

## New Horsa Glider diorama added to FONFA Heritage Centre

Loading the Horsa –“Left hand down a bit – then, hard right!”



Completed just in time for the 'D-Day 75' commemorations this month, a new scale model glider diorama was added to the Museum displays. This depicts a very common site on local airfields, during 1944, when glider borne troops practiced the loading of Jeeps and equipment into the large Horsa gliders, in preparation for the massive numbers of British gliders used in the parachute and glider assault on Normandy in June 1944.



This new 1.72nd scale glider diorama, inspired by the wartime photograph above, depicts British Paratroopers struggling to manhandle an Airborne Jeep into a Mk.I Horsa glider, in preparation for the Allies' assault on D-Day. The combination of a careful driver and manpower was needed to load a Jeep, trailer, and ammunition into the glider, via metal gutters, which allowed the Jeep to be driven up to the level of the side entry door. Some Jeeps were airlifted with a small artillery piece, ammunition, and the gun crew.





On landing in France, the tail section of the glider was removed, and the gutters placed so that the Jeep could be easily driven out of the rear of the aircraft. Later, for Operation Varsity in 1945, the Rhine crossing, the Mk II Horsa had a side hinged nose section, which made the loading easier, when the Jeep could be driven straight into the fuselage from the front.

The Horsa model kit, based on the 1960s era Italeri moulding, with more recent Airfix Jeep and Paratrooper figures, won the Poole Vikings Model Club 'Model of the Month' in June 2019.