

“The Migrant Caper”

European migrant flights to Australia by charter operators 1947-1949

Compiled by Geoff Goodall



The beginning: the first aircraft to carry migrants from Europe to Australia was Intercontinental Air Tours Lockheed Hudson VH-ASV *Aurora Australis*, parked at Camden NSW in 1947. Photo: Ed Coates collection



By 1949 overseas operators with larger aircraft joined in the Australian migrant charters. Skyways International Curtiss C-46 Commando NC1648M is seen loading migrant passengers at Singapore after a refuelling stop en route from Europe to Australia. Photo via Robert Wiseman

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The title of this research paper *The Migrant Caper* comes from a chapter title in participating pilot Warren Penny's unpublished autobiography. It summarizes, in the idiom of the day, the attitude of the former wartime pilots involved in this adventurous early post-war long-distance venture.

An extraordinary chapter of Australia's civil aviation history, which has gone largely unrecorded, is the early post World War Two period of ad-hoc charter flights carrying migrants from Europe to Australia. It began in 1947 with a handful of flights by Australian charter companies, flying mostly civilianised ex RAAF transports and bombers purchased from military disposals. As word spread, more and more individuals and families were prepared to pay the high prices asked to escape war-ravaged Europe and long delays waiting for shipping.

At the time, the Australian government was sponsoring European migrants using occasional chartered shipping. On 12 March 1947, 786 mostly Jewish survivors of the Nazi holocaust arrived at Cairns on board the immigrant ship *Johann de Wit*. All were joining relatives in Australia. A Yugoslav steamer arrived in January 1948 with 808 European migrants. By the following year the numbers had increased sharply, with 27,000 migrants, of whom 18,000 came from the Great Britain, arrived by sea in the first six months of 1948. In August 1948 the Federal government stated that it would accept all the immigrants that available shipping could carry. 105, 104

A total of eight Australian air charter operators joined in the migrant trade, flying a range of aircraft, from Lockheed Hudsons and Lodestars, Douglas DC-2s, DC-3s and a DC-5, to Sunderland flying boats and even a DH.86 biplane to and from Europe. Australia's only overseas airline on the route to European and London, Qantas Empire Airways was becoming increasingly frustrated by these migrant air charters and appealed to the Australian Department of Civil Aviation to apply restrictions. DCA concentrated on the Australian companies, inflicting maximum harassment in maintenance, crewing requirements, clearance request delays and customs inspections, until the majority were forced to abandon the lucrative trade. To the anger of these Australian airmen, few restrictions were placed on the foreign operators bringing migrants to Australia.

Although seen in emotional terms at the time, punishing World War Two airmen who had flown patriotically for Australia only a few years earlier, in retrospect the DCA clamp down was reasonable on an operational level. The first-hand accounts of these migrant charter flights included below highlight the lack of maintenance support en route as well as all inadequacy of all aspects of safety including crew training, crew rest, flight planning. It was simply seat-of-the-pants flying by rugged individualists, experienced in independent flying by their military service.

However the politics of the DCA restrictions are less easy to defend. The aim of protecting Qantas and BOAC's rights to the Europe-Australia route was ruthlessly applied but it was often out of touch with reality. Despite the two airlines regularly having no seats available for varying periods, the bureaucratic lag in DCA receiving this advice ensured that the Australian charter operators were refused clearances and heavily restricted for months while the protected airlines could offer nothing. This is fully explored in the story below.

By the end of 1948, only Guinea Air Traders had survived on the migrant run, while larger aircraft operated by US, Belgian, Egyptian and Philippine charter companies were carrying large numbers of migrants into Australia. Despite vague statements from DCA and the Minister for Civil Aviation to the contrary, Qantas and BOAC still did not have the seat capacity and foreign aircraft continued to ply the migrant routes into 1950.

This paper sets out to detail the companies and their aircraft used on the migrant charters. Research in National Archives of Australia by fellow historian Chris O'Neill found Customs reports for overseas flights arriving at Sydney for the 1947-49 period, which has greatly expanded our knowledge of this topic.

Once the market was established by the small Australian charter companies in 1947, overseas operators joined the migrant trade to Australia and even the two domestic airlines ANA and TAA joined in.

A darker side to the story concerns false identities used by some of the migrants carried, allegations of carriage of illegal goods, particularly gold bullion and narcotics as well as black market items, and transporting of individuals out of Australia. Two migrant aircraft were grounded at Darwin during 1948 with allegations of sabotage. During this period the Indonesian rebels were engaged in their war of independence from the Dutch in Netherlands East Indies. The migrant charter flights refuelled at various ports through the Indonesian archipelago, and the lines between carrying migrants and carrying supplies for the pro-Indonesian forces became sometimes blurred. Two of the Australian migrant charter aircraft were used by the Indonesian republican forces when they were retired from the migrant run.

Finally, in December 1949 the Minister for Civil Aviation White announced that no more permits would be issued to itinerant aircraft carrying migrants. The announcement coincided with the arrival in Darwin of a DC-3 of the Indian airline Bharat Airways carrying Cypriot migrants, which arrived on Boxing Day 1949, giving Customs less than a day's notice. The passengers were stranded in Darwin for some days while onward transport was found for them.

After 1949 passage of migrants to Australia was mostly by shipping, scheduled airline or Government sanctioned airline charter flights.

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SETTING THE SCENE

This record of the itinerant migrant air charter era commences by setting the scene with a collection of direct quotes from various sources:

1. Chronicle of Australia, Chronicle-Penguin 1993.

Geneva 21 July 1947: Concern has been expressed for the 200,000 Britons who have registered their desire to migrate to Australia. The Minister for immigration, Mr. Caldwell, today signed an agreement between the Australian Government and the International Refugees' Organisation covering the migration of displaced persons. Australia will take 4,000 persons in 1947 and 12,000 yearly if the IRO will supply shipping. And there's the rub. European refugees are prepared to travel on "sub-standard" ships, which Britons find unacceptable. So the Government may find itself assisting European migrants in spite of its declared policy to give priority to the British."

2 Flypast, a record of aviation in Australia, N. M. Parnell and T. W. Boughton, CAA, 1988

"11 August 1947: Strong pressures for immigration to Australia were building up in the face of apparent inaction by the Australian government; claims on the use of aircraft to transport migrants were officially labelled as "impractical", but during the following 12 months a number of small operators began to fly migrants to Australia; initially the services were tolerated, but as they expanded they were seen as a threat to scheduled services of Qantas Empire Airways and BOAC and the Department of Civil Aviation began to refuse landing applications for entry into Australia..... the restrictions were eased in August 1949 when private non-scheduled flights would be approved; 17 November 1949 Mr Drakeford introduced this new situation in response to claims that overseas operators were being permitted to carry migrants to Australia while Australian firms could not; 18 November 1949 both Guinea Air Traders and Australian National Airways Pty Ltd disputed the Minister's statement claiming it was not in accordance with the facts; by then the Government had organised a scheme of assisted migration mainly by sea as shipping lines were re-established."

3. Flight Magazine (UK) 4 December 1947:

"Charter Flights for Immigrants

There has been a rapid development of the charter business in Australia. Intercontinental Air Tours are conducting charter flights for immigrants from the UK and the Continent, and Trans-Oceanic Airways are engaged on charter flights to bring Greeks from Athens. A new company, known as European Air Transport Co has been formed to begin operations on charters between Athens and Sydney to carry the hundreds of Greeks who are endeavoring to reach Australia."

4. Doug Fawcett, Chief Engineer of Butler Air Transport, Mascot recalls:

"After two years as Butler Air Transport chief engineer at Sydney I was feeling a little restless when a Nicaraguan pilot came into the workshop and asked if I could repair his Curtiss C-46..... I spoke to Arthur Butler, who said he did not want anything to do with itinerant aeroplanes, but if I wanted to assist this gentleman after hours he would not mind. This marked the beginning of my personal business life in aviation. I gathered around me a few good mechanics, repaired the aeroplane to the pilot's satisfaction and was paid accordingly.

At that time there were itinerant aircraft bringing people into Sydney from all parts of Europe. They were certainly an odd bunch of aeroplanes, German, Egyptian, American, you name it, often in need of repairs or inspection, so I hired a hangar at Camden and had my brother and several engineers run it for me." 10

5. Phil McCulloch, then DCA Airports Inspector:

"1948-50 was an interesting time in Darwin with all sorts of odd aircraft greeting my eyes during my visits. Curtiss C-46 Commando, a beautiful old C-47 VR-HDB "Betsy", SIAI Marchetti, DC-3 I-TROS, the wreckage of a RNZAF Mosquito; Gregory Board's Lockheed Lodestar which I saw perform a 90 degree (almost) bank at about 500 feet just to the south of Darwin airport; dreadfully run-down RAF Dakotas ex Malaya en route to DAP Parafield for refurbishment; DC-2 VH-AEN of New Holland Airways parked up along the edge of the old runway 13-31 strip after a landing accident."

"In those days I kept a sketchy diary. I flew my Perth-Adelaide leg of my June 1948 transfer to Alice Springs and enjoyed the TAA DC-4 VH-TAD. Adelaide to Alice Springs was per TAA DC-3 VH-AEU "Thorsby". Great days when I was only 23 years of age. I was later transferred from Alice Springs to dilapidated Darwin from Thursday 3 February 1949 to Saturday 12 March 1949. I flew up in TAA DC-3 VH-TAJ and back in VH-TAN, the latter journey commenced at 5.20am. Ah! Those beautifully polished DC-3s.

The Qantas Liberator VH-EAJ was stranded in Darwin with wet ignition harness and other problems. My photograph of All Trans Airlines C-46 N1800M was taken in December 1949. I recall the Darwin airport staff describing the disgusting state of the interior of this Curtiss which was stuffed with people, 54 in all." 118

6. A first-hand account of a migrant charter in a Lockheed Lodestar by Bill Brown, flight engineer in January 1948.

It was a charter by Intercontinental Air Tours using the Godden Air Transport Lodestar VH-BFZ under command of ICAT Captain Bert "Moonlight" Starkey, from Sydney to Rome to collect 10 Cabrini nuns migrating to Melbourne. Although these recollections are quite matter-of-fact, it highlights how these itinerant charters were flown in barely airworthy aircraft without any operational support and independent of official scrutiny. That they continued without serious accident is a testament to the fact that virtually all pilots, engineers and navigators were recently demobbed military aircrew:

"On this flight to Rome, we were to pick up sixteen (sic) Catholic nuns, coming to Australia. The captain was Bert Starkey, copilot Hugh Hamilton, radio operator Geoff Taylor and myself as flight engineer. We took off the next day, the first stop being Charleville, where we punctured our tail wheel tube on landing. I changed this with our spare. We also carried a spare main tyre and tube plus my own fairly comprehensive box of tools. We stayed overnight at Harry Corone's hotel and I remember it was very hot. At about one o'clock in the morning I was awakened by a man enquiring as to whether I was one of the Lodestar's crew..... he said be sure to let the captain know that he would be joining the aircraft as a passenger the next morning.

The next morning our new passenger arrived accompanied by a female companion. Two elderly men were the other passengers, both of whom wanted to return to their homeland. The flight to Darwin was uneventful. As we were about to leave for Timor, Titus Oates, who was also flying to Rome in a Lockheed Lodestar, asked me to adjust the regulators on his generators. I did this and we flew to Timor, then to Surabaya, where we stayed overnight. On takeoff the next day one of the two hydraulic pump drive shafts broke, so we returned to the airport, where I removed the pump and shaft.

As it happened there was a contingent of Dutch marines in residence, one of whom I knew from the war. His name was Michael; and he was the resident technical officer for the Dutch Air Force at Clyde Engineering (at Bankstown: GG) when we were overhauling Dutch B-25 bombers. He had my pump fixed in four hours.

The next day we flew to Singapore (then Penang, Rangoon)... We then left for Calcutta arriving there at nine thirty at night. The next morning I went out to the airport earlier than the others to give the aircraft a thorough check before going on. While there, Titus Oates arrived and asked me to adjust his automatic pilot. He was also having trouble with his automatic direction finder, so I pulled the autopilot regulator out and found that someone had installed it back to front. When I got back to Grand Hotel, Bert Starkey advised me that we would not be leaving for two days. In repayment for the work I had done on his aircraft, Titus invited me to go with him to a nightclub.

The day before our departure we went by private bus to the airport. The driver took the bus down to what appeared to be a low-dive area where he stopped outside a doorway and ten men, our new passengers, emerged. All were quite large and one in particular seemed to weigh about 300 pounds. He just fitted in the aircraft door and when he was on board I had to remove one of the armrests from a chair to get him a seat. After taking off, Bert called me up to the cockpit and asked me to quickly get some of the heavy men up front as he was having trouble getting the nose down. This took some time, but we eventually had the load distributed to his satisfaction and he levelled off at 9000 feet.

Later we were getting low on petrol and I noticed a town on the right, so I suggested to Bert that we land there. 'No way', he said. 'That's New Delhi, if we go in there they will kill everyone on board including us. The passengers we took on at Calcutta are refugees and must be landed at Lahore.' After some rapid calculations it was decided that we could just make Lahore, and we did, arriving there late afternoon.

We left Lahore the next day for Karachi. On arrival four of the Sikh passengers who went into town were attacked by the townpeople, who came off second best. After refuelling, the passengers were loaded on board and I was very careful where they all sat. Bahrein was our next stop where we stayed at an RAF base. We had off loaded our passengers, the last of them going to Bahrein, and we were now just the crew, so we sat and drank in the RAF mess and bedded down in their quarters.

(Continued via Lydda, Nicosia, Athens to Rome: radio aerials iced up and they lost radio contact)

"Bert carried on until he judged he should be over Rome, so he let down through a break in the clouds. Just then the radio compass handle seized and he could not get a fix on the airport. At the time he was over the sea....so he circled for some time. Because of his predicament he asked me to get the life jackets ready. Bert flew into a small valley, which he recognised, as he had been there before. Suddenly he saw a blue flash from the arcing of the tram poles as they passed over joins. Bert knew the trams were near the airport. The aircraft had been in the air for six and half hours and he landed straight ahead, no circuit.

On the day of departure, the sixteen (sic) nuns we had contracted to fly to Australia were surrounded by about 100 friends. After takeoff I realised I did not have a seat, so I sat on the floor and leant against the spar which ran through the cabin about 18 inches high and one seat distance behind the cockpit door. Sometimes I would doze off. Upon waking I found that the nuns had taken off their shawls and covered me over - a very thoughtful act.

(At the nuns' request, Bill built a makeshift pulpit, which fitted over the wing spar inside the cabin, using wood purchased in Athens). "Before departing for Nicosia next morning I waited until the nuns were seated and I then installed the pulpit. They were not prone to excitement, but their eyes lit up. The Mother Superior embraced me, then immediately stood behind it and went through a ceremony which I did not understand, because it was all in Latin. Bert opened the cockpit door during the ceremony but closed it quickly when he saw what was happening. Mother Superior only took about five minutes to say her piece, then I stowed the pulpit in its position and we took off. The ceremony was repeated after each landing and before each takeoff for the rest of the trip.

We pushed on to Baghdad where, arriving at night, we found that only half the runway lights were on. We could not get the tower on the radio. Bert made his approach. As he was about to land, the tower came on the air and told him to circle the airfield while they fixed the runway lights. This was quickly done and Bert made a perfect landing and parked at the terminal. Bert, Hugh Hamilton and Geoff Taylor left the cockpit quickly. I installed the pulpit, then left the nuns for a few minutes before helping them to disembark. We left Baghdad the next morning for Bahrein, where we refuelled and flew on to Karachi and stayed at the RAF station.

(Then via Calcutta (night stop), Rangoon, Penang (night stop), Surabaya (night stop), Timor, Darwin.) "The next day we headed for Charleville, arriving quite late. We stayed overnight and left the next morning for Sydney. The nuns were to go on to Melbourne. Bert Starkey came over to me and asked if I would go with them. I said that I had had enough, so I said goodbye to the nuns and they took off for Melbourne." 10

Warren Penny, Managing Director of ICAT sacked Captain Starkey on his return to Australia from the above flight and Starkey took legal action against Penny for alleged moneys owed. Penny adds to the above account:

"I was in Sydney when they arrived back, and the Mother Superior aboard told me the story. She said when Starkey arrived in Rome, they decided to call him 'Father' for the trip. Starkey and some of the crew got drunk almost every night stop on the way back and the Sisters, very early in the piece ceased to call him 'Father'. He was, needless to say, fired after arrival." 58

However a charitable slant was put on the reporting of the flight. The 29 January 1948 edition of the Catholic newspaper "The Advocate" ran a feature story on the nuns' flight from Rome:

"Cabrini Nuns Arrive Safely in Flying Convent

When a privately chartered Lockheed Lodestar plane, carrying ten Cabrini nuns, touched down at 6.02 pm at Essendon Airport on Saturday it was probably the first time in the history of the church that an entire community of Catholic nursing Sisters had travelled half way around the world to found a convent.

The plane was piloted by Wing Commander F. Starkie (sic) and the Sisters were enthusiastic in their praise, appreciation and gratitude for his kindness and solicitude for their safety and comfort throughout the long journey. "He looked after us like a father" said one of the Sisters." 99

7. Another first-hand account of migrant runs, from Tom Watson, then chief engineer for Guinea Air Traders

Two DC-3s G-AGHN and G-AKNB were purchased by Guinea Air Traders at Lae, New Guinea via aircraft brokers W. S. Shackleton Ltd, London. Both retained their British registrations, which GAT hoped would allow them to avoid many of the DCA restrictions placed on Australian registered aircraft making migrant charter flights. 116

"DC-3 VH-GAT was a freighter with a few military type seats. The decision was taken to purchase two more DC-3s in the United Kingdom. Lionel Van Praag, three times champion dirt track motorcycle rider, and ex-RAAF where he was awarded the George Cross for bravery, and a really tough diamond, was employed to collect and fly the first DC-3 to Australia with a load of migrants.

I went to London with Lionel and took delivery of the aircraft and as we were without any British licence qualifications to fly the aircraft this caused quite a problem which we finally overcame. We flew the aircraft back without much drama.*

* G-AGHN which arrived Sydney 1 September 1948 from Rome with 28 migrants

Two weeks later with a pilot from New Guinea, let's call him Joe, we returned to the UK to collect the second aircraft. Joe was an Avro Anson pilot with no experience on DC-3s and was endorsed after only a one hour dual flight from Madang to Lae. When we arrived at Prestwick in Scotland, we discovered that the money for the aircraft had not arrived. The company was always short of money and undercapitalised. The upshot was that we were stranded in Scotland for two months before the funds came in.*

* G-AKNB which arrived Sydney 8 November 1948 from Rome with 30 migrants

When we finally took delivery, Joe told me that he did not know how to start the DC-3. I had many hours flying DC-3s but was not endorsed to fly as pilot in command. Eventually we took it for a test flight and then off we went, first stop Heathrow. Between Prestwick and London we entered a snow storm resulting in the propellers icing up and vibrating. After activating alcohol propeller deicing, chunks of ice flew off the propellers striking the fuselage like a bomb. We then got lost over a RAF station resulting in our being chased by a fighter. Naturally enough, the radios were not working. They rarely did. Eventually we ended up over the Isle of Wight, 65 miles south west of London. After finding London, we couldn't find Heathrow so followed a road to the west and as we had no radio, landed without permission. When Air Traffic Control was told we were from New Guinea that seemed to explain everything. It was suggested that we get back to New Guinea as fast as we could, having endangered all air traffic at London.

At midnight we took off for Rome to load 30 migrant passengers. After reaching 10,000 feet through cloud, one engine started to misfire. The decision was taken to return and purely by accident we came out of the cloud right over the runway. I spent the rest of the night pulling everything apart trying to find the cause of the problem. At daybreak we took off again towards Rome. After a storm over the Mediterranean, Joe got lost and we ended up in Marseilles. We were then arrested by the French police and taken in for questioning and ultimately released after receiving a lecture on safety and, as they put it, "good manners". The next morning we left for Rome and made it without great incident.

That night we took off for Athens with our 30 passengers. On the way to Athens an engine fire warning light and bell came on. As there was no sign of fire I decided to stop the noise by pulling the circuit breakers on the light and the bell. On approach to Athens the wheels wouldn't come down due to a leak in the hydraulic system. The reservoir was empty. In our spares I had a can of oil and kept pouring it in until the wheels came down. In Athens, no one would assist me in finding the leak. which entailed removing a panel on the side of the fuselage. The next stop was Nicosia in Cyprus. We arrived when it was almost dark. On the way our automatic pilot packed it in and Joe would not proceed further without it. I pulled it to pieces on the aircraft floor, finishing at 1am to be ready at 4am to prepare for takeoff.

Next stop Baghdad, no problems. Then we left for Sharjah. A fight then started in the cabin mid flight between some passengers. Being a jack-of-all-trades, I had to stop the fight. On landing Sharjah we had to taxi into an armed barbed wire compound as the locals were shooting at everything and everyone. We then refuelled and took off for Karachi just as darkness fell. Once we reached 9000 feet, Joe said he was going to have a sleep on the bunk, telling me to change course twice by 5 degrees, leaving it to me. Frankly I think it was only good luck that the lights of Karachi appeared on the horizon. Next stop was Allahabad in central India, arriving at noon. Armed Indian soldiers escorted us out of the aircraft, putting our passengers in a shed. It was very hot. Refuelling services consisted of my hand-pumping 500 gallons from 44 gallon drums. I might add that I had no sleep over all this period. Next stop Calcutta. The inevitable happened, we got lost over a mountain range. Trying to avoid cloud we got into a valley underneath the cloud base. We saw a wall of cloud at the end of the valley, did a steep 180 degree turn and luckily found a gap between two hills and went through it. In those days aircraft used to trail radio aerials out to try to communicate. Well we did, until that moment, as we were so low that our aerial got caught in a tree and got ripped out of the aircraft.

We landed in Calcutta, then flew on via Rangoon, Bangkok, Singapore, Batavia, Dili, Darwin and Cloncurry. On the way to Sydney we got lost again, headed for the coast which we reached at Coffs Harbour. The cloud was getting lower and lower and by this stage we were over the sea. We could not go any lower and were heading into a large black thundercloud. I decided this was it and took my shoes off expecting to go into the sea. Somehow we got through the back cloud and blinding rain to come out over Coffs Harbour Airport and landed. The next morning we left for Sydney. Halfway there a fire broke out in the cockpit, filling it with smoke. The fire was put out and we landed in Sydney."

8. Statement by Warren Penny, Managing Director of Intercontinental Air Tours:

"I interviewed the Australian Immigration Minister Mr. Arthur Caldwell in London and he, in front of witnesses, told us to "go to it and bring as many Greek and Italian migrants as we could carry", and gave us his blessing in the venture. On arrival back in Sydney I found that our agents had hopelessly overbooked us and committed us months in advance to carry migrants. As many of these people had already left their homes, I set out to try and meet our commitments. I bought from RAAF Disposals another Lodestar and two more Hudsons and bumped up the staff at Intercontinental Air Maintenance to 57 employees, all ex-servicemen.

I left almost immediately for England in the original Hudson VH-ASV and was away five months and whilst in England bought a DH.86 and another Lodestar, both of which brought out British migrants. About this time, the Department of Civil Aviation started getting tough. They stopped us from carrying either passengers or freight out of the country (except perishables), forced us to carry engineers and Flight Navigators and cabin attendants, and also forced us to pay £20 and then up to £45 for cabling to overseas countries for permission to cross. We had previously been doing this for ourselves at the cost of about £10. They also took away our Licence as a metal workshop on a technicality, and generally became most uncooperative. Up to now we had made four Australia-Europe return flights, and two England-Australia flights without any hold ups, conveying 82 migrants in, and some 20 - 30 people out, as well as small amounts of freight. The cutting of all these regulations on us made it terribly difficult to continue operations. Two extra crew on a Lockheed cut down our passenger seating, which even then was controlled by DCA. The cutting out of passengers and freight out of the country meant we were operating on a 50% loading, ie. nothing out and 100% back." 11

THE DARKER SIDE

With travel agencies across Europe with dubious credentials eager for commissions by signing up passengers prepared to pay the charter fares to Australia being asked, there were suspicions of falsified identity papers for some of the migrants arriving by air charters. In addition, early postwar currency restrictions generated allegations of gold being smuggled out of Australia by itinerant charter aircraft. There were also suggestions of narcotics being brought into Australia.

1 Doug Fawcett, by then operating as Fawcett Aviation, Sydney recalls:

Fawcett had established an aircraft maintenance business at Camden Airport near Sydney and would later move to Bankstown Airport. He provided maintenance for several of the migrant companies, particularly European Air Transport and New Holland Airways. He flew as engineer on some New Holland Airways DC-3 migrant runs to Europe.

"Jumping the immigration queue by air and gold smuggling was rife in those early days. I am not sure of the details of some of the passengers coming from overseas but I suspect quite a number of them came in with false papers in itinerant aircraft. They were whisked through customs and almost manhandled to waiting cars by men of dubious looking character. On outward flights I was told later that special fittings were being made of pure gold in the shape of engine cowling sections, sprayed silver, and fitted to aircraft. Gold smuggling became so strongly suspected customs eventually thoroughly inspected every aircraft that left Australia, though I never did hear of them finding any.

One day a Lockheed I had serviced was flown to the overseas departure section at Mascot by Greg Board to obtain clearance papers for a flight to Athens. The senior customs officer demanded that all removable panels be taken off, for an internal inspection of the aircraft. This would delay departure by some hours, so naturally I queried it. They refused to give me a reason and said the aircraft would not be leaving until they had inspected it. I had mechanics remove every panel while the customs officers climbed into the cabin, inspecting it thoroughly. They then advised me that the aircraft was clear to go. The mechanics replaced the panels and the aircraft departed two hours later."*

* New Holland Airways' Lockheed Lodestar VH-GRB, flown by NHAW founder Captain Greg Board

"We overhauled quite a number of aircraft used by various companies which we called the migrant airlift from Italy and Greece to Australia. An aircraft was sometimes stationed in Athens and ran a shuttle service between there and Nicosia, enabling young men facing National Service to flee their country. We carried various nationalities and unusual passengers from Europe to Australia." 10

2. Newspaper reports of the Customs search of the New Holland Airways Lodestar VH-GRB:

- Canberra Times Friday 3 October 1947:

Sydney, Thursday: So thorough was a search by customs officials of a private plane at Kingsford Smith airport today that the 21 years old wife of the owner-pilot was asked to strip. The plane, a Lockheed Lodestar was held up for four hours while officials searched minutely every inch of the plane and its contents, before the plane was allowed to take off for Singapore.

The owner Gregory Board, his wife and four members of the crew, were questioned for hours about their past and their intentions in Singapore. Every article of clothing was examined and even private letters were read. Mrs. Board was taken away and searched by a policewoman. The plane left before noon without any explanation being given by customs officials"

- Canberra Times Wednesday 29 October 1947:

"Sydney, Tuesday: The Department of Civil Aviation has warned Gregory Board, a private charter operator, that he will not be permitted to fly any more passengers from Singapore to Australia. Board said today that no reason was given. He was just told at Darwin that he could not make any more trips to Singapore.

On the previous trip, Board's plane was intensively searched in Sydney and Board and his wife were also searched. Board will fly to Melbourne tomorrow to protest against the Department's ruling."

This heavy-handed Customs action was searching for gold being smuggled out of Australia. Customs acted on rumours that by all accounts were probably based on fact. As well as searching the clothing and baggage of the occupants on board, the interior and exterior of the Lockheed was closely examined. All cowlings and removable panels were laid out on the tarmac. Nothing was found and Customs were sorely embarrassed. Greg Board, a colourful entrepreneur promptly had the petulant DCA ruling overturned and continued as a key player in the migrant trade.

However this search sent a clear warning to the charter operators. It is reported that gold continued to be smuggled out of Australia, sometimes shaped as a fitting to an engine cowling and sprayed silver.

Warren Penny who had just started Intercontinental Air Tours, mentions in his draft autobiography being approached to carry gold out of the country at that time concealed in his Hudson. He wrote *"I got cold feet and refused"*. 58

3. Gold smuggling : A shadowy associate of the Australian principals of New Holland Airways was a US citizen Gunning Patrick Plunkett who was living in Sydney just after the end of the war. A Plunkett family history gives the following candid account:

"Gunning Patrick Plunkett also used the name "Des". He started New Holland Air Line (sic) with a partner, after the war. The company was registered in Italy and flew from Rome to Sydney with various places of call. One plane was purchased from Disposals at the beginning of the venture and within a short period of time there were 5 planes in operation. The licence of this charter line permitted carriage of passengers on the journey to Australia but the return trip was to be used entirely for the conveying of cargo. His sudden acquisition of riches was viewed with suspicion by the authorities and a constant watch was placed on all outgoing movements. Patrick, however, had little intention of endangering his successful venture and the New Holland Air Line (sic) was never used as a conveyor of any gold bullion. In fact the gold travelled quite frequently strapped to the belt of one of the crew members of a rival airway." 90

Further detail on "Des" Plunkett and New Holland Airways partner Greg Hanlon comes from the late Captain Pat Armstrong:

"Des Plunkett was an associate of Greg Hanlon who was a spiv who wore immaculate white suits and stayed at Raffles in Singapore. Des was associated with the planes of several companies that operated the migrant charters. Hanlon had developed contacts in the gold mining areas of outback Australia. The miners apparently filched a little of the gold they mined for their employers and paid for their drinks with the local publicans. The publicans could not get rid of the gold because it was a highly controlled substance. Hanlon would buy it from these publicans and befriended several Qantas pilots who agreed to fly the gold overseas for Hanlon, sometimes to Hong Kong but mainly to India. On one such flight the Hong Kong Customs intercepted and seized the gold and arrested the crew. The Australian newspapers headlined the arrest and the Qantas crew was subsequently sacked. With their couriers exposed, the trade ceased and Plunkett and Hanlon dropped from sight." 91

4. Sabotage: Two companies engaged on the migrant runs claimed their aircraft had been sabotaged. No further details of these allegations are known.

- March 1948: Macair Charter Service Douglas C-39 VH-ARC suffered engine problems on its first overseas migrant flight and by was grounded at Darwin due engine problems. *Sydney Morning Herald* 17 March 1948 reported *"Macair Charter Service claimed its Douglas DC-2 had been sabotaged when starting to operate its first migration flight; the aircraft had made a forced landing at Darwin."* 38

- August 1948: A letter to DCA from Guinea Air Traders dated 16 August 1948 concerning their Douglas C-39 VH-ARB: *"The aircraft has recently done a trip to Darwin where it was grounded due to defects which were apparently the result of sabotage."* 39

DCA STRIKES BACK

1. Warren Penny of Intercontinental Air Tours, the first Australian operator to carry migrants, is grounded:

In February 1948 Penny flew his D.H.86B G-ADYH with radio officer Thurlow from Sydney to RAAF Tocumwal to inspect another Lodestar available for disposal. Office manager Ernie Allen phoned him at Tocumwal saying he should stop at Canberra on the way back because he had been summoned by the Minister for Civil Aviation, A. S. Drakeford. Penny remembers the day: *"I was in uniform at the time and I sailed into Parliament House like a Swiss Admiral in full flight, and left feeling like a Swiss cheese - shot full of holes."* 1, 58

Penny was bluntly told all his overseas permits to operate were forthwith cancelled. His requests for time to clear his backlog of booking were refused, although his Hudson VH-ASV was permitted back into the country because Hurst had already departed Rome inbound.

2. Sydney Morning Herald newspaper 27.12.48:

"Australian Pilots Harassed

Foreign planes bearing the colours of more than half a dozen different nations are a familiar sight at Kingsford Smith Airport, the terminal of profitable air migrant charter services.

These planes have captured, almost entirely, a rich traffic 'stream' of war-weary Europeans who are willing to pay almost any price to reach Australia.

The migrant charter air services were pioneered by Australian ex-servicemen operators.

But now, although migrants from Rome, Athens and Cairo are being brought into Australia in the hundreds each week, it is a rarity to see them disembarking from an Australian plane.

Only two Australian air firms have managed to keep going against an ever-growing programme of obstruction by the Federal Government. These firms are Guinea Air Traders and Trans Oceanic Airways, a flying boat charter service which operates from Rose Bay. Both these companies have other air routes, and carrying migrants is only incidental to their main operations in New Guinea and around the Pacific Islands.

Ex RAAF officers brought the first migrants to Sydney in Dakota and Lockheed aircraft, bought from the Disposals Commission. These pilots looked forward to a profitable post-war future, as long as the 'stream' of migrant traffic continued to flow towards Australia.

The reservoir of migrants in Athens and Rome during the past year has increased, but the original Australian airline charter operators are reaping no harvest in air fares. Instead their planes are rotting on out-of-the-way aerodromes because their owners have not the money to put them back in the air.

This time last year three well-known Australian charter operators were engaged in bringing migrants to Sydney from Rome and Athens. They were Inter-Continental (sic) Air Tours, European Air Transport, and Macair Charter Services.

Because of stringent Government regulations favouring the Government airlines to the detriment of private airlines, all three firms are today out of existence.

A fourth air charter firm, New Holland Airways, found a way to evade Australian Government red-tape by registering under the Italian flag.

Two of the most crippling regulations, which sounded the death-knell to the Australian ex-Servicemen's airlines, were orders from Civil Aviation that all planes going overseas must carry first-class navigators in the crew, and that the planes could not carry paying passengers out of Australia. The second order was made solely to prevent the private air companies from competing with the Government airlines operating along the same air route.

The Australian planes were only allowed to carry a certain number of passengers and numerous minor pin-pricking regulations governed their movements when they did become airborne.

Foreign air charter services running to Australia today do not have to carry first-class navigators. Nor do they have to comply with Australian regulations about the loading of planes. Australian operated Skymasters (DC-4s) are not allowed to carry more than 44 passengers on an internal route and 35 passengers on an overseas route. But as many as 70 passengers have been seen to disembark from a foreign operated Skymaster.

Embittered Australian airmen say their post-war ventures paid the supreme penalty for not seeking protection under a foreign flag, from the 'rehabilitation assistance' afforded them by their own Commonwealth Government."

3. Extract from 1947/48 Annual Report of the Department of Civil Aviation:

"The policy of this Department has been that operators of these non-scheduled flights are permitted to embark or disembark traffic in Australia only when the regular operator is unable to handle the traffic within a reasonable time. A further consideration is that the fares and freight rates charged shall not be less than comparable rates from the regular operator."

4. Warren Penny, founder of Intercontinental Air Tours later wrote:

"Things were starting to get extremely difficult. DCA had made us put more crew on each aircraft. They demanded a Captain, co-pilot, navigator, radio operator, engineer and cabin attendant - 6 crew on a 15 passenger aircraft. They had stopped us taking any passengers out of Australia. I got away with a few flights early in the piece but they said no fare paying passengers could be carried at all. So I flew them to Koepang for nothing and then charged them from there on. Then DCA said 'no passengers at all', so I carried the passengers as extra crew members and charged them once outside Australia, accordingly. Then they said 'no one, except normal authorised crew'. DCA had also made us lodge £120 to send clearance cables through the various countries. This was ridiculous - I used to clear the aircraft for about £20." 58

5. Examples of the DCA restrictions, both relating to Intercontinental Air Tours' Hudson VH-ASV: 19

- Letter to Intercontinental Air Tours from DCA Sydney Airport dated 21 January 1948:

"With respect to the departure of aircraft VH-ASV from this airport for Rome on 22nd January 1948, it is advised that it would be necessary for all non paying passengers to sign affidavits to the effect that they are not paying fares.

It will furthermore be necessary for the registered owner of the aircraft to likewise complete an affidavit to the effect that he shall not be receiving payment in any form for carriage of these passengers. The necessary forms for completion are forwarded herewith, and it is required that these forms be executed before a Police Stipendiary or Special Magistrate, a Justice of the Peace, a Commissioner for taking Affidavits or Declarations or Notary Public.

The forms should be handed to the Customs Officer at this airport when the aircraft is being cleared for departure and a clearance will not be affected until such time as affidavits in respect of each passenger and the owner of the aircraft are in the hands of the Customs Officer."

Compiler's note: DCA must have had high confidence in the Postmaster General's Department's ability to deliver this letter in time to not delay the aircraft's departure the following day. Further, the letter was addressed to The Manager, Intercontinental Air Tours, 428 Victoria Street, Kings Cross. Unfortunately ICAT's office address was 248 Victoria Street, so the letter was subsequently returned as "Not Known at this Address". The effect of non-receipt of this DCA requirement with the required Affidavit forms on the departure of the flight is not recorded.

- Cable from DCA Head Office Melbourne to DCA Sydney Airport (date unreadable):

"To AVIAT Mascot. Reference embarkation passengers and spare engine Intercontinental aircraft VHASV. Approval for flight subject to signing of affidavits by Mr Warren Penny and passengers to the effect that no consideration is being received or paid for the journey or portion of the journey. Form of Affidavit required will be transmitted early as possible. No objection transport aircraft engine but ensure that Department Trade and Customs has issued export licence in respect same."

6. Charles Eather, Australian pilot with Cathay Pacific Airways wrote in his book "Sid's Pirates": 33

"Charterers in plenty jumped in to meet the demand from southern Europe to Australia. Trans Oceanic Airways was charging approximately \$300 a head for both adults and children from Greece, and other carriers were in line. Qantas carried only a trickle of these passengers, surely an indication that seating capacity was filled and the Australian protection of air nationalisation misguided.

On behalf of the Government owned airline the Australian DCA was making things difficult for all these charter lines and, in consequence, for the migrants. When they reached Darwin, for example, the charterers would be told to off-load their passengers and advise them that TAA would take them onward next day. When the limited hotel accommodation was filled they would have to sleep on the beach or in the waiting rooms. The Babbitts of DCA were not in any way influenced by reports of hardship, and their attitude induced some charter operators to dump their human loads in Asian cities, leaving someone else with more moral fibre to tackle the Australian civil service bureaucracy. Such operators had put every plane available on the line whether or not it was servicable, and would rush back to Europe to load yet another consignment of the hopefuls. Singapore, Rangoon and Calcutta at different times became their main dumping grounds."

"Other forms of bureaucratic interference harassed the migrant runs. In March 1948 a Lockheed Hudson owned by Mr Warren Penny, of Intercontinental Air Tours, a Sydney firm, was delayed in Rangoon for nearly a fortnight pending payment for fuel and hotel accommodation. He needed an export permit for his Australian funds to reach him and it wasn't forthcoming. When it was finally authorised it was forwarded to a bank not nominated in Penny's application, a considered ploy, without doubt. Meanwhile fourteen Greek migrants were delayed with the aircraft.

For the next couple of years frequent news reports presented the plight of migrants suffering under Government protectionist policy. The Daily Telegraph in June ran a story on 40 odd people who arrived at Darwin at 6pm and did not get through Customs and Immigration procedures until 2am and still were not allowed to leave the airport until 5am.

7. Brisbane Courier Mail newspaper for Saturday 21 February 1948

This story was the first to publicly highlight a DCA ban on certain charter operators continuing further than Darwin:

Darwin Friday: The "immigrant express" - a special TAA Dakota - left here tonight for Adelaide carrying 21 Greek and Italian immigrants from Rome.

They were stranded here by the Civil Aviation ban on a chartered Dakota, which flew them to Darwin from Rome, but was not allowed to fly on because it had no permit. From Adelaide the immigrants will go to Sydney by other TAA lines. The fares - £39 a head - are said to have been paid by a southern European tourist agency.

A Cathay Pacific plane, with another 21 passengers, arrived here tonight from Singapore. The passengers include many British subjects from Palestine. A second TAA plane will arrive here tomorrow to carry these 21 immigrants to Adelaide."

IT ALL COMES TO A HEAD – THE END OF THE MIGRANT CHARTERS

The DCA restrictions and changing requirements almost on a flight-by-flight basis had taken their toll on the Australian operators. In August 1949 the final act by an Australian company was played out when Guinea Air Traders "ran the blockade" amidst widespread press coverage which attracted significant public sympathy:

1. Balus - The Aeroplane in Papua New Guinea: 45

"By mid 1949 Guinea Air Traders was the only surviving Australian operator maintaining migration charter flights. However the situation was now intricate because in May 1949 DCA had been formally advised that Qantas and BOAC had sufficient capacity to cope with passenger traffic offering from Europe, so DCA had refused any further permits for charter operators. Three months later in August 1949 Qantas found it could not in fact handle the traffic and DCA approved a limited number of charter flights. An August GAT DC-3 trip to Rome was approved and GAT applied for a permit for a second August flight. But DCA refused the second flight on the grounds that Qantas had once again decided it could take the migrants concerned.

"Arrangements had already been made for the second flight, and GAT sought legal opinion on the validity of the Air Navigation Regulations, upon which DCA were relying. Acting on this advice, the flight was made. G-AKNB was piloted by Captain Ken Lockyer and First Officer G. Hawke, and on board was company owner Sam Jamieson: 'We had gotten (sic) under the skin of Qantas. The politicians made it a political issue. On that last flight DCA withdrew our rights to overfly Australia from Darwin with paying passengers. But our legal man instructed us to leave anyway. We were fuelled and could fly empty but couldn't take anyone who had paid their passage! All the Italians - they were from the mountains - were running around, and we had no alternative but to get these people to Sydney. So I said 'Anybody wanting to go to Sydney, hop in!' We took off, and they were firing red Verey pistols at us from the Darwin control tower. We landed at Cloncurry to refuel. DCA gave instructions that the aircraft couldn't be refuelled, but Shell refuelled us, and we flew on to Sydney. They took us to court - shows the idiocy of these characters who were supposed to encourage private enterprise."

2. Flypast, a record of aviation in Australia: 1

"4 August 1949 after landing in Darwin, a GAT DC-3 was detained on the grounds that it did not have an Australian landing permit; migrants were being carried ; on 11 August the aircraft would be allowed to continue to Sydney, but without its passengers; the aircraft had previously made an unauthorised flight in June stated Minister for Civil Aviation Mr. Drakeford; 12 August 1949 the aircraft took off from Darwin without approval and landed at Cloncurry Queensland where the pilot Captain K. C. D. Lockyer received two messages, one authorising him to continue to Sydney and another ordering that he not be cleared from Cloncurry; the flight continued to Sydney where, after a delay of 30 minutes while reporters and photographers were cleared from the tarmac, the passengers were processed normally by immigration officials; on 16 August Mr. Drakeford issued a statement regarding the incident and on 25 August three summons issued by the Commonwealth against Capt Lockyer were mentioned in court, but they had not been served; the aircraft carried 28 passengers when it arrived at Darwin from Koepang on 4 August; 24 October 1949 Guinea Air Traders were fined £50 and its pilot Captain Lockyer £10, for breaching Air Navigation Regulations; GAT for discharging passengers at Sydney without approval of the Director General of Civil Aviation and Captain Lockyer for flying without a flight plan approved by air traffic control; both pleaded guilty."

This was the final act of any Australian air charter companies participating in migrant charters. The overseas charter companies continued until Christmas that year.

3. Charles Eather in his book *Syd's Pirates*: 33

"The childish war of attrition continued until August 14 (sic) 1949 when Captain Ken Lockyer did a moonlight flit from Darwin in a Guinea Air Traders DC-3. He took off without an approved flight plan, he ignored a red light which meant 'Stop - Clear Strip Immediately', and he negotiated a series of red flares which came dangerously close. Ken was quite in the wrong, as he admitted to me off the record some time later, but in the interests of Andreas Sehx, Stylianos Kleanvoos, John Goerchios, Andrew Spanos and his wife and five more migrant passengers who were practically destitute, decided to make the effort to end their inhuman situation. The newspapers mixed in, perhaps giving more coverage than usual because uniformed watchmen had struggled with investigating journalists at the airport, and the fact that the whole matter had thus been brought before the public did seem to quieten the over-zealous officials. Migrants seemed to get a more humane and less obstructive reception after that, so Ken's courageous but foolhardy action had a worthwhile effect. The usually unbending DCA did not suspend Ken's licence, a punishment they had inflicted a few days earlier on Lionel van Praag for a similar transgression."

4. Press Release by Director General of Civil Aviation, A.S. Drakeford, issued on 16 August 1949: 89

Such was DCA's concern by the negative press coverage of their handling of migrant charters from Europe that the Director General issued this press statement. The final paragraph clearly spelled the end of the migrant air charter era. For the next few years the vast majority of European migrants arrived in Australia by Government sponsored shipping:

"Australia's policy on non-scheduled flights has been stated many times, and it has been consistently applied. It is a policy followed by other countries as well as Australia and is specifically authorised by the International Civil Aviation Convention to which some 54 nations are now party. It can be stated in one sentence - "When the regular airline can handle the traffic, flights by non-scheduled operators are restricted."

Guinea Air Traders, far from being discriminated against, has been well treated by DCA. In June the company asked for permission to bring a load of migrants from Europe, but approval was withheld because the regular operators, BOAC and Qantas Empire Airways at that time were flying to Australia with sufficient seats to provide the necessary accommodation.

However, regardless of this ruling, the company's aircraft arrived at Darwin, and, to avoid undue inconvenience to the passengers, was permitted on that occasion to continue its flight.

In repayment for this consideration the company didn't even bother to seek permission for its next flight, which arrived in Darwin early this month.

For the past three months non-scheduled flights to Australia have not been permitted although many operators have desired to make them. Within the last few days, Qantas Empire Airways has informed DCA that scheduled operators cannot handle all the traffic now offering, and the Department will now be able again to approve applications for non-scheduled flights to Australia.

It is ridiculous to suggest any conflict between civil aviation and migrant policies. The two departments have discussed the position, and immigration authorities state that the availability of shipping is improving so fast that there is no need to encourage migrants to come to Australia by air."

5. InterAvia Notes edition 6 October 1949 115

"The first migrant-carrying aircraft to arrive from Europe since the Government lifted the ban on unscheduled charter flights reached Darwin on September 14th 1949. The aircraft, a Curtiss Commando of the US company Immigration Air Transport Inc, brought 38 migrants from Cyprus."

How many more independent charter operator flights were conducted in late 1949 has not been established. The last recorded charter flight reaching Sydney is All Trans Air Curtiss Commando N1800M on 16 November 1949 but it was seen again at Darwin the following month. The final migrant charter flight to Australia seems to have been an Indian DC-3 operated by Bharat Airways, which arrived at Darwin on Boxing Day 1949 with Cyprian migrants. DCA refused the onward flight to Sydney and the migrants were stranded at Darwin.

By the end of 1949, a scheduled program of European migrant arrival by ship had been implemented by the Australian Government. The Migrant Caper was over.

THE OPERATORS – AUSTRALIA

This section describes the air charter companies which joined the migrant trade 1947-1949. *Further details on the individuals behind these companies can be found in the section below THE PLAYERS*

1. H. W. G. (WARREN) PENNY / INTERCONTINENTAL AIR TOURS, SYDNEY

Henry Warren Grindrod Penny, trading as:
Intercontinental Air Tours, Suite 10, "Gleneagles", Darlinghurst Road, Potts Point NSW
Intercontinental Air Tours, c/- Gough's Foreign Travel, 1 North Audley Street, London
Intercontinental Air Tours, c/- Phospiropolens & Co, 12 Syngrou Avenue, Athens
Intercontinental Airlines, Suite 10, "Gleneagles", Darlinghurst Road, Potts Point NSW
Intercontinental Airways (England) Ltd, c/- Biddle & Co, 1 Gresham Street, London
Intercontinental Airways (Australia) Pty Ltd, Sydney
Intercontinental Airlines (Rome) Pty Ltd, Rome
Intercontinental Air Maintenance Pty Ltd, Camden later Bankstown
ICAT Managing Director: Warren Penny
Office Manager/Tour Manager: Ernest S. Allen
Operations Manager (by early 1948): Captain William T. Mellor.

Intercontinental Air Tours (ICAT) was founded in Sydney during April 1947 by **Warren Penny**, with two founding partners **Gregory R. Board** and **Stanley V. Godden**.

After RAAF service in Dakota transport squadrons, Warren Penny had found himself stranded in London in December 1946 after a shipping business deal had failed. To get home he purchased a Percival Proctor G-AIEF to fly back to Sydney to sell to cover this costs. He arrived at Mascot 3 February 1947 and the Proctor was quickly sold, becoming VH-SMS. Penny then established a charter operation, which he named Intercontinental Air Tours, its first aircraft being ex RAAF Lockheed Hudson VH-ASV.



Warren Penny (left) with his Proctor G-AIEF at Tocumwal on 27 February 1947. Penny had flown Stan Godden and Greg Board from Sydney to inspect an ex-RAAF Lodestar. The picture on page 73 was taken the same day. (via Tocumwal Aviation Museum)

A Certificate of Registration for the business name Intercontinental Air Tours, Potts Point NSW was issued on 15 April 1947. 75

Warren Penny describes the early days of ICAT:

"Whilst on a trip back from England in January 1947 in a Proctor aircraft, I conceived the idea of running world tourist trips by air; subsequently with the proceeds of the sale of the Proctor, my own money and by mortgaging my parent's home in Double Bay for £3500, I bought a Lockheed Hudson and had it converted for passenger use, and registered the firm of Intercontinental Air Tours.

In early July 1947, I left for England with 4 tourists booked out and 4 back. I was approached by American Travel Headquarters before I left, to see if I could bring some Greek migrants on the return trip and as I had some 5 empty seats I filled them with migrants.

Before I left for England and because of the exorbitant charges for converting aircraft made by outside firms, I also brought into being Intercontinental Air Maintenance Pty Ltd. I had two partners in this. Having obtained a Bellman hangar at Bankstown from the Civil Aviation Department, who had, in turn, leased it from the RAAF on a monthly tenancy, we spent some £2000 on machinery and equipment (some from Disposals and some new) and applied for and received Civil Aviation approval as a metal workshop. Our idea at the time was to service, maintain and convert our own aircraft.

On arrival back in Sydney I found that our agents had hopelessly overbooked us and committed us months in advance to carry migrants. As many of these people had already left their homes, I set out to try and meet our commitments. I bought from Disposals another Lodestar and two more Hudsons and bumped the staff at the Maintenance Company to 57 employees, all ex-servicemen."

"Originally, it was to take tourists by air around the world in various directions. That is how it started but after the first trip, it became purely a migrant business, bringing migrants into the country. The original intention of the firm was to take tourist trips only and the migrant charters were to enable me to get loading both ways. I bought a Lockheed Hudson from two partners named Board and Godden. I wound up and stopped flying on March 31 1948" 11

Flight Magazine (UK) carried the following report in June 1947:

"Intercontinental Air Tours is a company formed by three Sydney men operating charter air services from Australia to Britain. The company is endeavouring to make air travel between Australia and England a luxury affair, with no priorities, no dawn starts and no bad-weather flying. Passengers will be able to stay overnight at a hotel or club and see the show spots on the route" 102

Intercontinental Air Maintenance Pty Ltd was founded in June 1947 with original shareholders Warren Penny, Stan Godden and Greg Board. It commenced in a hangar at Camden carrying out civil conversions of ICAT and New Holland Airways aircraft, later moving to a hangar at Bankstown, where general aircraft maintenance was undertaken.

