



Tasmanian Aviation Giants – The Holyman Family

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Victor Clive Holyman (1894 – 1934)

Born on the 27th August 1894 in Devonport Tasmania, one of thirteen children of William junior and Honora Holyman, he was the grandson of William Holyman, the founder of the shipping firm William Holyman and Sons.

Educated at Launceston Church Grammar School, he followed in his father's footsteps and went to sea at the age of 16 years apprenticed on the Barque *CJS* of 720 tons trading between Australia and Mauritius.

When World War 1 broke out, Victor already had his mate's ticket and transferred to the British owned *SS Aragaz* as a second mate. On this ship he eventually sailed to Lemnos the jumping off point for the Gallipoli landing. In June 1916 he joined the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS), the aerial wing of the Royal Navy, as a Temporary Flight Sub Lieutenant. Serving in France in 1916 and 1917 he was subsequently promoted to Flight Lieutenant. According to the family history it was reported that Victor "*was an airman of rare ability*" and in 1917 he returned to the UK as a test pilot at Maartlesham Heath.

In early 1918 he took six months special leave to return to Australia, during which time he was transferred to the Royal Air Force (RAF) when it was formed from the RNAS and the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). At the end of his leave, he was seconded to the Royal Australian Navy South Eastern Area (Victoria) with the rank of Acting Flight Lieutenant, Royal Air Force. He returned to England in 1920 to resign and then joined the Holyman shipping line, his first command being the *SS Hall Caine*.

Over the next decade he was Master of a number of Holyman ships, including the *Koomeela*, *Koringa*, *Wariatea* and the *Laranah*, however, he retained his interest in flying and was known, when laying over in Melbourne, to take to the air. In 1927, with fellow WW 1 pilot C. W. B. Martin, he was instrumental in the formation of the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Division) and the establishment of Launceston airport at Western Junction.

On the 22nd of August 1922 Victor married Hazel Gaunt from Launceston at Christ Church, Longford.

Victor then convinced his family, presumably including his close brother Ivan who was managing the day-to-day activities of the company and his uncle James then Chairman of the company, to enter into aviation. Subsequently, in 1932, the Holyman family company, Holyman Brothers Pty Ltd, purchased a newly launched de Havilland DH83 Fox Moth, named



the aircraft *Miss Currie*, and commenced flying the old Holyman sea-route from Launceston to Flinders Island.



Brothers Victor (left) and Ivan Holyman, c.1917

Initially Victor was the only pilot with Jack Stubbs being hired as the engineer and Victor's wife Hazel acting as hostess (albeit from the ground). Shortly after they merged with Laurie Johnson, who was already flying the Launceston – Flinders Island route, to form Tasmanian Aerial Services Pty Ltd. In 1933 they acquired a new De Havilland DH84 Dragon, named the aircraft *Miss Launceston*, and commenced a tri-weekly service between Launceston and Melbourne.

In November 1933, the Commonwealth Government called for tenders for a subsidised airmail service to Tasmania as part of the Empire Air Mail Scheme. In order to ensure the success of its tender, they restructured Tasmanian Aerial Services, with Huddart Parker and the Union Steamship Company, (being shareholders in William Holyman and Sons Pty Ltd), taking an interest and in July 1934 changed the name to Holyman's Airways Pty Ltd.



On being awarded the tender, Holyman's ordered two de Havilland DH86s, specially developed for the Empire Air Mail Route. The first DH86s were single control models with only one seat in the nose of the aircraft making it somewhat difficult for pilots to change seats.

Holyman's first DH86 arrived in September 1934, was named *Miss Hobart*, and commenced a regular service between Launceston and Melbourne on the 3rd October 1934.



On October 19th 1934, Victor was co-piloting the new DH86 *Miss Hobart* when she went down with 10 passengers between Victoria and Flinders Island. Initially the enquiry focused on the theory that the aircraft may have run out of fuel or that the pilots may have lost control whilst changing seats. When another DH86 was later lost off Whitemark it was found that the spruce main wing beam had broken and it was thought the same fate had befallen Victor's aircraft.

The loss of *Miss Hobart* was a devastating blow for Holyman's Airways. The airline had lost its founder and driving force.

Victor was remembered by his family members as tough, completely fearless and a bit of a wild character but had business sense and a clear vision of the future of transportation.

His character is somewhat caught in his service records from 1916 – 1917 brief in nature as was the norm:

In 1916 "Good pilot, fair officer" and in 1917 "Ability to command but very little discipline"

Victor was survived by his wife Hazel, affectionally known as "Matron", who went on to play a major role in the development of cabin crew (air hostessing as it was known then) as Superintendent of Air Hostesses at ANA.



