



Edinburgh arm of California tech group trebles in size

By Hannah Burley
 Source: *The Scotsman* - 14 November 2019

A US tech group which launched its European headquarters in Edinburgh this summer has moved to larger offices after tripling in size.



UserTesting chief executive Andy MacMillan (left) and Bruce Hunter. Picture: Stewart Attwood

UserTesting has seen staff numbers surge to more than 30 at its capital base since opening in July, prompting a move to flexible office provider WeWork on George Street to accommodate growth. The move comes as the group has secured a string of new clients in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), with online travel and leisure retailer Lastminute.com the latest to sign up.

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The Flying Scotsman Who Kept Our Skies Safe

By Kirsty Smyth
 Source: *Scottish Field* - 15 November 2019

A glorious life above the clouds was always written in the stars for the natural born pilot and wee winged wonder that was Captain Eric Brown.



The late Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown.

Captain Eric Melrose 'Winkle' Brown, CBE, DSC, AFC, Hon FRAeS, RN was the most-decorated pilot in the history of the Royal Navy. A British Royal Navy officer and test pilot, he flew more aircraft than anyone else in history.

In 2015, the war hero – who passed away on 21 February 2016 – told *Scottish Field*: "Two things have contributed to my survival. Firstly, I'm absolutely vitally involved in preparation for anything I do; I think lack of preparation is what causes a lot of fatalities in aviation. Secondly, I'm not very tall. I'm only 5ft

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Candlelight Dinner held on October 21st. celebrating the memory of past President Gene McCracken and his gift of light to the Firehouse.



Grace Cathedral Remembrance Service (L-R): Davie Scott, Gary Ketchen, Susan Goodier, David Campbell, Laurien Fiddes, Stewart Hume, Bill & Yolanda Jagers. Special thanks to Gary's daughter Lucy for the photograph!

California Tech

This adds to its existing client portfolio of online brands including Asos, Trainline and Expedia Group, as the tech firm aims to rapidly grow its European market share. UserTesting, believed to be the first Silicon Valley tech group to open a European HQ in Scotland's capital, has created Human Insights, a platform designed to help clients provide a better user experience for customers. Its flagship product facilitates direct user feedback on products and services, which it claims allows users to "make accurate customer-first decisions".

Plan to create 100 Edinburgh jobs

The business has appointed Fergus Kennedy, former chief technology officer at cloud hosting provider Pulsant, to head up the engineering team, which now comprises 15 staff, and is looking to fill several vacancies. The group recently acquired US-based Truthlab, a provider of machine learning-based video analysis, which is also intended to further drive engineering capability. UserTesting plans further "significant" growth for the new year, outlining plans in July to create more than 100 Edinburgh jobs by 2022. The capital base marks the group's first international office and adds to sites in San Francisco and Atlanta.

Kennedy said: "The innovations in engineering and data science that we plan to deliver from our Edinburgh office will help companies worldwide to make smarter, faster business decisions with Human Insight to provide excellent customer experiences. As an Edinburgh native and veteran of the local technology scene, I am proud to see world-leading technology companies continue to recognise the capital of Scotland for the technology talent, environment, and resources that the local ecosystem has to offer."

Bruce Hunter, vice president of EMEA, who previously led global sales operations for translation software firm Lingo24, added: "The European team has made considerable progress since launch—both in terms of UK headcount growth and through adding impressive brand names to our customer base. "Over the next few years, UserTesting will continue to make major investments in the product and across the European business as a whole, to help more organisations leverage the power of on-demand human insights to make smarter, more informed business decisions." The California-headquartered group previously forecast that it will hit £100 million in global recurring revenue next year. According to research conducted by Tech Nation, Edinburgh is one of the fastest-growing tech communities in the UK, employing more than 44,000 people in the tech sector.

Captain 'Winkle'

7in. There have been crashes – three that I know of – where I should have lost my legs, but being small I tucked them under my seat.'

A cool-headed pragmatism typical of the man who survived 11 crashes, persuaded an airfield of 3,000 Germans to surrender to him at the end of the Second World War, and survived the bombing of HMS Audacity, must also have played a part.

