

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

LOCKHEED HUDSON MK.IIIA A16/199
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 81/AF/1057

Ordered as part of Req. BSC 2817, dated 2nd July 1941, as Wright-Cyclone engined Mk. IIIA, FH174, for RAF under the Lend-Lease scheme but diverted to RAAF prior to delivery. One of a batch of 300 delivered to RAF/RAAF/RNZAF April-July 1942, 94 of them being for the RAAF. Allotted American serial 41-36975. Built at Lockheed, Burbank, California; manufacturer's number 6464. A total of 2,942 Hudsons of all marks were built.

From 26 Jan 40 until May 1942 a total of 247 Hudsons entered RAAF service (A16-1 to A16-247) and operated the type until 1949, though most were sold 1946/7.

- 01 Feb 42 Received by USAAF.
- Feb 42 Shipped to Australia.
- 02 Apr 42 After shipping from manufacturers' in the US arrived for erection at No.1 AD (Aircraft Depot) Laverton, one of 30 delivered that month. Fitted with Wright Cyclone R-1820-87 engines, s/n 59461/2.
- 06 Apr 42 Recorded as awaiting erection at 1.AD.
- 05 Jun 42 Allotted 13 Sqn RAAF as A16-199, one of twelve RAAF squadrons to operate the type in the Australia/South West Pacific areas.
- 30 Jun 42 Received by 13 Sqn at Hughes Airbase, South of Darwin, in the Northern Territories. Recorded as unserviceable until 26 Jul 42. At this time the squadron were involved in an intensive series of raids on Japanese shipping and ground positions throughout the Netherlands East Indies and Timor.
- Logbook of Reg Curtis, Flt Lt. (Retired) RAAF, DFM, Hudson Navigator, records 11 flights in `199 31 Jul 42 - 14 Oct 42. The flights were of 3-9 hours duration; three were curtailed by engine failure. These flights with 13 Sqn included = (Quotes)
- 25 Aug 42 Pilot Plt Off McDonald - from Hughes Field raid on Dili, Portuguese Timor. Port engine failed over central Timor, bombs jettisoned. Returned at night on one engine. Flying time 6 hours 50 minutes.
- 26 Aug 42 Logbook extract of former Sgt Wireless operator/Air Gunner W R J Shaw (correspondence file Mar 2000) records 7.40 hour patrol to Millineimby, taking off from Hughes Field at 06.40; pilot P/O Dixon, with a 1.45 hour return flight to Hughes, leaving Millineimby at 15.45.

- 02 Sep 42 Pilot Plt Off McDonald - Hughes Field to Ambon - reconnaissance sortie abandoned when enemy aircraft sighted, port engine failed one hour from base at Hughes Field. Flying time 7hrs 45mins.
- 25 Sep 42 `Pilot Plt Off McDonald from Hughes Field. Discovered HMAS `Voyager' aground ashore, SE Timor - opened up with ack ack on us, evasive action. The damaged ship was later evacuated and blown up.
- 4 Oct 42 Shaw logbook extract records 7 hour Patrol, taking off at 06.30. Pilot P/O George Oldham from NSW. WOAG's Shaw and Sgt. Parker
- 8 Oct 42 Shaw logbook records 4 hour strike sortie; no shipping seen and no interceptions made. Pilot was again P/O Oldham; took off at 16.00.
- 10 Oct 42 Pilot Plt Off McDonald from Hughes Field, raid on Dili, 18,000 feet bombs on eastern end of town, intensive ack ack fire, return to Hughes Field.
- During Oct 42 A16-199 was also flown by P/O Dixon, F/O Jaques P/O George Oldham and P/O Thompson.
- 14 Oct 42 Flg Off McDonald involved in accident on take- off after engine change at Laverton (He survived and was still alive in 1996)
- 18 Oct 42 Issued 5 AD Ex-13 Sqn, presumably for repairs after the above crash. (Received 21 Oct)
- 24 Nov 42 Issued 13 Sqn Hughes - Received 30 Nov 42 ex-5 AD.
- 21 Dec 42 Plt Sgt Campbell - Anti-Submarine Patrol. Armed reconnaissance for possible floatplane base, west coast Aroe Is. Formation attacked by enemy aircraft. Floatplane attacked and caught fire -minor damage to Hudson.
- Operations over Timor included those in support of `Sparrow Force' - a guerrilla operation that was still fighting on the Japanese occupied island, supplies being dropped to them. See No.13 Squadron operations list, File E.30.
- 03 Feb 43 Further sortie crewed by Reg Curtis. Pilot Wg Cdr Jock Whyte - Hughes Field, raid on Pobo Is, bombs on target, attacked by Japanese `Pete' floatplane, shot floatplane down, intense ack ack fire.
- After missions flown by A16-199 at this time included searching for survivors of sunken ships and downed airmen, and numerous anti-submarine patrols and armed reconnaissances. In 1942 Wg Cdr A J Craze flew '199 as 2nd pilot and Plt Off John Alcock (13 Sqn) on 8 sorties from Hughes Field, and following year as captain flew 10 operational sorties with 2 Sqn on '199. (See file letters).

