



contributed by Frank Parker

NZ Warbirds Association receives RNZAF Aermacchi

IN March 2011 the NZ Warbirds Association received Skyhawk NZ 6709 on loan from the Air Force Museum to display in the Hangar Visitor Centre at Ardmore. At the time this loan was negotiated

there was also consideration on the possibility of receiving an Aermacchi trainer.

These aircraft had been procured for the RNZAF in 1991 to replace the aging Strikemaster trainers.

In 2001, in line with the Government's decision to scrap the Air Force Air Combat Role the aircraft were removed from service to remain in storage awaiting a decision on their disposal.

Then followed a change of Government and a change of direction. It was accepted that there was no ready sale for the aircraft and it was decided to allocate a number to appropriate aviation collections around the country. The process was much

simpler than the Skyhawk disposal, and in essence the aircraft were donated to the chosen institutions who then had to fund their disassembly and preparation for transport from Ohakea Air Force Base.

NZWA had allocated the funds for this and were fortunate in a sponsorship from one of our supporters which covered the transport costs. On Monday 2nd September, two truckloads of crates outside the hangar, with the next task being to turn it back into an aircraft.

While the Association has no immediate plans to fly the aircraft, the decision was made to protect this option in the future and accordingly, the reassembly had to be completed correctly. We were fortunate

that Pioneer Aero Manager Paul McSweeney had worked on these aircraft during his Air Force years and held up his hand to help.

Paul, directing an enthusiastic team of volunteers, soon had the aircraft un-jigged and the assembly was completed over a few weeks to go on display in the hangar in early October.

Compared to the ruggedness of the Skyhawk the Macchi has a sleek, almost attractive appearance, a hint of Ferrari or something equally exotic, and no doubt a reflection of its Italian heritage. As mentioned above, the Association has no immediate plans to operate the aircraft, however we have preserved this

option with careful detail and recording of the reassembly. In the future, should funding become available we may well see NZ 6471 gracing the Ardmore sky.

(A magnificent plan. Please send money... Ed.)

In the meantime this new acquisition in company with Skyhawk NZ 6709 is an added attraction to our Visitor Centre.

NZ Warbirds wishes to acknowledge assistance from Stevens Home and Giving, Pioneer Aero, and our team of volunteers in this project.



An RNZAF Aermacchi Trainer during more buoyant times in our Air Force. Coincidentally the Strikemaster at left of the picture is NZ 6370, now privately owned by Brett Nicholls and based at Ardmore. (RNZAF Official Photo).



L to R: Paul McSweeney, Gary Rasmussen, Ace Edwards, Frank Parker in front of NZ 6471 now domiciled in the NZ Warbirds Association hangar at Ardmore.



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