

the DH.89 RAPIDE in AUSTRALIA



by G. Goodall

When de Havilland Aircraft Co. Ltd. began design work in 1933 for a faster and more comfortable version of their widely used D.H.84 Dragon biplane, Australian airlines watched with interest as the basic specification fulfilled a very real need for this country's rapidly expanding air routes. Designated the D.H.89 Dragon Six, the prototype first flew at de Havilland's Stag Lane aerodrome on 17 April, 1934. Production began immediately at their Hatfield factory resulting in 728 Rapides and its military counterpart, the Dominie, being built over the next ten years. Powered by the reliable 200 h.p. Gipsy Six and Gipsy Queen series of engines, the DH.89 was renamed Dragon Rapide in its production form, but soon became known throughout the world simply as the Rapide. Although only a surprisingly low total of 23 Rapides were ever used in Australia, including two imported only in recent years by vintage enthusiasts, they made a major contribution to the formation of Australia's airline services in the formative years, and then remained the workhorses of a number of charter companies for another two decades. This is the story of the Rapide in Australia...

Australia's first glimpse of the new Dragon Rapide came on 3 November, 1934 when the ninth aircraft to arrive at Essendon Aerodrome at the end of the MacRobertson Centenary Air Race from England to Melbourne was D.H.89 ZK-ACO "Tainui" flown by J.D. Hewett and C.E. Kay with radio operator E. Stewart. This N.Z. entry had departed Mildenhall, Surrey with the rest of the field on 20 October, and although making a forced landing at Boulogne, France and suffering slight wing damage at Cloncurry, Q. en route, the Rapide was placed fifth in the Speed Section with a flight time of 85 hours 42 minutes over 14 days. The aircraft was specially fitted out for the Race with

three extra fuel tanks in the fuselage holding 230 gallons giving a range of well over 1,000 miles. After resting in Melbourne, Hewett and Kay flew the Rapide direct to Palmerston North, N.Z. on 14 November in 12 hours 14 minutes. Although it was the most modern aircraft in the country at that time, New Zealand's post depression economy was too restricted for a local sale of the aircraft and, after some local flying, ZK-ACO was dismantled and in May 1935 shipped back to Australia with a total Log time of only 167 hours.

(By coincidence, almost exactly 35 years later, another New Zealand Rapide was to fly in the 1969 England-Australia Air Race. ZK-AKU, sponsored by the Rothmans Sports Foundation, was the oldest aeroplane to compete in the Race, and arrived at Parafield on 28 December, 1969).

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ZK-ACO was shipped to Sydney from New Zealand on board the S.S. Wanganella, accompanied by two officials of the Auckland Aero Club who were to supervise the sale of the Rapide to an Australian airline. On arrival at the Sydney docks on 27 May, some difficulty was experienced unloading the aircraft from the boat and the Rapide's tail was damaged when it struck the wharf. Next morning, the aircraft was towed through Sydney streets to Mascot and then trucked on to Melbourne. It was assembled at Essendon Aerodrome and test-flown, still in its N.Z. markings, on 5 June, 1935. One the same day, it was inspected by C.A.B.



The Shell Company's VH-UVS, "Spirit of Shell". (G. Goodall)

Meanwhile, the first Rapide imported directly to Australia had been shipped to Sydney and assembled at Mascot aerodrome in March 1935, not for an airline, but for the Shell Company of Australia Ltd. Purchased for the Aviation Department to test new aviation fuels and oils under actual working conditions, the new DH.89 was test flown on 27 March as VH-UVS and named "Spirit of Shell". The aircraft was fitted with auxiliary fuel tanks to extend its range, and also instruments to record various data from the tests, including special thermometers to measure oil and fuel temperatures in flight. The interior of the cabin had six passenger seats, and walls covered with grey leather up to the windows and matching cloth above. The floor was covered with grey car-

pet and all woodwork was painted to tone in with the furniture. Shell's Rapide was soon seen all over Australia flown by their well known pilot Captain E.J. Jones. Inspectors and its Australian CofA was issued five days later. Registered VH-UUO, it was still owned by The Melbourne Centenary Air Race Committee (N.Z.) of Auckland.

A sale was quickly negotiated to West Australian Airways Ltd who needed a newer aircraft to replace their D.H.84 Dragon VH-URE on the long haul air route from Perth to Adelaide. The Rapide was ferried across to Perth later in June and entered service on the TransContinental service with the older Dragon as back-up aircraft. The longest stage length was 400 miles between Kalgoorlie and Forrest on the desolate Nullabor Plain, and the two-day schedule provided for an



The first Rapide to arrive in Australia was the New Zealand Rapide, ZK-ACO, entered in 1934 England to Melbourne Air Race. (J. Hopton)



ZK-ACO returned to Australia as VH-UUO and went into service with Western Australia Airlines. (G. Goodall).

overnight stop at Forrest where the passengers spent a comfortable night's rest in the airline's hostel. (See J-AHSA Vol. XII no.3).

The next Rapide to come to Australia was a military aircraft, ordered by the Royal Australian Air Force for general transport work but in particular for use on several large aerial survey projects under way at the time. The DH.89 was taken on RAAF charge on 2 July 1935 as A3-1, the day after it received its British CofA after construction at Hatfield, and after shipping to Australia, it went into service with No.1 Squadron attached to the North Australian Survey Flight. Based in far north western Queensland and Northern Territory, the Rapide was engaged in aerial photography for this geological and geophysical survey, flown usually by Sqn. Ldr. G. Jones and Flight Lieutenant W.L. Hely.

On 15 December, 1935 Mr. Ivan Holyman, Managing Director of Holyman's Airways Pty. Ltd. wrote to the Department of Defence in Melbourne asking that the Department give urgent consideration to releasing the RAAF's Rapide from its survey duties to allow its purchase by his airline as recent aircraft losses had left his company critically short of aircraft. Holyman's Airways had lost two of their DH.86 Express Liners in Bass Strait while flying their Melbourne-Tasmania service; VH-URT, "Lionä" on 2nd October and VH-USW, "Lepena" only two days earlier when it crashed on Hunter Island. The first Douglas DC-2 was on order from America, but a replacement aircraft was desperately needed to continue service on their airline's two routes, from Melbourne to Tasmania and Melbourne to Sydney. In his letter Holyman stated that the Rapide was "the most suitable aircraft to us in that we already have spare engines suitable for this machine, and due to the fact that she has a performance, as far as speed is concerned, practically equivalent to the DH.86". The request was referred for Ministerial approval, and the following day consent was given for the release of the Rapide, conditional on the RAAF receiving a replacement DH.89 from de Havillands promptly. Holyman was advised of the decision by telegram on 23 December, the prompt handling of the matter reflecting the importance of the Bass Strait mail and passenger air service particularly during the summer season.

The RAAF Rapide A3-1 was handed over to Holyman's Airways at Essendon over Christmas 1935, having now logged 125 hours flying time in military service since August. It was test flown at

Essendon by company pilot Captain Ken Frewin on 27 December then overhauled prior to entering airline service. Holyman had decided to use the new Rapide on their Sydney service, leaving the remaining four-engined DH.86, VH-UUB, "Loila" available for the Tasmania run. On the afternoon of 27 January, 1936 the all silver Rapide departed Essendon on its first commercial flight to Sydney with a full complement of six passengers. It was registered VH-UFF and named "Memma", aboriginal word for white cockatoo. Over the next six months VH-UFF, with occasional back-up from other company aircraft, provided the only airline service between the two capital cities. With stops at Canberra, the flight time for each direction varied between three and five hours. With no radio in the aircraft or on the ground, and no radio navigational aids, the service was subject to the notorious weather along the Australian Alps, and there were many diversions and forced landings. The following is an account of the Canberra-Sydney leg of a northbound flight on 18 March, 1936:

In the light of crude flares and the lamps of fifty cars, the Holyman plane "Memma" from Melbourne, carrying two passengers, made an emergency landing on the beach

at Thirroul tonight. A crowd of two hundred cheered as the giant plane glided along the sand, one wheel lapped by the water. The "Memma", with Professor Leitch from America and Mr. Cyril Gates of Rose Bay, left Canberra for Sydney at 5:50 p.m.. Mist and rain made visibility so poor that pilot Alex Bayne decided not to continue to his destination. At times he flew within a hundred feet of the waves to obtain better visibility. Sighting the lights of Thirroul he attracted attention by circling the town and flashing his starboard light. Grasping the significance of the signal townsfolk rushed to the beach and prepared bonfires. The town soon came alive and a line of cars stretched along the road overlooking the beach, their headlights focused on the sand. Bayne said he was dazzled by the flares, but he made a perfect landing. Passengers and mail were rushed to the station where a train had been delayed, and were brought on to Sydney. The plane will continue its journey tomorrow, taking off at low tide".

When flying through a storm soon after leaving Essendon on the northbound journey on 5 May, 1936, hailstones were so severe that they penetrated into the cabin. Later, on 24 June, while southbound to Melbourne, Captain Clarence Scott made a landing on the side of a hill at Wallanbeen, NSW to scrape four inches of snow from the wings and fuselage before continuing again. Two more precautionary landings were made before being forced to remain overnight at Seymour, Victoria. On 3 July the Rapide became bogged in heavy mud while taxiing out at Essendon, and the passengers unloaded their own baggage and waded back to the hangar through the mud. For all this however, the Rapide established a reputation both with the public and the airline for dependability, and even the Prime Minister Mr. Lyons was an enthusiastic passenger from Melbourne to Canberra on 29 June.

(J. Hopton)



Right Top: A3-1 of 1 Squadron, RAAF, was engaged in the aerial survey of Western Queensland and Northern Territory until released to Holyman's Airways as VH-UFF. (Right). (G. Goodall)

In early July 1936 Holyman's Airways made major changes to their routes and schedules now that their first DC-2, VH-USY "*Bungana*", had settled down on the Melbourne-Tasmania route. From 13 July the DC-2 flew Melbourne-Launceston-Hobart, and from 21 July "*Memma*" was taken off the Sydney run and placed on the Islands service connecting Melbourne-King Island - Wynyard - Launceston on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and returning to Melbourne each following day as well as flying Launceston - Flinders Island-Launceston. The DH.86 which had carried out the Islands run was now transferred to the Melbourne-Sydney run where her larger seating capacity was now needed. The Rapide was to fly these southern routes out of Melbourne faithfully for the next two years.

The Rapide ordered by RAAF to replace A3-1 was completed at the Hatfield works in the first weeks of 1936 and received its British CoFA on 17 January as VH-UVG, the registration allocated to deHavilland Aircraft Pty Ltd in Sydney in anticipation of a civil sale in Australia. It was shipped to Sydney and after assembly was immediately handed over to the RAAF and allotted military serial A3-2, and hastily prepared for the survey operation in northern Australia commenced by its predecessor. Such was the urgency in getting this aircraft back on to the survey that it departed for western Queensland in April still carrying its civil registration VH-UVG on the fuselage sides and upper wings, there having been no time to apply military roundels and markings.

