



Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society

Preserving Tasmania's aviation history.



“ROARING FORTIES”

***OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN
AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED***

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**TASMANIAN AVIATION
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Welcome to the 18th edition of our quarterly Newsletter “Roaring Forties”.

TAHS OFFICE BEARERS 2024

President: Andrew Johnson
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In this issue we continue the story of Tasmanian navigator Maxwell Sanders and the missions he flew over Germany during World War 2.

Peter Manktelow endeavours to clear up the mystery as to why two Australian RAAF glider pilots were buried in the Commonwealth War Graves cemetery at Stavanger and reveals the Tasmanian connection.

A new segment in this issue introduces Tasmanian aviators and their careers. The first article presents the career of Tasair Hobart’s Chief Pilot/CFI, John Pugh, that includes his career highlights, and a sneak preview of John’s skill as an author.

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Other articles include memories of Skyrace Tasmania. The pylon racing and the corresponding airshow was recognised as world class and later become a world’s first with the introduction of jets racing around the pylons.

Launceston’s aerial survey and a story on the aircraft flown by Stutt and Dalzell that went missing in 1921 are included in this edition.

This issue also includes a TAHS events calendar that details activities for the remainder of 2024 that will continually be updated in future Newsletters.



A TAA Viscount 754D about to touchdown at Launceston Airport around 1960. Photo courtesy Pinterest

Remember of you have any historical articles you would like to share just send us an email. Look forward to hearing from you!

***NEXT NEWSLETTER
SEPTEMBER 2024***

**MAXWELL FRED SANDERS,
DFC, RAAF NAVIGATOR.**

By W Dearing



*Photo courtesy F Madill author "Sanders DFC,
Out of The Darkness."*

We continue our story of Max Sanders DFC and start to understand the courage of Max and all Bomber Command aircrew.

OPERATIONS

Max's second mission was to L'Hey and a Flying Bomb Site that had been launching V1 flying bombs onto London. It was this mission that introduced Max to the horror of war and the danger all crews in bomber command faced.



Loading a bomb load courtesy Pinterest

**MAXWELL FRED SANDERS,
DFC**

Anti-aircraft fire was much heavier than on their first mission and Max was exposed to the "corkscrew". This involved the aircraft making a sudden violent dive and turn in an effort to evade enemy aircraft or flak.

This sudden movement of the aircraft, if Max was not quick enough to spread his arms and lay flat over his navigation table, would result in charts, equipment and sometimes Max himself being flung everywhere in his cramped work area.

This mission was flown at 19,000 feet and at this height Max was exposed to aircraft icing. The temperature outside was -20 degrees Celsius and not much warmer inside the aircraft. Chunks of ice would occasionally detach themselves from the wings and striking the aircraft's fuselage and sounding like shrapnel. This combined with a ack-ack shells bursting all around the aircraft made the crew even more tense.

In this scenario the danger faced by all crews was realised when the aircraft next to them received a direct hit and started to burn as it went down. Seven crew perished and although Max did not personally know any of them, he later said the sight made him feel sick. His aircraft completed the mission and headed for home with Max concentrating on his navigation. There were no conversations between any of the crew enroute and their safe landing was tempered by the feeling of seeing their mates shot down right along-side of them. This was the stark reality of war

Max was 19 years of age.

**MAXWELL FRED SANDERS,
DFC**

Missions to Stuttgart, Hamburg, were next and with them came a new challenge.

The first two missions had been conducted in daylight but now they were flying night time missions into Germany. To Stuttgart it was a nine-hour return flight and to Hamburg six and a half hours. During the mission to Stuttgart the crew encountered searchlights or “coning” as the crew called them. When the aircraft was coned it was very difficult to escape the blinding light and the aircraft was constantly thrown around the sky in an attempt to avoid them. Another hazard facing the crew was the risk of mid-air collisions with their own aircraft.



Night missions increased the risk of mid-air collisions Photo courtesy of IWM, UK

As if dodging other aircraft, searchlights and flack were not enough their aircraft was again illuminated forcing Andy to violently throw the aircraft around the sky to escape. During this attack on Stuttgart more than forty aircraft were lost.

Their next mission was to Hamburg, again at night. En-route to the target the aircraft began to shake violently forcing Andy to shut down the offending engine. Many a pilot would have turned back but Andy never hesitated. A quick check, with Flight Engineer Alfie, that the remaining three

**MAXWELL FRED SANDERS,
DFC**

engines were still serviceable Andy announced they would keep on going.

That was enough for the rest of the crew and the bond between the remaining crew members based on the skill and ability of their pilot became stronger. After landing Andy reported to the Squadron Commander and praised the entire crew such was the camaraderie developing within this crew.

Acquet and La Pallice followed with ice and clouds enroute to Acquet and fog at La Pallice with Max commenting on the latter being “not the most exciting trip”.

Max’s seventh trip was on 17 August 1940. Andy, Max and the remaining crew had developed a strong sense of solidarity and confidence in each other so it was with a great deal of dismay that, due to Andy having developed influenza and unable to fly, he was rostered with another crew. Max was not happy, had never met his pilot and didn’t recognise any of the names of this new crew.



The somewhat cramped navigators table and equipment on a Lancaster. Photo courtesy Pinterest.

**MAXWELL FRED SANDERS,
DFC**

The mission proceeded without any body speaking to Max. The pilot asked if he was OK then started the engines and apart from the navigational alterations, that was the end of any further conversation.

Max commented after this mission that he had *“had the feeling that this was not a very happy crew. They certainly didn’t have the same cooperation and feeling of teamwork that Andy’s crew had. I was relieved and pleased to finally go and have breakfast, and couldn’t wait to get back to my crew.”*

Due to fog at Middleton St George the crew landed at Wigsly base, stayed the night and flew back to Middleton St George the next day. There was no conversation on this trip either.

