



# Hawker Tempest Project for sale

KIWI aviation enthusiasts with an ear for such things possibly already know that Eric Hertz had begun a Hawker Tempest restoration project before the tragic accident that claimed his and wife Kathy's lives back in March of this year.

Lesser known may be the tale of how this very complete aircraft came to be in New Zealand, or that it is now for sale and at risk of being lost overseas if a local buyer or syndicate cannot be found

to acquire it. That would be a great shame. Hawker Tempests were flown by 486 (NZ) Squadron, a New Zealand Fighter Squadron of the Royal Air Force in WWII. Although a small number are undergoing restoration, there are currently no airworthy Tempests remaining. Thus MW376 would be a striking addition to the NZ Warbirds scene and (as Eric had intended) an honour to the many Kiwis who have worked on and flown them.



Top: MW376 now at Ardmore, and left, in France. Right: L to R Eric Hertz, Paul McSweeney, Jack Stafford (who flew Tempests in WWII with Distinction), Steven Cox.

## History of the Tempest

Derived from the Hawker Typhoon, the Tempest was one of the most powerful fighter aircraft used during the war. A new 'Typhoon IP' design was finalised in October 1941 and this was renamed the 'Tempest' in January 1942. Problems experienced with engine deliveries led the Air Ministry

to ask for six prototypes with different engines to ensure that if a delay was encountered with one, another variant would be available. This resulted in a Mk.I with a Napier Sabre IV engine, Mk.II with Bristol Centaurus IV engine, Mk.III with a Griffon IIB engine, Mk.IV with a Griffon 61, and the Mk.V with a Napier Sabre II.

Pilots reported "a manoeuvrable and pleasant aircraft to fly with no major handling faults". For various engine related reasons, first into production was the Tempest V variant, the first batch rolling off the Hawker production line in June of 1943. They became the RAF's best low to medium altitude fighter.

Although the first Tempest Mk.II also flew in 1943, it took time to sort various problems with the Centaurus engine and combined with a decision to 'tropicalise' all Mk.II versions for service in the South East Asian theatre, production didn't commence until October of 1944. As the war drew to a close, most orders were scaled back or cancelled with Hawker eventually building a total of 402. They were powered by a 2590hp Centaurus V driving a 12 foot 9 inch Rotol propeller and intended for combat against Japan but the Pacific War ended before they could be deployed.

Tempest Vs however, were in the hands of operational squadrons in 1944, including 486(NZ) Squadron. Their roles included high altitude fighter sweeps, long range ground attacks and anti-shipping reconnaissance. They also dealt to a great many German V-1 flying bombs.

## The Provenance of MW376

In 1948, the RAF sold 124 ex WWII Tempests to the Indian Air Force. In 1949, this fleet was supplemented by a further 89 aircraft, supplied by Hawker who had acquired 113 of the aircraft from RAF surplus before refitting them. MW376 is one of those 89. The RAF also passed a number of surplus Tempests on to the Pakistani Air Force. Anecdotally, it wasn't that long before both recipients

were using their new aircraft to shoot at each other.

Tempests flew in India as a front line fighter until about 1953 when they were replaced. Their role then became one of lead-in trainers. Later, they were used as decoys to be placed on airfields so that people would think the Indian Air Force had a lot of aircraft. Under the cover of night they would be trucked from airfield to airfield to further enhance the myth. MW376's airframe in fact bears damage which suggests a lot of lifting and transport so is likely to have been one of the aircraft used for this purpose.

In the late 1970s several Tempests were acquired by a British syndicate with a view to restoration. They were in varying states of repair and in fact none are flying yet.

MW376 was one of those and has since passed through the hands of a series of owners, the immediate prior owner being an American who after deciding not to pursue its restoration, put it on the market. Its storage location (still from the owner before that) was at a 'Chateau in the South of France', from where it was recovered by Pioneer Aero for Eric Hertz and transported to New Zealand.

## Bringing MW376 to New Zealand

When Pioneer Aero Directors, Paul McSweeney and Steven Cox, heard that a Tempest was for sale, they asked around to see if there was any interest in the project. One of the people they approached mentioned the opportunity to Eric Hertz and Eric subsequently contacted Paul, who then put a restoration budget proposal together that Eric accepted.

Paul says that most Americans interested in warbird restoration are fairly focused on acquiring either a Mustang or Corsair and he asked Eric why he was choosing a Tempest. It turned out that Eric knew more about 486 Squadron than Paul did. With no airworthy aircraft of the type remaining, Eric's intention was to be able to honour the people who had worked on and flown them. He also realised that Kiwis made up a large percentage of the Tempest flyers of the day.

Eric sent Steve to the USA (where a container load of parts was stored) and to France to undertake due diligence on the project



A WWII image of the exact same type, this example designated MW404, being a Hawker Tempest Mk.II with Bristol Centaurus V engine.

with a view to assessing whether it was a) worth the money being asked and b) able of being restored within the planned timeframe and budget.

