

This is my Life  
Ronald (Ron) Bruce Haack  
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Matriculated at Gympie State High School in 1968, just shy of my 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. Vocational interests were engineering or piloting aircraft – aspiration to fly in space in the astronaut program.

Applied for a QANTAS cadetship but unsuccessful, could not afford University so applied for direct entrant aircrew in the Air force. Initially, too young so spent 18 months helping on the dairy farm at Miva, SE Queensland. Joined the RAAF in April 70 on No77 Pilots course and graduated in July 71.

My simplistic idea for progression to Astronaut was through fast jet and test pilot qualifications. Initially posted to fly DC-3 Dakota aircraft (Gooney Bird) at the Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU), Laverton, Victoria. Disappointed, but gave me a chance to mature and had some great experiences; flew all over Australia and one epic mission to central Java, Indonesia in December 72. Meet my wife at Laverton and we are still together today.

I continually applied for a posting to Fighters and eventually, the Boss (tired of my persistence) had me posted to Williamstown (Newcastle), NSW for Mirage III fighter training. Operated the Mirage with 75 Squadron in Malaysia/Singapore and 77 Squadron at Williamstown, all the while applying for test pilot training.

Again, persistence paid off and I was posted to the Empire Test Pilot School (ETPS) at Boscombe Down, Wiltshire, England in December 77. The 12 month course was fantastic; a multi-national group of students and the flying and theory elements both were demanding and intense. Graduated as an experimental test pilot in December 78. Was privileged to have Prince Charles as the Guest of Honour at our graduation dinner, a formal but relaxed affair.

Spent the next four years (1979-82) conducting developmental flight tests on Mirage, F-111, Macchi, Nomad and CT-4 aircraft at ARDU, by now based at Edinburgh, SA. Spent the following 18 months working on F/A-18 Hornet acquisition in the project office, Canberra. Then posted to the USA for Hornet training and to test and certify the unique capabilities the RAAF had incorporated in our aircraft.

Back to Australia in 85 and flew the first flight on most RAAF Hornets as they rolled off the assembly line at Avalon, Vic. During that period, I had the opportunity to fly a brief, low level handling demonstration for the kids at the King Island primary school. The demo was a short excursion from the normal delivery flight profile to Williamstown for a brand new Hornet and as such was not advertised widely. An elderly gentleman on the Island thought he was being attacked and reported a very noisy, grey/green, hostile aircraft to Air Force Headquarters; I had some explaining to do.

After a further tour at ARDU conducting and supervising fast jet and rotary wing test flying I was posted to Williamstown as the Operations Manager for the fighter force.

At that time the fighter fleet included: Hornet, Mirage, Macchi, Winjeel, PC-9 and Nomad aircraft, so quite a complex job.

Retired from the RAAF in October 1995 and joined Qantas to fly B747-400 and A330 aircraft. There was something special about flying a big aircraft all over the World and into some demanding environments that I thoroughly enjoyed. The Jumbo was a delight to fly, and I was hoping to retire with the Jumbo in 2020 but unfortunately was snookered by ICAO and age “discrimination”.

Didn't make astronaut but my flying career has been quite diverse, comprehensive and very satisfying.

