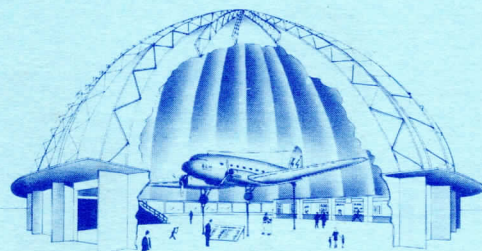


THE “UIVER” MEMORIAL



Dr Geoff Ross



“De Uiver” Foundation

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FOREWARD

The Rotary Club of Albury West undertook an ambitious project in Rotary's 75th Anniversary Year. It purchased a dismantled Douglas DC2 Aircraft and restored it as the K.L.M. Air-liner "Uiver", winner of the handicap section and second outright in the 1934 London - Melbourne Air Race. The people of Albury rescued the "Uiver" (Stork) during the Race striking up a close relationship with the Dutch people which has remained to this day. This rescue and the Race captured the attention of the world at the time. The performance of the DC2 in this Race heralded the arrival of regular international passenger air travel. Suddenly Australia was less than 4 days from the "Mother Country". But it took this American intercapital Airliner flown by a Dutch Airline (the oldest in the world) to do it. The British Empire was no longer at the forefront of passenger aircraft design. Overnight the Imperial Airways Handley-Page biplanes were old stringbags "solid as the Rock of Gibraltar, but about as fast" overtaken by a stressed all-metal monoplane carrying twice as many passengers twice as fast. Anthony Fokker was no longer the innovator. Dr. Albert Plesman's order of 10 more DC2's for K.L.M. after the Race was a bitter pill for fellow Dutchman Fokker to swallow. Australia's internal airlines soon too went American as the many who flew in A.N.A.'s DC2's will remember. The political currents started with the "Uiver's" performance swirl to this day. In 1934 K.L.M. was fighting to extend its service to Australia. Now it is fighting to retain it. The British won the Race with Scott and Campbell Black in the de Havilland Comet. However it was a racing aircraft tailor-made for the event, uncomfortable, hard to handle and mechanically unreliable. All three entered had engine trouble and one flown by Jim and Amy (Johnson) Mollison failed to finish. So it is worth looking at the "Uiver's" performance in this race in detail.

The MacROBERTSON INTERNATIONAL AIR RACE

The event was sponsored by Sir MacPherson Robertson, the chocolate millionaire who believed it a fitting way to celebrate Melbourne's centenary. Conditions of the Race were set out in great detail in "Aircraft Magazine July 1st, 1933, the day the DC1 made its maiden flight. The accompanying editorial predicted that the race would be "at the mercy of the high speed American planes". Prize money was £15000; with £10000 plus a trophy going to the winner of the speed event, £1500 for 2nd and £500 for 3rd. For the handicap event there was £2000 for 1st and £1000 for 2nd. While the Royal and Australian Aero Club committees grappled with the administration of a race across the world over so many different countries, the leading aviators of the time picked their machines and entered. Some 63 entries were received but many including Kingsford Smith and Wiley Post withdrew leaving 20 to face the starter at Mildenhall on October 20th 1934.

The 12300 mile event had as major controls Baghdad, Allahabad, Singapore, Darwin, Charleville with optional checking points at Marseilles, Rome, Athens, Aleppo, Bushire, Jask, Karachi, Jodhpur, Calcutta, Rangoon, Bangkok, Alor Star, Batavia, Rambang, Koepang, Newcastle Waters, Cloncurry and Narromine. The finish was Flemington Racecourse and then on to Laverton to land. The "Uiver" tackled the event as if it were a regular Amsterdam-Batavia Airline flight with some extra flying tacked on at the end. It carried 4 crew, 3 passengers (German Aviatrix Thea Rasche "journalist" for a group of European newspapers, and two Dutch Businessmen), luggage and mail.

