

WARBIRDS DIRECTORY V6



Commemorative Air Force formation: Bell P-63, Bell P-39 and Curtiss P-40: Photo Peter R. March

Compiled by Geoff Goodall

Version 6 updated 2013

Introduction

The *Warbirds Directory* presents listings of over 300 different types of "warbirds": retired military aircraft subsequently flown under civil registrations by civil owners.

The listings of World War Two and early post-WWII era aircraft types also include all known survivors: those which may not have received civil markings but which still exist in museums, held in storage, or even derelict on some remote airfield. Experience has shown that even the most battered and stripped airframe "hulk" or wreck can be rebuilt into a flying warbird showpiece by skilled restorers. A perusal of the aircraft histories in this Directory will reveal examples of flying restorations based on hulks salvaged after laying on the bottom of Lake Michigan since the war, salvaged from swamps in Russian forests, displayed in the weather in parks for over thirty years, and even buried under landfill on a remote farm on the Canadian prairie.

The individual aircraft histories in the *Warbirds Directory* do not pretend to be the whole story - they give known owners, accident details and other significant events in the aircraft's career. The compiler is aware, based on a lifetime of aircraft research, that the full story of any aircraft is unlikely to be found in official records or even the aircraft's own airframe log book. This is particularly true of warbirds, given the clandestine acquisition of airframes by some military air arms and de-identifying the aircraft by removing manufacturer's plates.

Even warbirds with apparently less colourful backgrounds often come from hard working previous careers in agricultural work or aerial fire tankers, prone to major accidents and structural rebuilds, using components from other aircraft and losing their true identities along the way. Restorations of warbirds using major parts from other aircraft and emerging with a new identity, swapping or even creating new manufacturers identity plates, warbirds which are seemingly destroyed in a severe accidents reappearing as pristine restorations - such is the mystique and fascination of the warbird fraternity.

The magnitude and standard of restorations is truly remarkable - tangled rusted airframes salvaged from Russian lakes and bogs are being turned into pristine airworthy aircraft in England, America, Romania, New Zealand and Russia itself. The scope of such rebuilds, which replace virtually all components of the airframe and often use a non-original engine type, has led to much debate in recent years over when a rebuild is a replica and not a restoration.

A word about the magnificent work of the airframe and engine restoration companies. When known, we give the location of a rebuild, but to avoid offending individual restorers we generally do not name restoration companies due to the high level of sub-contracting of major components to other restorers elsewhere in the country, or increasingly, other countries.

The *Warbirds Directory* salutes the owners, the sponsors, the restoration shops, the museums and the enthusiasts who love to see these fascinating aircraft, whether flying or on display.

What's In This Directory

- Selected World War Two era combat and trainer military aircraft types which received civil registrations after military disposal.
- Survivors of selected World War Two era military types which did not receive civil registrations
- Selected post-WWII military types, which have been allocated civil registrations.
- Not included are the thousands of static display military jets at air bases, museums, memorials or public parks around the world
- Photo galleries, showing aircraft currently flying, as well as warbirds of the past.

Acknowledgements

The basic data used to compile this Directory comes from public domain official records of civil and military authorities, collected and compiled for over 40 years. In addition, a wide range of aviation publications has provided information on the status of flying warbirds and restoration projects around the World.

In addition to the news-stand commercial magazines, the most valuable on-going information source has been the excellent Air-Britain range of specialist publications: *Air-Britain News*, *Air-Britain Archives*, *Air-Britain Aviation World* and their range of civil register books. *Classic Wings* magazine from New Zealand and *Flightpath* from Australia provided consistently high quality information. Over more recent years, numerous Internet websites have helped expand the stories of aircraft and their owners.

After publication of the last edition, the following readers responded with updates and corrections: Andy Marden, Alan Lock, Tony Morris, Ralph Lunt, David Legg, Pat Carry, Mike Henniger, Terry Judge, Leif Hellstrom, Steve Darke, Peter Dance, Bill Fisher, Rob Mears, Paco Rivas, Willi Hendrix. I thank you all and hope you will be pleased to see your changes incorporated in this edition.

My thanks go to the many warbird owners, restorers and enthusiasts around the world who have responded to my questions. Special thanks go to Peter R. March in Great Britain for his photographs and continuing support. Fellow Australian researchers David Prossor, Gordon Reid, Tony Arbon, John Hopton, Peter Anderson, Paul Howard, Phil Vabre and John Chapman have provided a continuing flow of information and sightings from domestic and overseas travels.

My special thanks go to Ron Cuskelly for his generous help to create this website on which I have included this updated version 6 of the *Warbirds Directory* and Derek Macphail for his ongoing support and invaluable IT skills.

Geoff Goodall
Melbourne, Australia. July 2013