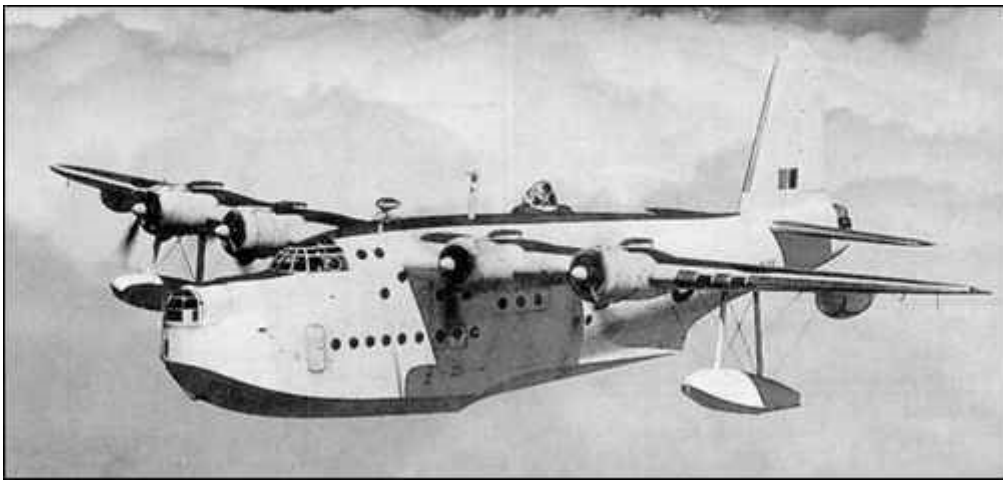


The Tasman Story



The Shorts Sandringham aircraft was derived from the Shorts Sunderland Military aircraft manufactured by the Short Brothers in the UK. Towards the end of WW2 a demand was created for a long range commercial passenger float plane. The Modifications for the Sandringham included the reconfiguration of the aircraft nose including the removal of the gun Turret. All other armament was removed, with gun positions being faired over, and simple seating fitted. By minor modifications to the engine and flight angles, a significant increase in the cruise speed, a relatively unimportant issue for the combat Sunderlands, was achieved.



The Original Military Shorts Sunderland

The Shorts Sandringham was used by various commercial operators including BOAC (British Overseas Airways Corporation). TEAL (Tasman Empire Airways Limited) on the Auckland-Sydney & Pacific Island flights. QANTAS for the Pacific Island flights.



The Shorts Sandringham

VH-EBW

Short Brothers Manufactured the Tasman in the Uk in 1946. It was purchased by Teal and was delivered to Auckland in July 1946. During its service with Teal it was used on the Auckland/Sydney flights and was a record holder with a fully loaded flight time of 8 hours. QANTAS purchased the Tasman in April 1950 with a new rego VH-EBW and used it to service such destinations as Suva, Lord Howe Island and Vanuatu.

VH-EBW STAT'S

Length	26.2 Meters	Wingspan	34.4mts.4 Meters
Height	7 Meters	Weight	18.8 Tonnes / empty & dry
Max speed	179 Knots	Ceiling	17,900 ft
Range	3360 km	Passengers	22-30
Engines	4 x P & W 1200 hp rotary piston	Crew	7



The Sandringham flight deck

VH-EBW Port Vila



(VH-EBW at rest on Iririki Island beach)

On June 16th 1951 whilst taxiing for take off VH-EBW manoeuvred to avoid a collision with a dug out canoe and hit an unmarked mooring buoy or coral head ripping a hole in the front compartment under the waterline. The aircraft came to rest in shallow water close to the shore next to Iririki Island. There were twenty passengers on board at the time and all were uninjured. VH-EBW was deemed unsalvageable and was stripped of all her engines & usable parts. VH-EBW was abandoned on Iririki Island for several years and then taken to the corner of the harbour in her current resting place.



