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The AIR-BRITAIN Civil Aviation Historical Quarterly



SO1221 Djinn

Falkland Islands Register

The Heston Phoenix

Argentine R Register

Dornier N

The FMA Monoplanes

AIR-BRITAIN - Founded 1948



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Historical Quarterly

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ME-FAD for details of availability and prices
DHC-2 Turbo-Beaver in formation c11.69
prior to delivery from Downsview direct to the
Falkland Islands for service with the BAS. A
review of the complete Falklands Is register
begins in this issue. (photo courtesy: BAS)

COVER PHOTO:

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HEAD-ON VIEW - WHAT IS IT? Number 19.

Another low-wing monoplane and resent enough to look familiar to some. The bracing on wing and undercarriage is distinctive, the engine a five-cylinder radial. Identity and description in the next issue! (via Jack Meaden)

In this issue

Although this issue is the normal 48-page length, we had planned for it to be larger to make up the full annual total. However, the earlier press date for pre-Christmas posting combined with editorial absence from the work desk for three weeks and various factors affecting a number of the articles, all conspired to require us to axe a few pages, mainly affecting serials, Casualties and Feedback. They will all be back with a vengeance next time!

What we do have are complete pieces on the Heston Phoenix from Jack Meaden, on the pre-series Djinn from Martin Best and the first part of what should be a fascinating and

detailed Falkland Islands register from Douglas Rough. Jack's Head-on View series continues with some lesser-known Argentine types which also relate to appearances in the R- register. Editorial acquisition of part of Maurice Gates' photo collection has provided the first of several potential themes for our revived Photo Album feature. Readers who can put forward similar civil themes are still invited to do so.

Finally may we thank all readers for their support in 2005 and wish everyone the best Season's Greetings. For ourselves, may we have fewer problems and more subscribers and contributors in 2006!

Book Reviews

Magnificent Enterprise - Moths, Majors & Minors by Janic Geelen published by NZ Aviation Press. 236 pages, fully illustrated; available from Air-Britain Sales.

Janic Geelen's long-promised seven-volume history of de Havillands commences somewhat curiously at volume two, covering the period 1926 to 1939. One assumes that this was thought to be the volume likely to sell best. This year has seen a spate of DH books, including of course our own on the subject of the Dragon Family. Geelen's book is about the same size and although he hails from New Zealand, does not focus on the antipodes. The project was in fact started by former DH employee Norman Eaststaff, who died in 2002 and bequeathed the project to Janic to complete. Janic previously authored *The Topdressers*, a much sought-after history of agricultural flying in New Zealand.

The book is good; it is full of new anecdotes and others which are usefully re-cycled and all of which make the book very readable. Gems include a very detailed history of the de Havilland Technical School which explained the circumstances of the various aircraft built under their auspices. Fascinatingly, he reveals that the one and only DH.81 Swallow Moth was first rebuilt as the TK.1 before being resuscitated as the prototype DH.94 Moth Minor. So the book adds much to our knowledge and thus deserves our welcome.

Some of the photos included are real rarities, including the tri-gear twin-finned Moth Minor and the beautiful long-range version E.2, neither of which I had seen before.

The book, though expensive in the UK, is a worthy addition to the de Havilland library and will reward many evenings of fireside reading.

De Havilland DH.60 Moth - The World's Most Successful Light Aeroplane by Stuart McKay published by Midland Publishing #24.99 192 pages fully illustrated.

A companion to Stuart McKay's story of the Tiger Moth published in 1999, this comes from the founder of the DH Moth Club and, as to be expected, packs in a wealth of material, old and new. Many of the photos are exceedingly rare and there is a very nicely printed colour section, mainly of the survivors but including shots from over 40 years ago.

The chapters are chronological and clearly show the benefit of access to original DH material. As such, the information presented is both valuable and has a good provenance. It combines technical information with historical fact and reads at a fairly fast pace, such is the amount of material packed into the pages. Perhaps regrettably, a detailed production list is not included (devotees will have to refer back to the early Archives for that!) but there is a useful list of the quite substantial number of survivors. The index is somewhat odd and in a font size that makes it all but unreadable but seemingly it needed to be shoe-horned into just two pages and only just made it!

