



AIRCRAFT

OF THE

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

AIRCRAFT



Royal of the
Australian Air Force

A BRIEF HISTORY

The Royal Australian Air Force was founded on March 31, 1921, having evolved from the Australian Flying Corps of World War I. Formed just three years after the Royal Air Force, it is one of the oldest air forces in the world.

Point Cook, 17 miles south-west of Melbourne on the shores of Port Phillip Bay, was the birthplace of the RAAF. The first military flight in Australia had taken place there on March 1, 1914, and the Australian pilots of World War I were trained there. Among them was Lt R. Williams (Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams) who led No 1 Sqn, AFC, in action in the Middle East and who was appointed the first Chief of the Air Staff on the formation of the RAAF.

Twenty-one officers and 130 airmen made up the initial strength of the modest young air force. The service, however, did not lack aircraft — 26 Avro 504Ks, 10 Sopwith Pups, six Fairey 3D seaplanes and a reserve of 128 aircraft (DH9s, DH9As and SE5As) — a gift from the British Government after World War I. It meant that for a time the RAAF had more aircraft than men !

There was a “club” atmosphere in the RAAF through the 20s and early 1930s. Money was scarce and the expansion of the service was very gradual. Its strength was only 310 officers and 3,179 airmen when World War II erupted in September, 1939. There were 12 squadrons and only 164 operational aircraft, many of them obsolete types. At that time nobody could have foreseen the glorious pages of Australian history which the RAAF was destined to write in the wartime years. By the middle of the war the RAAF had grown to a strength of more than 20,000 officers, 144,000 airmen and 18,000 airwomen, with 3,037 operational aircraft and 2808 trainers.

RAAF men served in every theatre of action, either with independent Australian squadrons or with Royal Air Force squadrons. However, the reputation which the RAAF built as a fighting force was done at a terrible cost in young lives. Nearly 11,000 were lost in action all over the world. In Europe alone the RAAF lost 5,500, with another

3,000 being killed in the Pacific Theatre. Graves in the Middle East, South-East Asia and in the Far East record the sacrifices made in those areas of operation.

Awards to RAAF men during World War II included two Victoria Crosses, 62 DSOs (four with bars), five MCs, 1,880 DFCs (188 with bars), 126 AFCs, 10 CGMs, three MMs, 401 DFMs (two with bars), 13 AFMs, 20 George Medals and 42 BEMs, while 1325 officers and men were mentioned in dispatches. Both Victoria Crosses were awarded posthumously — to F Sgt R. H. Middleton, a pilot in Bomber Command, United Kingdom, and to Flt Lt W. E. Newton, a Boston Bomber pilot in the South-West Pacific.

Australia played a major part in the giant Empire Air Training Scheme for the training of aircrew. The RAAF trained 27,387 aircrew members in Australia and as well provided elementary training for an additional 10,351 who were sent to Canada and 700 initial trainees who were sent to Rhodesia.

The RAAF has taken part in minor and major conflicts since World War II — the Berlin Airlift, Korean War (42 pilots killed), Malayan Emergency and the Vietnam War. In Vietnam the RAAF maintains a squadron each of Canberra bombers, Caribou transports and Iroquois helicopters. The RAAF today has 16 flying squadrons and an impressive inventory of some of the finest aircraft in the world—Phantoms, Mirages, Hercules, Orions, Neptunes, Caribou and Iroquois. Two Mirage squadrons are based at Butterworth, Malaysia. In the training role the RAAF uses Macchi jets.

The RAAF Academy, a diploma cadet squadron and a school of technical training are part of a huge ground training complex scattered throughout Australia. The personnel strength of the RAAF is around 22,000.

In its first 50 years the RAAF has won honours as a national Air Force. It has a history of endeavour and sacrifice which has won it a place in the hearts of all Australians. As it enters its next 50 years the men and women of the RAAF will not tarnish that record but will carry on in the tradition "Per Ardua Ad Astra".

How Numbering of Aircraft of the Royal Australian Air Force Began

To assist in rapid recognition of aircraft, the Air Board, by Agenda No 123 dated 12th August 1921, adopted the suggestion that a "distinctive system of numbering" be adopted by the Royal Australian Air Force. Under this system the first number prefixed by the letter A would identify the type of aircraft and the second number would identify the individual aircraft. Therefore, aircraft number A97-128 would mean that the aircraft was a Lockheed Hercules aircraft (A97) and that its number was 128.

Since 1921 the system has remained in force but there have been three series of aircraft numbers. The first series covered the aircraft of the nineteen-twenties and contained only twelve aircraft types — all biplanes. The second series was started in 1935 and, since so many of the aircraft owe their origin to the Second World War 1939-1945, the series is sometimes referred to as the "War Series". There are one hundred numbers in this series but two of these were never allotted to aircraft.

In 1961, the third series opened and is still current.

