

Sunderland Flying Boat model added to Heritage Centre displays

Short Sunderland Mk. I - DA-G Serial No: L2163 - 210 Squadron 1941



This 1.72 scale model of the Short S.25 Sunderland Mk.I will be added to the Heritage Centre displays for the 2020 Open Day season. The Sunderland was a British flying boat patrol bomber, which entered service with the RAF in June 1938. At the start of WWII, Coastal Command was operating forty Sunderlands, the backbone of the Command during the first two years of the war. This model depicts an aircraft of 210 Squadron, based at Oban, Scotland in 1940. The testing weather and sea conditions in the North Atlantic winters quickly took their toll on the paintwork, as shown in the photo below, taken while the aircraft was escorting Convoy TC 6, on 31st July 1940.



Armed with either 500 lb or 250 lb bombs, or eight 250 lb depth charges, and seven machine guns, the Mk I saw service in the early years of WWII, hunting U-Boats in the Battle of the Atlantic, from bases along the west coasts of England, Wales and Scotland and from Ballykelly in Northern Ireland. An RAAF Sunderland made the type's first unassisted U-Boat kill in July 1940.

Its combination of 18 hour endurance, and the ability to land on water, made it ideal for rescue and convoy protection missions, only being surpassed in the latter by the longer range Consolidated Catalina in 1941 and Very Long Range Liberators, introduced in mid-

1943.



Servicing and engine changes were commonly carried out at RAF Calshot, during WWII, as shown in this post-war photograph. The aircraft would fly down from their operational bases for the work to be carried out, landing on Southampton Water and taxiing up, for beaching via attaching main undercarriage wheels and a hull trolley apparatus. Sunderlands were susceptible to maritime growth on the hull, which could be cured temporarily by a landing on fresh water and the subsequent scrubbing effect of the take off.

The Sunderland was also important in the Mediterranean Theatre and the Far East, during WWII, and during the post-war Berlin Airlift. The type remained in service with the Royal New Zealand Air Force until 1967.