

**R.A.A.F
RECRUITING
TRAINS**

**In
NEW SOUTH WALES
1940 – 1942**



RAAF RECRUITING TRAINS

In New South Wales – 1940-1942

The Sun, Sydney, of 11 September 1940, page 6, headlined:

Special Trains to Seek Recruits in Country Towns.

Two specially-fitted trains will leave Sydney in the next few days to cover the railway system of the State, in an intensive six-month drive for Air Force recruits.

At least 5000 men are expected to be dealt with by the staffs on the trains. They will walk in at one end as civilians and out the other as members of the RAAF, having passed all tests and been sworn in. Ninety per cent of the men chosen will be for air crews.

Fitted with all recruiting equipment, these trains will be able to accomplish all the work done by the large metropolitan recruiting centres. They will overcome the difficulty of recruiting men who cannot come to Sydney. The RAAF now will come to the men.

Air Force officers today proudly showed the Press representatives over the first train, which will leave for Goulburn on Friday afternoon. It is painted in two shades of blue, with a silver roof, and red, white and blue Air force targets on the sides.

Recruits first enter the inquiry room, where literature and aircraftmen will be available to explain everything. In another similar room an NCO will help them fill in their forms, and they will interview the pan-power officer. Next, they will pass through the office, where the clerical work of the train is done.

In the next carriage a medical officer and assistants will put recruits through the exacting 80-minutes' examination. Full medical equipment is carried. A long narrow passage in this carriage has been fitted with detailed equipment for dark-room sight testing.

In the next carriage is the commanding officer's office, where the selection board will interview recruits. A compartment next door carries a buzzer for Morse sets. The carriage then opens out into a combined lecture and testing room., fitted with desks and benches. Fitters and tradesmen will have trade tests there, and, in the same room, men who have passed all their air crew tests will be sworn in and handed their badges. At the end of the carriage is a diesel motor to supply electric power for hot water, lights and fans.

Each train will carry a staff of 10 ranks and four officers. The commanding officer will visit each town in a panel van two days before the train arrives, to prepare the way with local recruiting committees.

The first train will cover southern areas, and the second train, to leave next Wednesday, the western and northern parts of the State. Each will return for a few days at Christmas, and the go out again. Scores of large and small towns will be visited and the panel van will help bring in men from surrounding smaller towns for examination.

No detail has been forgotten in the fitting out of the trains. Even hot water and filing systems are arranged. Supplies of steel plate, blueprints and tools, are carried for trade tests.

The first train will remain at Goulburn for about a week, and it is hoped that about 100 men will be dealt with there. The next stop will be Canberra and then the train will go to Griffith and Leeton. The second train will first go to Lithgow and then to Bathurst, Orange and Parkes.

Press, radio and poster publicity in the various towns will direct attention to the trains. Air Force officers have already visited Goulburn to arrange the work of the first train.

The book *Coaching Stock of the NSW Railways, Volume 2*, (Eveleigh Press), page 45, describes the trains as follows:

Mansard-roofed end platform car set 25 (G.G. Hudson, contract 12/96) was chosen in 1940 for use as the Royal Australian Air Force recruiting train. When outshopped on 10 September 1940 it was divided into two three-car sets, painted sky blue with the RAAF roundel on the right-hand end panel and on the side of each car. 'RAAF Recruiting Train' was painted along the three carriages. Seats were removed and the cars divided into waiting, interview, and medical test rooms. A 9.7bhp (7.5kW) Southern Cross electric generating plant was installed in each guard's compartment. Set 25A

was returned by the RAAF in April 1941. Lavatories were fitted on August 1941. Set 25B continued in use with the Air Force until February 1942. Seating was restored and the cars fitted with lavatories in March 1942 and the set was reunited. It was not remarshalled and the first class cars were 2 and 5.



The RAAF Recruiting Train on a siding at Carriage Works, Eveleigh.

