



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION of RETIRED AIRLINE PILOTS and AVIATION PROFESSIONALS

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Issue 48 (February – April)

EDITORIAL

Phil references the Sunshine Coast Lunch in his report. My wife and I managed to get to the lunch this year and I can attest to the fact that it was a very enjoyable afternoon. Ray Jarvis' membership card got a flogging as everyone took advantage of members' prices!

This newsletter is a little longer than normal so we hope we don't bore you too much? However, it was hard to cull the articles and, in any case, now that we're wholly digital, there's no extra cost involved.

We would have liked more on Jim Murtha but had to make do with what we could glean from the Internet, some of which needed verification before including it in the newsletter which we couldn't obtain.

And apologies to Andy Anderson for his late inclusion as a New Joiner. Somehow his details went missing prior to the last Issue.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Phil James

If you have had the opportunity to look at the photos from the Sunny Coast Lunch on the website you will see it was another fun afternoon with around 40 members' friends and guests enjoying the get together. It was good to catch up with two new members, Allen Chiesa ex CX FE and Malcolm Huff, ex CX Captain.

Your AGM is locked in at the Mermaid Waters Tavern Thursday the 17th July, details can be found on the web site.

Don't forget the Gold Coast Air Show, which is starting on 15th August; should be another exciting few days.

I hope everyone is enjoying the cooler weather. Let's hope it stops raining soon.

See everyone at the AGM.

WELFARE REPORT

Bob Allan

Ten or more years ago, I was diagnosed as an adult asthmatic and around five years ago after visiting my doctor at the Wesley hospital in Brisbane with breathing difficulties he considered my problem may be heart related and referred me to his heart specialist colleague. The problem, fortunately, was not heart related however to cut a long story short, I agreed to be part of the heart specialist cholesterol research program and see him once a year. A couple of years back he determined my heart was as strong as an ox and my cholesterol level was such that he had added 10 years to my life.

During my annual visit I do a stress test followed by an ultrasound and the last test revealed thickening of the aorta valve indicating possible calcification of the valve. Early February I saw another heart specialist who specialises in aorta valve problems who advised that sometime in the next two years I would have a stroke and be partially paralysed OR I would have a stroke and drop dead OR I could have an aorta valve transplant. After deep thought, lasting about half a nanosecond, I opted for the trans-catheter aorta valve implant, a TAVI. Then it hit me like a ton of bricks - Strewth, I'm mortal!

Up to then, I'd been blissfully living life and cursing the fact that arthritis in my thumb joints were making it difficult for me to uncap a bottle of Shiraz, and enjoying life with my wife as a couple of reasonably fit 81-year-olds. A successful TAVI was performed mid-March, which didn't fix my arthritic thumbs and now I'm back to struggling to open a bottle of red. However, being of the belief that around the age of 95 to 105, I would probably start to lose interest in sex and it would be time to "shuffle off towards the light". It's amazing the different approach to life you have after you've been told you could've dropped dead due to a stroke.

Now I'm at the pondering stage. How come someone with a heart as strong as an ox and cholesterol well under control could develop a calcified aorta valve? My opinion it was caused by Covid vaccines. Aahhh! There I've said it. I'm now officially a climate change denier, anti vaxxer, racist, etc. But, that's my opinion.

NEW JOINERS

Captain Andy Anderson: Ex TN/Australian – F27; DC9; B737. Ex SQ – B747 (200; 200F; 300; 400); A380

RIP

Captain Ron Neve

Captain John O'Keefe

VALE

Captain George Freischmidt: 18 July 1950 – 23 January 2024

Laurie Gillham writes:



George applied for the army's Officer Cadet School (OCS), in 1968. After the 12-months training at Portsea, he graduated as a 2nd Lieutenant and was posted to 5th battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

He applied and was selected for Army Aviation Corps and commenced training in July 1971 on the Winjeel at Point Cook. Following pilot graduation, he was posted to a Pilatus Porter squadron which was operating in Papua New Guinea.

George left the Army in 1975 but stayed in PNG flying the Pilatus and Brittan Norman Islander. He returned to Australia to fly for Stillwell Aviation on Lear Jets and in 1978

joined Associated Airlines, which was owned by BHP, as a corporate pilot operating the Gulfstream1 and G2.

January 1983 saw George join Cathay Pacific as a First Officer on the Tristar. Three years later he completed his command training on the Tristar and several years later became a Training Captain, Check Captain and eventually was appointed Base Training Captain.

He converted to the Boeing 747-400 in the early nineties and that was to be his journey for the next 20 years. He loved Boeing aircraft. A lobotomy to change George over to the Airbus fleet was never to be realised and he saw his days out speaking English and never French.

Upon retiring in 2009 from Cathay Pacific, George wasn't ready for having his feet on the ground for too long. He took a up a position with Virgin Australia on the Boeing 777 for 5 years before finally hanging up the headset from airline flying.