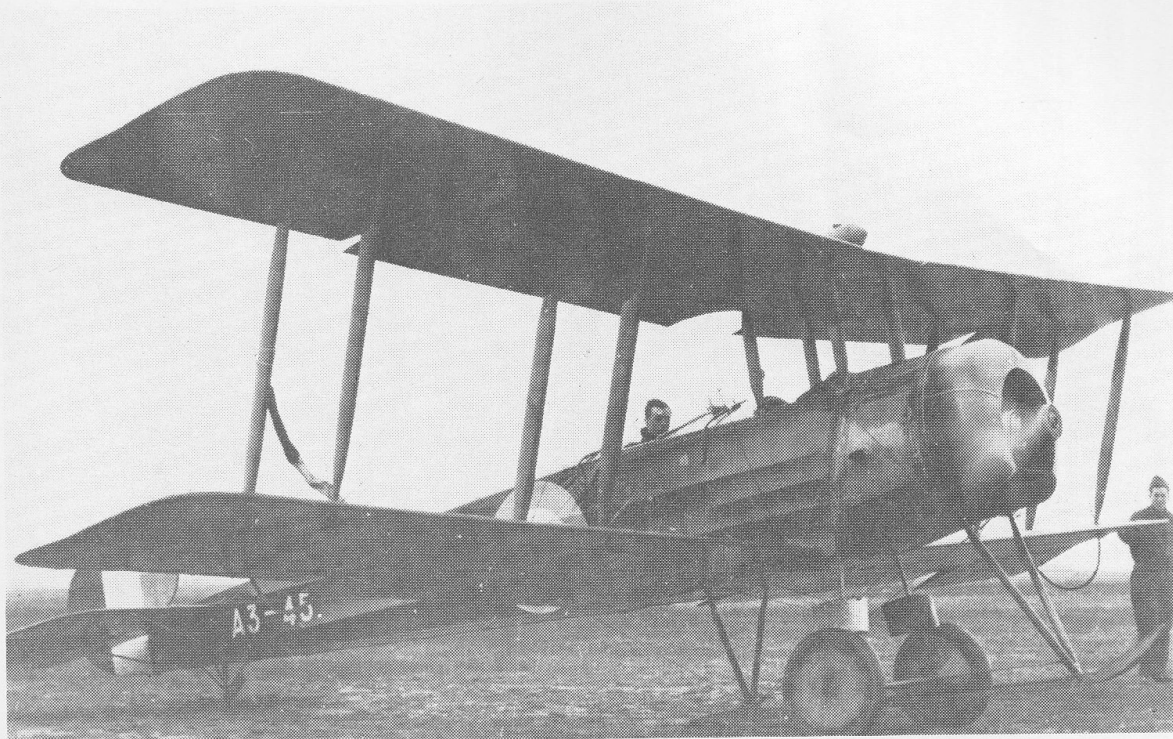
First
Series



A1 — DH9A



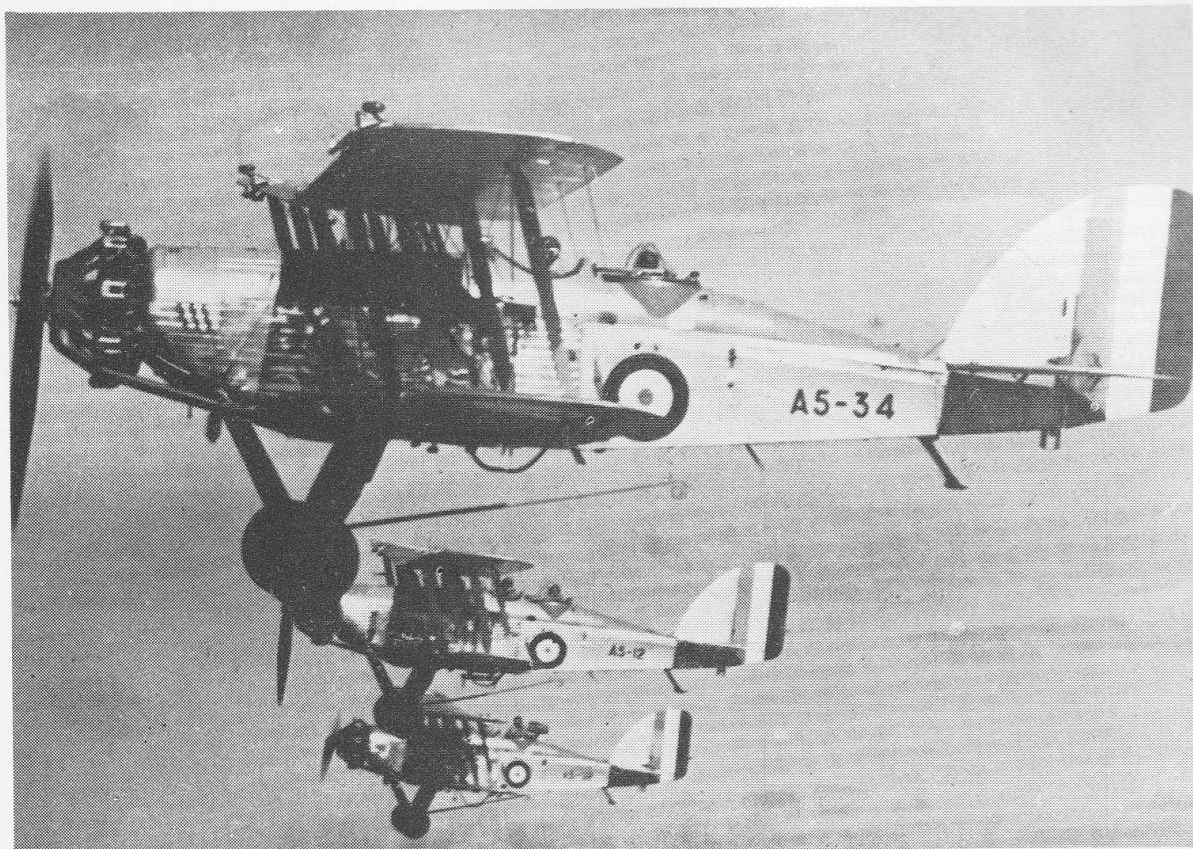
A2 — SE5A



A3 — AVRO 504K



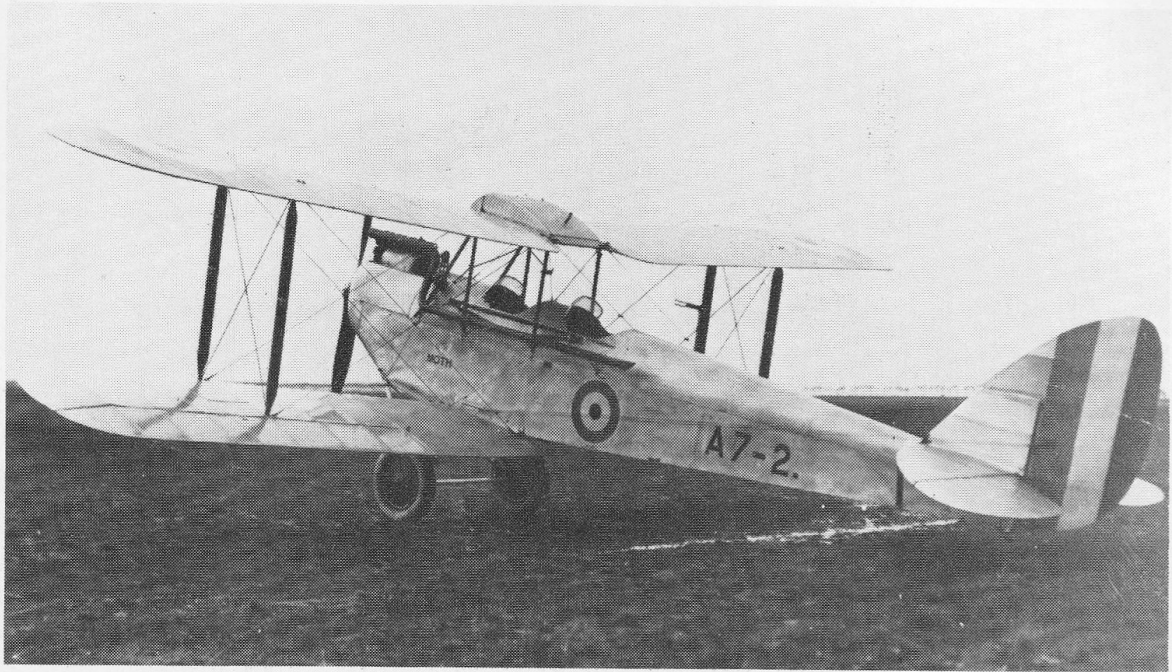
A4 — SOPWITH PUP



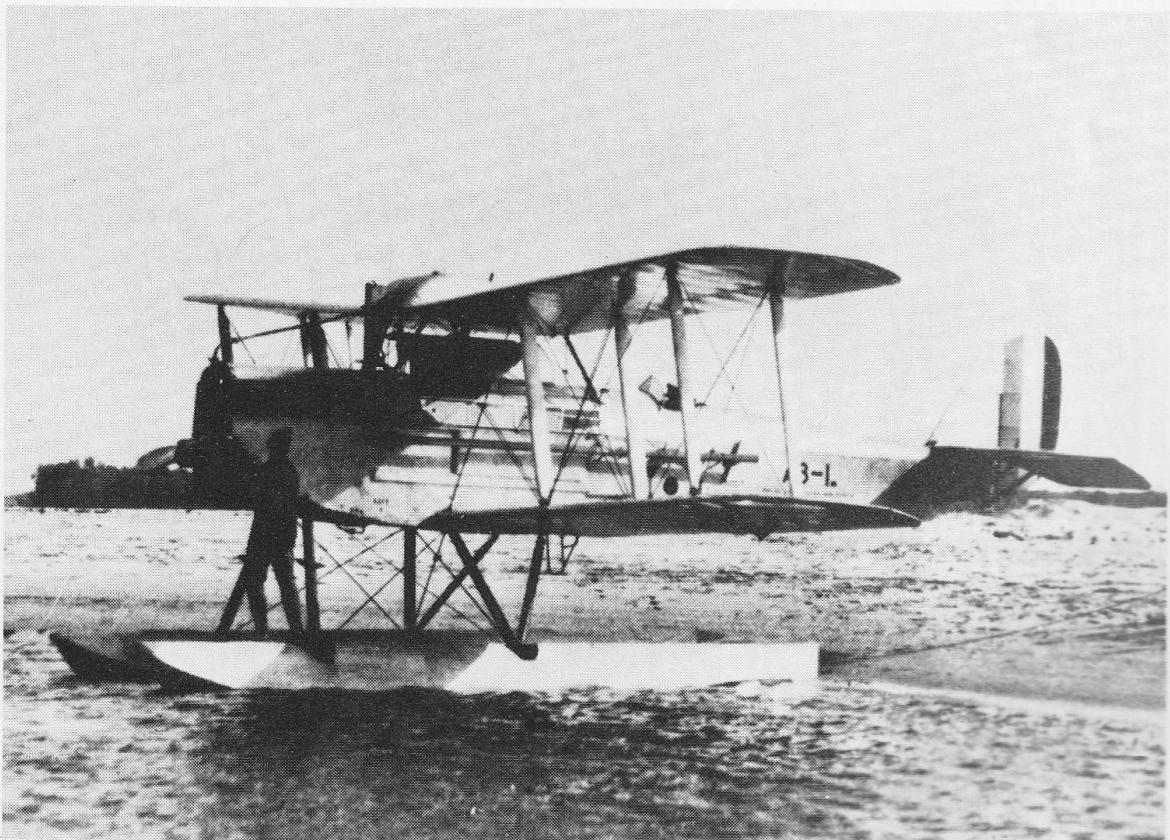
A5 — WESTLAND WAPITI



A6 — DH9



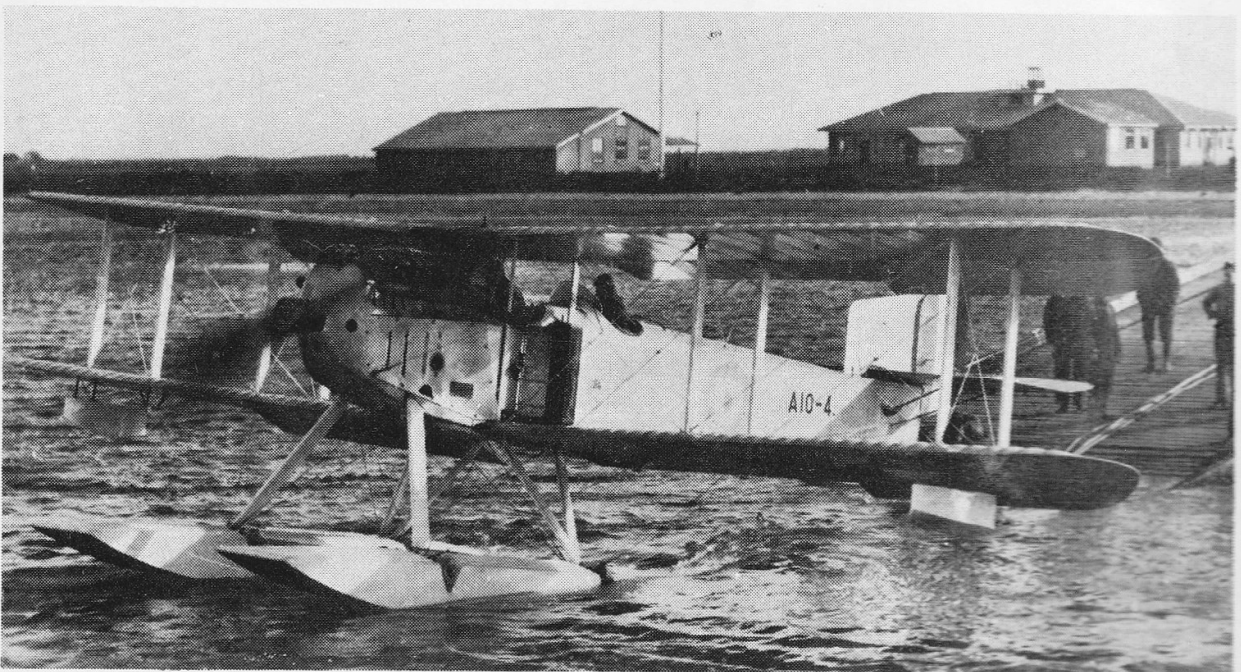
A7 — DH60 CIRRUS MOTH



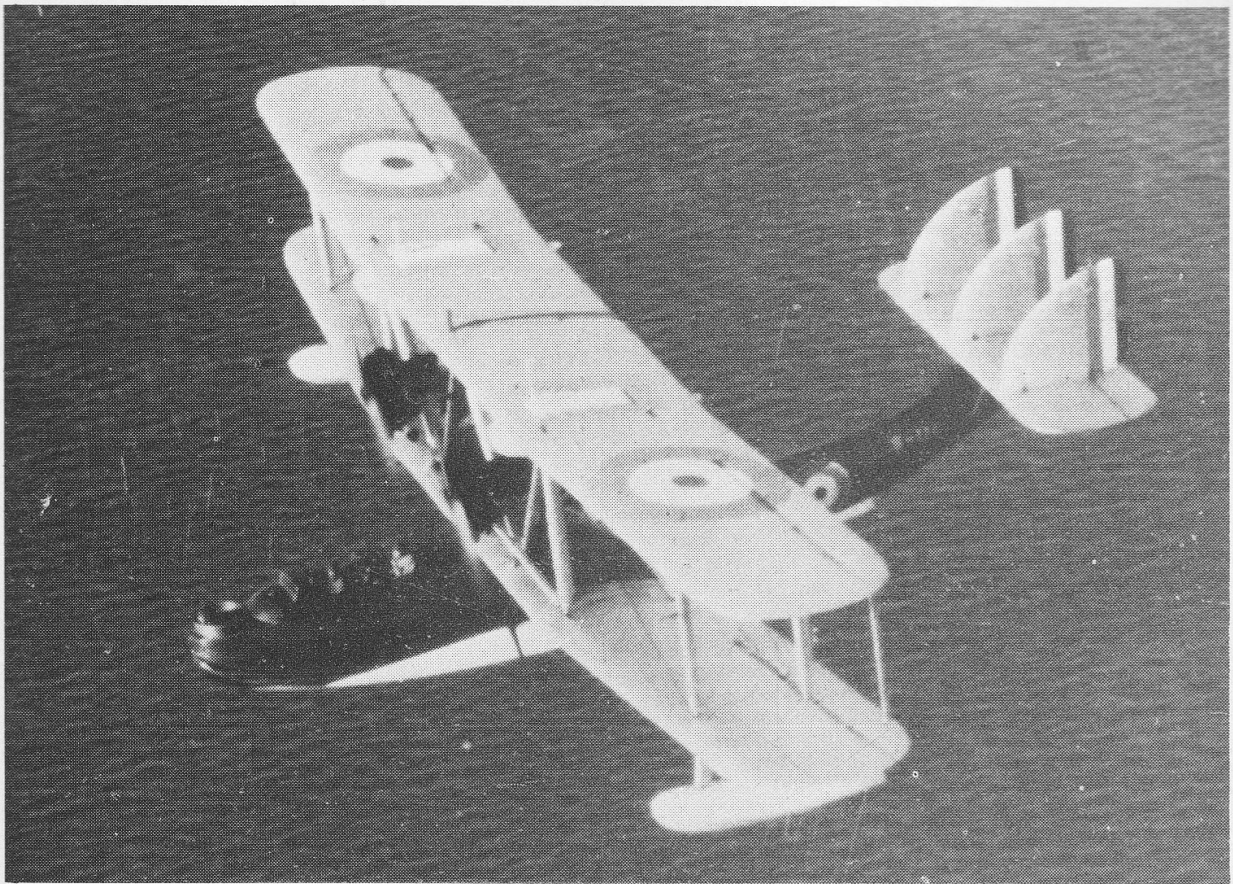
A8 — DH50A



A9 — SUPERMARINE SEAGULL III



A10 — FAIREY III D



A11 — SUPERMARINE SOUTHAMPTON

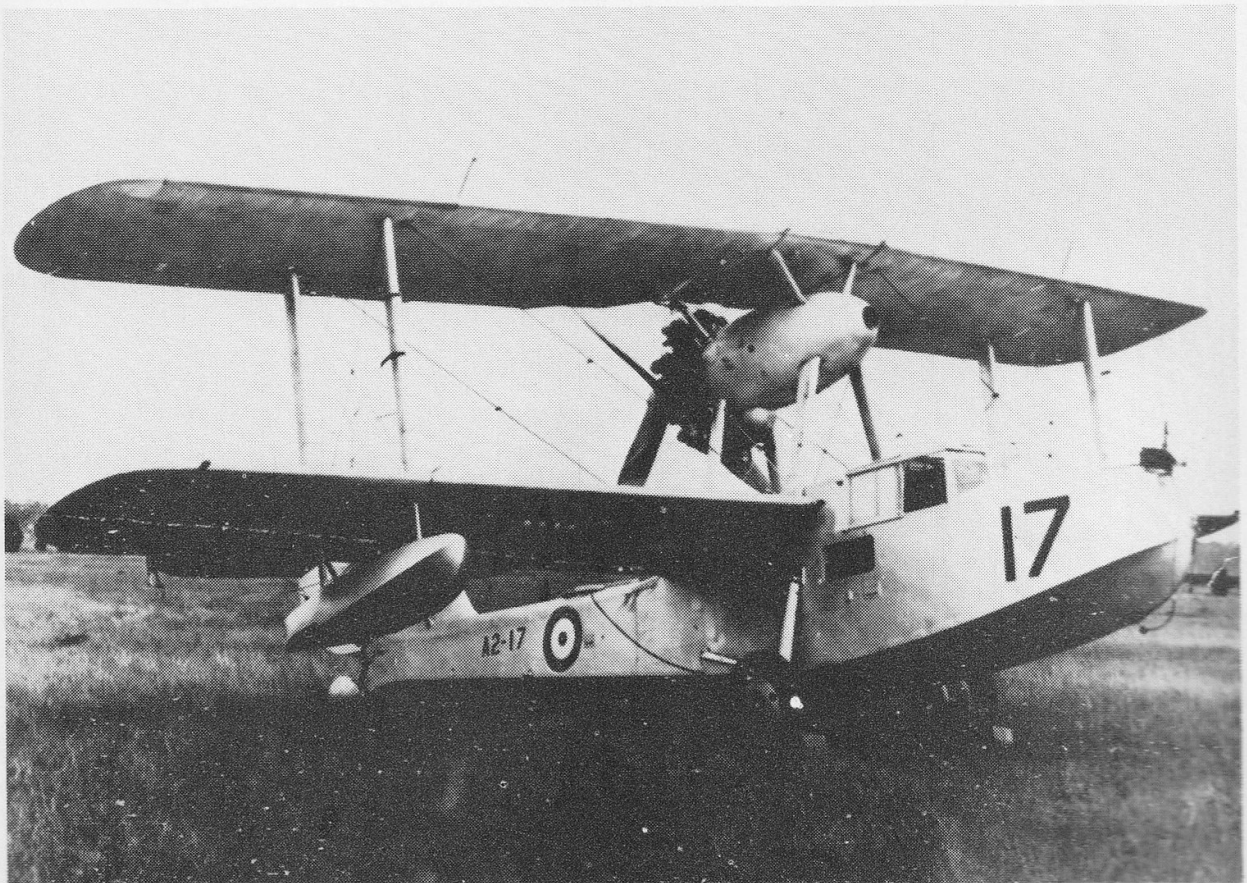


A12 — BRISTOL BULLDOG

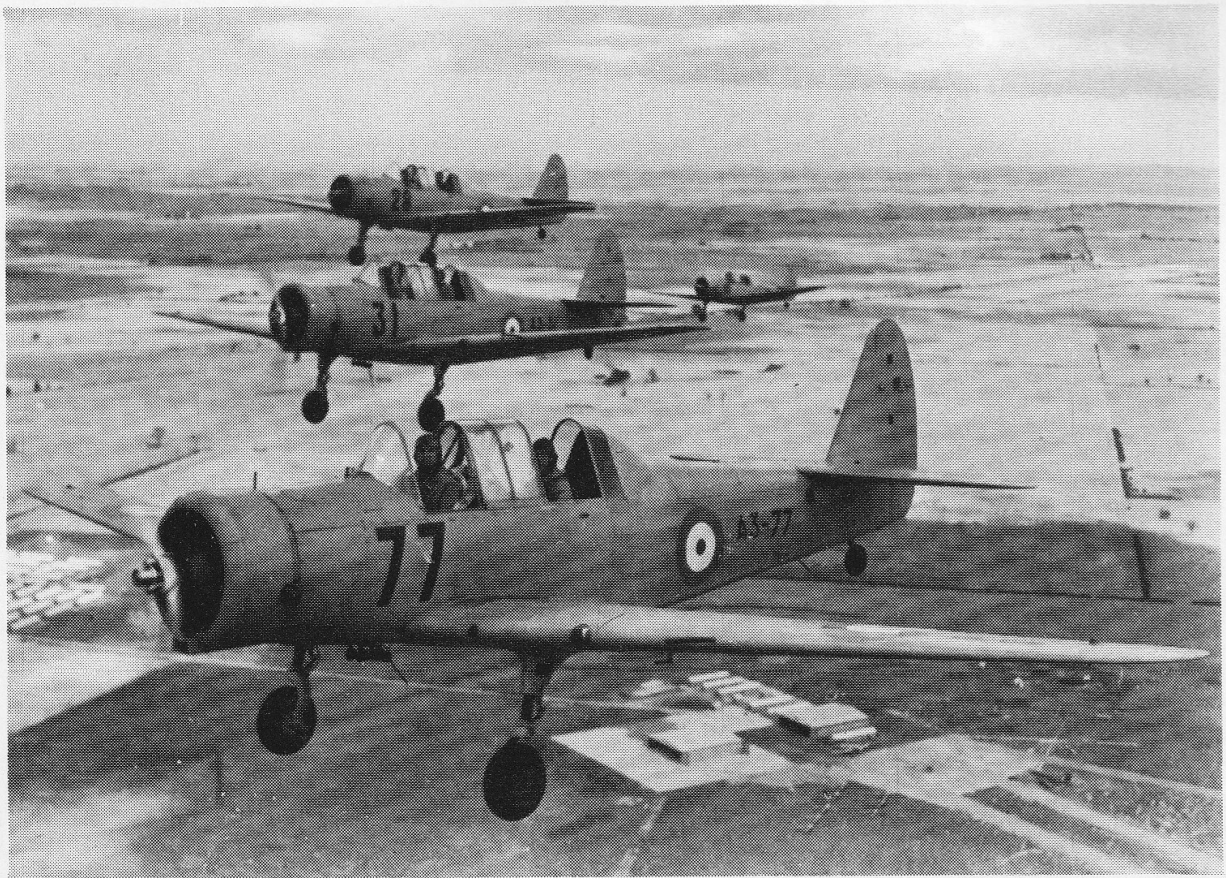
Second
Series



A1 — HAWKER DEMON



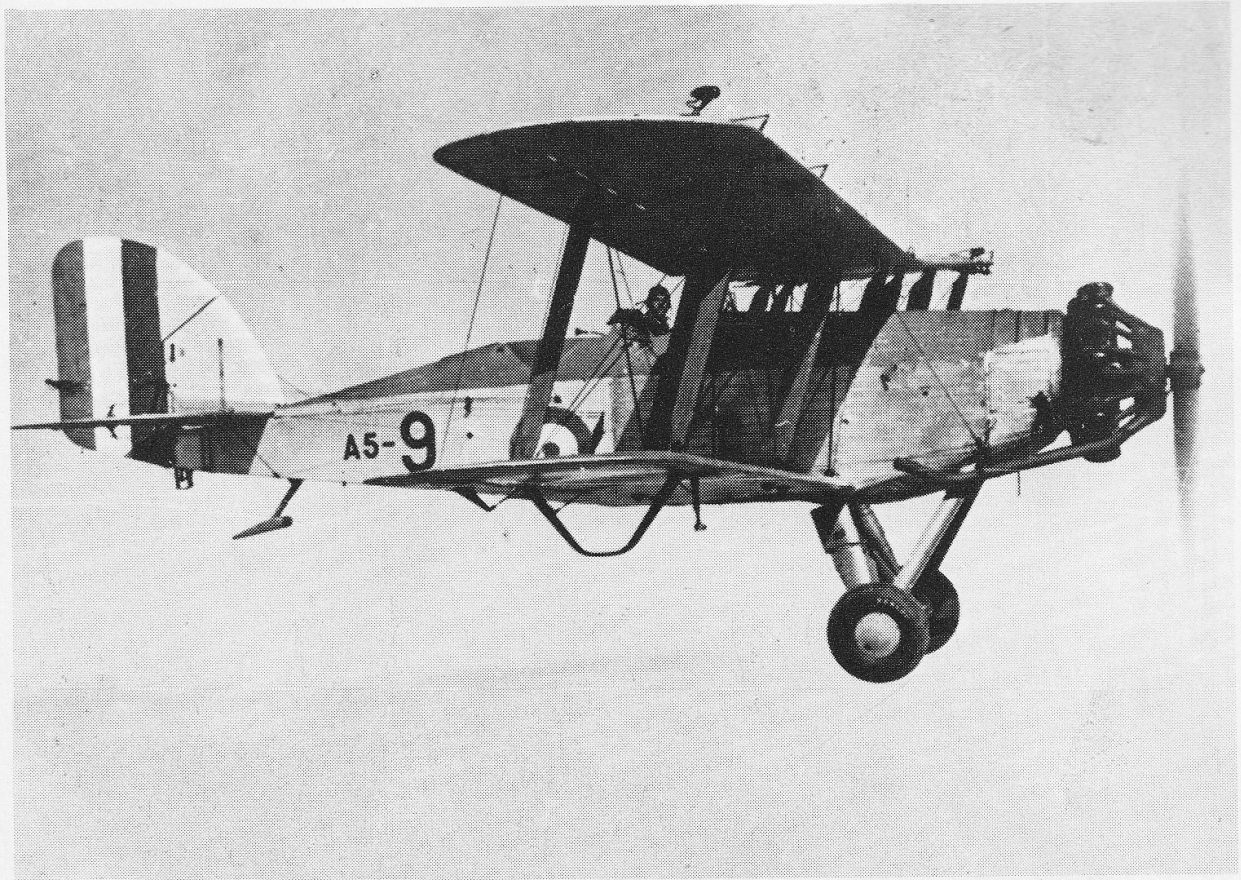
A2 — SUPERMARINE SEAGULL V



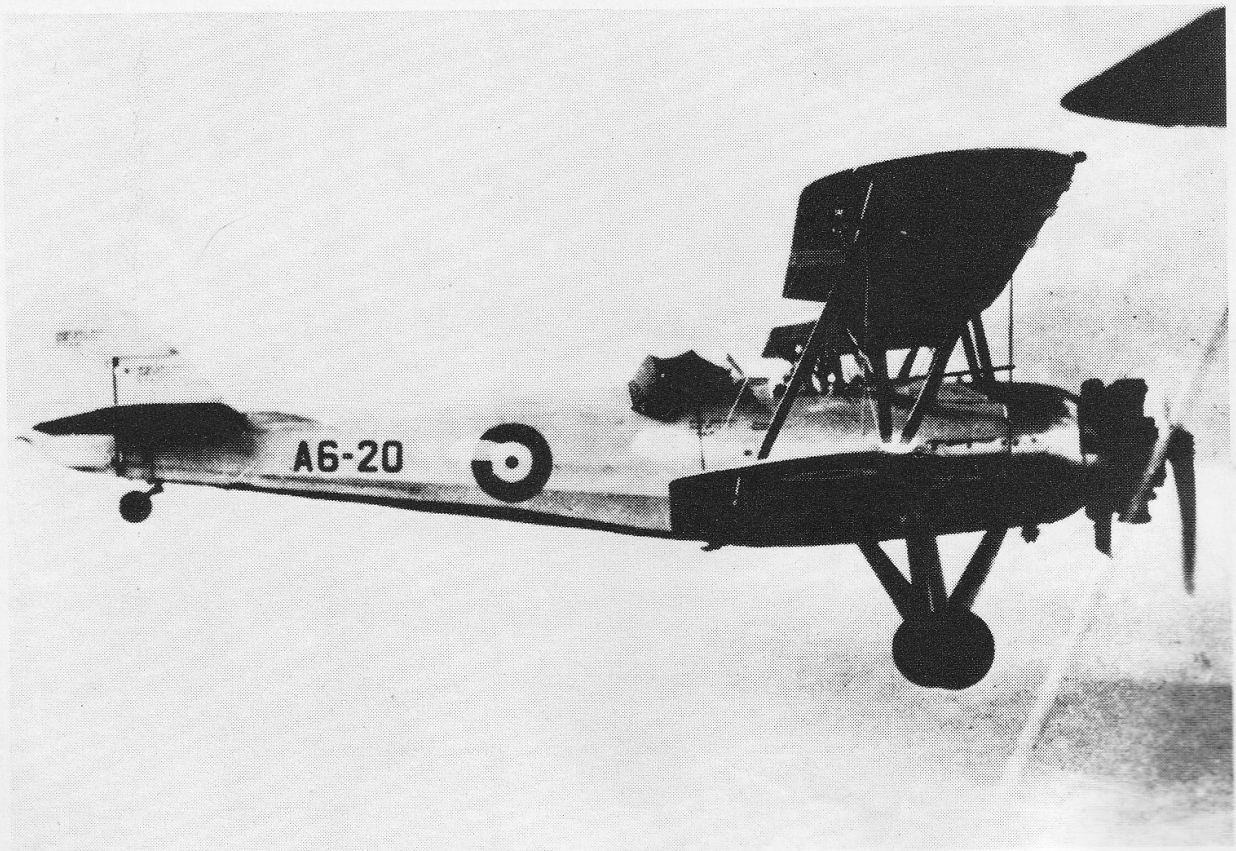
A3 — CAC WACKETT TRAINER



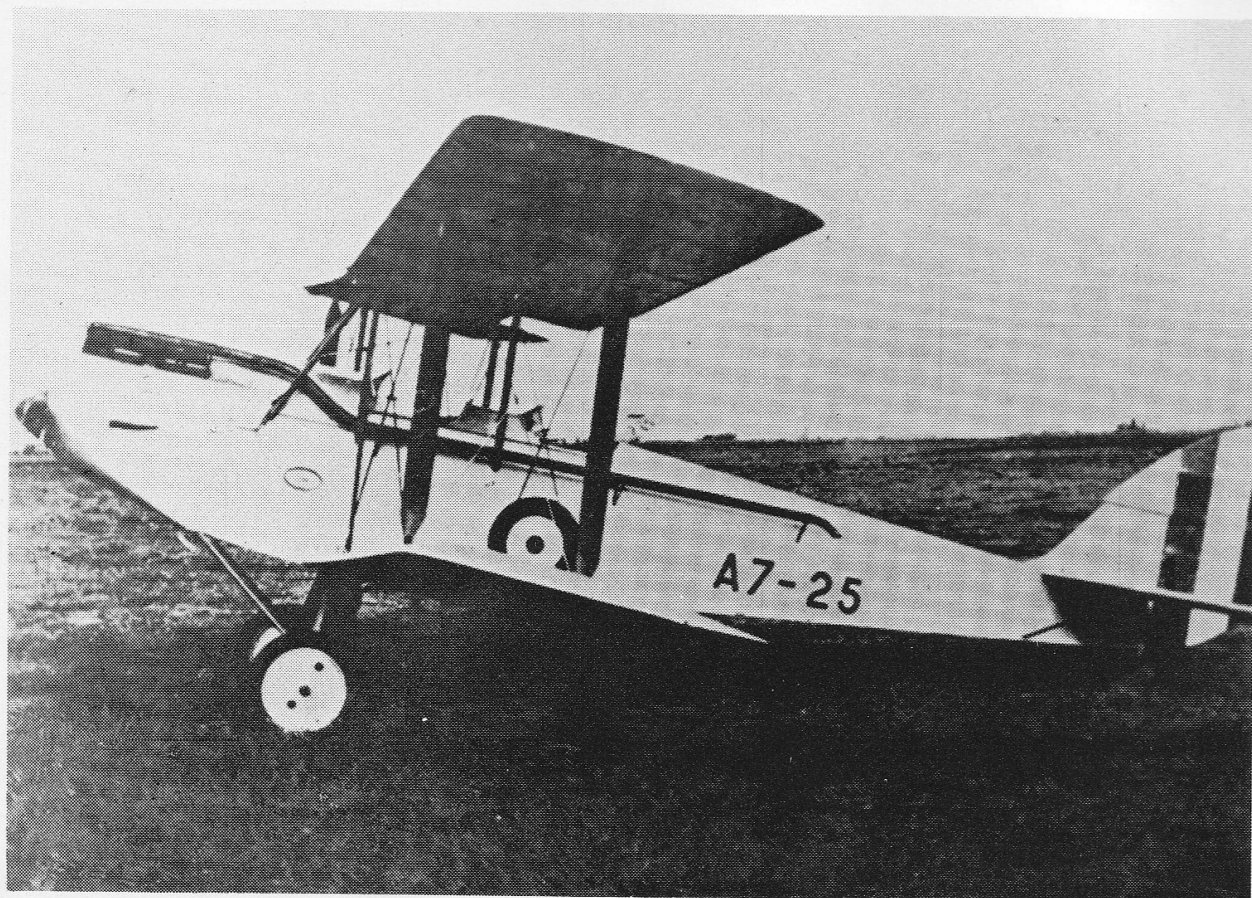
A4 — AVRO ANSON



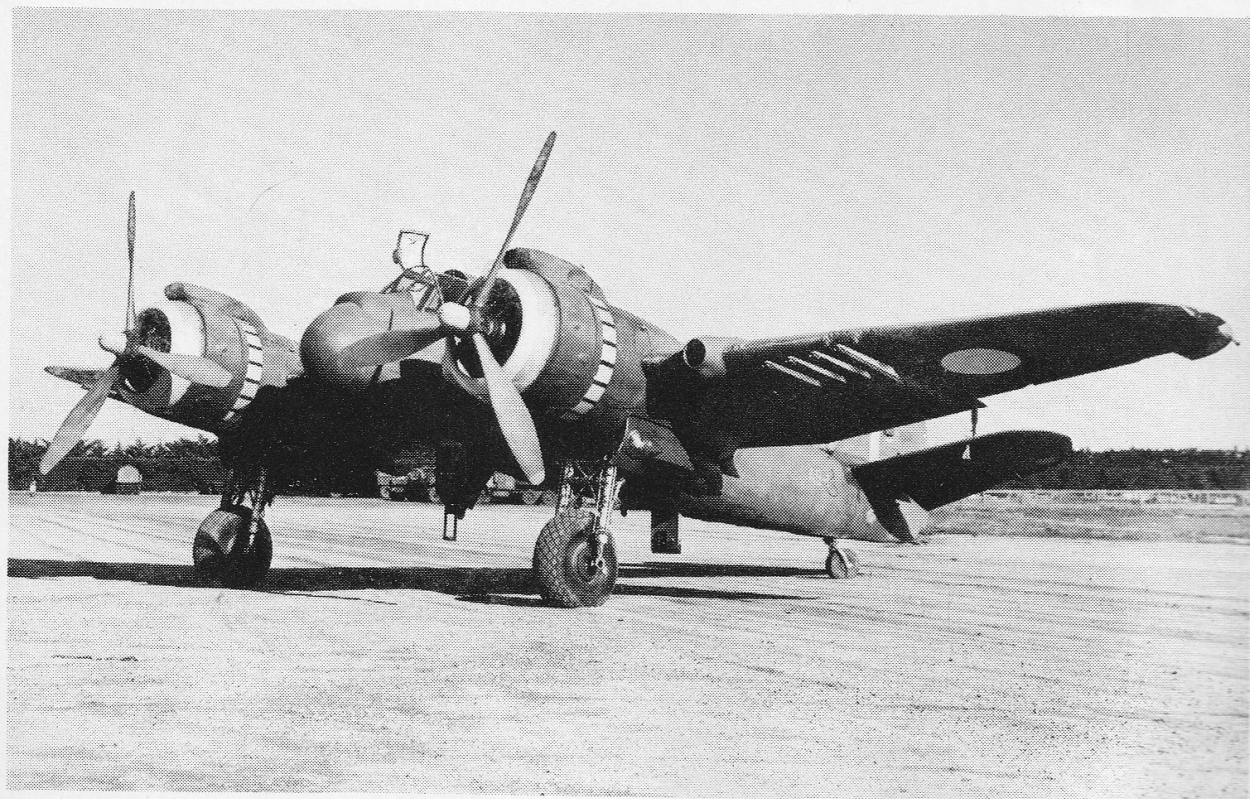
A5 — WESTLAND WAPITI



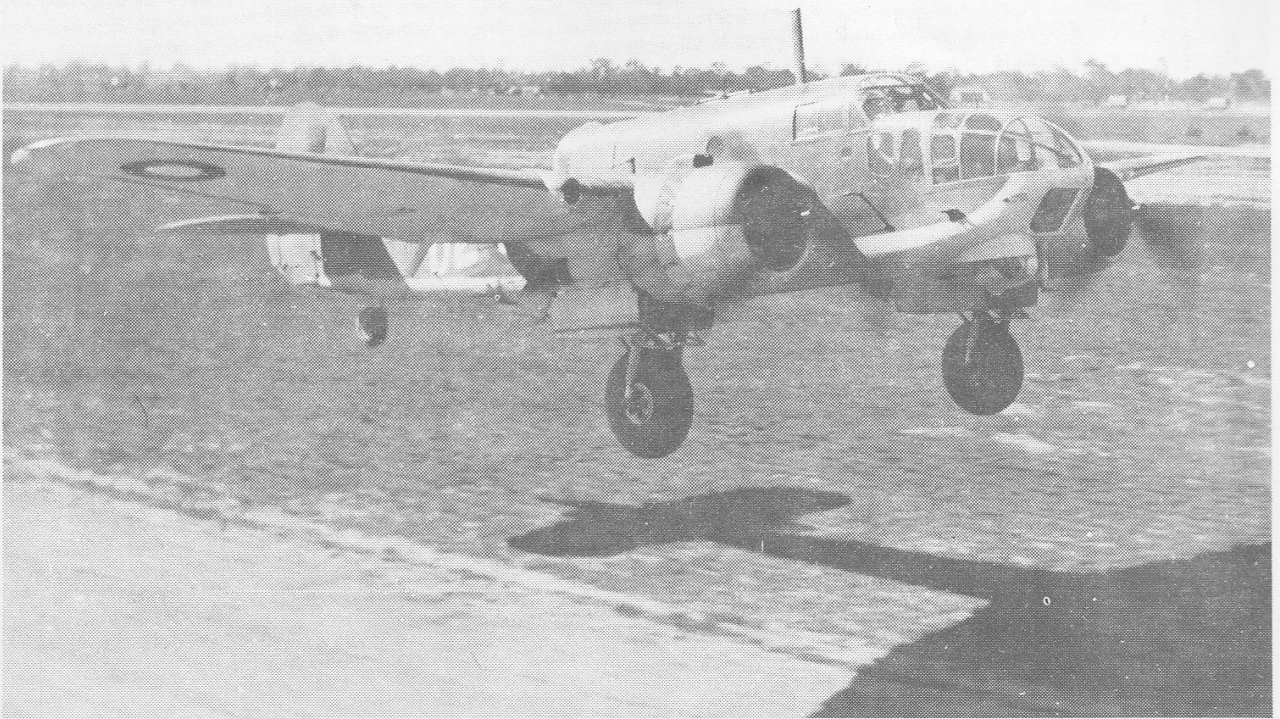
A6 — AVRO CADET



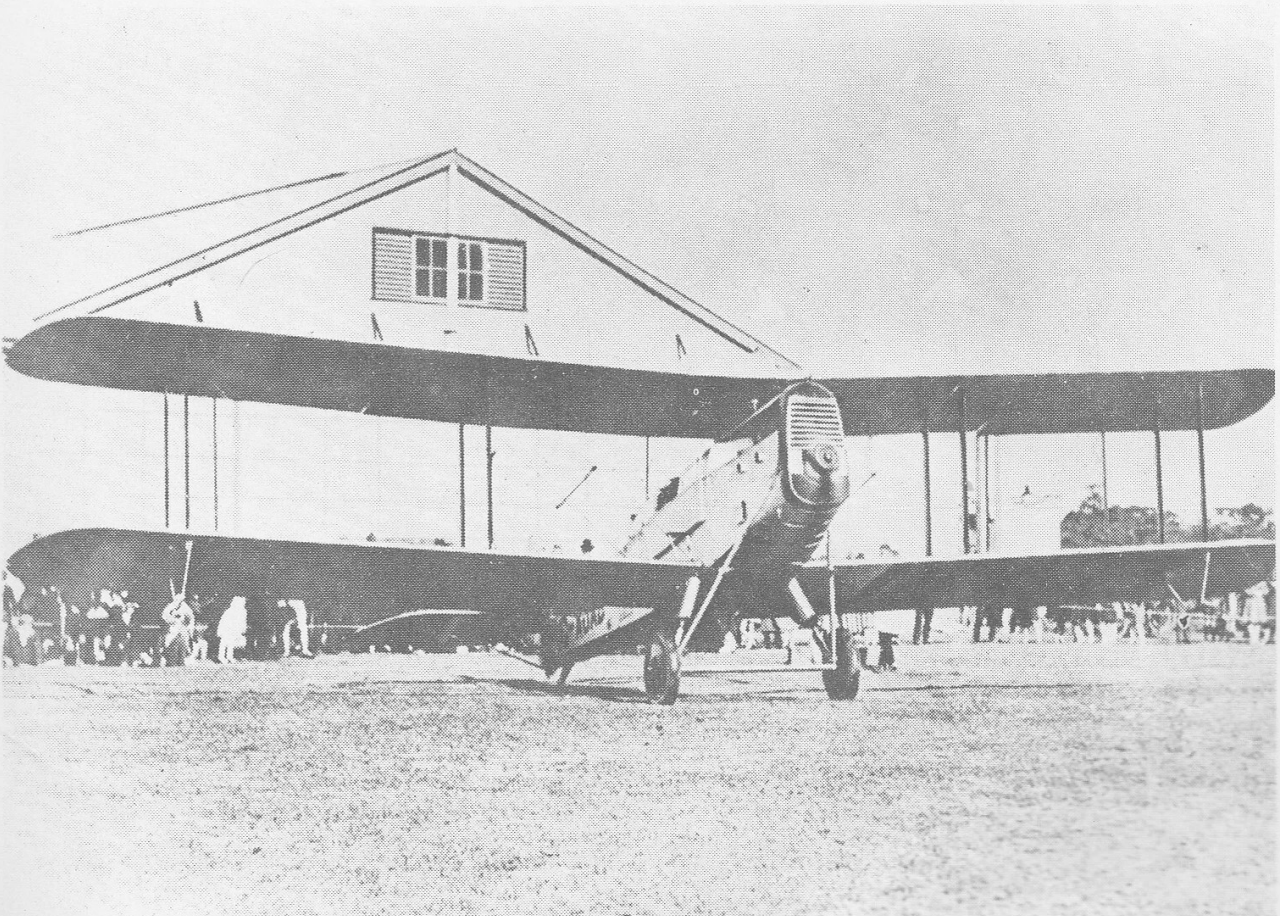
A7 — DH60 GIPSY MOTH



A8 — BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER (Aust)



