



CESSNA 180

The Cessna performed valuable service on tasks both military and civil throughout Australia, Papua New Guinea and South Vietnam

General History

The Cessna fixed wing aircraft was acquired in the late 1950's to replace the obsolete Auster Mark III.

Along with the Bell 47 helicopter, the Cessna became the first Army owned and army operated aircraft since the formation of the Air Force in 1921.

Although it was primarily a civilian aircraft adapted for military use, it proved to be a valuable and versatile asset, operating extensively throughout Australia, Papua New Guinea and South Vietnam.

A total of 19 Cessnas were purchased and delivered to the Army between 1959 and 1962. The models were all extremely similar, and had essentially been made military by a coat of green paint.

Later in its service, several modifications were made to that the aircraft was able to perform in its military role.

Cessnas flew a total of 16,146 hours in South Vietnam and were used for many different roles including visual reconnaissance, liaison, courier runs, target marking, leaflet dropping, convoy cover and the postal service. From November 1969 the Pilatus Turbo Porter gradually replaced the Cessna.

The last Cessna left Vietnam in 1971 and the type was officially retired in September 1974.

History of Cessna A98-045

A98-045 is a valuable asset within the Museum of Australian Army Flying and it is of special importance within the history of 161 Recce Flt's operational service in Vietnam.

This aircraft was introduced into service on 12 October 1961 and withdrawn from service on 26 March 1973.

A98-045 and A98-043 were the first Australian Army Cessna 180's to be deployed to Vietnam with 161 Recce Flt in September 1965.

A98-045 had the honour of being the first fixed wing aircraft to land on Luscombe Airfield at Nui Dat on 31 October 1966.

This aircraft was also the last Cessna 180 to be withdrawn from operational service in Vietnam.

On 14 February 1971, Denis Coffey flew this aircraft on a first light recce and then in a fly past with three Pilatus Porters to signal the end of the operational deployment of the Cessna 180 in Vietnam.

During the extended period that A98-045 was deployed to Vietnam the aircraft was returned to Australia on two occasions for routine major servicing before being returned to Vietnam.

Whilst deployed on operational service in Vietnam, A98-045 flew a total of 4309.30 hours.

Except for a few of the fixed wing pilots of 161 (Indep) Recce Flt, who were posted to Vietnam in late 1970 early 1971, the majority of the fixed wing pilots posted to 161 Recce Flt and 161 (Indep) Recce Flt flew this aircraft on more than one occasion whilst in Vietnam.

A98-045 was withdrawn from service on 26 March 1973 after it was damaged when it was 'wing looped' at Lanefield, QLD.

The aircraft was subsequently transported to the Army Aviation Base at Oakey. In 1974, the aircraft was rebuilt so that it could be flown within the Oakey area on special occasions such as Air Shows and special events relating to Army Aviation History.

In 1988, the aircraft became part of the Museum of Australian Army Flying. The last recorded flight of the aircraft occurred on 17 November 1989 when Gary Tierney flew for 2.00 hrs.

The aircraft flew a total of 6353.4 hours.
