



PHOENIX

HISTORICAL AIRCRAFT RESTORATION SOCIETY JOURNAL

April 2026.



HARS CONTACT DETAILS

Front Cover: Worldwide Aircraft Recovery.
Loading the B707 on board the Dutch line WALLENIUS WILHELMSSEN.

PRESIDENT:

Bob De La Hunty OAM
Phone: (02) 4257 4333
Home: (02) 4257 5915
Mobile: 0433 941 306
Email: delahunty@bigpond.com

VICE PRESIDENT:

Maureen Massey
Home: (02) 9522 6028
Mobile: 0499 113 556
Email: maureenmassey@bigpond.com

TREASURER:

David Neaves
Mobile: 0407 200 472
Email: david@neaves.com

SECRETARY:

Ian Debenham OAM
Mobile: 0432 106 157
Home: (02) 9874 0454
Email: ian.debenham@hotmail.com

GENERAL MANAGER ENGINEERING:

William Smith
Email: william.smith69@gmail.com
Phone: (02) 9501 5366
Mobile: 0418 966 273

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

William Smith: william.smith69@gmail.com
John Croll: john.croll46@gmail.com
Jim Marshal: jamarsh@optusnet.com.au
Steve Howson: stevenhowson@gmail.com
Peter Ward: peter_ward777@hotmail.com
Les Fisher: airframes43@yahoo.com.au
John Sims: jandsims@gmail.com

Website: www.hars.org.au

Associated Websites:

Tourism Shellharbour
www.tourismshellharbour.com.au
Destination NSW
www.destinationnsw.com.au
Wings Over Shellharbour
www.wingsovershellharbour.com.au
AussieAirliners
www.aussieairliners.org

PHOENIX EDITOR:

Maureen Massey
Mobile: 0499 113 556
Email: maureenmassey@bigpond.com



PRODUCTION COORDINATOR:

Terry Scanlan
Email: tscanlan@bigpond.net.au

SUB-EDITORS:

Terry Scanlan
Email: tscanlan@bigpond.net.au
Steve Heesh
Email: steve.heesh48@gmail.com
Mark Keech
Email: keechma@gmail.com
Reg Collins
Email: regcol39@gmail.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Chris Hudson
Email: peacockpub2@gmail.com

ALL CORRESPONDENCE:

Secretary
Historical Aircraft Restoration Society Inc
54 Airport Road
Albion Park Rail, NSW 2527
Ph: (02) 4257 4333

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President's Report

Bob De La Hunty OAM
President and Chief Pilot



THIS issue of Phoenix covers so much of what and who we are at HARS. We are a bunch of volunteers with an unusual level of enthusiasm and determination that defies any logic. Who in their right mind would take on such projects, almost regarded by many as impossible?. Somehow, we have beaten all the odds and established a great reputation proving that as Australians - we can.

The hangar building plans at both Shellharbour and Parkes are now dominating serious activity. At both locations we now have the Council development applications approved. The defining engineering drawings, in accordance with the conditions of consent, can now be finalised, leading to the costings.

Our clear objectives are to get undercover, all our hard-won assets, so that future generations can see and touch aircraft that might have only appeared in flight magazines if we did not take up the offer.

The growing acknowledgement of our success is reflected in the number of visitors and media calls. Thanks to all our volunteers, we are doing our best to give everyone a great experience. We will limit ourselves if we don't grow our volunteer base to relieve the heavy load on our current members. How we do that has always been a challenge and has been successful through having friends and colleagues encouraged to join and have fun! We are looking at community advertising as well to grow the base. Whilst we need volunteers in all areas, the tour guide team is the most under stress, so we will focus on locally recruited guides to start with before we do any advertising that we have avoided since word of mouth and media exposure has been so successful.

We will be sharing in the coming months more details about our community engagement programmes that will support our efforts to seek the Charity, Not-for-Profit, Volunteer Community rent concessions potentially available from the Council. The Parkes Council has been very supportive of our contribution to the Tourism objectives there and we have seen Shellharbour receptive to the idea and recognising our growing community support and tourist attraction. We will have more to report on this as negotiations unfold.

from the Vice

Maureen Massey
Vice President



EXCITING news with the JT 707 finally on its way to its new home at HARS Shellharbour Airport.

It seems like forever since we had the dream to fly it back to Australia, but as such in aviation, not to be. However, after many team visits to Georgia, and many hours spent deliberating on the best way to bring the 707 home, the decision was made, and finally the aircraft is on its way by sea!

There has been much media coverage on the operation thus far, some of it correct, but unfortunately, a lot is incorrect! Nevertheless, it is publicity, and the public is now aware that the JT 707 will be at HARS in early May.

A big thank you goes to all the HARS members who gave their time to work on the aircraft whilst in Georgia, and also helping with the preparation for dismantling and shipping. Especially to Steve Ferris, without him and his expertise, this could be another story. Thank you Steve.

Of course, the real test will be when the 707 arrives at the HARS facility, and the task begins to unload and reassemble it. There have been many questions asked about how, who and when this will happen, answer.....watch this space!

Like all HARS projects, it will happen. It will be positioned in Hangar # 1 until the reassembly has finished and then moved out for the next step... taxiing.

Cheers.

Maureen

Our 707 is on the Move...



Starting the dismantling process.

SINCE the last update which covered the packing of the tailplanes removed by Stambaugh Aviation, HARS has engaged the services of Worldwide Aircraft Recovery, an American company which specialises in dismantling and shipping aircraft.

They are a company which has a very good reputation and their history

includes relocating 8 SR71 aircraft and a significant number of KC135s, which are virtually the same as our 707-138, as well as numerous other aircraft types.

Work on the dismantling started on the 8 December 2025 and Wayne Studdert and I visited them in Brunswick, to ensure we were all on

the same page. We want to be able to taxi the aircraft at Albion Park, so it was very important to see how the wings were parted from the fuselage. For example, if the wiring looms had to be cut, the cuts had to be staggered and then each wire identified. Worldwide are very professional and all was in order.



...on the trailer.

In February 2026 when we returned to the US, they had removed the 3 undercarriage legs and the fuselage was sitting on a low trailer. Two of the crew (the team was only 3) were working inside the centre wing fuel tank, which is a very confined space, and even though they are small people, they were unable to sit up straight. Their job was to remove the sealant from around the heads and tails of approximately 2400 fasteners each side and then undo them. In all, Jesse and Ryan spent 63 days doing this job.

On the outside, Jay the 3rd man and leader of the group, was busy removing numerous rivets and huckbolt-fasteners on the front and rear wing spar, as well as liaising with the local authorities for permits to move the fuselage and wings to the port of Brunswick.

Before sending it to the Port, the entire aircraft, and all the removed pieces, had to be cleaned. Firstly, everything was sprayed with a diluted bleach solution and then pressure washed. Inside the aircraft Wayne and I spent 2 days super cleaning the interior and checking every cupboard, nook and cranny. Then we moved into the baggage area where we spent another 2 days wrapping cleaned panels and stowing them. We also removed the two spare nose wheels for cleaning and restoring. A dischargeable Aerosol insecticide was left in every compartment we later found out that the Port would also fumigate the aircraft before shipping.

The wings were finally removed on 8 March and the fuselage soon taken to the Port. The wings followed shortly after along with a container holding the landing gear and other bits that had been removed.

At the time of writing the shipment was due to leave on either the 19 March or the 29 March and with a bit of luck should arrive on 9 May at Port Kembla, hopefully in time for the Airshow; "here's hoping!"



ABOVE: A confined space to work in.

BELOW: Wings removed.

BELOW LEFT: ...up and away.



AROUND THE HANGARS



Neptune 273

Photo:
Terry Scanlan.



P2V-7 Neptune 273 getting a little touch up painting done.

Victa and Auster

Story & Photos:
Terry Scanlan.

BOTH these small single engined aircraft are undergoing their annual inspection and will return to flight when the annual inspections have been completed.



The Victa and Auster Aircraft.

AROUND THE HANGARS



Its not all about Aircraft Maintenance



Ken and his team restoring the circa 1960 Airstairs.



AROUND THE HANGARS



The ex-RAAF B707-338 Cockpit and Cabin taking shape



DAVE Barnes and Col Boundy are progressing the restoration of the ex-RAAF B707-338 and it is now looking like a complete cockpit with the Pilots, Engineers and Navigators panels almost complete.