On 13 April 1936 the Rapide departed Camooweal, Queensland at 8:00 a.m. bound for Wave Hill and Halls Creek on the long trip across to Port Hedland, Western Australia, where it was planned to commence survey work in the Marble Bar-Nullagine area. The aircraft was heavily laden with supplies and photographic equipment and was flown by Flt Lt W.L. Hely with crew. Aircraftsmen R.B. Sherwood and H. Walkington, both of Richmond. Later in the day they became unsure of their position between Newcastle Waters and Wave Hill and after searching for sometime were finally forced to make a landing in the desert as fuel became exhausted. The Rapide bounced heavily during the landing in rough scrub and the undercarriage was badly damaged but the three crew unhurt. Hely rationed their food and water to last three weeks and they settled down in the shade of the aeroplane for the long wait until they were found.

A large search was mounted for the missing Rapide, the RAAF sending two Hawker Demons from Richmond and diverting the Tugan Gannet, A14-1 from the survey project at Charleville. After a week there was still no sign of the downed aircraft, and the Gannet, flown by Flt Lt A.G. Carr, had been grounded at Wave Hill on 17 April due to an unserviceable engine. It was replaced in the search by a Qantas Empire Airways' D.H.86 from Darwin and an Australian Aerial Medical Services D.H.83 Fox Moth was flown from Wyndham by Capt. G.U. Allen. In addition, MMA Dragons were diverted to the search area while on their regular services between Perth and Daly Waters.

Finally, on 22 April, the Rapide was spotted by Flt Lt R.H. Sims and P.O. B.B. Cresswell in one of the Demons operating from Victoria River Downs Station. At 2:30 p.m. they located the downed aircraft and dropped food and water to the crew who appeared to be fit and well. Its position was fixed as 40 miles from Murringi Waterhole, 90 miles west of Newcastle Waters. Two days later a ground party made their way into the site and brought the crew back to



A3-2, still carrying the civil registration VH-UVG, badly damaged in a forced landing 90 miles west of Newcastle Waters. (J. Hopton)

"VRD", and the Rapide was later salvaged by a RAAF party. Because of the damage sustained during the landing and the inaccessability of the area, the outer mainplanes and engines were abandoned on the spot and only the fuselage and fittings retrieved and trucked back to Laverton for a major rebuild by No.1 Aircraft Depot.

The registration markings VH-UVG were re-allocated in September that year to a Percival Vega Gull imported by Qantas for Mr. J.F.W. Collins of Beaudesert, Queensland and were never officially taken up by the Rapide.

The rebuild of A3-2 was completed at Laverton early the following year, and the aircraft was rolled out resplendent in an all over silver scheme with full RAAF markings. During the rebuild it had been fitted with Wireless Transmitter equipment, one of the first aircraft in the country to carry radio. Before it could return to the North Australia Survey however, it was pressed into the search for the missing Stinson "A" trimotor VH-UHH of Airlines of Australia Ltd which had failed to arrive in Sydney on a scheduled flight from Brisbane via Lismore on 19 February 1937. The search for the airliner with its crew of two and five passengers was the largest aerial search in the country's history before being found 10 days later in a rain forest on the Lamington Plateau south of Brisbane with only two passengers still alive. (See J-AHSA Vol. 17 No.5). Flt Lt Hely flew the Rapide in search for a week before returning to Laverton for final fitting out of the aircraft prior

Right: A3-2s second forced landing was 500 miles west of Alice Springs. Visible in the photograph, taken from a search aircraft, are the ground marking arrow and shore of the dry lake. (via G. Goodall). Below: The undamaged A3-2 being towed to the take-off area. (J. Whyte)

to its return to the survey area in the Northern Territory.

On 27 April, 1937, Rapide A3-2 departed Laverton for the trip north, flown by Flt Lt A.G. Carr with W/T Operator Sgt W.C. Glakeley and LAC Hanrahan as fitter. They staged through Richmond where they picked up two passengers - Sir Herbert Gepp, the Chairman of the North Australia Geophysical Survey Committee and Mr P.B. Nye who was Chief Executive Officer of the Committee. They then flew north through Archerfield, Rockhampton, Cairns then through Normanton, Cloncurry and Mt Isa to Darwin.

The North Australia Survey had covered 3,000 square miles during 1935 and planned to cover 9,000 square miles during 1936. Because of the forced-landing of the Rapide however, the Gannet A14-1 had to continue on the survey alone until joined by a second Gannet, A14-2, in May 1937. May also saw the Rapide, carrying Sir Herbert Gepp, set out from Darwin for Pine Creek, Daly Waters, Katherine and Alice Springs on its survey, then turn north again to Tennant Creek.

On 21 May, 1937 the Rapide left Tennant Creek for Tanami on the edge of the Gibson Desert. Flying over one of the most remote areas of the continent, the crew became uncertain of their position later in the day, and at 1:45 p.m. made a forced-landing on the sandy shores of a dry lake. The aircraft was undamaged, and the crew made an ingenious solar-still to distill brackish water to make it fit for drinking while waiting to be rescued. Two days later the Gannet A14-2 appeared overhead at 2:22 p.m. and landed nearby on the lake bed, the rescuing crew being pilot - Flt Lt Hely with LAC W.T. Taylor as W/T Operator-Mechanic. The location of the forced-landing was found to be the north-eastern corner of Lake Mackay, 500 miles west of Alice Springs on the West-Australian/Northern Territory border.





The solar still constructed by the stranded crew to provide drinking water. (J. Whyte)

A land party reached the site by truck on 30 May and the Rapide was towed to a clear part of the dry lake. After refuelling with petrol brought in on the truck, A3-2 was flown out the following day. It then continued on with its survey trip before flying Sir Herbert Gepp back to Laverton on 8 June, after covering 11,000 miles in six weeks.

Later in June the Rapide set off from Laverton to again return to the Northern Territory to continue the survey, this time flown by Flt. Lt. Hely again. As the aircraft had become lost twice before on its trips north, there was much speculation within the RAAF about this third journey to the survey area. However, this time roles were reversed, and it was in fact to locate another missing aircraft.

The legendary Territory "flying doctor" Dr. Clyde Fenton had gone missing in his D.H.60M Moth, VH-UQV, "Robin," on 21st September, 1937 while on a flight from Newcastle Waters to "O.T." Station. He landed the Moth in scrub near a water-hole when low on fuel and unsure of position, and cleared a landing path nearby, long enough for a Rapide, as he knew that Hely was due at Katherine in the next few days on the survey in the RAAF Rapide and felt sure that this aircraft would be used in the search for him. Fenton made a large sign on the ground and burnt trees to clear the approach path to the strip over the next few days but quickly became weak due to lack of food and the withering heat. Finally, after seven days, smoke from his fires was spotted by the searching Rapide A3-2, and Hely landed on the rough strip, coming to a stop well past the end of the cleared area amongst high scrub and trees but luckily without damage. Also on board the Rapide were W/T Operator Taylor and Mr Carroll from Newcastle Waters who was acting as observer as he knew the area well. They flew Dr. Fenton back to Newcastle Waters, where he was met by a large crowd, elated with the radioed news that he had been found. Several days later they flew Fenton back to his Moth where it sat at 'Fenton's Flat', 20 miles east of Tanumbirini. After refuelling the Moth with fuel brought out in the Rapide, Fenton flew out to Darwin, while Hely and the Rapide continued on with the survey work.

A3-2 returned to Laverton late that year as the North Australia Survey was approaching completion. At mid-day on 3 February, 1938, as it was approaching to land at Laverton after a local training flight, the aircraft banked sharply and a wingtip dug into the ground and the Rapide crashed on the airfield and was a total wreck. The pilot, F.O.D. McLean, and his two crew received



A3-2's luck finally ran out at Laverton on 3 February, 1938. (via F. Smith)

minor injuries only but the Rapide was a complete loss. During its adventurous two years with the RAAF it had logged 550 hours flying time.

The next pair of DH.89s to be imported were ordered by Adelaide Airways Ltd. for their Adelaide-Melbourne service. This company had been formed the previous year by the Adelaide Steamship Company and Orient Steam Navigation Company. It commenced operations on Tuesday, 29 October, 1935 with a twice-weekly Adelaide-Mount Gambier-Melbourne service using two Short Scions, VH-UTV and -UVQ. The following day their Monospar, VH-UUV, inaugurated a twice-weekly Adelaide-Port Lincoln service and on 19 November a twice-weekly Broken Hill service began, followed by the first service to Kangaroo Island on 27 January, 1936. The two new Rapides were ordered from de Havillands and these arrived at Port Adelaide by sea in March 1936, and were taken to Parafield aerodrome for assembly under the supervision of Major Murray Jones of de Havilland Aircraft Pty Ltd, Sydney.

The first to be test flown was VH-UVI on 7 April, followed next day by VH-UVT, and both received their Australian CofA on 15 April. They then began regular airline service over the Adelaide Airways route network, VH-UVI quickly coming to grief a week later when, on landing at Port Lincoln from Cowell and Adelaide, the aircraft tipped onto its nose. Captain H.O. Cook and his passengers were uninjured and after minor repairs, the Rapide was flown back to Parafield the next morning. The new Rapides replaced the Scions on the Melbourne service, which now stopped also at Naracoorte, S.A. and Geelong, Vic. on request. On 30 August, 1936 the frequency of the Melb-

ourne run was increased to daily in each direction. On the same day Adelaide Airways introduced a new route, Melbourne-Mildura-Broken Hill-Renmark-Adelaide, which connected at Broken Hill to the W.A.S.P. Airlines Gannet service from Sydney.

Meanwhile, behind the scenes major business decisions were being made that were to result in the formation of Australia's most powerful airline. Major Norman Brearley sold West Australian Airways Ltd to Adelaide Airways Ltd, which in turn merged with Holyman's Airways Pty Ltd, and with the backing of five major shipping lines a new airline was formed as from 1 July, 1936 to be named Australian National Airways Pty. Ltd. On the eve of the take-over of West Australia Airways' East-West route, Adelaide Airways' Rapide VH-UVI over-nighted at Forrest then next day - 1 July, 1936 - completed the scheduled east-bound flight to Adelaide flown by Cpt. L.M. Diprose. The first westbound service under the new ANA flag left Parafield for Perth on 4 July by Adelaide Airways Rapide.

ANA took over the aircraft and routes of the three airlines from which it was formed, and with a total route structure stretching from Sydney through Melbourne to Perth and Tasmania immediately became Australia's biggest airline. Included in the new ANA fleet were four Rapides:

VH-UVI, ex Adelaide Airways, named "Moogana"
VH-UVT, ex Adelaide Airways, named "Monana"
VH-UOO, ex West Aust. Airways, named "Malonga"
VH-UUF, ex Holyman's Airways, retained "Memma"

At first these Rapides continued on the routes they



Right: Adelaide Airway's Rapide, VH-UVT at Parafield. (D.O.T.)

already flew with only occasional changes to replace other aircraft. The first route upon which the Rapide was replaced by a larger aircraft was the long-haul Adelaide to Perth where the DC-2 VH-USY began in December, 1936.

The DH.89 was considered the most suitable aircraft available for the shorter route lengths, and in early 1937 ANA placed an order with de Havillands for two new Rapides. The first was shipped to Melbourne on S.S. *Moreton Bay* in April and test flown at Essendon on 25 May as VH-UXT, "*Mundoora*". It was followed by VH-UXZ, "*Marika*" which was test flown at Essendon after its assembly on 11 September, 1937. With a total of six Rapides and three Douglas DC-2s now in service, ANA reorganised many of its services and additional routes were flown with these two types as the basic fleet, while waiting for the first of the new Douglas DC-3s on order to arrive.

