

News

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Buchón 'Yellow 7' airborne

Hispano HA-1112-M1L Buchón C4K-99/G-AWHM 'Yellow 7' made its first flight for nearly 50 years at Sywell, Northamptonshire, on 3 May with Richard Grace at the controls. The ex-Spanish Air Force and *Battle of Britain* film fighter has been restored over the past year or so by Air Leasing at Sywell, and is now based alongside the two-seat HA-1112-M4L Buchón, C.4K-112/G-AWHC 'Red 11', which took to the air following restoration by Air Leasing at the same location on 24 November last year.

The two aircraft are part of the famous haul of former *Battle of Britain* film Buchóns that were given to film pilot Wilson 'Connie' Edwards as part-payment for his work on the movie, and were stored on his ranch in Big Spring, Texas from early 1969 until they were finally put up for sale during 2014.

Richard Grace, the manager/chief engineer at Air Leasing said of the first flight, "It flew beautifully. There were no problems at all, which doesn't normally happen. The aircraft was in good condition, so it didn't require a rebuild, just a restoration. Restoring something so original is one of the delights. The Buchón is easy to work on: when an



Looking like a still from Spanish location shooting during production of the *Battle of Britain* film, Buchón 'Yellow 7' gets airborne from Sywell with Richard Grace at the controls on 3 May. ASHLEY STEPHENSON

PR Spitfire flies at Duxford



John Romain brings Spitfire XI PL983 in to land at Duxford after the first flight on 18 May. Note the outsize serial number, painted on with reference to a picture taken at Eastleigh in January 1948. COL POPE

Supermarine Spitfire PRXI PL983 flew again from Duxford during the evening of 18 May with John Romain at the controls following a long-term rebuild with Historic Flying Ltd. After landing, Romain reported that PL983 is very fast, has light handling and a high stalling speed.

The machine is fitted with a Rolls-Royce Merlin 70, the correct mark of engine for the XI — the powerplant having been rebuilt by Retro Track and Air in Gloucestershire — and has a newly constructed, unarmoured PRXI-style windscreen, the frame of which was built using an original PRXI windscreen for reference. The leading-edge fuel and wing tanks fitted to the PRXI have not been installed, the machine just having the standard 85-gallon tank in the fuselage as on the

MkIX. The deep chin cowling particular to the PRXI has not been refitted.

Reference for the markings came from a photograph of PL983 taken at Eastleigh shortly before it was presented on loan to the US civil air attaché to the UK, Livingstone Satterthwaite, in January 1948. The machine was originally delivered to No 1 Pilots' Pool at the RAF photo-reconnaissance HQ at Benson in November 1944, and was transferred to No 34 Wing, Second Tactical Air Force in January 1945. While operating with No 4 Squadron in April 1945 from Mill in the Netherlands, PL983 sustained battle damage, and following

repairs went on to serve in occupied Germany in September 1945.

After use with the US Embassy Flight, PL983 was donated to the Shuttleworth Collection and ferried to Old Warden in 1950. Having spent

many years sitting outside, a rebuild to fly was started in 1975, but financial difficulties saw the aircraft sold during April 1983 to French former

fighter pilot Roland Fraissinet. It was acquired by Doug Arnold and moved to Biggin Hill in 1987, before being bought during early 2000 by Justin Fleming and operated thereafter by Rolls-Royce and Bentley motor engineer Martin Sergeant. Tragically, Martin

was killed in PL983 during an airshow at Rouen on 4 June 2001. The remains were subsequently acquired by Propshop Ltd at Duxford and it was re-registered G-PRXI during February 2003.

The project was progressed at Duxford on an 'as and when' basis, when manpower was available. A new fuselage was built by Airframe Assemblies on the Isle of Wight, incorporating as many parts as was practicable from the remains of the original. The wings and tail were built by Historic Flying.

It is hoped that PL983 will return to Old Warden for a Shuttleworth show at some time in the future, but in the meantime it was due to have made its display debut in the static park at the RAF Cosford Air Show on 10 June, exhibited with a selection of wartime PR cameras.

“After landing from the first flight, John Romain reported that PL983 is very fast, has light handling and a high stalling speed”

aircraft is well designed, it is relatively easy to restore. When they painted it for the film, they didn't prepare the surfaces underneath, which made paint-stripping easy. But the original scheme, which had survived since 1968, gave us a

good reference point to replicate the film colours.”

