



## Spitfire Restoration Project Friends of the SAAFM

# NEWSLETTER

## JANUARY 2025

### 2024: A YEAR OF PROGRESS AND GRATITUDE

2024 has been a very encouraging year for the Project! Firstly, to ALL our incredible Supporters, THANK YOU! We could not attempt this massive Project without your support.

Most people do not understand the magnitude of the Spitfire Restoration. The estimated damage to Spitfire 5518 is approximately R80M, considering inflation and the present value of the Rand. Fortunately, we have an incredible and very competent team, now scattered all over the world, but each still contributing to the Project. The Project has grown significantly, as we are now including additional aircraft as well, but the Spitfire remains the main focus.

We had a great year in 2024, participating at the SAAFM Air Show, Elders Flight and AAD. Next year, we are hoping to participate in two air shows in addition to the SAAFM Air Show

We are extremely excited and grateful that Col (rtd) Cobus Toerien agreed to join the Project. Cobus was the Officer Commanding 2 Squadron. Our Spitfire, 5518 was also related to 2 Squadron.

Cobus, is mentioned in the wonderful book MiG Diaries, relating to the South African – Angolan bush war, where Cobus was a Mirage pilot. Through Cobus, the Project has received Mirage III parts, plans and logbooks. These will be parts that can be used at the Museum, or exchanged for Spitfire components.

We intend commencing the erection of the hangar walls during late February / early March, due to a very generous offer by Dawid Laas to donate the bricks. A new member to our team is working to source a discount, possibly even a donation, of the sand required.

James and Sarah Ryan have made three significant donations of books and models to the Project. Trevor Burgess of Wheel Chox identified the need to secure 5518, and kindly donated a set of chocks for 5518. Paul Wainwright, a dedicated supporter of the Project, visited us, to assess the progress. Paul contributes monthly to the Project.

Rosalie Fox, a wonderful lady from the Free State, has authored three novels on Spitfires. Rosalie has made a significant donation of signed copies of her first two books to the Project: Tale of Wild Geese and A Place to Land. Volume three is about to be released.

Richard and Irene Brooks also donated a near complete set of Flypast magazines to the Project. Complete Flypast sets are extremely rare and we intend to try complete the collection.

**Continued...**

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR TEAM LEAD



## 2024: A YEAR OF PROGRESS AND GRATITUDE CONTINUED...

Regarding the book, MiG Diaries has received incredible reviews. It was also listed in the top 20 of Exclusive Books non fiction best books of the year. The author, Lionel Reid has donated copies to the Project, for re-sale to raise funds for the Project.

The book is signed by Lionel, Cobus and Sean Thackwray, a Cheetah pilot, who was also the illustrator. We still have a few signed copies of this book available. A copy will be a treasured item in a book collection.

A unique and incredible donation to the Project, was that of the cockpit "simulator" of Mirage FI AZ, cockpit 206, as flown by Arthur Piercy. This forms a significant part of the SAAF heritage. This cockpit was initially converted into an F1 simulator, then de-commissioned. Peter and Dave Dooley created the simulator and have now entrusted the cockpit to the Project for preservation.

The cockpit section has been delivered . The cockpit section was officially accepted by the CSAAF, Lt Gen Mbambo and Arthur Piercy at the Elders Flight in July 2024. It will be preserved at the SAAFM.

Should you wish to contact the Project, please contact me via email or phone.

Thanking you for your interest, support, contributions and donations!

With immense gratitude,

*Ian Grace*



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## COBUS TOERIEN JOINS THE SPITFIRE RESTORATION PROJECT TEAM

It is with great pleasure that we announce that Col (Rtd) Cobus Toerien has agreed to join the Project as a Director within the South African Aviation Foundation Museum (SAAF). The SAAF is a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) and a Non Profit Organisation (NPO), administering and managing the Restoration of Spitfire 5518, and possibly additional aircraft.

Cobus is a former Commanding Officer of 2 Squadron, and as Spitfire 5518 is a former 2 Squadron aircraft, the is immediately a very strong connection.

Cobus has been instrumental in acquiring aircraft spares, manuals and logbooks for the Project. He has also been a valued member at many Hangar and Aircraft Clean ups, moving of equipment and provided much historical information regarding airframes. In a short time, Cobus has become a very valued member of the Team, with his absolute dedication to the preservation of our military aviation history.

He joined the Air Force in 1974 to become an operational pilot. After receiving wings and his commission, he completed the B.Mil degree at the Military Academy, before being posted for operational flying and pilot attack instruction tours on the Impala and Mirage F1CZ types. He completed 168 operational missions during the Angolan Conflict. On completion of a 5-year tour as the Officer Commanding 2 Squadron, 'the Flying Cheetahs' and 26 years in the SAAF, he joined South African Airways [SAA] in 1999 as an accident investigator, the flight safety manager, before commencing flying again in 1994 on the Boeing 737-800 and Airbus 330 / 340 types.

