

## SOUTH AUSTRALIAN AVIATION MUSEUM

### SIGNIFICANT AVIATOR PROFILES

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#### BROTHERS-in-ARMS – HERBERT AND RICHARD CHESTER



*Maurice Farman Shorthorn trainer at CFS Point Cook during the First War.*

#### CHESTER. H.J.

Herbert James Chester was born on 3 June 1888 at Mt Gambier in SA. He enlisted at Laverton in Victoria to serve during the First World War as an aircraft mechanic at Australian Flying Corps (AFC) Central Flying School Point Cook. On 9 September 1918 he enlisted for overseas service and embarked from Adelaide in SA on 22 October as Sergeant AFC Special Details in His Majesty's Australian Transport A36 *Boonah*, and after the Armistice was declared on 11

November he remained in Australia and disembarked at Perth. He arrived back at Adelaide by the East-West Railway on 30 January 1919, and was granted leave for a fortnight before entraining for Melbourne to receive his discharge on 26 February 1919.

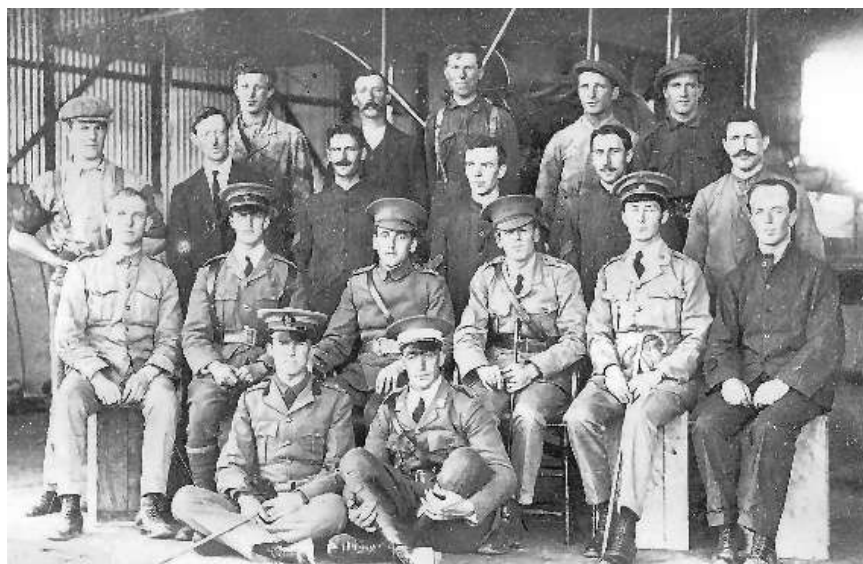
After the war the AFC lost its identity and Chester joined the Australian Air Corps (AAC) when it was formed on 1 January 1920. On 19 August 1920 he was a Sergeant in the AAC when he flew with Capt E. J. Jones in an AAC DH9A from Mildura almost to Sydney with the Prince of Wales' mail, which had been carried from Port Augusta to Mildura by Colonel R. Williams in another DH9A. Williams then accompanied them from Mildura until his aircraft was damaged at Cootamundra, while Jones and Chester made it as far as Campbelltown and delivered the mail over the last 56 miles by car.

In September 1920 Major W. H. Anderson and Chester in an AAC DH9A, together with Captain W. J. Stutt and Sergeant A. G. Dalzell in another DH9A, were ordered to search for the missing schooner *Amelia J* in Bass Strait, but on 23 September Stutt and Dalzell disappeared and were never found.

Chester transferred as Corporal to the (Royal)AAF when it was formed on 31 March 1921. He continued to serve in the RAAF until 4 June 1936, and in the Second World War enlisted in the Australian Army on 10 October 1940. He served at Keswick Barracks at Adelaide in SA until his discharge as Sergeant on 2 April 1947 from 4 Military District Echelon and Records, and he died at Adelaide on 7 September 1965 at the age of 77.

## CHESTER, R. H.

Richard Henry Chester, the older brother of Herbert James Chester, was born on 23



*R. H. Chester (in dark overalls) sits at right of front row in photo of personnel of AFC CFS Point Cook in 1914.*

November 1881 at Mt Gambier in SA. Before the First World War he sailed to England and served for over two years with the Scottish Military Forces, and in 1912 joined the British and Colonial Aeroplane Co (Bristol) to become an Air Mechanic. In 1913 he was selected to become one of the first four mechanics at AFC CFS Point Cook, and sailed for Australia in RMS (Royal Mail Ship) *Otway* on 25

April 1913.

Chester was appointed Regimental Chief Mechanic Aviation Instructional Staff with serial No.1, and was promoted through Sergeant to Warrant Officer before being appointed Lieutenant on 5 January 1916. Situations at Point Cook and difficulties associated with the health problems of his wife led to the termination of his appointment on 22 February 1916, after which he was employed as Chief Mechanic at the NSW Aviation School Richmond, which was developed by the NSW Education Department to train pilots for overseas service.

On 1 November 1917 Chief Instructor W. J. Stutt in a Curtiss Jenny left Richmond for Point Cook with the Hon A. G. F. James, Minister for Public Instruction, as passenger, Chester having been sent ahead to Goulburn to await their arrival. James left the flight at Goulburn after the aircraft was damaged, and Chester made the necessary repairs before flying on to Point Cook with Stutt the following day. On 12 November Stutt made the return flight to Richmond accompanied by Chester as far as Cootamundra, where the latter remained on the ground while Stutt completed the flight to Richmond at reduced weight. After the war the NSW Aviation School was closed and it appears that Chester then left the aviation scene. He died in 1947 at St Kilda in Victoria.

**Chas Schaedel**

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