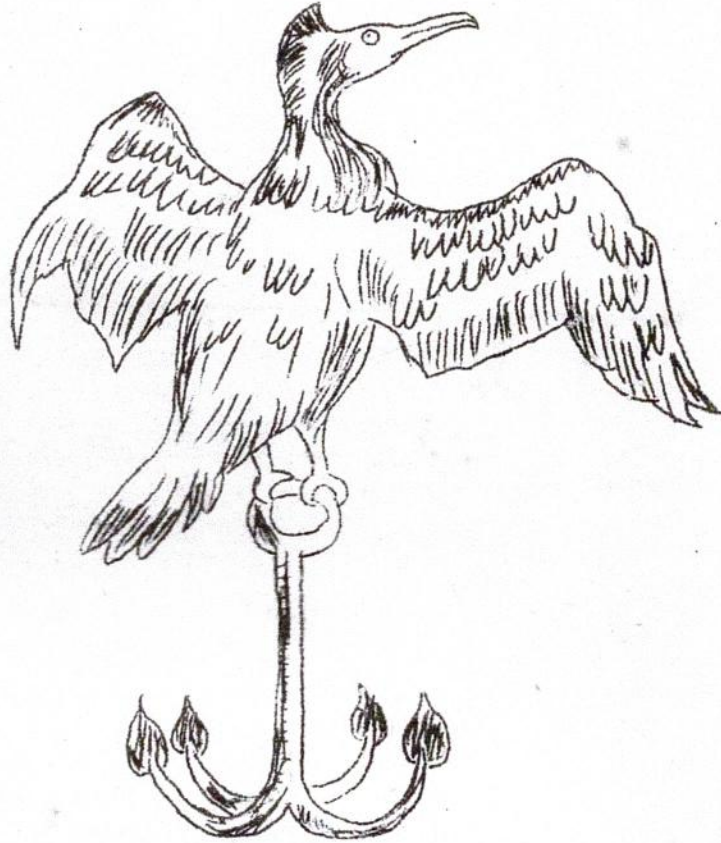
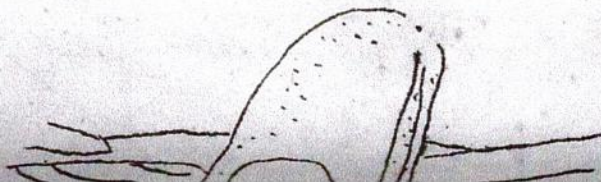


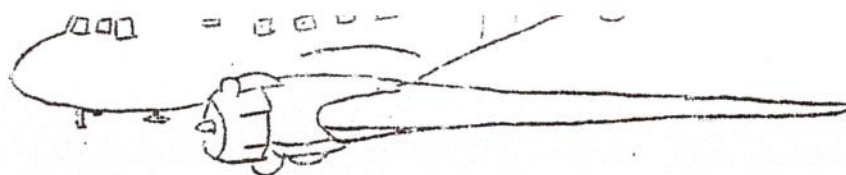
SPECIAL ISSUE MEGATON TEST 1957.

THE CHRISTMAS ISLAND NEWSPAPER



MID PACIFIC  
NEWS.





CHRISTMAS AIRWAYS 1325 Dakota Squadron.

When Operation "Grapple" was to be formed for carrying out tests in the South Pacific, air transportation became one of the leading factors. Aircraft were required to supply Christmas Island, this commitment fell to the Transport Command Hastings Squadrons. Another task of supplying the local Islands required a smaller aircraft with a good pay load, good range and an aircraft that could safely get in and out of short landing fields and strips. Thus the Dakota which had been long retired from the R.A.F. was recalled to duty.

The flight formed at Dishforth in late '56, with three aircraft and four crews. Having got the aircraft and crews on top line the flight departed U.K. at the beginning of January, 1957 supported by Hastings of No. 24 (Commonwealth) Squadron carrying ground crews, West bound for Christmas Island. They flew across the North Atlantic, and Canada down to San Francisco through the bitter sub-zero temperatures of the North American Winter. The Dakota Squadron then flew from San Francisco to Honolulu, a 16 hour flight into the Tropics, to arrive at its new home at Christmas Island on 20th January, 1957.

72 hours after arrival, Christmas Airways was in action and made its first Schedule flight to Malden, and by the end of January seven flights had been made to Malden uplifting 108 passengers, 1,844 lbs of freight and 290 lbs. of mail. The old work horse of the air was in harness once again.

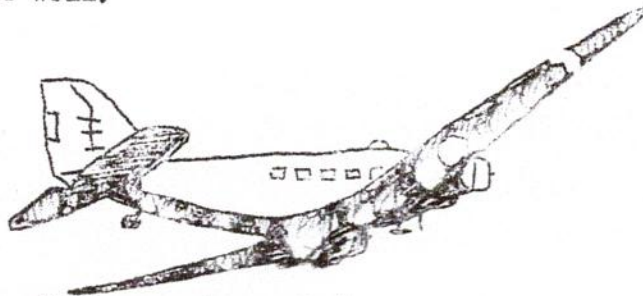
The main work of 1325 Dakota Flight, which as time went by became better known as "Christmas Airways", was to position personnel and equipment at all the small Islands in the area. Landings were made at Malden, Penrhyn and Samoa for the first series of tests. Supply drops were also carried out at Fanning and Jarvis.

On D. Day of the first test the Dakotas were standing off Malden with V.I.P.s on board as a flying grandstand and were once again landing at Malden soon after the bomb had exploded.

After the build up, came the rundown and once again the flight was very busy returning personnel and equipment to Christmas Island and collecting samples from other outlying islands. When this task had been completed the old faithful Dakotas were called upon to partake in another exercise and again moved further West.

On the 10th July the flight said farewell to Christmas Island and departed for Australia via Canton - Fiji - Noumea, -Brisbane, then down to Edinburgh Field near Adelaide, South Australia, where it arrived to take part in operation "Antler". But alas life was not to be so sweet. Christmas Island was building up again, and "Grapple X" came into being and the Dakotas were required to carry out the work which they left only a few weeks earlier. After a short spell of "De-coral dusting" the aircraft on a spot of civilisation the flight was once again heading back to its home at Christmas Island still carrying on the nose of each aircraft the name "Christmas Airways".

The 24th August saw the three "Christmas Airways" Dakotas arrive back over the Island in formation, and they were soon operating the well worn routine they had got to know so well.



The flight is still carrying out its commitments and still flies anything anywhere at any time, and has now become a part of the daily life of Christmas Island.\*

KN 434 KN 598 KJ/ 945  
ALSO FLEW THROUGH GRAPPLE 'Y'

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HASTINGS FLIGHT

1325 Dakota Squadron carries out all the short range transportation of men and material between the islands. It is left to a detachment of Hastings transport aircraft working at Christmas for a period to carry out the long range work.