But there is no doubt that the guts of the book will tell you pretty much most of what you really wanted to know of the type and as such, it is a valuable addition to the library. MPF

COMPLETE CIVIL REGISTERS: 14



THE FALKLAND ISLANDS Civil Aircraft Register 1949-2005

Douglas A Rough

Part One: VP-FAA to VP-FAH

Right: On landing at San Carlos settlement on 7.4.49, G-AJCH's mainwheels sank into soft ground and it overturned. The damaged Auster 5 was shipped to Stanley and on to the UK for repair and conversion to a floatplane.
(V H Spencer)



INTRODUCTION

As a co-author of *Falklands -The Air War* published in 1986, one of my rôles was to produce the Falkland Islands & Dependencies section and within that, the Civil Aircraft Register. Much effort went into its creation because so little aviation research had been done in that part of the world and most of that was fragmented and often inaccurate. That section has passed the "30 Years Test" pretty well, but now it is time to incorporate new data and photographs on the older and newer aircraft on the Register, which don't feature in the book. In the interest of continuity, I am keeping as close as possible to the original information presentation both in style and layout. I'll break occasionally from this to incorporate, within the individual histories, elaboration of certain elements normally more associated with plain text. Hopefully, this should make the histories more readable.

Originally, the idea was to make this a one-off article but it soon became apparent that this was not possible. I envisage publication should be contained within four to five issues.

This first Part covers the introduction in 1948 of civilian flying in the form of two fragile Austers into a very small community of about 2000 persons isolated in the South Atlantic. Aviation, in the form of a local passenger service allied to postal deliveries and ambulance flights, prospered and larger aircraft were later procured. In the early days the ubiquitous Beaver, in floatplane form, proved the most able whereas, nowadays, the equally ubiquitous land-based Islander is equally "King"!

The original Austers were British registered but soon gave way to local registration within the British Colonies allocation system. The fact that VP-F registrations might not be painted on the aircraft in the early days is purely a quirk of small, hard-working, isolated communities who don't need some of the niceties and flumneries we've become used to. The less bump the better is the simplest way of saying it. As time went by, aviation administration became more sophisticated and regulated.

Neglect in the past caused some wobbles in the registration allocation system which manifested itself in confusion between FIDS (and later, BAS) and the Falklands' allocators. The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 effectively removed the Antarctic portion of what had been previously administered as the Falkland Islands Dependencies and it became known as British Antarctic Territory. In 1985, the other Dependencies of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands became constituted as a separate colony of the UK, complete with their own flag and stamps as has British Antarctic Territory. These two changes, but especially the 1959 one, brought ramifications in the form of numerous errors and wrong assumptions associated with the allocation of aircraft registrations....but that's for a later issue. Now read on.

P.S. If anybody has a photograph of Hornet Moth G-ADMO taken before, during (as AV969) or after WW2, or whilst painted as OY-DTI or G-ADMO at Hatfield in the period 11.46 to 11.47, please get in contact with me through the Editor.

INDIVIDUAL AIRCRAFT HISTORIES

VP-FAA Auster 5

c/n 2054

Constructed as Auster Mk.V TW510 during 11.45 and delivered to 20MU Aston Down on 9.11.45. From there it joined the Central Bomber Establishment at Marham on 30.11.45 and thence to 8MU Little Rissington 17.11.47 for storage. SOC 10.9.48 on being bought on behalf of the FI Govt by FIDS (purchase details also completed on 10.9.48) and regd as G-AJCH on 18.8.48. Civilianised as an Auster 5 by AAL at Rearsby, its CofA was issued on 5.10.48. Crated and shipped on 'John Biscoe' from Southampton to Stanley during 11.48. Reassembled at its Stanley Racecourse base and test-flown from there by V.H.Spencer on 19.12.48 prior to the initial air ambulance flight 24.12.48. Although allotted the regn VP-FAA c6.3.49, the FI Regn Cert. to that effect (cancelling G-AJCH on the British Civil Aircraft Register) was not issued until 26.9.49. The aircraft was still marked as



Left: Auster 5 floatplane VP-FAA being manoeuvred by FIGAS pilot Vic Spencer (on left) and his engineer, Dave Jones, on the shoreline of Stanley Harbour on or about 26.6.51. Just visible, on the newly painted blue fuselage, is the only recently applied winged penguin motif and the first recorded use of the FIGAS acronym. (via D Jones)

