

de Havilland Gipsy Moth VH-ULJ

The South Australian Aviation Museum acquired two de Havilland Gipsy Moths (VH-ULJ and VH-ULO) in 1991. They were at the South Australian Museum of Applied Science, North Terrace, Adelaide, from November 1942 until 1961, then from 1965 to 1991, they were in the Birdwood Mill Museum (now known as the National Motor Museum).



VH-ULJ at Birdwood Mill Museum

de Havilland Gipsy Moth VH-ULJ is a DH.60G (wooden fuselage), first registered to Qantas 20 Feb 1929. On 3 Aug 1929, it was transferred to W.R. Evans, Berridale, NSW and operated by the Northern Rivers Flying School at Ballina NSW and then to Archerfield in June 1930. In 1932, its registration lapsed and it was restored. On 22 March 1933 it was transferred to Mrs. Edna Brett, Yeronga, Brisbane and then it was transferred to Holden's Air Transport Service, Salamaua, New Guinea on 3 Nov 1933.

VH-ULJ was used in the development of the Bulolo goldfields (a very rich goldmine located in the middle of the rugged Owen Stanley Range). It was based initially at Salamaua on the New Guinea coast and used to transport miners and their supplies over the New Guinea mountains. A flight of less than an hour replaced what was once a five-day walk through very steep mountains. On 8 Feb 1936, it was badly damaged when it hit boulders while landing at Surprise Creek, New Guinea. It was repaired and in Dec 1936 Holden's Air Transport Service was taken over by Guinea Airways. VH-ULJ was registered to Guinea Airways, Wau, New Guinea on 16 Nov 1937. It was based at Lae where it operated until September 1941 withdrawn from use after cracks were found in the rear fuselage longerons. It was reported as 'patched up' and flown by M. Blackman from Wau, New Guinea to Townsville via Daru and Horn Island in Feb 1942 to escape the Japanese invasion of New Guinea and subsequently to Parafield, South Australia.

The registration for VH-ULJ was cancelled on 26 Nov 1942 and it was sold to the Education Department of South Australia to be used as an 'Instructional Airframe'. Its total flying time was 4,300 hours. VH-ULJ was sold in 1980 to J. Delaney, Nailsworth, South Australia, who started the rebuild. VH-ULJ came to SAAM on 1 June 1991, and after restoration was put on display.



*VH-ULJ parked at Lau (New Guinea) in the 1920's
Pilot is believed to be Charlie Gray .*



VH-ULJ at Wau (New Guinea) in the 1920's



VH-ULJ parked at Wau (New Guinea)



VH-ULJ in SAAM's Hangar

History of Type

The prototype De Havilland DH-60 G-EBKT first flew on 22 February 1925 at Stag Lane, UK, piloted by Geoffrey de Havilland (later Sir Geoffrey). Its simple lines and outstanding performance on low power set an instantly popular fashion in light aircraft configuration, which lasted for several decades. This two-seat basic trainer was an instant success around the world with the first of the type being imported into Australia in 1926. They were initially used by Aero Clubs and the RAAF. The latter used them until replaced by the DH-82 Tiger Moth. The DH-60 type was also used by charter operators, for news reporting, aero medical services, mineral exploration, by private owners, and for aerial photography (most notably by Adelaide photographer D Darian Smith).

Technical Specifications

Engine: De Havilland Gipsy I of 100 hp

Maximum take-off weight: 750 kg

Length: 7.20 m

Wing span: 9.09 m

Height: 2.70 m

Cruising speed: 75 kt (142 kph)

Range: 533 km (295 nm)

Capacity: 1 pilot and 1 passenger