I understand that Virgin benefitted from many of George's suggestions over those five years. There was, I understand, a well-worn track to the Chief Pilot's office according to some of his colleagues.

Typically, George still had a lot to share and after VA he continued flying training and testing at Bankstown, helping new pilots realise their dreams. In particular he mentored three trainees who couldn't believe how lucky they were to have an ex-Cathay and ex-Virgin Check Captain helping them on their journey.

George was fluent in Russian. He was born in 1950 to Ukrainian parents and his ability to speak Russian was a skill set that would come in handy during his time at Cathay.

When Russia opened their airspace to allow CX to use it from Hong Kong to Europe there was a significant amount of work put in to gain clearances and access to the route structures. Airport approach plates needed translating and much communication was required to establish this new thoroughfare to Europe. George was an integral part of this process.

He was on the first flight across this airspace communicating with the air traffic controllers in Russian. When George returned, he was asked how it went with the Russians. George said it went well but the air traffic controllers weren't really interested in what route they were flying but wanted to know more about the Marco Polo Club in Hong Kong and how pretty the Cathay cabin crew were. It was a highlight of his career no doubt.

I flew with George on many occasions and it was a delight to be part of his crew. On my EK overnights in Sydney it was always great to see George and his wife Sandra and enjoy the usual sailing trip around the harbour. He was really a first-class bloke.

Captain Jim Murtha 23 August 1927 – 17 October 2024



Jim married a TAA hostess; his son is a pilot and his three daughters were hostesses. Certainly, a flying family!

In the early days of TAA, Jim flew a Drover aircraft for the Royal Flying Doctor Service – a cause that he was passionate about.

Jim retired in 1987. The photo brings back memories of how things were back then with everybody on the tarmac milling around his aircraft.



Ed. We would have liked more information on Captain Murtha but at time of publication, nothing more was forthcoming.

Captain Buckhurst (Buck) Brooksbank – 4 Sept 1940 - Jan 2025

Ray Vuillermin writes:

Buck's airline career started badly. After graduating from the Aero Club Federation's pilot training scheme with a CPL and his flight nav theory subjects, he joined TAA. He was posted to New Guinea. His health could not cope with the extremely humid atmosphere and he landed in hospital where he was eventually assessed to be medically unfit for tropical duty.

TAA then transferred him to Adelaide where he flew the specially equipped high altitude DC3 operated by TAA on survey duties for the government. Following that he flew the F27 and the DC6.

As we all know the mid-sixties were a time of great change in the lifestyle, career aspirations and work conditions of Australia's domestic airline pilots: achieved by our brilliant and very flamboyant AFAP President, Captain Dick Holt. However, Dick's successes cost the AFAP dearly and left it broke. We weren't critical of that but clearly something needed to be done to get the Association back on its feet.

Up stepped a young and not particularly well-known TAA First Officer, Buck Brooksbank, who claimed, if given the authority, he could do the job.

Buck established financial logic and discipline by creating a finance committee whose role was to approve each and every expenditure. He set a priority system for expenditure.



He then went hunting to find where the AFAP spent its money and whether it was necessary in terms of 'what bang we got for our buck' (pun intended). One such area was our contribution to the International Federation of Air Line Pilots (IFALPA).

He became aware that it was the international federation, not the federation of international pilots. But what were domestic pilots getting out of it? The answer was 'the rules of aviation' as set by DCA from ICAO advice. He found we had a voice in IFALPA's technical committees that had an input to ICAO; all provided we attended the tech committee meetings held in far flung parts of the world. That required expensive travel and support. Buck encouraged participation and gave it an appropriate priority on the condition that FOC travel could be arranged. Ron Austin's tech team worked on this and from that day on the AFAP became a voice at IFALPA. This became a two-way street as our tech reps were accepted by DCA as being well versed in current industry thinking. Buck, as a representative himself, became heavily embroiled in many politically difficult negotiations about the administration and finances of IFALPA itself.

During this busy and stressful time, he managed his upgrade to command on the F27 aircraft.

With great prescience he proposed we borrow to purchase the house next door to the AFAP office site in Albert St, East Melbourne in order to give us an adequate site size to build a seven-story building. As we would only need one floor for ourselves the rest could be leased in order for the building to become self-funding. Never again would we be caught without financial strength. His foresight was, of course, proven in 1989, when the AFAP was tested as never before. It may be Buck's building that contributed to the AFAP now being the only surviving party from that dispute.

Buck wanted to give some other aspirants the opportunity of a flying career. Being a friend and admirer of former president, Qantas Captain Bert Smithwell, he created a scholarship in Bert's name.

At the same time, he was maintaining a large and beautiful garden at his Mt Macedon home, being a father to two daughters, involving himself in local affairs as a councillor and mayor, and in the establishing a new secondary school in his area. He was recognised in a National Geographic

article about bush fires for having stayed in the ceiling of his home to deal with outbreaks as and if they occurred.