ANA's route expansion north of Sydney was being stubbornly resisted by Airlines of Australia Ltd, which was flying from Sydney to Brisbane and Cairns. This company traced its origins to the original New England Airways formed in 1930 by Keith Virtue and G.A. Robinson of Lismore, N.S.W., and the story of its growth and bitter fight against Holyman's Australian National Airways Pty Ltd is graphically told by Joan Priest in the recently released book "*Virtue in Flying*". When the Australian Government finally dropped its embargo on American transport aircraft on 1 December, 1935, Airlines of Australia introduced four Stinson "A" trimotors, which proved popular on their northern routes out of Sydney, and later imported DC-2, VH-UYC, "*Kyeema*" and Australia's first DC-3, VH-UZJ, "*Kyilla*". By 1937 AoA was Australia's biggest airline both in terms of number of aircraft and in route mileage. During the expansion of AoA several smaller firms were absorbed, in particular Rockhampton Aerial Services Ltd in October 1936 and North Queensland Airlines Pty Ltd in October 1938, thus extending their routes north from Cairns to Normanton, Burketown and Horne Island. Included in

Below: The first of ANA's new Rapides was VH-UXT, "Mundoora" followed by VH-UXZ, "Marika". (Bottom) (J. Hopton)



Three of the ANA fleet of Rapides, VH-UVI, "*Moogana*" (top), -UVT "*Monana*" (centre) and -UUO "*Malonga*" (above). (J. Hopton).

these take-overs were two Rapides.

Just prior to their take-over by AoA, Rockhampton Aerial Services Ltd. had imported a second-hand Rapide from England, which they had put into service in August 1936 as VH-UBN. It was in fact only the fourth DH.89 built, receiving its British CofA on 4 September, 1934 as G-APCO with Hillmans Airways Ltd. as part of an initial order for five Rapides placed by this airline.

North Queensland Airlines Pty Ltd had been founded by well known Cairns aviator Tommy McDonald and began airline services from Cairns to Cooktown in October 1934, quickly expanding to Townsville and Brisbane using DH.80 Puss Moths and later Dragons. This little airline was a direct competitor to AoA's coastal service from Brisbane north to Cairns, but there was none of the bitterness associated with the rivalry with ANA to the south. By 1937 AoA was operating its aircraft over most of North Queensland Airlines' routes, even those to the north of Cairns, and finally on 25 October, 1938 Tommy McDonald officially merged with AoA. Only a month before the take-over by AoA, North Queensland Airlines had purchased a Rapide, VH-UZY, from W.R. Carpenter & Co. Ltd. It had been based at Cairns as a back-up air-



craft on Carpenter Airways' Sydney—Port Moresby - Rabaul route. This new DH.89 had been shipped out to Sydney and test flown at Mascot on 17 January, 1938, then flown to Cairns to await the commencement of the planned 2,522 mile New Guinea weekly air service. Using three new DH.86B Express Liners just imported from England, the Carpenter service was inaugurated on 30 May that year and it was soon apparent that the relief Rapide at Cairns was not necessary, so in September it was sold to North Queensland Airlines. Tommy McDonald was eager to replace his aging Dragons with the new Rapide, but he had only flown several trips down to Brisbane when the AoA take-over was completed in late October. However VH-UZY remained based at Cairns, flying the same routes although now in AoA service. On 8 January, 1940, it made a forced landing on a beach north of Townsville and was partly submerged by the tide. However, it was quickly returned to service.

As well as VH-UBN Airlines of Australia operated Rapide, VH-UVS, leased from Shell Co. early in 1937, and this aircraft was destroyed by fire while in AoA service. On 12 May, 1937, while starting engines at Mascot for the regular service to Brisbane with three passengers seated in the cabin, fire broke out after the port motor back-fired, quickly spreading to the wing fabric and fuselage. There was no way for the passengers to escape except from the cockpit of the aircraft where Captain Peter Hoskins had broken the wind-screen perspex. The four occupants scrambled out, dropping to the ground and suffering only from minor burns. The Rapide was totally gutted by fire before AoA employees could reach it with fire extinguishers.

The Shell Company ordered a Percival Vega Gull, VH-ABS, also named "Spirit of Shell", to replace their Rapide. By coincidence this aircraft was also to be destroyed by fire in Ansett Airways hangar fire at Essendon in February, 1939.

In March 1937 ANA began negotiations to purchase the British Pacific Trust Ltd's controlling interest in Airlines of Australia Ltd, resulting in Hplyman finally obtaining a controlling interest in his major competitor; however G.A. Robinson ensured that AoA continued to operate under its own name as a separate company on its own route Sydney—Brisbane—Cairns. Even though agreeing to a co-ordinated DC-2 service between Brisbane—Sydney—Melbourne—Adelaide daily beginning 1 September 1937, AoA operated as a completely separate airline until 1943 when it was finally effectively merged into ANA under the one operation.

Meanwhile ANA's Rapide fleet was still flying over most routes between Sydney, Adelaide and Tasmania although not without their fair share of accidents. VH-UUO under the command of Captain R. Watt suffered major damage when it crashed on landing at Mount Gambier, S.A. on 30 September 1936, being trucked to Parafield for repairs which took five months. Then it settled down mainly on the Adelaide—Melbourne route.



Top: VH-UZY served with North Queensland Airlines for only a month before joining Airlines of Australia's fleet. (via F. Harris) Above: AoA's second Rapide, VH-UBN was acquired following the take-over of Rockhampton Aerial Service. (D. Eyre).

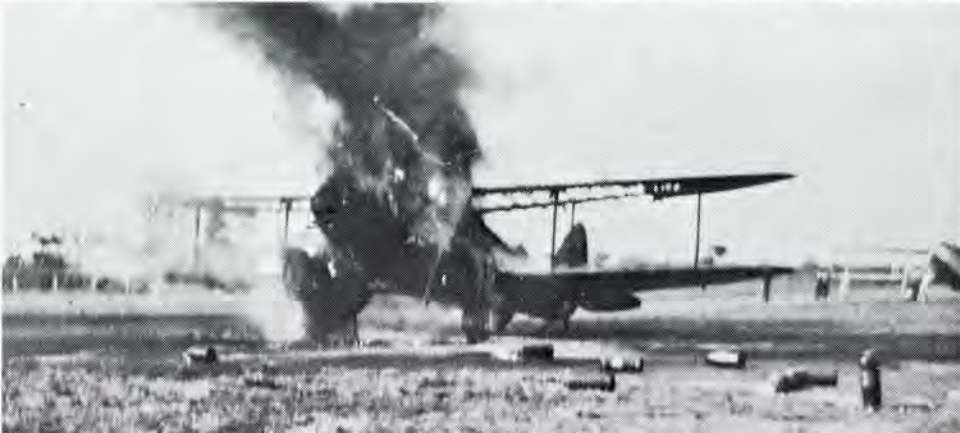
VH-UVT "Monana" was also badly damaged at Mt. Gambier less than a year later, on 30 June, 1937 when it struck a windmill when attempting to avoid crows on the landing ground. Captain A.S. Brown was hospitalised but his five passengers escaped injury, although the aircraft sustained very heavy damage when it struck the ground. It was trucked to Essendon the following month for rebuilding, but was not to return to service until April 1941, under the new name "Memma" which had been previously carried by VH-UFF until transferred AoA in June 1938. When landing at Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, S.A. on 5 February 1938 VH-UXT was struck by a strong wind gust and ran off the strip, causing substantial damage although Captain A.B. Annear and his four passengers were unhurt. The Rapide was shipped back to Adelaide, then taken by road to Essendon where it was test flown after major rebuild on 20 September that year.

In April 1939 ANA handed over its internal South Australian services to Guinea Airways Ltd who had been successfully operating its

Darwin Lockheed service for two years now. In August 1939 ANA sold its Rapides VH-UUO and -UVI to Guinea for these services to Kingscote, Port Lincoln and Broken Hill. At this time ANA was only utilising its remaining Rapides on Bass Strait Islands services, all other routes having been taken over by DC-2s and DC-3s.

Guinea Airways needed a third Rapide to cover their South Australian services effectively, and as they were at the time negotiating with Aer Lingus, Eire for two Lockheed 14s for their Darwin courier service, they purchased a DH.89 EI-ABP as well, arranging to have it shipped to Adelaide, whereas the larger and more powerful Lockheeds were flown to Australia. (See J-AHSA Vol. XVI No. 4). The Rapide was test flown at Parafield after assembly on 19 June, 1940, and finished in allover silver scheme with Guinea Airways motif on the sides and name "Morobe" on the nose. Its Australian CofA was issued two days later as VH-ADE. The pair of Lockheeds, which had flown into Parafield from Ireland on 9 June, were also quickly put into service as VH-ADY and -ADW. The Rapide had been first built in late 1936 and its British CofA issued 10 November that year as G-AENO with Blackpool and West Coast Air Services and after only several months service with them at Squires Gate it was sold to Aer Lingus. EI-ABP, named "Iolar II," inaugurated the airline's Dublin to Isle of Man service on 14 May 1937 then flew throughout the Irish route network until all Aer Lingus services were ceased on 1 September, 1939 due to the declaration of War. Its three years of airline service was reflected in a healthy airframe Log time of 1622 hours when assembled in the Guinea hangar at Parafield.

The end of the Shell Company's Rapide, VH-UVS, at Mascot, 12 May, 1937. (A. Jackson).





Above: Two of Guinea Airways' Rapides, VH-UVI and VH-ADE, with Lockheed 14, VH-ADW, in front of G.A's hangar at Parafield. (N. Parnell)

With the outbreak of War in Europe and the rapidly darkening situation in the Pacific, the RAAF began a major training programme to provide aircrews for the hundreds of new aircraft ordered. Aero Clubs around the country were training service pilots while the first Elementary Flying Training Schools (EFTS) were being established. By mid 1940 the RAAF was ready to handle all of its own training. Impressment Requisitions were issued to many aero club, private and airline aircraft for use in the military training schools. The twin-engined Dragons and Dragon Rapides were the obvious choice for navigation training, and the RAAF ordered 87 DH.84 Dragons from de Havilland Aircraft Pty Ltd's Mascot works for delivery commencing late in 1942. The Dragon was selected because of its Gipsy Major engines, which were under local manufacture by General Motors Holden for the Australian Tiger Moth production line, and eleven Dragons had been impressed earlier in the year for general training and communications duties. The RAAF now impressed seven DH.89s from the airlines to equip No. 1 Air Observers School, which was formed at Cootamundra, N.S.W. on 15 April, 1940. Here they were flown mainly by former Guinea Airways pilots seconded to the RAAF. The Rapides, supplementing Avro Ansons and several impressed Dragons, were used for cross-country navigation exercises by day and night, using HF/DF and Tail Drift Sight. The Rapides were returned to the airlines as soon as they were replaced by Australian built Dragons.

When impressed, the Rapides were handed over to the RAAF at 3 EFTS Essendon or 1 EFTS Parafield, where each aircraft was issued to ANA and Guinea Airways respectively for inspection and modification prior to delivery to Cootamundra.