G-AJCH (but using VP-FAA as a call-sign and for logbook entries) on 7.4.49 when, on landing at San Carlos settlement airstrip, the main-wheels sank into soft ground causing the aeroplane to overturn and sustain damage to the fin and fuselage. V.H.Spencer, the pilot, was uninjured but the aircraft had to be shipped to Stanley and from there to AAL in the UK (date unknown) for repair and conversion to a floatplane. Repaired and converted, VP-FAA was returned by ship to FIGAS at Stanley and, after reassembly, test-flown from Stanley Harbour by V.H.Spencer on 23.6.51. Following its last commercial flight (by J.Kerr) on 24.4.56 the aircraft was retained as a trainer until WFU in 6.56 due to extensive corrosion in the tail and fuselage framework. Subsequently broken up in Stanley and burned in early 1957 with VP-FAB, VP-FAC and VP-FAE (G-ADMO). Regn. cancelled on 4.2.57.

VP-FAB Auster 5 (converted Mk.IV)

c/n 817

Constructed as Auster Mk.IV MS951 during 2.44 and served with many Units until finally delivered to 20MU Aston Down for storage from Netheravon on 4.11.46. SOC 7.9.48 on being bought on behalf of the FI Govt by FIDS (purchase details also completed on 7.9.48) and regd as G-AJCI on 18.8.48. Civilianised to Auster 5 standard by AAL at Rearsby, its CofA was issued on 5.10.48. Crated and shipped on 'John Biscoe' from Southampton to Stanley during 11.48. Reassembled at its Stanley Racecourse base and test-flown from there on 3.3.49 by V.H.Spencer. Although the regn VP-FAB was allotted c6.3.49 and

Note 1: At some point prior to 7.4.49 the following was stenciled in black on Port & Starboard engine cowlings:

FALKLAND ISLANDS
GOVERNMENT
AIR SERVICES

(nowadays often erroneously referred to just as, SERVICE)

Note2: Photographed on, or close to, 23.6.51 wearing a winged penguin motif and the letters F.I.G.A.S. on the rear fuselage which was the earliest confirmed reference to the use of the acronym. The emblem and acronym were applied at the same time as the previously silver fuselage was painted blue locally on return from the UK. FI Regn not visible and believed not worn when photographed, or subsequently. According to FIGAS pilot, Vic Spencer, it was never applied because there was no pressing need to do so. "Everybody knew which aircraft it was!".



Above: A close up of an Auster 5 nose showing the full "Air Services" wording, but it was not until the floatplane version came into service that the acronym "F.I.G.A.S." was applied and entered Falklands vocabulary. (V H Spencer)



Left: FIGAS pilot Vic Spencer briefing a passenger at Stanley Racecourse airstrip for a flight by G-AJCI to one of the settlements. Of note is the full "Air Services" titling on the engine cowling. (V H Spencer)

Right: Ordered as a floatplane by FIDS for an Antarctic rescue mission, Auster 5 VP-FAC is seen at Rearsby in late 8.49 as a landplane. During 9.49 it undertook successful floatplane trials at Beaumaris before going south. (J M Gradidge via Ian O'Neill)
Below: All-yellow Auster 5 floatplane VP-FAC served with FIDS in Antarctica and then with FIGAS until withdrawn due to corrosion in 1953. (via R A M Pitaluga)



subsequently used as a callsign and for logbook entries, the aircraft reportedly remained marked as G-AJCI until an unknown date after 26.9.49 when the FI Regn Cert confirming the VP-FAB allocation was issued, thereby cancelling G-AJCI on the British Civil Aircraft Register. Retained as a landplane and, following its last known flight on 30.10.51, was WFU by FIGAS. Dismantled and stored in a hangar as a spares source until burned in early 1957 with VP-FAA, VP-FAC and VP-FAE (G-ADMO). Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

Note 1: At some point prior to 7.4.49 the following was stenciled in black on Port & Starboard engine cowlings:-
 FALKLAND ISLANDS
 GOVERNMENT
 AIR SERVICES

(Nowadays often erroneously referred to just as, SERVICE).

Note 2: To date no substantiated proof that it ever wore its FI regn.

