

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

Vol. 17/01



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QVAG Facebook URL: <https://www.facebook.com/Queensland-Vintage-Aeroplane-Group-Inc-160487164099644/posts/>

QVAG Web Site: <http://qvag.org/index.html>

Front Cover Photo: Captain E L Brown loads comforts package provided by the Australian Comforts Fund into an RAAF Wabus. The packages were then on their way to isolated RAAF stations WW2 – Source Queensland Archives.

Comments from the Editor

Well this is the first edition for 2017 and I really enjoyed compiling it. Each time I start a new edition I wonder how I will fill it up with interesting articles. I must admit my rule of thumb is that if I find an article interesting, then there is a fair chance a fair number of other folks will as well.

In this issue I have continued my series of articles on RAAF airfield archaeology; this edition I focused on the NSW airfield of Evans Head. When I started the article I didn't realise just how interesting the research that underpins the articles on subjects such these involves lots of trips to the Australian archives via the internet.

In the next edition of AVAN I will cover the RAAF Station at Maryborough. This airfield has an interesting history.

The article on DH Fox Moths in Australia came about because of the Murwillumbah Grass Roots Fly-in and seeing Greg Challinor DH Fox Moth restoration project. I have owned a Tiger Moth for about 40 years and never really considered that there were a number of DH Fox Moths in Australia and they had and some still have interesting lives.

It's the new calendar year and for QVAG that gives us a yet another year of opportunities. The real question is how to realise those opportunities into something tangible.

On page 4 we have published the Calendar of Events It has been colour coded to help with legibility. We don't have the dates yet but discussions are underway for two more fly-ins during the course of the year. Each edition of AVAN we will publish the updated version of this calendar.

Happy New Year

From the QVAG Committee

QVAG Management Committee

President and AVAN Editor	Ross Stenhouse	president@qvag.org
Vice President	Steve Newing	vice-president@QVAG.org
Secretary	Doug Stott	secretary@qvag.org
Treasurer	Phil Ridley	treasurer@qvag.org
Membership Officer	Jan Stenhouse	membership@qvag.org
Committee Member	Mark Purdie	comMember@QVAG.org

Calendar of QVAG events for 2017

The last Saturday night in the month BBQ has become the Second Saturday Night in the month in order to fit in with the Sunday Breakfast at Watts organised by Mark Purdie and Trina .

The conducting of some seminars (maybe 2) during 2017 is planned with various names mentioned. 'Restorations' and 'projects' discussed as possible topics. We still need to identify speakers and plan dates

Grass Roots Fly-ins are planned for Watts Bridge, Caloundra, Gatton and Boonah. The dates haven't been set yet except for Gatton. Red Thunder would be held again in 2017 and at this time it is expected to be in May. They will be using the QVAG clubrooms. Firm dates to be advised.

From the table below you will see that we have listed a number of events at Watts Bridge. Each 2nd Saturday night of the month QVAG has a BBQ starting at last light. Members and non-members are welcome to attend.

QVAG Calendar of Events

Date	Event
Saturday/Sunday 7/8 January	The Evans Head Great Eastern Fly-in
Saturday 11 February	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 12 February	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs.
Sunday 12 February	QVAG Management Committee Meeting 1200 hrs.
Saturday 11 March	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 12 March	QVAG Management Committee Meeting 1200 hrs.
Saturday 8 April	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 9 April	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs.
Sunday 9 April	QVAG Management Committee Meeting 1200 hrs.
Saturday 13 May	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Saturday 10 June	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 11 June	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs.
Sunday 11 June	QVAG Management Committee Meeting
Sunday 25 June	QVAG Grass Roots Fly-in – Gatton Airpark 0900 – 1300 hrs.
Saturday 8 July	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 9 July	QVAG Management Committee Meeting 1200 hrs.
Saturday 12 August	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 13 August	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs.
Saturday 9 September	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Saturday 14 October	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Saturday 11 November	QVAG 2nd Saturday Evening In Month BBQ
Sunday 12 November	WBMA Breakfast at Watts 0800 – 1000 hrs.

DH Fox Moths in Australia

The De Havilland Aircraft Co Ltd designed the DH.83 Fox Moth as a rugged and economical 3 or 4 passenger aircraft suitable for short haul airline routes, charter or joyriding. It used standard DH.82 Tiger Moth wings, tail unit, undercarriage and engine mounts attached to a new design wood and ply fuselage. Its layout followed the concept of the successful DH.50 four passenger biplane, which had been powered by engines of 230 to 450 h.p, but the Fox Moth brought remarkable economy of similar performance with a choice of 130hp DH Gipsy Major or 120hp Gipsy III engine.

The prototype DH.83 first flew at De Havilland's Stag Lane works on 29 January 1932, and a total of 98 Fox Moths were built at Stag Lane and later Hatfield until production ended in 1934. Many were exported and operated as landplanes, floatplanes or on skis. Pre-war two were built in Australia and 7 copies produced in Japan. Following WWII an additional 54 were built in Canada as bush aircraft.

The cabin was separate from the pilot and standard configuration was for 3 passengers (2 'hammock-like' seats together on the rear cabin wall and a third 'dicky'-type seat, facing the rear. A baggage-rack was fitted above the rear seat & the cabin was fitted with sliding windows. Contact with the pilot was via a speaking-tube. British authorities allowed a fourth passenger in the cabin, but in Australia the CAB insisted that the cabin was too small to carry a fourth passenger squeezed on to the hammock seat, even on short joyriding flights. Pre-war the CAB¹ rigidly enforced this ruling despite strong protests from several owners, however post-war the reformed DCA had a more relaxed attitude and allowed Fox Moths in New Guinea to carry 4 native passengers of small stature providing seat belts were worn.

Eight new Fox Moths were shipped to Australia 1933-34, followed by 14 second-hand machines imported from Great Britain. The enclosed cabin could accommodate a stretcher and medical attendant which made them effective aerial ambulances and the type had extensive use pre-war with Australian Aerial Medical Service (renamed Flying Doctor Service of Australia in 1942, and Royal Flying Doctor Service in 1955). AAMS operations were contracted to airlines: MMA in WA, ANA in western NSW and Qantas in outback Queensland.

During WWII four civil Fox Moths were impressed for use by RAAF as A41-1 to -4. Two were used for military ambulance duties by No.2 Air Ambulance Unit, based at Kingaroy and Archerfield, with detachments in Australia and New Guinea.

Australian built Fox Moths

Such was the Fox Moth's suitability for flying doctor work, three years after British production ceased and second-hand examples could not be found overseas, De Havilland Aircraft Pty Ltd, Sydney satisfied two orders received in 1937 for ambulance DH.83s by constructing VH-UZS and VH-AAA at their Mascot hangar. The company's woodwork craftsmen had gained considerable expertise by fabricating new components for the DH range at Mascot.

Five years earlier on 23 June 1932 Major Alan Murray Jones of De Havilland Aircraft Pty Ltd, Sydney had written to the parent De Havilland company in England proposing Australian production of the DH.83. He mentioned that the General Aircraft Company at Mascot was completing the first of its "imitation of the type" (the Genairco Cabin series) but he estimated that it would be quite heavy and

¹ CAB – Civil Aviation Branch of Dept. of Defence

lacking in power with only a Hermes III engine. Later that month Murray Jones cabled Hatfield asking for prices to supply assembled DH.83 fuselage and metal fittings less parts common to the DH.60. However Australian production did not eventuate until 5 years later.²

VH-UUS



Photo above: Fox Moth VH-UUL photographed 20 November 2016 by Ross Stenhouse at Mothcair, Murwillumbah

DH Fox Moth C/N 4090 was constructed at Stage Lane Edgware, Middlesex, England. It was completed in February 1933 and later that day made its first flight. Later that month it was registered to The Committee of the British Mount Everest Flight, Heston, England as a support aircraft for the Houston Mount Everest Expedition.

VH-UUS has an interesting and lengthy history which is well documented on Geoff Goodall web site (the URL is in the footnotes below) so I will only detail highlights in this article.

