

WASSI



Walsh Aviation Support Society Inc.



Update 2-24

Following up on the first update for 2024, this edition will continue informing you of recent news and activities involving the Walsh Aviation Support Society Inc. (WASSI). The first newsletter for this year contained a plea from the Chairman for volunteers to assist with specific areas and tasks to ensure that the organisation is operating at its best...please give this some serious thought and consideration as the WASSI is only as successful as the membership makes it! Welcome to all the new members who have recently joined the WASSI...we thank you for your support. Meanwhile, we hope the newsletters are informing and updating all the membership of the society.

WASSI Website and Social Media Refresh

Recent effort from WASSI member Murray Miskelly has seen an overhaul and update of the appearance and content of the WASSI website (www.wassi.org.nz). After defining the major categories to be detailed on the website, work then started on collating new material and updating what was already available. The updated website is still a "work in progress" and as Murray finds time to continue his work I am confident that the finished product will be a great asset to the WASSI.

The revamped **News** section now has recent posts that include extracts from the Chairman's annual reports while a newly added **The Fleet** section contains profiles on each of the WASSI's current fleet of six aircraft that includes images and details of their histories to-date, and the **Resources** section has several pdfs of Annual General Meeting reports attached while WASSI newsletters are to be added in the future.

In addition, the WASSI facebook page has been restarted along with another on Instagram in a effort to increase the society's social media exposure.

Please take the time and have a look at the WASSI website and social media pages. If you have any suitable suggestions for improving the website or have contributions that you can supply for inclusion, these are most welcome and can be sent in the first instance to: murray.miskelly@me.com



The instrument panel of Piper PA-38 Tomahawk JRS (left) and airborne during a flight at Matamata Airfield (right). The aircraft has received an avionics upgrade that matches that completed previously in NJT. The plaque above the centre avionics units reads "WASSI gratefully acknowledge the estate of John Richards (JR). Always a friend of the Walsh". This Tomahawk was re-registered to JRS as a nod to JR's contribution to the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School and the Walsh Aviation Support Society Inc. (both Phil Craig)

"It's a Wrap" with the WASSI

While one of the goals of the WASSI is to ensure that the aircraft it operates are as safe as possible and practical for the students and instructors plus other pilots that fly them, looking after the condition of the aircraft is also very important in New Zealand's harsh environment. There is no question that the aircraft in the fleet that have already been repainted into the WASSI livery, albeit in various colours, look absolutely stunning...we want to keep them that way too!

To help with ensuring that their external appearance and condition remain at their best, while making that the effects of UV and water are also kept at bay, the WASSI has a canopy cover for each of the aircraft. Some of the aircraft had covers when they were acquired by the WASSI, others did not. Some of the existing covers will last a while longer, however some are in need of replacement having served their purpose well.

A combined canopy and cowling cover was gifted to the WASSI for use on PA-38 Tomahawk NJT, then in late-2023 the WASSI purchased similar covers for PA-38 Tomahawk JRS plus Cessna A152 Aerobat MUM. Meanwhile, a cover has been ordered and delivered for PA-38 Tomahawk FML. These new covers are custom made by Barsal MNF Co Ltd at Te Kowhai Airfield near Hamilton using silver Sunbrella canvas that has a five-year guarantee. Then as a nod to the WASSI livery applied, these new covers have the aircraft registration details stitched onto a panel on the cover and its storage bag in the colour of each individual aircraft!



Sporting their combined canopy and cowling covers while picketed during the 57th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School at Matamata Airfield are Piper PA-38 Tomahawks NJT (left) and JRS (right). (both Phil Craig)

Marketing the WASSI

WASSI Chairman Mark Woodhouse advised in the Update 1-24 Newsletter recently that the "Warbirds Over Wanaka organisers have generously offered the WASSI a prime location at the event, to set up a display (free of charge) where we can showcase an aircraft and promote our society objectives to the industry and the general public".

Therefore, the WASSI made the most of this offer to maximise the opportunity to market the organisation. During the airshow at Wanaka Airport the event hosted a large gathering of public and

industry representatives who have not previously had the chance to see what has been achieved to date by the society since it was founded in January 2017.

For those lucky enough to attend the Warbirds Over Wanaka Airshow over Easter weekend at Wanaka Airport and visited the WASSI display, I hope you liked the society's display.



Completing participation at its fifth Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School, Piper PA-38 Tomahawk FML was the first aircraft to be added to the growing WASSI fleet during 2018. (both Phil Craig)

WASSI at Warbirds Over Wanaka

After a successful public showing at Warbirds Over Wanaka 2024, Nick Rowe reports on the weekend activities of the WASSI team.

