



TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club

Newsletter No. 109

July 2021

Editor: John Wren

President's Report

- Like everyone else I guess you are getting COVID 19 weary, particularly if you are in Victoria, and hope for an early resolution. At the Museum it is no different with all the restrictions / lock-downs affecting our work and the running of the Museum. But where there is hope there are solutions and whilst the Museum is still closed, we are managing to still get the Newsletter printed and distributed. It would help us greatly if you can receive the Newsletter by email.
- **New restrictions** have been placed on us as a result of the worsening COVID 19 situation in Sydney. Volunteers arriving at the Melbourne Flight Training Centre now have to sign-in to the Vic. Govt. app and the Qantas app. Whilst the Vic. Gov. app remembers the basic info you previously inserted and only takes seconds to 'register', the Qantas app requires yes/no answers to a range of medical questions and takes about 5 minutes to 'register'; and it has to be done every time you visit. This also applies to all Qantas staff working/visiting the Flight Training Centre. We now have to wear masks whilst at the Flight Training Centre and when in the Museum. It's not too bad for a short time but it wears a bit thin by the end of the day and it's a great relief on leaving to breath in fresh air! I have a whole new respect for many of the medical profession who have to wear them every day.
- Museum emails are still being attended to although sporadically as there are works going on at the Flight Training Centre requiring the power to be turned off, so my connection to the Museum computer goes down as well and we have to wait for a lockdown 'gap' to reset it. We have a stack of groups keen to visit the Museum as soon as we can re-open to the public.
- We welcome **new Museum Volunteers** Maurizio Giusti, Margaret Allen and Chris Meallin who have offered to help us with our work at the Museum.
- For those of you planning a visit to the Museum **keep an eye on our web site** www.taamuseum.org.au which will advise when it will be open for visitors; and please remember that the Café in the building is no longer operating.
- We have been continually frustrated by COVID 19 restrictions trying to run our **AGM** even though we originally put it off until the last moment possible under Legislation hoping COVID 19 would abate. Not so. It was one cancellation after another with the constant restrictions and lock-downs. Eventually it was held at the last minute at the Museum when there was a brief window of lesser restrictions and, as there was only one nomination for Committee, the three Committee persons who re-nominated were re-elected – thank you Terry Masocco, Dorothy Duan and Sam Favazza. And the newly elected member of the Committee is Barry Gawne who has been a Volunteer for many years. Welcome all to Committee.
- Volunteers Libby Watkins, Alma Barron and Ann Masters had planned to attend the 50th Anniversary of Wings Away in Brisbane recently but fell foul to interstate COVID 19 restrictions and could not attend. From all reports the Wings Away celebration went well with good support from Queensland and other states. For those that may not be aware – Wings Away was started by ex TAA hosties to raise money for charities like the Children's Hospital and to keep in touch with regular get togethers. There were Chapters in all States of Australia.
- Essendon Airport celebrates it's 100th Anniversary with an Open Day on 4 August. Originally known as St. John's, it was renamed Essendon Aeroport in 1923. It was declared an international airport [and renamed Melbourne Airport] in 1950. International flights transferred to Tullamarine in 1970 and in 2017 changed its name again to Essendon Fields Airport.

Newsletter

This is our 109th Newsletter issued by the 25 Year Club. We hope you have been enjoying the content over the years. If you would like to submit an article, just send it to the Newsletter Editor at the Museum. If you are currently receiving the Newsletter by mail and can receive it by email instead, please let us know to help drive down the cost of stamps [\$1.10 each].

Our thanks to **Maria Vamvakinou MP** for her assistance with printing the Newsletter.

Hawdon

And from HARS comes some news on Hawdon, which operated the first scheduled revenue service for TAA back on 09 September 1946 – which is still going strong. HARS reported:

“Our Douglas DC-3, Hawdon, returned to the skies during April after its annual inspection was completed, just in time to participate in the ANZAC Day flights. Many comments were made about the two Dakotas [see below] appearing together”.



Hawdon [tail only at left] and another of HARS DC3's – this one in RAAF colours.

Good to see the 'old girl' still flying and introducing a whole new group of people to flying as it was back in the 1940's.

It just shows you – 10 years on a pole outside the Tullamarine Terminal hasn't slowed her down [thanks to some LPS3 treatment suggested by Brian Jackson all those years ago].

