



## TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

### SALUTE TO A TASMANIAN PIONEER – LLOYD JONES

#### Salute to a Tasmanian Pioneer

*Author: P. d'Plesse, November 2020*

Doing things for the first time demands courage and commitment from individuals prepared to push the boundaries. They will take criticism from those who prefer to keep doing things in the time accepted way. If they're lucky, pioneers may be supported by an open minded few prepared loosen the reins. One Tasmanian pioneer stands out for reasons that will become self-evident. Sixty years after a ground-based accident ended his career, a salute to his contribution to Tasmania is appropriate.

Lloyd Jones was Chief Flying Instructor of the Aero Club of Southern Tasmania from 1947 to 1960. He served as a Flying Instructor in the R.A.A.F. during the Second World War and later flew Bristol Beaufighters during the same conflict.



**Lloyd Jones pre-fighting a Tiger Moth at Cambridge Airport c1947**

After the war several prominent Hobart citizens were responsible for the transformation of the southern branch of the Tasmanian Aero Club, based at Western Junction, into an independent organisation. Lloyd was appointed as Chief Flying Instructor and Manager.



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During his time as CFI Lloyd trained and mentored many pilots, a number of whom became commercial pilots with various airlines around the world or became flying instructors themselves.

It was a different time, one in which people had no fear to say what they thought. On one occasion when evaluating the performance of a budding instructor he wrote in the Instructor's Records, confidential to the manager, that during the flight there was 'TOO MUCH STUPID TALKING AND NOT NEARLY ENOUGH THINKING!' The red ink and capital letters contrast sharply against the precise handwriting in the blue ink and lower case of other comments. Lloyd must have been feeling a bit emotional when he penned the comment. These days, I can see the Fair Work Commission reinstating the complainant with monetary compensation for hurt feelings. Whether pilot instruction would improve after such a decision is perhaps a moot point.

The names of many respected pilots who grew wings under the legacy of Lloyd Jones could be mentioned at the risk of leaving some out. Those pilots and instructors in turn have influenced generations of flyers, some of whom still mention the instruction of Lloyd Jones or his successors with fondness, respect and even outright awe.

They do so because the demonstrated skill and judgment modelled by Lloyd Jones was far beyond the normal. Before the days of helicopters, he pioneered air rescue in Tasmania. Several times he aided and assisted others at considerable risk to his own life. His reputation for flying skill and courage was only equalled by his emerging fame as a camera artist and an enthusiastic advertiser for what he called 'the real Tasmania' of remote wilderness.

As noted by Tasmanian Premier Robert Cosgrove in 1955, his early survey flights over the mountainous areas of central, western and southern Tasmania revealed the potential scenic riches of the island and the need for faithfully reproduced publications to depict that scenery properly. Lloyd spared no effort to do this by producing hundreds of magnificent landscapes in natural colour. Many of his subjects were mountains, lakes and valleys which hitherto had been unknown even to Tasmanians. A collection of landscape photographs marked his entry into the field of published work. This met with such ready and wide appreciation that within a few months enthusiastic praise was received from all over the world. Prime Minister Robert Menzies also wrote that he was "very happy to accept your 'first work', but must say that it is more the mark of a professional than 'a struggling amateur'. I congratulate you on your artistry."

Lloyd's mercy flights stand out as an almost forgotten contribution to Tasmania. In May 1947 he was instrumental in rescuing a man lost in a boat off the East Coast of Tasmania. For three days he made two flights a day up to fifty kilometres out to sea in a Tiger Moth in weather so violent no boats could leave port. On another occasion he searched unsuccessfully for the fishing boat 'Vicana'. Developing weather meant that if he didn't leave immediately, a search



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wouldn't be possible for several more days. He made a flight of almost six hours in gale force winds from Bicheno to Flinders Island up to 240 kilometres out to sea.