To keep busy he built his own caravan and started building an aeroplane. His career had progressed from the F27 to the B727 and finally the A300B4. When TAA was contracted to Air Niugini to operate A300 services from Port Moresby to Manila and Singapore Buck spent a few months of international flying.

He was unwavering in the '89 dispute, despite being a former AFAP president and somewhat sceptical of how it was being handled. He saw the difficulties pilots would have of receiving their superannuation at a lower-than-normal retiring age, being paid out and then subject to the totally unsympathetic tax treatment that the Prime Minister would ensure they received.

One avenue existing was to put the superannuation into ADFs, approved deposit funds so he created one. By canvassing a number of investment advisers to ascertain where he could get the best dividends, he set up the fund using their advice, and the AFAP's ADF became one of the best investments available for displaced pilots ensuring their futures.

Who has done more for us as a group? Not many.

I personally don't think Buck ever received the public recognition he deserved.

Buck's family and friends held a memorial afternoon for him at the Caboolture Aero Club. Following the speeches, in compliance with his wishes, his ashes were spread over the airfield from a Chipmunk, a favourite aircraft of his as he trained on Chipmunks.

Ed: Buck also held the position of Past Regional Chairman, Liveryman of The Honourable Company of Air Pilots.

Captain Jack McDonald: (Died 10 January 2025, aged 94)



As one of the founding members of the Australian Warbird community, alongside Col Pay and Guido Zuccoli, Jack made an indelible mark on the preservation and celebration of aviation history.

Jack was a remarkable figure in the aviation world and a cherished member of the Warbird community. He generously donated two of his aircraft to HFC—his beloved Bristol Fighter B1229 and his Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-17.

Jack's passion for rare Warbirds began during his RAAF career and extended through his service in Korea, where he flew the Meteor.

On leaving the air force (circa 1964) Jack worked from Brain and Brown flying the DC3 and later the Armstrong Whitworth Argosy. Brain and Brown were chartered by IPEC flying mostly between the mainland and Tasmania.

Eventually, despite interference from DCA and various bankruptcies, IPEC took over and became a scheduled air freight operator in its own right. Jack stayed with various companies eventually retiring in the '80's on IPEC's DC9 Freighter.

Over the years, he flew most of the Mustang warbirds in Australia and was highly regarded as a skilled and dedicated display pilot. Jack also dedicated his time to restoring two Hawker Demons—one now proudly displayed at RAAF Point Cook and the other still undergoing restoration.



He was involved in warbird restorations including no less than two Hawkers Demons, a Lockheed Ventura and his own P51. He also flew the Australian B-25 with Aero Heritage. He raced motorbikes, built race cars and displayed the P-51 and DC3.



He flew his Mustang seen below, in the 1964 Ansett Air Race from Brisbane to Adelaide placing 1st in the speed section.



LUFTHANSA CELEBRATES THE ROLL-OUT OF LOCKHEED L-1649A “SUPER STAR”



Lufthansa Technik has achieved a significant milestone with the assembly of the iconic Lockheed L-1649A Starliner. Once painted in its classic livery, the aircraft will be transported to Frankfurt, where it will take centre stage in celebrating Lufthansa's 100th anniversary in spring 2026.

The German national airline operated their four Super Stars between 1958 and 1966, originally on services connecting what was then West Germany with New York City in the USA.

The Lufthansa Super Star gGmbH (LSSG) was established in 2015 to restore the “Super Star” to flying condition. Lufthansa Technik was entrusted with the task of overhauling the L-1649A. LSSG, an affiliated company of Lufthansa Commercial Holding (a subsidiary of Deutsche Lufthansa AG),

oversaw the restoration efforts in Auburn, Maine. Former N7316C (c/n 1018), originally delivered to TWA in 1957 and last flown on November 9, 1983, has undergone a lengthy restoration journey.



Lufthansa began restoring the aircraft in 2008 at their facility in Auburn, Maine, USA, with the ambitious goal of returning it to airworthy condition. However, after a decade of work and an investment of 150 million euros, the project was discontinued in 2018.

In 2019, the aircraft was shipped to Bremen, Germany, where it was stored before being transferred to Paderborn in February 2021. Most recently, in October 2023, it was relocated to Lufthansa Technik's base in Hamburg for further assembly and preservation efforts.

Today, Lufthansa Technik has completed the extensive assembly of the Lockheed L-1649A and rolled it out to a large hangar in Hamburg. This milestone represents a significant chapter in the aircraft's storied history.



In 1957, the Lockheed Super Star joined Lufthansa's fleet, introducing Senator Class as the pinnacle of luxury air travel. The aircraft was primarily used on transatlantic routes to New York, offering nonstop flights that lasted up to 17 hours. Powered by four piston engines, it marked the end of the classic propeller-driven era on North Atlantic routes.