Work on the cabin continues with the installation of seats and a galley.



TOP LEFT: Pilots panel.

LEFT: Flight Engineers panel.

BELOW LEFT:

Navigators station.

BELOW:

Cabin interior with seats and galley.



AROUND THE HANGARS



Greetings from the 'Fury' team

Story: Deb Farquhar.
Photos: Terry Scanlan.



TO the regulars at Hangar 1: you may have noticed a dramatic transformation taking place on WG630.

After months (and years!) of behind-the-scenes prep, the Fury Team is thrilled to finally be applying the paint and ID markings that bring this bird to life.

We're currently "all hands-on deck" to get her looking her best for the May Air Show.

Our "to-do" list for the next few weeks is ambitious: we're aiming to get the canopy, spinner, and LGDs back on, plus a few more body sections and another splash of paint to her forward section.

It's been wonderful seeing so many HARS members and visitors stopping by Hangar 1 to check on our progress. The support means the world to us!

Cheers, Brian, Deb, Glenn, & Ron.



The Sea Fury is coming to life!

STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS... STOP PRESS...



The Travolta B707 is actually on the ship and on its way to HARS.

Photo: Courtesy of Worldwide Aircraft Recovery.

New Facility at HARS

Photos, Story:
Terry Scanlan.



HARS now has access to the old terminal building adjacent to OJA. It will be used for Tarmac Day BBQs and also to receive and process bus tours.



Connie's Return to Flight on the 30th Anniversary of its Arrival in Sydney



HARS Super Constellation 3 February 2026.

ON 3 February 1996, the HARS Super Constellation arrived in Sydney after the long flight across the Pacific Ocean. Thirty years on, this aircraft is still flying and crewed by many of the HARS members that recovered and flew the aircraft to Australia so many years ago.

Connie has been the Flagship of the HARS fleet of aircraft since its arrival in Sydney, attending many airshows, doing long outback tours and being the main attraction at HARS over those years. It is a credit to the engineering staff, pilots and other members that have kept this aircraft in the air over the 30 years

since it arrived in Australia especially since the opinion of many at the time was that "it can never be done", they should never say that to an Ozzie, particularly a HARS member.

In its service with Qantas, the early models, L-749, circa 1947 and originally leased from BOAC, operated the Kangaroo Route to London. In later years the L-1049 Super Constellation replaced the L-749s and continued the service. The Kangaroo Route got its name from the many stops (hops) it made on its way to London. (see separate article in this edition).

Captains Choice, a luxury tour operator introduced a new tour for its customers with a flight in a modern Jet Airliner, an Airbus A330-300, revisiting the Kangaroo Route stopping at all the stops that the original route had. To set the mood for their passengers, a Cocktail party was arranged for them at the Opera House. Unbeknown to the group, it had been arranged several weeks prior to their departure that the HARS Connie and Southern Cross Replica would overfly the Opera House to celebrate the start of their trip.

Planning for this exercise began weeks before the event date of 3 February 2026 with all issues on the table, ATC negotiations, aircraft serviceability, crew availability, as the Connie had not flown for some time.

The date was set for 3 February with a departure time of 1730hrs for the Connie and 1700hrs for the Southern Cross Replica. The plan was for the SC to enter Sydney Harbour and do orbits around the Opera House at 1845hrs. The Connie would follow and do its orbits after the SC departed. To enable this to happen during the afternoon peak hour at Mascot with many arrivals and departures is a nightmare for the ATC (Air Traffic Control) and is very much dependant on which runways are in use at the time the HARS aircraft needed to be



The 1947 Kangaroo Route that the tour will follow.
(Photo courtesy of Captain's Choice)



Joining the Victor One airway at Jibbon Point.

doing their orbits.

The planned route for Connie was from Long Reef to the harbour, leaving the harbour via South Head and then

coastal to HARS.

On the morning of 3 February, all was looking good, the weather forecast was OK, both aircraft fuelled and

ready and negotiations with ATC were promising as the whole operation was dependant on a RWY16 configuration at Sydney. During the course of the afternoon the winds shifted



The Connie thrilling residents of St Huberts Island on the Central Coast.

to a northerly causing a runway configuration change to RWY34. The SC flight was cancelled and the Connie crew decided to depart and fly up to Sydney and try their luck. The flight would have thrilled the Captains Choice Group with the planned display outside the Opera House.

With twenty-seven HARS members onboard, Connie departed on time at 1730hrs and tracked up the coast joining the Victor One airway at Jibbon Point. The view of the coast from 500ft was spectacular and got the attention of many that first heard, then saw the Connie fly past their homes.

Sadly, when finally, ATC said that they couldn't allow the Connie to enter the harbour due to the departures of aircraft to the North, Connie, after pleasing many residents up and down the coast, headed south back along the coast and landed safely at Home Base.



On the Way Home with Bob De La Hunty and Bruce Simpson flying, Wayne Studdert at the Flight Engineers Panel and Mark Durden in the Observer's seat.

This exercise was very successful as the Connie got a well needed run, Social Media and YouTube lit up with

photos and videos and we even had some enquiries from members of the public wanting to join HARS.

One resident who saw Connie fly past had this to say in an email received 4 February.

Hello HARS team,

I wanted to get in touch to let you know that my Family and I were lucky enough to witness "CONNIE" your Super Constellation during her coastal passes over Forresters Beach NSW this past Tuesday 03/02/26.

We first heard the sound of the engines yet we were inside the house, we immediately knew that noise was something special. As the aircraft came into view, my father instantly identified it as a Constellation, and it was instant awe! We ran outside and were waving from our back deck as she made her first northbound pass at approximately 1200 ft, further offshore (East of our location). As we were sitting there on the back deck talking (almost de-briefing) about what we just saw, that unmistakable Radial Rumble in the distance was approaching again!

Then, she appeared. Making another

pass southbound along the coast (now West of our location) again at around 1200 ft. This second pass was closer to us (maybe the crew saw us waving)? She was noticeably faster, around ~200 knots. The sound was incredible — the prop tips clearly working and those rolling radial thunders filling the air. It was truly beautiful and a privilege to see and hear.

We were waving once again and hopefully letting the Crew know what an absolute privilege and a family memory they were creating. Connie is a true "Hens Tooth" and a Flying one at that!

Just to witness her flying. Pretty much having a Unicorn passing over where we live is in itself is incredible. It made it more so especially since I was sharing that experience with my Dad, Mum, 93yr old Grandmother and my 4yr old Daughter just made such an already rare experience that

much more incredibly special, so, Thank You!

She made another northbound pass (east of our location once again) At 1225ft again a bit slower at 190kts but closer to the coastline.

As "Connie" made her return southbound (west of our location, yet a little further away now) This was absolute magic. She was at 1275ft 208kts and proceeded into a smooth held bank directly in line to us out to the west as if to say goodbye! THAT was AMAZING!!!!

If you could also pass on our sincere Gratitude, Thanks and much Respect to everyone single person involved in keeping such an incredibly special aircraft in the air. She is stunning and an absolute privilege to witness.

(disclaimer – The altitude and speeds mentioned above were taken from Flight Radar24 and may not represent the actual altitude and speed).

Parkes Aviation Museum Reports

Updates from Parkes...

Story:
Mike De La Hunty.

THE drive is on at Parkes to recruit more volunteers to man our growing Museum site.

More members are needed to help out with Sundays and other days, so the Museum can open through the week to cater for the growing visitations to our site.

Last week was busy for members as they cleared and prepared the area for the RAAUS flying in. Lots of rubbish removed and excess stock relocated for the event last Saturday.

Work continued on the Dakota, the airstairs, the access steps for the P3, and ground equipment. The engineering team has made good progress on the Dak aileron and the wing repair is continuing. The P3 steps are next and we have explored Bunnings pre-made

stairs, as well as asking GB Welding for a quote, so a decision can be made on receipt of both proposals.

The students continued with the paint prep on the Qantas Air Stairs, and member Tony Cook introduced a new man to us, David White, who has offered to finish off the bogging and spray paint them in Qantas period colours. Welcome aboard David!

Tours are picking up with a visit booked in from a Car Club (10 vehicles) and 50 students are visiting from Middelton Public School.

