

WHAT'S NEWS

at Gippsland Aeronautics

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MISSION AIRVANS

The Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) Australia, a Christian aviation group, continues to add to its Airvan fleet and is now operating no less than nine Airvans, seven of which are flying in Arnhem Land in Australia's Northern Territory.

MAF recently took delivery of a new Airvan for operation in Papua New Guinea. This is the first Airvan to enter service in PNG.

This Airvan is also the first MAF aircraft to be painted in the new MAF colour scheme; designed to match MAF's Flying for Life logo. Over time other aircraft from the MAF fleet will be painted in this same style.

Following a dedication service at Ballarat in Victoria the Airvan carried out an extensive promotional and goodwill tour through various centres in eastern Australia including the National Capital Canberra. The tour provided opportunities for MAF supporters to view the Airvan, before it was ferried from the MAF HQ at Mareeba Qld to Mt Hagen to PNG in mid-May.

This aircraft will initially be based in Mt Hagen and, after a period of pilot and engineering familiarization, will commence service mainly at Rumginae in the Western Province close to the border with Papua. MAF also took delivery of another brand new Airvan, in mid May, for use in Aceh, thanks to the generosity of relief organization Samaritans Purse.

Since January, MAF has been working closely with Samaritans Purse (SP) and other agencies delivering aid to thousands of families left stranded and destitute by the Boxing Day (2004) tsunami.



MAF Board Chairman Russell Stebbins, Peter Furlong Director of Gippsland Aeronautics, Samaritan's Purse (SP) Chairman Graeme Pearson, SP Executive Director Leigh Brown and SP Board Director David Dawson at the Airvan handover ceremony at Latrobe Regional Airport.

Now, partner agencies Samaritans Purse and Operation Blessing International have been contracted to rebuild 5000 homes along the devastated coastline and the MAF Airvan will be providing vital air support for this program.

"The partnership between Samaritans Purse and Mission Aviation Fellowship has made and will continue to make a very real difference in the lives of many people devastated by the tsunami," said MAF CEO Bill Harding.

AIRVANS AT AVALON

The Australian International Airshow 2005, held at Avalon Airport near Melbourne in March, proved to be a premier event on the world's airshow circuit. The Airshows Down under team, under CEO Ian Honnery, did an excellent job of showcasing the Australian aviation industry at all levels. Experienced international airshow attendees commented that the exhibitions in the Expo Hall were amongst the best seen anywhere.

Gippsland Aeronautics had no less than six Airvans in attendance at Avalon. Two of these were in the red, white and blue livery of the USAF Auxiliary Civil Air Patrol. A third Airvan sported the new Mission Aviation Fellowship "Flying For Life" colour scheme while Airvans four and five were factory-fresh "Vanilla White" aircraft. The sixth Airvan did duty as the jump ship for the Flag jumper at the opening of each day's airshow and the also for the spectacular night airshow.

Gippsland Aeronautics gained excellent exposure at Avalon 2005, receiving a great deal of interest both from Australasian operators and from visitors from all parts of the world, and anticipates good results from the show.



Ian Wilson, Chairman of the Australian International Airshow 2005, with the Gippsland Aeronautics Airshow team at Avalon.

The Gippsland Aeronautics display was supported by the presence of Colonels Drew Alexa and John Kershtenstein of the United States Air Force Auxiliary, the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). These CAP officers are responsible for the development of Project Archer, an airborne hyperspectral imaging system, which will support Civil Air Patrol missions related to search and rescue and disaster relief. CAP will deploy Project Archer on the GA8 Airvan.

A highlight of the Show for Gippsland Aeronautics was the presentation of the Airshow Chairman's Award for Exhibition Excellence by Mr Ian Smith, Chairman of the Aerospace Maritime and Defence Foundation of Australia Limited.

DIRECTOR'S *cut*



Gippsland Aeronautics continues to expand into the international arena on a number of fronts.

A major goal for the company has been to gain certification of the Airvan in Europe.

The issuing of a type certificate for the GA8 Airvan by the European Aviation Safety Agency is now imminent. This will enable the aircraft to be sold and operated in the 25 countries comprising the European Union.

Sales in sub Saharan Africa continue at a healthy rate with Tanzania now being added to the list of countries in that part of the world that operate Airvans.

In the Americas Airvans are operating in Canada, the USA including Alaska, Belize and now in Costa Rica in Central America. The company recently made an extensive demonstration tour of Alaska attending the Alaska Airmen's Airshow at Anchorage.

Closer to home the Mission Aviation Fellowship is now operating the first Airvan to enter service in mountainous Papua New Guinea and have taken delivery of an Airvan for operation in Indonesia.

In this newsletter you will read of the secondment of an Airvan to the MAF relief effort in Aceh. This was made possible through the generosity of a number of Gippsland businesses. The support of these companies has made a very practical contribution to relieve the grief and suffering experienced by the survivors of the disaster.

