

FOURTH WARBIRDS DAY
Zwartkop AFB, 31 May 2003

- Johan Ehlers

The four week date shift, necessitated by the International Jet Scale Masters occupying the venue during the already traditional first Saturday of May, resulted in brilliant flying weather for this high point in the annual calendar for builders of flying scale models of military aircraft. This year forty-seven pilots registered to participate in the relaxed event, each receiving his commemorative 'Auster' motif cap and campaign bar. The theme for 2003 was '100 Years of Powered Manned Flight'. There were models ranging from large to small, subjects that ranged from WW1 to the present and motive power that ranged from electric to twin turbines. Something for every taste.

Some fantastic aircraft models were seen, as well as the first scale helicopter to be seen at this event. Unfortunately its flight ended in a mishap, but we are sure that Paul van Wyngaardt will have it fixed and back next year. The spectators were entertained by some excellent flying and the few mishaps that occurred were fairly minor and the models concerned were strutting their stuff a few weeks later at Zwartkop Scale.

The accent of the event was on safe flying and a whole number of Warbirds Day 'rookies' earned their wings by completing a successful flight under the watchful eyes of the RMAC Flight line Controllers who saw to it that everything occurred in an orderly manner.

The adjudicators this year were General 'Thack' Thackwray, Col Pieter vd Walt and retired SAA Captain D K Dreyer. Once upon a time all three of them were trained as Army Artillery Officers by the Air Force, flying Auster AOP (Artillery Observation Post) aircraft. Their choice of best model in the different categories was:

Best Biplane:	DH Tiger Moth of Paul van Wyngaardt
Best Monoplane:	DH Chipmunk of Johan Ehlers (Jr)
Best 'Vintage' Aircraft:	Fokker Dr1 of Doug Moss
Best Jet:	MiG 29 of Francois Diedrehsen
and 'Best of Show'	The fantastically detailed 1/3 scale Fokker E III Monoplane of Jan Labuschagne.

At 16:00 the pilots were formed up in platoon formation by Chris Burger to allow the medals and awards parade to proceed. All successful rookies received their 'Wings', the five awardees their awards and every participant also received a commemorative 'Centenary Star' from Genl Thackwray.

Chief Architect and Organiser, Gert de Klerk, and his helpers once again deserve a vote of thanks from all the pilots for their time and effort to make this event happen every year. The event was characterised by an excellent spirit, which was exemplified by Wessie vd Westhuizen declining the opportunity to once again receive an award for his brilliant C-47, allowing another deserving modeller to receive the honour.

In closing, Gert indicated that he had negotiated an earlier start for the next event from Lt Col Neil Thomas, OC of the SAAF Museum, and that the theme for 2004 will be 'Japanese Warbirds'. So get to the workshop and start producing!