We are also proud to be housing our new exhibit the F100 QantasLink Fokker aircraft, recently donated to HARS by Qantas. *See separate article...*

Welcome to your New Home F100

Story: Maureen Massey.
Photos: Courtesy of HARS Parkes members.



The F-100 arrives at Parkes.

QantasLink and HARS Partner to Preserve Aviation History in Regional NSW

ON Tuesday 10 February QantasLink Fokker F100, VH-NHO, flew from Perth, WA to Parkes full stop.

QantasLink donated this aircraft to HARS Parkes Aviation Museum, supporting aviation heritage preservation and regional tourism in Central West New South Wales.

The aircraft will become a permanent feature of the HARS Parkes Aviation Museum and is expected to deliver strong economic, educational, and tourism benefits to the Parkes region and surrounding communities.

The donation supports HARS' long term development plans, including a proposed \$15.5 million purpose-built museum facility on a 7.6-hectare site provided by Parkes Shire Council. The expanded facility will further strengthen Parkes' position as a regional aviation and tourism destination.

HARS President, Bob De La Hunty OAM, accepted the donation on behalf of HARS and acknowledged the F100 will play a key role in expanding public engagement and education programs at Parkes. The aircraft will also enable hands-on aviation learning experiences for students and visitors, while supporting our broader vision for a world-class regional aviation museum, he said.

The Fokker VH-NHO will be accessible to the public and will feature interactive experiences including cockpit access and guided onboard activities. Similar initiatives have proven highly successful at HARS' Base facility at Shellharbour Airport, home to the former Qantas Boeing 747-438 Jumbo Jet VH-OJA.

An excellent video of the arrival on YouTube can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JV0nArqP8rQ>



Welcome to your New Home F100 continued

The new arrival making some new friends.



Kelly Hendry (Tourism and Economic Development), Terry Job, Col Lucas and Mike De La Hunty.



Bob in the cockpit of the F-100.



Kelly Hendry in the cockpit of the F-100.



Local Parkes folk come out to see the new arrival.

AAHOF Induction Ceremony and Dinner



THE AAHOF (Australian Aviation Hall of Fame) 2025 Induction Ceremony was held at the HARS Museum on Saturday, 14 March 2026. It was attended by some 180 people, many politicians, dignitaries and several HARS members.

The event commenced at 1630hrs in Hangar One, a great setting with many aircraft positioned in the hangar for the guests to admire. Canapes and drinks were served with many guests sheltering from the sun outside under the wings of 'Connie'. HARS member, Shaun Browne treated the guests with a display of his P-51 Mustang flying some high-speed passes over the field.

Dick Smith, one of HARS's major supporters, arrived in his recently acquired Bell 206L helicopter accompanied by members of his family. Many visitors took the opportunity to chat with Dick and inspect his helicopter.

At 1730hrs, all guests were invited to proceed to the AAHOF area to be seated for the start of dinner and the official proceedings of the evening. Patrick Hornby, a director of AAHOF was the MC for the evening and introduced many



Guests under the wing of Connie.

guest speakers including Aunty Lindy Lawler who delivered her 'Welcome to Country' speech and Air Chief Marshall Mark Binskin AC (ret'd) and an AAHOF Patron who spoke to the Air Cadets present for the introductory formalities.

AAHOF Chairperson, Mr. Greg Hood AO opened the proceedings and spoke at length about AAHOF and its association with HARS. He also made mention of the Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) recognising AAHOF's commitment to preserving the history of aviation in Australia by bestowing their most prestigious award, the FAI Group Diploma of Honour on AAHOF.



The Bell 206L with the Southern Cross Replica in the background.



Maureen Massey, Dick Smith and Bob De La Hunty.



The Air Cadets being addressed by Air Chief Marshall Mark Binskin AC (Retd).

Inductees for 2025 were Bill Bristow, Greg Dunstone, William (Billy) Hart and Sir Ivan Holyman KBE MC MID. Details of all Inductees can be found on the AAHOF website www.aahof.com.au.

Mr. Bill Bristow's business partner accepted the award on his behalf as Mr. Bristow passed away late in 2025. Mr. Greg Dunstone was present to accept his award.

The proceedings and dinner finished around 2100hrs with many of the guests commenting favourably on the excellent quality of the catering provided by Culinarius.



Guests enjoying dinner served by Culinarius.



The Bell 206L and the Huey Helicopters together.



Dick Smith with Bob De La Hunty with the Air Force Cadets Guard of Honour.

The Qantas Kangaroo Route to London

Story: Terry Scanlan.
Photos: Courtesy of Bob Smith.
www.aussieairliners.org

IN the years following the Second World War, Qantas Empire Airways transformed long-distance air travel, linking Australia with Europe using some of the most elegant and capable piston-engine aircraft ever built: the Lockheed Constellation and later the Super Constellation. Prior to this time, travel to England was either many weeks at sea or by air involving many stops across Asia, the Middle East and Europe.



The Lancastrian, the first Qantas aircraft on the Kangaroo Route to London. (Photo Courtesy of the Qantas Heritage Collection).



L-1049 Super Constellation.
(Photo courtesy of the P. Sheehan Collection).



A Qantas B707-138 as used on the Kangaroo Route.
(Photo courtesy of the Qantas Heritage Collection).

In December 1947, Qantas introduced the Kangaroo Route using post war Lancastrians which were Lancaster Bombers converted for civilian use.

These aircraft were replaced by the introduction of the Lockheed L-749 and L-1049 Constellations. Capable of longer range and higher cruising speeds, these aircraft dramatically improved comfort and reliability on ultra long-haul routes.

The Kangaroo Route typically involved stops at Darwin, Singapore, Calcutta, Karachi, Cairo, and Rome before reaching London. Even with these stops, the journey took around four days—still lengthy by modern standards, but revolutionary at the time. Passengers disembarked at each stop to rest, eat, and often overnight in carefully selected hotels, turning the trip into a grand intercontinental adventure.

The Lockheed Super Constellation, L-1049 was introduced in 1954 and represented the pinnacle of piston-engine, long-haul airliners with greater range, more powerful engines and improved comfort. Flying to London with Qantas became a prestigious experience with only the wealthy able to afford the cost of that journey. Airfares at the time were approximately £600 one way or £1,200 return. In today's money, a one-way fare to London would cost approximately \$20,000.00.

Sadly, this era had to come to an end with the introduction of the jet age and in 1959, Qantas introduced the Boeing 707 on the Kangaroo Route drastically reducing the travel time and signalling the end of the piston-engine era.



L-1049 Super Constellation.
(Photo courtesy of the P. Sheehan Collection).

HARS Long Service Dinner No. 2

Story
Maureen Massey.



Life Members attending the lunch.

A BEAUTIFUL luncheon was held on Saturday 29th November, to celebrate HARS Long Service Membership.

16 Members attended this time, and between them have amassed 418 years.

The function was held in the AAHOF area, and the tables and décor was blue and white.

The meal was catered for by Sherryl Sherson and her crew, and was, as usual, first class.

The attendees were:

Bob De La Hunty, Michael De La Hunty, Don Hindle, Maureen Massey, Jim Hayes, Jim Marshall, Warren Goodhew, Gary Squire, John Meares, Jim Thurston, John Hewitt, Graham Smith (with carer daughter Cathy), Trevor Wallace, Clive Gibbons and Brian Kelly.

A great time was had by all, and our thanks go to Sherryl and her team for making the day a huge success.



The 16 Life Members enjoying lunch

PARKING STATION FULL

Rarely seen. Hangar One with a full complement of aircraft in the hangar.





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A3-42

New Life Members Awards

Story: Maureen Massey.
Photos: Ian Poulter.

TERRY Scanlan was awarded Life Membership at the HARS AGM in December.

Terry has been instrumental in organising Training Courses, Interviewing New Members, and setting up Computer systems throughout HARS.

Terry is Manager of the HARS Retail Shop, and is responsible for ordering and maintaining shop supplies. He is also a key player controlling the Membership System and a Sub Editor of the Phoenix Magazine.

Congratulations Terry for a wonderful achievement, and many thanks for your support of HARS.

Doug Philpott has been a well-known face of HARS for many years, meeting and greeting our many visitors, and directing them on tours of our facility.

Doug also represents HARS on many occasions, giving presentations to Probus Clubs, Lions Clubs and RSL Clubs.

Doug is the Manager of the HARS Website and has kept that role for years, often a thankless task.

