

This DH.9 played a big part in promoting the name of de Havilland in Australia in the early 1920s. It is the famous aircraft which Parer and McIntosh flew to Australia, seen here in the Sydney War Museum before transfer to Canberra.

Thirty Proud Years

This month marks the 30th anniversary of de Havilland in Australia. First British aircraft manufacturer to set up a branch in this country, the company must be recognised as a very part of the fabric of Australian aviation. Here is an historical review — by NORMAN ELLISON

HEAVERY with gallantly outrageous repairs, and weary with thrashings and misadventures, it lurched rather than flew on to the Australian air scene. It had taken 206 days to fly from England: been beaten by the record race-margin of 178 days. But its complement had demonstrated inspirational doggedness and adaptability (page Parer and McIntosh!) and, with the arrival of this DH.9, the name de Havilland had become known for the first time in a really big way in Australia.

That was in 1920. In the ensuing three years several pioneer airline operators and joyriders used converted war surplus DH aircraft, while in the RAAF at Point Cook the grand old DH.9 and DH.9a were the standard bombers and service trainers. Then, in turn, the Department of Civil Aviation, WA Airways and Qantas each hefted DH prestige in Australia—with the DH.50.

With the first such purchase here and with its own personnel, DCA made a magnificent round-Australia record; in 1923, to make such a flight without turmoil, and the need for less than £1 worth of replacements, surely merits the adjective!

For WA Airways and Qantas, the "50" was their first real airliner—their previous equipment was converted military types—and its operational performance was so good that the two companies subsequently manufactured the type, under licence.

Obviously, the pioneer operators of those early air years were greatly enterprising. Not so the British aircraft industry. At least so far as the aircraft-sales potential of Australia was concerned. Which was understandable, up to a point. Because Australia was effectively "sewed up" . . . by the strong stitches of tariff which excluded all but British aircraft products. So the local Mahomet was expected to go (from what was then termed Australia's "splendid isolation") to the British mountain. And each way the trip took six sea weeks.

It was an extremely lopsided arrangement (in Australian air circles other and more vivid terms were used) and the first heartening sign of a change was in 1926. Appropriately, it was initiated by the de Havilland Company.

Its founder-head, Captain (now Sir Geoffrey) de Havilland, sent his brother, Major Hereward de Havilland, to make a commercial reconnaissance in Australia. When

the latter returned to headquarters, his report must have been convincing, for in the following year he returned to Australia—to establish a local company. Registered in Melbourne, it was the de Havilland Aircraft Pty. Ltd.

This was the first overseas branch of de Havillands; the first time a British aircraft manufacturer had directly established himself in Australia. With Major de Havilland came Reg Bedford, as secretary of the new company, and Phil Taylor, the technical specialist.

In Whiteman Street, in South Melbourne, they set themselves up in an old warehouse made of corrugated iron. Chief item of the initial stock in trade was a Cirrus-engined Moth, dismantled, the first in Australia. When, with wings folded, it was trundled to Essendon aerodrome, a new era was begun in Australian flying. For it was with Moths that the Aero Club began their most effective work. In this crusade, as such it proved, Australian air consciousness had a big lift; and not a few Australians aerially began in a Moth what proved a climb to fame.

For this, Hereward de Havilland was in no small degree responsible. For he was a superb pilot; at many an aero club pageant he was the star performer. And he was a distinctive personality. Straight of back and shoulder, and pukka in voice, manner and speech, he was an unusual type in what was a "hairy-chested" era of Australian aviation. He was a good mixer, one never averse to a spot of fun and frolic, on the ground as well as aloft, and soon he had the Australian accolade of a nick name "DH."

In those early air years in Australia, another Englishman also proved a magnificent flying publicist for the Moth. He was RAF Squadron Leader Reggie Smart, on instructional loan to the RAAF. At least for spectators of the public, Smart's specialty was droll, crazy flying, and there are still arguments among the old hands as to whether "DH" or Smart was the better Moth pilot.

1928 was a big commercial year for the Australian DH company. The RAAF adopted the Moth as a primary trainer, and 28 more were ordered and in service that year. With this order the company's work force was increased to 25.

Due mainly to the dynamic leadership of its president, Captain Geoffrey Hughes, the Royal Aero Club of NSW became the biggest in Australia, and the one with the biggest Moth fleet; and New South Wales became the best sales territory for this aircraft. In 1929, the company decided to move to Sydney. A hangar-workshop was ordered at Mascot. When early next year the building was erected, the company moved in.

By then, however, an ominous financial "front" was building up over Australia—the depression was not far away—and to try to offset the dwindling revenue of sales and service, "DH" began a super flying school. Two Moths were used. The rates were £1 an hour higher than the fees then generally current. But "DH" himself was the chief instructor.

In 1931 Major Allan Murray Jones was appointed general manager of the company, and in the handing

over process "DH" remained for three years as technical manager before returning to England.

