

Lance Erwin made a Life Member

At the recent TAA/Australian Airlines 25 Year Club dinner, Lance Erwin was made a Life Member of the Club in a presentation by our President David Axon, recognising Lance's aviation career and STAARS (Simply TAA Retired Staff) initiative.

1



Lance, starting at TAA

Lance joined TAA on the 30th September 1946. He was a junior clerk in the then Head Office at Charthouse, in Little Bourke Street. He used to drive the lift up and down for J. Coles and L. Bain, who were the bosses at the time. Lance was then transferred to the booking office in the basement of Myers Lonsdale Street store.

Later the booking office went to the IOOF building in Swanston Street. He was responsible, amongst other duties, for organising the boss's laundry. One day he lost the laundry and was so distraught, the men in the office had a collection for him to buy more clothes to replace the ones that he had lost. The whip round raised 37 Pounds, but the replacement clothing didn't cost anything like that so he made a handsome profit! At this time he was overseen by a Miss Wooster and Miss Mandel (*see Vale at the end of the Newsletter*).

He was then sent to Essendon Airport to see a Geoff Bennett, who didn't really want him anyway. However he stayed, and became Harry Machin and Ernie Thompson's office boy, in aircraft overhaul. He had the title of Technical Clerk, and as he had a way with words, wrote memo's for Ernie.

Apprenticeships came along and Lance was put forward, which Gil Wise didn't like as they had gone through a selection process which Lance skipped; so Gil didn't think much of him. Lance was the first TAA apprentice and although he wanted to be an instrument fitter and wear a white coat, he was told he was going to be an airframe fitter! He served his 5 year apprenticeship, and within 1 year of finishing, he had obtained his first airframe licence, which was pretty good for someone only 1 year out of his time. Gil now thought he wasn't too bad after all!

Lance worked in aircraft overhaul with Mick McDonald and Lloyd Haines as his bosses. Soon he became an acting leading hand which then became permanent. This subsequently lead to a senior leading hands position.

At this time, in the 1950's, the Viscount aircraft were having their lower spar changes and the hand over from crew to crew was fraught with political intrigue! When the 2 crews went to 3 crews in the 1960's Lance became Foreman on crew 3 with Ray Tinker as his senior.

In 1965 he went to Douglas Aircraft Company at Long Beach, USA, as the resident engineer on the DC9. He was there for a year.

Sometime after the move to Tullamarine in 1972, Lloyd Haines retired as the Dock Maintenance Supervisor (as Aircraft Overhaul was now called) and Lance was promoted to the position.

In 1980 Lance was sent to Toulouse on the A300 as the resident engineer for 6 months. On his return he moved over to the Line Maintenance Supervisors position, where he stayed for 5 years.

In 1991 Lance had a gall bladder operation which didn't go as planned, and after some time in hospital returned to work, to be offered a golden handshake, which he took, so ending his 45 year career with TAA.

Sometime later, Lance had a conversation with Doc Brown who suggested it would be a good idea to get retired TAA staff together now and again – Lance got to work and the rest is history - with STAARS initially hoping for 50 or so, growing to over 400 people on the books!

A very fitting conclusion to a great career!

TAA Museum Open Days

Just in case you're busy during the week, we are having an Open Day for members and their friends on the weekend **20 – 21 November** 2010 from 1000 to 1400. So come along with the family and friends and see all the treasures from the greatest airline – **Trans Australia Airlines**. Tea and coffee will be provided. Any queries – call the Museum on 9280 8114.

Note from our President

Earlier in the evening of the recent TAA/Australian Airlines 25 Year Club dinner held at William Angliss's on 9th September, a General Meeting was held (as advised to all financial Members) to update our Constitution.

David Axon (President) advised; "Members attending voted unanimously to adopt the new Constitution, supported by 81 confirming postal votes. Thank you for your support."

After we sent out the notices (with a copy of the new Constitution) to all financial Members, we discovered that we had inadvertently blocked out our interstate Members who do not have a constituted Branch of the TAA/Australian Airlines 25 Year Club with the wording in Para 2 – "Member means a financial Member of the TAA/Australian Airlines 25 Year Club resident in the State of Victoria and Tasmania, the Branch."

So, attached you will find the wording needed to correct some minor typo's, remove the residency problem preventing interstate ex staff from being Members of the TAA/Australian Airlines 25 Year Club and adding some clarification wording in Para 6b.

Similar to the previous General Meeting just before the 9 September dinner, a **General Meeting** will be held before the Lunch at **William Angliss on the 24 November** to vote on the above issues.

