



‘Aviation Tales’ Newsletter: February 2025.



Continuing with the on-going windsock theme, my recent visit to the Wellington waterfront resulted in the above image.

‘On the waterfront’ you might ask. There is a private heliport just to the left but more importantly, it is to indicate the wind direction to the Cook Strait ferries arriving and departing from their ‘terminals’ nearby.

The month of February has been:

Busy as the New Year 2025 gets underway, and we have had the good weather to ensure the garden and grass needs attention!

Am now into the planning stage for a South Island trip during the Easter Break. I hear that there is an airshow at Omaka that may be worth a visit (See Page 2)

Recent (and future) Aviation Events

Such a sad event took place recently with the mid-air collision between the U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter and a Bombardier CRJ700 series airliner of PSA Airlines over the Potomac River within the area of the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

Sadly, there were no survivors and the official investigation continues. 😞

For airshow fans, head down to Omaka airfield over Easter. The ‘Marlborough Lines Classic Fighters’ are “Putting on the Ritz” and the organisers would love you to enjoy the experience.

Aircraft from the Golden Age of Aviation during the 1920s and 1930s will be up in the sky for your pleasure and you will need to hold your breath as iconic WW2 warbirds command your attention. You need to be there. 😊

During January, Air New Zealand’s latest ATR 72-600, ZK-MZG, entered service with a maiden flight from Christchurch to Invercargill. This will be the 30th ATR in the Air New Zealand fleet

ZK-MZG is the first ATR 72-600 model for Air New Zealand and has the latest Pratt & Whitney PW127XT engines fitted.

The airline has stated that this new engine provides an approximate 3 percent reduction in fuel consumption compared to its predecessor.

Additionally, Air New Zealand is expecting another ATR to arrive in mid-2025.



Aviation Personalities



In 1914 Sir Sydney Camm joined Martinsydes of Brooklands as a woodworker and was fortunate to come under the influence of George Handasyde, one of the leading aircraft designers of the day. He assisted Handasyde with design work until, during 1923, he joined the Hawker Engineering Company as a senior draughtsman. Within two years Camm had been appointed Chief Designer. He was to remain with Hawkers for forty-three years until he passed away during 1966.

Sydney Camm's remarkable series of successful aircraft designs range from his Hawker Cygnet biplane of 1924 to the VTOL P1127 of 1960 and included such immortals as the Hart and the Hurricane.

During 1925, along with Fred Sigrist, Hawker's Managing Director, Camm developed the distinctive Hawker metal construction, using cheaper and simpler jointed tubes, rather than the alternative welded structure. In the late 20s and early 30s Camm designed the classic Hawker Hart family of fabric covered, steel framed biplanes.

The Hart's success put Hawker in the front line of aircraft manufacturers and its design was used by Camm as a basis for aircraft to meet other requirements.

These included the Demon fighter, the Hart trainer, the Audax army co-operation aircraft, the Hind, the Fury, the Osprey and the Nimrod Fleet Air Arm machines.

This new generation of aircraft boasted performance far in advance of their contemporaries and at one time in the 1930s no fewer than 84 % of the aircraft in the RAF were of Hawker/Camm design.

Official prejudice had for many years precluded the adoption of monoplanes by the RAF, but Camm managed to overcome the Air Ministry's apprehension with his superbly designed Hurricane. This, Camm's most famous aircraft, was based on the Fury.

Together with Mitchell's Spitfire, it played a leading role in the Battle of Britain, the Hurricane shooting down more enemy aircraft than all other British aircraft and ground forces combined. Almost as celebrated were Camm's, later, high-performance, piston-engined, Typhoon, Tempest and Sea Fury aircraft.

After the Second World War, Hawkers did not rush into the new field of jet propulsion but, as always at the propitious time, they brought out the Sea Hawk and swept-wing Hunter jet

fighters, both designed under the direction of Camm. The Hunter, one of the longest-lived jet fighters and ground attack aircraft, first flew in 1951.

Towards the end of his career Sydney Camm was closely associated with the very advanced concept of vertical take-off and landing.

The P1127, a forbear of the Harrier, which made its first vertical take-off in 1960. A clear line of development can be traced throughout its design. The P1127 prototype is on display at Brooklands Museum, Weybridge, together with a Hunter and a replica Hurricane.

More of a perfectionist than an innovator, Camm's designs evolved logically, progressively and successfully from each other. Although Camm started his career without any advanced scientific training, he had a masterful eye and an intuitive feel for a well-designed aircraft.