Back with his own crew, and six days rest due to bad weather grounding the Squadron, Russelsheim was their next mission and it was a marathon ten hours and forty-seven minutes of flight time. This flight also included a newspaper reporter who wanted to write a report on an operation. Problem was he was airsick the whole flight and as Max later said *“I still don’t know whether he wrote the story.”*



The cockpit of the Lancaster, room only for one pilot! Photo courtesy IWM,UK.

**MAXWELL FRED SANDERS,
DFC**

Apart from the ever-present dangers associated with operational missions the fact that the flight took almost eleven hours added a further complication. On their return the aircraft would be low on fuel, with only about twenty minutes of endurance left, and not to be left out “mother nature” joined in with fog closing Silloth airfield their planned landing base.

Following a diversion, they landed safely tired, cold, hungry and with about three minutes of fuel left in their tanks. That was the most gruelling and nerve-wracking flight to date.

Mission number ten was to Mimoyecques and a further reminder of how deadly the game could be. After dropping the bomb load Max heard a *“big bang”* and on looking saw a gaping hole in the roof. A shell passed through the bomb bay that, a few moments earlier had been full of bombs, and exited through the roof of the aircraft resulting in two jagged holes in the floor and roof. Incredibly it didn’t explode and it caused no damage to the aircraft’s operation.

Following missions to Stettin and Emden the squadron was given a six day leave pass and Max headed down to London where he met a Naval Sub Lieutenant George Brown a fellow pupil of Glen Dhu primary school whom he had not seen since leaving the school.

**MAXWELL FRED SANDERS,
DFC.**

For some people the number thirteen is somewhat unnerving but Max was not a person who was superstitious and this mission was to Dortmund where they encountered a massive flak barrage. Somehow, they made the bombing run and dropped their load right on target. On landing they discovered just how substantial the flak was. They counted more than one hundred and thirty small flak holes in the aircraft.

Missions fourteen and fifteen were both to Calais the latter being a complete success with the Canadians infantry taking over the town the next day but mission number sixteen, to Bottrop, in the Rhur Valley, known as Happy Valley, was different. Established on their bombing run it seemed every German gun was concentrating the firepower on Max's aircraft. Just prior to their load being released their port outer engine received a direct hit and seconds later the port inner was hit and burst into flames. Throughout all of this they manage to drop on target but then came the trip back home in an aircraft that had lost both port engines. Somehow Andy had managed to bring the Lancaster under some semblance of control but now the aircraft became an asymmetric nightmare. After diving to gain airspeed, and noted that the engine fire had extinguished itself, Andy briefed the crew on his intention of trying to at least make the English Channel if not England. They all agreed and it was then that Max noted that Eddie, the radio operator, was standing in the rear of the aircraft door wide open with his parachute on. This was to be played out in another form some trips later.

Slowly Andy managed to coax the stricken aircraft back to England and a perfect three-point landing. Andy, the skipper,

**MAXWELL FRED SANDERS,
DFC**

was awarded the DSO for outstanding leadership. Max did not know at the time, but his skill and dedication on this trip resulted in him being recommended for an award. Bottrop was one of their worst ops.



The radio operator's area onboard a Lancaster, photo courtesy Pinterest.

After seven days of recovering from the Bottrop mission number 17 to Bergen was rostered. If luck ever rode with Max, it did again prior to this flight. When collecting his equipment and parachute the young WAAF lady advised Max that he had been given a brand-new chute. The top part of his old chute was virtually destroyed having been soaked with hydraulic fluid probably from the previous mission! Had Max used this chute a fatal result would have eventuated.

The trip to and from Bergen was conducted at 100 to 200 feet above the North Sea to avoid German radar an altitude that made Max very uncomfortable, however, the mission was a success and as Max said "*a lot more comfortable than the Bottrop trip*".

Mission number eighteen was met with little enthusiasm by the crew. It was the Ruhr Valley again, this time Dortmund.

MAXWELL FRED SANDERS, DFC

The approach to the bombing run was greeted by heavy flak and masses of searchlights. Andy threw the aircraft all over the sky in an effort to avoid the searchlights succeeding to escape them just short of the bombing run.



Under attack! Ju 87 attacking Lancaster, photo courtesy IWM,UK.

Bombs delivered, and Max with a headache after his head hit the aircraft's roof during the evasive action, they set course for home. Half way there they spotted a FW 190 fighter and once again Andy flung the aircraft into a corkscrew and once again Max's head hit the roof.

Having evaded the fighter and back on track they were set upon by a Junker Ju 88, once again evasive manoeuvres took place and once again Max's head greeted the aircraft's roof together with his charts and equipment. Almost home they were now greeted by fog and diverted to Woodridge that had provisions for a Fog Intensive Dispersal Operation (FIDO). This consisted of two heavy pipelines either side of the runway. Aviation fuel was squirted from nozzles was ignited and burnt off some of the fog giving pilots the opportunity to make a visual landing, and once again Andy landed safely. An overnight stay there, some patching of the

MAXWELL FRED SANDERS, DFC

aircraft's damage and the crew flew back to their base next morning.

Mission number nineteen was again to the Ruhr Valley this time to Bochum. Crossing over the German border they were attacked by a German Me 210 fighter and once again violent corkscrew manoeuvres had Max scrambling to protect his equipment.

