

What's News?

- VH-CAT – Quarterly update
- What's in a name? (Part 3)
- New Members/Donations
- VH-CAT's history catches up with her (again!)

VH-CAT – Quarterly update

Now that we're almost one quarter of the way through the year, we thought it appropriate to provide you with a brief quarterly report on the progress of work being undertaken on VH-CAT to get her up and flying.

Since the last report in the final newsletter for 2009, work has continued on an incremental basis doing things like carrying out repairs to the elevator fabric, preparing the wing struts for painting, checking the left hand wing lower attachments (outboard wing) for cracks, locating and fitting of handles for the forward door (interior lining also to be fitted), cleaning wing attach brackets on left hand side, replacing bolts in lower fuselage area, fitting new windows and removing water bombing components etc.

Whilst some of these jobs contribute in a small way towards the work required for our Australian Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A), many of these jobs have been programmed to suit the limitations of the skills base of our volunteers and our budget.

In the December 2009 newsletter, we reported a great shortage of money and people (eg, LAMEs) with the licences required to supervise our volunteers, provide guidance on the work required to get our C of A and to sign out inspections etc. Nothing much has changed on these fronts since then. These shortages mean that we cannot get on with the key items of work required to get our C of A. Instead, all we can do with our volunteer workforce to keep them going is tread water by attacking the kinds of tasks mentioned above.

Now that the aircraft has had a good look over, we have a very good idea of what needs to be done to get our C of A, not to mention a corresponding ball-park figure to accomplish this – somewhere between \$68,500 and \$80,000. This assumes land operations only. An extra \$18,000 is required to re-skin the floats – this being essential if we are to do water landings.

Remember:

1. these costs are approximate only, but provide a good indication of the order of magnitude of the money required.

2. this is the money required just to get her flying. Additional money, and a lot of it, will be required for the future stages of the restoration project which will see the installation of passenger seats, blisters, nose turret and painting.

So there's much to do and we are desperately short of money and qualified people. Against all of this, the expiry of our free tenure at Bankstown Airport is just over three months away (time flies, doesn't it?).

We still have vital positions within the management team that need to be filled, especially that of Fund Raising and PR Manager. We need someone who specialises in this field if we are to raise enough money to keep going.

We are indebted to Ray Berghouse of Chevron Publishing for his assistance so far but he has now become busy and not able to give us much time. We're sure he would be able to give advice and direction to anyone who might volunteer for this job. We are also grateful to Jaqui Lane of Focus Publishing who is also very busy but well experienced in fund raising. What we now need is volunteers to do the work under their direction.

So things are turning, albeit slowly, and the drought we are experiencing with money and suitably qualified people persists. If you think you can help break the drought, please contact us ASAP!

We need you!

Colin Cool and Phil Dulhunty

What's in a name? (Part 3)

As you may recall, we included in the January newsletter an article under the above heading (unbeknown to me, it was to become Part 1 of a series of 3 – or more, who knows?) that attempted to explain the origin of the various names applied to the Consolidated Model 28 – known to the US Navy as the PBV, the British as the Catalina, the Canadians as the Canso and so on.

David Legg, editor of the Catalina Society's *Catalina News* in the UK and well-known subject matter expert (don't fight it David – you are!) who is a recipient of our newsletter spotted the article and was good enough to forward to us an article he had written some time ago on the very subject of Consolidated Model 28 nomenclature, which was reproduced in our February newsletter.

In this, he mentioned that the RAF had its own naming system and generally maritime aircraft were named after either ports or Admirals. I concluded the article with a comment that asked how the Supermarine Walrus, Seagull and Sea Otter got their names, suggesting that water-dwelling wildlife also influenced the RAF in the naming of their maritime aircraft.

Well, not surprisingly, like a shot, David came back with the following:

I was very interested in the comment that you published after my piece. In my note about names, the bit about naming maritime aircraft after ports and admirals came from Phil Butler's book on Lend-Lease aircraft but I have to say I am finding it difficult to think of an RAF flying boat named after an admiral!

The names given to the Walrus and Sea Otter can be explained away as they were named after marine animals in the 1932 system of naming aircraft in British Service. As regards the Supermarine Seagull, there were no less than three distinctly different Supermarine types with the same name, dating from 1920, 1933 and 1948. The first seems to have been named under the 1921 system and should really have been named after a fish rather than a seabird. Although the RAAF used the second variant of the Seagull, the British called it the Walrus of course.

There seem to be many departures from the supposedly strict 'rules' for naming military aircraft and they are very comprehensively covered in the book *Names with Wings* by Gordon Wansborough-White. A cautionary note however - under Canso, he states that the name was derived from "CANadian ConSOLIDated" which I believe to be wishful thinking. He also says that the Canso was the "CATALINA built by Boeing in Canada" which is of course only partially correct and ignores the many built by Canadian Vickers!

I think it is fair to say that the whole subject is a bit of a minefield!

Kind regards.