The next Buchón to emerge from Air Leasing will be C.4K-145, which will fly in the markings of a Luftwaffe III./JG 52 Messerschmitt Bf 109F-4, 'White 9', flown by 80-kill ace

Uffz Edmund Rossmann during September 1941. It is expected to make its maiden flight during June, and it is hoped it will appear alongside 'Yellow 7' and 'Red 11' at the Flying Legends show at Duxford on 14-15 July.

OPEN DAY CELEBRATES HISTORIC HELICOPTERS

On 19 May, visitors to the second Historic Helicopters Open Day at Higher Purtington Showground in Somerset saw a unique formation as the world's sole surviving airworthy Westland Whirlwind HAR10, XJ729/G-BVGE, and former South African Air Force Westland Wasp HAS1 92/G-BYCX flew together.

Located outside Crewkerne, Higher Purtington is home to the Navy Wessex Restoration Project, manned by a team of dedicated engineers under the leadership of Whirlwind owner/pilot Andrew Whitehouse. They are working towards the ambitious goal of restoring another Westland product, Wessex HU5 XT761/G-WSEX, to flying condition. Both XT761 and a second example, XT771, were purchased by Whitehouse in 2017 following disposal by the MoD.



The wonderful sight of Whirlwind HAR10 XJ729 and Wasp HAS1 '92' airborne over Somerset on 19 May. LEE HOWARD

La Ferté Corsair back in the air

Korean War veteran Chance Vought F4U-5NL Corsair BuNo 124724/F-AZEG, owned by the Salis family's Casques de Cuir (Leather Helmets) collection, made its maiden post-restoration flight at La Ferté-Alais south-west of Paris on 9 May. Baptiste Salis was at the controls. The aircraft had last flown in 2003 and had been under active restoration since 2008.

This night-fighter was taken on charge by the US Navy on 26 September 1951 and assigned to composite squadron VC-3 'Blue Nemesis', home-based at Moffett Field, California, the following April. With that unit, BuNo 124724 was sent to the Korean theatre in December 1952 aboard the USS *Valley Forge* for an initial six-month operational tour, the unit primarily conducting nocturnal interdiction and radar intercept sorties. It returned to wartime duty from August-November 1953, this time on the USS *Boxer*.

Little is known about the remainder of its US Navy service, but at some point the airframe was placed in storage at Naval Air Facility Litchfield Park, Arizona. It re-emerged in March 1956 when 10 surplus



Baptiste Salis getting airborne from La Ferté-Alais in newly restored F4U-5NL Corsair F-AZEG. BEN DUNNELL

Corsairs — a mixture of F4U-5, F4U-5N and F4U-5NL models, the latter distinguished from the standard -5N by virtue of added winterisation equipment — were supplied by the US government to the Honduran Air Force. From 14-18 July 1969 the Corsair fleet participated in the last air combat action seen by the type when Honduras was attacked by El Salvador, resulting in the so-called 'Soccer War' — so named because of clashes resulting from a World Cup qualifying match between the two countries. BuNo 124724 was involved in the brief campaign, conducting air-to-

ground sorties against Salvadoran forces.

The Honduran F4Us were retired in favour of North American F-86 Sabres during 1970. Eight of the nine airworthy survivors, which had been stored at Tegucigalpa, were acquired in 1979 by Hollywood Wings, a company formed by Jim Nettle to sell them on to collectors. Most went straight to their new owners, but Hollywood Wings kept BuNo 124724 until 1983. Registered N4901E, it was passed to Terry Randall and John Rourke of Tulsa, Oklahoma, then to Phillip Bass of Fairhope, Alabama and

Ralph Parker of Wichita Falls, Texas. The latter painted the Corsair back into its VC-3 colours, which it still wore when bought by Jean Salis. In April 1986 the fighter was shipped to Amsterdam and flown from there to its new home at La Ferté-Alais. It continued to be a regular airshow performer there and elsewhere in Europe until the early 2000s.

The markings of VC-3 have been reapplied in the course of the F4U's recent restoration, albeit with the codes and titles in blue rather than white. Baptiste Salis piloted the Corsair on its return to display flying at the La Ferté-Alais show on 19-20 May (see report on pages 104-105), and it is hoped to be present at several other major shows this summer. It is now the sole airworthy Corsair in France.