Doug Fawcett, Chief Engineer of Butler Air Transport, Mascot recalls:

"In 1947 and despite all the negative advice, I decided to take the plunge and go into business for myself. I was not starting cold, I already had the business up and running as a sideline while I was at Butlers. Deciding to give it all my attention and expand, I formed a company - Fawcett Aviation Pty Ltd - and leased a hangar from the DCA at Camden Airport.

The main operation was concentrated on servicing aircraft that were transporting immigrants from Europe, as well as preparing RAAF war-disposal aircraft, which were to be placed on the Australian register, usually for the migrant run. This sometimes entailed the overhaul of an engine, or complete strip-down of an airframe. There were even times when I was asked to supply a pilot.

I purchased my first equipment from Warren Penny, who flew passengers on joyflights at Mascot when I was selling confectionery there as a schoolboy. During World War Two he flew RAAF transport aircraft. To this day I cannot understand why he did not become head of one of our regional airlines; he certainly had charisma and could not be faulted as a pilot. In fact he did start a small overseas airline, known as Intercontinental Airways... to carry immigrants from Europe to Australia, but when the larger official overseas airlines began operating he was forced out of business. He had an excellent workshop, well fitted out, and his aircraft were always maintained to a reasonably high standard. I was fortunate enough to buy his complete workshop for a good price. In fact I still use 50% of the equipment I purchased from him.

In the first year of our workshops we concentrated on overhauling a variety of large passenger aircraft. I was offered a large hangar at Bankstown Airport and moved my operation there in October 1949. We are still based in the same hangar, No.276. In 1950 I added a flying school, the Illawarra Flying School Pty Ltd, and in 1964 started Chieftain Aviation Pty Ltd on the southern side of the airport." 10

Warren Penny recalled:

"Our third partner, Greg Board, bought Stan Godden's interest in one Lodestar VH-GRB and went out on his own, with no connection with us, operating as New Holland Airways. We were forced to buy his shares in the Maintenance Company due to his misdemeanors." 11

ICAT's first overseas trip departed Mascot on 10 July 1947 bound for London in their freshly converted Hudson VH-ASV under the command of Captain Warren Penny. Nine passengers were carried, including Penny's wife Mone, his brother Raymond Penny and his wife, and ICAT Tour Manager Ernie Allen. The Hudson did not have dual controls so no copilot was carried. The second flight was to London in August 1947, Warren Penny leaving Tour Manager Allen in Athens to coordinate agents and passengers while Penny continued to London in the Hudson. 11

Warren Penny later recalled:

"The first trip was arranged as an air tour on which we arranged to carry tourists on sight-seeing trips round the world. That was approved by the Civil Aviation Department for us to take passengers out of the country provided we bought the same passengers back. Therefore, on the first trip outwards we had 2 or 3 passengers on a world tour and subsequently brought them back on a later trip. After we had started the trip we found the greatest percentage of our income would be derived from migrants and we started on that first trip getting migrants in. We were supposed to pick up 8 passengers in Athens and only 4 had landing permits. When we arrived in Australia after the first trip there were hundreds of passengers waiting to be picked up and it was then I started to expand the business rapidly to try to get a greater number of passengers. You must remember I was first to start this migrant run."

"I did the first return flight Mascot-London-Mascot in VH-ASV as Intercontinental. On the second flight I took it to London and then to Athens and converted Captain Jack Hurst who took it from Athens to Australia. I went back to London on B.E.A. to pick up Lodestar G-AGBU. Hurst later did two return trips to Athens and back, the short undercarriage strut let go on the last trip southbound at Darwin.

My brother * bought 3 Hudsons also, one of them A16-147 later after conversion registered VH-BIH sold to Israeli Air Force. All conversions were done by Intercontinental Air Maintenance at Bankstown." 12 * C. Raymond Penny

Warren Penny summarized the aircraft of ICAT:

"The first aircraft was VH-ASV, the Lockheed Hudson. Originally, when the first aircraft was being fixed up as a passenger aircraft, we were approached by a firm called Air Carriers* to purchase three Lockheed Hudsons for them and we committed ourselves to buy three, Godden and myself, from the Disposals Commission. The three Hudsons were duly bought and we had 14 days to shift them from Richmond Aerodrome and pay for them. Air Carriers said they had no money and could not pay for them and they were subsequently sold to my brother Ray who bought the three. After that, Board & Godden had, with the proceeds of the sale from the Lockheed Hudsons, bought a Lockheed Lodestar. They had an argument about this aircraft and Board bought Godden out of it and took the aircraft away.

Godden then, together with myself, purchased another Lockheed Lodestar from Disposals and two Hudsons. I paid for the two Hudsons myself and put £500 up for the purchase of the Lodestar from Godden and I entered into a partnership agreement with Godden on the Lodestar. The Lodestar afterwards became VH-BFZ. That left me with a half interest in VH-BFZ, the owner of VH-ASV and two other Hudsons whose numbers I think were A16-122 and A16-112.

I then went abroad and the two Hudsons were bought over from Richmond to Bankstown and subsequently sold, one to Megner and the other to a man named Clarke. The one that was bought by Megner was subsequently re-possessed by me and latterly given to the Shell Company as guarantee against their bill. The other one bought by Clarke was subsequently taken over by Thomas, repaired in our workshops at Mascot (sic) and then vanished overseas.

After that, I bought two more aircraft, a D.H.86 in England G-ADYH and I myself bought another Lockheed Lodestar G-AGBU also in England, and that was the sum total of my fleet." 11

* Air Carriers was a short-lived charter company which based Handley Page Halifax G-AGXA/VH-BDT at Sydney.

ICAT Director Mr. F. Megna became owner of one of the original disposals Hudsons A16-112 for a short time. Warren Penny's brother Raymond Penny's three Hudsons were parked at Intercontinental Air Maintenance by November 1947. However by then the original plans for these aircraft had fallen through, as indicated in a letter from Mr. H. Parkinson, General Manager of Intercontinental Air Maintenance to C. R. Penny dated 14 November 1947:

"We wish to bring under your notice, the amount of approximately £600 outstanding to this company, for work done of your aircraft A16-122, A16-147, A16-149.

We would point out this amount has been outstanding for some considerable time, and while we appreciate the fact that difficulties have arisen with you personally over these aircraft, this company, as a Maintenance Company is totally disinterested, except from the repair and maintenance point of view, and continually being put to further expense: the employment of a night watchman to guard the machines in question." 56

Sydney Morning Herald newspaper 5 September 1947 reported that American Travel Headquarters, a large Sydney travel agency announced that it has made arrangements with Trans Oceanic Airways to bring 26 Greek migrants to Sydney. They have also arranged with Mr. Warren Penny to bring nearly 100 Greek migrants to Sydney by November.

VH-ASV departed Mascot 9 September 1947 for London, and a DCA Memo from the NSW District Superintendent to Head Office on the same day records these details: 95

"I forward particulars received from Mr. Warren H. Penny in regard to the overseas trip by aircraft VH-ASV.

This plane left for Eglad today.

Passengers: Mrs M. Schring and child aged 6

Mr. A. J. Hurst

All to U.K. and non-paying

Freight Half dozen parcels from Greek Consulate - no charge and have export licence.

Freight inward, if any, at BOAC Flying Boat rates

Return Trip Ten paying passengers. Greeks from Athens to Sydney.

Charter Flight fares average £300 (A) per head

Route Charleville, Cloncurry, Darwin, Koepand, Sourabaya, Batavia, Singapore, Butterworth,

Rangoon, Calcutta, Gwalia, Karachi, Jiwani, Bahrein, Cyprus, Athens, Rome, Nice,

Croydon

Crew W. Penny. M. Croft (Co-Pilot), G. Taylor (W/O) C. Clayton (Engineer),

E. S. Allan (Steward)"

A photograph of Hudson VH-ASV at London's Croydon Airport taken on 21 September 1947 shows it was painted with large "Intercontinental" titles above cabin windows, on the nose the flag of Australia and name "Aurora Australis Sydney Australia". A few days later it visited nearby Redhill Aerodrome for maintenance by Field Aircraft Services.

Sydney Morning Herald newspaper 22 October 1947 reported that Intercontinental Airlines Director Mr. F. Megna announced that his company expects to be carrying Greek migrants to Sydney soon. 60 Italian and Greek migrants were due to arrive Sydney early November by Trans Oceanic Airlines Sunderland also Douglas and Lockheed airliners. Their travel had been organised by American Travel Headquarters, Sydney. ICAT's Hudson VH-ASV arrived at Mascot on 16 November 1947 from London carrying 8 British visitors and 4 Italian and Greek migrants.

Warren Penny recalls his time in London in late 1947 building up the migrant business:

"We took a flat in North Audley Street, just near Berkeley Square. I went round to Australia House and I talked to the boys at Immigration. They were getting a huge number of enquiries for Australia - I suggested to them that if they had any enquiries from persons willing to pay their own fares, to send them round to my office, which I had established in the basement of a travel agency in South Audley Street. For each one I signed up, the boys got £5. A run started and I began to put a lot of fare money aside. As a result, in November for £3000 I bought a D.H.86. It had belonged to Skytravel at Speke and they had gone into liquidation, after having over £5,000 spent on it on overhaul. I advertised and got an excellent skipper, Captain Mellor, and a wireless operator named Thurlow. I sent the D.H.86 off to Australia with a capacity load of 12 English migrants. They ran into trouble in Allahabad with an engine out, but Mellor somehow got another motor and after about four days, they were on their way and had a relatively unadventurous trip to Australia."* 58

*Compilers note: the unusual choice of the biplane D.H.86 airliner is explained by Penny's urgent need to acquire additional aircraft due to overbooking of migrants by ICAT's agents. While Penny was in London, *Flight* magazine for 16 October 1947 carried an advertisement for sale by order of the liquidators of Skytravel Ltd at Squires Gate aerodrome, Blackpool: 3 Austers, 2 Proctors, 2 Consuls, Miles Aerovan, Bristol Wayfarer and 3 D.H.86s. Offers were required by 31 October 1947. It must have proven too good an opportunity to bypass for Penny, who was experienced in flying the D.H.86 type from a pre-war period flying for Union Airways in NZ. He purchased D.H.86B G-ADYH "Denebola" which retained "Skytravel" titles throughout its time with ICAT. An auction of the remaining Skytravel Ltd aircraft was held at Squires Gate 9 December 1947, which did not include any of the D.H.86s. 51

An Intercontinental Air Tours flight arrived at Sydney on 16 November 1947 with 12 passengers. *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the firm's flights were now starting to be established on a regular nine-day service from London 1

ICAT's D.H.86 G-ADYH arrived Mascot on 28 November 1947 with 10 British, Greek and Italian migrants. *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that the trip had been organised by American Travel Headquarters of Sydney who announced they plan to bring another 150 Greek and Italian migrants to Sydney before Christmas. 6

Warren Penny recalls his new Lodestar G-AGBU's first trip to Australia, reaching Mascot on Christmas Day 1947:

"In England from my advertising for air crew, I had run into a Captain Michelson, who wanted to go to Australia. He had a lot of experience but only on light aircraft. He agreed to invest £6,000 sterling in the outfit, due for repayment later on arrival in Australia. I consequently purchased through brokers W.S. Shackleton Ltd, an ex BOAC Lockheed Lodestar G-AGBU, which had been on the Cairo-Khartoum run and was in fact in Khartoum. It was fully equipped as an airliner and the total cost was £8,500 sterling. It was ferried from Cairo and whilst taxiing in at London Airport in a fog, it ran into a building and wrote off the port propeller and engine. Apart from the 12 passengers on the D.H.86, I had 6 more passengers in London for Australia, due to the pricing set-up, and had to put them in a hotel in Croydon to get them together for the departure. BOAC sent to Cairo for another engine, but the delay was going to be some weeks. After a couple of weeks the passengers started getting very restless and expenses were mounting, although up to this point BOAC were footing the bill. I decided to charter an aircraft and get them on their way.

I appointed as hostess a girl who wanted to go to Australia also, and who had been acting as my secretary in the office. She seemed a sensible type and was an excellent secretary, so I put her in charge of the flight. The passengers, highly excited at the thought of spending a couple of days in Italy, departed on a converted Oxford shortly afterwards. Two of the passengers were not in a hurry, so they waited for me. On 12 December 1947 the Lodestar was finally ready and we proceeded after lunch to London Airport. It was very foggy but they gave me a clearance. I had never flown a Lodestar before, although it was very similar to the Hudson, except it had the dual controls and automatic pilot. It was getting fairly late so I decided to night stop at Lyons. Next day I went straight to Rome and picked up the other passengers. I had 15 seats in the Lodestar and four crew. My wife Mone was acting as hostess. This meant that on the pick-up I had the full load of 15.

Heading for Athens I ran into very heavy weather, so I decided to go over the top. I levelled at 12,000 feet but after 30 minutes I couldn't find a hole. The passengers were starting to suffer from anoxia and I was getting pretty fuzzy myself, mainly because of tiredness generally. Luckily just as I was about to go into cloud, a slight break occurred and sticking up in the middle of it was a large mountain peak. A few minutes later the cloud started to fall away. I had worked my way northwards to avoid high cloud and when I broke through I was south of Salonica, which is well north of Athens. I went back to Salonica and landed to give the passengers a break and to get some more fuel, and then went on to Athens.

I stayed a couple of days at Athens to get some more passengers through their paperwork which was not quite in order. The English passengers had complained about the behaviour of the hostess - too much drink and too many men. I found their complaints justified when the Police called me to her hotel room, which was a shambles, with a couple of drunken sailors spread-eagled over the bed. Needless to say, I fired her on the spot. How she got back, if at all, was her worry. She was an efficient secretar who went round the twist when her routine, of years perhaps, was suddenly and dramatically broken by these new experiences.

With this full load, I left Athens, having to call at Cyprus to pick up another Greek passenger, which meant a slight overload as far as seating was concerned. The Lodestar was a delight to fly - it was much more pleasant than the Hudson, and with the automatic pilot, it was piece of cake on the long runs. At Karachi, I ran into trouble again. BOAC had neglected to attach the Cholera certificate to the log books and the Health officials were going to hurl us all into the Quarantine Station. Luckily the log books had been stamped, although the certificate was not in the book. I eventually got the Quarantine Controller who was 200 miles away, on the telephone and he agreed to let us go. We were delayed three hours in all. At Calcutta the passengers approached me to see if I would be in Australia for Christmas. I told them I would try.

On my first flight to Australia through Calcutta, I had a hell of a row with the airport control tower at Dum Dum, which was the official name for the Calcutta strip, and after a lot of savage words, I was forced, in my own interests, to apologise to the whole tower. So I decided to win them, and on the next trip I had two dozen bottles of Australian beer for them. On this particular trip, when I went to the tower, they told me I couldn't go on, as Rangoon Airport was being repaired and no flights were allowed in or out for three days. This meant of course that Sydney by Christmas was impossible. I asked the boys what they could do to help and as a result, about two hours later they told me the authorities had agreed to open the field at Rangoon for my arrival and also for the departure next morning. I was grateful to the tower for their help - it just shows what a few bottles of beer can do.

I got into Rangoon at 10pm and left at 4.30am next day. We had an uneventful run through to Mascot, where we duly arrived on Christmas Day. The only episode of note was coming down the Burma Peninsula. We were on the automatic pilot and I asked Michelson to watch it while I had a doze. I was dropping with tiredness. I was also very hot. After about half an hour, Mone came up to the cockpit with some cool drinks and she woke me. I woke with a start and saw the coastline on the starboard side - it should have been on the port. Michelson was sound asleep. What had happened was the automatic pilot had gradually precessed and turned the aircraft on to almost the opposite direction. I was furious and decided to fire Michelson on arrival. We took a heavy battering going through the Inter-Tropical Front. One passenger got a bleeding nose out of it and the cabin was a shambles." 58

Before departing London, "Intercontinental" was painted in large letters above the Lodestar's cabin windows and the name "Aurora Borealis" on the nose, but retaining a the Union Jack painted on the tail fins. Australia House in London had cabled DCA on 22 November 1947 advising that Penny had purchased G-AGBU and was preparing it for a flight to Australia with seating for 15 passengers and 4 crew. He had requested Australian registration. DCA cabled back allocating VH-BKH.

The Australian registration was actually painted on to the aircraft in London during December 1947. Penny says "The letters VH-BKH were only in existence for two or three days at the most. We were in a hurry to get out of London the English lettering G-AGBU was painted out and the Australian lettering painted on; then we were informed we could not take the aircraft to Australia under the Australian lettering; so I had to apply to put the aircraft back on to its original lettering." 11

This first-hand account comes recently from Stephen Rose, who was an 8-year old passenger on board Lodestar G-AGBU on its first trip to Australia. Dates marked * are confirmed from his passport:

"My mother was widowed in 1943 when my father died from the results of being gassed during WWI. She decided there was no future in staying in the UK – the options were to migrate to Canada – too cold; South Africa – trouble was already brewing there; or Australia. Unfortunately, in 1947 there was an 18 month waiting list to get any sort of passage to Australia, whether by sea or by air. About mid 1947 she saw an advertisement offering air passage to Australia for £350 per person. All we had to do was pay up, get the necessary vaccinations, and have all the necessary clothes and possessions in a suitcase not exceeding a weight limit of 45 pounds.

The first departure was delayed when the plane was damaged striking a hangar door. So a few weeks later we had to be at the aerodrome for an early morning departure on 12th December 1947. We did not depart until about 14.00 – in fact we were in such a hurry that the plane did not have the oxygen bottles for flying over the Alps – so were limited to 16,000 feet. There were four crew, Captain Penny, a co-pilot, a radio/engineer and an air hostess – the wife or girl friend of one of the crew. There were 14 passengers including two children – myself, 8 years old, and Pat who was about 7. The rest were thirtyish to middle aged, mostly couples. There were only 12 fixed seats and two extras that were not bolted down – for us kids. (Not that it made much difference as I was most of the time up in the cockpit with the crew.) Due to our late start and lack of oxygen, we flew to Toulouse for the first night. This was my first experience of ersatz coffee – served French style in cups like soup bowls! Next stop was Rome (13/12*). The crew earned a little extra fuel money that afternoon by flying refugees. The next day the aircraft smelled of spring onions. In the UK we were still on rations so many of the passengers ate too much of the abundant food at the hotel and were very airsick the next day.*

The next leg was to Athens (14/12) where the airport was under armed guard due to the civil war. The next day was to Nicosia, Cyprus (15-16/12*) where we stayed two nights while the plane was used to ferry refugees. It was a very noisy place as every motorist drove with a hand on the horn! From here we flew to Habbaniya in Iraq (17/12*) – a mud-brick fort out in the desert. The next day we must have stayed somewhere in Iran – I have a feeling it was Teheran (18/12). From here we flew either to Delhi and got sent to Karachi or the other way around. Between the time we left the UK and arrived there, self government had taken effect and cholera had broken out and we would have had to be quarantined hence being sent on to the other place. Here we had to stay in the transit area overnight (19/12). The next stop was Rangoon (20/12). We were supposed to go to Singapore but that was closed due to the wide-spread cholera epidemic, so we must have stayed somewhere in Malaya or Sumatra (21/12). The next day we refuelled at Batavia (now Jakarta) again an airport under armed guard as the Dutch were fighting the the rebels. We overnighted in*

Bali (22/12) where the airstrip was on a plain surrounded by paddy fields. The hotel was colonial Dutch and each bungalow was linked by a covered walkway. We travelled from the strip to the hotel by military jeep.

Then came the long sea crossing to Darwin which is relatively flat so not readily visible in the haze until you are almost there. Here we landed at the old aerodrome, which is now Ross Smith Avenue. The two curved roof hangars are still at Parap and one of these was used by the health inspector. We stayed at the old Hotel Darwin (23/12) and travelled in an ancient taxi whose sides opened up whenever the vehicle hit a pothole.

We refuelled at Cloncurry where we had to circle the strip to attract the attention of the agent. We overnighed in Charleville on Christmas Eve (24/12). On Christmas Day (25/12) we departed for Sydney at about midday. In Sydney we stayed at a hotel in Rose Bay for a few days before heading for South Australia. While in Sydney the film, 'The Overlanders', had its premiere. It was funny to see the women wearing furs to the premiere, in the Christmas heat. Also there were cars with gas bags on their roofs for gas producers and of course there were the trams." 133

The ownership of Lodestar G-AGBU came into question on arrival in Australia. When Captain Percy Michelson was hired by Penny in England, he had made a significant financial investment in ICAT, and Bill of Sale for G-AGBU was transferred to Michelson on 2 December 1947. Penny:

"That was a mutual arrangement between Michelson and myself. After discussing the position of affairs in Australia we decided that it might be advisable to keep the aircraft under British registration. The Department of Civil Aviation was cramping our operations and I decided to operate some of the aircraft from England and I formed a company in England called Intercontinental Airways Limited with respect to which the solicitors were in process of drawing up documents. I suggested to Michelson that if there should be any question as to our operations in Australia it would be a good thing to have this company in England and for him to be recognised as the legal owner of the aircraft so that it could not be repossessed, clamped on by the Australian Government or suffer any other mishap. Michelson was in agreement with it and documents were drawn up with his consent by my solicitors in London." 11

When the Lodestar arrived in Sydney on its first trip to Australia, Penny sacked Michelson because of his poor airmanship displayed enroute. Michelson took legal action against Penny for the return of his investment money, which resulted in transfer of ownership of G-AGBU to Michelson by March 1948 in settlement.

Sydney Morning Herald Tuesday 20 January 1948 reports the arrival of G-AGBU's second trip:

"An Inter-Continental (sic) Air Tours Lodestar reached Sydney yesterday with 14 British and Greek passengers from London and Athens. Most of the passengers were migrants. The Greek migrants included a family of five, who said they left their village on the Greek-Bulgarian-Yugoslav border because it had been burnt and ransacked by guerillas. The family comprised Mrs. A. P. Tsormbaris, her three children and her 85 year old mother-in-law, who will live in Melbourne"

On 2 February 1948 a British subsidiary company under the name Intercontinental Airways (England) Ltd was registered, with Directors H. W. G. Penny and P. Michelson. An application was lodged with the British Air Transport Licencing Board for passenger services between the United Kingdom and Australia, via Italy, quoting the aircraft to be used as the DH.86 biplane. Although this application no doubt caused raised eyebrows within the British Civil Aviation Authority, events unfolding in Australia ensured that there were no further entries in the application file. 119

Later in February 1948, Penny was back in Sydney when he was summoned to a meeting with the Minister for Civil Aviation, A. S. Drakeford. He was told that Intercontinental Air Tour's overseas permits to operate were cancelled. Requests for time to clear his backlog of booking were refused, although his Hudson VH-ASV was permitted back into the country because Hurst had already departed Rome inbound.

This final ICAT Hudson flight in VH-ASV suffered a series of misadventures, being impounded at Singapore on 30 January 1948 on the outbound flight to Rome, delays due engine troubles, and culminating in a lengthy delay at Rangoon on the return with migrants. *Sydney Morning Herald Monday 15 March 1948 carried a detailed report:*

Singapore, March 14 (AAP-Reuter)

An Australian airliner is due in Sydney from Athens on Tuesday after a charter flight which has been a chapter of accidents and delays. The airliner, which belongs to Inter-Continental (sic) Air Tours, of Sydney, is bringing nine Greek migrants to Australia. Members of the crew, when the plane called here yesterday, said the plane had spent more than 6 weeks on a return flight from Sydney to Athens: the flight should have taken only 20 days. Latest hold-up was a delay of 15 days at Rangoon, where no arrangements had been made to meet routine expenses. While the crew waited for funds to arrive from Australia to pay for petrol and hotel expenses they undertook two charter flights - much to the consternation of their passengers, who feared they were being deserted.

The navigator of the plane, Barcroft Mathers, of Mosman, is particularly worried by the delay. He was due to be married in Sydney on February 16, and the wedding had to be postponed. Also he was due to join British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines on February 26 after his honeymoon. He criticised the financial arrangements for the flight and said the plane had met nothing but trouble since leaving Sydney.

It was delayed twice because of engine trouble, once because its papers were not in order, and three times because the crew had no money to meet expenses. In addition all the crew lost all their spare clothing. The passengers paid about £310 each for the trip.

Other members of the crew are Jack Hurst, captain-pilot, formerly of the RAF, Bill Shirley, radio officer, of Bellevue Hill, and Graham Clayton, engineer, of Bondi."

Penny adds to the story of this last ICAT flight, blaming much of the Rangoon delay on DCA, who insisted on handling all cables and clearances for the Australian charter aircraft while overseas:

"Normally the captain had some £1,500 in various currencies for expenses on each trip. The arrangement was that whatever was left over could be divided amongst the crew. This was designed to stop them fiddling the money. On the way back with Hurst as Captain, they ran out of money in Rangoon. I received a belated cable through DCA giving the full story some days after they had landed. I tore around like a lunatic and eventually got the money together. When the Hudson did finally arrive in Darwin, an undercarriage strut let go while taxiing and some minor damage was done to the wing. I got the Lodestar from Stan Godden and flew up to Darwin with Peter Thurlow as radio officer. I brought the whole team back with me, including the passengers, except Mathers who went back to Sydney by scheduled airline." 58

Penny discontinued the ICAT migrant charters in March 1948, just as their southern European agents were drumming up large numbers of prospective customers. Penny blamed DCA interference both at a policy level (demands for carriage of navigator etc) as well as specific harassment of his maintenance organisation Intercontinental Air Maintenance at Bankstown.

The DCA edict to refuse further overseas permits for ICAT shattered Warren Penny's plans for a considerable expansion for his operation:

"I had been negotiating in Canada for two Canadairs - these were DC-4s with Merlin motors, but I had to cancel the arrangements and lost a good deal of money in doing so." 58

At that time, Penny had registered a new company **Intercontinental Airways (Australia) Pty Ltd** in partnership with his ICAT Director Mr. F. Megna of the travel agency Italo-Australian Travel and Transport Co, and Stan Godden. The company's express purpose was to cater for Italian immigration, and had been allocated one of ICAT's Hudsons, which by February 1948 was only partially converted by Intercontinental Air Maintenance. This new company never commenced operations, for reasons described by a DCA internal report:

"The main trouble with this concern is that the Italian members do not wish to put in any further money until they are assured that the Government regulations will enable them to operate with a greater, or safer, margin of profit." 124

In his summary to the NSW Court of Bankruptcy in 7.49, Warren Penny stated:

"About this time also the Civil Aviation Department started getting tough. They stopped us from carrying either passengers or freight out of the country (except perishables) forced us to carry engineers and Flight Navigators and cabin attendants, and also forced us to pay £20 and then up to £45 for cabling to overseas countries for permission to cross (We had previously been doing this for ourselves at the cost of £10. They also took away our Licence as a metal workshop on a technicality, and generally become most uncooperative. Up to now we had had four Australia-Europe return flights, and two England-Australia flights without any hold ups, conveying 82 migrants in, and some 20-30 people out, as well as small amounts of freight (This section was building up rapidly). The putting of all these regulations on us made it terribly difficult to continue operations. Two extra crew on a Lockheed cut down our passenger seating which was even then controlled by D.C.A.

The cutting out of passengers and freight out of the country meant we were operating on a 50% loading, ie. nothing out and 100% back. Route expenses were mounting and fares were coming down, however as our passenger commitments had to be met, I decided to carry on for a while, even if only to clear up our backlog

Accordingly, I stopped any further bookings and concentrated on the backlog. I also started to take in outside work in the Maintenance Company to augment our income and to save the drain on the Air Tours side. About February, I decided that it was impossible to operate any longer in view of the restrictions that were being imposed on us and sent the last aircraft out. Between December and February we brought in another 42 migrants on these flights. The last flight was a troublesome one - the pilot ran out of money in Rangoon and did not notify the Sydney office. As a result it cost me £1000 to pay all the bills and the Press gave us a fearful amount of adverse publicity for about five days.

As a result of this publicity I had a large number of cancellations and had to sell aircraft rapidly to meet the run on the "bank". I was then left with a back-log of 40 passengers, and I sold two more aircraft and with the £12,500 obtained, I chartered a Dakota to uplift these passengers from Rome and Athens, and this was subsequently done and all the passengers were in Australia by May" 11

Further detail is given in Penny's unpublished autobiography, in which he recalls that by February 1948 ICAT was in a severe financial state. Payments for 30 outstanding migrants from Italy had already been absorbed in running costs. Penny did a deal with "the owners of an American Douglas C-47 visiting Sydney at the time" to transfer ownership of ICAT Hudson VH-ASV and D.H.86 G-ADYH to them in return for them collecting the 30 migrants from Rome to Sydney. 58

The Dakota chartered by Penny to bring the last of the ICAT migrant bookings to Australia was Filipino operator South Eastern's PI-C233.

American citizen Francis James Grigware was a principal of South Eastern, and ownership of VH-ASV and G-ADYH was transferred to Grigware on 13 March 1948. The C-47 PI-C233 arrived Mascot on 21 April 1948 from Rome under command of Captain Tucker with 20 passengers and 5 crew. Most of the passengers were Penny's outstanding Italian migrants. Customs ledgers record the agent as Southern European Air Travel.

However Grigware did not uplift all of Penny's outstanding Migrants from Rome with this C-47 trip, and the remainder were to be collected by the Hudson VH-ASV, which he now owned. ICAT Captain Jack Hurst joined Grigware as pilot for the Hudson, and Hurst departed Darwin 22 May 1948 for Rome and back to Darwin to collect the last of Penny's booked migrants.

Belying the parlous financial state of ICAT by February 1948, in correspondence to DCA dated 18 February 1948 from Operations Manager W.T. Mellor, the company stated the following:

"Types of aircraft:

<i>Present equipment:</i>	<i>Lodestars VH-BFZ, G-AGBU Hudson VH-ASV D.H.86 G-ADYH 2 Hudsons undergoing CofA and conversion 2 Lodestars will start CofA in about 2 weeks</i>
<i>On loan:</i>	<i>Douglas C-47 PI-C233 Douglas C-32 VH-ADZ Douglas C-39 VH-ARC</i>
<i>Projected additions 1948:</i>	<i>2 Douglas C-47 1 or 2 Douglas C-54</i>
<i>Senior Captains</i>	<i>Penny (9500 logged hours) Mellor (6500 logged hours) Michelson (7000 logged hours) Hurst (3500 logged hours) Rochforte (4000 logged hours) in process of engagement</i>
<i>Junior Captains</i>	<i>Barnard (3000 logged hours) D.H.86 Captain, Lodestar F/O</i>
<i>2nd Officers</i>	<i>Chalmers (1500 logged hours)</i>
<i>Nav Officers</i>	<i>Taylor (1500 logged hours) Mathers (2000 logged hours)</i>
<i>Radio Officers</i>	<i>Taylor (1500 logged hours) also Nav Thurlow (1500 logged hours) Long (2000 logged hours) Shirley (1000 logged hours)</i>
<i>Engineer Officers Clayton</i>	<i>(500 logged hours) Brown (150 logged hours) Dennison (Nil hours) Jenkins (900 logged hours) prospective Jackson (Nil hours) prospective</i>

You should note that this company is in the process of becoming a Limited Liability company under the name of Intercontinental Airways Australia Pty Ltd." 96

In March 1948 the ICAT hangar at Bankstown had four Hudsons parked awaiting civil conversion. 124

On 16 March 1948 DCA wrote to Penny saying the Lodestar G-AGBU must undergo inspection for Australian CofA and take up an Australian registration. Penny replied that the aircraft would be leaving the country within the next few days. However the Lodestar remained parked in Sydney.

However on 9 April 1948 Warren Penny had obtained Michelson's approval to use G-AGBU on a search off Coffs Harbour for a missing yacht, carrying relatives of the yacht's crew as observers. Penny and Michelson flew 8 hours in G-AGBU on this search. 58

Three days later Penny wrote to DCA advising that the aircraft would soon be flown to Cairo for renewal of its British CofA by BOAC. However by now ICAT had effectively ceased operations and the Lodestar was now under Percy Michelson's ownership.

Warren Penny stated:

"By April 1948 my only income was from the Maintenance Company which was only doing outside work. I swapped my share of the Lodestar VH-BFZ with S. Godden for his shares in the Maintenance Company, making me the sole owner of the Maintenance Company. I had left then only one Lodestar G-AGBU and a Hudson, which was in pieces repossessed from some people who could not pay for it. At the beginning of June I received word, followed up by a letter from the Civil Aviation Department that I was to be out of the hangar by 30th June 1948 owing to the fact that the hangar was required by the R.A.A.F.

I contacted all the relevant people in D.C.A. to see if I could get a replacement hangar and was given a blank refusal. At this time I had 37 employees and a good deal of work on hand and some to come in. I was approached by D.C.A. and told that if I didn't get the machinery out of the hangar it would be put out in the open, so I approached the C.O. R.A.A.F at Bankstown for extra time, which he gave me, and subsequently I managed to store all the equipment temporarily.

The word passed around very rapidly and I was forced, because of the pressure of creditors, to sell the machinery for £500 which was the best price I could get for it.

The Lodestar G-AGBU had to be pushed out into the open as there was no hangar space available anywhere. Some hundreds of pounds damage had been done to it by the recent gales. The Hudson (in pieces) was stored at Curtis Madsen's Hangar and was costing £3 per week to keep it there." 11

In May 1949 Warren Penny filed for bankruptcy due to his personal debts incurred operating ICAT, mainly fuel supplied by Shell and Vacuum Oil and costs for agents overseas and aircraft maintenance overseas. Among listed debtors was DCA for hangarage fees at Darwin during 1947/48 for DH.86 G-ADYH and Hudson VH-ASV.

Final word on Intercontinental Air Tours comes from Warren Penny's summary to the NSW Court of Bankruptcy:

"I was unable to continue my business of an airline operator mainly because of Government restrictions on Private Airlines and my subsequent eviction from my hangar at Bankstown Aerodrome.

Although I owe a good deal of money I have not done anything dishonest - all the passengers who had to be lifted were lifted. I have not been in any gold, gun or narcotic running ventures, and I think I can safely say that my reputation in Customs branches all through the world is of the highest order." 11



Intercontinental Air Tours' Lockheed Hudson VH-ASV *Aurora Australis* at Mascot 1947.

Photo Warren Penny



Hudson VH-ASV undergoing maintenance at Redhill aerodrome, London in September 1947. Photo via David Freeman



Interior on Intercontinental Air Tours' Hudson VH-ASV..

Photo Warren Penny via Greg Banfield



Intercontinental Air Tours' Lockheed Lodestar G-AGBU *Aurora Borealis* at Darwin 1948. Purchased from BOAC, Warren Penny retained the Union Jack on the tail fins, hoping to ease its passage through the many countries between Europe and Australia on the migrant flights.

Photo R. Richmond via Greg Banfield



Lodestar G-AGBU four years later at Mascot in 1952 as VH-FAD with South Coast Airways flying scheduled passenger services to Cowra. The Captain on this flight is Nancy Ellis.
Photo via David Vincent

Intercontinental Air Tours aircraft:

Hudson Mk. 1 VH-ASV *Aurora Australis* (c/n 1881 ex RAAF A16-30)

23.6.46 Purchased by G. R. Board ex Commonwealth Disposals Commission
 12.10.46 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage, RAAF Richmond and ferried to Camden.
 Work commenced on CofA at Camden, completed by Intercontinental Air Maintenance at Bankstown
 2.47 Ownership transferred to partner H. W. G. Penny, Sydney
 3.4.47 Ferried Camden-Bankstown for completion of civil conversion
 9.7.47 Testflown after CofA inspection Bankstown by Warren Penny
 10.7.47 Registered VH-ASV to H.W.G. Penny, Sydney: 10 passengers 3 crew
 10.7.47 Departed Sydney for London, flown Warren Penny with 9 passengers
 13.4.48 sold to Francis J. Grigware
 (see Grigware listing under Foreign Operators for subsequent use)

Lockheed Lodestar C-60 VH-BFZ (c/n 2611, ex A67-7, 43-16451)

10.9.47 Sold by CDC to S. V. Godden, Sydney, price £1000
 26.9.47 Issued to purchaser ex 7AD Storage RAAF Tocumwal
 10.47 Civil conversion under way by Intercontinental Air Maintenance
 30.12.47 Registered VH-BFZ Stanley V. Godden, Sydney: CofA issued
 (half share owned by Warren Penny)
 31.12.47 Departed for Rome, Cpt. Starkey.
 Operated by Godden Air Transport and Intercontinental Air Tours
 8.48 Chartered to Service Airways Inc, Rome (agents for Israel Government) for £8000
 8.48 Departed Australia for Israeli Air Force, through Bahrein 5.9.48
 11.10.49 Struck-off Australian register "improper sale overseas"

Lodestar G-AGBU *Aurora Borealis* (c/n 2090 built to BOAC order)

11.47 purchased by H. W. G. Penny, London ex BOAC *Lowestoft* via W.S. Shackleton Ltd.
 Aircraft had been stored after retired by BOAC wartime African services and was
 ferried by BOAC from Cairo to London for Penny. On arrival London Airport in fog,
 struck a building while taxiing, causing damage to port engine and propeller.
 25.12.47 G-AGBU arrived Sydney on delivery ex London, Cpt. H.W.G. Penny, 14 pax, 4 crew.
 4.48 Ownership transferred to Percy Michaelson, Sydney
 4.48 wfu, parked Bankstown
 9.48 struck-off British Register
 10.48 tailplane damaged Bankstown during windstorm.
 6.49 sold by Receiver of ICAT to Percy Michelson, Sydney who was a partner in South Coast Airways,
 Wollongong NSW.
 16.7.49 East West Airlines Board minutes record that Mr.Michaelson has offered his Lodestar to the airline
 .49 Purchased by Doug Fawcett of Fawcett Aviation, Bankstown from Laurie Middlemiss.
 12.51 VH-FAD Australian CofA issued: owned Fawcett Aviation. Leased to South Coast Airways,
 and operated on services between Sydney, Wollongong, Cowra and West Wyalong.
 8.53 returned to Fawcett Aviation, Bankstown.

- 4.55 sold to Fieldair Ltd, New Zealand as ZK-BJM and converted at Bankstown by Fawcett Aviation for agricultural topdressing work.
- D.H. 86B G-ADYH *Denebola*** (c/n 2344) 44
 10.47 Purchased by H.W.G. Penny in England ex Skytravel Ltd, Blackpool-Squires Gate
 28.11.47 arrived Sydney on first migrant run from London, Cpt. W. Mellor with 10 British, Greek and Italian migrants)
 1.3.48 stored in DCA hangar at Darwin from 1.3.48-12.4.48
 4.48 sold to Francis J. Grigware, Sydney
 (see *Grigware listing under Foreign Operators for subsequent use*)
- Hudson Mk. IVA A16-112** (c/n 6041 ex 41-23182)
 10.9.47 Purchased ex CDC by S. V. Godden, Sydney, price £1000
 Ex 2AD Storage RAAF Richmond
 .47 Ferried to Camden, stored by Intercontinental Air Maintenance pending civil conversion
 Transferred to H. W. G. Penny, Sydney
 Sold to F. Megna, Sydney
 Repossessed by H.W.G. Penny, Sydney
 10.48 Shell Oil Co, Sydney: stored dismantled at Camden, as part payment of ICAT fuel debt
 49 Sold by Shell to East West Airlines, Tamworth NSW
 23.4.49 Ferried Camden-Bankstown for civil conversion by Curtis Madsen Aircrafts for East West Airlines, 12.49
 Registered VH-BNJ, later VH-EWA, -AIU, -AGS, -KOY
 still flying with Temora Aviation Museum, Temora NSW painted as RAAF "A16-211 *The Tojo Busters*"
- Hudson Mk. IVA A16-122** (c/n 6051 ex 41-23192)
 24.4.47 Purchased ex CDC by Messrs. Godden & Board, Sydney, price £1000
 ex storage at 2AD RAAF Richmond
 .47 Ferried to Camden, stored by Intercontinental Air Maintenance pending civil conversion
 .47 Transferred to H. W. G. Penny, Sydney
 .47 Sold to Mr. Clarke, Sydney
 .47 Purchased by C. Raymond Penny, Sydney
 11.47 Work on civil conversion by Intercontinental Air Maintenance ceased by now
 11.54 Registered as VH-AGX: Adastra Aerial Surveys, Sydney
- Hudson Mk. IVA A16-147** (c/n 6076, ex 41-23217)
 24.4.47 Purchased ex CDC by Messrs. Godden & Board, Sydney, price £1000
 22.7.47 Issued to purchaser, ex 2AD Storage RAAF Richmond
 Ferried to Camden, stored by Intercontinental Air Maintenance pending civil conversion
 .47 Purchased by C. Raymond Penny, Sydney
 11.47 Work on civil conversion by Intercontinental Air Maintenance ceased by now
 17.6.48 Registered VH-BIH: C. Raymond Penny, Sydney
- Hudson Mk. IVA A16-149** (c/n 6078, 41-23219)
 24.4.47 Purchased ex CDC by Messrs. Godden & Board, Sydney. Ex 2AD Storage RAAF Richmond
 Ferried to Camden, stored by Intercontinental Air Maintenance pending civil conversion
 .47 Purchased by C. Raymond Penny, Sydney
 11.47 Work on civil conversion by Intercontinental Air Maintenance ceased by now
- Hudson Mk. IVA A16-155** (c/n 6416, ex BW737, 41-23599)
 10.9.47 Purchased ex CDC by S. V. Godden, Sydney. Ex 2AD Storage RAAF Richmond
 No civil conversion

2. NEW HOLLAND AIRWAYS, SYDNEY

Gregory Richmond Board

(6.47) "Gleneagles" 10 Darlinghurst Road, Potts Point, Sydney

(4.48) 15 Roosevelt Building, Roslyn Avenue, Potts Point. Sydney

(5.49) 279 George Street, Sydney

New Holland Airways (NHAW) was among the first operators on the Australian migrant run, mainly from Rome. The company was founded in June 1947 by **Gregory R. Board**, who was originally a partner with Warren Penny and Stan Godden in Intercontinental Air Tours. Before ICAT commenced operations he went out on his own to form New Holland Airways for overseas charter work, taking on partners **Gregory W. Hanlon** and **Stan Godden**. Original General Manager was **Captain Ronald W. Howitt**, but by the following year General Manager was shown as Greg Hanlon.

Greg Board, a former RAAF fighter pilot during the war, had ambitious plans for a civil flying career. Earlier he had been watching Commonwealth Disposals Commission advertisements in the Sydney newspapers, offering military aircraft for sale at low prices. In April 1946 the first RAAF Hudsons came on to the market, when ten Hudson Mk.1s with P&W Twin Wasp engines were advertised at various RAAF Stations. The CDC tender document stated "A *Certificate of Airworthiness will be issued for this type by the Department of Civil Aviation under the same conditions as for Lockheed 14 aircraft.*" Board went to RAAF Richmond, close to Sydney, to inspect the eight Hudsons listed as stored there at No.2 Aircraft Depot. Tenders closed on 6 June 1946 and he submitted a written offer of £600 for A16-30, which seemed in the best condition. His tender was accepted by the CDC and A16-30 was officially sold to Greg Board on 23 June 1946.

Hudson A16-30 was collected at Richmond on 12 October 1946 and ferried to Camden airfield, south of Sydney where the civil conversion commenced. During the following February it was given two short test flights at Camden by pilot Geoff Hoskins. In April 1947 Board was forming a partnership with a similarly adventurous Sydney pilot Warren Penny, both with plans for flights to Europe. Penny purchased A16-30, now allocated VH-ASV, and had it ferried from Camden to Mascot to complete the conversion, having the cabin fitted out to airline standard for 10 passengers and 3 crew.

Another Commonwealth Disposals Commission sale document dated 16 December 1946 offered six RAAF Lockheed Lodestar 14 passenger transports and 80 spare Wright Cyclone engines. Tenders closed on 10 January 1947 and Greg Board bid for Lodestar A67-5 located at RAAF Tocumwal. A business associate Stan Godden put up most of the £1000 offered, and A67-5 was sold to Messrs G.R.Board & S. Godden, Sydney effective 3 February 1947.

The formation of New Holland Airways is closely connected with Warren Penny and the early ventures were a partnership between Penny, Board and Godden. See Intercontinental Air Tours history above.

18 February 1947: Penny flew Board and Godden to Camden in his Proctor G-AIEF to inspect the Hudson A16-30 which they had purchased from RAAF disposals. Work had commenced on its civil conversion but needed interior lining and seating. Penny purchased the Hudson from them to establish his ICAT operation.

27 February 1947: the trio set off again in the Proctor, this time to Tocumwal to inspect the RAAF Lodestar A67-5 purchased earlier that month by Godden & Board from Commonwealth Disposals Commission. 58

An early business enterprise by the partners was to smuggle a police fugitive out of Australia. In this remarkably candid account, Warren Penny describes the events:

"Godden had been approached by a Mr. Hammond, who wanted to get out of the country. It later transpired that he was on a fraud charge for share selling and he was out on bail pending the hearing of the case. The price arranged to get him to Singapore was £5,000 because Hammond had no passport. We each put up £500 and Board was to fly the aircraft, an Anson which we bought quite cheaply for the job. The arrangement was to leave Mascot with only the pilot on board, booked out to Walgett. On being airborne the aircraft would divert to Woy Woy where there was an old air force strip, pick up Hammond and proceed to Walgett. The few minutes involved in picking Hammond up did not greatly affect the flight plan. The route was via Wyndham, because Customs agreed that as it was only a ferry flight to Singapore for the sale of the aircraft, with only the pilot on board, Wyndham could do the necessary clearance. Again, the plan at Wyndham was to drop Hammond on a clay pan outside Wyndham. Board then flew back and night-stopped, cleared Customs the next day, and enroute to Koepang, land on the claypan and pick Hammond up.

All went well until Board landed at Banka Island instead of Palembang in Sumatra. The Dutch arrested him and then later found Hammond in the back locker of the Anson which opened on the inside of the cabin. The idea on arrival at Singapore was to land at Changi, a military field, and to do a long landing run. This took the aircraft behind some trees outside the vision of the control tower. Hammond could then jump out and disappear in the scrub. He was then, of course, on his own. Board would be told that he was on the wrong field and be sent back to the civilian field at Kallang.

Board and Hammond got out of the Dutch jail, got to the aircraft and under various pretexts started the engines and began to take off. As they took off, they were shot at by the guards but luckily there was no damage and they were not hurt. The Dutch of course alerted Singapore, Hammond was arrested on arrival and later flown back to Sydney. We had to refund £5,000 and we lost about a £1000 on the deal among the three of us." 58

Compiler's note: The subject of this adventure was Avro Anson VH-ARK purchased by Gregory Board 23.4.47, departed Mascot 10.6.47 on ferry flight to Singapore for resale. A DCA report stated Board was grounded on Banka Island for 4 days by Dutch authorities who questioned him regarding his relationship with the Indonesian rebels. Board had taken off under gun fire and arrived at Singapore with a stowaway, identified as Mr. George Stamford, an Australian wanted on fraud charges from 1944. Police arranged his extradition to Australia. VH-ARK was sold 28.6.47 to Lim Cheng Sun in Singapore and was reportedly operated for the Indonesian rebels, fate unknown. 16

When NHAW was founded in June 1947 its address was "Gleneagles" 10 Darlinghurst Road, Potts Point, Sydney (same as Warren Penny) and its imposing letterhead proclaimed:

*New Holland Airways
Luxury charter flights to all parts of the world
Agents in Sydney, Singapore, Calcutta, Lydda, Athens, Rome*

Greg Board had ceased being a partner in ICAT to set up his own company NHAW. Warren Penny recalls:

"Our third partner, Greg Board, bought Stan Godden's interest in one Lodestar VH-GRB and went out on his own, with no connection with us, operating as New Holland Airways. We were forced to buy his shares in the Maintenance Company due to his misdemeanors." 11

A DCA internal memo dated 8 March 1948 throws more light on the formation of NHAW:

"In brief, Mr. Board broke away from a partnership with Mr. S. Godden in a Lockheed Lodestar VH-GRB. Mr. Board bought out Mr. Godden with money put up by a Mr. Arrowsmith, who was discussed in a previous memo. It now transpires that Mr. Board is a "lesser light" in the business and has been supplanted by a Mr. Gregory Hanlon as Manager. Mr. Hanlon has been Mr. Arrowsmith's assistant in previous dealings.

The concern owns the Lodestar VH-GRB, a DC-5 and a DC-2 and a half. The Lodestar has been held up for some time in Karachi having an engine changed. 124

There appears to have been another "silent" partner at the time of formation of NHAW, a US citizen named **Gunning Patrick "Des" Plunkett**. His name is not mentioned in the NSW companies office files, but a Plunkett family history from USA suggests that his main role was gold smuggling and is quoted above in **The Darker Side**.

Further mention of "Des" Plunkett and Greg Hanlon comes from the late Captain Pat Armstrong:

"Des Plunkett was an associate of Greg Hanlon. Des was associated with the planes of the several companies that operated the migrant charters. Plunkett was an associate of Greg Hanlon, who was a spiv who wore immaculate white suits and stayed at Raffles in Singapore. Hanlon had developed contacts in the gold mining areas of outback Australia. The miners apparently filched a little of the gold they mined for their employers and paid for their drinks with the local publicans. The publicans could not get rid of the gold because it was a highly controlled substance. Hanlon would buy it from these publicans and befriended several Qantas pilots who agreed to fly the gold overseas for Hanlon, sometimes to Hong Kong but mainly to India. On one such flight the Hong Kong Customs intercepted and seized the gold and arrested the crew.

The Australian newspapers headlined the arrest and the Qantas crew was subsequently sacked. With their couriers exposed, the trade ceased and Plunkett and Hanlon dropped from sight." 91

New Holland Airways' first aircraft was Lockheed Lodestar VH-GRB (ex RAAF A67-5) which completed its civil conversion by Intercontinental Air Maintenance on 1 October 1947 when its CofA was issued. The next day VH-GRB departed Mascot for Europe on its first migrant run. Its departure was delayed 4 hours due to a Customs search, which included a body search of Board, his wife and crew who were stripped by Customs officials. Customs stated nothing was found, however gold and Malayan and British currency had been found on aircraft during recent searches at Mascot. 1

VH-GRB returned with 15 Greek migrants, arriving at Singapore 27 October 1947 under charter to a Singapore tourist agency and landed in Sydney next day where it was quickly cleared by Australian Customs. Pilot was Captain Board and his wife flew with him on each trip. 46

Greg Board later summarised his aircraft:

"I bought the old DC-2 VH-AEN from Australian National Airways at Essendon Airport together with the DC-5 VH-CXC. Both airplanes were in good condition although their airworthiness certificates were expired. They came absolutely complete with all radio, catering equipment and even blankets for the passengers. Both airplanes were parked at Essendon when I bought them and I took them up to Camden or Bankstown, I cannot remember which, as our maintenance section was originally at Camden and later moved to Bankstown. I also had in New Holland Airways around that time, about three Lockheed Hudsons and one Lockheed Lodestar, as well as one Italian registered DC-3 I-TROS.