Beginning their bombing run the aircraft was struck by a direct shell burst that cut some of our wiring but worse still turned on the aircraft's navigation lights that were now both blinking away offering a wonderful target for German fighters. Making matters worse both our turrets had been knocked out. Just after bomb release, they were attacked by a Ju 88 that they managed to lose but the flak burst had also struck the ammunition tracks and detonated some of their own bullets. Now the crew was faced with their own ammunition being sprayed around the back half of the aircraft's fuselage. The flashing navigation lights, which could not be turned off due to the damage from the shell burst, attracted more fighters that somehow Andy managed to shake off. It was Andy's expert aircraft handling and Max's skilled navigation that saw them land safely at Middleton St George. A walk around the aircraft after landing revealed 167 holes a large percentage from our own ammunition.

Next issue: Twelve more missions then home!!!!

Acknowledgements: The editor gratefully acknowledges permission of the Sander's family and Frank Madill author of the book Sanders "Out of the Darkness", in allowing TAHS to present this article.

STAVANGER AND THE RAAF GLIDER PILOTS Part 2

Author Peter Manktelow

The identity of our two RAAF Glider pilots are revealed with these sombre photos of their headstones in the War Graves Cemetery in Stavanger , Norway. Both were 28 years old and they were the two pilots who flew, side by side, in the Horsa glider of Combination B during Operation Freshman.



The headstones of Fraser and Davies at Stavangar Cemetery courtesy P Manktelow collection.



STAVANGER AND THE RAAF GLIDER PILOTS Part 2

THE HISTORY

So, before we go in to detail as to what they were doing in Norway, a little background information is required. We start with the locations of both Pilot Officer Fraser and Pilot Officer Davies during their training in Australia. No. 1 Initial Training School was located at Somers, near Westernport Bay in Victoria where RAAF aircrew candidates began basic-training. Detailed screening of candidates was also carried out to allocate them for aircrew roles including Pilots, Navigators, Bomb Aimers, Wireless Operators and Air Gunners, before transferring to other schools either in Australia or in other Commonwealth countries to complete their training under the Empire Air Training Scheme.



Pilots and aircraft of No 7 EFTS Photo courtesy Aust War Museum.

The Tasmanian connection now becomes apparent when both men were sent to No. 7 EFTS (Elementary Flight Training School) located at Tasmania's Western Junction Airfield. For those of you who are not familiar with Launceston, the airport was first set up just before the beginning of WW2 by the Tasmanian Aero Club at its present location but was known as Western Junction, this owing to the layout of the railway routing that passed by.

STAVANGER AND THE RAAF GLIDER PILOTS Part 2

Both pilots trained on RAAF Tiger Moths at Western Junction where their training was about 60 hours flight time before graduates moved on to No.2 SFTS (Service Flight Training School) at Wagga Wagga for their advanced training on Wirraways. On completion they were awarded their wings prior to being posted to the UK.

AT THIS POINT I MUST HAND OVER TO DR. BRUCE TOCHER WHO CONTINUES THE STORY.....

THE MISSION

The successful attack on the Heavy Water facility at Vemork in Norway in February 1943, Operation Gunnerside, is rightly regarded as one of the most daring special forces raids of WWII. Over the years many books have been written about Gunnerside which has been portrayed in films ('The Heroes of Telemark', starring Kirk Douglas), television series (The Heavy Water War) and numerous documentaries. However, what is less well known is that there was an earlier attempt by the Allies to destroy the same target. This raid, Operation Freshman, which was launched from RAF Skitten, Caithness, Scotland on 19 November 1942, failed tragically with 41 of the 48 soldiers and airmen involved losing their lives. In the first issue of the GPN magazine in May 2012, an article, 'Operation Freshman and The First Army Glider Pilot', written by Peter Yeates, was published, which highlighted the story of one of the four glider pilots who took part in the raid, Staff Sergeant Malcolm Frederick Strathdee. As this year (2022) marks the 50th Anniversary of Operation Freshman, it is perhaps an appropriate time to revisit the events which took place in November 1942, and also to remember the three other glider pilots who took part in the raid, Sergeant Peter Doig, Glider Pilot

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Regiment, Pilot Officer Herbert John Fraser, Royal Australian Air Force, and Pilot Officer Norman Arthur Davies (RAAF).

THE BUILD UP TO OPERATION FRESHMAN

In the years just before WWII significant advances had been made in atomic research, and several countries started to realise that there might be military applications of nuclear energy. Research groups in Germany and Britain recognised the potential importance of deuterium oxide (D2O -'Heavy Water') as a moderator in nuclear reaction experiments, and the Norsk Hydro facility at Rjukan had, at the time, Europe's only regular production of D2O; a bi-product of its hydrogen production. When Germany invaded Norway in 1940, it took over control of the Norsk Hydro facility and ordered a huge increase in the production



The Vemork facility Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

of D2O. Allied concerns grew as to the purpose of this development and how advanced German atomic research actually was. As these concerns grew the British War Cabinet decided, in July 1942, that the heavy water production facilities must be

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destroyed. After much discussion, it was decided to use specially trained Royal Engineers to carry out the task. They were to be flown to a landing site on the Hardanger Plateau, near the Vemork facility, using two Horsa gliders, each towed by a Halifax bomber.

The Royal Engineers who took part were all volunteers. Twenty men, several of whom had experienced combat during the retreat from Dunkirk, came from the 9th (Airborne) field Company, and ten from

the 261st (Airborne) Field Park Company. The RAF aircrews who took part were drawn from 38 Wing, primarily from 296 and 297 Squadrons, with the flight engineers and ground crew from 138 Squadron. The nationalities of the 14 airmen selected for the operation reflected the breadth of the Commonwealth, with three Australians, one Canadian and one Jamaican amongst the crews.



