

What's happening at PIONEER AERO RESTORATIONS

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And another one flies! (And we're late again with the newsletter!)

On the Wednesday before Easter P-40N1 ZK- ZOC took to the skies over Ardmore and after a brief test flight program conducted by John Lamont, left midday Thursday in the hands of NZ Warbirds CFI, Frank Parker heading for Wanaka for the 2006 'Warbirds Over Wanaka' airshow. It arrived in Wanaka Thursday evening after an event free trip and Friday saw 3 P-40's in the air in NZ for the first time in 60 years. (ZK-ZOC, ZK-CAG, ZK-RMH) – All aircraft to have emerged from Pioneer Aero Restorations shop.



The team "showing off" - the 9th aircraft to fly from Pioneer Aero in 9 years

ZK-ZOC is a P-40N1 who's rebuild is based on the remains of NZ3125 which was acquired from Charles Darby by Allan Arthur from Albury, Australia. Initial restoration work – rebuilding the fuselage and mainplanes – was conducted in Australia over a number of years and in early 2005 it was shipped to us for completion.



NZ3125 on arrival



John Lamont lifts off on it's first flight in 60 yrs

The aircraft is painted in the colours of GA-Q – RAF 112 Squadron (North Africa) who's pilot was Flt Lt . Mathias (an Australian). 112 Squadron aircraft were normally painted in the desert tan/brown camouflage however one aircraft somehow turned up in medium green, more commonly seen in the Pacific Theatre, and this is the scheme represented on this aircraft.

Something different on this aircraft is the Ham Std prop (ex DC 3) – reprofiled to Curtiss Electric Paddle blade dimension – and the original profile P-40 spinner adapted to the Ham Std hub.

The next project scheduled for completion is Woodstock Aviation's (Santa Rosa, Ca, USA) P-40N5.

The fuselage of this aircraft is pretty much completed and most of the internal fit out finished. This includes the installation of a second seat but this time, with the N5 type rear glazing, we have made a separate opening canopy which makes egress easier and is more like the Curtiss produced TP40's.

One wing is completed and the second wing is 60% there. The fin and rudder are finished and the tailplane will be ready to install in the next couple of weeks.



Tailplane and RH Wing



LH Wing build-up

The engine has been overhauled (by Cascade in Seattle) and is final installed. Work has commenced on the front cowls.



Cowl assembly underway - engine in.



Lockheeds polished empennage parts

Rob MacKleys Lockheed Electra is making steady progress with the wings, centre section and now the empennage completed. This aircraft is going to be polished and hence even more than usual care and detail is going into each component.

Some other items of interest from the last few months (actually more than a few – since the last newsletter), we now have some new P-40 pilots.

Brendan Thow acquired a share in ZK-CAG and after the normal Harvard check out took to the skies at Ardmore and since has put together a lot more hours on type.

Liz Needham became NZ's first lady P-40 pilot. Liz has considerable Harvard time (and flies No 2 in the NZ Warbirds 'Roaring 40's' acrobatic team) and the conversion to the P-40 was a very straight forward affair.



Brendan after his 1st solo



Liz seems happy about something!

Cheers

Garth

P.S.



GA-Q immediately prior to it's 1st flight.

And a flypast at Wanaka (Thanks to Jean-Pierre Touzeau for this photo)

