

Aviators Park, Darwin, NT

Location: 10 Fannie Bay Place, Fannie Bay, Darwin, NT



(Photo: A.Boucaut 2019)



(Photos: Andrew John Arthur on fb 2019)

This structure is modelled on the Vickers Vimy biplane



(Photos: A.Boucaut 2019)

Plaques at Aviators Park, Darwin, NT

Inscription:

On 12 November 1919 Australians Captain Ross Smith, and his brother Lieutenant Keith Smith and Sergeants James Bennett and Wally Shiers departed England in their Vickers Vimy aircraft. They were one of a number of aircraft in the race to be first to fly from England to Australia. The Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes, put forward a prize of £10,000 to the plane that could arrive in under 30 days. Ross Smith and his crew made aviation history by arriving in Darwin in 27 days, on 10 December 1919.



Inscription:

Day 1-5

Bologne, France to Taranto, Italy

The perils of our flight soon began. Shortly after reaching the French coast at Bologne we ran into a big bank of clouds. We could not go underneath it as it practically reached the ground. We therefore climbed above it to a height of 8000ft. The cold was bitter 25deg. of frost... Our breath froze on our face masks and our sandwiches were frozen solid.

Ross Smith



Inscription:

Day 9

Ramadie, Persia

...we made our landing on the old Turkish battlefield. Here we were taken care of by the Tenth (Indian) Lancers, and invaluable to us was their help. For that night a simoon swept down and nearly put an end to our efforts. We lashed the machine to the ground, and assisted by a great crowd of Indian Lancers, we hung onto it during that wild night of storm. By morning the wind had died down and after six hours spent in adjustments and clearing away the sand, we made another start.

Ross Smith



Inscription:

Day 25

Soerabaya, Dutch East Indies

...we found that the aerodrome had been placed on reclaimed land, so on landing we became deeply bogged. We extricated the machine with the greatest of difficulty, and at one time I feared it would be impossible to ever start ... I had a roadway of bamboo mats laid down, 350 yards long and 40 yards wide.

We made a perilous take-off, with bamboo flying in all directions from our propeller.

Ross Smith



Inscription:

Day 27

Darwin, Australia

It was not until 3 o'clock that I observed the first outline of Land...Darwin came into view. In a few minutes we were circling above the town. Then down down, in a steep descending spiral and we had touched Australian soil!

Ross Smith

At 3.40pm on 10 December 1919, Ross Smith landed his Vickers Vimy bomber at Fannie Bay, completing the first flight from England to Australia. Ross Smith and his brother Keith received Knighthoods for their remarkable achievements, and the crew shared the £10,000 prize money.



(Photos: A.Boucaut 2019)