

# AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION of RETIRED AIRLINE PILOTS and AVIATION PROFESSIONALS

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#### EDITORIAL

Co-Editor Lee Godfrey has the unenviable job of reporting to the AGM those members who have passed on in the previous year. Unfortunately, this last year has not been a good one for the association as can be seen in the RIP column later in the newsletter as we lost 22 of our members and colleagues.

December is fast approaching and with it comes our **Xmas function** which is always a favourite and very well attended. **December the Eighth** is the date and once again it will be held at the Victoria Park complex. Reserve the day!

Member Paul Clough obviously included in his job description "bird strikes" and humorously recounts three of those in this issue.

Some of you may not know that our chairman moonlights as a rock star. So, to prove it, here he is featuring at the September Main Beach Festival.



#### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Time marches on, and we are well into the second half of another year.

The 2022 AGM was attended by approximately 40 members' partners and friends at the Broadbeach Bowls Club. Unfortunately, a Covid scare kept a number of people away who had previously confirmed their attendance. A good time was had by all who attended and as usual many old stories were resurrected.

Your standing Committee was re-elected for the 2022-2023 year. Thanks to all for the vote of confidence, and thanks to my fellow Committee members for their support throughout the year.

Attached to this newsletter is the notification form for the up-and-coming Christmas luncheon on Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> December at the Victoria Park Complex once again. This has been a great success over the last few years and I am sure this year will be no exception.

Please get your notifications in early as usual as this makes organization so much easier. There will of course be regular wake up and early reminder calls via email but still set your alarms.

Stay Safe

Phil James

#### WELFARE & RECRUITMENT REPORT

(Bob Allen reports on behalf of the Welfare & Recruitment team)

As reported at the recent AGM we had quite a large number of colleagues who sadly passed away during the last financial year and unfortunately only a small number of new joiners (See below – Ed).

With early retirements of fellow pilots and other aviation professionals during the pandemic there should be plenty of prospective new members out there who would enjoy the company of fellow AARAP travellers. When recruiting a new member, it's worth mentioning as well as the AGM and Christmas Luncheon, we are involved with the first Wednesday of the month breakfast on the Gold Coast, the first Monday of the month lunch at the Alex Surf Club, the two Phoenix club get-togethers for north and south of Brisbane members as well as the Kingaroy fly in every two years.

We would like to remind members to think of colleagues you haven't heard from in quite a while and pick up the phone and give them a call and check on their welfare. It can be rewarding knowing that just contacting them to let them know they are not forgotten can have a positive lift in their sense of well-being. See you all at the Christmas Luncheon.

#### **NEW JOINERS**

We welcome the following: -

Ken Atkinson; ex AN, MI (Silkair) & KA. Steven Beck; ex TN, SR (Swissair), NC (Cobham). John Howie; ex RAAF, QF, CASA, CX, KA. Ray Jarvis; ex AN, CX. Peter Legge; ex AN, SQ Mark MacDonald, ex RAAF, CX & EK. Ken Patton, ex AN & CX.

#### RIP

Joe Anderson; Stuart Arnold; David Baker; Dave Bastick; Russell Corney; Rick Dorney; Ted Elliott; Trevor Fitzpatrick; Geoff Greene; Aart Hofman; Geoff Litchfield; Charlie Long; Ken Lynch; Ray Meany; Harry O'Neill; Kevin Peddersen; Barrie Sigley; Frank Southwell; Brian Thomas; Graham Thomas; Ray Tulloh; Chick Williams

#### Captain Harry O'Neill (1943 – 20 April 2022)



Harry was born in Wongan Hills in the wheatbelt of Western Australia. He was educated at De La Salle College in Midland and then at what is now Trinity College in Georges St Perth.

He trained to restricted Private Pilot at the Royal Aero Club of WA using a club scholarship. Further training was self-funded and he commenced commercial flying in 1967 at Dampier and then Karratha.

