

## Cecil George Wright – Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday



From TAA Museum archive files – visit to Museum on 8 May 2008.

Cec retired from TAA in July 1972 from his Superintendent Training position (Engineering Melbourne) after 26 years of service. To help celebrate Cec's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, we thought you might be interested in how one particular man helped to create that TAA legend.

Cec, like most of the Foundation Members, came from post war RAAF service as an Instructor, applying for the position of Airframe Instructor with TAA. He commenced work on 26 July 1946 before the first TAA flight in September 1946. And his first assignment was to proceed to the Douglas Aircraft Company in Santa Monica, California USA to study airframe systems used in the DC4 aircraft. TAA had purchased four DC4's for long haul flights eg. Melbourne to Perth.

We got hold of a copy of Cec's appointment letter – it is on Australian National Airlines Commission letterhead, and advises his start date as 'immediately you obtain RAAF discharge'. It included a reply to Cec's enquiry about annual leave, sick leave etc; he was advised that it was being worked out for all TAA employees, but it would be 'standard'.

As aircraft travel to America was very limited at this time TAA arranged for sea travel on the Dutch ship "Tosari" going to Sydney, then Vancouver for refitting after being used for escort duties in World War II. Three other members of the maintenance department were travelling with Cec for their training. In the first week in August 1946 they set sail and spent the next month on the 'briny' to Vancouver. The accommodation was very basic with double bunks and mess style eating. They had to spend a week in Vancouver before obtaining air travel to Los Angeles. They commenced their training on the DC4 at Douglas mid September and returned to Australia early December via the 3<sup>rd</sup>. DC4 delivery flight.

In the meantime, an engineering school had been established at Point Cook RAAF Base. Pilots and maintenance engineers had been hired to commence TAA's DC4 training programme.

In 1948 the British Government, in conjunction with the Australian Government, established an airline to cross the Pacific Ocean from Sydney to the USA - BCPA (British Commonwealth Pacific Airline). Cec and other engineering school staff were sent to United Airlines (operated DC6 aircraft) in the USA to study at their maintenance base in Tulsa City, Oklahoma.

The TAA Engineering School had relocated to Essendon Airport by this time.

The overseas trips continued with new aircraft being introduced into the TAA fleet (Convairs, Viscounts, Lockheed Electra's) swelling the Engineering School numbers.

In 1958 the Fokker (F27) 'Friendship' was introduced into the TAA fleet and Ces (Team Leader) along with four other instructors went to England and Holland (Schiphol) to study the aircraft. And in 1963, again as Team Leader) Ces and five other instructors went to Boeing Seattle for the B727 introduction to TAA.

## **Dates to remember**

The TAA 25 Year Club annual daytime luncheon has been arranged at the usual William Angliss facility on 24th Nov. Please put this date in your diary. Details will be in the October newsletter. You can always check for dates, events etc on the Museum web site [taamuseum@bigpond.com](mailto:taamuseum@bigpond.com)

You will also notice we have kept the 'cut out' event applications on an attachment to the Newsletter so you don't destroy the article on the reverse side. We hear you!!

## **Western Region Historical Society – link**

The TAA 25 Year Club has pleasure in announcing that we have joined the Western Region Historical Society Group. The purpose of the society is to try and protect Australia's great history, which includes its aviation achievements. Unfortunately governments and developers are too quick to destroy our beautiful old buildings and history. If you are aware of a danger to any of our wonderful heritage, please get in touch with our club and advise us. The Western Region Historical Society meets every 3 months, and our club hopes to have 2 representatives at these meetings

## STARS (Simply TAA Retired Staff) Lunch

The next STARS Lunch get-together at Moonee Valley Race Course is on **17 August** – its a great day, sometimes (if the weathers good) getting close to 300 ex staff enjoying talking over old times and catching up. While you have the diary out, insert the remaining 2010 date too – **23 November**.

## Busy, busy, busy at the Museum – by the bus load!

If you would like to visit your Museum (7 York Street, Airport West), we are open Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 1000 to 1500 (closed on Public Holidays). Free entry for 25 Year Club & Museum members.

It's been another busy few months at the museum with visits from Ringwood Killara residents, Keilor Probus, Mentone Probus, Deer Park Seniors, Queensland Branch – 25 Year Club, Greenwood Probus, Chelsea Ladies Probus, Midland Tours, City of Murray Valley Probus, Conciege Retirement Village Balwyn, Vermont Retirement Village, Pascoe Vale Retirement Village, Red Hill Probus, Dandenong RSL, Kew Probus, Thomastown/Lalor Senior Citizens, Humes Mens Shed and Maryborough Probus plus visits by individuals just coming in to have a look. Word is getting around.

