

Something to share -

Just before Christmas 2000, we received news that Frank Fischer had passed away, and I included his "Vale" just before sending the newsletter out for printing. I knew that the newsletter should have contained more than just a one line reference to a man that was respected by everyone that knew him.

Frank was indeed an identity, having served in the air force in WW2, being shot down several times, and "missing in action" for 12 days before finally emerging from the desert as "an Arab". He was later to be awarded the DFC.

On return to the museum in January, and whilst commencing to compile a more appropriate "farewell", a message from Don Winch was received, (Don is a retired Captain who had shared many years of flying with Frank Fischer, along with Frank Ball, Ken Fox, Bill Moloney and the many "old mates" of our early years. It was an era that created "real characters" united under another common flag - TAA - the blue and gold emblem that continued an established camaraderie. This was a group of people who knew many hardships and were prepared to help and guide the existing and future generations of employees who had chosen to follow a career in aviation. Don had discussed with Frank Fischer the TAA museum, and its endeavour to retain the airline history.

Don's message was heartening inasmuch as Frank's son Peter and his family wished to donate some personal items relating to his career and so contact was made. The next weekend my wife Gina and I visited "YARRAMALONG" outside Castlemaine, the place where Frank had spent the last years and I spoke with the family regarding Frank's career in flying, from his first flight in a "Gipsy Moth" in 1936, to his war experiences and career in TAA, including being on the first delivery flight of the Convair.

It became apparent that perhaps his greatest affection was for the little "Gipsy Moth" that he did his first solo in, in 1936, for there amid the memorabilia was a medium size handmade authentically scaled and painted model with the registration VH - UIJ, and a photo with the words "First Solo 1936". Apart from other treasured aircraft models were newspaper and magazine snippets relating to his career. Frank was on the first CONVAIR flight (photographs as well) and other photographs recorded his part of the assessment team sent to the USA to evaluate the Lockheed 1011, one of the wide-bodied aircraft being considered in the 70's.

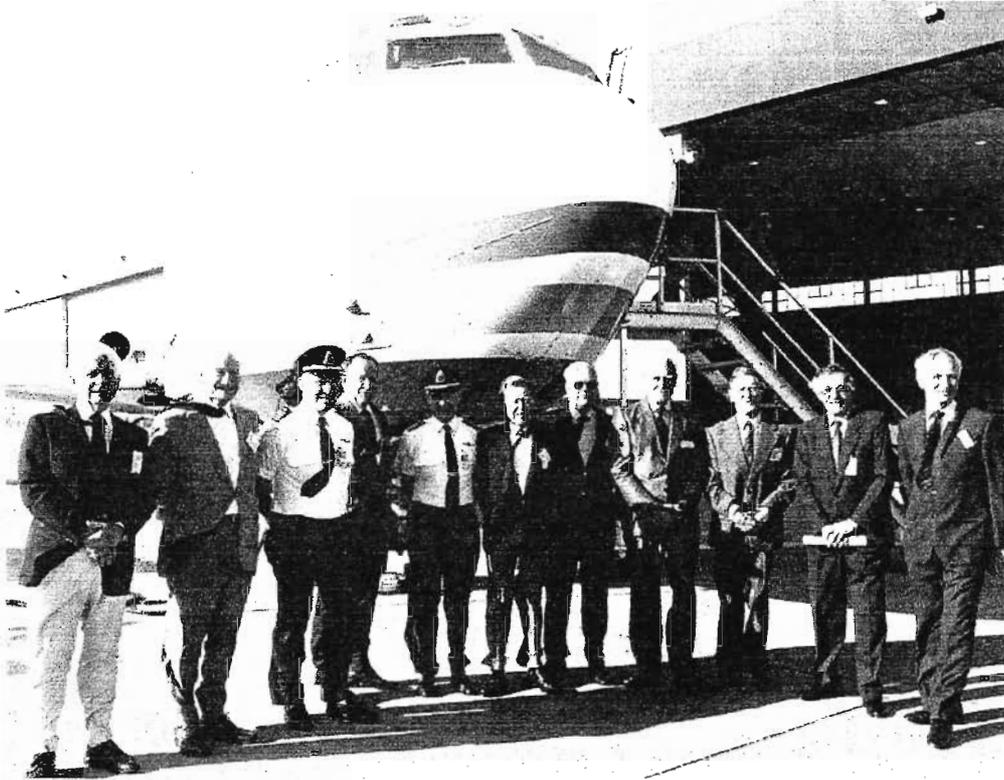
Interestingly, Frank's flying log book also proved to be a little treasure, identifying the numerous aircraft that he had flown over the years, including aircraft flown during WW2, such as the ME-109, Tomahawk, Spitfire and Gladiator through to the large commercial jets. Frank's life history has been added to our growing collection of personal effects, and we will continue to purchase suitable large receptacles in which this material will be placed and maintained to preserve the identity of the donor and his career within TAA.

