

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works

**SUPPLEMENTARY
REPORT**

relating to

**RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN,
N.S.W.—F/A-18 HORNET
FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT**

**RELOCATION OF ARMY PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL
FROM RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN, N.S.W.
TO HMAS ALBATROSS, NOWRA, N.S.W.**

(Twelfth Report of 1983)

**THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
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MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS
(Twenty-Seventh Committee)

Senator Dominic John Foreman (Chairman)
The Honourable Wallace Clyde Fife, M.P. (Vice-Chairman)

<u>Senate</u>	<u>House of Representatives</u>
Senator Gerry Norman Jones	David Bruce Cowan, Esq., M.P.
Senator Bernard Francis Kilgariff	Peter Hertford Drummond, Esq., M.P. Leonard Joseph Keogh, Esq., M.P. Eamon John Lindsay, Esq., M.P. John Saunderson, Esq., M.P.

EXTRACT FROM
THE VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NO. 13 DATED 26 MAY 1983

42 PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE - REFERENCE OF WORK - R.A.A.F. BASE
WILLIAMTOWN, N.S.W. - F/A-18 HORNET FACILITIES:

Mr Hurford (Minister for Housing and Construction),
pursuant to notice, moved - That, in accordance with the
provisions of the Public Works Committee Act 1969 the
following proposed work be referred to the Parliamentary
Standing Committee on Public Works for consideration and
report: R.A.A.F. Base Williamtown, N.S.W. - F/A-18
Hornet facilities development.

Mr Hurford presented plans in connection with the proposed
work.

Debate ensued.

Question - put and passed.

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PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN, N.S.W.,
F/A-18 HORNET FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

RELOCATION OF ARMY PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL
FROM RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN, N.S.W.,
TO HMAS ALBATROSS, NOWRA, N.S.W.

By resolution on 26 May 1983 the House of Representatives referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works for investigation and report the proposal for the development of facilities at RAAF Base Williamtown, N.S.W., for the F/A-18 Hornet Tactical Fighter Force.

The Committee has the honour of presenting the following supplementary report:

THE INITIAL REFERENCE

1. The proposal, when initially referred to the Committee, comprised the following elements:

- Facilities for No. 481 Maintenance Squadron;
- Fighter unit facilities for No. 77 Squadron and No. 3 Squadron;
- Facilities for No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit;
- Administration and domestic facilities; and
- Army Parachute Training School.

COMMITTEE'S THIRD REPORT OF 1983

2. The Committee's Third Report of 1983 (Parliamentary Paper 318/1983) recommended the construction of the work in the initial reference with the exception of the provision of facilities for the Army Parachute Training School (PTS). This recommendation arose as a consequence of changes made to the scope of the initial reference during the period of the Committee's investigation.

3. It was originally proposed that new facilities for the PTS be provided at RAAF Base Williamtown, the present location of the School. At the public hearing into the overall Williamtown proposal, held on 21 and 22 July, the Department of Defence advised that the location of the PTS was under consideration by the Minister for Defence. In September 1983 the Committee was advised that the Minister had decided that the PTS should be relocated from RAAF Base Williamtown to HMAS Albatross, near Nowra, N.S.W. It was stated that the decision was in line with the Government's intention to maintain the Service population and level of activity in the area to offset reductions in numbers associated with the phasing out of Navy fixed wing aircraft.

4. The Committee's Third Report of 1983 into the initial reference accordingly stated that a supplementary report on the relocation of the PTS would be provided after more details had been made available by departments.

5. A supplementary submission outlining the scope of the proposed work for the PTS at HMAS Albatross was provided by the Department of Housing and Construction and the Department of Defence during November 1983.

THE PRESENT REFERENCE

6. The scope of the works proposed for the PTS comprises the following elements:

- PTS Working Accommodation;
- Parachute Drop Zone;
- Living Accommodation.

7. When referred to the Committee as part of the RAAF Base Williamtown works, these elements were estimated to cost \$8.625 million. The estimated cost of providing similar facilities at HMAS Albatross is estimated at \$7.3 million.

THE COMMITTEE'S INVESTIGATION

8. The Committee received a written supplementary submission and drawings from the Department of Defence and the Department of Housing and Construction.

9. On 1 December 1983 the Committee resolved on a motion by Mr Fife that pursuant to sub-section 11(1) of the Public Works Committee Act 1969 a Sectional Committee comprising Mr Fife, Senator Kilgariff and Mr Lindsay, inspect HMAS Albatross and the sites of the proposed work and report to the Committee.

10. On 5 December 1983 the Sectional Committee carried out the site inspection and was briefed by representatives of the Royal Australian Navy, the Parachute Training School, the Department of Defence and the Department of Housing and Construction.