Ivan Holyman and the Birth of an Airline

Born in August 1896, Ivan was the youngest son of William junior, served at sea as a purser and worked in the firm's offices before joining the AIF as a private in 1914. He had a distinguished war career, serving from the landings at Gallipoli to the last actions of the AIF in France in September 1918. He was wounded four times, twice mentioned in despatches, and was awarded the Military Cross, finishing the war as a company commander at the age of 22 with the rank of Captain.

After the war, Ivan returned to the family shipping business in managerial positions, based in Devonport and then in Launceston.

Following the death of his brother in the *Miss Hobart* crash, the loss of the *Loina* off Whitemark and the force landing of the *Lepena* en-route to King Island, it would have been understandable had Ivan Holyman given aviation away and returned to a career in shipping. Fortunately, he decided to stay in aviation and that the answer to the problem of safety lay in buying "*bigger and better planes*." His vision was to develop an airline company of sufficient size and financial strength to provide the necessary infrastructure of workshops, engineers and staff.

After the non-fatal accident in Bass Strait to the *Lepena*, Ivan Holyman used his influence with the Australian Government to have an official ban on the importation of US built commercial aircraft lifted. Although it is hard to be definitive about Ivan's responsibility for the change in government policy, such policy being lifted on 30 November 1935, the airline was prepared for the announcement and placed an immediate order for the recently introduced Douglas DC2. It entered service as VH-USY *Bungana* on 18 May 1936 and completely justified the job it had been bought for. It proved Bass Strait could be flown in safety and with the regularity of a suburban train service.

Early in 1936 Ivan Holyman approached the Adelaide Steamship Company, owners of Adelaide Airways, with a view to an amalgamation aiming to become Australia's most powerful airline. Adelaide Airways had recently taken over West Australian Airways and the new combine would thus effectively control airline traffic between Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. With funding from the Orient Steam Navigation Company a new **Australian National Airways** was registered on 13 May 1936, and began services under its new name on 1 July 1936 with Ivan Holyman as General Manager. It acquired a second DC-2 VH-UXJ *Loongana* that began a twice-weekly service between Melbourne and Perth on 21 December 1936

The same expansionist philosophy continued after the formation of ANA. The reason for this was not expansion for the sake of expansion, but because Ivan Holyman saw clearly that the key to success in aviation lay in mobilising large amounts of capital to provide the most modern aircraft and develop the routes to use them intensively.



Meanwhile, efforts to expand operations northwards to Queensland were being thwarted by Airlines of Australia (AoA), its main competitor. Established in 1931 as **New England Airways** by G.A. Robinson and Keith Virtue of Lismore, it operated services in northern New South Wales and between Sydney and Brisbane, Queensland, expanding further into Queensland by taking over a number of struggling regional airlines during the mid-1930s. It was restructured as AoA in 1934 with funding by an investment group the British Pacific Trust. In 1936 it introduced Stinson Model A airliners in a regular service between Sydney and Brisbane, and later acquired Douglas DC-2s and Douglas DC-3s. After several months of fruitless negotiations with its financiers, ANA managed to gain a controlling interest in AoA in April 1937, although the two airlines retained separate public identities until 1942. Between them the two airlines operated four DC-2s and four DC-3s by the time of the outbreak of World War II, as well as several other aircraft including nine de Havilland D.H.84s, two D.H.86s and nine DH 89 Rapides.



In 1938 the airline suffered a tragic blow with the loss of the *Kyeema* with all its passengers and crew. Following this disaster an intensive study of the civil aviation systems in Australia was undertaken with a view to the taking of all measures possible to prevent a recurrence.

Out of it came safety provisions which had not existed before the accident and the continual application of the latest scientific aids to navigation. In addition to this ANA set up a School of Aeronautics to train pilots in all branches of aviation, including navigation, radio, and engineering.

ANA grew up very much in the image of Ivan Holyman who was constantly displaying his personality, drive, enthusiasm and vision. He was a hands-on boss, he knew everyone connected with the airline and could chat happily with any of them. He was an extraordinarily loyal person and this loyalty was reciprocated by the staff resulting in a sense of excitement and vitality throughout the company.



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Ivan Nello Holyman

So, ANA had what no other organisation had, a continent-wide range business to keep its planes flying to the optimum, and the ground organisation to ensure the two prime essentials of civil flying, safety and reliability.



ANA DC-2 VH-UYB "Pengana" at the ANA terminal Essendon Aerodrome Circa 1937



Australian National Airways – The War Years 1939 - 1945

When Australia entered World War 2 in 1939 the Government of Australia requisitioned ANA's four DC-3s, leaving it to battle on with its assortment of lesser aircraft, including three DC-2s. However, ANA was soon operating a network of services around Australia on behalf of the war effort. It operated a large number of Douglas DC-2s, DC-3s and even at least one rare Douglas DC-5, mostly on behalf of the American forces in Australia.