The Horsa Glider Photo courtesy Wikipedia. For further information on the Horsa Glider open the following link:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airspeed_Horsa#/media/File:Horsa_drawing.jpg

STAVANGER AND THE RAAF GLIDER PILOTS Part 2

GLIDER PILOT SELECTION

On the 24 October 1942, Group Captain Nigel Norman, Commanding Officer of 38 Wing RAF, issued a memo (38W/S/12/50/air) entitled, special Long-Range Towing Practices. Preliminary Air Instruction - Washington Competition. The 'Washington Competition was a cover story used to conceal the special training and preparation for the coming mission. The description of the task was given as follows, "Two complete teams of Halifax and Horsa aircraft with crews will be trained to the standard of carrying out tows up to 400 miles with moonlight landing.

To do this and finally take part in the competition, the following party will be formed within 38 Wing and will be known as the "Washington Party!" Group Captain Thomas Bruce Cooper, DFC, was appointed Ground Controller with responsibility for all of "Washington" once it reached advanced base. Squadron Leader P.B.N. Davis was appointed Advisor on glider tactics, and responsible for glider pilot training. Davis was also responsible for supervision of modifications and glider equipment specially prepared for the operation. Squadron Leader Arthur B. Wilkinson was assigned to be Flight Commander and Flight Leader during the 'competition. Archive documents from the same date record that, " After consultation with W/CDR Foreman, F/LT Taylor, Major Willoughby and F/LT Hill (Night Flying Commander of the HGCU) the following glider pilots were chosen:

Staff Sergeant Malcolm Frederick Strathdee, Glider Pilot Regiment (Team 1), Sergeant Peter Doig, Glider Pilot Regiment (team 1)

Pilot Officer Norman Arthur Davies, RAAR GPEU (team 2) Pilot Officer

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Herbert John Fraser, RAAF GPEU (Team 2).

In his post operation report dated 23 November 1942, the officer in charge of glider training for the mission, Squadron Leader P.B.N. Davis, stated:

1. It is desired to place on record the performance of the glider pilots in the above operation.
2. The pilots were not volunteers but were chosen because they were considered to be the most skilful pilots available, because they were reliable and because in the course of their previous flying, they had proved themselves to have the necessary qualities of determination.
- 3 On 24 October the pilots were interviewed and told that they would be required to go on a glider operation. Details were not disclosed, but all facts indicating the demands that would be



*The Halifax bomber used as the tow-aircraft
Photo courtesy History Collection.com
More information on the Halifax Towing Aircraft is
available through the following link:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handley_Page_Halifax#/media/File:Handley_Page_Halifax.jpg*

made on them were given. The chief of these was that they would be required to carry out a night tow of about 500 miles most of which would be over sea; that they would have to land in enemy-held territory in a restricted space, and on an operational

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flare path; they would then participate as soldiers in the ground operation; that they would thereafter have a distance of approximately 200 miles to walk, in order to make good their escape.

4. At this stage it should be noted that previously no tows of this length had been made even in daylight.
5. In spite of the highly exacting circumstances of the flight and the operation itself and of the escape, none of the pilots at any time showed the slightest wish to be relieved of the task. So far from that, they showed the most willing co-operation and the greatest enthusiasm that the objective should be achieved.

THE GLIDER PILOTS

Norman Arthur Davies was born on 4 October 1914 in Malvern, Victoria, Australia, the son of Herbert Arthur & Hannah Sophie Davies. He was educated at Caulfield Grammar School and Dookie Agricultural College. After graduating from Dookie, he started farming at Kinglake, and in his spare time, he also started learning to fly at Essendon. Soon after the war broke out, he sold his farm and bought a garage at Black Rock. Davies enrolled in the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve at the No. 1 Recruiting Centre, Melbourne on 17 July 1940, and joined the RAAF at the same location on 3 February 1941. Herbert ('Bert') John Fraser was born on 18th March 1914, the son of Herbert John & Ida Marion Fraser of 159 Queen Street, Bendigo, Victoria. Bert attended the High School in Bendigo, then worked as a clerk and driver for his father's business, a small delivery firm transporting general goods (furniture, Bert Fraser produce, etc.) locally, and between Bendigo and Melbourne. Bert was a keen boxer and had a basic gym and boxing bag set up in the work shed in his backyard at home. This interest appears to have continued after his

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enlistment as two pairs of boxing gloves were included in the list of personal property which was returned to his family after he was killed. Fraser enlisted in the RAAF at No. 1 Recruiting Centre, Melbourne on 01 March 1941. Two months later he married Elva Avery Fraser (nee Beyer), at the Forest St. Methodist Church, Bendigo, Victoria on 26th April 1941. Their time together must have been quite limited due to the intensive service and flying training which continued up to October 1941 when Bert was cleared for

service overseas. During Davies' and Fraser's time at IITS, they briefly overlapped with Allan Jones, who later served as navigator in one of the Halifax tow planes during Operation Freshman.

Davies and Fraser spent the next six months undergoing flying training organized under the Empire Air Training Scheme and both qualified as pilots from No 2, Service Flying Training School on 22 August 1941. On 01 October 1941 both men were posted to No. 1 Embarkation Depot, Ascot Vale, for final preparations before departing for England. They were also promoted to Sergeant on the same date. Prior to departure for Europe, Fraser was given a nine-day pre-embarkation leave. This would be the last time Bert and Elva saw each other. Their daughter, Jean Margaret, was born the following year on 17 April 1942, thus Bert had the joy of knowing he was a father but sadly never met his daughter before his death in Norway in November 1942. Davies and Fraser arrived in the UK on 5 February 1942 and spent almost three weeks at No. 3 Personnel Reception Centre (3PRC) at Bournemouth on the south coast of England, the arrival point for thousands of Commonwealth aircrew after training in Canada and Australia. Both men were then

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posted to No. 1 Glider Training School (1GTS), RAF Thame on 24 February, 1942 where they learned to fly the small troop-carrying Hotspur glider, and on 15 April 1942, they were posted to No. 102 Glider Operational Training Unit (102 GOTU), RAF Kidlington. According to GPR historian Claude Smith, the GOTUs only had the use of the Hotspur with Hector tugs at first, as no other aircraft were available at that time. Despite this, Smith considered these to be the first serious training schools for military glider pilots. Fraser's service record indicates that he was at 102 GOTU from 15 April until the 22 May.