One of the most famous pilots and commanding officers of the Australian Flying Corps, Murray Jones who had won the MC and DFC was liked and respected by his wartime associates. Following his return from the war, Murray Jones attended Melbourne University medical course. After two successful years there came, what proved to be, an irresistible call. His former AFC chief, "Dicky" Williams, asked him to return to the fold — in the newly established Australian Air Force — with the post of CO of Point Cook, and the rank of squadron leader. Only Murray Jones himself can decide whether the call was to heart or mind. He accepted.

In 1924, Murray Jones resigned the service—to become an orchardist. For five years his feet remained on the ground. Then the old urge reasserted itself and Murray Jones returned to aviation, as Superintendent of Flying Operations in DCA for a period of 2 years before resigning to take up the general managership of the Australian DH company.

First of the chief endeavours of the new management was to get out of the deep red. It wasn't easy. There were wide adverse effects from the depression and there was a grim shrinkage in the sales and service market. But, contrary to conservative advice (maybe, that is an understatement) Murray Jones continued the flying school; he's a hard man to stop when he has made up his mind. In any case very few people had a wider firsthand knowledge of the Australian air scene than he did.

For years the company had a big recurring publicity boost. In the continuing record breaking battles "against the clock" on the England-Australia skyway, not a few of the Big Name pilots used DH aircraft, and this meant big bursts of feature publicity. These pilots included Amy Johnson, the first of the women pilots to go so far, so fast, and solo; the so suave, so durable Jim Mollison (he was to become her husband); his strong opponent in aviation, the magnificently Anglo-Saxon C. W. A. Scott; the bright boyish flame which burnt too briefly, Jimmy Melrose; Jean Batten, the most efficient of the airwomen ever to fly here, and commercially one of the most competent.

Another happy happening for the company was the result of the Sydney-Perth (East-West) air race. Held in 1931, it was the chief air feature of Western Australia's centenary celebrations, and the longest air race proper ever held in the Commonwealth. Also it carried what was, until then, the most prize money — nearly £2000. "DH" won the speed section and Horrie Miller, also in a DH aircraft, won the handicap event, in which "DH" was second.

Kingsford Smith, C. T. P. Ulm, and Arthur Butler, who had flown to fame in other vehicles, were also Moth pilots, and so were Frank Chichester, Les Holden, Dave Smith, and Norm Littlejohn.

From this Moth usage there was mostly kudos for de Havillands. On other occasions, there was adverse publicity. As, for instance when Dave Smith crashed fatally in his Tiger Moth, the original tiny racing Tiger monoplane (it almost could fit in the room of a suburban home) which had established a world's speed record for light planes before it was brought to Australia.

At the DH works, the work force fluctuated, according to the commercial barometer. Normally, the staff averaged 20; at peak it was up to 60. When the depression was at its worst, there were only 6 employed—Murray Jones, John Byrne (now a director and senior executive of the company), a girl in the office, a combined aircraft and engine man, and a caretaker.

By that time "DH" had returned to the parent DH fold. Only the "old hands" realise the full extent of his personal services to Australian aviation.

From Les Holden in New Guinea to the company came what was virtually an "SOS." Les had fared forth on what for him was his most ambitious and costly project. In a newly purchased DH.61 Giant Moth (which he named the Canberra) he had flown to New Guinea to ply for hire and reward. There had been a major mishap—two wings were smashed. In imparting the sad news Les had asked, please, could the new wings be made in three weeks? If this could be done, the replacements could be shipped by the next boat.

Then there was only a small staff. Never before had they built wings for a Giant Moth. But Holden was a good customer, and it was a DH tradition always to rally to the help of a distressed friend.

They tackled the repair full bore. Overtimes lengthened and relengthened. Meal hours were chopped. But the rate of required progress still lagged.

With only three days to go, there was an unusual "family" effort. A little shop-residence opposite the works became a physical "recharging centre." Here, wives and girl friends provided meals round the clock, and, in between, hoed in at the factory. No time, now,

for key workers to go home: they snatched a few hours sleep "over the way." The job was done. The wings reached the ship in time.

Moth (various engines), Hawk Moth, Fox Moth, Giant Moth, Puss Moth, Leopard Moth, Hornet Moth, Moth Minor—all these single-engined DH types were sold or serviced at Mascot. No flight-testing problems, there. First "DH," and then Murray Jones, could and did cope. But when the first DH.86 in Australia (one of a pair ordered by Holyman Airways) had been assembled at Laverton, what could have been an awkward problem was solved physically by Murray Jones. Neither he nor any member of his staff had ever before flown a 4-engined plane. It was typical of his self-confidence and also of his aeronautical adaptability, that he did the job himself. Afterwards, he confessed to an intimate that when, on the eve of the test flight, he sat in the cockpit and looked around, "it looked awfully big."

