

What's happening at PIONEER AVSPECS

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Hi everyone

This is the late-arriving September newsletter. Workload has meant that it hasn't come out earlier and this is just going to be a brief update.

The **Lavochkin La-9** first this month - Progress is now proceeding at quite a pace. The canopy is finished, glazed and responds nicely to the canopy crank (Photo 1).



1 - Canopy



2 - Plumbing Installed



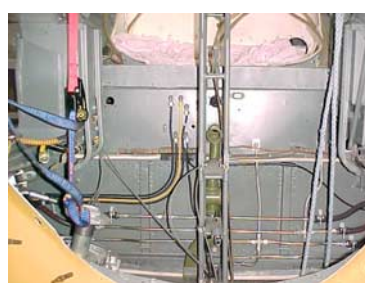
3 - Canopy crank

The cockpit interior continues to look more like an operational area with the RH console fitted and most of the systems and plumbing installed (Photo 2). The LH console is trial fitted to clear the oil pipes to and from the oil cooler and the "neutral gas" hot pipe (lagged). I should imagine these will make the cockpit a warm place to be. Just as well the canopy crank works (Photo 3).

The neutral gas system is installed and just needs a couple of hoses and clips. This is a rather ingenious system where exhaust gas is collected (from #6 cylinder exhaust pipe), ducted to the rear of the fuse, put through a moisture trap a coolant loop, then a filter and finally piped back to the front of the fuse and into the fuel tanks!!! The idea of course is that the dried and clean exhaust gas is inert and would prevent a fuel tank explosion if hit by a shell - Quite clever - hence the "neutral gas" title (Photo 4).



4 - Neutral gas plumbing



5 - More plumbing

Plumbing of the hydraulics, pneumatics and fuel systems is progressing nicely with most of the firewall-mounted pipes installed and connected. Hope we don't get any leaks in here. A thorough check will be done before this plumbing becomes inaccessible (Photo 5).

The ducting behind the engine has been tidied up. It's still not as nice as one would expect from a Western aircraft, but it's definitely better than off-the-shelf Russian. This is now

trial installed and work is progressing on the cowl flaps which are integral to the ducting (Photo 6).



6 - Engine ducting



7 - New undercarriage doors

Two of the items missing were the lower part of the undercarriage doors. New ones of these are being fabricated (Photo 7). The only other significant item missing was the main instrument panel and instruments. With the assistance of Toni Beidl in Germany we have tracked down most of what's required. Only a couple of instruments to go and these seem to be relatively standard Russian/Chinese units.

We've given up on sourcing original size tyres and have opted to run readily available tyres (same outside dimensions and superior load carrying) as fitted to the nose wheel on a Bandierante. This means a modification to the wheels and this is currently in progress.

Elevators and rudder are rebuilt and are ready for Ceconite (Photos 8 & 9) and the complete tailwheel assembly is fitted and plumbed (Photo 10).



8 & 9 - Rudder & Elevators ready for Ceconite



10 - Tailwheel assembly

Engine is in the Czech Republic being rebuilt and we're hopeful of seeing it early January, by which time hopefully we'll be ready for it.

Jerry's P-40E - Jerry's LH wing is out of the jig and waiting for its mate. The splice plate is fitted, as are the ammo bay doors and the aileron trial fitted prior to covering (Photo 11).

The RH leading edge is now in the jig, nose ribs, stringers and No. 1 Spar in the process of being fitted (Photo 12).



11 - LH Wing



12 - RH Leading Edge

We are completely rebuilding a tailplane and all structural components are now ready for assembly (Photo 13).

The cowl flap hoop, which is a rather more complex than it appears is almost finished and only needs the inner liner attached (Photo 14).



13 - Tailplane components



14 - Cowl Flap Hoop

Tony's P-40E - Pressure's on if we're going to make this fly for Wanaka. We've prepared a flow chart on what has to be done and we think it's totally achievable.

The full reskin of the fuselage is complete and looks fantastic (Photos 15 & 16). The two-seat conversion is structurally largely complete with just the rollover bar to be finish welded and installed (Photo 17), glazing is progressing on the canopy and windscreen (Photo 18).



15 & 16 - Fuselage Reskin



17 - Two-seat conversion

Tony's second wing is in the main jig. It is completed up to Spar 3 and most of the structure and skins from Spar 3 to 5 are rebuilt and are being final-assembled (Photo 19).



18 - Glazing



19 - Second wing

The fuse will be getting its final internal paint this week and then the fitting out with all the rebuilt systems stuff will get underway.

Watch this space!

By the time the next newsletter comes around expect some major visual advances. Exciting stuff at the moment!

If you want to be among the first to see the La-9 and Tony's P-40 fly, make your bookings for Wanaka now or you may miss out.

Garth & Warren