Doug has been a Tour Guide and a willing worker for years and is often called upon at short notice to fill in for someone who is sick. His manner has always been pleasant and he is a dedicated HARS member.

We thank Doug for his support of HARS and wish him well as a "lifer".



Terry Scanlan.



Doug Philpott.

HARS Aircraft and Crews Celebrate Australia Day

Story: Terry Scanlan.
Photos: Howard Mitchell.

AUSTRALIA Day 2026 once again saw several HARS aircraft in the air to celebrate Australia Day in the Shellharbour area.

The aircraft were staged to depart at intervals from 0900 and proceed to overfly Reddall Reserve at Windang where a large gathering of visitors assembled to participate in Australia Day activities. They were delighted to see our vintage aircraft overfly the park giving them a fine view of our aircraft.

Aircraft participating in the flying display were the AP-3C Orion, Grumman Tracker, Lockheed Neptune, Douglas C-47, Southern Cross Replica and the Huey Helicopter.



Locals enjoying the Australia Day celebrations.



The Orion overhead Reddall Reserve.



The AP-3C Orion positioning for the flyover.

MEMBER PROFILE...

Jeanette Whiteley

JEANETTE Whiteley was born in Bulli and raised across several Illawarra suburbs, including Russell Vale, Berkeley, and Barrack Heights. She attended Berkeley Primary School, Warilla Primary School, and Warilla High School, where she completed her Higher School Certificate.

From an early age, Jeanette enjoyed reading and embroidery, particularly cross-stitch. She was also a competitive ballroom dancer for a number of years. Her interest in practical and technical work developed while helping her father rebuild an old car.

In her final months of high school, Jeanette worked at a car yard washing cars and sought a motor mechanic apprenticeship. At the time, this was not a common career path for women in the early 1980s. She was subsequently accepted as an electrical apprentice with BHP. While completing her induction, she was offered entry into the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and chose to pursue a military career.

Jeanette enlisted in the RAAF in April 1982, initially as a Radio Technician (RADTECH). Following early training challenges—and as one of the first women accepted into the role—she later transferred to Signals Operator (SIGSOP). Training was completed at RAAF Laverton and RAAF Pearce.

Throughout her RAAF career, Jeanette was posted to:

- 3 Telecommunications Unit, RAAF Pearce, WA
- Joint Telecommunications Unit Melbourne, co-located with the Defence Signals Directorate at Victoria Barracks
- Air Intelligence Centre, RAAF Glenbrook, NSW
- Joint Telecommunications School, Borneo Barracks, Cabarlah, QLD
- Defence Signals Directorate (now the Australian Signals Directorate), Russell Offices, ACT
- Defence Intelligence Organisation, Russell Offices, ACT

While she did not deploy on operational overseas service, Jeanette spent three months in 2002 at the Kunia Regional SIGINT Operations Centre in Hawaii. She also participated in Exercises Pitch Black 1991 and Kangaroo 1992 and completed an ADFA Battlefield Study Tour to Turkey in 2000.



Story: Terry Scanlan. Photos: Jeanette Whiteley, Terry Scanlan

In mid-2018, Jeanette transferred to the RAAF Reserve and was posted to the Air Force Language Manager team based at RAAF Glenbrook. The team is responsible for raising, training, and sustaining the RAAF linguist workforce.

Jeanette first visited the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) while still serving in the Permanent Air Force and was immediately impressed by the aircraft on display, as well as the knowledge and passion of the members. Although she intended to join upon retirement, COVID delayed those plans. She officially joined HARS in 2022 and has since enjoyed being an active member of the organisation.

Fun Facts

Jeanette was a debutante at the Wollongong Combined Masonic Ball on 29 June 1979. She is an avid traveller and has visited all seven continents. Highlights of her travels include completing the Inca Trail in Peru, visiting pyramids in Central America and Egypt, climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, seeing the “Big Five” in Africa, touring the Gallipoli battlefields, camping in Antarctica and completing a polar plunge, and circumnavigating Tasmania.



ACW Recruit (ACW/R) Whiteley during recruit training at 1 Recruit Training Unit, RAAF Edinburgh, SA.

ACW Whiteley during Initial Employment Training at the School of Radio, RAAF Laverton, VIC.

Chief of Defence Force, Angus Houston congratulates Jeanette on her promotion to Warrant Officer in 2007.

Southern Cross Visit to Sydney Airport



**Southern Cross on a left base for runway 25 Sydney.
Photo: Howard Mitchell.**

"IT'S the most difficult thing you could fly in all your life! Just how Smithy and Ulm flew it across the Pacific at night in a storm is just amazing to me." Dick Smith on flying the Southern Cross replica with John Pope shortly after it was built.

Long time supporter of the Southern Cross replica project, Dick Smith, finally got his chance to re-acquaint himself with the aeroplane on Thursday 19 March when HARS was invited



**L to R: Alex Kingsford Smith, Charles Ulm, Dick Smith, Bruce Simpson, Mark Thurstan, Bruce Allan.
Photo: Howard Mitchell.**



**Southern Cross replica landing at Sydney airport.
Photo: Nigel Coghlan**

to participate in an event at Sydney airport with the aeroplane. Joining him on board for the journey from Shellharbour were Alex Kingsford Smith, great grand nephew of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, and Charles Ulm, grandson of Charles Ulm, Smithy's business manager and co-pilot on the original Southern Cross for the Pacific crossing in 1928.

Throughout the previous week the Southern Cross team had also been entertaining Jane Brennan, granddaughter of Allan Hancock, the American businessman who provided funding for Charles Kingsford Smith to make the first ever crossing of the Pacific by air in the Southern Cross. Jane came all the way from the United States for this event and was onboard for the return flight back to Shellharbour later that day.

Since before the restoration of the Southern Cross replica was completed Sydney airport had expressed their wish to see the aeroplane land there, the airport being named for Sir Charles. The planning ramped up after the first post-restoration flight in 2023 and it seemed that everyone involved was keen to see the Southern Cross on the tarmac at Sydney airport once again.



**Jane Brennan onboard the Southern Cross.
Photo: Mark Keech.**

However, the weather forecast leading up to the day was ominous with potential thunderstorms bringing unpredictable winds and extreme rainfall. Thankfully, the dawn brought relatively clear skies and calm winds so the decision was taken to depart early to reduce the risk of being caught in severe weather, though a minor technical issue delayed the departure until the scheduled time anyway. The remaining HARS contingent travelled to Sydney by bus and arrived just in time to watch the Southern Cross arrive on Runway 25.

The aeroplane was parked on Bay 12 which was directly visible from the Dreamliner room where the official proceedings took place. The purpose of the visit was to celebrate the return to flight of the Southern Cross replica, and to lay the foundations for the celebration of the centenary of the first Pacific crossing in 2028. It was quite a sight, seeing our radiant Southern Cross amongst the A380s and 787s.



**Southern Cross dwarfed by an Airbus A380.
Photo: Howard Mitchell.**

The function was well attended by many HARS members, Sydney airport staff, John Love, son of Nigel Love who founded the airport, Bill Wilkins, descendant of Sir Hubert Wilkins, people associated with the building of the replica, descendants of the people involved in the 1928 Pacific crossing, politicians and dignitaries.

"Today we celebrate a story that continues to shape us. When the original Southern Cross flew (across the Pacific), aviation was in its infancy: open cockpits, limited instrumentation and extraordinary courage and extraordinary risk. The flight changed how Australians saw distance and it shrank the Pacific and connected us to the World," said Scott Charlton, Chief Executive of Sydney Airport.

"This today may be seen as a practise run because in 2028 it'll be a hundred years since that spectacular flight across the Pacific," Jim Thurstan, HARS Project Manager for the Southern Cross replica restoration said.



Jim Thurstan. Photo: Howard Mitchell.

Bill Antel was one of the original builders of the Southern Cross replica and he said, "I'm absolutely delighted that the aircraft that's sitting out there right now is going to write its own history."

"Our flight this morning is a timely reminder of the extraordinary achievements of Charles Ulm, Charles Kingsford Smith, Hubert Wilkins, Bill Taylor, Dick Smith and many other Australians in the field of aviation over the past century," said Charles Ulm.