All of these aircraft were used to transport immigrants from Rome, Athens and Singapore. Of the whole fleet I must say the DC-5 was the finest of them all to fly, except for its rather short range and lack of an auto pilot." 7

The following later recollection from Greg Board (Jan 2003) gives a slightly different slant on the early days of NHAW:

"I purchased Lodestar VH-GRB from the air force when it was stored at Tocumwal. My friend and neighbour F/L Bill Upjohn had been the personal pilot to Chief of the Air Staff George Jones and flew the Lodestars for a Communications Flight. When I told Bill that I intended to buy a Hudson to start an air service he told me to find a Lodestar and buy it because of its superior performance. The Sergeant in charge when I picked it up at Tocumwal opened up the store for me (there were only 2 personnel on the base) and told me to fill the airplane with spares! I took VH-GRB to Camden where there was a licenced engineer who took on the job of getting a CofA for it. I think we also did VH-ASV there for Warren Penny.

Shortly after this purchase I got to hear that ANA had a couple of passenger planes for sale so I flew to Melbourne and bought the DC-5 VH-ARD and DC-2 VH-AEN for £1500 each complete with passenger blankets and crockery. At this time I took Stan Godden in as a partner as it looked as if New Holland Airways was going to grow. We started Intercontinental Air Maintenance and took over the large DH hangar at Bankstown. Warren Penny came in but as he had no money, we took VH-ASV. I put Doug Fawcett in as Chief Engineer as he was fully licenced." 81

Doug Fawcett, who had left Butler Air Transport to set up his own maintenance company Fawcett Aviation, buying the workshop tools and equipment of Intercontinental Air Maintenance recalls:

"Australians were starting to operate aircraft on immigration runs. One evening I had a call from Greg Hanlon, who was an associate of my friend Stan Godden and owner of New Holland Airways. Greg asked me if I could overhaul an 'upside down' DC-3. This was what we called the high-wing Douglas DC-5. The aircraft carried 21 passengers, the same as the DC-3, but the main undercarriage, nose wheel and flaps were far from DC-3 standard. I hired Sid Marshall's hangar for a week in my own name to overhaul the DC-5. There was no great trouble doing the overhaul. The DCA insisted that I increase the number of escape hatches, as the number fitted did not meet their requirements. Because of the hours we worked, I parked my DC-3 fuselage motor home outside Sid's hangar and made it both my home and a canteen for my men. We started work one Friday night and finished it in time for the inspectors to issue the paperwork by the following Friday afternoon. Greg Board, who had been the chief test pilot for the CAC, tested the aircraft and I went with him as observer. There were no faults." 10

The DC-5 was flown from Essendon to Sydney on 2 January 1948 by Greg Board. After its CofA renewal at Mascot by Doug Fawcett, it was conducting crew training at the military airfield at Schofields near Sydney when the undercarriage collapsed. However it was quickly repaired and entered service on migrant runs from Rome to Sydney, usually flown by Captain Ron Howitt. In March 1948 VH-ARD visited Lydd Airport, Kent, England, by now repainted in a different paint scheme with titles "New Holland Airways Charter Services" and Australian flag on the tail. 82, 130, 132

The DC-2 VH-AEN took longer to get ready for the migrant run and was damaged on landing at Darwin on 9 May 1948 while outbound on its inaugural trip from Sydney to Rome. Control was lost on landing and it ran off the runway, suffering significant damage. Its engines and parts were removed but its hulk remained off the side of the runway for a year or more.

Greg Board says: *Of all our aircraft only one never made a trip to Europe and that was the DC-2 VH-AEN. The pilot we hired for it was a chap by the name of Keith Robey. He evidently could not handle the differential hand brake and ran off the runway in Darwin on its maiden flight to Rome. It was a total write off. I was overseas at the time and missed the episode."* 7

Keith Robey went to Cutiss Madsen Aircrafts in Sydney to fly Hudsons on airline services followed by a long career in aviation with Fawcett Aviation and Illawarra Flying School at Bankstown. His copilot on the DC-2 VH-AEN at the time of its accident at Darwin was ex RAAF pilot Jim Perry, on his first flight with New Holland Airways. He later joined Guinea Air Traders as copilot on C-47s on the migrant run to Rome. 2, 45

On 10 May 1948 the DC-5 VH-ARD departed Darwin for Rome. DCA harassment of the migrant charter flights was at a height, and instead of immediately returning to Sydney with Italian migrants, Greg Board negotiated its sale to an American citizen Martin A. Rybakoff, resident in Sicily the papers dated 28 May 1948. Known to all but the government authorities, Rybakoff was acting as an agent for the new nation of Israel, as described in **The Israeli Connection** below. The attractive deal offered Greg Board a handsome profit for his orphan DC-5, but also included a replacement aircraft Douglas C-47 with Italian civil registration I-TROS. By operating a foreign registered aircraft, Board hoped to evade most of the DCA restrictions being placed on Australian charter aircraft. 2
A letter to DCA from NHAW on 2 July 1948 simply advised the Department that VH-ARD was unairworthy in Italy and requested approval to transport migrants to Australia in an Italian registered aircraft. This was approved by DCA and C-47 I-TROS arrived in Sydney with 21 passengers on 17 July 1948 with 22 migrants and 6 crew.

In July 1948 a dispute between Greg Board and his partner Greg Hanlon resulted in Board going to court in Sydney and successfully gaining an interim injunction on 30 July 1948 against Gregory Wolfram Hanlon to prevent him departing Mascot Airport with two aircraft bound for Rome. Board asked the court to rule on the respective rights of the partnership between himself and Hanlon. Board told the court that Hanlon wanted to quit the business and sell their aircraft.

NHAW continued to operate the C-47 I-TROS under its Italian registration for four months, retaining the previous owner's titles "Transadriatica" and the Italian flag on tail. However DCA demanded that it be registered as an Australian aircraft, and after Captain Ron Howitt arrived at Mascot from Rome in I-TROS on 17 November 1948 with 27 passengers and 5 crew, the Douglas immediately underwent inspection for Australian CofA at Essendon by Australian National Airways and was registered VH-BNH on 24 November. NHAW operated it for another few months to Rome until the restrictions on the migrant charters led to its sale to Butler Air Transport, Sydney.



DC-3 VH-BNH at Mascot 1948.

The Collection p1789-14176

Sydney Morning Herald of 27 December 1948 gave a summary of the migrant charter flights. It reported that most Australian companies had been forced out by DCA restrictions "but New Holland Airways has managed to evade these bureaucratic restrictions by registering under the Italian flag."

During 1948 Greg Board also conducted a series of migrant flights of a different nature. Instead of European migrants heading for Australia, he flew his Lodestar VH-GRB on a series of flights during the chaotic days of the Partitioning of India to form Pakistan as part of the British withdrawal:

Greg recalls: "I also flew GRB in India during partition, taking Muslims to Lahore and Hindus to Bombay and Calcutta. I managed to get about 32 pax in per flight without seats. The overload was such that the first hour was a battle to get up to 2000 feet. Also did one trip with a millionaire who was a leper. He chartered the plane for himself and three servants. The entire interior was covered with linen to prevent contamination." 81

Greg Board recently stated his thoughts on the demise of New Holland Airways:

"New Holland Airways was stopped operating by Qantas. When they were taking delivery of their first Constellation 749, they wanted to arrive with a full load of passengers so they went via Singapore where there were nearly one hundred destitute immigrants who had been visiting ashore when their ship slipped off without them. Thomas Cook was handling their transport through a Mr. Haxworth, Director of Immigration. When Haxworth informed Qantas that all these people were booked and paid for on New Holland by his Department and most already gone, there were some very red faces. I was informed that rumours had it that the big Q had ordered our closure, which followed soon after. I left Australia in disgust shortly after." 81

(Compiler's notes:

- The first Qantas Lockheed 749 VH-EAA was delivered to Mascot 14 October 1947 ex USA, followed by 3 others during October 1947. This seems far too early to have directly contributed to the demise of New Holland Airways in 1949

NHAW ceased migrant flights early 1949. Greg Board left Australia to pursue a flying career overseas (summarised in **THE PLAYERS** below) leaving the company and its debts with Greg Hanlon. On 29 July 1949 Hanlon wrote to DCA advising that NHAW's aircraft had been taken over by Captain Ron Howitt, who had been the company's Operations Manager. A month later on 16 August, DCA transferred NHAW's charter licence to R.W. Howitt, Sydney.

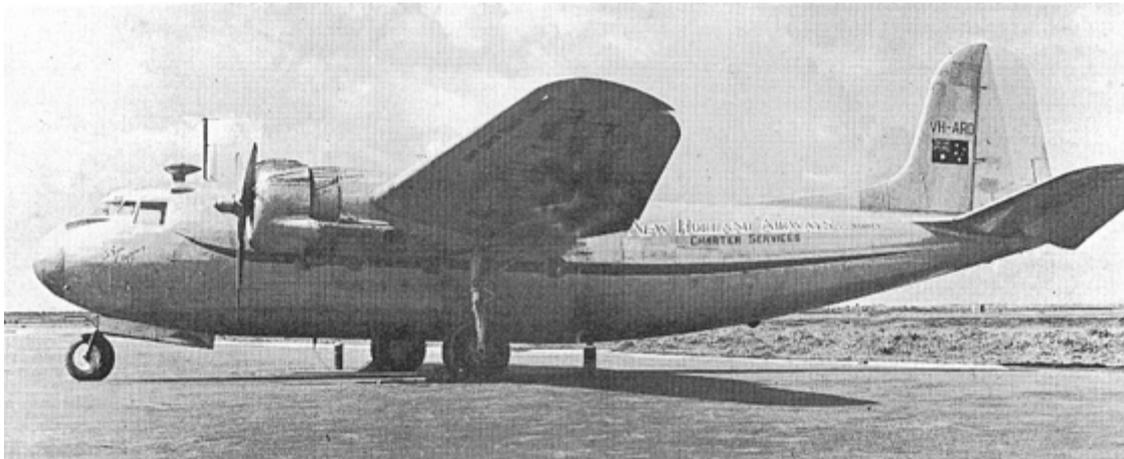
New Holland Airways was wound up during 1950. On 11 February 1950 Hanlon wrote to DCA on NHAW letterhead paper (which by now had a DC-4 circling the globe as an emblem) advising that New Holland Airways was no longer operating as a company. The remaining aircraft was Lodestar VH-GRB stored at Bankstown. On 12 April 1950 Australian National Airways wrote to DCA: "Gregory William Hanlon who trades under the name New Holland Airways is indebted to this company for a considerable amount of money. ANA hold Bill of Sale on Lodestar aircraft VH-GRB and two spare Wright Cyclone engines. If the aircraft is sold, we will have first call on the monies paid in settlement of his debt to us" 37 The matter must have been resolved, because VH-GRB was sold in August 1950 to Overland Air Services at Condobolin NSW.



New Holland Airways Lockheed Lodestar VH-GRB at Mascot 1949. Parked outside Hangar 2 with the build behind being the F.T.Wimble Printing Ink works. Photo Doug Fawcett via Ron Cuskelly



Douglas DC-5 VH-ARD in original New Holland Airways markings at Mascot in January 1948 immediately after purchase from ANA. It was later repainted into a different scheme - see The Israeli Connection below, Photo via E.D. Daw



VH-ARD two months later at Lydd Airport, Kent, England with revised New Holland Airways markings and "Bali Clipper" on the nose. Flypast magazine



New Holland Airways replaced their DC-5 with this DC-3 I-TROS purchased in Italy and pressed into migrant service for six months retaining the markings of its previous operator Transadriatica. This picture was taken at Essendon in November 1948 when it arrived for Australian certification inspection by ANA to be registered VH-BNH.

New Holland Airways aircraft: (RAAF disposals Hudsons purchased by Board & Godden listed under ICAT)

Lockheed C-60A Lodestar VH-GRB Singapore Clipper, Jade Star (c/n 2538, ex A67-5/"VHRAE", 42-56045)

- 3.2.47 A67-5 Purchased ex CDC by G.Board & S.Godden, Sydney, price £1000
- 15.3.47 Issued to purchaser ex 7AD Store, RAAF Tocumwal NSW
- 1.10.47 VH-GRB CofA issued: G.R. Board: after overhaul by Intercontinental Air Maintenance
- 2.10.47 Departed Mascot for Europe on first migrant flight, pilot Board
- 8.4.48 Ownership transferred to New Holland Airways, Sydney
- 30.9.48 CofA expired, retired parked Bankstown 48/50
- 7.49 NHAW assets taken over by Captain R. W. Howitt, NHAW's Operations Manager
- 1.8.50 Sold to Overland Air Services, Condobolin NSW as VH-OAS. CofA renewed 29.9.50 (to N4849V, N101S, XB-SAO, N2786Y, N102SD, N2786Y. Currently parked in damaged condition at Albuquerque NM)

Douglas DC-5 VH-ARD Bali Clipper (c/n 426, ex VH-CXC, 44-83232, PK-ADD, PJ-AIZ, PH-AXG ntu)

- 2.1.48 G. R. Board & G. W. Hanlon: purchased ex ANA ex open storage at Essendon
- 2.1.48 Ferried Essendon to Sydney by ANA crew and prepared for overseas passenger use by Fawcett Aviation, Sydney. Named *Bali Clipper*.
- 29.1.48 Damaged when undercarriage retracted too early on takeoff during crew endorsement training, Schofields NSW. CofA renewed 25.2.48.
- 3.48 visited Lydd, England "New Holland Airways Charter Service" titles, *Bali Clipper* on nose 130
- 4.4.48 Returned to Sydney from Italy, pilot Captain R. W. Howitt. 82
- 10.4.48 Ownership transferred from G. R. Board to New Holland Airways, Sydney
- 28.5.48 Sold to Martin A. Rybakoff, Sicily. Delivered 6.48 to Israeli Air Force/Chel Ha'Avir.

Douglas DC-2 VH-AEN (c/n 1259 ex VH-ADQ, A30-6/"VHCRJ", NC13733)

- 9.1.48 Purchased ex ANA at Essendon, CofA expired 18.4.47
- 2.4.48 CofA renewed Mascot.
- 9.5.48 swung off runway on landing Darwin outbound to Europe on first migrant run, write-off. (fuselage later moved into Darwin and reportedly there until Cyclone Tracey)

Douglas C-47A I-TROS/VH-BNH (c/n 26675/15230, ex 43-49414)
 5.12.46 I-TROS Societa di Navigazione Area Transadriatica - Transadriatica, Venice
 5.48 Purchased by NHAW ex Transacrita
 11.48 I-TROS arrived Essendon for CofA inspection by ANA, still "Transadriatica" titles
 24.11.48 VH-BNH Registered: New Holland Airways, Sydney
 19.5.49 Butler Air Transport, Sydney *Barragamba*
 (sold to USA 12.56 to N55L, last owner Continental Air Service, Laos 71)

3. S. V. GODDEN / GODDEN AIR TRANSPORT, SYDNEY

Stanley Vaux Godden, "Melton" 116 Victoria Street, Potts Point, Sydney

Stan Godden was a close associate of Warren Penny (ICAT) and a founding partner in both ICAT and NHAW: see those companies for more detail. Godden was not a pilot, but was involved in the Sydney wartime black market and friendly with aviators including Warren Penny, Greg Board and Doug Fawcett. Godden purchased a number of RAAF disposals Hudsons in partnership with Board which were taken over by Warren and Raymond Penny: these are listed under ICAT.

In the later days of World War Two in January 1945 Warren Penny was a pilot with RAAF 38 Squadron based at Archerfield flying Dakotas on the courier run to Morotai. A number of pilots were engaged in smuggling liquor, cigarettes, tyres and other items such as second hand bicycles. Penny recalls: *"When I arrived in Sydney, I cashed the cigarettes in with an old acquaintance of mine, Stan Godden, who was running an operation in Kings Cross. I received £416 for the eight cases and orders for plenty more."* 58

In September 1947 Godden purchased Lodestar A67-7 from Commonwealth Disposals Commission, with a half share purchased by Warren Penny. The Lodestar was converted to a civil airliner as VH-BFZ by Intercontinental Air Maintenance, and received its CofA on 30 December 1947. The Lodestar was operated under the name Godden Air Transport but was expected to mostly fly charters for Intercontinental Air Tours.

On New Years Eve 1947, the day after receiving its CofA, VH-BFZ departed from Sydney on its first overseas trip, to Rome to collect nuns on a ICAT charter, under command of ICAT Captain Bert Starkey. An account of this trip appears in the first section of this paper.

A DCA report dated 8 March 1948 on the migrant companies makes the following carefully-worded reference to Stan Godden's role in the migrant trade:

"Originally Mr. Stanley Godden was the financial heavyweight behind Intercontinental Air Tours. This gentleman was a car dealer before and during the war; he is reputed to have made a considerable amount from a certain class of transaction and to have interests in several garages. He still has a large shares holding in Intercontinental Air Tours but in due course, so he tells me, Mr. Warrne Penny will be buying his interest out." 124

In May 1948 Penny sold his half share in VH-BFZ to Godden for a cash consideration and the balance of Godden's shares in Intercontinental Air Maintenance Pty Ltd. In June and August 1948 Lodestar VH-BFZ arrived Sydney on migrant trips, both flights under command of Captain Horlock.

In August 1948 Godden sold his Lodestar VH-BFZ to Israel, via a bogus paper charter to Service Airways Inc, Rome for £A8000. Service Airways was a front company used by the Israeli Government to acquire aircraft for the Israeli air force. The Lodestar passed through Bahrein on 5 September 1948 on the ferry flight to Israel with pilot Captain Horlock and carrying Stan Godden as a passenger.

Further details under **The Israel Connection** later in this paper.



Godden Air Transport Lockheed Lodestar VH-BFZ with Stan Godden, his wife and Mrs. Doug Fawcett on right.
Photo by Doug Fawcett, via Ron Cuskelly "The Lockheed File"

Lockheed Lodestar C-60 VH-BFZ (c/n 2611, ex A67-7, 43-16451)

10.9.47 Sold by CDC to S. V. Godden, Sydney, price £1000
 26.9.47 Issued to purchaser ex 7AD Storage RAAF Tocumwal
 10.47 Civil conversion under way by Intercontinental Air Maintenance
 30.12.47 VH-BFZ Registered: Stanley V. Godden, Sydney: CofA issued
 31.12.47 Departed for Rome, Cpt. Starkey.
 Operated by Godden Air Transport in association with Intercontinental Air Tours
 8.48 Chartered to Service Airways Inc, Rome (agents for Israel Government) for £8000
 8.48 Departed Australia for Israeli Air Force, through Bahrein 5.9.48
 11.10.49 Struck off Australian register as "improper sale overseas"

4. EUROPEAN AIR TRANSPORT, SYDNEY

European Air Transport, c/- George Stammell & Co, Solicitors, 104 Hunter Street, Sydney.
 Managing Director Nicholas Marcel, (also known as Marcello), Kings Cross, Sydney
 A Director was his son George Marcel, 8 Cottenham Ave, Kensington, Sydney
 Manager: Martin L. Cherry

European Air Transport (EAT) was established in late 1947 with the express intention of catering for Greek immigrants to Australia. EAT was founded by Nicholas Marcel, a prominent member of the Greek community in Sydney, and his son George Marcel. Other principals were Greek milk bar owners in Sydney, all of whom had no previous personal involvement in aviation. George Marcel took an active role based in Athens recruiting passengers through travel agents. At the Sydney end, operational arrangements were handled by ex RAAF pilot Martin Cherry.

Sydney Morning Herald 17 November 1947 reported: "A new air charter service European Air Transport Co will begin operations between Athens and Sydney within the new few weeks. Operations Manager is Mr. G. Marcel, an Australian born Greek. He said Hudsons will be used to bring out hundreds of Greek migrants"

While the first of their own ex-RAAF Lockheed Hudsons was under civil conversion, EAT commenced migrant operations by leasing Curtis Madsen Aircrafts Ltd Hudson VH-JCM which flew two return trips to Athens: on 11 February 1948 VH-JCM arrived Sydney from Athens under command of Cpt. F. M. Twemlow, with operating company recorded by Customs as EAT.

Pilot Ted Gabriel recalls:

*"As I remember it, "Mac" Twemlow and I were the first of a series of flights by European Air Transport. The aircraft VH-JCM was chartered from Curtis Madsen Pty Ltd by a Greek family from the Griffith area to bring out members of the family and other relatives as migrants. The aircraft bore the name of "Kithira" * which was the island south of Greece where most of these people originated. We were employed by Curtis Madsen Pty Ltd and only made the one flight because we both then joined Qantas."* 80

(* the aircraft name was in fact Kythera: see next para)

EAT had purchased seven Lockheed Hudsons ex RAAF disposals on the same day 24 September 1947. First to complete civil conversion was VH-BFQ, the overhaul being completed by Curtis Madsen Aircrafts at Bankstown in February 1948. It was fitted out for 14 passenger and 3 crew, and immediately departed for Europe. Unfortunately no photographs have ever been seen of this aircraft by the compiler, however Curtis Madsen drawings for modifications to VH-BFQ and drawings of its paint scheme are held in a file at National Archives of Australia in Sydney. The drawing for the paint scheme shows titles "European Air Transport", Greek and Australian flags on nose, and name *Kythera*. 53

A DCA report dated 8 March 1948 on the migrant companies makes the following reference to EAT:

"The finance for the purchase, conversion and operation of their aircraft has apparently come from passenger fare monies collected in advance. The only passengers they have carried to date were brought from Athens in the Hudson VH-JCM, which they chartered from Curtis Madsen Aircrafts Pty Ltd. At present they have a Hudson being converted by Butler Air Transport and another by Curtis Madsen. They are occupying one half of the hangar formerly completely occupied by New England Airways at Bankstown. Here they have five Hudsons awaiting conversion. At the moment they have two men and a boy removing camouflage paint from the aircraft." 124

The second EAT Hudson to complete civil conversion was VH-BIA, also fitted for 14 passengers. Third Hudson VH-BIB was under overhaul by Curtis-Madsen Aircrafts at Bankstown in May 1948 when a dispute over costs caused the conversion to be discontinued and the aircraft was sold for scrap some time after EAT was dissolved.

Engineer Doug Fawcett recalls:

"Martin Cherry was the manager of European Air Transport, a company contacted to transport Greek immigrants to Australia. The company had purchased a Lockheed Hudson and we converted it for passenger use. After the first round trip, Martin asked me if I would carry out a mandatory modification to the "J" gears in the supercharger section of the Wright Cyclone 1820 engines. He was aware I had devised a scheme to do this work while the engine was still in the airframe, cutting the cost and time on the ground. The original conversion to the airframe for passenger use was paid in the normal way, but Martin suggested to me an unusual proposition for this supercharge payment. I would be paid on a daily basis! Every night, a car would arrive at my home and two men would carry sugar bags of silver coins into the house and tip them on to the carpet. They were in denominations from 3d to 2s and always sticky. My wife, myself and the men would then proceed to count it, the end result being tallied and signed for. Apparently the men would travel the Sydney suburbs, collecting money from Greek owned milk bars. The stickiness came from the milk and flavouring spilt on the coins." 10

In May 1948 Hudson VH-BIA flew from Sydney to Athens and return and suffered numerous technical problems. The EAT flight engineer was subsequently reprimanded by DCA over the aircraft's condition en route. DCA were concerned over the lack of organisation of the owner for servicing the aircraft on routes used overseas. A DCA inspection of VH-BIA at Bankstown in June 1948 revealed its electrical system was in poor condition. The aircraft was serviced by Curtis-Madsen Aircrafts at Bankstown, who received a written reprimand from DCA. 35

Doug Fawcett of Fawcett Aviation, Bankstown recalls his experiences with EAT:

"Martin Cherry was the manager of European Air Transport, a company contracted to transport Greek immigrants to Australia. The company had purchased a Lockheed Hudson and we converted it for passenger use". After the first round trip Martin asked me if I would carry out a mandatory modification to the "J" gears in the supercharger section of the Wright Cyclone 1820 engines. He was aware I had devised a scheme to do this work while the engine was still in the airframe, cutting the cost and the time on the ground. I agreed to do both engines at a price of £1000 and the job to be completed in ten days. He accepted the arrangement.

The original conversion to the airframe for passenger use was paid in the normal way, but Martin suggested to me an unusual proviso for this payment. I would be paid on a daily basis! I was astounded at the unusual proposition put forward, but I did not mind. The actual handing over of the money was equally strange. Every night, a car would arrive at my home and two men would carry sugar bags of silver coins into my house and tip them on to the carpet. They were in denominations from 3 pence to 2 shillings coins and always sticky. My wife, myself and the men would then proceed to count it, the end result being tallied and signed for. Apparently the men would travel the suburbs, collecting money from Greek owned milk bars. The stickiness came from the milk and flavouring spilt on the coins." 10

Later in 1948 EAT was forced to cease migrant charters, blaming DCA restrictions, in particular the requirement to carry a First Class Navigator and the ban on carrying passengers outbound from Australia. An internal DCA memo in November 1948 states *"European Air Transport are virtually non-existent."* 35

In February 1949 EAT sold their two airworthy Hudsons VH-BIA and VH-BFQ to Israeli agents who were offering attractive prices. They departed Australia for a “private business trip overseas”, in fact were an illegal sale to Israeli Air Force. DCA investigation quotes they were sold to Israel by Southern European Transport Co, represented by G. Marcel who owns a milk bar in Sydney and is not personally connected with aviation” 35

European Air Transport aircraft:

Hudson Mk.IVA VH-JCM *Kythera* (c/n 6039, ex A16-110, 41-23180)

2.12.47 VH-JCM Registered Curtis-Madsen Aircrafts Pty Ltd, Sydney: CofA conv. by CMA at
30.12.47 CofA issued Bankstown after conversion by CMA: 15 passengers, 2 crew.
2.48 operated by CMA on charter to EAT for two return flights Sydney-Athens in Feb and May 1948

Hudson Mk.IIIA VH-BFQ *Kythera* (c/n 6417 ex A16-156, BW738, 41-23600)

24.9.47 Purchased by EAT from CDC, price £170
12.11.47 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage RAAF Richmond, TT 1439 hrs
47/48 Civil conversion by Butler Air Transport at Mascot
12.47 VH-BFQ Registered, owner EAT: 14 passenger seats, 3 crew
11.11.48 ownership transferred to George Marcel, Kings Cross, Sydney
13.2.49 departed Sydney for Darwin on delivery to Israeli Air Force
11.10.49 Struck off Australian civil register as “improper sale overseas”

Hudson Mk.IIIA VH-BIA (c/n 6477 ex A16-226, FH187, 41-36988)

24.9.47 Purchased by EAT from CDC, price £1000
25.11.47 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage RAAF Richmond, TT 1280 hrs
47/48 Civil conversion by Curtis Madsen Aircrafts at Bankstown
12.47 VH-BIA Registered, owner EAT: 14 passenger seats, 3 crew
29.11.48 ownership transferred to Rene Jorio, Kings Cross, Sydney. Aircraft based Camden.
19.1.49 ownership transferred to Nicholas Marcello, Kings Cross, Sydney
13.2.49 departed Sydney for Darwin on delivery to Israeli Air Force
10.49 Struck off Australian civil register as “improper sale overseas”

Hudson Mk.IIIA VH-BIB (c/n 6357 ex A16-192, BW678, 41-23540)

24.9.47 Purchased by EAT from CDC, price £620
25.11.47 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage RAAF Richmond, TT 1322 hrs
12.47 VH-BIB Registered, owner EAT: 14 passenger seats, 2 crew
5.48 CofA conversion at Bankstown abandoned.
.49 sold for scrap, struck off Register 25.5.5

Hudson Mk.IVA A16-105 (c/n 6034, ex 41-23175)

24.9.47 Purchased by EAT from CDC, price £200
25.11.47 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage RAAF Richmond, TT 1692 hrs
Not conv. to civil by EAT
31.10.49 VH-BKY Registered, owner Curtis Madsen Aircrafts Pty Ltd, Sydney
(later to VH-EWB, -EWS, -SMO, -AGP, later displayed Air Word, Wangaratta VIC as
“RAAF A16-105/FX-F”, now at Australian War Memorial, Canberra)

Hudson Mk.IVA A16-163 (c/n 6092, ex 41-23275)

24.9.47 Purchased by EAT from CDC, price £180
11.12.47 collected by purchaser ex 2AD storage RAAF Richmond, TT 1652 hrs
Not conv. to civil

Hudson Mk.IVA A16-200 (c/n 6467, ex FH177, 41-36978)

24.9.47 Purchased by EAT from CDC, price £200
11.12.47 collected by purchaser ex 2AD storage RAAF Richmond, TT 1580 hrs
Not conv. to civil

Hudson Mk. IVA A16-231 (c/n 6492, ex FH202, 41-37003)

24.9.47 Purchased by EAT from CDC, price £350
11.12.47 collected by purchaser ex 2AD storage RAAF Richmond, TT 1298 hrs
Not conv. to civil

5. CURTIS MADSEN AIRCRAFTS PTY LTD, SYDNEY 42, 43, 57,121, 124

Curtiss Madsen Aircrafts Pty Ltd was formed in 1947 to establish a maintenance organisation at Bankstown Airport, Sydney and operate RAAF disposals Lockheed Hudsons on airline services from Sydney to NSW country towns. The shareholders were John David Curtis, his brother Ronald G. “Jack” Curtis and Vernon James “Jim” Madsen.

Jim Madsen was an Australian record holder in dirt track motorcycle racing. By 1943 he held a private pilot licence and worked for ANA, his duties including acting as a supernumerary crew member on scheduled flights. In July 1943 he purchased Genairco VH-UOD to build up his hours for a commercial pilot licence, flying the biplane in conjunction with the Sydney Anti-Aircraft Group as a target aircraft. By March 1944 Madsen flew with W. R. Carpenter & Co as copilot on their Lockheed 14 VH-ADT, then Qantas in New Guinea. In 1946/47 he was a pilot with Interstate Air Services, Mascot on Ansons.

On 22 November 1946 Jim Madsen was pilot of an Interstate Air Services Anson VH-AVZ when it was damaged on landing at Port Moresby while carrying buyers to Commonwealth Disposals Commission sales in New Guinea. 134, 135

John and Jack Curtis managed a tyre re-treading business named *Curtis Brothers* at 55 Parramatta Road, Glebe. The brothers were also partners in *Borokina Disposals*, Bourke Road, Alexandria, Sydney.

Curtis Madsen Aircrafts (CMA) set up the aircraft maintenance business in Hangar 17 at Bankstown, next to Marshall Airways, under Chief Engineer W. G. Brown. This hangar had previously been used by Air Carriers, a freight operation started by Mac Twemlow planning to use the Handley Page Halifax VH-BDT, which went out of business after one eventful charter flight to Singapore. CMA serviced aircraft owned by Interstate Air Services, Macair Charter Service and European Air Transport and carried out civil conversions of RAAF disposals Hudsons for themselves and European Air Transport.

On 1 January 1948 CMA officially commenced flying operations on a Charter Licence, undertaking two migrant flights to Athens on charter to European Air Transport early that year. Original pilots were F. M. "Mac" Twemlow, Ted Gabriel and Jim Madsen, later including Keith Robey, K. Curtis and J. McLean. In February 1948 ANA were holding one of two retired ANA Douglas C-39s VH-ARB and VH-ARC at Mascot for CMA while the company sought to finalise payment. In the event both went to Macair Charter Service (see later).

CMA's first aircraft was Hudson VH-JCM (ex RAAF A16-110) whose conversion to a civil airliner was completed in November 1947, fitted out with high-density seating for 17 passengers. Its first flight was undertaken by CMA pilots "Mac" Twemlow and Ted Gabriel.

Hudson VH-JCM specially named *Kythera* flew two trips to Rome to collect migrants on charter to European Air Transport in February and May 1948: see the EAT section above for details.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a story on Curtis Madsen Aircrafts, including the two flights to Athens on lease to European Air Transport: "*When purchased by the two lads John Curtis and Jim Madsen, their first Hudson aircraft had only flown 1000 hours in air force service. They worked together converting their new purchase into an airliner. It made two flights to Athens returning with 15 Greek migrants each trip, experiencing no problems at all en route.*" 41

The inaugural CMA scheduled airline service Sydney-Cootamundra-Temora took place on 14 January 1949, VH-JCM arriving at Cootamundra at 10.26am. Captain was Jim Madsen and copilot Jack Curtis. The airline advertised in newspapers with the following slogans 48

*Don't Delay - Fly CMA
Fly CMA - The Safer Way
Morning Tea in Coota - Midday Meal in Sydney*

Later in 1949 a second Hudson was purchased from the liquidators of European Air Transport. It was still in RAAF military configuration and converted to a civil airliner as VH-BKY to enter CMA service. The airline route was extended to West Wyalong under a new operating name Curtis Madsen Airlines. Other routes were planned before the company was taken over by Overland Air Services in November 1950 and both Hudsons sold to East West Airlines.

R. G. (Jack) Curtis then went into the used car business, trading as *The Motor Market* on Parramatta Road, Glebe. In 1953 the Australian War Memorial disposed of a complete Nakajima Ki.43 Oscar due lack of space, and it was acquired by Curtis and displayed on top of the office at his car yard as advertising. Several years later he sold it to Sid Marshall, who moved it to his Bankstown hangar on the Marshall Airways Chevrolet truck. It is now in the Flying Heritage Museum in Seattle Washington 122



Lockheed Hudson VH-JCM of Curtis Madsen Aircrafts at Cootamundra in 1949.

Photo: Bruce Winley

Hudson Mk. IVA VH-JCM (c/n 6039, ex A16-110, 41-23180)

- 1.4.47 Purchased ex CDC by V. J. Madsen, Sydney, price £1500
- 5.6.47 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage, RAAF Richmond
- 2.12.47 VH-JCM Registered: V. J. Madsen t/a Curtis-Madsen Aircrafts Pty Ltd, Sydney, fitted out for 17 passengers and 2 crew.
- 2.48 leased by EAT for two flights to/from Athens
- 23.12.49 Ownership transferred to John David Curtis, Sydney (partner)
- 20.11.50 East West Airlines, Tamworth NSW as VH-EWE, later VH-BPT, -EWR, -AGE.

6. TRANS OCEANIC AIRLINES, SYDNEY 92

Trans Oceanic Airways Pty Ltd (TOA) was founded by Squadron Leader Bryan A. W. Monkton, who purchased the RAAF's five Short Sunderland Mk.3 flying boats from Commonwealth Disposals Commission on 4 October 1946. Each was ferried from storage at RAAF Rathmines NSW to Rose Bay flying boat base at Sydney by Monkton. On 24 February 1947 TOA was incorporated as a company in Sydney with Brian Monkton as Managing Director and Chief Pilot. Three Sunderlands were converted to civil passenger standard as equivalent to the BOAC "Hythe" class and initially flew mainly to Lord Howe Island and Pacific islands. Australian pioneer flying boat pilot Captain P. G. Taylor joined TOA in December 1948 as a Director and Captain. TOA later introduced four ex BOAC Solents and flew scheduled services from Sydney to Brisbane, Hobart and Port Moresby. 1, 45, 92

Bryan Monkton recalls TOA's migrant charters in his book *"The Boats I Flew"* :

"This left the migrant organisations with large numbers of displaced persons waiting for transportation to their new land. One such organisation was headed by a coffee importer named Andronicus, a wiry and energetic Greek who never let up in his efforts to persuade us to help him. The long flight to Europe and back seemed fraught with possibilities for disaster and I was not keen on the idea, but over several cups of black syrupy Turkish coffee in his office, no doubt laced with ouzo, I weakened and agreed to make a trial flight to Egypt.

So Mathiesen and his crew set off on the 20,000 mile return flight to Cairo. Fortunately the risks of serious delays were minimised by following the Empire Air Mail Route flying boat bases along the way. Three weeks later the aircraft returned with 36 migrants (sic). This flight had gone so well that a few months later (sic) we decided to do it again and Mathiesen made a second flight to the northern hemisphere, this time to Augusta, Sicily.

Then we received the bills from BOAC for handling the aircraft at each port of call and found we had been charged through the nose. We barely broke even and decided not to push our luck any further." 92

TOA's first migrant charter departed Rose Bay on 21 October 1947 under command of Captain Philip H. Mathiesen. The plan was to collect 26 Greek migrants waiting at Athens. How the flight terminated in Egypt is explained by his recollections: 126

"The company had arranged a charter to bring migrants back from Athens and on 21st October 1947 I started off with the old Short Sunderland VH-AKO for Europe. It was daylight flying only and about 8 or 9 hours flying every day. We went to Bowen, Darwin, Sourabaya, Singapore, Rangoon, Calcutta, Karachi, Bahrain and to Cairo. There weren't a lot of maps available and I couldn't get maps across India, so I went from Calcutta to Karachi on a school atlas.

There was a cholera epidemic in Egypt at the time and when I got to Cairo on 29th October I landed on the River Nile to be told that on that day all Mediterranean countries had closed themselves to aircraft operating through Egypt. So I wasn't permitted to go on to Athens where my load was waiting.

I knew enough about the company to realise that if I didn't do something in a hurry, we would be flat broke and I would be stuck there with the aeroplane. So the First Officer, Gordon Taylor and I went around to all the travel agents, including Cooks. It took us about ten days to arrange a load of passengers in Cairo and we got all sorts of people. The money was collected in many different currencies and some of it wasn't got out of the country until 18 months later. But I finally drummed up a load and started off back on 8th November, returning to Sydney ten days later.

That was quite a trip. We operated with two pilots, a radio operator, a flight engineer, a ground engineer and one steward. At Karachi, the passengers were getting pretty high in the aeroplane as they hadn't bathed for days, so I had to direct that they weren't getting back on the aeroplane unless they all had a bath."

Sunderland VH-AKO returned to Rose Bay on 16 November 1947 with 23 migrants. The adult fare was £300. TOA Managing Director Bryan Monkton complained in the press that the Australian Government was handicapping charter airlines anxious to bring migrants to Australia from Europe. 1, 15

The second TOA flight a year later was again in VH-AKO under command of Captain Phil Mathiesen, departing Rose Bay on 25 October 1948 bound for Augusta, Sicily. It returned to Rose Bay on 5 December 1948 with 36 passengers including two children. Clearance of passengers took over 2 hours because there was only one Customs officer on duty. 1

There is a Customs record of TOA's Sunderland VH-AKP departing Rose Bay for Greece on 9 January 1948, but the compiler believes that it was more likely one of the charters the TOA undertook to carry workers to Pacific islands to prepare war disposals equipment. Bryan Monkton refers to these in his book:

"Other more lucrative and less risky charter flight followed. We flew demolition gangs to Truk in the Caroline Islands and to Kwajalein in the Marshalls. Both places had been big Japanese bases during the war and the task of our muscle-bound passengers was to dismantle and prepare for shipment the large amount of war equipment which their companies had acquired."



Trans Oceanic Airways Short Sunderland VH-AKO *Australis* which flew two migrant charters from Cairo and Sicily.

Trans Oceanic Airways aircraft: (migrant charter aircraft only) 17

Short Sunderland 3/Hythe VH-AKO <i>Australis</i> (ex A26-4, ML733)	
4.10.46	Purchased by TOA, ex storage RAAF Rathmines NSW.
21.11.46	Ferried from Rathmines to Rose Bay for civil conversion
6.3.47	First flight Rose Bay after conv. to Hythe at Rose Bay, configured for 28 passengers on a single deck
5.5.47	VH-AKO Registered and CofA issued, named <i>Australis</i> , renamed <i>Samoa Star</i> in 1948
19.12.50	CofA expired, retired Rose Bay. Struck-off Register 8.51, scrapped.

Short Sunderland 3/Hythe VH-AKP Antilles (ex A26-5, ML734)
 4.10.46 Purchased by TOA, ex storage RAAF Rathmines NSW.
 47 Conv. to Hythe at Rose Bay, configured for 36 passengers on double deck
 24.10.47 VH-AKP Registered and CofA issued, named *Antilles*, renamed *Tahiti Star* in 1948
 20.5.53 Sold to Ansett Flying Boat Services, Rose Bay
 12.3.54 Last flight, retired. Scrapped Rose Bay

7. MACAIR CHARTER SERVICE, SYDNEY

Founded by Colonel Charles Morrison McDonald in late 1947 and operated for less than six months. Three Douglas DC-2 type airliners were purchased by C. M. McDonald but it appears few flights were undertaken. The company's letterhead by December 1947 was "Macair Charter Service, c/- Curtis Madsen Aircrafts, Bankstown"

In November 1947 Macair purchased Douglas DC-2 VH-ADZ from Australian National Airways, who had retired it at Essendon. ANA also offered Douglas C-39s VH-ARB and VH-ARC which were stored at Mascot pending a decision on their further use. These civilianized C-39s were frequently referred to colloquially and also in DCA documents of the time as "DC-2 and a half".

During November 1947 Macair advertised the Airspeed Envoy VH-UXM for sale in the *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper: the advertisement said it was excellent for charter work, 6 passengers, just completed CofA. Many spares held including spare engine. Presumably Macair was only acting as a sales agent, because the Envoy was retired at Essendon at the time, still owned by Ansett Airways. It was not sold and was broken up for scrap at Essendon.

On 7 December 1947 Colonel McDonald purchased the Douglas C-39 VH-ARC from ANA. The following day he wrote to DCA advising that he intended to fit 15 passenger seats to VH-ARC, which was currently a freighter. "I have a contract to carry a few loads of migrants to Australia on a charter basis. The aircraft will then be used for freight work."
 38

Macair Charter Service's Manager and Chief Pilot was Mr. Alan Murray. He told DCA that his main aim was build up freight business, particularly carriage of cattle between Australia and New Guinea, as pioneered by Guinea Air Traders. But in the meantime the migrant charters offered good work for the new company. DC-2 VH-ADZ operated Macair's first migrant run, arriving back at Mascot on 18 January 1948 from Athens with 15 passengers, under the command of Captain A.J. Brooks. The DC-2 and its passengers had suffered an uncomfortable delay at Calcutta with mechanical problems. 19, 124

VH-ARC was fitted with seats and its cabin was lined for passenger work at Bankstown during January 1948. Its CofA was issued on 12 February 1948 and was due to leave Australia immediately. However it suffered engine problems at Darwin outbound on its first overseas flight in February, and was still there in April with two cylinders in an engine unserviceable. 38, 124

Sydney Morning Herald of 17 March 1948 reported "Macair Charter Service claimed its Douglas DC-2 had been sabotaged when starting to operate its first migration flight; the aircraft had made a forced landing at Darwin."

Arthur Carveles was a chemist of 11 Hastings Road, Kogarah, who traded as International Rapid Air Service, Kings Cross, Sydney which was a booking agency for some of the early migrant passengers. Passenger reservations from Europe were booked, then Carveles approached Macair and ICAT for space on their flights. McDonald was in debt to Carveles who went to the police, resulting in McDonald being charged and held in Long Bay Gaol, Sydney. Warren Penny of ICAT was approached by a friend to put up bail for McDonald, who was not a personal acquaintance. Penny agreed to put up the required bail, shared with Captain F. Twemlow, who flew for Curtis Madsen. 11

Warren Penny stated "I thought by going bail for him I would get McDonald in a position where I would be able to use his aircraft for some of my passengers, which I badly needed. Soon after he came out of Long Bay I heard Mr. Carveles had attached his aircraft. I saw McDonald once in Martin Place." 11

The sale of the C-39 VH-ARB to McDonald was never finalised and it reverted to ANA ownership. It was ferried from Mascot back to Essendon on 3 April 1948 however ANA had promptly arranged its sale to Guinea Air Traders in May 1948, by which time Macair had ceased operating. Ownership of VH-ADZ and VH-ARC was transferred to Arthur Carveles the following month, and both were immediately resold. Carveles then filed for bankruptcy. 11

Macair Charter Service aircraft: 73

Douglas DC-2/C-32A VH-ADZ (c/n 1376 ex 44-83227, "VHCXH", PK-AFL) 109, 121
 5.11.47 Purchased by Col. C. M. McDonald, Sydney ex ANA Essendon
 6.48 A. Carveles/International Rapid Air Services, Kings Cross, Sydney
 8.7.48 Sid Marshall/Marshall Airways, Sydney-Mascot later Sydney-Bankstown.
 8.49 Re-registered VH-CDZ due DCA requirements. Flew with Marshall Airways for charter and joyriding.
 30.12.57 Port undercarriage collapsed at Mascot while being towed by a tug off a taxiway due flat tyre. Port wing resting on ground caused structural damage. Jack Davidson fitted the port wing of A30-9, and on 14.2.58 it was ferried to Bankstown by Sid Marshall and Trevor Thiele.
 2.58 Permanent repair not carried out because DCA restrictions by now limited the country airfields to which the DC-2 could fly charters. Grounded at Bankstown with Total Log time 9,649 hours.

(Stored Bankstown 58/65 with three ex RAAF DC-2s held by Marshall. When Marshall Airways leased its second Bankstown hangar to Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd, VH-CDZ and A30-9 were removed from storage in that hangar and towed on their landing gear to Camden Aerodrome NSW 7.3.65 for storage in a hangar leased by Aerial Agriculture, both later moved to open storage at Narellan NSW by 1972; VH-CDZ sold to Hendon Aeroplane Co, Sydney for American Captain R. Rosser of Confederate Air Force who planned to fly it back to USA; returned by road to Bankstown 4.6.72 from Narellan for overhaul by Hawker de Havilland, allotted US registration N8486D; overhaul abandoned, open storage Bankstown; ownership transferred to Confederate Air Force Australian Wing (Mike Wansey), damaged in hangar during overhaul at Bankstown, later to Jack McDonald, Caboolture QLD. Moved to Essendon later Tyabb VIC and left in open storage; donated to Moorabbin Air Museum and moved from Tyabb to Moorabbin 7.06)

Douglas DC-2C/C-39 VH-ARC (c/n 2089 ex "VHCCH", 38-532)
 46/47 "VHCCH" stored by ANA without wings Essendon, ferried to Sydney c11.46 for CofA
 24.11.47 CofA renewed Mascot as VH-ARC owner ANA
 7.12.47 Purchased by Col. C. M. McDonald ex ANA Essendon
 18.6.48 A. Carvels/International Rapid Air Services, Kings Cross, Sydney
 21.6.48 Guinea Air Traders Ltd, Lae

Douglas DC-2C/C-39 VH-ARB (c/n 2076 ex "VHCCG", 38-519)
 46/47 "VHCCG" stored by ANA without wings Essendon, ferried to Sydney c11.46 for CofA
 c11.47 CofA renewed Mascot as VH-ARB owner ANA
 17.1.48 Purchased by Col. C. M. McDonald ex ANA Essendon
 3.4.48 Ferried Mascot-Essendon on return to ANA, sale to Macair fell through
 28.5.48 Sold to Guinea Air Traders, Lae

8. GUINEA AIR TRADERS LTD, SYDNEY and LAE

Samuel Jamieson and John Jamieson
 Australia Air Traders Ltd, 12 O'Connell Street, Sydney.
 Guinea Air Traders Ltd, Lae New Guinea

This vibrant company flew over 30 aircraft during a tumultuous three year existence in New Guinea before financial collapse. GAT's swashbuckling pilots were legends in the Territory. During 1948 GAT had carried over 4000 tons of freight within New Guinea. However the lure of profits from the Australian migrant trade was to hasten its demise, because its management and key aircraft were diverted from their core business in the New Guinea goldfields, allowing their unreliability to lose essential customers.

The operation was founded in September 1946 under the original name of **Australian Air Traders, Sydney** by brothers **John and Samuel Jamieson**, who were active in the timber business in Sydney. They purchased Avro Ansons from RAAF disposals for an expected postwar boom in charter flying within Australia. However during an early Anson charter flight, carrying buyers to Commonwealth Disposals Commission sales of military vehicles and equipment in New Guinea, Sam Jamieson was approached at Lae by the aviation manager of Bulolo Gold Dredging Company, offering large scale freight work which could not be handled by Qantas and the few operators to have started up again in New Guinea since the war. **Guinea Air Traders (GAT)** was quickly formed at Lae in October 1946 as an associate company of Australian Air Traders and commenced operations based at Lae from February 1947 with Ansons. They flew on BGD contracts as well as general freight and passenger charters, later flying regular schedules from Lae to Madang, Wewak, Aitape, Wau, Bulolo and Mount Hagen.

"Sam Jamieson had quickly realised that the Anson was not large enough to satisfy the increasing air transport demands of its principal customer, Bulolo Gold Dredging Ltd. The Anson was not capable of lifting items such as a dredge bucket, which weighed 1587 kilograms. A few months after GAT commenced operations, Jamieson went to New Caledonia and purchased a pair of C-47 freighters. One of these he sold to Butler Air Transport Company. The other, VH-GAT, went into service at Lae in September 1947" 45

After the majority of the 17 strong GAT Anson fleet suffered a mass grounding at Lae by a DCA inspector because of severe wood and glue joint deterioration caused by the tropical climate, Ansons were replaced by Hudsons, DC-2 types and DC-3s. Their main Bulolo Gold Dredging Co contract flew supplies and staff to Bulolo and Wau, including frozen food shipped to Lae. Hudson VH-ALA operated by GAT crashed at Lae 18 April 1948 due to an engine failure soon after takeoff, killing all on board: 4 Australian crew and 33 native passengers. The native labourers were being carried as freight without individual seatbelts, a standard practice in the Territory at the time. This tragedy brought much outrage against Guinea Air Traders with questions asked in Parliament in Canberra, and the Minister for Civil Aviation stating that the company would be prosecuted. However the accident investigation found no fault in GAT's Hudson operations and the aircraft was below its maximum all-up weight. No legal action was taken against the company

45, 84, 146, 149

In early 1948 Guinea Air Traders Ltd senior staff were as follows:

Managing Director: John Jamieson
Directors: Samuel Jamieson, D. Jamieson, W. W. Alderton
Manager: W. W. Alderton
New Guinea Manager: W. Fishwick
Flight Superintendent: Captain Richard Burt
Chief Engineer: G.(Bill) Humphreys
European Charters: Lionel Van Praag
Senior Pilots: W. Burdus, J. Dalrymple, K. Lockyer, G. Condell, T. Deegan

The DC-3 VH-GAT was used as a freighter, and then in May 1948 two Douglas DC-2C/C-39s VH-ARB and VH-ARC were purchased from the defunct Macair Charter Service in Sydney, also to be used for freight work but Sam Jamieson was aware of the migrant charters to Australia and was considering using them to join the trade.

