

FLYING TIGERS

SQUADRON DISPATCHES

Weekly Newsletter

LATEST EDITION



(Edition No.247) It was with some sadness this week, that I learned that RAF Cottesmore had been forced to yield yet another of its Harrier airframes! As the former Joint Harrier Force aircraft were loaded aboard ships bound for the US Military, Gate Guardian **Harrier GR.3 (XW917)** was removed from its position at the main entrance of the base, in a rather obvious '*cleansing*' of the Harrier aircraft and its association with this Rutland base.

Hawker Siddeley (BAe) Harrier GR.3 XW917 has been a high profile resident at RAF Cottesmore since 1999 and anyone who made the effort to go and see her cannot fail to have been impressed. Situated on a grassed area, opposite to the main entrance and guardroom, this machine was mounted on a pole in a very aggressive manner and made for an extremely striking gate guardian. Indeed, this aircraft has spent quite some time on a pole, guarding the entrance to RAF bases – its former duties included fulfilling a similar role at Royal Air Force Station Laarbruch, in Germany! A much loved resident at Cottesmore, this aircraft was extremely photogenic and its angled positioning allowed for some really interesting photographs, especially if the sun was out. Unfortunately, the sun has now set on the Harrier and its time at Cottesmore and this week, XW917 was gently removed from her display pole and placed on a low loader. By all reports, the work was carried out in an extremely careful manner and many hours were spent ensuring that the aircraft suffered as little stress as possible. She is to undertake similar duties at the National Air Traffic Control Centre in Swanwick, where civilian and military air traffic controllers work together in ensuring the safety of England's air space. The most important thing is that the aircraft will survive, even though she is serving as a high profile advert for the sad demise of the Harrier and the change in role for RAF Cottesmore – from this summer, the former home of the Harrier will be home to 600 troops of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Anglian Regiment.

It only takes the sight of some blue skies to start me thinking about the coming Airshow season and although we are still only in January, there is nothing like a little forward planning! With the state of the financial world at the moment, there is no moving away from the fact that Airshow 2012 has the potential of being a little uninspiring. I could be wrong and I sincerely hope that I am, but with the US Air Force all but cancelling the huge majority of its Airshow demonstration assets and many other air arms announcing deep and unforgiving cuts, modern aircraft participation at this summers air display events could be

extremely limited. This may actually be a huge opportunity for operators of historic and classic aviation types and forward thinking display organisers could actually turn 2012 into something of a triumph for the aviation enthusiast. If displays utilise some of the magnificent aircraft we have in this country, 2012 could be something very special indeed – backing up our popular Spitfire, Hurricane and Mustang displays, I am certain that Hunters, Gnats, Canberra's and particularly a Sea Vixen would swell Airshow audiences and leave them feeling that they had been anything but short changed! Hopefully, this will be the order of the day and the lack of international military participation will be seized upon as an opportunity to re-invigorate the UK Airshow scene and to provide some much needed revenue to home based historic aircraft operators.

OXFORD AVIATION SCOOP AT FLYING TIGERS

One of the recent success stories in the world of die-cast aviation model collecting has been the emergence of the [Oxford Aviation range of 1/72nd](#) scale models. Finished to an extremely high standard and produced at a price that is almost too good to be true, the range has started to include some really unusual aircraft types, which have obviously been of huge interest to the collector. Of late, their beautiful **Arado Ar 196** and **Heinkel He 162 Volksjager** have sold by the truck-load and their popularity must have taken everyone at Oxford by surprise. Not content with this significant progress, Oxford announced a new range last year, which promises to bring their models in a *head to head* contest with some of the best loved brands in the hobby and with the promise of a Premium Brand of aviation models, collectors are looking with great interest on what Oxford will have to offer. With many thanks to a great friend of Flying Tigers and his efforts at the recent Toy and Hobby exhibition, we are now in a position to give you **an exclusive first look** at these coming models! As with many of these model scoops, Mr X has made his apologies for the quality of the pictures, as they were taken through glass display cabinets, but we are really grateful for his help and I am sure that our readers will be really pleased to see these exclusive images.

