

## What's News?

- Bankstown Working Bee – more help wanted!
- Corporate Sponsor required!
- VH-CAT's use as a Fire Bomber – offer to PM
- Nancy Bird Walton felled by a cockroach?

## Bankstown Working Bee – more help required

Following our Cat's arrival at Bankstown in December, we continued to have problems with Quarantine who didn't want us to move our Cat until they had thoroughly searched inside the water tanks for mosquito spores and other possible Portuguese men of war.

Although the only time in the past eight years when VH-CAT went near any water was when we touched down at Rathmines on Lake Macquarie they still wanted to search every nook and cranny. (We thought that the Sierra Mountains in Portugal where the Cat has been sleeping would be free of mozzies but we can't criticise our Quarantine guardians from doing a good job.)

On Wednesday 4 February a small team of volunteers led by Ben Hunter went through the aircraft and removed all the tools and excess baggage of the ferry crew. Would you believe all this mounted up to about one ton?

In mid-February, we had a final visit from Quarantine and not surprisingly, they cleared the aircraft.

Bankstown Airport has been very sympathetic and kind to us and has given us a rent-free office cum club room where we can meet our volunteers and members when working on the aircraft.

It is our intention to work towards an "Experimental" C of A which will allow us to fly around in circles, all over the place but not take paying (commercial) passengers. We can give "Adventure Flights" only to club members and volunteers who will become part of the crew.

At this stage we need volunteers and engineers to work towards getting this C of A. This should not be too difficult because the aircraft is in remarkably good condition with practically NIL corrosion.

Whilst the engines are new we cannot leave them idle so they have to be run up to temperature every few weeks or inhibited. A decision has been made to run the

engines regularly as this gives our crew(s) experience and practice in operating the aircraft and also provides an opportunity for our patron, members and enthusiasts to visit during run up periods.

With the aircraft now cleared by Quarantine, we must start on the 100 hourly inspection and work towards getting our C of A. Along with this, we need to fix the oil leak on the left engine and fit tailor-made covers to the engines and cockpit windows.

We are in the process of assembling two teams to carry out the required work to get our C of A. One team will be the Airframe Team, the other the Engine Team. The roles required for each team, along with a brief description of the prerequisite qualifications and experience are illustrated below.

We will aim to establish regular meeting times to carry out the required work – one week day and one day on the weekend each week (at this stage, will aim for Wednesday and Saturday). However, this will depend on the availability of volunteers. A meeting of volunteers will be arranged as soon we know exactly what we need to do to the aircraft to get the required C of A.

The engine run ups will be arranged to occur during these times. We have already had a response to our call for volunteers, but we need two suitably qualified people – one to lead the Engine team, the other the Airframe team. It may be the case that the CFML will need to pay these people a nominal fee for their services, but ideally the provision of these services on a voluntary basis is preferred. Without qualified supervisors, the C of A will not be obtained.

You will be able to help us by any one of the following means:

- Offering your services as an Airframe or Engine Supervisor if you have the necessary qualifications.
- Providing a referral to someone who may be able to fulfil one of the supervisory roles.
- Offering your services as a member of the Engine or Airframe team.

In addition to bodies, we also need the following items to assist in the safe and efficient execution of the work:

- Scaffolding and stands
- A forklift or crane (eg, Electricity pole, or Platform ELP)

So, if you would like to:

1. help as a member of one of the teams,
2. help through the provision of items such as those listed above, or
3. pay us a visit during the next engine run (or any other time for that matter),

please contact the office at 02 9870 7277. Directions will be provided for those wishing to visit or help out at Bankstown.

## ENGINE TEAM

### **Engine Supervisor**

**Minimum prerequisite qualifications/experience:**  
General ticket on Pratt & Whitney 1830 engines

**Role:**

To lead and provide technical guidance to the team responsible for the repair and maintenance of the engines

### **Aircraft Engine Mechanics**

**Minimum prerequisite qualifications/experience:**  
Experience in engine maintenance (and engines) essential, experience in aircraft engine maintenance preferable, experience with Pratt & Whitney 1830s even better.

**Role:**

To carry out repair and maintenance of the engines

## AIRFRAME TEAM

### **Airframe Supervisor**

**Minimum prerequisite qualifications/experience:**

- LAME
- Experience on "big" aircraft

**Role:**

To lead and provide technical guidance and training to the team responsible for the repair/restoration of the airframe

### **Airframe "fitters"**

**Minimum prerequisite qualifications/experience:**

Experience in the repair and maintenance of airframes is preferred. Those without experience but with a good pair of hands are welcome and training will be provided

**Role:**

To carry out the repair/restoration of the airframe



**Bankstown Working Bee in progress**

## **Corporate Sponsor Required**

We are still searching for a corporate sponsor to help ensure the viability of the project. A corporate sponsor would benefit greatly from the unique flying/splashing/floating advertising billboard VH-CAT would provide. Much P.R. would be gained because the Cat is so photogenic when touching down on the water. We can guarantee maximum exposure on TV and Radio.

Ideas and introduction sought!

## **VH-CAT's use as a Fire Bomber – offer to PM**

CFML Director Phil Dulhunty wrote to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on 10 February offering the services of VH-CAT as a fire bomber during this and all future bush fire seasons, given the tragic events in Victoria over the last few weeks. Whilst it may not be as efficient as the latest Canadian CL415 turbo prop water bombers it has significant capability and can scoop 4 to 5 tons of water in one run.

In addition, we have been informed that a representative of the NSW Rural Fire Service has expressed interest in the possible use of our Cat as a fire bomber.

Our plans had been to convert this aircraft back to its wartime configuration and to do this we would need to remove the special water bombing tanks and hydraulic pick up snorkel. Before removing these items, it was thought that we should inquire of the desirability to leave it as is – a standby fire fighting water

bomber. This would be at the expense of adding passenger seats to pay for its operation as an active wartime museum.

Naturally, we would need to understand what sort of assistance we might expect from the appropriate authorities before removing all the necessary water bombing equipment. This information has been requested in Phil's letter to Mr Rudd. In the off season the aircraft could still remain a flying memorial to the RAAF Catalina Squadrons, albeit with fewer "passenger" seats.

In the meantime, the water tanks will remain and we await a response from Mr Rudd's office and to hear from the NSW Rural Fire Service representative.

## **Nancy Bird Walton felled by a cockroach?**

Nancy Bird's "downfall" was caused by the infamous La Cucaracha – a cockroach!

In the last few months, Nancy's arthritis was causing her a lot of trouble – and pain. She found it difficult to move around, especially up and down the stairs in her apartment at Bougainvillea Gardens. She went for some treatment and respite to an aged care establishment where they were going to get her on her feet again.

On the second day, she was resting peacefully there when a mighty big cockroach came from under her bed and started to head for the wardrobe.

Being the girl of action she was, Nancy leapt out of the bed to stomp on it, missed by half a millimetre, but twisted her knee and hip so badly she collapsed on the floor in agony. This was her downfall in more way than one – and her main concern was that this damned cockroach got away!

A reward is being posted for its arrest.

If Nancy had been a "lesser" person, she might be still alive today but that was not her choice. She was a girl of action right up to the last and wouldn't have wanted it any other way.

"Just do it" was her policy!

It was her policy that goaded us into getting that PBY Catalina. She was thrilled when on 7 December 2008 our Catalina arrived at Rathmines for a quick landing and then came on to Sydney where we flew several orbits around her apartment in Mosman before landing at Bankstown.

## **News or comments**

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