However in a letter to DCA on 16 August 1948 GAT stated that their C-39 VH-ARB was u/s at Darwin:

"The aircraft has recently done a trip to Darwin where it was grounded due to defects which were apparently the result of sabotage." 39 Two spare engines and two engineers were flown to Darwin in GAT's other C-39 VH-ARC, both engines were changed and VH-ARB ferried back to Bankstown, where it was parked in the Curtis Madsen Aircrafts hangar and considerable maintenance undertaken. In the event VH-ARB was to remain at Bankstown for a year before returning to GAT service. 45

This quote from *Balus - The aeroplane in PNG* by James Sinclair probably refers to this flight to Darwin:

"Jim Perry first flew for GAT as first officer on a C-39 on a ferry flight from Sydney to Darwin. He was offered permanent employment at Lae but initially declined.....He was offered yet another job as first officer on G-AKNB on the Rome immigration run, but finally took up the Lae offer, arriving in September 1948. He remembers his first New Guinea flight, in a C-39 piloted by John Dalrymple. He received his Anson command in October 1948 on one of the few survivors of the GAT Anson fleet". 45

These two C-39s caused GAT much heartache. July 1948, just after GAT had purchased VH-ARB and VH-ARC, DCA notified the company that the payload of the C-39 type Certificate of Airworthiness was to be significantly reduced, based on recent flight performance tests. GAT Director W. W. Alderton immediately replied to DCA on 12 July 1948: *"Had we known that your Department proposed to reduce the effective payload by practically 50% we would certainly not have purchased them."* 38

In a letter dated 29 July 1948 GAT requested DCA carry out flight tests in their VH-ARC to determine whether a relaxation of the proposed decreased payload and All-Up Weight was possible. VH-ARC was currently at Bankstown having maintenance at Curtis Madsen Aircrafts and would be made available for flight performance testing the following week. However engines of -ARC needed more work and parts were sent to ANA. GAT then decided to swap the Wright Cyclone G2s from -ARB into -ARC to allow the test flying to go ahead, which was flown by ANA Captain John Dalrymple who had extensive experience on C-39s in ANA service. As a result of these flight tests, GAT won a reprieve and DCA agreed to reinstate the C-39 type AUW back to the original 21,000 pounds.

C-39 VH-ARC had its CofA renewed at Bankstown on 29 August 1948, fitted for 14 passengers and was due to depart for New Guinea immediately. An October 1948 report stated it was in use on freight and passenger work in New Guinea.

"Sam and John Jamieson were among the first to recognise the potential goldmine of the migrant runs and they went looking for suitable aeroplanes. They found them, a pair of C-47s in England. Says Sam Jamieson 'my brother John joined me and we bought these two DC-3s from Shackletons and Scottish Aviation, G-AGHN and G-AKNB. They were British registered, and straight away we had 1,000 pounds each more payload than if we'd registered them in Australia. We could fly at 28,800 pounds all up. I traveled extensively back and forwards with the aircraft - over empty, back loaded with Italian migrants.'

It was the Jamiesons' involvement in the international migrant runs that proved to be the final straw for GAT. G-AKNB was placed on the migrant run between Sydney and Rome, and G-AGHN was sent to Lae where it was immediately employed on the Bulolo work, GAT's bread and butter. With its heavy payload, the DC-3 quickly became the key aircraft in the GAT fleet.

So lucrative was the Sydney-Rome immigrant work that John Jamieson withdrew DC-3 G-AGHN from Lae to be put to work on the Rome run. GAT Pilot Tom Deegan has no doubts about the effect this decision had on GAT: 'The Hudson crash was a great factor in the failure of the company, but the real factor was taking that English-registered aeroplane - it had 34 seats - and putting it on the Rome work. There was Ken Lockyer, George Cordell, Bill Burdus, Lionel Van Praag, they used to fly this aeroplane to Rome and bring back migrants for about 300 quid. We had lost our Ansons, and when they took this English DC-3 away we became unreliable as far as Bulolo Gold Dredging went, and they got Qantas to do the work.' 45

Pilot Lionel van Praag's usual copilot on his migrant runs was Tom Watson, who had been employed by GAT as a ground engineer but his pilot licence was endorsed for the DC-3. Watson was quickly promoted to the position of GAT Chief Engineer.

The other GAT C-39 VH-ARB had its CofA renewed at Bankstown 14 July 1949 after a year's storage following the alleged sabotage at Darwin. Weighed by DCA at Bankstown the previous day and accepted by GAT representative, Chief Engineer Tom Watson, it was fitted as a freighter with four passenger seats and two crew. Watson advised that the aircraft would leave for New Guinea immediately, carrying an aircraft engine and an installation crew to install in an aircraft delayed in New Guinea. After its arrival in New Guinea, DCA approved its conversion to high density seating, having standard USAAF Noorduyn Norseman bench type seats to carry 23 natives using same installation as in Hudson VH-BLA. A memo from DCA's Port Moresby office on 23 December 1949 stated that VH-ARB was operational in New Guinea as a passenger aircraft.

On 24 January 1950 GAT chief engineer T. J. Watson wrote to DCA on GAT letterhead requesting payload for VH-ARB to be increased by an additional 500 pounds for short flights in New Guinea. No ruling was forthcoming from DCA before GAT's attempt to revive its New Guinea operations unravelled, and VH-ARB was retired at Lae. It has been reported that it was purchased by Mandated Airlines for parts and during the 1950s its stripped hulk was still on the Lae town airfield, pushed to one side.

(Tom Watson joined AirGriculture Control at Bankstown as Chief Engineer in early 1950 and two years later founded Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd at Bankstown. He remained with Aerial Agriculture until its end in 1984, operating a large fleet of Tiger Moths, then Beavers and a Bristol Freighter crop duster) 40



GAT's C-39 VH-ARB stripped and abandoned at Lae airfield in the late 1950s. Photo by Richard Leahy

Guinea Air Traders founder John Jamieson was involved in various other business ventures, such as importing the first Vespa motor scooters to Australia. GAT aircraft were involved in charters to Australia in addition to the migrant runs. By February 1949 five loads of sheep had been flown from Australia to the Livestock Experimental Stations at Kerowagi and Nondugi. These are probably included in the following GAT flights recorded by Sydney Airport customs records which seem to be unrelated to the company's migrant operations: 19

Date	Reg	Type	Captain	Details
16.10.47	VH-GAT	DC-3	T. J. Deagan	Arrived ex Lae via Townsville 7.25pm
8.11.47	VH-AXQ	Anson	P. B. Lavender	Arrived ex Lae via Brisbane 8.30pm
1.1.48	VH-GAT	DC-3	T. J. Deagan	Arrived ex Lae, 3 crew, 4 pax
25.1.48	VH-GAT	DC-3	L. H. Ross	Arrived ex Lae, 3 crew, nil pax
20.7.48	VH-GAT	DC-3	J. Dalrymple	Arrived ex Lae, 2 crew, 2 pax. Probably on delivery to Ansett Airways
24.8.48	VH-BLA	Hudson	R. Burt	Arrived ex Lae, 2 crew, 1 pax
25.9.48	G-AGHN	DC-3	K. Lockyer	Arrived ex Brisbane. Agent Mascot Air Freight Delivery Service
6.11.48	G-AGHN	DC-3	G. Condell	Arrived ex New Guinea, 6 crew, 3 pax
13.11.48	G-AGHN	DC-3	K. Lockyer	Arrived ex Lae, 3 crew, 1 pax
18.11.48	VH-ARC	C-39	J. Dalrymple	Arrived ex Melbourne, 3 crew, 2 pax.
20.11.48	G-AGHN	DC-3	G. Condell	Arrived ex New Guinea, 5 crew, nil pax. Agent Mascot Air Freight Delivery Service
26.11.48	G-AGHN	DC-3	W. Burdus	Arrived ex Lae, 4 crew, nil pax. Agent ANA
11.12.48	G-AGHN	DC-3	G. Condell	Arrived ex New Guinea, 6 crew, nil pax
14.12.48	VH-ARC	C-39	J. Dalrymple	Arrived ex Lae, 2 crew, 9 pax.

1.6.49	G-AGHN	DC-3		Arrived ex New Guinea, nil pax
10.6.49	G-AKNB	DC-3		Arr from Manila, 25 pax
11.6.49	G-AKNB	DC-3		Dep for Hong Kong, 2 pax
11.6.49	G-AGHN	DC-3		Departed for Lae, 4 crew, 2 pax

DCA were interviewing migrants arriving on charter flights at Sydney, collecting information on fares being charged by the operators. A typical report is this cable from the Sydney Airport office to Head Office Melbourne on 25 April 1949:

"April 23rd Guinea Air Traders C-47 G-AKNB from Nicosia Beirut 30 passengers landed 1957 Hours six passengers checked - fare £140. Cyprian agent for passengers Amathus Navigation Company" 19

GAT charter operations in New Guinea had been allowed to run down while the company concentrated on the migrant charters from Rome to Australia. When the bureaucratic restrictions indicated the migrant trade was coming to a close, GAT commenced a scheduled weekly C-39 air service from April 1949 Lae-Goroka-Madang-Wewak-Manus Island-Kavieng-Rabaul passenger and freight service which was welcomed by the residents who previously had long waits for coastal shipping. GAT senior pilot Captain Tom Deegan flew these services, with loadings organised by traffic officer John Rowbottom. 147, 148

By May 1949 it was reported that GAT were using C-47s on the scheduled Lae-Rabaul service. This prompted DCA to write to the company in June 1949 stating that their British registered DC-3s G-AGHN and G-AKNB were not permitted to carry passengers within Australian territory. John Jamieson replied that G-AGHN was operating livestock charters between Lae and Sydney at that time. He stated that he wished to return both aircraft to British aircraft dealers W.S. Shackleton Ltd for resale. G-AGHN departed Port Moresby on 21 September 1949 for Cairns reportedly on ferry to England. However it was, in fact, on its way to Sydney where it remained until 26 April 1950 when GAT applied for ferry permit for G-AGHN to proceed Sydney-Essendon for overhaul by Ansett Airways, still painted in British markings. 36,147

In mid 1949 GAT was the only surviving Australian operator maintaining migration charter flights. However the situation was now intricate because in May 1949 DCA had been formally advised that Qantas and BOAC had sufficient capacity to cope with passenger traffic offering from Europe, so DCA had refused any further permits for charter operators. Three months later in August 1949 Qantas admitted that it could not in fact handle the passenger traffic and DCA approved a limited number of charter flights. An August GAT DC-3 trip to Rome was approved and GAT applied for a permit for a second August flight. But DCA refused the second flight on the grounds that Qantas had once again decided it could take the migrants concerned. 45

"Arrangements had already been made for the second flight, and GAT sought legal opinion on the validity of the Air Navigation Regulations, upon which DCA were relying. Acting on this advice, the flight was made. G-AKNB was piloted by Captain Ken Lockyer and First Officer G. Hawke, and on board was Sam Jamieson: 'We had gotten (sic) under the skin of Qantas. The politicians made it a political issue. On that last flight DCA withdrew our rights to overfly Australia from Darwin with paying passengers. But our legal man instructed us to leave anyway. We were fuelled and could fly empty but couldn't take anyone who had paid their passage! All the Italians - they were from the mountains - were running around, and we had no alternative but to get these people to Sydney. So I said 'Anybody wanting to go to Sydney, hop in!' We took off, and they were firing red Verey pistols at us from the Darwin control tower. We landed at Cloncurry to refuel. DCA gave instructions that the aircraft couldn't be refueled, but Shell refueled us, and we flew on to Sydney. They took us to court - shows the idiocy of these characters who were supposed to encourage private enterprise..." 45

The official summary of the legal action was as follows: 98

"Guinea Air Traders Ltd was fined £50 in the Special Federal Court for having disobeyed Australian Civil Aviation regulations and the pilot of the aircraft, Kenneth C. D. Lockyer, was fined £10 for having taken off from Darwin on August 12, without an approved flight plan.

The Commonwealth charged the company with having made a non-scheduled flight into Australian territory, contrary to rules of the Department of Civil Aviation, and having discharged passengers at Sydney without the approval of the Department.

Mr. R. J. M. Newton, representing Guinea Air Traders, said the company had allowed 28 migrants free travel between Koepang and Sydney to test the validity of Australian air navigation regulations."

"The "Migrant Caper" was over, at least for the Australian companies.

C-47 G-AKNB was ferried back to England by GAT pilot Captain Lionel Van Praag shortly after this final migrant flight. On arrival at Blackbushe, Van Praag was detained by Ministry of Civil Aviation officials due to concerns over the validity of his pilot licence and the CofA of the aircraft. He was interviewed by the Civil Aviation Liaison Officer at Australia House London, who reported back to DCA on 25 October 1949 that he had made the following statements:

- GAT were about to fold, and owed him considerable money
- GAT Hudson VH-ALA, which he owned and had leased to GAT and crashed at Lae 18.4.48 killing 33 native passengers was in fact overloaded, but a fake load sheet was made out after the accident.
- GAT migrant charters Europe-Australia involved much falsification of loadings and fares 36

During 1948 Sam Jamieson had left the management of GAT, John Jamieson taking over as Managing Director. However GAT's internal charter services in New Guinea were suffering severe financial and operational problems and the company finally ceased operations in early 1950 and was liquidated. 21

"The decline of GAT, which began with the grounding of the Ansons and accelerated after the crash of the Lockheed Hudson, was virtually complete by the end of 1949" 45

During September 1950 Charter Aviation Service (Australasia) Ltd had taken over the GAT establishment at Lae and commenced operations with Avro Ansons, which they grandly named "Avro Feederliners". 47

By June 1951 John Jamieson was trading as J.Jamieson & Sons, Timber Merchants, Pitt Street, Sydney.



Douglas C-39 VH-ARB with Guinea Air Traders, at Lae, New Guinea 1948.

Photo: Jim Perry



Guinea Air Traders DC-3 G-AGHN flew many migrant charters from Europe.

Photo: Sam Jamieson

Guinea Air Traders aircraft: (migrant charter aircraft only) 39, 45, 73

Douglas C-47A VH-GAT (c/n 4651 ex 41-38623)

6.7.43 41-38623 assigned 5th Air Force, Brisbane
Air Transport Command, Pacific Wing
15.1.47 US Foreign Liquidation Commission, New Caledonia
24.2.47 Guinea Air Traders, Lae: registration application.
7.10.47 VH-GAT Registered Guinea Air Traders, Lae
23.7.48 Sold to Ansett Airways, Melbourne
1.10.48 Reregistered VH-RMA *Anscirrus*
(*Rereg VH-BZA 17.6.49, crashed 12.1.56 Frederick Henry Bay, near Hobart TAS*)

Douglas C-39 VH-ARB (c/n 2076 ex "VHCCG", 38-519)

28.5.48 Purchased ex ANA, Essendon
6.48 Damaged at Darwin, GAT claimed it was sabotage. Both engines changed, ferried 8.48 to Bankstown for major overhaul by Curtis-Madsen Aircrafts over next year.
14.7.49 CofA renewed Bankstown: freighter
11.49 GAT fit Norseman bench seats to carry 23 native pax.
5.50 sold to Mandated Airlines for parts
13.7.50 CofA expired, not renewed. Stripped at Lae. Scrapped.
6.8.51 Struck-off Register in the 1951 DCA Census.

Douglas C-39 VH-ARC (c/n 2089 ex "VHCCH", 38-532)

21.6.48 Purchased ex Macair Charter Service, Sydney
16.3.49 Damaged in heavy landing Kerowagi, New Guinea. Repaired.
31.1.50 CofA expired, aircraft u/s at Bankstown. Reported owned Mandated Airlines, but DCA file shows no ownership change from GAT
6.8.51 Struck-off Register in the 1951 DCA Census.
10.51 W. E. James of South Coast Airways, Wollongong considered purchase from Mandated Airlines, for Sydney-Cowra passenger service. VH-ARC is in u/s condition at Bankstown.

Douglas C-47A G-AGHN (c/n 9414 ex FD868, 42-23552) 117

3.8.43 British Overseas Airways Corporation - BOAC
17.8.48 John Jamieson/Guinea Air Traders Ltd c/- W. S. Shackleton Ltd, London
1.9.48 Arrived Sydney on delivery, ex Rome, Cpt. L. Van Praag, with 28 migrants
27.11.48 visited Tamworth for inspection by East West Airlines shareholders
21.9.49 Ferried Port Moresby-Cairns for planned return flight to England. Appears parked Sydney
21.11.49 Struck-off British Register
26.4.50 DCA ferry permit to fly Sydney-Essendon for overhaul by Ansett Airways
10.5.50 Australian registration application: Ansett Airways, Melbourne-Essendon VIC
19.8.50 VH-BZB Ansett Airways, Melbourne *Ansertes*
(*to HS-TDF Thai Airways 10.58, to Thai Air Force 9414*)

Douglas C-47 G-AKNB (c/n 9043 ex FD789, 42-32817) 117

28.11.47 Scottish Aviation Ltd, Prestwick
27.7.48 John Jamieson/Guinea Air Traders Ltd c/- W. S. Shackleton Ltd, London
8.11.48 Arrived Sydney on delivery, ex Rome with 30 migrants
c9.49 Flown back to England by GAT Captain Lionel Van Praag
14.2.50 Field Aircraft Services Ltd, London Airport
(*to XY-ACN, G-AKNB, EI-BDU, G-AKNB, N459NA. Flies in USA in WW2 markings*)

9. AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL AIRWAYS PTY LTD, MELBOURNE

Australian National Airways Pty Ltd, Essendon Airport, Melbourne

Australia's largest domestic airline, ANA was at the time fighting competition from the Labor Government's newly established Government owned domestic airline Trans-Australia Airlines - TAA. ANA was determined to expand into overseas services and fought the Government over applications for overseas services to Mexico, United Kingdom and USA, all of which were refused. ANA had successfully operated DC-4 passenger services from Sydney to San Francisco on a charter basis for British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines, which had just been formed by the Australian, New Zealand and British Governments. BCPA took over the service with its own DC-4s from April 1948.

Stanley Brogden in his book "Australia's Two Airline Policy" states:

*"ANA needed capital to buy pressurised aircraft and dollar permits to import them. It also needed further sources of income. If ANA had succeeded in its struggle to secure overseas services, the whole future would have been different. Meanwhile ANA began flying migrants from Rome to Australia in DC-4s, a trial operation so successful that contracts were secured in many European countries for migrant flights and in Hong Kong for other charters."*⁸

Australian Notes for Interavia Newsletter, for April and May 1948:

"The Australian Government began to seek an increased flow of migrants into the country in the immediate post-war period, and by mid-1947 were actively contemplating large scale charter of aircraft of aircraft to expedite the

process. A number of overseas operators made various offers, and some small amount of ad hoc contracting* commenced. A multitude of local operators, using surplus Hudson, Lodestar, DC-2, DC-3 and DC-5 aircraft, commenced operations, and ANA (under charter to Orient-Lloyd Travel Service) participated in this lucrative business. A.N.A.'s first DC-4 departed Essendon on 26 April 1948 for Rome to pick up 40 immigrants. The aircraft departed Rome of 3rd May and arrived at Essendon on the 18th with Italian migrants on board. Fares quoted were £350 per adult and £200 per child." 23

* The compiler questions this reference to migrant carriage contracts with Australian Government. No evidence has been found of any such contracts. The migrant charters 1947-50 appear to be simply a commercial reaction by individual operators to a new market opportunity. The hostile attitude of DCA to charter operators belies any contractual arrangement with the Government of the day.

ANA acted as Australian agent for several migrant charter operators during 1948. It appears that the SABENA DC-4s bringing migrants from Belgium to Australia were operated under a charter arrangement with ANA, which was their Australian handling agent. When ANA arranged a series of migrant charters from Europe using its own DC-4s the airline was continually refused DCA approval to carry passengers on the empty aircraft outbound in line with the Government's protectionist policy for Qantas. 131

Captain Keith Virtue, veteran airline pilot with then 18,000 hours flying time, was flying DC-4s for ANA at this time. The book *Virtue In Flying* by Joan Priest, describes one ANA migrant charter flown by Keith in 1948:

"The next charter flight proved a little too interesting for comfort. It was also in a Skymaster, this time from Melbourne to Rome to bring back a load of Italian migrants. Keith and R. P. (Bob) Smith, a Senior Route Captain for ANA, alternated flying the DC-4 via Darwin, Batavia, Negombo, Karachi and Nicosia. In Rome they spent several days sightseeing then set off on the homeward flight.

"We got weather reports before we left", says Keith, "and we were aware that there was a severe storm on the path ahead of us across the Apennines to Bari. We had a couple of hostesses aboard and a steward to look after the Italians, who'd brought a concertina with them and we were all set for a good time. Well, we climbed to 9000 feet and the weather didn't seem too bad."

(Keith then describes running into a series of extreme storms, with ice striking the windscreen and the DC-4 being carried up to 15,00 feet then down to 7000 feet, the same level as the mountain tops.)

"We were being constantly bombarded by static discharges or lightning strikes. All I could do was try and keep the aircraft going and the speed between 120 and 180 m.p.h. The lightning burnt off one of the aeriels, one of the navigation lights and cracked a landing light. The two hostesses started praying. I didn't know hosties prayed. Then the lightning bolts caused repeated discharges that sounded like double-barrel shotguns going off right in front of our noses. It frightened hell out of us. I kept saying "The bloody thing's going to fall to pieces". I didn't think the aircraft was going to stand it. We went on battling the storms for 45 minutes and you wouldn't believe it but in the cabin, the Italians were playing the concertina, singing and having a whale of a time."

The next load of migrants was flown without incident and provided Keith, his copilot and crew with the evening's celebrations in Rome preceding New Years Day 1949." 93

On 1st December 1948, ANA announced its intention to carry imigrants from England and Rome when it delivered four DC-4s recently purchased in England." 1

(This refers to DC-4s VH-ANF (1 c/n 3077, VH-ANG (1 c/n 10365, VH-ANF (2 c/n 1030 and VH-ANG (2 c/n 10347. The first two were leased to Air Ceylon DC-4s crewed by ANA and immediately changed to Ceylonese registrations The Government of Ceylon entered into a contract with ANA for operation of Sydney-Colombo-London passenger service.

One Air Ceylon DC-4 flew a weekly Colombo-London service, the airline had entry rights into Australia only once monthly. As the aircraft entered Australia the second aircraft left, leaving one aircraft in Australia for the entire month unable to be used on domestic ANA services because of its foreign registration. This was solved when the two DC-4s were registered in Australia in 1951 when the titles were changed from ANA to Air Ceylon for each overseas service. 9, 19, 22,24, 25,26, 27

A later ANA delivery flight from England of newly purchased DC-4 G-ALEP in January 1951 (to be registered VH-INY then quickly reregistered VH-INX) collected Italian migrants in Rome enroute. It was flown out by an ANA crew as G-ALEP. Bill Eneberg was Navigation Officer on that delivery flight, and recalls:

"We had our Australian Licences endorsed by the UK Civil Aviation Authority so we could fly the aircraft to Australia. Air Ceylon was in full operation at the time with a crew based in Cairo for 3 months and two crews based in Colombo with a basing of one month. After leaving London with G-ALEP we flew to Rome where we loaded up with Italian migrants for Australia. The original intention was for our crew to carry on to Colombo where we were to hand the aircraft over to a Colombo based crew due for return to Australia after their one month's basing. When we reached Colombo the original on-going crew had not been advised of any change in arrangements and were waiting at the airport when we arrived. As you can imagine, they were very 'cheesed off' to find out that we were the only crew licensed to fly the aircraft. We overnighted in Colombo and continued on to Australia with a further overnight in Singapore. We were a little concerned that the aircraft was not performing according to the book, which was highlighted by an incident out of Kemajoran, the airfield for Djakarta. The temperature was in the 30s Centigrade at takeoff and the runway was not very long. We managed to scramble off only because the skipper dropped some flap at the last moment and bounced us off! When we got back to Melbourne and the aircraft documentation was more closely examined it was discovered that it had been fitted with an armoured floor for the carriage of gold bullion and the empty weight was 2000 pounds higher than standard." 123

Douglas C-54A VH-ANG (1) (c/n 10365 ex N57777, NC58003, Bu50843, 42-72260)

8.4.46 NC58003 Veterans Air Express
11.48 N57777 Matson Navigation Co
25.11.48 Australian National Airways Pty Ltd, Melbourne
25.11.48 VH-ANG Registered and validation of US CofA.
31.12.48 Struck off Register, leased to Air Ceylon. (VH-ANG reissued to c/n 10347 same day)
3.2.49 VP-CBD Air Ceylon *Laxapana*: operated by ANA
15.3.49 Arrived Sydney ex Darwin, Air Ceylon
20.3.49 Departed Sydney to Darwin, Air Ceylon
1.6.49 Arrived Sydney ex Darwin, Air Ceylon, 7 passengers
12.6.49 Departed Sydney to London, Air Ceylon, 2 passengers
27.9.50 CY-ACA Air Ceylon *Laxapana*: operated by ANA
16.3.51 VH-INY Registered ANA *Laxapana*: Continued lease to Air Ceylon in Air Ceylon blue scheme, also operated ANA domestic services.
23.7.53 Air Ceylon services terminated.
29.3.58 Twentieth Century Airlines, Burbank CA, to N5520V
(later to D-ADAL, G-AREK, conv. to Carvair (c/n 5) N9757F, LX-IOG, F-BHMV, G-AREK, F-BYCL, N83FA)

Douglas C-54A VH-ANF (1) (c/n 3077 ex NC57776, 41-37286, Bu39140, 42-37286)

22.5.46 NC57776 Veterans Air Express
1.11.48 N57776 Matson Navigation Co
25.11.48 Australian National Airways Pty Ltd, Melbourne
25.11.48 VH-ANF Registered and validation of US CofA.
8.12.48 Struck off Register, leased to Air Ceylon. (VH-ANF reissued to c/n 10302 on 8.12.48)
5.1.49 VP-CBE Air Ceylon *Ratmalana*: CofA: operated by ANA
7.2.49 Inaugural service Colombo-London, Captain Len Taylor
20.2.49 Arrived Sydney ex Darwin, Air Ceylon, 17 pax
25.3.49 Arrived Sydney ex Darwin, 10 pax
29.5.49 Departed Sydney for London, Air Ceylon, nil passengers
24.3.49 Arrived Sydney ex Darwin, Air Ceylon
11.10.50 CY-ACB Air Ceylon *Ratmalana*: operated by ANA
21.12.50 VH-INZ Registered ANA *Ratmalana*: Continued lease to Air Ceylon in Air Ceylon blue scheme, also operated ANA domestic services.
23.7.53 Air Ceylon services terminated.
21.4.58 Twentieth Century Airlines, Burbank CA, to N5521V *Mediterranean Sea*
(later to HP-351, 5N-AFC, VP-BCX, N11117 wfu derelict Phnom Penh, Camdodia 75)

Douglas C-54A VH-ANF (2) (c/n 10302 ex NC49776, 42-72197)

47 NC49776
2.9.48 N49776 Eugene Beese, Miami FL: CofR
4.9.48 Ferried Kansas City MO to Teterboro NJ for rework for export and engine changes
.48 Australian National Airways, Melbourne
11.48 Arrived Melbourne-Essendon on delivery to ANA
8.12.48 VH-ANF Registered ANA *Loongana*
15.11.54 Landed Brisbane-Eagle Farm with gear retracted, Captain Keith Virtue
17.11.54 Ferried Brisbane-Essendon for repair
8.67 Sold to Civil Air Transport, Taipei, Taiwan
13.8.67 Departed Essendon on delivery to Taipei
(to B-1811, transferred to China Airlines .71; crashed Battambang, Cambodia 15.7.74)

Douglas C-54A VH-ANG (2) (c/n 10347 ex NC88784, NC49777, 42-72242)

46 NC49777
3.46 NC88784 West Air Lines: delivered
47 American Airlines
.48 Australian National Airways, Melbourne
31.12.48 VH-ANG ANA Registered, *Palana*
28.4.58 Twentieth Century Airlines, Burbank CA, to N5519V *Indian Ocean*
(crash landed near Nagpur, India 22.3.61)

Douglas C-54B VH-INX (c/n 18327 ex G-ALEP, ZS-BYO, NC74628, 43-17127)

49/50 G-ALEP Mining and Exploration Air Services: leased to Silver City Airways
26.1.51 VH-INY Australian National Airways, Melbourne
1.51 Delivered from London to Melbourne by ANA crew still registered G-ALAP.
Collected Italian migrants at Rome
12.2.51 VH-INX re-registered to allow VH-INY to be used for CY-ACA ex Air Ceylon
(Photo 9.3.51 at Essendon still G-ALEP, "Mining and Exploration Air Services" titles)
9.59 converted for freight as "Cargomaster"
12.70 Retired at Essendon. Moved to Melton airfield Vic, became derelict, scrapped



ANA DC-4 VH-ANG *Palana* at Adelaide-Parafield in 1950.

Photo via SA Aviation Museum

10 TRANS-AUSTRALIAN AIRLINES, MELBOURNE

TAA had ordered five new Convair 240s off the drawing board in December 1946 for first delivery August 1948 to take advantage of production line places available from a reduced Western Airlines order. 8

TAA sought Government permission to carry immigrants on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Convair 240 delivery flights from the factory in San Diego California to Melbourne via London. TAA hostess Mavis McGill was one of four TAA hostesses who were flown to Britain to join the new Convair delivery flights, each to carry 35 English migrants to Australia. 76

Despite sequential registration and constructor's numbers, the five aircraft were not delivered in order of registration. Certificates of Registration for VH-TAO to VH-TAS were issued on the same date 24 March 1948 before the first was completed on the production line. All were delivered via Britain and Middle East due to lack of range for the Pacific crossing. Delivery dates quoted are from Convair records and refer to the date TAA crews accepted the aircraft at the factory at San Diego prior to delivery to Australia.

TAA Convair 240-5 24, 77, 79

Registration	C/n	Construction Date	Delivery Date	Name when delivered	Details
VH-TAO	32	21.12.48	30.12.48	George Bass	Undercarriage collapsed landing Keflavik, Iceland 10.1.49 on delivery, repaired on site, arrived Melbourne 3.7.49
VH-TAP	42	21.9.48	21.12.48	Matthew Flinders	Delivered via London Airport 1.1.49
VH-TAQ	64	21.8.48	25.8.48	John Forrest	Departed San Diego 26.8.48, arrived Melbourne 7.9.48
VH-TAR	92	21.9.48	8.10.48	Thomas Mitchell	Departed San Diego 8.10.48, arrived Melbourne 24.10.48
VH-TAS	93	21.9.48	8.10.48	James Cook	Departed San Diego 10.48, Arrived Melbourne 24.10.48

VH-TAQ was the first of TAA's new Convairs to arrive in Australia on delivery, landing at Essendon Airport, Melbourne on 7 September 1948 under the command of Captain John Chapman and entering TAA airline service 18 October 1948. 8 From the above, it can be assumed those intended to carry migrants from Britain to Australia were VH-TAO and VH-TAP, and one of the remaining two Convairs.



TAA Convair 240 VH-TAO at Canberra, August 1957.

Photo by Barrie Colledge

11. EASTERN DEVELOPMENTS PTY LTD, SYDNEY

O'Connell Street, Sydney

Eastern Developments Pty Ltd, O'Connell Street, Sydney are listed in Customs records as the agents for Douglas C-47 PI-C233 when it arrived at Sydney 11 September 1948 from Rome.

Sydney Morning Herald newspaper 22 November 1948 reported:

"Eastern Developments Pty Ltd are now flying large numbers of migrants from Europe. In early November one of their aircraft arrived with 45 Italians and a few days later another arrived with 48 passengers. Both planes immediately left for Italy to return again with further migrants. A third plane last week brought 45 Cyprians"

Nothing further is known of this company. It is assumed they were Australian agents for the American operated Curtiss C-46 Commando transports entering the migrant trade in increasing numbers at that time. See next section.

THE OPERATORS – UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A report in *Flight Magazine* dated 24 July 1947 stated:

"An air immigration scheme for prospective Australian settlers may be introduced soon if Mr. Arthur Calwell, Australian Minister for immigration, approves a plan put forward by a San Francisco aircraft company to fly 1,000 British migrants a month to Australia. The company plans to use ten DC-4s for the operation. Mr Calwell, commenting on the suggestion said "I am most interested and will go into the offer thoroughly." Mr Calwell is leaving for the United States in a few weeks' time." 101

Nothing came of this proposal, which almost certainly came from Transocean Airlines (see below)

SEABOARD & WESTERN AIRLINES, NEW YORK:

Seaboard & Western Airlines was incorporated 16 September 1946 and commenced operations in May 1947 with a Douglas DC-4 on contract cargo flights across the Atlantic. Further DC-4s and C-46s were added to the fleet, and the company became a large all cargo carrier with Constellations, CL-44s and later DC-8 freighters. In 1961 it changed name to Seaboard World Airlines in 1961 54

On 9 April 1948 a Seaboard & Western Airlines Douglas DC-4 arrived at Perth, Western Australia carrying 44 Jewish migrants from Germany, Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia. The flight was under the command of Captain V.R.Sproul of New York. The migrants boarded in Paris and the last leg was 10 hours from Batavia to Perth.

DCA impounded the aircraft on arrival Perth because at that time Perth was not a recognized entry port into Australia for international flights and no customs or immigration facilities were provided at Perth Airport. This had caused significant delays for the migrants, although all their papers were found to be in order. 160

SKYWAYS INTERNATIONAL, MIAMI, FLORIDA

Skyways International Trading & Transport Co Inc, Miami, Florida.
President Robert J. Bergeron.

This was a US non-scheduled cargo and passenger charter operator, with flights to Latin America 1946-1951 using C-46s, C-47s, Lodestars and Sikorsky VS-44A flying boats. Known to be active in Iraq during the 1948-51 period with US registered Curtiss C-46 Commandos. 54

Skyways International Trading & Transport Co acquired two Vought Sikorsky VS-44As NC41881 and NC41882 in June 1947. These large flying boats were to be based in Uruguay on contract with a local airline Transportes Aereos de Carga International, however Skyways won a Ecuadorian Government contract to carry cargo and NC41882 was reregistered in Ecuador as CX-AIR but crashed during a night landing on the River Plate at Montevideo on 15 August 1947 on return from Paraguay where it had carried supplies for rebels fighting the Paraguayan Government.

VS-44A NC41881 was returned to USA and leased to Captain Charles Blair's Associated Air Transport Inc in July and August 1947 for military supply flights from a lake in Michigan to Keflavik, Iceland to support construction of the US military air base at Keflavik. 20 years later Captain Blair was to purchase this flying boat for his Antilles Air Boats operation in the US Virgin Islands.

Skyways had acquired their first Curtiss C-46E from the US Reconstruction Finance Corp at Walnut Ridge Army Air Force Base, Arkansas on April 26 1946. It was registered as NC53472 and "was operated on charters carrying cargo to the Middle East and Latin America until about 1951." 85

During the early postwar reduction of military forces, the US Government was offering brand new USAF Curtiss-Wright Commandos to civil operators, including spares, on lease arrangements of \$300 per month with the latest model Pratt & Whitney engines and new three bladed props. Large numbers of these leased C-46s were in use with US scheduled and charter operators prior to the Korean War period. Skyways International leased six C-46Fs from the US Air Force effective 19 May 1948. These included NC1649M, NC1650M and NC1651M. The Civil Aeronautics Administration (forerunner of today's FAA) awarded Skyways International Trading & Transport an Approved Type Certificate (ATC 808) for the civil conversion of the C-46F model. Slick Airways and USAir held ATCs for civil conversions of earlier models of C-46. 28, 54, 55, 86, 88

Skyways International flew a number of C-46 Commandos on the Australian migrant run, apparently operating for Immigration Air Transport Corporation. Included was N53472, one of the rare C-46E model with "stepped" cockpit windscreen.

Sydney Morning Herald dated 16 January 1949 reported:

"Skyways International Curtiss Commando landed at Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport at 3.10pm, one hour earlier than the radioed time of arrival; the 48 European migrants were forced to remain in the aircraft as Customs, Immigration and Health officials were not available; they had not eaten for 12 hours; requests to allow the passengers out of the closed aircraft were refused by airport officials." 1



Skyways International Curtiss C-46E Commando N53472 *Big Bird* at Darwin 1949. Note the stepped cockpit unique to this model of Commando. In the background is Miles Gemini VH-BLN of the NT Aerial Medical Service.
Photo: Kevin Millbank via David Vincent

Skyways International Curtiss Commando aircraft: 54, 88

Curtiss C-46E NC53472 *Big Bird* (c/n 2932 ex 43-47406)
26.4.46 Skyways: purchased ex Reconstruction Finance Corp disposals at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas.
51 New York Car Wheel Co
By 51 Colonial Trust Co, New York: operated by Caribbean American Airlines

Curtiss C-46F NC1646M (c/n 22393 ex 44-78570)
19.5.48 USAF leased to Skyways International
22.8.49 USAF leased to Seaboard & Western until 11.51.

Curtiss C-46F NC1647M (c/n 22394 ex 44-78571)
19.5.48 USAF leased to Skyways International

Curtiss C-46F NC1648M (c/n 22395 ex 44-78572)
19.5.48 USAF leased to Skyways International
22.8.49 USAF leased to Seaboard & Western Airlines until 11.51

Curtiss C-46F NC1649M (c/n 22561)
19.5.48 USAF leased to Skyways International
2.6.48 Registered to Skyways International Trading & Transport Co
18.3.50 FAA report: Total airframe hours only 152 hrs 27 mins
21.3.50 USAF leased to Seaboard & Western Airlines

Curtiss C-46F NC1650M (c/n 22563 ex 44-78740)
9.12.48 USAF leased to Skyways International
8.48 accident at Pyote TX, operated by Skyways International
14.2.49 Registered to Skyways International Trading & Transport Co
20.1.50 leased to Continental Charters Inc

Curtiss C-46F NC1651M (c/n 22399 ex 44-78576)
19.5.48 USAF leased to Skyways International
30.9.48 damaged in groundloop on takeoff, Bastra, Iraq
14.2.49 Registered to Skyways International Trading & Transport Co
15.5.50 Sold to Arabian American Airlines

IMMIGRATION AIR TRANSPORT CORPORATION:

A US corporation, no other details known.

"25 October 48 Immigration Air Transport Corporation announced in Sydney that it planned to fly more than 15,000 European migrants each year to Australia using Curtiss Commando aircraft" 1

"The first migrant-carrying aircraft to arrive from Europe since the Government lifted the ban on unscheduled charter flights reached Darwin on September 14th 1949. The aircraft, a Curtiss Commando of the US company Immigration Air Transport Inc (sic), brought 38 migrants from Cyprus." 115

Curtiss C-46F N1673M (c/n 22461 ex 44-78638) 54
48/49 USAF leased to Immigration Air Transport
24.6.49 Departed Sydney for Nandi, Fiji: probably ferry back to USA
51 leased to Caribbean American trading as North Star, later to ZP-CCE

ALASKA AIRLINES, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON:

Operated a Douglas DC-4 NC90915 from Rome to Sydney in July 1948, carrying 45 passengers and 6 crew, handling agent in Sydney was Qantas. Passengers not confirmed as a migrants. 19

TRANSOCEAN AIR LINES, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA - TALOA:

Heavy aircraft charter operator founded by Captain Orvis M. Nelson and Ray T. Elsmore in 1946, initially military contract charters across Pacific to Hawaii and Japan using C-54s leased ex USAF. Built up a large fleet of DC-4s and C-46s and entered developmental contracts with Philippine Airlines, Air Jordan, Air Djibouti, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Pak

Air (Pakistan), Japan Airlines among others. TALOA went on to become a scheduled passenger airline with Constellations and Stratocruisers before ceasing operations in 1960 and filing for bankruptcy. 55

The book *Folded Wings - A History of Transocean Air Lines* records the following:

"In August of 1948, Transocean contracted with the International Refugee Organisation (IRO) for a flight from Paris to Australia with 50 European migrants. The flight plan was complicated because some of the passengers were Jews. This meant TAL would be unable to take the most direct route and would need to avoid flying over any Arabian countries. The plan called for the aircraft to be routed from Paris over Rome and Athens with the first refuelling stop to be Abadan, Iran.

Before takeoff, Captain Galvin "Ace" Sargent was handed a cablegram ostensibly from TAL's office in Shannon, Ireland. Its instructions were for him to continue past Abadan and land at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia on the Perian Gulf. The message was received without any suspicion, and Sargent insisted that a confirmation of the new plan had been made en route over Paris.

Before the transport's descent over Saudi Arabia and landing at Dhahran, the uneventful flight was forced to deviate from the flight plan. The traffic control tower at Dhahran refused permission to land. In the middle of the Arab world, carrying a charter of Jews, and now low of fuel, the situation looked bleak. Why was the flight plan changed by Shannon and now permission to land denied, wondered Sargent.

After many airports in the Persian Gulf refused landing rights to Captain Sargent, the Iraqis across the Gulf at Basra finally granted permission. The tower cleared the aircraft to land and refuel. When it came to a stop near the terminal, it was rushed by soldiers carrying rifles. Bob Glattly, who was the TAL navigator, said that the soldiers threatened to kill everyone as they herded them into a hotel at the airport. Now out of radio contact with the world, the Transocean flight was reported as lost and unaccounted for. Three days later, a pilot flying for an oil company landed at the airport and saw the Transocean plane. After his departure, he reported its location on the ramp at Basra to the airline's Middle East division offices.

Orvis Nelson always believed that this incident was created by a nationalistic or communistic group intent on stirring up international strife. The US State Department, IRO and Transocean headquarters negotiated for 18 days before the aircraft and its passengers were allowed to continue to the destination, Australia." 55

ALL TRANS AIRLINES:

All Trans Inc, operating as All Trans Airlines was a US charter operator with Curtiss C-46 Commando transports. The airline used at least one passenger C-46 N1800M on the Australian migrant charters in late 1949.

A cable to DCA Head Office Melbourne from DCA Sydney Airport dated 16 November 1949:

"All Trans Inc C46 aircraft N1800M arrived 0635 HRS November 16th. Fifty passengers including four children in arms. 40 Lebanese who paid £230 Sterling and 4 Greeks who paid £250 Sterling ex Rome. Condition of aircraft re amenities unaltered from last report. All passengers questioned were satisfied as to treatment enroute. Full report will follow early next week " 19



All Trans Airlines Curtiss C-46F N1800M named *Deuce* at Darwin December 1949.

Photo by Phil McCulloch

Curtiss C-46F N1800M (c/n 22577 ex 44-78754)

48/49

USAF leased to All Trans Airlines

50

USAF leased to Flying Tiger Line, later to YV-C-EVF

MATSON NAVIGATION COMPANY:

Established US shipping line founded in 1882, which specialized in carrying passengers and cargo from the USA west coast to the Hawaiian Islands, later extending to Australia.

On 27 August 1947 the Matson Navigation Co announced in Sydney that it planned to fly immigrants from America to Australia using 18 to 20 Douglas DC-4 aircraft. No further references have been found, but Matson could have been agents in organizing migrant carriage to Australia by a number of international charter aircraft 1

THE OPERATORS - INTERNATIONAL

CATHAY PACIFIC AIRWAYS, HONG KONG

Operated numerous DC-3 freight flights between Sydney and Hong Kong during 1946-1948. The airline was among the first to carry migrants to Australia, initially from Rangoon and Singapore to Sydney.

“Cathay Pacific became involved in a lucrative carriage of migrants who flocked from several European countries to Australia, carrying its first load in October 1947. Radio Officer Ken Wolenski told me of one of these migrant trips in Cathay Pacific’s first DC-3 VR-HDB, skippered by John Furley. Their route lay between Rangoon and Darwin, with technical stops at Bangkok, Singapore, Soerabaya and Koepang. At Singapore the ground engineer found a broken rudder hinge, and naturally, no spares were available. It seemed that Cathay Pacific would lose heavily on its charter as some 28 migrants would soon be eating their heads off at Raffles Hotel at company expense.

Then Furley remembered that some of his old RAF chums would be at Changi airfield, so the crew hailed a taxi and were soon breasting the bar at the RAF Officers Mess, surrounded by Furley’s old friends, each insisting he would buy the next drink. The total mess bill amounted to about 12 to 15 Straits dollars, but since it was Air Force duty free grog that is no indication of the amount consumed.

‘We were soon making a somewhat unsteady way to the RAF stores’ Ken Wolenski said, ‘and were there presented with a handful of the elusive rudder hinges. Someone insisted I should have my very own hinge as a memento of the event. I still have it somewhere. With the repair made we were soon on our way, a little hung over.’ When Furley later submitted the small grog account to the company for payment it was refused.” 33

7 October 1947 27 Greeks and two Italians were flown into Darwin on a Cathay Pacific Airways DC-3; they had flown to Singapore on a KLM flight before transferring to the Cathay charter flight. The DC-3 continued on to Sydney on 9 October 1947. 62

On 20 February 1948 a Cathay Pacific DC-3 arrived in Darwin from Singapore, carrying 21 migrants, including British subjects from Palestine. DCA would not allow the flight to continue to Sydney, and the passengers were off-loaded at Darwin to wait for a TAA DC-3 to carry them further. 106

During 1948, Indian rebels were on the edge of Calcutta’s Dum Dum Airport and firing at aircraft.

“At the same time Pat Hall was flying there for Cathay Pacific Airways and they shot off one of his wheels as he was taking off. A good place to get out of!” 3 It is not confirmed that this was a migrant flight because Cathay did operate numerous charters, for example Calcutta to Sydney in April 1948 with 17 ships crew.

As an interesting aside, a number of Cathay Pacific’s visits to Mascot from late 1948 were from Douglas C-47 VR-HDJ. This particular Dakota had been used for long-term charters for Indonesian Republicans in 1947. The first crew flew from Hong Kong to Singapore where directions were received in a cloak-and-dagger style in the dining room of the Raffles Hotel. Their operations were based at Jogjakarta on Java, which was Doctor Ahmed Sukarno’s headquarters for the fight against the Dutch for independence. VR-HDJ flew daily return flights to Bukittinggi on Sumatra for a number of months, with Cathay Pacific crews on three week rotations. The Cathay charter was discontinued after Dutch P-40s shot down C-47A VT-CLA on similar work on 21 October 1947. The Dakota had just been purchased in India and was being flown by Cathay pilot Roy Hazelhurst and a Captain Cunningham, who was establishing an air force for Sukarno. 52

AIR TRANSPORT CO, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Originally formed in early 1947 as **Trans-Air**, which planned passenger and freight charters from Brussels with RAF disposals Handley Page Halifaxes. However Chief Pilot Geoffrey Arlington convinced the company that Short Stirlings were better suited, and he was sent to RAF Polebrook where over 80 RAF Stirlings were lined up awaiting sale for scrap. He purchased 12 Stirling C Mk.V transports including spares for a total price of £2,000. Civil conversions were contracted to Airtech Ltd at Thame, some as freighters and some fitted with seating for 36 passengers. Meanwhile a busy period of recruiting and endorsing pilots and ground staff took place. First Stirling delivered to Brussels was OO-XAD in June 1947, which flew the company’s first charter on 13 June when Geoffrey Arlington flew from Brussels to RAF Manston to pick up a load of pigs bound for Italy. Three more Stirlings were delivered to Brussels and Trans-Air commenced a series of charters to China, taking Roman Catholic priests and nuns to Shanghai to be missionaries. The route was 24,000 miles return.

In October 1947 the Trans-Air operation was taken over by another Belgian charter company, **Air Transport SA**, which retained the existing personnel and recruited more for planned expansion as additional Stirlings completed their civil conversions.

On 22 December 1947 Stirling OO-XAC crashed on takeoff at Kunming, China on the last leg to Canton. The copilot was killed, 5 were injured, but 30 other passengers and crew were unhurt. The aircraft had departed Brussels on 13 December for Rome with 30 Belgian missionaries on board. On takeoff from Kunming, three engines failed and Captain Tam Morrison made a forced landing straight ahead through a cemetery where stone burial mounds tore into the aircraft. The crew was required to wait in China during the accident enquiry, before being collected by a company Lodestar in February 1948. 68, 70, 71, 168

Air Transport SA was one of the early foreign operators to commence carrying migrants to Australia, and was usually referred to as **Belgian Air Transport Co**. The *Sydney Morning Herald* newspaper on 27 August 1947 reported: *"The Belgian Air Transport Co plans to operate Lockheed Lodestars and Douglas DC-4s on an eight day service commencing 1 November 1947."* Air Transport Co did fly migrants to Australia in each of its three Lodestars, but did not own DC-4s, so presumably the SABENA DC-4s which flew migrants to Australia were operating on a cross-charter arrangement.

Some newspaper reports record the Belgian company's early Lodestar trips to Australia:

- *Canberra Times* 5 December 1947:

"Darwin Thursday (4th): A Belgian Lockheed Lodestar arrived today with 29 (sic) immigrants. It was under charter to BOAC to bring out migrants who could not be accommodated on other aircraft. The plane's radio failed on the final stage between Timor and Darwin. The wheel brakes failed when the machine landed but there was no mishap."

- *Brisbane Telegraph* January 1948:

"A Belgian Lockheed Lodestar, Sydney-bound, landed at Darwin with 12 British migrants and continued its journey. The plane left Brussels on December 30. Two of the migrants left the plane at Darwin. The others intend to settle in Mackay, Sydney and New Zealand.

The plane arrived at Cloncurry a little after 11am and continued on its journey, intending to call at Bowen and Brisbane. A Yorkshireman, Mr. John Richardson, who has his wife and child with him, told a Brisbane Telegraph reporter by phone from Cloncurry that he "thought he was in paradise". Asked what he intended to do in Australia, Mr Richardson said "I did local government work in England but I will do anything here. Australia seems such a grand place that I don't think the work I do will alter things greatly" he added. Mr. Richardson will settle in Mackay with relatives."

Details of the January 1948 Lodestar flight in OO-GVP come from the logbook of pilot Cecile Heems who acted as a stewardess on two Air Transport Co flights to Australia, with more information in a book she later published *Les Chemins du Ciel*. This flight in Lodestar OO-GVP was scheduled to depart Belgium on 30 November 1947 but was delayed by a series of problems including radios, and finally got away a month later on 30 December 1947 under the command of Captain Baudoux with First Officer Tacquin and a total of 5 crew. The number of passengers not given, but no passengers spoke French or Belgian:

30.12.47 Brussels-Rome

1.1.48 Rome-Athens

2.1.48 Athens-Nicosia

3.1.48 Nicosia-Baghdad-Basrah

4.1.48 Basrah-Sardjah-Karachi

5.1.48 Karachi-Amehdabad-Calcutta

6.1.48 Calcutta-Rangoon

7.1.48 Rangoon-Phnom Penh-Singapore (delay due engine problems)

9.1.48 Singapore-Batavia-Sourabaya

10.1.48 Sourabaya-Koepang. (delay due burst tyre)

16.1.48 Koepang-Darwin

17.1.48 Darwin-Cloncurry-Bowen

18.1.48 Bowen-Brisbane-Sydney

23.1.48 Departed Sydney on return to Brussels, with delays en route at Phnom Penh, Baghdad and 6 days at Damas due vibrating and smoking engine.

