

What's News?

- What's in a name?
- New Members/Donations
- A letter of thanks from a veteran

What's in a name?

I have always wondered how the PB5 got the name CATALINA everywhere except in Canada where it was and is called a "CANSO".

Was CANSO just an abbreviation (or contraction) for Canadian Consolidated? AND did other models of aircraft such as the Flying Fortress, Mustang and Liberator also have different names in Canada. Not always. The AT-6 trainer was called the Harvard in Canada, the P3 Orion in Canada is called the CP140 Aurora.

Usually the Americans only used numbers such as PB5 or P51 – it was the English who provided these nameless aircraft with names, like the Lockheed Lightning (P38 to the Americans) or the English Sunderland, Lancaster, Mosquito, Spitfire, etc.

The PB5 was given the name "CATALINA" by the English and was aptly named after the island of Catalina just off the coast of California close to where the Consolidated Aircraft factory was. Why this island was called Catalina, I'm not sure but like every other place in California it was originally Spanish. Catalina in Spanish is Catherine and maybe originally was Santa Catalina or Saint Catherine in English.

In any case, CATALINA to most people in this world, other than Canadians means a fantastic World War II Flying Boat.

I have a friend in Paul Caban, a Canadian aviator who has advised as follows:

I talked to lots of old timers who did not know the correct answer. They all told me the same old story about two Canadian air force pilots sipping beers.

One says –"there is no way that thing could ever fly – it just can't".

Then the other one answers - "it can so"... hence the name CANSO!

But here is the historically correct answer to your question, sent to me from a good friend of mine Roger at Bombardier Canada. I think he reads everything connected to aviation and always seems to find the answers to my many questions. See copy of his email below:

Yes, many book references. The best one is Royal Canadian Air Force, Aircraft Finish & Markings, 1947-1968, by Patrick Martin.

The PB5 was the US Navy designation of the aircraft. The RAF named their PB5s "Catalina" after Santa Catalina Island off California, USA. All US built PB5s for the RAF were called Catalinas. Canadian built (Boeing-Vancouver/Canadian Vickers-Montreal) were named "Canso." The RCAF named the aircraft for the Strait of Canso in Nova Scotia!

Did they know the PB5 already had the Catalina name? Or was it called CANSO in Canada before the RAF gave it the name Catalina?

This raises my question – How do aeroplanes get their names? Who gives it to them? The designer? The manufacturer? The operators? In Australia we only have the "Boomerang", the "Winjeel" and the "Nomad" - we could have a "Dingo" or a "Bondi".

But the name "Catalina" just seems to be a perfect fit for the beautiful PB5 aircraft. It has become much more famous than the original island after which it was named.

Phil Dulhunty

New Members/Donations

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

Life Members

Ken Hines
Trevor Dean

The CFML is also extremely grateful for the following donations:

- Trevor Dean - \$1,000 (donated back in April, but went unmentioned – sorry about that Trevor!)
- Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown –16 passenger seats for VH-CAT
- Coal Point Progress Association - \$200
- Noel Lyon - \$50

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

A letter of thanks from a reader

Mr Bill Dean, a Catalina veteran wrote a nice little letter to us expressing his appreciation for our November newsletter and the efforts that went into making the Catalina Festival the success that it was. Bill spent most of his service time on flying boats and seaplanes, including two years at Rathmines.

Thanks so much for the feedback Bill! It's a great pleasure keeping you and all our readers informed on our project. However, it is especially pleasing and rewarding to

know that the men like you we are trying to help commemorate think we are doing OK!

Bill's letter appears below.

17/11/09

Dear Colin and Jill

Thank you for your report on the 2009 Catalina Festival complete with photos. I have to agree with you, it was a great success and a credit to all involved.

I flew up from Adelaide to attend with my son in-law from Melbourne.

I spent about 2 years at Rathmines during the war after returning from Port Moresby 11 Squadron which I joined there about 9 months after they were formed and remember the arrival of the first Catalina on March 19 1941 a date I can always remember as it was my 21st birthday.

Except for one very shortstay at Port Pirie I spent all my almost 6 years in the RAAF with flying boats or float planes.

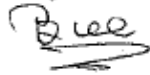
At Rathmines I was with 107 Squadron and then remustered from fitter 2E to Flight Engineer and was posted to 43 Squadron at Darwin.

Thank you for keeping me in touch by snail mail. I find email a bit beyond me.

Keep up the good work and congratulations on all your efforts.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Dean



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).