

Photograph compliments of Ian Garth

Remember this – Back in the 80's we had a dust storm that covered Melbourne with a thick blanket of Mallee dust that rolled in and over every thing in sight. Needless to say operations at the airport were suspended until it had passed, and city traffic came to a standstill.

Incidentally, I was a passenger (in the jump seat) on a DC9 from Hobart at that time and we were the last aircraft to land before the storm rolled in. It was a real experience, and at the time I wished I had a camera. The Captain of the DC9 was Paul Colby and I have forgotten the name of the First Officer.

FEO John Lancaster remembers this day also, as he was alone on the AIRBUS A300 in Gate 1, and he remembers the aircraft being buffeted and him racing to close the cockpit windows and passenger doors.

Newsletter Number 7 December 1998

Talk about a wealth of information –

So dedicated are some of our members that they go to great lengths to remember their experience of events or items published in the newsletters.

For instance, the newsletter distributed in early October had obviously just arrived interstate and one member was on the phone –

Yes! He did remember the game Travel Around Australia, and not only did he remember it, but he also identified the originator, Phil Jones, who was for many years one of our staff at Sydney International Airport, and Yes, permission was given by TAA for this game to be manufactured.

Phil is a member of the club and we will endeavour to get the full story about its history – to be appended to the game so that its origin will not remain a mystery in the future, and Phil will receive this recognition in the museum. Thanks Phil for your participation in our history.

With Zeal and Integrity – The Book

Stop looking on the bookshelf – We have obtained a copy of “With Zeal and Integrity” – and most fortunate for the museum it is John Watkins own (Autographed) copy. A real prize.

And as luck would have it, we have located yet a second copy, which has been donated to the museum by John Anderson, General Manager, Airports with QF and a TN employee for many years.

A sincere thank you to both of these members. .

Vale

Gordon Porter – Personnel – October 1998

Jock Wittcherby – Flt Safety – October 1998

What are they doing now?

Tony Derritt and Santo Rizzo were a couple of familiar faces on the Melbourne Tarmac for many years, working with the Catering Section and attending to the aircraft and passenger needs during turnaround and movements.

Recently I renewed their acquaintance, firstly with Tony and his wife who attended their first cocktail party reunion, and early in October whilst shopping for a new stove (something I had resisted for many months as it meant more work in refurbishing our home) I was surprised when I was recognised by Santo. After some reminiscing, we came to a very agreeable price for the stove that would make my wife more amiable in the kitchen.

Santo is manager of the DYNAMIC BULKSTORE, Keilor Road in Niddrie, and is loyal to the years spent with TAA. Santo is providing a guaranteed best price for all ex staff with his business, and Tony operates the GUILDFORD TOOL MUSEUM at Guildford, and would like to see all ex staff if you are passing through the area.

COCKTAIL PARTY – This year the venue proved to be a winner and the change in catering arrangements eradicated the queue for food, with continuous waitress \ waiter service and a greater variety of food and drink.

The obligatory raffle was conducted and again we were fortunate to have another model of the Boeing 727-200, plus 12 separate prizes of wine and 6 packs, doubled the number awarded in previous years. The raffle raised \$334.00, which has gone towards the purchase of a new 35mm slide scanner to allow the museum to reproduce photographs from the many 35mm slides housed in the museum.

All in all, the group was a real cross section of TAA with many new members attending for the first time and obviously enjoyed renewing old friendships.

A flash from the past –

You'll never believe it, we have got Ian Sabey's original proof documentation dated 1946\47 for TAA's first baggage tags, official flight logs, flight ticket folders, cargo label, and a ticket format which was rejected (initialled by Lester Brain, and dated 30\10\46).

Ian Sabey was (TAA's first Publicity Manager) responsible for using Nola Rose on our first poster and billboard, which at the time literally stopped the traffic on the road to the airport.

We also have a copy of his book "Challenge in the Skies" donated by Cpt Mike King. Thanks Mike, your efforts are appreciated. It is wonderful what is coming out of the woodwork and being donated to the museum.

Just to keep you on your toes.

Last month's story about our early years in outback Queensland was a contribution from retired Captain Mike King, and my apologies for not including the contributor with the article.

This month's extract is about a couple of aircraft engineers who had to do a chair change on an inbound aircraft. This, of course, was before TAA introduced the convertible "Morganisation" style chairs, which changed the aircraft seating without removing and replacing chairs.

Well, after identifying what was needed, and where the chairs were located, they were loaded onto two trolleys behind a tow motor ready for the arrival. As the aircraft approached, the foreman turned to a young "apprentice"

and said “Do you drive?” Of course, his answer was in the positive (but the question should have been “Have you driven on the tarmac before?”), so the foreman said “Get over to the parking bay with the chairs as quick as you possible can, the aircraft is arriving in about now”.

