

The Vintage Aviator Remembrance Day Airshow



Gary Yardley flew this new D.Va Albatros. John Lanham teamed up with the other Albatros for a pairs display.



The RE.8 makes a pass with Gene DeMarco at the controls. Bevan Dewes is the gunner in the back.



Gary Yardley flies the BE.2c. The Union Jack symbol was used in WW1 before roundels were introduced.



The Sopwith Camel and FE.2b bask in the sun whilst in the air, a Bristol Fighter leads three SE.5a fighters.



John Lanham takes off in the Nieuport 11. Its agility was well demonstrated by a very spirited display routine.

THE Vintage Aviator Limited's (TVAL) Remembrance Day Airshow on November 12 can only be described as an outstanding success, with a clear blue sky and not a lot of wind.

These shows are hosted every few months to mark significant days occasions such as ANZAC and Armistice Days. Historic Hood Aerodrome is the venue and since the last show earlier this year, five new airworthy aircraft have been introduced to the public and three flew overhead for everyone to enjoy at the airshow.

The most significant debut was by the second FE.2b fighter/bomber named 'Jess' which is one of two operated by TVAL. This one is modelled after the night bomber version - there are only two airworthy airframes on the planet and they were both here!

Jess had the bomb racks all loaded up, and looked as though it was ready to

take on the opposition. The Fee as it is affectionately known looked almost scary as it took off; the overall gloss black adding a very sinister element to this bomber. This FE.2b debut was only announced a couple of days out from the show and no doubt helped to lift crowd numbers (including Jay McIntyre and I who flew up from Blenheim just to see it).

Gene De Marco flew the aeroplane and Keith Skilling formed up on him in the second FE.2b. Gene was very busy, having earlier flown the second RE.8 to be constructed by TVAL with Bevan Dewes as gunner in the back. The RE.8 is a big aeroplane and looks stunning with the large four bladed propeller which is a work of art in itself. The first RE.8 to come out of the TVAL workshops is now in the UK and following a short flying career there it is destined for static display at the RAF museum at Hendon. Hence those present



Unfortunately the two new Sopwith Pups could not fly on the day due to the crosswind conditions.



The Fokker Dr.1 Triplane has just been nailed by an SE.5a. German aircraft get hit hard during these displays.



Gene De Marco heads out in the FE.2b night bomber. The tubular shaped thing under the front cockpit section is the aiming system for the 9 bombs that make up the bomb load. It is great to see one looking so authentic.



were very happy to be able to see another flying in New Zealand.

Another Albatros D.Va made an appearance in the capable hands of Gary Yardley. This aircraft is very striking and wears an overall silver colour scheme, with green checkers adorning both wings. It wears Jasta 5 markings. The warrior figure on the side is thought to have been used for intimidation and it still works some 90 years later.

Two rotary powered Sopwith Pups were to display for the first time but remained ground based due to the shifty wind conditions. The Pup is a very light aeroplane so good conditions for flight are needed and as WWI ended a long time ago there is no reason to put aeroplanes or pilots at risk.

Other notable displays were a dogfight between three Fokker Dr.1 Triplanes and three SE.5a fighters. Each pilot did their best to get on the oppositions tail using manoeuvres that are always amazing to watch.

The three Triplanes also formed up with two Fokker D.VIII's and a Fokker D.VII and thus we got to see a formation of six Fokkers comprising of three different types. To think we get to see sights like this in New Zealand still has many people pinching themselves.

Types such as Pfalz D.III, Airco DH.5, Nieuport 11, Sopwith Triplane, Sopwith Camel, Bristol Fighter, etc all flew, and it is not surprising how many people around the world are in awe with what is being done by TVAL to bring the WWI era of aviation back to life.

Many hard working volunteers put in long hours to make these airshows possible, so keep an eye on the TVAL website for details on the next show (www.thevintageaviator.co.nz). It is well worth the trip, no matter where you live.



Jerry Chisum takes a hit flying the Fokker D.VII. This aircraft has an interesting background, it actually starred in the 1960s movie "Blue Max".



The most impressive sight was seeing British aircraft lined up while three Fokker DR.1 Triplanes, two Fokker D.VIII's and a Fokker D.VII come charging in to attack the airfield. These airshows take the crowd back in time and provide a fantastic history lesson to all in attendance.

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