That same year he moved to Port Hedland as base manager for Murchison Air Charter. It was here he flew some notable passengers including Lang Hancock, Sir Charles Court and Bob Hawke. In 1969 he returned to Perth with Transwest Airlines, then SkyWest Airlines and finally East West Airlines where he became a captain on the F28. When Ansett bought

East West, he qualified on the Bae146.

After the pilots' dispute he went to Europe to fly the F28 with Delta Air Transport a Belgian carrier. (It was here he developed a taste for "black beer" a Belgian dark ale which he continued to brew on return to Australia.) In 1992 Harry returned to Australia and was employed by National Jet Systems on the Bae146 based in Rockhampton.

When National Jet opened the Perth base in '94, he moved back to Perth where he was their senior base pilot, training and checking. In 1999 he did a short stint in Ireland with a sister company of National Jet, City Jet, training their pilots on the 146. When the Perth base closed in 2005, he retired from airline flying with 27,500 hours. (Harry was a member of WA Branch of AARAP.)

#### Captain Aart Hofman (3 May 1933 – July 2022)

Aart's flying career started at the age of 18 with the Royal Aero Club of NSW at Bankstown in 1951.

He worked his way through to commercial pilot standard and a first-class radio telephony license by early 1953. He then went on the become a flying instructor and got a job with Kingsford Smith Flying Services at Bankstown in early 1954. Aart instructed there on Tiger Moths and mainly on Auster Aircraft. His main job was teaching National Service Trainees from ab initio to private pilot standard on behalf of the Airforce.

Towards the latter end of 1954, He joined Trans Australian Airlines starting on DC3 Aircraft. He flew the DC3, DC4, F27-100 and -200, and DC6B. During his 3 years on DC6B's he considered himself lucky enough to be appointed to Grade 3 Captain Standard (First Class ATPL holder to satisfy the 3-crew compliment on the DC6 run to New Guinea).

He gained his command in 1963 on DC3's and then the Bristol Freighter B170's in 1964-66. During his time in New Guinea, he was made a Check Captain on both types for the last 18 months of his stay. During that time, he was also appointed Port Check Captain for New Guinea which put him in charge of all Territory New Guinea flying standards and being directly responsible to Melbourne Operations Head Office. His duties included training up fresh Check Captains and seeing that the route qualifications were followed as laid down, along with doing license renewal checks, line flying checks and night flying renewals. At the end of his time in New Guinea he trained up his successor to Port Check Captain.

In January 1967 he was posted to Melbourne and reconverted as a DC4 captain on the freighter runs out of Melbourne. After a year or so of that he was given the Viscount 720-756 to fly and then in

1969/1970 he converted onto the Lockheed Electra L188 and consequently made a check captain on them as well. This was to be his favourite aircraft of all time as he discovered upon reflection.

He then moved to the DC9 in 1971, followed briefly by the Boeing 727-100 series in 1974 then shortly afterwards followed by the -200 series. During his time on the 727 he was made a Check Captain but gave it away to return to line flying.

1982 brought the opportunity to fly the Airbus A300. Training was undertaken at Airbus Industries in Toulouse for approximately 2 months. He saw out his career on that aircraft and retired at the age of 55 in 1988 spending nigh on 34 years as an airline pilot.

# **BOAC COMETS - FIVE CLOSE SHAVES**

**Britain's de Havilland Comet 4** introduced jet travel to the North Atlantic on October 4, 1958, fifteen days before the USA's Boeing 707.

The historic day followed the saga of the Comet 1, which had introduced jet transport to the world on May 2, 1952 and was soon flying the world's airways as far afield from London as Tokyo, Singapore and Johannesburg. Alas, de Havilland's pioneering steps were unrewarded as 1954 was marred by a series of mid-air disasters and the grounding of the Comet; the ground-breaking investigation introduced the world to the concept of metal fatigue.



Thus, the Comet 4, pride of the fleet at the British Overseas Airways Corporation, or BOAC, Britain's then-long haul flag carrier, which resides in a lineage preceded by Imperial Airways (before 1940) and leading to British Airways (after 1974). In the years from 1958 up to BOAC's retirement of the Comet 4 in 1966, its fleet of nineteen pioneering jetliners flew out of the United Kingdom to every corner of the globe – Africa, the Middle East, the Indian Subcontinent, across Asia to Japan, Australia and out into the Pacific – New Zealand, Fiji, Honolulu.