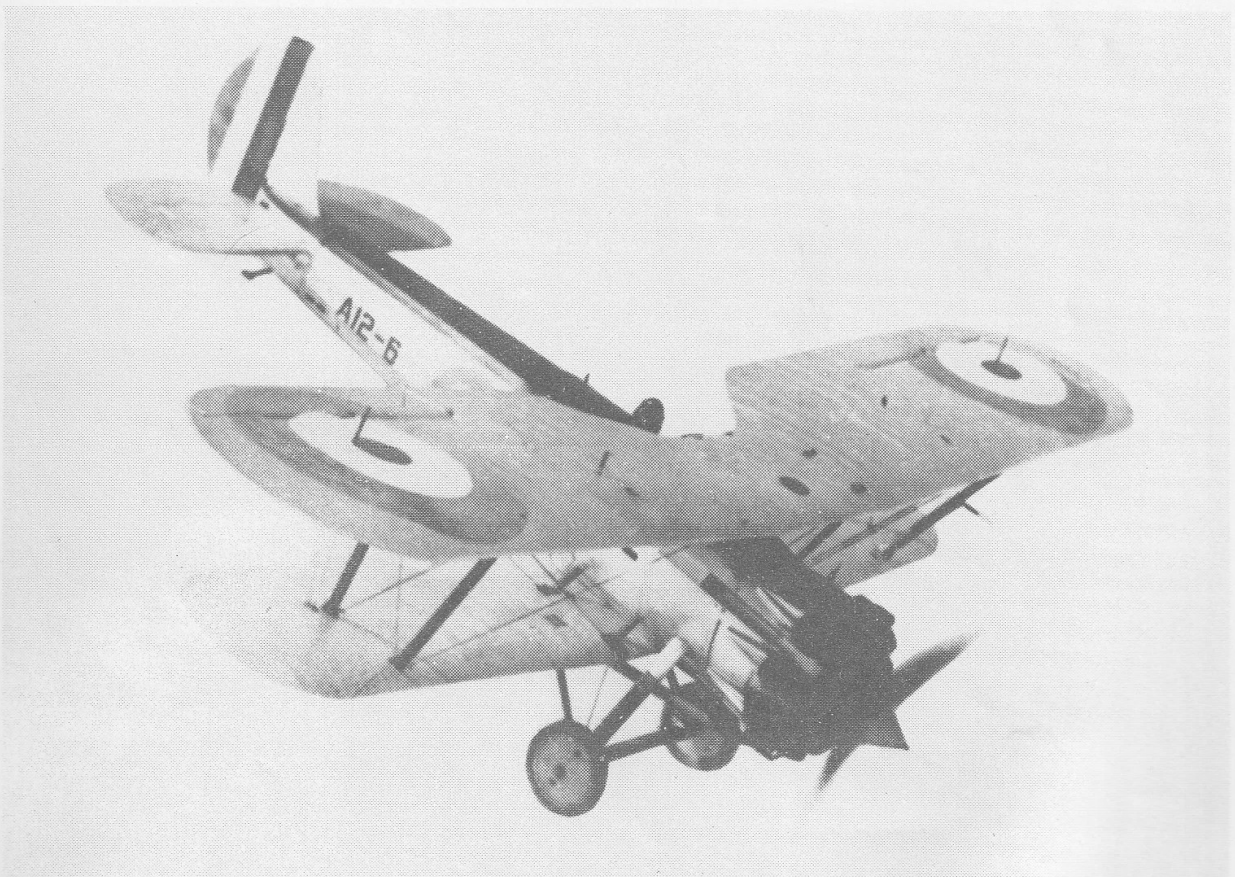
A9 — BRISTOL BEAUFORT



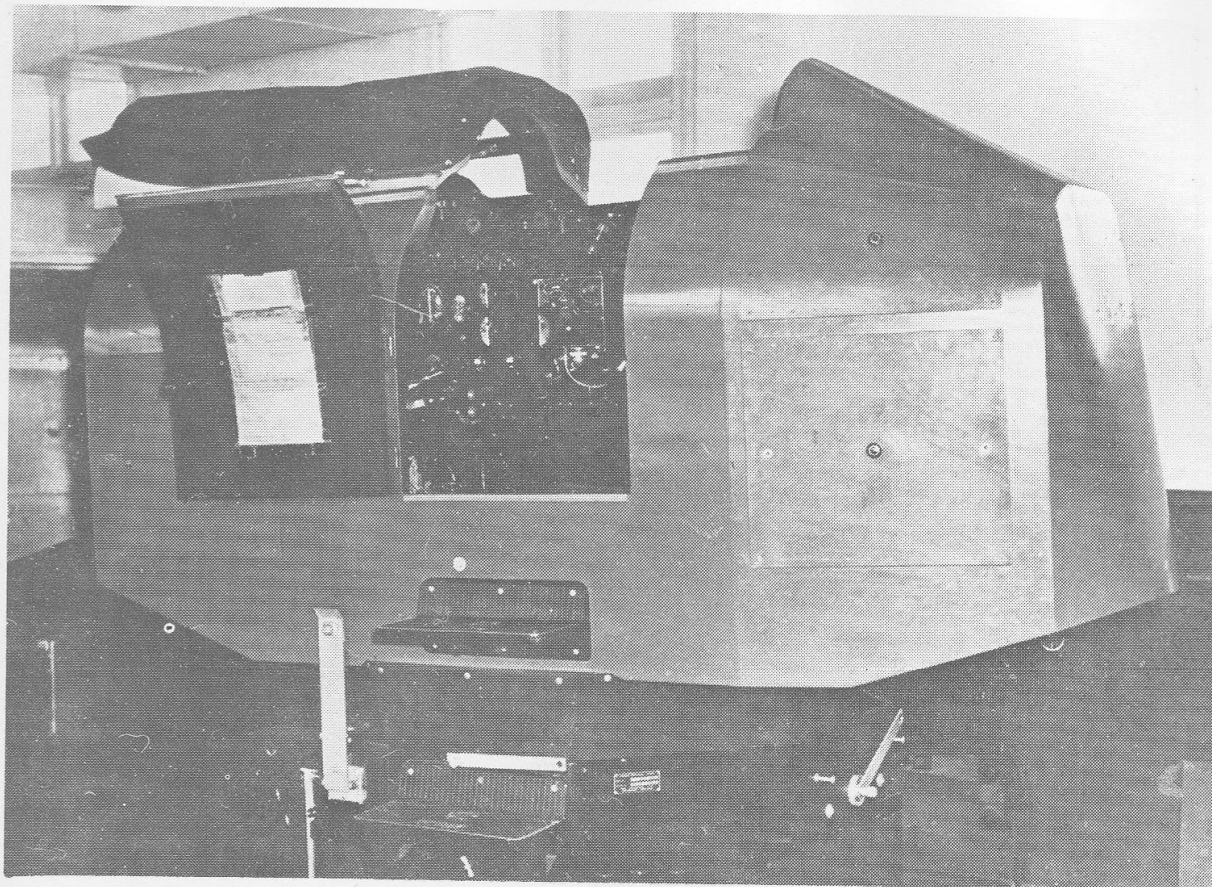
A10 — DH50A



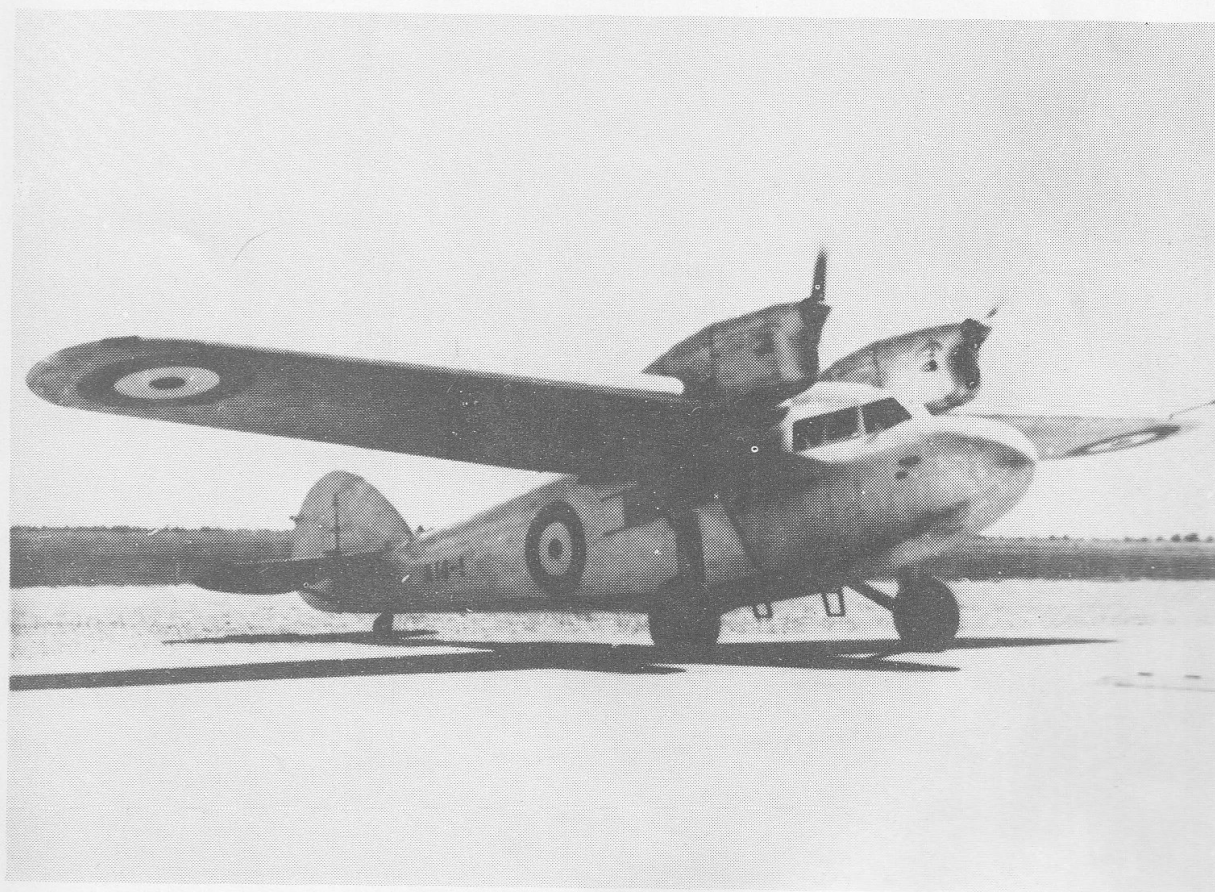
A11 — AUSTER AOP



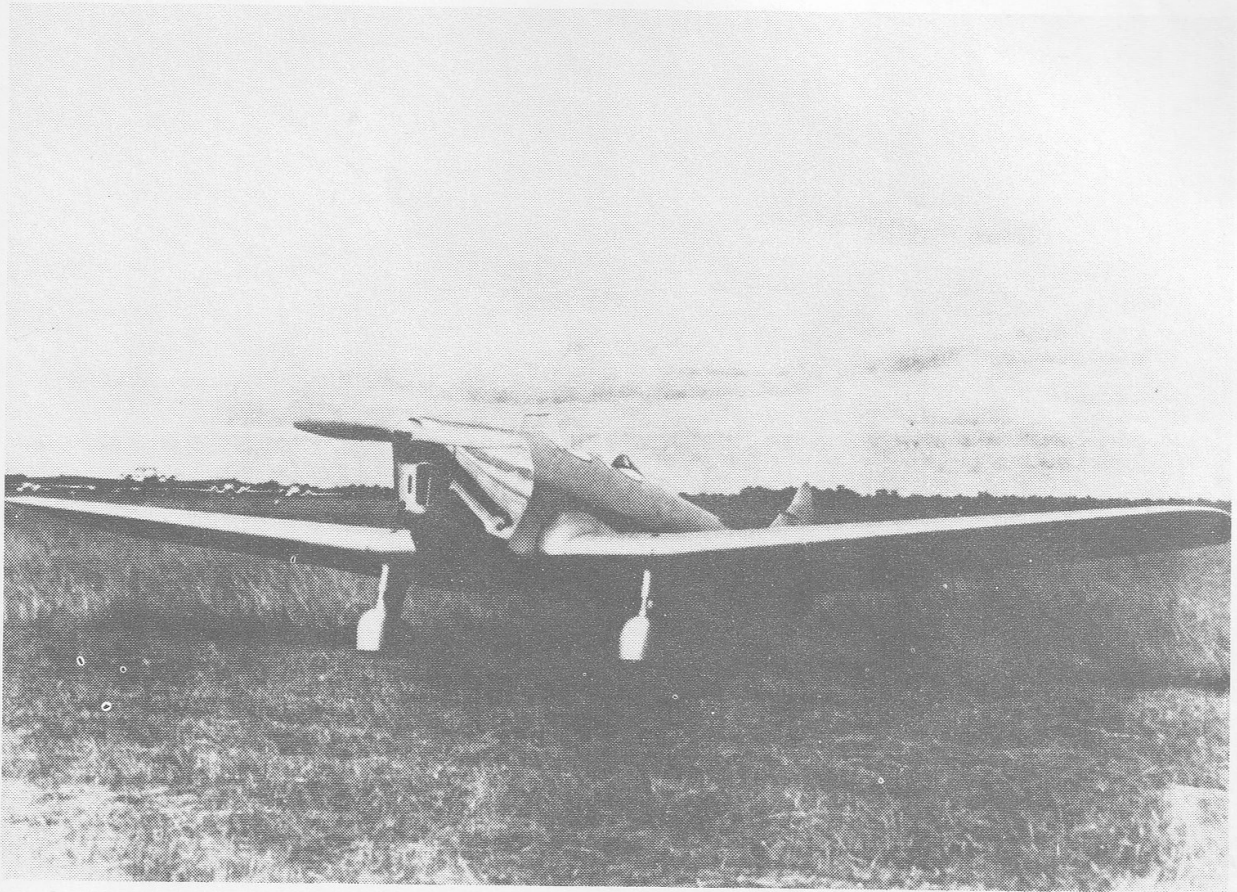
A12 — BRISTOL BULLDOG



A13 — LINK TRAINER



A14 — WACKETT GANNET



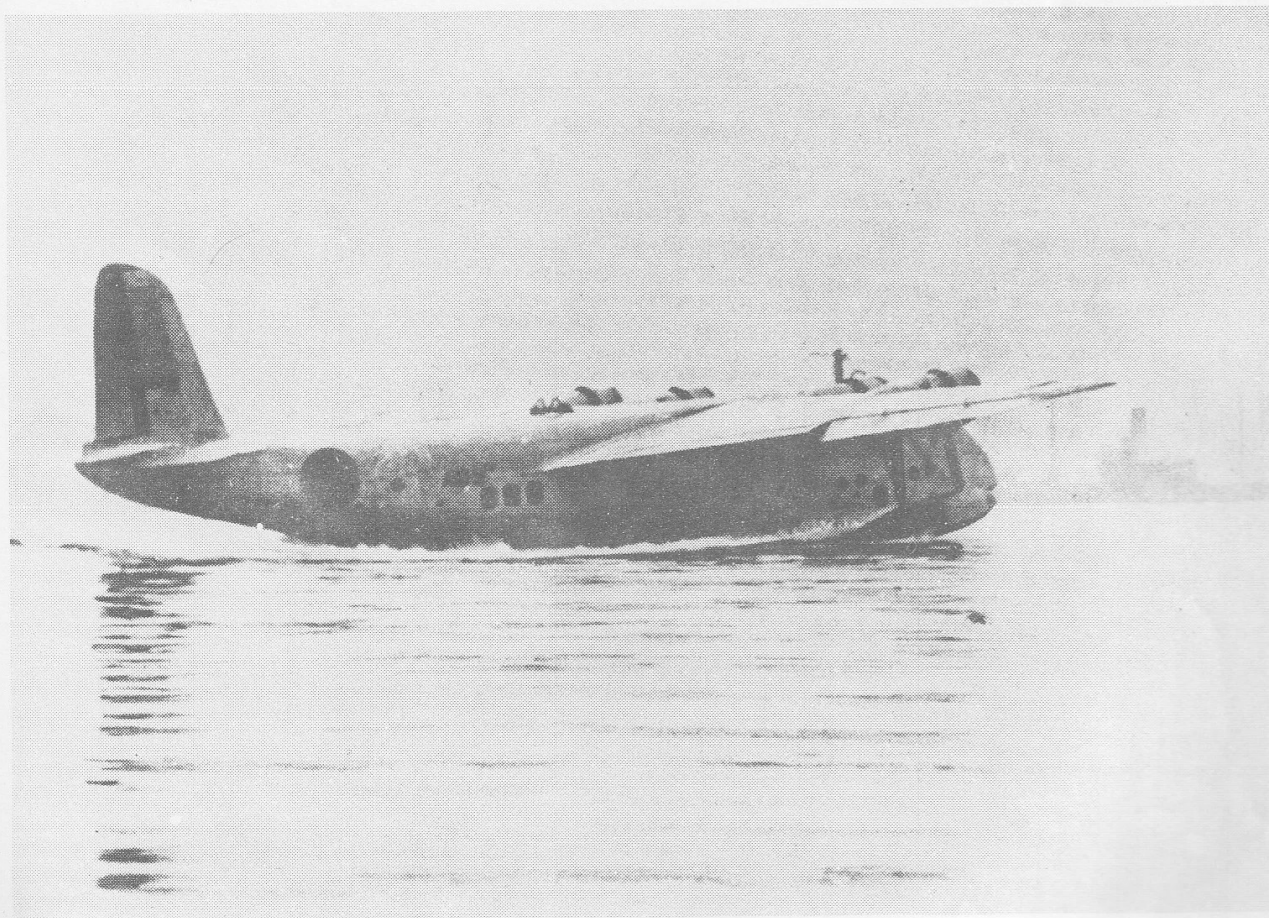
A15 — MILES MAGISTER



A16 — LOCKHEED HUDSON



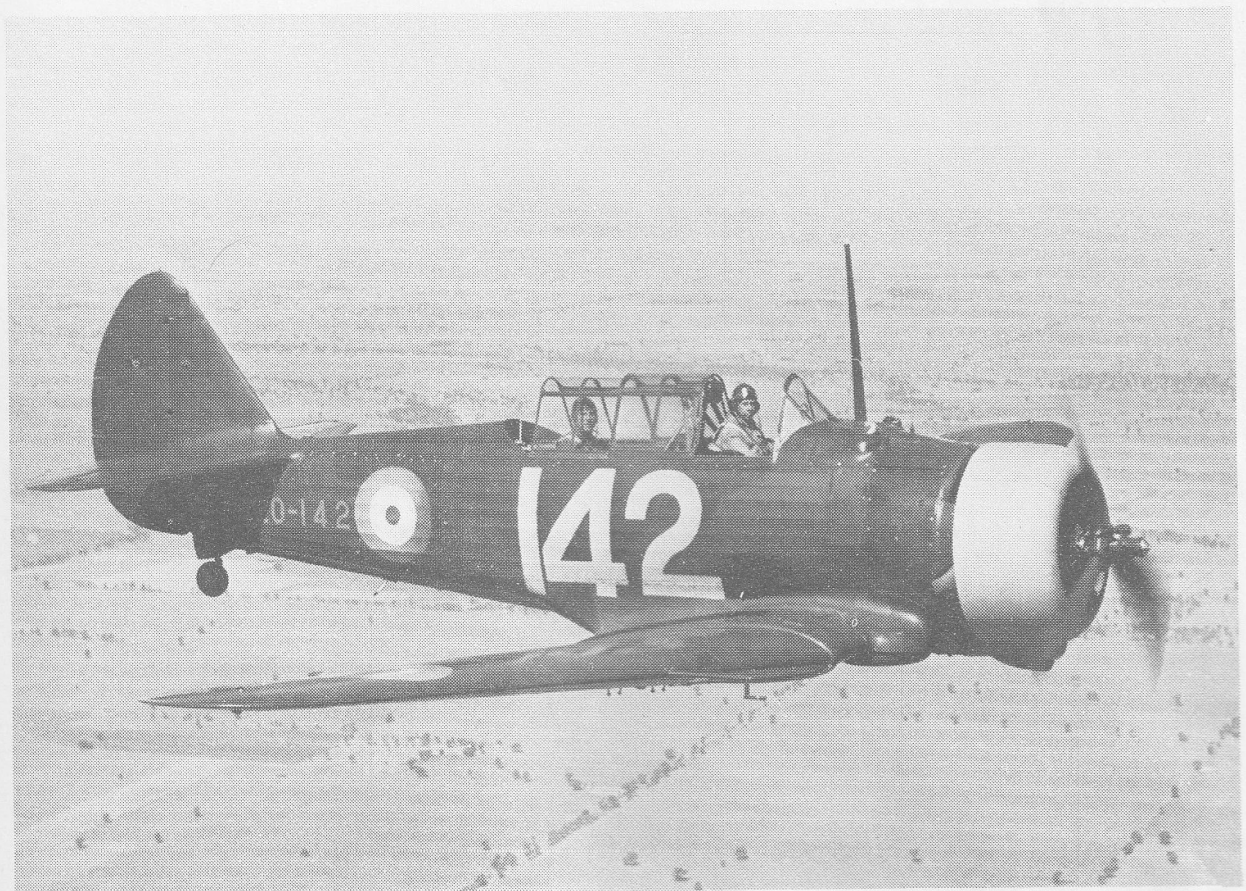
A17 — DH82 TIGER MOTH



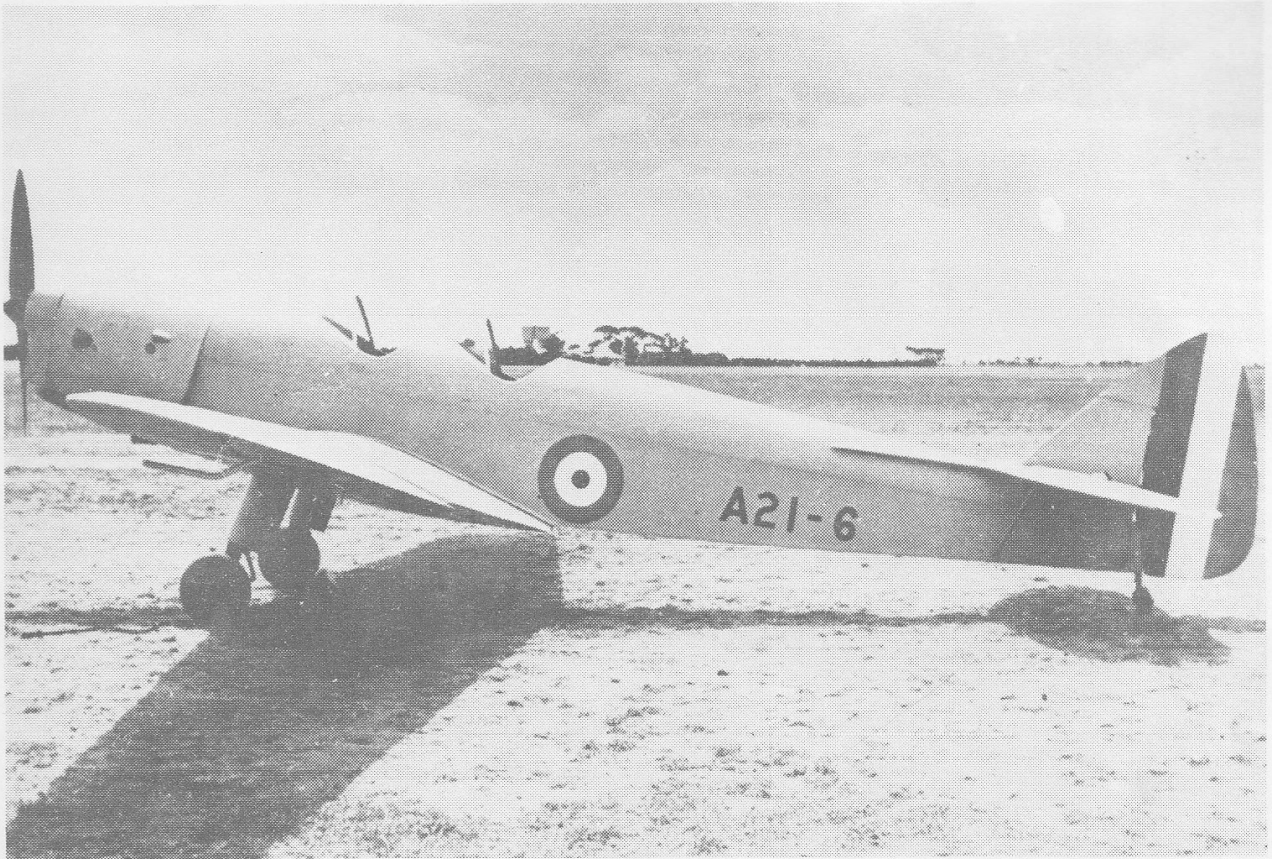
A18 — SHORT EMPIRE



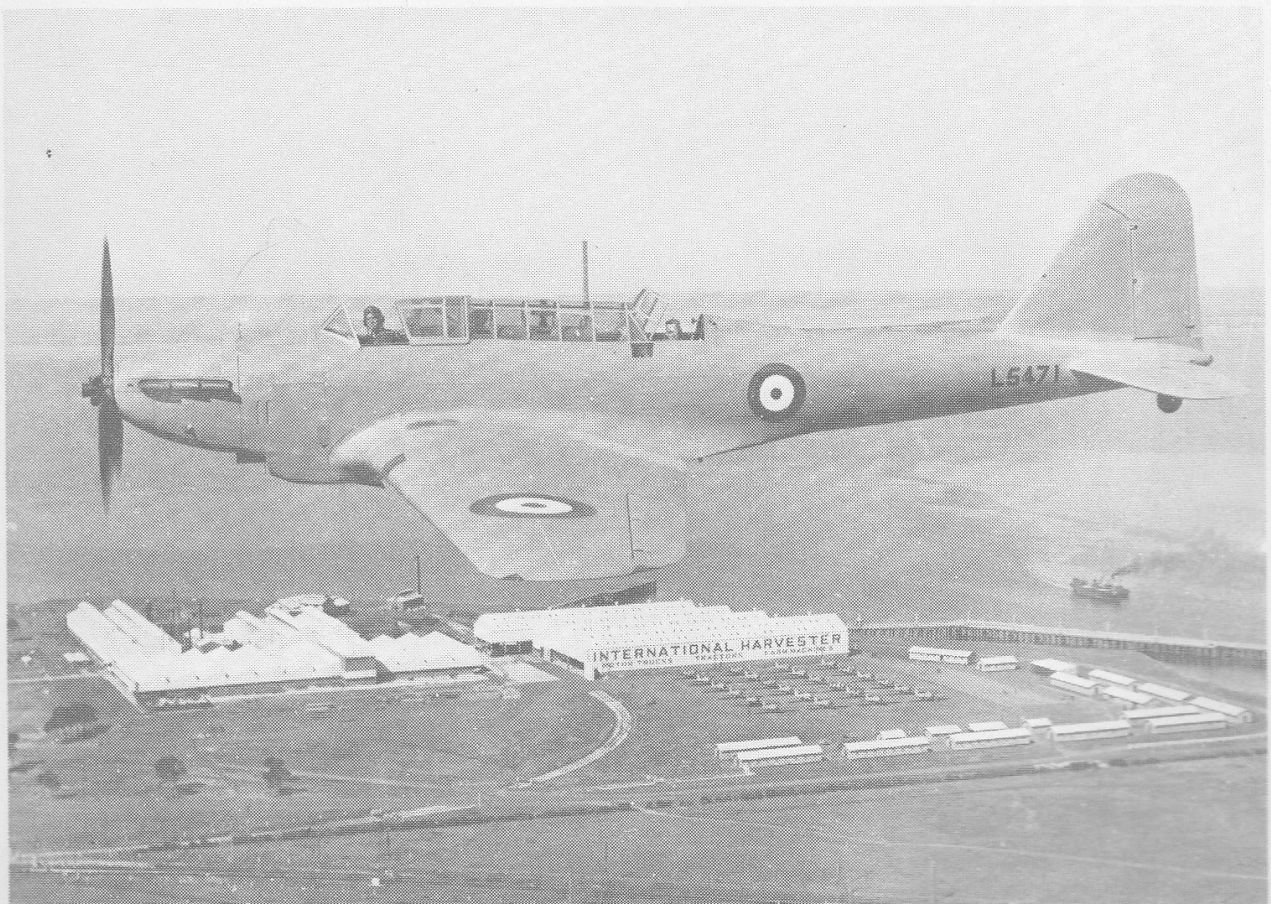
A19 — BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER (UK)