TAA Mugs

We were worried we may have brought too many mugs from our supplier – we shouldn't have worried; they are 'flying' out the door. Very pleasing indeed. The new and improved mugs have a A300, DC-9, 737 or F27 on the front. On the back of all of them is the TAA logo. The pictures are larger this time which makes the tea / coffee taste much better!

The cups are still \$10 each from the Museum [when we open again] or they can be mailed out now. Postage is: 1 or 2 cups \$15.00. 3 or 4 cups \$17.00, all anywhere in Australia. [Pics by Terry Masocco]

If you are still considering getting one of the 70th Anniversary prints, you may just be in luck. We only have three of the 59 cm X 40 cm and five of the 42cm X 30 cm left, all the rest have been sold.



Foundation Day Lunch

We had a booking at the William Angliss facility for this year on Thursday 9th September 2021 [which is the Anniversary date of the actual first TAA revenue scheduled flight]. Unfortunately, we have had to cancel due to the COVID 19 menace for the 2nd year in a row.

It is a real disappointment to us all that we could not get together over a nice lunch to discuss old times. I do hope you can make it on this 75th Anniversary – subject to the Government finally getting this COVID 19 virus under control so everyone feels safe again. A Booking Form is attached.

Internet find!

Alan Whatman [one of the Museum Volunteers] was trawling through the internet and came across a most unusual picture [below] taken in 1967 in Port Morsby, New Guinea with TAA Boeing VH-TJC [B727-76] in the background and one of our TAA Sunbird DC3s at far left. In the foreground is another Boeing, this one a B-17 Flying Fortress (299) c/n 8552 which belonged to Institut Geographicque National [doing survey work I believe]. *Ed. Note: The B17 crashed and burned at Binbrook in July 1989 during the filming of the movie "Memphis Belle".*



Photo from Ben Dannecker (via David Carter) on Airhistory.net

A Royal “thank you”



The picture is signed by the Queen and Prince Phillip and dated 26th March 1954.

It was signed on their way home on the S.S. Gothic whilst it had stopped off at Fremantle WA.

The above framed picture was addressed to TAA Hostess Beryl Olive who was one of the crew operating the TAA Convair VH-TAQ which the Queen travelled on during her visit to Australia in 1954. The letter reads:

“The Queen has commanded me to send you this photograph, which Her Majesty and the Duke of Edinburgh have signed for you in gratitude for the part you played in making their flights in the Royal Convair so successful and so comfortable”.



L to R: Museum Volunteers Libby Watkins, Alma Barron, John Wren, Wendy Maugher - Queensland Vice President of Wings Away, Margaret Allen and Ann Masters.

Wendy kindly brought the framed picture down from Queensland to present to the Museum.

It now shares pride of place with our existing ‘Queens 1954 Visit’ display in the Museum.

The picture came from John Cohburn [Beryl’s widower}.

HELICOPTER ACCIDENT - FEBRUARY 13, 1960

66° 53' 00.0S 109°07'00.0E

ANTARCTIC

Introduction

It could be said that the helicopter was born in the closing year of World War II and came of age during the Korean War. Rotary wing technology was still very basic when both TAA and Ansett - ANA introduced commercial helicopter operations in Australia in 1956, TAA with Hiller 12C's and Ansett with the Bristol Sycamore.

During those early pioneering days helicopters were chartered almost exclusively by organizations involved with National development projects, such as survey, mapping and exploration.

Compared to the modern chopper, the Hiller 12C was underpowered, range limited, initially prone to frequent mechanical failure and most pilots quickly became experts at auto rotations and forced landings. I personally had one tail rotor failure, two engine failures, six clutch failures and five fan failures in my first 18 months on helicopters. This was fairly typical for pilots at that time.

One of the original charterers was ANARE (Australia National Antarctic Research Expedition) who trialled a TAA Hiller 12C flown by Captain K. Cottee on the 1958 expedition to Macquarie Island. Even with the performance limitation of the day, the operation was judged a success, and it was decided that two helicopters would be used the following summer on the Antarctic continent.

The 1960 ANARE Expedition

In January 1960 two Hillers VH-THB and VH-THC were loaded onto the helipad aboard the MV Magga Dan on its resupply and summer survey voyage to Wilkes, Davis, Dumont d'Urville and Lewis Island.

The aircraft were flown by the late Captain Ray Hudson, the then TAA Superintendent of Helicopters and myself.

On board was also a float/ski equipped DeHavilland Beaver flown by Wing Commander Dick Creswell used mainly for aerial photography. The expedition was led by Dr Phillip Law, the director of ANARE.