Hamburg served as both the departure point for these flights and the maintenance base, making it a fitting location for the recent roll-out. The Deutsche Lufthansa Berlin Foundation has partnered with Lufthansa Technik to support this project.

The Restoration Process



Lockheed L1649A "Super Star" der Lufthansa. (1957)

Foto: Deutsche Lufthansa AG / D 103-10-14
Nur für redaktionelle Zwecke / For editorial purposes only

The assembly process in Hamburg posed significant challenges for Lufthansa Technik's team. Large components such as the fuselage, wings, and the distinctive triple tail unit, along with 292 crates of smaller parts, arrived in October 2023.

A special highlight of this static restoration is the meticulously recreated 1950s cockpit. The lighting and controls are functional, and cables connect to movable rudders and flaps, providing a true-to-original experience.

The cabin reflects 1950s style but incorporates modern technology. The seats, repurposed from a retired Lufthansa A340, have been extensively redesigned and upholstered in wine-red leather. Historical patterns inspired the carpet and curtains, ensuring an authentic period look.

Next Steps

Eventually, the aircraft will be dismantled into large segments and transported to Münster/Osnabrück Airport for painting. Scheduled for July, the aircraft will be repainted in Lufthansa's original parabolic-phase livery.

After painting, the Lockheed Super Star is slated to arrive in Frankfurt in October 2025. It will be unveiled just in time for Lufthansa's 100th anniversary in spring 2026. The aircraft will become the centrepiece of Lufthansa Group's new conference and visitor centre, sharing the spotlight with the legendary Junkers Ju 52 D-AQUI. Thanks to a glass façade, both exhibits will be prominently displayed for public view.

The restoration and assembly of the Lockheed L-1649A mark a return to its rightful place in aviation history. Although it will not take to the skies again, its presence will serve as a testament to the golden age of transatlantic travel and Lufthansa's pioneering spirit.



PNG RESCUE

Ted Goater writes:

On the morning of November 15th 1967, I was tasked with operating the scheduled TAA flight from Port Moresby to Misima, with a stop at Gurney.

Misima is a volcanic island in the northwest of the Louisiade Archipelago, within the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea and some 2hrs 50mins flight time in the DHC-6 Twin Otter which I was flying at the time.



The island measures 40 km by 10 km and back in '67, prior to the discovery of gold, was a fairly sleepy place. It had a short, crushed coral airstrip and the weekly air service from Port Moresby was mostly to service the patrol post and the area administration centre that was based there.

At that time TAA was one of the first operators of the Twotter which was flown as a single pilot IFR operation in a nineteen-seat configuration thereby avoiding the need for a cabin attendant.

On checking the NOTAMS for the flight, my attention was drawn to a report of an inter-island cargo ship the "Bev" which had been reported as foundering in a recent tropical storm and pilots of aircraft operating in the area were asked to maintain a look out for possible survivors.

The area given was between Gurney and Misima, and I decided to fly this segment lower than normal and check out the uninhabited islands along, and to the south of my track, briefing my passengers accordingly and asking them to act as observers.

Being unsuccessful on the outbound leg I repeated the exercise for the return trip, but this time taking a more northerly route to examine some islands that lay on that side of the direct track. Sure enough, whilst passing over the uninhabited island of "Bunora" - not much more than a sand cay - six survivors were sighted, one of whom lay immobile on the sand.

After making a couple of low passes to check out the logistics of the island, and the condition of the survivors it was clear that their situation was not good. The island was void of any useful

vegetation, or signs of fresh water and the immobile person was obviously seriously injured. As I climbed away to continue the flight to Gurney, I passed this information to Port Moresby on H.F.

Moresby acknowledged the information and advised that due to a lack of suitable aviation resources being available it would be some time before a sea rescue could be organised.

My thoughts immediately turned to the Esky full of sandwiches and soft drink sitting down the back of the aircraft – in-flight catering - which so far had been untouched by the passengers – and how I could get it to the survivors.

By the time we landed at Gurney a plan had been conceived...

With the unanimous support of the passengers the Esky and its contents along with any other suitable items that we could add would be air-dropped to the survivors.

Having completed our preparations, refuelled, and with the small baggage loading door removed we headed back to Bunora Island to complete the mission, which went off without a hitch.

Mission accomplished and with a last wave to the survivors it was back up to cruise level for the return to Port Moresby.

By the end of the day, I had logged just under eight hours of total flight time and felt very satisfied with what had been achieved.

The Sequel:

Many years later – now a check pilot on the B747 – I was enjoying a sun-downer at the Changi sailing Club in Singapore and was approached by a fellow aviator who wanted to introduce me to a friend who was accompanying him. The friend turned out to be the captain of the Bev, one of the survivors from Bunora Island who insisted on buying me dinner.