March 1933	Badly damaged when torn from pickets by sandstorm at Allahabad
December 1933	Rebuilt by De Havilland Aircraft Co Ltd as a speed model with "coupe head"
1936	Sold to Mandated Airlines Ltd, New Guinea
8 July 1936	Civil Aviation Board allocated registration VH-UUS to a DH.83
31 December 1936	Australian Registration application: Mandated Airlines Ltd, Salamaua, New Guinea Application signed by MAL engineer M.A."Joe" Taylor
18 January 1937	Registered VH-UUS Mandated Airlines Ltd, Wau, New Guinea Named <i>Irene</i> , after a MAL pilot's wife and an Australian C of A issued
3 September 1937	Overtaken during forced landing on Pancake Strip because of engine power loss due blocked fuel line. Flight from Ioma, pilot Norman D. Fader

² Introductory text from <http://www.goodall.com.au/australian-aviation/dh83/dh83.htm>

23 October 1938	Undercarriage collapsed and prop smashed when landed short of strip, Roamer New Guinea. Pilot B. D. Bates
14 May 1941	Overtaken on landing in tall grass on Sonia strip, Watut after pilot stalled in severe gusty winds. Pilot B. A. Carpenter and the one passenger both injured.
January 1942	VH-UUS was among the few civil aircraft to survive Japanese air attacks, used on civilian evacuation flights from Wau to Port Moresby ahead of expected Japanese advances. MAL pilots Fred Bryce and Arthur Collins made a number of emergency flights in VH-UUS, on one occasion Bryce carried 9 passengers in the cabin: two women on seats each nursing a child, 3 children sitting on the floor facing the tail and two more children were squeezed into gaps. Bryce flew 105 hours over 15 days.
26 June 1942	Change of ownership: QANTAS Empire Airways LTD, Sydney NSW
8 May 1943	Letter to DCA from Department of Air, RAAF Headquarters: <i>"It is desired to obtain two Fox Moths for use in our Air Ambulance Unit in Australia. These aircraft are very suitable for ambulance duties in particular areas and it is desired to obtain them as quickly as possible. It is known that VH-UZD and VH-UUS at present owned by Qantas Empire Airways could be made available to the Department for this work. Would you please advise whether you have any objection to the impressment of these aircraft; if not, arrangements will be made for them to be inspected to ascertain their usefulness for air ambulance work. It is known that VH-UZD is already modified but it is understood that you have details of modifications required."</i>
8 September 1943	Taken on RAAF charge as A41-3 Received 3AD Archerfield ex QEA
17 December 1943	Received 2AAU Kingaroy ex 3AD
31 January 1945	Received 2AD Detachment Evans Head for storage
19 December 1945	Fox Moth A41-3 offered for disposal through Commonwealth Disposals Commission
20 February 1946	Sold for £250 to Federal Methodist Inland Mission, Melbourne Vic
	(Note: Fox Moth A41-1 purchased and collected at the same time by FMIM and given C of A at Archerfield 3.46 as VH-ABU. Flown to Mt. Isa by FMIM Reverend C.W. Lanham 3.46)
13 November 1947	Civil Registration application: C.W.Lanham, Mt Isa Qld: to be used on <i>"semi-religious work, ambulance, air taxi"</i>
24 December 1947	Restored to Register VH-UUS Reverend C. W. Lanham, Mount Isa Qld
January 1948	Reverend Cliff Lanham based Fox Moths VH-UUS & VH-ABU at Mount Isa for Methodist Inland Mission. Known as "the flying padre" he flew extensively in western Queensland on pastoral work and emergency medical evacuations. VH-ABU moved to Camooweal that year flown by Rev. R. A. Lyons
13 April 1955	Change of ownership: Joh and A. Bjelke-Petersen, Kingaroy Qld. Agricultural company formed by Joh and his sister Agnete Bjelke-Petersen in 9.54 with Tiger Moths sprayers. VH-UUS was used as a duster and seeder, fitted with hopper inside the cabin. A long hopper opening lever extended up to cockpit for manual operation by pilot
11 January 1956	Crashed after take-off near Taroom Qld on agricultural operations. DCA Report: <i>"Soon after takeoff in hot, sultry conditions and high winds the aircraft lost height and struck the ground. The cause of the accident was pilot's lack of experience on the aircraft type under the prevailing conditions of load and weather."</i> Pilot unhurt.

15 October 1960	Change of ownership: Cropcair Aviation Pty Ltd, Brisbane Qld Shareholders of the newly formed Cropcair Aviation Pty Ltd were the Bjelke-Petersen family and pilot Frank Liddicoat who had been an original pilot from 1954.
December 1960	Tipped on to its nose when encountered a localised whirlwind on landing at Wondai Qld
6 December 1965	Crashed at Barney View Qld. DCA accident report: . <i>"The pilot abandoned a downhill take-off from a field when he considered there was insufficient distance remaining to become airborne, but he was unable to stop the aircraft before it collided with the boundary fence." Private flight. Pilot unhurt, no passengers. Pilot had total time 2100 hours on agricultural flying.</i>
6 December 1965	Struck-off Register
November 1966	Fuselage and recovered parts moved to Cropcair hangar at Archerfield Airport. Wreck noted in rafters of Cropcair hangar, Archerfield
Circa 1969	Wreck sold to Major Charles A. Miller, Canberra ACT Miller was an experienced pilot and aviation enthusiast with Australian Army Aviation based at Oakey Qld. Miller stored VH-CCH's parts at Mr. Moore's house at Ipswich Qld. Miller also acquired parts of DH.83 VH-UAL salvaged from ditching off Queensland coast 1.8.68.
Circa 1973	DH.83 parts reported under restoration at Canberra Airport
Circa 1974	Strathallan Collection, Scotland negotiated with Miller to purchase his DH.83 restoration project but export approval was refused by the Australian Government under heritage provisions.
Circa 1975	Charlie Miller moved the parts of VH-CCH & UAL by road to John Bange's farm near Clifton Qld for storage (where Bange's Ryan VH-RAE, Porterfield VH-UVH and other aircraft were based).
1 July 1976	Miller's collection of DH.83 parts were collected from Clifton and moved inside a furniture removals van to Canberra. Stored in a shed on "Carinya" Station, Geary's Gap near Canberra.
Circa 1979	Miller's composite DH.83 restoration at "Carinya" well advanced. Fuselage standing on its undercarriage
13 February 1979	Restored Fox Moth destroyed by bushfire which burnt out a shed on "Carinya" near Canberra. Widely reported as VH-UUS however the complete fuselage of UUS escaped the fire and remained in storage, with other surviving part
20 May 1987	Registration VH-UUS reserved for Fox Moth by R. Lanham, Tugun Qld. <i>Assumed a relative of previous owner C.W.Lanham for the restored aircraft</i>
1980s	Fuselage UUS and salvaged parts sold to Max Horsecraft, Perth WA Horsecraft was an experienced aircraft engineer who had worked on the restoration of a number of vintage aircraft in Perth
Circa 1991	Reported that a Fox Moth restoration project owned by Doug Muir, Perth WA would use a new-build fuselage constructed in New Zealand by Stan Smith & Myles Robertson
Circa 1996	Project stalled with the death of Max Horsecraft
Circa 2001	VH-UUS fuselage and parts purchased by Greg Challinor trading as MothCair, Murwillumbah NSW
13 September 2014	Restored to Register VH-UUS: Greg Challinor, Murwillumbah NSW
Circa 2016/2017	Restoration continues with Greg Challinor

Fox Moths still flying in Australia – VH-USJ



In Western Australia during the 1950s Flying Doctor services were operated by Australian Aerial Medical Services (WA Division) Inc., Perth. De Havilland DH83 Fox Moth VH-USJ *John Flynn* was one of the aircraft operated by AAMS.³



This aircraft (VH-USJ) (c/n 4058) was built by De Havilland at Stag Lane aerodrome, Edgware, UK, in 1933 and was first registered in February of that year as G-AECB to the Scottish Motor Traction Co. Ltd., Edinburgh. It was one of 8 Fox Moths and

³ <http://www.airwaysmuseum.com/Flying%20doctor%20c.50s%208.htm>

numerous other types operated by SMT and was based at Renfrew aerodrome. It often flew to unprepared strips throughout the Highlands. G-AECB was the first aircraft to land on Shetland Island when it arrived at Sumburgh on 19 April 1933 carrying officials of the Commercial Bank of Scotland.

The aircraft was disposed of when SMT replaced its Fox Moths with DH84 Dragons. It passed through a succession of owners until 1935 when it was imported into Australia by MacRobertson Miller Airlines (MMA), arriving on 15 June at Fremantle, WA. It was test flown after re-assembly at Perth/Maylands on 5 July and was registered VH-USJ on 9 July.

The first Flying Doctor Service base in WA was established at Port Hedland in August 1935. VH-USJ was based in Port Hedland and operated by MMA as a reserve aircraft for its north-western services, and for Australian Aerial Medical Service (AAMS). The resident doctor, initially Dr Allan Vickers, was carried as a passenger and the aircraft flown by an MMA pilot.