Aged 96 when he spoke to Scottish Field, Captain Brown, nicknamed Winkle due to his small stature, was one of the greatest test pilots the world has ever seen.

He flew more aircraft types – 487 – than anyone else in history, and holds the world record for aircraft carrier landings: 2,407.



A young Eric Brown in the cockpit.

Gloriously understated, Brown was everything that is great about Britain. Charming, courageous, and with a stiff upper lip softened by a twinkle in the eye, his personal account of historic events was spellbinding.

Born in Leith in 1919, Eric Melrose-Brown was perhaps destined for the skies. His father had served with the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) during the Great War and went on to be an RAF pilot. In 1929 Brown senior drew the wrath of his wife when he took their 10-year-old son for his first flight in a Gloster Gauntlet, the younger Brown sitting on his father's knee. Seven years later he was airborne for a second time when his father took him to see the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.

Among those hosting the RFC delegation was First World War fighter pilot and famous stunt flyer Ernst Udet, who took the young Brown up for a spin.

'He really put that machine through the hoop,' Brown said. 'I wasn't scared until the last minute of the flight when we came into land and he turned it upside down. I thought "the silly old fool's had a heart attack!" But he was such a brilliant pilot, that

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Captain 'Winkle'

was his idea of signing off at the end of the flight. He was testing me and he roared with laughter afterwards.



Eric Brown has his target in his sights.

Far from being put off for life, the 17-year-old was hooked. He went on to study modern languages at the University of Edinburgh, where he joined the air squadron. Not surprisingly he got the hang of flying very quickly.

'It seemed to come fairly naturally,' he said. Already an aviation enthusiast, Brown took a key interest in German technology. In 1938 he went to study at the Salem International College as part of a student exchange, and was still there when war broke out.

Arrested by the SS – who took his possessions, escorted him to the Swiss border and sent him on his way – Brown admits the whole thing caught him by surprise. 'I was very taken aback by it all,' he said. 'I think I was politically naïve at that stage, I hadn't seen it coming.'

Peeved at his treatment, Brown hotfooted it home and immediately signed up with the RAF. Itching to get airborne, and frustrated by the lack of RAF planes and postings, he switched to the Fleet Air Arm, retraining as a naval pilot. He was serving on HMS Audacity escorting vital convoys between Britain and Gibraltar when it was torpedoed in December 1941.

Left in the water and roped together with 23 survivors, Brown was one of just two men to make it through the night. Did he give up hope of rescue?

'Oh no,' he recalled, 'I've always been a bit of an optimist.'

Back on British soil the young pilot was transferred to special duties, embracing his dream role as a test pilot at Farnborough. Selected to specialise in enemy aircraft, his detailed analysis enabled him to advise the front line squadrons on how the opposition flew.'



Eric Brown in one of the many aircraft he flew.

'I was very interested to see how their technology compared with ours,' he explained. 'It was vital that we kept ahead, or at least up with, the best of the enemy.'

He tested all captured aircraft, including a number of potential death traps. Perhaps the most dangerous was the Messerschmitt Me 163 Komet – a rocket plane that ran on liquid explosive. 'The volatility of the fuels used meant you were sitting on an explosive machine that could go off at almost any minute,' Brown said matter-of-factly.

On 25 March 1944 the young Scot made history when he became the first pilot to land a twin-engined aircraft on a carrier, expertly bringing a Sea Mosquito to land on HMS Indefatigable. 'That was probably the proudest moment of my career,' he said. 'We were in very friendly competition with the Americans, you see. We beat them to it by nine months, so that was a feather in the British cap!'

From great highs there were terrible lows. Landing at a captured airstrip in Germany the following April, Brown met Allied troops investigating rumours of a concentration camp at Belsen. Realising the young pilot had better German than his inter-

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Captain 'Winkle'

preter, the brigadier in charge asked him along to assist with translation.

'Belsen was a horror that can never leave you,' related Brown. 'There were so many dead bodies and a dreadful stench to the place which lingers in my nostrils to this day. To think that these people who I had quite admired had resorted to this sort of thing, I was absolutely appalled.'

