

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN AVIATION MUSEUM

SIGNIFICANT AVIATOR PROFILES

THE 1954 REDeX AROUND AUSTRALIA AIRCRAFT RELIABILITY TRIAL JULY/AUGUST 1954

REDeX Company

Dating back to 1922, REDeX has long been a part of driving history. Many drivers remember getting a shot of REDeX at service stations, as a quick and easy addition to the fuel tank to improve engine performance. REDeX even had its own club, which gave loyal members special benefits.

Over the years, REDeX has remained at the forefront of engine technology and has continued to ensure its products clean the engine fuel system, reduce emissions and improve the life of engines to give a better drive.

REDeX Car Trials

While Formula One and related competitions remain supreme in the world of motorsport in the 21st Century, over sixty years ago a much longer type of race captured the imagination of racing fans in Australia when the REDeX Australia Trial was competed for from 1953 until 1955. Trials continued further but with different sponsors.

The REDeX car trials were huge with the general population as well. I remember as a child when the newspaper headlines each day and the newsreel picture theatres in town had the latest movies of the cars going through, and the celebrities playing up for the camera. It was just so exciting in mid-1950s Australia.

Unlike any other race before or since, the REDeX Trial was a special rally which saw over two hundred amateur and professional drivers circumnavigate Australia in a collection of cars, the majority of which were nowhere near appropriate for the tough conditions. Sponsored by REDeX for the first three years, the event was later dubbed the "REDeX Reliability Trial" in homage to the company's products that were thought to considerably improve the reliability and performance of the competing cars.



The competing drivers drove over 10,000km. The drivers didn't know the route until they arrived, and they had to average different speeds along the course. It was a drive into the unknown and at that time it was the second longest trial ever undertaken. It remains as a watershed in endurance rallies in Australia.

The first race in 1953 went up the east coast as far as Townsville, then west through Mount Isa and north to Darwin, then travelled through the Red Centre via Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, then

Port Augusta, Adelaide and Melbourne to the finish in Sydney. An incredible 246 starters left Sydney on the 1954 REDeX, this time doing a full circuit of Australia over 15,000 kms.

REDeX Air Trial

As the car trial generated much community interest, REDeX decided to hold an air trial. They needed a group with aviation expertise so the Royal Aero Club of New South Wales (RACNSW) became involved as the supervisory body supported by Aero Clubs on the route.

The rules were released on 30 April 1954 by Brigadier Macarthur-Onslow and Commander Hudson from the RACNSW. All types of aircraft were eligible: biplanes, monoplanes, rotor planes, amphibians, and helicopters, not exceeding an all up weight of 12,500 lbs, registered with the Civil Aviation authorities, and issued with a Certificate of Airworthiness. Each aircraft had a set time to cover each sector and points were to be lost for late arrival, plane damage or non-arrival. Entries closed on 2 July 1954. The REDeX people anticipated there possibly would be seventy entries.

During the operation of the trial there was to be a 24-hour alert for search and rescue supported by the Department of Civil Aviation and the RAAF. Lincoln bombers specially equipped to parachute food, water, and medical supplies to forced-down fliers, would standby constantly at Amberley, Garbutt (Townsville) and Darwin, and at East Sale.

One of Australia's then leading aviation authorities, Air-Marshal Sir Richard Williams, the Director General of Civil Aviation, was most enthusiastic about the event. He said: "Such a route around Australia, covering much sparsely-settled and poorly mapped country, will call not only for skill and efficiency, but will show the possibilities of the use of light aircraft for business and private purposes. Modern light aircraft are considered as thoroughly reliable, but they have never been called upon to undertake such a comprehensive trial before."¹

The primary aim of the trial was to test airmanship and to encourage the flying of light aircraft. Trial conditions stipulated that pilots must not exceed the set time on each stage. Seals on certain aircraft components must not be broken. Pilots must fly visually throughout and not before sunrise or after sunset.

The trial was to be run in accordance with the Federation Aeronautique Internationale rules and all competitors had to possess an FAI Competitors Licence.

Detailed Rules:

1. The race was to be based on aircraft reliability and pilot professional standards, and their ability to maintain their aircraft in a serviceable condition.
2. The contestants had to plan their flights in accordance with FAI rules and for an aircraft reliability race. This included pre-planning for weather, landing conditions and fuel consumption whilst maintain a strict schedule.
3. Constant communications were also to be maintained where possible.
4. Safety and survival standards were to be observed at all times.
5. Assistance was to be given if requested and where possible.
6. The aircraft was to be maintained at all times in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and DCA regulations.
7. All flight records, maintenance records and route maps were to be retained and submitted for scrutiny at the end of the race. Flight logs were also required to be submitted for review before being returned to the pilot.