If you would like to assist us at the museum (doing computer work, painting, rearranging exhibits, photographing / cataloguing the assets, dusting, carpentry – you name it, we could use your talents if you have a spare day now and then.

## Qantas Staff Travel Numbers

A few phone numbers to tuck away in your travel folder just in case!!! (don't forget your employee number and password as well for internet access)

Melbourne (03) 96585920	Sydney (02) 83034444	Brisbane (07) 32387920
Perth (08) 94778181	Darwin (08) 89823384	Cairns (07) 40504081
Adelaide (03) 82378450	Hobart (03) 62104889	Canberra (02) 62755508

Hours (local time) Mon – Fri (0830 – 1645) ..... Weekends (0800 – 1600)

Jetstar: 131538      Melbourne 90926403

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** From Monday 19 July, the Qantas Staff Travel Web address will change to [www.qantas.com.au/stafftravel](http://www.qantas.com.au/stafftravel)

## Stocktake at the Museum

With the move from Franklin Street and all the reorganisation here at the Museum, we have to catch up with all the changes and additions to the collection. If you have a spare day (or two) that you could lend a hand with our stocktake – give Ron Adams a call at the Museum on 9280 8114.

## Disaster Anniversary – VH-TFB lost with all on board 10 June 1960

Former staff member Terry Simpson (now General Manager - Mackay Airport) recently attended the very moving ceremony at Mackay commemorating the loss of all on board (4 crew and 25 passengers). The local newspaper (Mackay Daily Mercury) ran an 8 page lift out to mark the anniversary.

On the 10 June 1960, the TAA F27 aircraft was operating a flight from Rockhampton to Mackay, and whilst on approach, it entered the sea at 10.05pm some 7.5 miles south-east of Mackay. The cause of the crash was never established.



### TAA Maintenance Story

You might recall we asked all our members for editorial contributions to our Newsletter; well here is a 'story' from Ron Austin (Melbourne).

"Although we were engineers for many years with TAA, we really had little idea of the other trades contributing to our very high maintenance standards. I was an electrician. Where we worked, in the overhaul section, aircraft electricians were identified verbally as 'wire jerkers'. The Licensed Aircraft Engineers saw us as nuisance value in the hanger, always getting in the way of 'real work'.

In 1952 I had joined a small nucleus of skilled electricians who trained in the Air Force or Commonwealth Aircraft Factory. We worked on any aircraft type towed into the F1 overhaul hanger. TAA accepted contract work from other Airlines as well as their own aircraft.

In the 50s an overhaul was a major rebuild of each individual aircraft. Let us tow a DC3 through the doors and show you how we work. We first shut the doors, most necessary, as there was no heating or forced ventilation in this hanger.

Stands and benches soon converged on the aircraft and in a very short time both props and engines are removed, then seats and both wings are removed for transport to the overhaul building. We electricians removed all junction boxes from the nacelles, cabin and generator control area. These boxes were cleaned and rewired. All connecting wire was removed as the interior was stripped. The interior skin had to be cleaned and resprayed with corrosion resistant paint. As each section of the aircraft was cleaned and painted we began rewiring every circuit with new electrical cable. Some wiring looms were produced at our section bench, then tied with bee's waxed cord and tightly clipped to the fuselage frames with saddles. Some electrical plugs have 48 wires; these must be soldered into the correct pins. Identification of every wire is vital to the entire operation.

Our bare stripped aircraft was growing before our eyes. Both wings are delivered back to the hanger and carefully refitted. The engines are rehung, followed by the propellers. Our sheet metal mates, 'the sheeties', would have renewed and replaced any outer skin panels damaged in service.

Now the riggers get into the act, their cables and pulleys all seem to conflict in our areas. It was normal to have 5 of us working in the cockpit. Instrument makers, riggers and electricians worked very well together. Ask Lance Irwin, as a rigger he was a specialist on throttle cable fitting and the installation of attachments to these cables. Working face down on the floor, Lance was quite tolerant to withstand 2 electricians standing on him while they fitted overhead panels. During our meal breaks the painters would spray various parts of the airframe, then new undercarriage and wheels were fitted. To encourage us to greater efforts our foreman Mick would sometimes threaten to tow the aircraft outside to finish if we didn't work faster. As Melbourne's summers and winters were usually extremely hot or cold we tried to avoid this.

Very soon that tired old DC3, which was towed into the hanger emerged rebuilt and looking pristine. Newly painted white top, dark blue sidelines glistened and light reflected from the propeller during run up.

Usually only 11 days were required to achieve this miracle of transformation. Our specialist Test Pilots would then apply their trade to the aircraft and rarely did the aircraft need any extra work other than minor adjustments.