One of the most dramatic examples of the conflict's impact on ANA occurred at Brisbane which was then just a quiet airport in comparison to today's operations. In 1941 the works manager, Ted Battery, was in charge of four engineers, but by 1944 this number had increased to 2,500.

The growth of ANA during this period was due not only to the airline's total commitment to the war effort but the efficient systems and first class engineering that ANA could supply on a far greater scale than any other airline. Throughout the war ANA provide aircraft, aircrew and a full range of engineering services to the RAAF and the United States services whilst still able to maintain services on its route network throughout the country thus playing a valuable role in Australia's defence infrastructure.

This was a testament to the foresight and management of Ivan Holyman.

Within weeks of the commencement of World War 2, ANA aircraft commenced flying extensive surveillance flights using DC-3's and covering vast areas of waters around Australia with flights of up to ten hours being common. Ten pilots, ten engineers and a stores clerk of ANA's staff were immediately seconded to the air force, who at this stage had no experience of flying or maintaining modern aircraft.

The long-range flights were further expanded when, in 1940, pilots and engineers had their abilities further tested to carry out long-distance flights with precision. After one of these flights escorting a convoy of the AIF into the Indian Ocean using three DC-3's one of the pilots, Keith Virtue, suggested they should attempt on their return to fly across Australia. Fellow pilots Squadron Leader Heffernan and Willis Reeve quickly agreed and so the three aircraft departed Perth in West Australia at 1.30 a.m.

The DC-3 "Kyilla" piloted by Virtue flew from Perth to Goondiwindi in Queensland in twelve and a half hours, creating a new distance record across Australia. Keith Virtue felt he could have made Brisbane, but it was too risky. A second aircraft piloted by Willis Reeve had mechanical problems and diverted to Adelaide whilst the third DC-3 flown by Heffernan successfully landed at Richmond with the fuel gauges on zero proving the concept of long precision flights was possible.



**File photo of DC-3 “Kylla” flown by Keith Virtue in twelve and a half hours
from Perth to Goondiwindi**

One of ANA’s problems during the conflict was that, although under aircraft wartime manpower regulations, ANA was a protected industry however, the airline lost many staff to the armed forces including pilots, engineers and administrative personnel. Additionally, some losses of aircraft occurred when the DC-2 “Pengana” lost engine power after take-off from Mascot en-route to Brisbane and had to conduct a forced landing in Cook’s River and a further DC-2, the “Bungana,” had an engine fire en-route to Adelaide. Fortunately, all crew and passengers were unharmed but the accidents forced two of the airline’s DC-2’s out of action for lengthy periods.

A third aircraft to be lost did not have the same impact on the running of the airline as did the incidents involving the two DC-2’s but was of substantial sentimental and historical significance. Holyman’s Airways first aircraft, the DH.83 “Miss Currie,” was on loan to the Royal Flying Doctor Service based at Brocken Hill. A pro German saboteur set fire to the hangar where “Miss Currie” was stored totally destroying the aircraft.



File photo of the DH.83 Miss Currie that was destroyed by fire at Broken Hill

During this difficult period retaining trained staff, maintaining its regular services, the accidents to the “Pengana” and “Bungana” and the absence of the DC-3 aircraft, on secondment to the RAAF, the engineering department continued to expand. However, when Japan entered the war further complications arose.

With the Japanese invasion of South East Asia and the bombing of Darwin, Katherine, Broome and other northern Australian areas an invasion of the Australian mainland became a real threat. Australia’s economy and society were immediately put on a war footing with ANA and the Australian aviation industry becoming totally absorbed in the war effort. The airline faced constant problems with shortages of labour, spare parts, aircraft and fuel resulting with the inevitable reduction in the quality of passenger services, a reputation the haunted the airline in the post war era.

During the years 1941 and 1942, ANA flew innumerable flights, usually from Cairns and Townsville, to various ports in New Guinea including Port Moresby where Australian civilians were brought to in a variety of aircraft. In eight days during December 1941, 732 civilians were evacuated to Cairns. In January 1942 ANA engineers, at the request of US Army Air Force officers, undertook the task of overhauling American Flying Fortresses and Liberators. By war’s end it was estimated ANA engineers spent over four-million-man hours working on American aircraft whilst all the time maintaining the regular flight service, albeit with the inevitable slipping of safety standards.



An American Flying Fortress. ANA engineers did a 500-hour inspection removed, overhauled and replaced the four engines in a period of only sixteen days.