This state of affairs continued until 1941, when MMA decided to replace the Fox Moth with Cessna VH-UZU as the reserve aircraft on the Wyndham-Daly Waters run. VH-USJ was sold to AAMS, the change of registration occurring on 11 August. The Government Medical Officer, Dr Harold G Dicks, had completed his two-year appointment on 30 July and was not prepared to continue unless he was permitted to fly the aircraft himself. This was not desired by the AAMS Committee, as up to date the doctor had always been a passenger only. However, no other doctor could be obtained so Dr Dick's request was complied with, and AAMS acquired the Fox Moth.

The aircraft suffered accidents in 1942, and again in 1943, with Dr Dicks at the controls. Although it was repaired each time, in 1946 it was damaged again whilst under the command of another pilot. In 1947 the registration was transferred to the Flying Doctor Service (WA Section) Inc., Perth, successor to the AAMS. By 1949, still based in Port Hedland, it had been joined by DH84 Dragon VH-AGJ, with the Dragon doing most of the work. By 1953, MMA had taken over most of the aerial medical work using an Avro Anson, with the Fox Moth being retained as a reserve aircraft. During this period VH-USJ was mainly flown by 'honorary FDS pilots' Father J F O'Sullivan, Rev. Father Edward Bryan and J R M Wolfe.

In December 1957 VH-USJ was based at Meekatharra, WA, pending delivery of a new Cessna 180 for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Following the arrival of the Cessna VH-USJ remained based at Meekatharra as a standby aircraft, being flown by Don Ende. On 6 December 1959 the aircraft was damaged in a taxiing accident at Mt Magnet and subsequently trucked to Meekatharra for repair. In March 1960 it was ferried to Perth/Maylands for its Certificate of Airworthiness renewal, however this was not carried out and the CofA lapsed on 12 March. VH-USJ was then placed in storage at Maylands and, by November 1960, was being advertised for sale.

The CofA was finally renewed in June 1961, the aircraft subsequently moving through a series of owners in WA until badly damaged in an accident and struck off the Register on 16 March 1964. The remains changed hands and location several times over the following years until finally shipped to New Zealand where the aircraft was re-built to airworthy condition, flying again on 22 November 2002. It has been returned to Australia and is presently (c.2003) based again in Perth, Western Australia.

This article detailing the history of VH-USJ is from the "The Airways Museum and Civil Aviation Historical Society" web site. Lots of interesting contents on their web site at <http://www.airwaysmuseum.com/>

VH-UVL

The brief history of this Fox Moth is as follows:

07 Sep 1932	The aircraft was registered as G-ABXS by H. G. Travers, Stag Lane, UK
1935	The aircraft was acquired by MacRobertson Miller and shipped to Australia.
11 Jan 1939	The aircraft was badly damaged at Port Hedland when it's hangar collapsed during a cyclone.
1939	The damaged aircraft was purchased by Sid Marshall and it was taken to Sydney. The registration was transferred over on 03 Apr 1940.
07 Oct 1942	The aircraft was impressed into RAAF service from Sid Marshall and re-serial led as A41-2.
21 Oct 1942	The aircraft was allocated to 1 Rescue and Communications Flight
	The aircraft was allocated to No. 2 Air Ambulance Unit.
03 Nov 1942	The aircraft was allocated to No. 1 rescue and communications flight
	The aircraft was allocated to No. 8 Communications Unit
27 Oct 1943	Aircraft damaged
23 Nov 1943	To 26 RSU
30 Nov 1943	Approved to be converted to components
27 Jul 2000	The aircraft was reregistered as VH-UVL by Ken Orrman, P.O. Box 23, Blairgowrie, Victoria, Australia.
2002	The aircraft was acquired by Roy Fox.

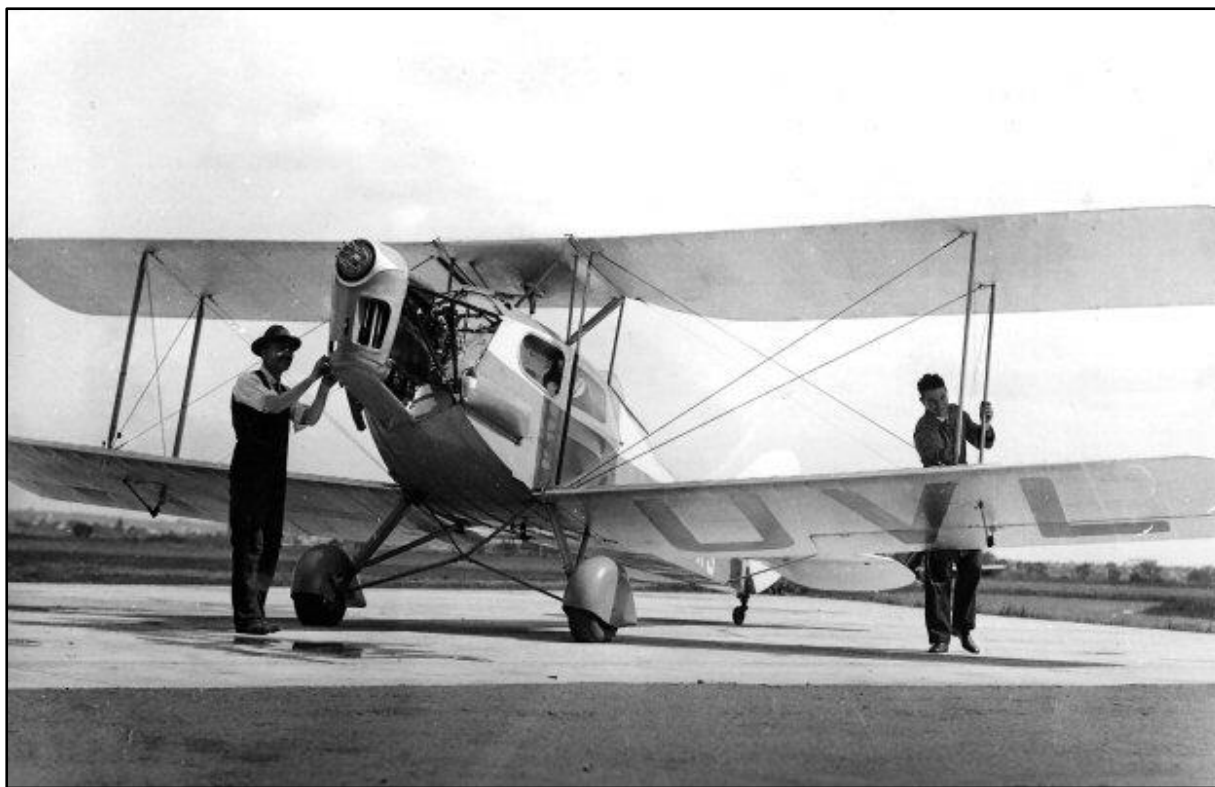


Photo above: VH-UVL being assembled by MMA at Maylands in September 1935.

Photo: Geoff Goodall collection

Australia's Fleet of Gipsy Moths had a new Addition

On 1st April 2016 Australia's airworthy fleet of Gipsy Moths grew by one with the addition of VH-UOI. The aircraft had been restored by Matt Weber and the team at Luskintyre Aircraft Restorations for owner Mike Worthington .

For more on this : <http://aviationspottersonline.com/australias-newest-gipsy/>





The above two aeroplanes (Gipsy Moth VH-UOI and Fox Moth VH-UVL) were restored at Luskintyre Aircraft Restoration. <https://www.facebook.com/luskintyre.aircraftrestoration/>

Who Flew First?

Member Warwick Henry contributed the following article:

Further to the TV film about Gustave Whitehead flying in 1901, Charles Darby reminds me about Richard Pearce who flew in NZ in 1902:

... In the case of this missive, [the TV film] the similar reason for ignoring the facts is that it was (and is, in some places) deemed absurd to think that a farmer in colonial New Zealand could build and fly an aeroplane before the Wright brothers.