13 Feb 43 Issued for No.1 Repair and Salvage Unit from 13 Sqn for 240-hour inspection.

08 Mar 43 Issued back to 13 Sqn at Hughes, codes SF -

30 Mar 43 Final Hudson operation by no 13 squadron.

04 Apr 43 13 Sqn to Canberra to reform. A16-199 stayed behind and transferred to 2 Sqn RAAF, who moved to Hughes Airbase that month.

14 Apr 43 Engine change at 1 RSU.

01 May 43 Delivered from RSU to 2 Sqn.

06 May 43 Attack on Maikour and Taberfare. Formation intercepted by Rufe. Bombs jettisoned. One Hudson shot down.

11 May 43 Extract from Reg Curtis log book - he had transferred from 13 to 2 Sqn - `Wg Comdr. Jock Whyte. (Pilot) Hughes Field, reconnaissance search for shipping to New Guinea Coast, to Cape Valsh, Dutch New Guinea. Navigator (Curtis) wounded in stomach. Nav shot down one Japanese `Sally' and awarded DFM.

3 Jun 43 Pilot's flying log book of E.B 'Beech' Stacy (X002-5794) records flight from Hughes to Millingimbi on 'Zebra Search No.2' with same aircraft and four crew returning from Millingimbi to Hughes the following day for Zebra Search No. 3.

9 Aug 43 Logbook of then Flight Sergeant radio operator/gunner, later Flying Officer, John Allan Ford RAAF records take off at 17.20 for strike on Doelah-Kai Island 'All bombs in target area; Big Explosion and Fire'; flying time 6.5 hours.

11 Sep 43 Ford logbook records 7.45 hour flight to from Hughes via various islands, taking off at 10.50.

14 Nov 43 -
23 Dec 43 Log book of Sqn Ldr Ross Moore RAAF (retired) records 7 flights in A16-199, including circuits and bumps and sea search.

30 Dec 43 To 4 RSU for 240-hour inspection.

26 Feb 44 Returned to 2 Sqn ex-4 RSU.

08 Apr 44 See Air International Jun 86 p.310 = last operational flight with 2 Sqn - a Sea Search, captained by Flg Off Roger Kuring - 2 Sqn re-equipping with Beauforts, having been the last RAAF operational unit equipped with Hudsons. This was also the units' last Hudson patrol, A16-199 being the last Hudson with No.2 Squadron.

