



## The 'Aviation Tales' Newsletter: November 2025.

### The month of November has been:

Yes, well, Spring certainly arrived with a vengeance.

It has been windy and stormy one day, lovely and sunny the next then back to being stormy!

### Recent Aviation News.

Just last month, New Zealand and Australian companies have successfully developed liquid-hydrogen storage technologies to enable Australasia's first hydrogen-electric flights.



Fabrum, AMSL Aero, and Stralis Aircraft have successfully filled pioneering aviation fuel tanks with liquid hydrogen produced and stored on-site for the first time.

The tank refuelling was successfully completed at Fabrum's dedicated liquid-hydrogen test facility at Christchurch Airport, at its renewable energy precinct.

Christchurch Airport CEO Justin Watson said, "It's fantastic to welcome aviation industry leaders paving the way for a transition to a low-emissions future here at the airport. Christchurch Airport continues to play a leadership role in advancing zero-emission infrastructure, positioning the airport to support liquid-hydrogen aviation."

## Restoration News.

(As this is a very complex and ambitious restoration project, it might just have to feature in two or more future newsletters!)

### **Hawker Siddeley Kestrel FGA.1 XS694 has returned to Britain following a half century of neglect in the USA.**

This important aircraft joins the Wings Museum in Sussex and is destined for restoration and eventual display at the former Dunsfold Aerodrome where she made her first flight in 1964.



The remains of XS694 as she was in the USA when found at a Paintball Park in Pennsylvania.

It seems that the airframe had sustained a lot more damage since this photograph was taken!



(photo via Wings Museum)

The Kestrel itself was a development of the Hawker P.1127 concept aircraft, which married the pioneering Bristol Pegasus, vectored-thrust jet engine with a brand-new airframe designed around it. Just six P.1127s and nine Kestrels rolled off the production line at Hawker's development site in Kingston-upon-Thames. Such was the radical nature of these aircraft that a number were involved in accidents during testing. The 'Wings Museum' is happy to see that one of these historic airframes, following decades of abuse and neglect, has finally found a new home where she has begun to receive the love and care she so deserves.

## Interesting to me.

While researching this article I learned that XS694, during 1965, became the first Kestrel to join the Tripartite Evaluation Squadron at RAF West Raynham in Norfolk.

My interest here is that during the summer holidays of 1966, I spent a very interesting week at RAF West Raynham. I was at that time a very keen ATC cadet from 1195 ATC Squadron in my hometown of Irvine, Scotland. A few short months later, we arrived as new immigrants to New Zealand and settled into our future lives in Christchurch!

## The restoration (so far!)

Aaron Simmons, the project's leader recently stated:

“I am very excited to finally be making a positive start on this unique and rare airframe; knowing it will eventually be on display at Dunsfold makes the project even more satisfying.

We have made some great leaps forward with the project using the latest CAD drawings packages to have the front cockpit bulkhead frame laser cut to replace the damaged one.

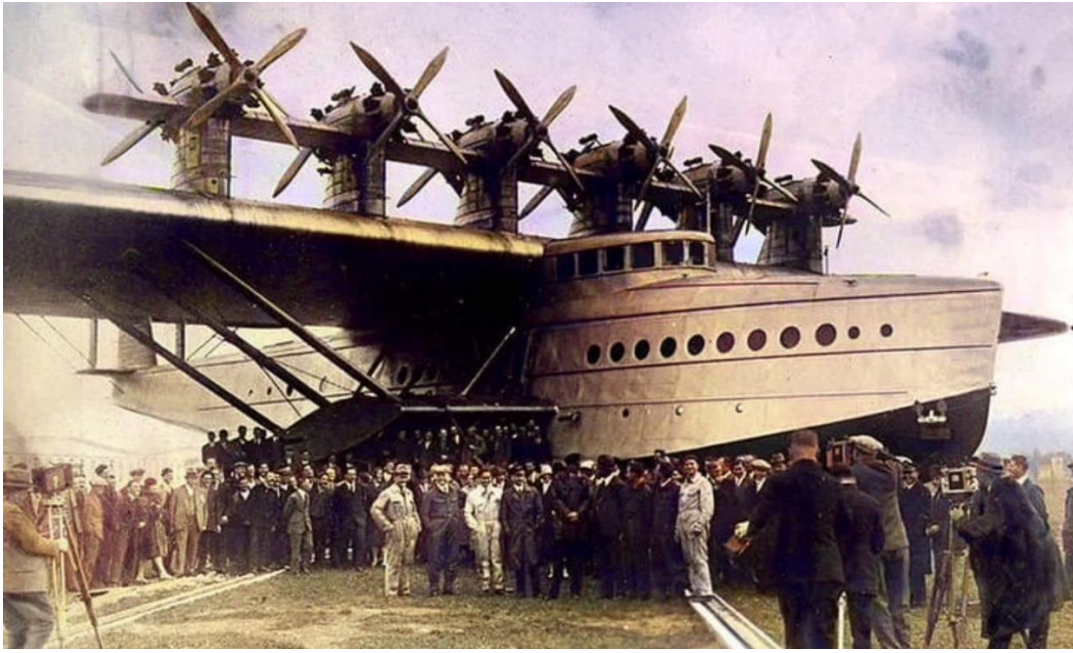


We have also had a set of pilot's instrument panels produced and are making some great progress on collecting the instruments needed to populate the panels but there are still many items needed.”