However, by 1903 Richard Pearce of Waitohi (near Timaru in NZ) had already designed and built an

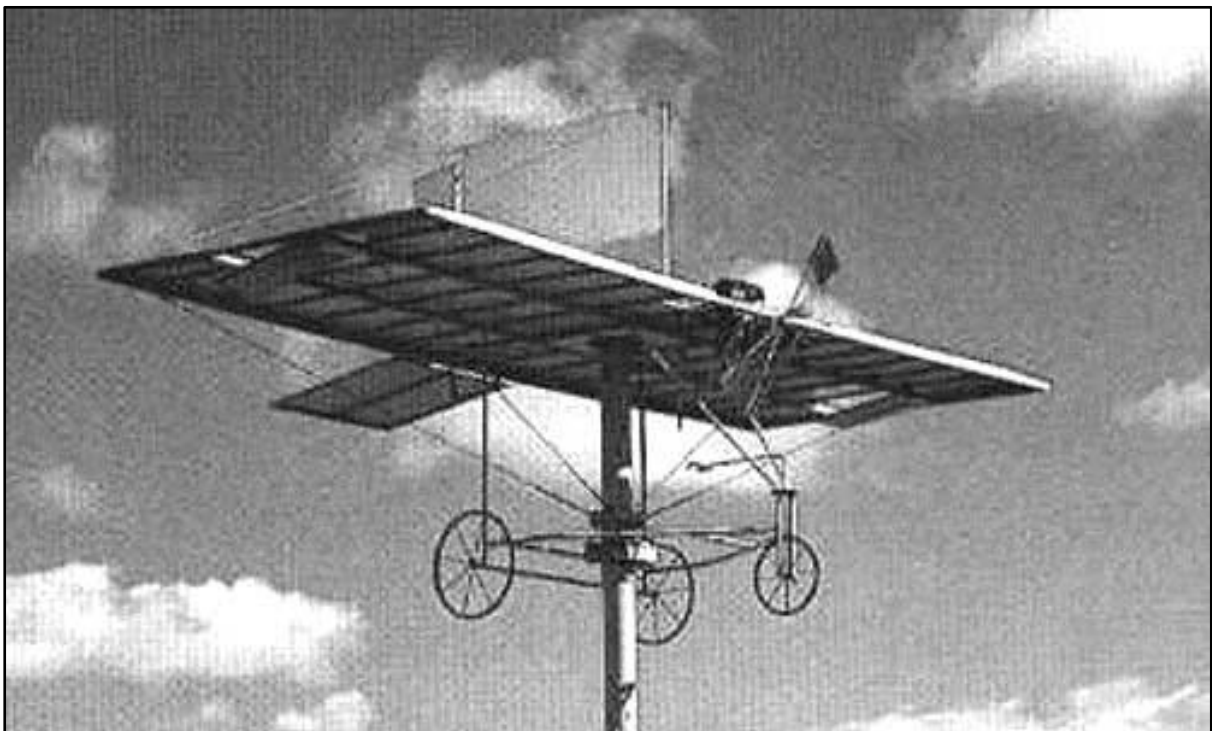
aircraft and its engine, and around Easter in 1902 had flown it before witnesses, some of whom have been interviewed by several people including me. He had taken-off in that aeroplane from his farm and gained altitude for half a mile or so before the aircraft could no longer out-climb the rising ground of the local riverbed. Note that this was a powered takeoff of a wheeled aircraft followed by a climb-out and a short cross-country flight, not a catapult launch along a rail-track and power/glide back to the ground.



Richard Pearce Born 1877- Died 1953 – Age 75

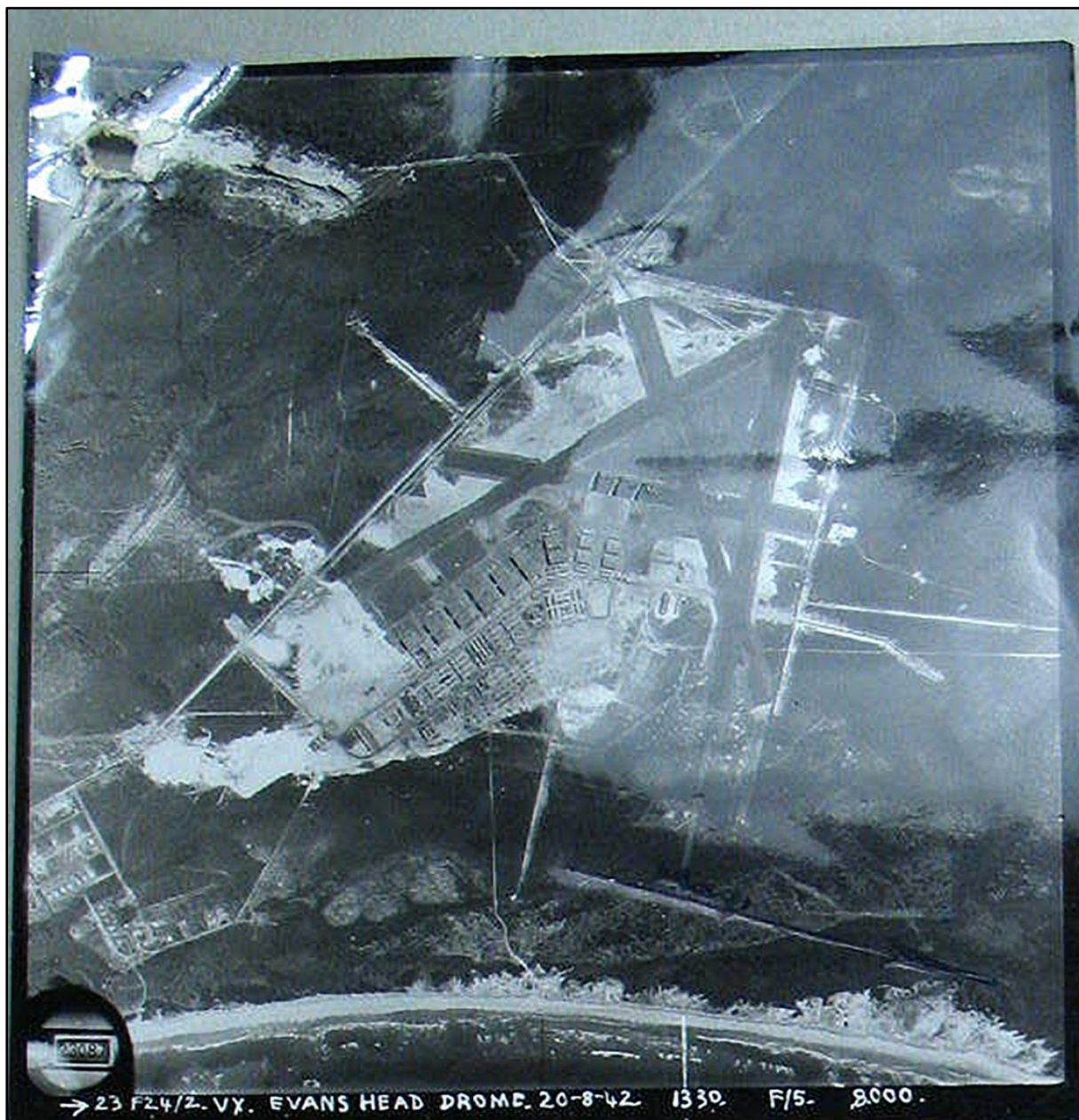
However again, Richard himself acknowledge that the Wrights were indeed the first people to achieve *controlled* powered flight, but says it wasn't in 1903 --- more like 1904/05. The Pearce flying machines (there were more than one) could not be controlled to his satisfaction as they always turned right, they didn't fly anywhere near as far as he wanted, and he never managed to land them where he wanted them to land. Thus he realised he had not been able to build a flying machine that went where he wanted it to go and remained in a condition where he could fly it home again. So he knew he wasn't the first to fly in a controllable powered machine, and he recognised that the Wrights had "got it all together" a year or two later and that he couldn't hope to catch-up. But in 1902 his technology and his flying machine was ahead of the Wrights' efforts, and it remained ahead throughout 1903.

See <http://www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/pearse1.html> for further information about Richard Pearce. For more about Gustave Whitehead, see: www.gustave-whitehead.com



RAAF Base at Evans Head

Compiled by Ross Stenhouse



An airfield was established at Evans Head in 1936 serving as an emergency landing ground. The specification for preparing the ground was issued on 07 May 1936 by the NSW State Government. The Evans Head ELG was constructed by Chesterfield and Jenkins of Grafton at a cost of 3,860 pounds.⁴

In 1934 a Genairco VH-UNT crashed at Evans Head and was badly damaged. UNT was repaired after the crash and flew again. In 1938 the registration was changed to VH-UZR.