[Published in The Railways of New South Wales, 1955-1955, (Dept of Railways NSW), page 204]

The following description of the train was published in numerous NSW country newspapers in 1941:

Comprising three carriages, each painted light blue, with Air Force cockades at each end, the train bears the words in big lettering on the sides, "R.A.A.F. Recruiting Train." The special object of the train is to provide full recruiting facilities locally for those who have been unable to journey to Sydney or Newcastle to offer their services. It is, in itself, a complete recruiting unit. An applicant can enter No. 1 car and leave No. 3 a member of the R.A.A.F.

The train is fully equipped to carry out examinations for the many types required by the R.A.A.F.

No. 1 coach consists of three compartments. The first is the assembly room where the recruits have all their inquiries answered and where they fill in their application forms. It is furnished with two fixed tables and revolving chairs which are not fixtures but are so constructed that they will not slide or fall over when the train is in motion.

From the assembly room one passes into the Recruiting Sergeant's office and this is also furnished with two tables and chairs similar to those already mentioned. Passing through this office we enter the long Orderly Room which occupies the remainder of the first coach. In this is installed the main telephone switch and this room is fitted with two long tables, running the full length of the compartment, on which stand the numerous typewriters and all the paraphernalia usually seen in the active clerical section of any business. Sergeants and clerks are kept busy in this room; for correspondence of all kinds calls for a great deal of clerical work in an ever-moving Recruiting Centre such as this.

From the long Orderly Room we pass on to the long coach devoted entirely to the medical examinations of those men who desire to enter the Air Force. This coach has been extremely well fitted out for the necessarily long and searching examination required for Air Crews in particular, and consists of four long compartments in all of which some part of the examination is conducted.

Passing through the Medical car we enter the final coach on the train in which are situated two offices and a large compartment used for the Morse Aptitude Test and the Practical Trade Test. The first of the two offices is occupied by the Commanding Officer and his second-in-command and is furnished with two tables and a number of the revolving chairs seen elsewhere on the train. The wall in this office are suitably hung with modern maps of Europe and the Middle East and suspended

from the ceiling is the model of a fighter plane presented to the Commanding Officer by its maker, a fourteen-year-old boy who lives in Narrabri.

A passage connects this office with the next which is occupied by the Man Power Officer, who interviews all applicants before they are officially interviewed by the selection Board, generally presided over by the Commanding Officer. The passage continues on past the Man Power Officer's room to a large compartment at the rear end of the Train, fitted with a number of tables and benches, where applicants are given their Morse Aptitude Tests, and in the case of some ground staff musterings, their Practical Trade Test.

Beyond this again we pass through a sliding door into a small compartment where the Diesel engine and generator are housed. The train is self supporting in that it generates its own power for the purpose of refrigeration, fans, lighting and hot water for the medical car.

The walls in every coach are suitably decorated with well chosen aerial photographs and pictures of interest to both air crew and ground staff applicants – in fact, this mobile recruiting unit is, apart from being efficient and self supporting, a place in which applicants are made to feel as comfortable as at home as it is possible to make them during the time they are obliged to remain on board, during their interview and medical examinations.

Altogether, there are eleven men on the train consisting of four officers and seven ratings, each man being a specialist in his own particular type of work. The group is known as the 2A Mobile Unit.



The Governor-General (Lord Gowrie) on the platform of the RAAF recruiting train which will leave Central station today for the South and South-West, during his inspection yesterday.

[Published in the Daily Telegraph, 13 September 1940, page 8]

Air Force men outside the RAAF recruiting train, which was open for inspection today. It is painted Air Force blue, and flies the flag of the RAAF.

[Published in The Sun, 11 September 1940, page 5]



THE R.A.A.F. RECRUITING TRAIN WILL BE HERE SOON!



The R.A.A.F. Train is a comprehensive and fully staffed recruiting unit. It will give you complete enlistment, including Medical Examination and Trade Tests and . . . if you get through these satisfactorily . . . the train provides Home Study Literature and a Reservist's Badge.



