

DHC1 CHIPMUNK

The chipmunk, that was designed and built by the de Havilland Aircraft Company of Canada Ltd in 1946, was selected to replace the Tiger Moth as the standard primary trainer in all R.A.F Volunteer Reserve Flying Schools and was produced in quantity in Great Britain.

Several of the Australian Army's early pilots gained experience in the aircraft and our model is finished in the colours of the R.A.F Training Command. However, the Chipmunk has a special place in the history of Australian Army Aviation for quite a different reason. A number of these machines were declared surplus by the R.A.F and sold (new) to civil flying schools and Aero Clubs. The Royal Victorian Aero Club bought two and these were available to early Army pilots for subsidised "continuation" flying while the Army awaited agreement by the R.A.A.F. for it to operate its own aircraft. During this time (1950's) Major Ken Oram, then at AHQ, used some of this flying to give personal experience of the military use of light aircraft to (then) COL A.L. MacDonald, the Director of Military Operations and Plans. This was done "after office hours" and always in a chipmunk. COL MacDonald quickly became convinced of the value of "army aviation" and at Oram's suggestion, arranged for the raising of 1 Army Aviation Company, based at Bankstown Airfield, as a home for Army pilots and to train new pilots, using chartered civil aircraft.

COL MacDonald became General Sir A. L. MacDonald KBE, CB, Chief of Defence Force Staff 1977-79 but never lost his interest in Army Aviation. However, it was his flying in the Chipmunk that started it all – and we have never looked back!

K. J. Oram
Runaway Bay, Qld
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LTCOL Ken Oram (Retired) and a Life Member of the MAAF donated his model of
DHC1 Chipmunk
to the Museum of Australian Army Flying on 20 May 2007