As the table shows, one DH.89 was written off during service with 1AOS Cootamundra when it crashed into timbered country following engine failure on take-off, killing its pilot Flying Officer Adrian and injuring the 4 crew. All the others were issued to DCA for re-allocation back to civil op-



Top: Guinea Airways' third Rapide, VH-ADE, "Morobe", at Parafield. (J. Hopton). Above: Guinea Airways' VH-UUO, impressed into the RAAF as A33-1 flying over Cootamundra, N.S.W., while attached to 1 AOS. (F. Smith).

RAAF Serial	Ex-Serial	Operator	Brought on RAAF strength	Delivered to	Subsequent Units	Struck off RAAF strength	Re-Issued to
A33-1	VH-UUO	Guinea Airways	2.7.40	3 EFTS	1 AOS	To DCA 16.4.42	AoA
A33-2	VH-UVI	Guinea Airways	12.7.40	1 EFTS	1 AOS	Crashed 20.6.41	
A33-3	VH-UFF	AoA	12.7.40	3 EFTS	1 AOS, 3 CF, 36 Sqn, 34 Sqn.	To DCA 21.11.43	Guinea Airways
A33-4	VH-UXT	ANA	19.7.40	3 EFTS	1 AOS	To DCA 15.4.42	ANA
A33-5	VH-UBN	AoA	12.8.40	3 EFTS	1 AOS	To DCA 16.4.42	Guinea Airways
A33-6	VH-UZY	AoA	12.8.40	3 EFTS	1 AOS, 32 Sqn, 33 Sqn, 34 Sqn, 2 AAU	To DCA 19.1.44	Airlines (W.A.) Ltd.
A33-7	VH-ADE	Guinea Airways	25.8.40	1 EFTS	1 AOS	To DCA 15.4.42	ANA



Left: A33-3, ex VH-UUF in full camouflage. (source unknown).

erators although two were issued to other units after initial use by 1AOS. A33-3 went to No. 3 Communications Flight at Mascot in August, 1942, then to No. 36 Squadron at Archerfield the next month. In January, 1943, painted in full camouflage with the radio call-sign "VHCRP" painted on the fuselage side, it passed to No. 34 Squadron at Parafield.

Following its two years service at Coot-mundra, A33-6 was overhauled by Ansett Airlines at Essendon. On 15 June, 1942, it was issued to No. 32 Squadron at Port Moresby. It then passed to No. 33 Squadron in New Guinea for aerial ambulance duties to evacuate wounded troops from front-line areas. However, in September, soon after starting this work, the Rapide was badly damaged. It was shipped from Port Moresby to Sydney in late October for repair by de Havilland at Mascot who received it on 3 December, 1942.



A33-3 of 34 Squadron, carrying radio call sign VHCRP, at Mt. Eba, S.A. in 1943. (J. Hopton)

On completion of the repair, A33-6 was issued to No. 2 Aerial Ambulance Unit on 9 March, 1943 and it returned to New Guinea on ambulance work for the Chief Medical Officer at Port Moresby. In June 1943 it suffered fire damage to the fuselage and mainplanes and, due to the lack of spare parts held in the area, was crated and again shipped down to Sydney for repairs, being received by de Havillands at Mascot on 24th September. There it began a slow rebuild, but by January 1944 de Havillands urgently needed space for other priority work and the Rapide was issued to DCA only partly rebuilt.

The two Rapides to escape impressment into military service were ANA's VH-UVT and -UXZ. The former was still waiting for its rebuild at Essendon following the crash at Mount Gambier back in June 1937, and after the loss of aircraft due to impressments, ANA began urgent work on its repair resulting in its return to service in April 1941, forsaking the original name of "Monana" for the more well known old name of Holyman's first Rapide "Memma". The rebuilt aircraft was flown to Cairns where it was to operate, first under AoA ownership and then from 1943 as an ANA aircraft, on the integrated services to Cape York

Peninsula towns via cattle stations for the next nine years. VH-UXZ "Marika" was spared by RAAF to allow ANA to maintain their Bass Strait Islands services out of Melbourne, and it flew these routes until it crashed on 29 May, 1942 in Tanners Bay at Flinders Island while attempting to return to the Island after one engine had failed.

When the RAAF released the Dragon Rapides back to DCA for reissue to the airlines, ANA received VH-ADE which had its CofA renewed at Essendon on 23 April, 1942. When "Marika" was lost at Flinders Island in May the new Rapide replaced it on the Bass Strait run, which was now operating from Melbourne through the Islands to Launceston and on to Hobart. The Rapide's wings and tail were damaged on 30 June when a USAAC charter Douglas DC-2 rolled down the tarmac at Essendon into the ANA No. 3 hangar and struck the DH.89. However it was quickly repaired and back in service within a fortnight. During September questions were asked in Parliament about the single-engine performance of the DH.89 for the over-water run down to Tasmania, resulting in DCA flight testing VH-ADE and the results were deemed quite satisfactory.

Early in 1943 VH-ADE was sent to Queensland for work with the Allied Works Council, along with the two Rapides that AoA had received from the RAAF, VH-UUO and -UXT. The rugged climatic conditions of extensive flying in tropical northern areas and hot western areas of Queensland took their toll on the woodwork and fabric of these aircraft, and maintenance soon became a major problem. During the year AoA finally ceased to operate as a separate company and all its Queensland routes were merged into the ANA network. As well as the A.W.C. work, the Rapides operated the regular Queensland services during 1943, VH-UVT suffered damage in minor accidents during the year at Abingdon Downs, Inkerman and Gilbert River, while VH-ADE struck a RAAF truck on landing at Iron Range on Christmas Day while flying the regular service from Cairns to Horne Island. Its damaged wings were flown to Cairns for repair inside a USAAF aircraft, and repairs were completed on New Years Day 1944. Less than a month later, on 26 January,

VH-ADE was badly damaged during a forced landing on a beach 13 miles south of Cape Sigmouth at Princess Charlotte Bay, and after a large air search was found by RAAF Catalina A24-55, FJ-E, of No. 11 Squadron which landed in the sea and recovered the passengers and mail. The Rapide was considered a write-off and after being stripped for spares which were taken back to the ANA hangar at Cairns, it was abandoned.

Meanwhile, down south the other ANA Rapide, VH-UXT, overran the strip on landing at Wynyard, Tasmania on 18 August, 1943 only several months after returning to the Bass Strait run from Queensland. The aircraft ended up in a ditch, badly damaged, although Captain F.H. Dawson and his three passengers were uninjured. The aircraft was broken up for spares.

Guinea Airways received VH-UBN from the RAAF in April 1942 for its internal S.A. services, followed by VH-UUF late the following year. After overhaul in the company hangars at Parafield, during which UFF had its camouflage removed and replaced by an allover silver doped scheme, its CofA was renewed on 21 November, 1943. Guinea lost VH-UBN on 20 July, 1944 in what was to be Australia's worst Rapide accident when the aircraft crashed at Mount Kitchener, S.A. in poor weather killing the pilot and six passengers while en route from Broken Hill to Adelaide on a scheduled service.

The final Rapide released by RAAF was A33-6/VH-UZY which DCA offered to Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. at Perth in January 1944, still needing some £1,000 work to complete its rebuild by de Havillands at Mascot. Urgently needing aircraft to maintain his W.A. services, Captain Charles Snook, Airlines' Managing Director was pleased to accept the offer and A33-6 was shipped to Perth on S.S. "Madura" on 17 March, 1944, following a consignment of DH.89 parts from the crashed VH-UXT and RAAF spares, which were shipped from Melbourne in February on S.S. "Lowana". The major rebuild commenced at Maylands aerodrome, Perth and was finally completed on 17 November that year, the Rapide's CofA being renewed two days later as VH-UZY named "RMA Perth". (See J-AHSA Vol. XIV No. 2).

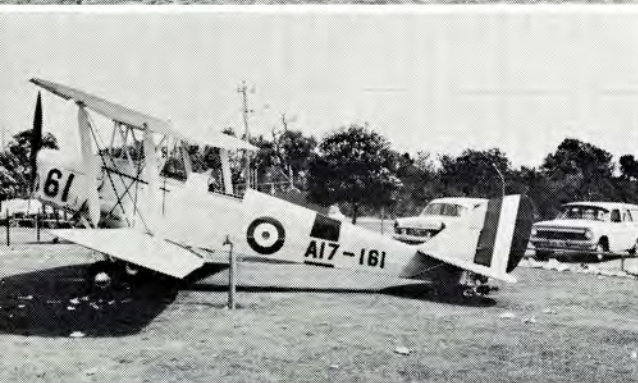
Pleased with the new Rapide, Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. purchased VH-UUF from Guinea Airways in February 1945 and it was ferried across to Perth to join VH-UZY on the company's W.A. route network. In August a load of parts from VH-ADE from ANA at Cairns was trucked to Perth for spares for Airlines' two Rapides.

So World War Two ended with only four DH.89s still flying in Australia, VH-UUF and

Below: A33-3 was released to Guinea Airways and restored to its original identity as VH-UUF. (J. Hopton)



PHOTO ALBUM



The Tiger Moth is probably de Havillands best known product with over 1000 manufactured in Australia alone. Depicted on this page is a selection of West Australian based Tigers in recent times.

Left, top: Lyn Forster's VH-AMU at Beverley, Nov., 1970. The unusual shape of the rear cockpit and the overturn truss are a reminder of its cropdusting days. **Left, centre:** Typical of the many old agricultural Tigers abandoned on airfields around Australia was Farmair's VH-AHP seen at Jandakot, June, 1968, complete with bee's nest in rear luggage locker. It was later rebuilt by Perth TV Station, TVW 7, for their private aviation museum and finished in its original RAAF yellow trainer scheme as A17-161. (**Left, bottom**).

Above: "Sheoak Farm" at Wongan Hills boasts two Tiger Moths, Peter Millstead's VH-PCI, fitted with a canopy and Alf Felcman's bright red VH-APQ. Jan., 1974. **Below:** Survivor of the early D.C.A. fleet of 'delux' Tiger Moths, VH-CKF (ex-VH-CAG) has had its canopy removed but retains the modified under-carriage fitted with braking — note the forward raked main legs and tailwheel. Photographed in Dec., 1969 at Geoff Lawrence's farm at Benjabbering. Colour scheme is red and cream. (All photos via [G. Goodall]).





Top: VH-FDA, "Islander" at Bankstown, early in 1960. It was the second last Drover to be built and is seen here modified up to Mk 3 standard — re-engined with 180 hp Lycoming engines but retaining the "flat" tailplane. **Above, left:** The Gipsy Major powered prototype Drover, VH-DHA at Bankstown, June, 1950. **Above, right:** Qantas' VH-EBR with modified cockpit canopy, the reason for which is unknown. **Right:** VH-UZS was the first of two DH.83 Fox Moths to be built in Australia. It was owned by the Dept. of Interior and used by the "Flying Doctor", Dr Clyde Fenton, as an aerial ambulance. It crashed at Katherine, N.T. on 10 Nov., 1941. (All photos J. Hopton).

Left: Chris Temby's VH-CKI lives on his Tambellup farm along with the even more veteran DH.60G Moth, VH-UAO. February, 1974 (G. Goodall).