In spite of all the pressures applied, ANA's safety record in the war years was by no means devastating, with only four serious accidents on scheduled services, partly due to lowered safety standards of wartime, with only two cases of damage that could be attributed to the war occurring. The first of these was the destruction of "Miss Currie" at Broken Hill the other case was somewhat more bizarre.

The second occurred in July 1942 after the DC-2 "Loongana" landed at King Island. In late 1941 and early 1942 the Army ordered explosive charges to be placed under the runways of selected coastal airports. One of these airstrips happened to be at Currie, King Island. Whilst the "Loongana" was being loaded, a soldier began fiddling with switches that controlled the demolition charges. Somehow the soldier activated the wrong switch, there was a huge explosion and the runway was destroyed. The DC-2 was showered with clods of earth that resulted in numerous dents occurring on the wings and fuselage on the aircraft which, fortunately, following some hasty runway repairs still able to take off and complete the flight but was out of service for some time whilst repairs were being affected.

A further war-time feat began in 1942 with the Courier Service flights began with aircraft provided by the Directorate of Air Transport (DAT), flown by ANA pilots, maintained by ANA engineers, whilst the co-pilots and wireless operators were from the RAAF. During the four



years of its operation, most of ANA's senior pilots spent time flying the service and attained a high standard of reliability and punctuality. The aircraft was quite distinctive featuring the white star of the US Army Air Force as well as the Australian civil registration clearly visible on the aircraft's fuselage. Initially flying Brisbane to Port Moresby and return the service expanded to fly from Archerfield in Queensland to different New Guinea destinations and eventually, following the defeat of the Japanese in the Philippines commenced at Service Brisbane-Manila-Brisbane. The service was credited with providing a secure way of maintaining communications between Allied Commanders in Australia and the allied forces in the front line throughout the South West Pacific.

After the conflict concluded ANA emerged with a remarkable record in the provision of essential services and commitment to Australia's defence. From December 1941 to June 1944, its civilian passenger aircraft flew 31,860 hours carried about 68,000 passengers and large quantities of mail and freight. It's engineering department's total man hours on RAAF and USAAF aircraft was a combined sum of 7,760,706 hours. By June 1944, ANA personnel had increased from eighty employed before 1936, to nearly four thousand, two thousand being engineers and one hundred and twenty pilots.

By 1945 the airline proudly claimed that it had the largest internal route network of any airline in the world. ANA's post war planning was largely in the hands of a small group of senior executives with Ivan Holyman as managing director.

During the war there was a large increase in the number of women employed by ANA. In 1936 staff lists showed only seventeen women were employed by the airline whilst in 1944 there was approximately five hundred female employees. The largest group was still the air hostesses.



Hazel Holyman “The Matron”



It would be remiss that any story or history regarding the Holyman family and Australian National Airways (ANA) is recorded without reference to the airline’s air hostesses (or flight attendants in today’s language) and in particular, one incredible lady known affectionately throughout the company as “Matron Holyman”.



Sisters Mollie (R) and Hazel (L) Gaunt

Born in Launceston on the 17th of March 1899, the eldest of four children of locally born parents Frederick and Emmeline Gaunt, Hazel was educated at Broadland House Church of England Girls’ Grammar School in Launceston.

Hazel married Victor Clive Holyman on the 22nd of August 1921, at Christ Church Longford.

When Victor and his brother Ivan expanded the family’s shipping business into aviation in 1932, Hazel supported the family business by driving passengers to the airport, providing



them with blankets, biscuits, and coffee for their forthcoming flight. It could be argued that Hazel became Australia's and the airline's first air hostess and she did it without leaving the ground!!

However, she was dealt a cruel blow by the death of her husband in the 1934 crash of the aircraft *Miss Hobart*. Following Victor's death, she withdrew from the "firm" and sought solace by travelling in England and America. Whilst in America she spent time in Chicago with officials from United Airlines, one of the pioneers of air hostessing services.

At the suggestion of Ivan Holyman that she take up the role of hostess superintendent, Hazel took up duties in her new role in November 1939 with just 18 hostesses. By the time of her retirement in 1955, the numbers had grown to almost 200.

On commencement of her new role, her duties were far from glamorous. They included taking charge of stores, catering, laundry, designing uniforms, and even filling in for hostesses that were too sick to fly. Always elegant, composed and very much in charge she was forever courteous and had a very pleasant manner.

While she ruled the hostesses with a rod of iron and was renowned for her steely grey eyes that could spot dirty shoes, crooked stockings seams, and soiled unpressed uniforms at fifty paces, most hostesses soon realised she had a heart of gold. Although she gave the impression of being a "tough old bird" she was as soft as butter underneath and was known to cry after having to reprimand a hostess.