As he put it, "You bought the last one."

AIR BUSAN AIRBUS A321 GOES UP IN FLAMES AT GIMHAE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

On 28 Jan 2025, an Air Busan Airbus A321-200 destined to Hong Kong (HKG) caught fire while preparing for departure at Gimhae International Airport in Busan (PUS).

While flight BX391 was being prepared for departure, reports indicate that fire broke out in the tail section of the aircraft around 22h30. All 169 passengers and seven crew members were subsequently evacuated, with only three passengers sustaining minor injuries.



Emergency officials attended to the aircraft quickly, but were unable to save the airframe, as intense flames resulted in the entire top section of the fuselage being burnt to a crisp.

Following the incident, the South Korean Ministry of Transportation issued the following statement (translated):

"On January 28th (Tuesday) around 22:15, on Air Busan flight ABL391 (Busan-Hong Kong, HL7763, A321) which was scheduled to depart from Gimhae Airport apron, a fire occurred in the rear interior of the aircraft, and the related situation is as follows." "All 176 passengers (169 passengers, 6 crew members, 1 maintenance engineer) who were aboard the Air Busan aircraft have completed evacuation through emergency slides." Fire authorities say three people sustained non-life-threatening injuries.



The 17-year-old Airbus A321-200 registered HL7763 was first delivered to Asiana Airlines in 2007 before joining Air Busan in June 2017.

THE AIRCRAFT THAT MAY FLY LIKE A FLOCK OF GEESE

Some species of birds like geese save energy by flying in close formation. Airliners could use a similar trick to burn less fuel.

In the early 1500s, Italian Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci developed a fascination with avian flight. He spent his days meticulously studying the movement of birds, sketching observations of how they maintain their balance and perform soaring manoeuvres. His ambition was to make a flying machine from his scientific investigations. But what he wound up creating instead was the seminal work *Codex on the Flight of Birds*. It pioneered what would later become the field of "biomimicry", the study of the natural world in search of efficient design.



Centuries later, experimentation flourished. Pioneering aviators like Otto Lilienthal, Igo Etrich and the Wright brothers mimicked birds to design their aircraft and the aviation industry was born.

In 2019, Airbus returned to the study of birds with the "fello'fly" project to understand how migrating geese conserve energy while flying in V formation. From it, a "wake energy retrieval" technique was developed to help trailing jets pinpoint the optimal location to fly in the wake vortex of a lead jet. This was found to generate fuel savings of 5% to 10% per trip, similar to findings published by the US space agency Nasa.

In July 2023, the effort evolved into the Geese project with €10m (£8.4m/\$10.5m) in funding, and support from the European Union's air traffic management research arm, Sesar.

Earlier this year, Delta Air Lines and Airbus announced that they were taking the "fello'fly" concept out of the lab and into the skies, targeting the second half of 2025 to deploy the technique into live operations. The goal will be to test a manoeuvre called "rendez-vous" in which two passenger jets are paired over the Atlantic Ocean.

For example, this could be an Air France flight from New York City and a Delta Air Lines flight from Miami, both heading to London. In pairing, the two planes would be separated by the regulatory 1,000ft (303m) in altitude while attempting to reduce the distance between them to 1.2 nautical miles (2.2km), the same distance that fuel savings were most recently achieved in the lab.

Delta chief sustainability officer Amelia DeLuca tells the BBC that this distance is substantially closer than planes fly today, which is typically at a separation of three to five nautical miles (5.5 to 9.2km), so the first step will be to see whether the gap can be narrowed without compromising safety.

As for why transatlantic flights were chosen for the test, DeLuca explains, "there are very few sustainable solutions for wide bodies flying today, besides sustainable aviation fuel. So, a 5% benefit off of a flight that's going across the Atlantic with a big airplane that's burning a lot of fuel has the biggest bang for the buck".

Stephen Trent, an analyst at Citi, says on some routes the formation flying technique could be useful. "My guess is that it is also somewhat route dependent, and somewhat dependent on what kind of equipment you're operating. So, the opportunity to do that, for example, flying from New York to London, is not going to be the same as an aircraft that's flying from Miami to Mexico City. It's possible that, in some cases, that's something that could help – like a tailwind that pushes a sailing ship." Across the airline industry, interest in biomimicry has been growing.

Aiming to decarbonise operations by 2050, the Delta Carbon Council reported that it had saved 41 million gallons (65,800 tonnes) of jet fuel in 2024. DeLuca says that to achieve this, Delta is constantly on the lookout for new ways to conserve energy, like plugging into ground power instead of operating engines on the ground, doing a shorter vector on approach instead of a long roundabout when landing, and installing winglets that point up on the tips of wings to reduce drag.

Other industry practices include continuous climb and descent operations that enable an altitude to be reached without the need for levelling and adjusting the centre of gravity on the aircraft to reduce drag.