On 4 June 1942 Davies and Fraser joined 296 Squadron on flying duties. Four of the men who would fly in one of the Halifax tug planes (Combination A) during Operation Freshman (Allan Jones, Eric Otto, 'Vic' Kemmis and Tom Conacher) had been posted to the same squadron on 16 May 1942 and were already heavily engaged in training exercises, including paratrooper deployment. However, according to Jones' and Conacher's log books and the squadron Operational Record Book, training involving glider towing does not appear to have started for this crew until mid-July 1942. Davies was promoted to Pilot Officer on 11 August 1942, and on the following day both he and Fraser were posted to the Glider Pilot Exercise Unit (GPEU) at RAF Netheravon. In Fraser's service record he is listed as undergoing a course at the Heavy Glider Conversion Unit (HGCU) on 13 August 1942. No. 1 HGCU was formed at Shrewton on 26 June 1942, before moving to two of Brize Norton's satellite stations in July 1942. Although not clear from the service record, the timing of Fraser's HGCU course suggests it probably took place at RAF Brize Norton. Following

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completion of the course, Fraser returned to flying duties at GPEU, RAF Netheravorn 30 August 1942. One month later, on 29 September 1942, Fraser was also promoted to Pilot Officer.



A Halifax bomber on take-off towing a Horsa Glider Photo courtesy IWM, UK.

Peter Doig was born at 28 Teviot Street, Glasgow on 25 May 1917, the son of Alexander Doig and Jeanie Lindsay Doig. He had eight siblings, five sisters and three brothers; two of the latter, Alex (Alexander Doig, (1914-2001) and Archie (Archibald McPhee Doig, (1919-1984), also served in the armed forces during WWII. As a youth Doig was an active member of the 4th Boy's Brigade Company, Glasgow, which held their meetings at Sandyford Henderson Memorial Church, close to where he lived. His family remember that Peter, Alex and Archie all played football in the BB teams. After leaving school, Doig worked as a laboratory assistant in the Medical Department at Glasgow University. On the 15 February 1942, shortly before his 23rd birthday, Doig enlisted in the 2nd Battalion, Cameronians. According to his service record, Doig was interviewed on 18 September 1942 and

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found suitable for transfer to the RAF, however, he remained in the Cameronians until the following year. According to a newspaper article published in 'The Extra' on 20 November 2003, Doig had wanted to become a pilot but failed the medical

examination due to colour blindness. He was promoted to the rank of Corporal on 11 December 1941, and shortly afterwards, briefly attached to the 59th Anti-Tank Regiment before being permanently transferred to the Glider Pilot Regiment on 21 January 1942.

Doig was initially attached to the Army Glider Pilots Training Section (AGPTS) and attended No. 16 Elementary Flying Training School (EFTS), before moving to No. 1 Glider Training Section at RAF Thame on 30 April 1942. On 27 May 1942, at No. 102 Glider Operational Training Unit (GOTU), RAF Kidlington, Doig was awarded his Flying Badge qualifying him as a glider pilot, and was promoted to Acting Sergeant on 30 June. On 01 August 1942, Doig transferred to the Army Air Corps (AAC) and was posted to the 1st Glider Pilot Regiment, RAF Kidlington. He undertook further training at the Heavy Glider Conversion Unit (GOTU), RAF Brize Norton on 28 July 1942.

TRAINING FOR OPERATION FRESHMAN

On 27 October, the preparation of three specially modified Horsa gliders was initiated; two for the operation and one spare. The initial training for the glider pilots started on 28 October with practice daylight tows. S/LDR Davis had been asked to arrange for suitable tug crews, initially from 296 Squadron, then 297

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squadron when aircraft became available following the move to Andover and Thruxton. The second phase of training involved practice in take-off and fast towing, night towing including the use of special blind flying aids, jettisoning of Horsa undercarriage with parachute apparatus, and operational landings on minimum flare path' In addition to the flying, there was also special ground training, as the glider pilots would be expected to act as soldiers after landing. "The training of the glider pilots for their duties on the ground and their briefing for subsequent escape as well as the supply of all necessary equipment was arranged by Col. Henniker, C.R.E., Airborne Division who also held all special. Intelligence information for briefing at the advance base. Throughout the planning and preparation of the operation, Col. Henniker's assistance was of the greatest value to the Air side and did much to maintain the morale and enthusiasm of the glider pilots and the R.A.F. personnel The three Horsas fitted with landing lamps, skids, jettisoning gear, special windows, sensitive altimeter, intercom sets, TR9 sets, and special parachutes for undercarriage dropping were ready by 5 November.

Thereafter, training continued using Halifax aircraft as the tugs. Additionally, on 6 November, the glider pilots were instructed in the use of motorcycles! Altogether, 44 hours 20 minutes glider flying was completed before the operation was carried out, and all required stages of the training were adequately covered. Special equipment (Rebecca) was also installed in the Halifax tugs which was designed to assist the aircraft locate the glider landing zone. The Rebecca/Eureka transponder/radar was a short-range radio navigation system consisting of two parts,

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the Rebecca airborne transceiver and antenna system, and the Eureka ground-based transponder. Target location was achieved by Rebecca calculating the range to the Eureka set, based on the timing of the return signals, and its relative position using a directional antenna.



