

FIFTY YEARS AIRBORNE

Half a century of military aviation (first the Royal Flying Corps, and then the Royal Air Force,) is celebrated at R.A.F. Upavon, with veterans like this 1917 S.E.5A taking off like two-year-olds. And from a later vintage - a 1931 Avro Tutor. Upavon, now headquarters of Transport Command, was Britain's first ever military flying school; and appropriate place to mark this historic birthday.

The Bristol Bulldog - one of the best-known fighters of the year between the wars. Equally famous in the Fleet Air Arm - the Swordfish, whose last great exploit was to cripple the Bismarck.

This Bleriot monoplane, similar to the one which first flew the Channel in 1909, weighed only 660 pounds loaded.

The Hurricane earned its place among the immortals during the Battle of Britain. And another star of World War Two, the Mosquito fighter-bomber. Immediately post-war was the Lincoln Bomber, successor to the Lancaster.

Jet Provosts maintain Upavon's tradition of breathtaking acrobatics.

Fifty fighting years - magnificent years; and if, as everyone hopes, they never have to fight another world war, we already owe them our survival. Their place in history is secure.