There are still many other missing parts, including the undercarriage, which they would like to obtain.

## The strange but true aircraft that graced our skies in years gone by:



A very nice 'period' image of the Do X.

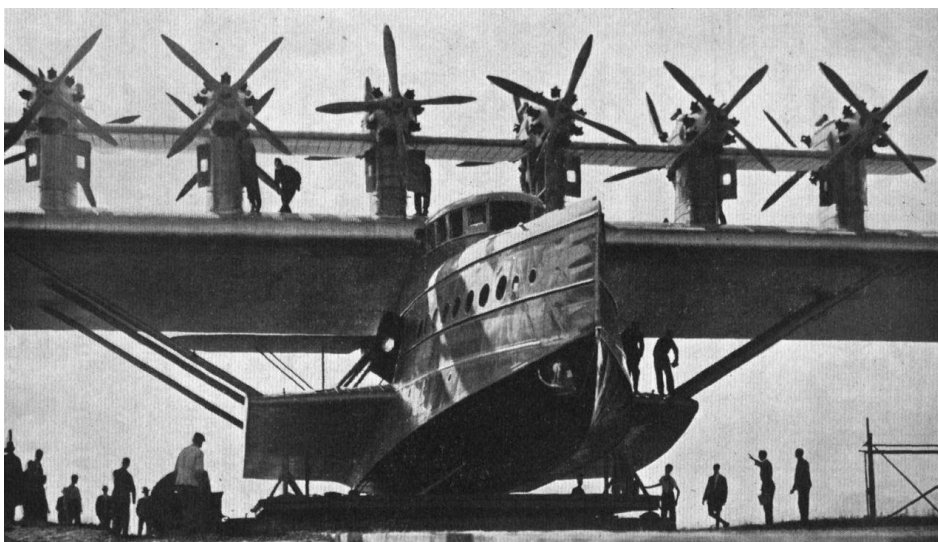
Built in 1929, the German Dornier Do X flying boat had 12 engines and a huge (for its time) wingspan of 157 feet.

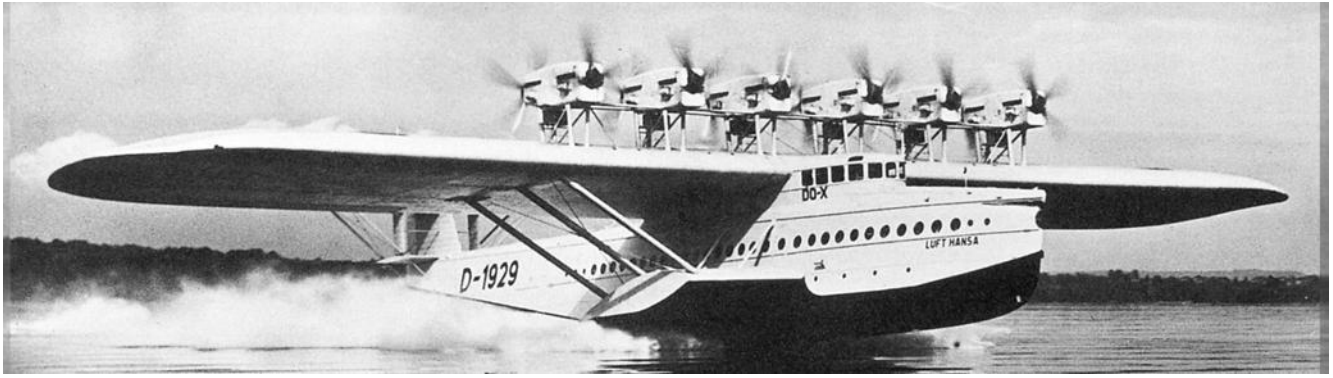
It could carry 169 people, setting a world record that lasted 20 years.

The Dornier Do X, was a German flying boat from the 1920s that stands as a testament to the era's ambitious engineering exploits. With its 12 engines mounted in a unique push-pull configuration, the Do X was the largest aircraft of its time, designed for transatlantic passenger flights.

### **Speaking of the engines!**

The Dornier Do X was initially powered by twelve Siemens-built Bristol Jupiter radial engines of 525 Hp. each.





At least one of the three aircraft built made use of Curtis Conqueror V12 engines of 600 Hp. These engines were geared and mounted, as were the Jupiter engines, in six tandem nacelles.

Yes, the Dornier Do X did fly!

It was a very large flying boat built in the late 1920s, and it first took to the skies on July 12, 1929. At the time, it was the largest and heaviest aircraft in the world.