Executives of ANA in 1945. Seated are Hazel (left), Ivan Holyman (centre) and Lawrence Johnson (second from right)



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Matron Holyman believed in first class service and that hostesses were essentially a public relations job. She was one of the first to realise that airlines are largely judged by the people the passengers spend the most time with – the air hostesses. As such the “Matron” encouraged hostesses to speak with every passenger insisting they allocate the time to do this.

In the early 1950’s aviation and flying was still very much a novelty for some and a nerve-wracking experience for others. Another function of ANA’s hostesses that was deemed vitally important was to reassure anxious and nervous passengers, whilst at all times, maintaining an air of calm and control.

Matron Holyman had strong views on the hostesses’ appearance. She preferred a neat, efficient and discipline image rather than a glamorous one.



“Matron” Holyman presenting their wings to newly graduated hostesses.

Hostesses had to keep their hair tidy and above the uniform’s collar, skirts were to be mid-calf length, gloves must be worn, together with stockings and sensible shoes with faces made up with a smile and little else. All of these requirements were often for a very short career as an airline hostess. Until the introduction of the DC-4s all ANA aircraft operated with one hostess, unless a trainee was flying with an experienced hostess, whereas the DC-4s required two hostesses and on their introduction the DC-6s required three.

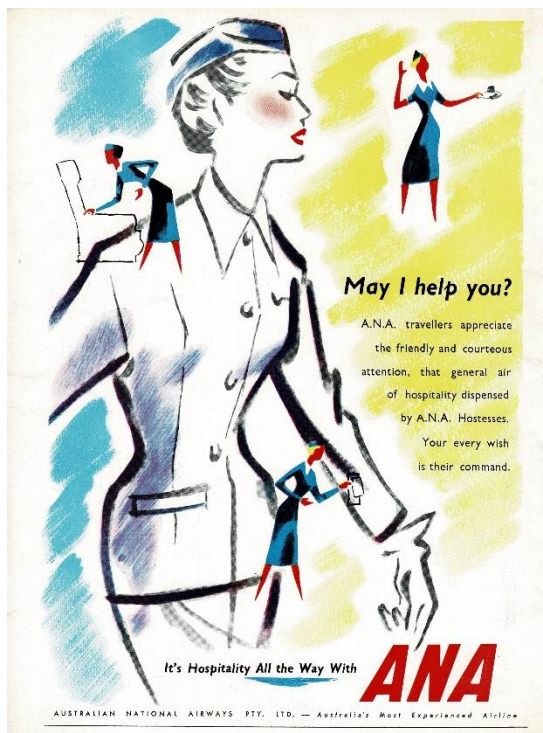


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Early life as a hostess was not all glamour but plain hard work. Most hostesses stayed with the airline only for a period of approximately two years although one reason for this, as with all airlines at the time, was because they had to resign upon marriage.

ANA used their hostess training to achieve another first for the airline when they use their hostesses and their in-flight service as a promotional tool. The hostesses being presented in promotions and advertisements based not on their glamour and beauty, but on their training and dependability.



The ultimate test for hostesses would be demonstrated in a crisis situation and whilst the vast majority of the hostesses never experienced an emergency, those who did found their training proved invaluable.

All hostesses were taught emergency procedures, the need to remain calm and the importance of getting passengers out of a crashed aircraft. The success of their training was graphically illustrated on the 8th of November 1946 with the crash of the DC-3 "Kurana" at Mount Macedon. Tragically both pilots were killed but the hostess on the flight, Elizabeth Fry, managed to supervise and assist all passengers safely from the burning wreckage, applying first aid to the injured until help arrived. In recognition of her coolness and courage Elizabeth Fry was presented with an inscribed silver tray from Lloyds of London. She was the first hostess in the world to receive such an award. A tribute to their training.



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Nan Whitcomb was a long serving hostess, joining ANA in 1950 and in the final chapter of her book “Up here and Down There” she referred to the methods and training received under the guidance of Hazel Holyman. She commented that “I tried to follow the Matron’s recipes for law and order and a mixture of loyalty and sense of belonging of a group with a common worthwhile purpose.”

Under Matron Holyman, the ANA hostess service was an enormous strength to the airline. Her influence lasted long after her retirement in 1955, extending through not only ANA, but also Ansett, TAA and Qantas as her senior hostesses were recruited to leadership positions with other airlines.

In 1966 Hazel Holyman was nominated for the “Down to Earth Club” formed that year by former Ansett-ANA air hostesses that raised money for various charities. She continued her involvement with this group for the rest of her life.



Hazel on her 80th Birthday

Awarded an AM in 1980 she also received an Advance Australia Award for her services to aviation in 1988.

Hazel Holyman died in Launceston on the 14th of November 1992.