The Tail Plane (Photo courtesy of Pete Wallace)

The Tasman Dive Site

Situated five minutes south of Naulitus Scuba Centre in the corner of Port Vila Harbour the Tasman rests upright in 41 mts. of water. The cockpit is @ 36 mts. And the top of the tail plane is @ 32 mts. The aircraft condition is relatively stable lying flat on the muddy/silty bottom facing the heading of 030 degrees. The Port side wing is still attached but has fallen down (due to a mooring mishap by a local fishing boat) and the wing tip rests in the sand/silt @ 40.5 mts. The Cockpit is highly visible with only a small amount of Perspex remaining; there is a large hole at the rear of the aircraft (a great entry/exit point for penetration dives) and there are numerous other entry/exit points.



(Photo courtesy of Richard Harris)

The Mooring is attached to a gearbox at the rear of the tail, only one meter away.

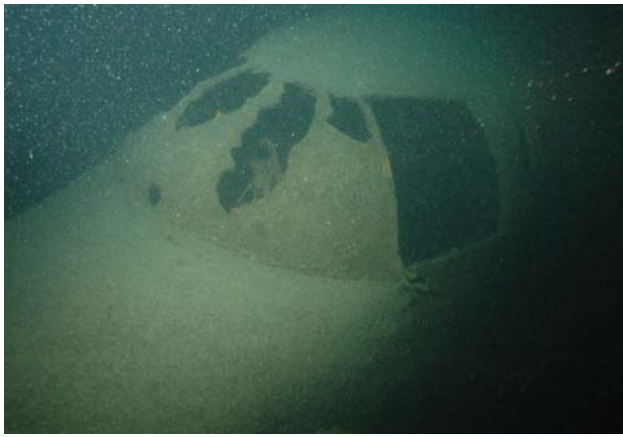


Points of Interest

- Tail plane/rudder
- Huge wings (34 mts. Wing span)
- Side windows upper & Lower decks (seats, stairs, cargo area)
- Engine Housing's x 4 (engines removed before sinking)
- Cockpit/gauges/control levers / pilot & co-pilot seats
- Engineers panel & communication / navigation equipment behind cockpit seats
- Front port side entry door (under cockpit)
- Forward mooring attachment bollard & anchor storage
- Fuel tanks removed from the starboard wing
- Fuselage top hatches
- Fish: Habitat in starboard wing & schooling long fin batfish on ascent/decent
Dugong (one time nomo)
- Various doors



(Photos courtesy of Peter Wallace)



(Photos courtesy of Peter Wallace)



(Left Photo, Lower deck Right photo upper deck from Ansett archives)



Photo by Tony Rogers

AIRLINERS.NET

Dive Configuration

Maximum Depth: 41 Meters

Bottom Time: 8-12 Minutes

Viability: Average 5-10 Meters (Sometimes Zero sometimes 20 mts)

Water Temp: Average 22-26 degrees

General conditions: No currents/swells. (A very protected dive site)

Mooring line attachment: front of Cowrie / rear of Tasman

Descent/Assent: Mooring Line

Safety stops:

1. 1 @ 9 meters for 2 minutes on mooring line
2. 1 @ 6 meters for 3 minutes on 6 meter bar
3. 1 @ 3 meters for 2 minutes on 3 meter bar

Hang tank: hanging on rope next to end of 6 meter safety bar

Please note: Air in the Hang Tank needs to be turned on before use.

Please stay with your guide

Please tell your guide if you reach 100 bar (T hand signal)

Please tell your guide if you reach 50 bar (fist to chest signal)

Hazards:

Crustations on mooring line / gloves

Very fine silt all over & inside aircraft

Very fine silt & thick mud on the bottom

Sharp edges on some surfaces

Time restrictions

Increased air consumption

Buddy separation (know the plan)

Shipping above: Use Mooring line & safety stop bars under Cowrie

Equipment Considerations: Full tank / wet suit / Torch & Back up / Gloves

Experience Considerations: Please see your Instructor (Good buoyancy skill's, Finning techniques & air management a must)

HAVE A GREAT DIVE

Please Note: Nautilus Scuba does not offer decompression dives

The Tasman (VH-EBW) & other Port Vila dive sites