He was asked to interrogate a number of notable Germans, including leading Nazi and First World War fighter ace Hermann Goering, Belsen commander Josef Kramer and his female colleague Irma Grese – the 'worst human' Brown said he ever met – and Wernher von Braun, an aerospace engineer who Brown had admired prior to the war.



Eric Brown in RAF uniform.



Eric Brown at Lossiemouth in 1967.

'I had always followed what the scientist Wernher von Braun was doing very closely,' Brown said. 'I had the good luck to interrogate him after the war and he was one of the most extraordinary people I've ever met. He had given himself up to a young American officer, and told him, "aren't you the lucky one to get me because I'm going to take your country to the moon". What confidence! And of course he did it.'

With the war coming to a close, Brown was made commanding officer of Enemy Flight and tasked with securing German aircraft so that they would not fall into Soviet hands. Seeking out airfields where advanced jets were likely to be found, he was advised to visit Grove in Denmark.

'The 2nd Army was moving through Schleswig-Holstein. We kept in contact with them and I said, "look, we've got word that there are some German jets, new ones, in this airfield called Grove in Denmark. Will you capture the airfield before us?" And they said "oh yes, we'll be there". So we took them on their word and off we went.' But the Brits' progress was slowed when they ran into the SS guarding Hitler's successor Admiral Dönitz near Flensburg.

'I arrived fat, dumb and happy at Grove thinking the army would be there and there was nobody there but the Germans!' Brown said. 'Fortunately it was a couple of days or so before the capitulation, most of their senior officers had fled. But there were still 3,000 Germans on the airfield and just six of us, so we

were outnumbered considerably.'

Rarely fazed, the unflappable Brown 'bluffed his way through' with the senior Luftwaffe officer accepting the inevitable and surrendering to him.

The sword of surrender hung on the wall of Brown's home. 'My wife Jean doesn't exactly love it because she has to dust it every day,' he laughed.

After the war Brown worked extensively on the Miles M5.52 research project to fly the world's first supersonic jet capable of 1,000mph. In February 1946 it was confirmed that he would be the test pilot, but six months before he was destined to break the sound barrier, the project was inexplicably cancelled.

'That was the biggest disappointment of my career,' he admitted. 'It still niggles me today because now I know more of what went on in the background. There was a lot of skulduggery. You've got to realise that this country was financially broke at the end of the war, and here we were trying an experiment well ahead of anybody else. The Americans wanted to be the first to go supersonic and I think it was as simple as this; they were prepared to pay for the knowledge that we had – and when I say pay, I mean huge sums of money.'

Brown's distinguished Royal Navy career continued with stints in America and Germany as well as the UK. In 1967 he returned to Scotland to command the naval air station at Lossiemouth, retiring from the Navy three years later.

'That was a fantastic time,' he said fondly. 'Morayshire is such a beautiful county and my heart lifts anyway every time I cross the border. I'm a proud Scot and there's nowhere like Bonnie Scotland, not really.'

Unable to keep his feet on the ground, Brown went into flying helicopters, before finally stopping flying at the age of 70.

A war hero in the truest sense of the word, Brown helped shape history. Despite retiring, he still contributed to the world of aviation, as he wrote numerous books and lectured extensively.

In his latter years, there was, however, time for catching up on everything he was too busy to do during his flying days.

'I'm an avid reader and lap up anything to do with flying,' he said. 'I have been trying to catch up with some of the First World War stuff to see how my father's life was in those days.'

There was also time to indulge his love of cars. 'I've never been in the Bentley category, although I would have loved to have been,' Brown said wistfully.

Captain Eric Melrose 'Winkle' Brown – 1919-2016.

**The Saint Andrew's Society
of San Francisco**
Cordially invites you to
join us in celebrating its
156th Annual Banquet and Ball



Saturday, December 7, 2019

Where:

Marines Memorial Club
609 Sutter Street at Mason
San Francisco CA 94102

Evening Events:

Hosted Cocktail Reception: 6:00 P.M.

Dinner, Evening Program & Ceilidh:
7:00–11:00 P.M.