VP-FAC Auster 5 c/n 1813

Constructed as Auster Mk.V TW476 during 10.45 and then into long term storage at 20MU Aston Down. Bought ex-storage by AAL on 30.5.49 against a FIDS order for a civilianized Auster 5 floatplane conversion to be used on an Antarctic rescue mission. Painted yellow overall with black regn, VP-FAC, by 25.8.49 and ready for its initial test-flight still as a landplane. Flown in "wheel form" to Valley, Anglesey, on 30.8.49 (date of issue of CoA) for 6.45 hrs of floatplane trials by Auster test pilot L.Leetham. Dismantled, and taken by road to Saunders-Roe facility at Beaumaris where the floats would be fitted. First flight from there as a floatplane was on 6.9.49 (with a Press Day on 7.9). Trials continued until 14.9.49 before being transported back to Valley for conversion back to a landplane. Returned to Rearsby as a landplane on 16.9.49. It departed (crated) on 'John Biscoe' from Southampton 12.10.49 for Deception Island, South Shetlands, where it was unloaded, assembled and then air-tested on 18.12.49. Flown as a floatplane from there to the Argentine Islands and rendezvous with (and be based on) 'John Biscoe'. Piloted by Flt. Lt. J.Lewis, it reconnoitered open sea routes around ice floes and clear water areas close to Stonington Island in Marguerite Bay, Graham Land before the 11



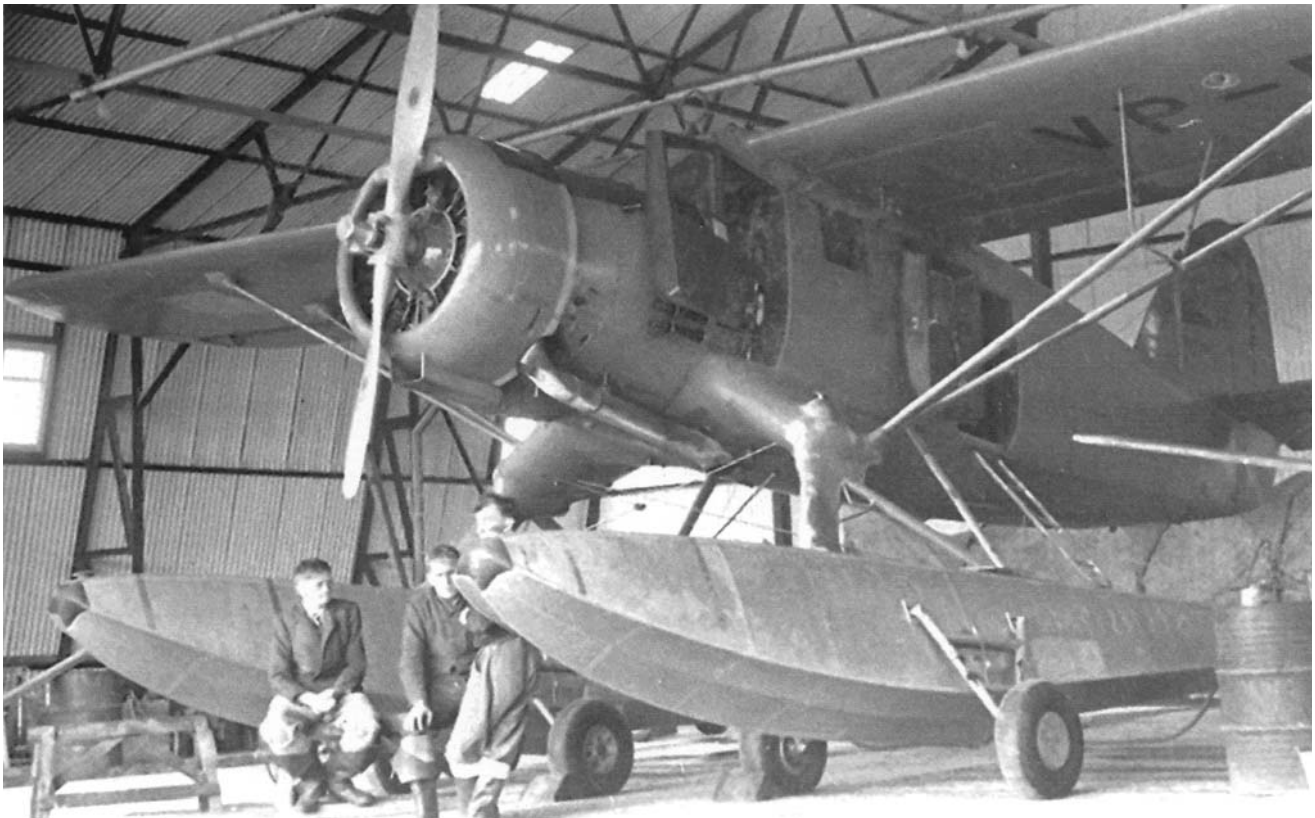
persons marooned on the Island were rescued in three groups by the Norseman VP-FAD and 'John Biscoe' between 30.1.50 and 11.2.50. VP-FAC returned to Deception Island on 19.2.50 where it was dismantled and crated prior to being shipped to Stanley on 'John Biscoe', arriving there 3.3.50. Off-loaded, reassembled by FIDS and then loaned to the FI Govt. after their pilot (V.H.Spencer) had been checked out by Flt. Lt. Lewis on 7.5.50. Sold to FIGAS in 11.51 and remained in service until c8.53 when WFU because of airframe corrosion. Dismantled and stored in a hangar as a spares source until burned in early 1957 with VP-FAA, VP-FAB and VP-FAE (G-ADMO). Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

