

News

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SPITFIRE LANDS AT THE BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW

Manama, Bahrain: BAE Systems and the RAF Museum will be showcasing an iconic, World War II era Spitfire at Bahrain International Airshow 2014. The aircraft is a piece of aerospace history and is also a reminder of the strong links between Bahrain and Britain which were underlined in the Second World War.

Students from the Gulf Aviation Academy in Bahrain have been working with BAE Systems and the RAF Museum this week to assemble the Spitfire ready for the start of the Airshow. The students were given the opportunity to get a first-hand look at how one of the Second World War's iconic aircraft is put together and to discover more about how Spitfire featured in Bahrain's history.

The Supermarine Spitfire remains the iconic British fighter of the Second World War, and Britain was not alone in its fight - Bahrain, through the Fighter Fund, financed the purchase of 10 Spitfires to aid the war effort. These were funded by all sections of the community in the Arabian Gulf. In total, the Fighter Fund raised £50,000 (31,000 BHD) and six Spitfires bore the name Bahrain.

Keith Ifould from the RAF Museum, said: "Spitfire is a true aerospace icon, and it played a key role in the Second World War, so we're pleased to be working with the BAE Systems and the Gulf Aviation Academy to display a Spitfire at Bahrain International Airshow 2014. The aircraft helped cement a strong spirit of cooperation between Britain and Bahrain which remains to this day, so it's a great opportunity for Airshow visitors to come and find out about Spitfire and this historical connection between the countries."

The aircraft was well known for its elliptical wings and the sound of its supercharged Rolls Royce Merlin engine, which can be seen up close at the show. An RAF Museum representative will be on hand to provide insights and anecdotes about Spitfire and its link to the Middle East, as well as the role Gulf Aviation Academy students have played in preparing the aircraft for display at the Bahrain International Airshow.

Spitfire entered service in 1938, with 20,321 Spitfires built over 24 variants and its last operational RAF sortie came in 1954. The actual model on display was originally ordered in June 1943 and built in 1945.

For more information visit http://www.baesystems.com/content/BAES_164460/bahrain-international-airshow-014, www.rafmuseum.org or follow @BAESystems_Gulf on Twitter.

Picture caption: Members of the RAF Museum's conservation team with students from the Gulf Aviation Academy

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