



Fly Navy Heritage Trust



FLIGHT DECK

SEE INSIDE ...

Firing on All Cylinders

Oldest Swordfish in the world flies again after major rebuild

Last Cold War Fighter Flying

Sea Vixen highlights British engineering and technology

Waiting in the Wings

Heritage Collection to tell story of naval flying

Over and Above

Beds and Bars Awards praise Fleet Air Arm values

The Few of the Few

Fleet Air Arm pilots remembered in Battle of Britain Flypast

Victory at Taranto

Success of decisive raid celebrated 75 years on

This year the Fly Navy Heritage Trust has had three iconic carrier-borne historic naval aircraft flying on the display circuit, the Swordfish, Seafire and Sea Vixen - a real celebration of our national heritage.

The Trust's mission is the preservation and promotion of the nation's Naval Aviation Heritage primarily through flying historic naval aircraft. A highlight of the year was the return to the skies of the oldest surviving Swordfish Mk 1 in the world, Swordfish W5856, flying for the first time in twelve years following a major rebuild.

With the help of a generous gift from the Peter Harrison Heritage Foundation and the longstanding and invaluable support of BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce, she flew magnificently all season, marking the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and the Fleet Air Arm victory at Taranto in November 1940.

The other great success story of the year was the spectacular de Havilland Sea Vixen. The all UK designed swept-wing, twin turbojet-powered fighter that saw service on British carriers during the Cold War, had an outstanding inaugural display season under Fly Navy Heritage Trust ownership.

"The last Cold War naval fighter flying in the world, the Sea Vixen symbolises the revolutionary and innovative technologies developed by British engineers and designers, the enduring focus of Britain on the sea and the resilience of British people" said Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham CBE, Chairman of the Trust. "She engenders a sense of national identity and is attracting a great following. Importantly she also represents the naval fast jet era, bringing the meaning and relevance of carrier aviation to younger audiences."

The Seafire Mk XVII, generously provided by Trustee Tim Manna, filled the gap left by the Sea Fury T20 and similarly gave exceptional service this year, allowing continuation of displays of big piston aircraft.

A year of Centenaries, 2015 also marked the first take-off of a wheeled aircraft from a ship at sea, the Bristol Scout from HMS Vindex in 1915, and the award of the first two naval aviation Victoria Crosses.

Continued over ...

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**PRESERVING AND PROMOTING
THE NATION'S NAVAL AVIATION HERITAGE**

EDITORIAL

Flight Deck has always been a title synonymous with the history, spirit and values of the Fleet Air Arm. For over fifty years its pages served as a narrative of the evolutionary story of naval flying and the contribution that supremacy in the air has made to the war at sea.

With many today unaware of the British invention and development of maritime aviation technology, the preservation and promotion of the UK's Naval Aviation Heritage is more important now than it has ever been.

Hurling themselves from temporary structures on the upper decks of warships, the early pioneers of naval aviation were met with almost universal disbelief; few could even begin to understand what they were doing! But their dedication to innovation and courage in the face of daunting challenges led to inspirational battle winning success.

Relating the work of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, Flight Deck today reflects the charity's same refusal to accept the status quo, and its determination to embrace change and find new innovative and entrepreneurial ways to tell the story of an air service, an ethos and a heritage that has no equivalent.

Sue Eagles
Campaign Director

CONTACT US

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

01935 842005
office@fnht.co.uk

CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

01935 849200
sue.eagles@fnht.co.uk

EVENTS

01935 452521
philt@fnht.co.uk

SEA VIXEN

steve.collier@fnht.co.uk

fnht.co.uk

From Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham CBE Chairman Fly Navy Heritage Trust

2015 has been an exciting year. The Swordfish and Sea Vixen are airborne again and we have broadened our ambition to 'educate, inspire and remember' by planning to bring together a wider collection of historic naval aircraft.

Our charitable objectives remain the preservation and promotion of the nation's Naval Aviation Heritage. We achieve this primarily by flying historic naval aircraft that are testament to our country's proud legacy of naval flying, to our historic world lead in aviation technology, and to the ethos and values of the Fleet Air Arm.

In 2017 the new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth enters service giving us the opportunity to connect the heritage collection and Fleet Air Arm of today with the history from which it evolved and during 2016 we will put the building blocks in place to generate a wing of historic naval aircraft to fly over HMS Queen Elizabeth at her commissioning.

We do conservation and preservation well in the UK and the Trust aims to build on this by presenting a joined up national approach to our Naval Aviation Heritage and finding ways of making the collection as relevant and accessible, to as wide an audience as possible.

We also aim to build an education programme. This work has already begun. In November, historian Dan Snow made a documentary on the story of Taranto.

There is much to do. We are custodians of an important national treasure and are incredibly grateful to our passionate benefactors and supporters. Amongst the most longstanding of our supporters, this year we have said goodbye to Admiral Sir John Treacher, Rear Admiral Terry Loughran and Trustees, Ray Edwards, Tony Edwards and Tim Boughton, all of whom have been hugely active and instrumental in developing the Trust over many years. We also said goodbye to Mike Nixon and John Longworth-Krafft who both gave their time unstintingly. We wish them all every success and thank them profusely for their invaluable and selfless contributions.

To all our supporters and donors, thank you all for making 2015 a significant year of reinvigoration for the Trust.

• Continued from front page

The Fleet Air Arm 'Few of the Few', the 56 naval aviators who flew in the Battle of Britain, were also remembered in the 75th anniversary national tribute by two Seafires, a Seafire Mk III and a Mk XVII.

"It has been a very successful year for the Royal Navy Historic Flight and our Naval Aviation Heritage in the round" said Rear Admiral Keith Blount OBE, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff Aviation, Amphibious Capability and Carriers and Rear Admiral Fleet Air Arm.

"With the help of the Libor Fund and the Trust's supporters and benefactors we are becoming more resilient and our Naval Aviation Heritage is on a stronger footing" continued Rear Admiral Blount. "We are not immune to problems; of course not, but continuing to build long term sustainability by investing in critical spares and support is a priority."

Continuing to increase fundraising with wider audiences and extending 'experiences' for more people to get up close with the aircraft is another priority over the year ahead. The Sea Fury T20 appeal has so far raised £189,000 towards the £250,000 target. This is a tremendous achievement and will help return this popular aircraft to the skies.

The 2015 season ended on a high with Lieutenant Commander Chris Götke AFC Royal Navy being credited with the best display ever seen in a warbird at Old Warden in October. Flying the Seafire Mk XVII in the WW2 trio of Sea Hurricane, Seafire and Hurricane Mk1, his display was described as everything a big piston display should be. Big graceful aerobatics combined with low sweeping passes. As the Hurricane broke off, the last pass by the naval pair was truly stunning.