For a few hectic days in 1934 Melbourne became, unofficially, the headquarters of Australian DH. This was at a time of the end of the Melbourne Centenary Air Race. As one who was there when the red Comet came in at Laverton, and who saw, then and later, the tremendous welcomes accorded C. W. A. Scott and Tom Campbell-Black, I venture the opinion that Murray Jones and his associates were justified in their enthusiasm (and its types of expression).

There was further cause for local DH gratification when, in 1934, the England-Australia service was inaugurated, and simultaneously, the internal links with it. For on all the three Australian-operated regular air services DH aircraft were used. Qantas, on the Singapore-Darwin end of this, Australia's first overseas link, flew DH.86s, Butler Air Transport, a newcomer to the airlines, used Dragons on its Charleville-Cootamundra service: and the same type were flown by McRobertson-Millers on their services in the West.

Until then, this was the most impressive sales victory won by Murray Jones, and at least one of the three orders was in no small degree due to the fact that the operator had a good memory: he remembered that when, in the depression he was almost forced out of aviation, it was Murray Jones who gave the opportunity, a generous one, to keep aloft.

But for the Qantas operation of the DH.86, this aircraft could have been a black chapter for DHs. At a time when other DH.86 operators, in Australia and abroad, had crashes and other misadventures, Qantas not only had a clean sheet, but also with a type new to them, and on what was their first overseas route, they operated to 98% of schedule for 4 years on the Brisbane-Singapore route.

Being a proprietary company, Australian DH has no need to publish its financial condition. Nor has it ever done so. But it is fair to assume that in the mid thirties the figures were marching well in the black, because then the company advanced from its routine activities into a major degree of manufacture — of Fox and Major Moths.

Although all metal parts continued to be imported, Murray Jones was gazing steadfastly at wider manufacturing horizons. He could get no indication of Defence needs, or rather, requirements, officially — Air was the junior of the Fighting Services—but it wasn't from want of trying.

Propeller Production — Wartime Expansion

In 1938 the company informed the Federal Government of its intention to begin the manufacture of metal variable pitch propellers—never before undertaken in Australia—if Government orders were forthcoming. An order for 100 (constant pitch) eventuated. A modern factory, the finest of its type in the Commonwealth, was erected at Alexandria. Key personnel were made available by the parent company. Everything went well, except in one sphere: the expected additional orders did not eventuate. Whereupon Murray Jones took unusual and forceful action.

At a luncheon, preliminary to an official ceremony at the factory, the guest of honour was the Minister for Defence, Mr. Jim Fairbairn. He was a personal friend of Murray Jones. He was also an owner-pilot; his plane was a Leopard Moth.

In his luncheon speech, Jim Fairbairn said the usual nice things about his host, and the occasion. But, instead of replying in kind, Murray Jones was brutally frank. Unless there were further Government orders and quickly, the factory would be forced to close, he declared. The Minister was obviously embarrassed. The extra orders came soon afterwards. So did world war two.

At the outbreak, Murray Jones was in England. Acting swiftly he ensured that a batch of Moth Minors were earmarked for Australia. Then, in Australia, came the first of the big orders—for 300 Tigers for the Empire Air Training Scheme.

No aviation organisation in Australia had so big, rapid and diffused a wartime growth as DH's. It was to have 27 establishments, 14 of them manufacturing. It took over a piano factory, two floors of a cotton mill, an undertaker's premises (these became a tool room); what had been a cork factory; and portion of a sweets factory.

At peak, the company employed 5500. In all, there were over 400 contractors and subcontractors. Sub-contractors of components came from Adelaide (where nearly 1000 hands were employed on this work) and from Brisbane.

There were 3 major production projects — Tiger Moths, Dragons and Mosquitoes. Simultaneously with the final stage of manufacture of Moths at Mascot, repairs and overhaul were carried out—lots of wartime RAAF Moths got "bent"—and, at peak, two new Tigers and one as good as, were coming out daily. Total production was 1066 and many hundreds were repaired and overhauled.

The Dragon project was smaller. It was to get as quickly as possible a twin-engined rescue and/or Nav-training aircraft, one for which the engines were available in Australia. General Motors made these Gypsies. A total of 87 Dragons was produced.

Biggest and most difficult of DH's wartime production projects was the Mosquito. It involved completely new techniques in methods and materials. The full story is still to be told how, in 1942, executive staff who visited America, so quickly got the blueprints and the other material from Canada and the promise of supply of Packard-built Merlins from the US; and certainly there was also splendid celerity in the erection, by the Allied Works Council, of the big factory at Bankstown which became the centre for Mosquito final assembly.

This was a time when Japanese forces were ominously close to Australia, and this spur gave the Mosquito makers top priorities in many spheres. But, these advantages notwithstanding, the fact that 13 months after the first drawings were received, the Mosquito was being delivered, is a notable highlight of Australian wartime production. Altogether, 212 of this extraordinary versatile aircraft were produced.

