

# WHAT'S NEWS

## at Gippsland Aeronautics

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### USAF AUXILIARY ORDERS AIRVANS

The United States Air Force (USAF) Auxiliary, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), has confirmed an initial order for the supply of GA8 Airvans

Following the Airvan's highly successful debut at EAA AirVenture 2002 after an epic flight from Latrobe Valley in Australia to Oshkosh Wisconsin, Gippsland Aeronautics was invited by the CAP to participate in aircraft flight evaluation trials. The trials were conducted at Buena Vista Airport in Colorado, at an elevation of 7,946 feet, with flights also made from Leadville Airport, the highest airport in North America and third highest in the world at an elevation of 9,927 feet.

The CAP carried out an extensive flight trials program during which rigorous performance and handling tests were carried out with particular emphasis on slow speed manoeuvrability. The Airvan was able to meet or exceed all of the CAP mission criteria.

CAP personnel were impressed with the large cabin, which will suit their highly sophisticated mission avionics equipment and also with the excellent visibility from the Airvan's large windows.

Gippsland Aeronautics was then invited to tender for supply of Airvans and following a successful tender bid the Australian company was appointed to supply Airvans to CAP on an



*The first Airvan for the USAF Auxiliary prepares for trans Pacific ferry flight.*

Indefinite Delivery - Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) basis for the next 3 years.

The signing of an initial order was dependant on US certification. Now that FAA certification has been achieved, CAP have placed their first order. The first CAAP Airvan, specially equipped to their requirements, has departed on its delivery flight across the Pacific Ocean. This Airvan will be on display for the Civil Air Patrol at EAA AirVenture 2003 at Oshkosh, Wisconsin in late July.

### AIRVAN CERTIFIED IN NORTH AMERICA

Gippsland Aeronautics, recently announced that both the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Transport Canada have issued Type Certificates for the company's GA8 Airvan utility aircraft. Both agencies have certificated the Airvan to Amendment 54 of Federal Aviation Regulation (FAR) 23, which is the latest and highest airworthiness standard available to general aviation aircraft worldwide. Gippsland Aeronautics understands that the GA8 Airvan is one of the first - if not the first - aircraft to achieve this standard in either country.

Gaining these coveted accreditations has been a long road for Gippsland Aeronautics. Following the Type Certification of the company's agricultural delivery aircraft, the GA200, in 1991, the company founding directors, Peter Furlong and George Morgan, determined that there was a market niche for an 8 seat utility transport aircraft to replace the world's ageing fleet of work horse aircraft such as the DHC Beaver and Cessna 206/207 types. Design work started in 1994 with the first flight of a "proof of concept aircraft occurring in March 1995.

Australian Civil Aviation Authority (CASA) Type Certification of the Airvan was gained in October 2000, against Amendment 48 of FAR 23. The Airvan then entered production with delivery of the first GA8 taking place



*A line up of six Airvans, two of which are bound for the USA.*

in December 2000. The Airvan has subsequently been Type Accepted in South Africa, Botswana, Indonesia, Belize and New Zealand on this basis. In March 2003 CASA upgraded the certification of the Airvan to Amendment 54 status as a precursor to North American Type Approval.

US and Canadian certification is vitally important to the company as it opens the door for Airvan Sales into the USA and Canada. Due to the ageing fleet of utility aircraft flying in North America the company has received many enquiries from operators, who are looking for a modern replacement aircraft. Initial sales efforts will concentrate on operators who have land plane requirements with a program to fit the Airvan with floats commencing shortly.

# DIRECTOR'S *cut*



From the time we cut the first metal for the first Airvan to the recent achievement of US and Canadian certification of the type, the project has always been very much a team effort. So many people have contributed to the project in so many ways that it would not be possible for me mention them individually in this column. However, to all those many friends of the Airvan, from all around the world, who have participated in or contributed to the project in any way, large or small, please accept the grateful thanks of myself and the other Directors of Gippsland Aeronautics for your valued assistance in bringing the Airvan to this stage of development.

Following the certification of the GA200 Fatman in 1991, George Morgan and I perceived a market niche for a no nonsense workhorse 8 seat utility transport aircraft between the Cessna 206 and the Cessna Caravan and we knew that we had a set of wings from the GA200 project that had the necessary performance.