Thursday morning before Easter dawned in Ashburton as a squally low overcast day, complete with the dreaded easterly that Canterbury despises. All the Yak team, the Harvard folks, and the lone Tomahawk pilot descended upon adjacent breakfast establishments to check the weather and to fill tanks. The weather was forecast to improve so the decision was made to the push on to the airfield for more standing around, albeit with different scenery. It was after lunch and behind the front that the token Tomahawk pilot was dispatched in JRS to lead the charge to Wanaka. The weather improved rapidly to blue skies, tremendous scenery, but with a pesky headwind.



The splendid view from Tomahawk JRS as in neared the stunning Lake Pukaki area. (both Nick Rowe)

Arrival at Wanaka was captured by the big cameras of airshow enthusiasts, and JRS was picketed outside the hangar it would guard for the long weekend. It would spend the weekend overlooking the jet apron with its noisy participants, and in the company of the homebuilt aircraft contingent and modellers.

Friday dawned with perfect airshow weather, and the people started meandering past the little white Tomahawk with its candy apple extremities, and with that Amit's sales patter reverberating off the hangar. Like a call-centre pro he soon had people informed of the Walsh, its goals, and then how the WASSI supported the school with its own aims and progress.

The WASSI team for the weekend was Amit Dhiman, Breanna Coffey, Jessie Fothergill and Kieran, Rachel Mackie, Andrew Sims, Nick Rowe, with guest appearances from several Walsh students, Hunter Rowe, plus Phil Craig and Scott Cowley dragging (*editor: we like to call it "convincing" Nick!*) all Airways employees over from the tower for a chat, and to sell them a hat (when they weren't stopping the flying tin from bad touching).



With large of images portraying the WASSI fleet of aircraft the stand was sure to attract plenty of interested people as they passed by the hangar entrance. (Nick Rowe)

Carlton Campbell had instigated the opportunity to showcase WASSI at Wanaka, but balanced the planet out by disappearing to the UK for Easter. As usual Woody was making things happen in the background.

The goal for the weekend was to raise awareness of the WASSI as a registered charity, the way it supports the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School, and the way that it supports the future of aviation while giving excellent skills to the next generation year after year. We aren't well known in the South Island or overseas, and this was the perfect event to improve that.

The Tomahawk drew the crowd over, inviting kids to sit in it held the adults in place, and the team started conversations and handed out brochures in front of the fantastic new banners and posters that Woody had produced. Nothing like kids sitting in a plane for free attracts more kids, so it was a cycle that repeated all weekend.



Piper PA-38 Tomahawk JRS arrives at Wanaka Airport flown by Nick Rowe, and again flown by Breanna Coffey (after weather conditions had forced her to return while enroute to Ashburton). (both Phil Craig)

We had boxes of hats to sell, an EFTPOS machine, and a cash box to assist the brochures in gathering revenue. Lucky for us the weather was perfect, and the display line was looking into the fiery orb which encouraged hat sales. There were a few generous folks who made a small donation on the spot, and one past Walsh student who's now a very successful engineer kicked off bank transfers with a substantial donation...thank you Alex! Hopefully the brochures do their work over time and more donations present themselves in various forms.

We also had plenty of folks who had solo'd in Tomahawks just wander over to reacquaint themselves, as did a previous owner of JRS, and needless to say everyone was impressed with the quality of aircraft we present to the training industry. Everyone appreciated that the background philosophy of WASSI is presenting a safer aircraft to the training environment.

It was a long weekend on our feet, a lot of dry throats from the amount of talking all day, but needless to say the South Island and the aviation community know we exist. Here's hoping an invigorated online presence will fire a few synapses from those who visited Wanaka, and our support will improve both financially, and personally.

As a bonus those manning the stand got to appreciate an F-16 pulling max rate turns in full afterburner in an echoing valley, four L39's flown by ex-Thunderbirds and Blue Angels pilots in tight formations, the newest Mosquito in the world flown expertly by the worlds most experienced Mosquito pilot, and numerous other superb displays by sensational warbirds and aerobatic wizards.



The well populated stand hosted by the WASSI team...the television (above the WASSI sign) was used to display a slideshow of Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School and WASSI photographs and videos to illustrate to those watching what it is that both of these organisations achieve. Meanwhile, a selection of merchandise is on the table for sale as the wingtip of JRS sneaks into the frame! (Nick Rowe)

Come Monday the cloud again wrapped up the mountains, but Breanna and Amit did a great job hurdling the passes back to Tekapo and then Ashburton where JRS resumed normal duties.

I'll catch you at Warbirds over Wanaka 2026!



A de Havilland DH-98 Mosquito stands proudly in the morning sunlight.