Top: On completion of a major rebuild, VH-UZY commenced service with Airlines (W.A.) in 1944 as "RMA Perth". (G. Goodall)
Above: ANA's, VH-UUO at Cairns, (G. Goodall)

-UZY with Airlines (W.A.) Ltd out of Perth and VH-UVT and -UUO with ANA out of Cairns, Queensland.

Airlines (W.A.) Ltd flew their pair for another three years, selling both in October 1948 after the introduction of new DH.104 Doves on their services. In September 1945 they had ordered a new Rapide Mk 3 from de Havillands in England which was to have been flown out to Perth by their Chief Pilot Captain John Moore in December that year, and registration VH-AIC was allocated to this aircraft. In November 1945 the plans were changed to have the Rapide shipped to Perth, but the following month the order was cancelled after DCA warned that it was considering imposing limitations on Australian DH.89 take-off weights, and Airlines then placed an order with de Havillands for a brand new Dove.

Having an interest in aerial agriculture possibilities, Airlines made several experimental aerial seeding flights in VH-UFF at Swanview near Perth in July 1948, sowing clover seeds with limited success. This aircraft was then sold to Brown and Dureau Ltd of Melbourne for their Aerial Survey Department which had been formed three years earlier to do vertical photographic surveys using DH.90 Dragonfly VH-UXS and DH.84 Dragonfly VH-APP. After conversion for survey work at the company's Belmont Common airfield at Geelong, Victoria the Rapide spent its next seven years in this role, joined in September 1952 by Beech C18S VH-KFD imported from England by Brown and Dureau for the same duties. In April 1955 the Rapide was sold to James Air Charter at Wollongong, who disposed of it a year later as F-OAVG to Societe Caledonienne De Transports Aeriens, Noumea which operated the

VH-UFF, probably during its service as a survey aircraft with Brown and Dureau. (J. Hopton)

New Caledonian domestic airline, Transpac. This veteran D.H.89, which was first imported into Australia back in 1935, made its last flight on 11 June, 1957. It was retired at Noumea and broken up for spares but many of its components were used to rebuild F-OATC, another Transpac Rapide at Noumea.

Airlines (W.A.) Ltd's other Rapide was sold to Connellan Airways at Alice Springs, who were second only to ANA as Australia's largest Rapide operator with a total of six DH.89s, although only five saw service on their routes.

Connellan Airways commenced their regular air services on 8 August, 1939 when E.J. Connellan departed Alice Springs in Percival Gull Six, VH-UVA, for Wyndham, W.A. via Mount Doreen, The Granites, Tanami, Nicholson, Inverway, Victoria River Downs and Auvergne Stations. Initially a fortnightly service, this long remote route was maintained throughout the War. Soon, other services from Alice Springs to cattle stations and small towns throughout the Northern Territory were inaugurated, expanding to a remarkable route network of 15,500 miles over 120 ports of call throughout N.T., W.A. and Queensland. Since the main purpose of these services was to carry mail and supplies with only occasional passengers, a variety of single engined aircraft was operated until 1947 when two DH.90 Dragonflies, VH-UTJ and -UXB, were introduced. Eddie Connellan then

decided upon the Dragonfly's larger cousin the Rapide, as the best aircraft to fly his routes, and sent his Chief Pilot Captain Damian Miller to England to purchase two DH.89s from the large number of Rapides and ex-RAF Dominies then available.

In early 1948 Miller negotiated for the purchase of two civil Rapides in England but the deal was not finalised. Instead, he purchased two RAF Dominies, X7873 and RL947, direct from ARF Disposals and began preparing the two aircraft for the 12,000 mile ferry flight to Alice Springs. Both aircraft were painted into their Australian markings prior to departure, X7873 becoming VH-BKM and RL947 to VH-BKR and the aircraft were blessed by a Roman Catholic priest in a small ceremony on the eve of their departure in April. Miller flew one aircraft and another Australian, L. (Ted) Hourigan, was hired in England to fly the other Rapide. Hourigan had flown Halifax bombers in RAF and after the war continued with this type by flying G-AGXA "Waltzing Matilda" for Air Carriers Pty Ltd on freight charters from Sydney, then after they folded he flew Halifax freighters in Australia, Africa and England for LAMS.

The ferry flight of the pair of Rapides was uneventful as far as Darwin, and on 6th May 1948 they left Darwin on the last leg to the home base at Alice Springs. After refuelling at Daly Waters, Miller departed for Tennant Creek in VH-BKR but Ted Hourigan was delayed because water in the fuel taken on caused his motors to cut out



One of two ex-RAAF Dominies purchased in England was VH-BKR. (T. Mowatt)

while taxiing out. The fuel lines were cleaned out, and with two women passengers and company Engineer Jim Crombie on board, Hourigan taxied out again. At 1:20 p.m. VH-BKM took off but when at only 150 feet, power was lost on both engines again, and he made a forced-landing ahead in scrub off the Daly Waters airfield. Just as he was flaring for the landing, power suddenly returned to one engine, causing a loss of control of the aircraft which then crashed heavily into the ground. Crombie pulled an unconscious passenger and Hourigan, who had a broken leg, clear of the wreckage just before it burst into flames. The Rapide was totally burnt out and its occupants were flown to Darwin that evening by MMA Anson ambulance piloted by Captain Neville Bell.



With one of the two new Rapides lost before even reaching Alice Springs, Connellan hired an Avro Anson, VH-BFG, from Corio Air Freighters at Geelong pending the delivery of a replacement Rapide. Airlines (WA) Ltd's VH-UZY was purchased in October but this too was destined to have only a short career with its new owners — exactly a year later it crashed on take-off from Coolibah, Northern Territory on 21st October 1949 being destroyed by fire and killing the pilot.

At that time negotiations were under way for the purchase of another two Rapides from England, both being acquired from North Sea Air Transport of Hanworth. G-AHLU was quickly overhauled for renewal of its British CofA for the ferry flight to Australia when VH-UZY was lost, and on completion of this overhaul on 1 November 1949 at Hanworth, departed for Alice Springs where it arrived on 8 December, still in its British markings. G-AIWG followed in January next year, being flown out by a crew ex-U.S. Navy, and after overhaul at Alice Springs for Australian CofA the pair entered Connellan service as VH-AHI and -AIK. The latter was to only see a year of service before being destroyed by fire when fabric caught alight during engine start-up at Turkey Creek, W.A. at 4.30 p.m. on 29 September, 1951.



(G. Goodall)



(T. Mowatt)



Top: G-AHLU prior to entering service with Connellan Airways as VH-AHI (centre). (Bottom: Connellan's second Rapide to arrive in 1949 was VH-AIK. (T. Mowatt).

Meanwhile across at Cairns ANA's two remaining Rapides, VH-UUO and -UVT, faithfully flew their routes north and west to Cooktown, Coen, Iron Range, Thursday Island, Croydon, Normanton via cattle stations as Rapides had done since North Queensland Airlines days. While all other ANA routes were flown by DC-3s and DC-4s, these little biplanes served northern Queensland "more or less as a little airline of its own", quoted a contemporary report. The Rapides were flown all the way down to Essendon each year for their major CofA renewals, but ANA stationed engineers at Cairns for routine maintenance. As more DC-3s came into ANA service, the Rapides' days were obviously numbered, and by 1948 the pair were flying only the northern route

up Cape York Peninsula to Cooktown and Horne Island. When DC-3s were introduced on this route as well, the two DH.89s were sold in February 1950 to Butler Air Transport, Sydney.

C.A. Butler began flying regular services on 10 December, 1934 when he won the Australian Government's contract to carry the England—Australia Airmail between Charleville, Q. and Cootamundra, N.S.W. using two Dragons, VH-URU and URV. Sydney and Melbourne mail was taken to and from Cootamundra by railway, and flown to connect with the Qantas Brisbane—Darwin—Singapore route at Charleville. In August 1938 his southern base was finally allowed to be moved to Sydney, and in November 1940 Butler Air Transport Co. took over Adastra Airway's Sydney—Moruya—Bega daily service. After World War Two airline services expanded quickly using Dragons and Ansons, and later DC-3s, and a wide network of main routes and feeder services to smaller country towns was established throughout N.S.W. and southern Queensland. In February 1950 the two ANA Rapides were purchased and replaced Ansons on the Sydney—Bega route, and on feeder services out of Tooraweenah, N.S.W. On 23 May 1952 VH-UUO crashed in heavily timbered terrain on Warrumbungle Mountain, eleven miles north of Tooraweenah, while inbound from Barradine in rain and low cloud late in the afternoon. The aircraft was destroyed by fire but Captain K. Brown and four passengers received only minor injuries. The remaining Rapide was then based at Tooraweenah to fly weekly services to Brewarrina and Collarenebri, plus thrice weekly services to Coonamble, while DC-3s flew all the other routes. In November 1952 Butler introduced the first of two new DH.114 Herons he had ordered to replace the Rapides, and VH-UVT was sold to Connellan Airways the following February.

It is of interest to note that DCA Annual Reports for 1948 and 1949 state that Queensland Airlines flew DH.89s on services from Rockhampton to Bundaberg, Thangool and Clermont.

Coincidental with the final departure of ANA's Rapides from Cairns, another DH.89 arrived there to take up residence. The Cairns Aerial Ambulance Service was commenced on 1 December, 1945 by the Cairns Branch of Queensland Ambulance Transport Brigade using an appropriately registered DHA, Dragon, VH-AMB, flown by pilots provided by ANA from their Cairns-based Rapide crews. The service provided fast medical attention to the isolated and remote cattle stations and towns in northern Queensland and is still

flying the same services today with a Beech Baron. The original Dragon struck trees on take-off from a muddy rough strip on Palmerville Station, 150 miles north of Cairns in the middle of The Wet on 23 February, 1949 while attempting to take a critically ill boy to hospital. Captain Donald Ludbey of ANA and his young patient were not hurt, although the aircraft was destroyed. Early the next morning another attempt was made to move the sick boy in a Tiger Moth flown in from Cairns. With Ludbey in the front cockpit and the boy on his knee, the Tiger Moth overturned on take-off in the thick mud but once again no one was hurt. Finally after a three day journey by horse Ludbey and his patient reached Laura where they were picked up by an ANA Rapide and flown into Cairns, where the boy was successfully operated on in hospital.

The loss of the Dragon was a severe blow to the Service, but publicity resulting from the epic four day effort to save the young boy from Palmerville resulted in donations towards a fund for a new aircraft being received from as far as Melbourne and Thursday Island, enabling a more powerful DH.89 Rapide to be purchased in England. In November, 1949 the aircraft, still carrying the registration G-AKOC from its days with West Cumberland Air Services, arrived at Cairns by sea from England and was assembled in the ANA hangar. During assembly, modifications were made to allow the fitment of two stretchers. The aircraft, VH-CFA (Cairns Flying Ambulance) was named "Gron Owens" after the late Chairman of the Cairns Ambulance Committee went into service later in the month. The vagaries of the northern Queensland weather were to claim this aircraft two years later, as well as its replacement VH-CFA (2). However, such was the dependability and performance of the D.H.89 on this ambulance work that the Service obtained a third Rapide which served well until replaced by Cessna 310D, VH-ATB in 1960.