Design work started on the GA8 Airvan in 1994 with the first flight of a "proof of concept aircraft occurring in March 1995, just in time to show the Airvan at the Australian International Airshow held at Avalon in that year. The response we received at Avalon showed us that we were on the right track.

After 10 years of hard slog, involving thousands of hours of static testing, hundreds of hours of flight testing and a couple of tonnes of paper, not to mention light years of meetings, we gained Australian Civil Aviation Authority (CASA) Type Certification of the Airvan to FAR 23 Amendment 48 in October 2000.

During 2001 we managed to get the aircraft into volume production with early deliveries in Australia and our first international sales.

In 2002 our efforts centred on achieving North American certification and launching the Airvan on the world market, with appearances at Asian Aerospace Airshow 2002 at Singapore, the EAA AirVenture 2002 at Oshkosh USA, African Aerospace and Defence Airshow 2002 at Johannesburg South Africa, the US AOPA Convention at Palm Springs, and a sales tour of New Zealand. These marketing efforts appear to have been very successful. Coincidentally, there has been a resurgence of interest in the GA200 with promising enquiry coming from Canada, New Zealand and South America.

We are now moving into a period of consolidating our ability to manufacture the aircraft in the quantities required. Whilst further certification effort is required, particularly in gaining European JAA certification and in finalising a number of product enhancement projects, such as the cargo pod, hopefully we will now have time to look to the future and investigate the possibilities for expanding our product range.

**Peter Furlong**  
Managing Director

## AIRVAN AIRBAGS



Gippsland Aeronautics has commenced a joint program with AMSAFE Aviation, the US aviation seat belt manufacturer, to certificate the unique AMSAFE Aviation Inflatable Restraint (AAIR) system in the GA8 Airvan Utility aircraft. The AAIR system is being hailed as the most important improvement in occupant safety since the seat belt.

Whilst the Airvan is already certificated to the highest international crashworthiness standards, the AAIR will provide a large increase in safety for Airvan occupants. Statistics show that the majority of light aircraft accidents occur in the take off and landing phase of flight and that a very high percentage of these accidents are survivable provided that the occupants are able to evacuate the aircraft after the accident.

AMSAFE Aviation initially developed their Airbag system for airliners and now 18 airlines around the world are flying with the AAIR installed on selected seats. They are now being fitted to Boeing 747s and may be standard equipment on the huge Airbus 380 airliners.

In the event of an accident the integral inflatable bag stored in the fixed half of the seat belt will deploy. Once the AAIR system's multiple sensors detect and verify a crash impact, a volume of gas deploys a large airbag "pillow" up and away from the occupant's lap belt within milliseconds. This is a much safer system than the automotive system and can be used by a wide range of occupants from small child to a large adult.

The AAIR installation has an electronic module control unit that ensures that the bag will only activate in a genuine crash situation and has been rigorously tested so that inflation will only occur when certain parameters are exceeded, to prevent inadvertent deployment.

The Airvan was chosen for this program, as it is one of the first general aviation to be fitted with seats that comply with the vertical impact requirements of the latest safety regulations.

Gippsland are now selling their seat system to other light aircraft manufacturers.

Gippsland Aeronautics is working with AMSAFE Aviation to achieve US FAA Certification to FAR23 of the AAIR system on the GA8 Airvan making one of the first general aviation aircraft in the world to have this safety innovation. Certification is anticipated during the later half of 2003.

The system will be able to be fitted to existing Airvans.

AMSAFE Aviation is represented in Australia by Bill Nott of ATS Australia Pty Ltd, Main Beach, Queensland 4217, Phone: +61 7 5531 4944, Fax: +61 7 5531 3336, Email: willnott@ozemail.com.au

or for further information on AMSAFE products please visit their web site at [www.amsafe.com](http://www.amsafe.com).



# TECHNICALLY *speaking*

## AIRVAN PASSES FAA NOISE TEST

Latrobe Valley based Gippsland Aeronautics has received confirmation that the GA8 Airvan has complied with the US Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) FAR Part 36 Amendment 22 Noise Testing requirements.

