

NZWA Airshows: The year that was

Contributed by Frank Parker

WITH THE shortest day behind us it is timely to reflect on last summer's flying, and maybe 'peek' into the coming year.

The airshow 'season' was busy for NZ Warbirds. The unfortunate withdrawal of the RNZAF Red Checkers Team led to several last minute additions to the program.

The Season 'opener' for NZ Warbirds was the Battle of Britain Memorial service flypast at the Auckland Museum Cenotaph on Sunday 20th September. The weather is always a lottery for this event. 2009 however, smiled upon us and we had a successful flypast with 18 NZWA aircraft involved.

A new promotion for NZWA commenced this year are 'Open Days' at the Ardmore Base. The first of these was on December 6th and in line with that 'Day of Infamy' the theme was naturally Pearl Harbour. The newly liveried Harvard 92 and T-28 Trojan made a striking 'Naval' pair on flypast.

New Years Eve saw the Yak Formation Team displaying at the growing Mahurangi festival for the second year running.

The first 'Big Event' was the Tauranga City Air Show. This is not a new event,

rather a development from past Sport Aircraft Association pageants, supported by the Classic flyers Museum. All participants and a very supportive crowd enjoyed the Bay of Plenty summer weather and a wonderfully varied flying program. I, along

year in mid February. For more than 10 years the Organisers of this now world renowned event have invited the Harvard Roaring Forty's Team for displays during the weekend. If you have a passion for old cars, old music and old clothes this event is a 'must do'. Personally I just love that American V12 machinery.

The Mercury Bay Aero Club ran an Airshow on March 6th. This was to replace an event cancelled by weather 12 months earlier. Once again there was a fine display by General Aviation, Classic and Warbird aircraft to an appreciative crowd. In the afternoon a developing crosswind gained the attention of tail wheel pilots - I recall clearly the crosswind demonstration provided by the Warbirds Dakota. Well done Andrew!

For all aviation buffs the 'show' every two years is Warbirds Over Wanaka. For us North Island based folk this is generally a week long exercise which occasionally challenges our organisational skills. As has been well reported the Show reached all

expectations of this iconic event with an impressive display of WW II fighter aircraft, and ooh those F-18s. Lucky bugger Richie McCaw.

An event running for its second year was the Whitianga Speed Weekend. This is a

with all other participants congratulate the organisers on a job well done and look forward to the next event.

An event, smaller for the aviation content, but huge in its own right, is the Art Deco Weekend at Napier held this



A Harvard and Yak formation over the Waitemata Harbour during the Battle of Britain flypast.



The Trojan and Harvard participated in a 'Naval' flypast during Pearl Harbour Commemorations.

Gravin Conroy picture

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The Vintage Aviator at Masterton holds regular flying displays of magnificent WW1 aircraft.

semi corporate sponsored event and brings together a variety of 'speed machines'; off shore power boats, thunder cats, jet boats, track racing, off road racing, moto cross and aircraft. If it burns petrol it's there! I feel this event has fantastic potential with something for petrol heads of every persuasion. Hopefully it can be developed over time to reach this perceived potential.

To round off the summer weather, NZWA provided a 'mini' flyby for ANZAC Day Services. This was at the request of the Hobsonville and Howick RSA's to flypast their mid-morning parades. With

the growing significance of ANZAC Day throughout the country this will hopefully develop into a more organised activity. For the afternoon NZWA held a members day with a limited flying display at the Ardmore Base.

The final flypast for the year was provided for the Hobsonville Old Boys Association holding a Parade at their old Base. With development on this historic aviation site, the remains of the old Base will soon be consigned to the memory files so it was fitting that a group of Harvard's, P-40 and T-28 were able to accompany the Catalina to salute these veterans.

Further afield, the 'Vintage Aviator' held flying weekends with their impressive World War I aircraft at Masterton to commemorate Remembrance Day and ANZAC Day. If the opportunity arises to view any of these iconic aircraft, take it! Wedged between all these activities there were 'fly-ins' organised at Pauanui, Matamata, Raglan, and no doubt other fields I have missed which members took time out to attend.

I know I've missed events that South of the Bombays' members participated in; my apologies for that. Nonetheless, that was the year as I recall it. No wonder summer was a blur. Cheers FP.

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