¹ Barrier Miner – Wed 28 July 1954 Pg 3

8. All landing points were to be considered mandatory and accommodation was made available to the competitors. These were identified on the Tracks & Distance data sheet and the submitted flight plans.
9. Each competitor was issued with a Carnot Card for the purchase of fuel enroute.
10. In the event of an emergency or crash landing the provisions outlined in the emergency procedures data sheet was to be adhered to where possible. This data was represented on the RAAF Townsville search and Rescue sheet.
11. If radios were installed, radio procedures and etiquette were to be maintained at all times and no unnecessary communications were to be made ensuring the radio frequencies would be open in an emergency.
12. Where possible the aircraft had to be protected from the elements while on the ground.
13. There was to be no malicious act taken by a competitor against another competitor. If there was evidence that this rule was not observed the competitor will be disqualified without recourse to appeal. If damage was severe restitution of costs against the perpetrator could be ordered.
14. The race organizers had to submit the race results for recording purposes with the FAI.
15. In the event of any serious incident where communications with an airport authority or race organizers was not possible the local police would be the point of contact.
16. The organization of the supply of aircraft parts was the responsibility of the pilot.
17. Fuel and oil supplies were to be at designated points managed by the Vacuum Oil, Shell Oil & Mobil Oil Companies along with the REDeX Oil Company.
18. Race rules and FAI conditions were to be observed at all times.

Aircraft Sections:

Section A – aircraft with a speed lower than 120 mph

Section 1 – aircraft with a speed between 120 mph and 150 mph

Section 2 – aircraft with a speed greater than 150 mph

Total prizes and awards were £1,800 (\$3,600) from various sponsors. The winner would receive a replica of the REDeX Trophy and £1,000 in cash. Smaller cash prizes would be given for minor placings.

Originally the trial was to be completely around Australia, but sponsors and entries were slow in coming. As a result, the route schedule was reduced on 12 July 1954 to the following:

Day	Schedule
1	Bankstown – Coffs Harbour – Archerfield
2	Archerfield – Bundaberg – Rockhampton
3	Rockhampton – Mackay – Townsville
4	Overnight in Townsville
5	Townsville – Hughenden – Cloncurry
6	Cloncurry – Duchess – Mount Isa – Cammooweal – Tennant Creek
7	Tennant Creek – Daly Waters – Katherine – Darwin
8	Free day in Darwin
9	Darwin – Katherine – Daly Waters – Tennant Creek
10	Tennant Creek – Alice Springs
11	Free day in Alice Springs
12	Alice Springs – Oodnadatta – Leigh Creek
13	Leigh Creek – Port Pirie – Parafield
14	Parafield – Nhill – Moorabbin
15	Moorabbin – Wagga Wagga – Bankstown

The total distance was 5,238 statute miles.



Produced by András Marosszéky (Amos Computer Services)

Competitors

Section A (18 entrants – 16 started)

Entrant	State	A/c Type	Registration	Points Lost	Details
L. Berryman	NSW	Auster J1	VH-AYO	130	
L. Crowley	PNG	Percival Gull Four II	VH-UTP		Force landed William Creek 12-8- 54 - WITHDREW
R.D. Moore/Maskeline	NT	Auster III	VH-BCF		Force landed on a claypan at Aileron 80 miles north of Alice Springs on 10- 8-54 - withdrew
W.A. Murrell/E Robinson	NSW	Auster J5F	VH-AGM	Nil	
M.J. & R.D. Soutar	NSW	DH82 Tiger Moth	VH-AIJ	63	
L.A.Wall & J.C.Vine	Qld	Fairchild 24G	VH-UYH	41	

R. Hall & J. Neal	NSW	DH87 Hornet Moth	VH-UYX	53	
A.J. 'Titus' Oates	NSW	DH87 Hornet Moth	VH-UUW	15	Was placed 2 nd but lost on appeal
J. Marosszeky & P. Allard	NSW	DH82 Tiger Moth	VH-AGK	35	
M.W.Hopp & H.A.Collings	QLD	CZL MRAZ M1C Sokol	VH-AXY		Withdrew at Wagga Wagga 15-8-54
I.A. Chubb	NSW	CA6 Wackett	VH-AJB	98	
J.A. Carter	VIC	Ryan STA	VH-BWQ	570	
C.B. Martin	NSW	DH94 Moth Minor	VH-ADL		Cr. Remer Springs NT 10-8-54 and withdrew
R.N. Hunt	NSW	DH 90 Dragonfly	VH-UXS	472	
N.S. Buckley	SA	Auster J5	VH-ADS	17	
S.F.Shipp & J. Potts	SA	DH82 Tiger Moth	VH-AML	28	
C. Hyland	NSW	Stinson L5	?		Entered the race but did not start
R G Carswell & W.R. Dalgleish	QLD	Zlin Aero	?		Entered the race. Did not start?