The run-up to the La Ferté event was a notably busy period for the Casques de Cuir, as the association's Fokker Drl replica F-AYDR — the ex-Robs Lamplough aeroplane, formerly registered G-ATJM — was also reflown after a programme of restoration work. Bruno Marlière was at the controls when the 'Dreidecker' took to the air on 15 May.

Ben Dunnell

KLEMM TO GERMANY

Following nine hours of test-flying, Friedrich Diehl and Thomas Holz ferried Klemm KI 35 SE-BGA from Hätunaholm airfield, just north-west of Stockholm, to Siegerland airport in central Germany at the end of April. The historic German trainer is now part of the Sterntakt collection at Siegerland, which currently operates a Focke-Wulf Fw 44 Stieglitz, two Spanish-built CASA 1.131 Jungmanns, and a 1939 Swiss-built Bücker Bü 131.

SE-BGA was built in 1941 at the Klemm factory in Böblingen, south-west Germany as Werknummer 1983, and delivered to the Swedish Air Force as Fv5054. It was retired from service in 1948. Its most recent owner, Håkan Wijkander, restored the machine about 10 years ago.

In addition to SE-BGA, Friedrich Diehl is restoring another former Swedish KI 35, Fv5012, which will also be painted silver overall. Diehl is preparing the fuselage in his own private workshop, while the wings have already been completed and are now stored in the Sterntakt hangar at Siegerland.

The exquisite Klemm KI 35 SE-BGA at Siegerland, where it is now based with the Sterntakt collection. STEFAN SCHMOLL



The newly repainted Avro XIX G-AHKX, showing the Coningsby Station Flight markings in public for the first time at Old Warden on 6 May. ADRIAN M. BALCH

INSET: The real TX176, on display at Odiham in September 1964. ADRIAN M. BALCH

BAE Anson repainted for RAF 100th

On 4 May the Old Warden-based, BAE Systems Heritage Flight-owned Avro XIX Anson G-AHKX flew in to RAF Coningsby wearing its new colours, the familiar two-tone blue civil scheme having been replaced with that of the Coningsby Station Flight Anson C19, TX176, which operated from the Lincolnshire base as a 'hack' on general communications duties during the early 1960s.

The repaint was carried out at Gloucestershire Airport by Ardent Paint Care, from where the Anson was flown direct to Coningsby by BAE test pilot Peter Kosogorin. The idea for the new scheme is at least partly to mark the RAF's 100th anniversary. BAE Systems is a strong backer of the RAF 100 programme and is heavily embedded at Coningsby with 600 civilians working to support the RAF's fleet of Typhoons. After landing, 'HKX' — which remains based at Old Warden, 'parented' by the

Shuttleworth Collection — was welcomed by the station commander, Gp Capt Mike Baulkwill.

The machine first flew in November 1946. It was operated by Smiths Aircraft Instruments at Staverton, Meridian Air Maps at Shoreham, Treffield Aviation

“The civil scheme has been replaced by that of the Coningsby Station Flight Anson C19, TX176, during the early 1960s”

— set up by Lord Trefgarne and Charles Masefield — flying freight, and Kemps Aerial Surveys at Southampton, who used the Avro for the final five years of its career before retiring it in 1973. G-AHKX was then acquired by the Strathallan Collection and moved to Auchterarder, Perthshire.

During July 1981 it was bought by British Aerospace at the famous Strathallan auction. A rebuilt to flying condition at Woodford was intended to be carried out by apprentices, but ended up being undertaken by volunteer retired staff, who still retained the necessary skills. It flew again on 8 March 2002.

The original TX176 was built at Yeoman and delivered to the British Air Forces of Occupation Communications Wing Station Flight at RAF Gatow in Berlin. It then served with the Home Command Communications Flight, Coastal Command Communications Flight, the Station Flights at Gibraltar, Kinloss and Coningsby and finally with Transport Command's Northern Communications Squadron. The Anson was sold off into civilian hands in February 1967, becoming G-AVGR, but only lasted a couple more years before being scrapped in March 1969.