# **Controlled Flight into Terrain (CFIT)**

**CFIT is one of the most well-used acronyms in the business of air crash investigation.** It stands for Controlled Flight into Terrain, and has proved to be one of the most difficult accidents to eliminate. As BOAC introduced the world to the Comet 4 and air travel to the world at the dawn of the jet age, they left tyre tracks across a game park in Kenya, a trail of sparks at both Stansted in Essex and Rome, stripped trees of their leaves in Rome (again), and reduced the elevation of a hill outside Madrid by a foot or so. That not a life was lost nor an injury suffered in any of these five serious incidents must represent the luckiest streak in the history of commercial aviation.

# 1-2: Rome & Stansted

**Unconventional descent profiles used by early jet crews** to enter the circuit were known as Jet Penetration, and would now be impossible due to the volume of traffic. A high speed, power off descent would take the plane down to 4,000 feet, which would then be flown level until the speed washed back to 170 knots, the maximum speed for flaps forty. Flaps forty without the landing gear (wheels) down would trigger a configuration alarm, which would be reflexively cancelled by one of the pilots. Closer to touchdown, the gear would be extended without reminder from the silenced cockpit systems.

Captain Peter Duffy, author of Comets Concordes (And Those I Flew Before) illustrated the lack of Cockpit Resource Management (CRM) of the era, the inability of junior airmen to question the judgement of those more senior. He wrote of a flight into Khartoum, Sudan, where the check pilot in the left seat asked him to perform such an arrival, under the check pilot's instructions. "I was a little doubtful about adopting this non-standard and unauthorised procedure, although it was within the permitted performance envelope, but curiosity prevailed, supported by a desire to avoid upsetting him by a refusal."

Dysfunctional cockpit dynamics and vague procedures meant an accident was inevitable, and it happened in Rome at the conclusion of a flight from Beirut. The belly landing and ground slide was so gentle that everyone outside the cockpit thought the landing had been normal, on its gear, not its exposed underside. As the engines became silent, a flight attendant opened a door, and was amazed to see a fireman standing outside on the grassy surface at the runway's edge, and only a foot below the height of the door sill.



No one was hurt but a verdict of pilot error was granted by the investigation, although the trap was laid in the form of a lack of operating rules in a primitive era. And to prove the point, another BOAC Comet 4 performed an identical ground slide on its belly at Stansted, in the Essex countryside, a few months later, during a training sortie.

# 3. Nairobi

This incident could have been a major air disaster of the era – descending in a jet until blindly hitting the ground in the countryside outside Nairobi must surely result in an instant and fiery demise, and that these passengers and crew lived to tell the tale is a deliverance rarely allowed in aviation.

On an otherwise normal night arrival in December 1959, the captain's altimeter was set to 938 millibars of barometric pressure instead of 839, causing the instrument to read 3,000 feet higher than the ship's true altitude above sea level. This was the kind of pilot error which would have been instantly caught in a later incarnation of cockpit procedures where the value of teamwork and crosschecking each other's work was better understood.



The brand-new Comet 4 made a perfect touchdown (on its extended landing gear) in Kitengela Game Park, a large area of hard flat grassland surrounded on all sides by vast expanses of lethal trees, rocks, crevices and ridges. The captain was allowed a one-in-a-billion chance to apply full power, raise the nose and fly away, and make a safe landing.

BOAC Comet 4, Boeing 707-436 and Britannia 300 at Heathrow. With Qantas 'V-Jet' Boeing 707-138B in background.

# 4. Rome again

**The crew in the next incident were not at fault**, but it does illustrate one of the challenges aviators faced in the early years of the jet age – poor ground-based navigation aids. The venue was once again Rome.