A20 — CAC WIRRAWAY



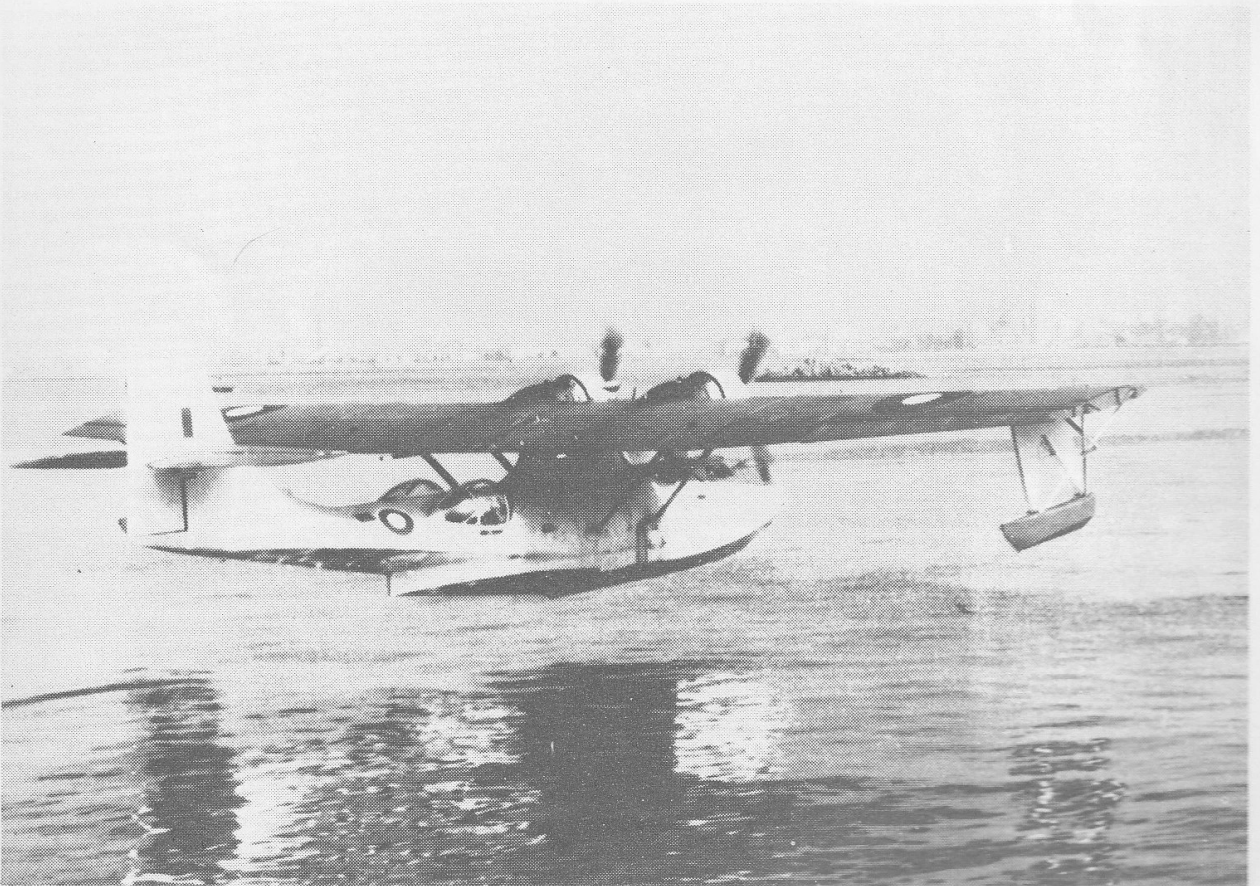
A21 — DH94 MOTH MINOR



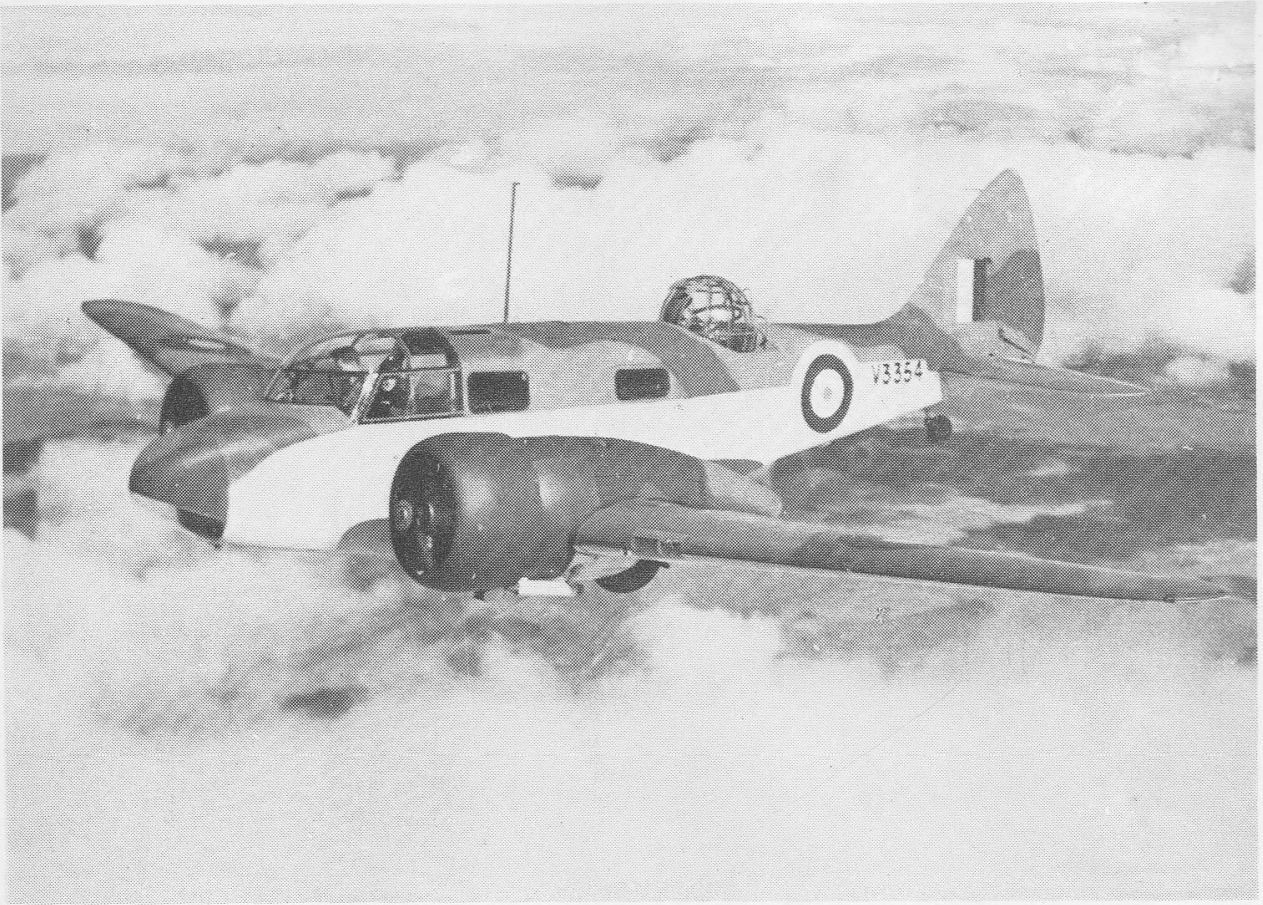
A22 — FAIREY BATTLE



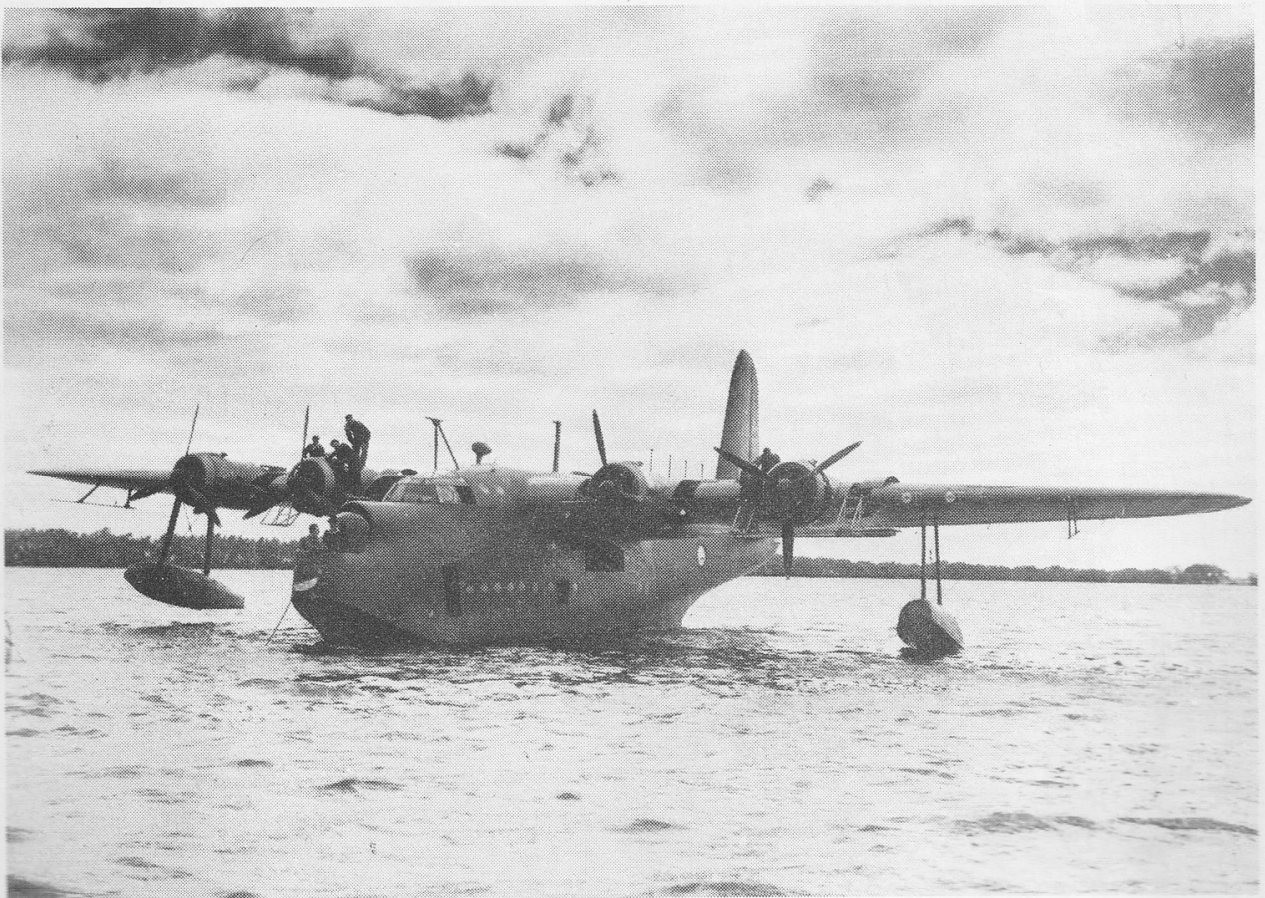
A23 — CAC WOOMERA



A24 — CONSOLIDATED CATALINA



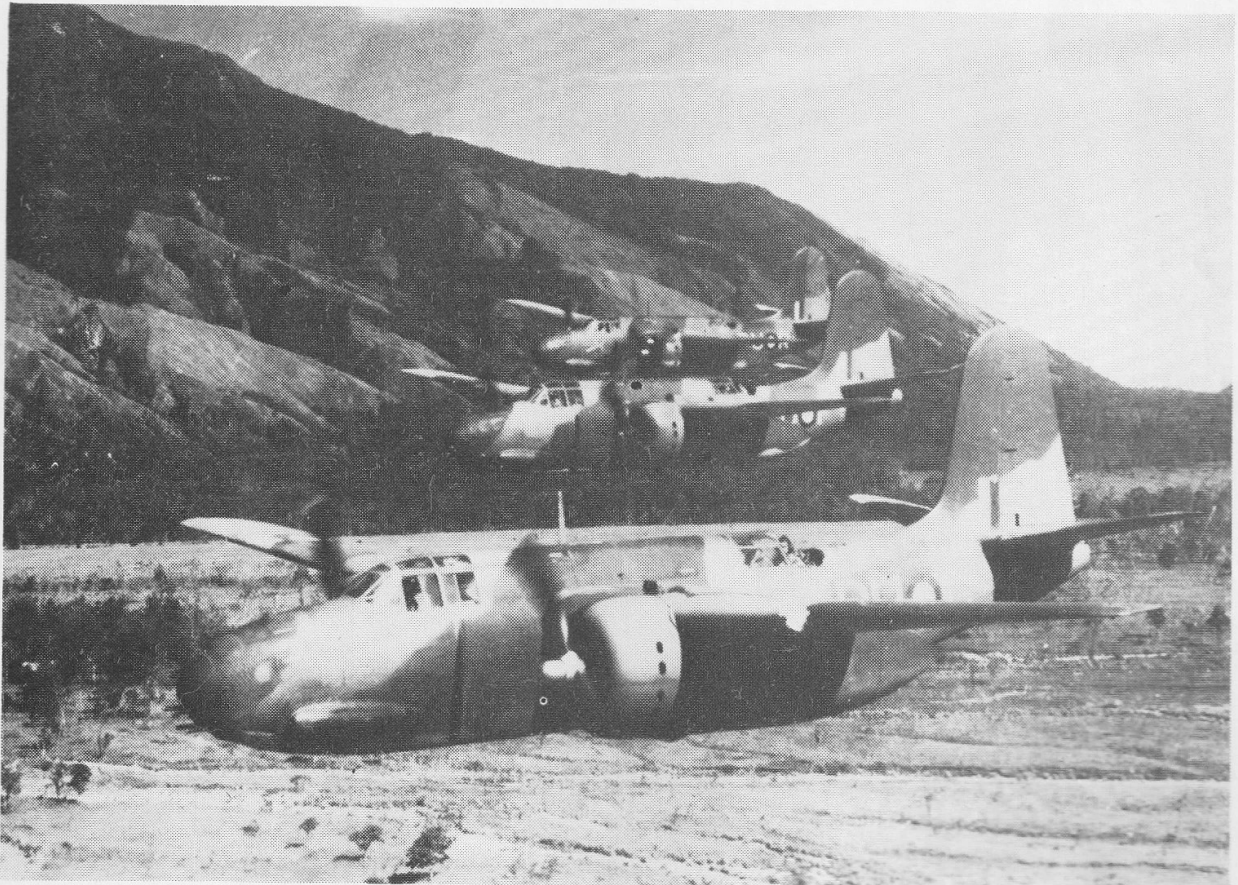
A25 — AIRSPEED OXFORD



A26 — SHORT SUNDERLAND



A27 — VULTEE VENGEANCE



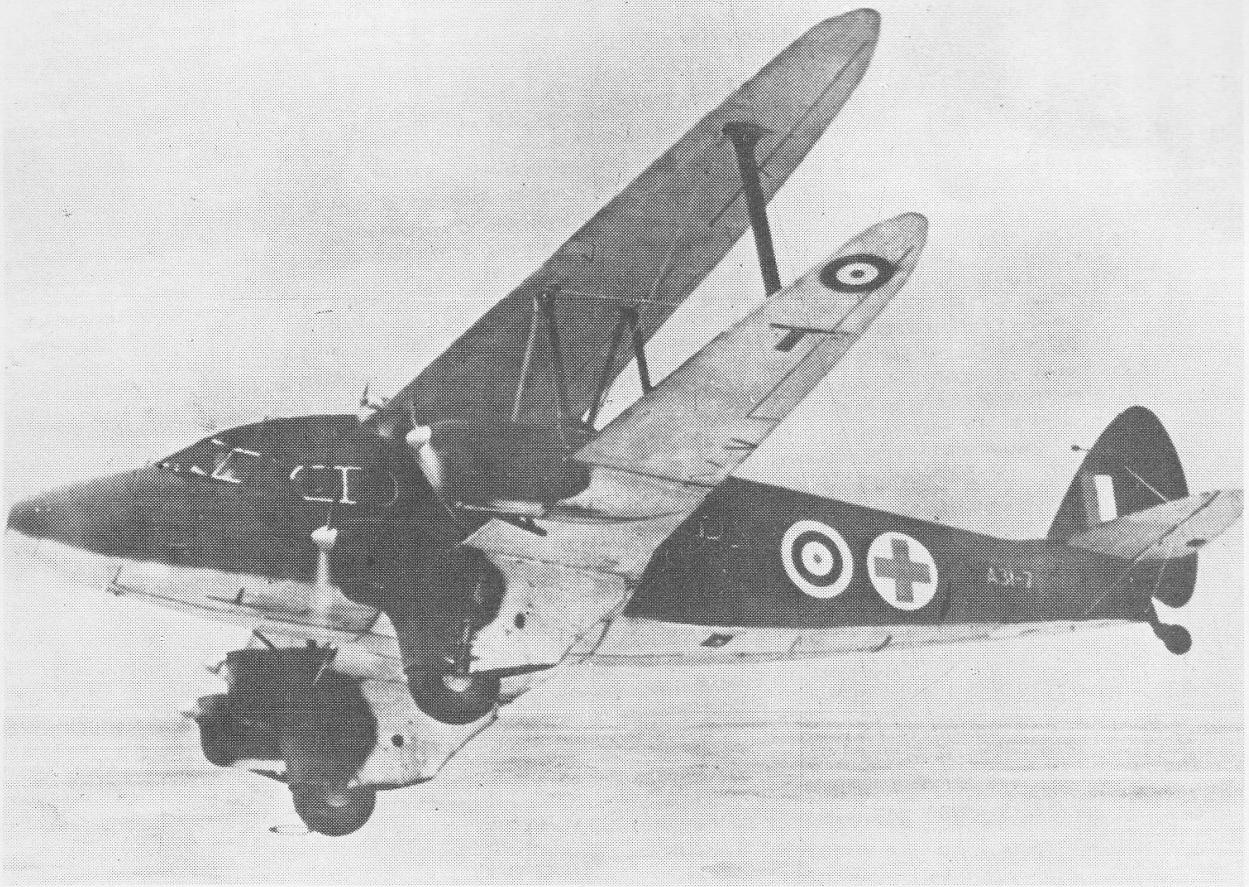
A28 — DOUGLAS BOSTON



A29 — CURTISS KITTYHAWK



A30 — DOUGLAS DC2



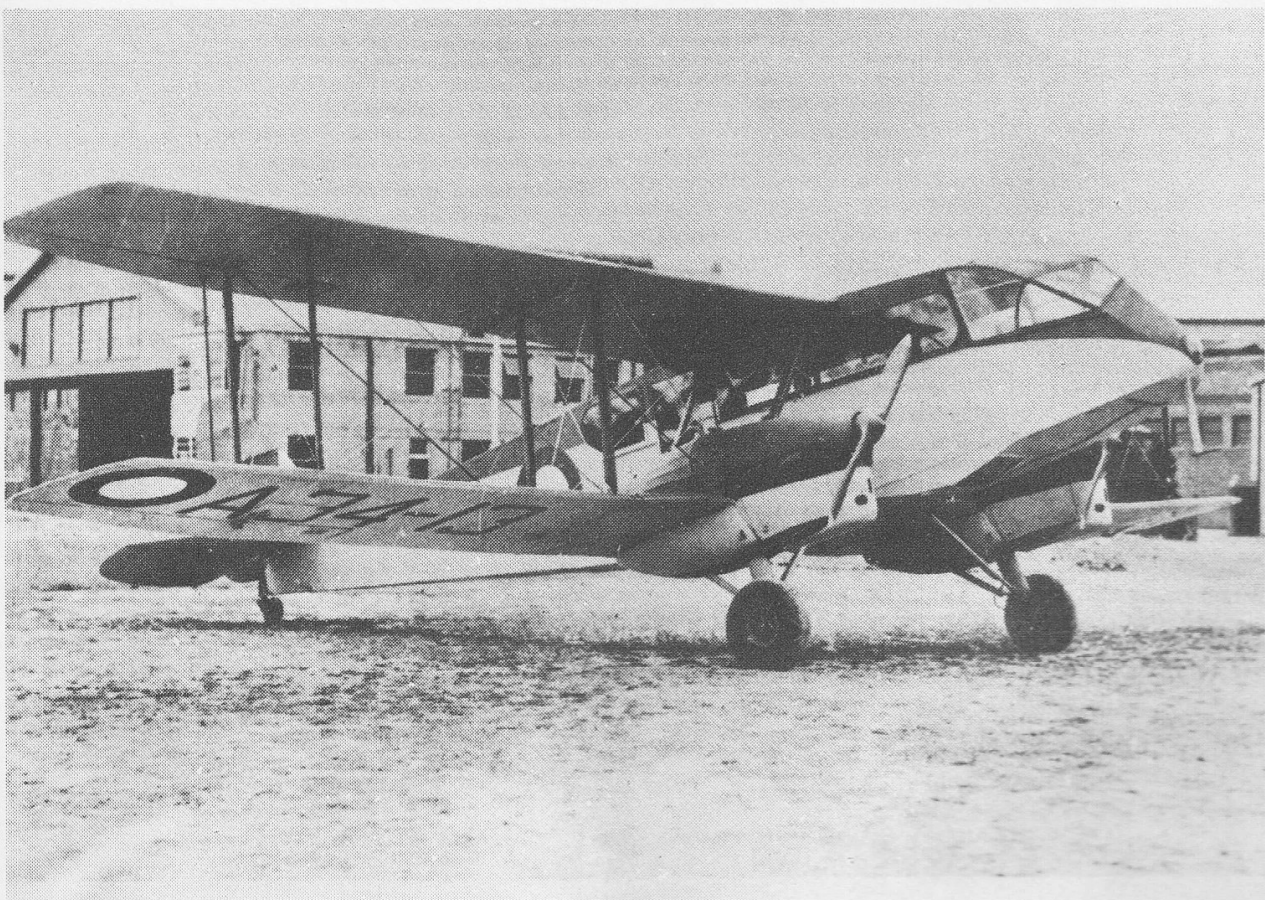
A31 — DH86



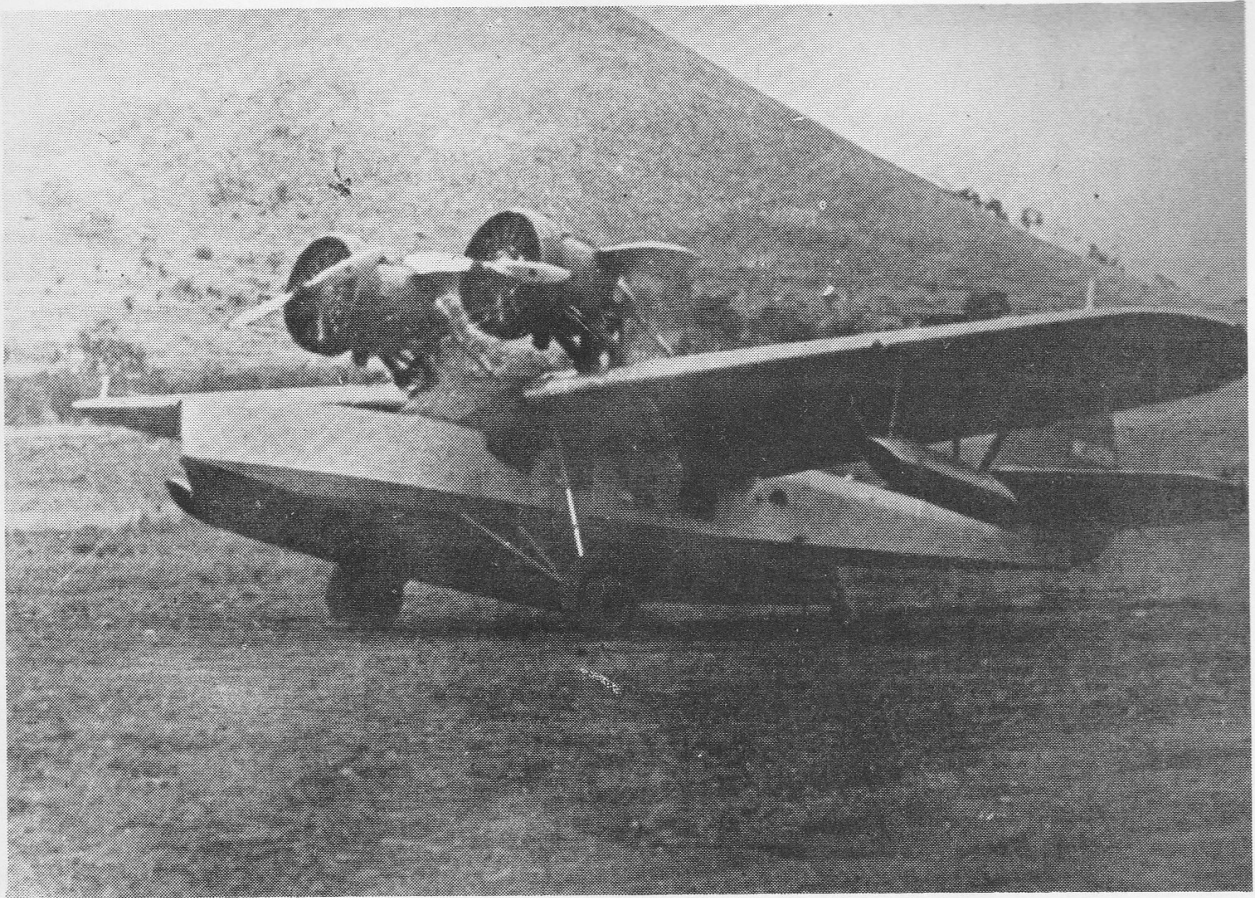
A32 — PERCIVAL VEGA GULL



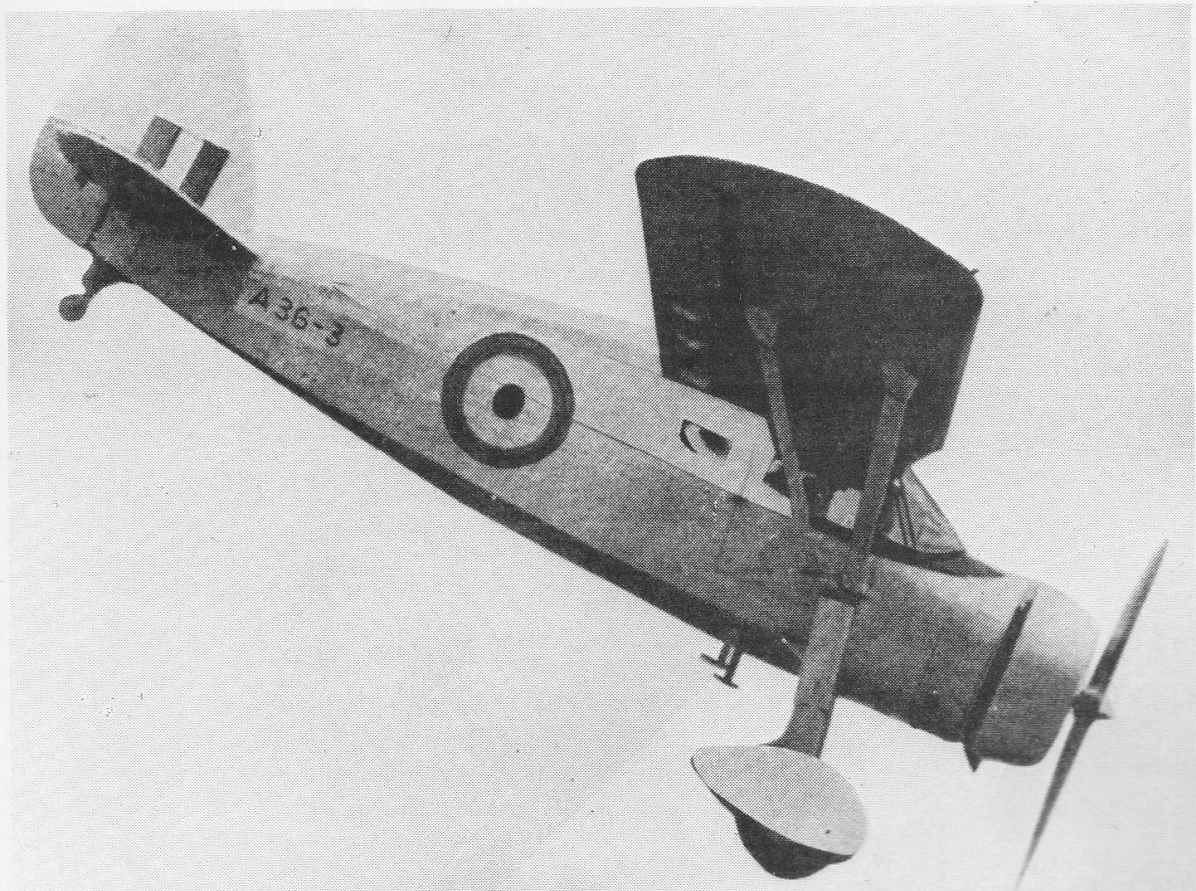
A33 — DH89 DRAGON RAPIDE



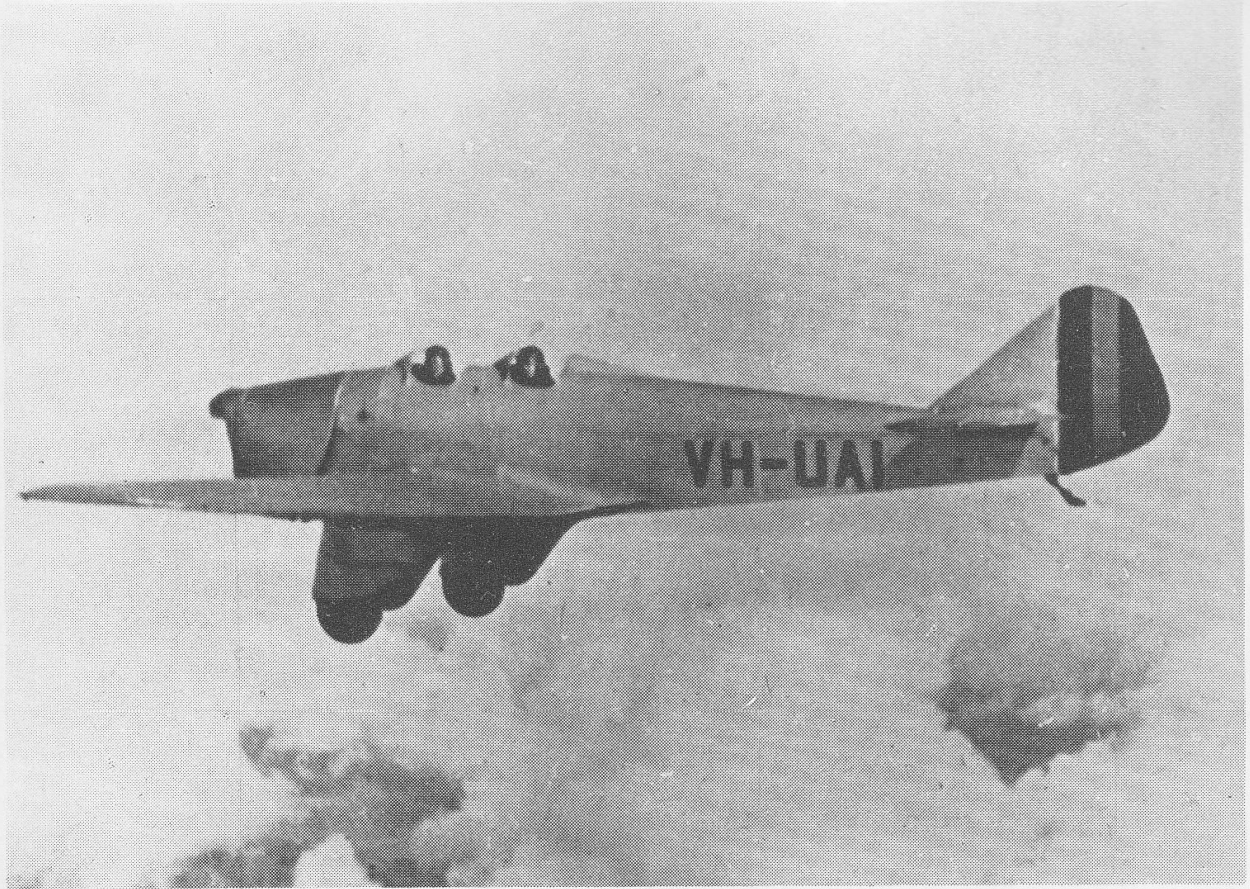
A34 — DH84 DRAGON



A35 — DOUGLAS DOLPHIN



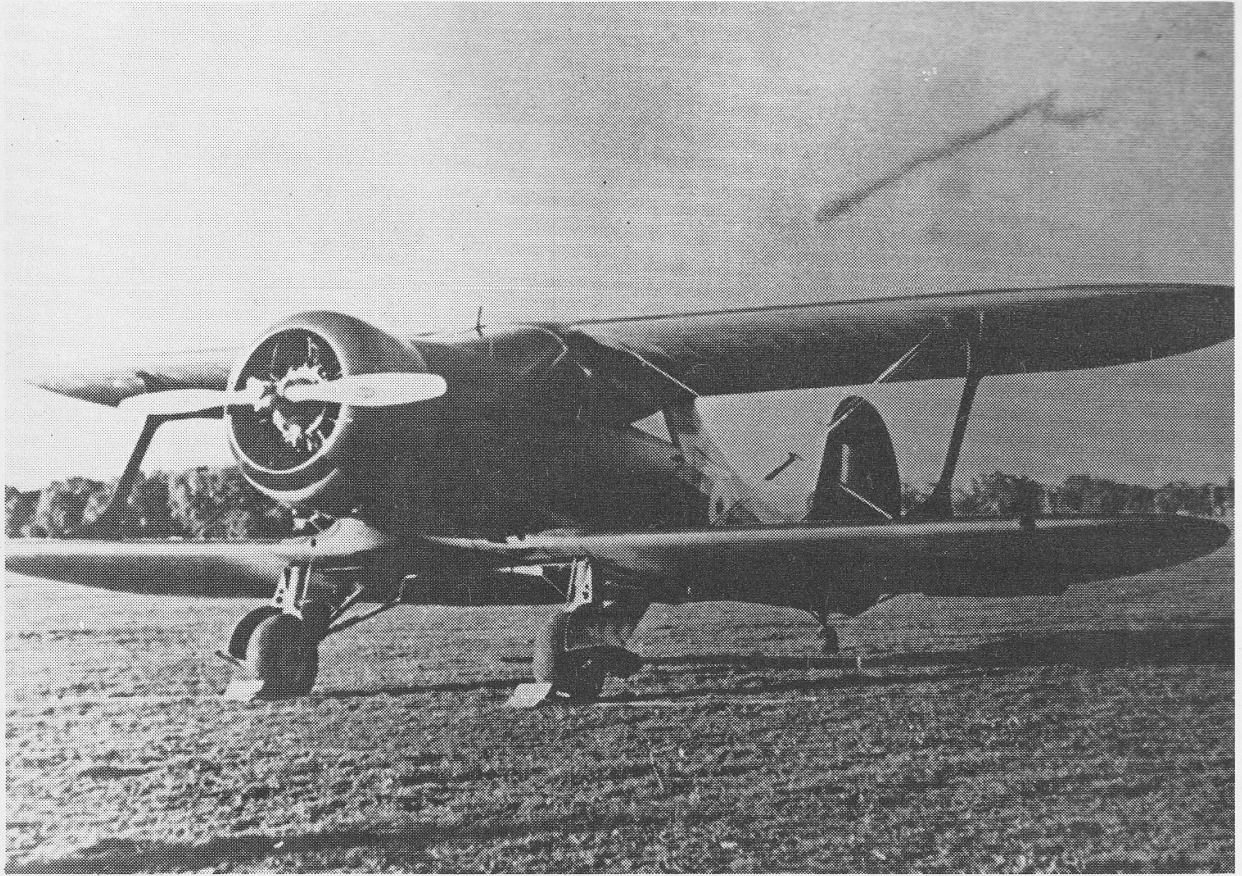
A36 — FAIRCHILD 24



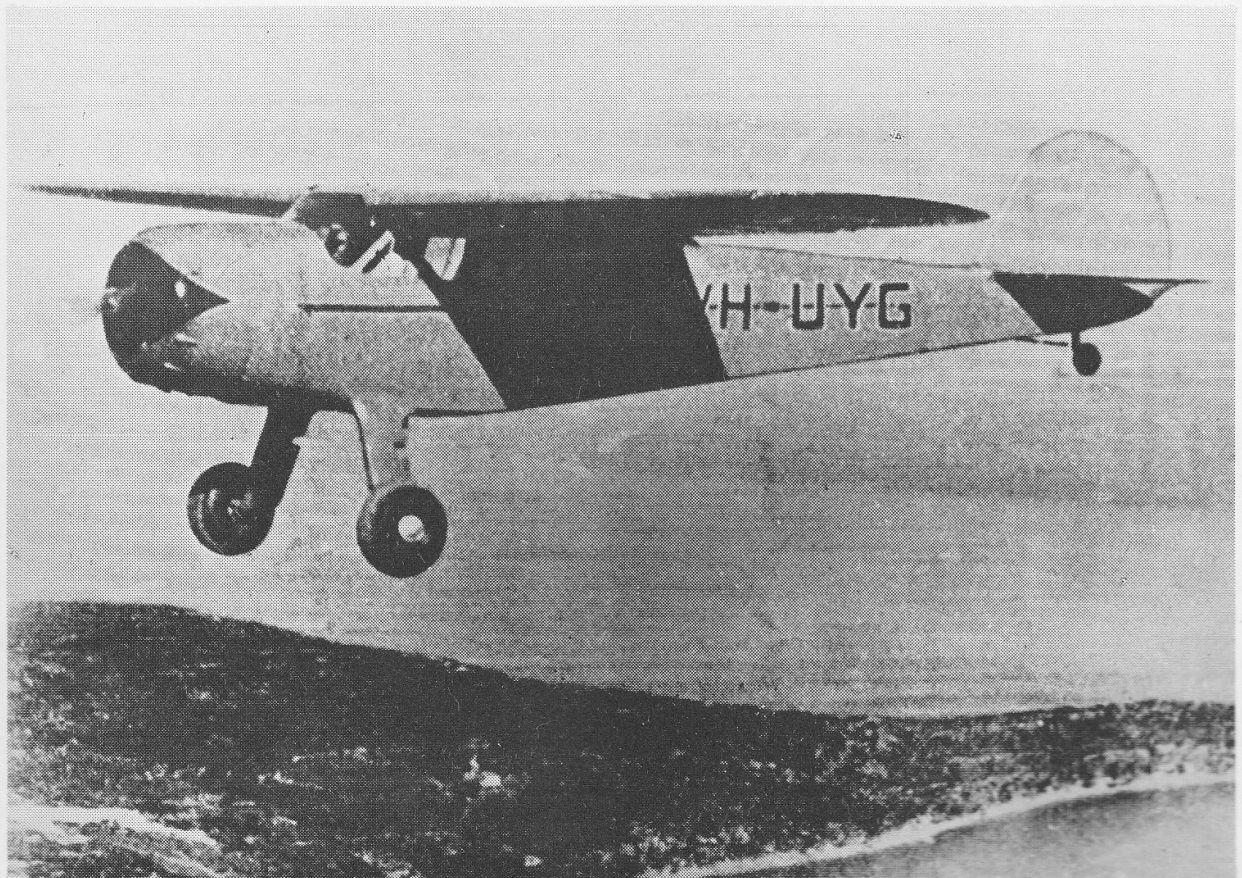
A37 — MILES HAWK



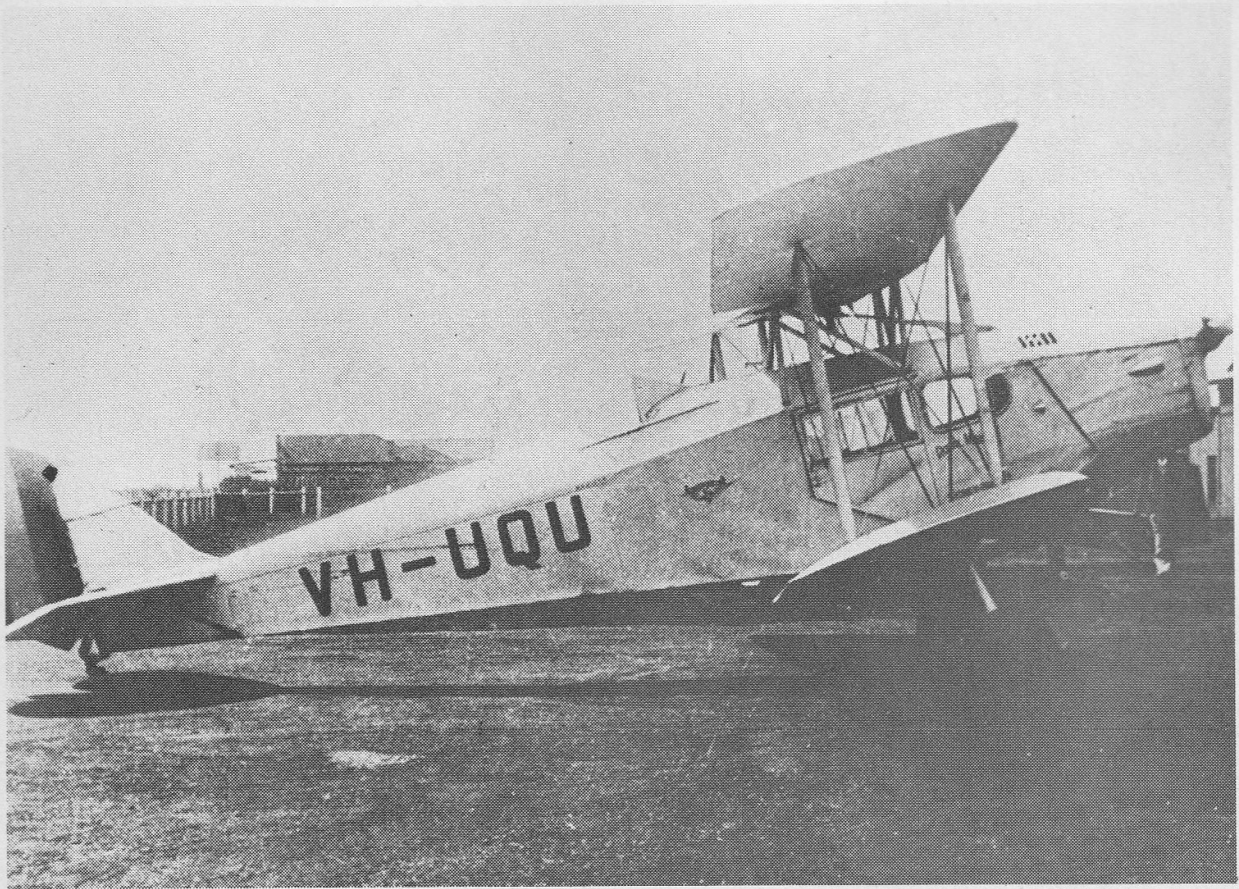
A38 — STINSON RELIANT



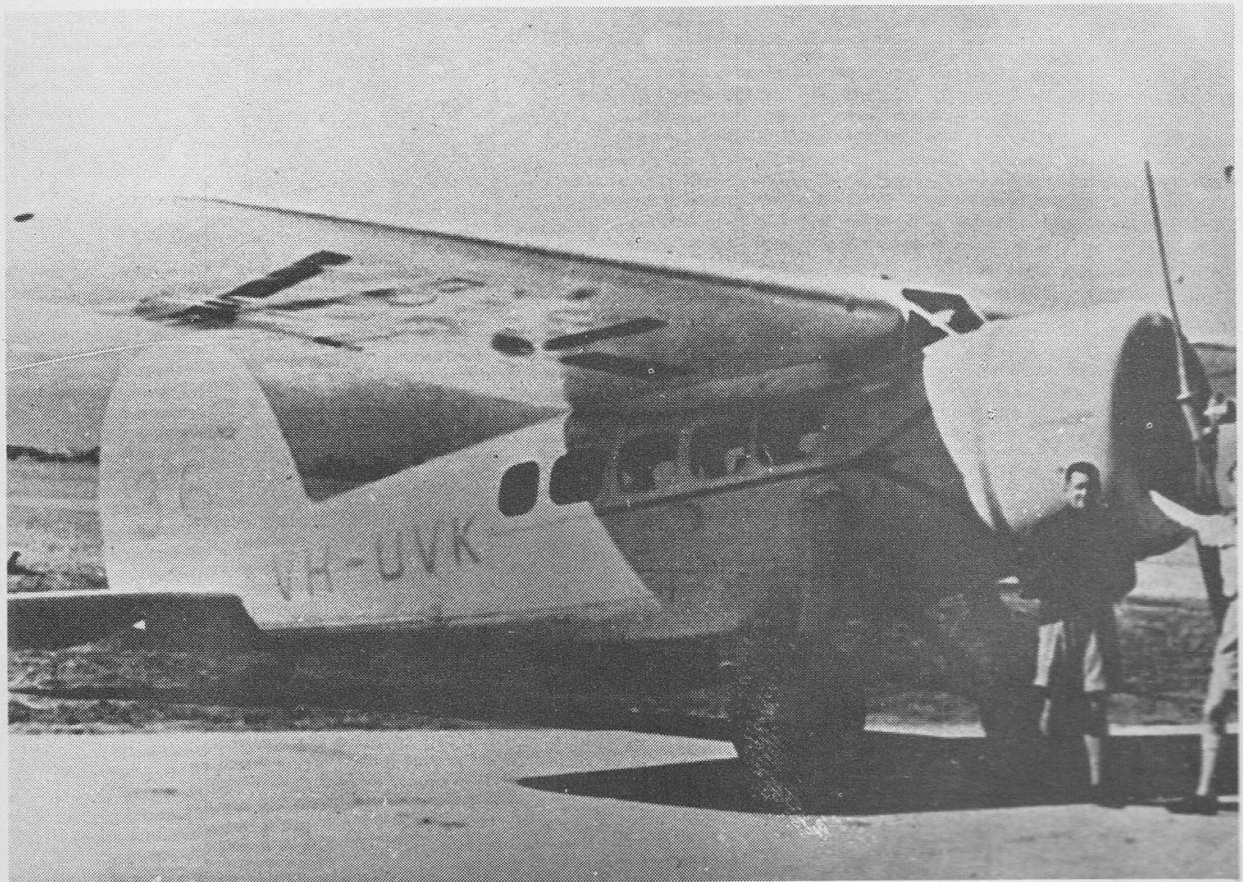
A39 — BEECHCRAFT 17



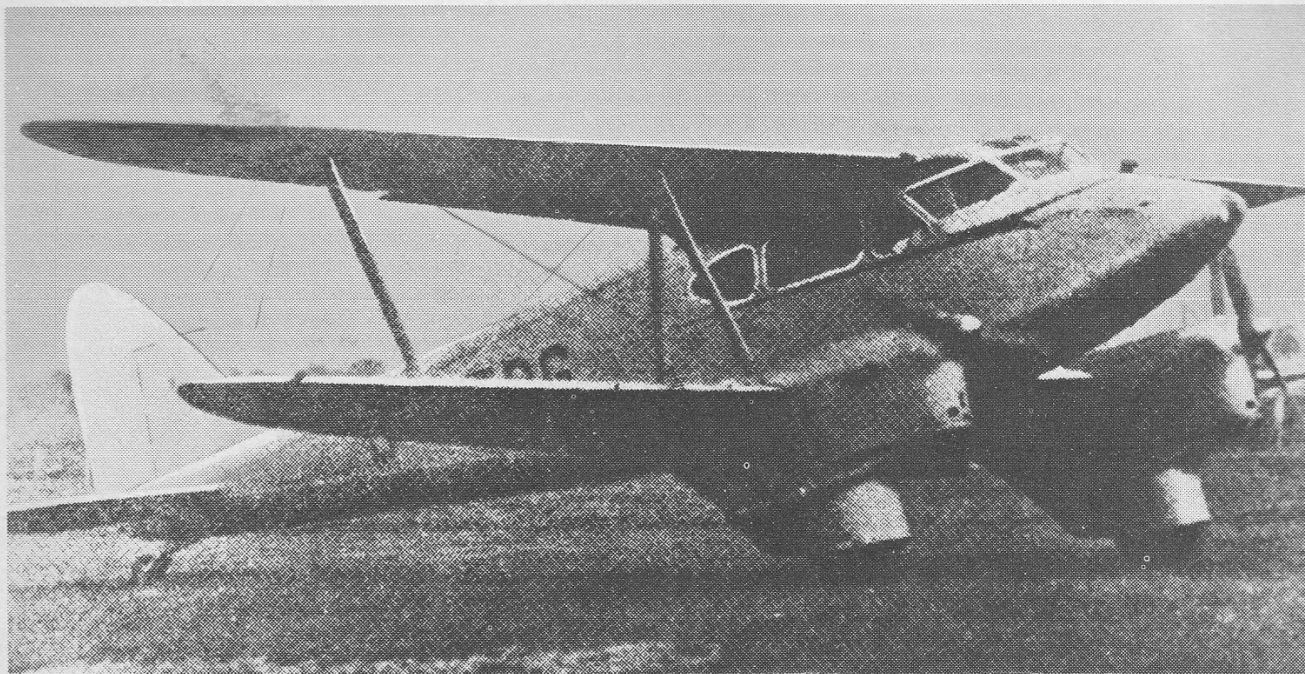
A40 — CESSNA C34



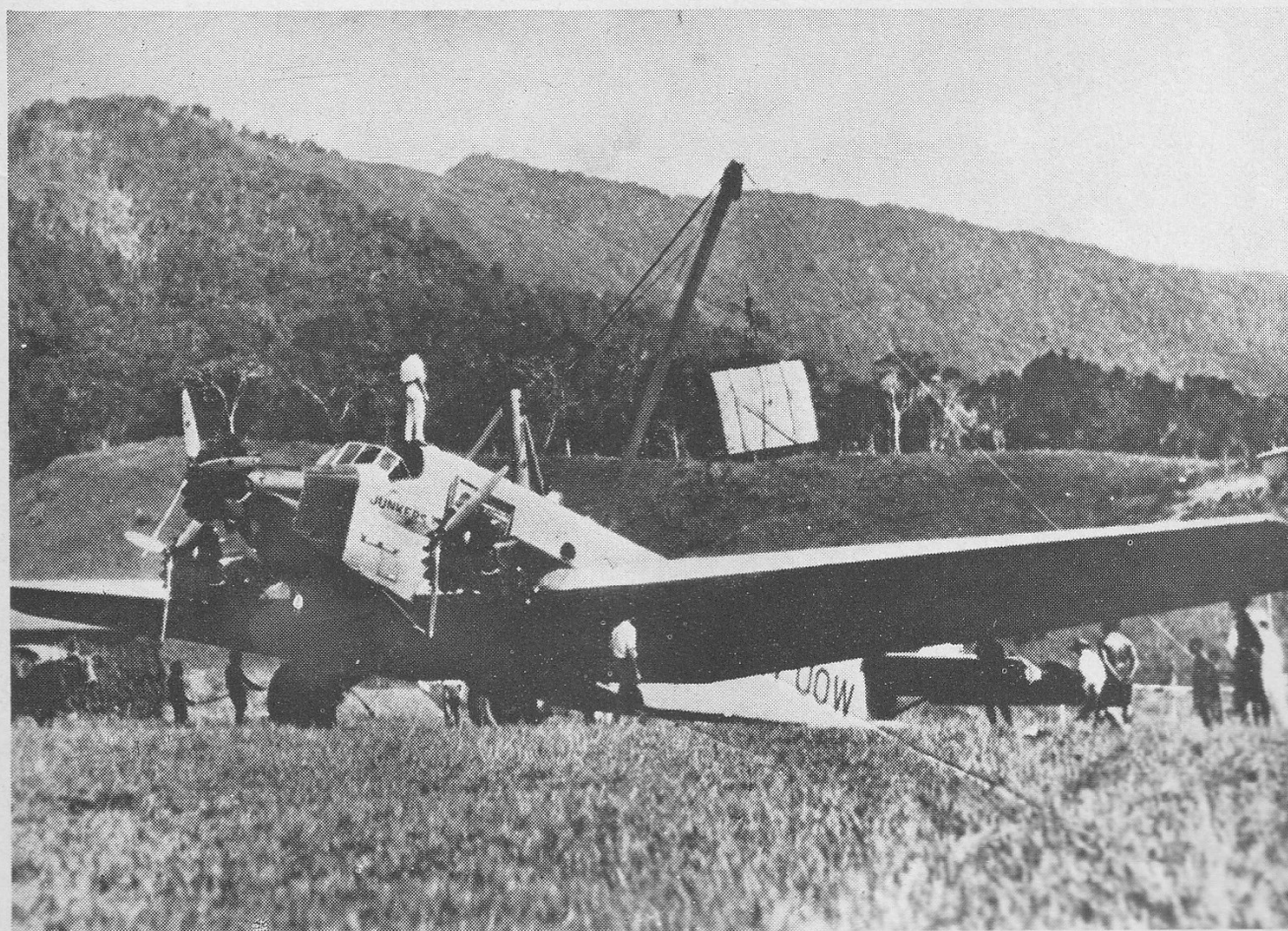
A41 — DH83 FOX MOTH



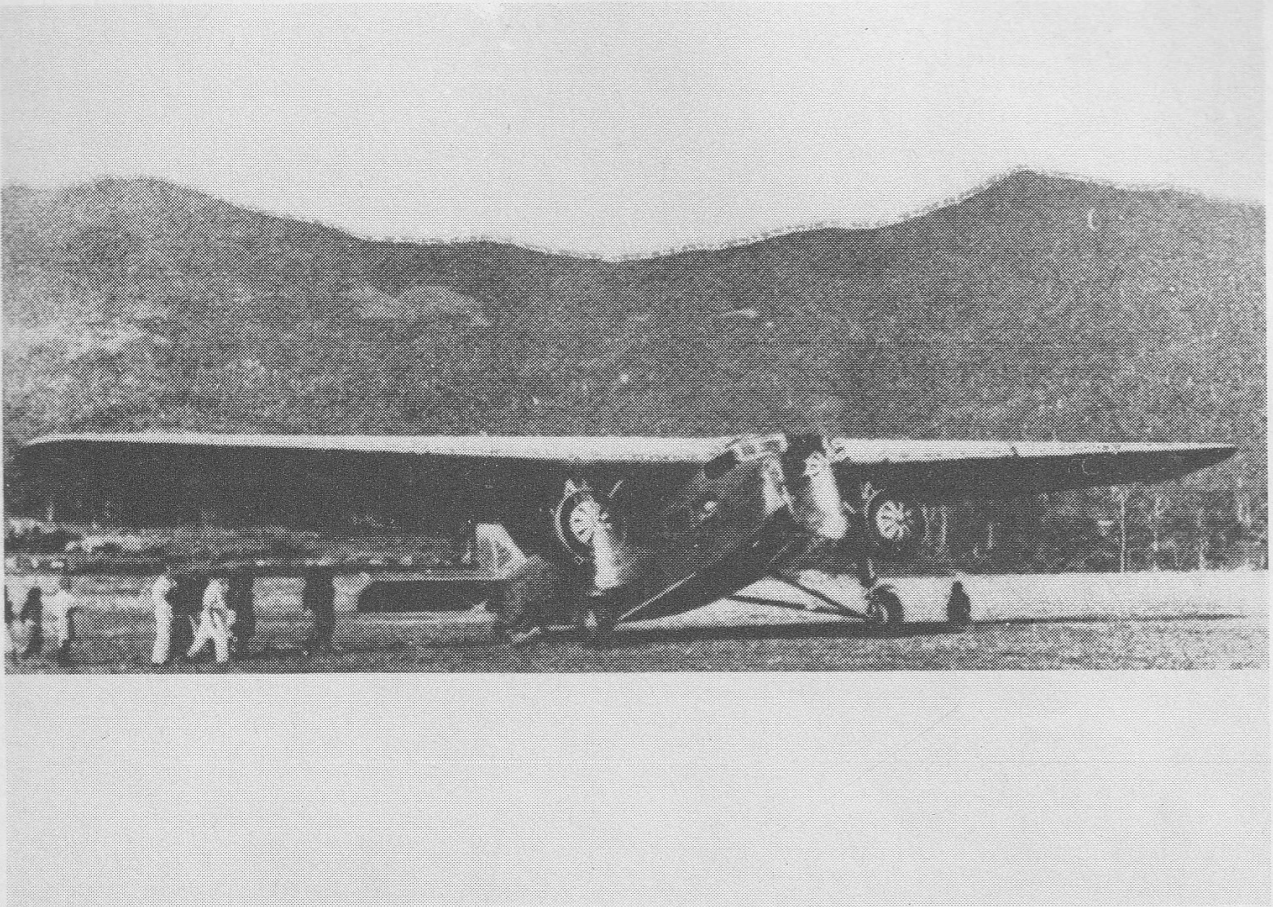
A42 — LOCKHEED VEGA



A43 — DH90 DRAGONFLY



A44 — JUNKERS G31