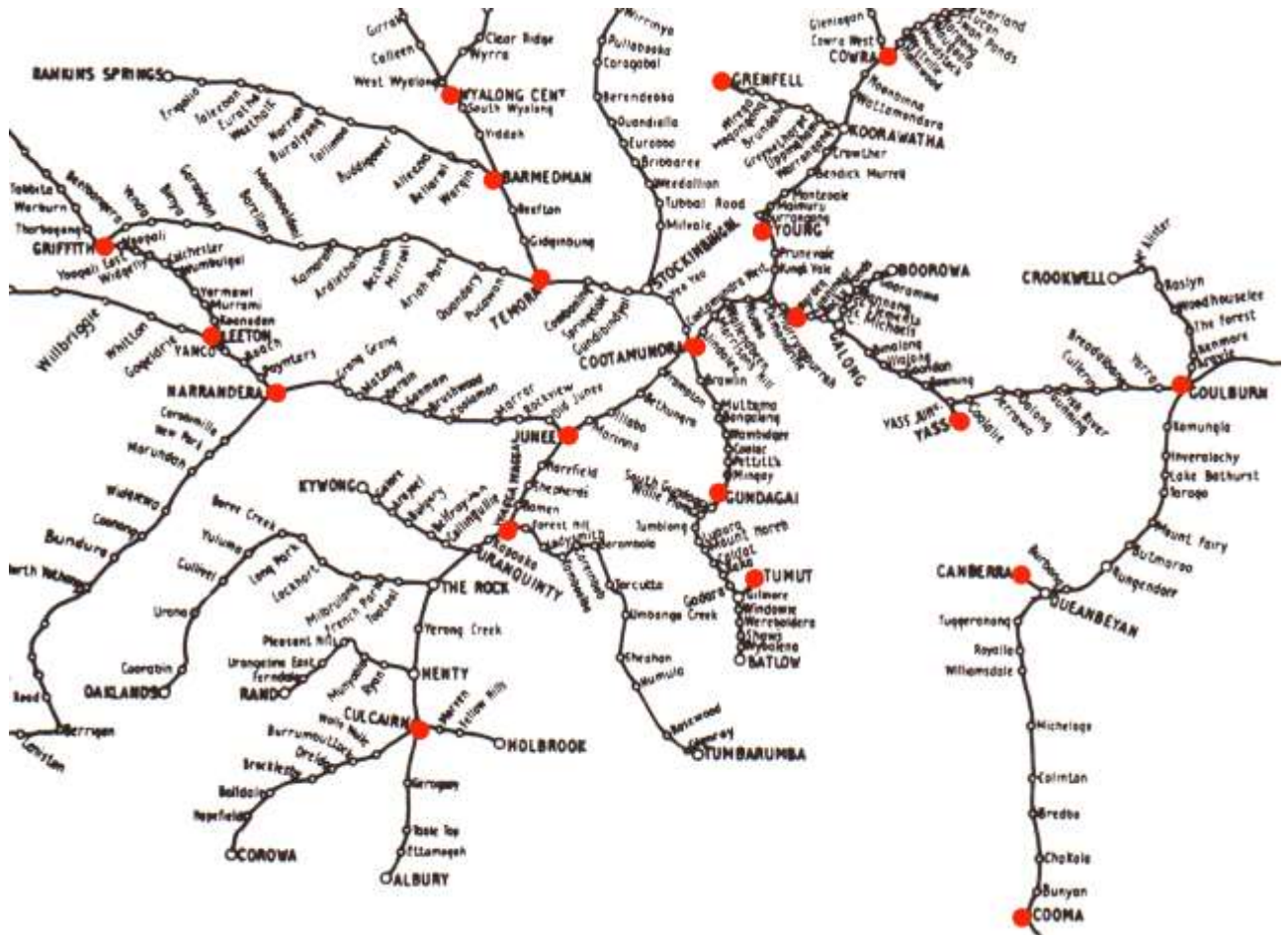
For
further
particu-
lars
apply at
the
nearest
Council
Chambers.



*Display advertising which appeared in a dozen NSW country newspapers.
The two lower photos are actually of the Victorian RAAF Recruiting Train.*

The dates below have been taken from local newspapers reporting the arrival and departure of the RAAF Recruiting Train.