Building the Collection



Pledged to delivering its promotional message through flying historic naval aircraft at air shows around the country, the Fly Navy Heritage Trust is moving towards a new era in the way it delivers its mission.

EDUCATE • INSPIRE • REMEMBER



The Trust's vision to build a broader flying heritage collection moved a step closer this year with the inclusion of the Sea Vixen in the 2015 display line up.

The concept of presenting a flying collection that can more completely tell the full naval aviation story through a representative range of heritage naval aircraft is taking the Trust into a new era. But why is it important to tell the wider story and how will the desire to build a wider collection be achieved, whilst simultaneously balancing the risk and cost of operating historic aircraft?

At its height at the end of World War Two, the Fleet Air Arm comprised over 78,000 people, 3,700 aircraft, 59 aircraft carriers and 56 air stations around the world.

The rapid advances of the folding wing, the angled flight deck, the steam catapult, the mirror landing sight and revolutionary vertical take-off aircraft - were all great British industry 'firsts' - The list is as exhaustive as the story is remarkable.

"This incredible success story and the service, sacrifice and high price paid, deserves national recognition" said Rear Admiral Ian Tibbitt CBE Deputy Chairman of the Trust.

"Ideally we would like to be able to tell the full story from the airship Mayfly to the Joint Strike Fighter and Wildcat" continued Ian.

"The aircraft of the Royal Navy Historic Flight and the Trust, while representing important types and eras, are only a fraction of the timeline and the Trust is working in partnership with private owners and operators of naval aircraft to build a collection of 'associates' to fly under a common naval aviation story banner."

"From Waterbird and Bristol Scout through Sea Hurricanes and Seafires to examples of the Gannet, Corsair, Martlet and helicopters there are numerous examples of airworthy and potentially airworthy aircraft in the UK being funded and operated by others which might help us illustrate more of the story."

Sue Eagles, Campaign Director for the Trust said "By working more collaboratively and combining a coherent flying collection with a strong presence on the ground, we hope to excite and enthuse, the millions who attend air shows every year. We also aim to stimulate interest and learning among younger audiences and serve as an inspirational touchstone for the Naval Service today."



NAVY HERITAGE AIRCRAFT HIGHLIGHT OF AIR SHO

2015

Three generations of historic carrier-borne aircraft stole the show at both RNAS Yeovilton and RNAS Culdrose Air Days this year in a celebration of the Nation's Naval Aviation Heritage.

All three aircraft, Sea Vixen G-CVIX XP924, Seafire Mk XVII SX336 G-KASX and Swordfish Mk1 W5856 are the only aircraft of their types still flying in the world.

"To have all three of these rare and historically significant naval aircraft flying this year has been a great achievement" said Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham CBE, Chairman of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust.

Both shows enjoyed glorious weather and record breaking crowds. The Seafire opened the show at Yeovilton, making a thrilling and dramatic entrance and the Sea Vixen flew in an awesome V-Jet formation with the Vulcan bomber and two Vampires in a unique four-ship classic British jets' flight.

The strong heritage showing at Yeovilton included the Sea Hurricane from the Shuttleworth Collection and at Culdrose the T-6 Texan Harvard, often used by the Trust, was joined by the Seafire and two other wonderful naval heritage associates, the Corsair and Martlet.



The Chipmunk also put on a good display at Culdrose but the hero of both shows was Swordfish W5856. Flown by Lieutenant Si Wilson Royal Navy, she went through her display manoeuvres of flypasts, tight turns and wingovers with characteristic ease, completing her display with the traditional Ensign Flypast with her Observer and Telegraphist Air Gunner standing in the rear cockpit saluting the crowd.

Over 200 Supporters enjoyed lunch in the Trust's marquee at RNAS Yeovilton and the Sea Fury FB11 made an impressive entrance to the enclosure.





WS!



Tribute to Channel Dash Hero

Helen Esmonde, the niece of Channel Dash Hero, Lieutenant Commander Eugene Esmonde VC DSO paid tribute to her uncle during a visit to RNAS Yeovilton in September.

"I was very kindly invited to the commissioning of 825 NAS last year and then to receive an invitation to honour my uncle with a flight in a Swordfish could not have been more special" said Helen.

"My uncle led an attack on two of Hitler's most formidable battleships and a heavy cruiser as they broke cover from Brest making a dash up the Channel for Germany. He had a squadron of six Swordfish and although he was an experienced Swordfish pilot, they faced overwhelming odds. Crippled and ablaze before they got into range, they flew on and delivered their attacks."

"Flying in the Swordfish really enabled me to experience what it must have been like for those 18 young aviators. They were all incredibly brave. As well as loving the history, I really enjoyed the flight. We banked, and turned, and just seemed to hang in the air at times. No wonder my uncle found the Swordfish such a dependable and trusty friend."

Lieutenant Commander Eugene Esmonde was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his absolutely heroic action. In 2017 the 75th Anniversary of the Channel Dash will be marked with a memorial service and flypast in Dover.

1915 NAVAL AVIATION'S FIRST VCS

One hundred years ago, Lieutenant Rex Warneford and Squadron Commander Richard Bell-Davies became the first naval aviators to receive the Victoria Cross. Throughout this Centenary year the Trust has highlighted the dramatic and inspiring actions that earned these men their place in history and the highest award for gallantry.

Warneford's extraordinarily courageous and resourceful moonlight duel with a German airship over Belgium on 7 June 1915, when he attacked and completely destroyed the Zeppelin in mid-air, made him a national hero overnight. Combat flying at night was unheard of at the time, and his fearlessness and bravery in taking on an airship in a small monoplane is still upheld today as an astonishing feat of airmanship. Richard Bell-Davies was awarded the Victoria Cross for rescuing a fellow pilot shot down behind enemy lines in Bulgaria in November 1915 during the Gallipoli campaign. Both Centenaries were marked by commemorative events in London attended by many former and current serving members of the Fleet Air Arm.



Swordfish W5856



Returns to the Air!

The only Swordfish Mk 1 bi-plane in the world, which saw active service with the Royal Navy in the Second World War, took to the skies again on 19 June 2015 for the first time in twelve years.

Built in 1941 by Blackburn Aircraft at Sherburn-in-Elmet, Swordfish W5856 was grounded in 2003 with corrosion in her wing spars but following a lengthy rebuild, she was finally restored to full flying condition with the support of a £200,000 grant from the Peter Harrison Heritage Foundation.

"To see this venerable and historic aircraft flying again 74 years after she was built has been incredible" said Rear Admiral Tom Cunningham CBE, Chairman Fly Navy Heritage Trust. "We are deeply indebted to Sir Peter Harrison. The aircraft is an absolute gem and Sir Peter's generosity has brought history back to life."