There are abundant proofs that the quality of Australian made Mosquitoes, Tiger Moths and Dragons could more than stand comparison with those made overseas, and Australian DH's pride of wartime achievement is further justified by the simultaneous production of a total of over 2000 propellers.

More than any other aircraft manufacturer, de Havillands had a tangible interest for every Australian pilot in British Commonwealth uniform who won his wings in the war years. For it was on the Tiger Moth that these young men made their first solo. And unless human nature has changed for the worse, that memory is indelible.

At war's end, DH's began the long return flight to peacetime normality. Revenue-wise, the main vehicle was the Mosquito; its manufacture, in diminishing numbers, was to continue until 1948.

From the wartime peak of 14, the plants were reduced

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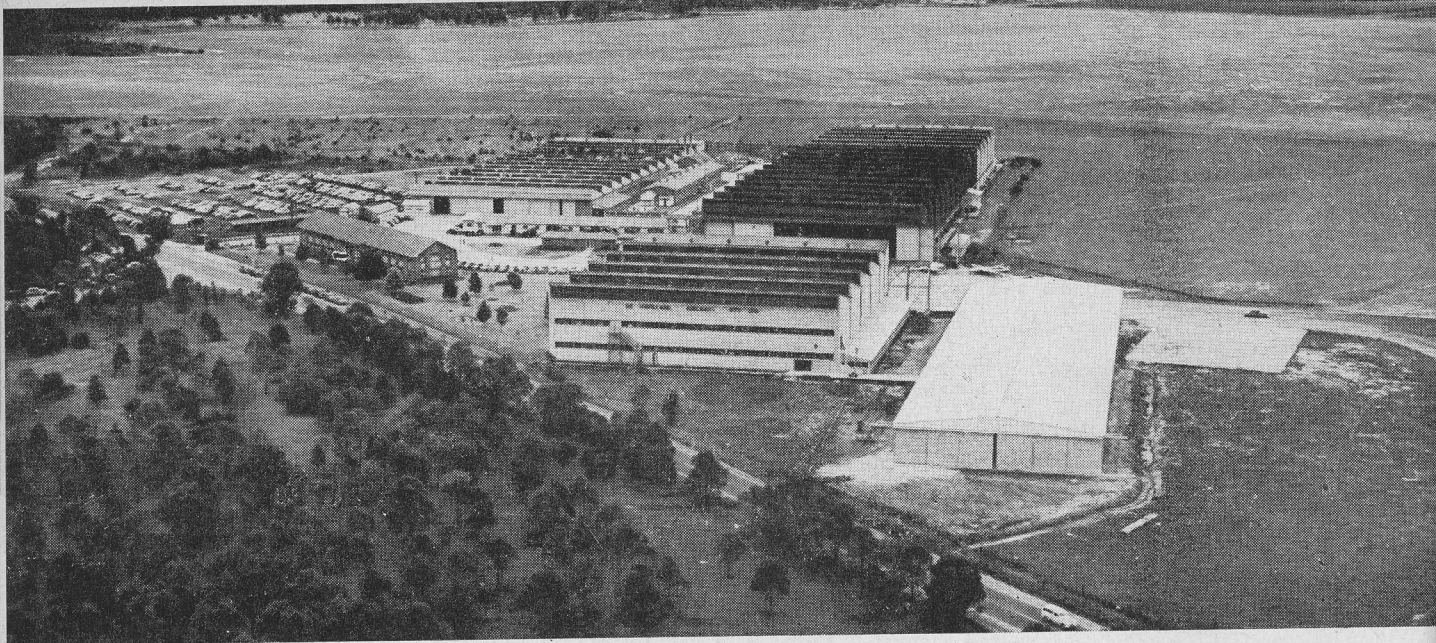
Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services were among the first operators to use DH equipment. Contemplating this aircraft is Lester Brain, then Brisbane manager for Qantas and now managing director of DH Australia.



Major Hereward de Havilland (right), first managing director of the Australian company, and F. W. Haig, chief aviation officer of Vacuum Oil, beside the latter company's Gipsy Moth, the first metal Moth produced in Australia.



That Mascot was de Havilland "territory" in the late 1920's is evident in this view of Aero Club activities. At right is the clubhouse, with "bullring" in centre. It was to this scene that de Havilland moved from Melbourne.



Last month's aerial view of DH at Bankstown. At right is new Sea Venom and service and store hangar, adjacent to main service building. On other side of tarmac is main production hangar containing Mk. 35 Trainer assembly. At left in the foreground is the administrative block and behind it C Hangar, housing the wood detail and engine shops.