The plaque commemorating Australian Davies and Fraser at the Stavanger War Graves Cemetery

On 13 November one Horsa piloted by Davies and Fraser was towed by a Halifax from Netheravon to Waddington, then from Waddington to Peterhead on the 15th. The second Horsa, piloted by Strathdee and Doig was towed by a Halifax from Netheravon to Peterhead on the 16th. The third back-up Horsa, with S/LDR Davis, P/O Brown and Sgt Stewart on board, towed by an Albemarle, also travelled from Netheravon to Peterhead on the 16th. All three Horsas then completed the journey to the Operational Home Base, RAF Skitten, Caithness, on 17 November.

Next issue Peter completes the mystery of "Operation Freshman" with Part 3. "STAVANGER AND THE RAAF GLIDER PILOTS"

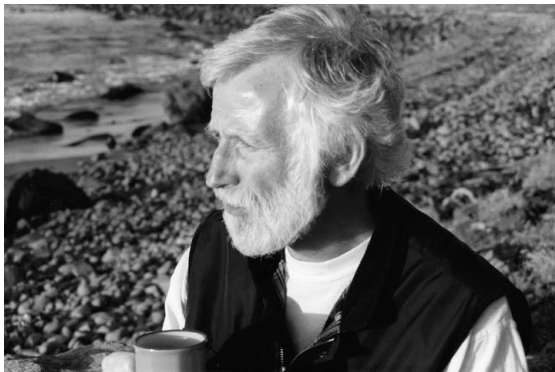
The author thanks Dr Bruce Tocher for the use of his article "Operation Freshman."

THE CAREERS AND STORIES OF TASMANIAN AVIATORS

JOHN PUGH TASAIR CFI/CHIEF PILOT

By W Dearing

John Franco Pugh was born in Wales in 1944. He and his family arrived in outback Australia in 1949 where his father commenced a medical practice before the family moved to Tasmania in 1956.



John Pugh enjoying a cuppa, photo courtesy of John Pugh collection.

Medicine ran in John's family with his father being a general practitioner, his mother a matron in a hospital, three uncles practicing medicine and his paternal grandfather a medical missionary in India during the 1920's and 30's. So predictably John entered university and commence his medical studies. To the dismay of his father and the bewilderment of his family, in his own words, he became a university dropout to become a pilot!!

John undertook his first flying lesson on December 10 1969, married his wife Roya six months earlier, and commenced the extremely expensive exercise to become a Commercial Pilot. Roya was a teacher and would support both while John took on various jobs as a labourer, deckhand and waiter to pay for his lessons. As Roya said *"I thought I was marrying a rich Doctor instead, I ended up with a poor pilot."*

JOHN PUGH TASAIR CFI/CHIEF PILOT

For three years John worked by day studied by night and in November 1972 was awarded with his Commercial Pilot's License and in September 1974 received his Instructor's Rating Those three years shaped John's future. He always said that this period allowed him to empathise with his students who, like John, had undergone the same rigours he accepted whilst training. Some pilots, on obtaining their Commercial License, dream of flying passenger jets for Qantas but John made the decision that General Aviation (G A), and in particular instructing new students, was his future. His Instrument Rating was issued in January 1978.

John's employer Tasair was established in 1965. It began as an air charter, maintenance, and flying school operation. Scheduled operations commenced on 27 March 1998 on a triangular service from Hobart to Devonport and Burnie, using a Piper PA-31-350 Chieftain and two Aero Commander 500S Shrike Commanders. Four months later operations from Devonport to King Island via Burnie commenced.



Tasair Cessna 172 used extensively for training and charters. Photo courtesy of Airlines .net

JOHN PUGH TASAIR CFI/CHIEF PILOT

Working for Tasair gave John the opportunity to live his passion and love of flying. From instructing new students, to charter flights in an Aero Commander, search and rescue flights, photographic expeditions, fire spotting and even air ambulance flights were all in a day's work for John.



One of John's favourites, Aero Commander VH-EXC. Photo courtesy Airlines.net.

In March 1992 John was promoted to the position of Tasair's Chief Pilot / Chief Flying Instructor (CFI). John's predecessors were Lloyd Jones and Nick Tanner. In over fifty years John was only the third CFI/Chief Pilot appointed by Tasair as John says, *"that surely must be some record for a Flying School and an indication of the stability and loyalty offered by career instructors."*

John received further honours when in 1995 he was appointed Master Instructor and in 1998 received Check and Training approval for Regular Public Transport.

On his retirement in October 2006 John had logged 20,248.5 hours of flying but in retirement he found another skill that had laid dormant for so many years. He became an author.

JOHN PUGH TASAIR CFI/CHIEF PILOT

John's first book "Seagulls do it Better John." was published in May 2022 with a follow up book on its way. This book contains fascinating stories of John's career, the ups and downs, the challenges, the experiences that only a career pilot can encounter.



Cover of "Seagulls do it Better John" courtesy John Pugh collection.

Future Newsletters will share some of these experiences with the first article introducing Samuel "Sammy" Seagull and the Concorde aeroplane. Strange bedfellows but once you have read it you will discover John's skill not only in his understanding of flight but his natural ability as a writer. No wonder his students loved him!

Acknowledgements:

The author wishes to acknowledge John's permission and assistance in presenting his story and experiences.

SAMUEL SEAGULL AND THE CONCORDE

One of the more fascinating tales from John's book relates to the aerodynamics of the Concorde and that of a seagull that John affectionally names Samuel "Sammy" Seagull.



Seagull landing on water J Dearing collection.

John writes that when "Sammy" comes in to land he configures himself for the landing flair. His outstretched legs are prepared for touchdown, both web feet and tail feathers are splayed to produce drag, wings flap intensely thus maintaining a high-angle of attack to maintain lift and reduce his rate of descent. Configured in this manner he has a high nose attitude so how does he overcome this? By lowering his head and beak.