The aircraft's Pegasus engine was completely overhauled and new pistons and cylinders had to be specially manufactured. She was also repainted in the colour scheme of 820 Naval Air Squadron when embarked in HMS Ark Royal during the attack on the Bismarck in 1941.

Speaking of the challenges of getting W5856 back in the air, Lieutenant

Commander Chris Götke AFC Royal Navy, Commanding Officer of the Royal Navy Historic Flight said "We had to overcome many difficulties along the way but problem solving and finding innovative solutions is very much the ethos of the Fleet Air Arm. We could not have done it without the support of a great many people including BAE Systems, Cosworth, Deltair, the Rolls-Royce Project Team, the airworthiness authorities, everyone at RNAS Yeovilton and of course the Fly Navy Heritage Trust and Sir Peter Harrison."

Chris, who converted to the Swordfish over an intensive weekend of test flights in June, described the joy of flying such a rare historic aircraft.

"She is a 1930s design and the cockpit controls are in all manner of nooks and crannies! But what an absolute delight to fly! It is extraordinary to think that we went to war in a bi-plane but she is just so manoeuvrable, it is no wonder she was considered the greatest torpedo bomber in the world!"

FITTING TRIBUTE



The Trust's Chairman of Ambassadors, Nick Mason, flew into RNAS Yeovilton at the beginning of the display season to thank the engineers and maintenance team of the Royal Navy Historic Flight personally for their painstaking work in restoring Swordfish W5856 to her former glory.

Taking the opportunity to sit in the cockpit, Nick said "She is truly a national treasure and could not be a more fitting tribute to the memory of the men who flew her and the spirit and ethos of the Fleet Air Arm."



Living

History

Sir Peter Harrison KGCN CBE fulfilled the dream of a life time when he became the first person to fly in Swordfish W5856 following her rebuild. The generous benefactor, whose headline gift, through the Peter Harrison Heritage Foundation, saved the aircraft for the nation, was delighted to see her returned to her wartime colours and splendour and to fly in her himself.

“I was captivated by the story of the Swordfish as a school boy and hope this much loved old aircraft will bring the heroic achievements of her aircrews alive for young people today” said Sir Peter.

“Now that I have flown in the Swordfish, I can really understand the affection her crews had for her,” continued Sir Peter.

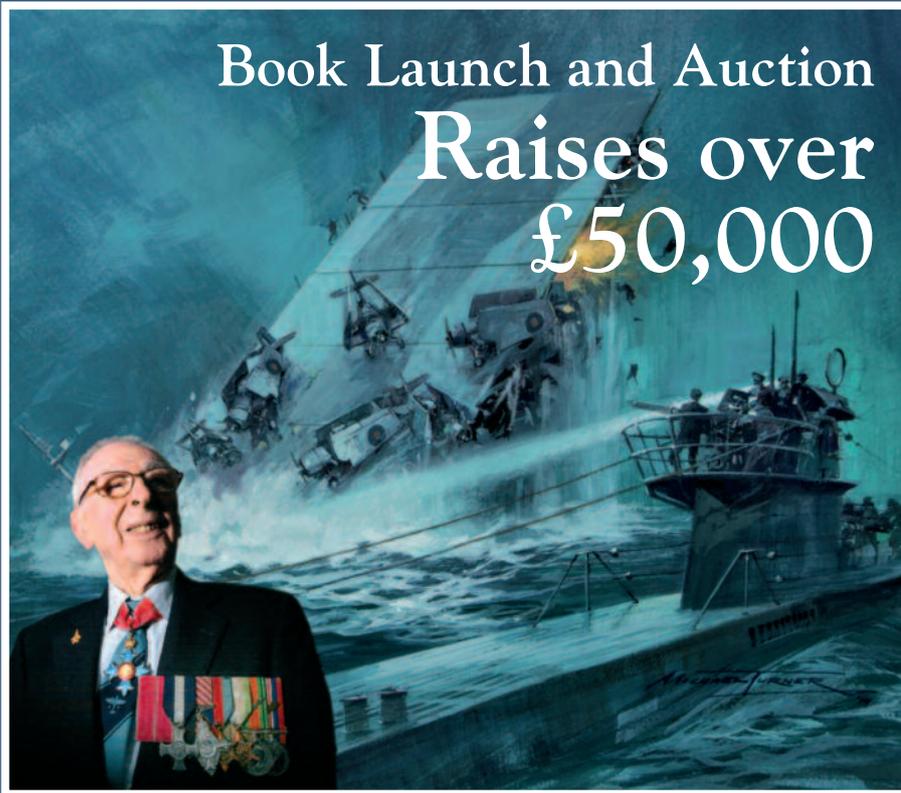
“It gives me pleasure to ‘give back’ in recognition of the service and sacrifice made for our country. When I think of the countless occasions Swordfish crews went out in atrocious conditions - their contribution is often forgotten but strategically, a squadron of Swordfish was a weapon capable of altering the course of a naval battle. Diving out of the sky with their torpedoes, they were the equivalent of a destroyer flotilla which had closed to short range - and levelling out at sea level they could attack enemy ships at all angles!”

“I wanted the Swordfish to fly this year to mark the 75th anniversary of Taranto. I can picture that night torpedo attack, with the moon glinting on a glassy sea and the Italian ships silhouetted in the harbour - then the Swordfish diving in like meteorites out of the sky! Seeing the Swordfish fly will help educate and tell young people these stories.”



Benefactor's visionary gift brings Swordfish heroes alive for young people today

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT



The launch of Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown's latest book 'Too Close for Comfort' and auction of the original paintings illustrating the book raised £50,000 for the Fly Navy Heritage Trust.

The limited edition book, which has been given a five star review by Aeroplane magazine, is a gripping story of death defying courage.

German U-boat U-751. The ship reared up so steeply that the aircraft plunged down the wildly tilting deck. I was very lucky to survive."

Vice Admiral Sir Michael Moore KBE LVO, who attended the event, lost his father in HMS Audacity. "I wanted to see Michael Turner's painting. My father, Lieutenant Anthony Moore was the ship's navigator and was a good friend of Eric's."

Speaking of working with Eric, Michael Turner said "Eric's accounts were so vivid that I could immediately visualise what he was describing. His memory of the 'turquoise green glow of phosphorescence surrounding the U-boat was mesmerizing."

Over 120 guests attended the event at the Mead Carney Gallery, London, in July and the paintings by renowned aviation artist Michael Turner FGAvA sold for £55,000.