ALBURY SAVES "UIVER"

The Airliner flew on schedule to Charleville when it was only a few hours behind the Comet which had engine trouble. On the last leg to Melbourne wireless operator van Brugge received Morse signals warning of bad weather ahead. After Bourke, electrical disturbances made further radio contact difficult. At 11.40 p.m. Albury residents heard the DC2 pass over heading south-east. Parmentier had decided to fly to the coast and then follow it around to Melbourne, but forgot about the Great Dividing Range with its Bogongs, Mt Feathertop and Mt Buffalo. Soon the "Uiver" iced up forcing it to lose height. Parmentier realised that the safety of the passengers and crew was now threatened, sent out repeated S.O.S. calls and turned back. At 12.10 a.m. Albury residents heard the heavy drone of radial engines as the "Uiver" flew over again, this time lost and flying in circles with the landing lights on. R.A.A.F. signallers at Laverton were trying in vain to contact the airliner. They alerted all towns along the route to be ready to help. A.W.A. radio stations broadcast messages, Navy ships switched on their searchlights, and railway stations along the Melbourne-Albury railway put on signal lamps. Messages were sent to the "Uiver" to return to Cootamundra and land there. But the severe atmospheric disturbances, thunder and lightning, heavy rain, not to mention the ice from the wings and propellers smashing against the fuselage, made it impossible to receive these messages.

However, whilst over Albury, they received a local radio station message to fly west for 30 minutes, then south-west. They headed west - Parmentier at the controls, Moll trying to get an idea of the terrain from the map, van Brugge trying in vain to contact Melbourne, and Prins monitoring the engines that had so far covered 12000 miles safely. But the storm continued, fuel was low, the passengers grim - Parmentier and Moll decided to turn back to Albury and try to land. At 1.10 a.m. the DC2 returned from the north. Meanwhile, on the ground, much activity was taking place. Local A.B.C. Station 2CO had remained on air after normal closing time. Announcer, Arthur Newnham, appealed for cars to go to the Albury Racecourse to light a makeshift landing field. Mr. L. Ferris, Municipal Electrical Engineer and Mr. R. Turner, Deputy Postal Inspector, at the Powerhouse flashed the town lights to attract the fliers. Mr. C. Mott, of the Border Morning Mail newspaper

telephoned officials in Melbourne who instructed that "Albury" should be flashed in Morse code —.—.—.—.—.—.—.—.—.— Mr. R. Jillard, a signaller of the 40 (Albury) Battery, used the searchlights on the War Memorial on Western Hill to do this. Then Ferris used the entire town lighting system to make one great Morse signal. About 80 cars had now gathered at the Racecourse and formed up in 2 rows, one on the eastern and one on the western side.

At 1.20 a.m. on the stormy night of 24th October 1934 the "Uiver" dropped 2 parachute flares and made its approach to land. It bumped several times on the undulating centre of the Racecourse, ran 200 yards and then slithered to a halt 100 yards short of the inner fence. Parmentier considered it the best landing he had made in the race - a pitch black stormy night, on the sodden racecourse of a foreign town capped by hills, at the end of a 12000 mile air race, lost in the biggest airliner of its time and after 5 hours of flying in terrible weather. The passengers were driven to Albury to spend the rest of the night whilst the crew stayed at the plane with the rain teeming down. Turner sent off anxiously awaited messages to K.L.M., the Air Race Committee, and Germany saying the plane was saved.

However, the ordeal was still not over for daybreak saw 8 tons of DC2 bogged in thick Albury mud. The Mayor, Ald. Alf Waugh rallied 300 people to dig out, then pull, the "Uiver" onto firmer ground. Only after the passengers, half the crew, the luggage, 30,000 letters, interior fittings and seats were left behind did Parmentier and Moll manage to take off for Melbourne. The Dutchmen gained 2nd place outright and won the handicap prize. Both were knighted by Queen Wilhelmina who also presented the Mayor of Albury with the Order of the Orange Nassau. The newspapers reported at the time - "Sir MacPherson Robertson spoke the mind of the world when he expressed the opinion that the greatest feat of all was that registered by the Dutch airliner. In the speed test the Douglas was handicapped by the fact that it was built for utilitarian purposes and not for speed alone. After being lost for hours on Tuesday night and travelling hundreds of miles out of its course to escape the wild elements and secure safe anchorage for its passengers it was magnificently handled in the dead of night, and brought to safety at Albury with no semblance of anxiety on the part of the passengers. There was no sign of fatigue on the part of the navigators, crew or passengers whilst the occupants of the Comet plane were done to exhaustion when the landing was made at Melbourne".