The radio beacon at Ciampino airport shared a frequency with a much more powerful transmitter elsewhere in the Mediterranean, under some atmospheric conditions enough to divert the indicated heading towards high ground. The problem had presumably resulted in dangerous proximity to terrain previously, but never was a flight brought so close to disaster as this BOAC Comet 4. Navigation radios were tuned and headings faithfully selected but their actual course was towards disaster.

Rushing trees and stony ground materialised in the landing lights. Before the pilots could react, the jet ploughed through and was able to fly on to a safe landing. All four Rolls-Royce Avons ingested branches and leaves, but there was no damage sustained by the aircraft or its engines once the twigs had been plucked out of the landing gear. Another lucky escape!

## 5. Madrid

The final incident was similar and tested the Comet 4's strength beyond doubt a few months later, on the night of March 14, 1960, on a hilltop outside Madrid. G-APDS was coming in from London, and after transitting the Spanish capital it was bound for Santiago de Chile via Dakar, Recife, Sao Paolo and Buenos Aires. The crew were attempting what was later known as a 'black hole' visual approach, where there is no light or other visual reference between the aircraft and the distant runway. Blackhole approaches claimed a number of early jets until it was realised that it was close to impossible to do safely without guidance from approach lighting or instruments.

As the descent profile sagged below the desired glideslope, a ridge loomed out of the darkness, too late for evasive action. The jet smashed onto the very summit of the ridge. On the underside of the engines were emergency cut-off switches, and the impact triggered the shutdown of both port engines. Having ripped off the fuel tank from the left-wing, and the left main landing gear, the ground then fell away precipitously, launching the aircraft into space, trailing a plume of metal, tree, rock, soil and smoke. With full power from engines three and four, and a lot of aileron and rudder, the wounded jet circled to land on a different approach, and after extensive repairs, returned to service.



Cockpit of Comet 4

# Look to the Future

**Other BOAC Comet 4s had scrapes**, notably G-APDB which was substantially damaged in Cairo on August 22, 1960, after an aborted takeoff on a closed runway, losing a couple of wheels

in an excavated hole at fifty knots; and G-APDN which suffered a tail strike at Tehran on March 9, 1964 so heavy that it disabled the elevators and the rest of the landing was without pitch control. But these were within the normal realm of knockabout early Jet Age runway scrapes and can't compare with striking a hillside in mid-flight, or a blindfolded touch-and-go in the Kenyan high plains.

As well as providing interesting anecdotes, close encounters with disaster bring to light failings in aircraft, procedures, ground aids, maintenance and piloting without the cost in blood and treasure of having the real thing. These incidents certainly contributed materially in the evolution of airline safety – the need for more rigid cockpit procedures, the abandonment of black hole approaches as something to even be attempted, better navaids.

The gear-up landing in Stansted had another unintended benefit – repairs to the belly revealed corrosion caused by the use of Redux adhesive that would have not otherwise been discovered, and resulted in modifications to the entire worldwide fleet of Comet 4s. Humans are a winged species, and incidents such as these are the way we have learned to be so with safety and confidence.

## THE MCDONNELL DOUGLAS DC-10

—commonly referred to as the "Death Cruiser" or "Donald's Disaster"—built up a horrific reputation throughout the 1970s. Today we'll explore the reputation and history of this commonly misunderstood aircraft, and what led to its unearned reputation as the most dangerous airplane ever produced.

It's 1970. Air travel is finally booming and Boeing had just released the Queen of The Skies, its pinnacle 747. The 747 was produced primarily to allow for easy long-haul operations, customer satisfaction, and lower prices on long-haul routes. What was once exclusively designed for the upper echelons of America's elite was now being transformed into commonplace for the average person. With the release of the 747, McDonnell Douglas saw an opportunity in a market that had only been captivated by the 747. Beginning in the 1960s, McDonnell drew up the blueprints for its own version of the 747, creating the DC-10. The DC-10 is commonly known as a "trijet", referring to the aircraft's two engines mounted on each wing, with the third engine mounted on top of the fuselage and in front of the stabilizer. On July 29, 1971, the aircraft received its type certificate from the FAA, and with that, was released into the unbounding skies.