VP-FAD CCF (Noorduyn) Norseman 5 c/n N29-45

Off-quoted as last aircraft built (but see Note), it was purchased by FIDS from CCF, Montreal, in 1949 for an Antarctic rescue mission. Regn VP-FAD applied to its "International Orange" overall colour scheme before being crated and shipped to the UK. Departed on 'John Biscoe' from Southampton 12.10.49 for Deception Island, South Shetlands, where it was unloaded, assembled as a floatplane and then air-tested on 28.12.49. Flown to the Argentine Islands and operating from there on 30.1.50 and 6.2.50 its pilot (Pt. Off. P.St Louis RCAF) flew the aircraft to Stonington Island in Marguerite Bay, Graham Land, to rescue (in two groups) five of the 11 men marooned on the Island.

Right: A rather evocative silhouetted view of Norseman 5 VP-FAD and Auster 5 VP-FAC taken from the Stanley Harbour shoreline in 1951 with the uncompleted FIGAS floatplane hangar in the background. (via R A M Pitaluga)





Above: Tucked into FIGAS' floatplane 'Robins Hangar' in Stanley is Norseman 5 VP-FAD which had a very successful career with FIGAS and led to the future purchase of its successor, the DHC-2 Beaver. (V H Spencer)

Returned to Deception Island to be dismantled and crated prior to being shipped to Stanley on 'John Biscoe' arriving there 3.3.50. Off-loaded and assembled by FIDS and then loaned to the FI Govt after their pilot (V.H.Spencer) had been type-checked by Pt. Off. St Louis on 2.6.50. Sold to FIGAS later that year and remained in service until c8.53 when WFU due to advanced corrosion in the main undercarriage legs, engine bearers and other metal components. Dismantled and stored in the floatplane hangar until early 1957 when the airframe was scuttled in Stanley Harbour. The floats, however, were retained for many years as part of a raft. Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

Note: 10 other aircraft built after N29-45, all of which served in Canada.