11. Following the inspection the Sectional Committee reported to the Committee. It was resolved that a further public hearing would not be necessary.

BACKGROUND

12. Parachute Training School Parachute training for the Armed Forces has been carried out at RAAF Base Williamtown since 1951. The present PTS was formed in 1974 when the Army assumed full responsibility for all paratrooping and training.

13. Since 1974 parachute training activities have increased markedly. The number of courses conducted annually has increased from 26 to 36 and the number of students from 322 to 674.

14. The staff numbers 69 and the school is organised into a Development Wing, Support Wing and Training Wing.

15. HMAS Albatross HMAS Albatross is about 8 kilometres south-west of Nowra, N.S.W.

16. The base comprises an airfield, with two runways orientated in east-west and north-south directions, aircraft support and domestic facilities. The majority of married quarters are located in the north-east corner, outside the base boundary.

17. Following the abandonment of the aircraft carrier replacement project the base will continue to be used for helicopter training. The final composition of Service units at HMAS Albatross is under current examination by the Department of Defence. The Committee understands the number of Naval personnel currently posted to the base number is about 1945. A reduction of about 600 personnel is planned.

THE NEED

18. The inadequacies of existing PTS facilities at RAAF Base Williamtown were described in the Committee's 3rd Report of 1983.

19. In summary, the buildings occupied by the school were described as sub-standard, a maintenance liability and totally unsuited to the needs of parachute training. For example, the headquarters and development wing is housed in Second World War huts and the support wing is housed in equally sub-standard buildings.

20. The location of buildings and outdoor training structures at RAAF Base Williamtown also act as an impediment to the development of the site for activities related to the adjacent aircraft apron. The Committee concluded that the location of the school at its present site to be based on the existence of a number of buildings when it was established rather than any functional requirements.

21. Committee's Conclusion The Army Parachute Training School requires modern training facilities to replace sub-standard facilities at RAAF Base Williamtown and to cater for increased numbers of personnel undergoing courses.

THE PROPOSAL

22. It is proposed to relocate the PTS from RAAF Base Williamtown to HMAS Albatross. This relocation will involve the construction of training facilities, a parachute drop zone and the refurbishment and possible construction of living accommodation. The extent of training facilities proposed is identical to that originally proposed at RAAF Base Williamtown.

23. Plan A-1 illustrates the location of the proposed works.

24. The Committee understands that apart from proper training facilities and adequate accommodation, the basic pre-requisites for a parachute training school are ready access to a sealed runway of suitable length for troop transport aircraft, a

parachute drop zone and a suitable climate. The Army does not envisage any problems in relation to parachute training activities at HMAS Albatross. The drop zone at HMAS Albatross is less restricted than at RAAF Base Williamtown where proximity to the Salt Ash Range could cause problems.

25. Training and Support Facilities The new parachute training and support complex will be located on a site adjacent to the off-base married quarters area. The site, whose central axis runs in an east-west direction, is about 500 metres long and 150 metres wide.

26. The outdoor training equipment, comprising fan, exit and Polish towers, will be located in the eastern sector. A kindergarten, located on the western boundary, will require relocation. A new site for the kindergarten was pointed out to the Sectional Committee.

27. The buildings area will be located near the centre of the site with the main buildings axis orientated in an east-west direction. Access to the area will be via the existing BTU Road.

28. The headquarters block will house the headquarters and administrative areas on the western side and lecture theatres and change rooms, part of the training wing, on the eastern side.

29. Indoors parachute training will be undertaken in a separate block, to be located immediately behind the headquarters block. It will house landing training, free fall/static line flight training and a fitting room. An outdoors parachute parade ground will be located behind the block. Aircraft mock-ups will be located adjacent to the parade ground.

30. The third block will house the parachute maintenance platoon, comprising storage area, pack, drying and repairs rooms and receipts area. Loading docks will be located at the eastern and western ends of the block. A transport compound and a separate filters' area will be located on the western side of the block.

31. Proximity to Houses The Sectional Committee was assured by representatives of the Department of Housing and Construction that a 20 metre-wide strip between the nearest houses and the school complex would be planted with trees and maintained as a nature reserve. As an additional measure to complement the existing movement and to provide visual and acoustic screening it is proposed to provide an earth mound between the houses and the site.

32. Capacity for Expansion During the site inspection departmental officials pointed out vacant land to the west of the building area would be available for expansion of the school.

