

Rathmines was the Catalina Headquarters. It was where Catalina crews did their operational training. When Wireless Air Gunners completed their courses they were instructed in the use of ASV which was later given the name of Radar.

When pilots new to Catalinas were sent to Rathmines they did circuits and bumps in the process of converting to flying boats and when we were on the staff at Rathmines were given the job of flying with them.

Marine staff was given training in servicing Catalina's at operational bases. Crews were also given Maritime training. There were also a number of servicewomen doing a variety of duties.

Married members had their wives living in the area and our Skipper's wife gave lunch to the crew at their home on occasions.

The notes from my diary were ones given by me to George Wood who is compiling a history of Catalina's for the War Museum in Canberra and with the diary I also sent pictures of the members of our crew and details about them. Our skipper Geoff Gregerson known as Greg, our second pilot Tom Baker, our Observer (Navigator), Keith Kleinert who gave us nicknames. Alan Palmer, our engineer air frames was "Hoppy" because of an injury to his leg in an accident. When we were flying on amphibious Catalina's on training flights he used a rod when the wheels wouldn't go down to make them go down manually and this happened sometimes on operational flights.

I was known as "Curly", our first engineer Ray Selwood escaped having a nickname as did my fellow W.A.G. and the second engineer was "Bing".

Rathmines was intended to be home in the first place, for No. 10 Sunderland Squadron but the Australian Government offered the Squadron to remain in Britain. The first unit at Rathmines was No. 9 Squadron. It became home for the "Seagulls" which were aircraft catapulted from ships. In 1940 the Seaplane Training Flight arrived from Point Cook. The remainder of 205 Squadron R.A.F. pushed out of Singapore were given a home in Rathmines and included Wing Commander Dick Atkinson, Squadron Leader Stilling and Flight Lieut. Harry Tamlyn. Post war it was home for units such as the Officer Training School and from 1950 to 1956 when it was converted to a School of Ground Training.

Group Captain Athol Wearne who lost a leg in a shark attack and was still able to fly Catalina's from Cairns while in 11 and 20 Squadrons and after that he commanded the base at Rathmines. While operating from Cairns he was awarded a DFC for his outstanding achievements on difficult operational flights with an aluminium leg.

The base at Rathmines was closed in 1960.