



AMERICANS AID WWII BOMBER PROJECT

Monday 10th June 2013

The Royal Air Force Museum is pleased to announce that a donation of \$50,000 made by The Royal Air Force Museum American Foundation is assisting in lifting a rare WWII bomber from the waters off the English Coast.

August 1940 and the Battle of Britain is in full swing with almost 40 identifiable American pilots involved. The fate of democracy is in the balance. With a crew of four, and loaded with 2000lb of bombs, a twin-engined Luftwaffe **Dornier 17** – known universally as 'The Flying Pencil' – was part of a large enemy formation intercepted by Royal Air Force fighter aircraft as they attempted to attack British airfields.

Boulton Paul Defiant fighters attacked the Dorniers at 13,000 ft over the British coast before they had reached their intended target. They claimed at least six Dorniers destroyed and one damaged for the loss of three of their own aircraft and two air gunners killed.

One of the Dorniers, flown by Feldwebel (Flt Sgt) Willi Effmert, attempted a wheels-up landing on the part of the English Channel known as the Goodwin Sands. He touched down safely and the aircraft sank inverted. Effmert and his observer were captured but the other crewmen died and their bodies were washed ashore later.

Now, over 70 years later that Dornier Do17 is the last remaining example of its kind and it lies just 60 feet below sea level off the English coastal town of Ramsgate.

The Royal Air Force Museum has undertaken an exciting, challenging and historically fascinating operation to recover the German bomber and on Sunday 2nd June came within 40 minutes of success when a sudden increase in winds around the Goodwin Sands area made the sea too choppy to complete the lift. Regrettably, and with the safety of the crew and the aircraft in mind, the lift was called off.

The complex project has not been entered into lightly and has used a number of ground-breaking techniques for underwater recovery and conservation. It has been undertaken with an impressive group of experts ranging from chemists and physicists from Imperial College London who advised on the conservation and structural integrity of the aircraft, to SeaTech who are managing the actual lift.

The project has stimulated a huge amount of interest across the world and events are being followed closely by a global audience of millions.

Since the last attempt, donations have flooded in from individuals and organisations such as **The Royal Air Force Museum American Foundation**, which exists to ensure that the shared aviation heritage of the USA and the UK is kept alive.

“As a group of Americans devoted to preserving the special relationship between the U.S. and the U.K. within the field of aviation we are honored to be able to support the RAF Museum in this significant recovery effort,” said the President of the RAF Museum American Foundation, Major General (USAF, Ret.) Fred Roggero.

Once recovered, the aircraft will undergo a two year conservation programme before going on exhibition in London.

Ends...

NOTES TO EDITORS

- For further information on the Royal Air Force Museum American Foundation contact: fred.roggero@gmail.com
- RAF Museum contact for further information, images and interviews on the Dornier project: 0044 20 8358 4849 / dornier@rafmuseum.org
- For full aircraft history, archive images and pictures from the project, please access the Online Press Pack: www.rafmuseum.org/dorniermedia
- www.rafmaf.org
- www.rafmuseum.org

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