10.2.48 Arrived Brussels

Air Transport Co operated their big Short Stirlings on migrant charters to Australia during 1948. Two have been identified:

Stirling OO-XAL departed Brussels on 3 June 1948 under command of Captain Lucke (ex RAF) and like the Lodestar trip described above, company pilot Cecile Heems acted as stewardess, and thanks to her book *Les Chemins du Ciel*. we have details of this adventurous trip:

3.6.48 Brussels-Rome-Athens

4.6.48 Athens-Bagdad-Bahrein

5.6.48 Bahrein-Karachi

6.6.48 Karachi-Delhi-Calcutta

7.6.48 Calcutta-Rangoon

8.6.48 Rangoon-Singapore-Macassar. In flight to Macassar a port engine exploded in flight, was shut down and feathered. A three-engined landing made at Macassar, where the Stirling was grounded waiting for repairs to the Bristol Hercules engine. Eleven days later, during the night of June 19-20, the replacement aircraft, Stirling OO-XAK, arrived at Macassar flown by another ex RAF pilot Captain S.W. Rogers. The company had loaded a set of engine spares, which were quickly found to be unsuitable to allow the engine to be rebuilt. OO-XAL's flight engineer accompanied the passengers to Sydney on OO-XAK where he unsuccessfully attempted to find the required engine parts, before returning on the aircraft to Macassar.

20.6.48 OO-XAK flew the passengers Macassar-Darwin

21.6.48 Darwin-Sydney

- Sydney-Darwin

2.7.48 Darwin-Macassar

(Next day at Macassar a telegram from the company in Brussels advised that the correct engine spares had been dispatched on another company Stirling on the regular charter service to China. However luck was really against them, because the spares were not off-loaded at Calcutta as intended for onward shipment to Macassar, instead remaining on board to China. Some days later the parts finally reached Macassar. While the engine was being rebuilt in tropical heat, the crew received a telegram from company head office telling them that OO-XAL had been sold to an Arab company and that once repaired, they should deliver it to Cairo and leave it there.

17.7.48 OO-XAL Macassar-Batavia

18.7.48 Batavia-Singapore-Rangoon

19.7.48 Rangoon-Calcutta-Karachi

20.7.48 Karachi-Bahrein. Delay at Bahrein due engine maintenance

22.7.48 Bahrein-Cairo. On arrival Cairo, the hapless crew received a telegram from Air Transport Head Office stating that the sale had not been completed, and the aircraft should continue to Brussels. Departure delayed because the Flight Engineer wanted to thoroughly check all engines.

24.7.48 Cairo-Tripoli-Brussels

Stirling OO-XAK returned to Darwin via Macassar in the Celebes in October 1948 carrying migrants, mostly Greek nationality. Later that month OO-XAK was among the Air Transport Stirlings sold to Royal Egyptian Air Force, using a small civil operator Tangiers Air Charter Co as cover because aircraft sales to Arab countries and the newly founded Israel had been banned. 74



Short Stirling OO-XAK of Air Transport Co, Brussels at Darwin 1948, RAAF Mosquito behind. Photo via John M. Smith

Air Transport Co fleet: (only those used on Australian migrant charters)

Lockheed L.18 Lodestars: 68, 70,71

OO-GVP (2322 ex 42-55905, NC9095H)
 25.3.47 delivered to Belgium ex USA via Prestwick as NC9095H
 4.4.47 Registered OO-GVP to Air Transport Co, Brussels
 27.7.48 crashed Wadi Haifa, Sudan

OO-OLY (2469 ex 42-55996, NC29218)
 8.5.47 Registered OO-OLY to Air Transport Co, Brussels
 10.47 diverted RAF Benina, Benghazi, Libya while en route El Adem to Malta,
 3.50 retired on company collapse
 31.12.50 Struck off register, broken up

OO-EDS (2442 ex 42-55984, NC55984)
 30.6.47 Registered OO-EDS to Air Transport Co, Brussels
 (refuelled at Bombay-Santa Cruz 26.10.47, arrived Sydney 21.3.48 from Brussels)
 27.4.51 sold to R. Lefebvre, Etterbeek, Brussels
 11.51 sold to USA, became N9974F, later N318.

Short Stirling C.Vs: 68,70,71

OO-XAK (ex RAF PK136)
 3.5.48 Registered OO-XAK to Air Transport Co, Brussels
 2.10.48 struck-off register
 10.48 sold to Tangiers Air Charter Co, to Royal Egyptian Air Force

OO-XAL (ex RAF PK182)
 28.2.48 OO-XAL test flown RAF Polebrook after CofA conversion overhaul
 1.6.48 Registered OO-XAL to Air Transport Co, Brussels
 11.6.48 forced-landing Macassar, Celebes 111
 18.8.48 crashed landing Bovingdon, over-ran runway into a field damaging landing gear and props 111
 29.10.48 struck off register, broken up at Bovingdon

On 24 March 1950 a public auction of assets of Air Transport Company S.A. (in bankruptcy) was held at Melsbroek airfield, Brussels. Included were three Lockheed Lodestars, an Auster and a Percival Proctor and a quantity of spare parts including parts for Short Stirling aircraft. 69

SABENA, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

SABENA DC-4s flew a number of migrant charters to Australia, probably in a cross-charter arrangement with Belgian Air Transport Co. SABENA had a large DC-4 fleet, the following two have been identified on migrant runs: 70, 71

OO-CBS Douglas C-54A (c/n 10326 ex OO-SBS, N49539, Bu39173, 42-72221)
 5.47 purchased as OO-SBS by SABENA ex Douglas
 3.6.48 OO-CBS re-registered by SABENA
 10.50 sold to Belgian Air Force as KX-1

OO-CBD DC-4-1009 (c/n 42906)
 22.2.46 Registered to SABENA *Ville dce Bruxelles*
 26.2.46 transferred to SABENA Congo services
(later leased to United Nations, then sold to Air Congo as 9O-CBD, 9Q-CBD)

SOUTH EASTERN, MANILA, PHILIPPINES:

Warren MacMillan, Manila, Philippines
 Filipino operator of Douglas C-47B PI-C233.

PI-C233 was operated by South Eastern, a syndicate based in Manila, Philippines, whose principal was a United States citizen Mr. **Warren MacMillan**. The main work of the syndicate was earth-moving, including demolition of bombed buildings in Manila. 124

The first recorded visit of PI-C233 to Sydney was on 13 January 1948 under the command of Captain L. M. Tucker, under charter to Airways Burma. It brought a load of passengers for Thomas Cook & Co Ltd.

PI-C233 then became a regular arrival at Sydney carrying migrants from Europe, usually flown by Captain L. M. Tucker. Later flights to Sydney were under the command of Captain U. L. Caldoza, presumably a Filipino national. Interestingly, the Customs records for this C-47 at Mascot quote Captain Tucker's initials as W. D. Tucker, and there is a record of a Philippine Airlines Douglas C-47 PI-C141 being flown from Hong Kong to Bangkok on 21 October 1946 by Captain W. D. Tucker. 143

Warren McMillan purchased two ex Netherlands East Indies Air Force Lodestars retired at RAAF Tocumwal, LT931 and LT934. These are listed as sold by the US Foreign Liquidation Commission in 1948 to an owner at Manila, Philippines. Stan Godden had also been interested in acquiring these two Lodestars. Having been parked in the weather at Tocumwal for three years, they were unfit for a ferry flight. Fawcett Aviation was given the job of dismantling both and moving them by road to Bankstown, a very demanding task on the poor standard of narrow country roads at that time. By the time Fawcett started civil conversion at Bankstown, MacMillan had lost interest and both Lodestars defaulted to Doug Fawcett, who later operated them as freighters VH-FAB and VH-FAC. 94, 124

An internal DCA memo dated 8 March 1948 reports:
"PI-C233 has now been chartered out to Intercontinental Air Tours and are therefore employing their custom for a trip from Darwin to Rome and return to Sydney. Mr. MacMillan is considering putting a certain amount of capital into

Intercontinental Air Tours, both in the way of cash and aircraft. The aircraft will probably consist of the C-47B and the two Lodestars. This investment will be subject to discussion and ratification by Mr. MacMillan's partners, the majority of whom are at present in Singapore. Should this deal come off, Intercontinental Air Tours should then be on more solid foundation than at present." 124

As shown in the history of ICAT above, this investment was not finalised, in fact almost the opposite occurred. Warren Penny of ICAT was in such financial difficulties that he sold two aircraft to the South Eastern syndicate, through another of their principals, US citizen **Francis James Grigware**. In February 1948 Warren Penny was forced to pull out of the migrant trade and did a deal with "the owners of an American Douglas C-47 visiting Sydney at the time" to transfer ownership of ICAT Hudson VH-ASV and DH.86 G-ADYH to them in return for them collecting 40 outstanding migrants booked with ICAT from Rome to Sydney. 58

Warren Penny recalls the events:

"I made arrangements with some Americans to bring these 40 passengers out. I could not afford to pay them £12,500 for the passages so I sold two of my aircraft to pay for the trips. The sale of these two aircraft returned £12,500. It was a contra agreement with the people who own the aircraft they contracted to carry the 40 passengers. It was an aircraft owned by a man named Martino who was a Philippine merchant and he had a syndicate operating and which consisted of people named Tucker, McMillan and others - there were about 5 of them in the syndicate. It was known as PI-C233"

I gave them the Hudson and D.H.86 in return for two flights to lift my backlog. They agreed and I organised my mother to go out on the first trip on the DC-3. She fell over in Singapore and broke her wrist and was put in hospital. She had to stay in Singapore for some weeks before the second flight, which was done by Captain Hurst in the Hudson for the new owners and he picked her up and took her to Rome." 11, 58

DCA Head Office Melbourne cabled their Darwin Airport office on 20 April 1948:

"Approval has been granted DC3 aircraft PIC233 under charter Intercontinental Air Tours proceed Sydney purpose disembarkation of passengers from Rome and Athens subject compliance with Australian Certification of Safety conditions and subject to loading restrictions as EER BCAP 003 Criterion Runs Charter ie aerodromes Darwin Sydney 26200 Longreach Cloncurry Daly Waters 26100 Charleville Camooweal 26050 pounds Maximum All Up Weight. Approval is given without prejudice to attitude of this Department to future applications. Please advise Mr. Penny accordingly." 19

Ownership of VH-ASV and G-ADYH was transferred to Frank Grigware on 13 April 1948. The C-47 PI-C233 arrived Mascot eight days later from Rome under command of Captain Tucker with 20 passengers and 5 crew. Most of the passengers were Penny's outstanding Italian migrants. The remainder were to be collected by the Hudson VH-ASV which Grigware now owned. ICAT Captain Jack Hurst joined Grigware as pilot for the Hudson, and Hurst departed Darwin 22 May 1948 for Rome and back to Darwin.

Frank Grigware appears to have then moved his base to Burma, flying the Hudson and DH.86 in support of the Indonesian independence fighters. See further details of his subsequent activities in **The Burma Connection** below.

South Eastern aircraft:

Douglas C-47B PI-C233 (identity not traced) 73
48 Operated by South Eastern, Philippines on migrant runs to Australia

Hudson Mk. 1 VH-ASV (c/n 1881 ex RAAF A16-30) 27,66
13.4.48 Purchased by F. J. Grigware from H.W.G.Penny/Intercontinental Air Tours, Sydney
22.5.48 Departed Darwin for Rome, pilot A. J. Hurst
9.48 Tailwheel collapsed Rangoon. Grigware in jail in Burma
(to XY-ACD Burma Air Traders .49, later to Burmese Air Force)

DH.86B G-ADYH Denebola (c/n 2344)
4.48 Purchased by F. J. Grigware from H.W.G.Penny/Intercontinental Air Tours, Sydney
19.5.48 Departed Singapore reportedly bound for England for CofA renewal. Did not reach UK.
48 Based in Burma and Malaya, operating for Indonesian rebels.
19.12.48 captured at Maguwo, Java by Dutch paratroops
(Later broken up at Bandoeng and its Gipsy Six engines later used on a locally designed aircraft built at Bandoeng.) 44, 59



A glimpse of C-47B PI-C233 can be seen behind this anonymous Curtiss C-46 at Sydney during 1948.
The Collection pflen-1500-001-065z

SAIDE EGYPTE, CAIRO, EGYPT

Services Aeriennes Internationaux d'Egypte, Cairo.

This airline was founded 12 February 1948 by Contieri Aero Navali, SIAI-Marchetti and Misr Airwork, to operate services to Mediterranean and Arab countries. The airline was privately owned, with 45% shareholding by Fiat and rest shared between the Egyptian Misr Bank and King Farouk's family. 87, 136

SAIDE operated an eclectic fleet of Fiat G.212 tri-motors and four-engined Savoia-Marchetti SM.95s, commencing with passenger services on the North African littoral route from Cairo to Tunis via Benghazi and Tripoli. Charters for *The Hadj* were also flown each year, carrying pilgrims to Mecca. Later scheduled services from Cairo to Athens, Rome, Paris, Milan were flown. During 1949 six Curtiss C-46 Commandos were obtained direct from USAF stocks. 18, 87

SIAI-Marchetti SM.95 SU-AFD swung off the runway during landing at Almaza Airport, Cairo on 23 September 1948 and struck control and fire vehicles, killing 2 ground staff. The first use of the Fiat trimotors on the Benghazi/Tripoli service was SU-AFX on 17 October 1949. However it was badly damaged during takeoff after a scheduled stop Alexandria, Egypt when the runway surface collapsed. The aircraft was left there for over a year awaiting repair, suffering further corrosion damage from the sea air. SAIDE's inaugural service to Milan was flown by SM.95 SU-AGC on 6 April 1950. Another SM.95 was seen far from home when SU-AFC arrived at London-Heathrow 14 February 1952 carrying the Egyptian delegation to the funeral of King George VI. 139

SAIDE Egypte flew its four-engined SM.95Cs and trimotor Fiat G.212 on migrant charters to Australia. The SM.95C was of mixed construction, wings being wooden three spar structures with plywood skinning, and fuselage welded steel tube framework, with light alloy skinning for nose, underside and a rear section, the fuselage sides and upper surfaces being ply and fabric covered. The SIAI-Marchettis were configured for 38 passengers.

SAIDE leased three Fiat G.212 *Monterosa* trimotors in 1948 from the Italian carrier Avio Linee Italiane SA, fitted for 34 passengers. A number were built for the Italian Air Force but only 12 were sold on the civil market. Both types in SAIDE service were powered by P&W R-1830-S1C3G Twin Wasp radials, as used by most DC-3s, which must have reduced engine maintenance concerns when so far from home on the Australian run. 20

Known visits to Darwin and Sydney by SAIDE Egypte are listed in the Migrant Aircraft Movements below.

After King Farouk was deposed in 1952, SAIDE was nationalised and services reduced until it ceased operations in April 1953. The airline went into liquidation on 5 December 1953. Its surviving Fiat G.212s were taken over by the Egyptian Air Force, and at least one G.212, painted all white, was used to repatriate Egyptian Prisoners-of-War from Israel during 1956. 136



SAIDE Egypte SIAI-Marchetti SM.95C SU-AFC at Darwin in January 1949, with a Connellan Airways DH.89 Rapide in the hangar behind.
Photo by Phil McCulloch



Another view of SM.95C SU-AFC at Darwin in January 1949, with the landmark water tower behind. The Captain is at the top of the steps with a group of TAA ground staff on the tarmac.
Photo by Phil McCulloch

Fiat G. 212 Monterosa:

SU-AFX (c/n 7), SU-AFY (3), SU-AFE (8), SU-AFF (9)

Siai Marchetti SM.95C:

SU-AFZ (c/n 17), SU-AGC (20), SU-AGD (13), SU-AFC (15), SU-AFD (16)

Curtiss C-46 Commandos:

SU-AFP, -AFS, -AFT, -AFU, -AFV, -AFW

NICARAGUAN INTERNATIONAL AIRLINES

William G. Spillman was an American who owned Curtiss C-46D AN-ADD and was captain of this Commando on at least four migrant runs into Sydney during 1948. Spillman was also in command of C-46 N1648M of Skyways International on two migrant runs to Sydney late that year, so appears Spillman operated his own Nicaraguan registered aircraft on a cross-charter arrangement with Skyways.

Doug Fawcett, in 1948 Chief Engineer of Butler Air Transport, Mascot, wrote:

"After two years as chief engineer I was feeling a little restless when a Nicaraguan pilot came into the workshop and asked if I could repair his Curtiss C-46. I spoke to Arthur (Butler), who said he did not want anything to do with itinerant aeroplanes, but if I wanted to assist this gentleman after hours he would not mind. This marked the beginning of my personal business life in aviation. I gathered around me a few good mechanics, repaired the aeroplane to the pilot's satisfaction and was paid accordingly." 10

Curtiss C-46D AN-ADD (c/n 33452 ex 44-78056) 54

30.1.47 Issued by USAF to Reconstructual Finance Corp, Bush Field, Georgia for disposal
48 CX-AKB not taken up
48 AN-ADD registered to William G. Spillman.
(Subsequent history unknown)

RECORDED MIGRANT FLIGHT MOVEMENTS 1947-1949

1. SYDNEY-KINGSFORD SMITH AIRPORT, MASCOT:

These listings of aircraft movements are based mainly on Customs records and Department of Civil Aviation daily reports in memos or cables to Head Office. They do not provide a complete record of the period as numerous reports are missing from the files held by National Archives of Australia. 19

Times are local, based on the 24 hour clock. Abbreviations used are:

ANA Australian National Airways, Melbourne
Arr Arrived
Cpt Captain
Dep Departed
EAT European Air Transport, Sydney
GAT Guinea Air Traders, Lae
ICAT Intercontinental Air Tours, Sydney (Warren Penny)
NHAW New Holland Airways, Sydney (Greg Board)
pax passengers

Date	Registration	Type	Operator	Details
10.7.47	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	Dep for London via Charleville, Cpt. W. Penny, 9 pax
9.9.47	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	Dep for London, Cpt. W. Penny, First Officer M. Croft
2.10.47	VH-GRB	Lodestar	NHAW	Dep for Europe, Cpt G. Board
11.10.47	VH-GRB	Lodestar	NHAW	Arr 0900 from Singapore, Cpt. G. Board, 4 crew, 15 pax including Albanian citizen Enver Tare 11
28.10.47	VH-GRB	Lodestar	NHAW	Arr 0900 from Singapore via Darwin, Cpt. G. Board, 15 pax all Greek migrants
16.11.47	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	Arr 1600 from London, Cpt. B. Starkey, 8 visitors from England, 4 migrants from Italy and Greece
28.11.47	G-ADYH	DH.86	ICAT	Arr 1815 from London, visa Darwin. Cpt. W. Mellor, 3 crew, 10 British, Greek and Italian migrants. <i>Customs ledger records 12 pax, 3 crew</i>)
8.12.47	OO-OLY	Lodestar	Belgian Air Transport Co	Arr 1830 from Gatwick via Darwin, Cpt. D. Jordens
13.12.47	-	Lodestar	ICAT	Dep 1420 for Rome and return
13.12.47	VH-GRB	Lodestar	NHAW	Arr from Athens via Darwin. Cpt. G. R. Board, 3 crew, 15 pax. Board wrote aircraft name <i>Singapore Clipper</i> on documents
19.12.47	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	Arr 1200 from Singapore via Darwin, Cpt. A. Hurst
25.12.47	G-AGBU	Lodestar	ICAT	Arr 1200 from London via Singapore, Cpt. W. Penny, 4 crew, 13 pax ex London, 1 pax ex Athens
31.12.47	G-AGBU	Lodestar	ICAT	Dep 1430 for Rome, no pax or freight
8.1.48	OO-GVP	Lodestar	Belgian Air Transport Co	Arr from Brussels via Darwin, Cloncurry, Bowen, Cpt. M. Bandoux, 4 crew, 7 pax
13.1.48	PI-C233	DC-3	South Eastern	Arr from Singapore, Cpt. W. D. Tucker, 5 crew, 13 pax
18.1.48	VH-ADZ	DC-2	Macair	Arr from Athens, Cpt. A. J. Brooks, 3 crew, 15 pax
19.1.48	G-AGBU	Lodestar	ICAT	Arr from Cyprus, Cpt. W. Mellor, 14 British and Greek

				migrants (<i>Customs ledger records 4 crew, 12 pax</i>)
22.1.48	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	Dep for Rome
24.1.48	VH-BFZ	Lodestar	ICAT	Arr from Rome, Cpt. B. Starkey, 4 crew, 14 pax
11.2.48	VH-JCM	Hudson	EAT	Arr from Athens, Cpt. F. M. Twemlow, 3 crew, 13 pax
18.3.48	VH-GRB	Lodestar	NHAW	Arr from Rome and Athens, Cpt. G. R. Board, 3 crew. 12 pax. Board wrote aircraft name <i>Jade Star</i> on documents
21.3.48	OO-EDS	Lodestar	Belgian Air Transport Co	Arr from Brussels, Cpt. Baiidown, 5 crew, 7 pax
4.4.48	VH-ARD	DC-5	NHAW	Arr 1140 from Athens, Cpt. R. W. Howitt, 2 crew, 17 pax
14.4.48	VH-GRB	Lodestar	NHAW	Dep 1300 for Athens
21.4.48	PI-C233	DC-3	South Eastern	Arr from Rome, Cpt. W. D. Tucker, 5 crew, 20 pax Agents Southern European Air Travel
3.5.48	VH-GRB	Lodestar	NHAW	Arr from Rome, Cpt. F. Wiza, 4 crew, 15 pax
5.48	VH-ARD	DC-5	NHAW	Dep for Rome, Cpt. R. W. Howitt, 2 crew, 3 pax including NHAW Manager Greg Hanlon
8.5.48	VH-BFQ	Hudson	EAT	Arr from Athens, Cpt. H. Gibson-Lee, 4 crew, 14 pax
13.5.48	VH-JCM	Hudson	EAT	Arr from Athens, Cpt. W. Burdus, 3 crew, 14 pax Agent C. Keetly, Darwin
7.6.48	VH-BIA	Hudson	EAT	Arr from Athens, Cpt. S. V. Owen, 5 crew, 11 pax Agent C. Keetly, Darwin
24.6.48	VH-BFZ	Lodestar	Godden Air Transport	Arr from Darwin, Cpt. Horlock, 4 crew, no pax Agent C. Keetly, Darwin
7.7.48	PI-C233	DC-3	South Eastern	Arr from Rome, Cpt. W. D. Tucker, 6 crew, 22 pax Agent C. Keetly, Darwin
12.7.48	OO-CBS	DC-4	SABENA	Arr from Belgium, Cpt. F. Henquin, 7 crew, 53 pax
12.7.48	NC90915	DC-4	Alaska Airlines	Arr from Rome, Cpt. Rutherford, 6 crew, 45 pax
17.7.48	I-TROS	DC-3	NHAW	Arr from Rome, Cpt. R. W. Howitt, 6 crew, 22 pax
21.7.48	OO-XAK	Short Stirling	Belgian Air Transport Co	Arr from Darwin, carrying migrant pax from OO-XAL grounded at Macassar
29.7.48	OO-CBS	DC-4	SABENA	Arr from Brussels, Cpt. FG. Peetarsen, 7 crew, 53 pax
14.8.48	VH-BFZ	Lodestar	Godden Air Transport	Arr from Athens, Cpt. Horlock, 4 crew, 15 pax Agent European Air Travel Headquarters
18.8.48	I-TROS	DC-3	NHAW	Arr from Rome, Cpt. R. W. Howitt, 4 crew, 22 pax
28.8.48	VR-HDG	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr from Rangoon, Cpt. J. W. Furley, 4 crew, 19 pax
30.8.48	OO-CBS	DC-4	SABENA	Arr from Brussels, Cpt. Von Akeres, 7 crew, 60 pax
30.8.48	AN-ADD	C-46	Nicaraguan International	Arr from Cyprus, Cpt. W. G. Spillman, 4 crew, 53 pax Agent Andromia
1.9.48	G-AGHN	DC-3	GAT	Arr from Rome, Cpt. L. Van Praag, 5 crew, 28 pax
4.9.48	AN-ADD	C-46	Nicaraguan International	Arr from Batavia, Cpt. W. G. Spillman, 4 crew, 38 pax Agent Andromia
7.9.48	VR-HDG	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr from Singapore, Cpt. P. Moore, 4 crew, 16 pax
11.9.48	PI-C233	DC-3	South Eastern	Arr from Rome, Cpt. U. L. Caldoza, 6 crew, 27 pax Agent Eastern Developments Pty Ltd, Sydney
17.9.48	OO-CBD	DC-4	SABENA	Arr from Brussels, Cpt. Fabry, 8 crew, 55 pax. Agent ANA
17.9.48	NC53472	C-46	Skyways International	Arr from Rome, Cpt. Hawley, 5 crew, 48 pax. Agent ANA
22.9.48	G-AGHN	DC-3	GAT	Arr from Rome, Cpt. L. Van Praag, 4 crew, 27 pax
25.9.48	AN-ADD	C-46	Nicaraguan International	Arr from Lebanon, Cpt. W. G. Spillman, 8 crew, 47 pax Agent Eastern Developments Pty Ltd, Sydney
12.10.48	PI-C233	DC-3	South Eastern	Arr from Rome, Cpt. U. L. Caldoza, 4 crew, 26 pax Agent Eastern Developments Pty Ltd, Sydney
14.10.48	AN-ADD	C-46	Nicaraguan International	Arr from Cyprus, Cpt. W. G. Spillman, 4 crew, 48 pax Agent Eastern Developments Pty Ltd, Sydney
14.10.48	OO-CBS	DC-4	SABENA	Arr from Brussels, Cpt. L. Aerden, 7 crew, 59 pax
16.10.48	NC1647M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr from Rome, Cpt. W. P. Moody, 5 crew, 47 pax. Agent Eastern Developments
24.10.48	NC53472	C-46	Skyways International	Arr from Macassar, Cpt. Hawley, 5 crew, 46 pax. Agent Eastern Developments
26.10.48	NC1673M	C-46	-	Arr from Athens, Cpt. White, 7 crew, 57 pax. Agent quoted by Customs as "IAT"
1.11.48	NC1646M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr from Rome, Cpt. G. C. Moore, 5 crew, 48 pax. Agent Eastern Developments
4.11.48	NC1647M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr from Rome, Cpt. Moody, 5 crew, 45 pax. Agent Eastern Developments
8.11.48	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr from Rome, 5 crew, 30 pax

10.11.48	NC1648M	C-46	-	Arr from Cyprus, Cpt. Spillman, 5 crew, 48 pax Agent Eastern Developments
15.11.48	VR-HDW	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr from Bangkok, Cpt. Smith, 5 crew
17.11.48	I-TROS	DC-3	NHAW	Arr from Rome, Cpt. R. W. Howitt, 5 crew, 27 pax
20.11.48	SU-AFF	Fiat G212	SAIDE Egypte	Arr from Cairo, Cpt. F. Bettelone, 6 crew, 26 pax Agent ANA
24.11.48	NC1673M	C-46	-	Arr from Cairo, Cpt. Husted, 5 crew, 50 pax Agent ANA
26.11.48	OO-CBS	DC-4	SABENA	Arr from Brussels, Cpt. L. Aerden, 7 crew, 62 pax Agent ANA
29.11.48	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr from Rome, Cpt. L. Van Praag, 5 crew, 29 pax
1.12.48	NC1648M	C-46	-	Arr from Cyprus, Cpt. Spillman, 6 crew, 45 pax
9.12.48	OO-CBS	DC-4	SABENA	Arr at 0806 from Brussels via Darwin, Cpt. Henquin, 7 crew, 74 pax. Agent ANA
10.12.48	OO-CBS	DC-4	SABENA	Dep at 1414 for Darwin
13.12.48	VR-HDJ	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr at 1023 from Darwin via Cloncurry
13.12.48	NC1673M	C-46	All American Aviation	Arr at 1811 from Darwin via Cloncurry, Cpt. Husted, 5 crew, 51 pax. Agent ANA
17.12.48	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr at 1130 from Rome via Darwin, Cpt. K. Lockyer, 4 crew, 29 pax
18.12.48	NC1647M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr at 1947 from Rome via Darwin, Cloncurry, Cpt. Wakefield, 5 crew, 46 pax. Agent Eastern Developments
20.12.48	NC1673M	C-46	All American Aviation	Dep at 0024 for Darwin via Cloncurry
20.12.48	SU-AFY	Fiat G212	SAIDE Egypte	Arr at 1855 from Rome via Cloncurry, Cpt. Zanchetta, 6 crew, 26 pax. Agent ANA
20.12.48	NC1647M	C-46	Skyways International	Dep at 1916 for Darwin via Cloncurry
22.12.48	NC1646M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr at 0702 from Beirut via Darwin, Cloncurry. Cpt. Moore, 4 crew, 54 pax. Agent Eastern Developments
21.12.48	PI-C233	DC-3	South Eastern	Arr at 0640 from Rome via Darwin, Cloncurry Cpt. U. L. Caldoza, 5 crew, 25 pax Agent Eastern Developments
22.12.48	VR-HDB	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr at 1421 from Darwin via Cloncurry
23.12.48	PI-C233	DC-3	South Eastern	Dep 1916 for Darwin via Cloncurry
24.12.48	VR-HDB	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Dep at 0737 for Darwin via Cloncurry
25.12.48	SE-BBE	C-54	SAS/ABA	Arr 1913 from Stockholm via Darwin, Cpt. Lind, 9 crew, 30 pax. Agent Qantas
26.12.48	SU-AFY	Fiat G212	SAIDE Egypte	Dep at 0628 for Darwin via Cloncurry
28.12.48	NC1646M	C-46	Skyways International	Dep at 1733 for Darwin via Cloncurry.
28.12.48	SE-BBE	C-54	SAS/ABA	Dep at 0936 for Darwin
1.1.49	NC1648M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr at 1528 from Darwin via Cloncurry.
6.1.49	NC1648M	C-46	Skyways International	Dep at 0908 for Darwin via Cloncurry.
7.1.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Dep at 1836 for Darwin via Cloncurry
8.1.49	NC1673M	C-46	Immigration Air Transport	Arr at 0730 from Darwin via Cloncurry
10.1.49	VR-HDG	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr at 0720 from Darwin via Cloncurry, Charleville. Customs ledger: probably op. for Skyways International
14.1.49	NC1673M	C-46	Immigration Air Transport	Dep at 2358 for Darwin via Cloncurry
14.1.49	VR-HDG	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Dep at 1604 for Darwin via Cloncurry
16.1.49	NC1646M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr at 1513 from Rome via Darwin, Cloncurry. 48 migrants
19.1.49	NC1646M	C-46	Skyways International	Dep at 0926 for Darwin via Cloncurry.
23.1.49	NC74648	C-54	TOLOA	Arr at 0721 from Darwin
24.1.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr at 1748 from Darwin via Cloncurry
29.1.49	NC1646M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr at 1531 from Darwin via Cloncurry.
29.1.49	VH-BNH	C-47	NHAW	Dep at 0310 for Darwin via Cloncurry
29.1.49	NC74648	C-54	TALOA	Dep at 2207 for Guam via Port Moresby
31.1.49	NC1648M	C-46	Skyways	Arr at 1136 from Darwin via Cloncurry, Charleville

			International	
4.2.49	NC1648M	C-46	Skyways International	Dep at 0853 for Darwin via Cloncurry
4.2.49	NC1646M	C-46	Skyways International	Dep at 0941 for Darwin via Cloncurry
10.2.49	SU-AFX	Fiat G212	SAIDE Egypte	Arr at 1302 from Darwin via Cloncurry, 24 pax
11.2.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Dep at 0410 to Brisbane
14.2.49	VR-HDJ	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr at 1238 from Darwin via Daly Waters, Cloncurry, 21 pax
14.2.49	SU-AFX	Fiat G212	SAIDE Egypte	Dep at 0528 for Darwin via Cloncurry, nil pax
17.2.49	VR-HDJ	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Dep at 1449 for Darwin via Charleville, 2 pax
22.2.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr from Darwin via Cloncurry, 27 pax
25.2.49	VH-BNH	DC-3	NHAW	Arr at 2156 from Rome via Darwin, 28 pax
3.3.49	VH-BNH	DC-3	NHAW	Dep at 0306 for Cloncurry
3.3.49	NC1648M	C-46	Skyways International	Arr at 1512 from Darwin via Cloncurry, Charleville
9.3.49	SU-AFC	SM.95	SAIDE Egypte	Arr at 1548 from Darwin via Cloncurry
14.3.49	VR-HDJ	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr at 1247 from Darwin via Cloncurry
17.3.49	VR-HDJ	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Dep at 1418 for Charleville
20.3.49	SU-AFC	SM.95	SAIDE Egypte	Dep at 0343 from Darwin via Charleville
25.3.49	SU-AFE	Fiat G212	SAIDE Egypte	Arr from Darwin, 29 pax
25.3.49	VH-BNH	DC-3	NHAW	Arr from Darwin via Tennant Creek, Oodnadatta, Broken Hill
27.3.49	NC1648M	C-46	Skyways International	Dep at 0757 from Darwin via Charleville, nil pax
29.3.49	SU-AFE	Fiat G212	SAIDE Egypte	Dep at 0320 for Darwin via Cloncurry
23.4.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr at 1957 from Nicosia and Beirut, 30 pax
4.6.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr from Nicosia, 29 pax
6.6.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Dep for Manila, nil pax
7.6.49	NC1673M	C-46	-	Arr from Rome, 55 pax
24.6.49	NC1673M	C-46	-	Dep for Nandi, Fiji, nil pax <i>Assumed ferry flight to USA after migrant runs</i>
12.8.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr from Darwin, Cpt. K. Lockyer, FO J.Hawkes <i>Unauthorised flight carrying Greek migrants</i>
16.11.49	N1800M	C-46	All Trans Airlines	Arr at 0625 from Rome. 50 pax including 4 children in arms: 4 Lebanese, 4 Greeks

2. DARWIN AIRPORT, NORTHERN TERRITORY

8.47	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	One night in DCA hangar (<i>DCA invoice</i>)
7.10.47	VR-HD.	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr from Singapore with 27 Greek and 2 Italian migrants who had flown to Singapore with KLM
9.10.47	VR-H..	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Dep for Sydney
11.47	G-ADYH	DH.86	ICAT	One night in DCA hangar (<i>DCA invoice</i>)
4.12.47	OO-...	Lodestar	Belgian Air Transport Co	Arrived with migrants, chartered by BOAC
16.1.48	OO-GVP	Lodestar	Belgian Air Transport Co	Arr from Brussels, 12 British migrants
17.1.48	OO-GVP	Lodestar	Belgian Air Transport Co	Dep for Cloncurry, Bowen, Sydney
c17.2.48	-	DC-3	-	Arr from Rome, 21 Greek and Italian migrants DCA refused onward flight to Sydney
20.2.48	VR-H..	DC-3	Cathay Pacific	Arr from Singapore, 21 migrants DCA refused onward flight to Sydney
28.2.48	VH-BFZ	Lodestar	Godden Air Transport	Dep for India and Europe
1.3.48	G-ADYH	DH.86	ICAT	6 weeks in DCA hangar 1.3.48 to 12.4.48 (<i>DCA Invoice</i>)
4.3.48	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	Arr from Europe. Port undercarriage leg partially collapsed while taxiing off runway. Pax collected by Lodestar VH-BFZ from Sydney.
11.3.48	VH-ARC	C-39	Macair	Forced landing due engine trouble outbound to Europe
17.3.48	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	DCA hangarage until 19.3.48
1.4.48	VH-ASV	Hudson	ICAT	DCA hangarage until 12.4.48
9.5.48	VH-AEN	DC-2	NHAW	Swung off runway landing from Sydney while outbound to Europe. Cpt. Keith Robey. Written off.

10.5.48	VH-ARD	DC-5	NHAW	Dep for Rome
22.5.48	VH-ASV	Hudson	F.Grigrware	Dep for Rome, Cpt. A. J. Hurst
23.6.48	OO-...	DC-4	SABENA	Arr at 1800 from Europe, 50 migrants. 7 hour delay for customs to clear pax. Migrants left on TAA DC-3s the following day.
7.48	VH-ARB	C-39	GAT	Delayed Darwin due engine trouble
20.6.48	OO-XAK	Short Stirling	Belgian Air Transport Co	Arr from Macassar, carrying migrants from OO-XAL grounded at Macassar. Continued to Darwin
2.7.48	OO-XAK	Short Stirling	Belgian Air Transport Co	Dep for Macassar with parts to repair OO-XAL
10.48	OO-XAK	Short Stirling	Belgian Air Transport Co	Arr from Macassar with Greek migrants
16.9.48	N53472	C-46	Skyways International	Arr from Rome, continued to Sydney Photo: "Skyways" above windows, <i>Big Bird</i> on nose
8.12.48	OO-...	DC-4	SABENA	Arr with 74 displaced Jews of Hungariian, Polish and Czech nationality, plus 7 crew. Dep for Sydney
1.49	SU-AFC	SM.95	SAIDE Egypte	Photograph at Darwin
4.8.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Arr from Koepang, Cpt. K. Lockyer, 28 pax DCA refused onward flight to Sydney
12.8.49	G-AKNB	DC-3	GAT	Dep. for Sydney via Cloncurry, Cpt. K. Lockyer, 28 pax Unauthorised flight with Greek migrants
14.9.49	NC.....	C-46	Immigration Air Transport	Arr from Cyprus, 38 migrants
12.49	N1800M	C-46	All Trans Airlines	Phoro at Darwin. "All Trans Airlines" above windows, name <i>Deuce</i> under cockpit
26.12.49	VT-...	DC-3	Bharat Airways	Arr from Bangkok with Cyprian migrants. DCA refused onward flight to Sydney. Migrants stranded at Darwin

THE BURMA CONNECTION

Charles Eather was an Australian pilot with Cathay Pacific Airways, Hong Kong in 1948 when the airline commenced extensive charter flying for the Burmese Government, basing two Avro Ansons and then DC-3s at Rangoon. Charles flew extensively in Burma and later wrote of this period:

"A motley collection of air charter companies settled in Rangoon to vie for the Burmese Government's rupees. Some did their best to fulfill every obligation to their charterers; others were strictly fly-by-night adventurers whose interest went no further than the lining of their pockets. Some involved themselves in gold and dope running, bringing no credit to our profession.

Many of these odious operators made little attempt to cover their movements; one of the most blatant, practically advertised on his letterhead that he was the designated agent for the insurgent movement in the Dutch East Indies, and that he was using Mingaladon Airport at Rangoon as a staging post for its gun running. This did little to soften the hearts of the harassed Dutch to the equally harassed Burmese." 33

Among the "fly-by-night adventurers" referred to in this account was American **Francis James Grigrware** who was previously involved in the Australian migrant trade before moving his base to Burma. He had been a principal of **South Eastern**, operator of Filipino registered Douglas C-47 PI-C233 on migrant runs from Europe to Sydney.

During February 1948 Warren Penny of Intercontinental Air Tours, Sydney was forced to pull out of the migrant charters and did a deal with Frank Grigrware and his partners to transfer ownership of ICAT Hudson VH-ASV and DH.86 G-ADYH in return for their collecting 30 migrants in Rome booked with ICAT, using their C-47 PI-C233. 58

A DCA report dated 8 March 1948 on the Australian migrant companies makes the following reference in its summary of Intercontinental Air Tours:

"However it appeared to me some time ago that they had over-invested their money in aircraft and left little ready cash with which to operate. The DH.86B is now being sold to a Mr. M. Khara, a hardware merchant of Rangoon, the intention being to raise some ready cash. Mr. Khara will be using this aircraft between Rangoon, Akyab and Chittagong." 124

The C-47 PI-C233 arrived at Mascot on 21 April 1948 from Rome, under command of Captain Tucker with 20 passengers and 5 crew. Most of the passengers were Penny's outstanding Italian migrants. The remainder were collected by the Hudson VH-ASV, flown by Captain Jack Hurst who had left ICAT to join Grigrware.

While South Eastern continued on the Australian migrant trade with their C-47, Frank Grigrware based the Hudson and DH.86 in Burma, flying clandestine military operations in support of the Indonesian independence freedom fighters led by Dr. Sukarno. They were fighting a bitter war of harassment against the Dutch forces in nearby Netherlands East Indies, which led to the Netherlands withdrawal and the declaration of the independent nation of Indonesia in December 1949.

There is also a strong probability that Grigware was flying arms and supplies to the Karen rebels in the south of Burma who were engaged in brutal fighting for their independence from the central Government in Rangoon.

In September 1948 the Burmese DCA cabled the Australian DCA requesting ownership status of Hudson VH-ASV which was at that time grounded at Rangoon with a collapsed tail wheel and left parked in open. They had reports that it was about to be sold in Indonesia and advised that Francis Grigware was being held by Burmese authorities. 59

In November 1948 a further report from Burmese DCA stated "*VH-ASV is grounded in Rangoon at request of Burmese police due to illegal landings at Mergui in southern Burma. Owner F. Grigware has abandoned the aircraft. Grigware has been associated with persons dealing with the disposals of materials etc to Indonesia.*" 59

In May 1949 the Burmese DCA reported that VH-ASV had been purchased by a partnership of two pilots and an engineer all based in Burma. They have registered the name Burma Air Traders Ltd, formed for the purpose of getting the aircraft airworthy. The following month they applied to register the Hudson in Burma but were refused by Burmese DCA "for certain reasons". The problems must have been resolved because it did come on to the Burmese Civil Register later that year as XY-ACD owned by Burma Air Traders Ltd.

In November 1949 two overhauled propellers for the Hudson were to be shipped from Sydney to Rangoon to Burma Air Traders but the deal was not completed. Nothing further is known of XY-ACD's activities, if any. It was subsequently transferred to Burmese Air Force. 27, 59

Meanwhile in May 1948 Frank Grigware's DH.86 G-ADYH had departed Singapore reportedly bound for England for CofA renewal. However when it failed to reach the UK, the British Ministry of Civil Aviation cabled DCA "*We cannot help having suspicions that the aircraft may have altered course to the Middle East.*" They were probably thinking it was another illegal sale to the Israeli Air Force, however it was in fact being flown on charter to the Indonesian independence movement

By September 1948 G-ADYH was reported unservicable at Penang, Malaya while operating for the Indonesian rebels. 59

Warren Penny adds some details on the D.H.86's subsequent activities:

"I had on my staff a copilot named Donati. When the DH.86 went to its new owners, Donati flew it to Singapore and other places for them, until it was captured by the Dutch during the Indonesian war. Years later, whilst in Cyprus, I got a message to say that one of Skyways' Yorks carrying troops from England to Fayid in the Canal Zone had hit the ground with its wingtip whilst in the circuit at Fayid during a night landing. The pilot was Captain Donati. He was later after the enquiry demoted to co-pilot and sent to Germany for more experience before being made captain again."* 58, 64

* 26.6.54 Avro York Mk.1 G-AGNY owned by Skyways of London painted with RAF trooping serial WW512

G-ADYH was captured by Dutch forces in Java on 19 December 1948. The event is described by Indonesian aviation historian Hugo Hooftman:

"Dutch forces attacked the airfield of Maguwo, near Djokjakarta, then in the hands of the Indonesian Republicans. Among the aircraft captured by the Dutch was D.H.86B G-ADYH "Denebola", a former aircraft of Imperial Airways. A few days later I was able to inspect "Denebola" at Bandung and its name was still on the nose and it still carried the British registration. On the fuselage was painted "Intercontinental". On the fin was the name "Skytravel Ltd". According to the logbook, "Denebola" had been to Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam several times before the last war. I am afraid that this D.H.86 never flew away from Bandung as it was dismantled there." 44

* Compilers note: Other embryo Republic of Indonesia Air Force aircraft captured on the same day at Maguwo were Dakota RI-001, Avro Anson RI-004 and Catalina RI-006. There were strong Australian links with several of these aircraft and their pilots.

Nothing further is known of Mr.Grigware's activities.

THE ISRAELI CONNECTION: Australian migrant charter aircraft sold to Israeli Air Force (Chel Ha'Avir, later IDFAF)

When the independent State of Israel was declared on 15 May 1948, a military fight for survival with its neighbouring Arab countries began. Earlier in November 1947 the United Nations had split Palestine into two nations, one Arab and one Jewish. Among the steps taken in a desperate diplomatic effort to stop Arab aggression was a United Nations embargo on arms and military equipment to the Middle East. The original Israeli Air Force (*Chel Ha'Avir*) clandestinely purchased combat and transport aircraft from around the world by a variety of subterfuges to beat these embargos. Most were delivered by air to Israel. During 1948-49 aircraft were secretly purchased from USA (73), France (4), South Africa (9), Czechoslovakia (84), Germany (20), Great Britain (16), Australia (6) as well as 12 RAF Spitfires and Austers salvaged from dumps in Palestine and made airworthy.

When DCA imposed bureaucratic restrictions on the Australian migrant charter operators during 1948, continued migrant runs were quickly made uneconomic. These small charter operators had invested heavily in aircraft for this specific migrant market, which was being made unviable. The chance of resale within Australia was extremely limited, so when word spread that the Israel Government was prepared to pay good prices for both aircraft and pilots, it was an attractive option.

First stage in the Israeli Connection appears to be when Doug Fawcett who had established his own maintenance operation Fawcett Aviation in Sydney became involved in this supply of aircraft to Israel in 1948/49. He later wrote:

"The Jewish War of Independence was in full swing when I had a call from Danny Agronsky, a representative of the Israeli government. He asked me if we could meet regarding the dismantling of aircraft that were to be shipped to Israel. I made it my business to make as many enquiries as I could as to the legality of the work to be carried out. Having done this and satisfying myself that neither I nor my company could get into trouble if all we did was dismantle the aircraft, I decided to invite Danny to my house for dinner.

He told me that the aircraft to be dismantled were ex RAAF twin engined Beaufighters, which had been purchased from the Department of Supply (sic) and were to be shipped to Israel. We talked for some time. I was not worried about the job - the problem was that the aircraft were at Werribee Victoria. After some haggling over the amount I would charge for the job, we eventually came to a mutual agreement. We discussed things such as hiring equipment, transport, accommodation and, as it was an extensive and expensive project, we drew up an agreement to cover these contingencies plus the payment of a deposit, and a progressive payment schedule.*

The money for this project was to come from the Jewish community and when payment was due, I would be met by a person who had details of me and the car I was driving. On one occasion I was told to contact a man on the corner of Elizabeth and Park Street, who would be wearing a dark overcoat with a carnation in his lapel. I think the amount I was to collect was £4000.

We completed the job to everyone's satisfaction and a contractor was employed to remove the aircraft to a disused chicken farm in Ringwood, a suburb of Melbourne. That was the last I heard of them.

I had several social outings with Danny Agronsky when he occasionally talked about the war they were having with the Arabs. Danny was a journalist and on his return to Israel he covered the war for a newspaper. I was saddened to hear later that he lost a leg when he stepped on a land mine." 10

* The disused RAAF airfield at Werribee had been the base of No.1 Central Recovery Depot, which handled the recovery and repair of aircraft, as well as converting wrecked airframes to components. 1CRD had a unit strength of 473 servicemen in 1945, but was disbanded the following year with the end of WWII. No.1 Aircraft Depot at nearby RAAF Laverton used Werribee from 1945 for storage of large numbers of surplus RAAF aircraft awaiting civil sale by Commonwealth Disposals Commission and Department of Aircraft Production. 138



The scene at Werribee airfield Victoria circa 1949 when Doug Fawcett's ground crews were dismantling RAAF disposals Bristol Beaufighters for planned export to Israel. Photos by Ray Smith

These photographs were taken by Mr. Ray Smith, an ex RAAF airframe fitter employed by Fawcett Aviation in 1949 as an aircraft engineer. Groups of Beaufighters being dismantled and loaded on to trucks. Most wore camouflage and retained RAAF roundels but their serial numbers had been painted over. Ray Smith recalled that a total of 88 Beaufighters were involved, 44 were dismantled into about 7 major components each, which were at first taken by truck to an industrial site at Dynan Road, Footscray, inner Melbourne where they were stored in the open. The remaining 44 were broken up for spare parts. Under the worldwide embargo on arms to Israel, the Australian Government blocked the export of these Beaufighters and it assumed they were subsequently scrapped in Melbourne. 137

Chel Ha'Avir had earlier obtained six airworthy ex RAF Beaufighter Mk.10s from England. These had been flown to Israel in July 1948 under the nose of HM Customs using a dubious cover story that they were to take part in a war movie. 122

The State of Israel was formally established on 14 May 1948. The first Australian migrant charter aircraft sold to Israel was New Holland Airways' Douglas DC-5 VH-ARD. This company's aircraft carrying Italian migrants to Australia often staged via Lod Airport (now Ben Gurion International Airport) while it was under British control but about to become Israel territory. Whether personal contacts were made is not known, but the DC-5 had come to the attention of the Israeli Air Force, as a makeshift bomber. They were desperate days. It has been reported that the same Danny Agronsky (his name also quoted as Danny Agron) who negotiated the RAAF Beaufighter plan, discussed the DC-5 with Greg Board. On 10 May 1948 the DC-5 departed Darwin for Rome ostensibly outbound to collect more Italian migrants. While overseas funds were exchanged and it was sold on 28 May 1948 to Martin A. Rybakoff, Central Corona Hotel, Catania, Sicily. Rybakoff was an American citizen acting as an agent for Service Airways Inc, a front company which acquired aircraft in USA and overseas for the Israeli Air Force. 132

DC-5 VH-ARD was delivered to Haifa Airport, Israel by early June 1948. Israeli Government papers reveal that on 2 June their first Prime Minister David Ben Gurion who was also Minister for Defence, instructed Treasury to disperse £12,000 (Israeli currency) in favour of Chel Ha'Avir for the "*procurement of an aircraft that is presently at Haifa.*" The price was equivalent to 40,000 US Dollars, a high sum for the time, which gave Greg Board a handsome payment as well as commissions for the agents involved in the deal. A replacement airline DC-3, which was almost certainly part of the deal was immediately acquired. On 2 July 1948 New Holland Airways wrote to DCA stating that VH-ARD was unairworthy in Italy and requested approval to transport migrants to Australia in Douglas C-47 I-TROS purchased in Italy.

