THE PATAGONIAN EAGLE

ARGENTINA'S INSTITUTO AEROTÉCNICO IAE.30 ÑANCÚ: THE FULL STORY

Bearing a striking resemblance to de Havilland's D.H.103 Hornet, Argentina's IAe.30 Ñancú had much in common with its British "hot-rod" inspiration, including the same Rolls-Royce engines. After more than a decade of in-depth research into the type and its development, **RICARDO M. LEZON & SANTIAGO RIVAS** provide the most detailed history of the type yet published

MAIN PICTURE *Showing its sleek lines and prominent nacelles housing its Rolls-Royce Merlin 130-series engines, the IAe.30 Ñancú prototype is seen here at the IAe factory at Córdoba in central Argentina.*

JUAN-CARLOS CICALESI VIA AUTHORS

RIGHT *The IAe.22 DL two-seat trainer was the first aircraft to be developed under the leadership of the* Instituto Aerotécnico's *Juan Ignacio San Martín. Powered by an indigenous IAe.16 El Gaucho nine-cylinder air-cooled radial engine, the first nationally designed aero-engine, the prototype made its first flight on May 25, 1943. Around 200 were built, the type seeing service with the Argentinian Air Force and Navy.*

TAH ARCHIVE

FOLLOWING THE ESTABLISHMENT of Argentina's *Fábrica Militar de Aviones* (FMA) in October 1927, the manufacturer undertook numerous aircraft projects, some of indigenous design and others built under licence. FMA was reconstituted as part of the *Instituto Aerotécnico* (IAe) on October 20, 1943. The company entered the modern age, however, with the appointment of *Comodoro Ingeniero* Juan Ignacio San Martín as Director of the IAe on March 6, 1944. San Martín's extraordinary vision and drive led to the establishment of a slew of progressive projects and the dawning of a golden age for Argentina's aviation industry.

POST-WAR RENAISSANCE

The IAe's first venture under San Martín's leadership was the IAe.22 DL, an advanced monoplane trainer built entirely of wood, somewhat similar in general appearance to the North American NA-16. On July 4, 1946, the IAe.24 Calquin light bomber prototype made its maiden flight, with *Jefe de Pilotos de Prueba del Instituto Aerotécnico* (IAe Chief Test Pilot) *Capitán* Osvaldo M. Rovere at the controls and San Martín as flight observer.

An important aspect of aeronautical work in Argentina at this time was the research and development of substitute materials, as non-locally-produced strategic materials were impossible to procure owing to war restrictions. The IAe therefore had to develop new methods to manufacture aircraft plywood, special alloys, glues and resins.

By mid-1946 the IAe was the largest industrial establishment in Argentina, employing 22 aeronautical engineers, 38 industrial engineers, 23 sub-engineers, 134 draughtsmen and nearly 3,000 specialised workers, plus administrative staff. The IAe factory at Córdoba boasted state-of-the-art machinery and had extensively equipped laboratories, capable of being used for any industrial project. This reorganisation and expansion of the factory and resulting increase in the quantity and quality of its facilities could not have been achieved without improving the technical level of its engineering staff, however. This was achieved owing in part to the incorporation of a group of professionals hired in former Axis countries, thanks to the remarkable work of the *Delegación Argentina de Immigración Europea* (Argentinian European Immigration Delegation) which, since 1946, had competed against American, British and Soviet recruiters to establish contacts with professionals in Germany and Italy, convincing them of a rosy future in a neutral, prosperous new home far from the ruins of their home countries. The Delegation worked closely with Argentinian embassies in Europe, mainly in Rome and Madrid.