



P7056 Club

Home of the Westland Whirlwind Fighter

Spring Newsletter 2022

Project News.

Lots of movement on the build and Museum front these last few months.

Firstly, the Kent Battle of Britain Trust at Hawkinge have taken delivery of the only two surviving Rolls Royce Peregrine engines - from the crash site of P6966 in Scotland.

Both engines were recovered by Steve Vizard during a dig at the site of the crash back in the seventies and were lent to the Rolls Royce Museum at Derby, who have now, with Steve's permission delivered them to Hawkinge.

On the occasion of the accident P6966 (HE-X) was being flown by P/o I.F.McDermott. Having suffered a tyre blow out on take-off which damaged the undercarriage, he was advised to bail out as landing the aircraft was considered too dangerous. The Whirlwind crashed near Stenhousemuir and was the first Whirlwind loss of WWII. (Rob Bowater)



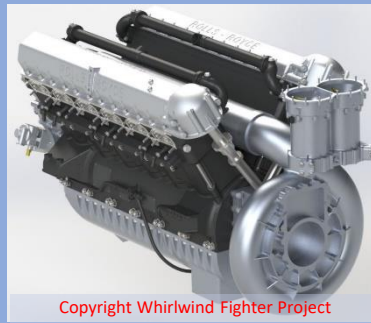
copyright Westland Aircraft Ltd



Copyright Kent battle of Britain Trust



Copyright Kent battle of Britain Trust



Copyright Whirlwind Fighter Project

Both the Whirlwind Fighter project and the Kent Battle of Britain Museum Trust would like to take this opportunity to thank Steve Vizard for his kind support and help with the build of P7056.

In recognition that the site for the display of our build and other Whirlwind parts is the Kent Battle of Britain Museum at Hawkinge, the Trust that runs the Museum have extended to P7056 Club members the offer of half-price entry. For adults the current cost of entry is £10, for seniors it is £9.00.

These prices are cut in half for card-carrying Club members in receipt of this Newsletter.

Good news, eh?!? It is a great Museum with lots to see – including an on-going restoration of a WW2 Heinkel, a Blenheim rebuild, and the developing and impressive monument ‘Spirit of the Few’. There is a lot more there.. please go along and see.

<http://www.kbobm.org/>

The Build.

Now on to other news of the progress of the build.

We were hoping to get the Whirlwind cockpit section set up at the Kent Battle of Britain Museum Trust by the end of March 2022. We have now had to put it back, a couple of months, hopefully to June 2022. This is due to several factors, the main one being (and to put it into Pete’s words) “you complete one part only to find that there are several other parts that have to be made to support it”).

One part (of many) in question is the pilot's step ladder. Do we include this in the build or not? Health and Safety preclude us from being able to use this for its purpose but does that mean it should be left out? The decision was made to include it and a search through crash photographs showed a small part of the unit but the rest was a certain amount of skilled guesswork.

F/o Eddie Musgrave had a number of close calls while flying Whirlwinds. He was awarded the DFC after his attack on the TOJO. He failed to return from a night attack while flying P7063 and is buried in Pihen-les-Guines war cemetery. In the picture above he can be seen with his foot on the stepladder.



The lower two photographs are part of the next exercise - to construct the flare chute. This again will not be visible but is an integral part of an original airframe and must be included.

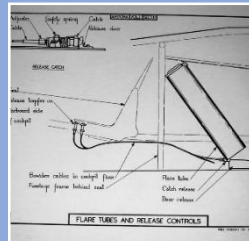
Main support for telescopic ladder



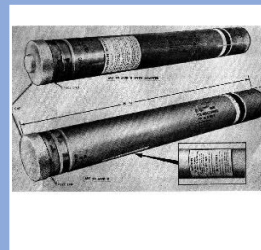
Same part during milling



Flare tubes position



Flare tubes.



Nothing on the Whirlwind was standard or simple

Latest photographs from Pete Smith of the build assembled.

Images taken mid-late March 2022.

Note the addition of windscreen frame, electrical panel coaming and armoured cover plate. The eagle-eyed amongst you may notice the aerial bracket installed below the aperture for the aerial. Another genuine component that will not be visible once the cockpit is skinned!



Copyright Westland Aircraft Ltd

Could be P6987 showing off her Fowler flaps (Another headache for Pete - later)

There's that stepladder again!

Nothing *about* the Whirlwind was standard or simple - especially its end.

The rumour mill still persists about G-AGOI. Was it buried under the perimeter track at Yeovil or was it, as described by an eye witness, towed to the local scrap merchant and reduced to produce there or could it have been a Welkin?

Does anyone know the truth?

Special Feature.

The article below has been borrowed from the Royal Observer Corps newsletter for No1 Group Maidstone.

Part One

K.R. Park Air Vice-Marshal, Commanding, No.11 Group, Royal Air Force.

Report on German Air Attacks on England 8th Aug. - 10th Sept.

To: Headquarters, Fighter Command.

Ref:11G/S.493

Date: 12th September, 1940.

German Air Attacks on England. - 8th Aug. - 10th Sept.

As directed in your letter FC/S.21069/Air, dated 6th September, 1940, I have to submit the following brief report on operations in No11 Group area since the German offensive began on August 8th, 1940. As the battle still continues unabated by day, and has increased greatly in intensity by night, neither I nor any of my Staff have opportunity to write a lengthy report.

