



Harry Hawker MBE AFC

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Pioneer Aviator

1889—1921



Harry Hawker

Aviation Engineer, Test Pilot, Aircraft Designer

AUSTRALIAN

www.harryhawker.com.au

1914

Australian born Pioneer Aviator, Harry Hawker returned home to Australia in January 1914 with the Sopwith "Tabloid", the most advanced aircraft in the world at that point in time. Harry's main objective was to promote the ever increasing aspect of flight to the Australian defence forces.

His presence and displays resulted in the Government finally activating the aircraft it had purchased 12 months earlier - which had not been unpacked from their crates!

In his initial flights in Australia, Harry took off from New Street, Elsternwick, power lines and all. From there he flew to Government House where he landed on the lawns and met the Governor General, Lord Denman as part of an impromptu visit.

Whilst in Australia, Harry demonstrated exhilarating flights at Elsternwick, Caulfield racecourse, Randwick racecourse, Victoria Park racecourse, Albury racecourse and Ballarat. Australia had not previously witnessed flights of this calibre. He also took Senator Millen (Minister for Defence) on a flight from Elsternwick.

Harry returned to England, and soon the outbreak of WW1 eventuated. Harry was the prime test pilot for all Sopwith planes during the war. In one period, covering 199 days, he tested (flew) a total of 295 planes, most were brand new and being tested for the first time – a very risky business.

Harry Hawker is credited with developing and perfecting the maneuver to correct an aircraft from a "Death Spin", which had claimed many a pilot's life in the early days of aviation. Pilot training manuals around the world subsequently adopted Harry's procedure for correction.