Upon the aircraft's release, flagship carriers such as American Airlines and United Airlines saw huge potential in the massive carrying capacity of the aircraft, in addition to its relatively low cost in comparison to Lockheed Martin's L-1011, which was in production at the same time. For the first year and a half, the airplane sailed the skies seamlessly. However, this came to a sharp end on June 12, 1972, when an American Airlines flight 96 lost its aft cargo door over Windsor, Ontario. This caused a sudden decompression of the cabin, causing part of the floor to collapse onto critical flight controls and hydraulic systems, damaging them severely. Miraculously, the pilots saved the day and made a safe emergency landing. Upon inspection, the NTSB realized that McDonnell Douglas had made a critical error when designing their baggage door. The door could be closed without the locking mechanism being fully engaged, and this wasn't easy to visually inspect. However, the FAA never issued an emergency airworthiness directive for the design, and the airplane continued service with little modification to remedy the issue.

Tragically, the lack of action on behalf of McDonnell Douglas and the FAA culminated in the deadliest air crash in history (at the time) aboard Turkish Airlines flight 981, which encountered the same type of cargo-door blowout as American Airlines 96. This time, however, the cargo door blowout severed the flight controls to the fullest extent. This rendered the aircraft inoperable and led to the deaths of all 346 people on board. After this accident a special airworthiness bulletin was issued, and the problem never resurfaced in any major ways. Following this tragic accident, the media swung into full force demonizing the aircraft as a "death trap", and the company suffered because of it.

However, even after the tragic accident of Turkish Airlines 981, America's flagship carriers were still utilizing the inexpensive airplane as an easy solution to their long-haul problems. While the reputation

of the airplane had suffered some damage, most people understood that no company is perfect, and new aircraft designs are bound to have problems. This consensus went out the window, however, when American Airlines flight 191 crashed shortly after departure from Chicago O'Hare (ORD) airport. The NTSB discovered that the left engine on the airplane had fully broken off immediately after takeoff. The engine then destroyed the leading-edge slats of the left wing, and when combined with the asymmetric thrust caused by the destruction of the left engine, the aircraft was soon making a steep left bank at low altitude. Just twelve days later on June 6, 1979, the FAA revoked the DC-10 type certificate, effectively ending McDonnell Douglas's reputation in the sky, although just five weeks later after some mandatory changes were made the aircraft hit the skies once more.

Upon further investigation of the crash, it was discovered that the cause of the accident had nothing to do with design flaws of the aircraft. The accident was traced back to a maintenance facility in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where the engine was improperly removed. Describing the incident the NTSB said, "Strut failure was determined to have been caused by unintended structural damage which occurred during engine/pylon reinstallation using a forklift...The NTSB concluded that the procedure had not been sufficiently evaluated, and appropriate consideration had not been given to the potential for inducing damage." Unfortunately, American Airlines had failed to follow McDonnell Douglas's procedure that they set forth specifically to avoid tragedies like these, yet it was McDonnell Douglas who suffered. By late 1979, the company's reputation had suffered to its breaking point, and the media was having a frenzy following the first ever grounding of a commercial airplane. Many mainline carriers were quietly forcing the DC-10 out of advertisements, and some even went as far as selling off their DC-10s entirely. The reputation had gotten so bad for the company that by 1988 production was stopped entirely, and a mere 386 airplanes were ever produced.



Even after production was halted in 1988, the DC-10 had made its mark on the world of aviation. Today, the aircraft is still in service through FedEx and other operators carrying freight across the world. As the DC-10's future is finally dwindling into the limelight, it's important to note that the aircraft's safety record is on par with other aircraft of its time. While the DC-10 certainly came with a heavy dose of design flaws initially, the cargo door issue was resolved, and the aircraft suffered more from reputation damages than design flaws. The DC-10 is quite possibly the most misunderstood plane to ever reach for the skies, in large

part due to poor media coverage of the 1979 accident that led to its grounding.