Steve says that when he got to the 'French Chateau' he found the plane actually "in a concrete shed on a lifestyle block", but he came away thinking it was the best start of a restoration project he had ever seen. It hadn't been crashed, it was a very complete airframe, and there were no major corrosion issues. He says the only apparent gaps in the project were a few systems items. Needless to say, Eric went ahead with the purchase.

In April 2012, Steve returned to France to arrange transport of the aircraft back to New Zealand. Located on a small farm 30km from the nearest hardware store, the exercise proved to be challenging; "The logistics were immense," says Steve. Fortunately through contacts in the industry they acquired the services of an aircraft engineer who spoke French. Steve says his assistance was invaluable, not only because he could speak the language but more so because he was familiar with the "French way of doing things".

The day before the container trucks came, the South of France suffered its worst weather for a year. In no time at all the truck was stuck requiring a chain of tractors to try and pull it free. Luckily the owner of the Chateau was on good terms with the local monastery and in due course, a Monk in full habit arrived with the largest tractor of all and a huge trailer which was used to relocate the aircraft some 4km away to flat land at the monastery where everything could more easily be containerised. First, the aircraft had to be lifted onto the trailer. Steve says he could hardly believe it when a 60 tonne crane turned up to lift a 3 tonne aircraft. Miraculously, "with much effort and cunning", they managed to negotiate several 90 degree corners on farm tracks to get on location and the mission was accomplished.

Steve was in France for nearly 2 weeks and thanks to Kiwi rather than English heritage, soon found his place as a 'temporary local'. Further good luck befell the project when it transpired that French Customs had visited the plane a year before and declared it to be an antique aircraft rather than a warplane, thus making it exponentially easier to arrange its export.

Shipped via Singapore, it was finally offloaded in pouring rain onto the Auckland wharves at 2am on 16th of June 2012. Paul and Steve were there to watch.

## Restoration Progress to date

Typically, all initial efforts centred on 'inventorying' the aircraft and understanding what was missing. Paul says that many component requirements can be misleading in that they look the same as the Hawker Sea Fury, but in fact turn out to be dimensionally different. Much of the missing systems components – electrical fittings, instruments, etc., have since been sourced and Paul says there are not many gaps left to fill. Fortunately a lot of British gear was used across 20+ aircraft types and can be located

Calling for Expressions of Interest

RESTORE THE  
**Hawker Tempest**  
and keep it in New Zealand



The Hawker Tempest MW376, owned by Eric Hertz and under restoration at the time of his death, is now being put on the market. Eric's dream was to restore it to flying condition, to honour the New Zealanders who flew with 486 (NZ) Squadron in the Typhoon and Tempest aircraft.

There are only 11 Tempests in existence and this would be the only one flying in the world.

To express interest in joining a syndicate to buy the aircraft, restore it and keep it in New Zealand, contact Paul McSweeney of Pioneer Aero.

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P: +64 09 296 8913 F: +64 09 296 8943



Family members of previous 486 (NZ) Squadron members are also invited to get in touch.

without too much trouble, though he also says they only have to buy one of an item to make the price go up for the next one.

Steve has also pulled down the engine for evaluation. No decision has been made on the engine yet – either the original Bristol Centaurus, or a later model Sea Fury (parts are more readily available) are options for the future owner(s) to consider.

Some restoration work of MW376's airframe and systems has been undertaken over the last 20 years by previous owners, however this needs to at the least be thoroughly inspected and in some cases repeated afresh by the Pioneer Aero team. An example of this is the forward fuselage structure which has been completely redone since arriving at Ardmore. All parts are presently appropriately inhibited for storage though they can be readily inspected if required.

**For Sale: Hawker Tempest MW376**

Although the Tempest Mk.II didn't see action during WWII, it is unlikely that a Mk.V will ever be made airworthy again and thus the Mk.II represents the best opportunity for a collector to have a flying representation of the Tempest lineage. The Mk.II has seen a degree of combat however, being utilised for strafing runs during the India / Pakistan conflicts. The Pioneer Aero team don't currently have any historical information about the type's service in India but are seeking this. If any readers know of information resources that might help with this then please pass those details on to Paul at Pioneer Aero.

Tempest Mk.II MW376 is now for sale, with the estate of Eric Hertz open to negotiation on the price. Paul says they do understand that the cost of shipping the plane to New Zealand is effectively lost and also that its currently dismantled state does little to enhance its value. Potentially that adds up to a bargain acquisition for a New Zealand syndicate. Paul says that if funds were available, restoring the aircraft would take in the order of 3 years. There is no syndicate currently in place so this could all be structured to the requirements of its assembled members.