VP-FAE de Havilland DH.87B Hornet Moth c/n 8086

Built by de Havilland Ltd at Hatfield and regd as G-ADMO on 15.3.36 and remained as such until it was delivered to Rochester Station Flight in 4.40 and impressed into military service as AV969 on 10.5.40. Served with a number of Units until finally delivered from Maintenance Command Communications Sqdn, Andover to 5MU Kemble for storage on 10.4.46 prior to being sold in 7.46 to de Havilland Aircraft Co. Ltd, Witney. UK CofA renewed 25.11.46 and intended for delivery to Denmark as OY-DTI. Not delivered because of an import licence problem and remained stored at Hatfield until purchased by FIDS as a readily-available, urgent replacement for their Auster J/1N Autocrat G-AIBI 'Ice Cold Katy' destroyed in an Antarctic accident on 15.9.47. Re-regd as G-ADMO on 26.11.47. Overhauled at Hatfield and test flown there on at least one occasion by P.Fillingham on 21.11.47 before it was crated and shipped from Southampton on 'John Biscoe' to Deception Island, Antarctica, arriving there on 21.2.48. Although unloaded onto the beach there was no point unpacking it because, due to a loading oversight, no skis had been sent with the aircraft. On 26.9.49, while still located at Deception Island, a FI Regn Cert. was issued allocating the regn VP-FAE to the aeroplane, thereby cancelling G-ADMO on the British Civil Aircraft Register. Remained snowbound in packing cases until shipped on 'John Biscoe' to Stanley (arriving 3.3.50) where the crated machine was off-loaded and stored in the landplane hangar. When eventually partially unpacked, an inspection revealed that dampness had affected the plywood construction and some glued joints. Although no longer airworthy, VP-FAE (still marked as G-ADMO) languished in storage until early 1957 when it was burned with VP-FAA, VP-FAB and VP-FAC. Regn cancelled on 4.2.57.

Note: The aircraft's log books were still in existence as late as 1979 in the Aviation Dept office on Govt Jetty, Stanley.

VP-FAF De Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver c/n 500

Purchased new from DHC at Downsview by the FI Govt for FIGAS. Emerged from the paint shop c1.5.53 as a silver airframe with a "Consolidated Blue" cheat line. Test-flown, dismantled, crated c1.6.53 then shipped on 'Fitzroy' to Stanley during 6/7.53. Under DHC supervision, aircraft was unpacked and assembled and then test-flown (by a DHC pilot) from Stanley Harbour prior to handover to FIGAS in 8.53. Due to a regn allocation error, the aircraft had been delivered painted as VP-FAE instead of VP-FAF. By 21.8.56 the mistake had been realized but the aeroplane remained marked as VP-FAE (see Note) until at least 6.6.67, the date of its last known flight for FIGAS. About then it was sold to L.J.Dorney of Mexico City, Mexico and regd N17597. Departed (crated) on 'Darwin' in late 1967 for Montevideo, Uruguay, and onward trans-shipment. Regn (VP-FAF) was cancelled on 15.3.68. As late as 11.84 spare (or replaced) wing marked VP-FAE was lying in the grass at Moody Brook near Stanley.

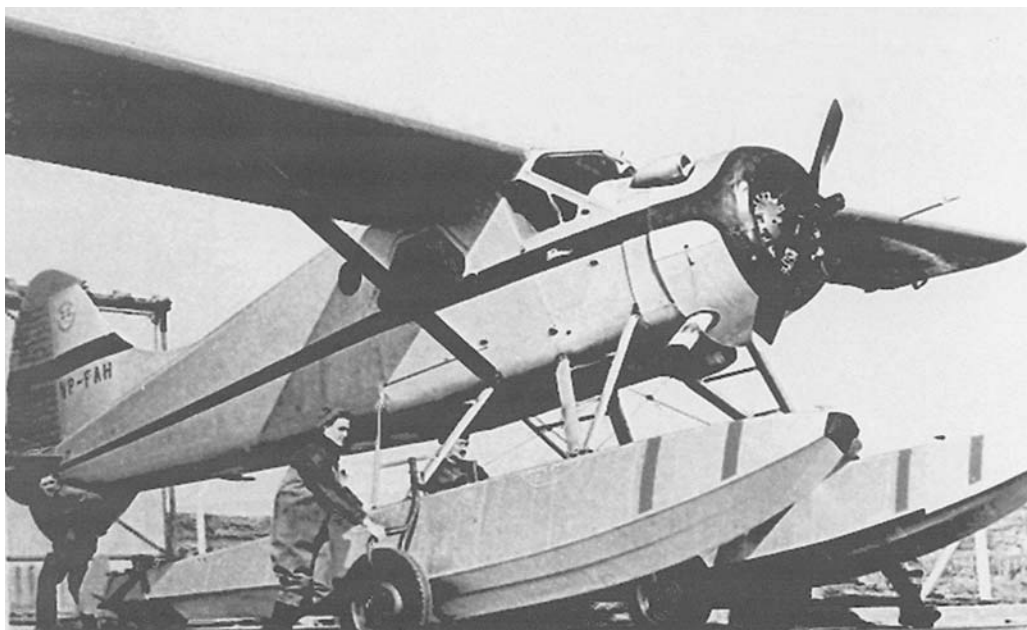
Summary of subsequent history: remained regd as N17597 with L.J.Dorney then to Paul H.Breed in 1969; Simpson Air Service Inc., Ketchikan AK 4.69; regd with Simpson again in 5.71 and then to Kenmore Air Harbor Inc., Kenmore WA in 8.71. Last noted in South East Alaska in 1980. No longer on current 2005 US Civil Aircraft Register. Fate unknown.