de Havilland Today

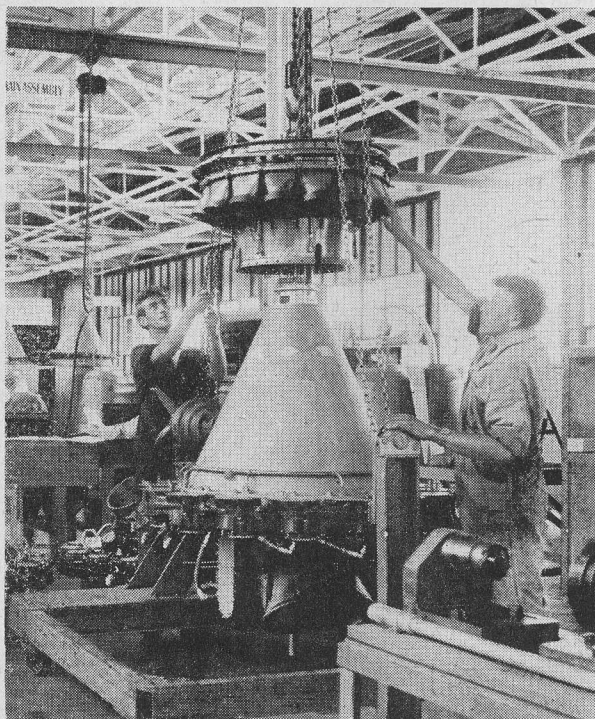
Here is a pictorial and concise survey of the de Havilland organisation in Australia today.

THE present day activities of de Havilland Aircraft Pty. Ltd., Australia, are centred at Bankstown, NSW, where the main factory and administration offices are located. A second factory at Alexandria, a Sydney industrial suburb, houses the Propeller Division while guided missile development is undertaken at a new establishment located at Salisbury, South Australia.

de Havilland activities in Australia continue to cover the manufacture of complete aircraft, propellers and spare parts, the repair, overhaul, servicing and modification of airframes, engines, propeller and auxiliary equipment and now take in part manufacture of guided weapons.

Sir Geoffrey de Havilland is president of the Australian company; Major A. Murray Jones is chairman of directors; and Mr Lester J. Brain is managing director. Other members of the board are D. H. McLachlan (general manager), J. J. Byrne and R. J. Vicars.

Import restrictions in recent years have handicapped sales of imported aircraft, and there is little doubt that aircraft built by the Enterprise and the Beaver in particular would have been sold in Australia in far greater numbers if import licences had been procurable. However, numbers of Herons, Doves, Beavers and Chipmunks have been sold by the company to Australian operators. The sale last year of two Australian-built Drovers to



LEFT: Portion of the service hangar at Bankstown. At left foreground is a Sea Venom wing with inspection panels removed. Chipmunk 601 and its wings await dispatch to Royal Newcastle Aero Club. The second Chipmunk is privately owned, and on completion of modifications will be the most comprehensively-equipped aircraft of its type in the Commonwealth. Dove CR-AGT is one of the two aircraft from Servicos de Transportes Aereos de Timor, the Government-owned and operated airline of Portuguese Timor, in for C of A inspection. Dove DHE is de Havilland Australia's demonstration aircraft. Vampire Fighters and Trainers in the background are in the process of being fitted with ejection seats. RIGHT: The "hot end" of a Goblin 35 being fitted to the diffuser and centre casing at the engine shop, Bankstown.

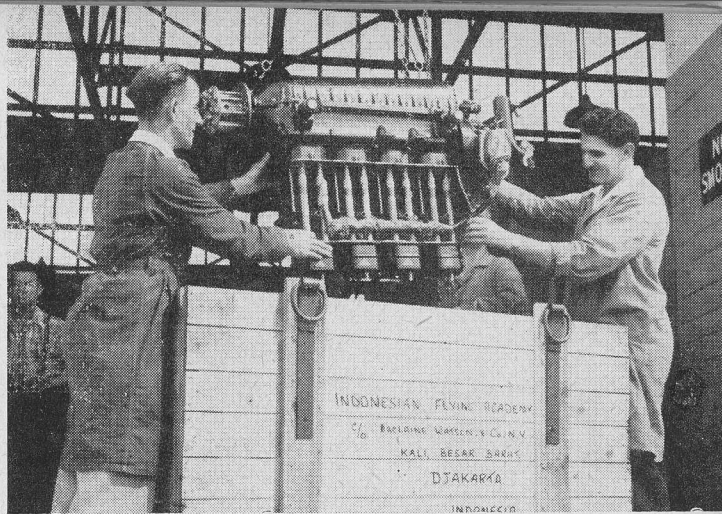
Fiji Airways marked the entry of the Australian company into the export field. The Fiji Airways aircraft were the last two off the Drover production line.

Major activity of the Bankstown de Havilland factory is at present concerned with the production of 68 Mk. 35 Vampire Trainers for the RAAF, the first of which is scheduled for delivery in September of this year. The Mk. 35, which follows the earlier Mk. 33 and 34, production of which ceased in November 1955, incorporates a number of new features. These include a redesigned dorsal fin, larger capacity thin wall bag tanks, a 2-piece clear view canopy and toe-operated Maxaret hydraulic brakes. Approximately 750 men are employed on the Mk. 35 Trainer project and completion of the order is scheduled by April 1960. Australian Vampire production will then total 189, comprising 80 Mk. 30 & 31 Vampire Fighters, 36 Mk. 33 Trainers, 5 Mk. 34 Trainers, and 68 Mk. 35s. The five Mk. 34 Trainers were built for the RAN and were similar in all respects to the Mk. 33 but had no armament. It is intended to progressively modify all existing Mk. 33 and 34 Trainers by fitting the new dorsal fin featured on the Mk. 35.

