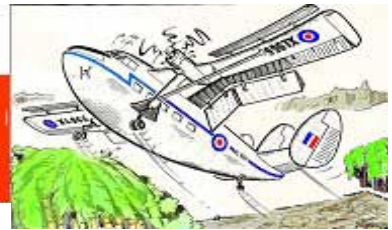


Scottish Aviation TWIN PIONEER



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- The Royal Malaysian Air Force veterans remember the first aircraft
- Twin Pioneer receives Media Coverage in 2007

"Rekindling fond memories"



Some of the pioneers who gathered earlier this year to celebrate their time on the RMAF's Pioneers were from left to right , sitting - Mohamed Ngah Said, Hamid Ibrahim, Unknown, Raju, Unknown, Sulaiman Sujak, kneeling - Adrian David (New Sunday Times), and standing - Richard Stevensen, Unknown, Unknown, Unknown and Soon.

It was those days when the boys in the jungle depended on aircraft for supplies as they battled the communist guerrillas. ADRIAN DAVID meets up with some of the Pioneer pilots and the men who kept the aircraft, the workhorse of the air force's supply programme, in the air.

There has been a considerable gap between this and the last issue of the Newsletter – nothing sinister, it has just been that way in New Zealand. The country has been closed since the 'catastrophe in Cardiff' when the All Blacks were unceremoniously bundled out of the World Rugby Cup.

This Newsletter has no other purpose than to provide a bit of nostalgic fun for a few people who believe that the Twin Pioneer, in some way, had an involvement in their lives. It is published in a liberated way by Ron Tannock in New Zealand.
Contact him at r.tannock@xtra.co.nz

The pioneers and their Pioneers



Pilot Officer Soon, Pilot Officer Bakri, Pilot Officer Dass and an unknown young man pose in front of an unidentified Twin Pioneer of the RMAF

FLYING them was a challenge and they could go where other aeroplanes could not. There could not be a better endorsement of the Pioneer supply planes that the fledgling Royal Malayan Air Force operated from 1958. This thumbs-up of the sturdy aircraft, purchased from Scottish Aviation of Prestwick in Britain, was given by retired Air Vice-Marshal (now major-general) Datuk Sulaiman Sujak, the country's first air force chief. 'Flying the Pioneers was challenging,' said Sulaiman at the 'Air Force Pioneers Night' in Petaling Jaya last month. 'As the environment was very tight, we had to be very precise — right speed and altitude.' The 'Pioneers Night' was held for about 60 of those involved in the aircraft operations from 1958 till the Pioneers were decommissioned in 1969. Among those who turned up were the ground services crew, policemen and army air despatchers. Of course, the pilots who put their lives on the line in jungle operations during the communist insurgency and Confrontation with Indonesia, were also present.

The air force operated 16 Twin Pioneers and eight Single Pioneers from the Sungai Besi airbase in Kuala Lumpur. The propeller-driven Pioneers — the heavier Twin version had a range of 640km and the single version 960km — were used for transport and liaison purposes. This was the era before the arrival of helicopters, and the Pioneers' outstanding short take-off and landing capabilities made them the backbone of the air force's efforts to supply and send reinforcements to the men fighting on the ground. The Pioneers serviced the remote interiors like Fort Tapong (now submerged under the Temengor dam), Fort Kemar, Fort Betis, Gua Musang, Kroh and Grik. The aircraft were also used for air drops to various forts such as Chabai, Legap, Betau, Dixon, Telanok, Brooke, Yum, Belatim, Wais, Hau and Ber.

While the Single Pioneer had one pilot and up to 225kg of supplies or four passengers, the Twin Pioneer could carry up to 16

troops or 900kg of supplies. The Twin Pioneers were decommissioned in November 1969 (the Single Pioneers were laid off a few years earlier) to make way for modern aircraft like the Dart Herald and de Havilland Caribou. Kol (Ret'd) Maximilian Theseira said the Pioneers were basic aeroplanes with just standard navigation aids that were sufficient to 'get you around'. 'That meant we had to be on the ball to fly it,' said Theseira, who retired as principal staff officer of the Air Staff Division. 'The Pioneers were basic aeroplanes, unlike the modern ones, which are equipped with a host of gadgets like the fly-by-wire (flying with the aid of computers and auto-pilot system) and glass cockpit environment. The first Twin Pioneer delivered was the 'Lang Rajawali', which began operations in 1958 soon after it arrived from Britain. Former air force chief, Lt-Jen (Ret'd) Datuk Seri Yunus Tasi, recalled how he was part of a joint RAF-RMAF team that flew the first four of 10 Twin Pioneers from Britain to Malaya in 1960. 'I had just obtained my wings in Britain and was given the job of taking delivery of the aircraft,' said Yunus. 'All in, it took us 28 days, 22 refuelling stops and we covered thousands of kilometres. It was one heck of an experience for a young pilot like me.' Yunus likened the Pioneer to a 'workhorse that did its job well'.