As we approach the centenary of Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm's historic flight there are many who have hopes that the Southern Cross replica will feature prominently in the celebrations to commemorate it. Brisbane airport was also represented at the function and we shouldn't forget that Kingsford Smith's first landfall on the Pacific crossing was at Brisbane on 9 June 1928,



**Southern Cross over Sydney Harbour.
Photo: Howard Mitchell**

the day before their arrival at Sydney.

Matt Thistlethwaite, Federal Member for Kingsford Smith, said, "Picture this: it's the 10th of June 1928 and the Mascot aerodrome is not much more than a cow paddock, yet on that morning 300,000 members of the community, that was one third of the Sydney population at the time, turned up here at the aerodrome to welcome Kingsford Smith and Ulm on the back of their historic journey across the Pacific."

During the function a thunderstorm had developed over Bankstown that raised the attention of the crew of the aircraft. Reports indicated that 38 mm of rain had fallen during the storm and it was decided that we should depart as soon as possible in case the storm moved any closer. Once again though, the departure was delayed and ended up taking place at the original scheduled time. Thankfully, the storm remained over the Bankstown area and was no threat to our planned flight back to Shellharbour.

The aeroplane departed Sydney on runway 07 at 14:38 local time and clearance was given to climb on runway heading to 1,500 feet and then turn left to track direct to Sydney Harbour Bridge where approval was given to conduct orbits over the harbour. Throughout the exercise wonderful support was given by Airservices Australia staff and every clearance that was requested was given without hesitation. Sydney airport waived the landing fees. As Scott Charlton said, "just to tell you what a big deal that is, we don't waive them for the Prime Minister, and we don't waive them for Taylor Swift!"

After completing orbits of the harbour, the return flight to Shellharbour was uneventful. Accompanying the Southern Cross replica was Brett Leech's Bell 206 helicopter with Howard Mitchell and Kurt Ams onboard to capture the event on video and some of the amazing photographs that illustrate this article. One of the videos can be seen by following this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=di55zZWZZ7U>

To quote Charles Ulm once again, "For those of us connected to these pioneers of Australian aviation it brings a real sense of pride and remembrance. We hope the Southern Cross's return to the air keeps the spirit of those early aviators alive for generations to come."



Photo Howard Mitchell.

Southern Cloud Memorial - Cooma

IT was a cool, partly cloudy Saturday morning at Mascot on 21 March 1931. Rain was expected and a further southerly change was due to arrive sometime in the afternoon when Captain Travis Shortridge and co-pilot C.L. Dunnell boarded six passengers onto the Southern Cloud, bound for Melbourne. As 8:00 am rolled around on his gold pocket watch Captain Shortridge observed that the tops of the cumulus clouds were already beginning to tower above the mists of the previous night's rain. Little did the passengers know that these clouds were a portent of the extreme weather they would soon encounter and that they were about to become part of Australia's first major airline disaster and a mystery that captivated the nation and endured for 27 years.

The Southern Cloud, VH-UMF was one of five Avro 618 Ten aircraft operated by Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm's fledgling airline, Australian National Airways, and the very first aircraft of its type off the Avro production line. The aircraft was chosen for ANA because it was a license-built version of the Fokker F.VII trimotor aircraft that Kingsford Smith and Ulm had so successfully flown all over the world – the Southern Cross.

Nobody really knows what happened to the Southern Cloud that day after it departed Sydney at 8:10 am. It had been heard flying overhead in north-east Victoria at about midday, but the weather



**Southern Cloud refuelling in Coffs Harbour 1930.
Photo: National Museum of Australia.**

had turned much worse than what was forecast and there were severe thunderstorms. Some reports indicated that it had turned back to the north. When it didn't arrive in Melbourne by its scheduled time of 3:30 pm, it was assumed that they must have landed somewhere remotely to wait for the storms to pass.

By Sunday morning the weather had improved but concerns for the missing aircraft were now intensifying. ANA had suspended all flights, and a search was begun on the Monday that ultimately involved over 20 aircraft and more than 1,000 people, a search that included the airline's chief pilots, Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm.

After 18 days the extensive search was reluctantly called off without a trace of the Southern Cloud being found. It was as though it had just vanished into thin air.

That was until October 1958 when young Snowy Mountains Scheme carpenter, Tom Sonter, was out for a hike. "I was working seven days a week. It was very tiring, but I decided to take a few hours off, on a Sunday morning, it was a beautiful day, to climb Black Jack Mountain," said Tom.

"I started going through the bush in the direction that I thought Black Jack Mountain would be but I had to get through a mass of saplings. I tried to go right through them. I realised I had no condition left. I hadn't been climbing mountains, I'd just been working 10 hours a day for three or four months, so I gave up the idea of



**The data plate showing Avro machine number 1.
Photo: Mark Keech.**

Black Jack Mountain."

"...then looking down below me, I saw a strange mound of earth. I had no idea how it could be there, it was a different colour – a dark orangey colour and it had a couple of mounds. I had a look around the area and saw the two sides of a plane. I thought, it could be well known that it is here but just in case I took a small (data) plate off the fuselage and took it back to camp."

The authorities were very interested in that small plate as it showed the machine type as an Avro Ten and the machine number of one, proving beyond any doubt that Tom had discovered the crash site of the Southern Cloud. Tom took the next day off work to lead the police to the site and in that moment the great mystery of the disappearance of the Southern Cloud was solved.

The wreckage of the Southern Cloud was found about 14 miles east of its planned flight track in heavily timbered terrain in the Snowy Mountains, impacting the slope in a north easterly direction about 400 feet below the top of the ridge. One of the artifacts recovered at the site was a gold pocket watch that had stopped at 1:15, believed to be the time of impact.

Saturday 21 March 2026 marked the 95th anniversary of the loss of the Southern Cloud and a commemoration was held in Cooma, attended by Tom Sonter and many of the descendants of the passengers and crew that perished that fateful day. We intended to fly the Southern Cross replica and have it on display at Cooma



**Tom Sonter leads authorities to the site of the wreckage.
Photo: Sydney Morning Herald.**



Tom Sonter with NPWS Ranger Michelle Williams.
Photo: Mark Keech.



Martin Treloyn doing aviation archaeology.
Photo: Mark Keech.

airport as part of the commemoration but, just like 95 years ago, the weather would have made flying there treacherous at best.

In fact, the weather systems that were active on this day were almost identical to the conditions that prevailed in 1931: towering cumulus and cumulonimbus clouds producing thunderstorms with heavy rain and damaging winds. When the decision was made to not fly the Southern Cross, I chose to drive to Cooma to represent HARS and the Southern Cross team at the commemoration, joining Frank Purvis and Martin Treloyn who were already there.

A dinner was held at the Cooma Car Club, hosted by the Cooma Lions Club and Snowy Hydro. Many of the descendants of the passengers and crew of the Southern Cloud spoke of their memories of the events and the discovery of the crash site. Martin and I spoke about the Southern Cross replica and its similarity to the Southern Cloud. We explained why it was not possible to fly to the event and that we didn't want a repeat of the events of 95 years ago.

The following morning a hike was organised to visit the actual crash site. Rangers from the National Parks and Wildlife Service accompanied the group and they had been there in the days before to ensure that the track was clear and safe for so many people to walk.

The first 4-5 kilometres of the hike was on a fire trail that ended



Approximate location of crash site. Photo: Mark Keech.

at a small weir on what is now known as Shortridge Creek. From there, the crash site was only about 400 m through steep, dense bush that gave us a sense of how rugged the bush must have been for Tom in 1958. When those ahead of me on the track had arrived at the site, I was only metres away but couldn't see it because it blended in so well. I'm sure that if Tom had taken a different line through the bush that day in 1958, the Southern Cloud disappearance might still be a mystery today.

Little remains of the wreckage today, but what is there is easily recognisable to anyone familiar with the construction of the Southern Cross. The horizontal stabiliser still has the strut and the leading edge of the elevator attached and there are some clearly identifiable pieces of fuselage frame. A memorial is there that lists the names of all who perished, attached to the remains of the front cargo door.

There is no doubt that the loss of the Southern Cloud was a contributing factor in the demise of Australian National Airways, but it also led to improvements in airline safety, including the compulsory use of radio on commercial flights and improvements in weather forecasting and communication technologies - things that we take for granted today.

This was Australia's first major airline disaster and the mystery surrounding it is not unlike the mystery of the disappearance of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 in 2014.