The "Flying Dutchmen" were national heroes, the Dutch giving themselves a national holiday to celebrate the result and all sorts of "Uiver" souvenirs were produced. Albury citizens were also much honoured by the grateful Dutch. K.L.M. instructed Parmentier and Moll to contribute 1000 Dutch guilders to the Albury Base Hospital. In Amsterdam a committee received donations for a lasting souvenir to be sent to Albury. Similarly, employees of the Royal Dutch Packet Mail Line in Batavia opened a fund and raised thousands of guilders to provide some tangible recognition of Albury's effort. The Prime Minister of the Netherlands (Dr. Colijn) on behalf of Queen Wilhelmina made a broadcast through A.B.C. Station 3LO Melbourne - "The Government and people of Holland are grateful for the splendid reception given to the Dutch airmen by Australians and particularly by the Mayor and people of Albury. We did not know such a place as Albury existed, but the name of that town will go down in our country's text books so that our children can read of the splendid services rendered to our airmen. We shall never forget the people of Albury. We also offer our congratulations to the winners of the Centenary Air Race, Scott and Black". Alderman Waugh in reply broadcast - "We join with all in expressing regret at the circumstances which compelled the airmen to land at Albury. Any slight service the people of Albury rendered on the occasion was amply rewarded by having the opportunity of meeting with the several gallant gentlemen, with all whom they have come into contact they have left a lasting impression for their courteousness and splendid bearing and the grateful references to the assistance that our townfolk put forth on the memorable stormy night of October 24th. The sympathy of all Australians was extended to the "Flying Dutchmen" when trouble overcame them in their last few miles of the magnificent flight". The Consul-General for the Netherlands visited Albury and made presentation to all those who aided the plane's safe landing and Ald. Waugh later went to Holland to receive the Order of Orange-Nassau. Today in the foyer of

<u>COMPETITORS.</u>	<u>AIRCRAFT.</u>	<u>ENGINE(S).</u>	<u>RACE NO.</u>	<u>RACE TIME.</u>	<u>RESULT.</u>
Sqn. Ldr. M. McGregor and Henry Walker (N.Z.).	Miles Hawk.	Gipsy Major.	2.	7 days, 15 hrs.	5th in handicap event.
Col. Roscoe Turner and Clyde Pangborn (U.S.).	Boeing 247D.	2 Pratt & Whitney Wasps.	5.	3 days, 21 hrs.	3rd in speed event.
D.L. Asjes & G.J. Geysendorfer (N.L.).	Panderjager.	3 Wright Whirlwinds.	6.	D.N.F.	Crashlanded Allahabad.
Lt. M. Hansen & D. Jensen (Den),	Desoutter Mk. II.	Gipsy III.	7.	11 days, 17 hrs.	7th in handicap.
Flg. Off. G.C. Davies & Lt. Ldr. C.N. Hill (U.K.).	fairey III f.	Napier Lion.	15.	35 days.	-
C.J. Melrose (S. Aust.).	D.H. Puss Moth.	Gipsy Major.	16.	9 days, 20 hrs.	3rd in handicap.
Cathcart-Jones & Ken Waller (U.K.).	10 H88 Comet.	2 Gipsy VI's.	19.	4 days, 22 hrs.	4th in speed race.
Sqn. Ldr. D.E. Stodart & K.G. Stodart (U.K.)	Airspeed Courier AS5.	2 Cheetah V's.	26.	9 days, 18 hrs.	4th in handicap
Jacqueline Cochran and Wesley Smith (U.S.A.).	Granville Monoplane "Gee-Bee".	Pratt & Whitney Hornet.	30.	D.N.F.	Mechanical problems Bucharest