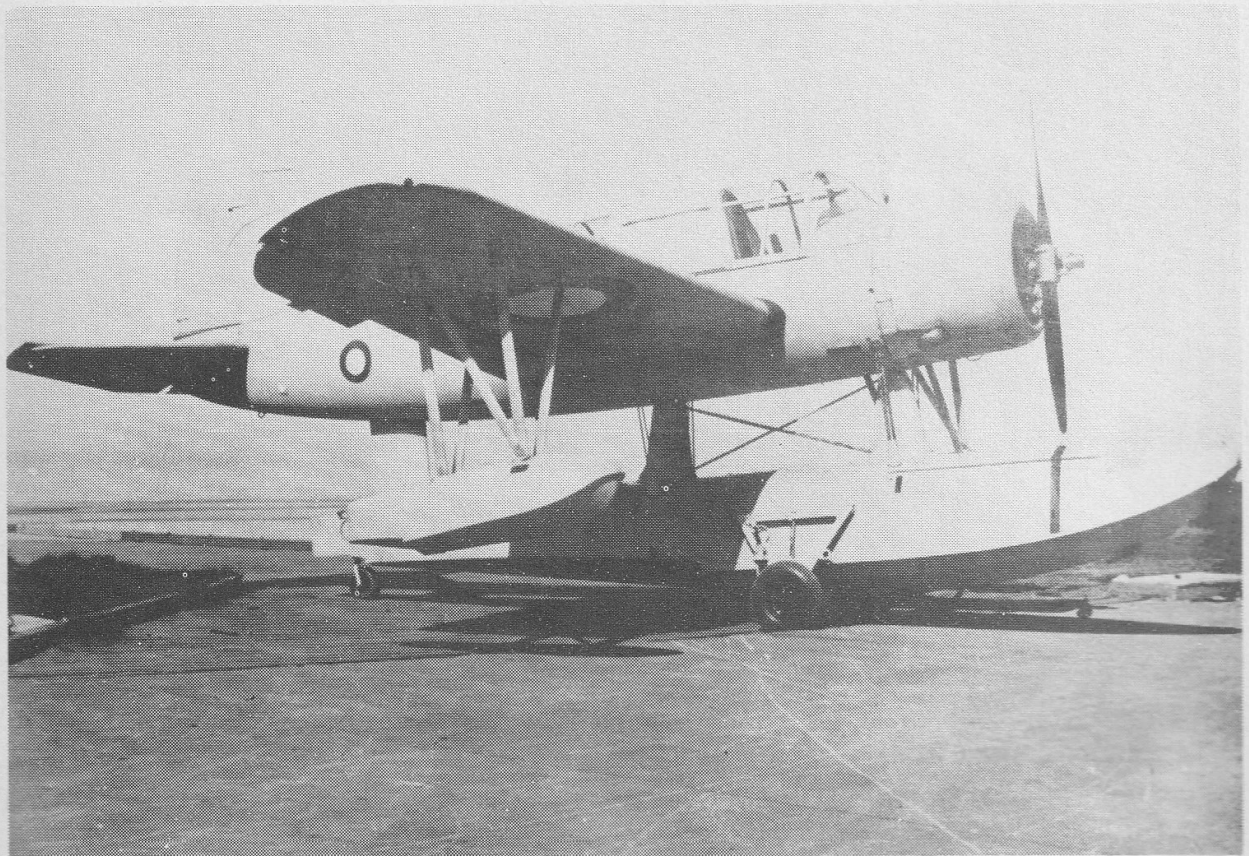
A45 — FORD TRIMOTOR



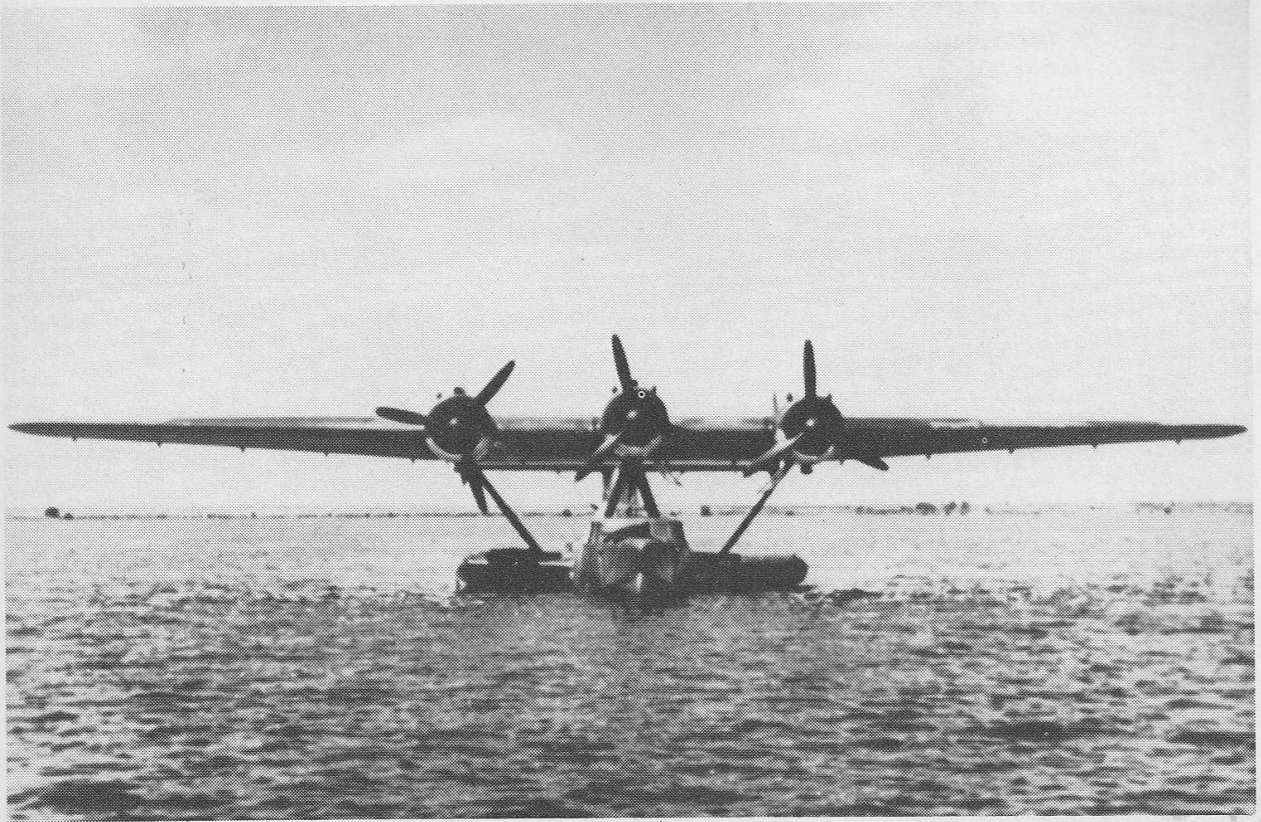
A46 — CAC BOOMERANG



A47 — NA MITCHELL



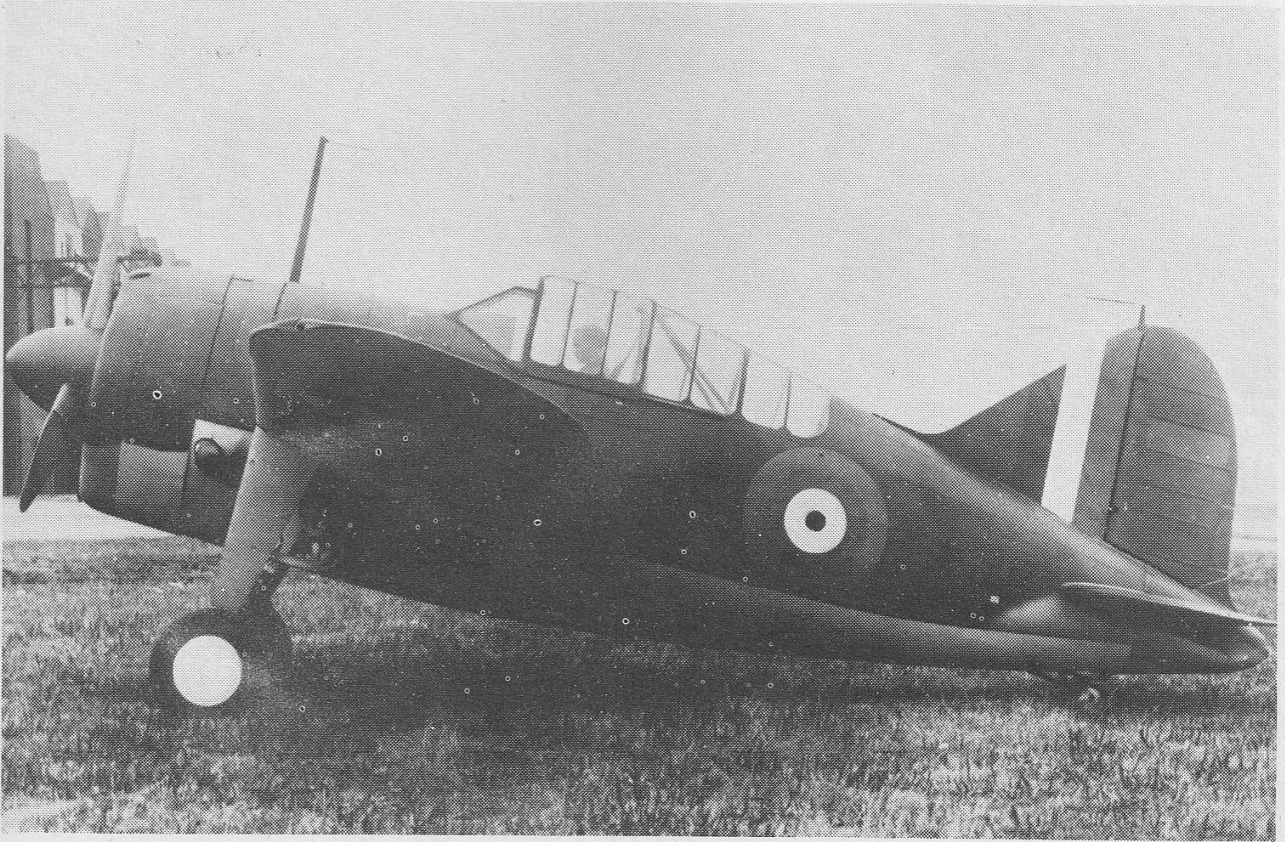
A48 — VOUGHT KINGFISHER



A49 — DORNIER DO24K



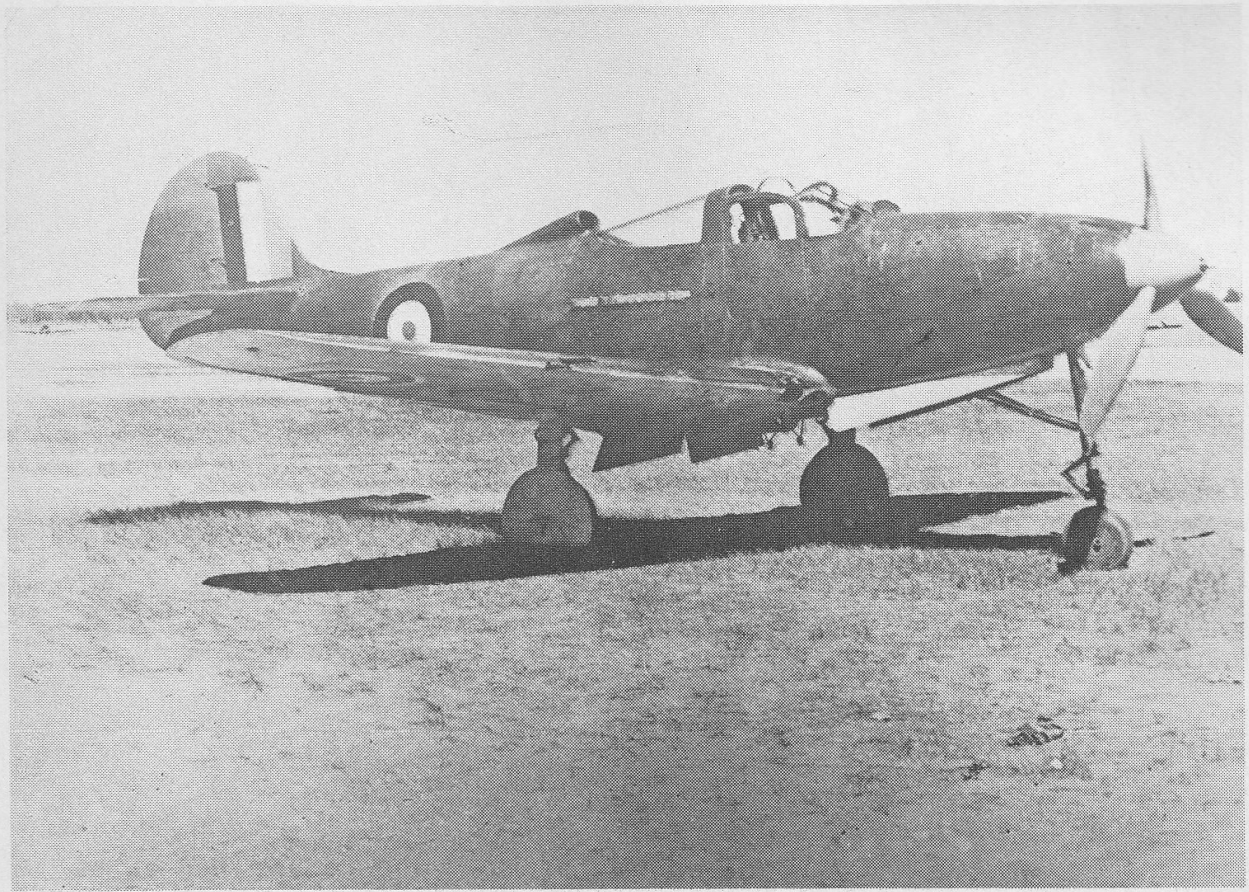
A50 — RYAN STM-2



A51 — BREWSTER BUFFALO



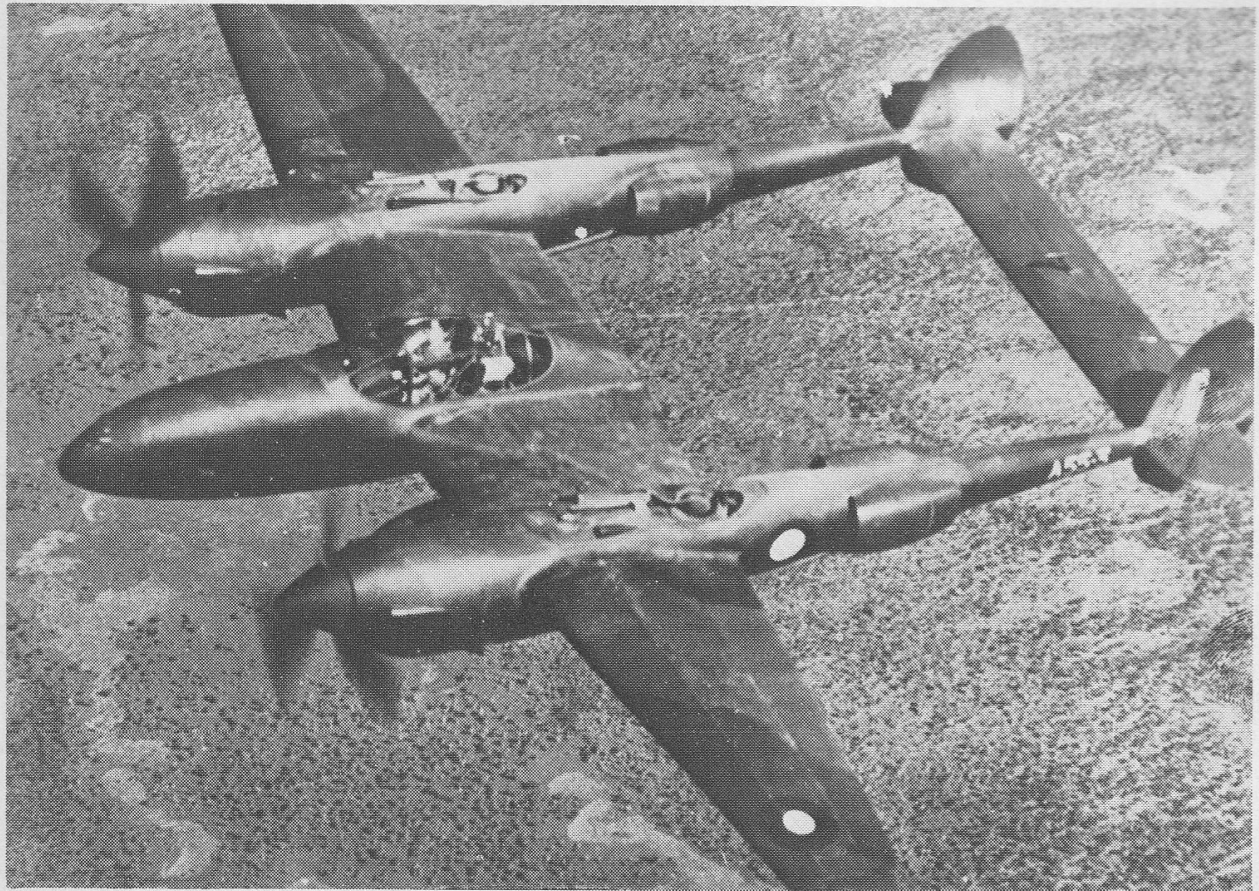
A52 — DH98 MOSQUITO



A53 — BELL AIRACOBRA



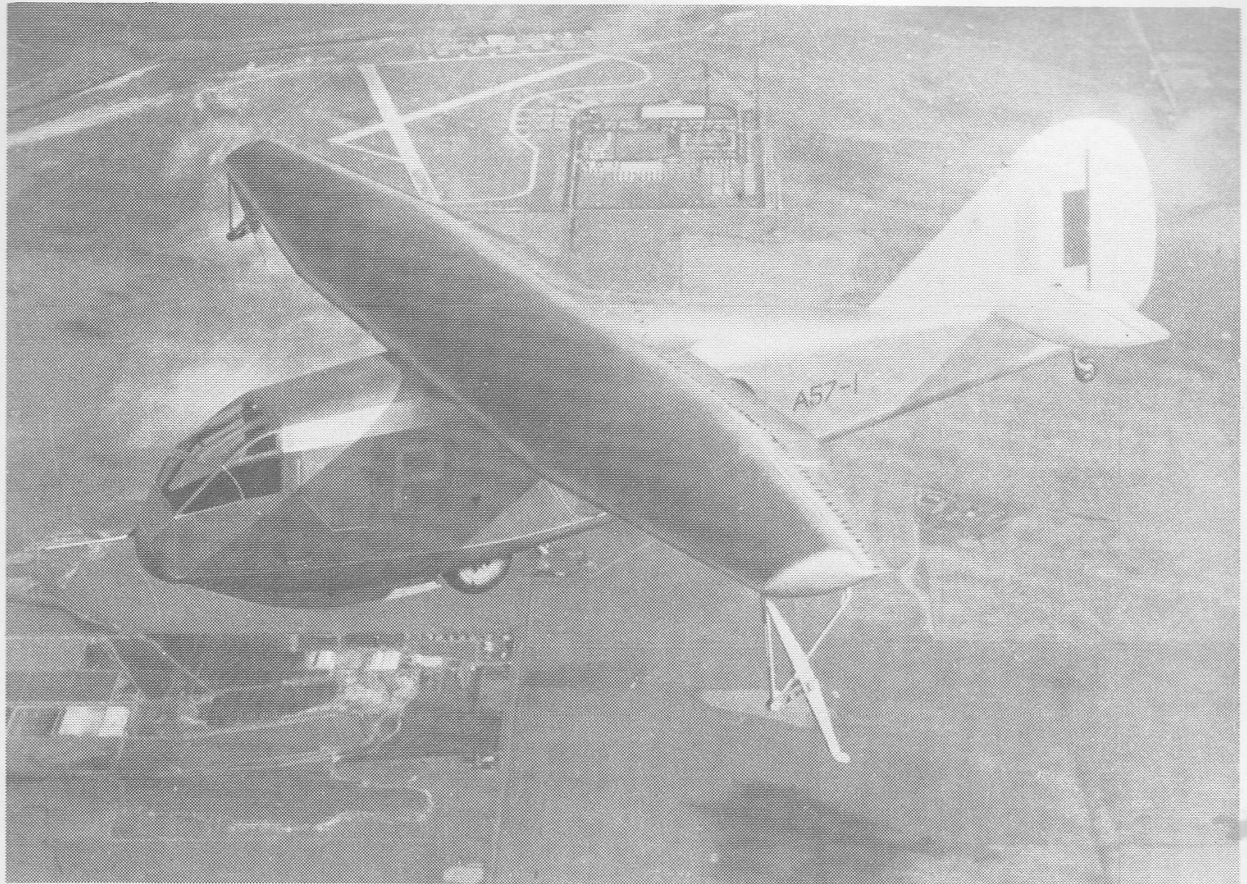
A54 — WACO YQC-6



A55 — LOCKHEED LIGHTNING



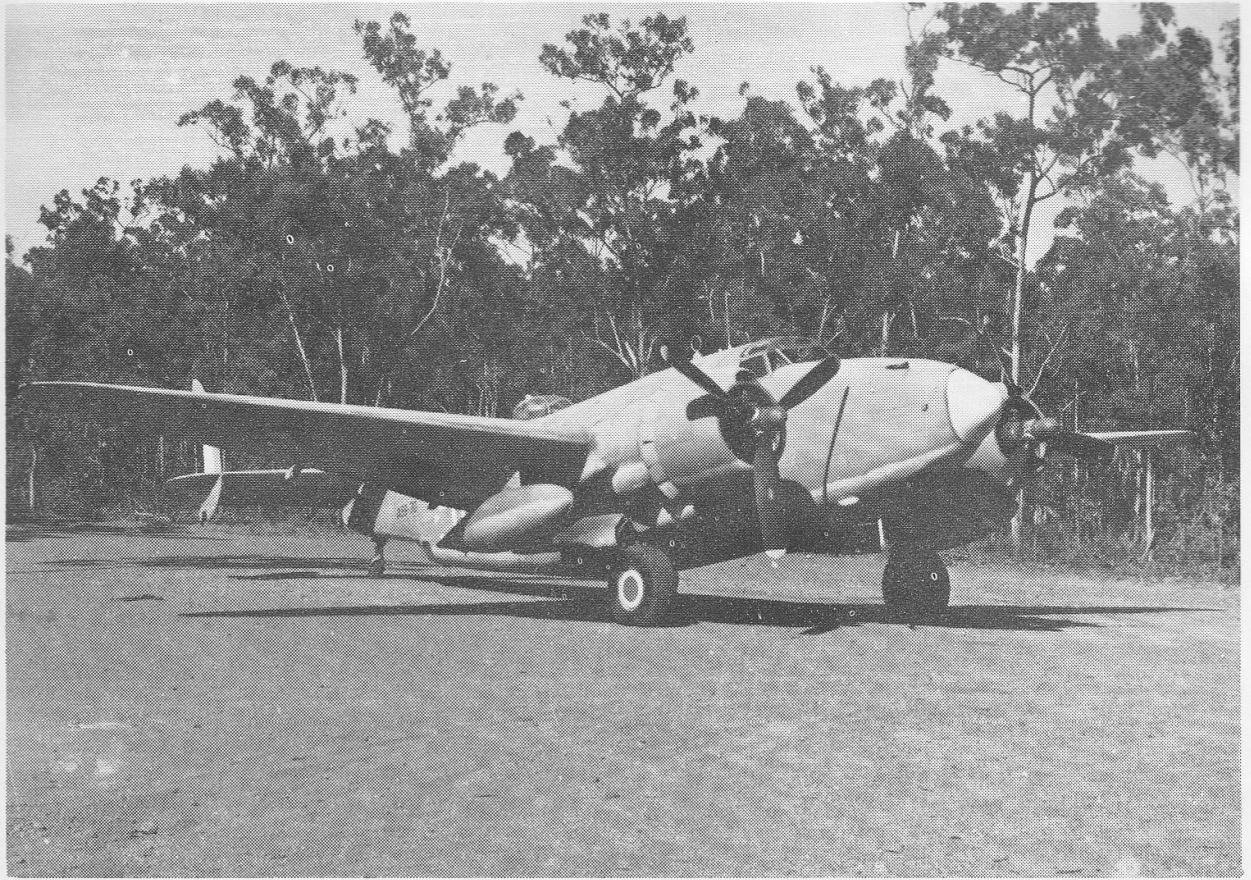
A56 — REPUBLIC LANCER



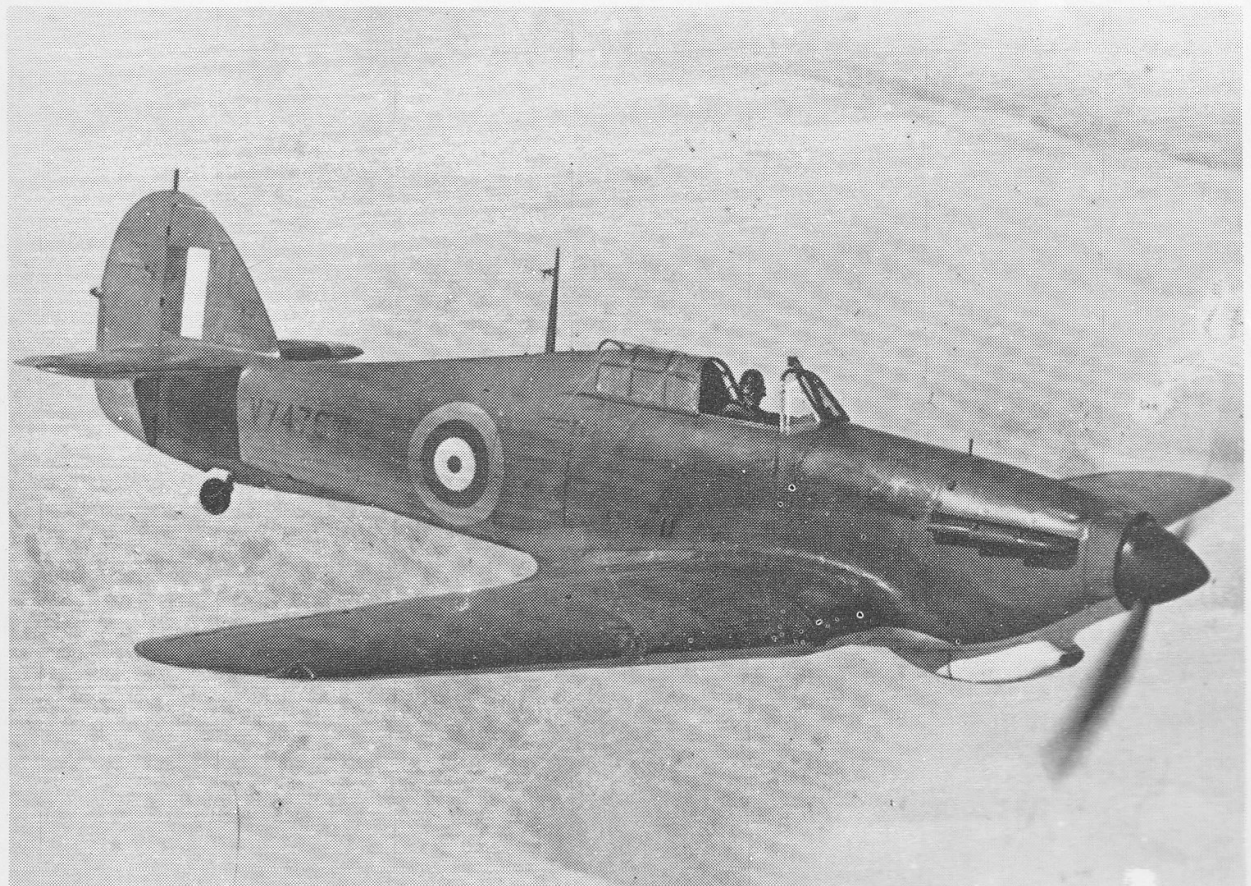
A57 — DHA GLIDER



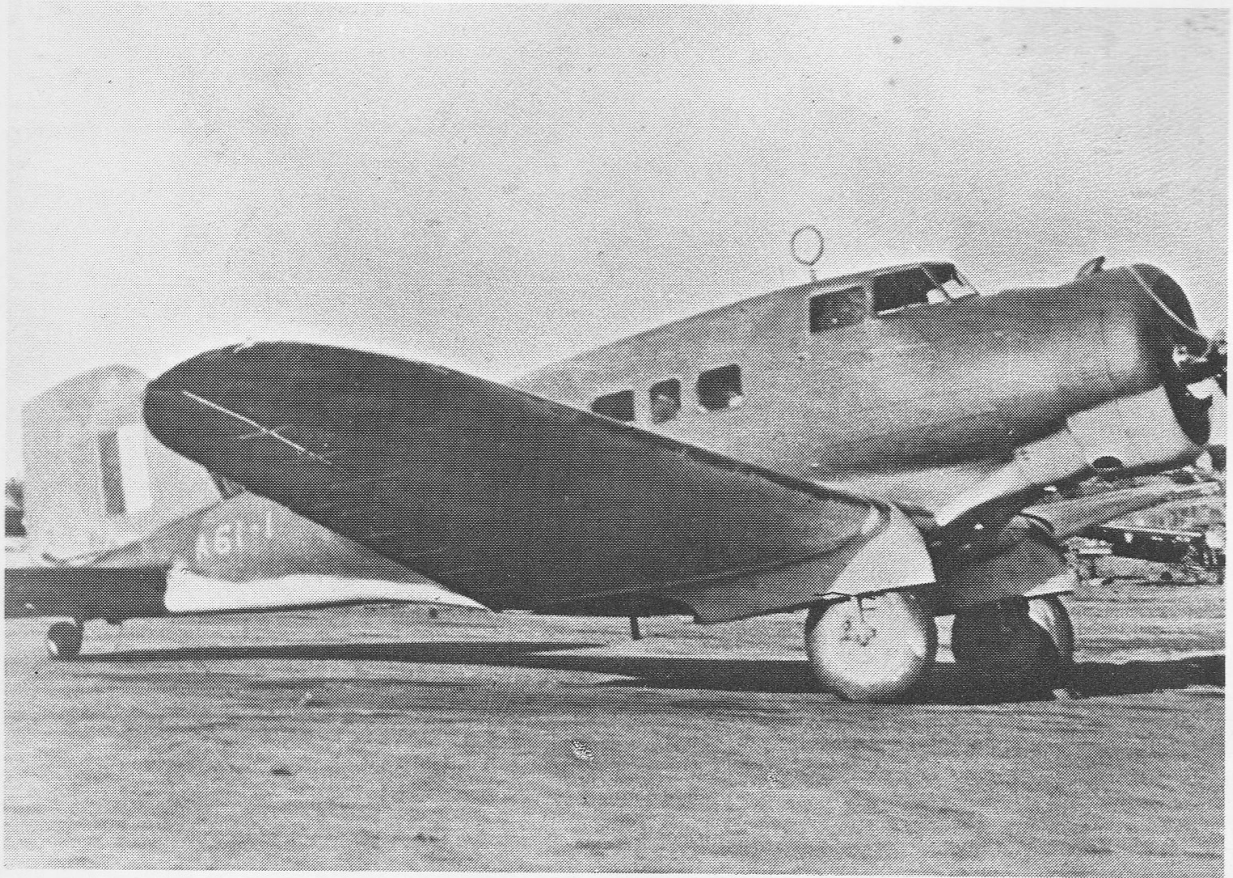
A58 — SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE



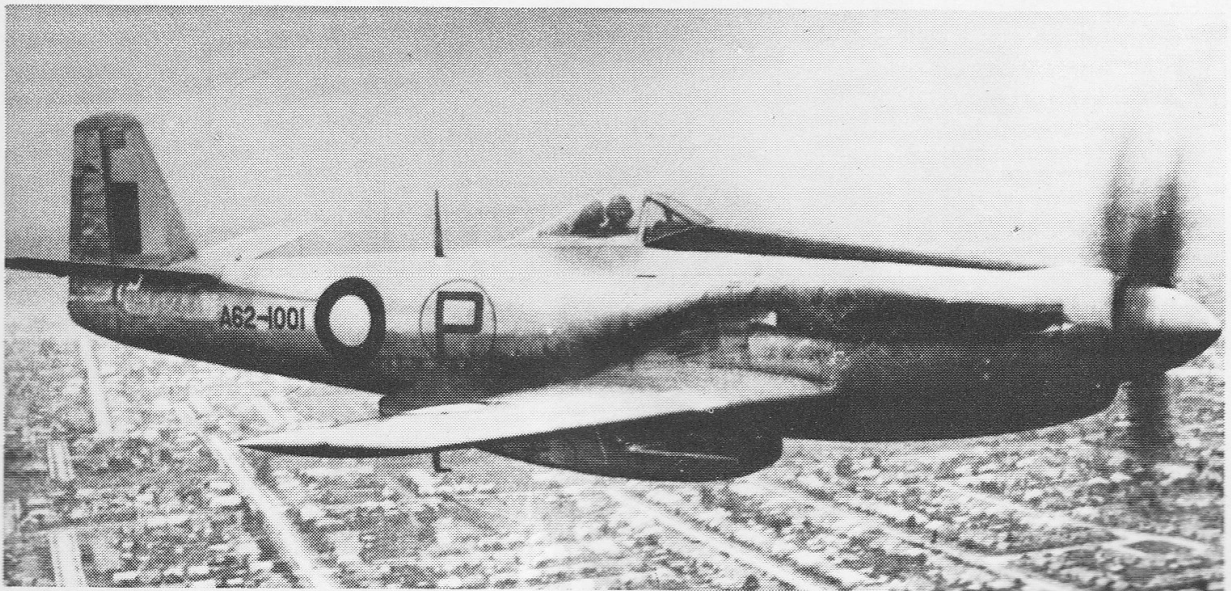
A59 — LOCKHEED VENTURA



A60 — HAWKER HURRICANE



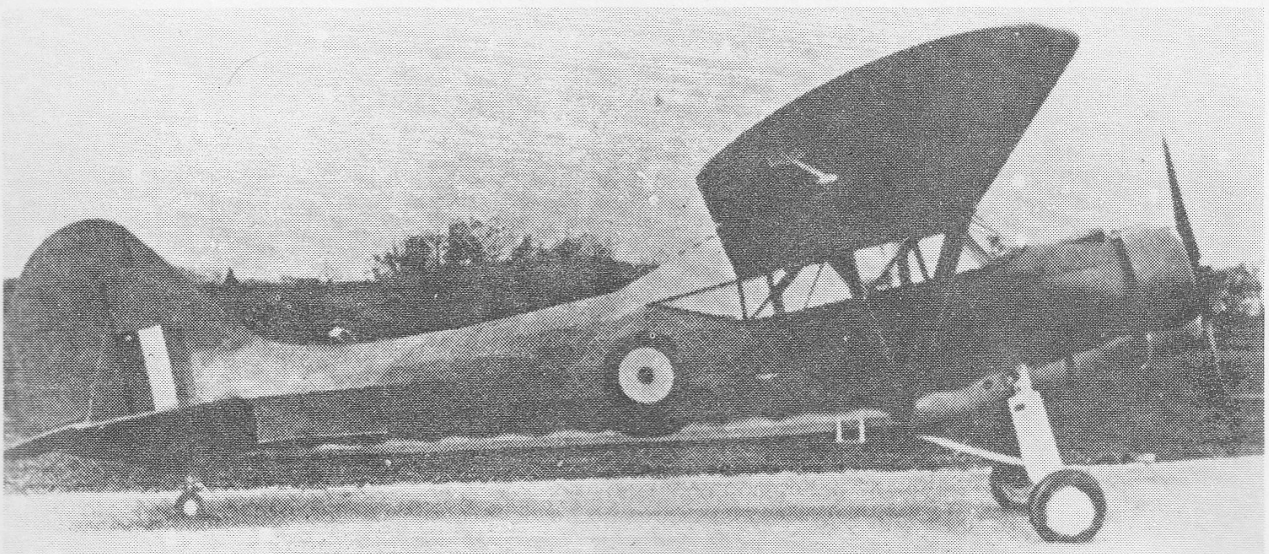
A61 — NORTHROP DELTA



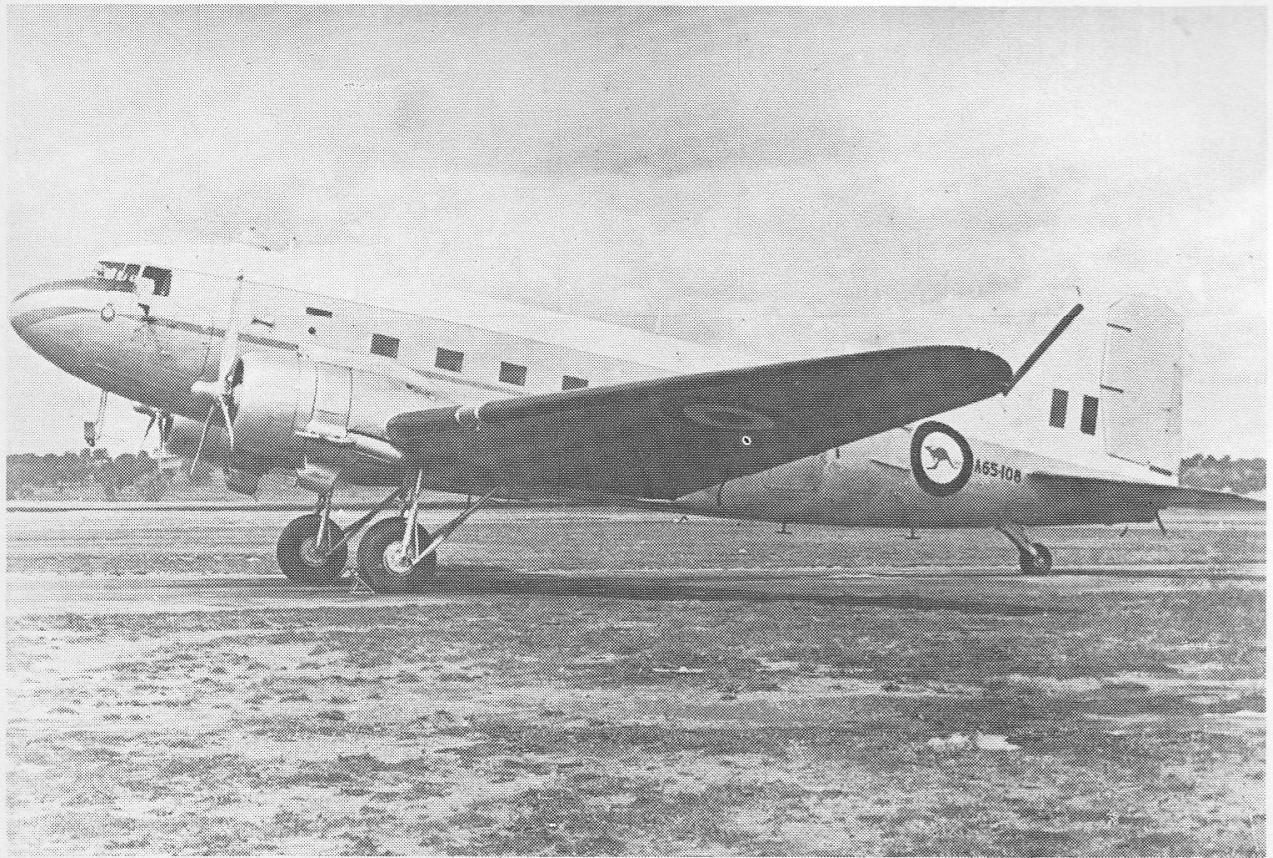
A62 — CAC CA-15

There is academic argument as to whether this number was intended for a celestial bombing trainer, now at Sale. This trainer was originally registered with Link Trainers as A13/94 — Type ANT-34 (AN255411), but the item is now held unregistered. The cypher A63 has not been allotted to any aircraft.