Successful completion of this test is a requirement for certification of the Airvan by the US FAA and was the last physical test required of the Airvan to gain this coveted certification. The test program was conducted at a remote noise testing range at Elk Hills-Buttonwillow Airport near Bakersfield, California during early December 2002.

The collection and analysis of the test data was carried out under the direction of Mike Bucha, Vice President in charge of Aircraft acoustics of the Los Angeles based Acoustical Analysis Associates Inc. (AAAI). Greg Lewis, Deputy Chief Test Pilot, of the National Test Pilot's School (NTPS) of Mojave California, flew the Airvan during the trials. Greg is an FAA Designated Engineering Representative (DER) of the FAA. The NTPS were also involved in the spinning and dynamic flight flutter testing of the Airvan. Company Director George Morgan was present at Buttonwillow to co-ordinate the tests and configure the aircraft on behalf of Gippsland Aeronautics.

The next challenge for Gippsland Aeronautics will be to reduce noise even further, to meet the European Joint Aviation Authority (JAA) standards. The European standard is significantly more severe than the either the US or Australian standard. Mr Morgan said that the company had already embarked on a program, with propeller manufacturer Hartzell, which they are confident will allow the Airvan to meet the European requirement.

## RECENT AIRVAN DELIVERIES

### Wings Over Whales - New Zealand

Airvan 024, ZK - KBZ was flown direct to New Zealand in March 2003 for delivery to Wings Over Whales at Kaikoura on the east coast of the South Island where it is used for whale watching tourist flights. Kaikoura is one of the few places in the world that these magnificent creatures can be seen year round. Wings over Whales can be contacted at Kaikoura Airfield, PO Box 55, Kaikoura, New Zealand. Phone +64 3 319 6580, Fax: +64 3 319 6668, Reservations 0 800 2CMOBY or view their website [www.whales.co.nz](http://www.whales.co.nz)



### Shine Aviation Services - Western Australia

Chris and Lorri Shine, owners of Shine Aviation Services of Geraldton, Western Australia took delivery of Airvan 029, VH - AQL, on 11th of June and immediately departed on a transcontinental delivery flight to their home base at Geraldton. Shine Aviation operates a range of aircraft, including a floatplane, and provides flying school, charter and a maintenance workshop services. Shine Aviation Services will use the Airvan for general charter and for a developing tourist operation particularly to the scenic Albrohlos Islands off the coast of WA. Shine Aviation Services can be contacted at Geraldton Airport, Geraldton Western Australia 6530, Phone 08 9923 3600 or visit their website - [www.abrohlos.com.au](http://www.abrohlos.com.au)



## AIRVANS OVER THE TASMAN

In the very early hours of Tuesday October 8th 2002 company Flight Test Manager David Wheatland departed Gippsland Aeronautics home base at Latrobe Regional Airport in Airvan 017 (VH- AAP) and flew direct to Nelson in the South Island of New Zealand, a distance of 1242 nautical miles, arriving at 1535 (local) after a flight time 9.5 hours. The purpose of this flight was to position an Airvan in New Zealand to carry out a sales and demonstration tour.

At Nelson, David teamed up with Ray Patchett of Patchett AG AIR, the NZ GA 200 Distributor, Adrian McHardy, the Textron Lycoming Regional Sales Manager and Steve Scott (Check Captain Air Nelson) who accompanied him on the tour. After removing the ferry system and refitting the seats, they departed for Hamilton where the Airvan was put on display at the NZAA Aerial Agricultural Association the Annual Conference.

Following the conference the Airvan was flown to a number of centres in both islands of New Zealand and was demonstrated to a large number of Air Charter operators. Many NZ operators were found to have been following the GA8 progress for some time and they were all very keen to fly the Airvan.

The tour proved to be most successful as the demonstrator Airvan was immediately sold to Air Safaris and Services of Lake Tekapo. Subsequently another Airvan was ferried across the Tasman for tourist flight operator Wings Over Whales of Kaikoura and other NZ orders are being negotiated.

*Airvan at Queenstown.*



## AIRPORT *update*

### Innovation Festival Opening

Gippsland Aeronautics' recently played host to the launch of the Latrobe Innovation Festival. A highlight of the launch was a skydiving display by Ms Janine Hayes, Australian Women's Skydiving Accuracy Champion, who delivered the "Launch Message" to Mr Peter McGauran MHR, Minister for Science and Member for Gippsland, after jumping from a GA8 Airvan.