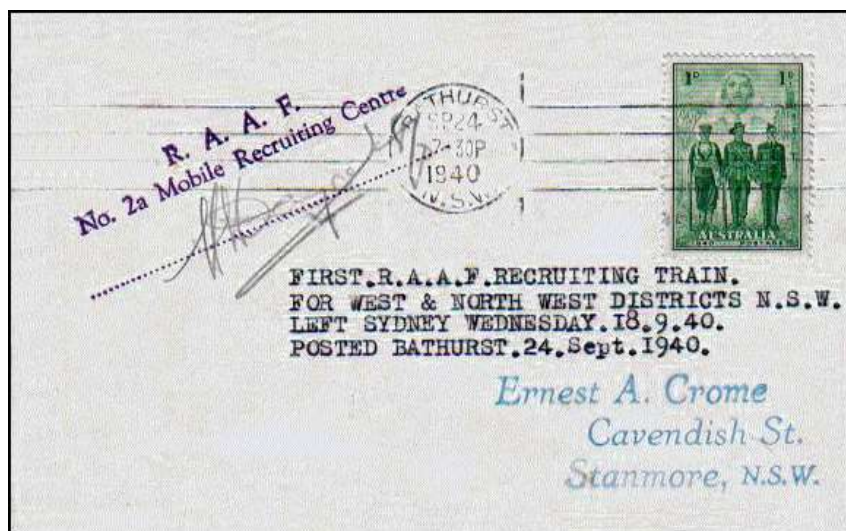
Town Visited	Arrive	Depart	Remarks
Sydney		13 Sep 1940	First train
Goulburn	14 Sep 1940	20 Sep 1940	
Canberra	21 Sep 1940	26 Sep 1940	
Cooma	27 Sep 1940	29 Sep 1940	
Yass	30 Sep 1940	1 Oct 1940	
Harden	2 Oct 1940	4 Oct 1940	
Cootamundra	5 Oct 1940	11 Oct 1940	At the top of Wallendoon Street
Juneec	12 Oct 1940	15 Oct 1940	
Narrandera	16 Oct 1940	19 Oct 1940	
Leeton	19 Oct 1940	22 Oct 1940	
Griffith	23 Oct 1940	25 Oct 1940	
Temora	26 Oct 1940	29 Oct 1940	
Barmedman	30 Oct 1940	1 Nov 1940	
Wyalong	2 Nov 1940	5 Nov 1940	
Wagga	6 Nov 1940	9 Nov 1940	
Gundagai	10 Nov 1940	13 Nov 1940	
Tumut	14 Nov 1940	16 Nov 1940	
Culcairn	17 Nov 1940	19 Nov 1940	
Young	20 Nov 1940	22 Nov 1940	
Grenfell	23 Nov 1940	25 Nov 1940	
Cowra	26 Nov 1940	28 Nov 1940	



Map showing the southern and south-western towns visited between September and November 1940.

Ace Stamp Auctions of Ellenbrook, Western Australia, advertised in their Auction Sale Catalogue 25 of 14 October 2018 the following items:

Item 540 1940 (28th Sept) First RAAF Recruiting Train covers posted Bathurst 24.9.40, Cooma 28.9.40 & Harden 4.10.40. all with typed endorsements & addressed to EA Crome. Each with a cachet in mauve in top left corner for "ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE No. 2a MOBILE RECRUITING CENTRE" for Bathurst & "No. 2c R.A.A.F. Mobile Recruiting Centre" for latter two & signed by the officer commanding for each mobile unit. Rarely seen and in Very Good condition. Ex Frommer. (3 covers) \$120



Insufficient information was found in local papers to complete the timetable below.