Flying for ANA, Innovations, New Ventures and the End of an Airline

At the end of the Second World War, ANA was the major domestic airline. The Federal Government then establishing TAA in 1946 as a direct competitor. The post-war expansion of aircraft travel, in a tough commercial environment, placed a lot of strain on the operation of ANA. With the death of Sir Ivan Holyman in 1957, ANA had lost its leader and ANA was subsequently sold.



This is our final article in the series on the Holyman Family.

Flying for ANA

At the end of the Second World War, ANA employed 65 pilots, which had risen to 300 by the late 1940s. After the rapid growth of the company during its first ten years, the insecurity caused by the rise of TAA and the assault on the company by the Chifley Government had a greater impact on the pilots than any other group of ANA's workforce.

The concern over the future of the company was compounded by the fact that most pilots were young married men who wanted continuity in their employment. It was not surprising that with ANA entering a lengthy period of uncertainty, that pilots were tempted to gain more secure employment with TAA, Qantas, or even overseas airlines like Cathay Pacific and Swissair.

The constant drain of pilots meant ANA was continually recruiting and training new pilots through the 1950s. Although there was constant turnover of pilots at the junior level, the experience of the airline's senior pilot's ranks was probably greater than any airline in the world. ANA Management showed great consideration to long serving pilots who found it difficult to adapt to the changing requirements of airline flying during the late 1940s and early 1950s, many of whom were moved sideways to some of the company's plum ground jobs.

With the new bigger planes that operated after the War, the role of the pilot was restricted to time in the cockpit. Nonetheless the old style still lived on to some extent in the DC-3 services to the outback. With the DC-3s flying slow and low, the pilots would often perform many a detour for passengers to enjoy the sights. Due to the intimate nature of this aircraft the airline's instructions to the captain was "to go back and chat to the passengers during the flight" meaning the pilots were involved with the passengers far more than they are today.



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File photo of the iconic ANA DC 3 VH – ANH Tulluna

Innovations

ANA always prided itself on its role as an aviation pioneer. (Some of these achievements are listed at the end of the article).

This enthusiasm for innovation remained strong throughout the life of ANA as they pioneered many new systems and methods, particularly in the field of air freight.

Freight became a major part of ANA's culture and was particularly strong in Tasmania, where the absence of road competition and frequent industrial disruption to sea transport placed air freight in a very favourable position.



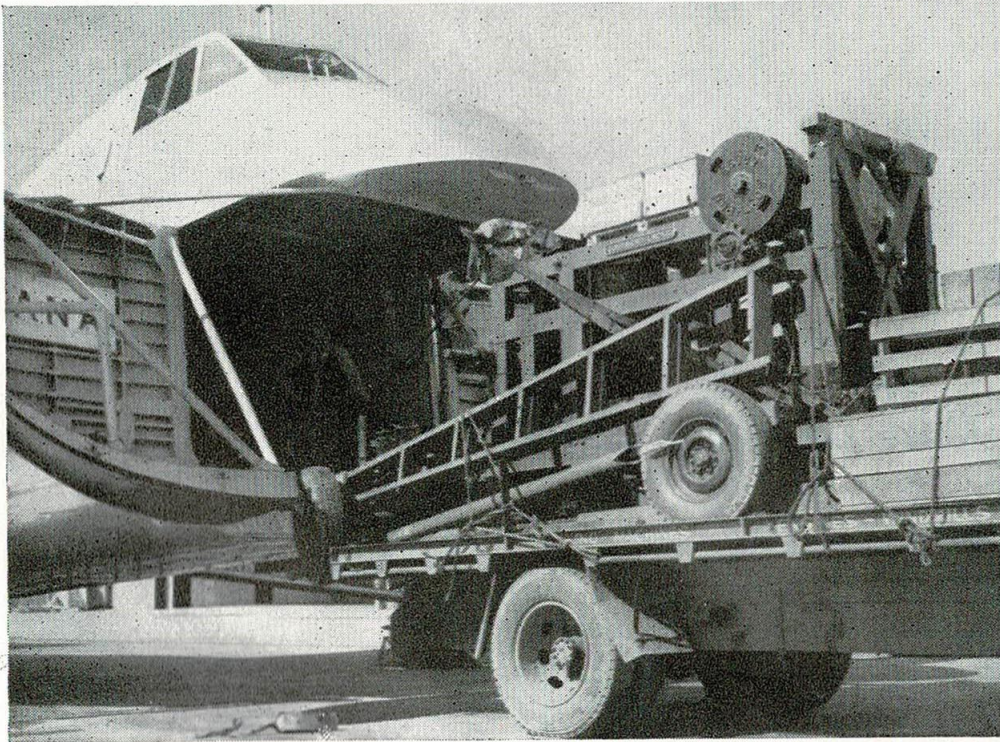
Australian National Airways Freight Service Van

Launceston freight supervisor, and later airport manager, Ron Roach recalls that freight became an enormous business for ANA in Tasmania. The airline worked closely with the textile industry and filled the Launceston hangars with wool bales and wool from Coats Patons, blankets from Waverly Woollen Mills and goods from other textile businesses in Launceston. In the mid 1950's Coats Patons was sending up to 200,000 cartons of wool to the mainland annually.