Auctioneer, Nicolas Martineau, from Christie's said "It was an exceptional sale! The collection of paintings was a significant and important collection and the book and the paintings together, have a unique provenance."

One of the paintings in the collection was the sinking of HMS Audacity in the freezing Atlantic in December 1941. "I will never forget that fateful day" said Eric "We were hit by three torpedoes from



Flying Helmet sells for £20,000

A highlight of the evening was the surprise auction of Eric's flying helmet which went under the hammer for £20,000!

Eric's flying helmet, which he wore while serving at the Flight Test Centre, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, USA, was bought by a naval aviation enthusiast and entrepreneur. "I felt very safe in that helmet," said Eric. "We had not developed bone domes in the UK at that time."



'Too Close for Comfort' is available as a signed hardback edition price £150 or a signed Collectors' leather bound edition price £350 from the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, tel. 01935 849200 or email office@fnht.co.uk

ORDER
YOUR COPY
NOW



Paying tribute to the 56 naval pilots who flew in the Battle of Britain, Lt Cdr Chris Götke AFC flying Seafire Mk XVII SX336 G-KASX

The Few of the Few

Remembered in Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary Flypast

The Fleet Air Arm was represented in this year's historic Battle of Britain 75th Anniversary flypast across the south of England on 15 September by Lieutenant Commander Chris Götke AFC Royal Navy, flying a Seafire, the naval variant of the Spitfire, modified to operate from aircraft carriers during the Second World War.

Over 20 Spitfires, a Hurricane, a Blenheim and two Seafires took part in the flypast which marked the day on 15 September 1940, when the Luftwaffe launched its heaviest attack on Britain.



"The excitement was electric" said Chris. "It was a real privilege to pay tribute to the bravery of the 'Few of the Few', the 56 Naval pilots who flew in the Battle of Britain on such a momentous occasion."

"It was the largest flypast of Spitfires and Hurricanes since the Second World War and it was very emotional to think that losses on that 'hardest day' in 1940 equated to the same number of aircraft we were flying."

The naval pilots who took part in the Battle of Britain between July and August 1940 saw some of the fiercest fighting in the battle. 23 naval pilots served with twelve Fighter Command Squadrons, flying Spitfires and Hurricanes and a further 33 served with 804 and 808, the two Fleet Air Arm, Battle of Britain Squadrons, who provided dockyard defence.

Four naval pilots became fighter 'aces' and although rarely acknowledged, three naval pilots also flew with the famous 242 Squadron commanded by the legendary Wing Commander Douglas Bader, including Sub Lieutenant Dickie Cork DFC Royal Navy, who was his wingman.





Epitomising the ingenuity of British engineers, British Industry and the British Spirit, the Sea Vixen is a must see for aviation enthusiasts and families alike at the pick of top national air shows in 2016.

The Trust's great success story this year has been Sea Vixen G-CVIX XP924, the iconic all British twin-boom, twin-turbo-jet powered fighter that flew from Royal Navy aircraft carriers at the height of the Cold War in the 1960s and 70s.

The Sea Vixen was one of the UK's most notable aircraft designs of the Cold War era and its technology was cutting edge. Capable of transonic speeds and the first British aircraft to be armed with guided missiles, rockets and bombs instead of guns, she was formidably capable. Purpose designed to operate from carriers, with power folding swept wings and hinged nose-cone for easy access, she epitomised the radical and innovative thinking of British engineers and designers.

As an island nation, the potent sea fighter also became a symbol of our national identity and the determination and resilience of the British people, flying day and night from the carriers

as the all-weather interceptor poised at any time to defend the fleet. Today Sea Vixen G-CVIX XP924 is the only flying Sea Vixen in the world and after a successful year on the display circuit in 2015, this spectacular and popular aircraft is set to become a must see for aviation enthusiasts and families alike at national air shows over the years ahead.

Commodore Bill Covington CBE, Director of the Sea Vixen Team said, "Although G-CVIX is based at RNAS Yeovilton and is flying in Royal Navy colours she is owned by the Fly Navy Heritage Trust on behalf of the nation and is funded entirely by public donations."



"It was the Sea Vixen and high speed strike aircraft of the 60s and 70s that transformed our nation's carrier aviation capability" said Bill.

"The Sea Vixen is not only a signature aircraft for the nation's Naval Aviation Heritage but she also represents the achievements of the Cold War British Aviation Industry."

"As a nation, British carrier aviation development and the Cold War Jet story is one that needs to be known - and it is a story of which the British people can feel proud" continued Bill.

"The engineering challenges of operating a complex high performance jet have certainly kept us busy this year" said Sea Vixen Accountable Manager Keith Copus.

"But we're in great shape. During a maintenance test flight in the summer the aircraft climbed to 45,000' in seven minutes reaching Mach 1.05 and all the systems functioned extremely well."

"We've had outstanding support from the Civil Aviation Authority and the Royal Navy, including 1710 Naval Air Squadron" continued Keith.

"We are also grateful to Babcock and other agencies for their technical support, to Survival and Equipment Services who overhauled the ejection seats and VRS Precision Holdings for the fuel bay door lug modifications. We are a small team with a strong 'can-do' attitude. It has been a very successful first year and we are looking forward to a full programme of displays at top air shows in 2016."

**BRITAIN
AND THE SEA**

LAST COLD WAR FIGHTER FLYING

SEA VIXEN



"A fantastic day with an Awesome Aircraft!"

SEA VIXEN Experience Day

After a highly successful season on the air display circuit, Sea Vixen G-CVIX XP924 was open to visitors for her first 'Sea Vixen Experience Day' on 12 September. The event was sold out within days as veterans and aviation enthusiasts eagerly signed up for a day of unprecedented access to the world's only flying classic Fleet Air Arm jet fighter.

The day began with an entertaining insight into the challenges of flying the Sea Vixen from carriers at sea given by Admiral Sir Michael Layard KCB CBE, former Second Sea Lord and Sea Vixen 899 NAS Commanding Officer.

"We then headed out onto the tarmac and the up-close experience with the aircraft. The pilot and the engineers were fantastic" said one supporter. "We heard the tannoy pipe 'Hands to Flying Stations' and saw the aircraft accelerate down the runway and pull up high into the sky."

"It was great to talk to the guys whose skill and dedication has got this awesome aircraft flying again. There was a brilliant atmosphere and talking to the Sea Vixen veterans as well, you got a real feeling of what it was like to fly these jets in the Navy."