Town Visited	Arrive	Depart	Remarks
Sydney		18 Sep 1940	Second train
Lithgow	18 Sep 1940	22 Sep 1940	Old Eskbank station
Forbes	12 Oct 1940	14 Oct 1940	
Bathurst			
Orange	29 Sep 1940		
Molong			
Parkes			
Forbes	12 Oct 1940		
Narromine			
Wellington	29 Oct 1940	30 Oct 1940	Back of silos, facing top of Maughan Street
Mudgee	31 Oct 1940		Passed through Dunedoo attached to mail train
Narrabri	6 Nov 1940	11 Nov 1940	
Moree	14 Nov 1940	17 Nov 1940	
Inverell	19 Nov 1940		
West Tamworth		23 Nov 1940	
Manilla	23 Nov 1940	25 Nov 1940	
Tamworth	25 Nov 1940		
Armidale			
Glen Innes	2 Dec 1940	5 Dec 1940	
Tenterfield	5 Dec 1940		
Murrurundi			
Young	Dec 1940		
Scone	10 Dec 1940		
Muswellbrook	11 Dec 1940	13 Dec 1940	
Singleton	14 Dec 1940	15 Dec 1940	
Newcastle	16 Dec 1940	17 Dec 1940	See below.
Sydney	17 Dec 1940		

A description of the RAAF recruit [*sic*] train was broadcast by 2NC Newcastle at 2.30 pm on Friday 13 September 1940.

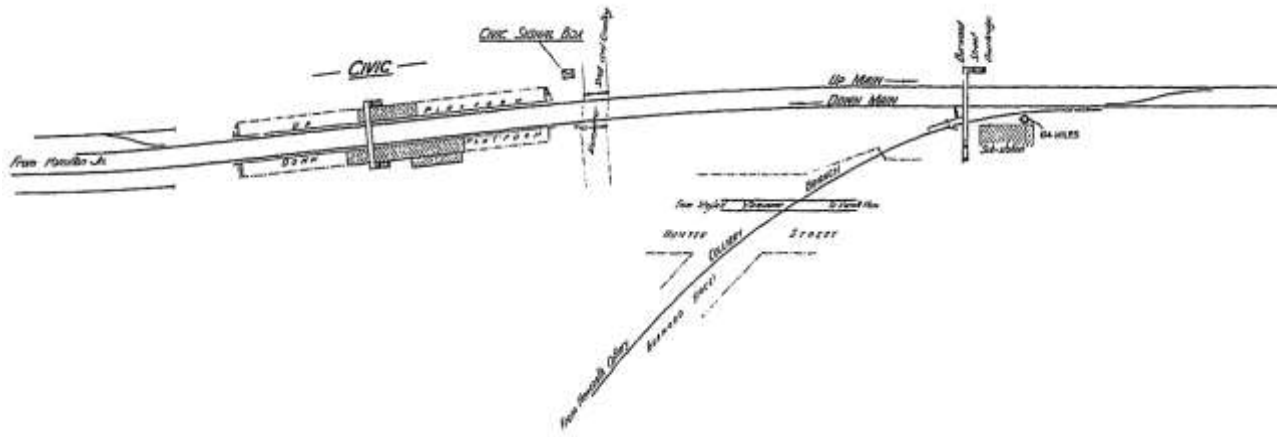
Cinesound News (No. 464) filmed the RAAF Recruiting Train at Goulburn on 20 September 1940. The scene is 1 minute 54 seconds in length. Copies are held by the Australian War Memorial and the National Film and Sound Archives.

The *Glen Innes Examiner* of 3 December 1940 reported that the train is not provided with a locomotive, but is attached to any convenient train, usually a goods.

The *Newcastle Morning Herald* reported on 11 December 1940 that the RAAF Recruiting Train is to be accommodated on the siding at Civic railway station. Some of the hoardings near Civic station will be removed to give access to the train. A flagpole at the siding will fly the RAAF flag.

The train was not placed on the siding but shunted onto the Newcastle Coal Mining Company's line in Burwood Street. This line connects with their Colliery at Glebe. The train was placed on the siding on its last night in Newcastle and attached to a Sydney-bound train on 17 December.

See diagram of Civic Station and Burwood Street on next page.



The *Daily Advertiser*, Wagga, for Tuesday, 14 January 1941 reported that an RAAF recruiting train left Central Station today on a three months' recruiting tour, and will visit 31 country centres.

A second train will leave on Wednesday, [15 January] and visit another 24 towns. The first train will cover the western plains, Riverina, and the southern tablelands. The second will visit the North Coast, northern and central tablelands, and north-western slopes.

