

NORBAR TORQUES SPITFIRES - AGAIN



A Norbar Professional Model 200 torque wrench being used to assemble the wing onto a new MK26B Spitfire

Norbar Torque Tools of Banbury recently delivered torque wrenches to nearby Enstone Airfield in Oxfordshire for the construction of brand new Spitfire aircraft. This event resonated strongly with key events in Norbar's history, since the company was the first in Britain to commercially manufacture torque wrenches in the 1940s specifically for engineering Spitfire engines.

The Norbar torque wrenches are being used for an inspirational project undertaken by Enstone Flying Club to construct and launch a squadron of 12 new Mk26B version Spitfires. The brainchild of Paul Fowler (aka Skipper) at the Club, members are being offered the chance of joining syndicates to obtain shares in each of these aircraft, which they would co-build and co-own with other members. These are in kit form and have been designed by Supermarine Aircraft of Texas. They will be eventually be used both in formation flying displays and for the individual enjoyment of the owners.

Norbar was established in Banbury in 1942 as the "North Bar Tool Company" and the initial demand for torque wrenches was driven by the need for the gasket-less cylinder head of the Rolls Royce Merlin engine used for the World War II Spitfire to be accurately tightened. Bill Brodey and his partner Ernest Thornitt obtained a licence from Britain's war-time Government to begin manufacture of torque wrenches and Norbar was launched.

Supermarine Aircraft has been selling pre-fabricated Spitfire kits all over the world for 17 years and they look, sound and fly like the original iconic aircraft. The latest Mk26B is a 90% aluminium 2-seater version powered by a GM V6 engine. At £210,000, it is a lot less expensive than the previous single-seat Spitfire with Merlin V12 engine costing £3 million. Thanks to Enstone Flying Club's imaginative plan, members can opt for a 12th or 20th part share in a MK26B aircraft, at the cost of £17,000 or £11,000 respectively.

Philip Brodey, Sales & Marketing Director of Norbar, explained: *"We are delighted to support this exciting project to create a piece of living aviation history. The Spitfire was an engineering triumph of its time and it is wonderful to know that we can continue to experience the thrill of its flight now and into the future."*