Peninsula Scottish Fiddlers, The Prince Charles Pipe Band and Highland Dancers

Formal or Highland Dress Recommended

Tickets:

Members: \$100 per person
Non-Members: \$125 per person
Tables of 10: \$1000

Buy tickets online at: **(EventBrite)**

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Saint Andrew's Society of San Francisco

presents

Hogmanay 2020



Join us as we "bring in the bells" to celebrate Hogmanay in Scotland's time zone! At this incredible annual event, we open our doors to our members, family and friends to bring in the new year. Door open at 2:00 PM.

Not just any old shindig, Hogmanay is one of the most legendary changing of year celebrations in the world. Like most Scottish holidays, Hogmanay goes hand in hand with countless customs and important imprinted traditions.

First-footing is perhaps the most widely practiced social ritual and deeply embedded tradition of Hogmanay. The moment the clock strikes midnight, lads and lassies across Scotland start bee lining for the homes of loved ones, friends and families, bearing gifts and endless banter, providing good vibes for times ahead and to be the first across the threshold, as the first-footer sets the precedent for the brand new year.

We also invite and encourage you to bring potluck "gifts" following Scottish tradition! These gifts, each with their own specific meaning, are a token of good luck and vary from whisky, a black bun (fruit cake), shortbread, and nowadays, anything left over in your pantry! Coal for warmth and salt for health were the traditional gifts of choice, just as communities in Dundee once brought a decorated herring!

We hope to see you there with us!

Note that while tickets are free, guests must have a ticket for entry due to fire regulations/space capacity.

**Please sign up here to reserve your spot: [Click here to join the guestlist for Hogmanay at the Saint Andrew's Society at 1088 Green Street in San Francisco](#)
Saint Andrew's Society, Tuesday 31 December 2019**

THE ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO
BURNS SUPPER
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2020



Join the Saint Andrew's Society of San Francisco for an incredible night, to rejoice and celebrate the life and works of Scotland's national Bard – Robert Burns!

February 1st, 2020 - 7:00PM to 11:00PM
at the
Marines Memorial Club in San Francisco.

Our evening will include piping in the Haggis, the Selkirk Grace, the Address and Toast to the Haggis, and lots more entertainment, such as the Immortal Memory, and the acclaimed Toast to the Lassies, with response!

Don't miss out on this spectacular evening!
Sign up today to be included on our wait-list and we will contact you when more details become available!

Sign up today!

<https://www.tickettailor.com/events/saintandrewssocietyofsanfrancisco/310695>

Meeting & Events Schedule

Date	Event / Topic	Location / Notes
2019		
Mon. Nov. 18	Member Meeting (Roger Weed/Scottish Regiments).....	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. Dec. 7	156th Annual St. Andrew's Banquet & Ball	Marines Memorial Club, SF
Mon. Dec. 16	No Meeting due to December 31st. Hogmanay Celebration	
Tues. Dec. 31	Hogmanay Celebration	1088 Green St., SF
2020		
Mon. Jan. 20	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD)	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. Feb. 1	Annual Robert Burns Supper	Marines Memorial Club, SF
Mon. Feb. 17	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. Mar. 16	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. April 4	Tartan Day Scottish Faire at Ardenwood	Fremont, CA
Mon. April 20	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Sat. April 25	John Muir Day / Earth Day celebration.....	NPS - Martinez, CA
Mon. May 18	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. June 15	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. July 20	No Meeting (Summer Recess)	
Sat. July 18	Summer Ceilidh at Encinal Yacht Club	Alameda, CA
Mon. Aug. 17	No Meeting (Summer Recess)	
Sept. 5-6	Caledonian Club's 155th Highland Games & Gathering	Pleasanton, CA
Mon. Sept. 19	Member Meeting (speaker/topic TBD).....	1088 Green St., SF
Mon. Oct. 19	Member Meeting (Candlelight Dinner).....	1088 Green St., SF
Sun. Nov. 8	Remembrance Day Service.....	Grace Cathedral, SF

About Us

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Gary Ketchen,
Newsletter Editor

Membership Meetings

Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of the month, at 7:30 P.M. Light supper served before the meeting. (Free valet parking is provided for members' meetings. MUNI: one block east of Hyde St. cable car).

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Allen Cary, First VP
Irene Waldman Costello,
Second VP
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Jek Cunningham, Bard
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