



## About the Legion

### Legion Spitfire sold by Bonhams ahead of auction

**09 September 2010**

A Supermarine Spitfire owned by The Royal British Legion has been sold by Bonhams the auctioneers for an above-estimate sum, ahead of auction. The plane was due to be auctioned at the Goodwood Revival sale next week on 17 September and had attracted a pre-sale estimate of £50,000-60,000.

The new owner, Michael Oliver, chairman of Europe's largest, privately-owned, valve manufacturer, intends to house the Spitfire with his collection of cars in Cheshire. Before he takes possession, he has agreed that the MKVb Supermarine Spitfire can be used by the RAF at the Battle of Britain commemorations at York Minster on 19 September and at a graduation ceremony on 30 September at RAF Cranwell, the RAF's training college in Lincolnshire.



The aircraft, number W3850, which was flown by Pilot Officer Joe Atkinson, later Flight Lieutenant Sir Joe Atkinson KCB CB DFC, over France on 13 October 1941, in an attempt to protect Blenheim bombers attacking port installations. Pilot Officer Atkinson, in formation with other aircraft from 609 Squadron Royal Auxiliary Airforce (West Riding of Yorkshire), engaged and damaged a number of German Messerschmitt 109s during this flight. He

was later awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Michael Oliver said, "I'm absolutely thrilled to have this iconic Spitfire as part of my collection and am very pleased that The Royal British Legion is benefiting. It seems very fitting for it to be used at Battle of Britain commemorations."

Stephen Cooper, Commercial Director of The Royal British Legion said, "This is a fantastic outcome. The offer was very generous and the buyer is being most kind in making the airframe available for worthy causes."

Stuart Gendall, the Legion's Director of Corporate Communications, added: "We are delighted the Spitfire is going to such a good home, and the proceeds will help fund our vital work in caring for and supporting Armed Forces personnel, veterans and their families."

Tim Schofield, UK Head of Bonhams Motor Department, said: "It is wonderful that the aircraft has gone to such a fabulous and generous collector."

The Spitfire has been used at a variety of Legion branch and regional events, and at RAF Leeming events, including the base's 70th anniversary celebrations. It is currently housed at RAF Linton-on-Ouse in Yorkshire.

[back](#)