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THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

R E P O R T

relating to the proposed construction of

PERMANENT BARRACKS AND DEPOT ACCOMMODATION

for

A.R.A. UNITS AT BROADMEADOWS, VICTORIA

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

LIVING AND DEPOT ACCOMMODATION FOR AUSTRALIAN
REGULAR ARMY UNITS, BROADMEADOWS, VICTORIA

REPORT

By resolution of 12th November, 1964, the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report, proposals for the construction of living and depot accommodation for Australian Regular Army units at Broadmeadows, Victoria. The Committee have the honour to report as follows :-

GENERAL

1. The Committee received statements from the Departments of the Army and Works and heard evidence from representatives of these Departments. A visit was paid to Broadmeadows and the site of the proposed works and existing accommodation and facilities were inspected.

HISTORICAL

2. The Commonwealth owned land occupied by the Army at Broadmeadows comprises 437 acres and was acquired in two parcels. The original southern section was acquired as a mobilisation camp site for A.I.F. training during the 1914-18 War. From 1919 to 1939 this area was used for Citizen Military Force training. During the 1939-45 War, the northern portion of the area was acquired and considerable development took place when stores depots, workshop facilities and associated living and administrative accommodation were erected.

THE SITE

3. The installation is located about ten miles north of Melbourne in an area which is expanding rapidly as a result of industrial and civilian residential development projects. The Hume Highway is about half a mile east of the camp and the main Melbourne broad and standard gauge railways are approximately one mile to the west. Broad gauge railway spur lines from Broadmeadows already serve the depot complex. At a later stage, it is intended that standard gauge spur lines be provided to the main store houses from the nearby Fawkner branch line. The camp is within five miles of Essendon airport and of the proposed airport at Tullamarine.

The site is therefore well located from a mobilisation viewpoint in relation to surface and air communication systems and to the Port of Melbourne.

4. Migrant Hostel. The Department of Labour and National Service occupies 21 acres of the site on a permissive occupancy basis and uses the area for a migrant hostel. Approximately 900 are accommodated in the hostel. The Army has no immediate need for this part of the Broadmeadows camp and accepts that because of the difficulty the Department has had in finding suitable areas to set up migrant establishments, the migrant hostel must remain for the time being. The Department should however take steps to relocate the hostel as soon as possible.

UNITS BASED AT BROADMEADOWS

5. R.A.E. Stores Depot and Workshop (27 Engineer Stores Squadron).

This unit has an Army Headquarters function, receiving, holding and distributing engineer stores and being responsible for their repair and maintenance. It also purchases, constructs, holds and issues engineer stores to units within Southern Command.

6. R.A.A.O.C. Ordnance Depot (2 Central Ordnance Depot). This unit has the Army Headquarters function of receiving, storing, maintaining and issuing ordnance stores. The range of these stores is about 40,000 different items including clothing, printing and stationery cooking equipment, field accommodation items and hand tools.

7. R.A.E.M.E. Workshop (3 Base Workshop). This unit carries out major overhauls of Army equipment for Southern Command units. It handles all types of weapons, major assemblies for all types of vehicles, optical and electronic instruments, telecommunications equipment and heavy engineering plant. It also carries out development work on machinery loaded vehicles used by field workshops.

8. R.A.A.M.C. Medical and Dental Stores Depot (Southern Command Depot). This unit performs Army Headquarters and Southern Command functions in relation to medical and dental stores.

9. Headquarters Broadmeadows Area. This unit administers the area and controls and maintains area accommodation and facilities.

10. Two small units, the Southern Command Trade Training Centre and 3 Ammunition Inspection and Proof Section are also located in the area. It is intended, in the long term, that these units be located elsewhere.

EXISTING FACILITIES

11. Generally the existing buildings and facilities were built during the 1939-45 War and consist principally of timber framed structures clad with either corrugated iron or asbestos cement sheeting. The store houses and workshops, except the engineering workshop, and a number of small buildings ear-marked for demolition, are in reasonable condition.

12. The living quarters used by all ranks are galvanised iron buildings which are far below acceptable standards. Beyond the maintenance and repair necessary to maintain the buildings in a habitable condition, little has been done in post-war years to raise the standard of accommodation. The huts have reached the end of their economic life and replacement is essential.

13. Some improvements, in permanent construction, have been carried out over the past ten years. An area rank and file kitchen and mess (to replace one destroyed by fire), an Other Ranks Club, a medical and dental store house and an area control building have been erected.

MASTER PLAN

14. A master plan for Broadmeadows which has been agreed by the Departments of the Army and Works and the Defence Business Board provides for the foreseeable needs of the area in peace and war. Much of the development planned will not be undertaken except in the event of war.