Concorde on touchdown photo courtesy Pinterest.

SAMUEL SEAGULL AND THE CONCORDE

John now compares the final approach of the Concorde and as portrayed by the previous photo its webbed feet and legs, in this case called the aircraft's undercarriage, is extended, while flaps and the complex design of the Concorde's wing take the place of the flapping of his wings to ensure the correct angle of attack and maintaining lift.

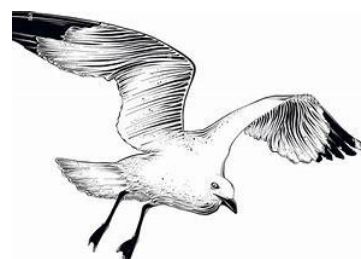
The Concorde had another trick when flying at slower speeds during take-off and landings. The aircraft had a droop nose. When flying at supersonic speeds the nose is retracted giving the aircraft a near-perfect aerodynamic profile with a heat proof visor retracted into the visor



Concorde with its drooped nose photo courtesy of Pinterest

As John states in his book "isn't that what Sammy does with his beak."

The full article is in the book "Seagulls do it Better, John" that is required reading for all aviation enthusiasts.



More of John's storeys and experiences in our next Newsletter.

SYRACE TASMANIA

Late one afternoon in the early 1990's the then CFI/Chief Pilot of the Tasmanian Aero Club, Terry Mulholland, was holding court in the club's bar. Armed with his trademark "fish bowl" of white wine he was proclaiming what a superb setting for an aircraft pylon race Launceston Airport provided. That afternoon marked another first for not only Tasmanian aviation but Australia and the world's southern hemisphere. Only Reno in the USA held such an event; aircraft racing around a set course of pylons at 100 feet above the ground and max speed.



Two Sea Furies approach the first pylon. Photo courtesy Bruce Smart Collection.

Country Club Casino Skyrace Tasmania was conceived. For logistical reasons the event was conducted not around Launceston Airport but at the World War 2 airstrip at Valleyfield Epping Forest resulting in the first Skyrace Tasmania being held in March 1994.

SYRACE TASMANIA

The event was preceded by a "Round Tasmania Air Navigation Race" that was open to all types of aircraft and licensed pilots. The event via Wynyard, Hobart and Tasmania's East Coast was well supported with a variety of aircraft taking part in the race.

After the grass strips at "Valleyfield" were upgraded the competitor's aircraft arrived for the big event. The racing was designed around a series of pylons with lap distances of 8.3 miles and 4 miles dependant on the race class. The "Valleyfield" airstrip was the ideal viewing platform for the racing and airshow.



"Valleyfield" strips and surrounds photo courtesy Bruce Smart Collection.

Racing aircraft consisted of several classes including an Unlimited Class that featured two Sea Furies, a T28 Trojan Class, a T6 Harvard Class, a Cabin-Twin Engine Class and a Cabin-Single Engine Class.



T28 Trojan aircraft await their race.

SYRACE TASMANIA

In addition to the racing a full airshow entertained the crowds with America's renowned airshow commentator Gordon Bowman-Jones keeping the crowd informed of the activities.

A highlight of the airshow was the display of the Aero Commander 500 flown by the legendary Bob Hoover. The aircraft is a standard seven seat twin engine commuter aircraft but in the hands of Bob Hoover the aircraft performed a series of aerobatic manoeuvres with the display's finale being with both engines shut down and feathered he approached and landed the aircraft.



Bob Hoover and his "Tennessee Walz" landing with both engines feathered. Photo courtesy of Bruce Smart Collection.

Australian aerobatic pilot Chris Sperou, in his red Pitts Special, thrilled the crowd with his famous "inverted ribbon cut."



Chris Sperou's inverted ribbon cut. Photo courtesy of Bruce Smart collection.

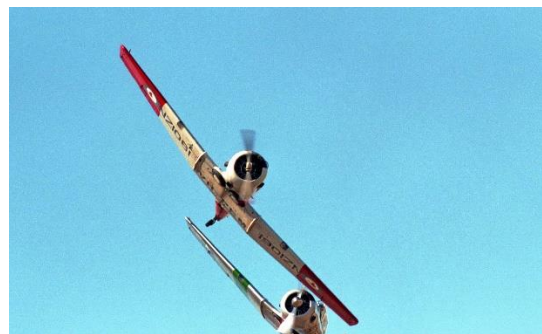
SKYRACE TASMANIA

Col pay gave an impressive display in his restored Spitfire whilst the crowd were entertained further by a restored Douglas C-47 aircraft. The airshow concluded with a mock attack by an Italian Fiat aircraft on the strip that ultimately was chased away by the Spitfire.



Guido Zuccoli's Fiat aircraft photo courtesy Pinterest.

The racing was breathtaking pilots pushing their aircraft to their limits to secure a win. The unlimited was a race between two Sea Furies with Rob Booth winning in his NZ Sea Fury. The T 6 Harvard Class provided plenty of excitement and noise with Victoria's Judy Payne ultimately victorious.



Two Harvard T-6 aircraft battle for victory. Photo courtesy of Bruce Smart collection.

The success of the event was apparent by the smiles on patrons faces as they left the venue.

SKYRACE TASMANIA

Skyrace organisers were ecstatic with the success of the inaugural event, the manner in which it was delivered to patrons and more importantly the safe conduct of the event with only a minor incident of a forced landing due to fuel starvation that resulted in no injury to pilot Chris Mulloy but significant aircraft damage.

Over the next few years, the event grew to become one of the premier events for Tasmania. Racing became ultra-competitive and became even more so when Skyrace Tasmania introduced the world's first Jet aircraft race between a Strikemaster, Iskra and Jet Provost.