Note: As FIDS Hornet Moth VP-FAE was never going to fly, there appeared to be no point in altering anything. This included the paperwork which had knock-on ramifications in relation to later FI Regn allocations to FIGAS & FIDS/BAS aircraft.

VP-FAG De Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver c/n 828

Purchased new from DHC Downsview by the FI Govt for FIGAS. Emerged from the paint shop as a silver airframe with a "Consolidated Blue" cheat line. Test-flown, then dismantled, crated and shipped on 'Fitzroy' to Stanley, arriving there in late 8.55. Under DHC supervision, it was unpacked and assembled as a floatplane prior to its acceptance test-flight from Stanley Harbour by J.Kerr (of FIGAS) on 29.9.55. Due to a registration allocation error, the aircraft had been delivered

Right: Dealing with floating Beavers involved a deal of careful man-handling as shown in this view of VP-FAH taken in Stanley Harbour. (H Peck)



Left: Another view of Beaver VP-FAH on the slipway. The colour scheme of the early FIGAS aircraft was silver with a blue cheat line. This aircraft was also reputed to have had all-red wings. It survives to this day in the USA as N17598. (H Peck)

Below: Although not the best of photos of VP-FAH, it does show what can happen to a floatplane when loss of control during surface manoeuvring leads to 'shore bumping'. (H Peck)

painted as VP-FAF instead of VP-FAG. Although the mistake was realized, and amended regn paperwork issued on 21.8.56, the aircraft remained marked as VP-FAF. While being piloted by G.Toys sometime between 11.57 and 3.58, it capsized and sank in a take-off at the Moro, Douglas Station, East Falkland (there were no casualties). Salvaged and shipped on 'Shackleton' to Stanley but, having been badly damaged during recovery, was deemed to be "beyond economical repair" and reduced to spares and scrap. Regn not cancelled until 15.3.68.

VP-FAH De Havilland Canada DHC-2 Beaver c/n 1129

Purchased new from DHC Downsview by the FI Govt for FIGAS as a replacement for VP-FAG. Wearing a "Consolidated Blue" cheat line on a silver airframe (with the correct regn, VP-FAH applied), it was test-flown prior to being dismantled, crated, and shipped c15.5.58 on 'Fitzroy' to Stanley, arriving there in 7.58. Unpacked and assembled as a floatplane prior to being flight-tested from Stanley Harbour by J.Kerr of FIGAS on 19.8.58. Damaged on 9.8.60 at Shell Point, Fitzroy. It was driven on to a rocky beach at high tide whilst being maneuvered through some narrows. Dismantled and recovered by sea to Stanley for repairs. Remained in service until at least 5.1.67, the day of its last-known flight with FIGAS. Sold c6.67 to L.J.Downey of Mexico City, Mexico and regd. N17598. Departed (crated) on 'Darwin' in late 1967 or early 1968 (reportedly still marked as VP-FAH) for Montevideo, Uruguay, and onward trans-shipment. FI regn cancelled on 15.3.68.

Summary of subsequent history: To Kenmore Air Harbor Inc., Kenmore WA 5.4.68. and was still current, regd as N17598, with them when last noted on 5.8.05.



ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS USED IN THIS ISSUE:

AAL	Auster Aircraft Limited, Rearsby, UK
BAS	British Antarctic Survey
CCF	Canadian Car & Foundry Company Limited, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Dept	Department
DHC	De Havilland Aircraft Company (Canada) Limitedand..... De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Limited, Downsview, Ontario, Canada
FIDS	Falkland Islands Dependencies Survey
FIGAS	Falkland Islands Government Air Services
FI Govt	Falkland Islands Government
MU	Maintenance Unit
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
SOC	Struck off Charge
WFU	Withdrawn From Use