Dutifully the “lad “ raced over, jumped on the tow motor and with the chairs in tow, raced off down the tarmac. As he approached the end of road, there was a sharp turn to the left, and low and behold, the staff employee car park was also located on this corner.

It was bound to happen, with the youthful enthusiasm, and excitement created with the roar of the Clark engine, and clanging of the two trolleys behind, the thrill of being involved, – yes you guessed it -. The brakes were good (as could be expected for a vehicle of this vintage), but the trolleys and chairs just seemed to have a mind of their own, and wanted to continue (and continue they did), cart-wheeling their way into the car park, spilling their load and causing damage to some of the vehicles. Needless to say it was a long time before this employee was asked the question

“Can you Drive?” (and many of his fellow workers later revived this comment with the emphasis on the word “CAN”.

This months story has been contributed by A.N.Onymous which of course is a writers right.

More treasures are arriving.

A recent visit to the museum by Cliff Sedgemen was most rewarding both for Cliff and the Museum.

After looking around and admiring our collection Cliff returned from his car with a Jig Saw puzzle which was two sided, one side depicted a scene of the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the other side was a scene depicting TAA at an outback station. Thanks Cliff I had a great time assembling this one side at a time.

Needless to say this will also be placed on show at the museum but we will have to have it mounted between two clear plastic sheets as you will only be able to look at one side, or sit down and put the pieces together if you want to see the other side, like I did.

Letters from the members – An apology to some members of the club for the emphasis placed on the early years of TAA in previous newsletter and we should include articles from the 70's and 80's, which we will do in future issues. I thrust that this will provide a better balance for all our readers.

The Last Farewell –

Saturday 24th of October 1998 set another milestone in the history of Trans Australia Airlines with the last flight of the European Airbus A300 B4 in Australia.

To celebrate the memory and popularity of this aircraft, - or commiserate its departure as emotions were indeed mixed, - a group of ex TN employees gathered at Tullamarine, and awaited its arrival on its last flight, Flight 459 arriving from Sydney at 2005 hours.

The venue for this event had to be changed a number of times as the word spread in the preceding days and the numbers grew to the point where over 300 people had registered to attend. People represented not only flight crew and cabin crew, but engineers, Traffic staff, sales personnel including the representative from Airbus Industries and GE, the makers of the engines, TN catering staff, training personnel, property and many retirees, virtually every department originally operated by TAA, reflected on their affection for this popular aircraft, which operated from 1981 and proved to be ideal for the purpose for which it was selected.

Cpt David Wiltshire and Chief FEO Doug Mac Kenzie spoke about the fine service record of the five A300 aircraft and the number of hours flown (over 150,000) over these years, highlighting the reliability record and indicating the number of passengers this type had carried (approx 18,000,000) over the years.

It was for many in the crowd, a sad moment, as some had been part of the original team who assessed the capabilities of achieving TAA's desire to introduce a wide bodied aircraft, and make sure that we could set the pace in maintaining regular "on time" schedules for a 45 minute turnaround, once in commercial operation, (a task which all staff rallied to and achieved to their credit), to others who just enjoyed the experience of flying on a wide bodied aircraft.

To Airbus. A fond farewell



Recognise this man –

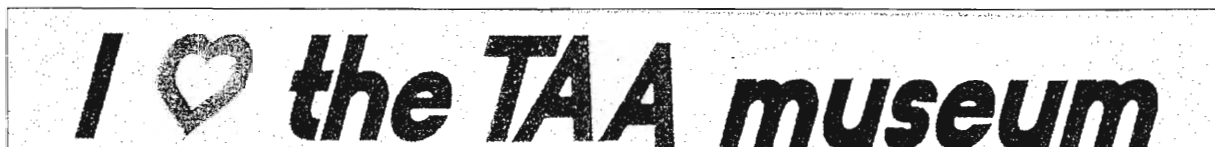
It is Francis Xavier Mc Carter, the man who waved the first airbus into Melbourne Airport Terminal. Franks nickname was "Maverick", as he had a problem playing cards with the other Engineers when work was scarce.

Frank also had the honour of waving the last airbus into the terminal when it arrived on its last flight in Australia on October 24th.

This is Frank on October 24th, notice how tight the overall are – he has put on weight and can now play cards.



This is a photograph of the first AIRBUS crew to operate when the A300 services began. It was given to me at the A300 farewell function, held on the evening of its last flight. Thanks Margaret, it will be placed with our collection on memorabilia on the Airbus in the museum. If you remember I'd like all the names so that it is complete in every detail.



