

NEW ZEALAND WARBIRDS ASSOCIATION (INC.)

De Havilland Lane, Ardmore Airport.
P.O. Box 283 049
Ardmore Airport, Papakura, Auckland 2582



UPDATE #12

20 June 2022

Gone up in the World !

Friday 17 June marks yet another milestone in our efforts to breathe new life into former RAF Canberra WT346 ...

After a couple of postponements due to the lousy weather, the Canberra is now safe and sound and taking pride of place in the 'NZ Warbirds at Ardmore' Visitor Centre.

Friday morning 0800 saw all of the operating aircraft moved out of the Visitor Centre. The Canberra was then deftly extracted from its temporary home in Hangar 1 and, with Fl Lt (Rtd) Gavin Trethewey at the controls, taxied to a new home. By 1030 the new extension frame and the HIAB were on-site and preparing for the lift. But the best intentions and planning sometimes need fine tuning - after 2 or 3 changes to the geometry of the lifting chains, the nose wheel gently lifted but the existing 'main wheels' stayed put. Some further head scratching required!!

Now, we go back a step - on the previous Saturday the camera hatch finally yielded a treasure trove of contents, including all of the covers for the canopy, engines, wheels and pitot head. But also tucked away were 7 X 25kg ballast bags containing very dense, rounded stones probably installed when the aircraft was disassembled in the late 70's.

So, the ballast bags were removed and hey presto- she gently moved to the horizontal! The team from Northern Sheetmetal moved in and loosened the existing frame, laid it on the floor and fitted the new extension. Then came the crucial part as the Canberra was lifted higher to allow the top plates and struts to be mated...with some gentle persuasion the frame fitted perfectly ..Success at last!

All that remained was to move her into the correct position against the hangar wall. All watched anxiously as the Palfinger slowly extended until the Canberra was in the right spot and lowered until the nose wheels slotted into the special stand.

It was now 1400 and there was a spontaneous sigh of relief and congratulations all round on a job well done!

It was big day and sincere thanks go to all involved in making the actual move possible;
NZ Warbirds – Allen House, Colin Gault, Paul Campbell and Dave Smith
Northern Sheetmetal Ltd – Andy McKee, Ricardo Van Blerck and Les Griggs
NZ Solid Ltd – Leon, Fili and Josh

So, RAF Canberra WT463, resplendent in the livery of RNZAF Canberra NZ6102 is now the new attraction at the Visitor Centre; the fin and rudder will shortly be in position as part of the display. Meantime, we're working on supportive display materials for the public to appreciate just how important it has been to preserve not only the heritage of WT346 but also the role the Canberra played as part of RNZAF history.

If you can't visit Ardmore in person to view the Canberra fuselage on display, here is a further reminder that the NZ Warbirds website does carry a Canberra section and access to a specific Canberra Facebook page; please use this link for further information:
<https://nzwarbirds.org.nz/association/canberra-restoration/>

What about some CANBERRA ART?

An opportunity to contribute further to the CSG funds and at the same time have your very own Limited Edition decorative LED light for home, office or display. An ideal gift for the aviation minded member of family or friends. Full details and an order form accompanied
Update #11

Thanks to those who have already made a purchase and for your positive feedback!

Gavin Trethewey/Tony Miller
Canberra Support Group

Donor Update #12