# **REACTION TO A HARD LANDING?**

A co-pilot who reportedly jumped to his death from a small airplane in North Carolina was upset over



damaging the craft's landing gear during a failed runaway approach earlier in the day, according to a US National Transportation Safety Board preliminary report. Charles Hew Crooks, 23, was quickly identified as the aircraft's co-pilot after the incident on July 29, which unfolded about 30 miles south of Raleigh-Durham International Airport.

The plane's pilot in command told federal investigators that Crooks "became visibly upset about the hard landing" in the minutes after they

diverted to another airport for an emergency landing, the report stated. The co-pilot opened his side cockpit window and "may have gotten sick," the report stated. He then lowered the ramp in the back of the airplane, indicating that he felt like he was going to be sick and needed air.

# ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

On August 19, Ethiopian Airlines pilots fell asleep while enroute from Khartoum, Sudan to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and overflew the destination at their cruising altitude of FL370. When ATC noticed the flight had not commenced descent, they tried contacting ET343 many times but failed.

When the aircraft overflew the destination runway, the autopilot disconnected. This woke the crew and after approximately 25 minutes they made a safe landing on Bole Airport's RW25L.



# THE P 51 WAS THE MOST VERSATILE FIGHTER PLANE OF WW2.

It excelled at both ground level support of the troops and high-altitude long-range fighter cover for the heavy bombers. It was the equal of the best fighter planes in dog fights. It was also an accident of fate or timing rather than planning that it existed.

In late 1940 or early '41 Britain was desperately short of fighter planes of any sort and had sent some RAF people to the US to see what they could buy. Hoping for some P-40s they talked with Curtis Wright and found them booked up for the duration by the US government. They got a tip from Curtis Wright that North American Aviation had no contracts yet and was looking for business and that Curtis Wright would licence North American to build P-40's if they worked out an agreement.

When the RAF asked the North American small management crew if they would be interested their answer was "Why do you want to buy an expensive, high-priced obsolete plane that would take well over a year to start any production of when we have a new design worked out and can have a prototype ready for RAF test flights in 9 months if you can get us an engine for it from Allison?" They were, they could and they did a deal and were very happy with the performance of the prototype and placed a production order.

When this news worked its way through to the Army Air Force they decided to look into the possibilities and eventually ordered a production run that wound up as the A-36 low-level fighter. The Allison V12 was the only non-radial combat aircraft engine built in the USA and unlike the Rolls Royce Merlin engine and the German ME bf109 it did not have a supercharger which was essential for combat above 15,000 ft altitude as well as top performance at lower altitudes.

After the RAF had a few months' experience with the new plane the RAF did the obvious thing and grafted a Rolls Royce Merlin engine from a Spitfire onto one of their "P-51's". At this time the RAF got the North American Aviation crew on board the update and they soon found out that Packard Motor Company in the US was building Rolls Royce engines for the PT Boats of the Navy. Packard was happy to add Merlin engines for NAA to their production runs and the P-51 was officially launched.

One of the benefits of NAA being small and nearly broke was that the design engineers had to do double duty as production engineers, so they designed the plane for simple and fast as well as low-cost production. At that time the conventional practice was to build the airframe and then have people crawl inside to string all the wires and cables. This more than doubled the assembly time and cost. NAA designed the fuselage in two half-shells and had the electrical, hydraulic and control cables etc., installed in each half prior to sewing the halves together.

The P-51 cost about one third the cost of the P-38 and about half the cost of the P-47 or F6F Navy planes.

# BIRD STRIKES (writes Paul Clough)

#### THE FIRST

I was a proud Brisbane-based F27 captain in Sydney on private business and seeking a lift home in a spare jump seat. I approached a MEL based DC9 captain and FO who were relatively junior to me in seniority. I was offered the jump seat for SYD – BNE. At 188cms, I tend to fill small jump seats to overflowing. We taxied out to the end of 07 and the takeoff commenced.

The captain was flying and at about 90 knots an enormous seagull impacted onto the front window directly in front of the captain. He instinctively threw his head to the left and clouted something on the side window and was somewhat stunned and thus out of the loop.

