

VAYU

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Hahnweide: a treasure trove for old timer lovers

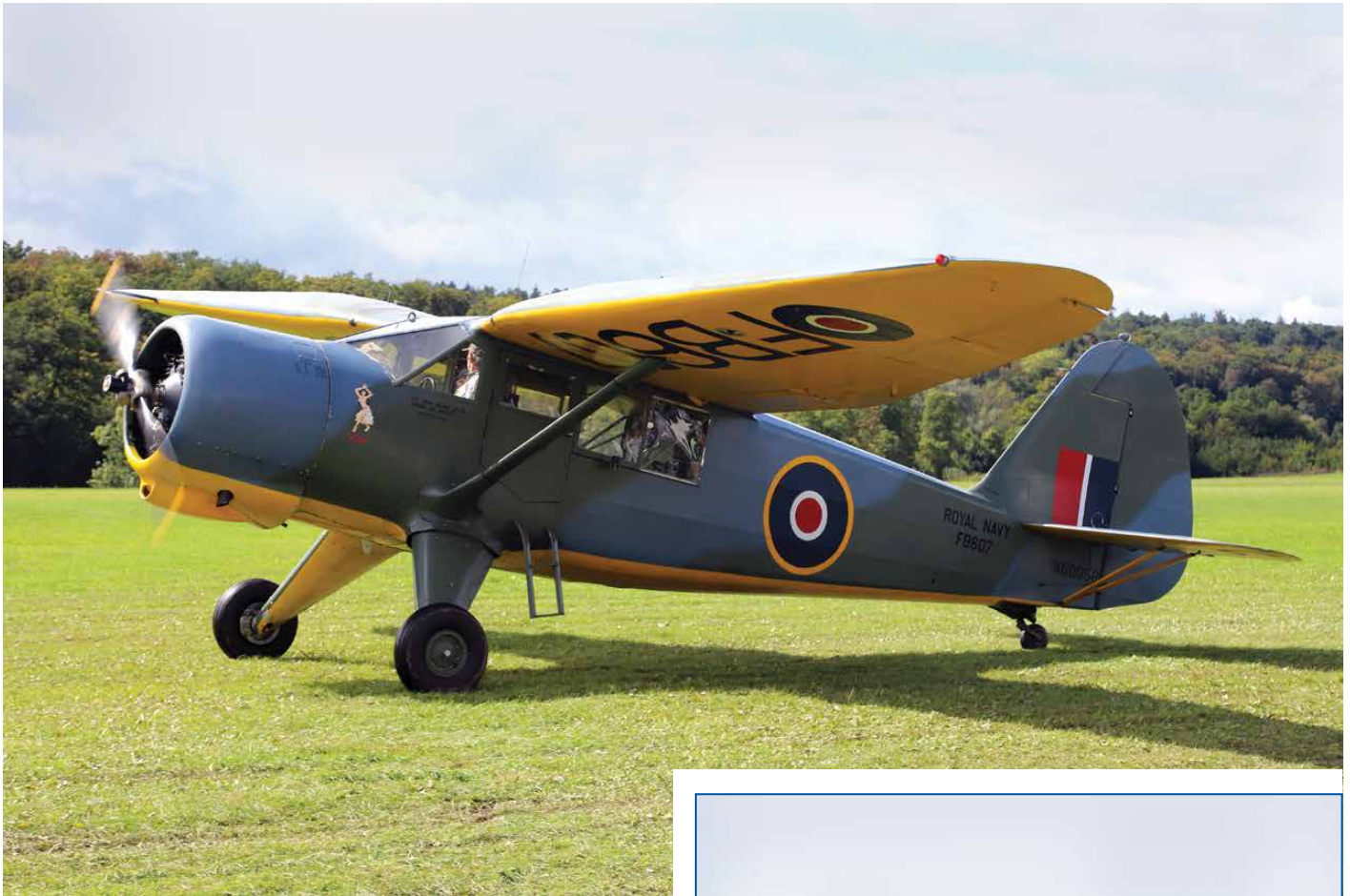


This is not an actual Yak-11, but a Czechoslovakian licence-built Let C-11. The Yak-11 Moose (as it was known by NATO) was developed from the Yak-3 fighter to serve as an advanced trainer. The 4,500 aircraft built were used by the former Soviet Union and many of its satellite states, but also by quite a few African and Asian countries. This particular example did serve in the Czechoslovak air force, but not much is known about its operational history. In the nineties it surfaced in the United Kingdom where it was restored to flying condition. It was sold to Germany, where it was repainted in the current Soviet AF colours as 15 white.

