

Geoff Goodall 1947 – 2024



GEOFF GOODALL WAS A VERY GENEROUS 'TOTAL AVIATION PERSON', LIFELONG AVIATION ENTHUSIAST, AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLER, AND AVIATION HISTORIAN.

By James Kightly, Commissioning Editor

We are sad to report that aviation historian and author Geoff Goodall passed away on January 5, 2024 in Melbourne, Australia, after a short illness. He departed five days shy of his 77th birthday.

Geoff had been a lifelong aviation enthusiast, professional Air Traffic Controller, and dedicated and unique recorder of aviation history, notably the full history of numerous aircraft manufacturers, organizations and types. He shared his work as widely as he could. As his colleague Ron Cuskelly wrote: "Geoff was a mentor to many, both in his professional ATC career and in his passion for aviation history." Geoff was responsible for the creation of the 'Warbirds Directory' books and resources, the first editions with John Chapman. These were produced in print only, initially with editing by Paul Coggan and published by Coggan's Warbirds Worldwide journal. The first edition was published in 1989, the updated second edition in 1992, the third in 1996, each a major expansion on the previous edition. A fourth edition was published as both a book and CD-ROM by Derek A Macphail in 2003. Since then, Geoff has regularly updated the Warbird Directory pages with PDF sections, for free, on his website up to mid-2023.

We cannot do justice to his entire life and career here, but we can record those early experiences included being 'the boy on the fence' at South Australia's Parafield Airport, and that after retiring from a 45 year career as an Air Traffic Controller (ATC) in Australia, Geoff took a contract as an instructor at an ATC school in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia.

Geoff wrote for his website (launched in 2013) "My fascination with aviation history goes back to early school days, living on the boundary of Adelaide-West Beach Airport in the 1950s. I grew up watching ANA and TAA Propliners, with the weekly highlight of the Sunday morning arrival of an Avro Tudor 4B Super Trader of Freddie Laker's Air Charter London. With Merlins popping as the power came off on landing, these Tudors flew the military courier from Britain to Woomera and Adelaide for many years before being replaced by DC-4s, DC-6s and Britannias.

Our South Australia local airline had the intriguing name of Guinea Airways, and from my bicycle at the fence, I wondered why their DC-3s had names like Bulolo and Kokoda?"

After finally retiring from 'one more project' in 2013, Geoff decided to work, (with critical website support from Ron Cuskelly) to sharing his many shorter publications and research for free online through his website: Geoff Goodall's Aviation History: www.Goodall.com.au. It quickly proved an essential stop for aviation history researchers looking for authoritative data on type and related history. While his work was particularly strong on Australia's aviation history, it was no accident that the globetrotting Geoff's interests and coverage was as worldwide as some of the publications he worked with.

The access to the online, regularly updated Warbird Directory, was invaluable. In the first print edition of the directory, Geoff and John Chapman dedicated the book to Leslie Hunt. Les Hunt's Veteran & Vintage Aircraft books of the 1960s and 1970s were really the first attempt at comprehensive listings of surviving historic aircraft. Since Geoff's huge expansion of detail and depth in the directories, and with the growth of internet access, several other directories and listings have been published, most of which owe something to Geoff's work. While Geoff was always punctilious in acknowledging the help and advice he had received from others worldwide, there is no question that his contribution (which so many others have built on) was an immeasurable expansion.

While today we value the depth of documentation Geoff and his thousands of correspondents managed on historic aircraft and warbirds, we should also note that it was not inevitable that we would be able to track the real histories of surviving Spitfires, Mustangs et al. In fact Geoff was advised, when he started, that a lot of rich warbird owners would NOT want the true history of their valuable, high prestige aircraft being published for anyone to know. Numerous aircraft then (and occasionally, even now) are represented as having a more prestigious history than the facts show. That these facts have been collected and are in the public domain, means we can be sure of which aircraft have genuine high-value or Geoff also wrote several other aviation history books, notably on the [de Havilland Australia Drover](#) for Air-Britain, published in 2016, and had recently revised 1979's 'Qantas Empire Airways (Western Operations Division) Indian Ocean Service, 1943-1946' by himself and Barry Pattison, for future release.

In a wide ranging interview with the author for [Australian Flying](#) in 2013, Geoff finished his exceptionally detailed insight to the previous half century of Australian aviation with "...it's clear people will always find a way to aviate for fun. Here's to the half-century."

Geoff's webmaster Ron wrote: "Geoff's domain will be maintained online in Geoff's memory for as long as is possible. Ultimately, the content of the website is archived by the National Library of Australia, so its survival is assured. Geoff's fellow historians, who always struggled to keep up with him, have concluded that the content of his website should be frozen as none of us feel that we have the capacity to update it as Geoff would have wished. Geoff is simply irreplaceable."