Due to the isolation, inaccessibility, ruggedness, low temperature and high winds, it was important to make a somewhat marginal operation as safe as possible with particular emphasis on controlled crash landings and ditchings and survival following auto rotation or forced landing.

Hence the operational policy to always operate the two aircraft together when away from base, and when landing on the ice, one aircraft would orbit until the other was safely down.

Ivanoff Head February 13, 1960

Flying operations commenced on 15 January following test flights near the French base of Dumont d'Urville, and continued successfully and uneventfully for the next few weeks at Lewis Island, Davis and Wilkes.

At 0800hrs 13 February the two helicopters departed Wilkes via a fuel dump established the previous day a little S.W. of the Vanderford Glacier. Our destination was Hatch Island, some 55nm South West. It was planned to refuel both outbound and inbound.

Surface conditions on take-off were CAV OK, wind light and variable. VHF com was maintained between the aircraft, with ops. control provided by Dick Creswell aboard the Magga Dan on HF.

One passenger was carried in each helicopter, Geologist Ian McLeod with Ray Hudson in THB, and Surveyor David Cook with myself in THC as the purpose of the flight was to fix the position of Hatch Island by Astro fix and examine the geology of the area.

The flight proceeded normally except THB had generator failure soon after take-off and, to conserve battery power, Ray switched off the radio but maintained VHF comm. aircraft to aircraft, and we flew in close formation so we could observe each other easily. I maintained HF com with Dick on the Magga Dan. Prior to crossing the Vanderford Glacier some turbulence was evident, but nothing abnormal considering it was a Glacial area.

We landed at the fuel dump at 0830 in a freshening S.E. wind of 30kts and temp -7°C. It was planned to refuel on both outward and inward legs. After refuelling we departed at 0855 climbing to our cruise height of 2000ft. Wind had now increased to 140/45 and it was apparent that both upper and surface wind were building up noticeably the further South West the flight progressed, particularly after we'd crossed the John Quincy Adams Glacier.

On reaching the first group of islands in the area some 4nm N.E. of Hatch Island. It was apparent we were flying in a very strong katabatic wind of some 50-60 kts. Ray, who was the lead aircraft, descended to check surface condition whilst I circled overhead at 2000ft. At 500ft he reported severe, almost uncontrollable turbulence, and suggested we look at the lee side of the Hatch Island area which appeared to be slightly sheltered, and possibly out of the funnel effect of the Glacier.

Whilst Ray climbed to 1500ft, I led to Hatch Island and made a pass to about 300ft over a small rocky headland adjacent to a sloping ice plateau finishing at ice cliffs about 100ft high, but it wasn't until close final that I noticed the steepness of the slopes.

Windshear was extreme and I carried out a missed approach climbing to 600ft, turning now toward the plateau commenced a shallow decent to have a look at the surface condition over the ice which, in fact, proved to be even worse than over the headland or the sea.

A second missed approach was made and at about 600' I caught a glimpse of THB breaking left under my aircraft, heading towards the rocky headland and struggling to gain height, I called Ray suggesting conditions were too difficult to land and he advised we would abandon the area and return to a flat ice shelf north of our present position, well away from the glacial funnel effect. But now very suddenly I was no longer just coping with windshear and severe turbulence, but in a great deal of trouble, serious trouble.

With climb power set and best climb speed of 45kts, we were being driven backwards, and descending at about 200'/min. I increased to maximum power and IAS sufficient to maintain our position over the sloping plateau, but it was apparent that there was a real possibility of being forced down into the sea or onto the sloping ice plateau.

As ditching without immersion suits, (our early model service suits leaked badly so we didn't wear them), would have been fatal to both of us, I decided to remain over the sloping plateau, trying to gain height but crash-land if necessary, or possibly even hover in the ground effect.

At about 0930 some 100 feet over the ice with an IAS of 45-55kts zero ground speed and a sink rate of about 200-300 fpm, it was obvious to me we were not going to climb out or to be able to hover and I called to David my passenger to "hang on" and rolled the aircraft onto the starboard side, breaking off the main rotor blade.

The helicopter bounced once and came to rest a few meters downhill from the initial point of contact.

The right-hand skid and luggage track broke off and slid down the slope over the cliff face into the sea and unfortunately, most of our survival gear including cramp irons were on this rack. I quote now Ray's account " I broke left under Pete's machine going like a rocket. As soon as we were under control again, I had a quick look around for Peter and was horrified to see his helicopter slam into the ice about 50 meters from the ice cliffs. Pieces flew out in all directions only to slide away down the slope, over the cliff into the

sea. I looked away, sick at heart fearing the whole machine would follow."