In Israeli service the DC-5 was flown from Haifa to Sde Dov airfield on the northern outskirts of Tel Aviv, home of the Tel Aviv Squadron which flew an assortment of light aircraft on liaison, spotter and transport duties. The unit also had operated DH.89 Rapides, Beech Bonanzas and Austers with electrically operated external bomb racks for harassment bombing of Arab troop incursions. The initial plan was to fit external racks for heavier bombs to the DC-5 but this was not done because the aircraft was diverted to troop transport work. Still in June 1948 it was flown to Ramat David Air Base, east of Haifa where it joined 103 Squadron for transport duties alongside three C-47s. It was roughly painted in a dark camouflage with the name *Yankee Pasha The Bagel Lancer* on the nose. As well as flying supplies, 103 Squadron flew night bombing missions with its Douglas aircraft: 50 Kg bombs were simply rolled out the cabin doorway. A squadron report dated 17 September 1948 lists the DC-5 on strength and airworthy. 130

The undercarriage was damaged in October that year in a heavy landing at Ramat David. The Chel Ha'Avir order of battle dated 4 January 1949 listed the DC-5 as unserviceable. It was abandoned at Ramat David when 103 Squadron moved to Tel Nof in early 1949. Meanwhile a deserted school on the boundary of Haifa Airport was taken over as the air force technical training centre, and a collection of grounded aircraft were gathered as instructional airframes. The DC-5 was moved on a large semi-trailer, and reassembled to stand on its own undercarriage. One of its Wright Cyclone engines was later replaced by a Rolls Royce Merlin for ground running. By 1954 it was moved to Tel Aviv International Airport where it was used as an instructional airframe at Tel Aviv Aeronautical Technical School. It was struck-off Israeli military charge on 1 March 1954 and often reported as broken-up for scrap in 1955, however the DC-5 was last seen in November 1962 stored in the centre of Tel Aviv International Airport, basically complete but without engines.



New Holland Airways DC-5 VH-ARD at Tel Aviv in 1948 soon after arrival from Australia.

Ed Coates Collection



DC-5 VH-ARD in service with Israeli Airforce (Chel Ha'Avir) painted in camouflage with names "Yankee Pasha" and "The Bagel Lancer"

Stan Godden's Lodestar VH-BFZ was next to go. As early as March 1948 Godden was negotiating its sale to an Israeli agent in Sydney. Warren Penny recalls using BFZ that month:

"I got the Lodestar from Stan Godden and flew up to Darwin.... Godden had arranged to sell his Lodestar to Israel and it went off soon after the Darwin flight." 58

In August 1948 Godden sold Lodestar VH-BFZ to Israel, via a paper charter to Service Airways Inc, Rome, Italy for £A8000. A cable to DCA from Ministry of Civil Aviation Baghdad dated 15 December 1948 included the following:

"Another Australian Lockheed callsign VH-BFZ owned by Godden Air Transport passed through Bahrain 5.9.48. Mr. Godden was listed as a passenger and the pilot named Horlock. Crew freely discussed intention to sell aircraft in Rome and have since returned through Sharjah in an aircraft of Skyways International." 32

* Compiler's Note: Skyways International refers to the American C-46 operator on the Australia migrant run - see above - not the British Skyways Ltd, who were operating Lancastrians and DC-4s on charters in Middle East at that time.

Warren Penny's brother C. Raymond Penny owned 3 ex RAAF Hudsons, of which only one received civil certification. A16-147 completed its civil CofA by Intercontinental Air Maintenance at Bankstown 6.48, fitted for 13 passengers and 3 crew. Raymond was a Director of real estate business Burke Naughton Pty Ltd, which had financed the certification of the Hudson with the aim of an overseas sale. 58, 124

CofA was issued 17 June 1948 and added register same day as VH-BIH to Clifton Raymond Penny c/- Burke Naughton Pty Ltd, 66 King Street, Sydney.

Raymond Penny wrote to DCA 8.9.48 advising VH-BIH would be leaving Mascot "for a private overseas flight" on 16 September 1948, pilot would be Captain Gregory Board.



Raymond Penny's Hudson VH-BIH at Bankstown 1948 after its civil conversion by Intercontinental Air Maintenance. Intended to join the migrant runs to Europe, a more lucrative offer came from Israeli agents and it was clandestinely delivered to the Israeli Air Force who put it into service as a bomber. Photo Warren Penny via Greg Banfield

The Ministry for Civil Aviation office at Baghdad cabled DCA on 15 December 1948:

"Hudson VH-BIH passed through Bahrein for Baghdad and Nicosia on 3 November. Its documents named the owner as Burke Naughton of Sydney and the pilot as Captain G. R. Board. Latter also known from previous flights through Bahrein as Captain Penny. Registration letters painted on side of aircraft were about two inches high presumably to avoid identification except at close quarters. Cheque to B.P. Aviation Service for petrol at Jiwani and Bahrein not met when presented for payment.

On 6/11 Bahrein received flight plan clearing the aircraft Nicosia to Bahrein direct and giving captain's name as G. Braln. Bahrein was unable to establish communication with aircraft and eventually took overdue action. Subsequently learning the aircraft diverted of own accord to Haifa, It has not since passed through Bahrein control area. Crew are believed to be in the habit of working passage back to Australia in any convenient aircraft." 4

In February 1949 Hudson VH-BLB owned by Brian Thomas of Sydney departed Australia on a private flight which was actually a ferry flight to the Israeli Air Force. The flight was operated by Sam Jamieson, who took the aircraft out of the country on an alleged private flight in the name of Guinea Air Traders Ltd. When DCA later investigated the circumstances of the flight, their report stated that GAT pilot Lionel Van Praag had a close connection with VH-BLB, having sold it to Thomas. The report stated:

"Mr. Sam Jamieson, one of the persons connected with taking the aircraft out of Australia states that the aircraft was unserviceable at Ciampiano Airport in Rome as late as May 1949 with a failed motor. A replacement engine was obtained in England and fitted. The aircraft was testflown at Rome 29 May 1949 then left Rome for Palestine. The charter to Israel Government is a subterfuge to prevent awkward questions being asked on the disposal of warlike materials to Israel Government. VH-BLB is owned by Mr. Thomas, but Mr. Sam Jamieson took aircraft out of the country on an alleged private flight in the name of Guinea Air Traders Ltd. Mr. John Jamieson, Managing Director of Guinea Air Traders denied that Sam Jamieson had any right to use the company name." 34

Sydney Morning Herald 10 February 1949 reported:

"Melbourne, Wednesday: The Civil Aviation Department recently asked for explanations about the failure of two Lockheed Hudson planes to return to Australia after permits to fly to Rome to bring out Italian migrants had been issued. The pilots have returned but only one, Mr. Ray Penny, of Potts Point, Sydney, has answered the department's letter. Mr Penny said his machine developed engine trouble at Tel Aviv, Palestine on the outward journey, and he left it there.

It was stated that neither pilot had permission to sell his machine overseas. They were former RAAF bombers, and were bought through the Disposals Commission and converted to transport planes.

Mr Penny said last night that he did not sell his aircraft overseas. He said the plane was in Tel Aviv, Palestine, awaiting a new engine. "The Civil Aviation Department knows the full facts of the position, because I have been communicating with them since I arrived home on December 22. If the Department can get me a new engine. I will bring the plane back to Sydney" he said.

On 13 February 1949 two Hudsons VH-BFQ and VH-BIA departed Mascot for Darwin on delivery flights to Israel. George Marcel, Sydney owner of ex European Air Transport Hudson VH-BFQ had sent a letter to DCA the previous November 13 requesting permission to "take his aircraft on a private business trip overseas." On 29 November Reno Jorio, Sydney owner of ex EAT Hudson VH-BIA wrote to DCA using the identical wording on the same typewriter. VH-BIA was subsequently transferred to ex EAT director Nicholas Marcello on 19 January 1949 who wrote to DCA on that same day that he "will be taking the aircraft overseas soon".

The following account refers to the delivery of two Hudsons to Israel by ex RAAF transport pilot J. L. D. "Wac" Whiteman. Despite its swash-buckling style, this summary of Whiteman's recollections gives an insight in the politics along the route to Europe at the time of the migrant charters. It almost definitely describes the ferry flight of VH-BFQ and VH-BIA:

"Wac" was approached in 1949 by Stan Godden to pilot a Lockheed Hudson to an overseas destination. Doug Fawcett was also mixed up in the deal. They had bought 2 Lockheeds from the RAAF for £250 each. They had evidently contacted the authorities in Israel to sell them there for £9000 sterling each. Israel was at war with the Arabs at the time. The Jews could not buy any bombers legally from Australia. Godden and Fawcett got around this, as they owned New Holland Airways operating to Rome, flying refugees to Australia and convinced the authorities the Lockheeds were to be fitted out as passenger planes in Italy. Everything appeared to be perfectly legal.

Stan Godden and Doug Fawcett wouldn't fly with Wac as their New Holland Airways DC-3 was flying a regular route to Rome piloted by Ces Owen. However they arranged to meet them in Bahrein. So Wac was to fly one of these old wartime Hudsons. He flew without a second pilot but had "Skeeter" Clayton with him as an engineer. The other pilot was a Pole called Wiza who held the Croix de Guerre. His second pilot was a Pommy bloke called Heath. Both aircraft were in shocking condition. Wac's starboard engine used to use about 6 gallons of oil an hour, so he had to start it up and keep the revs about 1200 because if he throttled back he would oil all the plugs up. They carried a 44 gallon drum of oil with a hand pump and it was Skeeter's job to keep the oil up to engine.*

They had to wait three days in Darwin for a clearance. They stayed at the Hotel Darwin and raised hell on the ground and in the air. Luckily the chief of DCA there turned out to be an old friend who overlooked their low flying during a test flight. Wac lost an engine as they were approaching Penang. There was no tower but the landing lights were on. Wiza was landing from the opposite direction and heard Wac's radio in the nick of time and as Whiteman landed on one engine, Wiza managed to lift off over Wac and go around again. It was very difficult getting clearances from then on, as they only had log books and they didn't have any visas in their passports. They landed at Chittaway, refuelling there and then went on to Rangoon. They landed on the wrong airstrip there, the military one, but it was alright. They made them stay the night while they checked them out. They then had dinner in the Officers Mess with all the Sikhs. Some of them were with RAF during the war.

Next day the two aircraft took off to Calcutta where the airstrip was Dum Dum. At that time there were rebels at the end of the strip, and Wac and his mate Wiza had to use the taxiway to land. The rebels were firing at them as they came in. The two crews went into the bar and were sitting there having a drink, when two of the rebels rushed in with their tommy guns and opened up on everyone. So Wac and his mate hopped behind the bar, and opened a bottle of bourbon and sat there while they cleaned the place out, then they left.

They landed at Allahabad with the usual Indian officials' attitude. Wac says "Feet up on the table. Sling your passports and log books on one side and he says "Come back after lunch and I'll see if I can find time to look at them. They couldn't care bloody less." It was late afternoon by the time they got cleared and then had to fly all night. They landed at a Sharjah in the middle of the desert outside a fort. There was oil spread all over the sand. The fort was just like the one in Beau Geste with all the soldiers manning the turrets looking like the French Foreign Legion. They parked the two planes outside and were taken through the huge fortress gates into the courtyard. They dined there and spent the night. After being refuelled from 44 gallon drums the next morning they took off for Bahrein, which is over the Arabian Sea.

It was coral strip at Bahrein. The RAF was there at the time and they had their mess on the edge of the strip, so Wac and Wiza stayed there. It was just about sunset when they arrived and they walked into the mess dying for a cold beer. They had just ordered a couple of cold Carlsburgs when the wailing started and before they were served the barman put down his prayer mat, knelt down and prayed to Allah for about 10 minutes, as Wac says, "while we were dying of bloody thirst".

The DC-3 arrived with Ces Owen, Stan Godden and Doug Fawcett. They were on a good "cop". Wac says he only got paid £50 a week for all the risk he took. They were making £18,000 while Wiza and Wac were doing all the hard work and taking all the blame.

They were off the next day for Baghdad. Wac says "we arrived there to all the usual bullshit over clearances. There were armed guard everywhere you went. As the Arabs had an idea these planes were going to the Jews they put special security men on our tail. Everywhere we went we had a security bloke shadowing us. We were at the Grand Hotel in Baghdad, Ces Owen, Wiza and myself, and one security man. So we went outside, Ces went one way and I went another and Wiza stayed put and the poor chap didn't know what to do. When Ces and I arrived back - no security guard. They kept us there 3 days while they checked all the clearances for the planes and ourselves.

*"They kept us there three days while they checked all the clearances for the planes and ourselves. While we were waiting there, we were approached to fly the pilgrims up to Mecca. It wasn't far away so we decided we would do it for so many rupees per head. We had no seats in the planes, they were just wartime bombers. We got a local bloke to put straw on the floor so they wouldn't make a mess if they were sick. We made a few quid out of it by doing two trips to Mecca. We came across Warren Penny doing one trip, complete with a flowing beard**. The story being that the Shell Company had refused him credit for his petrol, so grew the beard and changed his name." 3*

* Pilot Heath is almost certainly actually Captain A. J. Hurst ex ICAT.

** This reference to Warren Penny still flying in the Middle East in early 1949, close to a year after ICAT abandoned migrant runs is at variance with Penny's own account of the demise of ICAT and his flying in 1948/49 being confined to part-time for Marshall Airways at Bankstown. There was an acryophical story during the migrant flights era, of Penny reportedly passing himself off as Greg Board (of New Holland Airways). Asked about this in 1985, Warren Penny said that it was in fact Greg Board with a beard and signing flight plans, customs documents using the name Warren Penny! This seems to be confirmed by a comment in a cable from Bahrein dated 15 December 1948 concerning Hudson VH-BIH *"Its documents named the pilot as Captain G. R. Board. Latter also known from previous flights through Bahrein as Captain Penny."* Warren Penny in later years denied that it was him, stating emphatically that he had never grown a beard and he always paid for his petrol. 4, 97

James Whiteman continues, describing the last stage of the Hudson delivery flight to Israel:

"You have to fly over mountains before reaching the Mediterranean. These mountains were about 6000 feet and with the engines burning so much oil, I was flat out getting up that high, but we crossed over at last and saw the clear blue Mediterranean ahead - so I dived down and did a beautiful slow roll. All dust blew up inside the plane, papers went in every direction. We went in and landed at Nicosia. There was a war on there with the rebels. The RAF was there and the red coats. We were in Nicosia for about three days waiting for a clearance which we got to Rome, by saying the aircraft were to be refitted for passenger work. We decided we would take off and after about 50 miles we would re-set our course for Israel, which was at a 90 degree angle. I had to leave Skeeter in Nicosia to be picked up by the Douglas on its way through from Rome. Anyway I took off first by myself after filling the engines with oil. Wiza was behind me. He had left Heath (sic) behind also. After 50 miles, I changed course and headed for Lydda.

After about an hour, we were approached by Kittyhawks with Israel markings. They formed on us and escorted us in to Lyddia airstrip where we landed on the concrete strip. We were greeted by the Chief of the Air Force who arrived at the aircraft accompanied by his military aids in a jeep. We were introduced all around and driven to the Officers Club, which was on the waterfront at Tel Aviv.

Whiteman and Wiza were invited to stay on as instructors, and met American and Canadian pilots who had delivered aircraft and were flying with the Israel military (including legends such as "Earthquake McGoon" and "Screwball Burling" who went on to fly for the CIA in Indo China where both were killed). However, a brawl with Israeli officers in the mess that night ended their stay:

"The next morning the CO sent for us after breakfast, to come to his office. He told us he had decided to dismiss us and so he booked us on the Great Circle Airways midday flight to Rome. "Earthquake" wasn't concerned. He had a B-26 to pick up somewhere and then was heading for Saigon to do supply dropping. He had been there before and had been paid £250 per drop by the French.

Wiza and I spent a few days in Rome and then joined the DC-3 with Cec Owen. We arranged to share the flying so that we could fly night and day with our load of 21 refugees. We took off from Rome Airport at night and the passengers were rugged up against the cold and remained that way all the way through the tropics until we laid down an ultimatum at Koepang, which was only our second overnight stop. The toilet facilities were inadequate, all the passengers were overdressed and by Koepang we couldn't stand the smell any longer. We ordered everyone to shower before boarding the aircraft for the flight to Darwin. The remainder of the trip was uneventful until reaching Sydney, when we were ordered to stay on the aircraft after the passengers had disembarked and we were questioned at some length about the whereabouts of the two Lockheeds. The story we gave was that they had developed engine trouble and were in the middle of the desert awaiting repairs and if they required any further information, they would have to contact Mr. Godden". 3 * VH-BNH of New Holland Airways*

The return to Sydney of some of these key players in the migrant era after delivering Hudsons to Israeli Air Force is recorded in a DCA cable to Head Office Melbourne from Sydney Airport 27 March 1949: *"March 25th C-47 VH-BNH from Darwin twenty six passengers including S.V.Godden, G.Marcel and S.Jamieson."* 19

The matter of unauthorised aircraft sales to Israel was raised in Federal Parliament, but it appears no action was taken against the owners by either DCA or Customs.

The postscript:

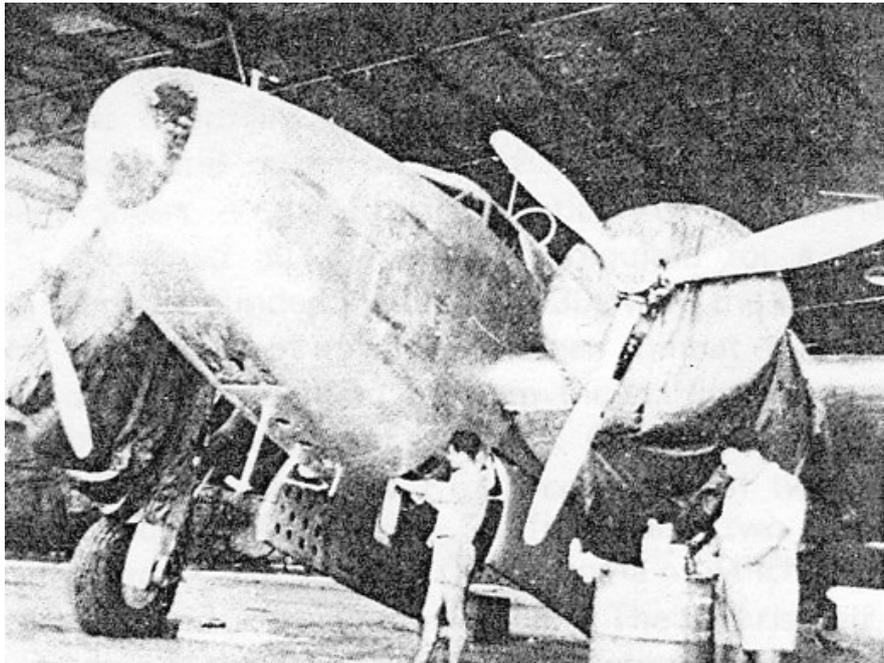
In August 1949 Captain A. J. Hurst (former pilot with New Holland Airways and Intercontinental Air Tours) made a written statement at Australia House, London. He had declined an offer to fly for the Israeli Air Force at £95 (Stirling) per week after delivering a Hudson to them from Australia. The Australian Hudsons were converted back to bombers and were flying missions against Arabs, initially still bearing their VH registration letters. His statement included the following:

DC-5 VH-ARD: grounded for spares in Palestine in very bad condition. It will not fly again.

Lodestar VH-BFZ: disposed of to Israel through Intercontinental Airlines. Used by Israel Air Force and has been written off in a crash by February 1949.

Hudson VH-BIA and -BFQ: Owned by Southern European Transport Co (sic) represented by George Marcel who owns a milkbar in Sydney and is not personally connected with aviation. Both left Australia early 1949 on delivery to Palestine. Ownership transfer was made on the basis that the aircraft were chartered to the Israeli Government for five years.

Hudson VH-BLB: Guinea Air Traders. Left Australia February 1949 for Palestine on charter to Israeli Government and is now in the hands of the airforce, still flying under Australian registration in hostilities against Arab forces.



An Australian Hudson seen at Ekron air base, Israel in 1949 with operational bomb bay doors

Israel Defence Force Air Force (IDFAF) records give the following details: 13, 60

Australian reg	Type	IDFAF serial	Delivery Date	Fate
VH-ARD	DC-5	1501	5 June 1948	To IDFAF Ground School, Haifa Air Base, later to Ground School, Tel Aviv.
VH-BFZ	L18	2501	8 October 1948 (Purchased)	Crash landing Herzliya 31 October 1948. Struck-off IDFAF charge 9.50. To IDFAF Ground School, Haifa Air Base
VH-BIH	Hudson	2601	7 November 1948	Crashed 5 March 1949
VH-BFQ	Hudson	2602	28 February 1949	
VH-BIA	Hudson	2603	12 March 1949	
VH-BLB	Hudson	2604	May 1949	

A personal recollection on flying the Israeli DC-5:

Hal Auerbach had joined 150 other American pilots to volunteer to fly in support of Israel's survival. He was an experienced wartime US Navy PBY-5 pilot, and in March 1948 at Burbank, California commenced his Israeli tenure by transition training on to the Curtiss C-46. The American Jewish Agency for Palestine financed the purchase of 12 USAF disposals C-46s and other transport aircraft for a cover company created to disguise arms deliveries to Israel: LAPSA - Lineas Aereas de Panama Sociedad Anonoma. Painted in LAPSA markings with Panama flag on the tail, the C-46s were ferried to Europe via Mexico, Panama, Dutch Guinea, Brazil, Africa, Morocco, Sicily to Czechoslovakia. From a former Luftwaffe air base in the Sudetenland, west of Prague, they loaded arms and dismantled Czech built Me 109 fighters, which were carried without flight plans or clearances, on a shuttle between Czechoslovakia and Israel.

In June 1948, Hal Auerbach was at Tel Aviv between C-46 missions. He was keen to fly the DC-5, which had just been delivered and which, he recalled, still had VH-ARD on its tail. He had a fondness for the type from watching their original test flights at Mines Field in 1940 during his days as an entry-level clerk at Douglas. He familiarized himself with the DC-5 cockpit and systems, then gained approval for a check-out flight. He later wrote:

"Confident I could handle the DC-5 without transition training, we lined up on the runway for take off, pushed the throttles all the way home, and headed out over the Mediterranean. In flight the DC-5 was a stable and gentle airplane, had no bad habits, was fast, responsive and easy to fly. After a few practice take offs and landings, I taxied back to the ramp with a heady feeling that I, once a 25 cents an hour junior at Douglas, had flown one of their DC-5s I had so admired."

A month later, in mid July 1948, Hal Auebach was back in Tel Aviv. The situation was desperate with Arab artillery from mountain top positions, pounding the Tel Aviv-Haifa road, which held the new nation together. Three Boeing B-17s had been delivered the previous week from Czechoslovakia where they had been fitted out as operational bombers using parts from abandoned wartime aircraft. When Ray Kurtz, commander of the Israeli B-17s received orders to bomb the artillery positions, Auebach suggested the DC-5 take part in the bombing:

"I asked Ray would he would mind if the DC-5 joined in as a back-door-bomber, flying inside his three plane formation. He said OK, he would arrange for bombs and bomb chuckers for us. Bomb chuckers were mostly immigrant soldiers who knew no English but hopefully comprehended enough sign language to roll live bombs out the back door without exploding them inside the airplane. In World War Two, flight crew often gave their aircraft colourful names. In that tradition and to add a little schmaltz to an otherwise tense mission, we named the DC-5 Yankee Pasha the Bagel Lancer.

On 21 July 1948, flying the DC-5 with copilot Bob Luerry, also a volunteer from California, we rendezvoused with the B-17s at their assigned altitude and elbowed our way into the middle of their formation. Because we were encircled with B-17 defensive firepower, we felt pretty safe. As soon as we saw the B-17s open their bomb bay doors and release their bombs, we chucked ours out the back door.

On landing at Tel Aviv, Yankee Pasha's brakes failed and she kept rolling towards the end of the runway. Fortunately we were able to steer her into a low sand dune alongside the runway, where her wheels ploughed in to a safe gentle stop.

The mission completed successfully, I kissed the DC-5 goodbye, took a last sentimental look back at her sitting knee deep in the sand, went back to my C-46s and that was the last I ever saw of her." 161

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES FROM THE PERIOD:

Some other interesting flights at Sydney are recorded 1947-49

1. **Douglas C-47A G-AKSM** of British charter operator **Sivewright Airways Ltd, Manchester-Ringway** arrived at Sydney on 30 November 1948. It was listed in the Customs ledger as originating in France, under command of Cpt. Lander with 7 crew and 17 passengers. Australian agent was Qantas. After 3 weeks at Sydney, it departed on 200 December for Darwin via Cloncurry. Originally suspected of being a migrant flight, the following reference indicates that it was more likely a commercial passenger charter flight from Europe:

"At the end of 1948, Sivewright Airways became one of the many British charter companies to take part in the Berlin AirliftOther interesting charters performed by Sivewright's Dakota fleet included the carriage of pilgrims to Mecca and several charters between London and the Colonies on behalf of the Crown Agents. A party of Russian diplomats was flown to Australia" 64

2. **Shanghai to Sydney:** A series of flights were operated between Shanghai and Sydney, which are assumed to be passenger charters and not connected with the migrant flights:

Date	Registration	Type	Airline	Details
21.11.47	HS-PC207	DC-4	Not quoted	Arr at 1000 from Shanghai via Biak. Cpt. R. Jackson Believed to be Pacific Overseas Airways(Siam) Ltd (Aircraft identity not traced)
19.12.47	VH-ANF	DC-4	ANA	Arr at 0730 from Shanghai, Cpt. P. Taylor, 8 crew, 35 pax
16.2.49	NC68961	DC-4	TALOA	Arr at 0353 from Shanghai via Darwin, 44 pax
22.2.49	NC68961	DC-4	TALOA	Arr from Shanghai, 44 pax
22.2.49	NC68961	DC-4	TALOA	Dep at 1230 for Darwin

3. **Philippine Air Lines, Manila:** During early 1949 there were a number of visits to Sydney from PAL Douglas DC-4s, operated under contract by the US company **Transocean Air Lines (TALOA)**. 55

These flights are assumed to be passenger services and not migrant flights: the following extracts from Customs and DCA records, times are Sydney local time based on the 24 hour clock: 19

Date	Registration	Type	Airline	Details
24.1.49	NC67566	DC-4	PAL	Arr at 0335 from Darwin
25.1.49	NC67566	DC-4	PAL	Dep at 1904 for Darwin
6.2.49	NC67566	DC-4	PAL	Arr at 2219 from Darwin
9.2.49	NC67566	DC-4	PAL	Dep at 1318 for Darwin, 2 pax
20.2.49	NC67566	DC-4	PAL	Arr 2114 from Darwin, 52 pax
23.2.49	NC67566	DC-4	PAL	Dep 1333 for Darwin, 1 pax
20.3.49	PI-C107	DC-4	PAL	Arr 0046 from Darwin, 47 pax

4. **Air Ceylon DC-3 from Colombo to Sydney**

On 5 June 1948, Air Ceylon Douglas DC-3 VP-CAT arrived at Sydney Airport on a passenger charter from Ceylon. Customs clearance misidentified the aircraft as "VH-CAT" but correctly recorded the pilot in charge as Captain Fernando, with 5 crew and 17 passengers. The long flight had been arduous for crew and passengers, and has been researched by Roger Thiedeman: 162

DC-3 VP-CAT *Sunethra Devi* was one of the three former RAF Dakotas with which Ceylon's first national airline Air Ceylon commenced regional services in December 1947. The Ceylon Government Fisheries Department asked the fledgling airline if it could transport a party of naval seamen to Sydney to take delivery of a large fishing trawler it had purchased in Australia and crew it back to Ceylon. The numbers grew, with various officials eager to join the trip, until the party reached 17 passengers. The crew was chosen as Captain Peter Fernando, First Officer P. B. Mawalagedera, a radio officer, flight engineer and purser/relief radio officer.

VP-CAT departed Ratmalana Airport, Colombo at 0745 hours on Sunday 30 May 1948. After refueling at Madras, India they reached Calcutta for the first night stop. A scheduled very early start next morning saw them airborne from Dum Dum Airport at 0310 hours for the long haul to Rangoon, then Singapore. Approaching Singapore that evening they flew into thunderstorms with extreme turbulence and the lightning induced static knocked out their radio and direction-finding instruments. They were lost in the dark but their distress radio calls had been heard, and a RAF aircraft dispatched to help. With the RAF crew's assistance, they landed at Changi Airport after being airborne for a remarkable 9 hrs 15 mins. Tension had been high amongst the passengers, so all were relieved to be on the ground safely.

Following two days in Singapore, the DC-3 continued to Batavia, Surabaya, Koepang, reaching Darwin on Thursday 3 June. Next day their refueling stops were Daly Waters, Cloncurry, Charleville, then Brisbane for the night. Next day they flew on to the destination Sydney, arriving at 1240 hours on 5 June 1948.

The same crew ferried the empty aircraft back to Ceylon, departing Sydney on 10th June, making their overnight stops at Bali and Bangkok. They returned to Colombo on 17th June, where to their surprise, they were hailed as national heroes.

POSTSCRIPT: LATER MIGRANT FLIGHTS TO AUSTRALIA 1950s-1960s:

Following the enforced cessation of the ad-hoc itinerant charter flights 1947-1949 as detailed above, the Australian Government arranged organized travel for large scale European migration mostly by ocean liners during the 1950s. Some were carried on scheduled airline services as well as dedicated charter flights by the major international airlines.

When Australian migration restrictions collectively referred to as *The White Australia Policy*, were progressively dismantled by successive Governments from 1950, the range of nationalities widened.

Special programs were implemented after European political crises in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, which caused many citizens to leave their homelands. There was a shortage of shipping but at that time a number of international charter operators offered 4-engined long-range aircraft, mostly DC-4s, at competitive rates. These companies secured contracts to carry refugees from Europe to Australia. Destination was usually Wagga Wagga NSW, where temporary customs facilities were set up to process the arrivals before they were sent by bus to the Bonegilla migrant hostel nearby in Victoria. During just two months of May and June 1957, more than 70 chartered airliners were scheduled at Wagga, bringing 3,400 Hungarians, 1,100 Germans and 600 Austrians. ¹⁵²

The Flying Tiger Line based at Burbank, California had flown world-wide cargo and passenger charters since 1945, mostly military contracts. FTL picked up many of the Australian migrant charters in 1957, using their fleet of Douglas DC-4s, which had been replaced on key military contracts by Super Constellations. The French airline UTA also took part. This account by Aero Club of Broken Hill instructor Keith McCoy describes an early FTL charter from this period:

"On an hot afternoon in early January 1957 a group of pilots were sitting out the front of the Aero Club at Broken Hill Airport when the sound of a large multi-engined aircraft could be heard overhead. When we looked up we could see a Douglas DC-4 positioning for a landing. The aircraft duly landed and taxied to the apron adjoining the refuelling station. Much to everybody's surprise the DC-4 carried the markings of FLYING TIGER LINE. The DC-4's crew kept the engines running while a crew member jumped out of the rear cabin door and the tail stand pole was handed down to him to fix under the tail of the aircraft. The engines were shut down and the aircraft's tail sank down heavily onto the stand. The DC-4 was stained heavily with engine oil and hydraulic oil and was looking well used. I thought this looks interesting, so while the aircraft was being refuelled I asked to have a look inside.

Much to my surprise the aircraft was full of passengers with clothes and belongings scattered throughout the cabin. Hanging from the cabin ceiling were string bags containing sticks of salami and metwurst and other bits and pieces. The air inside was hot with a strong body odour. The passengers identified themselves as Yugoslav immigrants to Australia escaping the turmoil of Yugoslavia. The Flying Tiger Line crew said that they had come from Darwin, leaving that morning and were bound for Wagga Wagga but were running low on fuel and diverted to Broken Hill. The DC-4 used most of the runway to get airborne and headed east after take-off but stayed low in the sky until they were out of sight."

¹⁵⁰

Further insight into the 1957 migrant uplift is given by experienced commercial pilot Paul Phelan:

"I was in the RAAF at Wagga at the time and remember the Hungarian migrants being flown in by Flying Tiger and UTA in DC-4s carrying 85 passengers in an aeroplane normally configured for 52. They were bussed to Bonagilla near Wodonga. Peter Abeles was one of the migrants. One flight arrived from Darwin on 3 engines – it had been observed feathering one shortly after takeoff from Darwin and was running 60 minutes late at Wagga, where he found he also had a flat nose wheel tyre. A couple of times they got the RAAF fire tender to park under the rear fuselage with a mattress on top so they wouldn't fall on their tails when they powered off." ¹⁵³

On 15 May 1957 a Flying Tigers DC-4 was escorted into Darwin by a RAAF Lincoln, after experiencing engine trouble over the Timor Sea at night en route Singapore-Darwin carrying 81 Hungarian immigrants and 7 crew. Press reports stated that the DC-4 was chartered by the Australian Government. 151



Flying Tiger Line DC-4 N90423 at Wagga NSW 6 July 1957, on a migrant charter. Photo by Barrie Colledge

By the 1960s when the ocean liner era was coming to an end, the majority of Government sponsored travel for migrants to Australia was by air. When British migration was heavily promoted in the 1960s, referred to colloquially as the *Ten Quid Pom* programs, the migrant uplift was principally by air, either on scheduled BOAC and Qantas services or dedicated charter flights. Bristol Britannias of British Eagle flew many British migrant charters to Australia, as well as their military contracts between England and Woomera.

THE PLAYERS

Some details on the individuals, before and after the migrant era:



Three of the key players are in this photograph taken at RAAF Tocumwal on 27 February 1947 while inspecting Lodestar A67-5: left Warren Penny, centre Stan Godden, and on the engine stand is Greg Board, accompanied by two helpful RAAF ground crew. This Lodestar became New Holland Airways' VH-GRB. Photo Warren Penny via Greg Banfield

Greg Board:

Gregory Richmond Board, 7 Kilgoa Road, Bellevue Hill, Sydney

- 5.5.21 Born at Point Piper, Sydney
- 11.11.40 Enlisted in [Royal Australian Air Force](#), occupation on enlistment was student
- 12.41 Sgt Gregory R. Board was among RAAF pilots in Malaya who were seconded to RAF 453 Squadron
- 19.12.41 Sgt G.R. Board pilot of Brewster Buffalo W8216 of RAF 453 Squadron damaged on takeoff Ipoh
- 22.12.41 Sgt G.R. Board baled out of burning Buffalo W8216 when attacked by Zeros near Kuala Lumpur, Malaya. He parachuted safely and was returned to the Squadron at Kuala Lumpur by car.
- 10.1.42 Sgt G.R. Board made forced landing in Buffalo W8219 Kuala Lumpur, aircraft wrecked. Board escaped to Java, then back to Australia
- .43 Sgt G. R. Board transferred to RAAF Reserve and attached to [Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, Fishermans Bend, Melbourne](#) as test pilot for CAC Boomerangs and CAC Woomera prototype. 20, 30, 31
- 43 Popular rumours claimed that Board often landed his Boomerangs while on test flights on a farm near Werribee where the fuel was siphoned out and sold as motor fuel on the black market. Rumours about Board's personal life, including his use of an alias *Gregory Richmond*, and alleged communist associates prompted an investigation by the forerunner of security organization ASIO. He was secretly followed in Melbourne for several months but the report found no evidence of any impropriety and summarized that he was a socially popular person who attracted gossip with the Melbourne social set. 119



Greg Board in the cockpit of a CAC Boomerang fighter.

The Collection pbiob-0016

- 21.2.43 Boomerang A46-36 of No.2 OTU Mildura, flown by Flt Sgt G. R. Board made forced landing in country Victoria due fuel selector failure. Pilot borrowed a bike spanner from a passing cyclist and turned the selector valve to the second tank, then continued the ferry flight to CAC Fishermans Bend
- 13.3.45 Discharged from RAAF with rank Pilot Officer
- 6.47 Founded [New Holland Airways, Sydney](#).

- 3.11.48 Board was pilot of Hudson VH-BIH when it refuelled at Bahrein on [delivery flight to Israel](#)
- 49 New Holland Airways ceased operations. Greg Board had left the country but Greg Hanlon was still trading as NHAW by April 1950, the remaining NHAW aircraft, Lodestar VH-GRB was stored at Bankstown. Sold to Overland Air Services, Condobolin NSW in August 1950
- 8.1.51 Purchased [Percival Proctor 5 G-AHTG](#) in England. Aircraft serviced by Miles Aircraft at Redhill and rolled out 24 January 1951 painted as [VH-BDA](#). It was added to Australian Register 25 January 1951 as VH-BDA to G. R. Board, Sydney. Departed Croydon for Australia 27 January 1951 flown solo by Board "in easy stages", reached Sydney 3.51. Sold to Fred Sutton, Suttons Motors, Sydney on 23 January 1952.
- 5.51 Sydney Central Court case against an art collector accused of stealing two oil paintings valued at over £1000 from Gregory Richmond Board. The painting had come from the collection of the late Leslie Board. The art dealer told police that Mrs Gregory Board and others in her family had borrowed money from him, and that he had worked for the Board family since 1940 but was paid no wages for a period. Outcome of the court case not reported.
- .51 Greg Board joined [Malayan Airways, Kuala Lumpur](#) as DC-3 First Officer. 30
- 50s Chief Pilot with DC-4 cargo operator [Trans Mediterranean Airways, Beirut, Lebanon](#).
- 56/58 Board was now flying for [Television Associates of Indiana Inc, Michigan City, Indiana](#), which had been formed by W. C. Eddy in 1952. The company specialised in worldwide aerial survey to establish locations for the installation of TV towers and repeaters, using [B-25 Mitchell N58TA](#), [Beech AT-11 Kansans N54TA, N55TA and N56TA Star of the East](#) which were frequently based in Iran. Kansan N54T ferried via London-Heathrow on 23 February 1958, through Bahrein on 29 March 1958 and crashed in Iran on 10 July 1958. Others of the fleet ferried through Britain in the 50s and 60s, N56TA was seen at Blackbushe on 27 September 1958, N57TA at Prestwick 18 September 1959, and the B-25 N58TA at Prestwick 17 October 1959 and Gatwick 27 April 1963. 120
- Television Associates of Indiana Inc is also reported to have also operated in Egypt, Pakistan, Syria, Turkey, French Indo China and Bolivia. It operated various contracts for the US State Department, leading to suspicions that it was involved with CIA activities in foreign countries. Kansan N56TA was seen at Hong Kong with large underwing long range fuel tanks before being transferred to Aero Associates Inc, Tucson AZ, with whom Board was also later associated. 120
- [Ryan Navions N9898F and N9897F](#) were also based in Iran: N9897F (c/n NAV-4-331ex LR-AAU) was struck off US Register 26 May 1956 as sold to Captain Board, Australia. However it was photographed at Beirut 20 September 1956 parked alongside N9898F. They were reregistered [N53TA and N52TA](#) respectively with Television Associates Inc, and both Navions passed through Bahrein on 25 March 1958 en route to Karachi. N53TA returned through Bahrein on 18 May 1958. 14, 120, 140
- c58 Board flew US State Department contracts for aerial survey terrain mapping of Cuba
- 58 Greg Board purchased Grumman ([Columbia](#)) [XJL-1 amphibian N54205 \(ex Bu31400\)](#). He carried out maintenance of the XJL-1 while on the water at Michigan City lakefront, repairing a faulty nosewheel, before flying it across to Michigan City Airport. Here further work was done and Board submitted plans for various modifications to FAA for approval. As a result, the FAA issued Civil Conversion Certificate Approval for the XJL-1 type to G. R. Board, Michigan City IN 28, 169
- In mid 58 Greg Board at Michigan City was quoted as saying he planned to fly the floatplane back to his home in Australia.
- 59 Board was connected with [American Compressed Steel Corporation, Cincinnati Ohio](#), which purchased a number of military disposals aircraft, particularly Boeing B-17s, for civil resale.
- 60/65 Board was a principal of [Aero Associates Inc, Tucson Arizona](#) and an associated company [Aero American Corp, Tucson AZ](#): by 1960 these companies took over American Compressed Steel's aircraft disposals operation. They were based at Ryan Field near Tucson and specialised in civil resale of ex military aircraft purchased ex US Air Force and US Navy disposals airfields in Arizona. Large numbers of C-47s and military Beech 18s, as well as the last B-17s ex US Navy service were purchased. The C-47s were converted to civil, sold directly to overseas air forces or broken up for parts. Some thirty ex USAF C-47s were still stored at Ryan Field in the 1970s, with engines and parts stripped.
- 5.60 Board test flew his Grumman XJL-1 amphibian N54205 at Michigan City, prior to ferrying it his new home at Tucson AZ. When the undercarriage would not fully retract, he made a water landing during which the extended gear caused a severe swing, which damaged the aircraft, which was half submerged. Repaired.
- 12.60 Board commenced the ferry flight of XJL-1 N54205 from Indiana to Tucson, but after 50 miles, engine failure caused a forced landing in a farmer's field near Kankakee, Illinois. After repairs by Aero Associates

mechanics sent from Tucson, Board continued the ferry in March 1961. However another forced landing was made at Woodward OK when the same engine failed again. The aircraft was left there for a year while he was involved with the B-17 ferry flights to England for the movie *The War Lover*.

- 61 Greg Board and aviation author Martin Caiden were among pilots of [Boeing B-17G Fortresses N9563Z, N5229V, N5232V](#) owned by [Aero American Corp](#), in a delivery flight from USA to England for the movie *The War Lover*. Board and Caiden were imprisoned in Lisbon enroute by Portuguese Secret Police, and later flew the B-17s for the movie in England. The operation was described by Caidin in his book *Everything but the Flack*.
- 2.62 Board completed the ferry flight to Tucson of his XJL-1 N54025 after a replacement R-1820 was installed at Woodward by mechanics from Aero Associates.
- 62 Board and his friend Martin Caiden were proposing a non-stop around the world flight in the XJL-1. Board commissioned Aero Associates Inc to carry out modifications for extra fuel tankage, provision for air-to-air refueling, and replacing the 1200hp Wright R-1820-56 radial with a 1700hp Wright R-2600 with new engine mounts, propeller and custom cowlings. Most of this work was completed but the aircraft never flew again. During 1965 Aero American Inc won a court judgement against Board for unpaid maintenance work on the XJL, and the aircraft was transferred to Aero American and left parked at Ryan Field. It is displayed today at Pima Air & Space Museum at Tucson, restored in US Navy markings. 169
- 63 [North American SNJ-5 Texan N1043C](#) (ex Bu43745) was owned by G. R. Board, 808 N Erin Boulevard, Tucson AZ. New owner in 1970 was Walter Malling, Tucson.
- 63 Greg Board and Martin Caidin flew [B-25 Mitchell N9089Z](#) owned by [Aero Associates Inc](#) to England as camera platform for several movies. Board flew B-25, Me108s and Mosquitos for the movies *633 Squadron* and *The Longest Day*. The B-25 was abandoned at Biggin Hill in 1964, later moved between three British museums and currently at Booker airfield.
- 12.63 Board and Caidin each purchased a Nord 1002 (licence built Me 108) used in movie *633 Squadron* to fly to USA for resale. F-BGVU cleared Customs at Southend on 22 October 1963, owner quoted as Aero Associates Inc, while en route Martlesham to Paris-Toussus. Both staged through Prestwick 1 December 1963, departing 12 days later, both were painted in Luftwaffe camouflage scheme masquerading as Bf 109s from the movie.
- Board's [Nord 1002 N107U](#) (ex F-BGVU c/n 264) registered to [Aero Associates Inc](#) made forced landing on the ice cap 136 miles east of Goose Bay, Labrador 12.12.63. Crew of Francis Freeman and Robin Carruthers picked up by RCAF Otter on skis, but the Nord was abandoned in situ.
 - Caidin's [N108U](#) (ex F-BFYX c/n 188) flown to USA by John "Jeff" Hawke, one of the movie pilots, with Jean Cullum. US civil certification was carried out at Zahn Airport, Long Island NY during 1963.
- 64/66 Gregory Board's company Aero Associates Inc took a contract with arms dealer Luber SA, Geneva, Switzerland to supply 20 Douglas B-26 Invaders in military configuration to the Portuguese Air Force. The United Nations had an embargo on sales of combat aircraft to Portugal because of their probable use against colonial uprisings in Africa.

The stored B-26s were purchased by Aero Associates Inc and given overhauls by Hamilton Aircraft Co at Tucson Airport. British aviation adventurer John "Jeff" Hawke was engaged by Board to fly the clandestine delivery flights to Portugal, using subterfuge paperwork indicating sales to Canada. After the seventh B-26 had been delivered, US Customs stopped further deliveries when they arrested Hawke and a French weapons dealer associate at Miami, Florida on 16 September 1966 while delivering spare parts to Portugal in a Curtiss C-46 N67934. Greg Board is reported to have flown to Jamaica the previous day and could not be located. In 1967 Board was among the associates who were tried on a charge of illegal export of military aircraft and parts. The indictments against several associates were dismissed by the court, those against Hawke and the French arms dealer were acquitted by jury. Gregory Board was never brought to trial and the charges against him were finally dropped in June 1973.

The Portuguese B-26 deal was investigated by Dan Hagerdorn and Leif Hellstrom in their book *Foreign Invaders – The Douglas Invader in foreign military and US clandestine service*. 74

"Luber SA president Lucien Bernard, hired a Frenchman named Henri de Montmarin to locate and secure the Invaders for the company. De Montmarin initially tried to obtain some Invaders in Europe...but without result. In November 1964 he got in touch with Gregory R. Board of Tucson Arizona, who told him he did have a number of Invaders available. The number of aircraft initially discussed was 12 with an option for a further 8, but there was apparently also some talk of 36 in all. After meeting him, de Montmarin recommended to Luber that they deal with Board.

Board was originally from Australia and served in the RAAF during the Second World War. Later on, he became a US citizen and began dealing in second-hand aircraft, ultimately setting up his own company Aero

Associates Inc in Tucson. But Board did not own any Invaders, so he in turn got in touch with Gordon B. Hamilton. He was owner of Hamilton Aircraft Co, also at Tucson Airport, which had processed nearly 200 Invaders for military and civilian clients around the world, and held about 60 USAF surplus Invaders in storage. Board and Hamilton first discussed the deal in November 1964, then in more detail in March 1965. The number of aircraft had now been fixed at 20. It was agreed that Aero Associates Inc would purchase the Invaders, and Hamilton Aircraft would carry out the necessary maintenance before delivery.

On 1 April 1965 Luber SA formally ordered 20 B-26s from Aero Associates. Three weeks later Luber opened a Letter of Credit to the amount of \$694,550.50 through the United Overseas Bank in Geneva. Under the terms of the Letter of Credit, Aero Associates Inc would receive \$28,900 for each of the first 3 aircraft and \$27,000 for each of the remaining 17 aircraft. The first aircraft was to be delivered by 30 April 1965 and the last by 21 January 1966. The balance of the amount was for spare parts and accessories. Board immediately began purchasing Invaders: some from Hamilton Aircraft storage stocks and some from elsewhere.

Throughout this period Board remained evasive about the destination of the aircraft. When pressed, Board claimed that the Invaders would go to France, to be converted to turboprop executive aircraft. Later he would also claim they were part of a consignment of 40 Invaders for Saudi Arabia. Confronted with these unlikely explanations, Gordon Hamilton wrote to US Customs in early May 1965 and informed them of the contract but got no reaction. Hamilton Aircraft began working on the first Invader in May 1965. Each aircraft was stripped down and a complete IRAN carried out. The switches for the bomb and gun circuits were removed to comply with FAA regulations, but the actual circuits were left intact.

Meanwhile, Board had been looking for a pilot to ferry the B-26s to Portugal. The man finally hired for the job was John Hawke, an Englishman recommended to Board by his friend Martin Caidin. The first B-26 became ready on 28 May 1965 and was flown out of the USA on 2 June, flying over Newfoundland, and then to Portugal via the Azores."

The involvement of CIA in the Portuguese A-26 deal is mentioned in Christopher Robbins' book *The Invisible Air Force - The Story of the CIA's Secret Airlines*: 170

"Another large US-based air proprietary was Intermountain Aviation Inc. which operated from a former USAF base at Marana, Arizona just outside of Tucson. Intermountain's cover was that it operated a desert storage base for US and foreign aircraft, offered a full service and maintenance facility and provided a fire-fighting parachutist service for the US Forest Service. In promotional material the company claimed to provide "total air support for remote operations". Intermountain also had STOL aircraft, developed a pin-point parachute drop system and reconfigured aircraft to special requirements.

Intermountain Aviation was used in 1965 as a conduit in the sale of B-26 bombers to Portugal for use in that country's colonial wars in Africa. Officially there was an explicit US Government embargo on weapon exports for use in Angola, Mozambique or Portuguese Guinea but unofficially the government, at its highest level, had decided to send twenty B-26s and the CIA proprietary Intermountain Aviation was following orders. Seven B-26s were flown from Arizona to Lisbon by an English pilot John Richard Hawke, hired by a firm called Aero Associates.

The operation's cover was so thin that Soviet and Hungarian representatives at the United Nations attacked the transaction. Accused for violating its own official policy, the US could do little but deny the charge and look for scapegoats. John Hawke and Francois de Marin, a Frenchman who had acted as middleman in the deal, were brought to trial in a federal court. CIA head Lawrence Houston denied that the Agency had been involved. Unconvinced that the two accused had deliberately violated the law, the jury found Hawke and Marin innocent."

- c68 Greg Board left Tucson and moved his family to Jamaica, taking a DC-3 with him. Sold the DC-3 to a Florida owner, and purchased a small ship in England. He sailed it across the Atlantic to Jamaica where he set up an inter island shipping service. His hired captain attempted to steal the vessel, which was later found in Miami and sold. After 18 months in Jamaica, Board returned to Australia and moved his family to Sydney. 112
- 5.69 [Aero American Inc, Tucson AZ](#) purchased [DC-6A N6813C](#) and operated it on behalf of Midwest Program for Airborne Television Instruction, Lafayette Indiana (similar work to Television Associates of Indiana 10 years earlier). Sold five months later to Robert Sholton, Anchorage, Alaska.
- 2.70 Greg Board, 178 McCarr's Creek Road, Church Point, Sydney: purchased [Piaggio P166 VH-GOE](#) from Hawker deHavilland, Bankstown (traded by Ansett Airlines of PNG on Twin Otters). It was delivered to Camden NSW in February 1970 for fitting of camera installation by Skyservice Aviation, noted at Camden in April 1970 repainted brown and white with titles [Air Research Pty Ltd, Sydney - Air Surveys Geophysics Division](#).