The first Rapide, VH-CFA, was lost when returning to Cairns at dusk from "Vanhook" Station on the evening of 26 November, 1951 carrying a patient with serious facial injuries from a power-saw accident. Smoke from bushfires had drifted out to sea blotting out the coastline and Captain Neville Hicks had no radio aids in the aircraft on which to track into Cairns. He searched for the lights of Cairns right up to fuel expiry, then descended through the cloud and finding

The Cairns Aerial Ambulance Service's second Rapide to carry the registration, VH-CFA, at Cairns, 1953. (F. Stokes via N. Parnell)



himself over the sea ditched six miles off the coast near Double Island, 15 miles north-west of Cairns. The pilot and ambulance officer Keith Howarth were unable to drag the unconscious patient from the aircraft before it sank, and set off swimming to the shore which they could see in the distance. After six and a half hours in the shark-infested ocean they reached shore totally exhausted and were later found by a police search party.

While waiting for a replacement Rapide to arrive from England, the Service hired the D.H.90 Dragonfly VH-AAD from Bush Pilots Airways at Cairns for its ambulance work. The new Rapide was G-ALNT, purchased from the Hampshire School of Flying at Southampton, which arrived at Cairns by sea in November 1952. DCA had allotted registration VH-ATU to this aircraft, but the Service requested VH-CFA again, and in view of its special significance it was re-issued. Test-flown after assembly at Cairns on 21 November, the new VH-CFA was named "Clive Jones" after one of the original pilots of the Service, then began what was to be less than a year on ambulance flying before being lost in surprisingly similar circumstances to the previous aircraft.

On 26 October, 1953 Captain Dick Brampton departed Cairns for Iron Range, 300 miles to the north, to pick up an aboriginal boy suffering from a snake bite. On return to Cairns that evening the aircraft was caught above a solid bank of stratus cloud at 1200 feet above the ground, and after going into a square search the pilot was unable to sight the lights of the town by 8:20 p.m. and was then diverted south to Townsville. The last radio message from the aircraft was received at Townsville at 9:55 p.m. saying: "Ditching aircraft, do not know where I am". Within an hour a RAAF Lincoln was despatched from Townsville and an ANA DC-3 from Cairns to commence the aerial search. The Rapide had ditched near Hinchinbrook Island, 20 miles north of Ingham, and had struck the sea heavily, breaking up and sinking within three minutes. The ambulance officer Andrew Couser had just helped the pilot from the aircraft and was attempting to extract the patient when the aircraft sank taking the boy with it. Captain Brampton, who had a broken leg, was supported by Couser for some time before slipping away and drowning. Couser was picked up by the Coastal vessel "Fiona" six hours after the ditching.

Again the Bush Pilots Airways Dragonfly was used for ambulance work while negotiations were under way to purchase a new aircraft for the Service. Their third Rapide was G-AGSI of Cambrian Air Services which was purchased through British brokers W.S. Shackleton Ltd. It was converted before delivery to the more powerful Rapide Mk.4 standard with Gipsy Queen 2 engines driving constant-speed airscrews and was the first of this type in Australia. In December 1954 Captain Frank Roche of Bush Pilots Airways left England in this aircraft for the ferry trip to Cairns with his wife Jenny as passenger, and they reached home in January 1955. The new Rapide entered ambulance service the next month as VH-BFS and faithfully served in this role over the next five years. It was sold to New Hebrides Airways for local services from Port Vila in the New Hebrides and flew their first service on 2 April 1960. Operated at first still in its Australian registration, it was later re-registered VQ-FAZ in May 1961 and given the New Hebrides Airways name of "Miti Vaku". It was withdrawn from use after major inspection in May 1962 and replaced by DHA-3 Drovers VQ-FAS leased from Fiji Airways.

Back at Alice Springs, Connellan Airways were still flying their Rapides on all the company's regular air routes as well as the Ayers Rock tourist charter services. VH-UVT was added to the fleet in February 1953 from Butler Air Transport but was scrapped at Alice Springs in November the following year due to its age, when its CofA renewal overhaul was uneconomical. 1956 saw the purchase of the first of a number of Beech 18s and Cessna 180s that were to replace the older aircraft, and Rapide VH-AHI was broken up at Alice Springs in May 1958 when due for major overhaul. VH-BKR met a similar fate three years later, although it had in the meantime been re-registered into the new Connellan Airways registration series as VH-CLH. Later all Connellan Airways Rapide spares and components, including engines, were dumped in 1968 at the time of their move from the original Townsite aerodrome to the new Alice Springs Airport.

Of the five remaining Rapides to be brought into Australia, four were to come from New Zealand where the type was equally popular, and the other flown all the way from Sweden ...

At Archerfield aerodrome in 1957 Airwork Co. Ltd. were looking for a suitable aircraft to carry out large scale spraying of brigalow in Queensland. Airwork had been formed by E.B. Jones during the 1930's for flying training and charter work at Archerfield, and still carried out these duties as well as a successful aerial agricultural operation using a fleet of Tiger Moths. A larger aircraft was needed and a Rapide, ZK-BFK, was purchased in New Zealand.

Originally built as a Dominie to RAF order as NR839, this aircraft was delivered instead to Ministry of Aircraft Production in 1945 and issued to the Associated Airways Joint Committee, which was formed to operate Britain's domestic air services on a temporary basis until a new national internal airline could be formed. It was flown by Railway Air Services as G-AHGF until British European Airways commenced on 1 February 1947 and it was among the 39 Dragon Rapides to be handed over the new airline to form the basic new fleet alongside Vikings and DC-3s. The



(G. Goodall)

exploits of BEA Rapides on their services to the remote parts of the British Isles, particularly their beach landing strips in the Scottish Islands are a legend. In July 1948 G-AHGF was sold to Lees-Hill Aviation at Birmingham, and then progressed through several other owners until 1953 when it was re-engined to become the prototype Rapide Mk. 4 by Flightways Ltd. at Eastleigh. They sold the aircraft in that year to Mr. K.G.R. Bloomfield who then flew it to New Zealand, leaving England 4 March, 1954 and arriving Gisborne via Norfolk Island and Whenuapai on 17 April. It became ZK-BFK in May and operated out of Gisborne on charter work for the next three years until sold in Australia.

Airwork placed the Rapide into service as VH-AWG in November 1957 on various agricultural and charter duties, flying for 18 months before disposing of the machine to another Archerfield operator, Carsair Air Services. A well known Queensland pilot and engineer, Bob Carswell formed his charter company several years earlier to carry meat in New Guinea also passenger and freight work in Queensland, using mainly Avro Ansons and Lockheeds (See J-AHSA Vol. XVI No. 5). The Rapide was immediately re-registered VH-BIF and operated from Archerfield all over Queensland usually flown by veteran Rapide pilot Captain Keith Virtue who had retired from ANA in November 1954 after logging a staggering 23,170 hours on AoA and ANA routes — many of those hours being on Rapides. He had returned to flying in 1958 to fly Carwell's Lockheed 12A VH-ABH and now the Rapide. In December 1959 Bob Carswell was flying a party of Federal M.P.s and oil company executives from the Cooroorah Oil Drilling Site near Rockhampton back to Brisbane in the Lockheed 12A, the rest of the officials following in the Rapide with Keith Virtue. Near Caloundra the weather deteriorated and the slower Rapide was caught in a violent storm causing Virtue to make a forced landing on Kings Beach at Caloundra. A perfect landing was made and the passengers, who included Leslie Bury who was later to become Federal Treasurer, continued on to Brisbane by car, while the Rapide flew out next day to Archerfield unscathed.

During 1958 a new company, Alpine Airways Pty Ltd was formed in Sydney by the shareholders of Kingsford Smith Flying Service Pty Ltd at Bankstown, and Allen Brothers (Asphalting Contractors) Pty Ltd, who had been involved in

Left: G-AHGF at Brisbane, in 1957, after being acquired by Airwork Co. Ltd of Archerfield who registered it as VH-AWG. (below), (N. Weeding).

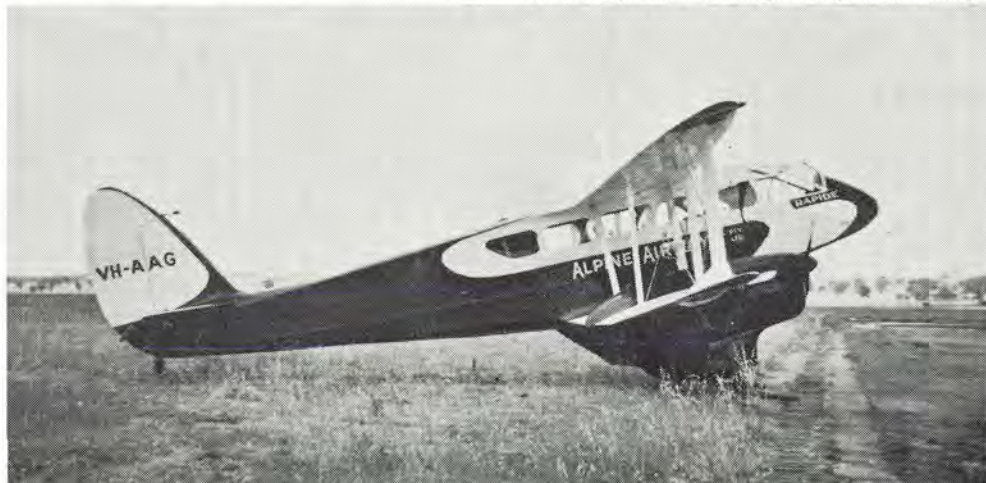


aviation for some years. It was envisaged that Alpine Airways would operate scheduled passenger services from Cooma to Canberra, Nowra, Moruya and Merimbula to carry tourists and the considerable passenger traffic generated by the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Authority construction work at that time in the Australian Alps. Rapide, ZK-BBP was purchased in New Zealand from South Island Airways Ltd and shipped to Sydney where it was assembled at Bankstown by K.S.F.S. It entered service with Alpine Airways in November, 1958 as VH-AAG.

This aircraft was built in 1943 as a Dominie 1 for RAF as HG669 but was delivered direct in November 1943 to No. 76 Maintenance Unit for packing ready for shipping to Royal New Zealand Airforce. On arrival at Auckland on 18 January, 1944 it was taken on RNZAF strength as NZ531 and flew military duties until disposed of to Airwork (N.Z.) Ltd who civilianised it as ZK-BBP before selling it to South Island Airways Ltd. After flying passenger services for this company along with several other Rapides, it was withdrawn from service and struck off the N.Z. Register on 24 January, 1957 and put up for sale.

Alpine Airways' new aircraft took up residence at Cooma, and as Proprietor Peter Brown of K.S.F.S. recalls;

"In Alpine Airways livery the Rapide was extremely well turned out in striking



maroon and white exterior finish and the name 'Rapide' emblazoned on the nose. Six passenger seats were fitted behind a full cockpit bulkhead. The cockpit itself was single control, and had full panel and V.H.F. radio. I flew AAG myself on a number of occasions and found it quite delightful in every respect. Single engined performance was virtually non-existent but the Gipsy VI engines were highly reliable and never produced an anxious moment".

However approval for the planned airline services was not forthcoming from DCA, the company's envisaged operations being ten years ahead of final Departmental policy on commuter services, and Alpine Airways degenerated into a joy-riding concern in the Snowy Mountains. The Rapide was flown by John Bales, now with T.A.A., and Stan Birtus who still flies in the area with Cessnas as Cooma Air Travel. After logging only 200 hours with Alpine Airways VH-AAG was flown to Bankstown for occasional charter work by K.S.F.S. while awaiting disposal.