Paul Xuereb of the printing shop, has given us a proof of a bumper sticker which he diligently composed on his home computer, and printed off a few labels to see if we had any interest in reproducing these for sale in the museum. If sufficient enquiries are received then obviously we will commence production, as this will be another source of revenue for our future project named A.D.A.M.M. and E.V.E.

ADAMM & EVE, - a project to ensure that the history of Domestic Aviation in Australia is not lost or forgotten, and that your museum's history, records and memorabilia are maintained and displayed for the Australian (and overseas) people.

We need to become a self supporting body, planning for all our memorabilia to be passed on to all future generations, for we will not always be blessed with dedicated retirees and members who shared the great experience in working for a national icon "TAA".

Can you guess what ADAMM and EVE stands for ?????

To succeed we must form associations with other aviation groups who like us, are reliant on a benefactor for their existence,

Unless we commence to create an awareness of our existence, then the future situation is that our history may be relegated to areas of obscurity which limit or prohibit public access, and this history will pass without future recognition of the contributions made by all concerned in making Australia the safest place to undertake air travel.

Its still around and we should be aware of its value.

Recently I received a telephone call indicating that there was some old avionics gear being discarded and due for the “tip”, thanks to an active member of the club still employed, and had heard that this was to take place fairly shortly.

As usual, and following all sources of information about our history, I went and had a look at what was to be discarded, and low and behold, some of it went back to the days of the Viscount, DC9 and B727-76 era of the 50’s and 60’s. Needless to say, I said that we would arrange for its disposal.

With the help of Ron Hayler, a retired Flight Engineer and museum volunteer, we went out in “Old Faithful”, (my 1981 Datsun ¼ Tonne Ute) and after 3 trips we had secured all of this equipment.

Now we need to enlist the assistance of an avionics expert to identify each item and its purpose as some items were obviously manufactured in our carpenter shop at Essendon, some in the avionics workshop and some – well who knows where?

This is adding to our collection and when we unite it with the AirServices Museum memorabilia then a clearer picture of the early years and their problems will emerge I’m sure.

Committee re-arrangements

The situation with the museum is proving to be a real challenge for club, and the increase in social activities has seen a greater workload being placed on the committee members. Previous meetings and functional arrangements have placed pressures on some members personal lives which has caused them to relinquish their place on the committee, necessitating change for committee to meet monthly. Odd months will see the committee meet on Wednesdays at 11.00 AM in the museum and on even months at 6.00 PM also in the museum.

In addition 3 members have had to resign, and their places will be filled by, Mike King, Ron Hayler and Ron Adams.

These changes will allow us to expedite matters that would normally be deferred until the bi-monthly meetings, so we should progress more rapidly under this re-structure.

I recently received an article from Flight Engineer Officer John Lancaster, who like many others employed by TAA, matured in the TAA Family after leaving school, beginning an apprenticeship and starting life “under the wing” of both the aircraft and the caring supervision of other employees.

The article is repeated without alteration for obvious reasons. It is titled –

“TAA Flight Engineers”

Quote

So long, Farewell, Good Bye.

These few words were the finale to the long running TV program M.A.S.H, and coincidentally, they appropriately signal the demise of the last TAA employed Flight Engineers.

TAA Flight Engineers were initially, then traditionally recruited from Ground Engineering ranks, from 1958. Prior to this time there were several staff members who were referred to as Flight Mechanics or Flying Engineers, however they were never integrated into a 3-man crew, cockpit work place.

When the TAA Electra (designated the L188A) aircraft began passenger service with TAA in 1959, (3 were introduced into the fleet) only a small number of Flight Engineers were recruited for this aircraft. Some were later to transfer to Pilot \ Engineers, however all of this crossover career experimentation had ceased by 1965.

Flight Engineer Officers, as they then became known, commenced a specialised career path concentrating on the Lockheed Electra L188A, Douglas DC 6B and the newly arrived Boeing 727-76 introduced in 1964.

In 1972 the Boeing 727-276 was introduced and by 1980 TAA was operating 12 Boeing 727-276 aircraft as the mainstay of the jet fleet and the Airbus A300 B4, the first true wide bodied aircraft, was due to be delivered for introduction to the fleet in 1981.

Between 1981 and 1983, 5 of these Airbus Industries A300 B4 aircraft were introduced into service and the TAA Flight Engineer Officer ranks swelled to nearly 150 personnel, as all major types now used the services of the Flight Engineer.