Endowed with these rare gifts he produced a succession of aircraft that were not only extremely good-looking but also boasted excellent performance and handling characteristics.

Sir Sydney Camm, acclaimed by Sir Thomas Sopwith as being the greatest designer of fighter aircraft the world has known, received the British Gold Medal for Aeronautics in 1949, and was elected President of the Royal Aeronautical Society in 1954, receiving its highest honour, the Gold Medal, in 1958.

Sir Sydney Camm was knighted during 1953.



Sir Sydney Camm – From ‘Cygnet’ to ‘P1127’ - Quite an achievement.

Restoration News

The Ilyushin Il-2 Shturmovik.

In 1944, a Russian IL-2 warplane was shot down by the Germans near the town of Pustoshka in the western Soviet Union, resulting in a crash-landing on a frozen lake.

During the Spring when the ice melted, the Shturmovik sank to the bottom, where it sat for more than 40 years.

Last month, the completed restoration of that rugged airplane, rebuilt and freshly painted with camouflage and red stars, gleamed under the lights of a cleaning room in a Smithsonian restoration hangar outside Washington.

“That’s her,” said Tony Hare, who is leading the project to restore the plane, as he stood before the aircraft.

Eighty years after it was downed in World War II and 4,000 miles from where it helped drive back the German invasion of Soviet Russia, this Ilyushin IL-2 is being readied for a historic debut at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington.

When it goes on display in about two years, it will be the first World War II Russian airplane to go on exhibit since the museum opened in 1976, a Smithsonian official said.

The museum has had the plane for more than 25 years but has never been able to display it.

The Air and Space Museum, on the National Mall in downtown Washington, has been undergoing an extensive renovation since 2018.

Much of the museum is open, but the World War II gallery has remained closed.

It is expected to reopen, with the IL-2, around 2026.

“There are very few of these complete IL-2s existing left in the world,” curator Alex Spencer said in an interview at the museum’s Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, near Dulles International Airport in Chantilly.

“It’s a handful. I think it’s a dozen or less.” The plane, however, is not flyable.



An original wartime Il-2 in Russian hands.



Please note the woodwork associated with the rear fuselage construction, bottom right.



Photo by Scott Bricker

A recent image of the completed IL-2 – August 2024

The restorers said they had no qualms about working on a Russian aircraft, given the war in Ukraine. “It’s all history,” mentioned Tony Hare, the project lead. “We don’t deal with politics; this is an artifact.” “Our biggest worry, I think, was ... were we going to be told, no, you can’t work on it.”

The IL-2 is “a big beast of an airplane,” Alex Spencer explained.

The aluminium wings, which are being kept in a separate storage area, will be reattached next month, he said.

The front half of the body is steel. “Every time you try to do something, it hurts you,” added Tony Hare. “This plane bites you constantly. I’ve got so many scars and dings. I even got one today.” The steel was to protect the pilot. “The pilot was surrounded in armour, but the poor gunner in the rear of the cockpit had no protection.”

The Smithsonian acquired the plane from the Russians through a broker back in 1995 in exchange for two old American helicopters that are not flyable. “We had this aircraft on our list of planes from World War II that we wanted,” Alex added.

“The plane landed on the frozen lake surface during the wintertime ... and then when the spring thaw took place, the plane just sank down to the bottom.”

After the Smithsonian acquisition, the museum put the plane in storage, where it remained for 26 years.

“Other priorities and demands were always taking place,” Alex Spencer said.

“That happens with a lot of our aircraft.” With the new World War II gallery underway, the team had a chance to restore the plane.

Unfortunately, the team discovered that by this time, the wooden part of the plane that the Russians had restored decades before was falling apart! So it was scrapped, and Jay Flanagan, the museum specialist, has meticulously recreated it over many months, using Russian blueprints. “I built this exactly as the Russians did,” he said. “Exactly.”



Restoration specialist Jay Flanagan re-builds the wooden rear fuselage utilising a wooden mold.

(As per the original factory techniques.)



The happy restoration team.

Tail Piece



The 'tail' work accomplished at Novosibirsk's "Aviarestation" facility was first class.

Utilising parts from five recovered Il-2 aircraft to achieve airworthiness.

- ❖ **Do you have any interesting aviation topics you would like to have researched for a future newsletter edition?**

- ❖ **Do any of the articles you have read in this newsletter edition require further explanation?**

Please get in touch.

This month's motivational statement:

"The return we reap from generous actions is not always evident."

Harper Lee

The 'Aviation Tales' newsletter is produced monthly.

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