The rescue that really stands out was a flight to Swan Island in March 1953 to pick up a sick child. Swan Island is the site of a lonely lighthouse flashing its warning to ships plying Bass Strait. In those days it was a manned station. The airlines were grounded at Launceston and Cambridge. Heavy rain, low cloud and treacherous winds meant that flight was only possible at a height of less than 30 metres above a storm lashed coastline and raging sea. Visibility was less than a kilometre.

Amidst this pandemonium of nature Lloyd circled five times over a tiny beach on Swan Island before deciding that a landing would be impossible. The beach was about the size of two tennis courts in length. The sight of a mother and desperately ill child braving the storm to watch him circling as the raging wind tore at their oilskins convinced him that he must at least 'have a go'.

For any pilot, the idea of fighting the controls and juggling the throttle of an Auster Aiglet to pull off a short field landing under those conditions would focus their attention for more than a little while. He made the landing and took off again back to Hobart with the mother and child on board. Fortunately, the aircraft had an auxiliary fuel tank under the belly to give extra range. I hope it wasn't the mother's first flight in a light aircraft! A few hours later a surgeon could announce that 'the child will live'.



**The Auster Aiglet VH-ACY used in the Swan Island rescue.  
The auxiliary fuel tank is visible under the fuselage**



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These days air rescue is conducted by a highly skilled team under the banner of RotorLift using the familiar yellow and red Westpac helicopter. Technology has advanced far beyond the days of Lloyd Jones in his Auster but the skill, commitment and courage involved remain the same.

On June 1 1953 Lloyd Jones was awarded as a Member of the Civil Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire to become Lloyd Lindsay Jones Esquire, in recognition of his service to the community. His citation was written by the Minister of Defense, Sir Philip McBride KCMG MP.

His reputation continued to attract the attention of those in government. As a result, a Deportation Order was issued by the Minister of Immigration, Athol Townley on March 25 1957. Obviously 'tongue in cheek', Lloyd was issued the Deportation Order to Heard Island for 'repeatedly breaking Air Navigation Orders and defying the laws of aerodynamics'.

Thank goodness he repeatedly managed to get away with it. It was a different world where individuality was accepted. The concept of personal responsibility was understood and embedded in community values. Many people benefited from his skill, experience and defiance of natural and man made laws. These days he would probably fall foul to political correctness and the smothering restrictions of bureaucracy.

His influence still survives in those pilots who still fly with the Aero Club, Par Avion, airlines around the world or reside in the memories of those who have retired from the world of aviation. Regardless of where they are now, these pilots still embody the standards that Lloyd set.

Today a mountain bearing his name over looks Lake Pedder in Tasmania's south west wilderness. In 2017 his ashes were united with the mountain that bears his name and the wilderness he loved.

Lloyd was the product of wartime flying training and community values of the time. His influence continues to ripple through the Tasmanian aviation community and around the world. When climbing into the cockpit of the Aero Club's Cessna 172, Kilo Sierra Romeo, many of us still practice the discipline taught by instructors who mastered their flying skills under the legacy of Lloyd Jones.

Thankfully, the familiar yellow and blue helicopter of RotorLift carries on the same tradition of discipline and commitment in the service of Tasmania.



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Form No. 43 B.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Immigration Act 1901-1949.

**DEPORTATION ORDER.**

To the Master,

SS. CARTEHA

Whereas one LLOYD JONES

who was not born in Australia, and who arrived in Australia by the

SS. UNKNOWN on the NO RECORDS 19    , has,

within five years after his arrival in Australia, Repeatedly broken

ANR'S and repeatedly defied the

laws of aerodynamics & of Kermode

NOW, THEREFORE, I, the Minister for Immigration, in pursuance

of Section 8A of the *Immigration Act 1901-1949*, do order that the

said Lloyd Jones be deported from the

Commonwealth, and I do further order that, for the purpose of deportation, he

be kept in the custody of the bearer of this Order until he has been deported

from the Commonwealth. to Heard Island

*Athol Townley*  
Minister for Immigration.