Both David and I were momentarily knocked out by the impact and equipment flying around the cockpit, and both suffered head injuries, (no helmets in those days), but we hastily exited the aircraft and examined the situation.

The wreckage was laying on its starboard side on a 25° to 30° ice slope some 50 meters above the ice cliff, which dropped about 100ft vertically into the sea. More by good luck than good judgement, the remains were firmly held in the ice by the imbedded skid front cross member and was in no danger of sliding back over the cliffs.

We salvaged a climbing rope, ice axe and a first aid kit which we carried in the cockpit, and patched each other up as best as possible in the circumstances whilst standing on a 30° ice slope, in a 50kt wind, but the loss of our cramp irons was a big loss and would make it difficult climbing out.

In the meantime, Ray, at great risk and no little skill, had managed to land in the appalling conditions, in the lee of the small headland and contacted Dick Cresswell on the Magga Dan, which immediately prepared to leave Wilkes as soon as the shore party was aboard.

At about 1000 hrs David and I roped together, set off up the slope cutting steps in the ice every foot of the way with our one ice axe. David was leading and cutting and seemed to be very expert, which I remarked on - he then advised it was his first attempt at cutting steps but he had seen it done in the movies.

As we started out, Ian McLeod, Ray's passenger started cutting steps from the headland end of the plateau with the aim to meet us on the crest so we could then all climb down together.

Some hours later we met on the top of the slope and made our way back to where Ray had landed and erected a survival tent. It was now about 1400hrs, and regular radio skeds were being maintained with the Magga Dan, (the battery in THB was holding well) which made extremely good time through unchartered waters arriving at 1615 hrs.

Just before 1700hrs, the wind had abated to about 15 kts and the ship's whale boat under the command of the First Officer, together with the ship's surgeon Dr. Sutcheck and Dr. Law, was launched and proceeded at great speed through the brash ice to our rescue.

Unfortunately, in their haste, the whale boat grounded on an unseen rock 5 or 6 metres from the shore line, but fortunately on a rising tide. As neither Dr. Sutcheck nor ourselves were willing or able to enter the freezing water we had to wait for the tide to free the boat in order to make physical contact.

In the meantime, medical supplies in the form of a bottle of best Danish Akavite was hurled from the whale boat into our waiting hands, and I recall being stitched up some hours later without the need of local anesthetic.

Later that afternoon Dr. Law led a salvage party which climbed out to the helicopter crash site, but it was decided, due to its precarious position, to abandon it where it lay. In recognition that the two of us had survived such a disastrous crash, the rocky headland was renamed Ivanoff Head, but I would have preferred to have my helicopter and head intact and leave the name as it was.

It was determined that the contributing factors to this accident were:

1. Extremely strong katabatic winds causing windshear and severe turbulence below 1800'
2. Attempting to operate light helicopters in conditions far in excess of their capabilities
3. Lack of rotary wing experience in Antarctic conditions

In retrospect, we should have been using something like the early model jet-powered Allouette, which had greater payload and reserve of power.

For the remainder of the voyage, with only one helicopter, (now fitted with new blades, the originals being cracked at the root end when Ray landed at Ivanoff Head) no further long-range surveys could be carried out, but it was most useful for local flights around the ship and logistic support, ship to shore.

In spite of the accident, helicopters had proved their worth and they became an established tool of ANARE operations for the next eight years.

[Ed. Thanks to Peter Ivanoff for this great article about TAA's early years (TAA was the first commercial helicopter operator in Australia and Peter had one of the first commercial licences.)

Peter was a pilot for 40 years (1955 - 1995) initially with TAA for 22 years then Singapore Airlines, Air Nauru, Royal Jordanian Airlines, The Royal Flight Brunei, Australian Airlines and National Airlines and then a Simulator Instructor with British Aerospace and flew as a Training Captain on DC3, F27, DC9, B737, B727, B747 and helicopters (Hiller 12C, 12E and Bell 47) AND, he had a big chunk of Antarctica named after him!]



Ed. VH-THC on her side with broken rotors after the accident described in the above article. As you can see the helicopter is very close to the edge.

