

# WORLD WAR II AIRCRAFT

## *Museum Object...Antique...or Archaeological Site?*

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We all see objects in our respective collections every day, but how often do we really look at them?

This presentation will use the Fleet Air Arm Museum's Corsair project to examine this point in greater detail and encourage the application of some 'Collections Critical Thinking.'

In 2000 the Aircraft Conservation team at the FAAM embarked on a project to examine, research thoroughly and (if possible) restore Corsair KD431 to its original condition. The aircraft had previously been over-painted with a very presentable paint finish on its arrival at the museum in 1963. However, this 'newly restored finish' was neither accurate in color or layout, and after nearly forty years was beginning to show signs of not being the only paint finish left on this airplane.

The essence of this project was to see if it was possible to restore the aircraft in the true sense of the word. This was no new science in the sense that paint finishes have often been removed to reveal the remnants of a particular color, marking or finish. But restoration of a whole aircraft was, we believe, a ground breaking achievement. Thorough research and the retention of as much of the original finish, witness marks and patina was to be overall aim.

In the world of fine art, furniture, porcelain and domestic antiques, this approach would be regarded as correct standard practice, but why (when we choose to refer to many of our 20th Century mechanical objects as antiques) do the same rules suddenly not apply?



# MCI

## Topics in Museum Conservation

**10:45 am  
March 30, 2010  
Tuesday**

MCI Theater  
Museum Support  
Center

4210 Silver Hill Road  
Suitland, MD 20746  
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