



South Australian Aviation Museum

Aircraft Profile

AVRO ANSON I EF954

Twin engine light military transport, aircrew trainer, general reconnaissance bomber

HISTORY OF EF954

During the Second World War, 1,028 Avro Anson aircraft, including EF954, were operated in Australia as training aircraft for Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) aircrew. Many were based at RAAF stations including Mallala, Mount Gambier, and Port Pirie. The Avro Anson was employed to train pilots in multi-engine aircraft operations, as well as navigators, wireless operators, air gunners, and bomb aimers.



Avro Anson EF954 was the first aircraft acquired by the South Australian Aviation Museum (SAAM) and has a significant association with aviation training in South Australia. The aircraft was delivered to No. 2 Aircraft Park (AP), Bankstown, on 28 December 1942, before being transferred to No. 6 Service Flying Training School (SFTS), Mallala, on 3 April 1944.

Following the end of the war, large numbers of surplus Anson aircraft were disposed of through the Commonwealth Disposals Commission, with many purchased for civilian use, particularly by primary producers. EF954 was purchased by Mr Reg Franks, a farmer from Mallala, on 30 May 1947. Mr Franks retained the aircraft until donating it to the South Australian Aviation Museum on 18 May 1984, shortly before the Museum's inaugural establishment meeting in June 1984.

The museum display aircraft is principally constructed from the original airframe of EF954. It also incorporates components from Avro Anson AW965, which subsequently operated in civilian service as VH-FIA with Flinders Island Airlines. These additional components were acquired by the Museum in 1994.



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HISTORY OF TYPE

The prototype Avro Anson first flew at Woodford, United Kingdom, on 7 January 1935. A total of 11,020 aircraft were manufactured, making the Anson one of the most widely produced British multi-role aircraft of the Second World War.

The Avro Anson originated from a civilian aircraft requirement. In May 1933, Imperial Airways commissioned A.V. Roe & Company (Avro) to develop a six-passenger charter aircraft. The resulting Avro 652 was powered by two Armstrong Siddeley Cheetah V radial engines, providing a cruising speed of approximately 150 mph (240 km/h) and a range of 600 miles (960 km). As the likelihood of war in Europe increased, the Royal Air Force (RAF) Coastal Command identified a requirement for a twin-engine maritime reconnaissance aircraft. The Avro 652 was subsequently adapted for military service as the Avro Anson, with an initial production order for 174 aircraft.

During the Second World War, the Avro Anson served extensively with the air forces of Britain and the Commonwealth. While initially employed in maritime reconnaissance and coastal patrol duties, it became best known as a training aircraft for pilots, navigators, wireless operators, air gunners, and other aircrew.

The Anson entered Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) service in November 1936. It was the RAAF's first aircraft fitted with a retractable undercarriage and its first monoplane bomber. During the Second World War, Australian-operated Ansons undertook coastal reconnaissance and anti-submarine patrols before transitioning primarily to aircrew training roles.

Following the war, large numbers of surplus Ansons entered civilian service throughout Australia. They were widely employed by commercial operators and regional airlines, including East West Airlines (New South Wales), Butler Air Transport Pty Ltd (New South Wales), MacRobertson Miller Airlines, Woods Airways (Western Australia), and Qantas Airways in Papua and New Guinea.



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On 30 June 1962, the Department of Civil Aviation grounded all but two Avro Ansons operating in Australia because of concerns regarding the long-term structural integrity of the aircraft's wooden wing construction and bonded adhesive joints. The only aircraft exempted were two Avro Anson Mk.19s fitted with all-metal wings. One was deregistered in 1965, while the second remained in service until 2002, when it was sold to New Zealand. It was subsequently restored to airworthy condition and returned to flight.

Technical Specifications

Engines: 2 x 320 hp Armstrong Siddeley Cheetah IX radial engines

Length: 12.9 m

Maximum take-off weight: 4,720 kg

Wing span: 17.5 m

Height: 4.2 m

Cruising speed: 128 kt (240 kph)

Range: 1,270 km (700 nm)

Crew: 1 pilot and 2 trainees (navigator and wireless operator)