

INSTRUMENTED AIRCRAFT VISITS TO HONEYSUCKLE CREEK FOR APOLLO

Compiled by Bob Burns

1967

The first visit by a Goddard Space Flight Center Instrumented Aircraft , a Lockheed C-121G Super Constellation [**NASA 421**] to fly engineering tests with Honeysuckle Creek (HSK) occurred on **January 9, 1967.**

The aircraft based out of Sydney. Reports show test flights were performed on 9, 10, 11, 12, 16 [scrubbed due to weather], 17, and 23.

At the end of tests on the 23rd, HSK requested the aircraft land at Canberra for Tidbinbilla and Honeysuckle personnel to view the aircraft and its equipment. Comments by the aircraft crew in the report indicated that they did not appreciate the Australian black flies at Canberra's airport ;-). This probably helped ensure that all operations with the NASA aircraft would base out of Sydney in the future.

The final day of tests occurred on 27 January, when the aircraft flew 4 hours + 15 minutes. The report indicated that testing was complete as far as possible with the current status of the station.

The **NASA Test Conductor was David 'Dave' Pine.**

No other NASA or Contractor personnel were listed in the report.

The Bendix flight crew for this mission:

Flight Crew

Capt. Don Keeler *
R/Capt Linton 'Len' Gurley
F/O Joe Conversano
NAV John Stastny
F.E. T. Lubicich
F.M. Hank Borcz *

Electronic Flight Techs

J. Barto
Charlie Brown *

(* indicates Deceased in these lists.)

The next Instrumented Aircraft visit to HSK was **NASA 421** again from **July 3– 8, 1967**.

The report only provided the names of the Bendix Flight Crew. Unable to determine who the NASA Test Conductor was, or if additional test or simulations personnel visited the station. Purpose of visit not specified in report. My best guess is that **George Harris, Jr.** was the **Test Conductor**.

Flight Crew

Capt. Charles 'Charlie' Lungren
F/O Richard Roberts *
NAV Mike Polski *
F.E. Carol 'Bud' Weddington
F.M. Hank Borcz

Electronic Flight Techs

William 'Bill' Eakes – Lead
Larry French
P. Patterson
Jerry Jarboe

The next visit of the Instrumented Aircraft to HSK was **NASA 420**, also a Lockheed C-121G Super Constellation, from **September 11 to 29, 1967**.

This appears to have been the first formal simulation with Bendix Simulation Team Members on site.

The **NASA Simulation Conductor was George Harris**.

Flight Crew

Capt. Don Keeler *
F/O Bob Kearse *
NAV John Stastny
F.E. James Kent
F.E. Fred Salmon
F.M. Doug Forrest

Electronic Flight Techs

Tom Robinson
Bob Schultz *
Del Golightly
Charlie Brown *

Bendix Simulation Team

R. L. Gooch
J. R. Johnson
T. I. Russell
H.C. Stice
Lloyd Hemmingway

1968

HSK received a visit from **NASA 421 on May 2, 1968** to deliver priority cargo for both HSK and Orroral Valley stations.

The next Instrumented Aircraft visit was **July 2–8, 1968** with **NASA 421**.

The **NASA Simulation Conductor was James 'Jim' Kennedy**.

The report indicates that the aircraft only flew on July 5 and 6.

Flight Crew

Capt. Charles 'Charlie' Lungren
F/O Howland Davis
F/O T. Brown
NAV Ray Epley
F.E. Doc Cramer
F.M. Doug Forrest
F.M. F. Sobeck

Electronic Flight Techs

Ronald 'Ron' Shaver
Delbert 'Del' Golightly
James 'Jim' Conkin *
Robert 'Bob' Schultz *

Bendix Simulation Team

R. Williams
R. Bomgardner
Fred Smith
Cleston Mirecle

The final Instrumented Aircraft visit for this year was during **November 14–28, 1968** with **NASA 421** for the purpose of conducting simulations for the **Apollo 8** mission.

The **NASA Simulations Conductor was Otto Womack *** who was also the Branch Head. **Francis 'Frank' Glynn was the NASA Aircraft Coordinator**, and also Head of the Aircraft Operations Section.

During flight operations supporting the Apollo simulations on November 26, the Power Recovery Turbine (PRT) on the No. 1 engine failed, resulting in the need for a new engine. Another Goddard aircraft, a **Douglas C-54G, NASA 427**, brought the replacement engine to Sydney.

Flight Crew

Capt. Harry Sanford
F/O Robert 'Bobby' Liles *
F/O Carol 'Bud' Weddington
NAV Ray Epley
F.E. Fred Salmon
F.M. Hank Borcz *

Electronic Flight Techs

Robert 'Bob' DeSombre *
William 'Bill' Eakes
P. Patterson

Bendix Simulation Team

E. Foraling
M. Kalweit
R. Jones

Bendix Photographer

William 'Bill' Carr

1969

The Instrumented Aircraft **NASA 420** visited Honeysuckle Creek on **April 12–20, 1969** for **Apollo 10/11** simulations. The routing of the aircraft for this mission was unusual in that it was via Alaska, Japan, and the Philippines.

Besides the Bendix Simulation Team, the aircraft manifest included a four member **DDMS Tag Team**.

The **NASA Simulations Conductor was Otto Womack***.