33. Construction and Engineering Details The headquarters block will be constructed using brick masonry, windows as appropriate and insulated metal deck roof. The training and parachute maintenance blocks will be constructed of metal clad walls and roof on a structural steel frame. The parachute maintenance block will be internally lined and partly air conditioned. The lecture rooms will be air conditioned.

34. Electrical supply will be taken from the existing underground reticulation system. A new underground high voltage cable will link a ring main in an existing substation to a new substation on the PTS site.

35. A new sewer main will link the PTS site to an existing main. Existing mains crossing the site will be diverted where necessary.

36. Water supply will be taken from the existing reticulation system.

37. Maximum use will be made of existing roads. Car parking for 49 vehicles will be provided.

38. Thermal fire detectors will be installed in the headquarters, training and transport blocks. A wet pipe sprinkler system is proposed for the parachute maintenance block.

39. Parachute Drop Zone The parachute drop zone will comprise an area bounded by the main north-south runway and the base boundary. (See Plan A-1) An existing open drain is considered to be a hazard and it is proposed to place underground pipes and regrade the shoulders of the drains.

40. Committee's Conclusion The extent and location of facilities for the Parachute Training School at HMAS Albatross, Nowra, are adequate.

41. Living Accommodation The Committee was advised that the Department of Defence is examining the base living-in and married quarter requirements for short and long term needs. The requirement for PTS living-in accommodation is as follows:

	Staff	Under Training	Total
Officers	3	5	8
Senior NCO	6	18	24
Rank and File	26	67	93
Total	35	90	125

42. The Committee was advised that existing living-in accommodation for officers and senior NCOs is adequate.

43. Existing living-in accommodation for rank and file is similar to that at RAAF Base Williamtown with much of it below scales and standards of accommodation. Departments advised that the extent and timing of improvements to accommodation and any new construction is dependent on decisions concerning the future composition of units at the base, priorities and funding.

44. In the short term it is proposed to refurbish an existing accommodation block for PTS rank and file staff. This will involve dividing existing four-man rooms into two single man rooms.

45. PTS students will use accommodation that is presently available. This arrangement is similar to that proposed at RAAF Base Williamtown.

46. Married Quarters The married quarters requirement for PTS staff is as follows:

Type	Number
Group 3	3
Group 2	10
Group 1	22
TOTAL	35

47. Departments advised that the availability of married quarters is dependent on the phasing out timetable for Navy fixed wing aircraft operations and on the final composition of units on the base. Possible options in the longer term for married quarters include the construction of 35 new houses in accordance with the above groupings or the upgrading of 22 existing group 1A houses and the construction of new houses constituting the balance.

48. Committee's Conclusion The accommodation arrangements proposed are satisfactory.

CONSULTATIONS

49. Departments consulted with Shoalhaven City Council and relevant service supply authorities.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

50. The proposal has been considered by the Department of Home Affairs and Environment who advised that acceptable environmental criteria have been met.

PROGRAM

51. The Committee understands that tenders for the work will be called in March/April 1984 with the project being completed in 1985.

COSTS

52. The estimated cost of the proposed work is \$7.3 million made up as follows:

- PTS training, administrative and stores facilities - including site works and outdoor training equipment	4.85*
- Parachute drop zone works	0.40*
- Married quarters	1.8**
- Living-in accommodation	0.25**
TOTAL	7.30

(* Limit of cost estimate)

(** Indicative costs)

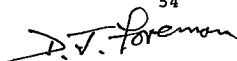
53. The estimated cost of providing similar facilities at RAAF Base Williamtown was \$8.625 million.

54. Committee's Recommendation The Committee recommends the construction of the work in this reference.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

55. The recommendations and conclusions of the Committee are set out below. Alongside each is shown the paragraph in the report to which it refers:

- | | <u>Paragraph</u> |
|---|------------------|
| 1. THE ARMY PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL REQUIRES MODERN TRAINING FACILITIES TO REPLACE SUB-STANDING FACILITIES AT RAAF BASE WILLIAMTOWN AND TO CATER FOR INCREASED NUMBERS OF PERSONNEL UNDERGOING COURSES. | 21 |
| 2. THE EXTENT AND LOCATION OF FACILITIES FOR THE PARACHUTE TRAINING SCHOOL AT HMAS ALBATROSS, NOWRA, ARE ADEQUATE. | 40 |
| 3. THE ACCOMMODATION ARRANGEMENTS PROPOSED ARE SATISFACTORY. | 48 |
| 4. THE ESTIMATED COST OF THE WORK IS \$7.3 MILLION. | 53 |
| 5. THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORK IN THIS REFERENCE. | 54 |


(D.J. FOREMAN)
Chairman

Parliamentary Standing Committee
on Public Works,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA A.C.T. 2600

7 December 1983