4

http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/icms_docs/136840_Evans_Head_Memorial_Aerodrome_Heritage_Interpretation_Plan.pdf



Photo above: Genairco VH-UNT crashed at Evans Head in 1934

In 1939, the RAAF was utilising the Department of Civil Aviation shed on the site for fuel storage and work was carried out to the aerodrome to mitigate airfield flood problems under the Defence Development Programme. Later that year, in October and November, further works were carried out by the RAAF using an Unemployment Relief Works Grant at a cost of 5,000 pounds. Further work was carried out by the RAAF in 1940 and the aerodrome was extended by sixty acres. However, the RAAF did not officially take control of the site until 22 January 1941.



In 1937 the Commonwealth Government took control of the airfield for use as a military base. It was decided that RAAF No 1 Bombing and Gunnery School (1BAGS) would be at Evans Head and under project WAR.W.30. 1 BAGS was established under the command of Wing Commander Valston Hancock (Photo at left).

In May 1941 the estimate for the improvements to the airfield and the construction of the necessary buildings was 295,141 pounds. Substantial works were carried out to the aerodrome for the construction of No 1 BAGS, including the extension of the aerodrome in 1939 with the acquisition of an additional 600 acres. Extensive engineering works were required to establish roads, bridges, culverts, drainage and water supply and large gravel areas for aircraft use. Power was supplied from Ballina and water from a number of bores which were drilled to a depth of 20 - 50 feet.



Within seven months of signatures on the work orders, the first trainees were arriving at the base. QVAG member Ken Holdsworth's father was amongst the first RAAF Personnel to be posted to Evans Head and was there when the first Fairey Battles arrived



Extensive drainage works needed to be carried out at the airfield as it was found after periods of heavy rain the airfield became waterlogged for several days. Due to the intense use the grass runways were receiving in patches all the grass had been worn away and the runways had large grass patches. In April 1941 approval was given for the construction

two sealed gravel runways (runways nos 1 and 2) at a cost of 22,000 pounds however the original estimate didn't include funding for the construction



and approval needed to be for 28,000 pounds in place of the 22,000 pounds already approved.

Photo above: The photo shows Evans Head with just two runways and most of the buildings that would eventually be at the base.



It must have been quite a sight to see seventy Fairey Battles spread over the aircraft parking areas. The photo on the left would have

A marine section was soon established for the search and rescue at sea. Its building facilities are shown in the photo below.



Operation of the Aerodrome - No 1 BAGS

At its height, No 1 BAGS utilised 70 Fairey Battle aircraft with Wirraway and Anson aircraft arriving daily from Amberley RAAF base in Queensland for bombing practice. The time constraints of war resulted in each course only lasting for an intensive 4 weeks, in which time the trainees needed to be completely schooled in bombing and air gunnery practices.



Photo above: Fairey Battle K7600 after a forced landing at west of Morewell, Victoria on 27 January 1944

Training accidents often occurred and the details reported on many web pages are often incorrect. As an example the photo above usually is captioned as being the force landing of K7600 at Evans Head. When writing articles such as this you need to check the sources if possible.

In fact the official K7600 accident report is as follows *"Pilot Officer Polkinghorne was engaged on an authorised Army Co-operation exercise with anti-aircraft batteries Yallourn. Whilst flying at 6000 feet he heard a loud report from the engine this was followed by a volume of smoke and a stream of hot oil into the cockpit which partially blinded him and drenched him. A suitable field was selected for a forced landing, but at the end of the landing run the aircraft ran through a fence, over a road and through another fence. An iron telephone post beside the road was sheared off and the undercarriage collapsed allowing the aircraft to come to rest on its belly. No injuries were sustained by personnel."* The pilot was subsequently criticized for not doing a wheel-up landing.

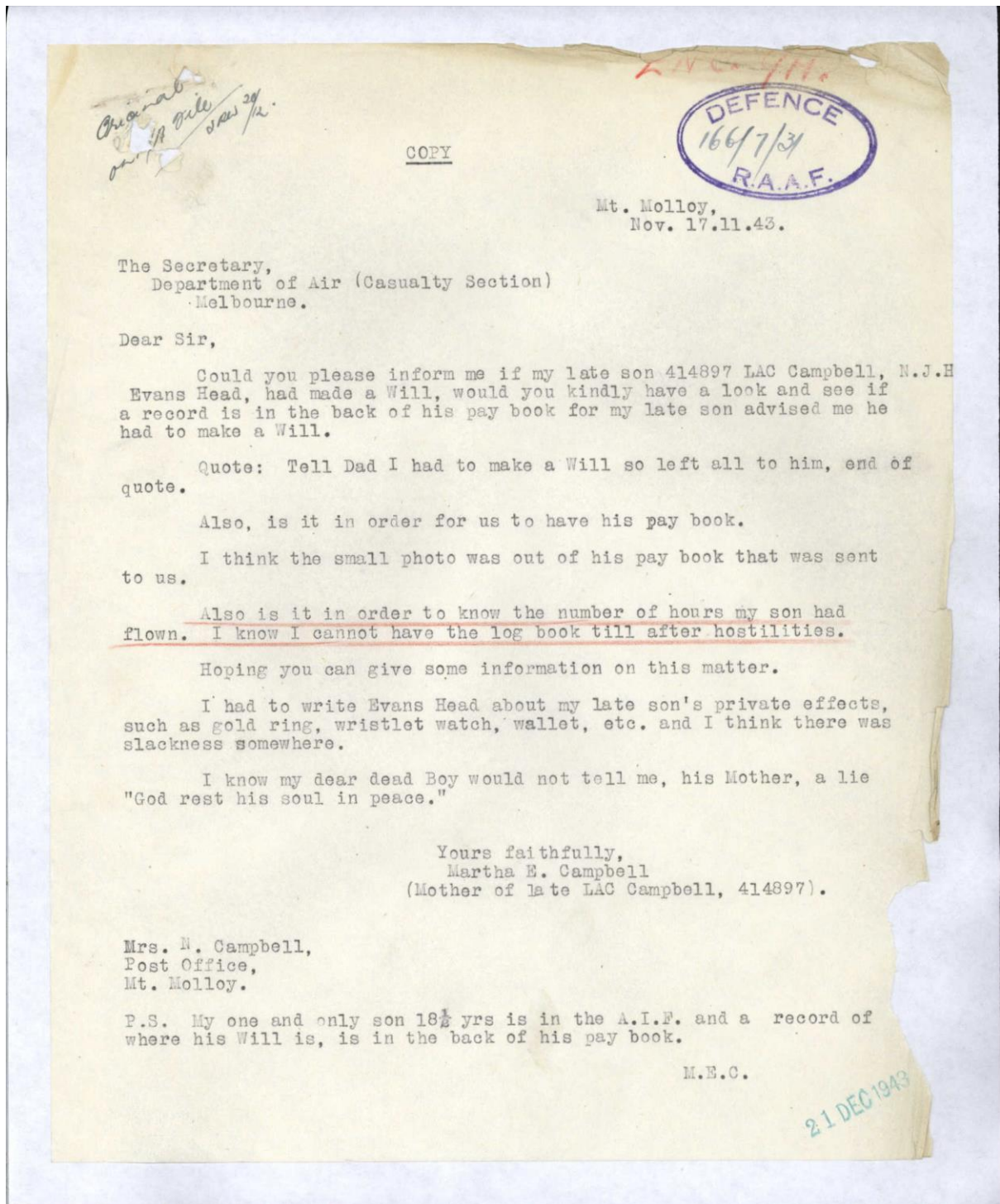
Not all flight crew were so lucky and training fatalities were very common. In my opinion if training accidents occurred at the same rate today heads would roll!

The copy of the letter from a distressed mother is a poignant reminder of the distress caused to many of the loved ones left behind.

The accident which caused the death of LAC Cambell was the result of a Fairey Battle (V1232) piloted by Pilot Officer (who was also killed) crashing whilst engaged as a drogue towing aircraft in a ground to air deflection shooting exercise carried out by the School Ground Defence Personnel. The instructions were for the aircraft to be flown at a height of not less than 500 foot and whilst so engaged, the aircraft was suddenly seen to dive into the ground at an angle of approximately 45 degrees.

The cause of the accident is evidently attributable to the drogue towing cable riding over the starboard side of the tailplane fouling the elevator in the vicinity of the trimming tab, resulting in the depression of the elevators which caused the aircraft to dive. Blame for the accident was attributed to the pilot for badly executing a turn with an angle of bank in excess of 20 degrees.

The pain felt by the mother is evident in the letter.



Having searched the Commonwealth Archives on a regular basis during the past nine months, I have read a number of similar letters from distraught parents. Death in the military was not a rare thing and is usually documented in a file which when read leaves one with a very sad feeling.

