

GENERAL UPDATE-
The NHF Project- Progress In Early Feb 2019
Michael Hough AM
HARS Navy Heritage Flight Project Leader

The first two weeks of February 2019 have been very busy for the newly active HARS Navy Heritage Flight, during which a large number of HARS volunteers and friends/ supporters drawn from e.g. Air Affairs (AA), have been very busy undertaking the following activities connected with moving the recently acquired 9 airframes and associated stores off the operational HMAS Albatross base.

The main activities that have already been achieved are now listed- NOT in any order of time sequence of events or of relative importance:-

Relationships with Defence Disposals and HMAS Albatross

- We have worked consistently with both ADF disposals and the Navy base to co-ordinate and implement the many moves that have taken place, often of necessity with very little notice, and I would particularly thank our HARS President Mr. Bob De La Hunty OAM for maintaining an effective dialogue with ADF disposals, and CMDR Ken Stevenson RANR who provided constant and effective Base liaison and access by both HARS and Air Affairs staff and support equipment.
- Our major NHF sponsor Air Affairs has been constantly supportive and helpful across this whole process, and I would like to particularly acknowledge the CEO Mr. Chris Sievers, and the Air Affairs Chief Engineer Steve Tomich, for their very practical and welcome support in many ways!

Trackers 844 and 845

These are now located at Air Affairs secure areas at the Albatross Aviation Technology Park (AATP) where:-

- 844 has been temporarily located in an approved maintenance hangar provided by Air Affairs and endorsed as a remote HARS Maintenance site by CASA. A significant number of HARS members have spent two blocks of continuous work over approx. 6+ F/T days and have now declared that the Tracker is eligible for a maintenance release to fly. This is a very significant and impressive achievement and the teams of volunteers were led by Mr. Bill Smith senior HARS LAME and Mr. Terry Hetherington senior ex RANFAA LAME. Tracker 844 will now be run weekly by qualified NHF volunteers to ensure this status is maintained
- Tracker 845 is in temporary storage at AA with no immediate plans to work on it or to move it short term

Dakota C47

- The aircraft fuselage of N2-90 has been towed to AA for short term storage and at this stage the wings are being stored separately to the fuselage. The short-term plan is to re-assemble the C47 so it externally complete- including refitting non airworthy engines and propellers, and to display it locally near HMAS Albatross - preferably on the previously approved future NHF site adjacent to, but separate from, the current Fleet Air Arm Museum.

Wessex

- Wessex 832 was moved from B Hangar by low loader and crane, and trucked straight to its long-term home at HARS Albion Park- where it will be on long term display Already our HARS volunteers have done an impressive job in cleaning it up and reattaching components which were being stored separately.
- Wessex 813 was similarly moved straight to HARS Parkes- where it will be on long term display
- The move of both Wessex was co-ordinated by the Wessex Project Manager, CMDR Peter Cannell RAN Rtd. who previously flew Wessex in 725 and 817 Squadrons and also commanded 723 Squadron, the last operational RAN Squadron to operate the Wessex 31B in the Utility and SAR roles.

Sea Venom

- The completely dismantled Sea Venom has been transported in containers to HARS Albion Park- where a team of enthusiastic HARS volunteers led by Mr. Noel Roberts as the Sea Venom project manager- have already commenced the very significant task of removing many components from the containers, evaluating the component condition and usability, and then setting out to re-assemble the Sea Venom. The final status of the Sea Venom restoration is still unclear at this time

Sea Fury

- Sea Fury WG 630 has been temporarily towed across to secure storage at AA and the current efforts are focusing on RMS approvals to move the Sea Fury by road to HARS Albion Park- where it will be on public display whilst being assessed by our HARS engineering staff for developing an approved schedule for repair and restoration – hopefully back to airworthy. This challenging task is being led by Mr. Mark Thurstan- the Sea Fury project manager.

Hueys

- Iroquois UH-1B Numbers 893 and 898 have very recently been towed across to Air Affairs at AATP and put into secure storage. Subject to defence approvals being obtained, Air Affairs will operate and maintain the B Model 'Hueys', and the current plan is that after required HARS remote site approvals have been finalized with e.g. CASA, then Air Affairs will take direct responsibility for the maintenance and operation of 1 flyable Huey acting at all times under HARS licences and accreditations. Mr. Chris Sievers CEO Air Affairs is the current project manager for the 'Hueys'.

This above list represents a very positive list of achievements, and I would like to pay my tribute and thanks to all who have so actively and enthusiastically been involved in undertaking and completing a very significant project- the removal of 9 airframes and associated stores from the operational Navy base to either a sponsored short term location (e.g. C47) through to a direct move to a 'home' either with a sponsor (e.g. Hueys at Air Affairs, or the HARS main base at Albion Park.

The airframes are in a very wide range of condition, and represent many challenges, and HARS is in principle committed to the future return of operational airframes back to the long- term home of Naval aviation at Nowra Hill

Michael Hough

Navy Heritage Flight Project Leader
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