2. The appended report covers the period from 8th August to 10th September, during which there were three distinct phases in which the enemy altered his plan and tactics. The first phase was from 8th August to 15th August, and the second phase was from 19th August to 5th September. The 6th September began a third phase, which is now occupying all my Group's attention by day and night.

FIRST PHASE

8th August to 18th August, 1940:

Enemy Strategy:

3. Bombing attacks were directed against the following objectives: Shipping and ports on the South-East and South-West, between North Foreland and Portland;

 Massed attacks against Portland and Portsmouth;
Attacks on fighter aerodromes on the coast, followed by Bomber Command and Coastal Command aerodromes on the coast;

Towards the end of this period, comparatively light attacks were pressed inland by day to various objectives.

Enemy Tactics:

4. To employ massed formations of bombers, escorted by massed formations of single and twin-engine fighters. The bombing attacks were mostly medium or high dive-bombing. Dive bombers, Ju.878, were used extensively, and also in lesser numbers, He.111, Do.17 and Ju.88, As this phase progressed, the enemy diverted the weight of his attack from shipping and ports on to aerodromes on the coast and R.D.F. Stations. Night attacks began to grow during this period, attacks by a number of single aircraft being made inland to various objectives.

Method of Attack:

5. The enemy usually made an attack against coastal objectives in Kent as a diversion in order to draw our fighters, then about thirty to forty minutes later, put in his main attack against ports or aerodromes on the South coast between Brighton and Portland.

6. This phase introduced bombing by Me.110s and Me.109s, Me.109s also carried out machinegun attacks on forward aerodromes.

Tactics of Enemy Fighter Cover:

7. During this phase the enemy employed his fighters in very unwieldy mass formations, usually flying much higher - about 5,000 to 10,000 feet - about the bombers, these tactics were not very effective in protecting the bombers.

Employment of Our Fighters:

8. The main problem was to know which was the diversionary attack and to hold sufficient fighter squadrons in readiness to meet the main attack when this could be discerned from the very unreliable information received from the R.D.F., after they had been heavily bombed. To meet these attacks on coastal objectives, it was essential to keep nearly all Readiness squadrons at forward aerodromes, such as Lympne, Hawkinge, Manston, Rochford, the greatest vigilance had to be observed by Group Controller not to have these squadrons bombed or machine-gunned on the ground at forward aerodromes. On only one occasion was any squadrons at a forward aerodrome attacked while on the ground refuelling, and this was because the squadron failed to maintain a protective patrol over the base during refuelling.

9. A very high state of preparedness had to be maintained in order to engage the enemy before he reached his coastal objectives. The general plan in employing the fighters was to detail about half the available squadrons, including the Spitfires, to engage the enemy fighters, and the remainder to attack the enemy bombers, which normally flew at between 11,000 and 13,000 feet, and carried out their attack frequently from 7,000 to 6,000 feet.

Tactics of Our Fighters:

10. During this phase our fighters were mainly employing the Fighter Command attacks fro, astern. These gave good results against

the enemy fighters, which were unarmoured, but were not so effective against the bombers. Our fighters were therefore advised to practice deflection shots from quarter astern, also from above and from below against twin-engine bombers.

11. During this phase, fighter squadrons not infrequently flew over fifty hours each in one day with twelve aircraft in commission. Casualties:

12. The casualties to pilots and aircraft were about equal in numbers for any given engagement. Owing to the lack of trained formation and Section leaders, also to the fitting of armour to enemy bombers, our casualties were relatively higher than during May and June, when operating over France and Belgium.

13. Results were satisfactory, the proportion of enemy shot down to our own losses being about four to one, slightly below the average when fighting over France, as much of this fighting took place over the sea, casualties were higher than they would have been if the fighting had been over land. The results of air combat were good because the enemy fighters were frequently too high to protect their bombers. Moreover, the Ju.87 proved an easy prey to both Hurricanes and Spitfires.

Conclusion:

14. It would appear that our fighter defences proved too good for the enemy, because on August 18th the Germans withdrew their dive bombers, Ju.87s, and there was a break of five days in intensive Operations.



**K.R. Park Air Vice-Marshal, Commanding, No.11 Group, Royal
Air Force.
The author of this report**

Part two to follow next newsletter

Club News

All whose membership has lapsed in the last 6 months have received emails from me at wfpmembership@mail.com.

The Membership Sec would like to especially thank those annual members who have responded to my very recent entreaties and renewed their membership! We appreciate the support.

To continue supporting the build of P7056, and to keep receiving these newsletters and invites to the Club Nights – please renew your membership when its due. Applies only to Annual Members, of course!

All members – Life or Annual - are free to take up the offer of reduced entry from Kent Battle of Britain Museum – as highlighted above.

The last Club Night that was held in February again went without a hitch, with 11 members present.

One video was shown, that was the second of the interviews with John McClure, we did intend to show two, the other being the second video with Eric “Winkle” Brown but there was so much interest in the construction of P7056 that we ran out of time, that will be shown next time.

The next Club meeting will be on the 29th May 2022.

Many thanks to all who attended and to Peter Lancaster for taking charge.

Member of the Aviation Heritage UK.
Charity number EW37349
Secretary. C J M Hayward, 57 Bramblefield Lane, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 2SX
whirlwindfighterproject@outlook.com
Website- whirlwindfighterproject.co.uk