15. The buildings which comprise this reference are needed to replace sub-standard structures as well as to provide additional workshop facilities. Further stages of redevelopment or expansion are not expected to be required for some years, unless there is pressure for additional living accommodation.

16. The buildings in this reference are sited in accordance with the agreed master plan.

THE PRESENT PROPOSALS

17. The work currently proposed falls into two broad categories :-

- (a) the replacement of existing unsuitable living and messing accommodation and provision of limited sporting facilities; and
- (b) the provision of new technical accommodation including workshops and the extension of existing workshops.

The Committee noted that the Defence Business Board had considered and endorsed the proposals and that the Services' Scales and Standards of Accommodation had been followed where applicable.

18. Living, Messing and Recreational. The military staff of units at Broadmeadows averages about 40 officers, 109 warrant officers and sergeants and 264 rank and file. Not all of the staff "live in" the camp. There are 21 Army married quarters in the camp area and others of the staff live either in Army married quarters or in private accommodation in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

19. It is proposed therefore to provide sleeping accommodation only for the staff who actually "live in", with a small allowance for transient rank and file personnel who may be required to be housed temporarily.

20. As mentioned, a permanent kitchen and mess for the rank and file has already been constructed. The proposal is to now build two two-storey barrack blocks providing accommodation for a total of 144 men. Toilet and shower facilities are planned for each floor of each block and a laundry with ironing and drying facilities is proposed in a single storey unit situated between the blocks and accessible by covered ways.

21. For warrant officers and sergeants there will be a two-storey sleeping block joined to a single storey mess and kitchen block. Sleeping accommodation for 24 is proposed and the mess will cater for 45. Some expansion space is provided in the kitchen. The plan allows for extension of dining and mess areas and for the erection of additional sleeping accommodation if required.

22. The officers' mess and sleeping quarters is of somewhat similar design to the facilities for Senior N.C.O's. It provides sleeping

accommodation for 16 junior officers and two senior officers and messing facilities for 29. Extension can take place readily if required.

23. Consideration has been given by a committee of officers of the Departments of Works and the Army to the desirability of using a combined kitchen to serve both senior N.C.O.'s and officers. The conclusion reached was that there was little, if any, likely saving in capital cost between combined or separate kitchens. Separate kitchens are therefore proposed because of the administrative convenience which results.

24. Sports Pavilion. It is proposed to construct a dressing pavilion at the existing oval at Broadmeadows to provide change rooms, toilets and shower facilities. There are no facilities of this nature at present. There is to be no provision for spectators.

25. Technical Accommodation.

- Engineer Stores Workshop. An engineer stores workshop is proposed to replace the existing facilities which are spread over four small buildings. These are in extremely poor condition, are electrically hazardous and are to be eventually demolished.

26. Accommodation to be provided includes a carpenters' shop, a fitters' and refrigeration shop, paint shop, technical store, an office, toilets and change rooms. Future expansion of the building is provided for by a temporary wall at the east end.

27. - High Lift Bay (R.A.E.M.E. Workshop). The existing vehicle workshop facilities do not permit high lifts of heavy equipment. It is proposed to extend the present workshop to provide a high lift bay with overhead travelling cranes. Vertical lifts necessary in the repair of heavy items of Army equipment will then be possible in this workshop.

28. - Telecommunications and Instrument Workshops. The workshop is at present unsatisfactorily housed in an area subdivided from the main vehicle workshop. The new workshop will provide dust-proof and temperature controlled areas where the repair, inspection and calibration of precision equipment may be carried out with the accuracy required in this work.

29. The proposed building is in two parts. each structurally separate and isolated to prevent the transmission of vibration. The northern end of the building is the vehicle equipment area and is provided with a travelling crane, a small spray paint booth and an electrical vehicle and plant cleaning area.

30. The second area is of single storied construction planned around two courtyards. It provides modern facilities, air-conditioned where necessary, for basic instrument, telecommunications, radar, control equipment and electrical repair functions. It also includes space and facilities for :

- (a) Calibration and storage of electronic test equipment;
- (b) Diesel injection equipment test and repairs;
- (c) Machine shop for telecommunications, radar, electrical control and electrical (vehicle and plant) equipment;
- (d) Technical administrative functions including a control office, stores and technical library;
- (e) Ablution block with change and locker room.

31. Road Works. It is proposed to build a concrete roadway from the vehicle workshop to the general engineering workshop and to incorporate this into the floor of the high lift bay and the vehicle workshop. It will replace the present inadequate road services and provide communication for mechanical equipment and palletised loads between the two areas.

32. Subject to the minor qualifications which follow, the Committee recommends the early construction of the buildings and other work which comprise this reference. Urgent replacement of existing sub-standard living accommodation of all ranks is essential.

