



Royal Aeronautical Society
Adelaide Branch

LECTURE

Tuesday 31st August 2010

Women in the Cockpit

by

Air Commodore (Dr.) Tracy Smart

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Women began flying in the very early days of aviation. From these early days it was recognised that the differences between men and women would not necessarily exclude the latter from flying, but would cause some specific integration issues, be they physical, physiological or cultural. By World War 2, large numbers of women flew in military aircraft of many countries during World War 2, often in combat roles. As a consequence considerable research into these integration issues was undertaken only to be abandoned at the end of the war when women returned to their home duties. Sixty five years on, women pilots can be found in most militaries throughout the world, and yet some issues, both real and perceived, remain unresolved. Despite their stoicism and the success of women in the field, many misperceptions still exist about women's abilities to fly for a living, and some mundane problems such as the difficulties of urinating in flight have been difficult to solve. An overview of some of these issues, including specific women's health problems, flying during pregnancy, and gender-specific physiological and anatomical concerns, will be addressed. It is hoped that this will delineate the myths from the real concerns facing women in aviation, and provide practical solutions to some of these problems. Yes we've come a long way but there's still some distance to travel before true gender equality exists in military aviation.

Tracy joined the RAAF as a medical undergraduate in 1985. She has served as MO/Senior MO at bases around Australia, has undertaken overseas postings with the RAF and USAF, was Chief Instructor and Commanding Officer of AVMED, and Officer Commanding Health Services Wing. She has had operational experience in Rwanda, Timor Leste, the Middle East and Lebanon, and was awarded a CAF Commendation for her role in a fatal air accident investigation in Malaysia. She attended the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies as a student in 2008 and was promoted and posted into the dual roles of Director General Corporate Health Management and Air Force Health Services within Joint Health Command in February 2009. AIRCDRE Smart assumed a new role as DG Garrison Health Operations in Feb 2010, and in this position manages health care at over 100 locations on Defence bases throughout Australia. She has authored, or co-authored, 14 published articles, and over 50 papers for presentation at scientific meetings, primarily in the areas of aviation medicine, aeromedical evacuation, and military medicine.



Location:

Engineers Australia, Level 11, 108 King William Street, Adelaide
5:30pm for 6:15pm

For more information please call Andrew Clark (0421 051 328)