When Oxford announced their new premium aviation range, they also further delighted us with news that their first two releases would be a De Havilland Tiger Moth and the beautiful Dragon Rapide. Even though these models were marketed by utilising colour profile artwork and just the promise of more detailed models, collectors were keen to register their interest in these exciting new models and we saw literally hundreds of pre-orders come flooding in! In my view, the vast majority of collectors have been waiting for a little more *meat on the bones* with this project, before they commit themselves, but I am in no



doubt that Oxford have no idea just how popular these new models are going to be. I partly agree with the sentiments of *wait and see*, having now served many years in this industry and I was also extremely interested in seeing what Mr Oxford was going to serve up with this project. Some recent industry rumblings have dared to utter extremely positive things about these new models and the photographs above certainly seem to confirm this optimism. Without doubt, the [De Havilland D H 89 Dragon Rapide](#) is one of the most attractive aircraft ever produced in Britain and I am very much looking forward to adding this model to my collection. From the picture above, I think you will agree that not only does it look positive, it looks absolutely magnificent – anyone still *sitting on the fence* and delaying their pre-order will certainly be tempted to change that, as I am absolutely certain that the first models received will sell out as soon as they hit the shelves! The new models are finished to an extremely high standard and also benefit from the inclusion of wire rigging and a new display stand – I am really looking forward to these models! The second release has the potential to adorn the shelves of millions of homes in the UK alone, as it brings us one of the most famous aircraft of all time – the [De Havilland Tiger Moth](#). So many people have come into contact with the Tiger Moth that a high quality die-cast model of the aircraft could quite possibly be the most successful 1/72nd scale model in existence! With tens of thousands of airmen learning their trade on the Tiger Moth and a great many examples surviving to this day, Oxford may well have stumbled upon a little *gold mine* and could leave the established manufacturers with more than a little *egg on their faces!* These beautiful new Oxford models are expected to be released during April, but you can ensure that you are one of the first to have one in your collection by clicking on this [NEW OXFORD](#) link and reserving your example.

Our weekly look at the *movers and shakers* on the Flying Tigers website begins with a distinctly lunar flavour, as our [NEW RELEASES](#) section now boasts a pair of Dragon Space Series releases that have already sold out at the distributors. Many aviation collectors also have an interest in space exploration and these unique models always sell extremely well. These latest releases are something very special for the space collector and whilst they are certainly a little more delicate than the majority of the models we carry on our site, they are finished to an incredibly high level! The two new models both commemorate the **Apollo 11 mission** and we have a 1/72nd scale 'lunar landing diorama' and a 1/48th scale 'Eagle Lander' – both models are sold out releases and we only have 6 of each still available! Please be quick with these ones, as we know that obtaining further models will be almost impossible. Aviation collectors will be well aware that the [Sky Guardians Gloster Javelin](#) has just arrived in stock and created yet another problem for suppliers – we received 1/3rd of the models we actually requested! Thankfully, to ease this pain, they have just announced a pair of Javelin [FUTURE RELEASES](#) that will again be of interest to fans of the classic British jet fighter. The first machine is in the colours of **No.33 Squadron**, from RAF Middleton St. George – this aircraft has been restored and now acts as gate guardian to the Jet Age Museum, at Staverton, in Gloucestershire. The second model is a really unusual all silver machine, which is in the colours of **No.11 Squadron**, at RAF Binbrook. Both models are available for pre-order now and will again be produced in relatively small numbers for this interesting and unique model release. Finally for this week, Sky Guardians will also be bringing us a pair of beautifully presented [BAe Tornado F.3's](#), which will benefit from some tooling modifications from the original releases!

SELL OUT RELEASE
1/72nd SCALE
APOLLO 11
'LUNAR LANDING DIORAMA'






Limited Edition
Future UK Special release!

Thank you for reading the latest edition of the Flying Tigers Newsletter (Edition 247)

MJC

Unfortunately due to the downsizing of our Squadron Dispatches Newsletter images for display on standard computer screens, some loss in quality has to be expected. The Flying Tigers Newsletter and all images contained within it are subject to international copyright law and must not be copied, used or distributed under any circumstances without prior permission being obtained from Flying Tigers Ltd. All rights are reserved. Copyright Flying Tigers Ltd MMXII