LIVING ACCOMMODATION

33. The basis on which and the numbers for whom sleeping and mess accommodation is to be provided are referred to in paragraphs 18 and 19 above. The following table compares the sleeping accommodation planned with present day requirements.

	<u>Planned</u>	<u>Currently Required</u>
Rank and File	144	139
Sergeants and W.O's.	24	30
Officers	18	17

34. Evidence was given that the facilities proposed were designed before the recent announcement on the introduction of selective national service and that consequently no allowance has been made for the effect this will have at Broadmeadows. The Committee was advised that selective national service will have little impact, in either the short or long term, on accommodation requirements.

35. The table in paragraph 33 shows that, disregarding selective national service, the sleeping accommodation planned provides little margin over normal requirements to meet unusual or emergency needs and in the case of Sergeants and Warrant Officers falls short of actual requirements. Consequently, and also because of the introduction of selective national service, the Committee believes that the existing and potential requirement for living accommodation for all ranks should be reassessed before the proposals are developed any further.

CONSTRUCTION AND FINISHES

36. Living Accommodation. The sleeping quarters are to be of load bearing brick construction with concrete floors and stairs. Moss blocks will be framed in steel with brick infill panels and concrete floors. Roofing is to be galvanized steel and windows will be aluminium framed.

37. Floors will be generally finished with vinyl tiles, with quarry tiles used in kitchens, terrazzo in toilets and granolithic in laundries.

38. Workshops. These buildings will be steel framed with brick infill panels. Floors will be finished in granolithic and windows framed in aluminium. Roofing will be corrugated asbestos cement on timber purlins.

39. Engineering Services. Air conditioning is to be installed in the telecommunications, radar, electrical, instrument and diesel injection equipment areas of the Telecommunications and Instrument Workshop for functional reasons.

40. Offices, recreation and dining rooms, drying rooms and the High Lift Bay are to be heated. Mechanical ventilation will be provided in toilets, showers, chemical cleaning areas, drying rooms and laundries.

41. Domestic hot water will be provided to ablutions, kitchen and laundry outlets.

42. Overhead travelling cranes are planned for the High Lift Bay and Telecommunications Workshop.

43. Existing water and sewerage services will be extended to the new buildings.

44. Fire Protection. Thermal fire detectors connected to the Guard House are to be installed in all of the proposed buildings except the Engineer Stores Workshop. The latter is to be protected by an automatic sprinkler system.

45. Portable fire extinguishers will be located in all buildings which will also be covered by the existing fire hydrant system.

46. Electrical Services. The electricity supply will come from the high-voltage reticulation through the existing sub-stations which will be increased in capacity. Artificial lighting will conform with Standards Association codes. Fluorescent lighting will be used in functional buildings and for street and area illumination. Incandescent fittings are to be installed in domestic accommodation.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

47. It has been estimated that the preparation of working drawings and tender documents, the calling of tenders and the signing of a contract will occupy 15 months from the time an authority to proceed is given. The construction period is estimated at 20 months with progressive occupancy of some buildings in that period.

COSTS

48. The estimated cost of the proposals submitted to the Committee is £825,000 made up as follows :-

	£
Barrack Blocks for Rank and File	140,000
Sergeants Sleeping Quarters and Mess	109,000
Officers Sleeping Quarters and Mess	100,000
Sports Pavilion	13,000
Engineer Stores Workshop	77,000
High Lift Bay	180,000
Telecommunications and Instrument Workshops	128,000
Engineering Services	
- Electrical	20,000
- Civil	<u>58,000</u>
	<u>78,000</u>
	<u>£825,000</u>

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

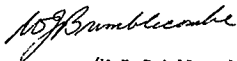
49. The summary of recommendations and conclusions of the Committee is set out below. Beside each the relevant paragraph in the report is indicated. Recommendations appear in bold type.

	Paragraph
(1) The Department of Labour and National Service should take steps to re-locate the migrant hostel as soon as possible.	4
(2) The living quarters used by all ranks are galvanized iron buildings which are far below acceptable standards.	12
(3) SUBJECT TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH FOLLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE BUILDINGS AND OTHER WORK WHICH COMPRISE THIS REFERENCE IS RECOMMENDED.	32
(4) URGENT REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING SUB-STANDARD LIVING ACCOMMODATION FOR ALL RANKS IS ESSENTIAL.	32
(5) THE REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVING ACCOMMODATION FOR ALL RANKS SHOULD BE REASSESSED.	35

10.

- (6) The estimated cost of the work referred to the
Committee is £825,000.

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(W.J. Brimblecombe)
Chairman.

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CANBERRA, A.C.T.
27th April, 1965.