

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN AIR JOURNAL

VOLUME 38 NUMBER 2

JUL – SEP 2009

EDITORIAL

This quarter has seen much aviation activity in South Australia. Pacific Blue recommenced flights to Fiji, Sharp Airlines announced the commencement of flights from Adelaide to Avalon via Portland. Air South is to cease rpt operations. Minlaton celebrated the 90th anniversary of Harry Butler's flight with a re-enactment by the DH82 VH-ATM, the R.A.N. retired its Fokker F27/500 VH-EWP and it is to be replaced by the DHC8/202 VH-LCL. R.A.A.F. Edinburgh celebrated the 70th anniversary of No. 10 & 11 Squadrons with a special commemorative event and fly-past.

Also two special tributes to the late W.B.A.G'ers John Smith and Dave Freeman have been compiled and they are included together with several appropriate photographs.

Thank you for the positive feedback on the PDF production copy of the magazine. Subscribers are appreciating the colour photographs. I have fine tuned the document size so that it will fit your e-mail mail boxes. Thank you for your patience.

Read on and enjoy all the regular features.



9M-MGC FOKKER F27/050 ADELAIDE 2-8-09 (R. BROWN)

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ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY RETIRES FOKKER F27/500 VH-EWP by Nigel Daw

On 15 September the Navy LADS flight, based in Cairns Qld, used its F27/500 for the final time on survey charting services.

Brief History of Laser Airborne Depth Sounder (LADS) Flight.

In addition to several survey ships the section also employs a valuable and capable airborne unit. This flight was formed in 1992 after a long period of research and development. The LADS aircraft was a Fokker F.27/500 Friendship which was acquired from East-West Airlines and extensively modified. This aircraft was based at Cairns Airport and it tackled the difficult surveys that were too complex for the ships particularly within the Great Barrier Reef.

During the last half of 2008 a third generation LADS system was installed in the aircraft at Adelaide Airport as the LADS head office is located in Mawson Lakes, a northern Adelaide suburb. The new system takes 1000 soundings per second and the aircraft was able to fly faster at 170 knots and operate at various heights. The new grid pattern was 3 x 3 metres in lieu of the previous 10 x 10 metres and so an improved resolution of the seabed will be achieved.

This current equipment in the aircraft is one laser, one computer console, two support boxes for the laser and two consoles for the cooling equipment.

General

Commonwealth Government budget papers released in May 2009 announced that the R.A.N. LADS flight would be receiving a replacement aircraft in the July to September quarter. The new aircraft is to be the DHC8/202 VH-LCL which has been operated on similar work to VH-EWP by Tenix LADS Corporation since 1998. The DHC8's prime area of charting work has been overseas primarily in Europe and North America. Tenix LADS has an annual turnover of \$22m, generated primarily from hydrographic mapping contracts with defence and commercial organizations. The company also provides its LADS technology for survey tasks such as habitat mapping and climate change monitoring. In August it was announced that Fugro a company headquartered in the Netherlands and which has consolidated revenues of \$3.6 billion pa had takenover LADS. Fugro It is a leading international provider of data and advice related to the earth's surface, seabed, soil and sub-soil. The Company already has other operations in Australia.

The Final Flights

On 10th September the Fokker F27 made its last survey flight from Cairns Qld and two days later the aircraft ferried to Adelaide. To plan for the handover of the laser equipment to the DHC8 two final flights were made off the coast in SA in Spencer Gulf (14th) and the final flight in Gulf St.Vincent the following day. The reason for these flights was to obtain charting data in four separate areas, and then when the equipment is installed in the replacement aircraft the grid pattern will be flown again. This is to ensure the laser equipment remains working to the required specifications. The DHC8 will then be formally accepted into the LADS Flight.

Your Editor was invited to participate on the final flight on 15th September. Arriving at the aircraft just before 1900 and checking in with Lt Cdr Peter Mellick I sought details of the operation. I was eagerly looking forward to seeing the Fokker Friendship in operation again as I had observed the flight in May 2007 (see S.A.A.J. Vol 36 No. 2). Crew for the flight were: Captains Peter Condon & Bill Gronbeck, Lt Cdr Peter Mellick, Paul Wilson (L.A.M.E.), Mark Penley and two assistants from LADS, and a rep. from D.M.O. plus Nigel Daw. The flight commenced at 2040 using the callsign 'Navy Survey'.

After a short transit time to Edithburgh (base of Yorke Peninsula) the survey runs commenced at 2110 near Troubridge Lighthouse at an altitude of 1,600 feet. Wind was 20 knots at 050 deg giving 5 deg of drift. The first

grid pattern was flown on a heading of 043 degrees with a ground speed of 118 knots. The reason for the charting in this area was due to the location of special 2m (cubed) concrete caissons located in a straight line at depths of 5m, 10m & 15m with set distances between each. Laser charting of these was used to check the equipment. During the exacting grid pattern flying the run progressively moves 50 metres to one side. After an hour the aircraft transited to 'Rods Run' off Middle Beach, north of Outer Harbour, for further charting operations. Charting continued until survey work finished at 2330 and it was time to return to Adelaide Airport where 'Navy Survey' landed at 2350 and into R.A.N. history. The Fokker F27 had faithfully served the R.A.N. for seventeen years.

The Future

The laser equipment was removed from the Fokker F27 and on 18th September EWP ferried to Essendon for maintenance. The aircraft was due to return to Adelaide in November for fitment of the survey equipment from the DHC8 LCL and next year the Fokker is expected to head off overseas to undertake survey work. Ownership of the aircraft is to transfer to Fugro LADS. The Navy Survey flight based in Cairns QLD will now have a more modern aircraft with DHC8 in service. A major benefit will be an A.P.U. which the Fokker does not have. Fly-on Fokker VH-EWP, the only Rolls Royce Dart powered aircraft in Australia.

Special thanks for preparation of this article by Peter Condon, Bill Gronbeck, Lt Cdr Peter Mellick, Paul Wilson, John Newman, Mark Penley and Lt Cdr Richard Cullen.



VH-EWP F27/500 ADELAIDE 15-9-09



VH-EWP COCKPIT 15-9-09



From LHS; P. Wilson, C. Deacon, R. Kelly, P. Condon, J. Newman,
B. Gronbeck, N. Daw, P. Mellick 15-9-09



THE CONSOLE 15-9-09