

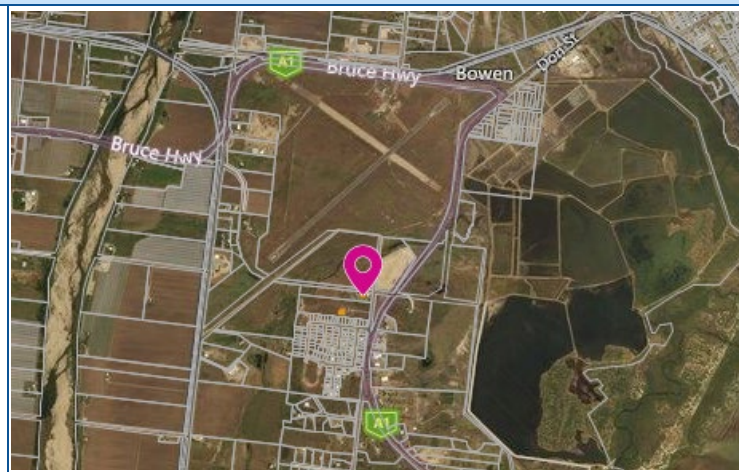
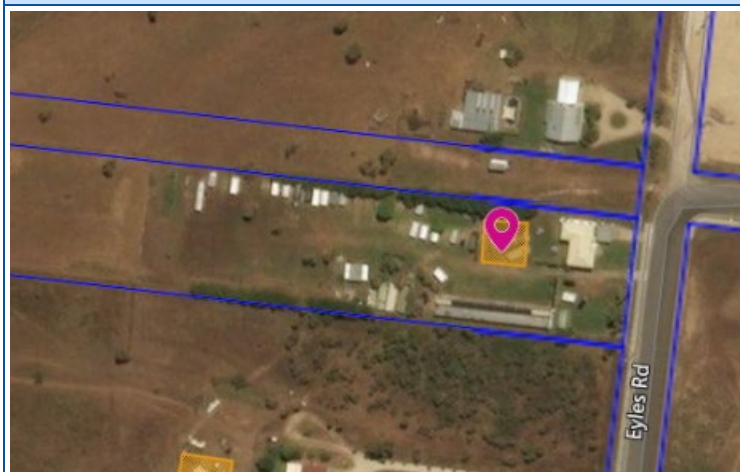
CONCRETE WWII IGLOOS

Address	9 Eyles Road, Bowen
Lot Plan	1RP733281, 1SP204653
Coordinates	(E: 626866 N: 626866) (E: 626960 N: 7785275)
Integrity	Fair
Condition	Fair
Statutory Listings	Nil
Non-Statutory Listings	Nil
References	Queensland Government, 2010. Queensland World War II Historic Places Website. Pearce, Howard, 2009. WWII NQ: A cultural heritage overview of significant places in the defence of north Queensland during WWII. Environmental Protection Agency, Brisbane.

Street View



Location Map



Physical Description

The two concrete WWII igloos are located to the southeast of Bowen Airstrip.

Igloo 1 is located at 9 Eyles Road, behind the main property. The igloo faces south, southwest and the formwork used to construct the building is clearly visible. The entrance comprises a raised concrete access slab and a central doorway.

Igloo 2 is located to the south of the igloo 1, on an unmarked road. Like igloo 1, it comprises a raised concrete access slab and a central doorway. Two ventilation fans are also visible on the roof.

Historical Context

With the outbreak of the Asia- Pacific war during WWII Bowen, like other airfields on the north Queensland coast, provided a brief rest and refueling stop for aircraft transiting northward to New Guinea. During 1943 Bowen aerodrome was used by amphibious aircraft of RAAF No.9 Fleet Co-operation Squadron, for the servicing and repair of naval spotter aircraft and for the delivery of mail and messages to ships of the RAN.

Bowen was selected as the aerodrome for carrying out chemical warfare trials for the 1st Australian Field Experimental Station based on a farming property at Gunyarra railway siding near Proserpine in 1943. The station was a self-contained camp housing some 250 to 500 military personnel and scientists. Supporting staff were drawn from most of the Allied forces. Station numbers were augmented from time to time by the attachment of volunteers from the Australian forces to participate in experiments and simulated attacks involving poison gas. These tests were conducted on an irregular basis from 1944 and involved mustard gas bombing trials over Mission Beach, Hinchinbrook Island and the Tully rainforest.

Two 'igloo-shaped' reinforced concrete explosive stores, located south of the aerodrome near the Bruce Highway, may have been constructed during this period for the storage of chemical weapons including mustard gas and phosgene bombs. Ammunition stored at the Bowen airstrip consisted of 65 lbs. bombs, 44 gallon and 540 lbs. drums, mustard gas and other chemicals. Interpretation signs near the igloos note that the buildings were camouflaged by burial in rubble and protected by a machine gun bunker. The stores are similar to others built at the main RAAF chemical weapons stockpile at Talmoi siding in western Queensland. Drawings from Talmoi indicate that the igloos were comprised of concrete with a timber entrance door and timber bracing posts and had a concrete entrance step and base. The timber doors on both of the igloos in Bowen have been replaced.

Although their history and use following the war is unknown, the igloos appear to be used as additional sheds for each of the adjacent properties.

Historical Significance

Criteria A - *the place is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of the region's history*

The two concrete igloos located to the south of Bowen Airfield demonstrate the use of Bowen as an airfield during World War II and as a munition and bomb storage facility. Further, they are important surviving evidence of facilities used to store materials for the 1st Australian Field Experimental Station based at Gunyarra railway siding near Proserpine which conducted chemical weapons testing during 1944.

Criteria D - *the place is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a particular class of cultural places*

The two concrete igloos located to the south of Bowen Airfield demonstrate the principal characteristics of World War II Igloo buildings, facilities that were purpose built to house munitions and other materials during the war.