Meanwhile back at the ranch, the FO was studying the engine and flight instruments and did not see the captain nod off. The aircraft continued the take off sequence and the FO called "V1" and "Rotate". The DC9 continued along the ground, skipping a bit. At this stage I thought it wise to acquaint the FO that here was his chance of a bit of command flying. I said "take over the captain is disabled".

We were now doing about 120kts or so along 07 and nearing the end of it and a sojourn along the General Holmes Drive was not out of the question. The FO turned and looked at me like a crow looking down a bottle and said "What?". Then the FO's hand movements were a blur. He put his left hand on the power levers, his right hand on the column and then waved his left hand near the gear lever, then the radios, then to the power levers. I said "do the takeoff" or something similar. He did and we leapt into the air.

I am sure the FO was still in FO mode and thinking about his FO duties after takeoff. Instead of pulling up the gear, he started to change the radio frequencies. I could see it all and clearly no one was obeying the first rule of incident flying and actually flying the aircraft. I said "Do you want your gear up?". He said "Yes please". I leant forward and flicked the gear lever up. I then said "You fly it and I'll do the fiddling".

Brisbane TAA crews will recall the usual pre-takeoff briefing "You fly and I'll fiddle". I said "Fly straight ahead and get the aircraft under control then we can think about what to do". I reduced the power to climb and I called the tower and said "Callsign? We are maintaining runway heading for a short while and your frequency".

About this time the captain came alive again with a severe pain in the head and said "What's happening?" I said "You suffered a bird strike and hit your head on the side panel". The aircraft continued the runway heading toward Fiji and eventually order was restored and we went to Brisbane. No report was ever submitted of the incident that I was aware.

#### THE SECOND

I was flying an F27 milk-run from Brisbane to Winton overnight. It was about 17h30 on a summer's day. We had had a long day and the landing was the second last before Winton at Muttaburra. The aircraft was light and we were both looking forward to a quiet beer and dinner at the North Gregory hotel and a chat with the girls.

The landing approach was normal and just at check height a flock of galahs rose up from the touchdown point on the gravel/grass strip. There must have been about 60 or 70 galahs. They blended with the ground completely until I got near them. I think the aircraft hit about 20 or so on the front of the aircraft? The landing was not the usual greaser - more a hopping arrival.

When I pulled up and caught my breath and looked at the FO, he was wide-eyed and speechless. We taxied back to the shed that passed as the Muttaburra terminal. After shutdown and inspection, the agent informed me that he had no way of shoo-ing the birds off the ground as the grass was in seed and the birds were not to be put off by a big mechanical bird nearby. There was blood and guts on the front windows, the propellers, the engine intakes, the wings and the wheels.

A call was made to BNE engineering to seek advice on what I should do about the possibility of a galah body in the intake to the engine compressor. Visions of a roast galah issuing from the exhaust come to mind. The fact that the propellers both had strikes also was a cause of concern.

The engineering bod must have been the shed wag. He suggested cleaning the mess from the intakes and the propellers, running up the two engines and checking the engine parameters and if all was OK going to Winton normally. He also suggested that I should brush up on my forced landing technique lest his long-distance prognosis be amiss. He reasoned that the area between Muttaburra and Winton was reasonably flat and a bloke with my experience should be able to put it down safely somewhere. There was no suggestion that an engineer would travel from Charleville to do a proper check.

The alternate to going to Winton was an overnight in Muttaburra, a first. I was not sure if there was enough accommodation in the town to take 4 crew and our passengers. Sleeping in the aircraft might have been on the cards. If the plane worked to Winton, the engineering bod said it should work to Charleville the next day. Again, I do not think a report was filed about the matter.

#### THE THIRD

I was operating out of Luxembourg and flying an F27 as a captain. The trip was Luxembourg – Venice. The old airport was still in use. As most readers would be aware Venice is built on a swamp. From the air the swamp is quite large. Venice is near the Adriatic Sea and sea birds are a possibility. The trip was uneventful.