The aircraft taking off in the background is a PZL-106A 'Kruk' (Crow), a dedicated crop duster built in Poland.

The airfield is just a grass strip of maybe 1000 meters long, of which there are literally hundreds in Germany. But mention the name Hahnweide to an aviation enthusiast, and he will get shivers down the spine. Hahnweide stands for the biggest gathering of vintage aircraft in Europe: the Oldtimer Fliegertreffen!

Organised by the Fliegergruppe Wolf Hirth for the first time in 1981, this year after a rather long break the 20th edition was held. Usually the fly-in is held roughly every three years. However in 2019 Covid threw a spanner in the wheel, and the following years the situation was too unsure. Only this year the



Painted in the colours of the Royal Navy, this Stinson AT-19 (or Reliant I as the British called it) only moved to Europe in 2023. Built in 1944, it was delivered directly to the British Royal Navy under a lend-lease contract. It spent its military life in India, or Ceylon as it was called at the time. After being demobbed it returned to the USA where it spent over 60 years with multiple owners, before moving to Europe. It is now based at Altenrhein in Switzerland and is adorned with a small nose art and nickname 'Dot'.

organisation was confident enough to arrange the much longed for next edition. Unfortunately bad weather the days before the start of the event meant that quite a few of the 380 aircraft that had been registered cancelled their participation. But in the end still 247 aircraft from 12 different countries showed up, including many very rare oldies. It is hard to choose, but some of the highlights are shown here.

The tens of thousands spectators, almost 40,000 over the three days, proved again that the love and fascination for aviation in general and the historical treasures and rarities in particular still remain very high. Luckily, although no date is fixed yet for the next edition, the organisation is confident another Oldtimer Treffen will be held in a few years' time. We will be there!



The amount of Messerschmitt Bf.109's that have been built is only surpassed by the Cessna Ce.172 and the Ilyushin Il-2: some 35,000 in total. It formed the backbone of the German Luftwaffe during World War II, but today only a handful are left. Airworthy ones are even rarer, but the number rose when the restoration of Werk Nummer 1983, an E-version or 'Emil' as it was called, was finished earlier this year.

Built in 1939, the aircraft was shot down on January 14th, 1942 over Murmansk, Russia. In 1993 the wreck was recovered and restoration started. Only in 2023 restoration had progressed so far a second 'first flight' could be made, with well-known British pilot Charlie Brown at the stick. And here at Hahnweide the beautifully restored aircraft was finally shown to the public for the first time, where it arguably stole the show.



Not surprisingly, for an airshow in Germany, multiple Buckers were present. Here a Bu.131 Jungmann does a nice fly-by, and also quite a few Bu.133 Jungmeisters showed their shape on the ground and in the air. Both types were designed and built before World War II, with the Bu.131 as basic trainer and the Bu.133 as advanced trainer. Most numerous was the Jungmann, both in Germany and abroad. Yugoslavia operated over 400 aircraft, in Spain hundreds of aircraft were built under licence as Casa 1.131 and also in Japan over 1,000 examples were license built as Ki-86 for the army and as K-9 for the navy.

This specific example was license built in Switzerland by Dornier for the Swiss air force, where it served as primary trainer.



Maybe not as old as many other participants, but still exactly 50 years old this year, is this Cessna 337 EC-MYM. Together with sistership EC-IPL the push-pull aircraft displayed as the "Quixote Patrol", named after Don Quichot. Although both Cessnas are painted as Vietnam era USAF O-2 Skymasters, they are actually Cessna FTB.337G Super Skymasters. Both served in the Portuguese air force before being sold on the civilian market in 2007. This one ended up in storage in Valencia, Spain, but some 10 years later it returned to the air. Both Cessna 337s are part of the Fundación Aeronáutica Antonio Quintana at Madrid-Cuatro Vientos.



Although it doesn't look like a warbird, this Spartan 7W Executive actually is! Built in 1937, during World War II it was impressed with US military designation UC-71. After serving for 2.5 years it was returned to its owner and reverted back to its original civil registration, which it carries to this day.

The Spartan Executive was, as the name suggests, meant for the upper class. It was fully handmade and made to order only. The aircraft was built entirely of metal, with retractable landing gear, and the powerful Pratt & Whitney engine made it a fast aircraft as well. The spacious cabin had four or five luxury seats, heating, ventilation, mood lighting, sound insulation and, of course still normal in those days, ashtrays. Everything a gentleman needed while on a business trip.



Well-known vintage is the T-6 Texan or Harvard. This particular example is based in Sweden and is painted in US Navy colours. Its last military operator though was the Swedish Air Force, where it got the type designation Sk.16A. The Swedes have their own aircraft designation system based on the role of the aircraft, in this case Sk for Skolan (meaning school) which implies a training aircraft. The number 16 means it is the sixteenth training type in service and follow up letter A is used to differentiate subtypes.