B737-376

TAA's first B737-376 [VH-TAG] was accepted on 25 July 1986 however before that delivery a lot of work was done comparing other aircraft with the B737 before we made the decision and placed an order. So, in the early 80's Boeing was pushing pretty hard to get us to commit and were providing very smart publications that TAA could use both internally and externally.

And as you all know, Boeing went on to produce many variants after the EFIS B737-300, the -400 etc and the latest B737 variant everyone has heard about – the **B737 MAX**.

So that's the background to my little 'find' at the Museum recently. In amongst a stack of Boeing 'blerb' was a pricy presentation to TAA on the benefits of the 'new' EFIS / CFM56 engined B737-300 tailored to TAA's requirements. The first 30 odd pages were the usual promo for a new aircraft but then the next page contained a surprise [see next page] – have a read. Remember this was nearly 40 years ago

WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN A 737?

Granted, the 737 is a good way to fly.
But now, it's also the old way.

Meet TAA's new 737-MAX. It's taken
the 737 to the maximum in every way.

Consider leg room. The 737-MAX is
nearly three meters longer than its
older relative. And that extra length
means more room for your legs.

Our new MAX also takes stowage to
the "max" with extra large overhead
bins.

And because your bags are easier to
grab from both under the seat ahead of
you and from the overhead bins, both
boarding and de-planing are faster.

So take off with TAA aboard the new
737-MAX. When it comes to speed,
comfort and efficiency, we've taken air
travel to the max.

the new 737 MAX!



Remember

TAA's first scheduled revenue flight was on 9 September 1946. Three months later TAA was flying to all State capital city's and in 3 years was flying **Australia's biggest air network** serving 33 ports in all States and the Northern Territory.

In August 1947, TAA first used the slogan "**Fly TAA the Friendly Way**".

TAA's network had grown to such an extent that in April 1949 the airline could claim that it had the **longest unduplicated network** of any purely domestic airline in the world with a total of 21,843 kilometres.

In August 1949 TAA carried its **one millionth passenger**. In 1960, we did that in just 12 months.

TAA entered the '**jet age**' in November with the delivery of our first B737-276.

In July 1981, TAA took delivery of the **first A300** wide bodied aircraft to enter Australian domestic service.

On August 4, 1986 TAA **changed its name to Australian Airlines** and also took delivery of the first B737.376 on that day – painted in a new livery of blue, green and gold with the re-introduction of the kangaroo..

Vale

Our sincere condolences are extended to the families and friends of past TAA/Australian Airlines work colleagues. Fond memories will remain. [FM = Foundation Member]

Peter Ralph	Photographer – MEL	Aged 84	/04/21
Shirley Bruin	Ticketing – MEL	Aged 86	16/04/21
Josie Dixon	Traffic – SYD	Aged 91	26/04/21
Bob Demkiw	Tarmac - MEL	Aged 74	23/04/21
Bill Webster	Commercial Purch. Contl. - ESS		24/05/21
Glen Thompson [Playle]	Hostess - BNE		/06/21
Robin Patrick	Hostess – BNE		/06/21
Leo Danaher	Baggage Master MEL	Aged 85	03/06/21
Capt. Stuart Arnold	Flt Ops BNE	Aged 97	01/07/21
Trevor Mellor	Snr. Insp. – Components MEL	Aged 91	04/08/21
Jack Macwhirter	Fabric – MEL	Aged 89	27/07/21

*** Note the **change** from Commonwealth Bank electronic transfer details to **Qudos Bank** details. ***



TAA/AUSTRALIAN AIRLINES 25 YEAR CLUB INC. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Name: Spouse's name:
Address:
City: State: ... Postcode: Phone:
Mobile: Email:
TAA/Australian Airlines/QANTAS service: Start date: Finish date:
Primary area of work & where:
Preferences (Please circle) Newsletter: Mail / Email Other correspondence: Mail / Email
Additional comments:
.....
Donation: 1 year - \$20...3 years - \$60.....5 years - \$100.....Other amount \$.....Gift: \$.....

Cheque – payable to 'TAA 25 Year Club' mailed to: Membership Co-ordinator, TAA 25 Year Club, Qantas FTC, 7 York St, Airport West, Vic. 3042, and for **Bank transfer**: "Trans Australia Airlines Museum Acct" @ Qudos Bank [Indue Limited] BSB: 704 865 Account No.: 02190853

Please include your name on bank transfers and, return this form by mail **OR** send by email to: taamuseum@bigpond.com . **For enquiries**: Phone: 03 9280 8113 / 03 9280 8114.