



CURTIS P40N-1 KITTYHAWK A29-448

SPECIFICATIONS

Length:	10.20m	(33 ft 6 in)
Height:	3.76m	(12ft 33in)
Wingspan:	11.42m	(37ft 5in)
Powerplant:	Allison V-1710 V12,	1360hp.
Maximum Speed:	609 km/h	(378 mph)
Range:	1200 km	(750 miles)
Service Ceiling:	11,630m	(38,150 ft)
Armament:	6 x M2 Brownings, 0.50 calibre machine guns	



Warbirds Adventure Rides Limited P40N-1, ZK-CAG was built by Curtiss at Buffalo, New York in May 1943 with the United States Army Air Corps serial number 42-104730, and allocated under the Lend- Lease Program to the Royal Australian Air Force. It was taken on strength on the 8th of August 1943 at No.2 Air Depot, Richmond (Sydney), Australia and re-numbered A29-448. On the 25th of August, 1943, it was allocated to 75 Squadron based at Turnbull Field, Milne Bay, New Guinea where it saw combat against Japanese forces.



With 75 Squadron, A29-448 was allocated the squadron code GA-C. The letters " GA" refer to the Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader Geoff Atherton's initials. On the 1st of May, 1944, A29-448 was allocated to 78 Squadron based at Tadi, New Guinea. It was soon written off later that month as a result of damage sustained in a heavy landing after a total electrical and hydraulic failure. She was towed to the western end of the base and used for spares until the war ended.

RECOVERY & RESTORATION

The remains of A29-448 were recovered from Tadjia by Charles Darby in 1973. In the 1990's she was rebuilt by Pioneer Aero Restorations in Auckland. Charles and new co-owner Garth Hogan ensured it was restored to the original colours it carried in New Guinea in 1943.



During its restoration the aircraft was converted to a two-seat status with the addition of a seat in place of the rear fuel tank. The rear seat is complete with dual controls and instruments for conversion training in what is a remarkable feat of engineering. This has allowed the fighter to retain its original lines but provide the public with a unique opportunity to experience what it was like to fly in a fighter.



A29-448's first airshow experience was at Warbirds Over Wanaka in 2000 and since that time it has appeared at all the major air displays in New Zealand. At 'Wanaka' 2008 and 2010 it was fitted with its original armament of six "live" 50 cal (12.5mm) Browning M2 machine guns and demonstrated gun-firing strafing attacks with blank rounds, a worldwide first for any airshow.

In 2012, the ownership moved to Frank Parker and Liz Needham. Of the 13,000 plus P40's built, A29-448 is one of only about 30 in the world still flying.

ANZAC FIGHTER

The P40 Kittyhawk was extensively operated by both the Royal Australian and Royal New Zealand Air Forces during World War II in the Pacific theatre.

RAAF Kittyhawks played a crucial role during the Battle of Milne Bay, New Guinea in August 1942 fending off Japanese aircraft and providing effective close air support for the Australian infantry. At the height of the battle P40 Kittyhawks were getting airborne from Turnbull Field and firing their guns at Japanese positions at the end of the airfield before they could raise their undercarriage.



The RNZAF used P40s in the Solomon Islands and later on Nissan Island of Papua New Guinea. The RNZAF P40s supported the landing of American, Australian and New Zealand troops on Guadalcanal and flew standing patrols searching for enemy aircraft and ground forces. By the end of the war, 99 Japanese aircraft were destroyed in action for the loss of 20 RNZAF Kittyhawks.