Most of these people are now forgotten and the pain felt by their loved ones has passed into history. What are left are the archives documents. These documents become the lasting trail of a very sad period in history. In my own way I find that documenting the airfields is a way that we can remember the lives of those who built the airfields or operated from these airfields.



Photo above: Battles assigned to 1 BAGS fly in nice formation circa 1941

In addition to the actual training of bombing and gunnery crew, a multitude of other duties were undertaken in order for No 1 BAGS to function; such as plane maintenance, armament maintenance (comprising test butts facilities, which were facilities to check the operational condition of aircraft armaments), plane fitting, fuelling, bomb maintenance, stores control, administration, payroll, housekeeping, cooking, grounds maintenance, parachute packers, fitters, armourers, clerks, cinefilm operators, smiths, transport drivers and many, many other occupations. By 1942, No 1 BAGS had become a completely self-contained village.



Photo above: In order to support the operation of the base a large contingent of Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) on parade at Evans Head.

Operation of the Aerodrome - No 1 Air Observers School

By March 1943, the British Air Ministry realised they had an oversupply of aircrew and consequently, in December 1943, No 1 BAGS was disbanded. On December 1943, No 1 Air Observers School (AOS)

was relocated from Cootamundra to Evans Head with 1,496 personnel and trainees. The AOS was established to train Navigators, Bomb Aimers, Gunners and Air Observers.



Photo above: Fairey Battle L5656 was with 1 AOS when it made a wheels up landing on the beach on 25 January 1944. The Battle had been with the RAAF since 21 August 1940

The AOS trained over 630 personnel during its operation, using Ryan, Tiger Moth, Wackett and Anson aircraft. The school was disbanded on VP (Victory in the Pacific) Day, 15 August 1945.⁵



Photo left: Fairey Battles, Wirraways and a Hawker Demon 1 Bombing and Gunnery School RAAF Evans Head. Note the photographer with a camera on the roof of a car in the foreground.

http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/icms_docs/136840_Evans_Head_Memorial_Aerodrome_Heritage_Interpretation_Plan.pdf page 19



The photo of the crashed Avro Lancaster are from the collection of Betting Errington, a WAAAF who flew with the Lancaster Bomber "Q" for Queenie during its Liberty Loans Campaign in Australia during World War II.

The Lancaster was flown from place to place in Australia to raise funds for the War Effort and attracted huge crowds. I understand the picture with the large group of people was taken in Brisbane.

Unfortunately Q for Queenie crashed while landing at Evans Head. A repair crew was sent from Amberley to bring it back to flying status which they did over many months successfully. On its inaugural post repair flight a WAAAF by the name of Dorothy 'Joy' Sivertsen went for a ride as a thank you gift from the aircrew for all the work she did to look after laundry and mess requirements. Joy is still alive and comes to Veterans Reunions at Evans Head. She lives at Tweed Heads in a retirement village.



<http://www.adf-serials.com.au/2a66.htm>

Q for Queenie was numbered A66-1 whilst in RAAF service and holds a number of important records. One record is that it is the biggest field service repair in RAAF history.⁶

The second record is that it is the largest aircraft ever to have flown under the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The aircraft did about another 500 hours flying after the Evans Head crash including training DAP test pilots and 52 QANTAS pilots for the Lancastrian operations which began in

1945, and because it had no war service it was sold for scrap.

RAAF Departure from Evans Head Aerodrome

In 1945, after the AOS was disbanded, the Care and Maintenance Unit was established at the aerodrome and operated until August 1947, when the responsibility of the aerodrome was passed to the Department of Civil Aviation, ending approximately 10 years of RAAF use and occupation. Throughout the late 1940s most of the aerodrome buildings were dismantled and destroyed or transferred to other locations

When the RAAF was disposing of the site in 1945, they noted that Evans Head Aerodrome contained an area of approximately 27,000 acres of land, broken down as follows:

- Aerodrome and Camp: 344 acres of Commonwealth owned land (NB: 92 hectares of this land is the SHR listed portion of the aerodrome);
- Explosives Area: 243 acres of Commonwealth owned land; and
- North and South Bombing Ranges: c.26,413 acres of which 105 acres was Commonwealth owned land and the remainder was State Crown Land secured under provisions of National Security

From 1947, the aerodrome was used by Butler Air Transport for commercial aviation activities and in 1952, the Department of Defence handed over the aerodrome to the Department of Civil Aviation.

Evans Head Airfield Post-War II

Commercial activities ceased in the mid-1950s when the aerodrome was closed to commercial flights and its commercial aviation activities were transferred to Casino.⁷

Evans Head airfield suffered badly in the 1950's because of the intervention of the local MP Mr Larry Anthony who was in favour of the development of the Casino (see copy of letter opposite). Mr Larry Anthony MP was then the Postmaster General and died suddenly and was succeeded in the seat of Richmond by his son Doug Anthony who in 1971 subsequently became Deputy Prime Minister.

As Deputy PM there was a requirement for the RAAF VIP aircraft to be able to land at Casino to pick up the Deputy PM and thus the Casino airstrip became a sealed strip. Commercial activities

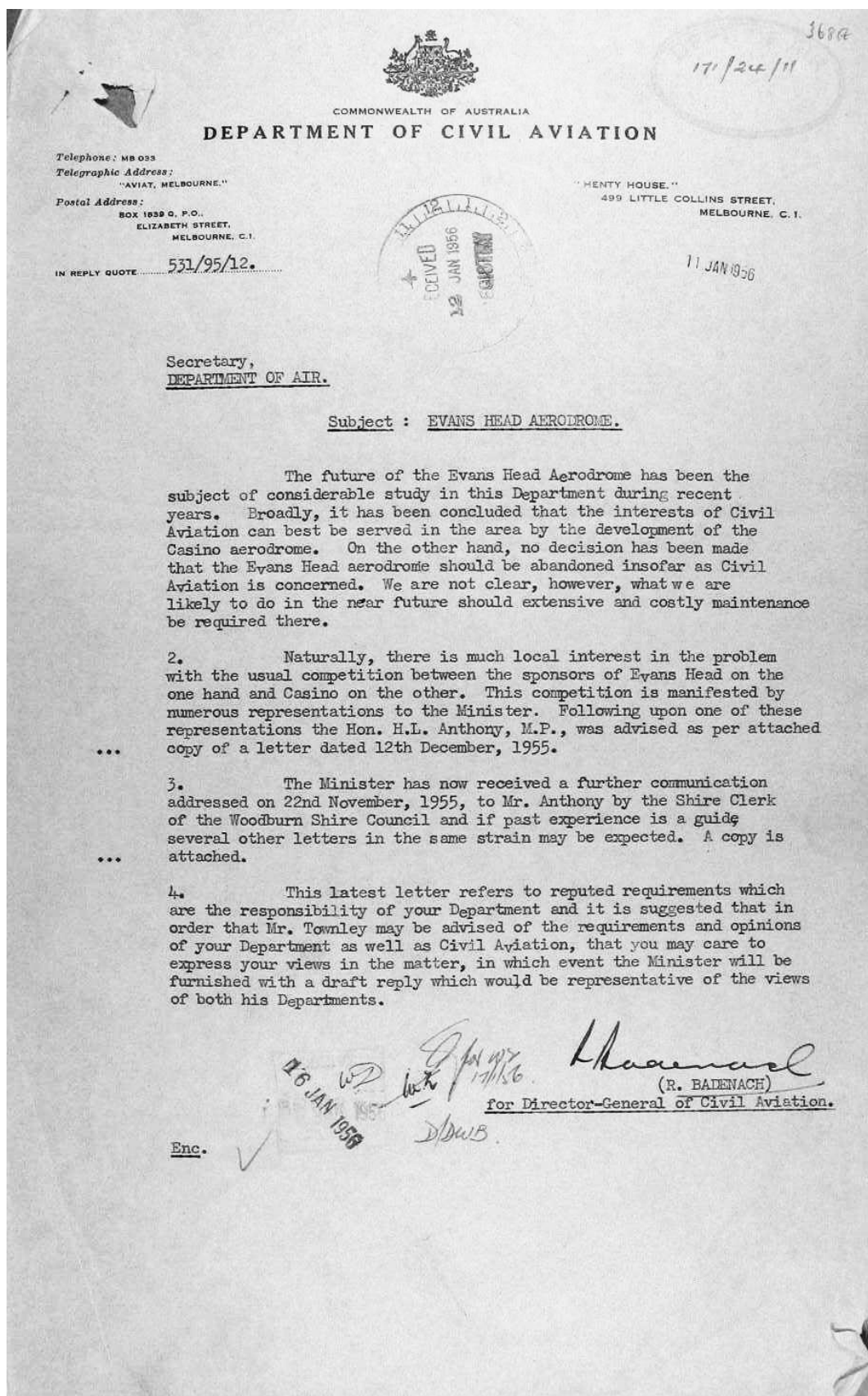
The airfield remained the property of the Department of Civil Aviation and then its successor the Department of Transport until 1992 when ownership was transferred to Richmond River Shire Council under the Local Airport Agreement.