But the freight business didn't stop there. Their innovative attitude resulted in the construction of special pens and facilities that enabled the airline to carry horses, sheep, and cattle to shows and sales on the Australian mainland. ANA also would fly ice cream into Tasmania for Peters and additionally the Wander company-chartered flights for Ovaltine from Devonport.



After a humble beginning in 1947 when one car was carried to Launceston on a Bristol Freighter by the airline, by the mid-1950s ANA was bringing 100 cars a month into Launceston, such was the enormity and diversity of the air freight business.



Australian National Airways recently flew this water-boring plant weighing 5 tons 5 cwt. to King Island, in the Bass Strait, in a Bristol freighter. The machinery will be used by the Land Settlement Board to develop irrigation schemes on new farms

The amount of freight carried by the airline in the post war years grew at an incredible rate from 3,500,000 lbs in 1944/45 to almost 100,000,000 lbs in 1956/57. The revenue from the air freight was estimated to be over 30% of ANA's income, while being only 14% of the revenue for TAA.

Another of ANA's innovations was the introduction of helicopters to Australian aviation. The first Bristol Type 171 Sycamore helicopter was test flown by Captain Max Holyman in Hobart on 11 May 1956. The helicopter was used for a wide variety of purposes including surveys, crop seeding and spraying, lifting people and machinery into remote areas. In October 1956 and again in March 1957, the ANA helicopter performed lifesaving extractions moving injured Tasmanian patients quickly and safely to hospital.



**File photo of ANA's Bristol Type 171 Sycamore helicopter VH – INO (Yarrana)
at Tasmania's Queenstown airport**

ANA's pursuit of excellence pervaded in every area of the company's operations. Even though the financial situation of the company worsened, the reaction was to invest more in the business. From the introduction of a fleet of sixty ground transport coaches, the purchase of five DC-4 aircraft (which by now were flying the major trunk routes), refurbishing of airport lounges, new buildings for the technical divisions at Essendon and the development of the ANA travel service.

One of the largest and most innovative investments was made in the late 1940s, the teletype system that was used in Operations, Reservations and Administration.

Although Ivan Holyman often retained loyal workers from the airline's early years, he was aware of the need to attract quality executives. His solution was long term, rather than short-term, by instituting a management cadet scheme to train young executives, with one or two being appointed each year.

The Post War Business Environment

The post-war Chifley government was determined that post-war Australian aviation would be a state monopoly and ANA now faced severe competition in the form of the state-owned airline Trans Australian Airlines (TAA) which was created in 1946.

Prior to TAA's arrival, ANA had enjoyed a near monopoly on domestic air transport.

From the viewpoint of history, it is generally agreed that TAA was a better run airline that made better choices of aircraft than ANA.



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Ivan Holyman stuck to his relationship with Douglas by buying the non-pressurised DC-4 whilst TAA opted for the revolutionary pressurised Convair. Later Holyman's loyalty to Douglas again was apparent when he bought the pressured DC-6B, while TAA bought the Vickers Viscount turbo prop aircraft.



ANA DC-4, VH-ANB "Lackrana"

ANA was floated as a public company in 1949 and the tough competitive aviation market did not result in a profit being recorded until 1954/55.

In 1956 Ivan Holyman was knighted for his services to aviation and it appeared that ANA had recovered from the losses of previous years, but the stability was an illusion and short lived.

Toward the end of the 1950's TAA had driven ANA close to collapse. Holyman himself wanted to expand overseas but the government's ownership of Qantas prevented this so he bought shares in Cathay Pacific and Air Ceylon.



File photo of ANA DC-6B Kurana



The End of the Airline

The end of ANA is the subject of much misunderstanding and misconceptions, but it is generally accepted by knowledgeable people that the reason for the demise was one key event, then death of Sir Ivan Holyman on the 18th of January 1957 whilst holidaying in Honolulu, at the age of 60 years. The company was a product of his imagination, drive, skill and experience.

He was indeed an enigma in Australian business. He was a man of charm, vitality and a sense of fun who believed in the old-fashioned values of loyalty and trustworthiness and as a result he had a close and almost paternalistic relationship with the staff of ANA.