- 09 Apr 44 Issued to No.3 Communications Unit for experimental duties with Radio Physics Laboratories.
- 16 Apr 44 Received 3 Comms Unit ex-2 Sqn. `Used by AOC EH until due for complete overhaul'.
- 29 Aug 44 Received 2 AD for complete overhaul ex-3 CU.
- 16 Nov 45 Stored 2 AD. (Richmond, NSW)
- 28 Jul 46 Offered to Commonwealth Disposals Commission for sale - one of the post-war-disposal of war assets. Around four dozen RAAF Hudsons were sold to civil operators 1946-49.
- 24 Sep 47 Sold by CDC to Macquarie Grove Flying School, NSW for A£150.00, although the usual price for a Hudson was A£500.00. A total of 48 ex-RAAF Hudsons were sold post-war, including eleven sold for scrap.
- 27 Nov 47 Collected by purchaser and taken to their base at Camden as one of eleven Hudsons acquired by the Flying School.
- 18 Dec 50 Registered to John Fairfax & Sons PTY Ltd, Sydney as VH-SMM. Fairfax & Sons were the proprietors of the Sydney Morning Herald Newspaper and used `SMM and other ex-RAAF Hudsons to air-drop their papers to country areas. Re-engined with P & W Twin Wasp R-1830-SIC3-G engines to conform with rest of Fairfax fleet - Hudson IVs. Test flown on this date.
- 10 Aug 51 Transferred to Herald Flying Services of Sydney - a Fairfax company.
- 27 May 52 Withdrawn from service.
- 02 Mar 53 Struck off Register.
- 12 Oct 54 Returned to service as VH-SMM for aerial survey work under charter to Adastra Airways Pty Ltd, though still owned by Fairfax. Like John Fairfax and Sons Pty Ltd, Adastra were Sydney based.
- 16 Oct 54 Departed for Essendon for engine modifications by T.A.A. On charter to Brown & Dureau Ltd, Aerial Survey Division. Minor airframe work on nose window and newspaper chute. Much of this detail from the www.adastra.adastron website.
- 24 Nov 54 Departed for Moorabbin on completion of engine work by T.A.A (fitment of R-1830-S1C3G engines converted by addition of two speed superchargers in order to carry out aerial photography at altitudes up to 25,000ft). Entered Brown & Dureau hangar at Moorabbin for completion of aerial survey modifications, with installation of an oxygen system, camera hatch and camera mount near the rear door, and installation of two additional framed flat Perspex windows in the nose section.

- 1957 Used for short period by Tamworth, NSW based East West Airlines Ltd on survey work; one of three Hudsons they operated.
- 1958 Returned to John Fairfax & Sons.
- 1959 Leased to Adastral Aerial Surveys, Sydney.
- By March 1960 it was flying in an overall silver colour scheme with Adastral fuselage titling in black. Photo - Anson, Hudson and Sunderland in Australian Service (Wilson) p.134.
- 3 Jun 60 Struck power cables at Humpty Doo in the Northern Territory; the impact demolished the cockpit roof and upper aerials, but the aircraft landed safely with no injuries to the crew. The cockpit roof was repaired to virtually Lockheed Lodestar rather than Hudson standard.
- Aug 64 Photographed at Bankstown alongside preserved Avro Lancaster NX611. Flypast November 2004 p.42.
- 6 Apr 66 Photographed at Mascot, NSW in overall silver scheme and black 'ADASTRAL AERIAL SURVEYS' titles over the cabin windows. Colour photos, Sydney, April 1966 – Anson, Hudson and Sunderland in Australian Service (Wilson) p.131.
- 24 Jun 66 Sold to Sepal Pty Ltd. Sepal was an Adastral subsidiary company for registration of aircraft and employment of aircrew, based at Mascot.
- 14 Dec 66 Re-registered as VH-AGJ. Photo: FlyPast Dec 88 p.34 and December 2012 p.76.
- Jan-Feb 67 Aircraft received major overhaul by Adastral at Mascot. Camera hatch installed in nose compartment by this time and non-standard nose transparency replaced by a conventional Hudson unit. Pitot heads relocated and other internal modifications - e.g. seats and bulkheads made.
- 24 Oct 69 To Adastral Aerial Surveys Pty Ltd, Mascot.
- Mar 70 Repainted in Adastral colours. The scheme for the company's Hudsons included the titling Adastral Aerial Surveys over the fuselage windows on the white-topped fuselage and blue engine cowlings. See Scale Aircraft Modelling April 2002 p.129 for colour side views.
- Flew with Adastral's Mk.III Hudsons VH-AGP, VH-AGS (ex A16-112) and VH-AGX. (VH-AGS now restored as VH-KOY A16-112 and flying with the Temora Aviation Museum, New South Wales; believed to be the only airworthy example). VH-AGP/BKY/FXF/SMO is also preserved by the Australian War Memorial, Canberra in its former colours as A16-105. The remains (major parts) of the crashed VH -

AGX, formerly A16-122, are stored by the RAAF Museum at Point Cook, Victoria-they also have major parts of A16-22.

