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Painting and Signage for award winning aircraft

DURING the last few years Roy King of Airspray Ardmore Ltd. and Neil Richardson of Reflect Icon Signs Ltd. have developed a reputation for providing comprehensive aircraft re-finishing services at Ardmore. Although both offering a

challenging work, from Roy's side this being the technicalities of achieving authentic paint finishes (and colours) on warbird aircraft as well as overcoming access obstacles (the Mosquito required scaffolding, with difficult 'reach'

requirements to many parts). In Neil's case, there are the complications of re-creating old-time fonts for plaques, labels and markings, as well as the difficult surfaces some of these must be applied to. (Reference lines etc. having to be created by detailed study of old photographs). Even simple items like roundels often require four or more separate masks to be made. Neil also mentions the care required when trimming vinyl graphics on canvas; "one slip and I'd have to leave town!"

Both Roy and Neil greatly enjoy their warbird work, saying that participating in these projects is a "real buzz" and that they are very grateful to Warren Denholm (Avspecs) and Paul McSweeney (Pioneer Aero) for the opportunity to work on such amazing aircraft. "We're usually the last step in a long and expensive process and it's great to be the ones adding finishing touches that help make these aircraft look so good," says Neil.



Projects have included (from top): DH FB.26 Mosquito, DH.89 Dragon Rapide, Dyn'Aero MCR-4S and Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk.

The aircraft looks magnificent and is certain to join a list of others (that have been restored at Ardmore and painted by Airspray) that have won significant international awards in recent times. These include Jerry Yagen's DH Dragon Rapide (Best Transport Aircraft: Oshkosh 2010), a P40 Tomahawk (Grand Champion: Omaha Classic Fighters 2011, Best Warbird: Reno Airshow 2011, Reserve Grand Champion: Oshkosh 2012), a Dyn'Aero MCR-4S (Best Composite Aircraft: Tauranga Airshow 2012) and others.

variety of other services, the two companies frequently co-operate on the re-finishing aspects of warbird restoration projects, Roy looking after painting processes and Neil undertaking all of the markings, signage, plaque and decal requirements. Their latest project has been Mosquito KA114 featured earlier in this issue of KiwiFlyer. Initial involvement with the Mosquito project began three years ago when Roy painted the tail, rudder and stabiliser components. Neil has been working on cockpit placards and other markings as various parts became ready over the last year. Then with barely two weeks to go before the 'Mosquito Launch Spectacular' airshow at Ardmore, KA114 was wheeled into the Airspray hangar for its finishing coats of paint to be applied. Roy and Neil say the pressure was intense, as the job was expected to take 3 to 4 weeks, however with plenty of extra effort and overtime, the team was proud to declare the job complete after just 11 days.

Neil also mentions the care required when trimming vinyl graphics on canvas; "one slip and I'd have to leave town!" Both Roy and Neil greatly enjoy their warbird work, saying that participating in these projects is a "real buzz" and that they are very grateful to Warren Denholm (Avspecs) and Paul McSweeney (Pioneer Aero) for the opportunity to work on such amazing aircraft. "We're usually the last step in a long and expensive process and it's great to be the ones adding finishing touches that help make these aircraft look so good," says Neil.



Captions: 1. Reflect Icon specialise in cockpit and instrument labels, often involving the creation of custom fonts for authenticity. 2. The Tomahawk nears completion. 3. Venom markings and colours had to be interpreted from b&w photos.

It's not just about warbird restoration (or even just aircraft) however. Airspray undertakes all types of work (including cars and exotic paint finishes by request) from small repairs or touch-ups through to full strip and repaints. And Reflect Icon can produce building signage, window effects, promotional signs, vehicle branding, and much more. Contact them at the numbers shown below.



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