Strikemaster aircraft at Launceston Airport courtesy of Wings Over New Zealand.

The airshow component of the event also grew attracting an array of aircraft not seen before in Tasmania. A replica of the famous aircraft flown by Charles Kingsford-Smith, the "Southern Cross", gave a wonderful display in 1995 as did the RAAF Roulettes who became regular visitors to the event.



The "Southern Cross" at Skyrace in 1995. Photo courtesy Martin Edwards.

SKYRACE TASMANIA



The Roulettes in action. Photo courtesy RAAF.

Gordon Bowman-Jones and Bob Hoover returned as did Chris Sperou in his red Pitts Special.



The Army Red Beret Parachute Team became regular visitors, Photo courtesy Aust Army.

The event continued annually until the late 1990's when sadly the organisers decided the event was not sustainable and a chapter, of Tasmania's aviation history, that was applauded nationwide and overseas ceased.

Some attempts to resurrect the event on the mainland were attempted but did not succeed.

Skyrace Tasmania is still remembered and discussed as, not only aviation's but one of Tasmanian's greatest events!

SNIPPETS OF HISTORY STUTT AND DALZELL

Author P Manktelow



A restored DH9A aircraft, the type Stutt and Dalzell were flying, on display in the U K. Photo courtesy RAF Museum.

This is a DH9A biplane bomber restored and complete in the RAF museum in the U.K. It is the same type as flown by Captain Billy Stutt and Sergeant Abner Dalzell which disappeared somewhere in north eastern Tasmania on the 23rd of September 1920. Note the Liberty V12 engine on the wooden stand to the left of the lower prop. It weighs 383 kg.



Engine from a DH9A aircraft. Photo courtesy Pinterest.

The top half of the engine is ferrous, the bottom half aluminium measuring 67x27x41 inches. The army officer is a young “Hap” Arnold of later fame as a famous U.S. Army Air Force general

SNIPPETS OF HISTORY STUTT AND DALZELL

during WWII. When WW1 ceased in 1918 the Australian Flying Corps (Army) was disbanded and their aircraft handed over to the Royal Flying Corps later to become the RAF. The UK government then gifted thirty DH9A aircraft to the Australian Government In 1920.



The burnt-out aircraft. Photo courtesy Pinterest.

This is a DH9A that burnt to the ground in 1929. It was one of three aircraft dispatched to find Sir Charles Kingsford Smith who went missing enroute to the UK. This became known as the Coffee Royale affair. The wreckage above was as a result of an engine fire on start. Probably an over primed engine. The engine is just to the right of the lady. The fuel tank is obvious and the white circular shape lower centre is the Scarff Ring (machine gun mount) All was thrown on the dump at Wave Hill Station (N.T.) The engine now resides in the Aviation Museum in Darwin.

If we ever find Billy Stutt and Abner Dalzell’s last landing place, the above is probably all we will find.

FIRST AERIAL SURVEY OF LAUNCESTON.

In 1922 local photographer H J King was commissioned by the City of Launceston to complete an aerial survey of the city the first time an Australian city had been surveyed from the air.



H J King photo courtesy H J King Collection.

Before any flights could be undertaken King had to find an aircraft and a pilot that would allow a hole to be cut in the floor of their aircraft big enough for his camera lens. That man was local pilot and World War 1 veteran F G Huxley and his aircraft a small Farmen bi-plane.



Pilot F G Huxley MC. Photo courtesy of Australian War Museum.

FIRST AERIAL SURVEY OF LAUNCESTON.

Working alongside Huxley the duo navigated the small Farman biplane in a grid pattern over the city, taking photographs every 15 seconds, with each image capturing one square mile of the city. The project used 81 glass plate negatives in total. By hand, it took King more than 200 hours to cut and join the scaled and printed images to complete the final survey.

This project was a landmark moment — the first photographic aerial survey of any city in Australia.



The finished article photo courtesy QV Museum.

King was known for his adventurous approach to photography; documenting many of his adventures across Tasmania from both land and sky. It's incredible the level of detail that went into this project with King delicately and strategically cutting images in such a way that would allow for them to all join seamlessly without the joins being highly visible.



**TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL
SOCIETY EVENTS CALENDAR -
JUNE TO DECEMBER 2024.**

JUNE 2024

Saturday 01 commencement of membership recruiting drive.

Tuesday 11 June Information/Guest Speaker Night Glebe Heliport Lounge 6.45pm-9.00pm.

JULY 2024

Tuesday 09 July Executive Meeting Launceston Library Conference Room 2nd Floor 10.30am-12.30pm.

Sausage Sizzle at Bunnings Youngtown date to be advised.

AUGUST 2024

Tuesday 13th August Information/Guest Speaker Night Glebe Heliport Lounge 6.45pm-9.00pm.

SEPTEMBER 2024

Tuesday 10th Executive Meeting Launceston Library Conference Room 2nd Floor 10.30am-12.30pm.



**TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL
SOCIETY EVENTS CALENDAR
JUNE TO DECEMBER 2024**

OCTOBER 2024

Tuesday 08th Information/Guest Speaker Night Glebe Heliport Lounge 6.45pm-9.00pm.

Sausage Sizzle Bunnings Youngtown date to be advised,

NOVEMBER 2024

Tuesday 12th November Launceston Library Conference Room 2nd Floor 10.30am-12.30pm.

Sausage Sizzle Bunnings Youngtown date to be advised.

DECEMBER 2024

Tuesday 10th December Christmas Party Venue to be advised.

Sausage Sizzle Bunnings Youngtown Date to be advised.

SPECIAL NOTE: Executive meetings will be open to all members as observers (non-voting) via ZOOM or attendance in person with prior notice. This brings us back in line with how we conducted meetings in the past. This move to be ratified at the next Executive meeting.