Brig-Jen (Ret'd) Soon Lian Cheng, said Pioneer pilots had to learn from scratch, the tough way. 'There were no flight simulators or sophisticated navigational aids,' said Soon, who obtained his wings with the Royal New Zealand Air Force in 1962. 'It was all manual and physical flying.' Airstrips, Soon said, were short and tight like runways on aircraft carriers. 'Flying the Pioneers was very challenging given their limitations. We had to negotiate mountain ranges, hills, deep valleys and track rivers before finding that tiny strip tucked in a sea of green to land'.

Kol (Ret'd) Datuk Abdul Hamid Ibrahim, who served with the Royal Malay Regiment, said the Pioneers were a 'vital link between air and ground forces. While it would take days to send supplies by ground, the Pioneers could do it in a matter of hours,' said Hamid, who is now World Veterans Federation (WVF) president.

Lt-Kol (Ret'd) Richard Stevenson said the Pioneers were the backbone for sending reinforcement and supplies to remote jungles and mountain forts. Stevenson, who retired as Staff Officer 1 (Logistics) with the Army Field Command said the pilots often battled rough terrain and weather to make precise airdrops. 'Unlike larger aircraft, Pioneer pilots had to come rather low for accurate air drops, thus increasing the risk of being downed by enemy fire. Being smaller, the Pioneers had to make more frequent sorties as their payload was between 225 kg and 1,080 kg. The Valettas and Hastings could carry up to 1,800 kg.' Stevenson said after Britain disbanded its army in Butterworth, the Malaysians began operations from the Jalan Ampang camp in Kuala Lumpur and flew operations from Sungai Besi.

Mej (Ret'd) Maniam Nandasan, who joined Malaysia Airlines after retiring from the air force and then joined Air Asia last year, said the Pioneers were a good grounding for his career. 'The basics learnt in flying the Pioneers put me in good stead and I moved on to flying VIP jet engine aeroplanes like the HS 125 and Fokker 28 with the air force. 'I joined MAS and progressed to become captain of a Boeing 747.'

Former television newscaster Robert Lam, who served four years with the air force, said the Pioneers were a test of one's training and discipline. 'There was a sense of independence, flying especially the Single Pioneers,' said Lam, now a human resource consultant.

Former air force chief Lt-Jen (Ret'd) Tan Sri Mohamed Ngah Said said the gathering rekindled fond memories. 'We are planning a grander gathering in conjunction with the air force's 50th anniversary next year.'

In the piece above, one of the Pioneers talked about 'modern fly-by-wire aeroplanes. At a recent Warbirds meeting one old timer was, surprisingly, singing the praises of fly-by-wire aeroplanes. It was only as this praise was drawing to a close that it was realised that his fly-by-wire required pulleys, fairleads, rods and levers.



The Tentera Udara Diraja Persekutuan or Royal Malayan Air Force's first aeroplane, FM1001 of No 1 Squadron, c/n 529, being named by Tunku Abdul Rahman at a naming ceremony on 24 April 1959. FM1001 was first named *Lang Rajawali*, it was later renamed *Rajawali* on the Tunku's orders.



FM1001, as it is today, sitting in the sunlight, at the RMAF Museum in Kuala Lumpur



FM1064, c/n 581, at Malacca Museum
Photo Ian Lim

THREE MORE TWIN PIONEERS ARRIVE FOR R.M.A.F.

KUALA LUMPUR Sat -

Three more Twin Pioneers costing \$1.8 million have arrived here from Britain for the Royal Malayan Air Force.

The planes were piloted by Flying Officer Mohamed bin Ngah Said, Flight-Lieut. Mohamed bin Taib, Pilot Officer Gophal Ramdas, Pilot Officer Arthur Cheah Nee Wah and Flying Officer Lawrence Phong Kiew Mun

The ferry operation, which began on May 19, was under the command of Flight-Lieut. D. J. Coxell.