Its life began in 1942 when it was delivered to the Royal Canadian Air Force, where it served until 1946. It was then sold to Sweden where it served for 25 years before being decommissioned in 1972. It was destined to be scrapped, but instead it was sold to a collector. It changed hands a few times and in 2002 restoration to flying status started. That would take until the spring of 2025, with a first flight on May 30th, only some three months before making its big public debut at Hahnweide.



Also abundantly present at Hahnweide were Piper J-3 Cubs. Designed just before World War II as a trainer aircraft for the general aviation community, the American military also quickly embraced the simple but effective design of the J-3. Many thousands were constructed during the war under the designation L-4 Grasshopper, with one rolling out of the factory every 20 minutes during the peak of the war! They were especially used for training new pilots in the USA, but many were also sent over to the European and African front where reconnaissance and liaison duties were their main tasks. After the war ended, hundreds were left behind and they were happily adopted by locals. Nowadays worldwide thousands of L-4s and J-3s still fly, proving the concept of simplicity compared with usefulness.

The one depicted here, nowadays in the well-known Cub-yellow, was one of those left behind in Europe. It came over from Denmark for the Oldtimer Treffen, and the pilots stayed in their tents under the wing during the event. They even used the wing strut for their laundry!



The Dornier Do.27 is the first German built aircraft that was produced in large numbers since World War II. Over 600 have been built, with the German air force as largest customer with 428 aircraft, but also the Swiss air force used 7 and in Spain 50 aircraft were licence built by CASA as C.127 for their Esercito del air. Many have ended up in civilian hands and in Germany alone some 60 are still airworthy. Only 185 meters of runway are sufficient to land a Do.27, so it can operate from almost every sports airfield.

No less than 9 were present at Hahnweide. Two of them, including this D-EQXG, belong to QUAX Flieger, an association that operate a few dozen oldtimers from different airfields scattered through the country.



In total 15,495 Texans and Harvards have been built. Biggest users were the US Air Force and Navy, the Royal Canadian Air Force and the British Royal Air Force. However also South Africa was a major user, with over 700 aircraft. They were operated for 55 years, from 1940 until 1995. After World War II ended, some 300 aircraft that had been supplied under the lend-lease conditions were shipped back to the USA. A few different versions were operated, both US built AT-6D and T-6G and Canadian built Harvard IIA and III. D-FASS is one of the latter. Although primarily a training aircraft, in 1976 a dozen Harvards were painted in camouflage colours and equipped with rocket pods for operations in Angola, during the so-called Border War between Angola and South Africa. 7429 was one of them, making it a rare one.



To finish the overview, because it is so rare and beautiful, one more shot of the Bf.109. Here it is seen taxiing in after its display, with Charlie Brown at the stick. The aircraft proudly displays the markings rote 12 (12 red) and the badge of 5./JG5 or 5 Staffel, Jagdgeschwader 5 (5th squadron of Fighter Wing 5), the unit it was operated by when it was shot down in Russia in 1942.



This flaming red beauty is a Beechcraft model 17, nicknamed Staggerwing. This name comes from the rare position of the wings. Unlike with most biplanes, the upper wing is positioned behind the lower one, what is called a 'negative wing stagger'.

This example is flown by Filip Rochette and is based in Belgium. He discovered it in a barn in the USA, where it had been standing for 17 years. The aircraft was originally delivered in 1938, making it a real old-timer at 87 by now. During World War II there was a big shortage of aircraft, and many civilian aircraft were impressed. This example was taken into service with the United States Army Air Force as UC-43D. When the war ended, it was returned to its owner and converted back to its civilian registration. The aircraft is in immaculate condition and is definitely not showing its age!



With a Bf.109 participating, of course there had to be a Spitfire as well. And not just any Spitfire, but a real war veteran. Built by Vickers-Armstrong in 1943, this fighter was heavily involved in World War II. After that it was sold to the Royal Netherlands Air Force where it served another ten years. Next was target tug duty in Belgium followed by a movie career! MH415 flew in the movies 'The Longest Day' (1962) and 'The Battle of Britain' (1968). Famous stunt pilot Connie Edwards then took it with him to his ranch in Texas as payment for his work in the last movie. It spent the next 46 years there, mostly in a barn. Only in 2014 a part of his collection was sold, including MH415. After restoration the classic fighter was bought by Flying Legends in Germany.

Text and photos: Patrick Dirksen & Frank Mink (Tristar Aviation)