



**LEFT:** Superb photo opportunities are available during the flights, offering passengers the chance to try their hand at air-to-air photography.

grass airstrip. The Hurricane and Spitfire then flew along the Kent coastline between Capel le Ferne and Dover, providing a flying tribute to The Few on September 15, the day on which the tide of the battle turned in Britain's favour.

**Passion and awareness**

Stephen Burt, owner of Action Stations! says: "We're very happy that we have developed an excellent relationship with the Historic Aircraft Collection over the past two years that now enables us to fly with both the Spitfire and Hurricane. It was the combination of the combat qualities of these two aircraft that gave the RAF the leading edge during the Battle, and I think that, by enabling flights with both aircraft to take place, we are helping to keep the memory of the aircraft and aircrew that flew them alive, 71 years later.

"Word-of-mouth recommendations, testimonials on our website, and glowing reports in the media have all helped to spread the word that this is the most moving and remarkable flying experience you can have today – flying with an authentic, battle hardened Spitfire, in the same airspace in which the Battle of Britain was fought, flying along the White Cliffs of Dover.

"Many of our customers experience mixed emotions; delight at the sight and sound of this iconic aircraft that so valiantly defended us, and such sadness at the terrible cost many of the pilots paid. Those brave "Few", who selflessly gave their lives that we may live in the relative peace and freedom we enjoy today.

"Those aircrew numbered over 500, and the National Memorial to the Battle of Britain at Capel le Ferne, near Folkestone, was built to commemorate them. This cliff-top site is where the statue of a lone pilot sits in the middle of an 80m, three-bladed propeller, looking out to sea. Behind is the Memorial Wall, engraved with the names of those who fought in this momentous aerial battle, which took place in the skies above Kent and Sussex.

"Since our start-up we have always flown over the memorial to show our passengers ▶

# Flying with the legends

JARROD COTTER describes how people can fly alongside either a Spitfire or Hurricane, an experience once available only to a privileged few



Stephen Burt, creator of Action Stations!, at the National Battle of Britain Memorial, Capel le Ferne.

**A**ction Stations!, the Battle of Britain flying-experience company which has been carrying passengers in a helicopter alongside Supermarine Spitfire Vb BM597 of the Historic Aircraft Collection (HAC) for the past two years, has become well known for offering this fantastic opportunity. The company has recently added a significant new option to its already impressive set-up, one which will please fans of Britain's other iconic Second World War fighter, the Hawker Hurricane.

To mark the 71st anniversary of the Battle of Britain, and the second anniversary of its hugely popular and successful "Fly with a Spitfire" experience, for three days in September Action Stations! offered flights

on which, for the first time in the company's history, passengers could also fly alongside HAC's Hurricane XII, "Z5140".

Plans for the future envisage the Spitfire and Hurricane flying independently on different weekends during the season but, significantly, on the last Battle of Britain Day, September 15, they both flew during one of the flying experiences, allowing the passengers in the four helicopters to see the two fighters during the same flight.

Moreover, the formations were, as usual, flying over the National Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel le Ferne, Kent. The annual remembrance service at this cliff-top location was also held on that day, and the fighters enhanced the occasion wonderfully.

The flights took off from Pent Farm Airfield, close to Folkestone. There, the passengers and their guests could view the aircraft at close quarters, then watch them being prepared for flight and taking off from the

**LEFT:** Highlighting the Action Stations! flight experience, Hurricane "Z5140" formates on one of the helicopters flying along the Kent coastline towards Dover. ALL JARROD COTTER

**BELOW:** At Pent Farm on September 15 the Spitfire and Hurricane were available for ground viewing in-between flights.





***“We delight in the joy that our passengers experience when they fly with us”***

**ABOVE:** The HAC Spitfire V, BM597, flies over the National Battle of Britain Memorial on September 15.

the site from above, and to create awareness of its existence. We have also given £5 to the Battle of Britain Memorial Trust for each person flown, donating £1,000 for those flown in 2010. On flying days we also attract many visitors to the site with our ‘free air show’! This helps the shop and canteen with further sales during the day.

“We are working in support of the trust to raise further funding for their new ‘Wing’ centre, which will become a centre of education for future generations to learn about the Battle of Britain and its significance to the freedom we all enjoy today.

“My team and I are passionate about our venture, and in raising this awareness of the memorial site. We also delight in the joy that our passengers experience when they

fly with us. Many continue to tell us what a profound and moving experience they have had while flying with us. Their feedback and photographs on our website are testimony to that.”

It is expected that the Hurricane will make regular appearances during the 2012 season, adding further interest to an already very popular programme. For further information about Action Stations! and its range of flying experiences with both the Spitfire and Hurricane, along with flying dates, please call 01227 721929 or visit the website at [flywithafighter.com](http://flywithafighter.com)

*With many thanks to Stephen Burt and Michelina Caliendo-Sear.*



**ABOVE:** Flight Lieutenant Charlie Brown prepares the Spitfire for start-up, while in the background Dave Harvey gets the Hurricane ready.

**LEFT:** Charlie Brown puts the Spitfire through its paces to demonstrate its performance to the passengers.



**ABOVE:** After their morning flight the first group of passengers on September 15 were flown to Capel le Ferne and given a talk by Stephen Burt on the events of that day in 1940 and the memorial.