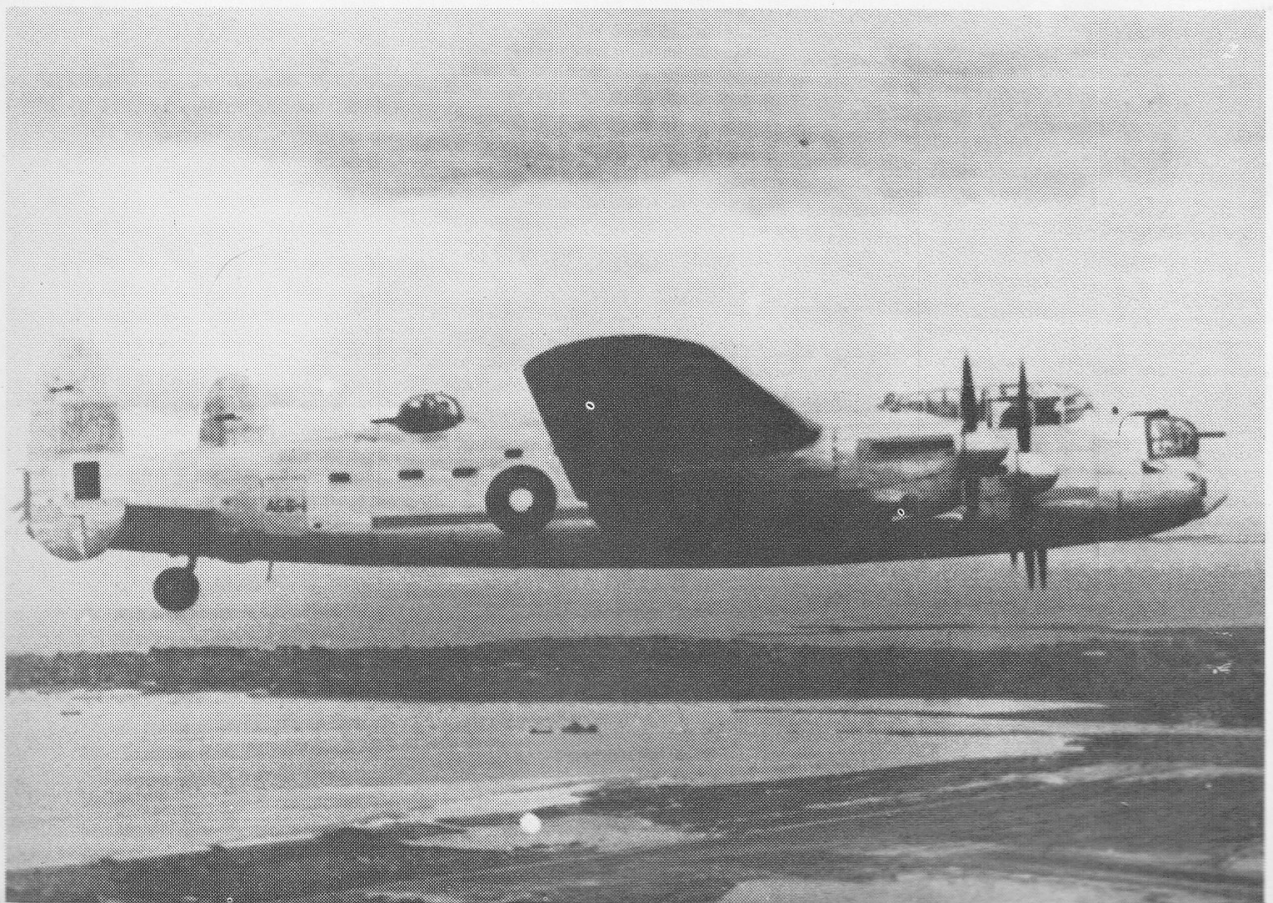
A63



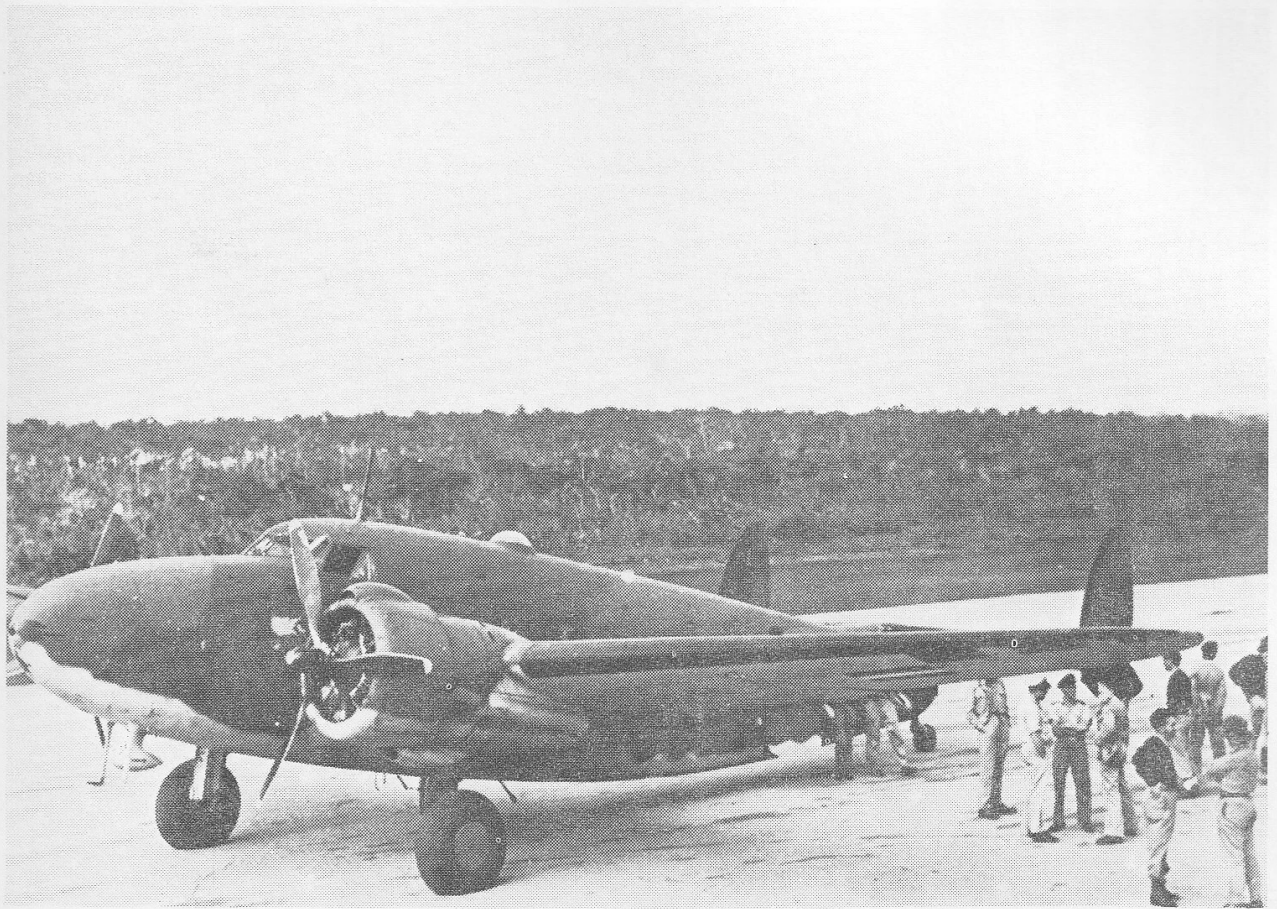
A64 — VULTEE STINSON VIGILANT



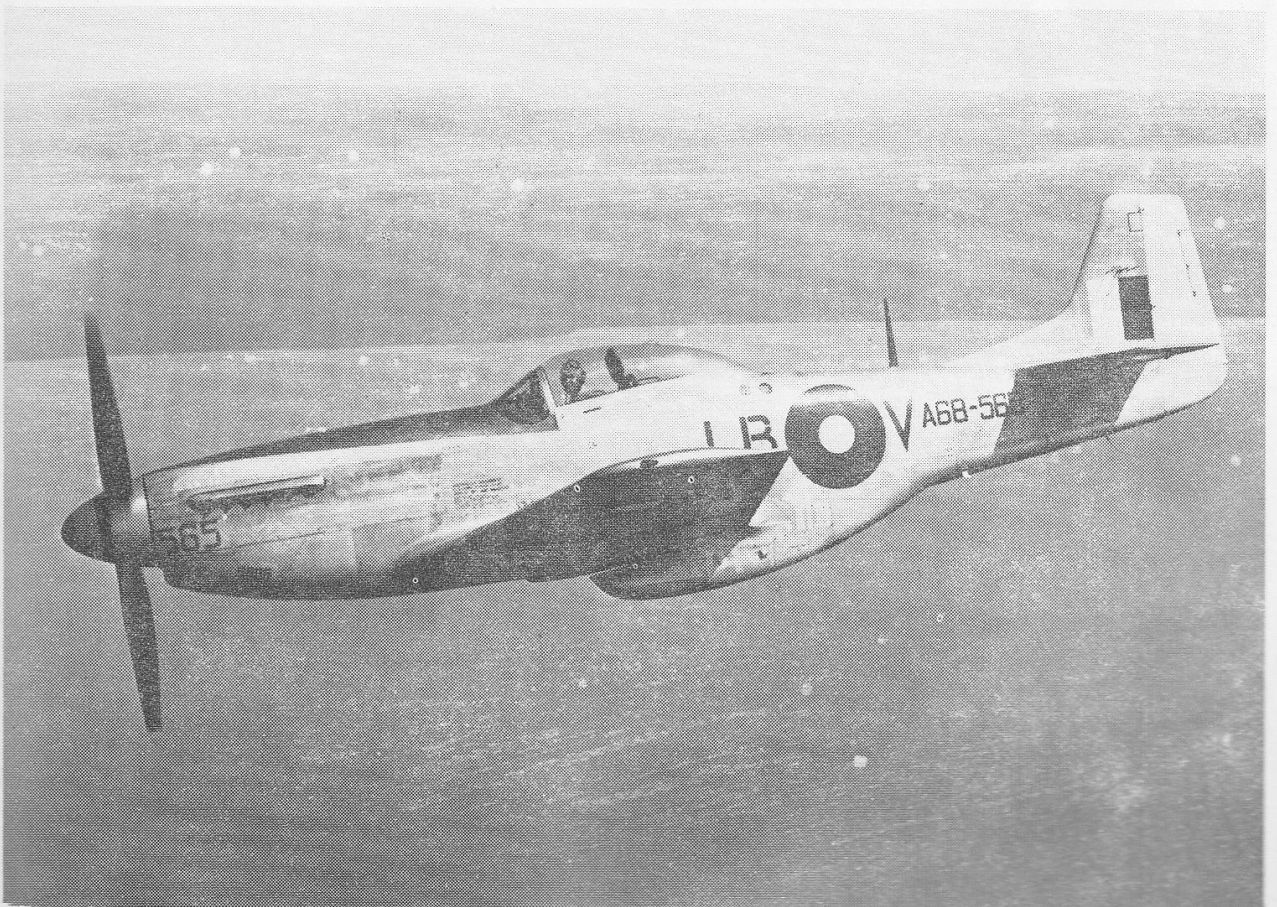
A65 — DOUGLAS DAKOTA



A66 — AVRO LANCASTER



A67 — LOCKHEED LODESTAR



A68 — CAC NORTH AMERICAN MUSTANG



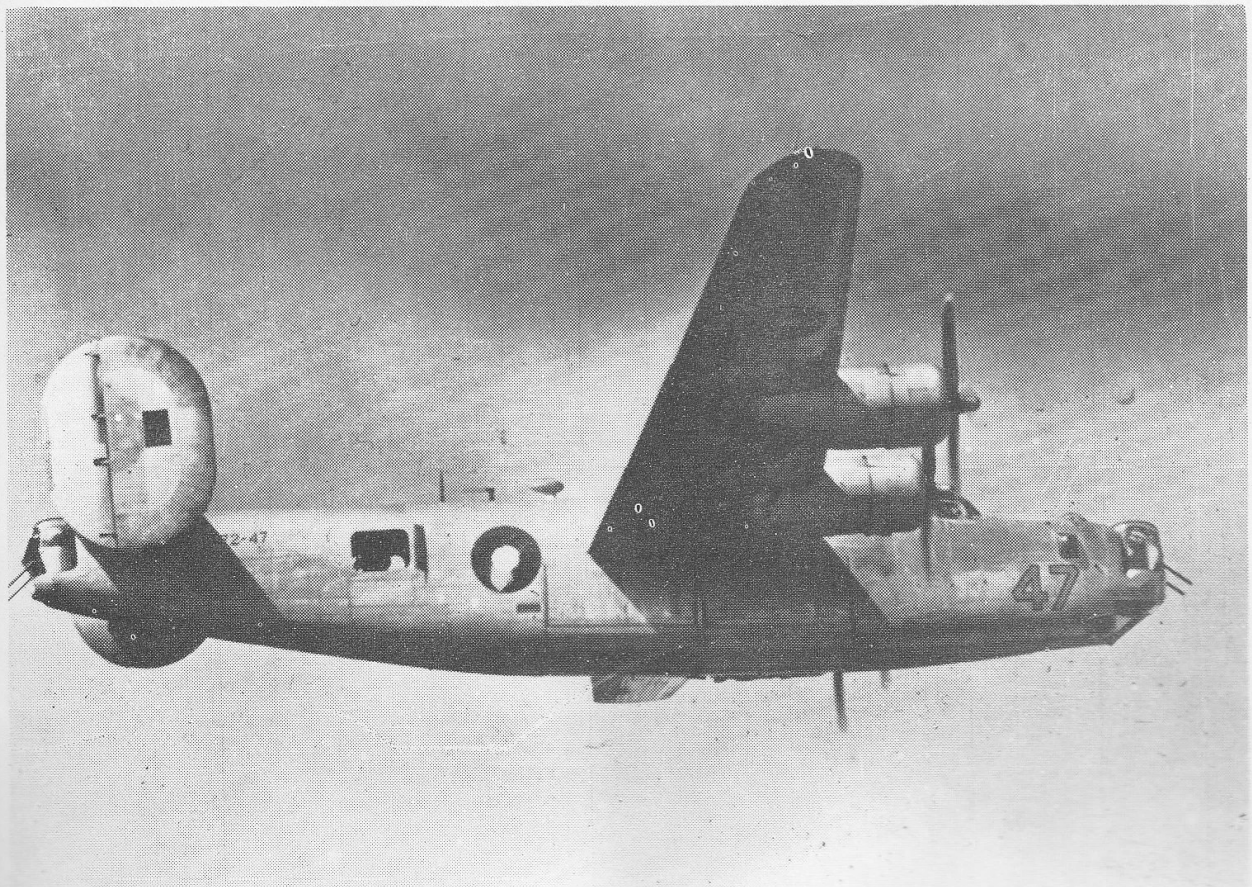
A69 — CURTISS SHRIKE



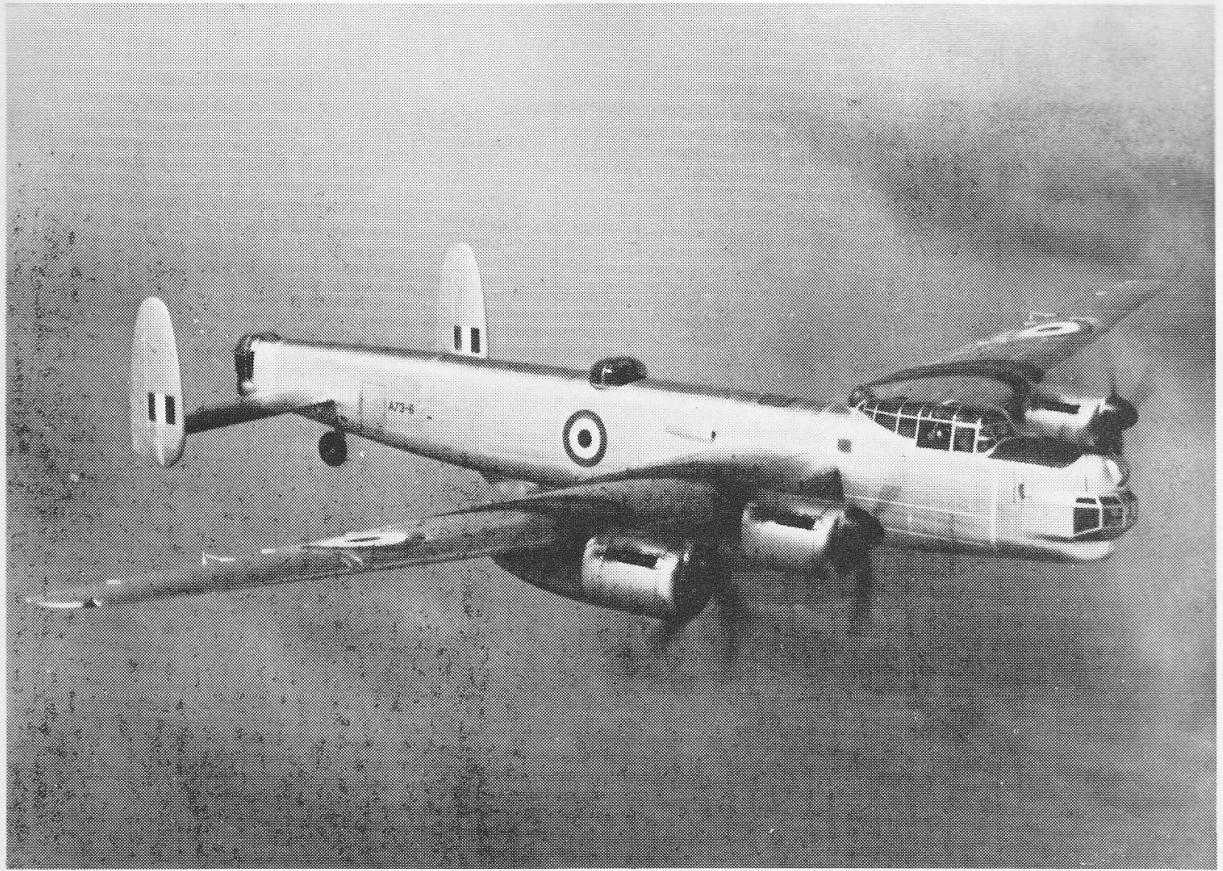
A70 — MARTIN MARINER



A71 — NORSEMAN



A72 — CONSOLIDATED LIBERATOR



A73 — AVRO LINCOLN



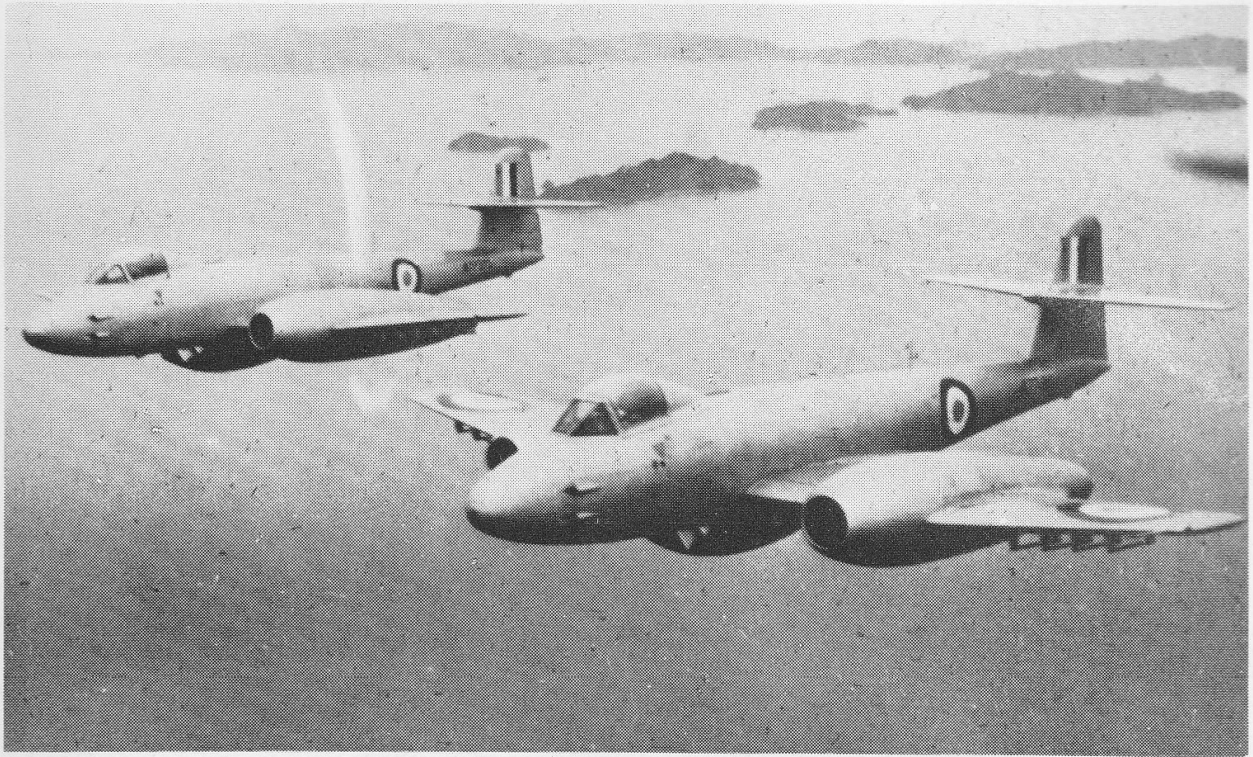
A74 — AVRO YORK



A75 — PERCIVAL PROCTOR



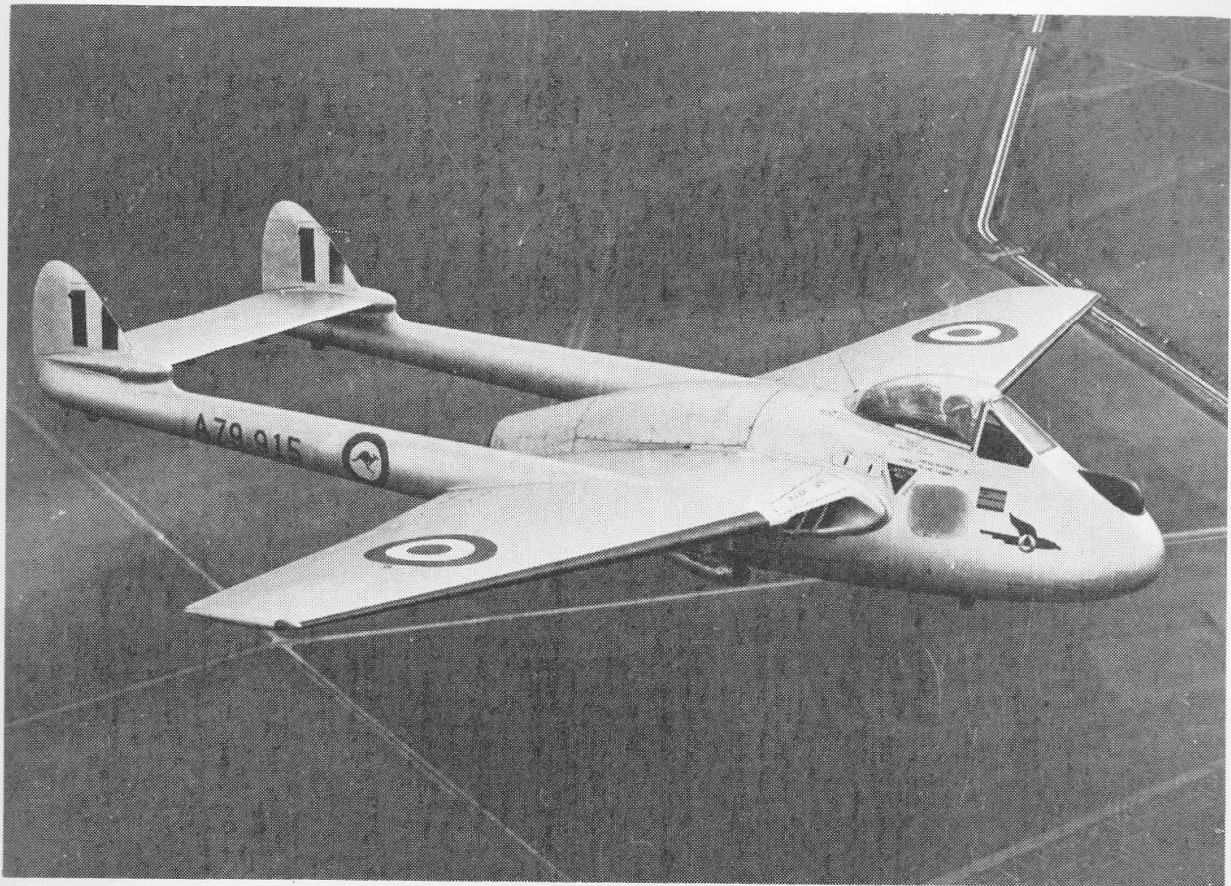
A76 — BOEING WASHINGTON



A77 — GLOSTER METEOR



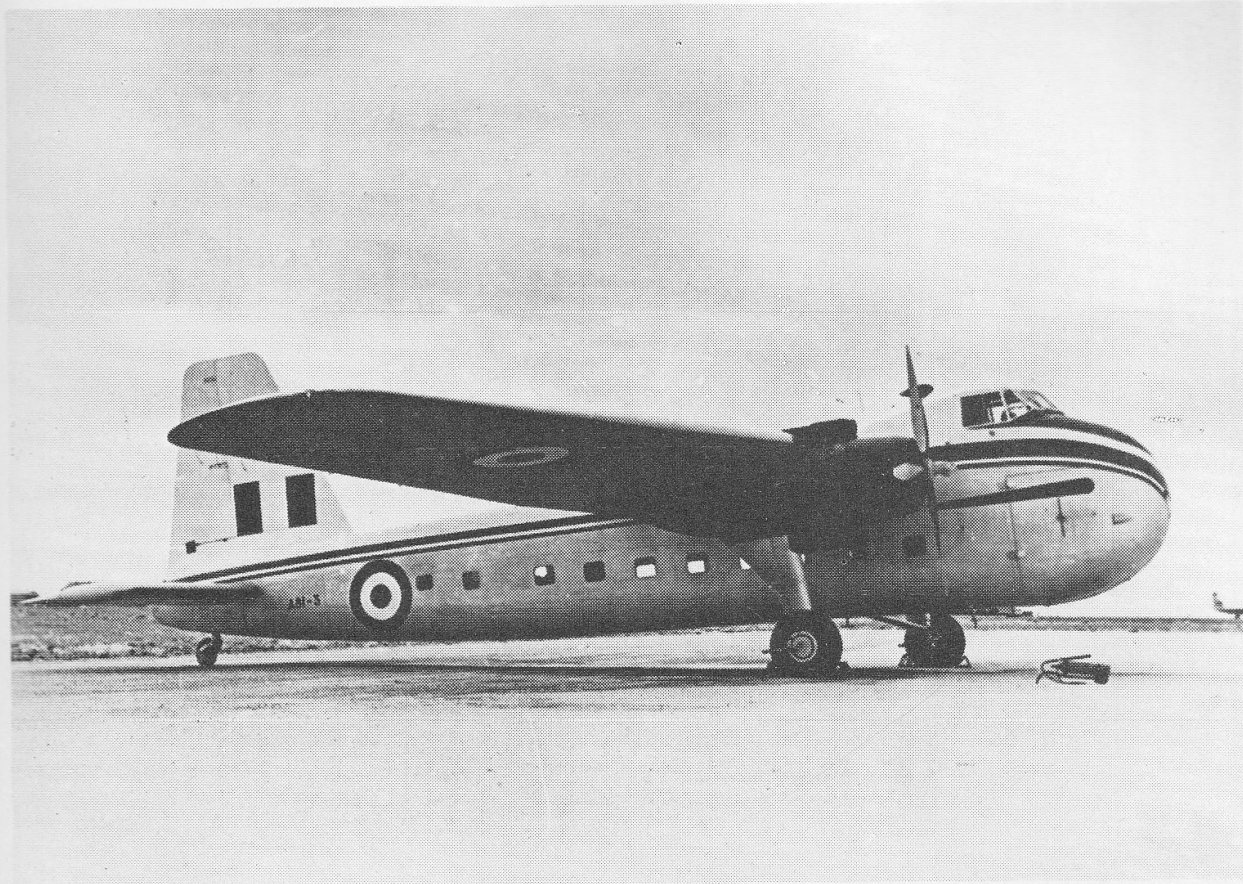
A78 — DH100 VAMPIRE (UK)



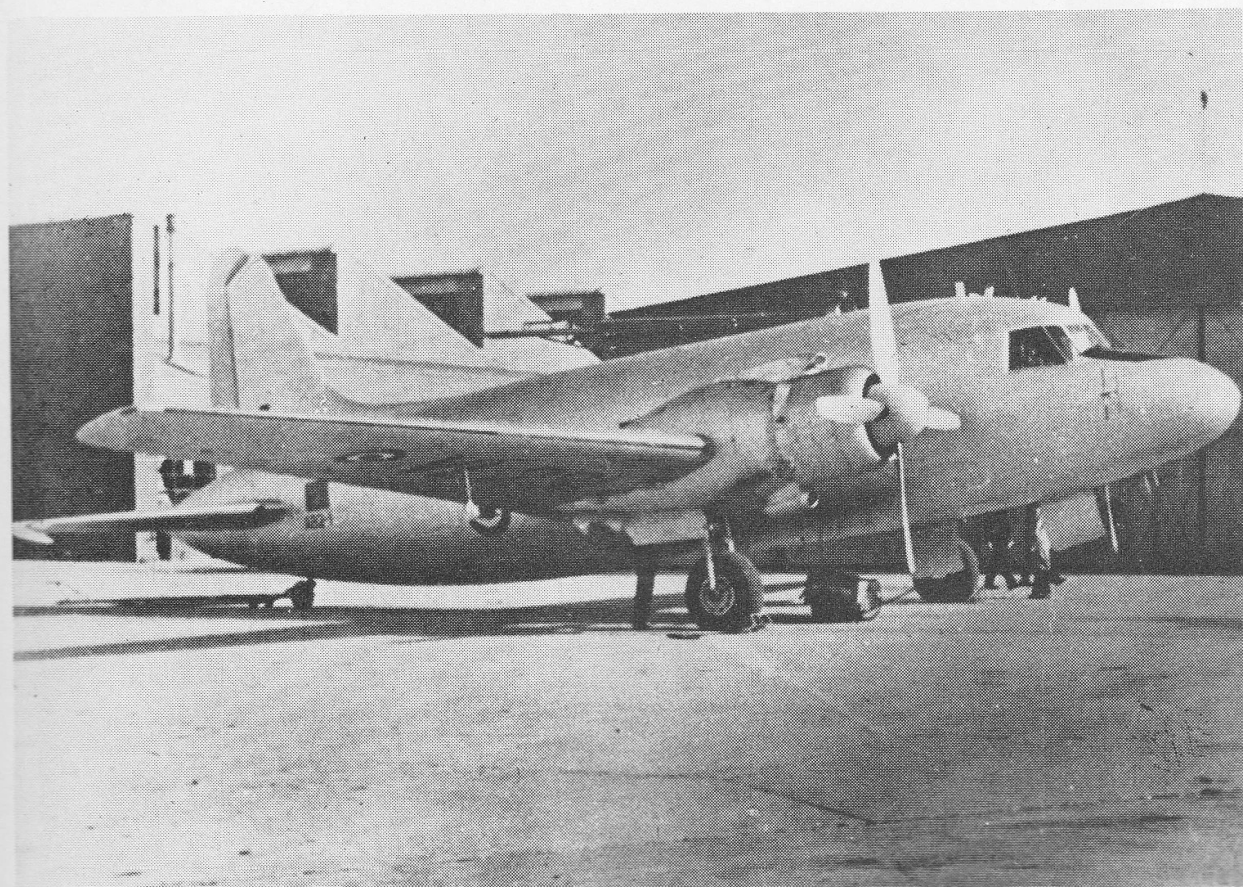
A79 — DH100 VAMPIRE (Aust)



