

Tuesday 30 April 2013

Spring Air Show flies the stars and stripes

Remembering the Mighty Eighth and the aircraft that flew for the USA

The Spring Air Show, on Sunday 26 May, commemorates the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the 78th Fighter Group of the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) at RAF Duxford in spectacular 'stars and stripes' style.

The first-ever display by the *Eagle Squadron* forms the centrepiece of a flying programme which showcases the legendary aircraft flown by American airmen during the Second World War.

The *Eagle Squadron* is a historic four-ship display comprising a Hawker Hurricane X, Supermarine Spitfire Mk I, Republic P-47G Thunderbolt and the North American P-51C Mustang *Princess Elizabeth*. *Princess Elizabeth* has been shipped over from the USA specifically for the Spring Air Show. The Hurricane and Spitfire have received new paint schemes especially for this display.

The *Eagle Squadron* will open the flying display in grand style, flying in four-ship formation, as pairs and also in an evocative display alongside B-17 Flying Fortress *Sally B*. This will be the first time since the Second World War that a 'razorback'-configured P-47 Thunderbolt and a P-51 Mustang have flown together in the United Kingdom.

The Fighter Collection's TF-51 Mustang *Miss Velma* and the Old Flying Machine Company's P-51 Mustang *Ferocious Frankie* represent the Mustangs that were flown from RAF Duxford and USAAF fighter stations across Great Britain during the latter half of the Second World War, on bomber escort and ground-strafing missions.

The only remaining airworthy survivor of the Pearl Harbor attack on 7 December 1941, The Fighter Collection's Curtiss P-40B Warhawk is also the oldest aircraft of its type in the world. It served with the 19th Pursuit Squadron of the 18th Pursuit Group of the United States Army Air Corps at Wheeler Field, Hawaii.

The Fighter Collection's Merlin-engine Curtiss P-40F Warhawk is one of only two airworthy examples of this variant in the world. Its Second World War service career remains a mystery, but today it wears the markings of *Lee's Hope*, flown by Lieutenant Robert J Duffield of the 85th Fighter Squadron, 79th Fighter Group, who flew from Capodichino airfield, southern Italy, in 1944.

Two Piper L-4 Cubs, owned by Robin Roberts and FrazerBlades, will also perform flying displays. The L-4 Cub, also known in military service as the Grasshopper, was used for reconnaissance, transporting supplies, artillery-spotting duties and evacuating injured soldiers. During the D-Day invasion, it offered an ideal aerial vantage point for spotting German tanks lying in wait along the hedge-covered edges of the invasion beaches.

The Westland Lysander, owned by the Shuttleworth Collection, is probably best known as a special operations aircraft, used to drop intelligence agents into enemy territory under the cover of darkness. It was also used by the United States Army Air Forces as a target tug aircraft.

The Spring Air Show sees two North American Harvards, owned by The Fighter Collection and Aircraft Restoration Company, perform flying displays. The Harvard was the United States Army Air Forces' trainer aircraft of choice and every pilot would have flown one before moving onto more powerful fighter aircraft such as the Thunderbolt or the Mustang.

D & M Miller's de Havilland Dragon Rapide represents the Dragon Rapides that were loaned by the RAF to the USAAF Eighth Air Force Command as light transport aircraft. They operated as freight and personnel transport, often carrying ferry pilots to and from American air bases in East Anglia.

Golden Apple's Stearman is a pristine example of the aircraft that was the primary trainer for American airmen during the Second World War.

The Douglas C-47 Skytrain was vital to the success of many Allied campaigns. C-47 units of the 9th Air Force, also based in Britain, supported the D-Day and Arnhem landings and the aircraft played a major role in the Berlin airlift. Two D-Day veteran C-47 Skytrains, owned by Dakota Heritage and Aces High, will perform displays at the Spring Air Show.

Presenting a powerful and high-performance spectacle is the North American F-86 Sabre operated by Golden Apple Operations. This Sabre is believed to be the world's oldest flying jet. F-86 Sabres took part in the Korean War and were the natural successor to the P-51 Mustang as agile and highly-effective fighter aircraft. A number of United States Air Force F-86 units were based in East Anglia during the Cold War.

Also performing at the Spring Air Show will be Supermarine Spitfire IXT owned by Air Leasing, Aircraft Restoration Company's Hispano HA-1112 MIL Buchon, the Royal Navy Historic Flight Fairey Swordfish, the rip-roaring Hawker Hunter, the iconic Battle of Britain Memorial Flight Avro Lancaster, Hawker Hurricane and Supermarine Spitfire and the gravity-defying Breitling Wingwalkers.

Closing the Spring Air Show in classic British style is the world-renowned the Red Arrows, in its 49th display season.

Join us for a superb day at the Spring Air Show, where we commemorate Anglo-American relations in a fabulous flying programme which presents some never-seen-before flying moments!

Purchase your tickets for the Spring Air Show by Monday 13 May at our advance booking rate and enjoy 10% off our 'on the day' ticket prices. Also, one free child ticket is available with every adult or senior ticket purchased in advance.

– Ends –

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Notes to Editors

- All flying is subject to weather, serviceability and operational commitments.
- Keep an eye on our website – iwm.org.uk – for updated information about the Spring Air Show, including aircraft taking part in the flying display.

IWM Duxford

IWM Duxford is Britain's best-preserved Second World War airfield, with a fascinating history that dates back to the First World War. Its story reflects the landmark achievements made in aviation history. IWM Duxford is Europe's premier aviation museum, where historic buildings intersperse with state-of-the-art exhibition halls, including AirSpace and the American Air Museum. Historic aircraft can regularly be seen taking to the skies from Duxford's wartime airfield. Through the rich displays of aircraft and the powerful stories of the men and women involved, we tell the story of the impact of aviation on the nature of war, on people's lives and on the social and economic history of the region. With one of the finest collections of tanks, military vehicles and artillery in the UK, we also show the impact of technological development on war and conflict.

Open Daily:

Summer 2013 16 March 2013 to 26 October 10am – 6pm. Last entry an hour before closing.
(Closed 24 – 26 December).

Admission*: £17.50 Adults; £14.00 Concessions (Senior, Student, Unemployed, Disabled Adult); £12.25 Disabled Senior/Student; Children (under 16) Free; Special rates for groups of ten plus.

IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches attract over 2 million visitors each year. [IWM London](#), our **flagship branch**, is transforming with new First World War Galleries and a new Atrium with large object displays which will open in summer 2014 to mark the Centenary of the First World War (Please note IWM London is closed until July 2013 when it will partially re-open, and in June 2014 the museum will fully reopen). Our other branches are [IWM North](#), housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; [IWM Duxford](#), a world-renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; [Churchill War Rooms](#), housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser [HMS Belfast](#).

First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM will mark the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the country, including the opening of brand new First World War Galleries at IWM London in 2014. For more information visit www.1914.org

