



No. 14 Squadron's A16-115 at Fossil Downs, Western Australia, in the first week of May 1942. According to the log book of Ron Cornfoot who, with H. A. "Robbie" Robertson made the flight, VIPs carried were army officers, including Maj-Gen Gordon Bennett, and the Hon Mr Frank Wise, the Western Australian Minister for Lands and Agriculture (later a Western Australian Premier and Treasurer). Bennett, who had escaped the fate of most of his 8th Division men in Malaya and returned to Australia (that he had been given command of this Division to begin with had been another consequence of the crash of A16-97) and in April 1942 was appointed General Officer Commanding 3rd Corps in Western Australia, is fourth from left in the photo, next to Mrs Maxine and Mr Bill MacDonald, the owners of Fossil Downs, at centre. According to Robertson, Bennett was flown in to the area (other stops were made at Derby, Broome and Wyndham) to give instruction on denying the area to the Japanese. At the time there was a strong possibility that this area, the Kimberley, would be where an enemy landing could take place. (Sven Polgreen via Ted Polgreen)

No. 2 Squadron's A16-217 at Corunna Downs, Western Australia, after the landing accident on 29th May 1943 whilst carrying an Auxiliary Power Unit for a 380th Bomb Group Liberator, an incident that is described in Chapter One. The aircraft was transported to No. 7 AD for repair but this was not considered an economical proposition given the difficulty of obtaining and fitting a centre section, and the aircraft was subsequently approved to be converted to components and written off. Both Nos. 2 and 13 Squadrons undertook a lot of transport work in North Western Area and were able to retain the odd Hudson for non-operational duties. No. 13 Squadron's A16-118 was the last of these but with the move of the squadron out of North Western Area in April 1943 it went to No. 6 Squadron. Attempts by No. 14 Squadron late in 1942 to be provided with a stripped down Hudson for transport duties in the north of Western Australia were not approved. (via Frank Smith/Mike Austin)



Another example of a squadron aircraft being used for the carriage of VIPs was A16-236, in which His Excellency the Governor-General of Australia, Lord Gowrie VC, flew in to different destinations in the Northern Territory on 6th, 9th and 11th August 1943 during part of his tour of North Western Area. Not all those in the photo have been identified, but Maj-Gen A. S. "Tubby" Allen, GOC Northern Territory Force, is at far left, AVM A. T. Cole, AOC North Western Area, next and Lord Gowrie VC third. Keith Kemp, pilot for these flights, is third from right. Lord Gowrie VC was succeeded as Governor-General by The Duke of Gloucester in January 1945 and at that stage a specially-formed RAAF transport unit, the Governor-General's Flight, took care of his air transport needs. Comparing this photo with another of A16-236 in Chapter One indicates that the name, Foo, was repainted at some point. (courtesy Harry F. Abbott)