Section 1 (10 entrants - 7 started)

Entrant	State	A/c Type	Registration	Points Lost	Details
F.J. Montgomery/ S. Simar	QLD	Percival Proctor III	VH-BEG	234	Winner of Section 1
A. M. Lowe/D. Herbert	QLD	Percival Proctor I	VH-BCX	284	
J. Nicholls		Percival Proctor I	VH-BQQ	361	
W.E. James		Cessna C-34	VH-UYG	507	
R.W. Locke		Miles M.65 Gemini 1A	VH-BJZ	586	
R.H. Hamblin & Howard		Percival Proctor V	VH-BJY		Withdrew 080854 Coffs Harbor
R. Smith & R. McNeill	WA	Miles Gemini	VH-AKV	484	
C.D. Kelman	Qld	Percival Proctor III	VH-ABN		Entered the race. Did not start?
A.H. Jones	NSW	Miles Gemini	VH-AJC		Entered the race. Did not start?
J. Palmer (Air Charter Pty Ltd)	NSW	Avro Anson	VH-BLL		Entered the race. Did not start?

Section 2

Entrant	State	A/c Type	Registration	Points Lost	Details
A. Glass	NSW	CA17-20	VH-BVM		Withdrew on 8 August on the Brisbane/Bundaberg leg due to handicapping

Support aircraft:

Note that VH-AHZ DHA3/3 surveyed the first route in June/July 1954.



From Left: W.A. Murrell, E. Robinson, REDeX Official Bankstown August 1954 'The Aeroplane' 10-9-54



Pierre Allard and Jeno Marosszeky via Peter Marosszeky

All competitors were required to carry emergency flares, camping gear, ration packs, warm clothing, suitable maps and navigation equipment. Fuel supplied by either the Shell Company, Mobil Oil Company and the Vacuum Oil Company was to be available at the nominated landing points.

Entrants came from all walks of life, they included sheep and cattle stations operators who flew their own aircraft.



*REDeX Air Trial Line-up
Bankstown August
1954 'The Aeroplane'
issue 10-9-54*

Pastoralists used them on their properties for personal transport, locating herds and inspecting the vast area of their properties in Australia's outback. Others were city businessmen who fly for a hobby, airline pilots, trainee pilots building up their hours and gaining experience and other pilots who wanted to see the country. The only female in the trial was Dorothy Herbert who navigated for A M Lowe from Julia Creek in his Percival Proctor. Jenő Marosszék was previously a pilot in the Hungarian Air Force and the Luftwaffe, both in WWII. His co-pilot Pierre Allard was later an Ansett pilot. A.J.(Titus) Oates was an ex-RAAF WWII 100 Squadron Beaufort pilot and after return to civil life flew for various charter operators. He attempted to fly Mosquito VH-KLG to the UK for an air race but crashed in Burma. He later purchased Mustang VH-AUB. Lawrie Crowley later formed 'Crowley Airways', a helicopter and fixed wing charter operator in Lae, PNG. Arnold Glass was a car dealer, racing car driver and flew a DH82 and the Mustang.

The following entrants were all pastoralists: L Berryman, W A Murrell, L A Wall, A Carter, R N Hunt, A M Lowe, R W Locke, C D Kelman and R Hamblin. N S Buckley was the Chief Pilot of Guinea Airways, who sponsored him. Joe Vine of Maryborough QLD was an aircraft engineer who earlier helped to rebuild Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith's Southern Cross in 1929. Harry Collings was a TAA pilot. Syd Shipp was a tractor mechanic and Jack Potts was in the RAAF as an engineer/mechanic.

For Section A aircraft the trial started on 1 August 1954 from Bankstown via Coffs Harbour for refuelling and then onto Archerfield. The departing aircraft were watched by a crowd of around a thousand spectators.

Section One aircraft were scheduled to start the trial on 6 August and the last group Section 2 (only one entry) was scheduled to start on 8 August.

On the first day, the contestant in Section A who lost most points was R N Hunt. He lost 354 points for landing in Newcastle to change a magneto. All aircraft were blessed with fine weather conditions.