John H. Wright & Lambert John Polando (U.S.A.) Monocoupe.	Warner Super Scarab.	33.	D.N.F.	Engine trouble Calcutta.
C.W.A. Scott & Comet DH88 Captain I. Campbell- "Grosvenor Black (U.K.). House".	2 Gipsy <u>VI</u> 's.	34.	2 days, 23 hrs.	1st outright. 1st in speed event.
Lt. Ray Parer & Fairey Fox. Godfrey Hemsworth (New Guinea).	Fairey Felix D12.	35.	3 months, 24 days.	-
Jimmy Woods & Flt. Lt. Lockheed Vega. D.C.I. Bennett (U.K.).	Pratt & Whitney S/C.	36.	D.N.F.	Undercarriage damaged on landing, Aleppo.
Koene Dirk Parm- entier, Johannes Moll, Cornelis Van Brugge, Bouwe Prins (N.L.).	2 Cyclones.	44.	3 days, 19 hrs.	2nd outright. 1st in handicap event
Flt. Lt. G. Shaw (U.K.).	Gipsy Major.	47.	D.N.F.	Undercarriage damaged on landing, Bushire.
Capt. I. Neville Stack & S.L. Turner (U.K.).	2 Cheetahs.	58.	D.N.F.	Mechanical problems, Athens.
Sqn. Ldr. J.D. Hewitt & flg. Off. Cyril E. Kay (N.Z.).	2 Gipsy <u>VI</u> 's	60.	13 days, 19 hrs.	5th in speed, 6th in handicap race.
Flt. Lt. H.D. Gilman & J.K.C. Baines (U.K.).	Felix Curtiss.	62.	Killed.	Crashed near foggia.
Jim & Amy Mollison (U.K.).	2 Gipsy <u>VI</u> 's.	63.	D.N.F.	Engine trouble Allahabad.
Comet DH88 "Black Magic".				

Albury's new Council Building these gifts may be seen including the Order, a bronze plaque, a silver model "Uiver", newspaper cuttings, Delft porcelain, plus souvenirs from Parmentier and Moll. One of these is the silver cigarette case dropped from the "Uiver" onto Albury Racecourse on the return journey home. Inside was a small Dutch flag and the message - "To all our good friends in Albury, we salute you and say farewell. On board the "Uiver", November 1, 1934, in the air" - Signed by the crew and passengers of the "Uiver".

AFTER THE RACE

After flying home to a tumultuous welcome in Amsterdam, the "Uiver" continued its regular K.L.M. Airline service. Tragically, on December 20th, 1934, whilst on an air-mail flight from America to Java the "Uiver" crashed in a violent sandstorm near Rutbah Wells in the Syrian desert. The crew of four and three passengers were killed instantly. "Battling" Ray Parer and Hemsworth still trying to complete the Air Race inspected the wreck whilst held up in Baghdad. The people of Albury subscribed to a Memorial erected in Holland to those lost in the crash.

And what of the Air Race crew - Captain Parmentier died on October 21st, 1948, on an Amsterdam - New York flight. His K.L.M. Lockheed Constellation PH-TEN "Nijmegen" crashed during the approach to Glasgow's Prestwick airport. Commodore Moll, is living in Aalsmeer. Flight Engineer Prins died some years ago at Den Helder. Wireless Operator van Brugge was killed on June 1st, 1943, when K.L.M. DC3 G-AGBB was shot down by the Luftwaffe over the Bay of Biscay. British actor, Leslie Howard, was also killed aboard this Lisbon-Bristol flight. German Aviatrix, Thea Rasche, served in Hitler's Luftwaffe. During World War II both Moll and Prins re-visited Albury whilst serving with the Royal Netherlands Air Force.

And what of those flying machines - The winning Comet is in the Shuttleworth Collection in the U.K. This design evolved into the "wooden wonder" the Mosquito, used in many roles in World War II and served in the R.A.A.F. from 1943 - 54. Many were built by de Havilland in Australia. The DC2 evolved into the DC3 the most famous aircraft of all time and in service to this day. The Boeing 247D, the third placegetter evolved into the B17 Flying Fortress bomber of World War II and is the ancestor of today's Boeing Jumbos. The Air Race Boeing is now in the National Air Museum, Washington.