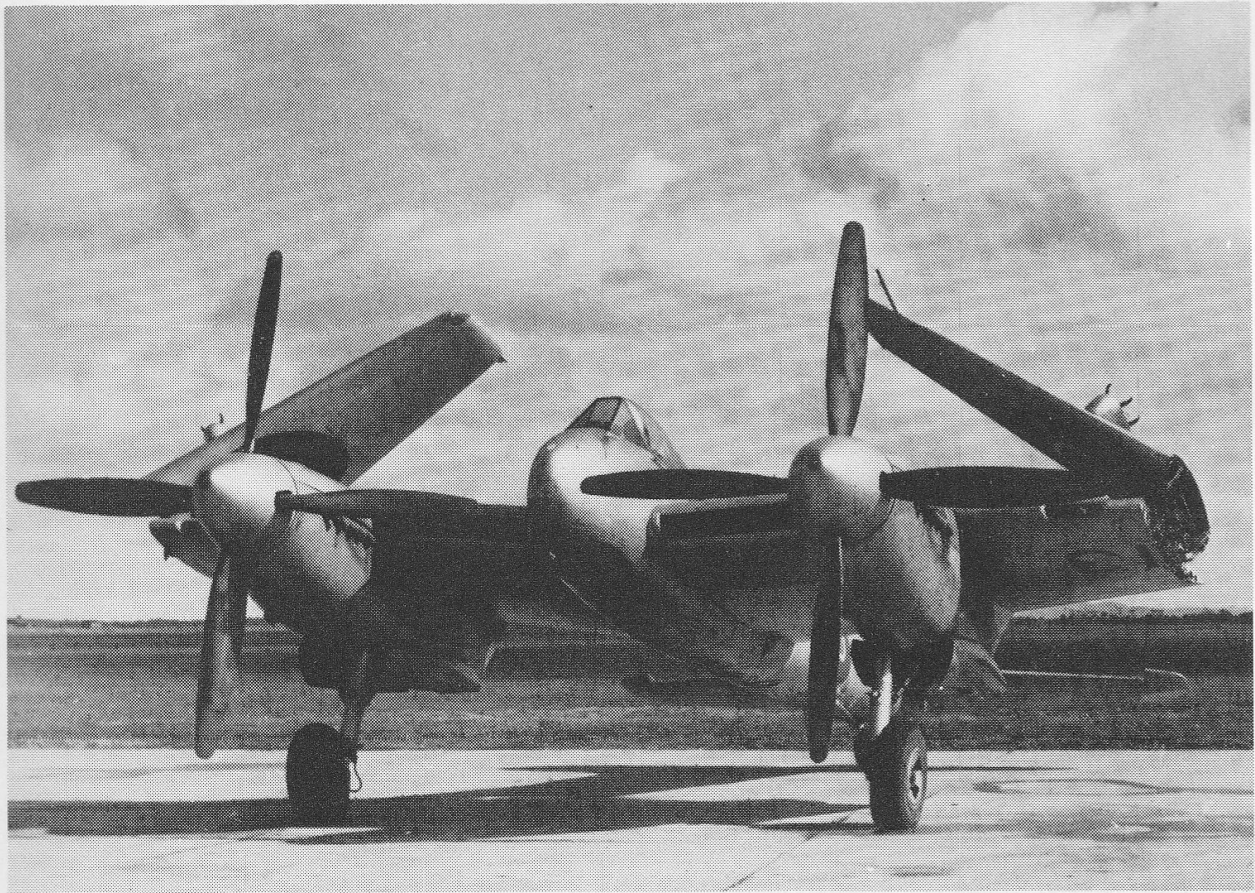
A80 — SIKORSKY S51



A81 — BRISTOL FREIGHTER



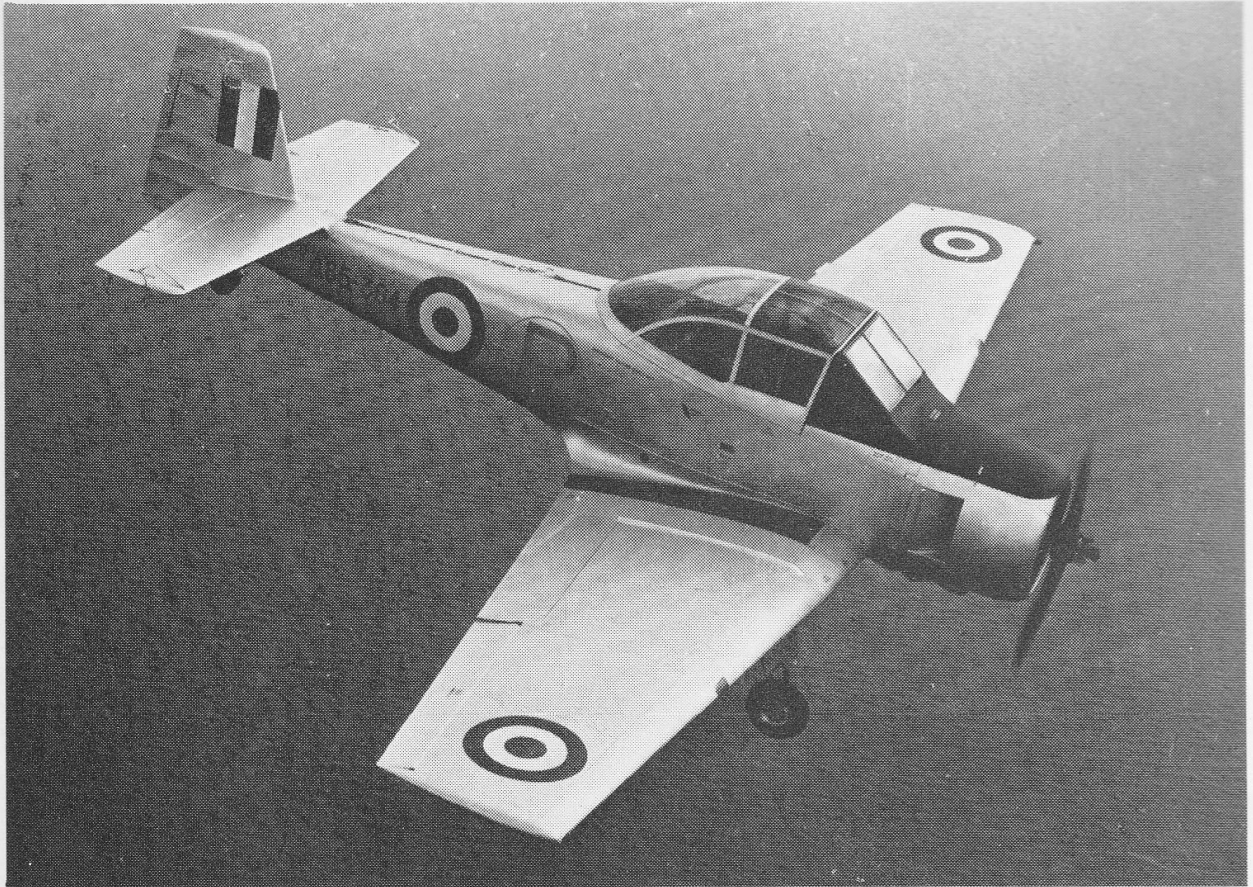
A82 — VICKERS VIKING



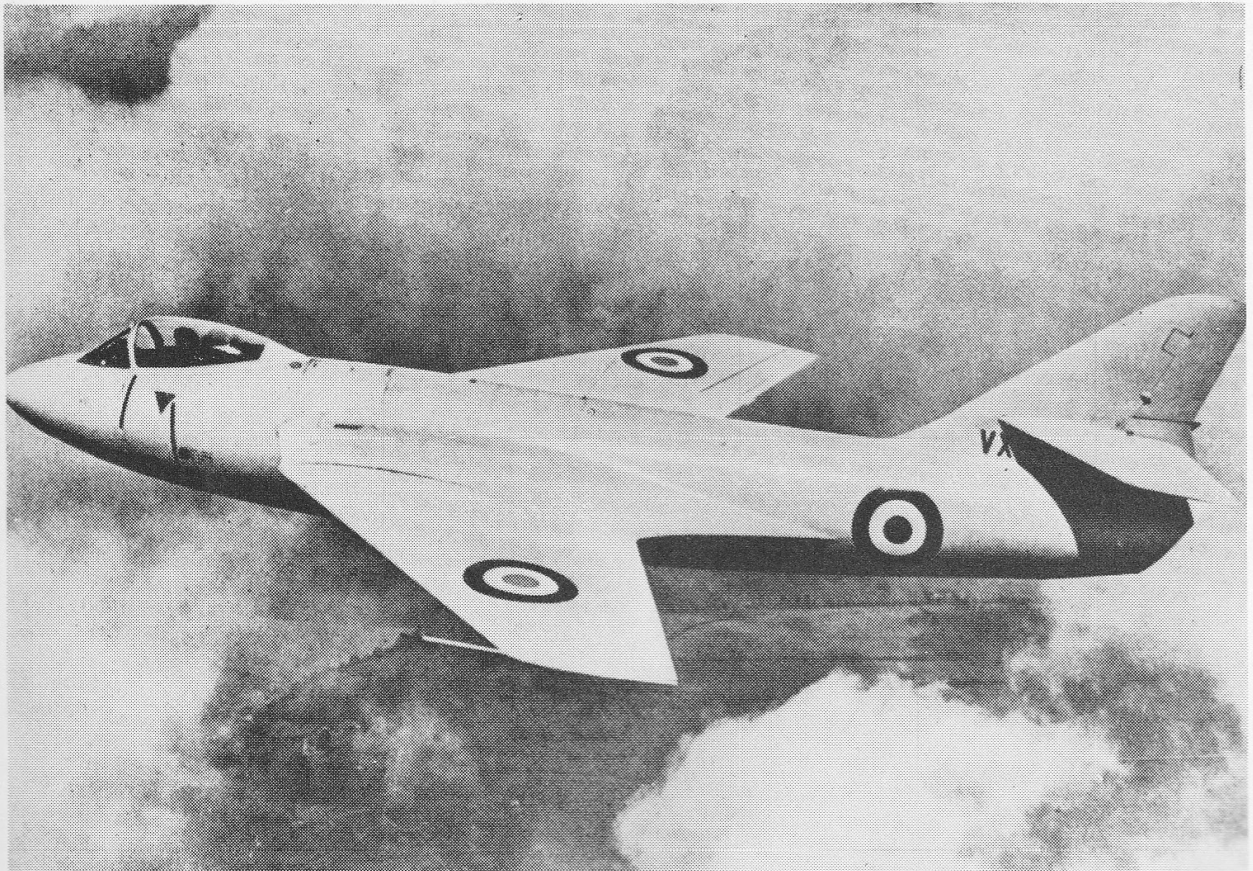
A83 — DH103 SEA HORNET



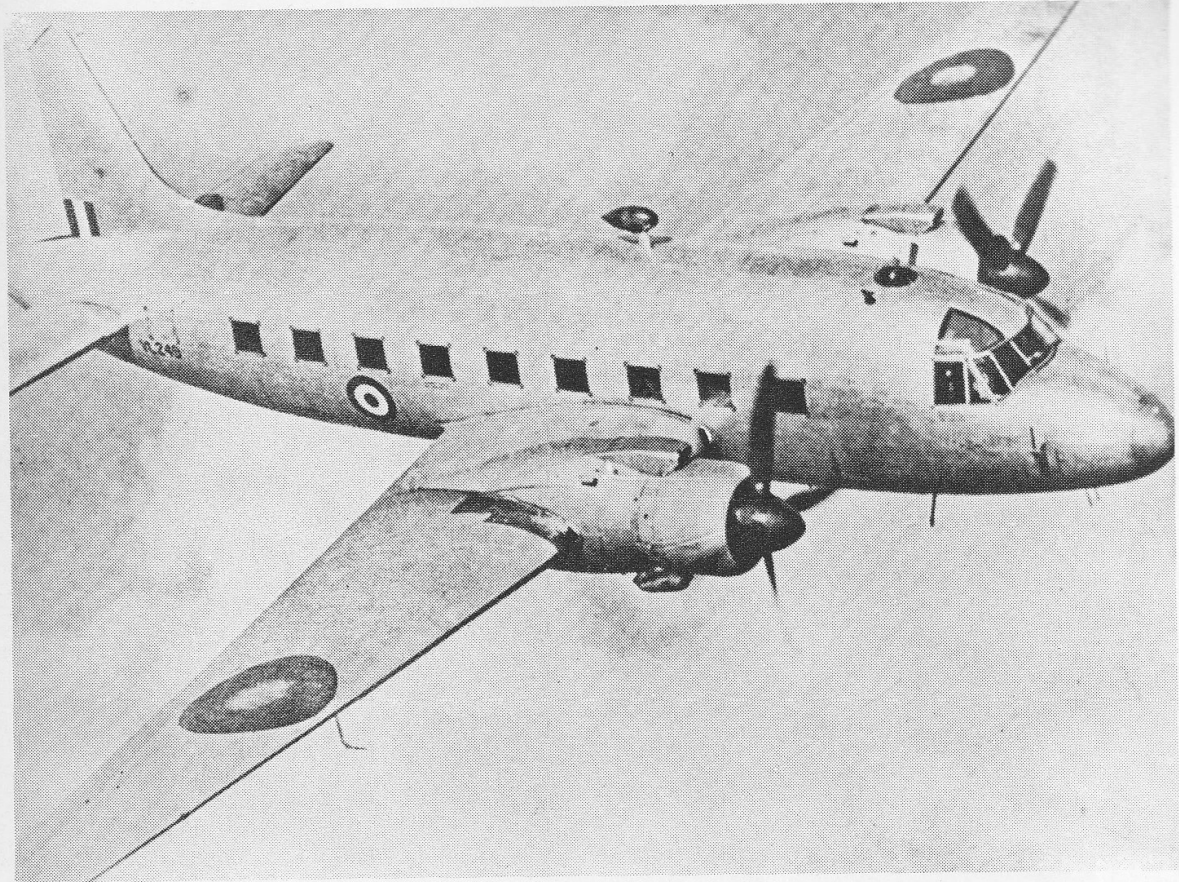
A84 — GAF EE CANBERRA



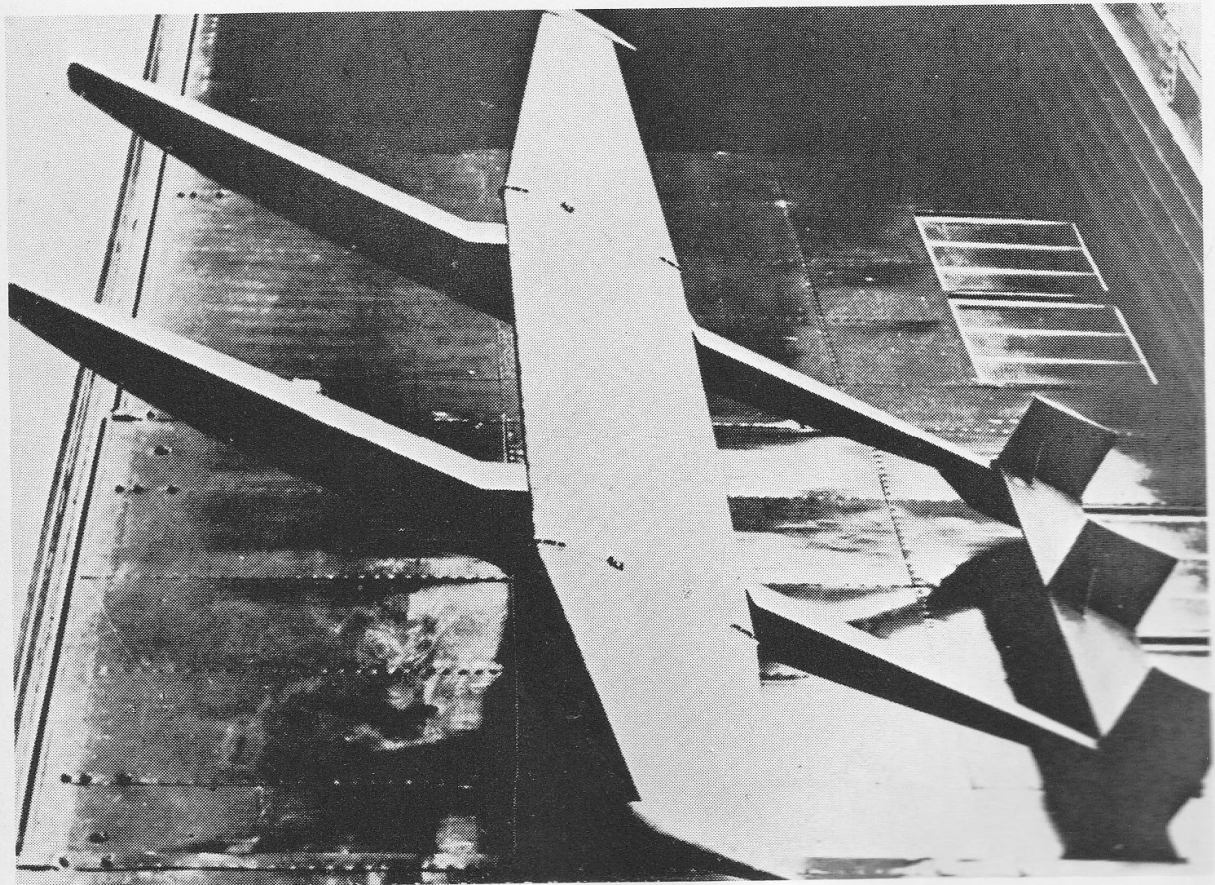
A85 — CAC WINJEEL



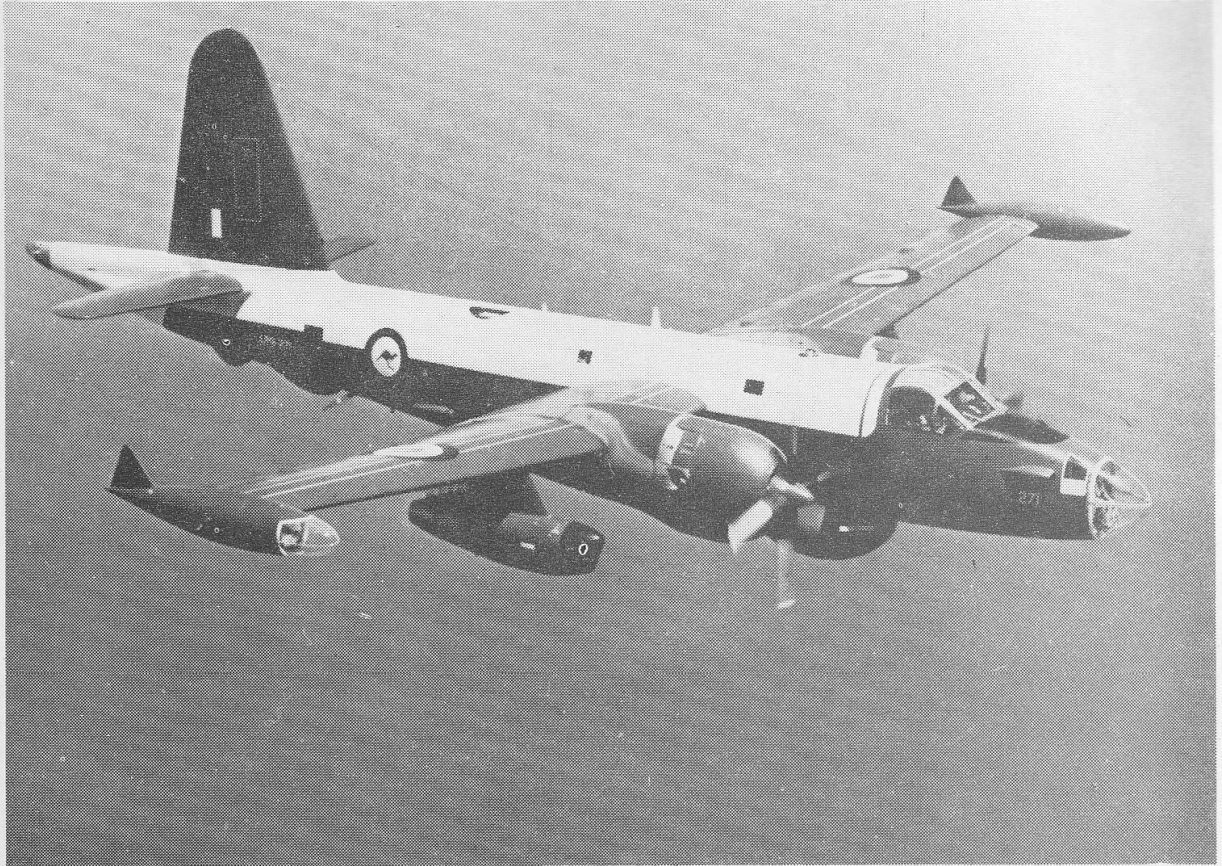
A86 — HAWKER P.1081



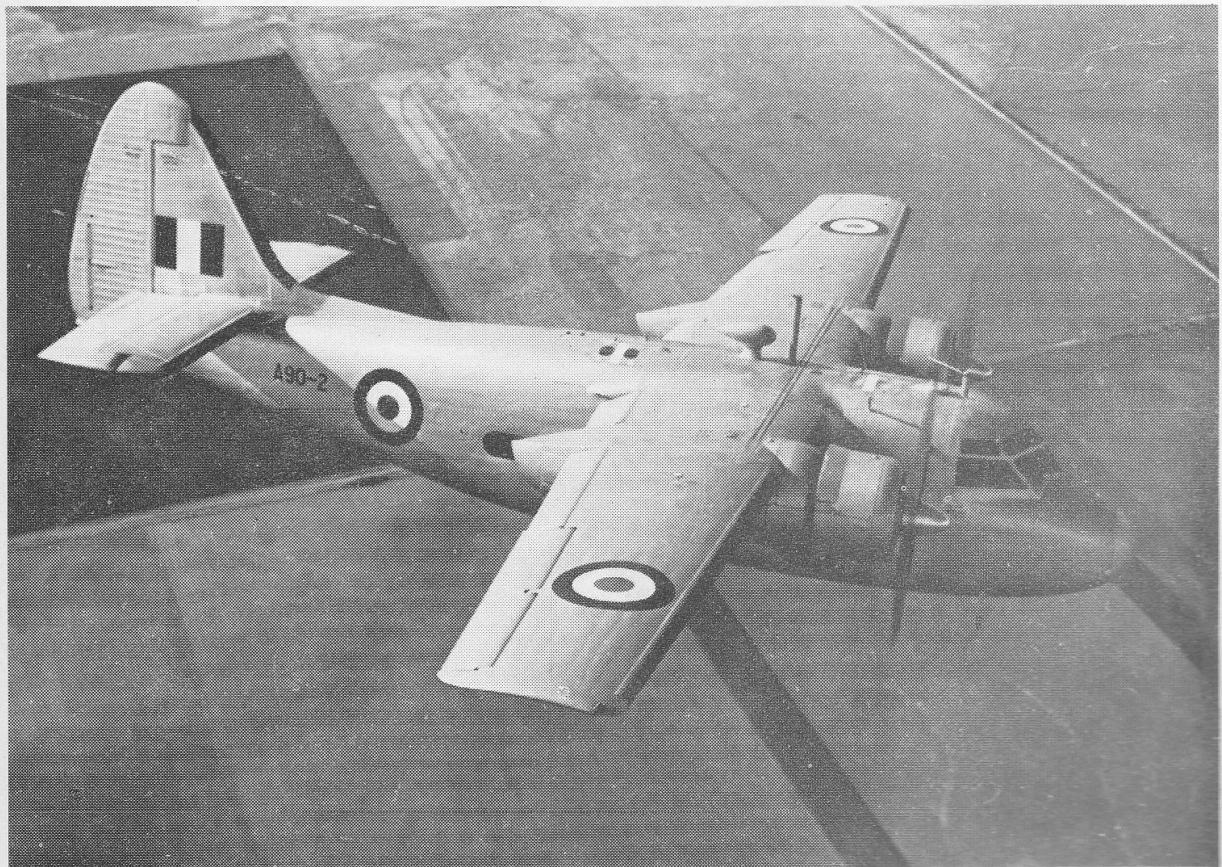
A87 — VICKERS VALETTA



A88 — RFD WINGED TARGET



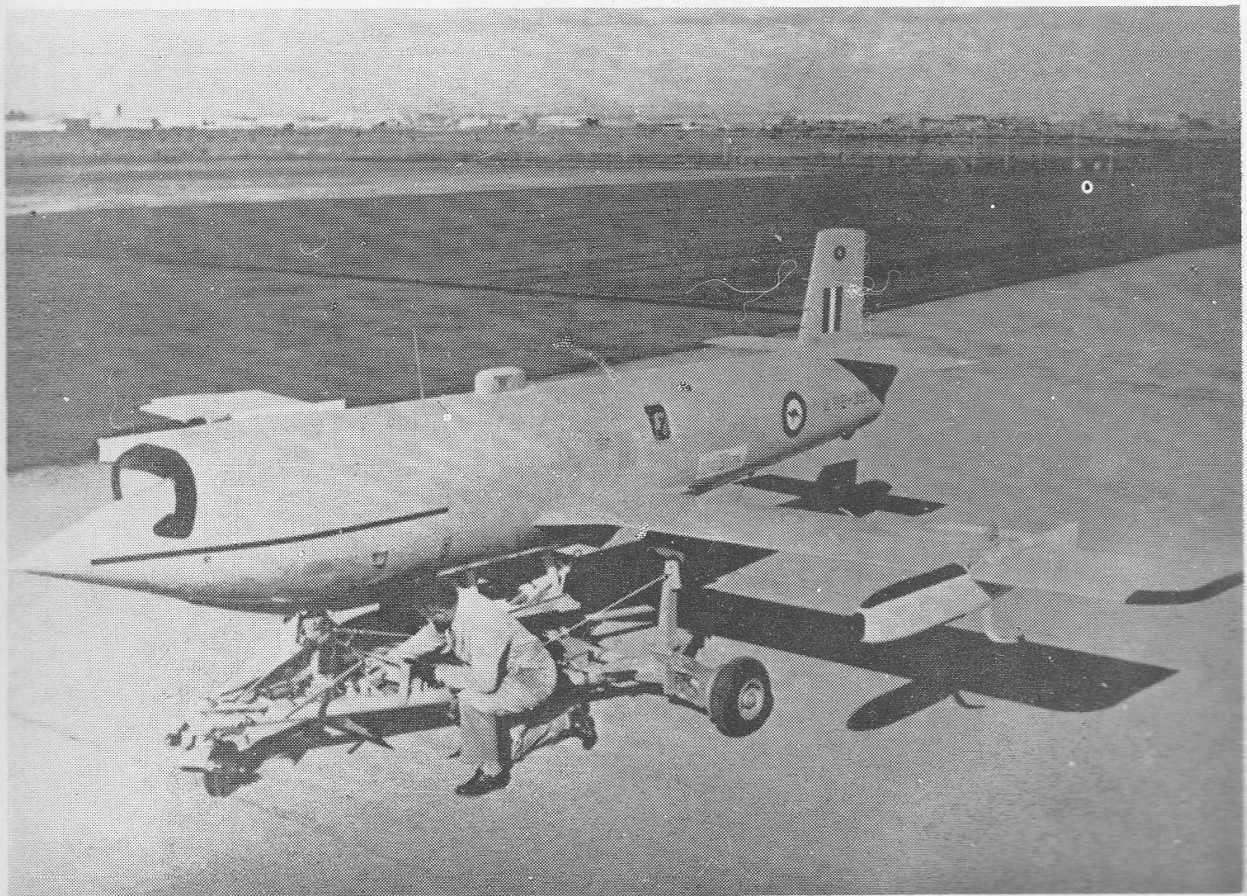
A89 — LOCKHEED NEPTUNE



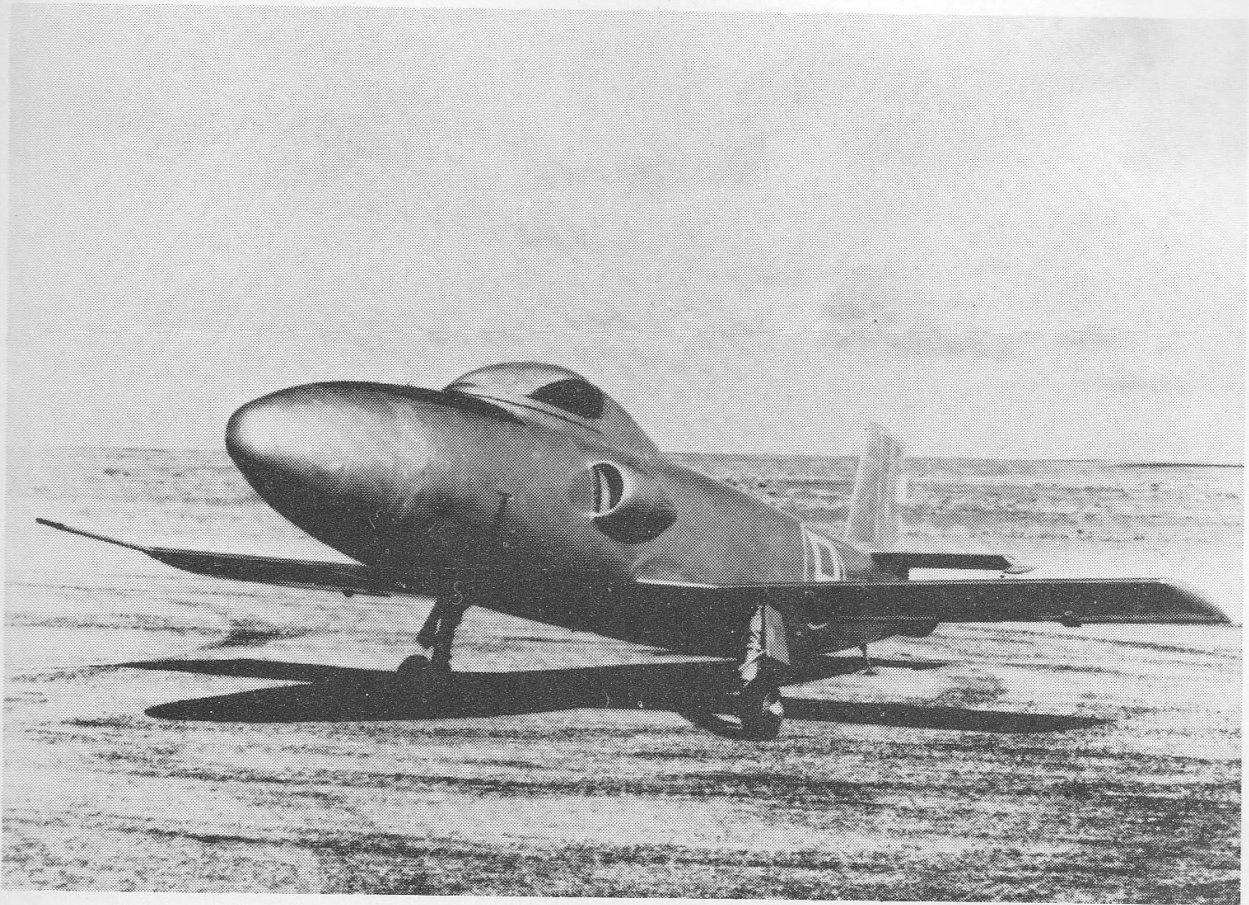
A90 — PERCIVAL PRINCE



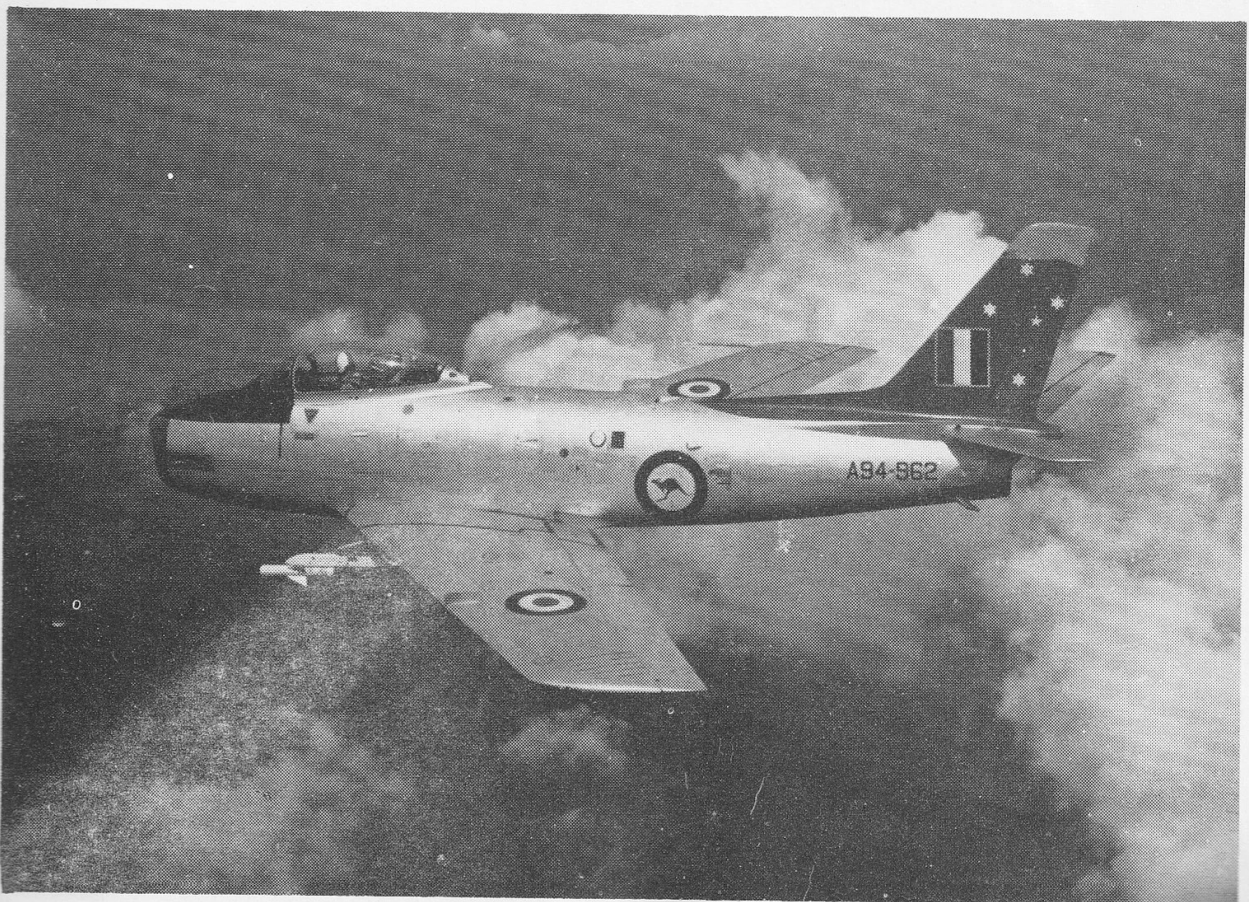
A91 — BRISTOL SYCAMORE



A92 — GAF JINDIVIK



A93 — GAF PIKA



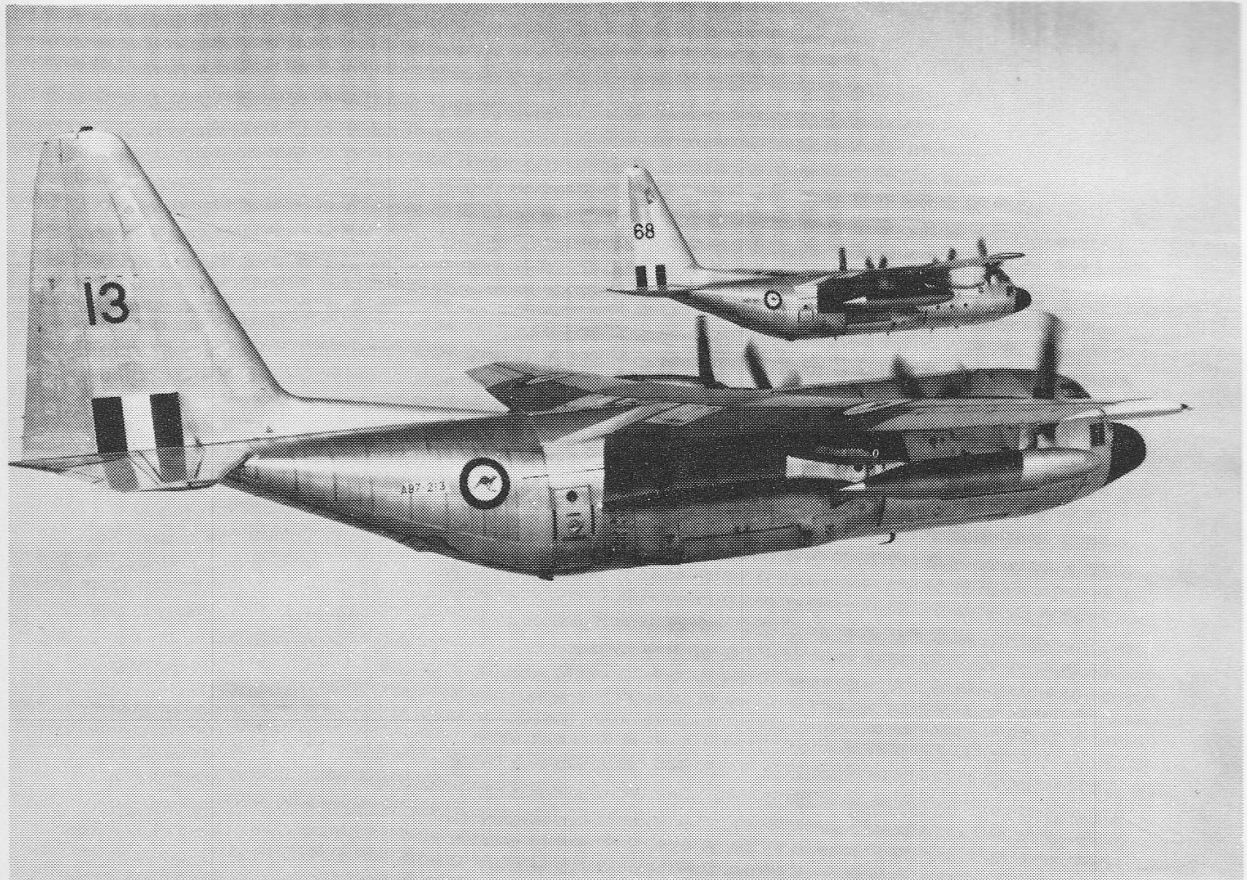
A94 — CAC AVON SABRE



A95 — DHC BEAVER



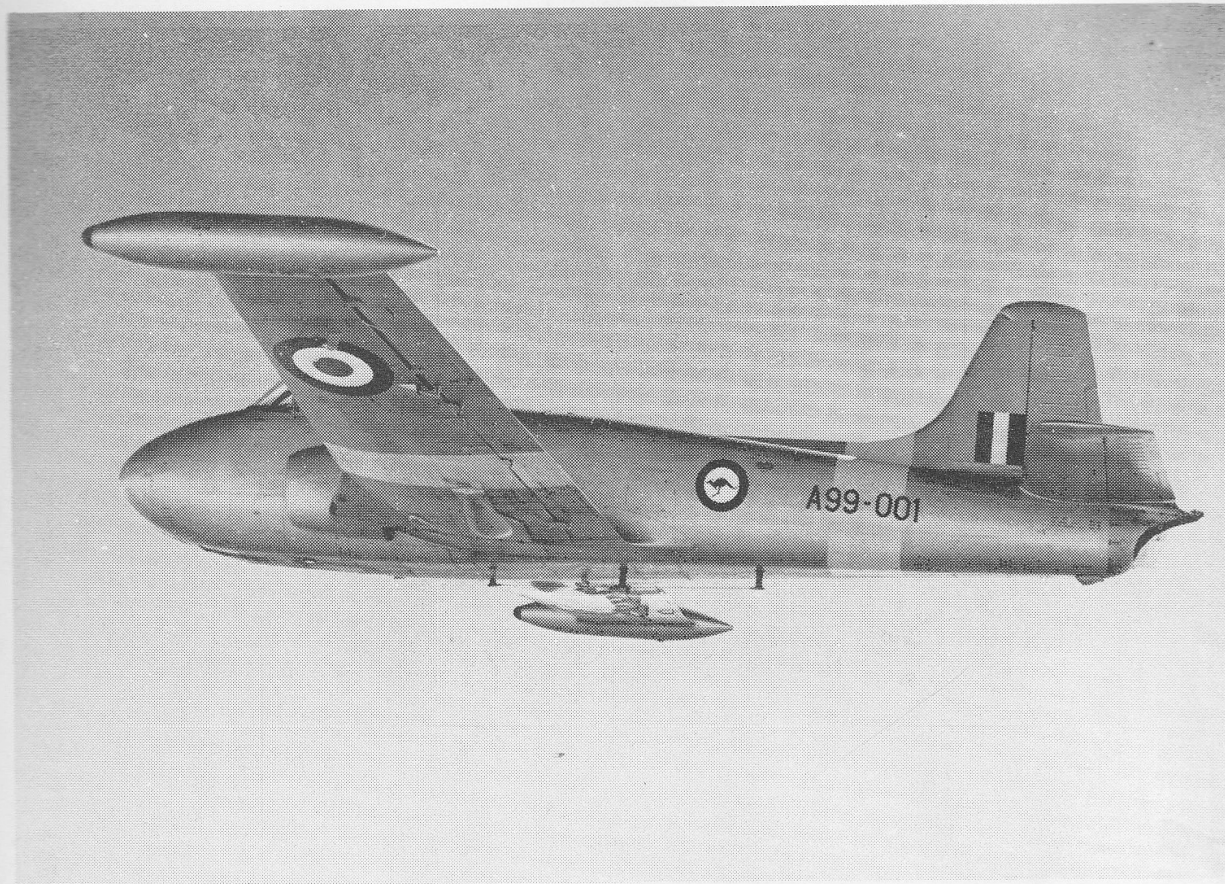
A96 — CONVAIR METROPOLITAN



A97 — LOCKHEED HERCULES C.130A AND E



A98 — CESSNA 180