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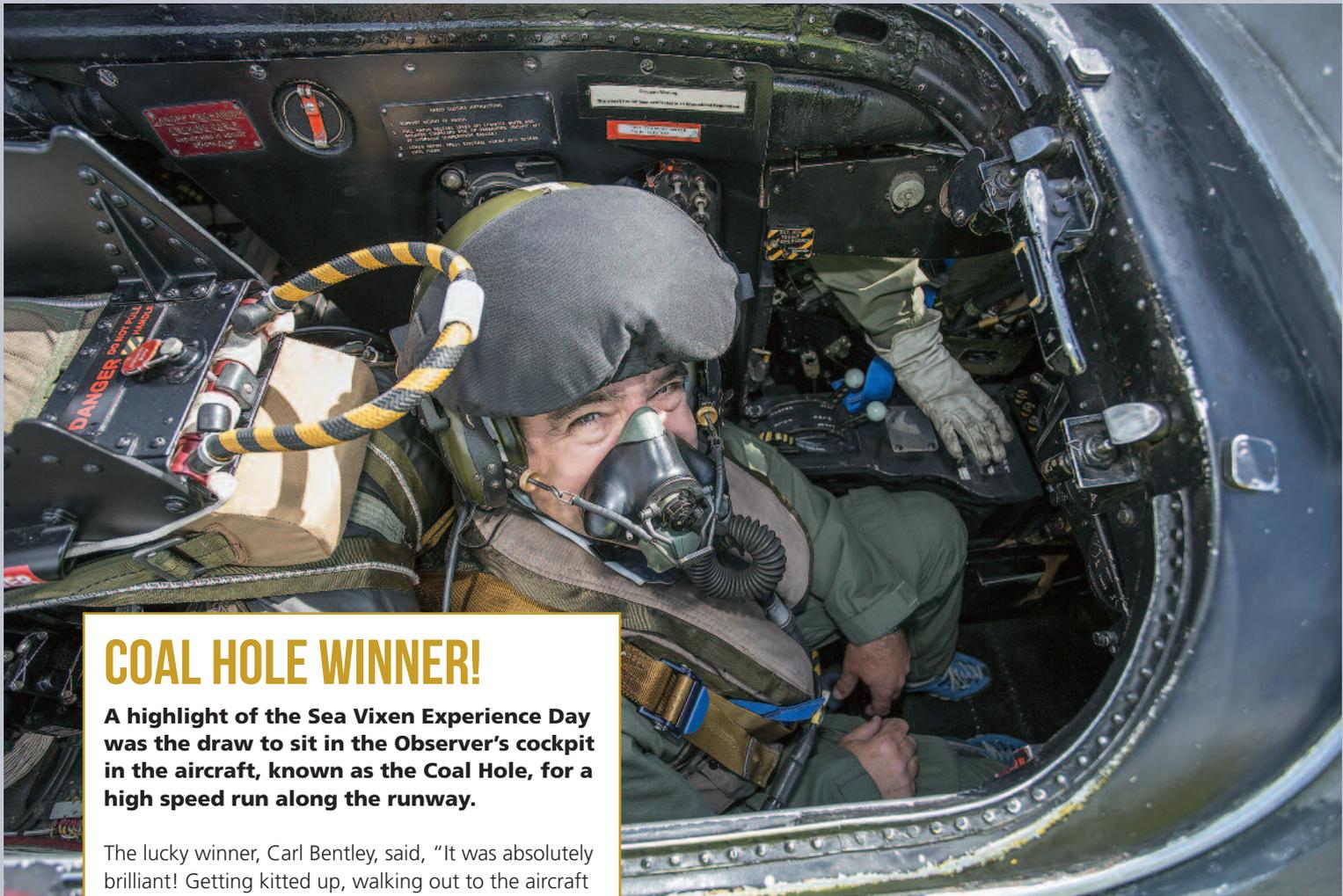
The pilot of the Sea Vixen, former Royal Navy Sea Harrier pilot, Commander Simon Hargreaves OBE RNR, spent time talking to supporters and enthusiasts about the aircraft.

"G-CVIX is a civil registered aircraft owned by the Fly Navy Heritage Trust and regulated by the Civil Aviation Authority" explained Simon. "She is funded entirely by charitable donations to the Trust – so your support is very important to us." A highly experienced Royal Navy Pilot and graduate of the Empire Test Pilots' School with over 9,000 hours on military jets, including the first pilot to fly the X-35B, which was the Concept Demonstration Aircraft for the F35 Joint Strike Fighter, Simon is looking forward to being the display pilot for the Sea Vixen for the 2016 season.



Are you a Young Technician?

Come and experience working on a heritage supersonic jet fighter! Nick Still (16), an engineering apprentice from Yeovil worked with the Sea Vixen maintenance team over the summer. "It's a great opportunity to gain engineering skills and get involved with history and heritage. F-35 next!" said Nick. To find out more about volunteer and youth opportunities with the Sea Vixen email steve.collier@fnht.co.uk



COAL HOLE WINNER!

A highlight of the Sea Vixen Experience Day was the draw to sit in the Observer's cockpit in the aircraft, known as the Coal Hole, for a high speed run along the runway.

The lucky winner, Carl Bentley, said, "It was absolutely brilliant! Getting kitted up, walking out to the aircraft and strapping in - and then the tremendous surge of power as we reached 90 knots along the runway! The heat and potency of the aircraft was amazing."

"The whole experience was fantastic" continued Carl "and it was particularly special as my father was on 899 NAS on HMS Eagle's last commission. My uncle was also a Sea Vixen maintainer and my grandfather was an armourer on Hellcat Squadrons during WW2."

"I grew up with a love of naval aircraft and can't wait to tell my father of my incredible day! He served with Admiral Sir Michael Layard on 899 and in Atlantic Conveyor during the Falklands."



"I really enjoyed meeting the former serving Sea Vixen guys and listening to the banter. There was a superb atmosphere. Many of them told me that if they had drawn the winning ticket, they would have put it back! In the Sea Vixen the pilot's position and canopy are offset to port and the observer is seated to starboard, lower down in a darkened cockpit for ease of viewing the attack radar. It is almost entirely enclosed and is not called the Coal Hole for nothing!"



Thank you!

BAE SYSTEMS



The oldest flying Royal Navy Swordfish Mk1 in the world, Swordfish W5856, returned to BAE Systems Brough, East Yorkshire, in September to say thank you to the apprentices and specialist engineers at the site for their dedicated support to the aircraft over many years.

Swordfish W5856 was bought by BAE Systems in 1990 and the workforce at Brough lovingly restored her to full flying condition before gifting her to the Royal Navy Historic Flight in 1993.

Ten years later, when the life in her wing spars expired, BAE Systems stepped in again, freeing up company facilities and resources to build a brand new set of wings.

"We are deeply grateful to BAE Systems for their continued and long standing support," said Lieutenant Commander Chris Götke AFC Royal Navy, Commanding Officer of the Royal Navy Historic Flight.

