

# Luftwaffe Bronco flies at Duxford



**ABOVE** Tony de Bruyn brings OV-10 Bronco G-BZGK in to land at Duxford on July 10. It is one of 18 Broncos that were used for target-towing in Germany during 1970–90.

ROCKWELL OV-10B Bronco G-BZGK made its first test-flight from Duxford on July 10 after restoration work by engineers at Propshop. The former Luftwaffe target-tug — one of two brought to Duxford in 2001 from Fassberg — will now undergo 3–5hr of test flying for the issuing of a Permit to Fly. The pilot for the first flight, Tony de Bruyn, says, “After

that we will fly it some more in order to establish base data for future reference and to set a performance baseline. This will then open many possibilities, as we will be able to take the aircraft to displays and show its unique capabilities to the public.”

Tony continues, “the first flight went very well with all major airframe systems performing as they should. It is

a delight to fly, very responsive and well harmonised on the controls. It is definitely a pilot’s aeroplane!”

The Propshop engineers who put ‘GK back in the air are John “Smudge” Smith, who did the metalwork, Billy Kelly, responsible for most of the airframe systems, and Colin Swann, who did the electrics. Tony continues, “The restoration has been

very thorough and lengthy, due to the uniqueness of the aircraft in the UK. The co-operation of the CAA has always been very positive and constructive and we are all very pleased and relieved that the first of our Broncos has finally flown again”.

Work on the other Bronco, G-BZGL, will begin after ‘GK has been certificated, and eventually they will be

available as a display duo.

Unfortunately the Imperial War Museum will soon evict the OV-10s from Duxford, because they “have not participated in any major air conflicts of the 20th Century”. Try telling that to the former North Vietnamese troops who were on the receiving end of close air-support OV-10s during the Vietnam War.