Each plane is equipped with loud speakers and can accommodate 16 passengers. It can also carry heavy equipment.

During the 15-day flight from Britain, the planes encountered storms in the Middle East and tropical monsoons over Calcutta.

The RMAF now has 12 Twin Pioneers and five single-engine Pioneers. Two more Pioneers are expected here in August.

[Departing Scotland as above, the three aeroplanes—FM10067, 68 and 69 arrived on Saturday, 2 June 1962—Editor]



Picture shows the five Malayan officers, from left: Flying Officer Mohamed Ngah Said, Flight Lieut. Mohamed bin Taib, Pilot Officer Gophal Ramdas, Pilot Officer Arthur Cheah Nee Wah and Flying Officer Lawrence Phong Kiew Mun



Here are five Twin Pioneers lined up for a photograph. This photograph has been around for many a year but when and under what circumstances was it taken? It would be tempting to say Kuala Lumpur because there never were five aircraft ready to be delivered at one time at Prestwick. However, it does look like Prestwick and the SAL boys did like lining them up – remember the photograph of the 12 RAF and the five Philippine Air Lines aeroplanes! So we will go for Prestwick around May 1962 when FM1066, '67 and '68 were delivered and FM1069 was only a few days away from its first flight and FM1070 was wheeled off the production line for an early outing. The production line would not have been very long by this time consisting of two aircraft, the said FM1070, and c/n 582 later to become FM1071 a year later.



Trainspotter's

Corner

by

Anorak

Twin Pin's press coverage 1

Ex apprentice Andrew McClymont gave me the 'heads up' that *Pilot* the UK mag for pilots [obviously, Ed]

had featured *Primrose*, aka G-APRS, in its regular Flight Test column. Peter Turner's report was well balanced and honest. Peter had also gone to some trouble to undertake some research and the result was a pleasing blend of flight test experience and history. Peter R March's photographs were of the highest quality.

The best quote? -

'It may not have the best proportions in aviation, but the Twin Pin makes up for it in sheer majesty.'

Ahhh! Scottish Aviation! Thank you, Andrew!

Twin Pin's press coverage 2

Aeroplane magazine, the UK magazine for classic types, both aeroplanes and readers, featured Twin Pin G-APRS in its columns in its November issue. It showed 'RS in all its previous liveries and a pen portrait of its history.

Aerospace – The Royal Aeronautical Society

John Yeeles, under strict instructions from his Domestic Control, was cleaning out his memorabilia. I hope it was a token gesture rather than a 'cleaning out'. Rather than send a copy of *Aerospace* he had going spare to the local Issaquah, Washington State, dump he sent it downunder to the *Shaky Isles*.

The publication date of the mag is February 1975 and it is a *Salute to Prestwick*. It commemorated the 40th anniversary of Prestwick as an aviation centre. Articles by Wg Cdr NJ Capper - Prestwick 1935-75 and by Capt John Blair - The Development of the Bulldog and Jetstream feature strongly. Among the many items and features in this *Aerospace* was the photograph of the RAeS President and Mrs Laight travelling to Glasgow for the Main Lecture at the Prestwick Branch on the 12 January 1975. It was the first day of British Airways' Shuttle service and was operated by Trident – Ahhh! de Havilland! - there were nine Tridents assigned to the service. For the record 'Cap' Capper gave his lecture on the development of Prestwick as the Main Society Lecture that year.

Thank you, John!

Search for Photographs

Another of our readers, this time from New Zealand, has been active in sourcing and providing Twin Pioneer photographs. In the middle of the year there was a great deal of activity in unearthing 'new' images. John Mounce is a prolific photographer and has contact with many similarly minded people around the world through the Air League.

Here is a list of the Twin Pioneers that do not have a photograph in the Chronology -

Construction No./Serial/Registration

510 – JZ-PPY
525 – XL991
530 – XL994
531 – XL995
536 – XM284
541 – XM287
542 – XM288
547 – G-APUM, 9N-RF7
551 – XM942
563 – FM1004
564 – PIC-430, XW-PBJ
565 – PIC-432, XW-PBN
566 – G-APXL, PIC-433, XW-PBO
568 – FM1003
580 – FM1062
587 – FM1067
588 – FM1068

Please search your archives, lofts and other hiding places. Cyril Large, ex 209 Squadron tells me he has a photograph of 551 XM942 after its accident at Long Akah in Borneo – keep scanning, Cyril!



FM1064 with loudspeaker