He retired from SAA in Feb 2019 with a total of 12 000 flying hours, of which 2000 are on supersonic types. Since 2015 He also been involved at the Airline Pilots Association and is an IFALPA-accredited Aircraft Accident Investigator. Since 2018, he has been a member of the Human Factor Hub as the Flight Safety Manager whilst 'freelancing' as an Independent Aviation Safety & Human Factor advisor; since 2023, the Aviation Safety Manager at Incomar Aeronautics, and lecturing Safety & CRM at CemAir, AIFA, etc.

His hobbies include all things flying, watersports, visiting the bushveld, and joining the Friends of the SAAF Museum in early 2024.

## NEW TEAM MEMBER



Cobus Toerien  
Col (ret) / BMil / CA / ATPL

### Did you know?



Cobus Toerien flew 168 operational missions during the Angolan Conflict, showcasing exceptional skill and bravery.

As Officer Commanding of 2 Squadron, Cobus led the legendary 'Flying Cheetahs' during a pivotal time in South African aviation history.



From military jets to commercial airliners, Cobus has amassed an extraordinary 12,000 hours in the skies over his career.

## HANGAR WALLS SET FOR CONSTRUCTION



Following the significant offer from **Dawid Laas**, we intend to commence construction of the hangar walls from the end of February.

Dawid previously owned the the only flying MB326 in South Africa. He is very passionate about the Project and very generously offered to donate all the bricks required to erect the external boundary walls. We are extremely grateful to Dawid, for his passion, contribution and desire for the Project to progress.

We require a 2500 litre plastic water tank and stand, sand, cement, brick force, damp proofing, window frames, edging bricks, glazing, a double steel pedestrian door and frame, two 3m steel roller shutter doors and the main hangar door. Should anyone be in the position to contribute, it would be greatly appreciated.



## JAMES AND SARAH RYAN'S GENEROUS DONATIONS CONTINUE

## DONATIONS

James and Sarah Ryan have made several significant donations of books, memorabilia, and models to the Project.

On Saturday, 3rd August 2024, fantastic supporters of the Spitfire Restoration Project, James and Sarah Ryan, visited the Museum and made a further very generous donation to the Project. The Project team on the day received the donation on behalf of the Project.

We are very grateful to James and Sarah Ryan for their continuous support of the Project. They have made several donations consisting of a large quantity of books, DVDs, and models. These are sold to raise funds towards the Spitfire. The Project is extremely grateful for their generous donations.



In the photograph above, left to right: Mike Hoepper, James Ryan, Nico Smith, Sarah Ryan, Melanie and Robert Hardy, Clive Godfrey, and Lynn Greyling.

## WHEEL CHOX DONATION SECURES SPITFIRE TE213

As a project, we are grateful to all the wonderful supporters, companies and donors to the project. It is this support that will make this project materialize. Trevor, from the company Wheel Chox graciously donated a set of Wheel Chocks for Spitfire TE213. With these Chocks, Spitfire TE213 will be secure when parked. Our sincere gratitude and appreciation to Trevor and Wheel Chox!



Trevor Burgess, a wonderful supporter of the Spitfire Restoration Project.



## DONATIONS

### PAUL WAINWRIGHT: A LONGSTANDING ADVOCATE FOR THE SPITFIRE PROJECT

Paul Wainwright, a Spitfire enthusiast, has been a supporter of the project, contributing significantly over many years. On 27th December 2023, we were honoured to host him when he visited the project and introduce him to the physical project. Subsequently, he has paid a return visit as well.

The Project thanks Paul for his generosity and support.



In the photograph, from left to right are Paul Wainwright, Phil Scallan and Kathryn Grace.

### FLYPAST MAGAZINE COLLECTION PRESERVED FOR HISTORY



On 20th January 2024, Richard and Irene Brooks visited the South African Air Force Museum at Swartkop. They presented a near complete collection of Flypast magazines, in pristine condition to the Spitfire Project. Additionally, Richard and Irene presented a First Day Cover collection.

It is the intention to preserve this collection in the Spitfire Project library, as reference material. The Project thanks Richard and Irene for their very generous donation.

Apologies to them for the poor quality of the photograph.



In the photograph, Rosalie Fox is donating copies of her Book, "Tale of Wild Geese" to Robert Hardy, a member of the Spitfire Restoration Project. The books will be sold to raise funds for the Project.

The reviews of this book have been fantastic: naturally, the novel relates to a Spitfire. Rosalie has subsequently authored a second book, "A Place to Land", which is also receiving wonderful reviews from our supporters. Rosalie is about to launch a third volume.