NEWS IN BRIEF

TEICHMAN TO HANG UP DISPLAY HELMET

North Weald-based Hangar 11 Collection owner Peter Teichman has announced that he will retire from display flying at the end of the 2018 season, his last show being the Shuttleworth Race Day on 7 October, when he will fly his P-51D.

BOBSLEIGH FLIES

The one-off Reid and Sigrist RS4 Bobsleigh, VZ728/G-AGOS, flew at Spanhoe in early May following restoration by Windmill Aviation. The experimental prone pilot research machine — which first flew on 9 July 1945 as the RS3 Desford — is owned by Leicester County Council and was previously stored in an old miners' washroom at the now defunct Stribston Discovery Museum near Coalville.

ANOTHER VIGGEN FOR SWAFHF

The Swedish Air Force Historic Flight (SwAFHF) Saab SK 37 Viggen, Fv37809/SE-DXO, flew again at Sätenäs on 15 May after several years in storage and a restoration to airworthiness. Originally delivered to the Swedish Air Force in February 1974, 37809 last flew in September 2007 while being operated by the air arm's test unit, based at Linköping/Malmen. This two-seater joins the SwAFHF's single-seat Viggen, 37098/SE-DXN.

AVIODROME BUYS CONVAIR

Convair 340 ZS-BRV has been donated by Rovos Air in South Africa to the Aviodrome museum at Lelystad, the Netherlands. The twin-engined airliner — originally built for the US Air Force as a C-131B — will be flown to its new home this July, and thereafter kept airworthy. Twenty-four examples of the type were operated by Dutch national airline KLM. BEN DUNNELL

PREDATORS TO UK MUSEUMS

With the retirement of the type by the US Air Force, two General Atomics MQ-1B Predator unmanned aerial vehicles were delivered to major UK museums in mid-April. IWM Duxford has received serial 03-33120, while the second example has gone to the RAF Museum London at Hendon and will be displayed in its new Age of Uncertainty exhibition. The Predator has been replaced by the more capable MQ-9 Reaper. BEN DUNNELL



Rob Davies prepares to take F-6D Lil' Margaret up for its first, 15-minute test flight at Sywell on 22 May. The markings are those of Capt Clyde B. East of the 15th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, 10th Photo Reconnaissance Group. DAVID WHITWORTH

F-6D MUSTANG DAMAGED IN TAKE-OFF MISHAP

North American F-6D Mustang 44-84786/ N51BS Lil' Margaret was badly damaged when it failed to get airborne on the new Italian owner's first take-off in the reconnaissance machine at Woodchurch, Kent on 25 May.

Following importation from the USA, the machine was reassembled by Air Leasing at Sywell, from where it made its first flight in the UK on 22 May with former P-51D owner Rob Davies at the controls.

Second Avenger for Classic Flyers

At the Classic Flyers Aviation Museum at Tauranga Airport in the Bay of Plenty region of the North Island of New Zealand, 15 volunteers are stuck into their second Grumman Avenger restoration in less than four years. The derelict former Royal New Zealand Air Force TBF-1, NZ2539, arrived on 7 July 2017 from Riverhead, just north of Auckland, where it had been kept by owner Ken Jacobs since he acquired it in the mid-1970s from a children's playground in Havelock North.



The second Classic Flyers Avenger project, NZ2539, in the hangar at Tauranga Airport. DAVID ASHWORTH

Ken donated it to the museum after seeing its previous TBF-1 restoration, NZ2505, on which the Classic Flyers engineers began a two-year rebuild to ground-running condition in August 2014 on behalf of its owners, the Gisborne Aviation Preservation Society. That machine is on loan to Classic Flyers for five years and is providing an important reference point during the restoration of '2539. Gisborne airfield was where No 30 Squadron, RNZAF trained on Avengers during 1943 prior to heading to the Pacific theatre, so NZ2505 will be in an appropriate home when it finally goes on display.

Nord for Quax-Flieger

The Quax-Flieger club's latest hangar open day at its headquarters at Paderborn-Lippstadt on 6 May revealed a new acquisition: Nord NC856A F-PGCD, which had arrived during April. The rare 1950s French Army machine — only four examples of which are flying worldwide — is now owned by three of the club members and is expected to fly again later this year. The engine, a 160hp SNECMA-Régnier 4 LO 8, is being overhauled.