- 4.70 [Norduyrn Norseman VH-GSG](#) painted at Camden in the same brown and white scheme as P166 VH-GOE and same titles. It was fitted with a magnetometer bomb under belly and additional fuel tanks to give 200 gallon capacity for extra endurance for survey operations. Offered for magnetometer, scintillometer and photographic survey work. VH-GSG was leased from Ed Fleming's Skyservice Aviation Pty Ltd, Camden. Ownership changed in 1971 to Mercredits (WA) Ltd, Sydney. Shipped to Canada .73 by Ed Fleming, became CF-ISM to Ed Fleming, Vancouver BC.
- 25.7.70 [Cessna 210A VH-RHT](#) purchased by Greg Board, Sydney. Ownership transferred 17 September 1970 to Air Research Pty Ltd. Sold in November 1971.
- 70 [Republic Seabee VH-MJO](#) purchased by Greg Board and based at his house at McCarr's Creek Road, Church Point. The house backed on to the shores of Pittwater, a northern Sydney suburb. The Seabee was moored over a special frame at his house, which became exposed as the tide went out leaving the aircraft well above the seawater. Board used the amphibian to fly to Camden where he was preparing the Piaggio and Norseman, and was painted in same brown and white scheme. When his operations moved to Bankstown he based the Seabee there until it was sold to Bill Suhr, Moorabbin in 1972, operating shark patrols over Melbourne beaches during the 72/73 summer.
- 8.70 Piaggio VH-GOE noted Mascot, reported that Air Research Pty Ltd had gone out of business but the Piaggio was still owned by Greg Board.
- 4.71 Piaggio VH-GOE noted at Bankstown with new titles [Mineralair - Charter Survey - Sydney](#) Regular freight work commenced mid 1971, including a regular contract to deliver day-old chickens from commercial hatcheries near Sydney to poultry farms around Australia including regular trips to Perth. The large cabin size of the Piaggio allowed 11,000 live chics in boxes to be carried.
- 11.73 [Piaggio P166A VH-GOC](#) purchased by G.R. Board. He based it at Bankstown, retaining basic Ansett Airlines of Papua New Guinea colour scheme without titles. [South Pacific Airways](#) titles added in late 75. Crashed and destroyed near Marulan NSW on 22 February 1977 shortly after departure on a flight from Sydney to Warracknabeal Victoria carrying 11,000 day-old chickens. Pilot killed.
- 7.74 [VH-GOE](#) reregistered to new Greg Board company [South Pacific Airways Pty Ltd, Sydney](#) Noted Bankstown April 1974 very faded paintwork with titles painted over, in October 1974 it was repainted in new green and white scheme with titles "South Pacific Airways". In November 1974 the overhaul was completed and large "SPA" added to fin, now flying regularly. Chicken flights resumed to Perth in 1975. VH-GOE was retired at Bankstown in early 76 due maintenance requirements, struck off register 24 May 1976. Stripped of parts and one engine by 1977, it was derelict in the Bankstown "Piaggio graveyard" by 78; broken-up for scrap in August 1983.
- 1.76 [Piaggio P166A VH-FSA](#) delivered to Bankstown in South Pacific titles over Forrester Stephen Aviation scheme, just purchased by Board from Hookway Aviation, Melbourne. VH-FSA replaced GOE on freight charters. Retired at Bankstown by December 1976, sold 11 March 1977 to W. D. Hooper trading as Eagle Airways, Sydney. 63
- 1.76 [SIAI Marchetti FN333 Riviera VH-SAV](#) purchased by South Pacific Airways, Sydney. It was sold a year later on 28 January 1977.
- 5.76 [Grumman Mallard N121SP](#) flown from USA to Sydney, "South Pacific Airlines" titles. Australian CofA at Bankstown, registered VH-SPL 13 August 1976 to G.R. Board. That same month the Mallard was advertised as available for Lease/Sale/Charter: *13 seat amphibian in superb condition, fitted weather radar, just completed major inspection and survey for Australian registration by Hawker deHavilland. If your company desires the ultimate in luxurious accommodation with the versatility of a flying yacht then contact the owner: South Pacific Airways Pty Ltd, 178 McCarr's Creek Road, Church Point.*"
- .77 Mallard VH-SPL was flown from Sydney to Malaysia by Brian "Blackjack" Walker, and flown in Penang and Borneo filming a TV series named *Bailey's Bird*. Walker mentions in his autobiography: *"... in early 1977, when my friend Greg Board came up with another proposition, which was to ferry a Grumman Mallard, a fairly big amphibian, to Penang. How he got into these things, I could never fathom, but this aeroplane was needed to make a film called "Bailey's Bird" and it was a TV series about this character who was floating around the islands."* 19
- 6.77 Mallard VH-SPL transferred to Greg Board's son Mark Board (an American citizen) of Miami FL and registered N83781. Ferried from Malaysia to USA in January 1978 via England, arrived Fort Lauderdale FL March 1978. Later to Antilles Air Boats, Chalks International Airline and Virgin Island Seaplane Shuttle as N604SS. Crashed and sank 24 October 1986 during a water takeoff at St Croix, US Virgin Islands.
- 90 Greg Board retired at Surfers Paradise. Built a [Murphy Rebel VH-DOD](#) in his home garage, added to Register 9 March 1995 to G. R. Board, Broadbeach Qld. Board took over the Australian agency for this homebuilt type. 112

- c04 Greg was reported at Moorabbin planning to have training for a rotary wing licence
- 6.07 Greg Board died in Queensland. A fellow pilot stated *"If you had the pleasure of flying with this talented and focussed man, who was better at crash landing than anyone I knew, you would have sat next to someone who was larger than life in the volatile dangerous days of unreliable aviation."*¹¹²

Bill Burdus:

- 4.47 William L. Burdus, experienced RAAF pilot, joined [Guinea Air Traders, Lae](#), flying Ansons
- 24.5.47 Bill Burdus and Peter Lavender were flying GAT Ansons from Lae to Bulolo. A good natured rivalry between the two young and high spirited pilots led to both departing Lae and a race taking different routes to Bulolo, where they made landing approaches to opposite ends of the Bulolo runway at the same time (no radios fitted), obscured from each by terrain. Burdus in VH-ALS landed, Lavender in VH-AYD attempted to go around but was unable to out-climb terrain and hit a ridge, with no injury. ⁴⁵
- 19.3.48 Bill Burdus departed Sydney for Athens in Hudson VH-JCM owned by [Curtiss Madsen Aircrafts Pty Ltd on charter to European Air Transport](#). Burdus arrived back at Mascot 13.5.48 carrying 13 Greek migrants.
- 48/49 DC-3 Captain for Guinea Air Traders on migrant charters to Europe
- 50 Joined [Department of Civil Aviation](#), based Head Office, Melbourne. Appointed as Inspector of Accidents
- 16.10.51 Arrived Kalgoorlie on a DCA DC-3 from Melbourne to investigate crash of Airlines (WA) Ltd DH.104 Dove VH-AQO which had broken up in flight.
- 4.4.56 W.L.Burdus, Inspector of Accidents, DCA Head Office wrote a report on the original accident investigation of the crash of Noorduyn Norseman VH-BNT at Ialibu, New Guinea on 17 April 1955, while operated by Gibbes Sepik Airways.
- 60s Phil McCulloch, then a DCA airports inspector recalls: *"I came to meet Bill Burdus in the course of my incarcerations in DCA Head Office for periods between 1950 and 1963, and later, during a trip with Jim Schofield and Bill in Aero Commander VH-CAW in SA/NT during the 1960s. Bill spoke on occasions about the migrant fights and their 'irregularities' ."* ¹²⁵
- 12.68 W.L.Burdus wrote a report on a DCA program to deter birds from airports.

Martin Cherry:

Martin Laurence Cherry, 8 Roma Avenue, Kensington, Sydney

- 4.4.25 Born Kensington, Sydney
- 4.43 [Enlisted in RAAF](#), qualified as pilot later that year
- 9.44 Joined 80 Squadron as Sergeant Pilot, later Flight Sergeant, Warrant Officer with 80 Sqn, then 76 Squadron
- 6.46 discharged from RAAF
- 1.4.47 [DH82A Tiger Moth VH-AVA](#) added to Civil Register to M. L. Cherry, Sydney (ex RAAF A17-406, sold by Commonwealth Disposals Commission to James Long, Sydney)
- 2.5.47 Cherry departed Mascot in VH-AVA flying it solo to Malaya, where he sold the aircraft to Chinese businessmen Ho Ah Loke, Odeon Theatre, Kuala Lumpur and Ho Yue Hong, High Street Lane, Kuala Lumpur. It was re-registered VR-RBD in August 1947. Newspaper report: *"Martin Cherry, 22, a former RAAF pilot, of Kensington took off to-day from Kingsford Smith airport on an old style adventure flight to Malaya in a Tiger Moth. Cherry had considerable experience in the East-Indies with the RAAF and had been with a civil company in the East since his discharge"* ⁹
- 20.6.47 Newspaper report: *"Martin Cherry who returned today after flying a Tiger Moth to Japan (sic) said that Japanese fighters had been sold to the Indonesians. Dutch pilots reported that their planes had been intercepted by fighters similar to Japanese Oscars."* ⁹
- 12.47 Cherry was Sydney Manager of [European Air Transport, Sydney](#)
- 49/52 Cherry lived in England, employed by [Handley Page \(Reading\) Ltd](#)
- ,51 Delivered a [Miles Aerovan](#) from England to Benguela, Angola

- 1.11.51 Martin Cherry purchased [Percival Proctor 3 G-AIIL](#) in England, address Crowthorne, Berks,
- 9.11.51 Cherry departed Croydon Airport, London on delivery flight to Australia in G-AIIL with two friends.
- 3.12.51 G-AIIL arrived Mascot after Cherry had refused a Customs order to proceed from Wyndham to Darwin, which he complained would have added an unreasonable extra distance and cost to his delivery flight. The aircraft had been cleared on behalf of Customs on arrival Wyndham by the town police officer and they had stayed the night in Wyndham. Cherry instead flew direct to Sydney. Press publicity over Customs threats of legal action and allegations of smuggling. Sold and registered VH-AYQ in March 1952 to Perficut Pty Ltd, Sydney.
- 12.51 A few weeks later Cherry returned to England by sea, announced his engagement to an English girl and planned to fly another Proctor to Australia as a honeymoon flight.
- 4.52 Married Miss Myrtle Chalk in London
- 3.4.52 [Percival Proctor 3 G-ALSM](#) purchased by Cherry, registered in this wife's name Myrtle L. J. Cherry, Crowthorne. Berks. Cherry and his wife departed England that month on ferry flight to Australia where he planned to sell the Proctor.
- 11.5.52 [G-ALSM lost without trace over Timor Sea](#) enroute Koepang, Timor to Darwin. Wac Whiteman departed Koepang the same morning in his Fairchild Argus VR-RBE. The Proctor was faster, and some time into the flight Whiteman observed a blue seat cushion floating on the sea, the same colour as the Proctor's seating. A large-scale air search by RAAF Lincoln and Dakota, Qantas DC-4, and Indonesian Air Force B-25 and PBY-5 was called off after 8 days. Martin Cherry was aged 26.

Ted Gabriel

Edmund Gordon Vincent Gabriel, Sydney

- 8.1.40 [Enlisted in RAAF](#). Graduated from No.26 Cadet Course
- 12.41 Arrived at Sembawang with Hudson replacements as Hudson Second Pilot. Among RAAF crews who flew their Hudsons from Singapore through Java attacked by Japanese on ground and air. Captured by Japanese, survived POW camps and repatriated from Thailand in 1945.
- 11.47 Ted Gabriel test flew [Curtiss Madsen Aircrafts](#) Lockheed Hudson VH-JCM after civil conversion, with Mac Twemlow. They were both original pilots for CMA, with Jim Madsen.
- 2.48 Gabriel and Twemlow flew Curtis Madsen Aircrafts' Hudson VH-JCM from Sydney to Athens and return on charter to European Air Transport as their inaugural migrant service.
- 19.3.48 Joined [Qantas Empire Airways](#) as DC-3 First Officer on Short Hythe flying boats

Stan Godden

Stanley Vaux Godden, "Melton" 116 Victoria Street, Potts Point, Sydney

- 45 Reportedly associated with Sydney black marketeers based at Kings Cross during the war and the postwar rationing period. He was a popular personality and friendly with pilots and others in aviation. Close personal friend of Warren Penny and Doug Fawcett.
- .46 Stan Godden put up finance and became a founding partner in [Intercontinental Air Tours](#) and [New Holland Airways](#). Established his own air charter business as [Godden Air Transport](#), with a single [Lodestar VH-BFZ](#), which seems to have mostly been leased to the other migrant trade operators.
- 8.48 Godden sold his Lodestar VH-BFZ to Israeli agents and it was ferried from Sydney to the Israeli Air Force
- .50 Purchased a share of an established business, Maurice Dry Cleaners in Double Bay, Sydney and later owned the business. He was President of the Dry Cleaners Association of NSW for 10 years and President of Federal Council of Dry Cleaners in Australia for 5 years.
- .60 Godden joined Doug Fawcett as a partnership to establish All Type Auto Repairs, Sydney to repair PMG buses with Alclad aircraft skin, grew to a successful business leading to 30 years of PMG/Telecom/Telstra contracts: caravans, mobile workshops and toilets, and all types of equipment and repairs.

- 1.2.64 Stanley Godden died in Mater Hospital, Sydney. Obituaries included: *"He was a man who was always innovating and adapting. He never stood still."* 100

Greg Hanlon:

Gregory W. Hanlon. Hanlon's middle name changes between "William" and "Wolfram" but references appear to be the same person:

- 6.47 Gregory Wolfram Hanlon was an original partner with Greg Board in the formation of [New Holland Airways](#). Hanlon was unflatteringly described as *"a spiv who wore immaculate white suits and stayed at Raffles in Singapore"* and it was claimed he was active in illegal smuggling of gold out of Australia by aircraft.
- See **THE DARKER SIDE** above.*
- 7.48 Greg Board gained a court injunction to prevent his partner Greg Hanlon taking two NHAW aircraft out of Australia because Hanlon wanted to quit the business and sell their aircraft overseas.
- 49 Migrant flights ceased. Board left Australia, leaving Hanlon as owner and General Manager of NHAW. In July 1949 the company's remaining aircraft were taken over by former NHAW operations manager Ron Howitt and their charter licence transferred to Howitt
- 2.50 Greg Hanlon advised DCA that NHAW was no longer operating as a company. The remaining NHAW aircraft, Lodestar VH-GRB was stored at Bankstown. It was sold to Overland Air Services Condobolin NSW in August 1950.
- 4.50 ANA wrote to DCA: *"Gregory William Hanlon who trades under the name New Holland Airways is indebted to this company for a considerable amount of money. ANA hold Bill of Sale on Lodestar aircraft VH-GRB and two spare Wright Cyclone engines. If the aircraft is sold, we will have first call on the monies paid in settlement of his debt to us"* 37
- 4.6.55 *The Age* newspaper Melbourne reported a court case in which a Mr. Gregory William Hanlon of Double Bay, Sydney was charged with theft of £900 during a gold transaction. Hanlon admitted to convictions for receiving, carrying an unlicensed pistol, malicious damage and offensive behavior. In July 1944 he had been convicted of theft of US Navy stores and in the same month profiteering for charging US servicemen on leave a weekly rent 5 times more than he paid for a Sydney flat.

Captain Ron Howitt:

Ronald William Howitt, Sydney

- 43-45 RAAF transport pilot. Reported to have flown transports in Burma.
- 47 Pilot and General Manager for [New Holland Airways, Sydney](#). Flew DC-5 VH-ARD and DC-3 I-TROS on migrant charters from Italy to Sydney. His title was Operations Manager at the time the company ceased operations. 82
- 7.49 Howitt took over New Holland Airways' remaining aircraft, the Lodestar VH-GRB, grounded at Bankstown
- 16.8.49 DCA transferred NHAW's charter licence to R.W. Howitt, Sydney.
- 27.2.50 Captain Ron Howitt was pilot of [Curtis-Madsen Airlines Hudson](#) at Temora
- 50-51 Howitt is [Operations Manager and Chief Pilot for Overland Air Services Pty Ltd, Condobolin NSW](#) (Lodestar VH-GRB purchased by OAS August 1950, reregistered VH-OAS) on scheduled passenger services from Sydney to Cootamundra, West Wyalong, Temora, Lake Cargelligo, Condobolin.
- 9.52 OAS has ceased operations and is in liquidation
- 52 Captain Ron Howitt is Lodestar pilot for Fawcett Aviation's [Air Cargo Pty Ltd, Bankstown](#). Flew cargo charters to Melbourne and Hobart for TAA.
- 52-58 [Managing Director of Aviation Sales Pty Ltd, Mascot NSW](#): aircraft sales and Beech agents.
- 28.11.52 Howitt of Aviation Sales Pty Ltd at Mascot purchased [Lodestar VH-FAB](#) from Fawcett Aviation, Sydney. Howitt delivered it to Saigon, French Indo China, with engineer Jack Chignell. Sale contract included instruction of pilots and engineers on the Lodestar at Saigon. Became F-OALK

- 22.9.55 Aviation Sales Pty Ltd, Mascot purchased [DH.60M Moth VH-UQV](#). Sold 12.1.59 to Titus Oates
- 10.56 Aviation Sales Pty Ltd purchased [DC-3 VH-BNH](#) ex Butler Air Transport. Sold to USA as N55L.
- .56 Aviation Sales Pty Ltd, Mascot, Australian Beechcraft agents, imported Australia's first [Beech 35 Bonanza VH-CWR](#). In following years brokered imports of Bonanzas and Twin Bonanzas.
- 5.60 Aviation Sales Pty Ltd sold 3 ex RAAF C-47s to overseas air forces after overhauls at Bankstown by Fawcett Aviation: VH-CDA and CDC to Israel, VH-CDB to Cambodia.
- 72 Ron Howitt had left aviation and was running a takeaway food shop in Newport, Sydney. Greg Board tried to find him when he returned to Sydney from USA but Howitt had sold the shop and moved on. 83
- 5.12.11 Ron Howitt died at Lady Small Haven Retirement Village, Benoiwa Queenskand, aged 89. 164

Jack Hurst:

British pilot Captain A. J. Hurst (ex RAF with over 3000 hours) was engaged in England by Warren Penny for [Intercontinental Air Tours](#) in August 1947. He mainly flew Hudson VH-ASV. When Penny sold ASV to American citizen Francis Grigware in April 1948, Hurst continued flying ASV for Grigware. See above under operators for more details on Grigware.

- 9.9.47 Hurst carried as passenger Sydney-London on Hudson VH-ASV
- 3.48 Captain of VH-ASV when delayed at Rangoon on ICAT's last migrant charter
- 16.5.48 Hurst departed Darwin for Rome in Hudson VH-ASV to collect last of ICAT's migrants
- 48 VH-ASV operated in Burma where Hurst "got into lots of trouble in Burma" 12
- 49 Hurst ferried an Australian Hudson to Israel, believed either VH-BFQ or VH-BIA
- 49 Declined a contract to fly as pilot for Israel Air Force

Ken Lockyer:

Kenneth Clinton Dudley Lockyer 52, 144, 145

- 43/44 Captain for [Australian National Airways](#), flew Lockheed Lodestars on US courier services, mostly Brisbane-Cairns- Brisbane
- 47/49 Captain for [Guinea Air Traders](#), flew GAT DC-3s on migrant runs from Europe 45
- 12.8.49 Lockyer defied DCA orders not to continue from Darwin to Sydney with 28 migrants he had flown from Rome in GAT DC-3 G-AKNB. He arrived in Sydney to press publicity about the plight of migrants being abandoned at Darwin.
- 24.10.59 Captain Lockyer fined £10 for breaches of the Air Navigation Regulations over this flight. GAT fined £50. DCA did not suspend his pilot licence
- 6.50 Joined [Union of Burma Airways](#) as DC-3 Captain. He was still flying with UBA in 1952.

Bill Mellor:

Captain William T. Mellor was employed by Warren Penny as pilot for [Intercontinental Air Tours](#) in England in late 1947 and became Operations Manager of ICAT in 1948

- 8.47 Flew [Lockheed Lodestar ZS-BAJ](#) owned by Mitchell Cotts, on long range flights from South Africa. (A report of ZS-BAJ refuelling at RAF Benina, Benghazi, Libya on 22 August 1947 states that it was owned by Mitchell Cotts and named *St George* and "probably flown by Bill Mellor") 108
- 11.47 Mellor flew ICAT's DH.86 G-ADYH from London to Sydney on inaugural migrant flight.
- 12.47 Mellor flew ICAT's Lodestar G-AGBU from London on its first trip to Sydney.

- 11.48 Cpt. W. T. Mellor was again pilot for Mitchell Cotts' [Lodestar ZS-BAJ](#), which regularly visits London from South Africa. Bill Mellor spoke with British historian John Havers on 23 November 1948 while refueling in the Middle East in ZS-BAJ. Mentioned his flying for Intercontinental Air Tours. 44

Percy Michelson:

- 11.47 Captain Percy Michelson was engaged in England by Warren Penny as a pilot for Intercontinental Air Tours. Michelson had 7000 hours experience. He made a large financial investment in ICAT.
- 12.47 He was a pilot on ICAT Lodestar G-AGBU's first migrant flight London-Rome-Athens-Cyrus-Sydney. On arrival at Sydney, Penny sacked Michelson due to his operational short-comings identified on the flight. Michelson took over ownership of G-AGBU in lieu of his financial investment in the company.
- 9.4.48 Warren Penny obtained Michelson's approval to use [Lodestar G-AGBU](#) on a charter for a yacht search off Coffs Harbour NSW, pilots Penny and Michelson.
- 50 G-AGBU purchased by Doug Fawcett, Fawcett Aviation, Bankstown (Fawcett states he purchased the Lodestar from a Mr. Laurie Middlemiss) 10
- 50 Michelson is pilot and partner with Walter E. James in [Wollongong and South Coast Air Service, Wollongong NSW](#) and subsidiary airline [South Coast Airways](#). South Coast flew scheduled Avro Anson passenger services Sydney to Wollongong and Cowra.
- 4.9.50 Captain Michelson flew South Coast Airways Anson on inaugural Service Cowra-Sydney. Press reports quoted Michelson as having 7000 hours experience.
- 8.12.50 Captain Michelson made forced landing near Katoomba on a South Coast Airways Anson service from Sydney to Cowra, with 9 passengers. He landed in a cleared field with no damage.
- 15.3.51 Captain Michelson was pilot of South Coast Airways Lockheed 10B VH-UZO when undercarriage collapsed when taxiing for departure at Wollongong, minor damage.
- 10.12.51 Lodestar G-AGBU added Australian register as VH-FAD to South Coast Airways Pty Ltd, Wollongong. DCA file quotes "legal owners of aircraft are Fawcett Aviation Pty Ltd". Australian CofA carried out at Bankstown by Fawcett, test-flown and CofA issued on 10.12.51.
- 1.51 South Coast Airways operated Lodestar VH-FAD on its passenger services from Sydney to Wollongong, Cowra and West Wyalong, fitted with seating for 18 passengers, 2 crew and a hostess.
- 8.53 South Coast Airways taken over by East West Airlines. South Coast's Lodestar VH-FAD and Lockheed 10B VH-UZO not included in sale. Lodestar returned to Fawcett Aviation, Bankstown.

Bryan Monkton: 1, 61, 92

Captain Bryan Arundel Wills Monkton was founder and Chief Pilot of Trans Oceanic Airways, Sydney in 1946. His biography is highly recommended: *The Boats I Flew*, Australian Aviation Museum, Bankstown 2005

- 3.4.18 Born as Bryan Monk at Canterbury, Melbourne
- .31 Moved to England with his father, then returned to Australia in 1933
- 34 Partner in [Skyways Ltd, Brisbane](#). B.W.Monk flew [Skyways' DH.9 VH-UHT](#) in the Brisbane-Adelaide Air Race 16-19 December 1934.
- .35 While studying law at Adelaide University, commenced flying training with Royal Aero Club of SA and gained his private, then commercial pilot licence
- .37 Commenced as instructor with Royal Aero Club of NSW at Mascot
- 2.39 By now Chief Flying Instructor of Royal Aero Club of NSW at Mascot
- 1.9.39 Enlisted in RAAF with rank Pilot Officer. First posting No. 22 Squadron Richmond, Wirraways and Demons
- 40 Instructor at Wagga, Deniliquin and Central Flying School at Camden

- .41 Posted to England with No. 254 Squadron, flying Hurricanes. With Japan's entry into the war, after only two months in England he was posted back to Australia
- .41 Posted to No. 41 Squadron Townsville on Short Empires and Dornier Do 24s then Martin Mariners. Monkton delivered two Mariners from Banana River, Florida to Rathmines.
- 26.3.42 Flt Lt. B.W. Monk was temporary CO of 33 Squadron until 8 .4.42
- 29.6.42 Bryan changed his surname from the family name Monk to Monkton.
- 11.43 S/Ldr Monkton ferried RAAF Martin Mariner A70-7 from Florida to Australia, arrived No.1 Flying Boat Repair Depot at Lake Boga, Victoria 29.11.43. He was immediately returned to USA for another Mariner ferry.
- 1.44 Ferried RAAF Martin Mariner A70-10 from Florida to Australia, arrived 1FBRD Lake Boga mid January 1944
- .44 Posted to No. 43 Squadron flying Catalinas in Pacific, Borneo, Philippines and Taiwan, including mine laying.
- 24.9.45 Discharged from RAAF
- .46 Chief Flying Instructor with Royal Aero Club of NSW at Mascot
- 10.46 Monkton and his good friend Stewart Middlemiss, also recently demobbed from RAAF Catalina service, went to RAAF Rathmines to inspect Catalinas and Sunderlands listed for disposal by the Commonwealth Disposals Commission. Middlemiss purchased two Catalinas for his newly formed company Barrier Reef Airways, and Monkton was to purchase [all 5 RAAF Sunderlands](#) and spares stocks for a total price of £6,000 with borrowed funds.
- 24.2.47 Founded new company [Trans Oceanic Airways, Rose Bay, Sydney](#). Monkton ferried each from RAAF Rathmines to Rose Bay where three were converted to civil airliners equivalent to the BOAC Hythe class.
- 29.5.47 TOA commenced charter operations with VH-AKO *Australis* flying to Tulagi, Solomon Islands. Flights to the New Hebrides, other Pacific islands and Lord Howe island followed. The first scheduled airline services were Sydney to Lord Howe Island. With Monkton as Managing Director & Chief Pilot, TOA expanded to fly scheduled services from Sydney to Grafton, Port Moresby and Hobart. Sunderlands were replaced by [Short Solents](#). Qantas Empire Airways lobbied strongly to block each TOA route licence.
- 27.8.49 Qantas Catalina VH-EAW sank at its moorings at night at Rose Bay when a time bomb exploded. Monkton was involved in a bitter dispute with Qantas at the time over access to TOA routes, and was later charged by police. The trial before a jury found him not guilty. Suspicion fell on a TOA employee sacked by Monkton, but no further legal action followed. Monkton's personal reputation was seriously tarnished for some years following these events.
- .51 TOA's flying boat services suffered mounting financial loss due competition from Qantas DC-4s on the Port Moresby route, and Ansett, ANA and TAA on the Hobart route. TOA re-financing introduced new management, which caused tensions, resulting in Monkton being forced to resign from the airline he formed.
- 51-52 Monkton flew Sandringhams for [Barrier Reef Airways, Brisbane](#)
- 29.11.51 Cable to DCA from aircraft brokers W. S. Shackleton Ltd, London advised they are supplying DH.89 Rapide G-AJSL to Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade. It will be flown to Australia by Captain B.W.Monkton. *(The sale was delayed, and a replacement Rapide G-ALNT was shipped out, became VH-CFA)*
- 7.52 Trans Oceanic Airways Pty Ltd ceased operations and went into liquidation
- 5.53 The assets of TOA (except the two surviving Short Solents) were purchased by Ansett Flying Boat Services, formed the previous year when Ansett Airways purchased Barrier Reef Airways, Brisbane. AFBS moved its base from Brisbane River to Rose Bay, Sydney taking over the TOA facilities. AFBS continued to fly Short Sandringhams from Rose Bay until 1975.
- 53-54 Part-time instructor on Tiger Moths for Fawcett Aviation's [Illawarra Flying School](#) at Bankstown
- .53 Monkton founded [South Pacific Airlines, Honolulu](#) in partnership with the Dollar Shipping Line to operate scheduled passenger services between Honolulu and Tahiti. The two retired TOA Short Solents stored at Rose Bay were purchased for South Pacific Airlines.
- 12.5.54 Monkton departed Rose Bay delivering [Short Solent N9946F \(ex VH-TOB\)](#) to Honolulu to new owners South Pacific Airlines

- 15.5.55 Monkton departed Rose Bay delivering [Short Solent N9945F \(ex VH-TOD\)](#) to Honolulu to new owners South Pacific Airlines
- .57 After a trial flight Honolulu-Christmas Island-Papeete, South Pacific Airlines was forced to abandon its plans because the British Government withdrew approval to use Christmas Islands as an essential refuelling stop because of a planned series of British nuclear bomb tests not previously disclosed to the airline. Monkton ferried both Solents from Honolulu to Oakland, California where they were later sold to Howard Hughes.
- .57 Monkton returned to Sydney deeply disappointed over the failure of SPAL. He accepted a contract to ferry [five TAA DC-3s](#) which had been sold to West African Airways at Lagos, Nigeria. Monkton captained each delivery over 4 months with a different copilot each trip.
- c58 Delivered a [Douglas DC-3](#) from Sydney to USA with 4 extra fuel tanks in cabin.
- 25.9.58 Departed San Francisco in [Beech 50 Twin Bonanza N565B](#) on delivery to Connellan Airways, via Beech agents Aviation Sales Ltd, Sydney. Arrived Sydney 5 October 1958, re-registered VH-CLA.
- .59 Monkton took a European Summer contract to Captain [Douglas DC-4s](#) for a British independent airline
- .59 Monkton replaced an American Captain on a US registered [Douglas DC-4](#) for American owner [Dan Walcott](#) for 12 Hadj flights from Iran to Jedda with Muslim pilgrims. Monkton carried a total of 900 Hadjis.
- .59 Flew [Douglas DC-6s for Nordair, Copenhagen](#)
- 4.60 Began a contract with [Sabena](#) as Captain on [Douglas DC-7s](#)
- 7.60 Based Leopoldville, in newly independent Democratic Republic of Congo flying [DC-4s and a DC-6](#) for Sabena affiliate company [Air Congo](#)
- .61 Commenced a new contract with British independent airline [Starways](#), based Elisabethville, Congo flying as Captain on 3 [Douglas DC-4s](#) with large "ONU" titles. Adventurous and dangerous flying, often from marginal airstrips during civil uprisings and tribal fighting.
- 16.9.61 His [DC-4 G-APIN](#) was destroyed by fire at Kamina, Congo after being strafed by Fouga Magister of the Katangan Air Force. Monkton was hospitalised with shrapnel wounds.
- 11.61 Monkton released from hospital in Brussels. Sent to United National HQ in New York by Starways to give evidence at a UN hearing in an attempt to gain compensation for the destroyed DC-4.
- 3.62 Commenced a contract with a Lebanese company flying [Douglas DC-4s](#) on a UN contract in Congo.
- .62 Monkton left the Congo and returned to Australia
- 3.63 Delivered ex Indian Airlines [DH.114 Heron VT-DHI](#) from Delhi to [Connellan Airways, Alice Springs](#). Became VH-CLT. Monkton remained with Connellan Airways for some time as Heron Captain while he carried out crew training and standardisation.
- 27.2.64 Monkton arrived Perth in [Piaggio P.166 VH-MMP](#) on delivery to MacRobertson Miller Airlines. He had departed England on 5 February 1964 and was delayed at Darwin and Broome with engine troubles. He had shut down an engine inbound to Darwin from Timor and was escorted by a RAF Hastings and RAAF Dakota.
- 1.74 Captain B.A.W. Monkton formed a new company [Marinair Pty Ltd, Sydney](#). The company planned to establish an airline service from Sydney to Lord Howe Island when Ansett Flying Boat Services withdraws its Sandringhams from the route later that year. Marinair Director Bryan Monkton was quoted in the press as planning to use turbine engined Grumman HU-16 Albatross amphibians, but may use a piston-engined Albatross while waiting for modified turbine models. The following month, the Vice President of Grumman Corporation, visited Sydney and Lord Howe Island and had talks with DCA over Turbo Albatross operations into Lord Howe Island. 165
- 29.9.74 Bryan Monkton remarried in Sydney
- 28.11.74 Monkton departed Rose Bay as Captain of [Short Sandringham N158C \(ex VH-BRC\)](#) the second Ansett Sandringham delivered to US Virgin Islands. Antilles Airboats owner Charles Blair was the copilot.
- 1.75 Monkton and his new wife left Sydney to live at St Croix, US Virgin islands take up the position of pilot with [Antilles Air Boats, St Croix](#). He flew the Sandringhams on Caribbean air cruises and Grumman Mallards and Grumman Goose amphibians on regular scheduled services between Caribbean islands. 114

- 5.81 Monkton captained [Sunderland N158J \(ex VH-BRF\)](#) from Christiansted, USVI to Marseilles, France for new British owner Edward Hulton. This aircraft had been stored since delivered to Antilles Air Boats because FAA would not certify it for airline use (due to its non-factory conversion ex RNZAF Sunderland by Ansett Flying Boat Services at Rose Bay in 1964)
- 81 Monkton retired from flying, with total hours 25,489 hours, of which almost 10,000 hours were logged on flying boats. During that year he visited the Solent N9946F (ex VH-TOB) being rebuilt in San Francisco.
- 11.86 B.A.W. Monkton, 92 Pitt Street, Sydney has been appointed by the Bermuda Government as Australasian and South West Pacific Director at the Bermuda Department of Tourism.
- 29.5.03 Bryan Monkton died at Southern Highlands Private Hospital, aged 85 years.

Aubrey J. R. "Titus" Oates, DFC 10, 129, 156-160, 167

Aubrey John Raymond Oates
 Born Newcastle NSW 22.11.22, schooled at Barker College, Sydney
 50/56: Good Intent Hotel, Campbelltown, Sydney
 56/57: 9 Veda Street, Hamilton NSW
 58/59: Royal Hotel, Bathurst NSW
 61/66: 13 Malo Road, Whale Beach NSW

- 39 Prewar flying on [Fairchild 24](#), [Hornet Moth](#), [Piper Cub](#), [Moth Minor](#)
- 26.3.40 Enlisted in RAAF: training at 4FTS Mascot, 1SFTS Point Cook, 1ANS Parkes
- 26.2.41 Promoted from Pilot Officer to Flying Officer
- 14.4.41 CFS Camden
- 23.7.41 3SFTS Amberley
- 1.4.42 Promoted to Flight Lieutenant
- 10.8.42 GRS, Cressy
- 6.10.42 1OTU Bairnsdale
- 7.11.42 Beaufort A9-5 flown by Oates struck power wires, when low flying near Marlo Victoria. Minor damage.
- 18.12.42 14 Sqn Pearce
- 24.9.43 6 Sqn Turnbull, Papua (Beauforts)
- 26.10.43 6 Sqn Goodenough Island, Papua (Beauforts)
 (Doug Fawcett was a DAP inspector sent to Goodenough Island to support the maintenance of RAAF Beauforts. He later wrote:
*"I was a good friend of Aubrey Oates. Often we would join forces and make up a poker game with two other men. In fact, it was through our poker games that I got to know why he was called Titus. It was not because of his namesake (the gallant Arctic explorer), but just that he was very tight with his money.
 One night I had just joined a game of two-up when Titus drove up in a jeep. He was off to Rabaul and, on an impulse, I decided to go with him. In fact I would often fly as an observer on test flights after some major maintenance on an aircraft, to check that he faults had been rectified. I grabbed my warm gear and parachute from the nearby hangar and when we arrived at the Beaufort, Titus had what he called a nervous pee down at the rear of the aircraft. If he was nervous he certainly didn't show it. (Description of flight in formation with 2 other Beauforts) During the flight he talked on the intercom to the crew about last minute checks, the weather, the last briefing etc. Although he was a determined man, he was also quite jovial and and always seemed to have a new joke to tell. On arrival over Rabaul, there was little opposition, though quite a few tracers were seen. Titus did his low-level bombing run with a dogged look on his reddish shiny face. The crewman in the cupola up front gave the signal and the 500 pounders were dropped.
 I flew many submarine patrols, both day and night, while stationed at 6 Squadron, but the flights with Titus are the ones I remember best. They were carried out with such professionalism and bravado. There was a special air about him. Titus seemed a cut above the others and his sense of timing was remarkable. I can still see his gloved hands moving around the cockpit operating the various controls, with a slow rhythm, rather like an orchestra conductor."* 10
- 16.11.43 F/Lt A.J.R. Oates actions in a shipping attack in Beaufort A9-402 resulted in him being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross on 4 January 1944.
- 1.7.44 Promoted to Squadron Leader
- 6.7.44 6 Sqn CO's assessment: *"This officer is an excellent pilot who has completed an outstanding flying tour. He is however intolerant in his dealings with subordinates and before he can qualify for additional responsibilities must learn to curb his impatience"*
- 14.10.44 5 OTU Williamtown
- 24.11.44 Discharged from RAAF at the officer's request, to resume civil career
- by 2.45 Aubrey Oates employed as a [DH.Mosquito](#) test pilot for [De Havilland Aircraft Pty Ltd](#), [Bankstown](#).
- 15.8.45 V-J Day: Oates flew a Mosquito at low altitude over Sydney during V-J Day celebrations.
- 46 Married Jacqueline Sonia Lewis at Woollahra, Sydney

- 9.47 A. J. R. Oates is temporary Manager of [Interstate Air Services Pty Ltd, Mascot](#): airline service Sydney to Jervis Bay, using Avro Ansons
- 16.10.47 Oates purchased [Comper Swift VH-ACG](#) ex Light Aircraft Pty Ltd (Denzel MacArthur-Onslow). It had been dismantled during the war, CofA renewed 24.10.47. Aircraft log book shows that Oates based it at Camden, flown regularly between Mascot and Bankstown during 48/49. Sold 31.10.50.
- 1.48 Oates reported at Darwin and Calcutta while flying a Lodestar to Rome on a migrant charter (operator unknown).
- 28.1.50 Advertisement in Sydney Morning Herald newspaper for the Good Intent Hotel, Campbelltown:
"Every comfort and modern convenience. Beautiful surroundings. 35 miles from Sydney. Handy Golf, Polo Cross, Horse Riding. For bookings A.J.R. Oates, Proprietor. Phone....."
- 24.10.50 A.J.R.Oates, Good Intent Hotel, Campbelltown, Sydney purchased [Percival Gull VH-CCM](#) with expired CofA at Parafield. Ferried to Bankstown, CofA renewed 12.12.51 by Morris Air Service. Sold 14.4.52.
- .52 Purchased [Ryan STM VH-AHE](#) with expired CofA ex Newcastle Aero Club. Ferried from Broadmeadow to Camden for CofA renewal. Testflown 5.11.52, and restored to Register on 5.11.52 to T.A.Tulloh, Cobar NSW
- 10.9.52 Minister for Air, William McMahon announced that a surplus Mosquito would be made available to Sqn Ldr Oates DFC for the London-Christchurch Air Race. [Mosquito PR.41 VH-KLG](#) registered to A. J. R. Oates on 23.9.53 ex A52-324. Entered in race as #6, painted allover red, main sponsor KLG Spark Plugs. While en-route to England to commence the race, Oates made a forced landing in a coastal swamp near Mergui, Burma on 4.10.53 when lost and low on fuel. Oates and copilot/navigator Flt Lt Doug Swain both injured when thrown out of the cockpit on impact, but rescued. Pilot Oates was described in newspaper reports as a hotel publican.
- 11.53 Oates attempted to purchase Jimmy Woods' Mosquito VH-WAD, which was withdrawn from the 1953 London-Christchurch Air Race when a key sponsor reneged, had been parked at Perth Airport. Sale not completed due to restrictions in the agreement for the free issue of the RAAF Mosquito to Woods.
- 22.7.54 Oates purchased [DH.87A Hornet Moth VH-UUW](#) to be his entry in the 1954 REDeX Air Trial in August. The aircraft was painted with large "Associated Television City, Sydney" slogans.
- 26.7.54 Press report: Aubrey Oates has sold his Hotel Austru in Camden NSW "to enter television production in Australia"
- 1.8.54 Oates departed Bankstown in VH-UUW in the 1954 REDeX Air Trial, route via Brisbane, Townsville, Darwin, Alice Springs, Adelaide, Wagga, Sydney. He was originally Second place but unplaced after an appeal was upheld. He sold VH-UUW on 15.9.54, immediately after the Air Trial.
- 4.55 Oates & Lionel Van Praag ferried ex [Fawcett Aviation Lodestar ZK-BJM](#) (ex VH-FAD) to NZ when sold to Fieldair, both pilots reported to have stayed on in NZ to train local pilots on the Lodestar for low-level agricultural flying.
- 27.6.56 Purchased [Percival Proctor VH-BQQ](#). Sold 11.1.57
- 11.56 Oates & Lionel Van Praag ferried ex [Fawcett Aviation Lodestar ZK-BMC](#) (ex VH-FAC) to NZ when sold to Fieldair.
- 56 Oates engaged as a Tiger Moth ag. pilot for [Fawcett Aviation subsidiary Farm Air Pty Ltd](#). Doug Fawcett recalls that Oates flew night dusting on moonlight nights to get jobs finished earlier, using marker men on ground with torches, which was not approved by DCA at the time.
- 23.12.56 Wreckage of Sydney Morning Herald Lockheed Hudson VH-SML (missing since 14.9.54, Captain Doug Swain, Oates' copilot/navigator for the air race Mosquito) sighted by Butler Air Transport crew, north of Dungong NSW. Oates landed his Tiger Moth on top of a nearby mountain ridge and circled the crash site to aid a ground party.
- 57 Oates proposed purchase of two new E.P.9s for a new agricultural business being established, Skyspread Ltd, Sydney. He made the purchase arrangements for the aircraft to be ferried to Australia. Oates offered a position with Skyspread to James "Wac" Whiteman, who would fly the second E.P.9 on delivery. To reduce costs, the pair crewed one of five TAA DC-3s being ferried to Lagos, Nigeria after sale to West African Airways Corp. Bryan Monkton had the contract to deliver them and was captain on each flight with different copilots. From Lagos, Oates and Whiteman went by airline to London. While waiting for the new E.P.9s to be tested at the factory, the entrepreneurial Oates located three Australians in London, desperate for a cheap flight home plus cargo to offset the ferry costs. Despite Whiteman's E.P.9 carrying all the spare parts included in the purchase, Oates allocated him two female passengers and a racing car engine. Oates would take the third passenger plus other cargo.
- 28.10.57 Whiteman and Oates departed Croydon in [Edgar Percival E.P.9s G-APIA & G-APIB](#) on the delivery flight to Sydney. Whiteman aborted his first takeoff attempt because he was too heavy. He had the racing car engine

off-loaded, then the two aircraft set off in loose formation. It was agreed that Whiteman would be responsible for navigation and Oates would stay in visual contact. Neither aircraft was fitted with radio. Refuelling stops were: Roanne, Lyon, Marseilles, Roma, Araxas, Athens, Rhodes, Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, Basra, Bahrein, Mauraeva, Karachi, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Calcutta, Chittagong, Rangoon, Mergui, Butterworth, Penang, Singapore, Palembang, Djakarta, Soerabaya, Denpasar, Koepang, Darwin, Tennant Creek, Cloncurry, Charleville, Dalby, Archerfield, Newcastle, Bankstown. The trip took three weeks and included being forced to land at Damascus by military jets and the aircraft searched. At the last stop at Newcastle, Oates off-loaded the aircraft spares collection, and changed into a fresh suit for interviews with media, organised to meet their arrival at Bankstown. The E.P.9s were registered VH-FBY & FBZ. Whiteman remained with Skyspread as a cropdusting pilot. However Oates was taken to court by the company over costs he claimed for the delivery flight and to gain access to the E.P.9 spare parts.

- 23.4.58 [CAC Mustang A68-100](#) collected ex RAAF Tocumwal, after purchase by tender by Oates. Sold to Fawcett Aviation .60 as VH-BOW ntu.
- 23.4.58 [CAC Mustang A68-187](#) collected ex RAAF Tocumwal, after purchase by tender by Oates. Sold to Adastral Aerial Surveys, Sydney .60
- 24.5.58 [CAC Mustang A68-107](#) collected at RAAF Tocumwal, after purchase by tender by Oates. Registered VH-AUB 4.9.58 to A. J. R. Oates, Bathurst NSW. Painted pillarbox red, initially based at Bathurst, later Bankstown, with maintenance by Civil Flying Service at Moorabbin Vic.



Aubrey Oates with his red Mustang VH-AUB in 1958

- .58 [CAC Mustang A68-104](#) purchased ex Taren Point Non Ferrous Metals, Sydney: probably collected by Oates at Tocumwal. Sold to Adastral Aerial Surveys .60
- .58 [CAC Mustang A68-199](#) purchased ex R. H. Grant Scrap Metals: probably collected by Oates at Tocumwal. Sold to Fawcett Aviation .60 became VH-BOZ
- 7.12.58 [Gloster Meteor F8 A77-868](#) arrived Bankstown. Offered for sale by owner A. J. R. Oates asking £10,000: Advertisement: "*Graziers who want to make a quick trip into town would find the jet invaluable*". By 2.60 price had dropped to £1000. In 8.60 traded to Sydney Technical College, Ultimo, Sydney in exchange for two [Spitfires: MV154 instructional airframe and MV239 still crated](#).
- 12.1.59 Purchased [DH.60M VH-UQV](#) ex Aviation Sales Pty Ltd (Ron Howitt). Sold 15.5.60.
- 59 Oates was hired as a pilot for [target towing Mustangs](#) for [Fawcett Aviation, Bankstown](#). Owner Doug Fawcett in his book *Pilots & Propellers* describes Titus often arriving late in the Mustang, delaying Army gunnery training contracts. "*One dark evening when I was staying at the Chevron Hotel in Surfers Paradise, I heard the roar of what could only be a Mustang. The next moment one flew past about 100 feet above the hotel. The amazing thing about it was that the navigation lights were the wrong way around. I knew Titus had his own Mustang VH-AUB at Coolangatta Airport, and I guessed it was him, flying inverted over the hotel, probably trying to impress a young lady. This type of flying was severely frowned upon by the Civil Aviation authorities and they threw the book at him the next day. Although unruly, he*

was in my opinion, a very capable pilot, and even with his faults, he was a likable person. We did, however, find it necessary to use pilots over whom we had a little more control." 10

- early 60s Titus Oates flew cropdressing aircraft for Airland Improvements, Cootamundra NSW. At the time the company operated Tiger Moths, Fletcher Fu24s, Cessna 180s and CAC CA-28 Ceres. He is remembered at Cootamundra for his large imported green Pontiac convertible car.
- 5.61 Spitfire Mk.VIIIc MV154 seen at Bankstown, assembled, ex Sydney Technical College. Planned display as a memorial to RAF Battle of Britain pilots, but plan abandoned. MV239 has been purchased by Sid Marshall and assembled in Marshall Airways hangar Bankstown, then moved to his storage yard on Bankstown airfield boundary 28.5.61. MV154 also later acquired by Marshall.
- 29.4.63 Oates test flew his Mustang VH-AUB at Moorabbin after it had been parked there 14 months. He departed for Bankstown on 3.5.63. Parked at Bankstown until 1966, when sold to Ewan McKay of "Rosedale" Station, Jericho Queensland. It was dismantled and left by road in April 1966 for Queensland, where it was reassembled on McKay's property, retaining the red paint scheme. Sold to Col Pay, Scone NSW in 1978 and restored as RAAF A68-107
- c65 Aubrey Oates remarried Barbara Lang in Sydney. They had four children Quentin, Ranville, Gabrielle and Hugh.
- .68 Flew for [Air America Inc, based in Laos and Cambodia](#).
- 70 Military flying instructor with [Republic of Singapore Air Force](#)
- 31.7.71 High Court of the Republic of Singapore: writ of seizure and sale by plaintiff Mercantile Bank Ltd versus Aubrey John Raymond Oates and Barbara Helen Oates, regarding one Pontiac Parisienne motorcar.
- 9.8.71 High Court of the Republic of Singapore: Bankruptcy Ordinance: Aubrey John Raymond Oates to pay the sum of \$11,290 as final judgment obtained by Bank of America against Oates on 9.2.71.
- c74 Moved to Africa from Singapore, flew general aviation and agricultural aircraft
- Reports circulating among Oates' associates in Australia claimed he was killed in a crop-dusting crash in Africa, or, more colourfully, stabbed to death by an Arab in the Middle East. It was also suggested that he arranged to have his own spurious death notices published in Australian newspapers to discourage parties interested in his location.
- 1979 Aubrey Oates died of a heart attack in Zambia.

Warren Penny: 1,11, 50,49, 58, 65,142
Henry Warren Grindrod Penny, Sydney

- 31.7.29 Warren Penny purchased [Avro Avian VH-UKD](#) from Edgar Percival in Sydney.
- 30.9.29 Left Mascot in the East-West Air Race to Perth, race number 20, arrived Perth 5.10.29. Penny remained in WA with address of his parents' farm at Chidlow WA. The Civil Aviation Branch had a running dispute with Penny, who flew his Avian out of Maylands aerodrome, Perth each time CAB attempted to inspect the aircraft. An internal CAB report in 4.30 describes Penny as a *gipsy joy rider who spends his time at WA country towns taking up unsuspecting public*". 78
- 4.30 Flew the Avian back to Sydney, repossessed 7.30 by Avro agents Harkness & Hillier.
- .30 Due to the Depression, Penny sailed to California steerage class looking for flying work.
- 5.31 Testflew the locally designed [Ford Silver Centenary](#) biplane at Beverly WA and took it on a tour of local towns. The aircraft was refused a CofA by CAB due lack of engineering design drawings.
- 10.31 Joined 2UE Sydney as radio announcer, later with 2CH, 3AW, 4BK through to 1936
- 8.34 Sailed for California again. Entered the 1934 MacRobertson Air Race from England to Melbourne, quoting a [Vultee V-1A](#) aircraft. Vultee assigned him a V-1A off the production line at Glendale (c/n 5, 750 hp Wright Cyclone) but Penny was unable to raise required finance and forced to withdraw only two days prior to commencement of the race from Mildenhall. (Vultee V-1A c/n 5 went to American Airlines as NC13767 but crashed in Texas 29.1.36 causing American to withdraw its fleet of ten Vultee V-1As, which were eventually shipped to the Spanish Republicans and used during the Spanish civil war)
- 2.35 Penny arrived back in Sydney by sea after stowing away on a liner from New York to London.