### Airport Works

Latrobe City Council is currently pushing ahead with plans to extend and upgrade the Gippsland Aeronautics aircraft manufacturing facilities at Latrobe Regional Airport. The first project will be the extension of the carpark by 50 parking spaces to accommodate the company's growing work force. The second project will see the extension of one of the production buildings to three times its present size.

### City Council Logo

To mark the excellent relationship between Latrobe City Council and Gippsland Aeronautics and the City's commitment to developing the local aviation industry through it's Aviation Industrial airpark project the Company demonstrator aircraft GA8 Airvan VH-FGN now proudly sports the Latrobe City wave of energy logo and the slogan Latrobe City - A New Energy In Aviation on its tail fin.

## our PEOPLE



*Chuck Norris completing the final inspection of a new Airvan.*

In this issue's **'Our People'**, we feature Greg, better known as "Chuck", Norris. Chuck is the GA8 Production Line Supervisor at Gippsland Aeronautics.

After leaving school Chuck joined the Royal Australian Air Force and qualified as an Airframe Structures Technician. After completing his trade training at RAAF Wagga he served on RAAF stations throughout Australia, including RAAF East Sale in Gippsland, working on all types of aircraft in the RAAF inventory.

For a time he was posted to the RAAF Museum at Point Cook and worked on the restoration of the Museum P51 Mustang and the antique Walrus Amphibian. His last posting in the Airforce was to RAAF Amberley in Queensland where he worked in the leading edge technology composites workshop maintaining the RAAF's front line F111s long-range bombers.

When it came time to leave the RAAF Chuck chose to return to Gippsland because he knew, from his time at East Sale, that the area suited him. He now resides at Stratford just north of Sale, which is a strategic location for the pursuit of his main interest in life, trout fishing in the remote mountain streams of Gippsland.

He joined Gippsland Aeronautics about 4 years ago and spent a short while working on the GA200 Fatman before commencing work on the first production GA8 Airvan. Chuck has seen the GA8 production rate increasing from an original three months per aircraft to the present rate of one every 11 working days.

Chuck leads the GA8 production line team, which has workers of all ages ranging from new apprentices to veteran tradesmen. "They are a great team to work with and it is very rewarding to see their dedication to maintaining quality and increasing the Airvan production rate", he said.

## CLIENT profile

### Air Safaris and Services - New Zealand



*Demonstrator Airvan at Lake Tekapo Airport.*

Air Safaris and Services is one of New Zealand's largest scenic flight airlines flying 9 aircraft including Cessna 207 and Cessna Caravan and GAF Nomad aircraft. The recent acquisition of an Airvan is part of a fleet replacement program.

Air Safaris is located in the South Island of New Zealand and caters for visitors wishing to explore the breathtaking beauty of New Zealand's World Heritage National Parks. Bases at Lake Tekapo and Glentanner Park service the Mount Cook National Park and a base at the Franz Josef Glacier services the Westland National Park.

From these bases Air Safaris flies the world famous "Grand Traverse" tour taking in the highlights of the dramatic Southern Alps, including Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain, the Tasman and Murchison Glaciers, the main divide of New Zealand, Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers. The company also provides Charter options at Mt Cook and Queenstown as well as scenic excursions to Milford Sound and other resorts.

Richard Rayward, Managing Director of Air Safaris, says, "The Airvan has proved absolutely excellent for our scenic operation, with payload, ease of loading, viewing and performance with a load, being significant factors for its success. The ability to load last passengers through the rear sliding door and via the aisle, without concerns over C of G is a great boon, which with the "user friendliness" of the Airvan makes the operation so much easier."

**Air Safaris can be contacted at:**  
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Fax 64 3 6806740  
Email [richard@airsafaris.co.nz](mailto:richard@airsafaris.co.nz)  
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### Your Thoughts

Your contributions to *What's News at Gippsland Aeronautics* are most welcome. Please let us know of any articles you would like to see appear or other suggestions or feedback you may feel is relevant. Information can be directed to Marguerite Morgan at Gippsland Aeronautics.



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