STARS (Simply TAA Retired Staff) Lunch

The next STARS Lunch get-together at Moonee Valley Race Course is on **23 November** – the weather should be fantastic by the end of November so come along and enjoy the company of up to 300 ex staff talking over old times and catching up.

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 group visits from Dandenong RSL, Banyule City Council Group, Donvale Central Probus, Rosana Probus, East Ivenhoe Probus, Rye Men's Probus, Wendouree Probus, Pascoe Gardens, Melbourne Travel Club, Vintage Car Club plus visits by individuals just coming in to have a look. Word is getting around.

We also had an interesting visitor in **Capt. Jim Barton** who flew with TAA from 1957 to 1988. Jim was born on the magic date - 9th September the day TAA had its first flight. Jim has had a recent stint in hospital but is well on the road to recovery.

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.

TAA / Australian Airlines 25 Year Club Annual Dinner

The annual dinner was again held at the William Angliss Restaurant on Thursday 9th September 2010, with 107 members attending; which was a great response.

The highlight of the night was the awarding of our second life member award (Frank Ball was the first) to **Lance Irwin**. Congratulations Lance (*see lead article of the Newsletter*).

A welcome visitor was the President of the South Australian chapter of the TAA/Australian Airlines 25 Year Club Peter Chapman (and his wife Lori) who came over for the dinner / function.

It was an honour to have four of our great TAA captains, and their wives, sharing a table on the evening - Stan Mar, Alan Searle, Ray Baker and Doug Spiers sharing a laugh with David Axon (*see photo below*)

One of the great supporters of our club, John Grant and his wife Lil, also attended. John is charging through the nineties beautifully. Keep the good work going John.

The students at the William Angliss Restaurant once again provided high class catering and service to all present - A great night was had by all.



Lto R – Stan Mar, Doug Spiers, David Axon (President), Ray Baker and Alan Searle

Stocktake at the Museum

We didn't get many takers for our once only task of stocktaking 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.

TAA Line Maintenance Story

You might recall we asked all our members for editorial contributions to our Newsletter; well here is a 'story' from Tasmania by Ray Stone (from Devonport). Thanks Ray.

“There are two humorous little happenings I would like to share with you from the late 1950/60's. As a Lead in those days, prior to roll on / roll off cargo shipping to Tasmania – bulk airfreight was the main way of transporting cargo of many descriptions including sheep, cattle, pigs and the occasional horse. A fleet of DC3's and DC4's kept the cargo moving at all hours of the day and night.

The first chuckle came after a DC3 was loaded with cattle and the Captain discovered that the gun and ammunition had not been loaded on the southbound leg. We were stuck until one of our staff raced to a nearby farm, knocked up the sleeping farmer at 0500 to 'borrow' his gun and ammunition for the flight. It must have been some explanation to the farmer!

The second chuckle came when a DC3 arrived fully loaded with cargo. We removed it all, and the aircraft then had to proceed empty to another port to pick up a back load of meat. We went looking for the ballast needed for the rear of the aircraft during the positioning flight to find we had run out. So some staff members disappeared under the airport fence to the nearby sand dunes at 0300 to bag sand!”

Last Newsletter for 2010

Hope you have enjoyed the Newsletters this year – all of the committee and supporters working at the Museum extend to you and yours our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Vale

Maxwell (Max) Darby – 27/08/10 (Capt. B727) as a result of a house fire at his home in Rosebud (you may have seen the article in the newspapers) Max had been unwell for some time due to strokes. We received a detailed account of Max's life from his family which we will endeavour to put on our Web site in time.

Enid Mandel – 29 August 2010 - our original Communications Superintendent. Enid had been a Flt Sgt Communications with the RAAF during the war. Retiring in 1972, relocated to Sydney (where she had enlisted) and died peacefully at her Jewish faith Hospice aged 94.

David Randall – 03/08/10 (F/E Qld)

Annette Kennelly (nee Baoovsky) – 12/07/10 (F/A from 1969 – 1979) sadly passed away after a battle with cancer.

Capt. Bill Scott – 08/08/10 (Flt Ops)

Capt. Tom Fuller – 08/10 (Flt Ops)

Harold Belbin – 24/08/10 (Cargo)

Addendum - We reported the passing of 'Cassey Schryver' in our last newsletter, and fortunately Capt. Graham Hawk has been able to clarify the name: **Keith 'Cassey' Schryver**, and advise that Keith was a 1st Officer until 1969 (Adelaide). He went to BNE and made Capt. in 1980 from where he retired. Keith enjoyed playing the euphonium with a brass band.