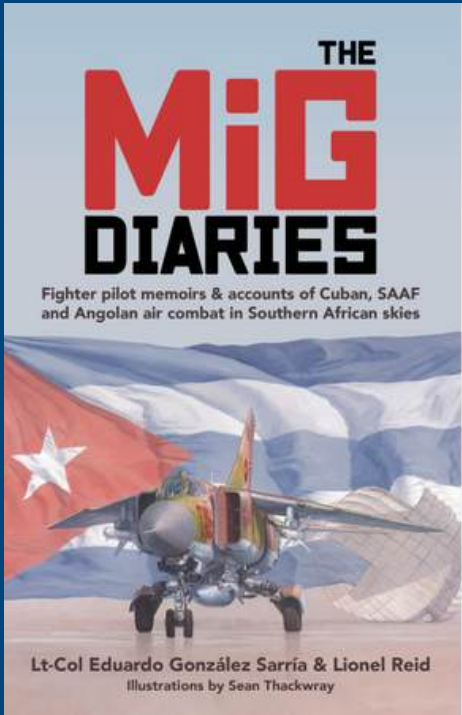
She is a dear friend of the Spitfire Restoration Project and a huge supporter, and has travelled on several occasions from the Free State. It is wonderful to see a lady so passionate about the project.

Rosalie, we thank you and appreciate your incredible support!





In the photograph, from left to right Cobus Toerien, Lionel Reid and Sean Thackwray.



Lionel Reid is a pilot and author of the book MiG Diaries, co-authored together with Cuban pilot Lt-Col Eduardo Gonzalez. Sean Thackwray illustrated the book.

MiG Diaries has been nominated for the best non-fiction book within the Exclusive Books awards.

The book is a wonderful presentation of the Bush war in Namibia and Angola, offering views from both the South African – Namibian side and the Angolan-Cuban perspective.

Lionel, a wonderful supporter of the Spitfire Restoration Project, donated copies of the MiG Diaries, for sale, to raise funds for the Spitfire Restoration Project. He has donated a second shipment of books to the Project. Our gratitude to Lionel for his generosity!



In the photograph is Col Tony Smit receiving the books from Lionel Reid.



## MIRAGE F1CZ COCKPIT JOINS THE SAAF HERITAGE

The cockpit section of a Mirage F1CZ, airframe 206, was presented to the Spitfire Restoration Project for safe keeping and preservation on the 15th May 2024. This was the cockpit of the Mirage which Arthur Piercy was flying, when struck by a missile.

On the 7th July 2024, during the Elder's Flight, the Chief of the South African Air Force, Gen. Wiseman Mbambo and Arthur Piercy unveiled the cockpit section.



In the photograph, Dave Dooley, Mike Hoeffler, Peter Dooley, Clive Godfrey and Robert Hardy.



In the photograph, Gen Wiseman, Arthur Piercy, Gerda Piercy and Mrs Mbambo.



### DONATION FROM PIERRE DIPPENAAR AND AEROSUD – MIRAGE III AND CHEETAH PARTS, MANUALS AND LOGBOOKS



In the photograph, from left to right, Robert Cathro (Project lead Engineer), Dr Chris Greef, Pierre Dippenaar, Sahir Singh, Cobus Toerien and Phil Scallan

Pierre Dippenaar and his team at Aerosud have made a remarkable contribution to the Spitfire Restoration Project. Known for their expertise in upgrading and modifying Mirage III and Cheetah aircraft, Aerosud played a critical role in preserving valuable aviation history.

At the conclusion of the project, all non-sensitive and non-classified information, including parts, manuals, and logbooks, were generously transferred to the Spitfire Restoration Project for safekeeping and future use. This invaluable donation will aid in preserving the legacy of these historic aircraft. It's important to note that no classified information was provided during this process.

We extend our deepest gratitude to Pierre Dippenaar and Aerosud for their passion and dedication to supporting aviation preservation.

## KNOBEL FAMILY'S SCALE SPITFIRE P-JK NEARS COMPLETION

## PETER KNOBEL'S SPITFIRE



In the photograph, from left to right, Clive Godfrey, Shirlee Smit, Col Tony Smit, Jann Knobel, Flt Sgt Marco Geddes, Flt Sgt Herman Groenewald

This Spitfire is a 5/8 scale home build, by Peter Knobel. It is absolutely magnificent. The Knobel family donated this masterpiece to the Spitfire Restoration Project.

This project is very much underway. Our main focus is to place PJ-K on her under carriage. This is not possible at the moment as the port side under carriage has a slight challenge.

Mike Hoepper, one of our highly competent resident engineers is investigating and re-designing this. On completion, Spitfire PJ-K will be displayed and preserved, to honour Peter and the Knobel family and also promote the Spitfire Restoration Project.