Switching to a renewable energy source like sustainable aircraft fuel is also seen as a solution, however this will require a staggering amount of land to grow enough biomass to make biofuels. DeLuca says Delta quadrupled its sustainable aircraft fuel (SAF) usage in 2024, but that's still less than 1% of the fuel being used with it. The main hurdle, she says, is the supply of sustainable fuel. However, she's encouraged by Airbus joining Delta which has stated a commitment to purchase several million gallons of SAF annually starting in the second half of 2025. Knowing customers are lining up to buy the product gives farmers in rural communities a reason to redirect soy and corn ethanol production into sustainable aviation fuel, says DeLuca. "It's really about economic and social development in rural communities – job creation, attracting investment into these communities. It's a new industry, so will be a big development opportunity for these sites," Airbus chief sustainability officer Julie Kitcher tells the BBC. Trent says sustainable aviation fuel won't yet be a silver bullet because it costs far more than conventional fuel. "Let's say today jet fuel kerosene is like \$2.50 (£2) a gallon. If you look at SAF a gallon it can be more than three times that price...

FIRST OFFICER WHO DIED ON FLIGHT 5342 NAMED HONORARY CAPTAIN. THE PILOTS AND FLIGHT ATTENDANTS ARE ALSO BEING HONOURED.

First Officer Sam Lilley posthumously received the title of captain, PSA Airlines said Sunday. Lilley was one of the four airline crew members killed on board flight 5342 after it crashed on Jan. 29.

He began flight training in 2019 before later joining PSA, a wholly owned regional subsidiary of the American Airlines Group. Lilley had spent two years at the carrier prior to the crash. According to Fox 5 Atlanta, he was engaged to get married later this year. His father – Tim Lilley – currently flies private jets but was previously a Black Hawk pilot in the Army.

"It is with profound respect and deep appreciation that PSA Airlines posthumously bestows the status of Honorary Captain upon First Officer Samuel Lilley," the airline said.

National Transportation Safety Board investigators recovered all major pieces of both the Army Black Hawk helicopter and CRJ-700 that collided over the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. All 67 victims have also been recovered and identified. PSA added that Lilley "exemplified the highest standards of aviation excellence."

The three other crew members on flight 5342 were also honoured by the airline, including Capt. Jonathan Campos, flight attendant Danasia Elder, and flight attendant Ian Epstein.

All four crew members will receive PSA's Honorary President's Award, the carrier said. This is the highest honour any of the airline's employees can receive.

"It is a peer-nominated honour and based on the company-wide outpouring of support for our lost colleagues, we cannot think of a more moving or sincere tribute than having all 5,000 PSA team members nominate our fallen colleagues," the airline stated.

Families of the crew will receive certificates reflecting the award.

TRACKING SYSTEM WAS OFF IN US ARMY HELICOPTER THAT COLLIDED WITH PASSENGER JET

In a tragic incident near Ronald Reagan National Airport in Washington, D.C., a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter was involved in a collision with an American Airlines regional jet resulting in a devastating loss of life. This marks the deadliest aviation disaster in over two decades in the U.S., with a confirmed 67 fatalities following the crash on January 29.

Following the collision, Senator Ted Cruz, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, revealed crucial details regarding the safety measures—or lack thereof—adopted by the helicopter crew. It was disclosed that the helicopter had turned off its Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) system.

Although military aircraft are permitted to operate with this system turned off, Cruz questioned the necessity of such a decision during a training mission, emphasizing that there was no compelling national security reason for the ADS-B to be inactive at the time.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) confirmed that the helicopter was operating at an altitude approximately 30.5 meters above the maximum height allowed for that specific route, raising serious concerns about potential oversight regarding flight regulations.

While the helicopter had a traditional transponder that allowed it to be detected on conventional radar systems, the absence of ADS-B significantly reduced the tracking precision. This factor contributes greatly to mid-air safety.

In response to the accident, Senator Maria Cantwell, the leading Democrat on the commerce committee, voiced her concerns regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) policy that has permitted military flights to operate with their ADS-B equipment switched off since 2018. This regulation has drawn scrutiny, with calls for a review of the FAA's protocols and guidelines regarding military operations in congested airspace.

In the wake of the tragedy, the FAA has taken swift action, imposing stringent restrictions on helicopter flights near Ronald Reagan National Airport. These limitations are expected to remain in effect until at least late February, with two of the airport's lesser-used runways currently closed.

According to FAA guidelines, when police, medical, or presidential helicopters require access to the airspace, civilian airplanes are prohibited from operating in that vicinity to reduce the risk of further incidents.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy has also raised concerns about the necessity of some non-essential military helicopter missions. He pointedly remarked, "If we have generals who are flying in helicopters for convenience through this airspace, that's not acceptable. Get a Suburban and drive – you don't need to take a helicopter."

