

Wings are the Wheels of Today!

THE DEVELOPMENT OF BULK CARGO AIRCRAFT IN BRITAIN PART TWO : THE POST-WAR FREIGHTER GENERATION

In the concluding half of his two-part series on Britain's painfully slow development of dedicated freight aircraft — as opposed to repurposed troop transports, bombers and airliners — **RALPH PEGRAM** examines the various projects established to exploit the potentially lucrative post-Second World War market for highly specialised freighters

THE FIRST HALF of this two-part series in *TAH42* concluded with the Ministry of Aircraft Production (MAP) approving the development of the Avro York, a general-purpose troop-carrier with bombing and freight capability. This was the first such aircraft to be built for the RAF since the Bristol Bombay, which was ordered to meet an Air Ministry (AM) Specification drawn up in 1931. While the York was a valuable aircraft to have in the RAF inventory, its use as a freighter was limited by the same side-access restrictions as its predecessors.

AIRSPPEED EXPLORES THE POSSIBILITIES

It seems that Airspeed Ltd may have been the first to look at opportunities for a specialised military heavy freight aircraft, commencing work on two schemes in June 1942. The merits of fore or aft access through large full-width doors had been appreciated, as had the benefit of a tricycle undercarriage, as this ensured that the cargo-hold floor was level when on the ground. A high-set wing allowed the aircraft to sit low to the ground to facilitate loading. Both schemes were for an aircraft to be powered by two Bristol Hercules XI air-cooled radial engines.

Airspeed's Transport Aircraft Scheme No 1 adopted the layout of its military Horsa glider



MAIN PICTURE "We're all going on a . . ." A pair of luggage-laden Ford Consuls with Bristol 170 Mk 32 Freighter G-ANWM (c/n 13261) of Silver City Airways at Lydd circa 1956–57, while a member of the groundcrew perches on the starboard wing for a quick fuel top-up. Next in line is the prototype of the Mk 32 "Superfreighter" G-AMWA (c/n 13073), which first flew in January 1953.



ABOVE This advertisement, placed in a May 1954 issue of *Flight* by Blackburn & General Aircraft Ltd, extols the virtues of its GAL.60 Universal Freighter, which "has been designed to meet the demand for an aircraft able to carry a variety of loads, being just as suitable for high-density passenger transport as for freight operations". The prototype had first flown in June 1950.

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