This describes a relatively simple overhaul. The complexity of overhaul rises with Convairs, DC6's and Viscounts. The same procure but on a much larger scale. We electricians did encounter one unusual state overhauling a Convair 240. The pressurisation controller was rewired as directed by the makers wiring diagrams; these proved to be incorrect. We spent many long shifts resolving the problem. As we in TAA flew our aircraft longer hours in a year than other operators, we were the first to completely rewire and aircraft. Our drawing office corrected the drawings and passed on the correction to Convair in America.

My time in overhaul has left me with 'mates' I treasure and seek out at our regular lunch gatherings. Still see Lance, and he holds no animosity toward electricians."

## Trip enjoyed (“The Brook” on Sneydes, Point Cook)

The 25 Year Club ‘**Christmas in July**’ trip to “The Brook” at Point Cook on 13 July was a great success. The bus’s arrived in time for morning tea (scones, cream etc) and then everyone was entertained by a very talented singer with all the favourite xmas songs. Then a three course meal followed to round out the day.

## General Meeting – 09 September 2010

A separate ‘official’ notice will soon be going out to all members of the TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club (Vic / Tas Branch) advising of a General Meeting that will be held at the William Angliss Institute, 550 Little Lonsdale St. Melbourne at 1830 hours. The meeting will be held just before the 25 Year Club Annual Dinner since many attendee’s will go to both the meeting and dinner. (If you would also like to attend the dinner, an application form with payment details etc is attached to this Newsletter)

The General Meeting has been called to approve a revised set of Association Rules for the TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club Victorian / Tasmanian Branch Incorporated. If you cannot make the General Meeting, please complete the postal vote that is with the ‘official’ notice.

## Vale

**Charlie Lambeth – Machine Shop** passed away on 04/05/10

You may have seen the article in the Melbourne Herald-Sun newspaper commemorating Charlie’s private piloting ‘50 years of flight’; but what wasn’t in the article was his service with TAA.

**Capt. Cassey Schryver - 737 Check Captain**

**Capt. John Herrick** passed away 21 April 2010 aged 81.

*History* - At the advanced age of 27, and after much persistence, John was accepted as a pilot with TAA. He spent 31 years with TAA and flew the DC3, Bristol B170, Electra, Viscount, F27, DC9 and B727. He counted his 2 years in New Guinea on the DC3 and Bristol among his best. John was flying a large remote-controlled helicopter from his bed the day before he was admitted to hospital where he died peacefully a few hours later.

**Cliff Peacock – Cost Accountant, Finance** (aged 92) passed away 05/05/10

**Selwyn Francis Brudenell** passed away on 23.12.09 aged 93

**Alan Betteridge AMD** passed away April 2010

**Jimmy Chow - Despatch** passed away on 23.06.10

**Ray Kershler – Aircraft Elec Mascot** passed away on 01/06/10

**Noel Kent – Personnel** passed away on 11/07/10

## Membership Renewal 2010 - 2011. Reminder.

If you haven't got around to sending off that cheque yet; now's the time. (You can tell if your current years membership has been paid or not by looking at the envelope that this Newsletter came in. If it has "FM10" or a lower number, you are not currently financial. Again, thank you for your continuing support.) Please mail the membership form below to: Ross McDonald, TAA Museum, Qantas GT Building, 7 York Street, Airport West 3042.

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Please find enclosed my cheque / money order for \$20.00 for my membership of the TAA 25 Year Club (make payable to "25 Year Club")	
Name .....	Spouse Name.....
Address.....	
Suburb.....	State .....P/Code.....
Phone.....	Mobile.....
E-mail:.....	
Date Joined TAA.....	Date left.....

This official receipt will be endorsed once your Subscription is received.
New receipt number

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## 25 Year Club Annual Dinner.

Please come along and join your friends to celebrate another TAA birthday (66<sup>th</sup>)

Where: William Angliss.550 Lt. Lonsdale Street Melbourne.

When: Thursday 9th September

Cost: Member/Partner \$25.00 p.p. (Non Member / Guest \$33.00 p.p.)

Pre dinner drinks and savouries will be served in the foyer at 6.30pm. A three course meal will be served in the restaurant at approx 7.00pm. Please note that there is a substantial reduction in the price of the function this year following a committee decision to allow individual drink choices (just pay your account before leaving). Waiter service as usual will be provided at each table. The bar closes at 2200.

### RSVP by 27th of August 2010, mailing to:

Ross McDonald - Events Co-ordinator, TAA Museum, Qantas GT Building, 7 York Street, Airport West 3042

Member Name \_\_\_\_\_ Partner \_\_\_\_\_

Non Member \_\_\_\_\_ Guest \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your cheque payable to the "TAA 25 Year Club"