The itinerary for the first train includes: Condobolin, February 16-18; Ivanhoe, February 20-21; Hillston, 22-24; Griffith, 25-27; Jerilderie, February 28-March 1; Narrandera, March 2-4; Hay, 6-7; Wagga, 8-9; Lockhart, 10-11; Culcairn, 12-13; Wagga, 13-14; Lake Cargelligo, 15-16; Wyalong Central, 17-19; Cootamundra, 20-22.

Town Visited	Arrive	Depart	Remarks
Sydney		14 Jan 1941	First train
Warren	14 Jan 1941	15 Jan 1941	
Nyngan	17 Jan 1941	19 Jan 1941	
Byrock	20 Jan 1941	21 Jan 1941	
Bourke	21 Jan 1941	23 Jan 1941	
Byrock	24 Jan 1941	25 Jan 1941	
Brewarrina	26 Jan 1941	27 Jan 1941	
Nyngan	27 Jan 1941	28 Jan 1941	
Cobar	29 Jan 1941	30 Jan 1941	
Peak Hill	1 Feb 1941	3 Feb 1941	
Parkes	5 Feb 1941	7 Feb 1941	
Forbes	7 Feb 1941		Second visit
Tottenham	9 Feb 1941	10 Feb 1941	
Trundle	11 Feb 1941	13 Feb 1941	
Condobolin	16 Feb 1941	18 Feb 1941	
Ivanhoe	20 Feb 1941	21 Feb 1941	
Hillston	22 Feb 1941	24 Feb 1941	
Griffith	25 Feb 1941	27 Feb 1941	
Jerilderie	28 Feb 1941	1 Mar 1941	
Narrandera	2 Mar 1941	4 Mar 1941	Second visit
Leeton	4 Mar 1941	5 Mar 1941	
Hay	6 Mar 1941	7 Mar 1941	
Wagga Wagga	8 Mar 1941	9 Mar 1941	
Lockhart	10 Mar 1941	11 Mar 1941	
Culcairn	12 Mar 1941	13 Mar 1941	
Wagga Wagga	13 Mar 1941	14 Mar 1941	

Town Visited	Arrive	Depart	Remarks
Lake Cargelligo	15 Mar 1941	16 Mar 1941	
Wyalong Central	17 Mar 1941	19 Mar 1941	
Temora	19 Mar 1941		Timetable altered to include Temora
Cootamundra	20 Mar 1941	22 Mar 1941	
Goulburn	23 Mar 1941	25 Mar 1941	
Crookwell	27 Mar 1941	29 Mar 1941	
Canberra	30 Mar 1941	2 Apr 1941	Stationed near the Big Gun, Kingston
Cooma	3 Apr 1941	4 Apr 1941	
Bombala	5 Apr 1941	7 Apr 1941	

The towns visited are widely spaced and is probably due to the goods and passenger train timetables on which the Recruiting Train depended for movement.



The first train covered the far north, west and the far south of the state.

RAAF Recruiting Train set 25A was returned to the Railways in April 1941.

Town Visited	Arrive	Depart	Remarks
Sydney		15 Jan 1941	Second train
Taree	16 Jan 1941	18 Jan 1941	
Kempsey	19 Jan 1941	21 Jan 1941	
Coffs Harbour	22 Jan 1941	23 Jan 1941	
South Grafton	24 Jan 1941	26 Jan 1941	
Casino	27 Jan 1941	29 Jan 1941	At old Casino station
Scone	30 Jan 1941	2 Feb 1941	
Quirindi	3 Feb 1941	5 Feb 1941	
Tamworth	6 Feb 1941	8 Feb 1941	
Armidale	9 Feb 1941	11 Feb 1941	
Glen Innes	12 Feb 1941	14 Feb 1941	
Tenterfield	15 Feb 1941	17 Feb 1941	
Barraba	19 Feb 1941	20 Feb 1941	
Gunnedah	21 Feb 1941	23 Feb 1941	
Narrabri	24 Feb 1941	25 Feb 1941	
Mungindi	26 Feb 1941	28 Feb 1941	
Moree	1 Mar 1941	3 Mar 1941	
Pokataroo	4 Mar 1941	6 Mar 1941	
Walgett	7 Mar 1941	9 Mar 1941	
Coonabarabran	11 Mar 1941	13 Mar 1941	
Dubbo	15 Mar 1941	17 Mar 1941	
Coonamble	18 Mar 1941	21 Mar 1941	
Gulgong	23 Mar 1941	24 Mar 1941	
Coolah	25 Mar 1941	26 Mar 1941	
Rylestone	27 Mar 1941	28 Mar 1941	
Kandos	28 Mar 1941		Cement Siding

