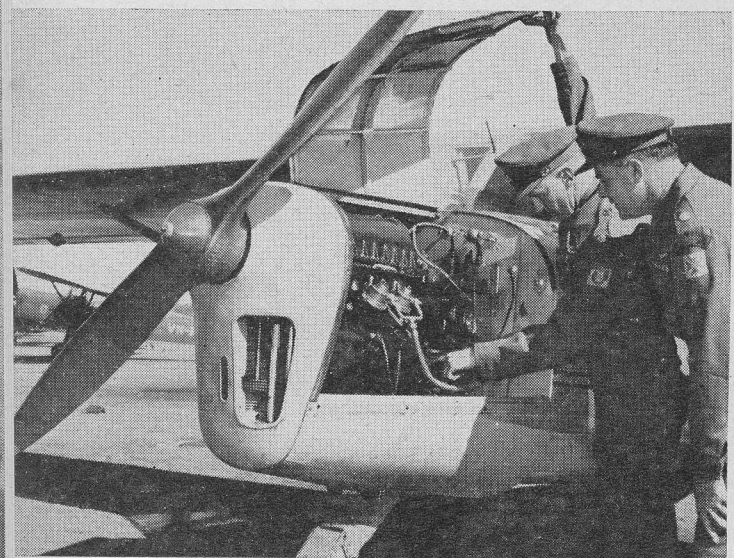
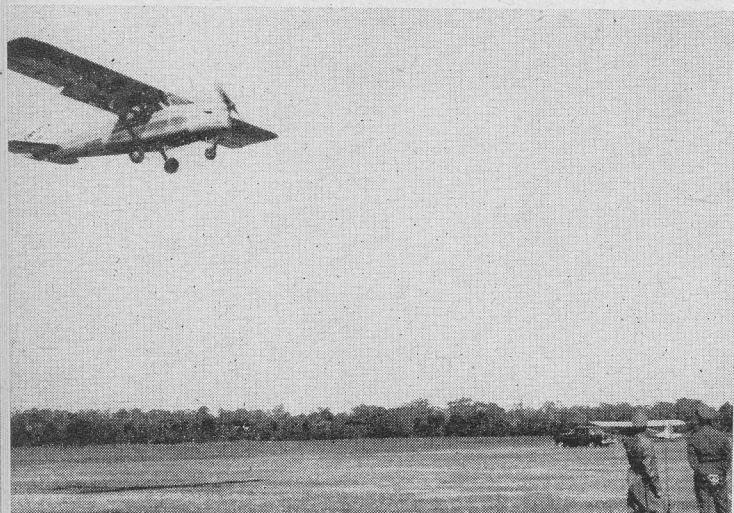




Fawcett 120 Performs for Army Evaluation Team



Fawcett 120 views on this page were taken during the Army trials at Bankstown last month. TOP: Take-off in company with an Auster. CENTRE: Slow run past Army Signalling party. ABOVE: Major K. Oram (left) and Major P. Benjamin examine engine installation. RIGHT: Douglas Fawcett with Majors P. Benjamin (left) and K. Oram.

WHILE civilian development of the Fawcett 120 remains at a standstill, awaiting finalisation of the protracted negotiations between DCA and the RAAF over final testing, considerable interest is being shown by Army authorities in a possible application of the basic 120 design to an AOP or light communication role. It is possible that construction of a service prototype may follow the flight trials of the Fawcett 120 which were conducted at Bankstown last month by an Army Evaluation Team.

The Army team, led by Major K. Oram, checked general handling characteristics of the Fawcett 120 with particular references to takeoff, landing and slow flying performance, and its general suitability to undertake the variety of tasks associated with Army light aircraft operations.

Following completion of the tests, Major Oram stated that the aircraft had been flown through the full range of manoeuvres and as far as possible under conditions met in operational flying in the field, and to say the least had performed very very well indeed. The Fawcett 120 showed considerable promise, he stated.

The Fawcett 120 is at present powered with a 130 HP Gipsy Major engine, but the airframe is stressed to take considerably more power, and it is likely that the projected service version would be powered with a larger engine resulting in a considerably improved takeoff, climb and cruise performance. Possible powerplants would be the Lycoming O-435A 190 HP, Continental E185 185 HP, or Cirrus Bombadier 180 HP. The higher power for weight ratio of these engines should considerably benefit the performance of the 120. In the case of the Continental E185, an increase of 55 HP could be obtained by paying a penalty of only 20 lb. in the empty weight.

The Service version of the 120 would follow the same general configuration of the existing prototype with minor modification of the airframe to allow for the installation of military equipment. It is already planned to replace the existing mechanical brakes with toe operated hydraulic brakes on civilian production series aircraft. This modification would also be incorporated in the military model, together with a steerable nose wheel to ease ground handling on very narrow operational airstrips. Other modifications already planned for the civilian production version include a redesigned fin and rudder, a larger cabin with increased head room and leg room in both front and rear seats and increased fuel tankage. These modifications would also all be incorporated in the projected service aircraft.

The delays the Fawcett 120 and other promising light aircraft projects have experienced are inexcusable. The fact that any Australian built aircraft should wait seven months for the relevant airworthiness authority to make arrangements to have it tested appears to be equally as hard to understand as the fact that the Department of Civil Aviation does not itself possess the necessary equipment to carry out type approval tests on even a simple light aeroplane.

END

