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South Africa



SPITFIRE RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATE: May 2021

Sadly, due to the devastating effect of COVID on us, the progress on the project has been very restricted over the past twelve months. The Steering Committee continues to meet regularly, planning and strategizing for the future. It has been incredible working with the Committee during this difficult time, especially during Level 5 lockdown: the Steering Committee has remained resolute and given their best.

1) THE HANGAR

The most urgent requirement for the Project to proceed is a new larger workspace. The present one cannot accommodate the jigs required for the empennage, wings and fuselage. The Museum allocated an area for the erection of the new hangar, which will ultimately become the new Museum Restoration Hangar. As readers may be aware, Performance Centre, a Centurion based company, have partnered with the Spitfire Restoration Project and offered to build and sell ten unique FTR 5 litre V8 Ford Mustangs, in the colours of the aircraft of ten South African aviation legends. These Mustangs will be built in the specific colours requested by the owner.

The first was completed and recently sold, thus making the new owners the envy of the Spitfire community. It was completed as DB-H, the colours which our Spitfire bore in 1950 whilst stationed at Waterkloof Air Force Base. The project's research All at Waterkloof. The intention to restore her to those same colours, as they team found entries in the Captain Bob Rogers' logbook indicating he had flown 5518. The team has also just reviewed Lieutenant D D Grace's logbook and found that he flew 5518 once in 1949 and 3 times in 1950. are historically correct for this Spitfire.

As a consequence of this sale, Performance Centre have made a massive R75 000-00 donation to the Project, for which we are incredibly grateful.



The Pillay family, Darren, Nirvarsha, Craig and Rajen with their new family member, Performance Centre Ford Mustang DB-H



Grant Askham (CEO, Performance Centre) handing the cheque to Phil Scallan (President of FSAAFM) and Ian Grace, as a donation to the Spitfire Restoration Project

We wish to thank Grant Askham and Colin Lazarus for their generous support to the Project.

With the construction of the new hangar, we will require civil and structural engineers, legal specialists, a quantity surveyor, building, project and personnel managers, and industrial engineers to oversee the workflows.

2) MEDIA

Through the Performance Centre Mustang Project and their donation, the Museum and the Project have received significant publicity. Flypast, the largest British aviation publication, published an article in January 2021. Local publications have also been very supportive: World AirNews published a beautiful article, as did Road Trip, Drive and Times Live. A program was broadcast on EnCA Drive on Sunday 7th March 2021. We are extremely grateful to all these media companies, and their personnel for their support.

3) UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA JCP PROJECT

The University of Pretoria has a program where the second year students in the Faculty of Engineering, Built Science and Environment are required to participate in a forty hour community based project. In recent years, we have engaged a number of students very successfully in this regard. We wish to thank the University for allowing this participation.

In 2020, Robert Cathro, our Aeronautical and Engineering Manager, engaged some of these students to undertake the evaluation of the plans of the Spitfire empennage. Huge progress was made in establishing the completeness of these plans.



4) PARTNERSHIPS

Unfortunately, as a sad reality of the turbulent times which we are currently experiencing, a major partner was forced to withdraw support temporarily. We trust that this will soon be restored, as the level of lockdown decreases. Many of the companies whom we have approached are aviation companies and due to the pandemic these companies' operations were seriously reduced. As their businesses are now starting to trade again, we trust that their support will soon resume.

5) PROPOSED BUSINESS MODEL REGARDING THE PRODUCTION COMPONENTS

We are investigating the feasibility of creating a new business model for the Project. This would include the Project Partners: should the partner be in a position to manufacture certified aircraft parts, then they manufacture additional parts, which can then be traded, bartered or sold internationally, to assist to finance the Spitfire Restoration. This will greatly assist with the purchase of components required, as the majority will likely be priced in pounds sterling. £1 is around R20 at present ...

6) HISTORY OF AFB SWARTKOP

The year 2020 was the centenary of the South African Air Force. 2021 sees the centenary of Air Force Base Swartkop. An ambitious project, which started to record the undocumented history of the Spitfire, has now evolved into a project updating the history of the Museum. Two books were previously written and published in the late 1990's, regarding the Museum history, by Dave Becker and John Illsley. These books record the history until 1995. The intention is to record and add to the existing Museum history, to bring it up to the present time. As we operate from a Museum, and are part of the Museum, the preservation of the history is of paramount importance. Col Tony Smit has recorded an incredible amount of history from his term as Officer Commanding. Col Dave Knoesen is in the process of recording the history during his time. Other senior officers have also been approached to record their experiences. Once recorded, this will be stored at the Museum and possibly published at a later date.

7) ASSOCIATIONS

The Project continues to form links with other similar projects and companies. We have formed these with several similar projects in South Africa, such as Buccanner 416, Buccaneer 421, the Harvard Club, Little Annie and the SAA Heritage Flight. We all share common goals and in most cases we can assist or be of benefit and support to each other. We are also forming relationships with international organisations. We will continue in this regard.

8) VOLUNTEERS

We encourage volunteers and organisations to become involved and support us. To facilitate the Project, a Non Profit Organisation and Public Benefit Organisation were established. To manage and administer the Project, we require the services of many skills: lawyers, accountants, engineers, technicians and skilled artisans from all disciplines, administrators, procurement specialists, inventory administrators, SHERQ specialists, project management, IT specialists and administrators, PR, media and social media and most importantly anyone who has a passion for what we are doing.

To ALL already involved in the various, the Friends, the Spitfire Team may we offer our sincere appreciation. Also our sincere gratitude to Col Schoeman (Base OC Swartkop), Maj Ntshangase (Acting OC South African Air Force Museum) and the entire staff at Swartkop and the Museum for your continued support.

Should you wish to be involved in any way, in any part in this exciting Project, or contribute, PLEASE contact Ian Grace

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