The lavishly glazed former French Army Nord NC856A F-PGCD in the Quax-Flieger workshop on 6 May. STEFAN SCHMOLL

Meanwhile, Quax-Flieger's Bücker Bü 180 Student, D-EUTO — the sole airworthy example of only two survivors of this late 1930s monoplane trainer — was one of the stars of the static park at the ILA Berlin Air Show at Berlin Brandenburg Airport at the end of April.

ADVERT PAGE

Last 'Dambuster' flies in Lancaster

The last surviving British crew member from No 617 Squadron's raid on the Ruhr dams, Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson, flew in the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight's Lancaster I PA474 from RAF Coningsby on 17 May to mark the 75th anniversary of the raid, Operation 'Chastise'. Johnson flew in the bomb-aimer position, the same as he occupied in 1943. The Lancaster flew over the dams of the Derwent Valley, exactly the same journey he took just over 75 years ago while training for the mission.

After landing, 'Johnny' said, "It has been a wonderful trip and it's surprising how 75 years just disappear. Over the Derwent Dam, the time was gone, just like that. I was back there thinking about the times that we went there... I have to say the first time I noticed the hilly area we were going to, I wondered what the hell we were doing down at 60ft, but there it was — that was the job."



Sqn Ldr George 'Johnny' Johnson MBE DFM in the middle of a group of BMBF air and groundcrew in front of Lancaster PA474 at RAF Coningsby on 17 May. MoD

Montrose museum adds an Anson

Avro Anson C19 TX226 arrived at the Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre (MASHC) in Angus, on a truck from storage at a site near Coventry, at the end of April. The 1945-built machine was previously owned by Glenn James, who operates Anson T21 WD413/G-VROE from Sleaf, Shropshire. MASHC chairman Ron Morris said, "It's a very exciting project and we are looking forward to starting restoration work, which we estimate will take around five to six years to complete."

Anson Is first appeared at RAF Montrose in August 1939 with No 269 Squadron, and were soon flying on anti-submarine patrols over the North Sea. On one of these an Anson, flown by Flt Lt



Anson C19 TX226 being unloaded at the Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre in late April. KEVAN DICKEN

'Tiny' Burrell, attacked a Dornier Do 18 flying boat. Return fire from the Dornier entered through the windscreen of the Anson and Burrell was killed. He was a

large man, but his navigator, Sgt W. E. Willits, managed to pull his body out of the pilot's seat, regain control and fly the damaged aircraft 140 miles back to Montrose. For his

heroic action, Willits was awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal, the first of the war, which was presented to him by King George VI.

Dr Dan Paton, curator of the Montrose Air Station Heritage Trust added, "Our approach at the heritage centre is different from that of most aviation museums. They collect and display aircraft, while we focus on the experience of the men and women who served here and seek to collect aircraft which have a historical connection with RFC/RAF Montrose. Ansons served at Montrose, so they fit our collections policy, but we will be looking for a personal story to attach to our Anson when it is restored."

B-17F MEMPHIS BELLE UNVEILED

On 17 May, exactly 75 years after its crew flew their 25th and final mission over Europe, Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress 41-24485 *Memphis Belle* was unveiled to the public at the National Museum of the US Air Force at Dayton, Ohio, following a 13-year restoration/conservation project. Surrounding the jacked-up bomber is a new strategic bombardment exhibition featuring a digitally animated map of the campaign, two Medals of Honor, items worn and used on significant missions, artefacts from bombing campaign leaders, a photographic display, and B-17 top and ball turrets.

It is the first time the aircraft has been on public display since 2002, when it was on show at Mud Island, a little peninsula on the Mississippi River in Memphis. The



The dramatically posed B-17F 41-24485 *Memphis Belle* at Dayton on 17 May, surrounded by the new strategic bombardment exhibition. NMUSAF

following year the rather bedraggled bomber was moved to a restoration facility at the former Naval Air Station Memphis in Millington, Tennessee, but in 2005 it was decided to relocate the aircraft

to Dayton for restoration. Among those on hand at the unveiling were hundreds of family members of the *Memphis Belle* crew and maintainers and invited dignitaries. "This is a once-in-a-

lifetime opportunity to witness a culmination of thousands of hours of work", said Lt Gen Jacqueline Van Ovost, USAF director of staff. "It is a tremendous piece of our national history."