A99 — PERCIVAL PROVOST



A100 — DHC OTTER

Third
Series



A1 — BELL SIOUX



A2 — BELL IROQUOIS



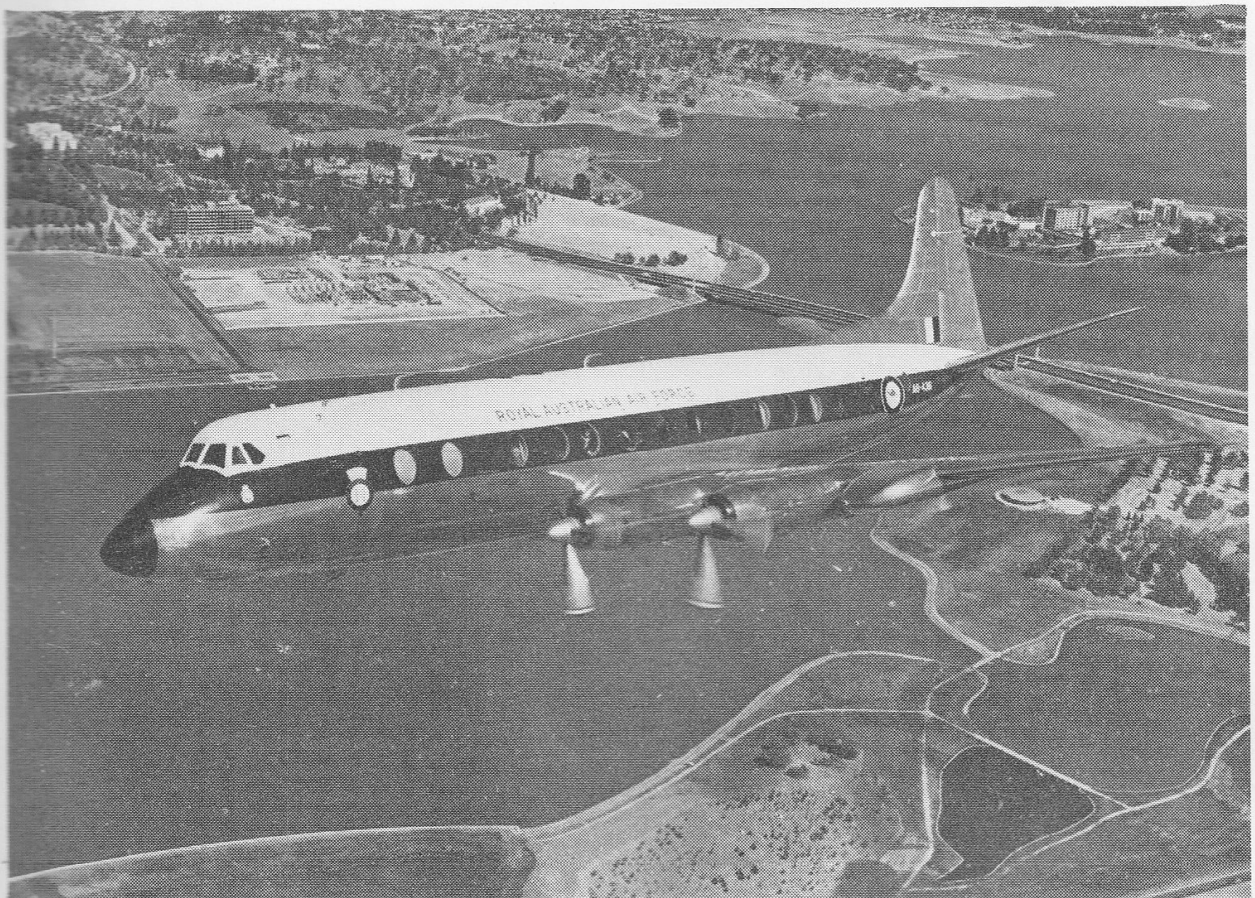
A3 — DASSAULT MIRAGE III-O



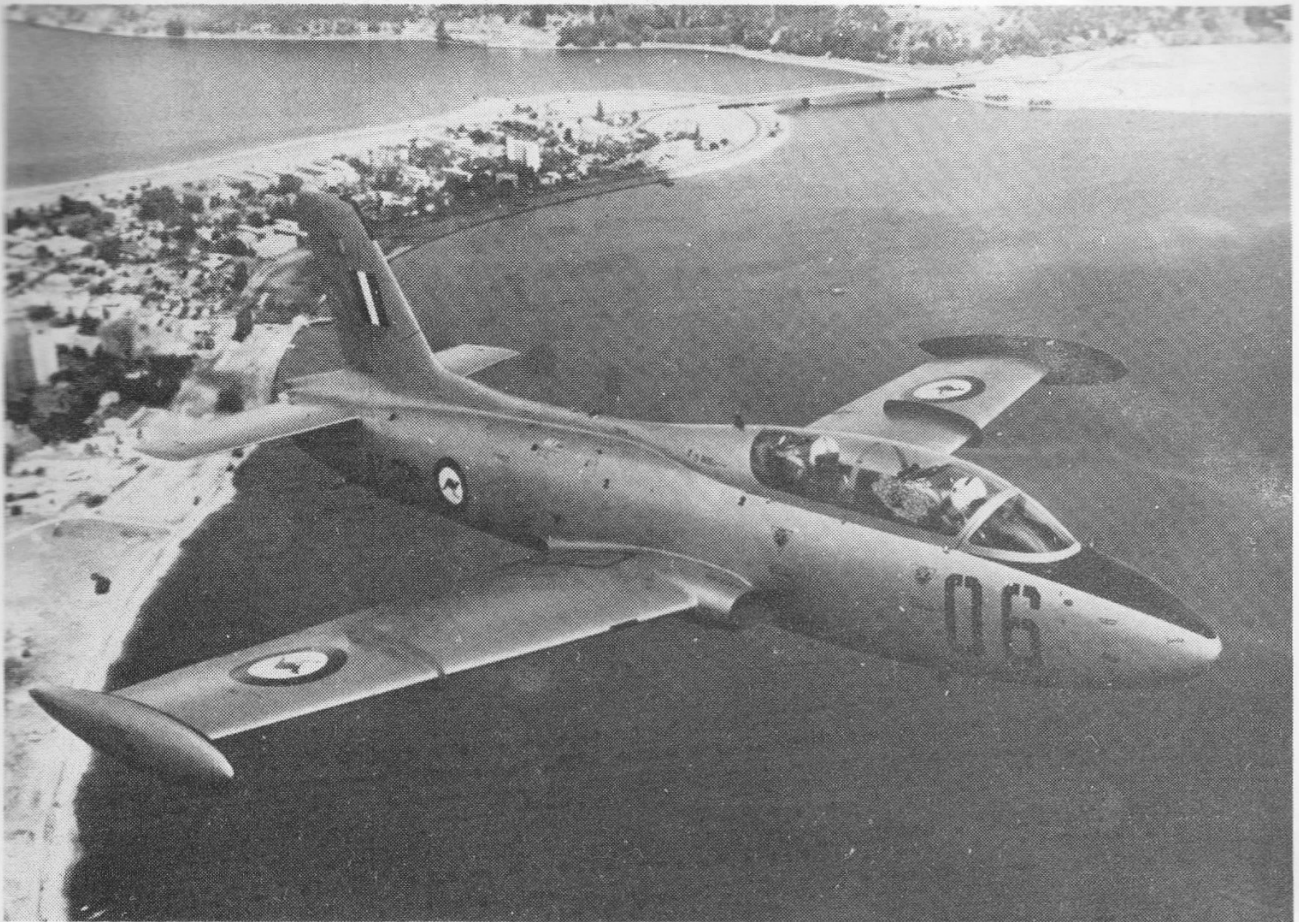
A4 — DHC CARIBOU



A5 — SUD ALOUETTE III



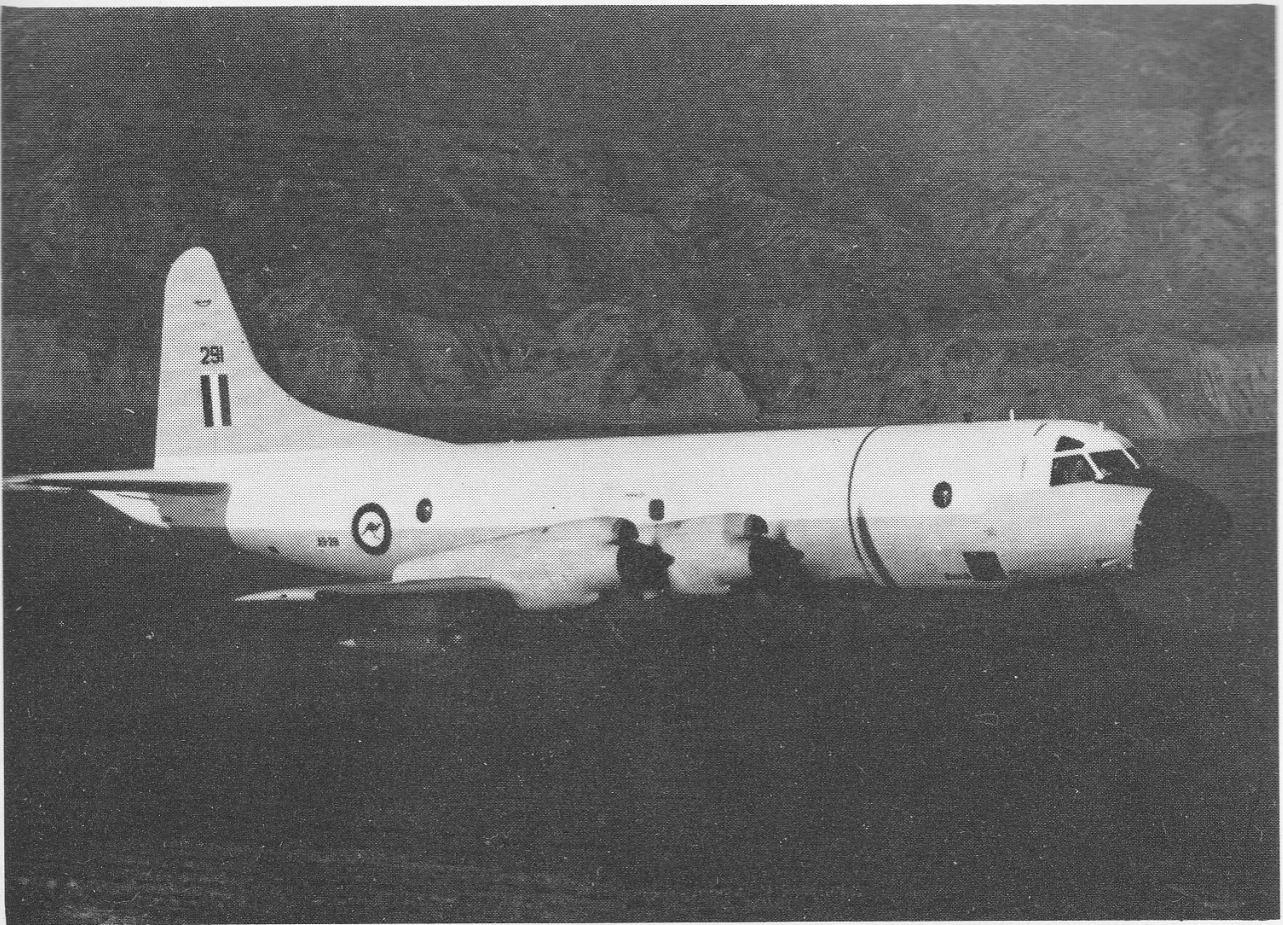
A6 — VICKERS VISCOUNT



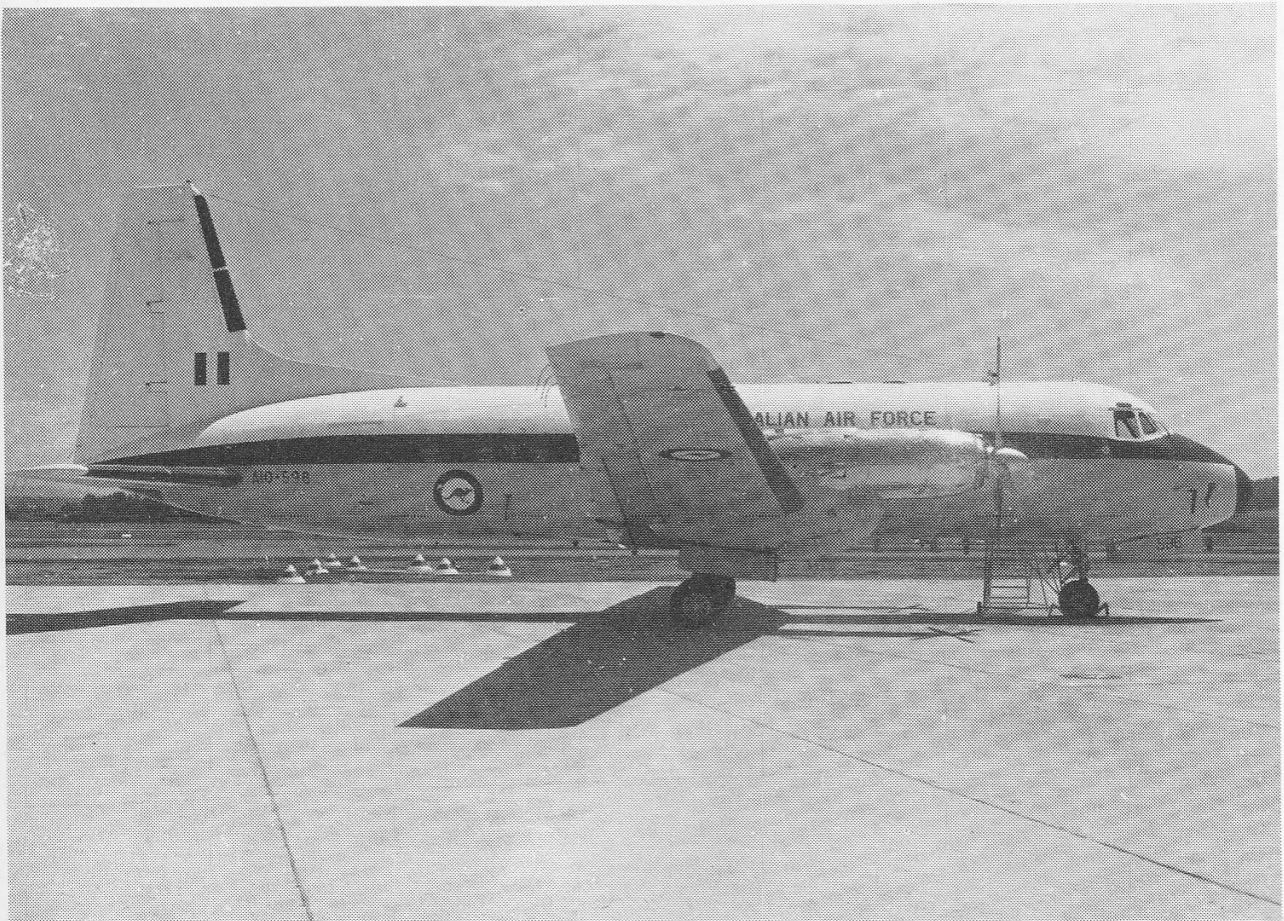
A7 — MACCHI MB.326H



A8 — GENERAL DYNAMICS F-111C



A9 — LOCKHEED ORION



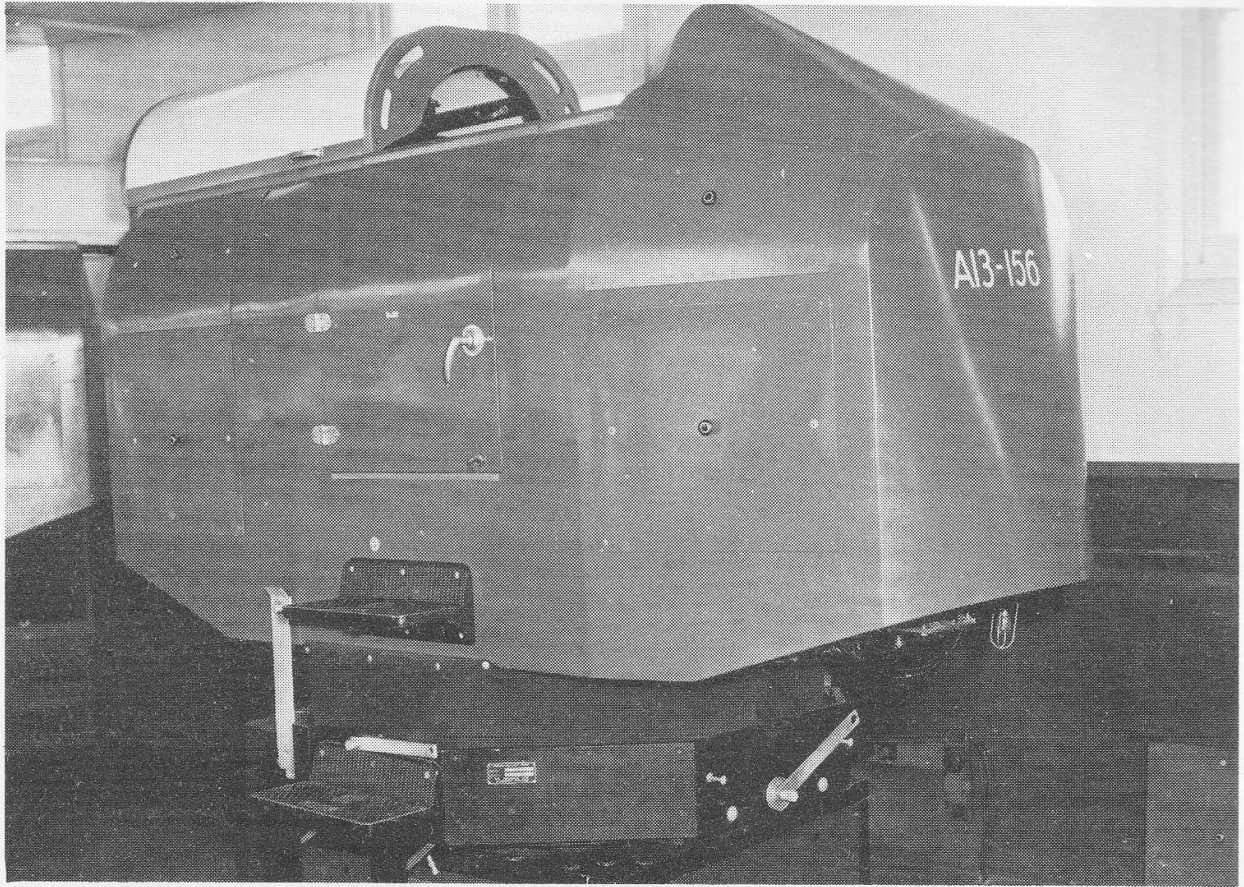
A10 — HS748



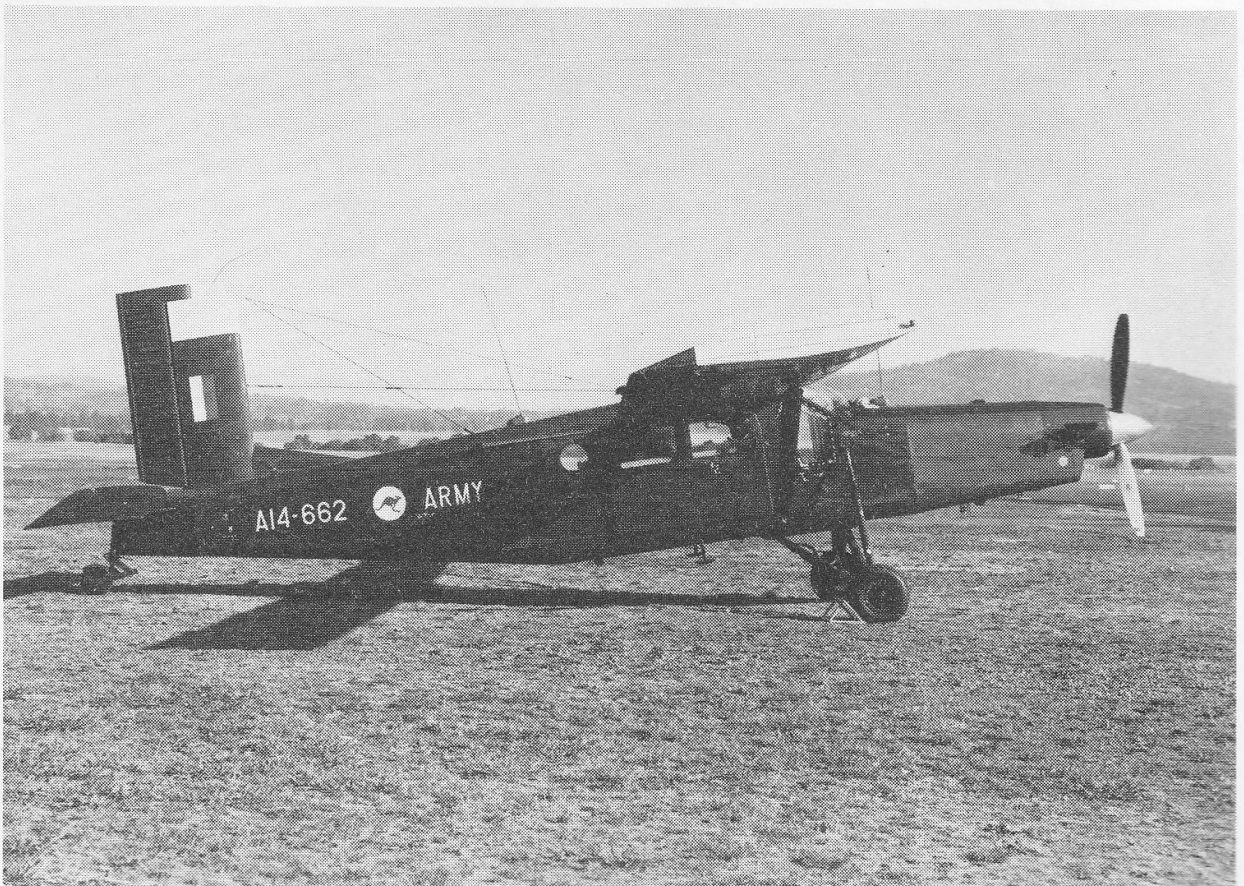
A11 — DASSAULT MYSTERE 20



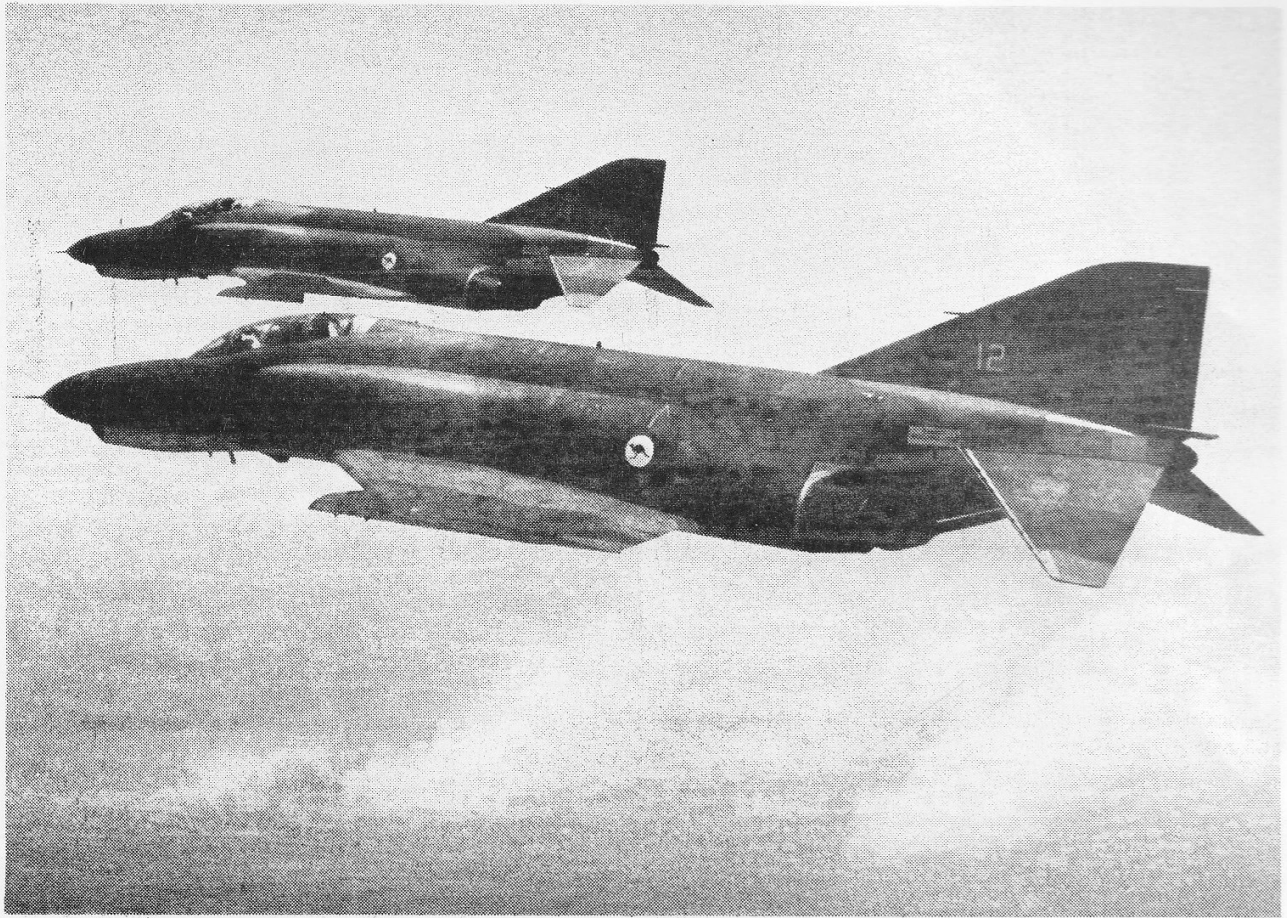
A12 — BAC111



A13 — LINK TRAINER



A14 — PILATUS TURBO-PORTER



PHANTOM F-4E

Twenty-four Phantom F-4E aircraft are based at RAAF Amberley, Queensland. As they are on lease from the United States, they have not been allotted an A number. Two J79-GE-17 engines give the Phantom a speed of more than twice the speed of sound and a service ceiling of 60,000 feet.