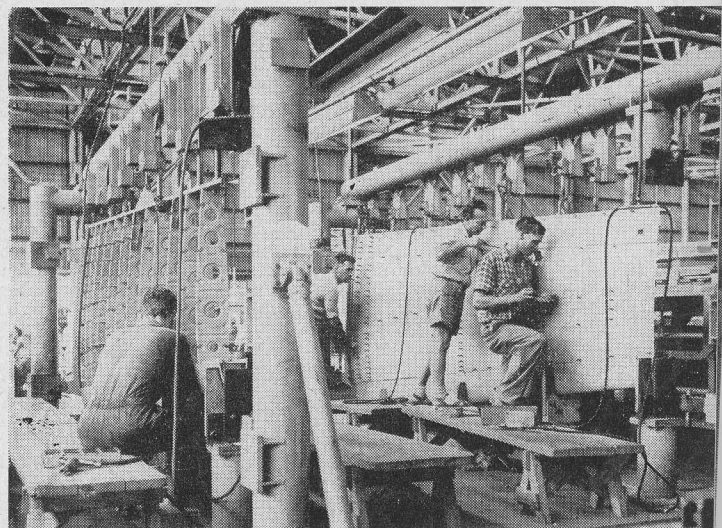
In parallel with the production of the Vampire Trainer de Havilland are busily engaged in the manufacture of all types of spares and 100-gallon long range tanks for both Vampire fighters and trainers, and wings and centre sections for the CA.22 Winjeel. Production of Winjeel wings and centre sections began towards the end of 1952, and to date a total of 80 wing sets and 81 centre sections have been produced. These Winjeel components are manufactured at Bankstown as complete units and are delivered to CAC ready for assembly on a "nothing to be added" basis. Spare wings and centre sections are delivered direct to RAAF stores depots. The Winjeel wing project will be completed in May of this year, and the production facilities thus released diverted to assist with Vampire Trainer production.

Although primarily concerned with aircraft production the Bankstown factory also houses the service department which moved to Bankstown from Mascot in 1948. The activities of this department cover the overhaul, servicing, repair and modification of military and civilian aircraft and engines. In the airframe shop military commitments embrace the overhaul and repair of Vampire fighters and trainers and the Mk. 53 Sea Venoms of the RAN. The servicing of civil airframes is playing an ever increasing part in this department's activities. Civil aircraft of de Havilland and non de Havilland origin are overhauled for Australian operators and operators based in other Western Pacific and South East Asian countries. An example of this type of activity is a DH Dove at present being overhauled in the service hangar. This aircraft is one of two Doves operated by Servicos de Transportes Aereos de Timor, the Portuguese Government airline serving Portuguese Timor. de Havilland carry out all overhauls and C of A inspections on these aircraft, their overhaul periods being so arranged that one of the Doves visits Bankstown every six months.

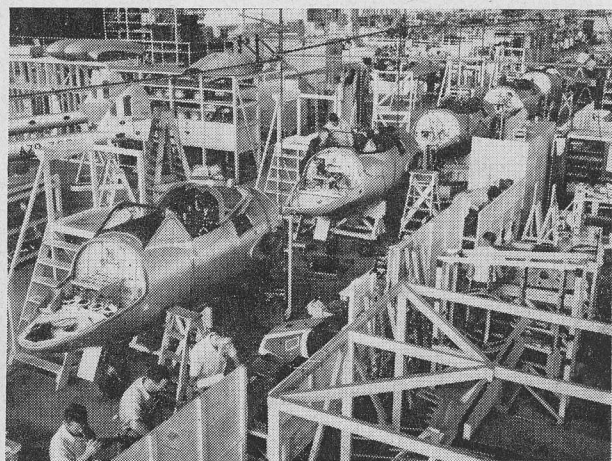
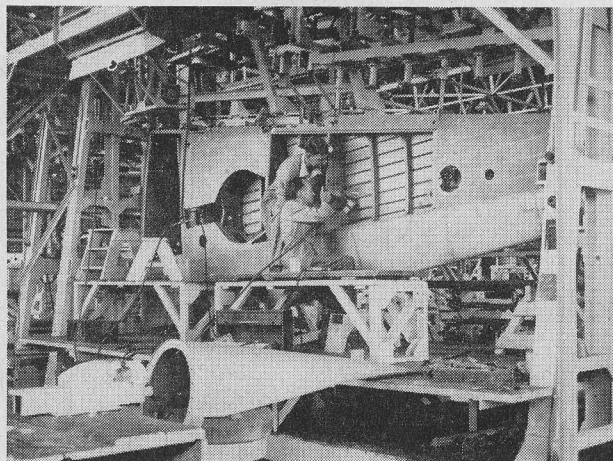
The arrival in Australia of the RAN's Sea Venoms in HMAS Melbourne greatly increased the military commitments of the service department and additional quarters had to be found. A new service hangar and a large service store has recently been completed. Servicing and complete engine overhauls on many types



Several Asian operators now regularly send piston engines to de Havillands at Bankstown for complete overhaul.