I asked Tom if he ever made it to the top of Black Jack Mountain. "No, I never got the chance. Someone offered to drive me there once but it wouldn't be the same," he said. Tom is 94 and he came on the hike all the way to the weir on Shortridge Creek but he didn't trek the last 400 m to the crash site. He has been there before.



Memorial at the crash site. Photo: Mark Keech.

Reminiscing the “Good Old Days”



Connie with four turning and four ‘glowing’.

I CAN remember the days when I first joined HARS, 30 years ago, when every weekend there was an aircraft flying somewhere, whether it was an invitation to visit an air force base, or an air show, HARS was constantly mustering crews for “away” trips.

The demand for Connie was extraordinary; not only did it attract huge crowds at Avalon, but in the early days of Avalon, Connie used to open and close the show. Arriving on the Thursday afternoon, securing our position and offloading the shop, preparations began for the “Lumiere” which would take place on the Friday evening, signalling the opening of the Avalon air show.

Restricted to essential crew, the Connie took to the skies on dusk and staged the most amazing air show routine to be seen for a long time.

The huge crowds that gathered for this very event were never disappointed. If I had a dollar for every flash that went off during the flight, I would be very rich indeed!

The Connie looked amazing with the flames flowing from each engine changing colour from red to blue as the mixture was altered by the flight engineer on board. Staging this display at night enhanced the audio-visual impact of the capabilities of a magnificently designed aircraft of bygone days and demonstrated the perfection of the Curtiss Wright Cyclone 3350 engines, perfectly maintained by the HARS crew.

Of course, when the Connie landed, the crowds would be already lined up to board and inspect this machine that had just thrilled them like no other.



Connie on approach into Narromine.

The same routine was followed for the closing of the show, usually on the Sunday night. That was followed by volunteers commencing the loading and preparation for the flight home on Monday morning.

What a wonderful experience it was for me to have been part of this amazing show, which continued every second year until the incoming new management team for Avalon decided to change the theme and move more into the jet age with more international participation.

However, the 11 shows I attended at Avalon (over 22 years), have been the most rewarding. The huge number of people who boarded and inspected Connie made donations has been instrumental in helping to finance the building of Hangar # 1, the first of the HARS hangars at Shellharbour Airport.

Other “away” trips included open days at air force bases, Williamstown, Townsville, Darwin, Edinburgh, Richmond, Nowra, Point Cook to name a few, each one well attended by families of military, all wanting to visit the Connie and other HARS aircraft such as the Dak, Neptune and Catalina.

HARS always maintained a very professional approach to these visits and was welcomed back several times. Along with donations to visit the aircraft and sales from the HARS shop, these trips provided not only a bit of R & R for the crews but always contributed to the financial stability of HARS.

Those days have gone now, due mainly to 911, which changed the world in more ways than one, but the enthusiasm and passion remain with HARS and their members, who continue to provide a world class Museum for the education and pleasure for future generations to enjoy.

“ The engineering side of HARS has been second to none and can be envied by other aviation organisations ”

Today we are fortunate to have over 800 volunteers, all giving their valuable time to “make it happen” at our Base at Shellharbour Airport. These members are our assets, particularly the “Front or Face” of HARS, those who welcome the public to our facility, conduct tours, and entertain them for a couple of hours. The shop has a great array of all things-aviation and is open, along with the Museum, 7 days a week.

Café Conne has added to the attraction, providing hot meals, snacks and drinks, along with the “best coffee in town” to our many visitors.

Although times have changed and we do not “fly away” a lot anymore, the HARS spirit remains and hopefully we will continue to work together and maintain the wonderful family we have grown into.

The engineering side of HARS has been second to none and can be envied by other aviation organisations. Without this skill set, HARS aircraft would not have been able to attend the “Avalons”, RAAF bases, etc in the past, and we are truly grateful to them.

All in all, we at HARS have a great diverse team, not only pilots and engineers, but people with IT skills, admin, maintenance, painters, cooks and many more, all forming a great organisation.

Thanks to all for the wonderful ride so far!



Connie waves the flag at Avalon (circa 2005).



Rarely seen, Connie on an Aerobridge in Darwin (Circa early 1990s).

Seventy Fifth Anniversary of P.G. Taylor's Flight from Australia to South America



Departure from Rose Bay.

IN March 1951, Sir Patrick Gordon "P. G." Taylor and his crew flew the "Frigate Bird II", a Boeing built Consolidated PB2B-2 Catalina Flying Boat, from Australia eastwards across the Pacific Ocean to Chile in South America.

Many of the world's large Oceans had already been conquered, the Atlantic, Tasman and Indian Ocean but the Pacific Ocean between Australia and South America had yet to be traversed by air.

Captain P.G. Taylor, who had established himself as an accomplished aviator in the 30s, and who was accustomed to long-distance flying, as Navigator on the Southern Cross with Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm, was well qualified to attempt this flight. Taylor's handpicked crew was Captain Harry Purvis as first officer, Angus Allison as radio operator and E. (Blue) L'Huillier as flight engineer with Jack Purvcival as Executive Officer/Press Representative.

The flight departed Rose Bay, Sydney on 13 March 1951, alighting on the Clarence River at Grafton for an overnight stop and a final check of the aircraft before setting off the next morning for Noumea (New Caledonia), Suva (Fiji), Tonga, Aitutaki (Cook Islands), Tahiti (French Polynesia), Mangareva (Gambier Islands), Easter Island (Isla de Pascua) and then the long hop to Valparaiso in Chile, South America arriving on 27 March 1951.

All of the crew have since passed but luckily, Jim Marshall was able to meet with Blue L'Huillier, the Flight Engineer in 2007. Blue was able to give a firsthand account of the flight. With Jim's permission I have included Blue's account of the flight.

Jim had met Blue through friends of Sandy Howard at a dinner in Roma Queensland and during a conversation with Blue it came to be that he was the flight Engineer on the Frigate Bird II and was on the flight in March 1951. Jim made arrangements to meet up with Blue at a later date and get his story of the flight. The article was published in the 2007 Winter edition of the Phoenix magazine and republished below.

After the War, Blue was approached by Captain PG Taylor who told Blue, "that Australia was about to sign an agreement with the USA that would be the envy of other countries". The agreement was that if either country were attacked, they would defend each other. Taylor asked Blue "would you like to take part in a vital mission" and showed Blue a sealed letter from the Prime Minister Robert Menzies, which contained details of a flight-finding an

aerial route over the South Pacific from Australia to South America.

Finding an aerial route over the South Pacific had emerged as an issue during the war in the Pacific. After the war there were also fears that the USSR would stake a claim to Antarctic Territory. This increased the strategic importance of finding a feasible flight path between Australia and South America.

The Australia to Tahiti sector had been completed many times but the flight beyond to South America was something else. From Tahiti two stops were needed, the first at the uninhabited Mangareva Island in French Oceania where fuel supplies had been hidden under a palm tree many months before the flight started.

Blue told me "once we found the fuel drums, we still had to get them to the aircraft. My theory was that if we waited for a few days some curious natives would turn up and they would have boats that we could use to transport the drums to the aircraft. Fortunately, on the third day this proved correct, giving us both boats and a helping hand". Blue went on to say that this was not the end of their troubles. When he tested the fuel, it had started to go off. However, they had no alternative but to use it anyway.

So, the flight to the second stop at remote Easter Island proceeded. Many flights to this isolated place had failed but Taylor was sure his top crew and Catalina could make it. The alighting on the ocean in the lee of the island was OK, however the weather changed putting the Catalina on the windward side of the island necessitating the aircraft be moved to the calmer leeward side and the fuel to be transported across the island. Blue recalls that the take-off was to say the least "hairy" getting airborne on a very rough sea. It was then on to Chile to a very warm welcome from the President and a full check of the aircraft by the Airforce engineers.

Blue recalls that the return flight also had its moments. During the transit of Easter Island, they were caught in another storm in which Taylor was washed overboard and virtually being washed back again. This time the take-off was to be assisted by 2 JATO (jet assisted take off) rockets attached to the aircraft (these had



Captain Taylor (right) being welcomed by Comandante Roberto Parraguez.

been fitted to the hull especially by the RAAF back at Rathmines). The Catalina taxied out from the lee side of the island as far as the huge seas would permit and then started the take off run in towards the cliffs of the island. The aircraft, overloaded with fuel for the long trip back to Mangareva Island, was taking green water over the cockpit as it struggled to pick up speed. As a large wave approached, Taylor waited till the Catalina was at its crest and fired the JATO's. This got them airborne and staggering towards the cliffs with little rate of climb and minimal airspeed. Blue said, "I called Taylor for the OK to jettison the expired rockets but didn't get a response, so I took the initiative and released them giving us enough climb to clear the island".