The local air traffic controller was Italian but with a distinctive accent. He spoke English with a New York Bronx accent. After listening to him for a while, I felt he had given up his day job as a Mafia hitman in New York and was moonlighting as Venice tower. Anyway, we were directed downwind and given a landing clearance for runway 09 in the normal jargon, with the additive "Watch out for de boids".

My FO was a German and no more fluent in the Bronx accent than I was. I looked about as the FO did and not a seagull or osprey or any other birds were to be seen in the air or on the water. So, I got the tower bloke to repeat his comment. Again, it came "Watch out for de boids". I could see none, but remembering other times birds appeared in the air suddenly, kept a close watch in the adjacent air.

At the point of touch down, the whole of the runway moved twenty feet to the left! The birds were in their thousands and about 2 inches in size. They were resting on the warm tarmac at the threshold end of the runway and as I rounded out discretion became the better part of valour for the birds and they exited stage left. The colour of the runway changed with the departure of the thousands of birds and again a less than smooth landing ensued.

I think I hit about 10 birds with the undercarriage and no damage was done. They did not fly up into the compressor air intakes or the propellers, rather the birds just shifted sideway to the grass on the left of the runway. Apparently after I passed by, they resumed the warmth of the runway tarmac until the next aircraft arrival.

#### **RAAF MIRAGE BOOK**

The following is from Roger Wilson, an ex-RAAF Mirage pilot and may be of interest to those AARAP members who flew the Mirage with the RAAF.



I can strongly recommend this 295-page book compiled by retired "Sumpy", Peter Taylor. The first 20 pages are devoted to the acquisition and building of the aircraft and then each tail number is afforded two pages with a brief history together with mostly coloured photos. Following this is a section dealing with all Mirage units and showing the various tail markings. The final 15 pages is devoted to miscellaneous photos of pilots, troops and significant events. Peter is now collecting expressions of interest in purchasing the book. The previous print run was for 250 copies with the cost being \$32 plus \$11 postage. This print run will be a few dollars more but, in my opinion, worth every cent. Peter does not make a profit from the sale of the book – the compilation is his hobby.

Contact the author, Peter Taylor, of "Introducing the French Lady – a Compendium of RAAF Mirages" at <a href="mailto:pcwh@bigpond.com">pcwh@bigpond.com</a>

# QATARSTROPHE!



It appears a **Qatar Airways B777 freighter** took the wrong taxiway at O'Hare. It was reported that the taxiway is only suitable for smaller aircraft.

**\$20.00 Annual Subscriptions are due 1 July.** For accounting and recording purposes, payment by Direct Deposit is preferred. **Suncorp BSB 484 799 Acct No 000044125 AARAP**. <u>Remember to include</u> your name when you do the transfer. However, if electronic transfer is not possible, please send your cheque to AARAP, P.O. Box 172, Isle of Capri, Qld,

# **AARAP Christmas Lunch**

I / WE.....Please Print)

WILL be attending the LUNCH to be held at: -

VICTORIA PARK COMPLEX HERSTON ROAD HERSTON https://victoriapark.com.au



# THURSDAY, 8th DECEMBER 2022 (12h00 to 16h00)

**COST:** \$65 PER PERSON. (Includes 3 course lunch plus welcome drink)

Attending, as my guests, will be: -

(Subject to numbers a bus may be provided. Cost will also be dependent upon numbers.) I WILL require seats on the Gold Coast Bus.

> MEMBER..... PARTNER.... GUEST (S).....

I have Direct Transferred THE ABOVE TOTAL to the AARAP Account.

(Account Name: AARAP BSB 484-799 Account Number: 000044125)

NOTE: To <u>Account Description</u> add your <u>name and initials</u> so we know it's yours. Your <u>Transaction Description</u> is <u>AARAP</u>. Email: Treasurer Bob Neate <u>bobneate@bigpond.com</u>

OR A cheque, made payable to AARAP for the above TOTAL is enclosed.

> Mail to: - Capt. Bob Neate, Treasurer AARAP PO Box 172 Isle of Capri Qld 4217