Another chapter in the Almanac of life has been added.

(Frank (on Left) retelling his encounter with the "enemy" in 1942 for which he was awarded the DFC) Our thanks to the Fischer Family).



Frank Fischer on the occasion of his retirement on 31st of January 1980, after 33 years of service to Trans Australia Airlines.



Amid the papers and photographs given to the museum by the Fischer family was this picture of Frank, and most of the other members who joined in 46-47, and who had over the years formed a strong bond of friendship.

Left to Right –
 Frank Ball
 Don Winch
 Doug Spiers (*)
 Frank Fischer
 Stan Marr (*)
 Eddie Clarke
 Bill Moloney
 Reg Bailey
 Bart Woodgate
 Ken Fox
 John Crammond

(*) Current Flight crew

The occasion was the departure of the last Boeing 727-200 VH-TBO from Melbourne bound for the U.S of A.

Avalon – and a great time was had by all



Tired and battered – Part of 1 of 4 teams that represented TAA AUSTRALIAN at the AVALON Airshow – Left Bill Smart, seated – Ron Adams – Standing (just) Jim Meehan (Taking the picture was Bob Demkiw)

Our stand created great interest and believe it or not we even had people (mainly women) break out into our most memorable theme song – Up Up and Away, with TAA the friendly friendly way, much to the amusement of the crowd. As is customary we continued the Friendly Way spirit, and we anticipate many visitors to your museum over the next 12 months.

Over the 5 days from Wednesday to Sunday we had 12 plus 1 member/s rostered in groups of 4, and we created a “bit of a traffic jam” as we were located at the entrance to the large tent that housed 8 other exhibitors. The members who attended were - Ron Adams, Bill Smart, Bob Demkiw, Ron Hayler, Jeff Fry, Kelvin Hawthorne, Leighton Passant, Don Owen, Alan Nock, Alan Bunker (ex Ansett employee) Ross Mc Donald, David Laurie (ex QANTAS employee) and Jim Meehan. It is marvellous how many people came up and indicated that they had worked for TAA, and that they had fond memories of the time spent with the airline. We even recruited some new members who thought that we had vanished – Not likely. At the end of the airshow our “little group” had raised **\$1,503.00** for the Club – A Great Effort

years that have elapsed since retirement, as this will determine the period that will apply under the new STAR scheme, under which staff travel will be available.

QANTAS have issued a booklet outlining the revised features of the STAR Scheme and a copy may be obtained by contacting the Museum. The booklet was received just prior to printing and is yet to be digested but we will copied into a later newsletter if demand exceeds the copies allocated to the club.

CLUB PATRON – resigns from QANTAS.



James Strong officially resigned as Chief Executive & Managing Director of QANTAS recently, and on behalf of the Members of our Club we would thank James for his assistance and interest in the club as both Patron and honorary member, and as a participant on our DC3 “Hawdon” excursion.

James has continued to support the heritage preservation of our organisation, and his support for our Club has been a positive demonstration for aviation history.

The picture has been extracted from our files of when he joined TAA.

Thanks James for your support of our Club and members.

New Chief Executive & Managing Director for QANTAS.

Mr. Geoff Dixon has been appointed the new CE & MD of QANTAS, and like his predecessor, Mr. Dixon served his apprenticeship in TAA \ AUSTRALIAN AIRLINES.



Geoff Dixon (picture from our files) was appointed the General Manager Marketing and Public Affairs, AUSTRALIAN AIRLINES in March 1987.

Geoff commenced a career in journalism, expanding to public affairs \ government Appointment within Australia and Overseas. Prior to joining Australian Airlines he was Public Affairs Manager for the Australian Mining Industry Council. He also held the position of Deputy Consul General at the AUSTRALIAN CONSULATE GENERAL, NEW YORK.