"As well as gifting a significant number of exceptional historic aircraft to the Royal Navy Historic Flight, BAE Systems' commitment to our heritage and the Swordfish especially, has been outstanding" said Chris.

"You simply cannot put a price on the painstaking effort, skill and generosity of the staff at Brough and the support of the whole company has been considerable."

Howard Mason, BAE Systems Heritage Manager said "We are proud of our long history of aviation industry and innovation and the Swordfish is an irreplaceable part of our heritage. It is important that her legacy is not lost."

Speaking at BAE Systems Brough during the visit, Rear Admiral Ian Tibbitt CBE, Deputy Chairman of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, said "Without the support of BAE Systems the Swordfish would simply not be flying. We are extremely grateful for their ongoing support for these priceless aircraft. The company's heritage programme is a key contributor to our work to preserve the UK's naval aviation history and fully complements our aim to educate and inspire current and future generations."



Swordfish W5856 also took the opportunity while she was in the North of England, to pay a homecoming visit to Sherburn-in-Elmet, where she was built by the Blackburn Aircraft Company in 1941. "People in Yorkshire have a great affection for the Swordfish" said Sarah Douglas, nee Blackburn, whose family ran the Blackburn Aircraft factory. "Over 1,700 Swordfish were built at the factory and the last one left the production line in August 1944. The whole family was at the factory when the last Swordfish departed. I shall never forget it. Blackburn aircraft became known as 'Blackfish' and it is an exceptional day when a Blackfish comes home" said Sarah.

Supporters' Day



This year's Supporters' Day was held on the 70th anniversary of VE Day in May with supporters coming together to remember, celebrate and show their gratitude for the aircraft and men and women of the Fleet Air Arm and Naval Service who did so much to defend our country in World War Two.

"The Royal Navy Historic Flight hangar had the atmosphere of a 1940s street party with red, white and blue bunting, Vera Lynn playing on the radio and the aircraft completing the theme perfectly. It was wonderfully nostalgic" said Commander Edward Thring from Castle Cary.



Many enjoyed buying aircraft instruments and memorabilia and Hilton Holloway, pictured above, from London, bought one of the Sea Fury T20 propeller blades!

"I know it is expensive keeping these wonderful aircraft flying so I am pleased to give generously to save our heritage. Chris even signed it too, so I am delighted!" said Hilton.



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

You can contact us through Facebook or Twitter. They are great ways to keep in touch and let us know your thoughts.

Visit our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/FlyNavyHeritageTrust](https://www.facebook.com/FlyNavyHeritageTrust) or tweet us [@flynavyheritage](https://twitter.com/flynavyheritage)

We also send regular news updates, information about events and photographs of our aircraft, by email.

E-NEWS UPDATES DON'T MISS OUT!

Unfortunately we do not have email addresses for many of our Supporters and you may be missing out! It would be very helpful if you can let us know your email address. Please email your name and first line of your address (or your supporter member number) to:

office@fnht.co.uk

You are welcome to tell us if you do not wish to receive our regular news emails, however it would still be very useful to have your email address on record.



Tony **WINS** Annual Draw for Flight in Heritage Aircraft

Tony Atkinson could not believe his luck when his name was drawn out of the hat to win a flight in a heritage aircraft. A longstanding supporter of the Fly Navy Heritage Trust, Tony said "As I strapped into the aircraft the familiar sight of the Chipmunk's beautiful old cockpit brought the memories flooding back. Chipmunk, Chris Götke and I had perfect aviating weather. It was idyllic – as good as it gets! I was whooping loudly inside – even before we started spinning and aeros!"

"Being a supporter gives me some great benefits and keeps me up to date."

Tony, a retired Air Traffic Controller, who served in HMS Victorious during her last commission, flew Harvards in Canada, the Chipmunk at Linton-on-Ouse, the Tiger Moth at Brawdy and still flies a Club Cherokee at Compton Abbas. Tony's wife, Val, daughter Charlotte, son, Richard and son-in-law Matt shared his happy day with him. "It was an unforgettable red letter day for me!"

WHAT DO YOU VALUE MOST ABOUT YOUR FLY NAVY HERITAGE TRUST SUPPORTER MEMBERSHIP? WE WANT TO KNOW!

£500,000 LIBOR GRANT HELPS SECURE LONG TERM FUTURE FOR SWORDFISH

The Trust received the welcome news in January that it was one of the military charities to benefit from the £35 million Armed Forces Covenant Libor Fund.

The Libor Fund was set up from the fines levied on banks for manipulating the London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) financial benchmark and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne MP pledged £3 million to causes which support Royal Navy families and projects which showcase naval history.

The Trust received £500,000 to fund essential repairs and build a contingency of spares to help keep the Royal Navy's two Fairey Swordfish flying at air shows and events around the country.

"This grant is a tremendous boost to our funding" said Gerry Hunt, Finance Director for the Trust. "It will make a real difference enabling us to provide a vital third Pegasus engine and all the spares needed to keep both aircraft flying well into the future."

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BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

Continuing to build long term sustainability and resilience by investing in critical spares, engines and components has been a priority this year.

Following a disappointing 2014 display season, the Royal Navy conducted a root and branch review of the sustainability programme for its heritage aircraft.

As a result of the review, the Royal Navy and the Trust have begun to develop and implement a basket of mitigation measures to address the identified issues and ensure more consistent and reliable availability over the years ahead.

"Historic aircraft are particularly vulnerable to engine problems" said Howard Read, Chief Engineer on the Flight "and the long lead in times and high costs of engine overhaul, repair and recondition have compromised the availability of the Swordfish particularly."

"After a long and technically challenging restoration programme, Swordfish W5856 returned to the skies in June and her newly restored Pegasus engine ran smoothly all season. We are extremely grateful to Rolls-Royce. Their technical advice has been invaluable. There is no doubt that having reliable Pegasus Mk 30 engines, with the required approvals from a Design Organisation and Support Authority are critical to sustainability in the future" continued Howard. "We have made the first move by having new pistons and cylinders specially manufactured and have successfully proved them this year through a rigorous programme of regular checks and inspections."



"The priority for next year is to get the second Swordfish LS326 flying again. We plan to have at least one Swordfish airworthy and available all year. However, to do that we need at least one spare serviceable engine and our third engine is in a poor state of repair."

For the Trust, the critical issue is fundraising to support these expensive capital items and balancing immediate priorities with the cost of building longer term resilience.