Big grant for Qantas 'Connie'

During May at Longreach, Queensland, the Qantas Founders Museum's Lockheed L-1049 Super Constellation, N4247X, had its wings, engines and tail section fitted, and is now standing on its undercarriage for the first time in more than three years. The project had received a major boost on 16 April with the allocation of a \$300,000 grant from the federally funded Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Fund, administered by the Queensland Government.

The museum bought N4247X from the Manila International Airport Authority in September 2014. Over two-and-a-half-years it was extracted from its mud-encrusted position at the airport, dismantled and transported by ship from Manila to Townsville and by truck to the museum's base at Longreach, arriving in late May 2017.

The Qantas Foundation Memorial will contribute \$455,000 to the project. The external restoration is expected to be completed by July 2018, and the museum plans to restore the interior in time for the Qantas centenary in 2020.

Qantas took delivery of its first Super Constellation in April 1954 and went on to operate a fleet of 16 L-1049s. On 14 January 1958, two of them left Melbourne to inaugurate a round-the-world service, first visiting Sydney and then flying off in opposite directions. One travelled via India along the 'Kangaroo route', while the other flew eastward on the 'Southern Cross route' via the United States. The aircraft circumnavigated the globe in opposite directions, arriving back in Sydney six days later. Soon after, Qantas was operating eight round-the-world services per week.



L-1049 Super Constellation N4247X with the newly refitted wings, engines and tail at the Qantas Founders Museum in Longreach on 30 May. QFM

CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS



A former resident of the Milestones of Flight gallery at Hendon, Harrier GR3 XZ994, and a full-size facsimile Typhoon with RAF 100 tail markings outside Cardiff City Hall on 18 May.

RAF centenary tour begins

This summer's RAF centenary aircraft tour got under way at Cardiff, south Wales, on 18-20 May with a display of five aircraft in front of the City Hall. The airframes on show represent five major eras of RAF history, starting with Sopwith Snipe reproduction 'E6655', which is a partially original aircraft constructed by The Vintage Aviator in New Zealand. It was moved to Cardiff from the RAF Museum at Hendon.

Representing WW2 was the Imperial War Museums' Spitfire I replica 'X4474', wearing No 19 Squadron markings, while the Cold War was depicted by Harrier GR3 XZ994, which was previously on display in the Milestones of

Flight building at Hendon. Completing the aircraft display were Wessex HC2 XR497 from the RAF Museum collection at Cosford, and a Eurofighter Typhoon FGR4 replica wearing an RAF 100 logo.

The aircraft types selected for each of the successive city events will vary, but will cover the same eras seen in Cardiff. Future tour dates are 6-9 July at Horse Guards Parade, London; 10-12 August at Newcastle in County Down, Northern Ireland; 25-27 August in Birmingham; 31 August-2 September in Glasgow; and 14-16 September in Manchester. The London event will be followed by a 100-aircraft flypast down The Mall on 10 July.



The YAM Avro 504 replica on display in front of the Hôtel des Invalides on 25 May. The Dôme des Invalides contains the tomb of Napoleon. NEILL WATSON

YAM Avro on show in Paris

Over the long weekend of 24-28 May the Yorkshire Air Museum/Allied Air Forces Memorial's Avro 504 replica was displayed outside the Hôtel des Invalides in central Paris to commemorate the RAF's 100th anniversary, and to celebrate more than 100 years of co-operation between the air arms of Britain and France. Displayed alongside the Avro was a replica SPAD VII provided by the Conservatoire de l'Air et de l'Espace d'Aquitaine in Bordeaux. YAM director Ian

Reed commented, "This was an unprecedented occasion and the first time that a UK museum — indeed any museum — has undertaken a display of this kind in perhaps the most prestigious location in France, where many occasions of state take place. We are very privileged to be asked by the Royal Air Force to assist in bringing to fruition this unique celebration of over 100 years of co-operation between the two countries' air forces, especially in this year of RAF 100."

Richthofen remembered

The death of the 'Red Baron', Manfred von Richthofen, in a field close to brickworks near the Somme at roughly 10.30hrs on Sunday 21 April 1918 was commemorated 100 years later by a reception in the village of Vaux-sur-Somme. The crash site itself is slightly to the north of the road that runs between Bray and Corbie, just north of the Somme. Two map references are given in official reports, so the location can be narrowed down to an area of 100 by 50 yards.