(Nick Rowe)

More images of the WASSI at Walsh 2024

It is not difficult to appreciate the magnificent liveries that the aircraft in the WASSI fleet have been repainted into, while those that have yet to recent their specific liveries are not too bad looking either! So, the deployment of the WASSI aircraft to the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School (“Walsh”) provides a great opportunity to capture them where they belong...in the environment of intensive flight training. Below is just a further handful of images from the 2024 Walsh.



The tail of Piper PA-38 Tomahawk NJT with the New Zealand, Scouting New Zealand and Venturers flags flying in the background (left). And isn't it amazing what some enforced time spent at home in the garage can achieve...a big thanks to Flight Commander Nick Rowe for his effort to construct (and paint in WASSI-style liveries) a new fleet of model aircraft (right) that can be used by the flight instructors at the Walsh...well done that man!
(both Phil Craig)



Looking very smart! The three WASSI Piper PA-38 Tomahawks that have been repainted so far in the society's stunningly vibrant liveries were, opportunely, able to be lined up for a staged photograph during a break in flying near the completion of the 57th Walsh Memorial Socut Flying School (WMSFS) at Matamata Airfield that is located just north of the small Waikato settlement of Waharoa. What a sight it will be if all six WASSI aircraft can be similarly presented together at the 58th WMSFS during January 2025!
(Phil Craig)



Completing another touch and go landing during the 57th WMSFS is Piper PA-38 Tomahawk MAJ (left) while the smile says it all...ab-initio student James Lewis (right) was the third student this year to complete their first solo flight in Piper PA-38 Tomahawk NJT after Daniel Nota and Abbey Palmer. These three students received a WASSI cap, in the appropriate colour, as a gift for their achievement at the Awards Dinner. (both Phil Craig)

Walsh Trophy Recipient

The following is mostly extracted (with a few minor corrections) from an article that appeared in the Matamata Rotary Newsletter dated 13 February 2024.

Our guest speaker for this evening was Max Tarrant. Earlier in the year, we sponsored Max to participate in the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School, held at Waharoa Airfield in January. Max is an outstanding young man, evident by the number of pins and awards he already wears on his lapels.

Max has a love of flying and relished the opportunity to take part in the flying school. Pilot instructors at the school donate their time, and some their personal aircraft, to help and encourage these aspiring young students. There were 18 planes lined up on the flight line, most being Piper Tomahawks or Cessna 152s. They also had a fly over by the RNZAF Black Falcons.

Max loved every part of his experience which included some aerobatics, learning the ins and outs of air traffic control and most importantly, his first solo flight. For his first solo flight...the instructor disembarks and he is off. And the welcome home from his first solo flight is the traditional bucket of water.



Max was such an outstanding student that he was awarded the Air New Zealand top student prize which consists of a \$5,000.00 scholarship, which equates to about 18 hours of flying time, a Boeing 787 simulator experience and a work experience day spent with an Air New Zealand crew.

And the icing on the cake came when he was also awarded the prized Walsh Trophy.

Max thanked the club for sponsoring him on his journey and paid tribute to the amazing instructors he had and has said that he hopes to go back next year as a returned student.

WASSI Merchandise

A very successful sales session at the Warbirds Over Wanaka Airshow saw over sixty items of WASSI merchandise sold...a great effort that will now see many more people proudly wearing caps and bucket hats in the distinctive colours of the WASSI fleet of aircraft. Well done everyone for your work at the airshow, and thank you to all who supported the WASSI through your purchases.

For those who ordered items of WASSI merchandise during the 57th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School, this has now all be acquired from the supplier. Later in the year a further order may be placed for items of merchandise including caps plus bucket hats, plus the possibility of polo shirts...standby for more details to follow in a few months.

Over the next few weeks, the merchandise that has not already been delivered to those who have previously ordered items should be dispatched to the rest of you...if I need any delivery address details, I will be in contact either by email or text message prior to sending items. I thank you on behalf of the WASSI for your support by purchasing items of merchandise, and I sincerely apologise for my delay in not getting these to you quicker (*the delays have not been created through slackness, but rather by over committing to too many tasks and failing to deliver all the desired results! Oh well, I will just resolve to do better in the next few weeks. Cheers*).

Phil Craig, WASSI Supporter

“Walsh” Participants

Following on from the success of taking the Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School photograph recording both the students and staff members that attended, use was again made of the marquee to achieve this...while not being quite as hot and humid in the marquee as last year the task was completed with a little bit of colour to!



As was the case in 2023, the 57th Walsh Memorial Scout Flying School photo was taken in the marquee. And again, although not the “official” school photo, in this image the staff and students are all happily waving for the camera...with a small dose of Hawaiian shirts interspersed along with a splash of WASSI merchandise on display “front and centre”! What else would we expect? Nothing less!
(David Jupp)