From Australian Hudson Historian Ron Cuskelly, June 2017; I have added several of my images to the Hudson's history:

<http://www.adastron.com/adastra/aircraft/hudson/vh-agj.htm>

I was surprised to find the Sepal plate inside the door of the Hudson. It is subtly different to one in my possession. It inspired me to add a new page to my website:

<http://www.adastron.com/adastra/company/sepal-placard.htm>

- 1 Feb 72 Struck off register and stored in Adastra hangar at Mascot.
- 11 Apr 73 To Adastra Airways Co.
- 16 Apr 73 After reconditioning bought by Mr Maurice J. Whittington of the Hendon Aeroplane Company, Avalon Beach, Sydney, who sold it to the Strathallen Collection for A\$17,930.00. Adastra was acquired by East West Airlines in 1973.
- 09 Apr 73 Engine change as part of major inspection.
- 13&19 Apr 73 Two Air Tests at Sydney. Certification sheets and other technical ducts from this period to DoRIS May 1945 - AC95/8/1-95/8/8.
- 19 Apr 73 Left Sydney for the last time piloted by 64 year old Lionel M. Van Praag, ex-Flt Lt., RAAF, assisted by metal worker W. Chambers. Flew v/a Charleville (20/4) Mt. Isa (20/4) Darwin (overnight stop) 21/4 - Kupang 21/4 - Sourabaya 22/4 - Singapore 23/4 - Bangkok 24/4 - Calcutta 25/4 - Delhi 26/4 - Karachi 27/4 - Dubai - Bahrain 29/4 - Damascus 30/4 - Athens 1st May - Rome 1/5 - Marseilles 2/5 - Gatwick 4/5 - Prestwick 4/5 - arriving Strathallen 10th May 1973.
On this, her final flight the aircraft covered 12,000 miles in 73 flying hours, giving total airframe hours of 8,494.45. Slight delay at Prestwick due to Strathallen airfield being water-logged. Photo: Central Column Jun 73 p.89; Aircraft Illustrated Jul 73 p.295.

Lionel van Praag wrote of the delivery flight: 'Tropical storms were encountered over Indonesia and the airplane leaked like a sieve and the water damaged a few of the gyro instruments.

At Delhi, India I was interrogated by army blokes at considerable length about the aircraft and the trip they were hardly nice people'.

After Paris then came London through very bad weather using blind flying instruments that were far from good and no windscreen wipers with zero visibility and low cloud along with the other things to contend with it was a blind landing', though 'the Pommy talk down man was terrific'. Mr van Praag died in Brisbane in May 1987, aged 79.

- Apr 75 Aadastra scheme stripped for repainting into 13 Sqn RAAF colours. The aircraft did not fly in Strathallen ownership, though registered with Sir William Roberts as G-BEOX on 25 March 1977. Photo at Strathallen 1974 - Air Enthusiast International Apr 74 p.212. Also Scale Models Aug 77 p.385 (repainted); RAF News week ending Feb 28th 1976 p.7; Lost Aviation Collections of Britain (Ellis) p.118; Aeroplane January 2012 p.47; Flypast December 2012 p.77 (as of July 1976).
- 14 Jul 81 Auctioned by Christies as Lot 14 at sale of part of the Strathallen Collection. Sold to RAFM for £16,000.
- Aug 81 Aircraft moved by Abingdon Salvage and Transportation flight from Strathallen - St Athan for repainting, the wings arriving in September (Aircraft Illustrated Feb 82 p.90).
- 06 Oct 81 Aircraft arrived at Hendon from St Athan. Photo: Control column Mar 82 p.41. FlyPast Mar 82 p.3.
- 02 Nov 81 Reassembly at Hendon complete. Aircraft cocooned and stored by Beverley until Bomber Command Museum aircraft moves complete.
- Jan 82 Aircraft moved into main hall of Museum. Photos - Aeroplane Monthly 1986 UK Aircraft Collections and Museums Guide p.7; Flypast December 2012 p.76.
- 04 Jan 82 Registration G-BEOX cancelled since aircraft formally withdrawn from use 22 Dec 81.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON