

On-the-Step

Newsletter of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A number of significant changes to the SPAA Committee occurred at the Annual General Meeting in February:

- SPAA's founding member Philip Dulhunty recently decided to hand over the Chairman's reins, and we are grateful that Rob Loneragan has agreed to pick them up. Philip has always been an integral part of SPAA. One day he might think about retirement, but don't hold your breath!
- Keith Clark somehow managed to convince me to take over his role as President this year. During his very successful tenure, Keith handled every hurdle with patience, grace and respect. His kind nature meant that everyone involved with him was empowered to do their very best. Thanks for keeping the organisation in such great shape for us Keith!
- SPAA's Treasurer Jim Moline has recently been rebuilding his SeaRey from the keel of its new C hull up. Jim has decided to hang up the SPAA abacus to concentrate on this beautiful restoration project. Thanks Jim for your many years of reliable service to SPAA.
- Many thanks to Philip Dartnell, who is also stepping away from the SPAA Committee for a while. Philip's professional approach has guided

our membership database and web arena for a long time now. Philip's tireless attention to detail and honest opinions have regularly kept SPAA on the straight and narrow.

- SPAA's outgoing Secretary Ben Hunter has had to step back from the frontline due to increasing work commitments at the big 'roo. Ben is a highly qualified and quiet achiever whose understated efforts have been vital to the operation of our organisation. Ben continues as Assistant Secretary, but let's hope that he can find the time to be more involved again.

Welcome also to the following new SPAA committee members. Here's a quick introduction for those of you who don't know them:

- Our new Treasurer Wendy Robinson is a CPA, and has many years of practical accounting experience around the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie region. As the partner of an avid aviator licensed to operate almost every flying machine known to mankind, Wendy also has an innate understanding of the seaplane pilot's psyche.
- SPAA's incoming Secretary Bill Coote is a retired health professional and businessman. Bill currently has had several seaplane projects on the



boil, and has also been a very active volunteer in his local marine and aviation spheres. Bill also brings with him his wife Lyndal, who's quick wit matches her expertise and intellect.

- Lars Larson has been 'waiting in the wings' for a while, but has offered to assist Kevin Bowe in the vital Waterways Access arena. Although he is very busy flying almost every day, Lars still has more energy left than the rest of us put together. His new ideas and ability to clearly communicate them should bring some better clarity and direction to this essential role.

Whilst not an official committee member, Duncan Miller has been observing the past few SPAA meetings with interest. Duncan has a wealth of knowledge and operational experience that we hope to draw upon.

Thanks also to those who have decided to stay on:

- Keith Clark remains on the committee with all the aforementioned qualities that he brings. He very importantly continues as our 'On The Step' Newsletter Editor. Thanks Keith!

- Kevin Bowe started Air Whitsunday more than 40 years ago, and is the preeminent floating hull endorser in Australia. We are grateful indeed to enjoy Kevin's valuable experience, advice and genuine humility within our association.
- Donna Handley remains as the main organising force (typhoon) behind the social and fly-in events on our calendar. Thanks for your continued efforts Donna!
- David Geers has agreed to take on the difficult job of developing the new SPAA website. The Committee has resolved that David be paid a nominal amount for the very significant amount of time he spends in this role. I envisage that the result will be a cost effective one, and hope that will enable us to communicate far more effectively with our membership, and the broader community.
- Jack Peters, Rohan Walter and Lyn Williams remain as stalwarts, and together bring more than a century of commercial aviation experience to the SPAA committee.
- Adam Holt, Judy Hodge, Steve Krug, Rohan Whittington and others continue to provide practical input and advice when time allows.

It's a pleasure to be involved with and supported by such a great group of volunteers.

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Membership:

The Seaplane Pilots Association Australia currently has about 495 members. About 100 of these members are active seaplane pilots within Australia, and around 75 members live overseas. Some of our members land on rubber but hold an interest in gaining their water wings, whilst others are content to remain as enthusiasts on the shore.

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Membership Fees:

In recent years our association has survived almost purely from donations by our members. Discussions at committee level about membership payment structure options have not

yet resulted in a firm decision. At this stage we will not charge membership fees. In the next couple of months I will send a letter to all SPAA members encouraging each of us to make a small donation. This will then enable continued development of our new website, and provide the seed for future projects.

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SPAA Constitution:

The SPAA Constitution was lodged with NSW Fair Trading in 2006. Keith Clark has examined the current constitution and identified some areas for improvement. If the committee chooses to alter the constitution we will consult with our membership, and hold a Special General Meeting so that you can consider and vote on the proposed changes.

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Training Syllabus:

I have asked our training pilots to commence discussion about a standard training syllabus for all float, amphibious and floating hull trainees in Australia. The US FAA and Australian CASA frameworks will provide a good starting point. We will also invite RAAs to partner with us in this important process. Some shortfalls have already been identified within the Part 61 MOS Design Feature Endorsement guidelines, and these issues will no doubt take some time to resolve.

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In summary:

SPA exists to encourage and support all water-borne aviators in Australia, whether recreational or professional. The peaceful and safe enjoyment of our chosen activity is what this organisation is all about. Thanks again to those people vacating or beginning roles within the SPAA Committee.

Safe flying!

MALCOLM BURNS

RATHMINES NSW

0448 744 763

TIONA SEAPLANE GATHERING

Can't get along to the Rylstone Fly-in, BBQ Lunch & Hangar Dinner?

Want to get together, talk and fly with fellow seaplane pilots?

Talk with Michael Smith?

Come along to Tiona Park on Wallis Lake (Forster NSW) for three days of flying, fraternizing and feasting.

May 16th to 19th

Contact Rob Loneragan

0411 816 300

rob@rylstone.com.au

MEMBER PROFILE**OUR SECRETARY - BILL COOTE**

In preparing a presentation for last year's Splash-Down Conference I gathered statistics on aircraft owned by our members. I was interested to note that one of our members listed a Coot Amphibian, his name - Bill Coote. Go to Bill's website, Stick & Rudder, and you see that he is into building wooden boats and aircraft. Spelling not being my strong-point, I put 2 & 2 together and got 5. Wooden aircraft builder Bill Coote builds wooden aircraft, a Coot. SO Bill must have been the creator of the Coot Amphibian, right? Not quite, its was more a case of Bill Coote building a Coot Amphibian because it was a seaplane, it was wooden, and it almost had his name.

At our 2016 AGM, Bill kindly accepted nomination and was elected as our Secretary. To stop others jumping to the wrong conclusions as I did, here is Bill's story.

Bill was born in Strathfield Sydney Australia in 1947, by coincidence the day Edmond (EJ) Coote died. EJ was the founder of Angus and Coote Jewellers whilst his brother WJ, Bill's grandfather, founded W J Coote & Sons. The jewellery business was continued by Bill's father, Bob, and Bill's brother, Sam. Bob was apprenticed at Angus and Coote as a watch maker in the late 1930s and served in the RAAF during WW2 as an instrument maker, spending some time servicing Spitfires in Parkes NSW.

Bill and his family moved to Bathurst in 1954, living on 25 acres beside the Mount Panorama race track. His love affair with all things mechanical stems from this time.

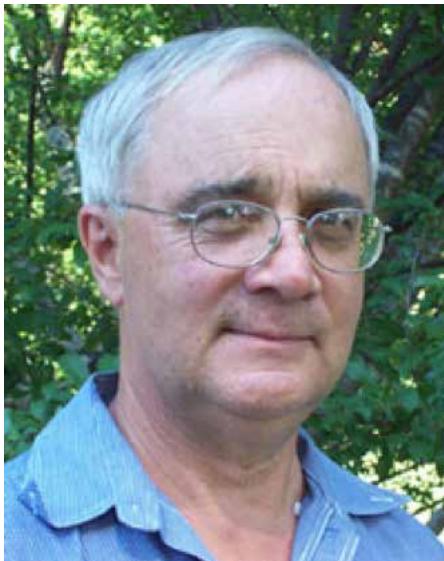
He completed secondary school at All Saints College and a Bachelor of Science at the University of New England, finishing in 1969. After graduating with a Diploma in Nutrition & Dietetics from Sydney University in 1970, he married Lyndal, and proceeded to complete a Master of Science Degree in Food Technology through the University of NSW in 1976.

Twelve years as a hospital dietitian included a stint as Chief Dietitian at the Flinders Medical Centre in Adelaide. This was followed by three years in marketing with Baxter Healthcare and two years in general management with the pharmaceutical division of Davis Consolidated Industries.

Whilst raising a family in Chatswood, Bill left full time employment in 1985 to set up Becoming Healthy. It started as a Medical Centre weight control program and for 30 years, along with a move from Chatswood to Laurieton on the NSW Mid North Coast, Becoming Healthy kept Bill busy. The business was sold in 2015. Bill and Lyndal (BNL) then moved to a water front home at Toronto on Lake Macquarie.

There has always been plenty outside human nutrition to keep BNL busy.

Sailing was an early interest. In 1980, BNL restored a 26 foot Thunderbird yacht. Over a period of 3 years in the 1980s Bill built a Canstel Clubman then, in 1985, BNL took up historic motor racing.



This led to the restoration of several cars including a Mark 1 Ford Cortina, a Bug-Eye Austin Healey Sprite, a Lotus Europa and an Australian Special Open Wheeler from 1967 called WP111.

After decamping from Sydney to the mid north coast of NSW BNL took up flying. They gained their GFPT in 1999 and passed the private pilot's test two years later. They joined Hastings District Flying Club of which Bill was President from 2009 till 2013. He is currently President of SAAA Chapter 7, a SAAA Technical Councillor, a member of RAAus with a pilot certificate and L2 maintenance authority. Not to mention Secretary of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia SPAA.

Time to build an aircraft.

Bob Furness, a LAME and owner of the Camden Haven Airfield at the time, had built a Jodel D150 (Sky Prince) and was on hand to advise. Bill was easily convinced to follow Bob's lead; plans and lots of encouragement came from Frank Rogers. The project started in 2003 and was completed in three years. It was then down to Bill to do the test flying - 40 hours were required before passengers could be taken skywards.

The Jodel was sold after 125 flying hours. It had proven to be reliable and comfortable, with a trip of 9 hours from Port Macquarie to Natfly in Narromine under its belt.

Time to turn a hobby into a life style. A trip to Oshkosh in 2008 included boats on Chesapeake Bay and a Coot Amphibian ride in Madison Wisconsin.

Building a COOT A amphibian aircraft became Bill's next great passion. The flying boat was finished in 2012, Bill completed



his floatplane endorsement with Bill Lane and his floating hull endorsement with Kevin Bowe. BNL travelled to Vancouver Canada where Bill got a taste of water landings in a COOT before returning to test fly WID.

After 15 hours of testing at Camden Haven and Taree Bill scrapped his COOT in favour of an easier-to-manage and, some said, better-engineered amphibian an Osprey 2. This is a project that had been started in 1978 which he had acquired along the way. The Osprey 2 is nearing completion and is hangered at RNAC Maitland. Unlike the COOT, which was under-powered by Subaru, the Osprey is adequately-powered by a Lycoming O 320 and should be ready for testing by Christmas.



There's been a wind change, and now Rohan Walter can't wipe the smile off his face. Our Pittwater (North of Sydney) representative has spent years researching his choice of seaplane. A retired Qantas 747 Captain, Rohan had fallen in love with the concept of seaplane flying and was desperate to get a plane of his own. Like many he was greatly attracted to the beautiful lines and promised features of the Icon A5 and he traveled to the US and spent countless hours gathering every bit of information he could on the A5. He paid his deposit and waited.

However the increasing delay in the A5's delivery and increasing costs started to make Rohan look for an alternative, at least in the interim, after all its the flying of seaplanes that is the fun not the owning of one. After a number of false starts, Rohan finally found a beautifully made Searey that had been built in North Queensland by Paul Hewitt. Rohan said that he was sold, not only by the quality of the build that Paul had done, but also by the meticulous records that Paul had kept during construction and subsequent flying. (*If you are building an aircraft, please take note*). Last month Rohan took delivery of his new acquisition, adorned in the image of one of the regions iconic butterflies, Papilio Ulysses, appropriately naming his new craft "La Papillon".

Rohan flew "La Papillon" on the long flight from Innisfail to its new home at Somersby (60km north of Sydney). I challenge anyone to stop Rohan grinning from ear to ear and talking about his new "Papillon".

Congratulation Rohan!



BEWARE THE DRONE



Most pilots are well aware of the threat posed by birds at low level, but it's also worth considering another type of intruder near our waterways!

Camera drones are becoming increasingly popular among the general population. Some of these vehicles are quite large and heavy, but extremely difficult to see. A collision with a drone could easily injure a pilot or cause catastrophic damage to an aircraft.

A member of the public recently made a report to SPAA highlighting the need to be aware of these devices when operating anywhere near the water.

Please keep a good lookout when surveying alighting areas, and be aware of the possibility of multiple small aircraft sharing the airspace with you.

BURT RUTAN RETURNS WITH a “SkiGull”

Aircraft design visionary Burt Rutan has popped up again, after disappearing into retirement four years ago, with plans to build a revolutionary seaplane with the interesting moniker SkiGull.

Rutan, who is responsible for 46 designs including Voyager, the first aircraft to fly around the world unrefuelled, and Spaceship 1, the first privately funded bid to put civilians into space, hopes the aircraft will carry two people, fly up to 2100nm non-stop, survive a 10G impact on rolling seas and fit inside the one-car garage of his lakeside home.

Speaking at this year's Oshkosh Airventure, Rutan said his experience designing efficient aircraft gave him the courage to make bold predictions about his latest design. "I did Boomerang and Voyager. Why wouldn't I do something for a seaplane that was just a little better?" he asked.

The SkiGull features retractable skis with shock absorbers and an airframe designed to survive a 10G impact on water. Rutan decided such strength was needed after envisioning the SkiGull slamming into the crest of a 12ft-high wave while landing on a rough sea. His reasoning is that if the pilot could survive that impact, he wants the aircraft to survive it as well.

Power will come from a modified Rotax engine, running on mogas. Dual electric motors will also be fitted for docking.

To avoid aluminium corrosion problems, he plans to use a combination of composites and titanium for construction.

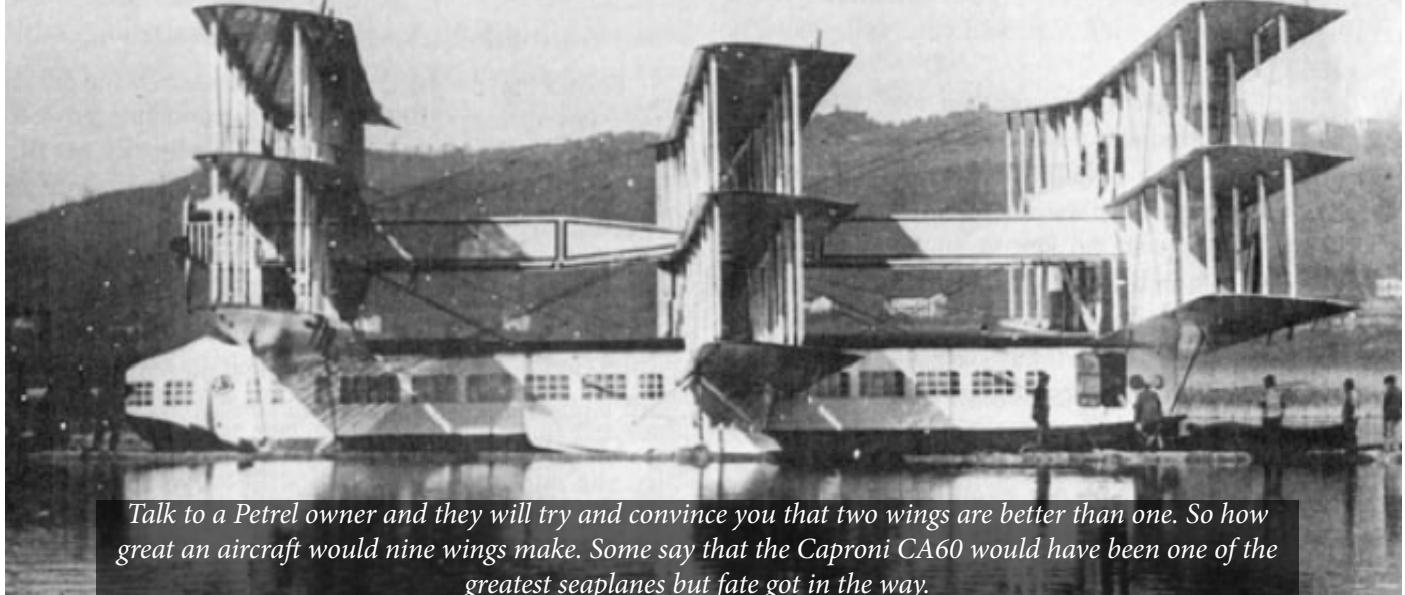
Rutan is quick to point out that he has not yet flown the SkiGull, and so the claimed performance remains unproven. An attempt to assemble and test the aircraft ended in failure about three weeks before Airventure when Rutan realised the skis would have to be redesigned.

But, ever the optimist, Rutan said that when it does fly he will use it to travel with his wife Tonya.

"I know it sounds like Walter Mitty, but if it flies well, Tonya and I will explore the world with it, visiting the places you cannot easily get to any other way," Rutan said.



THE CAPRONI CA60 TRANSAEREO



Talk to a Petrel owner and they will try and convince you that two wings are better than one. So how great an aircraft would nine wings make. Some say that the Caproni CA60 would have been one of the greatest seaplanes but fate got in the way.

Extracted from Wikipedia

Gianni Caproni became a famous aircraft designer and manufacturer during the First World War; his Caproni aviation company had major success, especially in the field of heavy multi-engine bombers, building aircraft such as the Caproni Ca.32, Ca.33, Ca.36 and Ca.40. The end of the conflict, however, caused a dramatic decrease in the demand for bombers in the Italian military. As a result, Caproni, like many other entrepreneurs of the time, directed his attention to the civil aviation market.

Gianni Caproni (left) on board a Caproni Ca.32 bomber during World War I.

As early as 1913 Caproni, then aged 27, had said during an interview for the Italian sports newspaper *La Gazzetta dello Sport* that "aircraft with a capacity of one hundred and more passengers" would soon become a reality. It was after the war, however, that (besides converting some of his large wartime bombers into airliners) Caproni began designing a huge and ambitious passenger flying boat; he first took out a patent on a design of this kind on February 6, 1919.

The idea of a large multi-engined flying boat designed for carrying passengers on long-range flights was considered, at the time, rather eccentric. Caproni thought, however, that such an aircraft could allow the travel to remote areas more quickly than ground or water transport, and that investing in innovative aerial means would be a less expensive strategy than improving traditional thoroughfares. He affirmed that his large flying boat could be used on any route, within a nation or internationally, and he considered operating it in countries with large territories and poor transport infrastructures, such as China.

Caproni believed that, to attain these objectives, rearranging wartime aircraft would not be sufficient. On the contrary, he thought that a new generation of airliners (featuring extended range and increased payload capacity, the latter in turn allowing a reduction in cost per passenger) had to supersede the converted leftovers from the war.

In spite of criticism from some important figures in Italian aviation, especially aerial warfare theorist Giulio Douhet, Caproni started designing a very innovative aircraft and soon, in 1919, he took out a patent on it.

Caproni was aware of the safety problems connected to passenger flights, such concerns being the root of Douhet's criticism. So, he concentrated on both improving the aircraft's reliability and minimizing the damage that could be caused by possible accidents. First of all, he conceived his large seaplane as a multi-engine aircraft featuring enough motors to allow it to keep flying even in case of the failure of one or more of them. He also considered (but then discarded) the opportunity of providing the aircraft with "backup engines" that could be shut off once the cruise altitude had been reached and only restarted in case of emergency. The seaplane configuration assured the



Gianni Caproni (left) on board a Caproni Ca.32 bomber during World War I. Taliedo airport, July 1915



The Transaereo under construction in Sesto Calende. Gianni Caproni is sitting on the left side outrigger.

capability of performing relatively safe and easy emergency water landings on virtually any water surface calm and large enough. Moreover, Caproni intended to improve the comfort of the passengers by increasing the cruise altitude, which he meant to achieve with turbochargers and variable-pitch propellers (such devices could compensate for the loss of power output of the engines at high altitude).

The construction of the model 3000, or Transaereo, began in the second half of 1919. The earliest reference to this event is found in a French daily newspaper of August 10, 1919, and perhaps the first parts were built in the Caproni factory of Vizzola Ticino. In September an air fair took place at the Caproni factory in Taliedo, not far from Milan, during which the new, ambitious project was heavily publicized. Later in September, Caproni experimented with a Caproni Ca.4 seaplane to improve his calculations for the Transaereo. In 1920, the huge hangar where most of the construction of the Transaereo was to take place was built in Sesto Calende, on the shore of Lake Maggiore. The several parts built by Caproni's subcontractors, many of whom had already collaborated with the company during the Great War, were assembled here.

At the end of the year, the construction yard was visited by United States Ambassador to Italy Robert Underwood Johnson, who admired Caproni's exceptional aircraft. The press affirmed that the aircraft would be able to begin test

flights in January 1921, and added that, were the tests successful, Italy would swiftly gain international supremacy in the field of civil aerial transport.

On January 10, 1921 the forward engines and nacelles were tested, and no dangerous vibrations were recorded. On January 12 two of the aft engines were also successfully tested. On 15, Caproni forwarded his request for permission to undertake test flights to the Inspector General of Aeronautics, General Omodeo De Siebert.[10]

Design

The Transaereo was a large flying boat, whose main hull, which contained the cabin, hung below three sets of wings each composed of three superimposed aerodynamic surfaces: one set was located fore of the hull, one aft and one in the center (a little lower than the other two).[8] The wingspan of each of the nine wings was 30 m (98 ft 5 in), and the total wing area was 750.00 m² (8073 ft²); the fuselage was 23.45 m (77 ft) long and the whole structure, from the bottom of the hull to the top of the wings, was 9.15 m (30 ft) high. The empty weight was 14,000 kg (30,865 lb) and the maximum takeoff weight was 26,000 kg (57,320 lb).

One of the eight Liberty L-12 engines of the Transeaereo (the only surviving one) is on display at the Gianni Caproni Museum of Aeronautics in Trento, Italy.

Each set of three wings was obtained by the direct reuse of the lifting surfaces of the triplane bomber Caproni Ca.4; after the end of the war several aircraft of this type were cannibalized in order to build the Transaereo.

The flight control system was composed of ailerons (fitted on each single wing) and rudders, even if the aircraft didn't have a tail assembly in the traditional sense and, in particular, didn't have a horizontal stabilizer. Roll (the aircraft's rotation about the longitudinal axis) was controlled in a completely conventional way by the differential action of port and starboard ailerons; pitch (the aircraft's rotation about the transverse axis) was controlled by the differential action of fore and aft ailerons, since the aircraft didn't have elevators; four articulated vertical surfaces located between the wings of the aftmost wing set acted as vertical stabilizers and rudders controlling the yaw (the aircraft's rotation about the vertical axis). Wings had a positive dihedral angle, which contributed to stabilizing the aircraft on the roll axis; Caproni also expected the Transaereo to be very stable on the pitch axis because of the tandem-triplane configuration, for the aft wing set was supposed to act as a very big and efficient stabilizer; he said that the huge aircraft could "be flown with just one hand on the controls." Caproni had patented this particular control system on September 25, 1918.

The engine control panel of the Transaereo, on display at the Gianni Caproni Museum of Aeronautics. The switches and lights were used by the pilots to communicate orders to the flight engineers who, sitting or standing in the nacelles close to the engines, directly controlled their power output.

The aircraft was powered by eight Liberty L-12 V12 engines built in the United States. Capable of producing 400 hp (294 kW) each, they were the most powerful engines produced during the First World War. They were arranged in two sets of four: one close to the foremost wing set (two engines were pulling and had a two-blade propeller, while the other two were located in a push-pull nacelle and had four-blade propellers) and one close to the aftmost wing set (two engines were pushing and had a two-blade propeller, while the other two were located in a push-pull nacelle and had four-blade propellers). All four side engines and both nacelles were surmounted by radiators for the cooling liquid. The two nacelles also housed a cockpit for one flight engineer each, who controlled the power output of the engines in response to the orders given by the pilots by means of a complex system of lights and indicators located on electrical panels. Each of the two fore side engines was connected to the central wing set and to the corresponding aft engine thanks to a truss boom with a triangular section.

The fuel tanks were located in the cabin roof, close to the central wing set. Fuel reached the engines thanks to wind-driven fuel pumps.

Besides the main hull, the aircraft was fitted with two side

floats located under the central wing set, acting as outriggers which stabilized the aircraft during static floating, takeoff and landing. Caproni had Alessandro Guidoni, one of the most important seaplane designers of the time, create the hull and floats, the hydrodynamic surfaces that connected them and the two small hydrofoils located close to the nose of the aircraft: Guidoni designed new and innovative floats for the Transaereo to reduce dimensions and weight.

This scale model of the Transaereo, on display at the Volandia aviation museum, shows in a relatively clear way the complex arrangement of the engines and propellers. The open cockpits for pilots (on the top of the fuselage) and for the flight engineers (in the nacelles) are also visible.

The passenger cabin was enclosed, and featured wide panoramic windows. Travelers were meant to sit in pairs on wooden benches that faced each other—two facing forward and two backwards. The open-air cockpit accommodated a pilot in command and a co-pilot side-by-side. Its floor was raised above the passenger cabin floor, so that the shoulders and heads of the pilots protruded through the roof. The flight deck could be reached from inside the fuselage by a ladder.

The Transaereo featured a lavatory at the rear end of the fuselage.

Test flights

The Transaereo was taken out of its hangar for the first time on January 20, 1921, and on that day it was extensively photographed. On January 21, the aircraft was scheduled to be put in the water for the first time, and a cameraman had been hired to shoot some sequences of the aircraft floating on the lake. Because of the low level of the lake and of some difficulties related to the slipway that connected the hangar with the surface of the lake, the flying boat could not reach the water. After receiving De Siebert's authorization, the slipway was lengthened on January 24, and then again on 28. Operations were carried on among problems and obstacles until February 6, when Caproni was informed that 30 wing ribs had broken and needed to be repaired before the beginning of test flights. He was infuriated, and kept his employees awake through the night to allow the tests to begin on February 7. The ribs were fixed, but then a starter was found broken, causing Caproni's frustration, so that the tests had to be postponed again.

On February 9, finally, the Transaereo was put in the water its engines running smoothly and it started taxiing on the surface of the lake. The pilot was Federico Semprini, a former military flight instructor who was known for having once looped a Caproni Ca.3 heavy bomber. He would be the test pilot in all the subsequent trials of the Transaereo; no tests were going to be performed with more than one pilot on board.

Always keeping on the water surface, the aircraft made



The wreck of the Transaereo is towed to shore after the accident, on March 4, 1921. The boat may be the same that interfered with the aircraft's takeoff, possibly causing it to crash.

some turns, then accelerated simulating a takeoff run, then made other maneuvers in front of Gianni Caproni and other important representatives of the Italian aviation in the 1920s: Giulio Macchi and Alessandro Tonini of Nieuport-Macchi, Raffaele Confletti of SIAI. The tests were soon interrupted by the worsening of the weather conditions, but their outcome was positive. The aircraft had proved responsive to the controls, maneuverable and stable; it seemed to be too light towards the bow and at the end of the day some water was found to have leaked inside the fuselage, but Caproni was satisfied.

On the next day, after reconsidering some of his calculations, Caproni decided to load the bow of the Transaereo with ballast before carrying out further tests, in order to keep the aircraft from pitching up excessively.

More taxiing tests were successfully carried out on February 11. On February 12 or March 2, 1921, the bow of the aircraft loaded with 300 kg (660 lb) of ballast, the Transaereo reached the speed of 80 km/h (43 kn; 50 mph) and took off for the first time. During the brief flight it proved stable and maneuverable, in spite of a persisting tendency to climb.

The second flight took place on March 4. Semprini (according to what he later recalled) accelerated the aircraft to 100 or 110 km/h (54–59 kn, 62–68 mph), pulling the yoke toward himself; suddenly the Transaereo took off and started climbing in a sharp nose-up attitude; the pilot reduced the throttle, but then the aircraft's tail started falling and the aircraft lost altitude, out of control. The tail soon hit the water and was rapidly followed by the nose of the aircraft, which slammed into the surface, breaking the fore part of the hull. The fore wing set collapsed in the water together with the nose of the aircraft, while the central and the aft wing sets, together with the tail of the aircraft, kept floating. The pilot and the flight engineers escaped the wreck unscathed.

The wreck of the Transaereo is towed to shore after the accident, on March 4, 1921. The boat may be the same that interfered with the aircraft's takeoff, possibly causing it to crash.

Caproni, coming from Vizzola Ticino by automobile, was delayed, and only arrived on the shore of Lake Maggiore after the Transaereo had crashed. He later commented, "So the fruit of years of work, an aircraft that was to form the basis of future aviation, all is lost in a moment. But one must not be shocked if one wants to progress. The path of progress is strewn with suffering."

At the time, the accident was blamed on two concurrent causes. First, the wake of a steamboat that was navigating on the lake close to the area where the Transaereo was accelerating was thought to have interfered with the takeoff. Second, test pilot Semprini was blamed for having kept pulling the yoke trying to gain altitude while he should have performed corrective maneuvers, for example lowering the nose to let the huge aircraft gain speed. Another theory suggests the aforementioned boat was a ferry loaded with passengers and Semprini (who was only performing some taxiing trials, for he didn't mean to take off before Caproni's arrival on the spot) was suddenly compelled to take off, in spite of the insufficient speed, to avoid a collision. According to more recent theories, the cause of the accident was probably the sandbags been placed in the aircraft to simulate the weight of passengers: not having been fastened to the seats, they may have slid to the back of the fuselage when, upon takeoff, the Transaereo suddenly pitched up. With the tail burdened by this additional load, the aircraft became uncontrollable and the nose lifted more and more, until the Transaereo stalled and violently hit the water tail first.

The surviving fragments of the outriggers and of the lower front section of the main hull, on display at the Gianni Caproni Museum of Aeronautics

More surviving fragments (a section of one of the truss-booms and one of the hydrofoils) are on display at Volandia.

Because the photographer was on board the same car as Caproni, no photos exist of the takeoff, flight or crash, but many were shot of the wreck.

The flying boat had sustained heavy damage in the crash, but the rear two-thirds of the fuselage and the central and aft wing sets were almost intact. However, the Transaereo had to be towed to shore. The crossing of the lake, performed thanks to a boat that may have been the same that had interfered with the takeoff, further damaged the aircraft: a considerable quantity of water leaked in the hull and the fuselage was partly submerged, while the central and aft wing sets got damaged and partly collapsed in the water.

The possibility of repairing the Transaereo was remote. After the accident, only the metallic parts and the engines were still usable. Almost all wooden parts would have to be rebuilt. The cost of the repairs, according to Caproni's own estimate, would be one-third of the total cost of building the prototype, but he doubted the company's resources would be sufficient to sustain such a financial effort. After initial discouragement, however, on March 6 Caproni was already considering design modifications to carry on the project of a 100-passenger transatlantic flying boat. He was sure that the Transaereo was a promising machine, and decided to build a 1/4 scale model to keep on testing the concept.^[3]

After discussing with De Siebert and Ivanoe Bonomi (who had been the Ministry of War until shortly before), Caproni was convinced he could build a 1/3 scale model and Bonomi promised that, had he won the elections, his cabinet would grant him all the financial support he needed. However, even though Bonomi actually became Prime Minister in July, more urgent political priorities ultimately caused the project of the Transaereo to be abandoned.