On behalf of the Directors of Gippsland Aeronautics I thank all those people who made this outstanding humanitarian effort possible, particularly Mayor, Councillors and Officers of the City of Latrobe and the Gippsland Businesses that contributed so generously. I also record our appreciation of the efforts of the personnel and staff of both MAF and Gippsland Aeronautics who worked so hard to make it happen.

A recent highlight in the Australian scene was the company's attendance at the Australian International Airshow that allowed the company to display the Airvan to a very wide audience. We were very pleased to win the Airshow Chairman's Award. The Airshows Down Under Team is to be congratulated on yet another first class airshow.

On the home front staff numbers continue to grow in line with the increasing production rate. At a recent open day at the Airport I was pleased to see the large number of our employees who demonstrated their interest in their work by bringing their family and friends for a tour of Gippsland Aeronautics.

Gary Wight
Chairman
Gippsland Aeronautics

Airvan aids Aceh relief effort

Airvan delivers aid to villagers after landing on a roadstrip in Aceh Province.



When the news of the cataclysmic Boxing Day tsunami in South East Asia first broke Gippsland Aeronautics realised that the Airvan would be very useful for many of the tasks confronting relief agencies.

These agencies were experiencing considerable transportation difficulties due to destroyed and damaged road infrastructure, which prevented or delayed much needed help being delivered to the victims of the tsunami. The Airvan has been developed to deliver a comparatively large payload into semi prepared landing areas, such as roads, that would be unsuitable for most types of aircraft.

With the support of the City of Latrobe, fund raising commenced with the aim of sending an Airvan to Aceh. As the full extent of the disaster became known, the Gippsland community responded generously and sufficient funds were secured within days.

Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) Australia, which has extensive Airvan and Indonesian operating experience, agreed to crew and maintain the aircraft in the field.

Following a four-day ferry flight of 3300 Nautical Miles the Airvan joined a small fleet of MAF aircraft at Meulaboh in Sumatra including a Cessna 206 from MAF USA and a Beaver Amphibian from MAF UK. The Airvan and the Cessna operated into makeshift airstrips that had been created on the local roadways whilst the Beaver operated into coastal river systems and the ocean.

During the five-week deployment the Airvan flew more than 100 hours on operational relief work and carried more than 36.5 tonnes of aid and assistance to remote communities. In addition 67 passengers were transported to provide assistance and to manage aid programs.

The Airvan also performed a medical evacuation flight. This flight, from the island of Nias to Medan, undoubtedly saved the life of a young boy who was severely burned in an accident whilst cooking with a fuel stove, receiving burns to almost his entire body.



Surrounded by devastation from the Boxing Day tsunami this is typical of the makeshift road strips that MAF aircraft used in the relief efforts in Aceh.

RECENT AIRVAN *deliveries*

North to Alaska

First for Alaska



Natron Air Inc, an air taxi service located on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula at the Soldotna Airport, recently took delivery of N26NA the first Airvan to be operated

in Alaska. Natron chose the Airvan because it is bigger and more comfortable than their previous aircraft. Tim Pope, President and Chief Pilot of Natron says "The Airvan is designed for sightseeing tours with each seat having a "bubble" style window for ease of viewing of Alaska's uncharted and unsurpassed beauty and abundant wildlife." Some Natron flights include the unforgettable experience of a landing on a remote Alaskan beach. Natrons slogan is "We have fun". A visit to the Natron Air website at www.NatronAir.com is worthwhile.

Costa Rican pair



Paradise Air, based at Aeropuerto Internacional Tobias Bolanos San Jose in Costa Rica, now operate two Airvans. Headed by Art Dawley, Paradise Air offers a range of Airsafaris that provide the opportunity to see the natural wonders of Costa Rica including the magnificent volcanoes of the central cordillera, mineral rich lakes, rugged mountains, and lush rain forest. Paradise Air also offers Executive charters within Costa Rica, Central America, and the Caribbean. Paradise Air recently became the first air taxi company to be certified under the new, stricter aviation laws of Costa and brings to their customers a commitment to professionalism and service with its modern fleet of aircraft. You can visit their website at www.flywithparadise.com

Papua New Guinea first



Arriving at Mt Hagen on Wednesday 18 May, a new MAF Airvan, the first of type in Papua New Guinea, is greeted by a traditional Airport Fire Fighters salute to a new aircraft type. The Airvan, now registered P2-MFI, had just completed a tour through eastern Australia from the Gippsland Aeronautics factory in Victoria. MAF personnel held a dedication ceremony for the Airvan before it entered service.

In early May a GA8 Airvan was flown from Australia to Anchorage in Alaska in a 14 day, 85 flying hours flight over a total distance in excess of 10,000 nautical miles (18,500 kilometres)

The route across the Pacific Ocean took the Airvan via, Lord Howe and, Norfolk Island, Apia (Samoa), the Kiribatis, Hilo Hawaii, to Mojave California, and then north through Canada along the Alcan Highway to Anchorage. The longest leg was from Hawaii to California, a distance of 2300 nautical miles that kept ferry pilots Stephen Death and Doug Hamilton airborne for more than 17 hours.