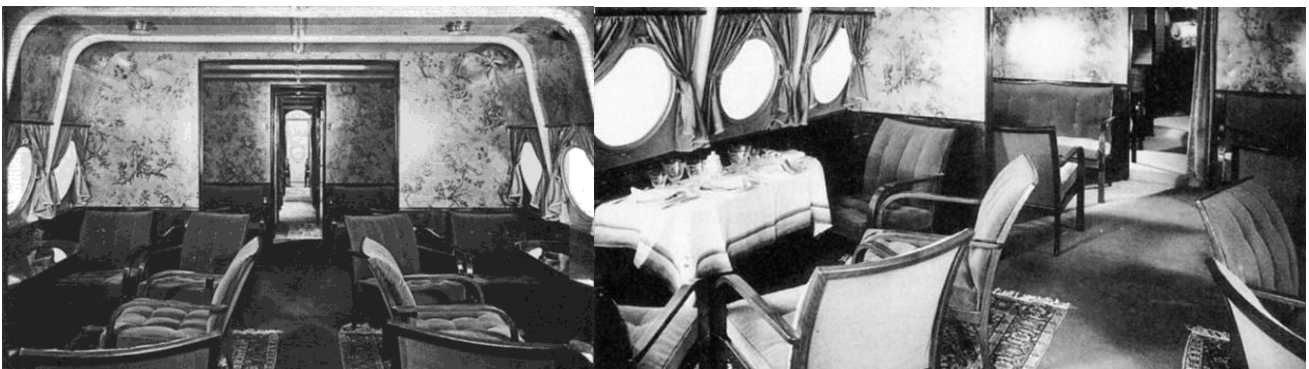
One of its most famous flights was a transatlantic journey from Germany to the United States in 1930-1931.

The trip took nearly ten months, with multiple stops across Europe, Africa, and South America before finally reaching New York.

Despite its impressive size and luxurious interior, the Do X was not commercially successful, and only three were ever built.

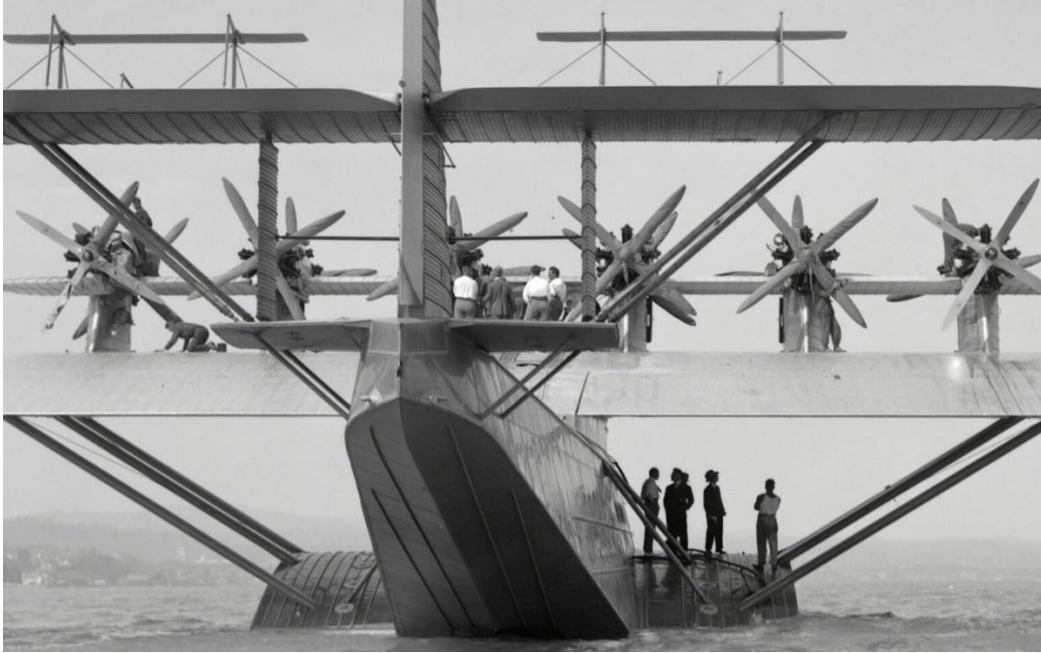
Sadly, none of the original aircraft exist today, but efforts are underway to create a full-scale replica for historical display.

Massive for its day and, with a greater wingspan than a Boeing 757, airliner-sized even today, the Dornier Do-X flying boat served as a luxurious means of intercontinental travel for up to 100 passengers during the early 1930s.



Were it not for the effects of the Great Depression in 1929, this massive aircraft might have seen success as a trans-Atlantic airliner, but ultimately, only three were built and sadly, none survive today.

## Tailpiece



Yes, the Dornier Do X was certainly impressive from any angle and it seems to keep a lot of people very busy!

- Do you have any interesting aviation topics you would like mentioned in future newsletter edition?
- Have any of the articles you have read in this newsletter edition require further explanation?

### **This month's motivational statement:**

“You do what you can for as long as you can, and when you finally can't, you do the next best thing. You back up but you don't give up”!

Chuck Yeager.

The 'Aviation Tales' newsletter is produced monthly

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