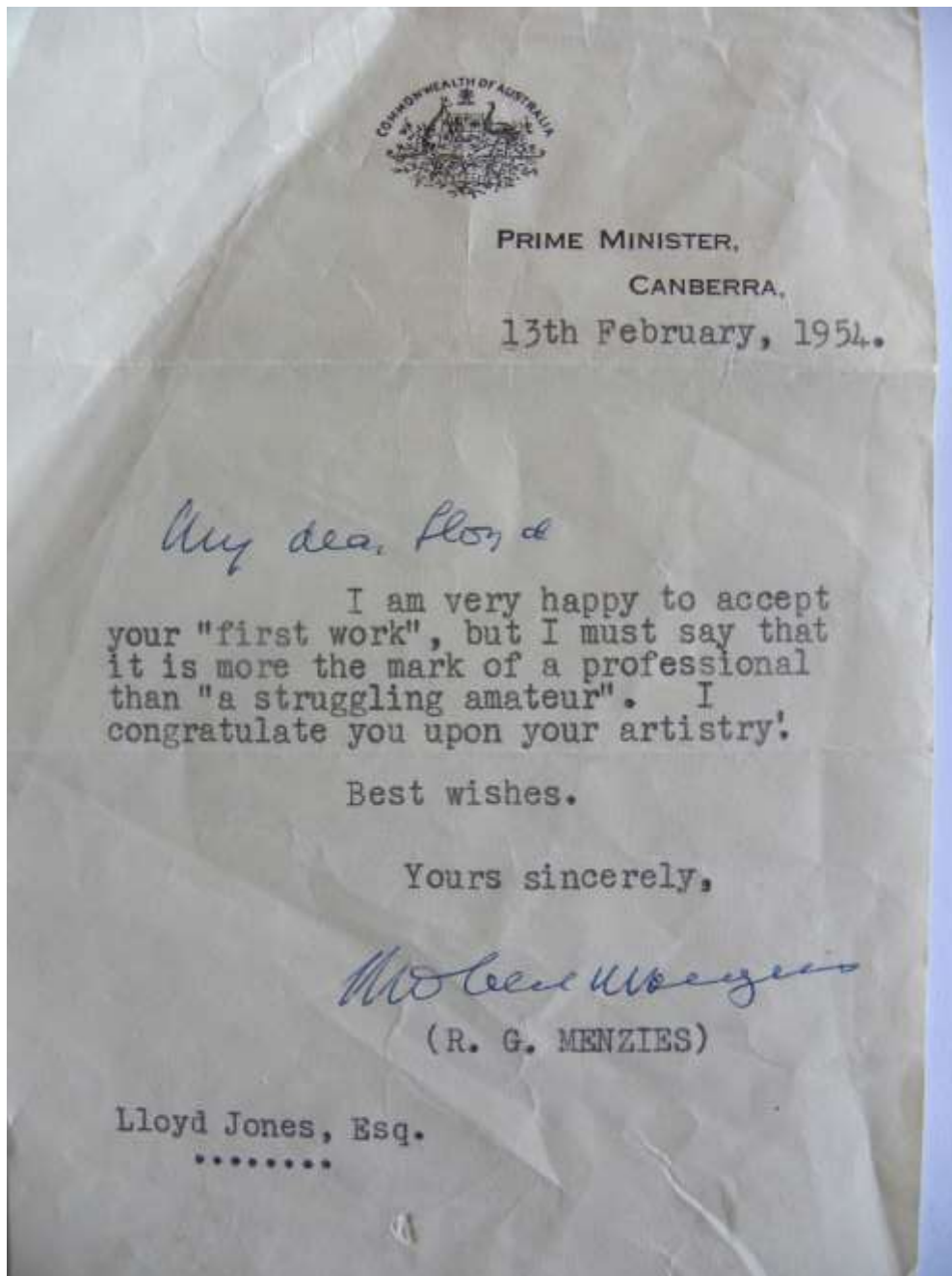
Date March 25 1957

The deportation order issued to Lloyd Jones by The Honorable Athol Townley, Minister for Immigration, 1956 – 1958



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The letter signed by The Hon. Robert Menzies acknowledging receipt of Lloyd's book of photographs of the Tasmanian wilderness.