Flight Crew

Capt. Lawrence Williams
F/O Eldon Henningsen
NAV Joe Hilliard
F.E. James Kent
F.M. Dave Coleman
Reserve Capt. Melvin 'Mel' Schmidt

Electronic Flight Techs

R. Chabut
Delbert 'Del' Gollackner
Harry Schenk
Charlie Brown *

Bendix Simulation Team

Albert 'Al' Hartje
Larry French
P. Berry
R. Workman

DDMS Tag Team

C. Knuckles
W. Schoefield
D. Yee
Carl Roberts

1970

Only one trip to Honeysuckle Creek was recorded for this year with the Instrumented Aircraft. **NASA 421** and the simulations team worked with HSK from **December 1–7, 1970**.

This was the first all NASA simulations team to visit HSK. Activities were performed in preparation for the **Apollo 14** mission.

James Costrell from GSFC was also on this trip to discuss financial matters with stations senior personnel.

Flight Crew

Capt. Charles 'Charlie' Lungren
F.O. Robert 'Bobby' Liles *
NAV Ray Epley
F.E. William 'Bill' Darr
F.M. Hank Borcz *

Flight Electronic Techs

Robert 'Bob' DeSombre *
Robert 'Bob' Schultz *
James 'Jim' Conkin *

NASA Simulations Team

Evan Gull – Sim. Conductor
Kermit Blaney
Charles Foreman
Larry French
Robert 'Bob' Seiders *
Barry Nims

1971

The Instrumented Aircraft arrived in Australia for Honeysuckle Creek support of the **Apollo 15** mission on **June 18, 1971**. Activities with HSK covered a period from **June 18–23, 1971**.

A group of eight passengers were also listed on the manifest without any explanation of their purpose.

A second flight crew, consisting of **Capt. William 'Bill' Morgan ***, **Chief Bendix Pilot, Capt. Paul 'Stubby' Hendrickson, and Flight Engineer Carol 'Bud' Weddington** were also on the passenger manifest. I believe they were meeting the **NASA Calibration Aircraft, NASA 428**, to relieve another crew.

Flight Crew

Capt. Melvin 'Mel' Schmidt
R/Capt. Howland Davis
NAV Ray Epley
F.E. Wayne 'Doc' Crammer
F.M. Hank Borcz *

Flight Electronics Techs

Harry Schenk - Lead
Delbert 'Del' Gollackner
Robert 'Bob' Schultz *
Charlie Brown *

NASA Simulations Team

Evan Gull – Sim. Conductor
Fred Palloni – RSDP
Blake Lorenz – TLM
Nick Polizos – USB
Calvin 'Cal' Segree * – COMM
Dennis Maddy – A/C Coord.

Passenger Manifest

J. Morgan	A. Holmes
T. King	J. Loyd
B. Collis	E. Trutillo
E. Kegelman	R. Dawson

1972

The first trip of the Instrumented Aircraft to Honeysuckle Creek for the **Apollo 16** mission covered **April 28 – March 5, 1972**. Once again the aircraft was **NASA 421**.

Additional personnel for this visit included **LCRU TV engineers, J. Miller (NASA)** and **J. Feltus (RCA)**.

Flight activities were uneventful during the HSK sims, but a loss of engine No. 4 after the conclusion of the Carnarvon simulations on **March 13** required a new engine to be flown in from the States. This complicated the remainder of our simulations schedule, but all objectives were accomplished with Goldstone prior to the launch of **Apollo 16**.

A Honeysuckle Creek technician, **Hardy (Robert) Dey**, was approved to fly with the simulation team from Canberra to Perth.

Flight Crew

Capt. Charles 'Charlie' Lungren
Capt. William 'Bill' Morgan *
Capt. Howland Davis
NAV Mike Polski *
F.E. Carol 'Bud' Weddington
F.E. William 'Billy' Darr

Flight Electronics Techs

William 'Bill' Eakes
Harry Schenk
Bud Dominick *
Robert 'Bob' Schultz *

NASA Simulation Team

Kermit Blaney – Sim Conductor
Barry Nims – M&O
Larry French – RSDP
Robert 'Bob' Burns – TLM
Edward 'Eddie' Lowe – USB
Al Hartje – COMM (BFEC)

The final visit of the Goddard Instrumented Aircraft, **NASA 421** to Honeysuckle Creek occurred during **November 23–26, 1972**.

Prior to arriving in Australia we were performing simulations at Guam (GWM) when word was received that the Instrumented Aircraft support would be terminated upon our return to the USA. To say this was not a happy time would be the understatement of all time, however, we still had Carnarvon, and Honeysuckle Creek on the schedule for **Apollo 17** simulations.

Since this was the final trip overseas for the Constellations, the aircrew and simulation team members went all out on a buying spree at the Guam Base Exchanges. Checkbooks, FooNicks, and Credit Cards were well used, and the empty cargo space in **NASA 421** was put to good use.

Flight Crew

Capt. Charles 'Charlie' Lungren
F/O Robert 'Bobby' Liles *
NAV Mike Polski *
F.E. Art 'The Prince' Kestner
F.M. Hank Borcz *
F.M. Terry Leguire
Coord.

Flight Electronics Techs

Harry Schenk – Lead
Robert 'Bob' Schultz *
James 'Jim' Conkin *

NASA Simulation Team

Evan Gull – Sim. Conductor
Nick Polizos – USB
Robert 'Bob' Burns – TLM
Calvin 'Cal' Segree * – COMM
Dan Surowiec * – RSDP (BFEC)
Dick LaCroix – A/C