



contributed by Graham Orphan

Omaka's Community Fighter Revealed

A GATHERING at the end of June saw members of the nascent 'Marlborough Fighter Consortium' meet at Omaka to view progress on the restoration of their syndicate owned Yak-9V. It is fair to say that all in attendance were impressed with the achievements of the JEM Aviation team in only a relatively short time frame.

The consortium follows similar lines to the many successful warbird syndicates within New Zealand except that the goal was to provide owners with a V-12 fighter experience but at a realistically affordable price. In addition, it was seen as desirable to utilise an aircraft with full dual control capability for type ratings, currency checks and also to facilitate continued flying for any members who may go through difficulties maintaining their flight medicals at times. This would be impossible to achieve with existing types like the TF-51D Mustang or the Tr.IX Spitfire, in both cases represented by fewer than 10 surviving aircraft and with price tags between 3 to 4 million NZ dollars. The solution is the Yak-9V which offers full dual controls in an attractive, well-mannered fighter that will be completed for under NZ\$1m.

After a period of promotion to raise interest and gather members, work-proper started on the aircraft last October in the hangars of JEM Aviation at Omaka. The staff at JEM have had considerable involvement with Eastern Bloc aircraft, and have worked on all of the Yak-3/-9 aircraft presently in New Zealand. The award-winning Yak-3 of the Frew syndicate was fully restored by the JEM Aviation team, being completed about 18 months ago, so the project could not be in better hands.

This aircraft started life as a LET



Syndicate members admire progress on the Yak-9V being restored by JEM Aviation.

C-11, the Czech license built variant of the Russian Yak-11 trainer. It was one of 40 examples recovered from Egypt by a French consortium during the late 1970s and was later sourced from the USA by Kiwis Steve Petersen and David Dew who brought it to Omaka and commenced the restoration. David remains a member of the current syndicate.

The basic syndicate structure comprises 18 members putting in \$40,000 each. There are presently 3 shares remaining which don't have names against them. It is pleasing to see that there is strong support for the group which has members spread right across New Zealand, with another being a Hong Kong based Australian, and another in Sydney.

For many people this represents the only practical way in which they can realistically enjoy owning and flying a WW-II fighter. With the manageable airframe, engine and propeller combination, and fixed costs shared by so many people, it really is the achievable everyday pilot's fighter!

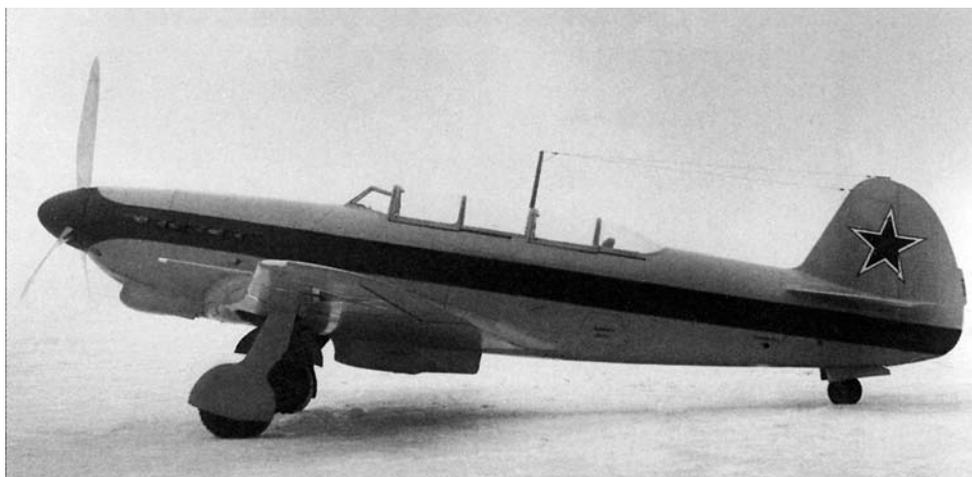
For more information

We look forward to bringing readers further updates from JEM Aviation as work progresses on the project. In the meantime, anyone wishing to know more about this aircraft or syndicate should feel free to make contact with the following principals.

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This Yak-9V shows its attractive lines whilst in service with the VVS (Soviet Air Force)



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