"To provide real sustainability for two flying Swordfish in the future we are potentially looking at the acquisition of a fourth Pegasus engine and another aircraft restoration. The Libor grant will help fund this but we still have a significant



SEA FURY T20 REBUILD

The rebuild of Hawker Sea Fury T20 G-RNHF (VX281), which suffered engine failure in 2014, is progressing well at North Weald and subject to raising the money and finding engine spares the Trust is working hard to get the aircraft in the air again.

Despite the loss of engine power, the pilot, Lieutenant Commander Chris Götke AFC Royal Navy, made a skilful and gentle touchdown ensuring minimum damage to the aircraft. Internal damage to the engine, however, was extensive and although the core of a replacement Centaurus Mk XVIII was purchased earlier this year, the paucity of spare parts is proving costly and challenging.

"The complexity of rebuilding a Centaurus 18 engine is proving more expensive and technically challenging than we first thought" said Bill Covington CBE, Director of Naval Aviation Ltd. "We are still striving to have three aircraft types flying next year but it may be 2017 before the T20 is flying again."

"Only 2,500 Centaurus Mk XVIII engines were built and the authenticity of the replacement engine is extremely important to keep the integrity of this beautiful historic naval aircraft" said Trustee, Tim Manna.



"There is a really good team working on it and we have had great cooperation from the insurers but there is always a degree of unpredictability in restoring these old heritage aircraft."

Built in the early 1940s, the Centaurus Mk XVIII was the ultimate development of the Bristol Aeroplane Company's series of sleeve valve engines and it was this 2,500 horse power engine that made the Sea Fury one of the fastest high performance piston-engine fighters ever built. While the exact cause of the engine failure is still unknown, the evidence suggests that the failure was a result of the breakup of mechanical components within the front row of the crankcase caused by severe overheating.

The cost of rebuilding the engine together with some corrosion repair to the undercarriage legs is expected to be in the region of £250,000 and the Trust has already raised £195,000 towards this target. Please keep your support coming. Every pound counts. To help get the 'Fury' back in the skies please make a donation online at www.fnht.co.uk Sea Fury T20 Appeal or to the Fly Navy Heritage Trust at RNAS Yeovilton.

fundraising challenge ahead" said Rear Admiral Ian Tibbitt CBE, Deputy Chairman of the Trust.

"We have completed a study to identify what engines, airframes and components we need, and where we might find them" continued Ian. "The Swordfish is the core aircraft at the heart of the heritage collection and we are working closely with the Royal Navy and DE&S to support the development of better engine repair and overhaul facilities for the Flight. The Team is also looking to introduce Parametric Data Gathering systems on the Swordfish to monitor engine health and performance," said Ian.

Air Force Cross Presented by Prince Charles

Lieutenant Commander Chris Götke Royal Navy, Commanding Officer of the Royal Navy Historic Flight was presented with the Air Force Cross by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace on 12 June 2015.

Chris, who was awarded the AFC for heroically landing Sea Fury T20 G-RNHF VX281 after suffering engine failure at RNAS Culdrose Air Day in July 2014, faced the deeply unenviable choice of jumping out of the aircraft or crash landing in a field. Despite rapidly losing altitude, Chris bravely chose to stay with the aircraft, pulling the plane out of a steep dive and managing to glide the heavy fighter back over the airfield boundary.

"I effectively put the aircraft into the equivalent of neutral, allowing it to lose power and glide" said Chris.

In a series of split second decisions Chris also rapidly raised the undercarriage reducing drag and improving the glide angle just sufficiently to make it onto the runway.

An experienced Navy Test Pilot, Chris delayed lowering the landing gear again until the last possible moment. Acutely aware that hydraulic pressure might be reduced due to the failed engine, he held the aircraft off the ground perilously close to the stall speed giving the gear a crucial second more to lock into position. With no 1940s aircraft simulators in which to train for emergency procedures, Chris' calm handling of the situation was all the more courageous.



His citation praised his 'extraordinary and instinctive flying skills which averted disaster and prevented the real chance of catastrophic loss of life.' He minimised damage to a historically important aircraft and his 'quick thinking and exemplary airmanship was one of the finest examples of gallantry in the air in peacetime.'



Chris' outstanding airmanship was also recognised by the Honourable Company of Air Pilots when he received the Master's Commendation at their annual Awards Ceremony at the Guildhall, London in October.

Heritage Awards Praise Fleet Air Arm Values

The Fly Navy Heritage Trust Awards programme, which recognises the excellence and distinction of young people serving in the Fleet Air Arm nominated three outstanding winners this year.

The 2015 winners, Leading Medical Assistant Serena Bennett, Leading Aircraft Controller Leah Payne and Logistician Daniel Garrod were all praised for their total professionalism, 'can do' approach and for making a real difference to the productivity and efficiency of their departments.



Serena Bennett (pictured) was presented with her award by Andrew Griffiths MP at a lunch hosted by the sponsor of the awards, Keith Knowles, Chief Executive of Beds & Bars in London.

Speaking of Serena's achievement, Andrew Griffiths MP said "Serena's professionalism and commitment really 'stands out'. She is not only highly competent at her job but she consistently steps up to challenges and goes out of her way to benefit the Service. She is a shining example of young people in the Fleet Air Arm today."

Sue Eagles, Campaign Director of the Trust said "The awards reflect that the heritage of the Fleet Air Arm lies in the values of its people. Courage, fearlessness in adversity, ingenuity and resourcefulness in overcoming problems and a 'can-do' attitude are the values at the heart of our naval aviation heritage."

The awards are presented three times a year and the winners receive an overnight stay in London and a weekend in a Beds & Bars hotel of their choice anywhere in Europe.

Days of Our Lives

Capturing the memories and feelings of those who are helping to promote our naval aviation heritage has become an important part of our work as the Trust digs deeper into why naval flying is such an important part of our national identity.



Sub Lieutenant Jack Thomas RNVR

Jack Thomas, pictured at RNAS Maydown in 1944, was delighted to see Swordfish W5856 return to the skies this year. "I completed my conversion course to the Swordfish in 1943 at RAF Errol in Perthshire and flew Swordfish W5856 on three occasions while I was there" said Jack. "She is a very special aircraft to me – and in June 1995, on a visit to RNAS Yeovilton, I was fortunate enough to fly in her again. A wonderful day! Jack's book of poems 'The Lonely Sea and the Sky' has sold over 200 copies with all proceeds donated to the Trust.

Mrs Sheila Thomson

Sheila's husband, Lieutenant Commander Ron Richardson RNZNVR, Commanding Officer 1840 Naval Air Squadron was killed in action during the attack on the Tirpitz in August 1944. Embarked in HMS Indefatigable, Ron's squadron was part of a strike force of 40 Barracuda dive bombers and 50 fighters, including Corsairs, Hellcats and Fireflies.