On arrival at Anchorage the Airvan was displayed at Alaska State Aviation Trade show and Conference. Since temperatures in Anchorage at that time of the year range from below zero to a maximum of only plus 10 degrees C the static displays are held indoors in the massive Fed Ex hangar at Anchorage International Airport.

Alaska features highly in the Airvan's future as it is well suited to the type of flying that is undertaken in Alaska where it is often a case of "If you can't fly there, you can't go there".

Light aircraft operate in remote locations and in harsh conditions, often landing on wheels on gravel bars in riverbeds or landing on lakes on floats in the summer or on skis in the winter.

The extensive Alaskan fleet of bush aeroplanes is ageing. Many aircraft will need replacing over the next decade creating a potential market for Airvans.

Following the show the Airvan was demonstrated to operators in the Anchorage area before visiting a number of Alaskan airports, including Yakutat, Skagway, Juneau and Ketchikan, as it made its way back to Canada before heading to Oshkosh where it will be on display at AirVenture 2005, the world's largest aviation event, in July.

The Airvan is to become the US demonstrator Aircraft and will make an appearance at AirVenture 2005, the world's largest aviation event.

Meanwhile the first Airvan for an Alaskan operator has been delivered, see the Recent Deliveries column.



View from the Airvan high over the wilderness of Alaska's Glacier Bay National Park.

our PEOPLE



East Gippsland TAFE Instructor John Patten conducting work place training with Gippsland Aeronautics employees.

Training at GA

Gippsland Aeronautics, in conjunction with the East Gippsland College of Technical and Further Education (TAFE), is delivering a formal, on site, training program for employees. This training has been introduced to achieve a consistent standard of workmanship and quality assurance in the manufacture of the company's aircraft.

East Gippsland TAFE has based an instructor, John Patten, at Gippsland Aeronautics Latrobe Airport manufacturing facility to assess and determine skill gaps among the enrolled staff and to conduct any required training. John has been working on site 3 days a week since mid February, interacting with, assessing and training the trainees.

Sixty employees are participating in the Traineeship program and are enrolled with East Gippsland TAFE to complete Certificate 3 in Engineering – Production Systems.

The course has been designed to ensure that each employee has the competencies to carry out their particular area of manufacture as well as the general skills that are required in a manufacturing environment including Occupational Health and Safety, Human Factors and Communication. Each employee has completed induction training that includes Standard Workshop Practices as well as Quality Assurance procedures First Aid and an overview of aircraft drawings.

While the majority of participants will be completing Structural elements of the Certificate, others are completing Avionics, Quality Assurance, Painting (surface finishing), and machining, welding and maintenance modules where appropriate.

Training plans have been completed for the trainees and training and assessments are on target with approximately half of the 22 first year modules complete, and all trainees have completed the Workplace Induction.

The traineeship program has been implemented in response to both management and employee enthusiasm to complete formal accredited training in the aviation industry.

CLIENT profile

Wings over Wilderness

Wings over Wilderness, an adventure travel company based in Vanderhoof British Columbia Canada, brands their tours as "Soft Adventure in Hard Places" providing tour guests with the comforts of the modern world while experiencing some of the highest quality wilderness anywhere.

Headed by Emil Gulbranson, Wings over Wilderness provides, amongst other tours, a unique nine-day flightseeing adventure tour through the remote and unspoiled wilderness of Northern British Columbia using the GA8 Airvan.

The tour takes in 25 million acres of pristine Canadian Wilderness covering a variety of landscapes including spectacular mountain ranges, glacier lakes and plateaus and countless wild rivers that have not yet felt the hands of man.

Starting at the beautiful mountain community of Smithers, a quaint little alpine community that has a Swiss Bavarian theme, guests are whisked by Airvan to the luxurious Bear Claw Lodge in the Skeena Mountains. On every second day they are flown to a new wilderness resort including a remote wilderness ranch in Moose Valley.

On non-flight days guest can choose to relax and enjoy the comforts and hospitality of the resort or continue to explore British Columbia's incomparable wilderness. Guests have the opportunity to venture by horseback into the backcountry where they can see mountain goat, moose, mountain caribou, elk, deer, grizzly bear and black bear. They also have the opportunity to catch hardy silver river run salmon, weighing up to seventy pounds, and a variety of other sport fish. The GA8 Airvan aircraft was selected specifically for these adventure tours because of its many unique features including a large sliding door for passenger convenience when loading and unloading, a wide body cabin for passenger comfort, one large curved window per seat for greater viewing and overhead speakers so everyone can hear the tour guide.

Wings over Wilderness can be contacted at:
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Or write to: P.O. Box 2519 Vanderhoof, BCVOJ 3A0
Or visit the website - www.wingsoverwilderness.com



Wings over Wilderness Airvan in the Canadian Rockies.

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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