- 35/36 Flew joyrides most weekends at Mascot for [Kingsford Smith Flying Services](#) in [Avro 10 VH-UMG](#) owned by Australian Transcontinental Airways Ltd. Often flew [Curtiss Robin VH-UJE](#) on joyriding at Mascot, owned by S. L. "Pop" Tyler.
- 21.11.36 Penny was pilot of [Avro Ten VH-UMG](#) when it crashed on landing Mascot after being struck by wind squall while being operated on joyrides. Port wing tip struck the ground, aircraft cartwheeled across the aerodrome, and was wrecked. 3 of the 7 passengers were treated for minor injuries.
- 12.36 Flying joyrides at Mascot in [Avro 10 VH-UXX](#) owned by [Eastern Air Transport, Sydney](#)
- 36 Flew as instructor on [Aeronca C-3s VH-U XU and VH-U XV](#) imported by [G. B. S. Faulkner, Sydney](#)
- 36/38 Joined [Southern Airlines and Freighters Ltd](#) as pilot on scheduled service Sydney-Broken Hill. Fleet included [Codock, Tugan Gannet, Waco YKS-6, DH90, Monospar](#). Numerous forced landings.
- 38 Flew for [Airlite Pty Ltd, Mascot: Ryan STA and Cessna C34](#)
- 26.2.38 Penny flew experienced parachutist Miss Jean Burns on jump from Airlite's [Cessna C34 VH-UYG](#) at Mascot.
- 18.4.38 Penny made emergency landing in Airlite Cessna [C34 VH-UYG](#) at Old Bar NSW with 3 passengers
- 38-39 Pilot for [Marshall Airways, Mascot](#) and regularly flew Marshall's [Short Scion VH-UUP](#) on aerial ambulance flights to NSW country towns.
- 39 Sailed to NZ to join [Union Airways](#) as Commander Penny, flying [D.H.86s and D.H.84s](#)
- 9.39 Penny back in Sydney: leased [DH.60G Moth VH-UAE](#) from C. S. Richards, Sydney to conduct flying training under the name [Warren Penny Flying School, Mascot](#). Richards sold UAE in December 1939
- 10.39 Penny leased [Avro Avian VH-UHC](#) from Mrs. Amy Madden, Sydney for flying training by [Warren Penny Flying School, Mascot](#). Avian tipped on nose Mascot 29 October 1939 due to undercarriage structural failure, pilot Penny with student. Avian repaired, retired at Mascot due wartime flying restrictions, sold to S. D. Marshall. Mascot on 25 March 1941
- 11.39 Penny leased [Avro Avian VH-UHZ](#) from Paul Burton, Sydney for Warren Penny Flying School, Mascot. Prop damaged on takeoff Raymond Terrace NSW 4 November 1939, tailskid was damaged at Cooma NSW 16 November 1939, undercarriage collapsed landing Mascot 9 December 1939. The flying school operated at Mascot on weekends and Cooma NSW on weekdays.
- 15.1.40 Penny made forced landing in Avian VH-UHZ at Bungendore NSW due engine failure.
- 4.40 Enlisted in RAAF. Initially flew as an instructor, then flew in RAAF Dakota transport squadrons until his discharge November 1945 with rank Squadron Leader.
- 46 On discharge from RAAF Penny applied for pilot position with Qantas Empire Airways in Sydney but withdrew his application when he was told that he would have to spend three years as copilot on DC-3s, despite his 3,000 hours as Captain on Dakotas. He decided on a new career in shipping.
- 46 Established [Hervey Bay Boat Co](#) at Maryborough QLD with an 86 feet timber freighter vessel *Erina II* which he purchased at auction at Garden Island dockyards, Sydney. It was refitted in Sydney and a full crew hired for the trip to Hervey Bay, carrying Penny, his wife Mone and his father who had financed the business. In the hold were three small motor boats he planned to base at Pinalba. Commenced charters with *Erina II* whose hold was converted to sleep 45 passenger and won a contract to service light houses along Queensland coast. But after several months the business failed. Penny sold *Erina II* and joined a syndicate in Sydney named [Consolidated Shipping Co](#) which planned to establish a freighter shipping line to Singapore.
- 46 Penny sailed to England on *Dominion Monarch*, which was still configured as a troop ship, to locate a suitable vessel for their planned Singapore service. He was negotiating a price for a 10,000 ton vessel with a London shipbroker when he learnt the syndicate in Sydney had disbanded and he was stranded in London.
- 12.46 Purchased [Percival Proctor 1 G-AIEF](#) in London and flew it back to Australia for resale. He departed England on 28 December 1946 and arrived at Mascot on 3 February 1947 and immediately advertised it for sale, c/o Marshall Airways. Sold to motor dealer Fred Sutton and registered as VH-SMS to Suttons Motors Pty Ltd, Sydney on 15 May 1947.
An arrival Karachi he had parked the Proctor as instructed by the airport officials, when he was confronted by red headed Qantas Captain Ron "Torchy" Uren aggressively demanding he move to clear a path for Uren's Constellation. Penny had trained Uren to fly at the Warren Penny Flying School at Mascot in 1939, and resented his high-handed attitude, so refused to move. After an argument befitting both men's temperaments, Penny was satisfied and moved his Proctor.

- 5.47 Warren Penny established [Intercontinental Air Tours, Sydney](#). Full details under ICAT above.
- 4.48 ICAT ceased operations.
- 49-53 Charter pilot for [Marshall Airways, Mascot, later Bankstown: DC-2, Ansons, Dragon, Puss Moth](#)
 Greg Banfield's history of Marshall Airways gives the following:
"On 9 February 1949 Warren Penny was called in to fly Marshall Airways Anson VH-AZX in a search for children missing in the Burragorang Valley. Further flying on ambulance work and carrying doctors to country towns followed and he struck a good deal of work over the next 15 months. Most of the ambulance trips in the Anson were to the western districts of NSW, although trips carrying specialist doctors were largely to the northern part of the State. The work included many photography flights for the Press to obtain pictures which appeared on the front page of various newspapers of floods or visiting ships and such like; and carrying sheep and cattle buyers around the country. When rail strikes paralysed NSW in 1949, Warren Penny carried mail to Brisbane and large amounts of freight to various places around the state. He flew a survey party to Kosciusko for the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority in the Anson and made several trips over the mountains area with the group who were planning the construction of the dams and tunnels. When Nabiac was cut off by floodwaters, Warren did quite a few trips in the Puss Moth, flying supplies of food.
- Using both the Puss Moth VH-UQB and the Anson VH-AZX, Warren Penny made a number of trips to Bega on behalf of Cams Trawlers, a big firm of wholesale fish suppliers in Sydney. Cams were operating their vessels out of Eden and had continuous trouble with their crews, so Marshall Airways would fly seamen down to the little strip at Bega, where they would be met by cars which took them to the ships, and the discharged crew members would be flown back. Pigeon racing became popular around this time and on 16 July 1949 Warren took a load of pigeons in Anson VH-AZX to West Wyalong, where they were released to race back to Sydney. This was so successful that he subsequently flew quite a number of trips to various places with loads of pigeons. The carriage of pigeons developed into the delivery of chickens and he did a number of trips carrying day-old chicks to Dubbo, Parkes and Young.*
- Warren Penny also flew Sid Marshall's Douglas DC-2 VH-CDZ on joyriding and charter work. Subsequently he hired aircraft from Marshall on a number of occasions. He hired the Puss Moth, Anson and Dragon VH-AQU at various times and used them for flood relief work, charters and joyriding. 121*
- 1.50 Warren Penny was declared Bankrupt due debts incurred by ICAT. Bankruptcy discharged in May 1956.
- 6.50 Established [Inland Airways Pty Ltd, Broken Hill NSW](#), at request of 5 Wilcannia businessmen including the town mayor who financed the operation: [Avro Anson VH-BMQ](#) was purchased in June 1950 from Wagga Air Taxis. With Warren Penny as Chief Pilot, the company commenced scheduled services on 27 May 1950 on the route Bankstown-Dubbo-Ivanhoe-Wave Hill-Wilcannia, also between Wilcannia and Cobar and Broken Hill, and Wilcannia-Ivanhoe-Griffith. Due to lack of patronage, Inland Airways ceased operations only two months later on 19 July 1950 when Penny ferried the Anson back to Wagga. DCA reported: *"One of the directors was Warren G. Penny. When he left the company, the set-up was very confused with no pilot and no operational experience."* 50
- 7.10.50 Penny departed Mascot in Marshall Airways Anson VH-AZX for Coffs Harbour participating in search for Auster Mk.3 VH-DAE which was missing enroute Coffs Harbour to Sydney on 4.10.50. Penny flew the Anson over the next six days. The Auster has never been located.
- 50-52 Penny flew [Lodestars VH-FAB and VH-FAC](#) for Fawcett Aviation subsidiary [Air Cargo Pty Ltd, Bankstown](#)
- 7.50 Commenced hay dropping sorties from Narrabri NSW to stock stranded by floods. Continued these operations over the next year, using [Anson VH-BMQ](#) and Marshall's [Anson VH-AZX](#) and [Dragon VH-AQU](#).
- 11.50 Penny commenced flood relief flights at Moree NSW for 4 months using Marshall Airways Dragon VH-AQU, carrying passengers between Moree and Narrabri where the railway line was still open, landing on the road just outside Moree.
- 3.51 Penny ferried Avro Anson VH-AZI from Tamworth following its sale by East West Airlines on 12.3.51 to Campbell-Hicks Airways, Condobolin NSW. The aircraft had an expired CofA at that time.
- 17.3.51 Penny and Sid Marshall flew [DC-2 VH-CDZ](#) Mascot-Narrabri-Moree return to collect people stranded by floods. They did it again on 22 March, and a third DC-2 trip on 27 March was flown by Penny and Lionel Van Praag.
- 7.51 Penny established [Air Centre, Narrabri NSW](#), financed by local graziers. [Anson VH-AZI](#) was purchased in October 1951 and flown by Penny on general passenger charters throughout NSW. The venture was soon wound up
- 12.51 Penny flew [Lodestar VH-FAD](#) for [South Coast Airways, Sydney](#)

- 7.52 Flew [Marshall Airways Anson VH-AZX](#) chartered to airlift 2000 sheep stranded by floods on an island of higher ground on a property near Hillston NSW. He flew in men and fencing to erect a temporary stockyard, then commenced the short flights to nearby higher land, landing on the island and packing 52 sheep into the Anson each trip. He moved another 2000 sheep for another farmer. Penny flew 120 hours in the Anson on this charter.
- 15.8.52 Flew [Marshall Airways Dragon VH-AQU](#) from Sydney to Maree SA with a documentary movie crew.
- 1.53 Sailed for UK to seek airline work, joined [Skyways Ltd, London](#) to establish a heavy charter operation based at Nicosia, Cyprus for Skyways Avro Yorks. Penny built up work for 9 Yorks, then transferred to Singapore to develop similar work. Left Skyways in January 1956 and returned to Sydney.
- 3.56 Commenced 3 months of flood relief charters at Brewarrina NSW firstly with [Auster VH-KAG](#) hired from John Conley of Australian Aircraft Sales, Kings Cross. After several weeks of flying 7 days a week, the propeller came off the engine on takeoff from Bourke with 2 passengers. Penny landed the Auster safely and found the crankshaft had seized. He immediately took a Butler Air Transport DC-3 service to Sydney and arranged to hire Marshall Airways [Avro Anson VH-AZX](#) with which Penny carried loads of 52 sheep off flood islands. He also rescued stranded stockmen, on one occasion landing alongside a group of 12 men and 3 dogs, which he flew out with the men standing together at the front of the cabin. When the Anson reached its hours before overhaul, Sid Marshall and his engineer Jack Davidson flew another Marshall Airways [Anson VH-ASM](#) to Narromine where they switched over and took AZX back to Bankstown for its service. By the time ASM ran out of hours, Sid had finished AZX and brought it back to Narromine. A total of 4,475 sheep were airlifted in 15 minute runs.
- 10.3.57 Penny flew a Marshall Airways charter in [DC-2 VH-CDZ](#) to Canberra, chartered by newspaper proprietor Frank Packer for a meeting with the Prime Minister.
- 57 Flew [Tiger Moth crop spraying](#) in NSW for Fawcett Aviation subsidiary [Farm Air Pty Ltd](#).
- 20.12.57 Warren Penny borrowed Marshall Airways [Anson VH-AZX](#) to fly to Coolangatta for an airshow which Warren and his two brothers had organised for a charity. When strong winds threatened to spoil the airshow, Warren flew the Anson so slowly into the stiff wind that the Anson was stationary in front of the crowd.
- 2.1.58 Penny regularly flew [Dragon VH-AQU](#) for Marshall Airways for 6 months, including joyrides at The Entrance.
- 3.60 Penny purchased [D.H.84 Dragon VH-PSZ](#) and delivered it to Sydney from Parafield on 15 March 1960: he established his own company [Independent Air Charter, Box 22, Woollahra Sydney](#): offered charter flights in Dragon, Lockheed 10B and other types.
- 60 [Aviation Manager for C. H. Degotardi Air Services, Sydney](#): delivered their [Lockheed 10B VH-CHD](#) from Charleville QLD in July 1960, used for real estate flights and general charter
- 19.7.60 Penny was a passenger on TAA Electra VH-TLB Sydney-Brisbane when he helped overpower a man attempting to hijack the aircraft with a dynamite bomb and fuse.
- 3.8.60 Penny made forced landing in [Lockheed 10 VH-CHD](#) with engine failure at Camooweal Qld on a passenger charter to NT: he was subsequently charged by DCA with operating overloaded.
- 2.63 Aviation Advisor and pilot for [Western Air Courier Pty Ltd, 143 High Street, Hillston NSW](#) on charter work. Directors included John Conley of Australian Aircraft Sales. Commenced a scheduled service in March 1963 between Hillston-Wilcannia-Ivanhoe-Griffith to carry passengers to connect with scheduled airlines to Sydney using [Beech Bonanza VH-BBQ](#) and [Lockheed LASA 60 VH-ELI](#) both owned by Australian Aircraft Sales. There was a subsequent court case against Conley over investors' funds.
- 23.7.67 Penny was flying [Marshall Airways Lockheed 10 VH-ASM](#) on joyrides at Bankstown, when he made an emergency landing with a smoking starboard engine and suspect undercarriage: landed safely.
- 20.5.01 Warren Penny died at Blacktown Hospital, Sydney

Bert Starkey: 3, 58

Captain Bert Starkey, popularly known as "Moonlight" Starkey.

39 Prewar civil pilot

40 [Enlisted in RAAF](#)

- 2.42 WO Starkey flying DC-2s with 1 Wireless Air Gunners School, Ballarat VIC
- 7.42 WO Starkey flying DC-2s with 36 Squadron, Essendon VIC
- 8.43 PO Starkey flying C-47s with 36 Squadron, Townsville QLD
- 25.3.44 FO Starkey of 36 Squadron made a forced landing in Dakota A65-1 at Cairns QLD due engine failure
- 47-48 Pilot for [Intercontinental Air Tours, Sydney](#) on migrant charters
- 21.1.48 Starkey dismissed from ICAT by Warren Penny after an eventful trip from Rome with a load of nuns (described in the first section above).
- 1.48 Starkey joined [Guinea Air Traders, Lae, New Guinea](#).
- 29.1.48 Starkey was captain of [New Holland Airways Douglas DC-5 VH-ARD](#) during crew endorsement training at Schofields NSW. Undercarriage was retracted too early on takeoff and the aircraft settled back on to the runway on its belly, with only minor damage. 58

Frank "Mac" Twemlow DFC: 128

Frank MacKay Twemlow, Sydney

- 18.9.40 [Enlisted in RAAF](#). Flew P-40s with RAAF 450 Squadron in Middle East. Awarded Distinguished Flying Cross, Africa Star, Italy Star, 1939/45 Star.

Returned to Australia as instructor at No.2 OTU Mildura.
- 12.46 Managing Director of [Interstate Air Services Pty Ltd, Sydney](#): operated Ansons and Dragons on airline service Sydney-Jervis Bay
- 6.47 Twemlow operates as Gracelin Import and Export Co, P.O.Box 8, Bankstown NSW. He is owner of Handley Page Halifax VH-BDT registered to [Aircarriers Pty Ltd, Sydney](#). Planned tramp freight operations were discontinued after a problem-plagued first charter to Singapore in June 1947.
- 11.47 Mac Twemlow and Ted Gabriel test flew [Curtiss Madsen Aircrafts Lockheed Hudson VH-JCM](#) after civil conversion. They were original pilots for CMA, with Jim Madsen.
- 2.48 Gabriel and Twemlow flew Curtiss Madsen Aircrafts' Hudson VH-JCM from Sydney to Athens and return on charter to European Air Transport as their inaugural migrant service.
- 48 Mac Twemlow and Warren Penny together put up bail to have Charles M. MacDonald of Macair Charter Service released from gaol in Sydney on fraud charges.
- 18.3.48 Joined [Qantas Empire Airways](#) as DC-3 First Officer in New Guinea. DC-3 Captain in New Guinea 1950-52.
- 16.4.52 Captain Max Twemlow in a Qantas DC-3 joined the search for DCA Drover VH-DHA, which had ditched 100 miles from Wewak. He picked up the signal from the *Gibson Girl* transmitter of the dinghy carrying the three occupants. At dawn next morning they were rescued by the crew of Qantas Catalina VH-EBD, flown by Captain Fred Fox who landed alongside the dinghy at sea.
- 53 Qantas DC-4 Captain
- 21.3.60 Retired from Qantas due ill health, at that time Boeing 707 Captain
- 30.1.95 Frank Twemlow, late of Berrima NSW, died at age 76. 164

Lionel Van Praag: 114

Lionel Maurice Van Praag, 35 Fletcher Street, Bondi, Sydney.

He pronounced his name as *Van Pragg*, but was known to his friends as "Van".

Doug Fawcett wrote: *"He was certainly a tough person. I believe that during his motorbike racing days he had broken almost every bone in his body"* 10

17.12.1908 Born Sydney

- 31 Van Praag was a professional motorcycle speedway rider. He appeared in the 1933 British *film Money for Speed*, which starred motorbike speedway riders and promoters.
- 10.9.36 Won the World Speedway Championship at Wembley, England. Returned to Wembley to ride in the world championships in 1937 and 1938
- 11.8.41 [Enlisted in RAAF](#), occupation on enlistment quoted as Professional Motor Cyclist, Bondi Sydney.
- 41-42 Sergeant L. Van Praag attached to No.2 WAGS, Parkes as DC-2 copilot.
- 26.1.42 Sgt Van Praag was copilot to Flying Officer Noel Webster in RAAF DC-2 A30-8 en route Sourabaya-Koepang returning from a special mission carrying USAAC P-40 Kittyhawk ground crews and aircraft spares to Sourabaya during the fall of Java. The DC-2 was attacked by Japanese fighters, badly damaged, Van Praag was wounded and they were forced to ditch in Sumba Strait. With two other crew members, they drifted in sea for 30 hours in water before washed up on an island where they were cared for by natives. Webster and Van Praag were awarded the George Medal for bravery. 31
- 43 John Balfe, fellow RAAF transport pilot, later wrote of Lionel and the DC-2 ditching:
"...in flying with Van, I had perceived in his slight, wiry form a man of particular capacity and directness. He cared nothing for false values in anything or anyone and did not hide the fact. I found him only a week out of hospital after the ditching but already back in a comprehensive engineering workshop that he had behind his unpretentious home on Botany Bay's northern shore. One of the real Australians, Van had led a hard and dangerous life racing motorcycles from early manhood and lived to standards that he had not relaxed. He was a moderate in thought and habit and held in quiet contempt those who were not." 113
- 18.3.42 Flying Officer Van Praag assigned from RAA Hospital to No.36 Squadron, Townsville as C-47 captain on transport operations to the islands
- 11.43 36 Squadron CO Squadron Leader Harry Purvis assessed Van Praag: *Above the average pilot, of considerable experience on large types. Ideally suited for transport flying. Inclined to be truculent in his manner with men under him and as a result is not popular.*
- 11.43 Posted to No.1 Paratroop Training Unit with DC-2s
- 44 Flew Dakotas with 38 Sqn and 35 Sqn
- 12.44 Flight Lieutenant Van Praag RAAF Flying Hours report: Total hours 1712, including 544 hours on DC-2s, 828 hours on Dakotas
- 27.7.45 Discharged by RAAF at own request to resume civil career.
- 46 Operated the International Speedway Club, Sydney. He retired from competitive motorcycle riding in 1950.
- 46-47 Purchased [3 RAAF Hudsons](#) from Commonwealth Disposals Commission: listed below
- 47-49 Pilot for [Guinea Air Traders](#). He was senior Captain for their European DC-3s migrant flights from Europe. Van Praag delivered [GAT's DC-3s G-AGHN and G-AKNB](#) from England to join the migrant charters.
- 10.49 He ferried [GAT DC-3 G-AKNB](#) back to England after DCA stopped migrant charters to Australia. On arrival at Blackbushe, he was held by Ministry of Civil Aviation officials due to concerns with the validity of his pilot licence and the CofA status of the aircraft.
- 8.12.49 Van Praag arrived at Alice Springs delivering [DH.89 Rapide VH-AHI](#) from England to Connellan Airways. He was accompanied by S. Birtus and R. E. Brownley, both of Sydney.
(Stan Birtus was Chief Flying Instructor of Kingsford Smith Flying Service, Bankstown by 1958. He also flew charter in DH.89 VH-AAG fo Alpine Airways, Cooma which was an associate company of Kingsford Smith Aviation Service.)
- 50/52 Flew [Lodestars VH-FAB and VH-FAC](#) on cargo work for Fawcett Aviation subsidiary [Air Cargo Pty Ltd, Bankstown](#).
- 7.2.51 Van Praag with copilot Nancy Ellis flew [Lodestar VH-FAD](#) from Mascot to Adelaide for Empire Speedways, carrying 15 competitors from Britain and Australia on bench seats without seatbelts, along with their motorbikes and tool boxes. They then flew the group on to Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Tom Watson flew as copilot for Van Praag on other flights with speedway riders.
- 50s Anecdotal tale related by Tom Watson of him physically restraining Van Praag from shooting a fellow speedway rider with a revolver in a Paddington (Sydney) street, during a dispute over a lady. 155

- 27.3.51 Van Praag and Warren Penny flew [Marshall Airways Douglas DC-2 VH-CDZ](#) Mascot-Narrabri-Moree return to collect people stranded by floods
- 10.52 Flew as Captain on [Lodestar VH-FAD](#) on passenger services of [South Coast Airways, Sydney](#)
- Flew for an airline in [Pakistan](#) for a year before returning to Australia
- 4.55 Van Praag and Titus Oates delivered [Lodestar VH-FAD](#) of Fawcett Aviation to Fieldair in NZ as ZK-BJM, and Van Praag remained with the aircraft flying topdressing operations in NZ
- 7.56 Van Praag and Titus Oates delivered [Lodestar VH-FAC](#) of Fawcett Aviation to Fieldair as ZK-BMC
- 57 Flew [Tiger Moth cropdressing](#) in NSW for Fawcett Aviation subsidiary [Farm Air Pty Ltd](#)
- 58 Joined [Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd, Bankstown](#) as pilot. Chief Pilot on their [Bristol 170 Freighter VH-AAH](#) on crop dusting operations in NSW.
- 23.8.58 Pilot of Aerial Agriculture [Beaver VH-AAP](#) when it crashed near Goulburn NSW
- 59/60 Dusting ops in Bristol VH-AAH discontinued late 58, Van Praag continued flying it on cargo charters with part-time copilot/radio operators.
- 60 Van Praag proposed a passenger service Sydney-Gold Coast with VH-AAH, but unable to get airline licence
- 4.61 Freighter VH-AAH sold by Aerial Agriculture to [Pacific Aviation, Archerfield QLD](#): Van Praag was engaged by Pacific Aviation as Chief Pilot and continued flying the Freighter, mostly carrying fish Tasmania-Sydney
- 4.61 Van Praag and Pacific Aviation manager Arthur McLachlan (who also founded Air Express at Archerfield) ferried former Pakistan Air Force Bristol Freighter AP-ADM from Pakistan to Brisbane then Bankstown after purchase by Pacific Aviation. Became VH-ADL.
- 26.5.61 Van Praag, Arthur McLachlan and engineer G. Myers crewed Bristol Freighter AP-AMF purchased by TAA from Pakistan Air Force, which arrived at Bankstown on delivery from Karachi. Became VH-TBB.
- 18.12.61 Van Praag was Captain of [Bristol VH-AAH](#) when it crashed during a forced landing near Woolongong NSW due engine failure on a flight Sydney-Tasmania with a full load of foodstuffs, mainly Kellogs Cornflakes. No injuries.
- 62/75 Van Praag was pilot for [Adastra Aerial Surveys, Sydney](#), becoming Chief Pilot and Check Captain.
- 72 Purchased [Edgar Percival EP-9 VH-DAI](#) which was stored damaged at Parafield. Reportedly Lionel planned to use it to carry supplies to Temple Island, south of Mackay where he planned to retire. The EP-9 was trucked to Broken Hill for repairs, but it did not fly again and was sold three years later.
- 4.73 Van Praag delivered [Adastra Hudson VH-AGJ](#) from Sydney to Scotland for Sir William Robert's Strathallan Collection. Departed Mascot 19 April 1973, ferry took 73 hrs 55 mins flying time. This Hudson is now displayed at the RAF Museum, Hendon.

15.5.87 Lionel Van Praag died from emphysema at Royal Brisbane Hospital



Lionel Van Praag's Hudson VH-BLA while leased to Guinea Air Traders and named *Silver Bullet*, at Mascot 1948. Photo: Ed Coates collection

Lionel Van Praag's aircraft:

Hudson Mk. IIIA VH-ALA (c/n 6460, ex A16-214, FH170, 41-36971)
 25.11.46 Purchased by L.M.Van Praag from CDC, price £1500
 4.2.47 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage, RAAF Richmond.
 4.47 CofA conversion under way at Camden NSW: to be freighter
 5.47 VH-ALA registered to Lionel M. Van Praag/International Speedway Club, Sydney.
 5.47 Leased to Guinea Air Traders, Lae PNG
 18.4.48 Crashed on takeoff Lae on GAT flight to Bulolo. 4 crew and 33 native labourers all killed.

Hudson Mk. III VH-BLB (c/n 3843, ex A16-222, AE488)
 16.4.47 Purchased by L.M.Van Praag from CDC, price £1000
 6.6.47 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage, RAAF Richmond
 .48 Sold to Brian Thomas, Sydney
 11.48 VH-BLB registered to Brian Thomas, Sydney.
 CofA by Curtis Madsen Aircrafts, Bankstown. Planned lease to GAT, Lae as freighter, but later fitted with 9 pax seats. Not delivered to New Guinea.
 2.49 Departed Sydney on ferry to Israel Air Force, by Sam Jamieson under name of GAT
 10.49 Struck off Australian civil register as "improper sale overseas"

Hudson Mk.IIIA VH-BLA (c/n 6486, ex A16-219, FH196, 41-36997)
 13.1.48 Purchased by L.M.Van Praag, Sydney from CDC, price £400
 11.2.48 Issued to purchaser ex 2AD Storage, RAAF Richmond, TT 1511 hrs
 CofA conv. by Curtis Madsen Aircrafts, Bankstown
 4.48 VH-BLA registered to L. M. Van Praag. Leased to Guinea Air Traders, named *Silver Bullet*
 10.49 Ferried Lae-Sydney. Withdrawn from service.
 22.6.50 Sold to Adastra Airways, Mascot, modified for survey ops. Became VH-AGG.

Edgar Percival EP-9 VH-TCA (c/n 28 ex VH-SSV, G-APBR)
 .72 Purchased from Austral Exploration Services Pty Ltd, Parafield. Had been used for aerial survey but was stored dismantled at Parafield following damage in forced landing Burra SA on 16.7.71.
 1.9.72 Trucked from Parafield to Broken Hill for repair by Barrier Air Taxis. Complete by 12.72.
 2.8.73 DCA Register Change of ownership to L.M.Van Praag, Sydney
 20.3.74 Struck-off Register, still parked at Broken Hill.
 .75 Sold to Joe Drage/ Drage's Historic Aircraft Museum, Wodonga Vic
 Currently on long-term restoration by Todd Miller, Derrinallum Vic, VH-EPN reserved

Tom Watson 45, 154, 165, 166, 167

Thomas J. Watson served as an engineer and pilot with Guinea Air Traders in New Guinea and on the GAT DC-3 migrant runs to Europe. He left GAT after the migrant charters ceased and became Chief Engineer for Air-Griculture Control, Sydney, Australia's first dedicated crop dressing company. When it ceased operations due financial difficulties

two years later, Watson borrowed funds to purchase their assets to establish his own company Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd at Bankstown. It grew to be the largest agricultural operator in the Southern Hemisphere, Tom Watson being credited with keeping the company going through agricultural slumps by diversifying the operation into aerial survey and other ventures. Tom maintained a long friendship into old age with GAT founder Sam Jamieson.

- 13.7.18 Thomas J. Watson was born at Narrogin WA. He developed an interest in flying at a young age, and eagerly assisted visiting barnstorming pilots in the district
- 34 Learnt to fly with Royal Aero Club of Western Australia at Maylands Aerodrome, Perth. He failed the medical examination for colour blindness, which prevented the issue of a Pilot Licence.
- 35 Joined the Naval Reserve. When war was declared he was immediately called up to serve in Royal Australian Navy
- 9.10.40 Transferred to RAAF at his request. Posted as Fitter 2E to RAAF Deniliquin, later RAAF Rathmines. Overseas service followed during World War II, serving with Nos.10 and 461 Squadrons on Sunderlands and later 463 Squadron on Lancasters in Britain.
- 2.46 Returned to Sydney. DCA agreed to review his colour blindness, ruling it in the mild category, which allowed him to gain a pilot licence. He conducted further training to gain a Commercial Pilot Licence.
- 46 Employed by [Qantas Empire Airways](#) as ground engineer at Rose Bay flying boat base, Sydney
- 8.46 DCA charter licence application from D. W. Gluyas, a former RAAF pilot, to operate in New Guinea with an Avro Anson VH-AXQ, which he had just purchased. Operating name would be [New Guinea Air Freighters](#). The application listed another pilot Peter B. Lavender and engineers B. McHugh and Tom Watson. Nothing further came of the plan, McHugh, Lavender and Watson later joining Guinea Air Traders.
- 3.47 Joined [Guinea Air Traders](#), Lae as ground engineer, flew from Sydney to New Guinea on board GAT Avro Anson VH-AVQ which was being delivered to Lae by newly employed pilots Tom Deegan and John Spiers.
- 48 Watson was promoted to [GAT Chief Engineer](#) after the former chief engineer George Price was killed in the takeoff crash of GAT Lockheed Hudson VH-ALA at Lae on 18 April 1948. The following year, Watson was flying on the GAT DC-3 migrant charters to Europe and the Chief Engineer position at Lae was taken over by Cliff Jackson, who later founded Papuan Air Transport
- 49 Flew as GAT DC-3 copilot, usually with Captain Lionel van Praag on GAT migrant runs from Europe.
- 49 Following the end of the migrant charters, Watson left GAT as the company ceased to operate effectively.
- .50 Early 1950 Watson was appointed as Chief Engineer by [Air-Griculture Control Pty Ltd, Sydney](#), which had been formed to take over the pioneering aerial agricultural experiments of East West Airlines at Tamworth. AGC had previously contracted aircraft maintenance to J. S. McConnell & Sons at Camden. Watson set up the company's own maintenance organization for their fleet of Tiger Moth crop sprayers and other aircraft, all registered in the VH-PC series, for 'pest control'. Watson designed and constructed loader vehicles, initially based on Willys jeeps. AGC conducted dusting and spraying in NSW, Victoria, SA and Tasmania.
- 30.6.52 Air Griculture Control Pty Ltd was placed in receivership and the company ceased operations.
- .52 Tom Watson negotiated with the receivers and founded a new company [Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd](#), which purchased the assets of AGC. The new company was financed by a variety of investors, a major shareholder being Nottingham Insurance Ltd, Sydney which had taken over ownership of 10 former AGC Tiger Moths, including crash wrecks, which it wanted operated on their behalf by Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd.
- 6.53 Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd had 10 Tiger Moths in service by now, based at Bankstown Airport, Sydney
- 1.7.53 Watson operated the Chevrolet Blitz truck superphosphate loader vehicle for company pilot Fred Burke when they broke the New Zealand record of 30 tons spread by a Tiger Moth in a single day. Using Tiger VH-PCF at Bacchus Marsh Vic, 34.5 tons were spread, involving 130 takeoffs and landings.
- .55 Fred Sutton of Suttons Motors, Sydney purchased Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd from its original shareholders, conditional on Tom Watson remaining as Manager and shareholder.
- 50s Tom often flew as copilot for Lionel van Praag on freight and passenger charters from Sydney in Fawcett Aviation Lockheed Lodestars. Watson employed Van Praag as agricultural pilot with Aerial Agriculture.
- 57 The Tiger Moths needed replacing. Watson went to NZ to evaluate Cessna 180s in agricultural service but decided they were not suited for the high density-altitudes of one of his company's key operating areas, the New England district of NSW. He chose the DHC-2 Beaver because its supercharged engine let it climb with

a full load. Watson pioneered modifications to the Beaver for dusting and spraying and in the 1960s companies under Aerial Agriculture's ownership operated a total of 56 Beavers.

- 10.57 Aerial Agriculture's first Beaver VH-AAI was first demonstrated at an agricultural field day at Walcha NSW. A company loader vehicle, capable of scooping and lifting a ton of superphosphate granules from the stockpile, dropped the load into the aircraft hopper through a roof hatch and the Beaver delivered 12 tons in one hour and 10 minutes. The vast improvement over the Tiger Moth was appreciated by all present. Tom Watson was later to personally donate Tiger Moth VH-PCB to the Walcha Historical Society as a memorial to first commercial crop dusting of superphosphate, carried out in 1950 at Walcha by Air-Griculture Control.
- 57 Some farming properties to be dusted required bags of superphosphate to be carted by road up to 50 miles. Watson supported Lionel Van Pragg's proposal to operate a Bristol Freighter for large-scale crop dusting. Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd acquired VH-AAH from French Indo China, which was delivered by Van Praag. It was modified at Bankstown with a large removable metal hopper in the cabin with holes cut in the roof and belly for loading and discharging fertilizer. Captain for the Bristol was exclusively Lionel Van Praag. Operating from Cootamundra NSW, he established a delivery rate of 40 tons per hour. When not required for agricultural work, the Bristol was used on freight charters, including carrying cattle in pens.
- Under Tom Watson's management, Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd at Bankstown Airport, Sydney grew to 150 staff. He was personally involved in designing and developing more efficient spray and dump equipment capable of being fitted to a variety of aircraft and brought to Australia new techniques from around the world. During the boom days of the early 1960s the company took over rivals Super Spread in Melbourne and Robbys Aircraft in Adelaide, re-equipping them with Beavers.
- .63 He was elected as President of the Australian Aerial Agricultural Association. Re-elected the following year.
- 63 Watson designed fiberglass wing pods to sow grass seed. They were built and fitted under the wing of Aerial Agriculture's Cessna 182A VH-DCG. Each carried 90 Kg of clover seed. After flight trials these pods were later fitted to Cessna 180 and Beaver types and used to distribute eucalypt seeds following logging.
- 6.64 Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd imported the first of 27 Callair A-9A & B-1 agricultural aircraft to Australia, in competition with the Piper PA-25 Pawnee 235. The Callairs were marketed by an associate company, Southwest Pacific Aircraft Co, Bankstown.
- .68 Aerial Agriculture's Beaver VH-AAX was rebuilt at Bankstown with a Garrett Airesearch TP331-61 turboprop and redesigned tailplane. Watson had extensively researched the project overseas. Associate company Southwest Pacific Aircraft Engineering marketed the turbine Beaver as the *Wallaroo*, but no sales eventuated. VH-AAX was returned to a standard Beaver with P&W R-985 engine, until 1986 when it was again fitted with a Garrett TPE331 turbine and propeller salvaged from a Short Skyvan, and used extensively as a parachute drop ship.
- 1968 Because of slumps in demand for aerial agriculture, Watson guided Aerial Agriculture into aerial geophysical survey operations. Used Beavers then Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneers, extensive surveys were operated all over Australia searching for mineral despoths under the earth.
- 83 Improvements in land-based farming methods had reduced demand for aerial application to such an extent that Aerial Agriculture Pty Ltd ceased operations. Tom Watson oversaw the break-up of the company that resulted in many former pilot employees acquiring the aircraft they had previously flown and an operating area. Watson retired, living at Lane Cove, Sydney, but maintained an active interest in the industry.
- 18.2.99 Inaugural recipient of the *Lawrence Hargrave Award* by Royal Aeronautical Society (Australian Division)
- 26.1.03 Awarded the *Medal of the Order of Australia* for his service to the aerial agriculture industry
- 3.9.2010 Tom Watson died peacefully in Sydney, aged 93. A lone DHC-2 Beaver circled his funeral service in Sydney. He was widely liked and respected. It was said *"Anyone in the industry will attest to his being someone who would help anyone else without prompting and seeking (or even wanting to accept) anything in return. This generosity in both spirit and action marks him out. His word was his bond and once he'd committed to something - that was that. He was a pretty humble sort of fellow and not really into material possessions."*

James "Wac" Whiteman: 1, 3, 10, 67, 129, 141

James Leighton Dennett Carlile Whiteman, born Christchurch NZ on 13 July 1910, widely known as "Wac". He was a popular character with a vibrant personality who had a bad memory for people's name, so called everyone "Wac", and it became his nickname. Wac Whiteman was once described by Donald G. Anderson, Director General of DCA as *"last of the buccaneers of aviation"*.

- 27 Apprentice fitter at deHavilland Aircraft, Johannesburg and gained pilot licence.
- 30 Commercial pilot licence in Argentina. Test flying for Argentine Air Force, pilot for La Critica Newspaper, flew a [Comper Swift](#) over the Andes
- 31 [Joined Esso in Paraguay](#), flying pipeline patrols and dropping WW1 German bombs on marauders
- 32/38 Flew with aero clubs in England, then Australia, New Zealand, back to Sydney in 1936.
- 37 [Flew as a mercenary pilot in the Spanish Civil War](#), first on Franco's side, then switched to the other side when higher pay was offered
- 17.1.38 [Enlisted in RAAF at Laverton](#). Began as an aircraft fitter, promoted to Sgt. Pilot due to his previous flying experience, posted to Narromine as a Link trainer instructor. After a Flying Instructor course at Camden he was posted to No.2 EFTS Archerfield, then Launceston, then 7 SFTS Deniliquin as instructor on Wirraways.
- 19.10.42 FO Whiteman left Essendon for Darwin in 36 Squadron [Junkers G.31 A44-1](#) carrying military cargo
- 14.11.42 FO Whiteman flew [DC-2 A30-10](#) from Essendon to Townsville.
- 24.11.42 FO Whiteman in command of [DC-2 A30-10](#) when it crashed on takeoff Mallacoota VIC
- 6.43 Flt Lt Whiteman flying 36 Squadron [Douglas C-53s](#) in New Guinea
- 8.43 Flt Lt Whiteman flying 36 Squadron [Lockheed C-60 Lodestar](#) carrying cargo to US Navy at Woodlark Island, New Guinea, attacked by Japanese Dinah near Woodlark Island, landed safely.
- 46 Flew RAAF Dakota courier service to Occupational Forces in Japan
- 30.1.46 Whiteman registered [Westland Widgeon VH-UKS](#) which he had stored at Rockhampton Qld for the duration of the war. CofA was renewed on 23 May 1947.
- 46 With RAAF discharge due, Whiteman established an antique business in Sydney.
- 10.1.47 Discharged from RAAF with rank Flight Lieutenant
- 6.10.47 [Westland Widgeon VH-UKS](#) was being ferried by Whiteman from Rockhampton to Sydney. Enroute between Kempsey and Newcastle NSW he made a forced landing on a beach to clear a blocked petrol line, getting airborne again just ahead of the incoming tide. 15 minutes later the engine failed completely and Whiteman made a forced landing in a swamp at Sugarloaf Point NSW north of Port Stephens. The aircraft overturned in water, but Whiteman was not hurt and spent the night with the aircraft. Next morning he took three hours to get through the tidal swamp to the beach then set off walking towards the Seal Rocks lighthouse, and was spotted by a searching RAAF Catalina whichg dropped water and food rations. A Sydney Morning Herald Lockheed Hudson flown by Captain G. Hoskins was also in the search and located him on the beach. The Widgeon was later salvaged from the swamp and its remains changed hands, being seen stored on a farm at Goolwa SA by 1964.
- 2.49 Departed Sydney for Israel flying [Hudson VH-BFQ](#), in company with Frank Wiza in Hudson VH-BIA, both aircraft carrying an engineer but no copilot. DCA had been told the Hudsons were being ferried to Rome for fitting as migrant transports for New Holland Airways but were in fact lucrative sales to Israel where they were returned to bombing configuration. Whiteman and Wiza were invited to stay on as instructors, but after a brawl with Israeli officers in the mess on their first night, the CO dismissed them. The pair returned to Australia via Rome on a migrant flight in NHAW DC-3 VH-BNH.
- 6.50 Purchased [Curtiss Robin VH-UJE](#), used it for charter and joyriding at Wollongong and Coolangatta. While flying it into Sydney with two passengers the rudder controls connecting rod failed, so he opened the left and right cabin doors and using his knees and elbows pushed them open to turn the aircraft, and landed safely.
- 11.50 Captain of [Fawcett Aviation Lodestar VH-FAB](#), with copilot Nancy Ellis, on wool bale airlift at Narrabri due to extensive floods. Carried 15 bales each trip off rough clay strip at Yarraldool Station, making 5 return sorties a day. By 5th December the Lodestar had moved 700 bales.
- 51 Flew Fawcett Aviation [Lodestars VH-FAB and VH-FAC](#) on freight contracts for TAA.
- .51 Re-enlisted in RAAF, based at Butterworth, Malaya and then Korea.
- 1.52 Flt Lt Whiteman purchased [Fairchild Argus VR-RBE](#) from Kuala Lumpur Flying Club.

- 1.52 Posted from Malaya to 36 Squadron at RAAF Richmond NSW
- 5.52 Whiteman travelled from Australia to Kuala Lumpur to collect the Fairchild. He was unable to get a military flight direct to Malaya, so took a No.38 Squadron Dakota to Hong Kong then hitched a ride on a RAF Sunderland to Singapore, where he got a ride on another RAAF Dakota to Kuala Lumpur.
- 5.52 Whiteman flew Fairchild VR-RBE from Kuala Lumpur to Sydney. Used an electric car pump to pump fuel from 6 five gallon fuel drums in the cabin. Arrested for 3 days by Indonesian Army at Sumbawau Besar on suspicion of dropping arms to rebels in the area. Sold to Doug Fawcett at Bankstown, added Register 6.53 as [VH-AIO](#) to Fawcett subsidiary Airmech, and used by Illawarra Flying School.
- 1.53 Released by RAAF, but remained on active reserve.
- 30.1.53 Purchased [CAC Mustang Mk.20 A68-5](#) from Department of Supply for £100. He planned to enter the Mustang in the 1953 International Air Race London-Christchurch.
- 2.53 Whiteman ferried Mustang A68-5 to Bankstown from RAAF Tocumwal where it had been stored. Civil inspection by Fawcett Aviation, registered [VH-BVM](#) painted with sponsor "REDeX" titles and name *Rebel* on nose.
- 17.7.53 Flew [Mustang VH-BVM](#) Sydney-Auckland in 3 hrs 31 minutes, breaking speed record previously set by a Pan American Stratocruiser. Fitted with under wing drop tanks, which he attempted to jettison when empty, but the rear attachment points did not release and the tanks hang down, making the aircraft almost uncontrollable. He was planning to ditch when the tanks finally broke away.
- 31.8.53 Departed Sydney as pilot of Redex [Percival Proctor VH-BQQ](#) carrying officials of the Redex car reliability trial to check points across Australia ahead of the competitors
- 9.53 Withdrew Mustang from London-Christchurch Air Race when DCA refused CofA with his proposed modifications including ram-jet engines on each wingtip. He had attempted to obtain loan of RAAF Sabre prototype A94-101 and a Republic F-84E Thunderstreak on loan from USAF. Whiteman sold the Mustang to Arnold Glass of Capitol Motors, Sydney.
- 30.11.53 Whiteman purchased [Ryan STM VH-AGS](#) which he also named *Rebel*
- 12.53 Left Sydney to live in NZ again. Shipped the Ryan to Auckland in May 1954 and soon after it was assembled, Whiteman made a forced landing on Takapuna Beach, Auckland on 17 May 1954 without damage to the aircraft. Re-registered [ZK-BEM](#) to Whiteman at an Auckland address on 14 September 1955, and sold the following month. This Ryan still flies in NZ in Netherland East Indies military scheme.
- 12.56 Returned to Sydney from NZ. Flew [Tiger Moths on agricultural operations](#) in NSW, Queensland and WA.
- 6.57 Whiteman was approached by well known Sydney pilot Aubrey "Titus" Oates, to join a new aerial agricultural company being formed by Lindsey Campbell and Joan White, to be named Skyspread Ltd, Sydney. Oates proposed they purchase two new Edgar Percival E.P.9 aircraft then under production in England and fly them to Sydney. To save costs, it was arranged that Oates and Whiteman would join a DC-3 ferry flight from Australia to Nigeria then being undertaken by Bryan Monkton. TAA had sold five DC-3s to Nigerian Airways and Monkton had the contract to deliver them (see Monkton above in *The Players*). With Monkton as captain, the two shared copilot duties on the ferry flight to Lagos, Nigeria. From there Oates and Whiteman continued on commercial flights to Amsterdam then London.
- While waiting for the new E.P.9s to be tested at the factory, the entrepreneurial Oates located three Australians in London, desperate for a cheap flight home plus cargo to off-set the ferry costs. Despite Whiteman's E.P.9 carrying all the spare parts included in the purchase, Oates allocated him two female passengers and a racing car engine. Oates would take the third passenger plus other cargo.
- 28.10.57 Whiteman and Oates departed Croydon in Edgar Percival E.P.9s G-APIA & G-APIB on the delivery flight to Sydney. Whiteman aborted his first takeoff attempt because he was too overloaded. He had the racing car engine removed, then the two aircraft set off in loose formation. It was agreed that Whiteman would be responsible for navigation and Oates would stay in visual contact. Neither aircraft was fitted with radio. Refuelling stops were: Roanne, Lyon, Marseilles, Roma, Araxas, Athens, Rhodes, Beirut, Damascus, Baghdad, Basra, Bahrein, Mauraeva, Karachi, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Calcutta, Chittagong, Rangoon, Mergui, Butterworth, Penang, Singapore, Palembang, Djakarta, Soerabaya, Denpasar, Koepang, Darwin, Tennant Creek, Cloncurry, Charleville, Dalby, Archerfield, Newcastle, Bankstown. The trip took three weeks and included being forced to land at Damascus by military jets and searched for cameras, The E.P.9s were registered VH-FBY & FBZ. Whiteman remained with Skyspread as a cropdusting pilot.
- 9.11.57 Whiteman flew a Skyspread EP-9 demonstration at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College for the annual Aerial Agricultural Conference. Aircraft magazine reported: "*Wac Whiteman next demonstrated Skyspread's EP.9 in*

a most convincing manner, his low-level dusting runs and steep climbing turns leaving the onlookers in no doubt as to the maneuverability of the Percival."

- 58 Whiteman flew one of the E.P.9s back to Bankstown after an engine fire while operating in the field. DCA investigated and decided to charge him with breach of the Air Navigation Regulations for flying a damaged aircraft. Whiteman later recalled: *"Civil Aviation tried for weeks to contact me while I was away flying and finally waited at Bankstown for me to land so they could serve their summons. They were waiting in a Commonwealth car and rushed on to the tarmac, following me as I taxied around the aerodrome until I decided to finally come to a halt. After all that effort, the fine turned out to be only £20."* 156
- 58 Later while operating an E.P.9 from Dalby, Queensland, Whiteman diverted to Toowoomba when engine oil pressure dropped, forcing him to reduce power and make a low straight-in approach. A poultry farmer complained to police and a summons for low flying was issued. He wrote: *"The E.P.9s were not an ideal aircraft for agricultural work. Skyspread was not a reliable firm to work for and I gradually became disillusioned with the whole set up. Finally after several near misses with mechanical trouble, including a fire in the engine and being fined by DCA for flying a damaged E.P.9, I parted company with Skyspread."* 156
- 58 Flew a season for a Perth agricultural company, crop dusting wheat crops in Western Australia.
- 9.58 Whiteman made enquiries at the Bankstown DCA office regarding hm purchasing two Boeing Stearmans with NA-75 modifications VH-FBA and VH-CCI, stored in boxes at Bankstown prior to being shipped back to owners Crop Care Inc, Sacramento California after a failed attempt to commence agricultural operations in Australia. The purchase of the two Stearmans was not pursued.
- 61 Joined [Crop Culture \(Overseas\) Ltd, in Ecuador](#), then Jamaica flying [Snow](#) aircraft spraying banana and sugar crops. Later based in Sudan spraying cotton, then back to Jamaica
- c70 Delivered several twin engined aircraft from USA to Indonesian Air Force
- 9.3.03 James Whiteman died, reportedly at Gosford NSW.

Frank Wiza: 3, 10, 127

Franciszek "Frank" Wiza was a Polish freedom fighter against the Germans before becoming a RAF Spitfire pilot during World War Two.

- 28.2.16 Franciszek Wiza born in Poland
- 48 Pilot on migrant charters from Europe for [New Holland Airways, Sydney](#)
- 2.49 Departed Sydney for Israel flying Hudson VH-BIA, accompanied by Wac Whiteman in Hudson VH-BFQ on delivery to Israel Air Force. Whiteman and Wiza were invited to stay on as instructors, but after a brawl with Israeli officers in the mess on their first night the CO dismissed them. The pair returned to Australia via Rome on a migrant flight in NHAW DC-3 VH-BNH.
- 12.50 Delivered Fawcett Aviation [Lodestar VH-FAC](#) to New Guinea on lease to [Gibbes Sepik Airways](#). Fitted to carry 40 native contract workers. Wiza flew this Lodestar for GSAW for two years
- 26.6.51 Wiza made forced landing in [VH-FAC](#) at a disused strip Jacquinot Bay, New Britain. Minor damage.
- 50/52 Flew [Lodestars VH-FAB and -FAD](#) for Fawcett Aviation subsidiary [Air Cargo Pty Ltd, Sydney](#). Regularly flew weekend Lodestar newspaper delivery Sydney-Broken Hill
- 4.6.53 Ferried [Lodestar VH-FAC](#) Port Moresby-Cairns-Sydney on return to [Fawcett Aviation](#) when lease to Gibbes Sepik Airways ended.
- 11.53 Purchased [Anson VH-BMA](#) ex Alf Abilene, West Wyalong NSW. Wiza's address by now was c/- Australian Aircraft Sales, Kings Cross, Sydney. He sold VH-BMA in May 1954 to John P. Conley of AAS, who on-sold it in July 1954 to night club owner Abe Saffron, Kings Cross!
- 12.10.56 Frank Wiza died at Rushcutters Bay, Sydney

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