

# *What's happening at* PIONEER AERO RESTORATIONS

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2nd March 2005

Well, "It's flying time again, I'm gonna leave you" – perhaps not the exact words from the song but very appropriate for us at the moment with 2 fliers that have flown the coop and another due to do so.

Our first flying departure is Andrew Wallace's Pilatus Porter. As mentioned in a previous newsletter, this was an ex Air America aircraft that served in S.E Asia and collected a few bullet holes in the process. I guess that makes it a Warbird – or at least that's how we rationalised having it in the shop enjoying the company of some older and more recognisable high-powered kin.

The finalisation of the project seemed to go and on as one small problem after another was encountered with the late arriving PT6 – but finally it was airborne as the following photo shows.



Here's looking at ya!

And when it was time to leave, it didn't exactly fly away. It was disassembled, packed in a 40 ft container and shipped off to Italy where it will operate as a "meat bomber" dropping silly people with parachutes into the ethos.

The second flyer wasn't exactly a restoration.

It's Robert Broeck's P51D "Dove of Peace", purchased by Rob in the USA and shipped to us for re-assembly. On arrival however, Rob decided he'd like to do a little retro work and so we removed the auto pilot and air conditioning (!! ) hence lowering the aircraft's weight by over 200lbs! Further servicing revealed radiator problems so a more comprehensive inspection was carried out with various hoses and other perishables being replaced. It was then test flown by Wanaka Warbird pilot Grant Bisset and subsequently with Rob in the back seat, departed on the trip south to Wanaka.



Looks nice!



Grant and Rob depart Ardmore for Wanaka

The “about to be a flier” is Ray Hanna’s Yak 3. This was originally a Yak11 and the basic conversion to Yak 3 with V1710 was done in Russia in the early 1990’s. It sat at Duxford, UK for some time and was then shipped to us for completion. It’s almost ready to fly, with only engine runs to be completed before the test flight programme begins.



Off to the paint shop sans prop and control surfaces & back with a fresh set of clothes

The next flier isn’t due to be airborne until the end of the year, and it is yet another P-40. In fact it’s a P-40N1, which when it flies will bring the worlds population of flying N1’s to the grand total of 2! This one is based on the remains of an RNZAF P40N1 acquired from Charles Darby.

This aircraft belongs to Alan Arthur of Deniliquin, NSW, Australia. Alan has had the project under rebuild for some time and had completed the wings and fuselage and a few other control surface components in Australia. The project has been shipped to us for completion and is progressing rapidly. Should not be a problem having this one at Wanaka next year. It will be painted as a shark mounthed RAF 112 Squadron “Desert Hawk”.



Alan Arthur’s fuse & tailplane

Ray Hanna’s P-40E has left the shop, dual controlled, and has already appeared at the ‘Wings over Wairarapa’ Airshow. It’s currently based at Wanaka Airport, handy to Ray’s New Zealand home on the shores of Lake Wanaka.

The tail feathers of Rob Mackley's Lockheed 10 are nearing completion. Rob already has the main wing assembly complete and once the empennage is finished - only the fuselage to go to be structurally complete.

Our 'In house' P-40N1 ("Come in Suckers") is also progressing well with most of the fuselage reskinning completed and the tailplane also nearing completion. Work is continuing on system items and the engine bearers are due for completion in the next month which will allow for the engine installation to begin once the fuselage comes off the jig.



"Come in Suckers" fuse & tailplane nearing completion.

And - yet another P-40 - N5 this time - is on its way to us, due to arrive in New Zealand late March. This is to be restored to totally original specs, including radios, armament & oxygen system, for Woodstock Aviation in California. More news and details on this one later.

Cheers

Garth