In 1960 Bob Carswell won a contract to carry buffalo meat from shooters camps in Northern Territory into Darwin. Deciding upon the Rapide as the best aircraft for the job, he purchased VH-AAG from K.S.F.S. at Bankstown in August

and it was immediately flown to Darwin arriving there late the same month to commence operations. The lucrative contract soon required another aircraft, and in November Carswell flew up his Lockheed 12A, VH-ASG, just purchased from Associated Airlines in Melbourne. With E.C. (Ossie) Osgood, who was later to form Arnhem Air Charter, usually flying the Rapide, and Bob Carswell in the Lockheed, the two aircraft flew daily sorties to Wolner, Banyan, Wildboar and other station properties. Regular flights were also flown as far afield as Victoria River Downs, Timber Creek and Hookers Creek to pick up buffalo meat for processing as pet meat in Darwin.

Australia's hot climate and the proximity of wing fabric to the engine exhausts had made Australian Rapides particularly prone to engine start-up fires, and several aircraft had been totally destroyed by such fires over the years. VH-AAG fell victim to this on 12 December 1960 when pilot Osgood was starting engines at a remote strip on Banyan Station east of Adelaide River, N.T.. Flames from the exhaust ignited mainplane fabric on the starboard side and before the fire could be put out both the top and bottom starboard wings had been destroyed. To repair the aircraft, engineer Ivan Unwin was flown in from Queensland to spend the next three months camped on the strip. He worked right through "The Wet", tropical downpours of rain hampering doping of new fabric and the replacement wings being badly damaged



Above: Alpine Airways' maroon and white —AAG at Cootamundra. (B. Dannecker). Right top: VH-AAG undergoing repairs at Bunyan Station after a fire had destroyed the starboard wings. Right centre: "Rapide Motel" —AAG served as home during the repair operation. Right: Covered with tarpaulins to protect it from the "wet". (I. Unwins)



when dropped into a swamp from under a helicopter attempting to fly them into the strip. However the job was eventually completed, and on 16 February, 1961 Osgood flew the Rapide out of Banyan and back to Darwin. Ivan Unwin recalls that

"the job on AAG was quite an ordeal — I used the cabin of the aircraft as a motel, and couldn't complain about the service, because there wasn't any! The work did

eventually get finished, and the aircraft was assembled and rigged by 'eyeball engineering' and flown without any bother back to Darwin where I did further work on it to renew the CofA".

To replace the Rapide while it was out of action at Banyan, Carswell leased DHA.Dragon VH-AON from Territory Airlines who had retired it from New Guinea work, and it left Archerfield on 28 January on a two-day ferry flight to Darwin.

It went into service on the meat run the very next day with a long haul to Daly Waters and Timber Creek. The Rapide returned to service on 8 April and now flew mainly to Wildboar and Wolner Stations, sometimes making up to three return trips between these properties and Darwin daily, while the Lockheed ranged out to the farther flung strips.

In October 1961 the contract passed to Darwin Air Taxis, formed by veteran Territory pilot Neville (Dinga) Bell, and the Rapide was leased from Carswell to continue the meat carting. Using Cessna 190, VH-BVD, purchased from Ansett-M.A.L. in New Guinea for passenger work and the Rapide for buffalo meat, Darwin Air Taxis continued for two years until the Rapide struck a kangaroo on the Wolner Station strip, breaking its lower centre-section spar. It was flown back to Darwin but major rebuild was not economic, and its engines were removed. The Rapide was left in the weather at Darwin Airport, and deteriorated quickly. Ossie Osgood describes the Rapide's fate:

"The aircraft was taken over again by Bob Carswell with the liquidation of Darwin Air Taxis, the radios were removed and the airframe presented to RAAF as a target. It was destroyed by Sabres in early 1964 on an operational exercise on the Leanyear Range near Darwin. That is the end of the story of VH-AAG, a very good Rapide".

Meanwhile Carswell's other DH.89, VH-BIF, in Qld., was sold in November, 1960 to Mr Merv Ward of Brisbane who operated as Airflite. He used the Rapide on grass-seeding and dingo bait dropping work throughout Queensland until 1963 when sold to Northern Star School of Parachuting in Victoria. This school had its name painted on the aircraft's tail at Archerfield, but never took delivery of the aircraft which was subsequently repurchased by Ward and based at Archerfield for occasional charter work. The last recorded flight of VH-BIF was in October 1965 and the following account comes from a passenger on that trip:

"I recall that at that time the aircraft was not fitted with seats, they had to be resurrected from the back of the hangar of the at Archerfield and dusted off. I was last to board and drew a seat near the door. This seat unfortunately had no seat belt fitted and I was restrained by a length of webbing tied around my middle. The cabin door was closed, followed by the customary tug on the handle to test for security. Needless to say the handle was seen to depart from the rest of the door! I am pleased to say the rest of the flight was uneventful".

Shortly after this VH-BIF was withdrawn from service at Archerfield due to deterioration in the timbers and fabric, and after two years parked in the open was donated to the DCA fire service who burnt the old aircraft for fire drill practice on 3 June 1968 near the Archerfield Control Tower.

When he initially sold VH-BIF in Victoria



(J. Hopton)

Top: VH-BIF, bearing the legend "Northern Star School of Parachuting" on the rudder, at Archerfield, 23 January, 1964. (J. Hopton).

Above: The broken-backed -BIF at Archerfield four years later, 23 February, 1968.

in 1963 Merv Ward looked for a replacement Rapide for his agricultural work in Queensland and found VH-ECW available in Darwin. This aircraft had been flown out from Sweden three years earlier by a family migrating to Australia and had quite a background...

Built in 1941 for RAF as Dominie 1, X7370, it had a full service career flying with Numbers 60 and 52 Operational Training Units, No. 2 Delivery Flight and No. 1 Radio School before being sold from No. 5 Maintenance Unit in May 1947 to Field Aircraft Services Ltd. who brought it on to the British Register as G-AJXB on 14 June 1947. In December the following year it was purchased by British European Airways and named "William Gilbert Grace" and entered the B.E.A. route network. It passed to Eagle Aviation Ltd. in April 1955, then Independent Air Travel Ltd. at Hurn in February of the next year, before being sold in Sweden in March 1956 as SE-CBU with Dragon Aviation A.B.. In 1960 W.A.R. (Peter) Ahrens, an experienced pilot and engineer, had been attempting to migrate from Sweden to Australia for some time, but the cost of commercial airline fares was too high. Instead he purchased the Rapide for a

low price, and with his family of five set off on the long flight to Australia.

SE-CBU passed through Nicosia on 5 September, Singapore 17 September, and made Australian landfall at Darwin on 26 September 1960 after a remarkably trouble free flight. The Ahrens continued on to Brisbane and Sydney where they stayed for some time, flying the Rapide down to Tasmania in January 1961, before settling in Burleigh Heads on the Queensland Gold Coast. Here Peter Ahrens established his own charter firm, East Coast Airways, at Coolangatta Airport. The Rapide was added to the Australian Register as VH-CBU in May 1961 but re-registered VH-ECW the following year to join East Coast Airways



Left: Ex -AWG in Airflite livery and carrying the new registration, VH-BIF. (J. Hopton). **Above:** Destined to replace -BIF at Airflite was SE-CBU, seen here at Bankstown soon after its arrival from Sweden in late 1960. (J. Hopton).

varied fleet of TriPacer VH-ECX, Apache VH-ECY, Seabee VH-ECZ, and Grumman Mallard JZ-PCB just purchased in Dutch New Guinea. The two amphibians were planned to be used on services between the Gold Coast and Brisbane where they would land on the Brisbane River in the city; however Ahrens made an emergency landing on the Brisbane River on 16 July 1962 in the Mallard when the port under-carriage leg could not be retracted. He sold this aircraft





Top: —CBU, now carrying the VH prefix in service with East Coast Airways. (J. Hopton). Above: Another change of registration for East Coast Airway's Rapide, to VH—ECW. (J. Hopton)

soon afterwards to T.A.A. for their Mackay Islander services as VH—TGA, and the Republic Seabee sank after a heavy landing on the Tweed River at Tweed Heads on 24 November that year and was also sold.

East Cost Airways also leased Piaggio P.166, VH—BBG, for a proposed commuter airline service Brisbane—Coolangatta—Lismore—Grafton—Coffs Harbour, but approval was not given by DCA and the Piaggio returned to Bristol Aviation at Banks-town. The aging Rapide was sold in January 1963 to R.H. Healey of RAAF Station, Darwin, and later that year East Coast Airways ceased operations, Ahrens joining Avis Rent-a-Car's newly formed aviation division in Sydney. In March he ferried their Piper Aztec, VH—AVT, from U.S.A. to Sydney, following in June with Aztec, VH—AVU, and he became Chief Pilot with Avis Rent-a-Plane System.

After less than a year in Darwin, the Rapide VH—ECW was ferried down to Parafield in December 1963 for major overhaul by Aero Kair, during which it was purchased from Healey by Merv Ward. The extended overhaul stretched out to over three years, being finally completed in June 1966. Merv Ward taxied the now gleaming silver and white Rapide out on 26 June, and after official photographs had been taken of the staff of Aero

Kair and Ross Aviation posed in front of the old biplane, he departed on the ferry flight back to Archerfield, arriving home two days later. With his new operating name "Pastoral Aviation" painted on the fuselage sides, VH—ECW went into service



Right top: VH—ECW emerging after its three year overhaul by Aero Kair at Parafield. (M. Prime). Right: Airflite, now operating under the name of Pastoral Aviation (Qld) used —ECW for aerial grass-seeding and dingo-baiting. (G. Goodall)

on the same duties as its predecessor until 30 March 1968 when it was destroyed by fire during engine start at Blacknall, Q. and was a total loss. Merv Ward states "both these Rapides were used for grass-seeding and dingo-baiting, being extremely suited to these operations". He replaced VH—ECW with the DHA—3 Drover, VH—PAB, for several years, then after Pastoral Aviation went into liquidation he formed his present business Airspray (Qld.) Pty. Ltd. at Toowoomba using Cessna Agwaggon for spraying.

The final chapter of the Australian Rapide story came in 1974, six years after the passing of the last example of the type previously in the country. A group of Melbourne enthusiasts, aware of the ever decreasing number of vintage aeroplanes in Australia decided to purchase two DH.89s in New Zealand. These Rapides were to be flown purely for pleasure, to show the era of the biplane airliner as long as possible. Numerous difficulties involved in the ferrying and certification of the two aircraft were eventually overcome, and on 15 June, 1974 Rapide, ZK—ALB, flew into Brisbane Airport at the end of its delivery flight across the Tasman Sea from Auckland via Norfolk Island. After clearing Customs, the Rapide continued south to Essendon Airport at Melbourne where it entered a hangar for its Australian CofA inspection, emerging two months later as VH—IAN for Mr. Ken Orrman of Shepparton, Victoria and took up residence in a specially built air-conditioned hangar there.

