

THEY'RE HOME!



● The war is over, and the gunships come home!

This landing at RAAF Amberley just before noon on December 19, 1971, marked the end of the Vietnam War for the 16 Troop helicopters, pilots and crews of No. 9 Squadron. Earlier in the day they landed at Maroochydore Airport, north of Brisbane, after a flight from the deck of the troop transport, HMAS Sydney.

The pilots and crews have now settled into a more peacetime role at Amberley.

Settling down on home-ground after years of war in a foreign land, these helicopters of No. 9 Squadron, RAAF, look like wasps with a sting in their tail.

Their landing at RAAF Base, Amberley, Qld, marked the end of nearly six years of war for the officers and men of No. 9 Squadron. The olive-green helicopters, led by two blades whirling. Earlier in the day they landed at Maroochydore Airport, north of Brisbane, from the deck of the troop transport carrier, HMAS Sydney.

The Commanding Officer of the Squadron, Wg Cdr Peter Mahood, was aboard the first of the Squadron's helicopters as it touched down at Amberley on December 19.

The Commanding Officer of No. 5 Squadron, Wg Cdr Brian Nicholls, flew to the carrier to meet the returning crews, while the Officer Commanding Amberley Base, Air Cdre C. H. Spurgeon, met the Vietnam veterans at Maroochydore Airport.

● Pictured on the tarmac at RAAF Amberley shortly after their arrival, these No. 9 Sqn. helicopter crewmen (left) discuss the flight from Maroochydore with their Commanding Officer, Wg. Cdr. Peter Mahood.



NEW POSTS



The new Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal C. F. Read, CBE, DFC, AFC.



● The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Sir Colin Hannan, has been appointed Governor of Queensland.

Air Vice-Marshal Read has been appointed for a term of three years. He will be promoted to the rank of Air Marshal on taking up the appointment on March 21, 1972.

Air Vice-Marshal Read, who is 53 years old, joined the RAAF as a Cadet in 1937. He served in the Pacific in World War 2 when he commanded 31 Squadron and No. 77 Wing Headquarters, Command appointments held since the war include: Director of Operations, Department of Air, from 1960 to 1964, and Deputy Chief of the Air Staff since August, 1969.

The Minister for Air, Senator Tom Drake-Brockman, said last month that he was delighted at the news of the appointment.

The Minister for Air, Senator Tom Drake-Brockman, said that the appointment of Sir Colin, who has been RAAF Chief of the Air Staff since January 1970, and is the first RAAF officer to be given the honour, had brought great credit to himself and to the RAAF.

This is not the first association of Sir Colin with Queensland. In 1949-51 he commanded RAAF Base, Amberley in Queensland.

F-11Cs To Join RAAF Armoury

The Australian Government has decided to go ahead with the F-111C aircraft programme.

The Minister for Defence, Mr. David Fairbairn, and the Minister for Air, Senator Drake-Brockman, in a recent joint statement said the Government had now agreed to proceed with the purchase of 24 F-111Cs and had approved an extensive modification and refurbishment programme to bring the aircraft to the standards required by the RAAF.

The Ministers said the Government had decided, on the advice of the RAAF and its scientific advisers, that there was now adequate evidence from comprehensive and rigorous test programmes recently completed in the United States to give confidence that the F-111Cs, after modification and refurbishment and subsequent testing, would meet Australia's operational and technical requirements. These requirements were incorporated in the Agreed Minute between the then Australian Minister for Defence, Mr. Fraser, and Defence Secretary

Laird of the United States, which had been published on May 12, 1970.

Work on the aircraft at the Fort Worth, Texas plant of General Dynamics, will start in April, 1972. Each aircraft will be in the modification line for 10 to 12 months. On com-

pletion and before delivery, each aircraft will be put through a comprehensive test programme, including cold proof load testing at minus 40° Centigrade, to prove structural integrity.

(cont. P. 8)

QUEEN MOTHER'S MESSAGE

The following message has been received from the Queen Mother, who is the Air Chief Commandant of the WRAAF:

"On the occasion of the 21st anniversary of the formation of the Women's Royal Australian Air Force I send to all ranks my warmest congratulations. Your reputation based on the service and traditions of your predecessors in the Second World War has, I know, been most worthily maintained. I am confident that in the years ahead this heritage will be enhanced and that you will continue to serve your Sovereign and country with pride and loyalty."

also sent the following message to all units:

"In the 21 years since the first airwoman enlisted in the WRAAF on January 30, 1951, over 7000 young women have seen service in this women's branch of the RAAF. They have made a most valuable contribution to the working efficiency of the permanent air force during this period and I offer congratulations on behalf of the RAAF as the twenty-first anniversary of the force is celebrated."

CAS: The Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sir Colin Hannan, has ● See WRAAF BIRTHDAY SUPPLEMENT in this issue.

WRAAF CELEBRATE 21st BIRTHDAY

See supplement inside —