Even if, overall, it was not successful, the Caproni Ca.60 keeps being considered "one of the most extraordinary aircraft ever built."

Aircraft on display

Most of the damaged structure of the wreck was lost after the Transaereo project was eventually abandoned. Caproni, however, was convinced of the importance of preserving and honoring the historical heritage related to the birth

and early development of Italian aviation in general, and to the Caproni firm in particular; his historical sensibility meant that several parts of the Transaereo, retrospectively known as the Caproni Ca.60, survived: the two outriggers, the lower front section of the main hull, a control and communication panel and one of the Liberty engines were spared and, after following the Caproni Museum in all its whereabouts between its foundation in 1927 and its move to its current location in Trento in 1992, they were displayed together with the rest of the permanent collection in the main exhibition hall of the museum in 2010.^{[3][23]}

A section of one of the two triangular truss-booms also survived, as well as one of the hydrofoils that connected the main hull and the outriggers.^[3] These fragments are on display at the Volandia aviation museum, in the Province of Varese, hosted in the former industrial premises of the Caproni company at Vizzola Ticino.

Specifications (Ca.60)

Crew: 8

Capacity: 100 passengers

Length: 23.45 m (77 ft)

Wingspan: 30.0 m (98 ft 5 in)

Height: 9.15 m (30 ft)

Wing area: 750,00 m² (8073 ft²)

Empty weight: 14,000 kg (30,865 lb)

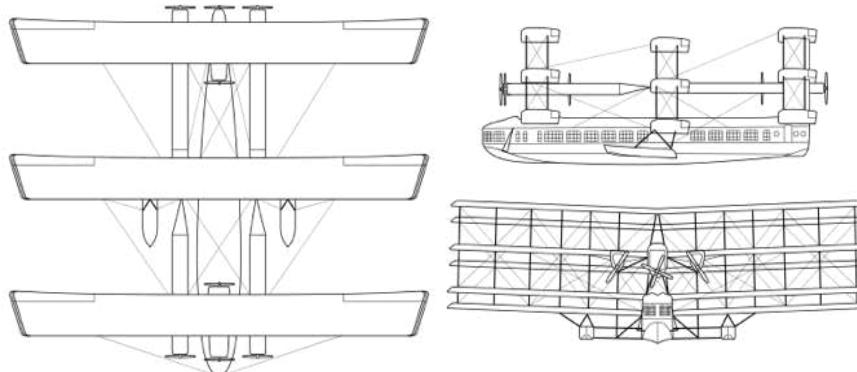
Max. takeoff weight: 26,000 kg (57,320 lb)

Powerplant: 8 × Liberty L-12 liquid-cooled V12 engines, 294 kW (400 hp) each

Performance

Cruise speed: 130 km/h (70 kn, 80 mph)

Range: 660 km (360 nmi, 410 mi)



ANZAC WEEKEND FLY-IN

The **Ross Vining Memorial Fly-in** at Lake Boga is a great chance to catch up with your fellow pilots in an historic setting.

If you don't have access to a flying boat or float plane, fly to Swan Hill or drive to Lake Boga.

Be there to enjoy the camaraderie and catch up on the latest news.

Ben Hutchinson will screen the amazing 'Buccaneers Adventure' movie on Saturday evening

On Sunday afternoon a 'Special Guest Speaker' will present an informal talk at the Lake Boga Catalina Museum

On Monday you are welcome to attend the 11am Anzac Day Service

Cost: \$55 per head for catering. RSVP Donna Handley 0409 172 776

WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON THE ICON A5

The ICON A5 has been on the horizon for a long long time, but some recent announcements have given confidence that customer may soon be flying the seaplane they have been waiting so long for. A 300,000-square-foot facility in Vacaville, California, is now operational and Icon is predicting 175 A5s will roll out of the facility by the end of the year. It is pleasing, even a relief, to see that ICON is taking on the responsibility for training A5 owners to be.

Matt Emmens recently became the first graduate of ICON's Flight Training program, helping launch an exciting new chapter for the company. Already an experienced land and seaplane pilot with over 4,000 flight hours in a number of aircraft types, from singles and twins to jets, Matt spent two days at ICON headquarters to become qualified to fly the A5.

ICON's fleet of aircraft now features three Flight Training A5s, two of which are finished in the unique livery which will be flown by all ICON students..



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On-the-Step On The Step is distributed free to all members of the Seaplane Pilots Association of Australia (SPAA)

Stories, articles, photos and news are welcome and should be sent to: editor@seaplanes.org.au.

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