This apprenticeship in AUSTRALIAN Airlines and his continued career in QANTAS to rise to this new position, indicates that he has enjoyed the challenges of our industry. We are sure that he will continue to lead the QANTAS group forward during the fleet changes and restructures that will be experienced in the future commercial world of aviation.

Geoff - We wish you all the best for the future.

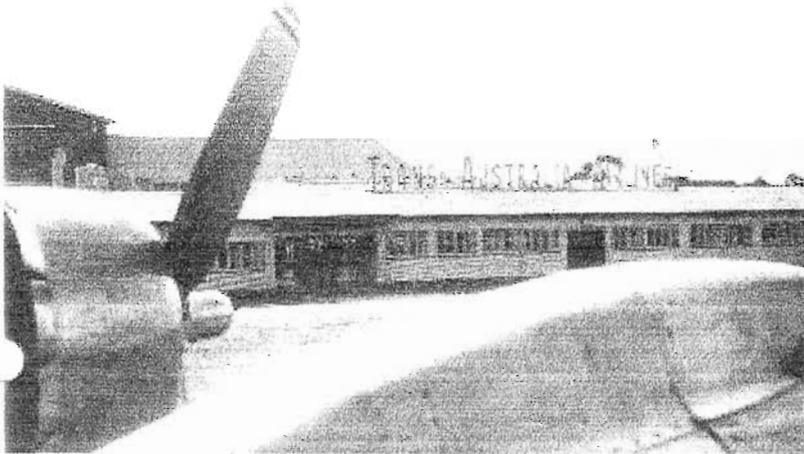
Special visitor to the Museum

Captain Joe Porrett many will remember as a pilot with a sense of humour, but time has taken its toll, and Joe has not been well for a number of years. His great love (apart from Margot his wife) was the airline. Joe has been wheelchair bound and in specialist care for some years. Recently we arranged for Joe to visit the museum, and our crew helped resurrect many memories. I am sure that he enjoyed his visit reviewing the memorabilia we have on display, and bringing a little bit of joy and change into his daily routing. Thanks Margot for your efforts I am sure Joe will again add this visit to his fond memories of yesteryear.

Essendon revisited

Another extract from our photographic collection – Essendon Airport from the air, and it is believed that this picture was taken around 1947, as the only aircraft shown are DC-3s, and the tarmac works in front of the TAA terminal appear to have been completed. If you look hard enough you can see the original TAA terminal, the long thin building 2\3 across the photograph.

We will give a special prize to the person who can identify the registration of the DC 3, closest to the road, and a certificate to verify that this person indeed does have 20 \ 20 vision. (WE know the aircraft reg-)



A VIEW OF THE FIRST TERMINAL AT ESSENDON AS SEEN FROM THE WINDOW OF A DC 4 AIRCRAFT.

When you think that in the last 55 years and perhaps the years from 1949 to 1980 or from the Convair to the Airbus, these years introduced the greatest changes in the way we in Australia have experienced air travel. From my personal point of view, I joined when piston, prop-jet, and New Guinea were the main topics of conversation, and departed when wide-bodied Airbus aircraft had total acceptance by the people – and yes flying had to some extent lost its fascination.

JOKE – (or yet another true story from the almanac of aviation – supposedly ANSETT)

Being a new employee in the days when the airlines initiated “A FREE FIRST FLIGHT” as an introduction to the industry, Mr Joel Gay checked in – which was subject to seats available - obtained his seat. Shortly afterwards Ansett announced that a second flight scheduled to operate over the same route had been cancelled due to “technical problems”(we all know about these) and that passengers were to be transferred to the flight that was leaving. Mr Gay, being unfamiliar with airline procedures boarded the aircraft and looked for his seat, which had been reallocated to a full fare paying passenger, and so not to create a problem, he surveyed the cabin, located another seat and sat down. Confusion rained when a number of passengers were left standing in the aisles, and so an official came on board with a list of passengers to be “bumped”, and number 1 on the list was our Mr. Gay.

Proceeding to the seat that had been allocated to our Mr. Gay, the official asked “Are you Gay?”. The man shyly nodded that he was, at which point she demanded “Then you have to get off the plane”. Our Mr. Gay, on hearing this realised that it was he that was being sought, and announced “ You’ve got the wrong man, I’m Gay.” A third fellow incensed at the discrimination yelled “I’m gay – and have the right to travel just like everybody else”