Port (left) and starboard jigs for Winjeel wings. At right, bottom skin is being positioned with aid of skin-pins inserted through sitting holes. Skin will next be drilled through existing holes in ribs from other side. This wing is 15% completed. Assembly of ribs of front and rear spars (left) precedes temporary attachment of bottom skin (removed for deburring after drilling). Winjeel wing project, sub-contracted to de Havilland by CAC is almost concluded.



Two views of Mk. 35 Trainer production. LEFT: Riveters install the backing plate for intertank connection pipe inspection panel in starboard wing. Here the wing is about 80% completed. Remaining job is assembly of stub boom (on bench in foreground). RIGHT: Section of production line. Rear-most fuselage is in first stage of assembly.



Part of Sea Venom line in new service hangar. Aircraft are at Bankstown for ejection seat installation and overhaul.

of piston engines and Goblin Mk. 35 Ghost 104 jet engines are undertaken in a modern comprehensively-equipped engine overhaul shop. Operators in Asia and the Pacific Islands now regularly send engines to Bankstown for overhaul. Test running of jet engines is undertaken at a special jet engine test bed situated in a sparsely populated area at Menai, not far from Bankstown.

In addition to the normal servicing work, the service department in recent months has been responsible for the installation of Martin Baker ejector seats and Lear radio compasses in Vampire fighter and trainer aircraft. Some of this work has been undertaken away from Bankstown by field parties working on RAAF stations.

Production and service testing at Bankstown is now handled by Mr E. Shaw, who recently joined the company from the RAAF as chief test pilot. It will be recalled that Mr Brian Walker, who was chief test pilot for 10 years prior to his retirement from test flying

last September, and who handled all the early test flying on the Australian-built Vampire, has left the company to take up residence in New Guinea. Test flying from Bankstown is somewhat restricted due to lack of runways. Test programmes are frequently interrupted in the winter months due to aerodrome unserviceability after spells of wet weather and operations are sometimes transferred to the RAN aerodrome at Schofield or RAAF Richmond.

A little-known side of de Havilland's activities concerns the work of the Fescol department, also located at Bankstown. de Havillands are the sole licensees of the Fescol process in Australia and New Zealand and considerable volume of Electro-deposition is carried by this department for all branches of the engineering industry. The Fescol process consists of a method of applying, without heating, types of non-ferrous metal components already fabricated in such a manner as to make the superimposed material an integral part of

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The de Havilland Propeller Division at Alexandria is well equipped to service commercial and military equipment. LEFT: Bristol Freighter propeller built by de Havilland Propellers (England) is lowered onto a test rig. DH overhauls and rebuilds Hamilton-type propellers in Australia, including those used by major airlines. On bench at rear is Hamilton-type propeller built by de Havilland Australia. CENTRE: Blade finisher polishes and buffs a reconditioned propeller blade preparatory to anodising. RIGHT: Alexandria is frequently called upon to service non-DH equipment. Here a rear Rotol propeller from a Gannet contra-rotating assembly is subjected to a functional test on a Rotol test rig.



de Havilland directors at the sixth annual dinner (December 1956) of the company 10-year club. From left: D. H. McLachlan, A. Murray Jones, L. J. Brain, J. J. Byrne. The fifth Australian director, not pictured here, is R. J. Vicars.

THIRTY PROUD YEARS.

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to two — one at Bankstown and the propeller factory at Alexandria. Here all the activities of the company were concentrated. Then, especially for Murray Jones, the long hard battle was on again—to get sufficient work simultaneously to maintain financial equilibrium and retain a skilled work force adequate for the national defence needs. It was a persistently difficult task, especially because American aircraft, military as well as civil, had potent protagonists in Australia.

While waiting and waiting for the vital Defence orders, DHs demonstrated, in the Drover project, a virile degree of self-help. Only 20 of this light 3-engined aircraft, designed in Australia by Martin Warner, were built, and hopes for a larger market here and overseas did not eventuate. However, Harold Gatty, founder-head of Fiji Airways, is very happy with his Drover fleet, and some who are competent to pass judgment declare the Drover is the best aircraft ever to go into Flying Doctor service.

For the first time since the end of world war two, DHs really began to flex its manufacturing muscles, in 1947. There was an order for 50 Vampire Mk. 30 aircraft. This was a new variant of the product of the parent DH company.

