

One of our board members, Stephen van Dijck, was combining business with a family visit and he headed off before Christmas 2022 to Aotearoa, New Zealand. The main goal of the visit was to see how the work was done, meetings cockpit lay-outs, discussions about our colour scheme and see how amazing work already was done.

Our Steve was meeting up twice with Steve Cox, Marty and the rest of team at Pioneer Aero and that was marvellous. Six top notch engineers working full time on "White 25". It was important for the team to meet one of the owners and for Steve and us to observe the care, precision, personal pride, and dedication at every stage of the restoration.



Master riveter just popped up.

So where are we at the moment?

The fuselage is largely completed with work now shifting to the internal fitting of brackets, conduits, pulleys required for the cockpit, and for the various other sectional areas such as the radio/electronics bays etc. The area forward of the firewall is being added to in a similar fashion. The horizontal tail, elevators, ailerons, flaps, rudder, and the vertical tail are as good as complete. A start has been made on the wings with the all-new spars and stringer extrusions looking excellent.



Steve van Dijck en Steve Cox with cooling intake frame.



Many discussions were held and where possible decisions have been made. One important decision of note being the inclusion of a belly tank, instead of integral extra wing fuel tanks. The belly tank will compensate somewhat the amount of fuel that can be carried after offering up the fuselage tank to accommodate the inclusion of the rear seat. Baggage capability is increased by using the ammunition bays as well as the standard Curtiss canvas bag in the baggage compartment.

At the Dutch Warbird Foundation we'll have to make an informed decision on our choice of engine overhauler soon and invaluable information is being gained to help us make the best choice possible. We can't overstress the importance of all the advice and experience of not only Pioneer Aero but the various owners, operators, engineers spread throughout NZ who I visited and spoke to. They were kind enough to share their time and informed information which spans decades.



We also discussed some cockpit instrumentation in more detail. In line with modern requirements some compromises will have to be made to originality of cockpit equipment whilst on the other hand some brilliant ideas will be used to retain the original equipment look. An example is that the original radio boxes will be used with the modern units inside. Innovative and passionate ideas from Pioneer Aero!



With access to the aircraft of Frank and Liz's P-40 Steve sat in their aircraft for around 3 hours. Steve Cox, Marty and Steve van Dijck discussed cockpit layout regarding requirements and functionality.

To cap off this update we showed a possible colour scheme, which will remain a secret at this stage, to the good men at Pioneer Aero. They were very impressed and happy that, (whatever the final version may be), it wouldn't be another drab green camo scheme.

To be continued

The Dutch Warbird Foundation