Towards the end of 1989 through to 1992, all of the Boeing 727-276 aircraft were sold, leaving the 4 remaining A300's (one had been sold due to the downturn in the economy during the early to mid 80's) to carry on. These aircraft continued in the fleet, through the change of trading name from Trans Australia Airlines to Australian Airlines in 1986, to Australian Airlines and transferred to the QANTAS fleet in October 1992 with the merger.

On Saturday the 24th of October 1998, the last Airbus A300 B4 flight in Australia will arrive in Melbourne bringing to a close the last TAA type purchased and TAA identified aircraft, and all the appointed TAA Flight Engineers, so closing a career path for this aircraft. (Note -The Boeing 737 arrived in the Australian Airlines livery and therefore cannot be considered for this reason).

It should be noted that the TAA A300 Airbus has always been the only true wide-bodied aircraft operated domestically in Australia, apart from the short-lived Compass Airlines Airbus aircraft.

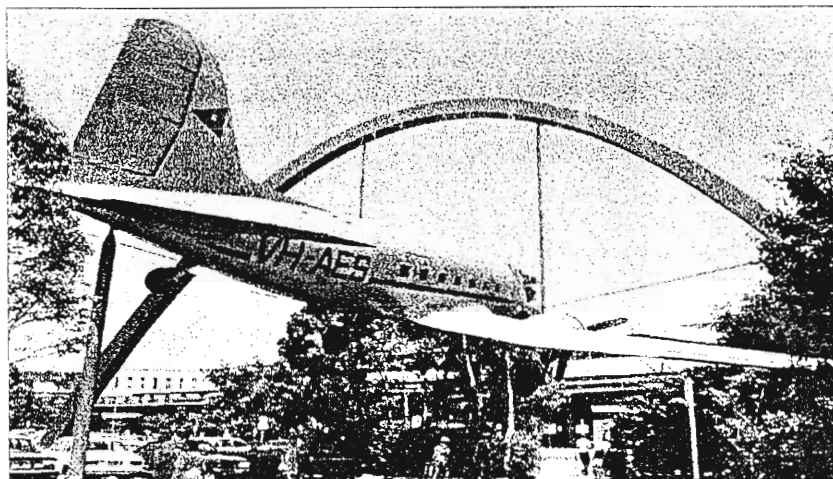
Interestingly this month, October, it is 40 years almost to the day, from when the first generation of TAA Flight Engineers were selected to begin training in Melbourne, and over the 40 years over 800 qualified men were selected from over 2,500 applicants for this position. More than 260 have worn the uniform at one time or another, with 5 dying during their term of employment, and we acknowledge their contribution, and only a small number have not achieved the acceptable flight standard checks, or have been terminated due to conduct unbecoming whilst on duty.

Many who commenced this career path stand out over these years for their managerial skills or personalities, with some rising to senior positions within the management of the Flight Engineer ranks, whilst other developed business and management skills and \ or hobbies of every kind. All of these have attained and exhibit an excellent standard of professionalism, measured, nurtured and encouraged by the TAA family.

This system of cooperation, which every TAA employee knows, was put into place from day one by the foundation members, and even now, after 40 years of Flight Engineer flying, they are still proud to say "I flew for TAA".

It remains to this day, both the older and newer employees are proud to say - "It really was TAA - The Friendly Way".

Thanks John, and if others would like an article included in the newsletter, drop me a line at the museum.
Jim Meehan



Just hanging around.

Remember this was Hawdon during her "semi-retirement" days, draped in the arch outside the Melbourne Tullamarine terminal. Thankfully Hawdon is now "Off the hook" and graces the skies regularly and this legend "lives on".

AIRWAYS MUSEUM – DCA – OPEN DAY

Roger Meyer, Custodian of the above museum, has invited members of the TAA \ Australian Airlines 25 Year Club to visit the AirServices Australia Museum on its open days in November (Friday 27th and Saturday 28th) commemorating 60 years since the creation of the Dept of Civil Aviation (DCA).

The open days are an opportunity to view some early examples of Air Traffic Control and Aeradio Equipment, including early operator consoles, radio transmitters \ receivers, radio navigation aids and much much more.

Also to be displayed for the first time will be the Civil Aviation Historical society's "History and Heritage" room featuring a pictorial display titled "Images of DCA".

The museum is located at the rear of the building on the corner of Lionel St. and Wirraway Rd. Essendon Airport and will be open from 10.00 til 5.00 pm.

For further information Roger may be contacted on 9667 8163, except on Tuesday when he attends the museum, and the contact here is 9374 7409. Try to make it, it is quite an experience.

This will be very important to our future planning and you will have to read the article on ADAMM and EVE, in a later newsletter.