Duffy's comments reflect a growing sentiment that military operations should be better coordinated and managed, especially in areas with heavy civilian air traffic.

As the investigation continues, the NTSB and FAA scrutinize the circumstances of the crash to ensure accountability and prevent future tragedies.

The incident has shed light on the complexities of airspace management, particularly when it involves military aircraft operating alongside commercial flights.

As more details emerge, policymakers face mounting pressure to enhance safety regulations and review existing procedures to safeguard the lives of civilians and military personnel. The implications of this crash will likely resonate throughout the aviation industry for years to come, serving as a cautionary tale about the critical importance of stringent safety protocols.

WHO SAYS TURBO-PROPS CAN'T BE FUN?

Subject: Ferry of VH-NLS to Holland

Captain Steve Weatherstone: ex EWA; CASA; VB; Aircruising

I was asked about this ferry flight so put this together for the enquirer. It brought back some very fond memories.

The Dutch pilot (Jan Maasdam) whom we picked up in Corfu for the last leg of the ferry flight, turned out to be the Dutch Airforce display pilot flying the Fokker in the attached YouTube videos. I had no idea who he was and only had been briefed that we were to pick him up in Corfu. He was very experienced on the F27 and was going to be the museum's Chief Pilot to operate the F27. Also, the Dutch museum would like him to fly the last sector into Holland.

During the flight from Corfu to Holland, he requested of me and the other pilot (Shorty Austen) that he would like to put on a little display upon our arrival at the museum airfield. We had no idea of what the display was going to be.

So, for the flight from Corfu to Leylstad, I put him in the captain's seat, myself in the jump seat and Shorty Austen occupied the co-pilot's seat. Shorty was a very experienced F27 Check Captain. My name was on all flight documentation as captain of the flight, and I was feeling just a little uncomfortable.



Jan's only brief of what was to come was to ask me to operate, on his call, the throttles, undercarriage lever and flaps, and for Shorty to action all other switches, water methanol, etc.

Repeating, that was as much as Shorty and I were aware of what was to come.

For Mike: 40psi minimum torque wasn't a consideration!

It was an absolute blast.

Turn up the sound.

The second half of this video is from inside the cockpit.

<https://youtu.be/kqq0MMnQzpc?feature=shared>

<https://youtu.be/acqULr4-mUo?feature=shared>

Copy and paste this in your browser: [VH-NLS Aviodrome \(ruudleeuw.com\)](http://VH-NLS.Aviodrome.ruudleeuw.com)

VH-NLS F27 ex-Aircruising, which was ferried to the Netherlands by Steve Weatherstone EWA, Ron "Shorty" Austen EWA and Bruce Simpson QF was met in Greece by Capt. Jan Maasdam. Jan is the captain in the 1989 video and became my sim instructor for the F50 type rating in 1992. Both Shorty and Jan were my training captains on F27 and F50. Shorty was the Flight Captain when I flew F28s at both EWA and TAT. That got me to KLM City Hopper where I attained JAROPS IRE/TRE qualification.

Both good blokes. Steve Weatherstone too.

Enjoy,

Lee Godfrey

HOW CLEVER DESIGN HELPED SAVE 80 LIVES IN A FIERY PLANE CRASH



When Delta Flight 4819 from Minneapolis to Toronto crash-landed, losing a wing and flipping upside down, onlookers feared the worst. Yet, in what seemed like a miracle, all 80 passengers and crew survived the crash at Toronto Pearson International Airport.

Michael McCormick, an associate professor at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, saw something else: decades of aircraft safety advancements in action.

"That was absolutely phenomenal—to see an aircraft on its back like that and have people walking away from it," McCormick said. "But my second thought was, well, that's the design. That's engineering. That's the years of civil aviation research that made this possible."

Fuel Tanks Are Primarily Stored in the Wings

Past aviation disasters have shown that jet fuel should be stored in the wings rather than beneath the passenger cabin. "In the early days of aviation, fuel was stored in the belly of the aircraft," McCormick explained. But when Delta's Bombardier CRJ900 crash-landed, its fuel-laden right wing detached, sparking a massive fire yet keeping the flames outside the cabin as the aircraft skidded and flipped over.

According to aerospace engineer Joe Jacobsen, the wing detachment played a critical role in preventing a catastrophe. "Things can break, but if it's within design requirements, then you have to see how it broke, and did it break according to design?" he said.

While investigators will determine whether the wing's detachment was due to a maintenance issue or design feature, McCormick emphasized that separating fuel from passengers is a key safety principle. "We want to ensure the fuselage can come to rest in a stable position," he said.

In this case, that stable position just happened to be upside down—but all passengers survived, in part due to the strength of modern aircraft seating.

