

## VICKERS-ARMSTRONGS LIMITED

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FIRST T.A.A. VISCOUNT NAMED.

The first of a fleet of six Vickers Viscount Airliners ordered by Trans-Australia Airlines was named by Sir Thomas White, High Commissioner for Australia, at a ceremony at the Hurn factory of Vickers-Armstrongs on July 22nd.

As he named the aircraft "John Batman", Sir Thomas poured Australian Champagne over its nose from a silver chalice.

The chalice, which was presented to Sir Thomas after the ceremony by Mr. George Edwards, Managing Director of Vickers-Armstrongs Aircraft Division, is inscribed:-

"Presented to His Excellency The Honourable Sir Thomas White, K.B.E., D.F.C., V.D., on the occasion of his naming the first Trans-Australia Airlines Viscount "John Batman". Hurn Airport, July 22nd, 1954."

Included in the fleet of six aircraft under construction for T.A.A. will be the first Viscounts to be equipped with auxiliary long-range fuel tanks, adding another 290 gallons of fuel to the 1,950 gallons carried in four bag-type tanks in the wings. The T.A.A. aircraft will also be the first Viscounts to have fuel capacity increased to 1,950 gallons, from 1,720 gallons as at present.

The third and fourth aircraft of the fleet will have fittings in the wings for the auxiliary tanks. Number five will carry the extra wiring and piping necessary for the tanks. Number six will be fitted with the tanks themselves - slipper tanks positioned on the leading edge of the wing outboard of the outer engines.

Finally, the first five T.A.A. Viscounts will be powered by the Rolls-Royce Dart Mark 505 Turbo-prop Engine, giving 1,400 shaft horse power plus 365 lbs. of jet thrust per engine. But the sixth will be powered by a new, uprated version, the Dart Mark 506.

Internal improvements to the Dart's efficiency have resulted in a gain of 80-90 H.P. at cruise in this engine. This gives the Viscount an average of 18 miles an hour more cruising speed, with faster climb and higher cruising altitude. At the same time, lower specific fuel consumption brings a reduction in operating costs.

The first T.A.A. Viscount will be delivered to Australia shortly after it has completed its flight trials in the late summer. Delivery of the rest of the fleet will follow on fairly rapidly, and will be completed during the autumn of this year.

The Vickers Viscount was the first civil airliner in the world to be designed with propeller-turbine engines. After more than a year in service with British European Airways, and already well established on the routes of Air France and Aer Lingus, it is the only turbo-prop airliner in operation in the world.

With accommodation varying from 40 to 59 passengers, according to the operator's requirements, the Viscount is fully pressurised to cruise at

heights up to 25,000 feet with cabin pressure maintained at the equivalent of 5,000 feet of altitude. With full payload it has a still-air range of 1,450 statute miles. With an average cruising speed of 303 m.p.h. raised to 320 m.p.h. by the more powerful Dart Mark 506 engine, it is the fastest medium-haul airliner in the world.

A month ago another Australian order for two Viscounts placed by Butler Air Transport, took the total of firm Viscount orders past the century, to 101. This included the following orders:

BEA	38
Air France	12
Aer Lingus	4
Trans-Australia Airlines	6
Trans Canada Air Lines	15
British West Indian Airways	4
Hunting-Clan Air Transport	3
Iraqi Airways	3
Fred Olsen Air Transport (Norway)	2
Indian Air Force	2
Canadian Dept. of Transport	1
Misrair (Egypt)	3
Linea Aeropostal Venezolana	3
Capital Airlines (U.S.A.)	3
Butler Air Transport	2

Up to the present 34 Viscounts have been built and delivered - 20 to BEA., 4 to Aer Lingus, and 10 to Air France.

The first 20 Viscounts were built at the Vickers-Armstrongs factory at Weybridge, near London. This factory is now given over to the super-priority production of the Vickers Valiant four-jet bomber. The Viscount assembly line was moved to Hurn at the end of 1953. Previously the Hurn factory had been building twin-engined Varsity aircraft at the rate of just under 100 a year.

Hurn is now producing Viscounts at the rate of three a month. Extensions to the factory now in hand are due to be completed at the end of September, and production will then go up to a rate of five a month, starting in October. Capacity will then be available to increase Viscount production to eight a month, nearly 100 a year, if the growth of orders makes such a programme necessary.