



Hudsons based in North Western Area formate for the camera, circa August 1942. By this time Nos. 2 and 13 Squadrons were equipped almost entirely with Mk IIIs. These came from Lockheed wearing identical camouflage patterns, as the RAF's "mirror image" requirement had been abandoned early in 1941. Fuselage roundels have now had their yellow outer circle painted over, the overpainting being obvious in this photo as the RAAF camouflage colours Foliage Green and Earth Brown show darker than the original matt and, by now, slightly faded and stained surrounding paintwork. The red and blue style of wing topside roundel was proving too easily confused with the Japanese Hinomaru, the more-so since US aircraft had lost the red centres to their insignia leaving a white star on a blue disc. Consequently, from the end of July 1942 all RAAF operational and second-line were to have the red centres of their topside roundels painted white. This change would, undoubtedly, have been implemented quite speedily and would certainly have affected large numbers of aircraft, yet photos clearly showing this markings combination are hard to find, making this view one of particular interest. (courtesy AWM; neg no 150348)



No. 6 Squadron Hudson Mk III A16-244 seen at Richmond in March 1943. Previously operated in New Guinea, it appears to be coded FX-P, probably in Sky Blue, and wears the blue and white national insignia in all positions, a pattern adopted by the RAAF in the last quarter of 1942. Noteworthy is the aircraft's undersides finish. The RAF had earlier developed an ultra-matt black finish which was called "Special Night", a scheme devised to be non-reflective when searchlights were encountered, but its rough surface finish proved unpopular in the long run as handling and normal wear and tear, combined with retouching and repairs, caused excessive patchiness and deterioration which, in turn, led to the introduction of a smoother, reflective, black finish. But even as the RAF was abandoning Special Night, the RAAF was discovering it and briefly became enthused about it. During June 1942 instructions were issued for one flight of each bomber squadron to be given black undersides for night operations, but the extent to which these instructions were acted upon remains unclear. The procedure to be adopted was for undersides of these aircraft to be given one coat of Special Night. Proper maintenance, as per instructions, of the resultant sooty matt finish would have proven impossible in normal RAAF operating environments and conditions, where even the regular paintwork had a tough time, soon resulting in a very tatty appearance. Consistent with its Special Night finish, A16-244 is also fitted with exhaust flame dampers. (courtesy Bert Fotheringham)