# SPITFIRE SIMULATOR

## SPITFIRE SIMULATOR REVIVED THANKS TO NICO BRAND



In the photograph, from left to right, Bela Wilson, Kathryn Grace, Mike Hoepper, Nico and Jen Brand, Clive Godfrey, Heydon Hall and Gerhard Holtshausen.

The project is very grateful to Nico Brand for his very generous donation of his  $\frac{3}{4}$  scale Spitfire fuselage. The Project collected the fuselage and Nico very generously also donated his entire library to the Project.

It was agreed that this fuselage would be converted into a Spitfire simulator. A team initially agreed to undertake the Project then sadly withdrew. A young very talented engineer has joined the Project, however and his hobbies include simulators. He has agreed to take on the simulator project.

CAREL HOFFMAN – SPITFIRE ZU-ZPA VISITS THE PROJECT, PILOTED BY BRIAN DAVIDSON

The Spitfire Restoration Project was honoured and privileged to participate in Felix Goshier’s Elders Flight on the 1st July 2024. Felix is an incredible supporter and assisted greatly in raising the funds to complete the new hangar’s roof.

On the day, Brian Davidson flew Carel Hoffman’s incredible 85% scale Spitfire to Swartkop for the event. Carel and Brian agreed to display their Spitfire with the Museum’s Spitfire TE213, together with the Knobel Spitfire PJ-K and the Nico Brandt scale Spitfires.



The beautiful Spitfire ZU-ZPA



Pilot Brian Davidson with ZU-ZPA. Photograph courtesy of Julian Pokroy.



South Africa’s four Spitfires.



Our line up of Spitfires: from Left to right, Carel Hoffman’s Scale Spitfire ZU-ZPA, Peter Knobel scale Spitfire PJ-K, Spitfire 5518 and the Nico Brand scale Spitfire.



# ART- DONATION

## ARTIST MICHAEL PRETORIUS CAPTURES SPITFIRE LEGACY



Col Tony Smit accepts the artwork from artist Michael Pretorius.



In the photograph, from left to right, Kathryn Grace, Mike Hoepper, Julian Pokroy, Col (rtd) Tony Smit, Russell Dixon-Paver, Joshua Pretorius, Michael Pretorius, Dylan Pretorius and Col (rtd) Cobus Toerien.

Photo courtesy of Julian Pokroy.

On Saturday, 18th January 2025, Michael Pretorius, a highly talented pencil sketch artist, visited the Museum with his sons, Dylan and Joshua. Michael has created three stunning sketches of Spitfires, each capturing a unique piece of aviation history.

The first sketch depicts four Spitfires flying in formation, including the Grace Spitfire and the Y2K Spitfire, which is now in Canada. The Y2K Spitfire was originally an ex-SAAF aircraft, previously owned by Mark de Vries. The second artwork beautifully portrays Spitfire 5518 in her 1950 colours, DB-H, flying above the Performance Centre Ford Mustang DB-H. The third sketch captures Spitfire 5518 in her earlier AX-K 1950 colours, though she will be restored as DB-H upon the project's completion.

In addition to these works, Michael created two more pieces specifically for Col (Rtd) Tony Smit, a founding member of the Museum and a key figure in the Spitfire Restoration Project. Tony, the second Officer Commanding of the Museum, was instrumental in the restoration of eleven aircraft, including the North American Mustang P51D, which he acquired, imported, restored, and test-flew, and the Provost. Michael's artwork commemorates these two aircraft and Tony's contributions to aviation history.

On this special day, Michael presented the original sketches to Tony, including the artwork featuring Spitfires AX-K and DB-H flying in formation. We are deeply grateful to Michael for his incredible talent, generosity, and unwavering support of the Spitfire Restoration Project!

## CUSTOM-BUILT MUSTANGS SUPPORT THE SPITFIRE PROJECT

## SUPERCHARGED MUSTANG



Performance Centre, a company with the Lazarus Motor Group, acquired ten licences to build unique Ford Mustangs, to support the Spitfire Project. Each Mustang will be one of a kind: the only one of its type in the world. Each will represent a different South African aircraft and pilot hero.

A standard Ford Mustang, 5 litre V8 is taken and converted into a super muscle car, each with its own unique identity. To view the pilots' names selected for the Project, visit the Warriors of the Sky website, [www.warriorsofthesky.co.za](http://www.warriorsofthesky.co.za).

The car is truly transformed, a supercharger is added, a RT-TR wide body kit is installed, new wider wheels, state of the art racing upholstery, and stunning air brush art work on the body! It is reported these are the fastest Ford Mustangs in South Africa! The first one has been sold.

We need a buyer for number 2. Credit cards will be accepted.





[www.spitfire-restoration.co.za](http://www.spitfire-restoration.co.za)