The events of 21 April 1918 started when two RE8s, patrolling near Sailly-Laurette, were attacked by Albatros and Fokker Drl fighters. The Sopwith Camels of No 209 Squadron joined the fray and the fight moved westwards towards Sailly-le-Sec and Vaux-sur-Somme where von Richthofen is said to have overflowed the church before turning north. The town of Vaux decided to mark the occasion together with the local tourism organisation.



The Digger Cote 160 group exhibited its static Fokker Drl replica at Vaux-sur-Somme for the Richthofen centenary event. MELVYN HISCOCK

In the small park next to the church, Digger Cote 160, a group based in Pozières that commemorates the Australian troops stationed in the area, had set up its static Drl replica. A procession, led by a French pipe band, contained local dignitaries and members of JG 71, the current 'Richthofen' squadron in the German Luftwaffe. Speeches were made by Philippe Gosselin, the mayor of Vaux, M. Barbuat, the president of the Val de Somme tourist organisation, and Lt Col Rex of the Luftwaffe. **Melvyn Hiscock**



The floor beams of *Night Fright*, seen through the gap where the cargo door will go. CHARLIE WALKER

Night Fright on target

The rebuild of D-Day veteran Douglas C-47A Skytrain 42-100521 *Night Fright* is now progressing well with Ben Cox and his team at Coventry Airport for Charlie and Philip Walker, the owners of Membury airfield in Wiltshire. The historic transport flew from Membury at the start of Operation 'Neptune' — the initial assault stage of Operation 'Overlord' — during the early hours of 6 June 1944. The team is still aiming for completion in early 2019 and remains on schedule to fly in the Daks over Normandy event in June next year.

The aircraft was acquired by Philip and Charlie Walker of Walker Logistics during 2012. The Walker family had purchased the Membury estate during 1993, and in 1999 the family business, Walker Logistics, which specialises in warehousing, transport and distribution, moved onto the old airfield, using some of the T2 hangars dating from the war. Charlie Walker is a commercial pilot with a keen interest in aviation history, so he set about trying to track down an aircraft that had flown from Membury. With the help of several contacts, *Night Fright* was located on an airfield in Arkansas, and acquired during November 2012. The aircraft arrived at Coventry by road from Southampton in April 2017, following a sea crossing from the USA.

Charlie Walker says, "A huge amount of painstaking work has gone in to repairing corrosion in the centre section; new pieces have been spliced in to seven of the 12 spar cap extrusions. Primer has now been applied

to the whole centre section and we are almost ready to start building up the bays one at a time.

"The rear fuselage has been stripped and the necessary skin repairs carried out. A new rib at the front of the fin has been fitted as has a new web at the base of the rudder, which was missing. Cargo door frames, upper and lower channels are currently being replaced, and all of the floor beams are being inspected and, where necessary, new ones fitted. A new rear bulkhead has been installed and painted.

"Our first engine is about to go in to a cradle ready to be built up, and the second is en route by sea from the USA. The next jobs are to look at putting the original cargo floor back in. We can then look to mate the sections back together and the aircraft can stand on its wheels. From there we need to build up the undercarriage and brakes, build up both engines, research the layout of the original instrument panel, then make it and source all the instruments both old and new."

The Skytrain was operated from Membury by the 475th Troop Carrier Group. After returning from the first para drop, *Night Fright* was one of 50 C-47s that towed Airspeed Horsas during the evening of D-Day on the 'Elmira' mission to a landing zone near Sainte-Mère-Église. The aircraft returned to Membury with serious flak damage and was out of action for several days. Some of the skin repairs are still evident, particularly on the crew entry door.



The augmented Tiger Nine team's magnificent 16-aircraft '100' formation over Henlow on 12 May. MARK O'NEILL

Tiger Nine flies '100' formation

During the de Havilland Moth Club's private Moth Flying Forum held at RAF Henlow, Bedfordshire, on 12-13 May, the Tiger Nine display team rehearsed a '100' formation using 16 DH82A Tiger Moths in honour of the RAF centenary. With team leader Jeff Milsom in command, a number of 'guest' aircraft and pilots were added to the Tiger Nine's regular line-up to create the spectacle. A seventeenth aeroplane was also airborne to act as a formation 'whipper-in'. **Ben Dunnell**