"I had not been back to RNAS Yeovilton for 70 years" said Sheila. "Ron was an instructor on 809 Squadron flying Seafires. I remember the Nissen huts and the smell of the aircraft as if it was yesterday. In October this year I was invited to the Fly Navy Heritage Trust Legacy Seminar - and what an exceptional privilege it was. I attended with my grandson, Commander Philip Richardson, Commanding Officer 815 Naval Air Squadron. It was an extremely special day for both of us, especially seeing the Seafire flying again."

"My grandfather scored two direct hits on the Tirpitz, diving through intense flak and low cloud," said Phil Richardson "His bravery inspired me from an early age to join the Fleet Air Arm."

Lieutenant Commander 'Jock' Moffat

John (96) joined a fledgling Naval Air Arm at the beginning of the Second World War and in May 1941 was the Swordfish pilot whose torpedo is credited with crippling the Bismarck.



"My father flew with Commander Samson in the Dardanelles" said John "and the memory of the dreadful slaughter of the First World War was still very much on peoples' minds. When Churchill gave the order to sink the Bismarck, we knew we just had to stop her trail of devastation at all costs. We dived in through the mirk, into a lethal storm of shells and bullets, skimming the water at wave height and waiting until exactly the best moment to release our torpedoes."



BUILDING THE TEAM

Three new members of staff joined the team this year helping to build capacity as the Trust moves into an exciting period of growth.

Former Royal Navy Sea Harrier pilot, Steve Collier is the Sea Vixen Business Manager. Jenny Forbes, pictured left, joined in February after a career with BP, managing the development and operation of BP.com, to head up our social media and website development and Laila Sadler, our newest member, with a background in science and charity work, joined in the summer, as Fundraising Support Manager, to help develop the Trust's fundraising.



Great Scot Award for Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown

Fly Navy Heritage Trust Ambassador, Captain Eric 'Winkle' Brown was hailed a national hero at the spectacular Sunday Mail Great Scot Awards in Edinburgh in October.



At the joyous climax to the 25th annual awards ceremony, Eric (96) received a standing ovation in honour of his incredible career as a Naval Test Pilot and his services to aviation and the country. Winning a

Great Scot Award was a particular highlight for Eric coming at the end of an exceptional year that saw him return to Belsen concentration camp with the Queen to meet survivors. In 1945 Eric had helped to liberate the camp, having earlier in the war been arrested by the SS and survived his ship being torpedoed.

"I don't consider myself to be a hero" said Eric "I love flying and have been fortunate to have pioneered technologies that have given the UK aviation industry a world leading reputation it can be justly proud of."



TARANTO 75

This year marked the 75th Anniversary of one of the Fleet Air Arm's greatest actions, the Raid on the Italian Battlefleet at Taranto on 11 November 1940 when twenty one Swordfish biplanes from 813, 815, 819 and 824 Naval Air Squadrons, launched a devastating attack that changed the face of Naval Aviation and set a blueprint for the Japanese air strike on Pearl Harbour.

Historian Dan Snow, who flew in Swordfish W5856 to make a documentary highlighting the anniversary, said "Of all the Second World War anniversaries, Taranto is one of the most significant. It was a decisive victory that gave the Allies the strategic advantage at sea and changed the outcome of the War."

"They were incredibly brave young men. Chilled to the bone in open cockpits, in aircraft heavily laden with fuel and weapons they were operating at night at the extreme limits of range from their carrier and flying directly into a heavily defended strategic harbour."

"Taranto was a remarkable victory for a small force. The destruction of the Italian Fleet allowed Allied convoys to operate successfully at a critical stage of the war, and for the loss of only two Swordfish and two crew members, it was an unprecedented example of the UK's 7th Principle of War - Economy of Effort."

"They dived into an inferno that night. A total of 40 medals were awarded including four DSO's, 18 DSC's and 18 Mentions in Despatches."



“The initiative and indomitable spirit of the Fleet Air Arm unleashed the strategic and devastating effect of Carrier Air Power. This vital naval capability remains critical to UK defence strategy today with HMS Queen Elizabeth about to enter service in the Royal Navy.”

Dan Snow

Dan Snow's documentary Operation Judgment 'The Battle of Taranto' can be viewed on www.fnht.co.uk/Taranto or search 'YouTube Taranto 75'

Diary Dates 2016

Thursday 17 March
Industry and Corporates' Dinner

Saturday 14 May
Supporters' Experience Day
RNAS Yeovilton

Wednesday 1 June
Swordfish Corporate Golf Tournament
Bowood Country Club, Devizes

Saturday 2 July
RNAS Yeovilton Air Day

Thursday 28 July
RNAS Culdrose Air Day

Friday 30 September
Legacy Seminar
RNAS Yeovilton

The Sea Vixen Experience

During 2016 the Trust will be running a programme of Sea Vixen Experience visits. Watch our website for dates or join our mailing list email office@fnht.co.uk

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to assist with events, provide support groups for different aircraft types, help in the office or man the trailer at Air Shows around the country. These tasks don't take up enormous amounts of time but they make a huge difference to raising awareness, spreading the word and raising money to keep our Naval Aviation Heritage in the public eye. If you have some spare time and would like to help, please give us a call on 01935 842005 or email us at office@fnht.co.uk

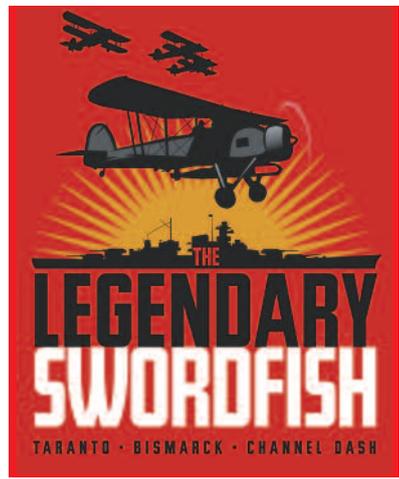
Legacy Appeal

Leaving a gift to the Trust in your will is an easy way for your generosity to last beyond your lifetime and benefit future generations. We appreciate, however, that this can be a delicate decision. Our next Legacy Seminar is Friday 30 September 2016. These are by no means sombre occasions. They are actually an enjoyable insight into the excitement, challenges and commitment of providing for the flying collection in the long term. To request an invitation please email sue.eagles@fnht.co.uk

WE HAVE MOVED ...

Fly Navy Heritage Trust
RNAS Yeovilton
Ilchester, Somerset BA22 8HT
01935 842005
01935 849200
Email office@fnht.co.uk







NAVY WINGS

**PRESERVING AND PROMOTING
THE NATION'S NAVAL AVIATION HERITAGE**