October 24th 1979 was the 45th Anniversary of the "Uiver"'s rescue by Albury. During a Race Meeting, to the crowd's delight, pilot John Love in his Lockheed 12 "Silver City" re-enacted the incident. Cars of the period lined up to meet the Aircraft, which made the difficult landing in a tricky cross-wind. Like the "Uiver", the "Silver City" became bogged in the sodden turf. Once again Albury residents had to dig out and pull an Aircraft onto firmer ground. This memorial was unveiled at Albury Airport on Sunday, March 2nd, 1980, by the Governor-General of Australia, Sir Zelman Cowen in the presence of the Mayor of Albury and the Dutch Ambassador.

THE DOUGLAS DC2

Donald W. Douglas left the U.S. Navy in 1912, gained his B.Sc. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and went to work as an Engineer for the Glenn Martin Aircraft Company. Soon he went into his own business in Los Angeles, California, and in the 1920's was turning out military biplane aircraft. In 1932 T.W.A. issued a specification for passenger planes - minimum 12 passengers, range at least 1000 miles, metal fuselage and wings, minimum cruising speed at sea level 146 m.p.h. landing speed less than 65 m.p.h. and 3 engines between 500 and 550 H.P. supercharged. Douglas briefed his designers and gave them 2 days to think

on it. On 4th August 1932 the design parameters were discussed. Chief Engineer "Dutch" Kindelberger (later to design the North American P-51 Mustang) wanted to use two of the newly developed 710 H.P. 9-cylinder Wright Cyclone radial engines. These would produce the same power as the 3 specified but with less weight. He also wanted a roomy cabin so people could walk around in it. In such designs as the new Boeing 247 and later Lockheed 10's the main wing spar ran through the fuselage making the cabin cramped. Designer Raymond suggested building the wing in section with a stub wing carrying the engines bolted to the fuselage. The outer wing section and tips could then be bolted to the stub wing. Engineer Herman suggested fitting flaps under the rear edge of the wing to give the specified low landing speed, as well as aiding the take off climb. Within a week the basic design was agreed upon - a stressed all metal low wing monoplane with much attention given to streamlining - cowed engines, retractable undercarriage and smooth surfaces.

T.W.A. accepted the Douglas Commercial design so production of the DC1 began. On 1st July 1933 the DC1 made its maiden flight. Its wingspan was 85', length 60', cruising speed 190 m.p.h., range 1000 miles, crew of 2 and 12 passengers. Variable pitch propellers were fitted to enable the plane to climb on one engine. Although the DC1 flew for T.W.A., then a Spanish Airline until it crashed in 1940, it was a prototype. The production version was the DC2. Engine power was up to 720 H.P., wingspan unaltered, length 62', range 1060 miles, crew of 3 and 14 passengers. It first flew on 11th May 1934 (Construction number 1237) and was a commercial success. Over 200 were built and the operators included T.W.A., American Airlines, Eastern Airlines, Holyman Airways, A.N.A., K.L.M., the R.A.F., R.A.A.F. and A.A.F. The performance of the K.L.M., DC2, PH-AJU "UIVER" (c/n 1317) in the Great Air Race played no small part in selling this design to the world.

The DC3 was a stretched version of the DC2 to enable the 14 passengers to sleep. Originally known as D.S.T. (Douglas Sleeper Transport) the DC3 had by 1939 sold about the same numbers as the DC2. However with the arrival of World War II the DC3 was produced in huge numbers. 10655 were eventually made (excluding Japanese copies) and by 1944 one came off the production line every 34 minutes. The design concepts brought together in the DC1, 2 and 3 series are still current and they can be considered as the first airliners of the modern age.

The DC2 was also adapted to a heavy bomber for the U.S., Canada and Brazil. It was the B-18 (Bolo or Digbey) of which 370 were built and which served from 1937 - 43 as a bomber and later as an anti submarine patrol aircraft.

THE "UIVER" MEMORIAL

In 1979 Albury West Rotary Club held a very successful Air Carnival. \$25,000 was raised and the bulk of this went towards the purchase of a "cell separator" for the Leukaemia Auxiliary of the Royal Childrens' Hospital Melbourne, \$3,500 went to purchase a dismantled DC2 located in a yard on the outskirts of Bankstown Airport, Sydney. The restoration of this DC2 was to be the Club's main Community Service Project 1979-80, Rotary's 75th Anniversary Year. The project gained such interest that it was widened to include all clubs in Rotary District 979. This District extends from some of Melbourne's Suburbs in the south, to Albury in the north, Swan Hill in the west and Corryong in the east.