See map on next page.



Recruiting Train labels. These items have been valued at \$40 each in David Elsmore's World War Two Patriotic Cinderella Labels catalogue. [David Elsmore collection]

Town Visited	Arrive	Depart	Remarks
Sydney		26 Apr 1941	for North Coast
Newcastle	27 Apr 1941		On coal road in Burwood Street between Hunter and King Streets – second visit
Gloucester	28 Apr 1941	30 Apr 1941	
Wingham	1 May 1941		
Taree	2 May 1941	5 May 1941	
Wauchope	6 May 1941	10 May 1941	
Kempsey	11 May 1941	15 May 1941	
Macksville	16 May 1941	20 May 1941	
Coffs Harbour	21 May 1941	25 May 1941	
Glenreagh	26 May 1941	28 May 1941	
South Grafton	29 May 1941	3 Jun 1941	Second visit
Casino	5 Jun 1941	8 Jun 1941	
Lismore	9 Jun 1941	12 Jun 1941	
Ballina	13 Jun 1941	16 Jun 1941	
Byron Bay	17 Jun 1941	20 Jun 1941	
Murwillumbah	21 Jun 1941	23 Jun 1941	
Kyogle	25 Jun 1941	27 Jun 1941	
Casino			
Dorrigo			Not going to Dorrigo
Urunga	28 Jun 1941	1 Jul 1941	To Urunga in place of Dorrigo
To Sydney	26 Jun 1941		Date from <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>

See map on next page.

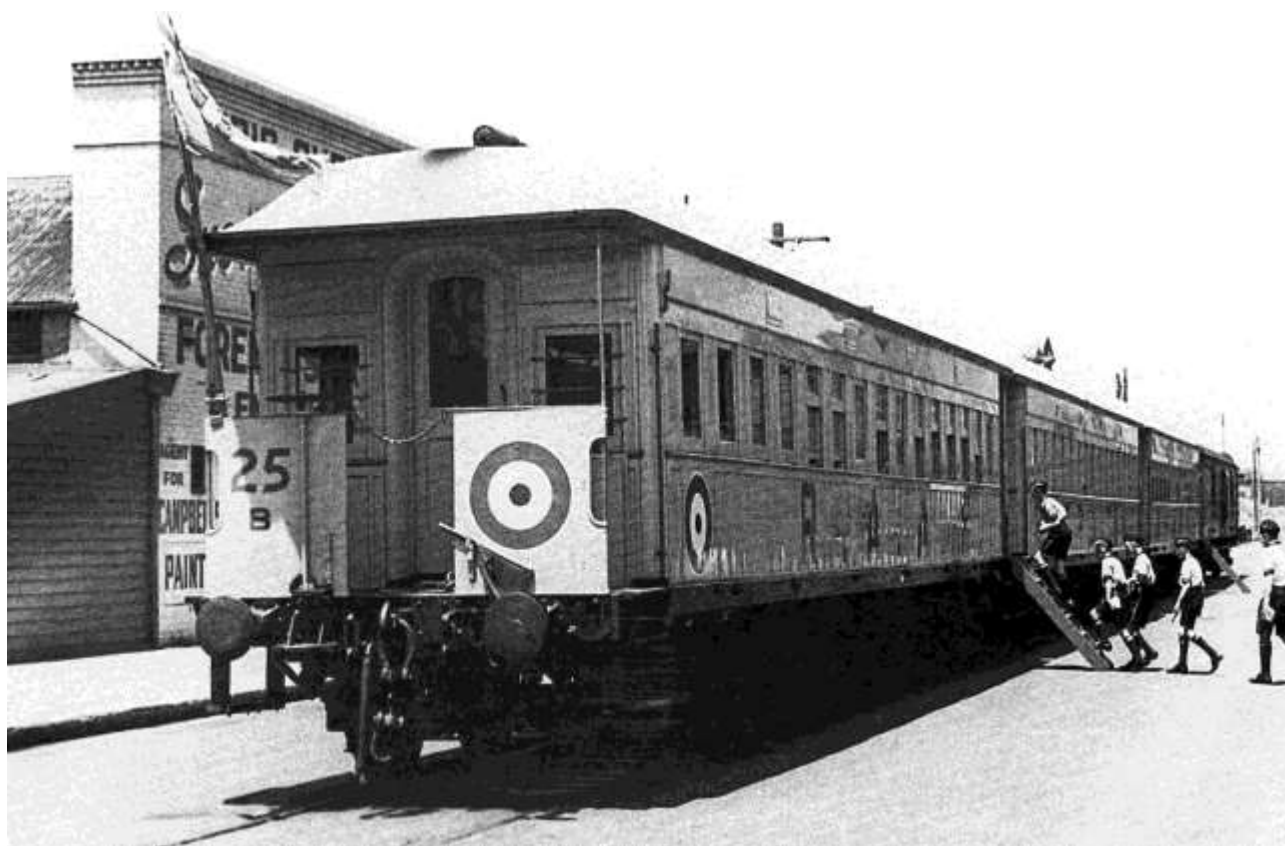
The *Sydney Morning Herald* for 28 April 1941 reported that the train departing Sydney on 26 April also carried staff to deal with inquiries and enlistments for the AIF. This has been confirmed by reports of the train in country newspapers.