The budget to bring a project like this to a fully restored, flying status is in the order of NZ\$3m so a passion for aviation and what the aircraft represents is required, as well as substantial funding. Having the aircraft already here at Ardmore is a great start for someone or a syndicate to indulge that passion and acquire what is potentially a one-of-a-kind warbird with which to thrill aviation enthusiasts, and themselves, and to honour those who worked on and flew the Tempest, as was Eric's intention.

For more information contact Paul McSweeney at Pioneer Aero on 09 296 8913, email: paul@pioneeraero.co.nz or visit: [www.pioneeraero.co.nz](http://www.pioneeraero.co.nz)

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contributed by Jill McCaw

# Higher and higher: Soaring in the wave



Soaring in the wave can provide for some "tremendous fun" and mean a free ride to 18,000 feet and beyond.

AS I write this column I've just spent the morning in the Air Law lecture for the Qualified Glider Pilot (QGP) rating. In amongst the lists of CAA, Gliding NZ, and local club rules, our CFI who was giving the lecture said something that had never occurred to me. He said that most power pilots don't know the rules pertaining to airspace. He says they don't need to know, as most don't fly higher than 2000 feet above the ground.

It makes sense I suppose. Most GA flights are VFR and you don't need to be any higher than that. It is probably one of the biggest differences between glider pilots and other pilots. For us, height is everything. The higher we go the further we can fly. This is why loss of uncontrolled airspace (see the article earlier in this issue in KiwiFlyer) is such a big deal. We need that height. Not to mention, when you are climbing in wave lift it can actually be difficult to stop ascending.

This happened to a crowd of Canterbury Gliding Club pilots last weekend. It was a glorious spring day, clear and cool with a good nor-west breeze blowing up top. In nor-west conditions the airflow over the Southern Alps creates wave. If you remember that air is a liquid then the phenomenon is identical to what happens to a river flowing over rocks. The water/air falls over the obstacle and then 'bounces' upward – higher than the obstruction that caused it. Then the ripple effect causes further waves downstream. Last Saturday the sky above our glider field here at Springfield was full of waves.

I went flying with my son Alex in the Club's Janus, a cross-country two seat glider. By the time we took off many others

had noted that there was a reliable entry into the wave above the Lime Works on the main road and the tow pilot was taking everyone over there. We released from tow at around 2000 feet AGL, straight into rotor thermal, the broken but mostly rising air under the wave. This is the tricky bit. The useable lift of the wave doesn't happen much below about 8000 feet so to use it you have to find a way up. It can often take hours or scunging and circling in weak and scrappy thermals to do it. Then you have to find the wave, the rising air of course is completely invisible and it is a matter of making judgements based on what cloud you can see and wind strength and direction. Alex and I however were in for a dream run. We thermalled the rotor, gaining height, losing the lift occasionally, but consistently climbing overall. Within ten minutes from release of tow we had gained 4000 feet and were sitting around 7000 feet ASL. The lift smoothed out. The area of rising air widened. We were in the wave, the bounce of smooth air that could have taken us to 18,000 feet. We didn't even have to go looking for it. From the cloud indicators we could have ridden that line of wave lift all the way to Hanmer.

The glider was oxygen and transponder equipped. We could have gone anywhere. One thing we couldn't do without clearance, was keep going up. Our airspace ceiling was 9500 feet. It was late in the day, bitterly cold, and neither of us were dressed for a prolonged flight at altitude so we decided against going cross country and we decided against the bother of asking for clearance to go higher. The problem was, the lift was so strong it was almost impossible to stay below that ceiling. We

were flying at 80 knots (racing speed for the Janus) AND had the airbrakes out. We were still going up. I actually had to fly out of the wave to keep us legal.

The whole flight was tremendous fun. We didn't want to go higher/further/do more than we did. But many times glider pilots do. There were other people flying that day who would have loved to have popped up higher, just to see how high the wave went, how high they could go. It's like stopping climbing, half way up a mountain because there's an arbitrary line on the ground, with a sign that says, 'You shall not cross this line until you've cleared it with the Controller.'

Of course, many of those flying that day did call up Control and get clearance. It was granted without any problems, but that is not always the case. If the Controller is busy, there is a commercial jet coming through, or for any number of reasons, sometimes that permission will not be granted. Glider pilots aren't bemoaning the need for controlled airspace. No-one wants to be wrapped around the tail of a 747. Heck, I don't even want to be anywhere near its prop wash. What we do want is places in the sky where we can play, without unnecessary restrictions.

If you are interested in gliding and flying in wave yourself, see the Gliding NZ website for your closest club. If you are interested in helping keep New Zealand from being swamped in unneeded airspace restrictions, contact GNZ President Nigel Davy, email: nigel@davy@clear.net.nz

*I'm Jill McCaw, Editor and Publisher of SoaringNZ, NZ's magazine about all things gliding. Subscription details can be found on [www.gliding.co.nz](http://www.gliding.co.nz)*