



www.aerotoxic.org

Captain John Hoyte

Chairman and Founder Aerotoxic Association Former BAe 146 Training Captain

John Hoyte was born in Edinburgh in 1955, lived briefly in Sri Lanka and was educated in East Anglia. He gained his Private Pilot's Licence in 1977 and became a civilian flying instructor. He flew as a professional agricultural pilot for 8 years, working in the UK, Kenya and Australia. He pioneered aerial bush fire fighting in South Australia from 1983 - 1987.



He flew the DC3 Dakota and Cessna twin-engined aircraft for two years as a maritime patrol pilot and attended the Piper Alpha and Ocean Odyssey oil rig disasters.

Believing that his former flying was 'dangerous', he became a night freight pilot on the four-engined jet BAe 146 airliner in 1989.

In 1990 he began to experience odd neurological health problems including slurred speech, word finding difficulties, chronic fatigue and memory problems, which convinced him that he had developed early dementia or Alzheimer's disease. He felt 'permanently intoxicated' and – 'like a zombie'. He told nobody, as he feared that he would lose his job. Few people seemed to notice the symptoms, which increased in severity over the years.

Believing that his ill health was being caused by night flying, he changed to day flying in 1998 – but still with ongoing serious ill health.

He operated as a pilot on passenger BAe 146 jet aircraft for 7 years which included working as Training Captain. He elected not to fly three times in 2004/5 due to fatigue and safety concerns; his last flight on BAe 146 was on 30th June 2005.

After being medically grounded by the Civil Aviation Authority in February 2006 due to "chronic stress" and "not going the extra mile", Capt Hoyte undertook neuropsychological testing as part of a research programme at University College London (UCL) as well as complex blood and fat testing in March / April 2006 along with 26 other BALPA pilots.

In August 2006 he was diagnosed as having 'potential Aerotoxic syndrome' – a medical condition he had been unaware of until that time.

In January 2007, Capt Hoyte founded the Aerotoxic Association to help other fellow sufferers deal with similar health experiences to his own.

After 20 years of ill health and a substantial recovery, Capt Hoyte is currently attempting to renew his aviation medical certificate from the CAA to be able to fly 'non pressurised aircraft' only - similar to the aircraft he flew before his jet aircraft flying career. The CAA say his ill health is 'a belief'.

Capt Hoyte lives in South Warwickshire, UK. He has two children and enjoys community life, walking and sailing. He works as an unpaid volunteer from his home.

Discussion:

The Aerotoxic Association:

Provides support for sufferers of Aerotoxic Syndrome and their carers. The main aim of the Association is to offer previously-unavailable, targeted support to individuals, which some other organisations have found 'inconvenient' to offer.

A well-established web site www.aerotoxic.org has been available since 2007. It is a unique, balanced collection of personal testimonies, historical data, Government reports, specialised medical contacts and recent media reports concerning the issue.

Numerous enquiries are received from aircrew and passengers who have developed serious ill health after flying but often spend many years having routine medical tests which are not specific enough to detect the invisible damage from breathing neurotoxic oil fumes.

Although the illness can be experienced on a single flight, it is more normal for aircrew to develop symptoms after repeated exposures. The victims and neurological specialists, most of whom are unfamiliar with the condition, often fail to understand the cause of the ill health which often leads to serious misdiagnoses and mistreatments. Recently, several high profile court cases have commenced in the US, which has brought about a renewed interest in the issue.

BALPA Conference 2005 - Before & after statements.

At the BALPA Contaminated Air Conference of April 2005, the introductory speech by the General Secretary Jim McAuslan referred to a: *"Growing acceptance that a problem existed with the quality of the cabin air in aircraft, but what was the problem, what effect did it have on flight crew and how can we avoid it in the first place?"*

At the end of the conference, after two days of evidence from 17 international guest professional speakers, the following statement was issued:

"We wish to bring to the urgent attention of Government, Aviation Regulators and the Airline and Aerospace Industry the following conclusions:

There is a workplace problem resulting in chronic and acute illness amongst flight crew (both Pilots and Cabin Crew).

The workplace where these illnesses are being induced is the aircraft cabin environment. This we conclude is resulting in significant flight safety issues in addition to unacceptable flight crew personnel health implications.

Further we are concerned that the passengers may also be suffering from similar symptoms to those exhibited by flight crew.

We urgently call upon Government, Industry and Regulators to work in partnership with cabin environment medical and analyst specialists and representatives from flight crew unions to analyse, quantify and remedy the cabin air quality problems that we have identified exist"

"Health and Flight Safety Implications from Exposure to Contaminated Air in Aircraft"

In the continued absence of the 'Cranfield University Report' on contaminated air, commissioned in 2007 by the House of Lords, Dr Susan Michaelis successfully published her thesis and gained a maximum grade for her PhD in March 2011.

"If designers were free to design jet aircraft again – they would not use bleed air. They should install toxic air detectors in all modern jet aircraft as a sensible, precautionary measure."

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