The restoration of the DC2 started with its arrival in Albury, August 31st, 1979. It was transported by McLiesh Transport Semitrailers to the old Milos Cold Store on the Lincoln causeway where the cleaning and putting together began. Specialist assistance was received from the R.A.A.F. Army, local industry and numerous individuals without which the March 2nd deadline could not have been met. As the plane was out in the open for the last 20 years much corrosion had to be treated, sections re-made and the fabric control surfaces recovered. This DC2 has a history all of its own worth mentioning. Construction number 1286, she was built just before the "Uiver" for Eastern Airlines of the U.S.A. "The Great Silver Fleet".

Unfortunately Eastern Airlines records of this period were destroyed by fire some years ago no doubt it carried many famous Americans of the 30's and many infamous ones particularly on the Chicago-New York-Miami run!

Along with 9 others it was bought by the R.A.A.F. and entered service on 30th March 1941 after Australian National Airlines had re-assembled it. As R.A.A.F. A30-11 registration VH-CF it flew for various squadrons right through World War II. Unlike its brother A30-12 VH-CRF illustrated in colour in "Aircraft of the R.A.A.F. 1921-78" by Geoffrey Pentland and Peter Malo A30-11 was not camouflaged. It was used for training wireless operator/air gunners and as a freighter particularly of Aircraft engines. Details of its R.A.A.F. service are-

Type: Douglas DC2 A30-11 VH-CRE.

Order No. 603 (In America).

Received from: Eastern Airlines of America.

Date Received: 30/3/41.

Engines Fitted: Wright Cyclone 22481 and 21683.

HISTORY

30/ 3/41	Received at 1AD ex A.N.A.	7/ 1/43	Engine change at A.N.A. then back to 36SQN.
24/ 4/41	Allotted to Sigs School	19/ 4/43	240 hourly at A.N.A.
9/10/41	C Servicing at 1SFIS	13/ 5/43	Engine change at A.N.A.
	(engine change by A.N.A. at 1SFIS)	28/ 5/43	Issued to 36SQN.
25/12/41	C Servicing at 1SFIS.	14/ 6/43	Allotted to Anset for 40 hourly, engine change and other minor repair. Back to 36SQN
30/ 1/42	Received at 1Wags for fitment of DF Loop.	18/ 4/44	Allotted A.N.A. for rigging check.
9/ 2/42	Received 1SFIS ex WAGS.	22/ 5/44	Allotted 7AD ex A.N.A. for minor works.
16/ 2/42	E Servicing at 1SFIS.	29/ 6/44	Allotted A.N.A. ex 7AD for completion of repairs.
3/ 4/42	Allotted to No36SQN ex Sigs School.	2/12/44	Allotted to 34SQN Aircraft to fly only on mainland due not camouflaged.
13/ 4/42	Received at No36SQN.	15/ 2/45	Allotted to 37SQN.
20/ 4/42	C Servicing at 36SQN.	2/ 3/45	Forced landed Parafield due seizure of port engine.
1/ 5/42	Being converted to engine transport at 36SQN.	5/ 3/45	Allotted to 7AD.
	The aircraft was then used by 36SQN to transport aircraft engines to all parts of Australia.	3/10/46	Sold through CDC to Marshall Airways Mascot.
23/11/42	Taxied into a stationary B25 and was damaged.	27/11/46	Issued to purchaser.
14/12/42	Engine change at A.N.A. then back to 36SQN.		

In 1946 it was disposed of to Marshall Airways where it stayed until discovered as a dismantled wreck by Albury V Rotary Club who made it the new UIVER. Once again by the kind permission of the Dutch government and K.L.M. UIVER returned to Albury for good. It is the oldest surviving DC2 in the world, (older than the "Uiver"), the oldest Douglas commercial in the world and as such the oldest "modern" airliner in the world.

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