

ATTN: SEAPLANE & HELICOPTER OPERATORS

SUBJECT: OPERATIONS IN R405 - SECURITY AWARENESS ALERT

OVERVIEW

On the 16th September 2005, various Commercial & Privately owned seaplanes took part in a commemorative flight in recognition of the 60 year anniversary of the return to RoseBay of the Changi war camp prisoners.

In order to take part in the RoseBay flyover, a flight of 4 Seaplanes (some of which came from Bankstown) travelled eastbound via the Harbour Transit lane, the southern pylon of SHB and then proceeded in the Transit Lane to Long Reef where the flight formed up for a return to RoseBay for a formation flyover.

The Catalina joined the flyover event and turned on a moving spectacle that was widely publicised on National TV, Press & radio. The whole event created great public interest and as an Australian commemorative event was a great success and was warmly received.

ATTENTION - SECURITY AWARENESS

Following the RoseBay Commemorative Flight Event, one of the pilots who participated in the flyover, received a letter from CASA.

In the letter, CASA advised that it had "received a complaint from the Operations Security Manager of the Sydney Opera House, that his staff had observed a seaplane to have flown at a low altitude over the Sydney Opera House....."

The aircraft in question was a part of the flight of 4 seaplanes. The pilot was an experienced seaplane pilot who is most familiar with operations in R405 and was also accompanied at the time by a highly experienced and respected Bankstown Flight School instructor.

All 4 seaplanes were operating in strict accordance with the procedures as prescribed in the ERSA.

The pilot in question was requested to submit a written reply to CASA's letter in response to the complaint as raised by the Sydney Opera House Manager. This was done and CASA has subsequently advised that "in light of the information presented in the response, no further action is envisaged".

CONCLUSION

There is a heightened awareness of security, fear and concern that has been advertised and promoted to the Australian community. What may have been considered normal and an every day occurrence is now being reviewed and considered in the light that it may be a potential threat.

The incident as reported by staff at Sydney Opera House, I believe, is a case in point where a standard routine operation has been considered more closely by unqualified and

inexperienced people, who have questioned the operation as a possible security threat. I don't think these people can be blamed for making their report, there are adds promoting the Australian public to be aware and be vigilant.

CASA is also doing its job by investigating and reporting back with their findings.

RECOMMENDATION

In view of this event, it is recommended that all pilots of Seaplanes & Helicopters be particularly aware that there is a heightened sensitivity to potential security issues.

Therefore with regard to flights in the Harbour Transit Lane and in particular in the vicinity of the Sydney Opera House, Garden Island and the Prime Ministers Sydney residence at Kirribilli, all Pilots should take special care to ensure that operations are kept well clear of these sensitive areas and at appropriate altitudes, to minimise the occurrence of reports and complaints from individuals who may have security concerns.

with best wishes

On behalf of the Seaplane Pilots Association

Rob Loneragan
Vice President.