As part of the transfer deeds the Richmond River Shire Council agreed that it:

(Local government) "shall take such action as is within its power to create land use zoning around the aerodrome which will prevent residential and other incompatible development in areas which are, or which may be, adversely affected by aircraft noise

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http://www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/icms_docs/136840_Evans_Head_Memorial_Aerodrome_Heritage_Interpretation_Plan.pdf page 20



⁸ <http://www.radschool.org.au/magazines/Vol53/Page14.htm>

Understanding who had ownership of Evans Head airfield over the past 30 years is complicated because of Council amalgamations. The council which received the airfield from the Department of Transport was the Richmond River Shire Council.

The Richmond River Shire Council was the result of the merging of the Tomki Shire Council with the Woodburn Shire Council in 1976. In 2000 the Richmond River Shire Council amalgamated with the Municipality of Casino to become the Richmond Valley Council, the current owners of Evans Head Airfield.



In 1985, with the introduction of larger aircraft, Casino airport was closed for an upgrade and during this short period, it was necessary to reopen Evans Head to commercial traffic. To allow the regional airlines' F27's to operate in and out of Evans Head, runway 18/36 was

extended to its current length of 1300m and one of the two taxiways allowing access to the apron area was resurfaced.

.The airfields status was changed from being a registered airfield to a unlicensed airfield.

Some of the WW2 buildings were moved a short distance away and form part of Camp Koinonia which is a year round camp and retreat set apart for spiritual growth, camping, recreation, and training. It is run by the Northern Rivers Baptist Association.



Of the 17 Bellman Hangars originally at Evans Head, only one remains and it had was in poor condition until it was completely stripped down , sand blasted, painted and then reassembled to

become a museum called the “Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Heritage Aviation Museum”



Using Randoff Dopes – Luskintyre Aircraft Restoration’s Process

From a posting they did on Facebook:

Randoff coatings, but we have a lot of trouble lately , consolidated coating not replying to emails or calls, but normal process up to and including UV coatings , then we do a white coat to enhance colour, 2 yellow coats but final coat is at 22 degrees, humidity at 40-50%, paint mix 20% retarder , 50% thinners and 30% paint, cross coat , once finished turn booth fan off and place booth heater on 25 degrees, gun setup is largest tip poss around 40-50 psi!! But after writing all this, it works well with our booth/ fan/ heater/ taken about 10 years to work this out!!!!

More on Bellman Hangars

Original article enhanced by Ross Stenhouse

The following is an article published in the Newsletter of the Australasian Society for Historical Archaeology Inc. and written by Jane Ainsworth. I would like to thank Doug Stott for bringing it to my attention.

As part of our on-going contracts at Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome, we have been preparing a CMP for the one surviving Bellman Hangar at the aerodrome. This included a comparative analysis of Bellman Hangar's in Australia and has provided some very useful comparative information, primarily by establishing that Bellman Hangars are not rare in Australia, NSW, VIC or QLD.

The following outlines the results of the comparative analysis (please note that our comparative analysis was not example comprehensive or exhaustive, many more surviving examples may exist). Bellman Hangars were fabricated and erected in Australia from approximately 1939-1940 onwards. The hangars were particularly used on aerodromes constructed as training bases for the Empire Air Training Scheme.

The Rarity of Bellman Hangars

A brief desktop study, which is not comprehensive, established that there at least 130 surviving Bellman Hangars across Australia, with more than 70 in NSW. The location of these Bellman Hangars is noted in the table at the end of this document.

The large number of Bellman hangars shown in the above Table of known Bellman Hangars in Australia (and we stress that our search was not extensive or comprehensive) indicates that World War II in-situ Bellman Hangars and post-war relocated Bellman Hangars are not rare in Australia or in NSW. Further, it indicates that Bellman Hangars are not rare on bases established for the Empire Air Training Scheme, or in Defence ownership (More than 70 are still owned by Defence).

However, it does appear that groups of Bellman Hangars are becoming increasingly rare and these groups of Bellman Hangars (those sites which retain three or more Bellman Hangars) may warrant higher significance. Defence owns the three largest groups of Bellman Hangars, at RAAF Wagga Wagga, RAAF Amberley and RAAF Point Cooke – these three bases each retain 14 Bellman Hangars.

Three Bombing and Gunnery Schools were established for the EATS including Evans Head; each of these former schools retains one Bellman Hangar. The hangar at No 2 BAGS (Port Pirie) is in quite good condition. New South Wales retains the largest number of Bellman Hangars and groups of Bellman Hangars, with at least 70 individual hangars and 10 groups of Hangars. Victoria and Queensland both retain good populations of hangars; however the ACT and NT each only retain one known Bellman Hangar, and WA only 3, which makes these hangars very rare at their state level.

Representativeness - Bellman Hangars

Representativeness refers to the ability of a place to demonstrate an important type or class of building. In this sense, all Bellman Hangars are representative of World War II prefabricated temporary hangars. Each Bellman Hangar also represents the transference of technology from Britain to Australia prior to and during World War II. The condition and Integrity of each hangar varies however, and those in original or near original condition would best represent this class of Hangar.

Although it appears that most hangars have post-war cladding, this should not detract from the hangars' significance as the Bellman was designed with the cladding sitting independent of the portal frame structure to allow easy re-cladding, repairs and addition of doors and windows to suit each hangar's specific requirements.

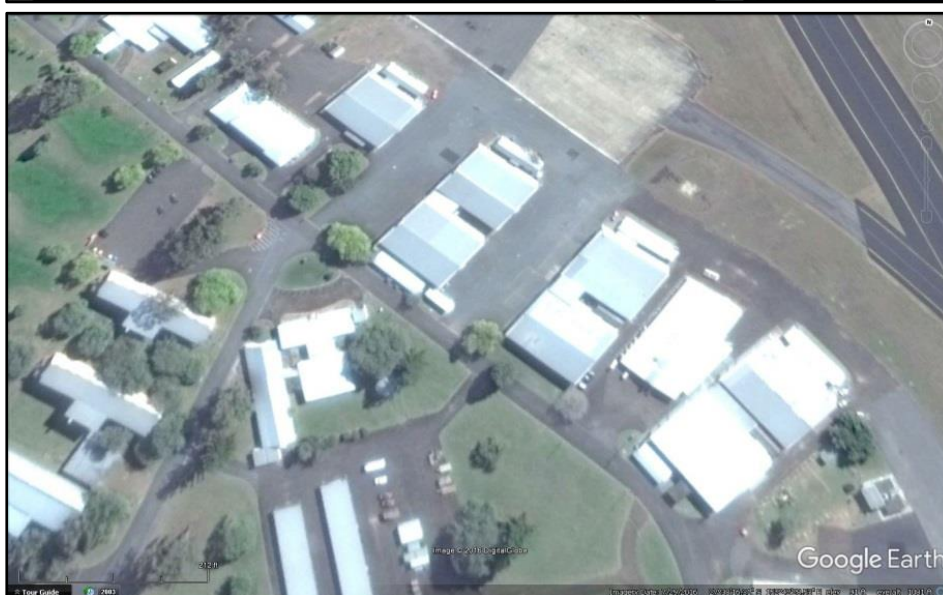
The surviving groups of Bellman Hangars, which are becoming increasingly rare, would better represent the function of Bellman hangars in Australia. For example, Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome (formerly No 1 BAGS) originally contained 17 Bellman Hangars arranged in an arc, as did No 2 BAGS at Port Pirie. The third BAGS, at West Sale, originally contained 15 Bellman Hangars in two groups. These three aerodromes only retain one Bellman Hangar each, and accordingly, the ability of these Bellman's to demonstrate their large-scale maintenance role and the importance of that role is greatly diminished. As such, aerodromes which retain their original group, or a large group, of Bellman Hangars, better represent the maintenance function that most Bellman's serviced.

The tables on the following pages supply more details on known surviving Bellman Hangars. In a lot of cases we checked the airfields to see just what remains.