In 1953 Murray Jones resigned his position as managing director to become chairman of the company, and D. H. McLachlan was appointed general manager. Two years later (in 1955) Lester Brain left the founder-general managership of TAA to become managing director.

Like his predecessor, Lester Brain has a long and wide knowledge of Australian air transport. Like Murray Jones, too, he is an administrator of proven ability and has always a keen eye fixed on far aeronautical horizons. In a way, an industrial wheel had turned full circle. For he had organised and commanded the first

overseas link (Darwin-Singapore) of Qantas Empire Airways, and this was operated with DH.86s.

To the public, especially in Sydney, one of the best known postwar members of the company was Group Captain Brian ("Blackjack") Walker, DFC. For 10 years he was DHs chief test pilot, and, aeronautically and personally, he demonstrated a lot of the distinctive dash which had made him a personality in the wartime RAAF.

He left the company last year to join forces (in New Guinea) with another high-powered type, ex-RAAF — Bobby Gibbes, who founded Sepik Airways.

Contrastingly, another personal link with an air era, more distant and even less inhibited, is Rollo Kingsford Smith. A worthy nephew of "Smithy," he got his First Class Nav. "ticket" at a record young age, and gave distinguished service in Bomber Command. Immediately he doffed RAAF (Permanent) uniform to join DHs, he made a successful commercial submission. Now he is sales manager.

No other overseas aircraft manufacturer has had so long and tangible a link with Australia as de Havillands. This month, its local company is 30 years old.

Has this venture been a success? And, if so, to what extent? Neither question can be answered (at least by the writer), if the yardstick is financial. But if, instead, the basis of assessment is results for Australian aviation, then de Havilland Aircraft Pty. Ltd. has been successful in happy degree.

Its founder-head in Australia did inspirational work aloft—work which gave a tremendous impetus to the aero club movement, then a major force in our air progress—and began a practical and technical service which was to prove highly valuable to fledgling airlines.

Then Murray Jones firmed and widened greatly the de Havilland spheres of service to Australia, and made possible manufacturing developments which vitally helped our war effort, and has added an important industrial echelon to our Air Arm.

As always in every sphere of industrial endeavor, the team is not less important than the captain. The quality of the DH team is proved by results. And every member of de Havilland staff, with a first hand knowledge of his senior colleagues, will testify that two in particular deserve a special badge on their "guernseys."

They are John Byrne, the oldest member and now one of the directors — he has been with DH in Australia for 27 years — vividly and obviously young at heart and indefatigable, and fellow director McLachlan (note his initials, appropriately D.H.), who has proven himself a finance stalwart and who, as general manager, held the fort for two years after Murray Jones relinquished his chief executive post of managing director.

In 30 years of operation de Havilland Aircraft Co. Pty. Ltd. has proved that it is a very part of the fabric of Australian aviation. Many happy returns! **END**

de HAVILLAND TODAY

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base metal. The process is employed to restore worn machined parts and in some cases, improve the finish of new components by imparting to them a surface of very high order and possessing special qualities such as resistance to oxidation, abrasion, etc.

de Havilland operate their Propeller Division at Alexandria as a self-contained entity. This is the only establishment of its kind in the southern hemisphere. Originally set up to manufacture complete propellers and associated equipment, the scope of activities has extended in recent years into other fields.

The increased complexity of aircraft types and their requirements for specialised propellers together with the big expansion in airline and private flying activities have created a demand for overhaul and repair facilities as well as the manufacture of spares. This service is available also to overseas and territorial operators. In addition, considerable effort has been applied to the manufacture of components for the de Havilland Vampire Trainer undertaken by the Bankstown factory. And there is a comprehensive heat treatment plant — it embraces both electric and gas furnaces, the electric furnace being capable of 1300 deg.—which provides its services not only for internal operations but for industry generally. The toolroom and metallurgical laboratory also

provides specialised services for the Commonwealth Government, Services, and industry generally. Security provisions preclude detailed reference to the work done by this plant on guided weapons, but it can be stated that the Propeller Division is most interested in the current trials of de Havilland weapons at Woomera. (See page 48 for summary of Salisbury activities.—Ed.)

While at the present time the future of the Australian aircraft manufacturing industry is uncertain, de Havillands are at least assured of a full two years' production programme. What the future holds is difficult to foretell. On the military side what will follow after the present Vampire Trainer order is completed depends entirely on policy decisions and Service requirements. In the civilian field the high cost of design, development and tooling for comparatively short production runs has made the local design and manufacture of civilian aircraft an unattractive proposition. It is to be hoped, however, that as civil aviation in this country continues to expand this position may improve and that we may once again see locally built de Havilland aircraft designed especially to suit Australian conditions. In the guided missile field the possibilities seem unlimited and the servicing and overhaul activities of the company must continue to expand in relation to expansion of the industry generally.

There is little doubt that in the coming years de Havillands will continue to play that same prominent role that the company has taken in the past 30 years of Australian aviation. **END**