The rest of the trip, apart from a severe storm between Easter Island and Mangareva Island in which the left float was bouncing on its latch requiring the manual handle to be fitted, wound up tight and tied off, went as planned as far as Tahiti where Taylor selected floats down before Blue could remove the manual handle (if you look at the position of the handle relative to the engineer's legs you can imagine the damage this could do to a young man's future). This resulted in a short hospital stay for Blue in Tahiti.

On return to Sydney, Blue said they were met by a huge crowd including the Prime Minister.

A brief history of PG Taylor

Patrick Gordon Taylor was born in Sydney in 1896. In 1915 he was appointed temporary Lieutenant in 26 Battalion CMF, replacing a man who had joined the AIF. Keen to be on active service too, but rejected by the AIF, he travelled to England at his own expense to join the Royal Flying Corps.

He was commissioned into the RFC on 12 August 1916 and trained as a pilot. He joined 66 Squadron, flying Sopwith Pup scouts. In July 1917 he was awarded the Military Cross and was promoted to Captain, serving with 94 and 88 Squadrons. Taylor returned to Australia in 1919. During the 1920s he flew as a private pilot, completed an engineering course and studied air navigation. In 1933 and 1934 he was second pilot and navigator for Charles Kingsford Smith's Australia-New Zealand flights.

He was navigator on Charles Ulm's Australia-England flights in 1933. Taylor and Kingsford Smith completed the first Australia to the US flight in 1934. In 1935 Taylor was Kingsford Smith's navigator for the King George V Jubilee airmail flight from Australia to New Zealand. Six hours into the flight the starboard engine failed and the aircraft turned back. When the oil pressure dropped on the port engine Taylor saved the flight by climbing out of the fuselage, edging along the engine connecting strut to collect oil from the starboard engine which he then transferred to the port engine. He repeated the process five times and the plane returned safely. For his courage and resourcefulness Taylor was awarded the Empire Gallantry Medal.

In 1939 Taylor made the first flight from Western Australia to Kenya. During the Second World War he ferried flying boats from the US to Australia. In 1943 he joined the RAAF but transferred to



Waiting at Mangareva for help to refuel the aircraft.

the RAF in 1944 ferrying aircraft from Canada to Britain.

He flew an RAF Catalina on a survey flight from Bermuda to Sydney. In 1951 he flew from Australia to Chile in another Catalina. He published eight books on his flying experiences. He was knighted in 1954 and died in 1966.

See separate article on page 37 VH-ASA, Frigate Bird II.



Welcomed home by the then Prome Minister, Sir Robert Menzies.

Wings of Legacy – 35 – 80 – 104

Commemorating the Spirit of Service, Peace and Flight

Thirty-Five years ago, the Russian Antonov An - 124 flew out of Melbourne for an historical world trip, completing the Pole-to-Pole trip in 72.5 hours.

2025 witnessed the eightieth anniversary since the end of WW11.

The skies over Australia became safer after the inauguration of the RAAF one hundred and four years ago.

On the 14th of December 2025, Doctor Viktor D'jamirez welcomed 150 guests to HARS to celebrate the Wings of Legacy, incorporating these three major events on the Australian Calendar. The agenda for the day was always to unite the guests with the spirit of friendship and peace, whilst providing an insight into the traditions enjoyed over the centuries. Of particular interest was the Son of Doctor Viktor D'jamirez, Alexander. Alexander was only 12 years old when he joined the crew of the Antonov An-124 with his primary objective to be the interpreter between the Australian and Russian Air Traffic Control. Alexander spoke fluent English and Russian, while performing his duties as interpreter, with poise and honour.

Alexander spoke quietly to the guests about his experience, his humble yet inspirational involvement in that World record breaking



Rod Walker, Bob De La Hunty holding the Certified map of the Pole-to-Pole flight with Alexander D'jamirez.

Pole-to-Pole trip will always be remembered.

Guests were greeted by HARS Members Ann-Marie Morison and Helen Palmer, both retired and experienced Cabin Crew Members of Qantas, with Borodinsky bread and offered a Vodka shot. Followed by Caviar and other varieties of Russian breads.



Bob De La Hunty receives the Antonov AN-124 model donated to HARS.



The Hon. Mikhail Petrakov opening the Wings of Legacy celebration.



The Russian dancers dressed in traditional Russian Folk costumes.

These breads were lovingly baked by a team of ladies who relish any opportunities to show off their skills.

One of our many talented HARS Members Lidia Gubareva, used her skills to develop three film clips from varying resources, which outlined the successes, difficulties and attributes of the significant milestones being celebrated.

The Hon. Mikhail Petrakov, Russian Ambassador to Australia opened the Wings of Legacy celebration, while adding an air of warmth and relaxation to the friendship already in the room.

Guests were ushered down to Hangar 1 where the fun started.

Russian dancers dressed in brilliantly coloured outfits and bonnets performed Folklore dance from the past traditions of their ancestors.

Culinarius Caterers lived up to their usual standard of excellence, with magnificent food choices, of course accompanied with a shot of vodka, and other beverages. Raffles were won, music played, guests danced to the solo entertainer Samir Marrbani who was also the major Sponsor for the event, Australian Chemicals Resource Pty. Ltd.

Many dozens of congratulatory emails and texts have been received since that event, all with the element of peace attached.



Distinctly Australian

2 JULY this year marks 70 years since the current RAAF Roundel with the red Kangaroo was approved for use as the Australian Roundel by the Minister for Air. The following article explores the influences and process leading to the current Roundel. The story was written by the Air Force Association – South Australia Division and appeared as a post on their Facebook page on 2 July 2025. The main text of the story is reprinted here with the kind permission of AFA-SA. <https://afasa.org.au>

When the Royal Australian Air Force was first established as an independent air force in 1921, it adopted the British RAF Roundel comprising blue, white and red circles to identify its aircraft. During World War 2, the inner red circle was dropped in the Southwest Pacific Area with the RAAF adopting a Blue and white Roundel after an incident when an American aircraft [Navy Wildcat] fired on a RAAF 11 SQN Catalina seeing its red inner circle and assuming it was a Japanese aircraft.

“...though the shape of the Catalina was no doubt disturbingly familiar, the red in the upper wing roundels seemed to him so distinct—as he later said—that he mistook them for Japanese markings and immediately attacked. Bullets passed through the Catalina’s main crew compartment, fuel tanks, and ailerons, but fortunately no one was hurt and the aircraft was able to land safely.” [Geoff Pentland -RAAF Camouflage & Markings 1939–45 – Vol. 1]



Australian RAAF Roundel at the time of WW2.



Modified for the Southwest Pacific Region during WW2.

Meanwhile, 456 SQN employed an insignia featuring a red kangaroo in a blue circle, on some parts of its aircraft during World War 2. While this insignia was unofficial and the squadron’s main markings conformed to the RAF roundels used by British and other Commonwealth units, it inspired post-war thinking about the roundel.

After World War 2, both RAAF and RAN aircraft returned to using the Red, White and Blue roundel of the RAF. However, following the lead of several other commonwealth countries, the RAAF looked at other designs involving a more distinctive national emblem as the centre piece of the traditional roundel. Other designs considered included the Southern Cross, the boomerang and a sprig of wattle.

In March 1955 the RAAF Air Board put together a formal proposal to change the roundel to something more Australian and distinctive. Most favoured by the Air Board was a leaping or a standing erect kangaroo. The Air Board recommended on 3 June 1955 that new roundels should undergo service trials and a standing kangaroo on Sabre A94-927 was shown in Melbourne. Approval was also given for a RAAF Beaver A95-201 used in Macquarie Island to have an interim standing kangaroo style roundel.



Sabre with standing Kangaroo.



Beaver A95-201.