The second day of the trial saw aircraft depart Archerfield at 0630 heading for Rockhampton via a refuelling stop in Bundaberg.

On the third day the weather was once again perfect for the hop from Rockhampton to Townsville via the refuelling stop in Mackay. Aircraft took off at three-minute intervals with M Hopp's Sokol first and J Marosszék's Tiger Moth the last to leave. Several thousand spectators saw the aircraft while they were in Rockhampton.

After finishing the sector from Rockhampton to Townsville, both N S Buckley & W A Murrell had lost no points and were the only ones in that position. Buckley commented that the handicaps were fair but left no margins for mistakes. Cruising speed schedules had been fixed at about 10 mph above the normal cruising speeds of most aircraft in the trial. To this stage competitors had virtually followed the east coast.

While landing at Townsville one of the Tiger Moths was forced off the runway by a sudden gust of wind. However, some astute manoeuvring saw the aircraft recover without damage.

The trial across to Mount Isa and Tennant Creek was without incident as all sixteen aircraft in Section A arrived successfully. The following day, 7 August, three Section A aircraft were damaged on landing at Darwin due to strong gusty crosswinds. The other thirteen aircraft landed safely after the flight from Tennant Creek via Daly Waters. The flying conditions had been perfect that day except for some turbulence between Katherine and Darwin. The three damaged aircraft were Ryan VH-BWQ (A. Carter), Hornet Moth VH-UYX (J Neal and R Hall) and Tiger Moth VH-AML (S F Shipp). The latter had landed on an unserviceable runway and damaged the port leading edge and starboard aileron. No one was injured. The Ryan was damaged as the tailwheel lock pin sheered and broke. The Hornet Moth had ground-looped near the end of its landing run and damaged the undercarriage. All three aircraft were repaired during the layover day in Darwin with required aircraft parts flown from Sydney on a Qantas Constellation that was passing through on a London flight.

On the flight from Darwin the DH94 Moth Minor VH-ADL had an engine failure and crashed on a road near Remer Springs 80 miles (135 kms) north of Tennant Creek. A passing motorist found the pilot, Clive Martin, of Granville, Sydney, strapped unconscious in the cockpit of his overturned aircraft. The pilot was seriously injured and conveyed by an ambulance to Tennant Creek Hospital for treatment.

Meanwhile Section 2 entrant Arnold Glass started the trial from Bankstown on 8 August but withdrew later that day on the Archerfield to Bundaberg leg due to handicapping. He considered he had been given an impossible handicap and he had no hope of maintaining the high speeds set by the trial organizers. They had allowed him only 27.5 minutes to fly the leg from Archerfield to Bundaberg.



VH-BVM Mustang Bankstown Aug 1954 – G Goodall



A Glass Mustang Pilot

Significant rain and fog troubled the contestants around Alice Springs. At that stage Nobby Buckley in Auster VH-ADS was leading jointly with W A Murrell in Auster VH-AGM as both had lost no points at Alice Springs on 10 August. Others in Section A grounded at the latter were: Shipp 10 points, Soutar 22, Marosszeky 8, Crowley 13, Hunt 426, Oates 6, Hopp 49, Wall 31, Chubb 66, Carter 482, Berriman 71, Hall 24 and Moore 35. The latter had forced-landed on a claypan at Airleron 80 miles north of Alice Springs on 10 August and was out of the race.

Section 1 competitors were meanwhile delayed in Darwin after having left Bankstown on 6 August and followed the same route as the Section A aircraft.

There was a sensation at Alice Springs when a crew alleged another crew had landed on a bush strip and refuelled from two cars. The charges were made to the control. Hall & Chubb in Wackett VH-AJB reported they had seen Carter flying VH-BWQ going in to land on a bush strip 30 miles (55 kms) north of Alice Springs. However, Carter denied the allegation. Clive Martin, of Sydney, who overturned his Moth Minor after crash landing 130 miles (215 kms) north of Tennant Creek on 10 August was reported to be in a satisfactory condition.

