
GUINEA AIRWAYS LIMITED

BRG 8
Series List

In New Guinea in the Bulolo area, 64 kilometres from Lae, many Australians were carrying on a gold mining operation. As this grew it became evident that heavy machinery was needed for the mining, but there were difficulties with transportation into the area because of the terrain and jungle.¹ To alleviate these transportation difficulties a former patrol officer C.J. Levien, who had formed Guinea Gold No Liability in Adelaide in 1926, with C.V.T. Wells as chairman, believed that the idea of using aircraft would overcome the difficulties.²

In those days the aircraft were primitive and very little experimenting had been done to test the value of air freight in any country. Their first aircraft was crated to Rabaul, where it was assembled and flown to Lae. On April 18th, 1927 it flew with its first passenger from Lae to the gold fields. The journey, which had previously taken 10 days on foot had been accomplished in only 45 minutes - and so began air transport in New Guinea.

A separate company was formed, known as Guinea Airways, on 4th November, 1927. During the next few years the company was to become the world's leading freight operator, carrying huge loads by 1930 standards, including complete motor cars. In fact with 4 aircraft Guinea could carry about 16 tonnes a day and carried in one month more freight than all other aircraft in the world actually carried in one year.³

In February, 1937 they commenced a weekly service between Adelaide and Darwin, and for a short time they even operated from Adelaide to Sydney, but this was abandoned when the Darwin service increased to 3 times a week. Guinea Airways won the Royal Mail Darwin/Adelaide trunk route in 1938. With their base in Adelaide they expanded into SA country areas.

Then came WW II and the Darwin route became a life line to the southern states. In January 1942 the Japanese bombed the company's headquarters at Lae, and they lost the bulk of the fleet of 15 aircraft. After the war they were prevented from resuming operations in NG. The Australian Labour Government policy was to nationalise airlines, and although this was not enacted, legislation still had a marked effect on them. They were unable to return to operations in NG and the profitable Adelaide/Darwin service was taken away and passed on to Trans Australian Airlines (TAA). Guinea began co-operating as a junior partner with Australian National Airways.(ANA) The early post war years saw the reduction of Guinea Airways from one of the world's leading prewar freight operators to a small registered airline.⁴ From 1929 -1942 Guinea Airways had carried 105,314 passengers and 73,480 tons of freight. It was an excellent effort for a concern which started with one aeroplane and £50,000 capital and had operated without any government subsidy.⁵

Merger proposals submitted by Australian National Airways were rejected by shareholders, although ANA virtually became managing agents. Ansett Transport Industries Limited (ATI) acquired ANA and so Guinea made an arrangement with TAA on 1st July, 1958 to receive the services previously made available by ANA. This led to a

successful take over offer on the 1st July, 1959 by ATI (Ansett). Guinea Airways became Airlines of S.A. (ASA) on 17th January 1960.⁶ Airlines of S.A. were taken over by Ansett on the 28th June, 1986.⁷

References:

1. "Guinea Gold and Guinea Airways", by R.H. Jenkins, South Australiana, v II, 1972, p. 1-5.
2. "It began with New Guinea Gold". Johnny Green's Journal v. 3, No.4 (April 1983) p. 2-3.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. "Wings of Gold" by James Sinclair, p.300.
6. "It began with New Guinea Gold". Johnny Green's Journal v. 3, No. 4 (April 1983) p. 2-3.
7. Obtained from Mr. L. Connelly, who was the General Manager of Airlines of South Australia.
C.dB.
December, 1990.

Minutes of meetings of directors and shareholders, with printed copies of directors' reports & financial statements. 7 November 1927 - 25 October 1935. 2 volumes	<u>1</u>
Ledgers. 1927-1937. 3 volumes.	<u>2</u>
Journals. 1927-1937. 4 volumes	<u>3</u>
Register of ordinary and preferential share-holders. ca.1928-1950. 1 parcel On loose leaves arranged alphabetically.	<u>4</u>
Cancelled certificates of ordinary shares in Guinea Airways Ltd. ca.1929-1957. 1 parcel. Arranged alphabetically by share-holder and numbered from 1 to C.550.	<u>5</u>
Cancelled certificates of preferential shares in Guinea Airways Ltd. ca.1937-1957. 1 parcel Arranged alphabetically and numbered from 1 to 481.	<u>6</u>
Instruments of transfer of ordinary shares in Guinea Airways Ltd. December 1941 -February 1957. 1 bundle & five folders.	<u>7</u>
Instruments of transfer of preference shares in Guinea Airways Ltd. November 1945 - March 1949, August 1952 – February 1957. 2 folders.	<u>8</u>

Instruments of transfer of shares in Guinea Holdings Ltd. Nos. 1-1005. April 1957 - August 1959. 2 folders.	<u>9</u>
Sundry creditors ledger balance and reconciliation of control accounts - monthly statements. July 1946 - June 1952. 1 parcel.	<u>10</u>
Sundry debtors ledger balance and reconciliation of control accounts - Monthly statements. July 1946 - June 1952. 1 parcel.	<u>11</u>
Machine ledger cash book.. July 1950 – August 1958. 1 volume	<u>12</u>
Pay sheets - pilot salaries. Jan 1954-June 1958. 2 folders. Originals and duplicate.	<u>13</u>
Maps and plans (5 items):	<u>14</u>
Map of town of Salamaua, district of Morobe, n.d. Scale 1 : 5000, Blueprint with pencil notes.	
Map of Lae. Signed J.D. Ecclestone staff (?) Surveyor. 1947. Scale 1 : 5000. Photoprint.	
Plan of Lae showing location of G.A.L. & B.G.D. properties. Signed R.C. 16.6.37. Scale 1 : 1250. Photoprint. Together with typescript notes on Guinea Airways Ltd. buildings. 19 June 1937. 3 pages.	
Guinea Airways Ltd. plan of Lae. T.N.G. n.d. Blueprint. With manuscript additions showing buildings after recapture from the Japanese.	
Lae Aerodrome. Produced by Department of Civil Aviation. 10 March 1948. Scale 1" = 200". Photoprint.	