16G Seats: Designed for Safety, Not Comfort

Modern commercial aircraft must be equipped with 16G seats, meaning they can withstand 16 times the force of gravity, McCormick explained. "You don't want seats to collapse or come loose in an accident—even if the aircraft is upside down," he said. "These seats aren't designed for comfort; they're designed for durability in case of an emergency."

Seat belts, often overlooked, also played a life-saving role in this crash. "Without seat belts, passengers would have been thrown around and suffered far more injuries," said Hassan Shahidi, president and CEO of the Flight Safety Foundation.

Aviation analyst Peter Goelz noted that had this accident happened decades ago, the outcome would likely have been far worse. “What’s changed is that all commercial aircraft have seats that are locked in place on the tracks as part of the fuselage, capable of withstanding up to 16Gs of impact,” said Goelz, a former managing director of the National Transportation Safety Board. “That means if you’re strapped in correctly, you’ll survive the impact and have a chance to escape,” he said. “And when you combine that with advances in fire-retardant materials, your chances of survival increase significantly—if you follow instructions.”

Nothing Replaces Skilled Crew Members

While engineering advancements likely saved lives, McCormick emphasized that the real heroes were the flight attendants who executed a flawless evacuation. “You cannot give enough credit to the cabin crew for safely evacuating that aircraft,” he said.

Flight attendants train for 90-second evacuations, but few have ever practiced it while hanging upside down. Yet, despite the chaos, the two flight attendants on Delta Flight 4819 managed to get everyone off the plane in less than 90 seconds. “They performed their jobs perfectly. They were heroic,” said Sara Nelson, international president of the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA. McCormick hopes this incident reminds the public of the critical role flight attendants play beyond serving drinks and snacks.

“They are highly trained professionals responsible for passenger safety,” he said. “And they did a phenomenal job.”

FERRY FLIGHT DITCHING INEVITABLE AFTER ENGINE FAILURE DUE TO AIRCRAFT WEIGHT AND PROPELLER FEATHERING ISSUES



The ditching of a twin-engine Cessna 53 km off the coast of Queensland after one of its engines failed was inevitable due to the weight of the aircraft and the failed engine’s propeller not being able to be feathered, an ATSB investigation report details.

The twin piston-engine Cessna 421C, with two pilots on board, had departed Sunshine Coast Airport on the first leg of a transpacific ferry flight to the United States early on the morning of 10 November 2023.

The aircraft had been fitted with additional fuel tanks to extend its endurance, including a large (1,134 litre) bladder tank in the main cabin, and a smaller (132 litre) tank in the nose locker. A special permit had been issued to allow the aircraft to conduct the ferry flight exceeding its certified maximum take-off weight.

When about 250 km offshore and climbing through 12,000 ft the pilots heard a muffled bang as the left engine failed. Oil was observed streaming from the engine and a large bulge had developed in the cowling.

Due to the nature of the engine failure the propeller would not fully feather, meaning it windmilled, creating excessive drag.

After turning back, the pilots identified that the aircraft could not maintain altitude and they calculated based on their rate of descent that they would be unable to reach the Sunshine Coast. “The drag from the propeller combined with the weight of the fuel onboard meant a ditching was unavoidable as the aircraft was unable to maintain altitude on one engine,” explained ATSB Director Transport Safety Dr Stuart Godley.

The pilots notified air traffic control of their intention to ditch, with ATC in turn alerting the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (operated by the Australian Maritime Safety Agency), which immediately began coordinating a search and rescue response.

“The pilots’ chances of surviving the ditching were enhanced by their early liaison with air traffic control and their preparation of the aircraft during its descent,” Dr Godley noted. The aircraft was ditched in the open ocean about 53 km off the coast, with the pilots configuring the aircraft to avoid a nose down attitude on touchdown and allowing their airspeed to slow before the aircraft contacted the water.

“The pilots reported the aircraft initially skimmed the crest of a wave before it rapidly decelerated when the nose pitched into the water,” Dr Godley said. The pilots deployed a life raft from the rear cabin before exiting the aircraft. The first of two inbound rescue helicopters arrived overhead shortly after, and winched them to safety. The aircraft sank and was not recovered. “Impact forces during the ditching were minimised by the pilots ensuring the descent and airspeeds were managed prior to their contact with the water.”

The investigation also found that the pilots did not hold the required licence ratings and approvals to conduct the flight, and that the aircraft was not compliant with the special ferry flight permit conditions. “However, while these factors did remove important safety defences, they did not contribute to the engine failure and the need to conduct the ditching,” Dr Godley noted. “Nonetheless, operating outside of aviation regulations removes built-in safety defences, increasing the likelihood that undetected problems can emerge.”



I spilled spot remover on my dog, now he's gone.

A clear conscience is usually a good sign of a bad memory.

I stayed up all night wondering where the sun went... then it dawned on me.

For contributions, comments and/or suggestions, please address your feedback to the Editors:

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