After leaving Alice Springs, the Percival Gull VH-UTP did not make the next stopping point at Leigh Creek as it forced-landed at William Creek on 12 August and withdrew from the trial. Full details of this incident may be found at: <http://www.goodall.com.au/australian-aviation/percival-gull/percivalgull.html>

On 13 August 1954 the competitors still in the trial arrived at Parafield after having flown that day from Leigh Creek via Port Pirie. Just before Port Pirie, N S Buckley in Auster VH-ADS had an engine failure for a short time but it restarted just before a forced-landing and he managed to land at Port Pirie safely and on time Both Buckley and Murrell were still leading with no points lost. While at Parafield the competitors were looked after by members of the Royal Aero Club of South Australia (RACSA). Publicity for the trial was provided by Mr Ron Sullivan of Radio 5AD, so the population of Adelaide certainly heard of the race and large crowds came to see the aircraft. Captain Buckley, one of the competitors, and a member of RACSA later stated that the reception they received at Parafield was the best hospitality they received during the trial.



L. A. Wall or J. C. Vine with Dr S. Dunstone (Pres RACSA) Parafield Aug 1954 (Via South Australian Aviation Museum Inc)



VH-UYX DH87B PFLD -8-54 – T. HALLIFAX (via South Australian Aviation Museum Inc)



VH-AXY SOKOL PFLD AUG 1954 – T. HALLIFAX



VH-UUW DH87B PFLD AUG 1954 – J. EVANS

Aircraft departed Parafield on 14 August 1954 heading for Nhill and Moorabbin. After overnighing at Moorabbin, the aircraft flew via Wagga Wagga (for refuelling) to Bankstown where the trial finished on 15 August.

Unlike the car trials, which continued through the 1950s, the air trial was not repeated. I believe the reason was that it lacked the larrikinism of the car trials and the stunts of the big names who took part, like 'Gelignite' Jack Murray, Jack Davey etc who enthralled everyone at the time. The air crews who took part enjoyed it but there wasn't the excitement for the general public.

Placegetters for the 1954 air trial were:

Section A

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 st | W. Murrell | VH-AGM Auster – £1,000 (\$2,000) |
| 2 nd | N.S. Buckley | VH-ADS Auster V – £400 (\$800) |
| 3 rd | S.F. Shipp DH82 | VH-AML –£200 (\$400) |
| 4 th | L. A. Wall | VH-UYG – amount unknown |



W. A. Murrell – The Advertiser 16-8-54



S. F. SHIPP and N. S. Buckley – The Advertiser 12-8-54

Multi-engine Aircraft

1st R.N. Hunt VH-UXS DH90

Section 1

1st F. J. Montgomery VH-BEG Percival Proctor



VH-UXS DH90 Moorabbin Aug 1954 – E. COATES



*VH-BEG PROCTOR Bankstown Aug 1954
- G. Goodall*

References:

Thanks to the following individuals:

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Good Neighbour (ACT) 1-9-54
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1954 REDeX (Aircraft Reliability) Trial by Peter Marosszeky FRAES, MAOPA (USA) MIAMI Adjunct Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Science, School of Aviation UNSW Director, Aerospace Developments Pty. Limited.

132 pages (Peter is the son of Jeno Marosszeky one of the entrants in the 1954 air trial).

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Royal Australian Federation of Aero Clubs Conference 8-5-54

Nigel Daw

History Group

January 2019

REDeX EXTRA PHOTOGRAPHS



Miss Dorothy Herbert – only woman pilot 'The Aeroplane' issue 10-9-54



*VH-AGK DH82 Bankstown Aug 1954
– P. Marosszeky*

Last minute engine check



VH-AIJ DH82 Bankstown August 1954 – E Coates



VH-AJB CA6 WACKETT Wagga Wagga August 1954 – R. F. Neate



VH-AKV MILES GEMINI Bankstown August 1954 – G. GOODALL



VH-BJZ MILES GEMINI Bankstown
August 1954 – J. HOPTON

RED_EX congratulates De Havilland

... and their pilots on the remarkable achievement of the De Havilland "Drover" in surveying the Redex Aircraft Trial (1954) route in 68½ flying hours. Redex also extends its thanks and appreciation to De Havilland Aircraft Pty. Ltd., for the use of the aircraft.

Around Australia in 68½ hrs.

Amazing RED_EX Aircraft Successes!

- Flight Licut. L. J. Whiteman (at left) sent the following telegram after breaking the Trans-Tasman Record in his fully Redex-ed Mustang in July, 1953 (Time: 3hrs. 27mins): "Aircraft performed perfectly on Redex STOP Very pleased with result—Whiteman".
- A Proctor III owned by W. Jamieson, Newtownards, N. Ireland, recorded 142 m.p.h. airspeed and 122 deg. F. oil temperature before Redex—recorded 148.5 m.p.h. and 116 deg. F. after Redex.

RED_EX

the amazing Additive oil that makes good oils better!

1954, 20.

'AIRCRAFT MAGAZINE'

- AUGUST 1954

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