The second Rapide, ZK—BCP, arrived at Brisbane Airport from New Zealand on 21 January, 1975 and flew on south to Melton airfield near Melbourne where it had its Australian CofA overhaul. Resplendent in its red and silver colour scheme and re-registered VH—BGP, this aircraft made its public debut the following month at the Aviation Historical Society of Australia's Gipsy Moth Fiftieth Birthday airshow — all eyes were upturned on Saturday afternoon 22 February when a unique formation appeared overhead

Berwick airfield comprising the two new Rapides and DHA.Dragon VH-AON "Puff" from Drage's Historical Aircraft Museum at Wodonga, Victoria. There, the three aircraft took a starring role in the following day's flying display and VH-IAN, in its immaculate blue and white scheme, won the day's award for the best vintage aircraft present.

Later in the year VH-BGP was purchased by Mr. Joe Drage for his Museum on his private strip near Wodonga, joining a wide variety of vintage aircraft on display there and flown on special occasions.

Both these latter-day Australian Rapides have similar pedigrees, being built only seven aircraft apart on the wartime production line at Brush Coachworks Ltd. at Loughborough in May 1943 for RAF as Dominie 1s, but shipped directly to RNZAF. NZ527 was civilianised by New Zealand National Airways Corporation as ZK-ALB named "Tikaka", while NZ524 was disposed of to Airwork (N.Z.) Ltd as ZK-BCP. They were then both flown by Trans Island Airways Ltd and Coastal Airways Ltd on passenger work before going to other operators until they teamed up again with Mount Cook Airlines for whom they flew tourist services in the New Zealand Alps until withdrawn from service and stored awaiting sale.



(N. Parnell)~

~(G. Goodall)



(J. Hopton)~



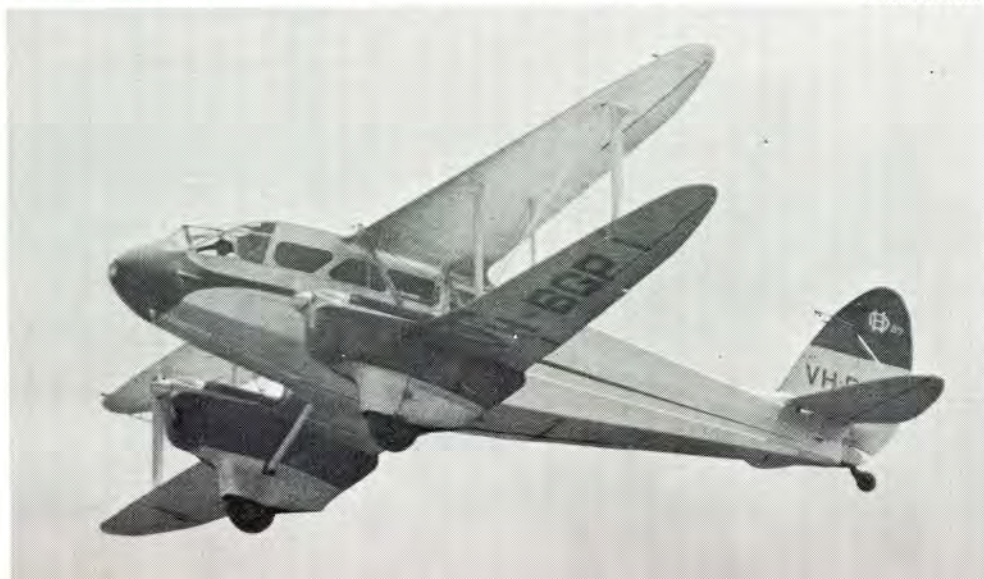
These two Rapides, in the hands of flying enthusiasts in Victoria, are now the only remaining examples of the type that served its owners so well in Australia over the past forty years.

Top right: The first of the recent Rapide imports from New Zealand is VH-IAN, ex-ZK-ALB (lower right). The second Rapide is VH-BGP (bottom left) which previously served with the RNZAF as NZ524 (top left) and with various N.Z. civil operators as ZK-BCP (left centre).



~(J. Hopton)

~(N. Parnell)



The following listing shows Australian Civil Register details of DH.89s operated in Australia. All aircraft were built at Hatfield Aerodrome, Herts. except for those marked (*) which were from 336 Dominies built for RAF by Brush Coachworks Ltd at Loughborough, Leicestershire.

VH-UBN	17. 8.36	Rockhampton Aerial Services Ltd, Rockhampton, Q.
C/n 6253	1.10.36	Airlines of Australia Ltd.
G-ACPO	9. 8.40	To RAAF A33-5
	15. 4.42	VH-UBN:Guinea Airways Ltd, Adelaide, S.A.
	20. 7.44	Crashed Mount Kitchener, S.A.
VH-UFF	30.12.35	Holyman's Airways Pty Ltd, Melbourne, Victoria
6270	1.11.36	Australian National Airways Pty Ltd.
A3-1	12. 6.38	Airlines of Australia Ltd.
	17. 9.40	To RAAF A33-3
	21.11.43	VH-UFF:Guinea Airways Ltd, Adelaide, S.A.
	17. 2.45	Airlines (W.A.) Ltd, Perth, W.A.

	1.10.48	Brown & Dureau Ltd , Melbourne, Victoria.			Pty Ltd , Sydney, N.S.W.	VH-AWG/BIF *6903	4.11.57	VH-AWG:Airwork Co. Ltd., Archerfield, Q.
	12. 4.55	W.E. James, Wollon- gong, N.S.W.		14. 2.53	Connellan Airways Ltd, Alice Springs, N.T.	ZK-BFK G-AHGF NR839	15. 5.59	VH-BIF:Carsair Air Service, Brisbane, Q.
	11. 4.56	Sold to New Caledonia F-OAVG.		20.11.54	Withdrawn from ser- vice Alice Springs..		9.11.60 6. 5.66	M. Ward, Brisbane, Q. Withdrawn from ser- vice Archerfield, Q.
VH-UUO 6259 ZK-ACO	10. 6.35	The Melb. Centenary Air Race Committee (N.Z.), Auckland, N.Z.	VH-UXT 6346	25. 5.37	Australian National Airways Pty Ltd.	VH-BFS *6886	16. 2.55	Queensland Am- bulance Transport Brigade, Cairns, Q.
	25. 6.35	West Australian Air- ways Ltd , Perth, W.A.		19. 7.40 22. 4.42	To RAAF A33-4 VH-UXT: Airlines of Australia Ltd.	G-AGSI NR810	4. 5.60	Sold to New Hebrides as VO-FAZ.
	1 . 7.36	Adelaide Airways Ltd. Adelaide, S.A.		26. 6.43	Australian National Airways Pty Ltd.	VH-BGP *6648	31. 1.75	C. Tracey & Co. Pty Ltd , Melbourne, Vic.
	1 .11.36	Australian National Airways Pty. Ltd.		18. 8.43	Crashed Wynyard, Tasmania.	ZK-BCP NZ524 HG649	.11.75	J. Drage, Wodonga, Victoria. Current.
	8 . 8.39	Guinea Airways Ltd , Adelaide, S.A.	VH-UXZ 6365	15. 9.37	Australian National Airways Pty Ltd.	VH-BKM 6543 X7383	10. 2.48 6. 5.48	Connellan Airways, Alice Springs, N.T. Crashed Daly Waters, N.T.
	8 . 7.40 21. 4.42	To RAAF A33-1 VH-UUO: Airlines of Australia Ltd.		29. 5.42	Crashed Flinders Island, Tasmania.			
	26. 6.43	Australian National Airways Pty. Ltd.	VH-UZY 6384	25. 1.38	W.R. Carpenter & Co. Ltd , Sydney, N.S.W.	VH-BKR/CLH *6929 RL947	4. 3.48	VH-BKR:Connellan Airways, Alice Springs N.T.
	7 . 2.50	Butler Air Transport Pty. Ltd , Sydney, N.S.W.		10.38 25.10.38	North Queensland Air- ways Ltd , Cairns, Q. Airlines of Australia Ltd.		5.11.58	VH-CLH:Connellan Airways, Ltd , Alice Springs, N.T.
	23. 5.52	Crashed Tooraweenah, N.S.W.		9.8.40 19.11.44	To RAAF A33-6 VH-UZY: Airlines (W.A.) Ltd , Perth, W.A.		31. 7.62	Withdrawn from ser- vice Alice Springs, N.T.
VH-UVG A3-2 6314	4.36	RAAF		20.10.48	Connellan Airways, Alice Springs, N.T.	VH-CBU/ECW 6530 SE-CBU	12. 5.61	VH-CBU:W.A. Ahrens, Burleigh Heads, Q.
	3.2.38	Crashed at Laverton Victoria		21.10.49	Crashed Coolibah, N.T.	G-AJXB X7370	7. 6.62	VH-ECW:East Coast Airways, Coolangatta, Q.
VH-UVI 6318	15. 4.36	Adelaide Airways Ltd. Adelaide, S.A.	VH-AAG *6668 ZK-BBP NZ531 HG669	19. 8.58 16. 8.60	Alpine Airways Pty Ltd , Cooma, N.S.W. R.G. Carswell, Bris- bane, Q.		11. 1.63	R.H. Healey, 5ACS, RAAF Darwin, N.T.
	1.11.36	Australian National Airways Pty Ltd.		21.12.64	Withdrawn from ser- vice, Darwin, N.T.		29. 1.65 30. 3.68	M. Ward, Brisbane, Q. Destroyed by fire Blackall, Q.
VH-UVS 6265	11. 8.39	Guinea Airways Ltd , Adelaide, S.A.		27. 6.40	Guinea Airways Ltd , Adelaide, S.A.	VH-CFA1 *6814 G-AKOC NR726	12.11.49	Queensland Am- bulance Transport Brigade, Cairns, Q.
	12. 7.40	To RAAF A33-2		25. 8.40 23. 4.42	To RAAF A33-7 VH-ADE: Australian National Airways Pty Ltd.		26.11.51	Crashed in sea near, Cairns, Q.
VH-UVS 6265	31. 3.35	Shell Co. of Australia Ltd , Melbourne, Vic.	VH-ADE 6341 EI-ABP G-AENO					
	12. 5.37	Destroyed by fire Mascot.						
VH-UVT 6319	15. 4.36	Adelaide Airways Ltd. Adelaide, S.A.		26. 1.44	Crashed Cape Sig- mouth Q.	VH-CFA2 *6713 G-ALNT HG728	21.11.51	Queensland Am- bulance Transport Brigade, Cairns, Q.
	1 11.36	Australian National Airways Pty. Ltd.		14.12.49	Connellan Airways, Alice Springs, N.T.		26.10.52	Crashed in sea near Hinchinbrook Island, Q.
	30. 6.37	Crashed Mount Gam- bier, S.A.	VH-AHI 6633 G-AHLU X7516	13. 5.58	Withdrawn from ser- vice Alice Springs, N.T.			
	17. 4.41	VH-UVT: Australian National Airways Pty Ltd.		13. 2.50	Connellan Airways Alice Springs, N.T.	VH-IAN *6655 ZK-ALB NZ527 HG656	2. 8.74	C. Tracey & Co. Pty Ltd , Melbourne, Vic.
	17. 4.41	Airlines of Australia Ltd.		29. 9.51	Destroyed by fire Turkey Creek, W.A.		.74	K.E. Orrman, Shep- parton, Victoria. Current.
	26. 6.43	Australian National Airways Pty Ltd.						
	7. 2.50	Butler Air Transport						