His feeling towards Tasmania sometimes overrode his business sense. He maintained his home in Launceston always voting in his home city and when travelling overseas and asked where he was from, he would always reply “Tasmania.” The airline gave far higher priority to Tasmania than the volume of business warranted. The first helicopter was based in Hobart for many months and the first DC-6B was flown to Tasmania to “*show it off*”.

Following the death of Sir Ivan Holyman, the shareholders offered to sell out to the Australian Government to merge with TAA and smaller airlines, an offer the government declined. The ANA board then commenced negotiations with Reginald Ansett of Ansett Airways and finally on 03 October 1957, ANA was sold to Ansett for £3.3 million pounds.

Ansett – ANA was formed on 21 October 1957 and the ANA name was retained until 1968 when the airline was renamed Ansett Airlines of Australia. The contribution made to the airline by ANA and Sir Ivan Holyman was quickly forgotten.

Whereas the history of TAA, Ansett and Qantas have been analysed in minute detail the history of Australia’s first modern airline, its creator and its people have been either distorted or ignored.

“Sadly, ANA is truly the forgotten giant of Australian aviation.”



IVAN HOLYMAN was an Elizabethan—at least he would have liked to have been! A modern Sir Francis Drake or Sir Walter Raleigh, ranging in search of the enemy. Engaging in ventures and enterprise. A Knight tilting for a cause, too, and taking victory or defeat with his characteristic laugh.

In his career what he will be most remembered for was championship of free enterprise, and his practice of it, not only in aviation, but in numerous business ventures mostly in his native Tasmania, and which he pushed with his characteristic energy.

He represented one swing of the pendulum. An uncompromising entrepreneur, he fought for the free rights of business, and championed this cause at a critical period—at a time when the pendulum swung hard in the opposite direction.

In commercial aviation Ivan Holyman will be remembered for his refusal to admit defeat after the death of his brother Victor and tragic aircraft losses in Bass Strait in the early nineteen thirties, and when the present A.N.A. was formed.

Despite these crushing setbacks, he went on, with his colleagues on the Board of A.N.A., to introduce the now-famous Douglas aircraft to Australia, and for the first time give Australian capital cities the type of service we have today, complete with air hostess and meals in the air. With the application of business principles to the enterprise, A.N.A. went from strength to strength till it became the great airline that it is today.

Ivan Holyman will be sadly missed from the Australian scene, but what he stood for and what he accomplished at a critical time in Australia's development will always be remembered, and passed on to those who will follow him in the tradition and the pioneering spirit of that great character, the original Captain Holyman, and of Holyman Bros.

HUDSON FYSH,
Chairman,
Qantas Empire Airways Ltd.,
Sydney.

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A Tribute to Sir Ivan Holyman, from another Tasmanian Aviation Giant,
Sir Hudson Fysh, the co-founder of Qantas.

Published in Air Travel, (The ANA flight magazine), February 1957



ANA – SOME OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS and ADVERTISING

- In 1936 ANA introduces the first DC - 2 aircraft into Australia.
- The same year saw the employment of Miss Rita Grueber of Hobart and Miss Blanch Due of Melbourne as Australia's and ANA's first air hostesses.
- In November 1939 "Matron Hazel Holyman" took over the role of hostess superintendent of 18 hostesses with that number growing to almost 200 on her retirement in 1955.
- ANA's belief in, and dedication toward, safety produced the reputation of having one of the finest engineering and instrument repair shops in the world pioneering many new methods.
- 1936 saw the purchase of the Victorian Flying School to train commercial pilots to ANA's high standards. The barnstorming days for pilots were over with ANA requiring First Officers to have a minimum of 1000 flying hours before being part of their aircraft's crew.
- By the mid 1940's ANA was carrying 80% of passengers, 80% of Air Mail and 86% of air freight carried on commercial aircraft.





TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

TASMANIAN AVIATION GIANTS – THE HOLYMAN FAMILY

- ANA were the first Australian airline to provide both pilots and hostesses with uniforms.
- ANA introduced auto pilots, co-pilots and radio compasses, air to ground radios and many new flight and navigational aids to ensure increased safety.
- ANA's second DH 86 (VH - URT) was named "Loina" starting a practice that saw all of ANA's aircraft carrying a one-word Australian aboriginal name.
- Employees in 1936 totalled 80 but by mid-1940's this number had grown to almost 4000.
- Late 1940, saw the introduction of the revolutionary "*teletype*" system to handle reservations and operational matters and by 1951 the system covered 4300 miles, had 50 machines and 90 operators throughout Australia.
- 1950 saw the introduction of Australia's first commercial helicopter.
- Between 1945 and 1949 ANA boasted not only the largest internal network in the world but also became the world's 9th largest airline.
- The early 1950's saw another innovation in the establishment of the ANA Travel and Holiday Centres the forerunner of today's travel agents.