This RAAF Recruiting Train label is rubber-stamped with the date and town and as a result has been valued at \$100 in David Elsmore's World War Two Patriotic Cinderella Labels catalogue.

Insufficient details of the RAAF Recruiting Train's movements appeared in the country papers for the timetables shown below to be completed in detail.

Town Visited	Arrive	Depart	Remarks
Sydney		26 Jul 1941	
Katoomba	26 Jul 1941	28 Jul 1941	Complaints were made regarding the location of the train at Katoomba. It is said it was nearly a half mile from the town.
Mudgee	4 Aug 1941	7 Aug 1941	
Dubbo	Aug 1941		Second visit
Wellington	18 Aug 1941	21 Aug 1941	Second visit
Bathurst	26 Aug 1941	29 Aug 1941	
Cowra	30 Aug 1941	5 Sep 1941	
Grenfell	8 Sep 1941	10 Sep 1941	Second visit
Harden	15 Sep 1941	16 Sep 1941	Not going further south
Yass	17 Sep 1941	19 Sep 1941	
Cowra	20 Sep 1941	24 Sep 1941	
Wollongong	27 Sep 1941	30 Sep 1941	To Sydney



Set 25B in Burwood Road on the Glebe branch to Newcastle Coal Mining Co's Colliery, Newcastle, 1942. Air Force cadets are entering the train. [I.K. Winney collection]

Town Visited	Arrive	Depart	Remarks
Depart Sydney			
Glen Innes	28 Oct 1941	31 Oct 1941	
Armidale	4 Nov 1941	9 Nov 1941	
Uralla	10 Nov 1941	11 Nov 1941	
Moree	18 Nov 1941	23 Nov 1941	
Inverell	24 Nov 1941	27 Nov 1941	
Narrabri	30 Nov 1941	1 Dec 1941	
Scone	6 Dec 1941	9 Dec 1941	
Singleton	10 Dec 1941	12 Dec 1941	
Gosford	13 Dec 1941	15 Dec 1941	To Sydney

No details of the train's last movements in early 1942 have been found in the NSW country newspapers.

RAAF Recruiting Train set 25B was returned to the Railways in February 1942.

Another frame from a 32 second film clip of the Recruiting Train showing the Recruiting Centre sign being placed on the train.

Framepool

