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Media Release

Australia's Aviation Heritage

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GRUMMAN ON TRACK FOR NAVY REUNION ...

Restored anti-submarine hunter's first flight for HARS Navy Heritage Flight

Just over 44 years since it was officially retired from service duty, a restored Grumman Tracker is ready to be centre stage at a reunion at HARS Aviation Museum next month.

The S-2 Tracker is the first former Royal Australian Navy aircraft to fly after restoration for HARS Navy Heritage Flight.

Tracker 844 flew from Nowra's Albatross Aviation Technology Park to Shellharbour Airport last weekend.

Following an open tender process and some 15 years of negotiation, in January this year HARS Navy Heritage Flight became the custodian of former Navy Historic Flight aircraft.

In a very busy time for volunteers and staff of major sponsor Air Affairs, Tracker 844 has been brought back to the high safety standards required for flying former defence aircraft.

At the risk of never seeing it fly again HARS Deputy General Manager of Maintenance, William Smith, oversaw bringing the Tracker back to life while Glenn Harley put together a maintenance package to guide the aircraft's operational future.

HARS Navy Heritage Flight project leader Prof Michael Hough said the Tracker is currently housed at HARS Aviation Museum Albion Park.

"Our aim is to preserve Australia's former Fleet Air Arm aircraft for the future," Prof Hough said.

"We are delighted to be trusted by the Royal Australian Navy to be the custodians of these historic ex Fleet Air Arm Airframes and the Tracker is the first of a number of historic aircraft we plan to restore to flying condition and operate in support of RAN Heritage.

"I also want to pay tribute to the strong and constant support of our HARS NHF major sponsor Air Affairs based at Nowra Albatross Aviation Technology Park, and to the vision of their CEO Chris Sievers in recognising the value to the nation of the Navy Heritage Flight."

Where space was at a premium so their folding wings were essential, some 32 RAN Trackers served in an anti-submarine role on HMAS Melbourne, then at HMAS Albatross and in a coastal patrol role off the north-west shelf of Western Australia, from 1966 until 1984.

In addition, former RAN Wessex helicopter 832 and a de Havilland Sea Venom are being restored to static display at HARS Aviation Museum at Shellharbour Airport.

Further restoration work aims to eventually see Sea Fury WG 630, a Dakota C47 and Iroquois UH-1B helicopters 893 and 898 returned to the air.

Tracker 844 is due to fly during the two-day "Friends of the Tracker Reunion" to be held at HARS Aviation Museum on 23-24 October.

Registration for the reunion being organised by Bruce Saville can be made by going to Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/703844286295816/events>

(caption)

Grumman Tracker 844, wings folded carrier style, arrives at HARS Aviation Museum at Shellharbour Airport, ready for the Friends of the Tracker" reunion in October.

(Photo courtesy of Mountainlion Productions, an AV sponsor of HARS Navy Heritage Flight)

ENDS:

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