The image on the top left is of Amberley RAAF base and is captured via Google Earth. You can drill down and magnify the image as can be seen in the image on the left lower.

The lower image clearly shows the Bellman hangars in their original configuration together with the accompanying "Office" building beside the hangar.



Local knowledge is of benefit and member Phil Ridley tells me that some of the Bellman's have been removed in recent times.



The two images above show Bundaberg Airport and the foundations of where the bellman hangars from WWII are clearly visible. It is more difficult to determine if any of the bellman hangars are still there. There does appear to be one Bellman still in existence at Bundaberg Airport.

AAU	Air Ambulance Unit
AD	Aircraft Depot
AFRU	Advanced Flying and Refresher Unit
ANS	Air Navigation School
AOS	Air Observers School
ASP	Air Stores Park
CFS	Central Flying School
CMU	Care and Maintenance Unit
CU	Communications Unit
EFTS	Elementary Flying Training School
ITS	Initial Training School
MCS	Medical Clearing Station
OBU	Operational Base Unit
OTU	Operational Training Unit
RS	Radar School
RIAMU	Radio Installations And Maintenance Unit
RSQN	Reserve SQN
RTD	Recruit Training Depot
SD	Stores Depot
SFTS	Service Training School
WAGS	Wireless And Gunnery School

The Evans Head Great Eastern Fly-in

This fly-in is usually a great fly-in and well worth attending. BIG fly-ins such as this take a lot of organising and usually by unpaid volunteers. Their reward is to have a well-attended event with a lot of people enjoying themselves.



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State	Location	Airfield Name	Airfield Type	EATS Base	Number of surviving Bellman Hangars	Number of Hangars as at 23/11/1945	In Defence Ownership?	Condition of Hangar (If Known)
Act	Majura	RAAF Fairburn		No	1		Yes	Used by RAAF No 34 Squadron (VIP Transport Squadron)
NSW	Armidale	N/A	N/A	No	1		No	Used as a factory
NSW	Bankstown	Bankstown Airport	Parent Operational	No	5 Original 1 Relocated	6	No	
NSW	Camden	Camden Airport	Central Flying School	Yes	5 or 6	7	No	
NSW	Deniliquin	Deniliquin Airport	No 7 SFTS No 80 SQN No 22 SQN No 30 SQN AFRU	Yes	4	13	No	
NSW	Dubbo	RAAF Stores	N/A		3 1 Dismantled	2	Yes	2 Single Hangars 1 Double
NSW	Evans Head	Evans Head Memorial Airfield	No 1 BAGS No 3 AOS Care and Maintenance Unit	Yes	1 Original	17	No	
NSW	Griffith	Griffith Airport		No			No	Extended on one side
NSW	Narrandera	Narrandera-Leeton Airport	No 8 EFTS	Yes	2	6	No	
NSW	Narromine	Narromine	No 5 EFTS No 8 OTU	Yes	1 1 dismantled	6	No	
NSW	Nowra	HMS Albatross	N/A	N/A	4	4	Yes	These bellman's look like they are now gone.

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NSW	Parkes	Parkes Airport	No 1 ANS No 2 WAGS No 8 OTU CFS No 87 SQN	Yes	3	5	No	
NSW	Rathmines				1			Went to RAAF Richmond
NSW	Richmond	RAAF Richmond	Moved to Richmond post WWII	No	3		Yes	Bellman's possibly moved from Evans Head
NSW	Temora	Temora Airfield	No. 10 EFTS	Yes	1 or 2	6	No	
NSW	Tocumwal	Tocumwal Airfield	Aircraft Depot	No	2 Timber		No	2 x Timber Framed Bellman Hangars in Good condition
NSW	Tottenham	Tottenham RAAF Store	N/A	N/A	6		Yes	
NSW	Uralla	N/A	N/A	No	1		No	Kitchen showroom and factory
NSW	Wagga Wagga	Wagga Wagga RAAF Base	No 2 SFTS	Yes	14	14	Yes	Good Condition The hangar layout still very original.
NT	Alice Springs	7 Mile Aerodrome	N/A	No	1		No	Good Internally portioned New Long-elevation doors There are more than 1 bellman possible 3 or more.
Qld	Amberley	RAAF Amberley	No 3 SFTS So 24 SQN No 23 SQN No 3 RTD No 3 AD	Yes	14	14	yes	13 in a group, 1 separate New concrete floors Partly re-clad with colourbond otherwise have retained frame and doors Good condition. Reports received that some have been removed. 13 appear visible with Google Earth.
Qld	Archerfield	Archerfield Airport	No 2 EFTS	yes	2	5	No	2 survive of an original group of 3
Qld	Bundaberg	Bundaberg Airport	No 8 SFTS	Yes		?	No–	Appears to be 1 still there foundations of former bellman's visible using Google Earth
Qld	Cairns	Cairns Airport		No	2		No	One houses North Qld Aero Club and another houses Skytrans

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Qld	Kingaroy	Kingaroy Airport	No 3 IFTS No 4 SQN No 5 SQN No 1 SQN No 6 SQN No 15 SQN No 75 SQN No 92 SQN No 93 SQN No 2 AAU No 86 Wing HQ No 46 OBU No 84 OBU No 13 CU No 30 ASP No 4 RIAMU No 26 MCS		1	4	No	1 survives out of the original group of 4
Qld	Mackay	Mackay Airport		No	1		No	Owned by Chrisair Maintenance
Qld	Maryborough No 1 RS No 3 RD No 6 RD	Maryborough Airport	No 3 ANS No 3 WAGS	Yes	1	4		1 survives out of the original group of 3 One was relocated to the CBD (Ford Dealer), another went to Maryborough Sugar Mill 2 Bellmans are believed to have been removed to Cairns
Qld	Oakey	Oakey Airport	No 6 AD	No	1		Yes	Owned by Army Aviation Centre
Qld	Toowoomba	Toowoomba Airport	No 5 SQN	No	1		No	Owned by Darling Downs Aero Club
Qld	Townsville	Townsville RAAF Base	No 24 SQN	No	2		Yes	
Qld	Townsville	Jezzine Barracks	N/A	No	1		Yes	Fair to Poor Condition Rust Damage
Qld	Townsville	Macrossan Stores Barracks	N/A	No	3	3	Yes	Good condition Timber framed, Most Original
SA	Adelaide	Adelaide Airport		No	1			
SA	Mallala		6 SFTS No 24 SQN No 34 SQN		?	14		Building and land sold and site become Adelaide International Raceway

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SA	Mt Gambier	Mt Gambier Airport	No 1 AOS	Yes	1	6		Re-clad
SA	Parafield	Parafield Airport	No 1 EFTS	Yes	3	2	No	1 original and in excellent condition 2 with minor modifications & re-clad
SA	Port Pirie	Port Pirie Airport	No 1 BAGS No 3 WAGS	Yes	1	17	No	Good condition and re-clad
Vic	Ballarat	Ballarat Airport	No 1 WAGS RAAF Radio School	Yes	5	5	No	Good with new roofs used as hangars
Vic	Benalla	Benalla Airport	No 11 EFTS CMU	Yes	1	6	No	
Vic	Dandenong	N/A	N/A	No	1			Used as a factory
Vic	Essendon	Essendon Airport		No	1	2	No	
Vic	Fisherman's Bend	Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation	N/A	N/A	3	4		Good Condition and now have been relocated to TYABB Airport
Vic	Mildura	Mildura Airport	No 2 OTU	Yes	1	8	No	
Vic	Nhill		No 2 ANS No 1 OTU	Yes	At least 1	5	No	
Vic	Point Cook	RAAF Base Point Cook	No 1 SFTS	Yes	14	14	Yes	
Vic	Tottenham	RAAF Stores	No 1 SD			6	No	
Vic	Werribee	N/A	RAAF Camp	no	Several			
Vic	West Sale	West Sale Airport	No 3 BAGS	Yes	1	9	Yes	
Vic	Williamstown, Laverton	RAAF Laverton	GRS No 1 AD	Yes	2 or 3	5	Yes	
WA	Cunderdin	Cunderdin Airport	No 9 EFTS No 25 SQN No 86 OBU		1	4		Structurally good, cladding fair
WA	Geraldton	Geraldton Airport	No 4 SFTS No 87 OBU (CMU) No 68 RSQN No 69 RSQN		2	14		

Disclaimer

All views expressed in this journal are not necessarily the views of the author, the editor or the Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group Australian Flying Museum Inc. They are simply opinions and are not necessarily fact.