David Legg

Editor, The Catalina News, The Catalina Society

So there you have it folks. Thanks again David for sharing your wealth of knowledge with us. I'm sure that like me, many of our readers out there found this material most interesting and educational.

Colin Cool, Editor

New Members/Donations

The Catalina Flying Memorial welcomes the following members to the Aussie Cat Club:

Life Members

Ken Hughes

One year Members

Doug Nolan
Christina Mumford

Rod Campbell
John Goldsborough
Patricio Parrague
Richard Paine

The CFML is also extremely grateful for the following donations:

- Pete Stuart-Smith - \$300
- Doug Nolan - \$125

A very big thank you to all of the above for their support!

VH-CAT's past catches up with her (again!)

Last month, we reported that Mr Patrick Olave paid a visit to VH-CAT back in January. Mr Olave wrote to us the following day telling us how grateful he was to have been given the wonderful opportunity to appreciate first hand the aircraft known to him since childhood as the Manutara II. He was born in Chile and arrived in Australia in 1973 at the age of 7, and his parents often spoke of Roberto Parrague's airline ASPAR and his fleet of Consolidated PBY-6A Catalina's.

Well, you wouldn't believe it, but just over a month later, Roberto Parrague's nephew, Patricio Parrague dropped in at Bankstown to pay us a visit, and signed up as a member (see "New Members/Donations" above) and volunteer!

So it seems that VH-CAT's past has caught up with her yet again!

The following is an extract of VH-CAT's history from the CFML website, telling of the period when, as CC-CNP, VH-CAT served with the company owned by Roberto Parrague – ASPAR.

In 1957, she turned up on the Chilean civil aircraft register as CC-CNG. The registered owner was an outfit called TRANSA, who mothballed her until 1959, when she was acquired by the prominent Chilean aviator Commandante Roberto Parrague, becoming CC-CNP in the process. Parrague owned a company called ASPAR, and he christened CC-CNP Manutara II in honour of a previous Catalina that he had flown from Chile to Easter Island in 1951.

Manutara means 'frigate bird', incidentally.

By coincidence, PG Taylor – the famous Australian flyer – had stopped over on Easter Island soon after Parrague's visit in 1951. PG noticed a derelict Catalina called Manutara marooned on the island, but he did not realise the significance of the plane at the time and flew on to his destination, Valparaiso, without giving the matter much thought.

It seems that when Parrague was getting ready to fly Manutara back to Chile, the Easter Islanders had warned him that according to legend, their sacred frigate bird would never leave the island. And so it came to pass that as Parrague took off, rough

conditions snapped the Catalina's wing, causing her to 'die' on the island as prophesied. Her broken body was still there at the time of PG Taylor's stop over.

When PG saw the wreck he was glad that he had equipped his own Catalina, the serendipitously named Frigate Bird II, with JATO (jet assisted take-off).

PG, with so many Pacific crossings under his belt, had the greatest respect for frigate birds – an appreciation that he clearly shared with Parrague. He admired the way in which the birds inhabited vast expanses of the ocean, forever skimming the wave tops and seeming never to rest.

As a reward for completing their pioneering flight from Sydney to Valparaiso in '51, all PG's crew were made honorary officers of the Chilean Air force, while PG was awarded a government decoration, Al Merito Bernardo O'Higgins (named after the founder of the Chilean Republic). He also met Parrague, learning the story of Manutara's ill-fated takeoff from Easter Island.

In 1961, Parrague flew CG-CNP (alias Manutara II) to Easter Island and, four years later, took her on a long-distance flight to Tahiti. But she was used mainly to ferry freight and passengers to and from the Juan Fernandez Archipelago. Parrague's company ASPAR diversified into the fire fighting business during the late '60s and CC-CNP was sent from Santiago to Canada to be converted into a fire bomber fitted with internal water tanks and 'drop doors'. In this new role, CC-CNP was first given the tanker number '65' but later became '35'.

CC-CNP flew to Spain in July 1988 when ASPAR was awarded a fire fighting contract there. She worked for the Spanish government department ICONA under a charter arrangement and was re-registered EC-593. This change was short lived, however: by the end of the decade, her Chilean registration of CC-CNP had been restored. She was now working as a chartered fire bomber in Portugal for Aerocondor, which was owned by Victor de Brito.

By this stage, CC-CNP's fire fighting technology had been rendered out of date due to the advent of more efficient, special-purpose Canadian CL415 aircraft. She was retired from service and stored at Seia in the Portuguese Sierras, where she waited patiently for the Catalina Veterans of Rathmines in Australia to save her from laying one sacred frigate bird egg and dying.

Whilst you can learn the history of Manutara II (aka VH-CAT) on the CFML website, you can learn about the original Manutara via the following article:

http://www.laahs.com/artman/publish/article_237.shtml

Many thanks to Gordon Finn for his assistance in compiling this newsletter item.

Colin Cool, Editor

News or comments

If you have any news or comments regarding the website, please forward to Colin Cool (colin.cool@jemena.com.au) or Jill Brandon (info@catalinaflying.org.au).