Mrs Pamela Brinsley, a staff artist for the Department of Air from 1954 to 1956, designed a number of the designs. Originally from the UK, Pamela married Kevern Brinsley, a RAAF pilot who had served with 11 SQN flying Catalina's. GPCAPT Kevern Brinsley completed postings to Malaya, Saigon, Townsville, Canberra and Edinburgh where he completed his RAAF career in 1972 retiring to the Adelaide Hills. Surviving her husband by 16 years, Pamela Brinsley passed away in Adelaide in December 2019 aged 98.

In 1956, 9442 RAAF personnel voted with an overwhelming 81% vote for a new 'kangaroo in motion' roundel. On 8 June 1956, the Air Board proposed to adopt the new roundel and the Minister for Air approved the new Kangaroo Roundel on 2 July 1956.

Ever since, the RAAF Roundel with a red kangaroo has become one of the most iconic military symbols. Since 1956, the Kangaroo Roundel has become internationally recognised as Australian being displayed not only on aircraft but also vehicles and in promotional material. Copyright restrictions apply to the use of any Royal Australian Air Force logo. They are protected nationally and internationally by the Defence Act 1903, Trademarks Act 1995 and the Chester Herald Act 1939.

Importantly, the red kangaroo always faces the left except when positioned on an aircraft or a vehicle where it always faces the front of the aircraft/vehicle. Since the 1970's, some black roundels were employed on camouflage aircraft including 9 SQN Iroquois helicopters in the Vietnam War. In recent years, battle grey versions of the Roundel have been developed for RAAF aircraft replacing the traditional red, white and blue colours but the Kangaroo still takes pride of place in the centre of the Roundel.



Mrs Pamela Brinsley creator of the modern-day RAAF Roundel.



HARS AP-3C Orion displaying grey version of the Roundel.

Photo: R. Collins.



The red kangaroo always faces the left.

Postscript: Steve Mackenzie in his RAAF Oddity #103 -Adaption of the 'Kangaroo' roundel, IPMS blog commented: "The Kangaroo was adopted for the fuselage only at that stage by the RAAF (July 1956), the wings would follow nine years later. The RAN decided to immediately use the leaping kangaroo in all roundel positions, with the mainplane kangaroos facing forward and legs pointing inboard (the RAAF also adopted this layout)."

From Polar Ice to Orbital Skies: Thomas Mueller at HARS



Dr Paul Mueller addressing the audience.

THE HARS Aviation Museum recently hosted an informative and inspirational presentation by Thomas Mueller, founder of Austronaut, who detailed the incredible momentum behind Australia's presence in the cosmos.

Mueller highlighted the historic evolution of Australian spacefarers, paying tribute to Dr Paul Scully-Power, the first Australian-born astronaut (1984), and the latest history-maker, Eric Philips. In April 2025, Philips became the first astronaut to fly into orbit under the Australian flag as part of the SpaceX-supported Fram2 mission, the first human flight to orbit Earth's polar regions.

Key takeaways from the talk included:

The "Wollongong to Orbit" Connection: Mueller celebrated local reserve astronaut Dr Meganne Christian, who grew up in the Illawarra. Her journey from The Illawarra Grammar School to the European Space Agency serves as a powerful local inspiration for aspiring explorers.

https://www.esa.int/Science_Exploration/Human_and_Robotic_Exploration/Astronauts/Meganne_Christian

The Explorer's Path: Insights into how Eric Philips' decades of experience as a polar adventurer prepared him for the rigours of space—a transition Austronaut aims to replicate through its specialized training workshops.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fram2>

Sovereign Ambitions: Companies like Gilmour Space Technologies in ensuring Australia can launch its own missions. Katherine Bennell-Pegg, the 2026 Australian of the Year, her recognition reinforces the importance of STEM learning and provides a visible roadmap for students pursuing careers in science and engineering, continuing the legacy started by Scully-Power and Andy Thomas.

The event was a poignant reminder that Australia's aerospace journey not only encompasses the preservation and display of vintage aircraft in the HARS hangars, but about preparing for the next giant leap.



The audience comprising HARS members and several people who had pre-booked for the presentation.

Frigate Bird II VH-ASA, Consolidate PB2B-2 Catalina Mk.VI



VH-ASA, Frigate Bird II, on display at HARS.

Story: Terry Scanlan.
Photos: Terry Scanlan, Andy Anderson.

THE aircraft displayed in Hangar One at the HARS Museum was built in 1944 by Boeing Aircraft of Canada Limited under licence from Consolidated Aircraft.

It was originally ordered for the Royal Airforce (RAF) and subsequently transferred to the Royal Australian Airforce (RAAF) in 1945 as A24-385. Whilst with the RAAF, A24-385 saw service with air-sea rescue and support squadrons in Australia and New Guinea shortly after WWII.

After military service, A24-432 was transferred on to the civilian aircraft register as VH-ASB however Taylor had it changed to VH-ASA (Australia South America) and named the aircraft Frigate Bird II.

The Frigate Bird II was the aircraft that Captain P.G Taylor used for his record-breaking flight across the Pacific Ocean to South America (refer article Seventy Fifth Anniversary of P.G. Taylor's Flight from Australia to South America on page 30).

After retirement in the mid-1950s, VH-ASA was donated by P.G Taylor to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (Powerhouse Museum) in 1961.

Restoration of the aircraft was completed in 1987 and it was then displayed, suspended in the museum's transport exhibition.

The Powerhouse Museum approached HARS in 2023 to act as 'caretaker' of the aircraft whilst plans were made to relocate that museum. The aircraft was transported to the HARS Museum where it is now on display.



VH-ASA, Frigate Bird II, on display at the Powerhouse Museum.

HARS – C47 Celebrates the 90th Anniversary of the First Flight of the DC-3

Story: Terry Scanlan. Photos: Howard Mitchell and Others.



ABOVE: VH-EAF over the Harbour with Bob Small saying “make a left here Tom”.



RIGHT: The Crew from L to R Bob Small, Don Hindle and Tom Payne.

DECEMBER 17 2025 marked the anniversary of two very important aviation milestones. December 17 1903, the Wright Bros achieved the first powered, sustained and controlled flight. December 17 1935, The first Douglas DC-3 took to the skies.

To mark this milestone, exactly 90 years later on December 17, HARS tasked VH-EAF, our C-47 (military version of the DC-3) to make a commemorative flight up to Sydney and to execute circuits around the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House.

The story behind the DC-3 can be traced back to the early 1930s where the Douglas Aircraft Company was already well established as a military contractor. They moved into the commercial aviation field with a ‘one-off’ DC-1 followed by the DC-2 which first flew on 11 May 1934. 193 DC-2s entered service as a fast all metal airliner.

American Airlines, who at the time operated a fleet of Curtiss T-32 Condor II Biplane Sleeper Transports, asked Donald Douglas Sr. if he could develop a Sleeper Transport version of the DC-2. From this request came the Douglas Sleeper Transport (DST) which had 14 Sleeping Births arranged as 7 upper and 7 lower running lengthways along the cabin. Eventually this aircraft evolved into the DC-3 with 21-32 seats. The first flight of the DST/DC-3 was 17 December 1935.

During WWII, Douglas Aircraft Corporation reverted to producing military versions of the DC-3 called C-47 of which we have two at HARS. 10,174 C-47 Skytrains were built and served in every theatre of the war. In total there were 603 DC-3s and 10,174 C-47 aircraft built for a total of 10,777 aircraft of this type. Many (2000 to 3000) of the C-47s were converted to DC-3s after the war with many still flying to-day.

The HARS Dakota fleet now consists of three C-47s, one DC-3 and one DC-2. The two C-47s and the DC-3 are airworthy and flyable. N90 (Queen’s Dakota) and the DC-2 are static displays at the museum. There is also a C-47 on display in our Parkes museum.

Graham (Pud) Smith

Story:
Maureen Massey

GRAHAM Smith, affectionately known as “Pud” has finally pulled the plug and decided to retire from HARS.

Pud joined us on 30th October 1992, and was one of our valued “Engine” men. He was instrumental in maintaining and signing for the work carried out on the many engines in our fleet.

As an ex-Qantas employee, Pud blended in well with the other HARS engineers working on the big round engines, many of which he knew from his Qantas days.

A morning tea was held to celebrate his retirement and to thank him for his many loyal years of service to HARS. Pud was made a Life Member in 2024.

All the best Pud, from all your friends at HARS!





HARS members on the Connie's flight to Sydney.



**The Southern Cross Replica
on approach to Sydney Airport.**

Photo: Howard Mitchell.

