

Interview Armémuseum, Stockholm – Christina Tegnèr  
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**WP2. Investigating the conservation of WWII wrecks (land or underwater), and more particularly parts made of Al alloys.**

- Presentation of the institution

Armémuseum's collections illustrate the military history of Sweden, including its modern policy of neutrality, and of the Swedish Army.

Flygvapen museum (the Swedish Air Force Museum) is a modern technical and cultural history museum tracing the development of Swedish military aviation. The museum has a unique collection of aircraft, from pioneers of the early 20th century to the present day

Armémuseum is part of Statens försvarshistoriska museer (SFHM) along with Flygvapen museum in Linköping. SFHM's mission is to increase knowledge about the Swedish defense through the ages and about its role in the development of society and make sure it is available to everyone who wants to learn more about Sweden's defense. SFHM will also discuss about how war affects, and has affected, people and society in Sweden.

Christina Tegnèr, metals conservator at Armé museum, has carried out a conservation project on a aircraft belonging to and exhibited at Flygvapen museum.

- The operating chain: from the wreck to the museum

At what stage or stages of the operating chain has (or is) the institution/ group / association been involved? Defining a recovery project? Integrating wrecks or artefacts from wrecks in the collection? Do they have direct input in defining the projects or just executing? What is their approach? Is it similar or different approach if different projects?

The aircraft disappeared during a military survey mission in June 1952. Over the years many attempts at locating the aircraft and its crew has been made by the state. It was finally located in 2003 by a private initiative. After that the military took over the investigation of the site and recovery of the wreck. In the course of the forensic investigation it was decided that the aircraft would become a museum object in the collection of the Air Force Museum in Linköping. As a result the preservation process was to a large extent taken over by the museum and consultants from corrosion prevention industry. As the Air Force Museum have no conservators on staff the conservators from the Army Museum joined the team to deal with the more sensitive materials.

It was clear that the industrial approach to preservation and the conservation methods had different ways of dealing with the materials, in many cases different views on results and longevity of different treatments. As a result the treatment of the fuselage (industrial treatment) and the smaller parts and organic materials (conservation treatment) differ.

- Concept of “conservation” : Do you think of long-term preservation/conservation of the artefacts you handle ? How do you define long term ? What does the idea of “conservation” mean to you for this kind of heritage ? How would you want that heritage to be passed on to future generations ? Has that definition shifted over time for you/the institution ?

In this case it was quite unique to the museum practice that the management of the museum decided to in a way set an expected life span for the wreck, meaning the preservation treatments should be made with a 50-year perspective in mind. This was never put in writing but the general idea was to take a new decision after that time if it was still possible to keep the aircraft wreck as part of the collection.

In general the idea of longevity of treatments and the desire to preserve objects over a certain time depends on many different factors such as placement (indoor-outdoor-storage of various quality), moving objects, age and importance of objects etc.

As a conservator I always want the treatment to be long lasting (limited often by the quality and properties of the conservation product in combination with the time given to perform the treatment as thorough as possible). When working with consultants from industry there is always the need to go through what defines museum preservation on irreplaceable objects as opposed to degradation prevention on mass produced industrial products. We have many common grounds but a common understanding of the museum ethics is the place to start.

- Who works on these collections (after recovery) : conservators, technical staff (aviation background or not), volunteers? What training for these different stakeholders? Do they work in collaboration? Are they internal or external to the museum? What is the relationship between museum management / conservation and the people in charge of interventions directly ? (addition to Form A)

(see previous answers)

In the case of the DC-3 wreck it was an all men on deck situation because of the size, complexity and time limitation of the project. The Air Force Museum staff (including AM conservators), collaborated with corrosion prevention consultants, forensic team for the investigation of the aircraft, handling and transport team and many other functions needed for a project of this magnitude.

- Conditions of conservation of the collection / artefact : aircraft in working order with regular maintenance / complete planes (or nearly) with or without preventive conservation / wrecks or elements of wrecks: exposed or not, kept in storage /outdoors (addition to Form A) ?

Contact Air Force Museum for details on collections management.

- Conditions of storage location (exhibition room or storage) : rooms or hall ? awareness about influence of climate on preservation ? Monitoring or not of HR & T ° and their changes during the year (addition to Form A) ?

Contact Air Force Museum for details on storage.

- Conservation problem that may be encountered with Al alloys (questions and needs if there are any, or practices for solving these problems) ? Does it feel like a priority concern regarding your corpus of WWII wrecks ? regarding the rest of the collection (if relevant) ? What type of treatment protocols are (or have been) carried out (addition to Form A) ?

As there is only one wreck at the Air Force Museum, and the history of recovery and treatment in that case is unique, the preservation decisions made in that case are not compatible to what is being done to the rest of the exhibition. Items placed in an outdoors environment for example get a very different treatments and interval of treatments (ideally).

- Reflecting on their own practice : do you feel that you know everything you would like to when it comes to managing this sort of artefacts ? What would be the aspects you would like to know more about ? Do you keep informed or in contact with other stakeholders in this field ? Has your practice evolved through those connections ?

The Air Force Museum has on 2 occasions held seminars on preservation of both submerged aircrafts and objects placed outdoors. The museum however have no conservators on staff, even though there are conservators working within the organisation (Army Museum) that can be called in for certain projects. The field of preservation of aircrafts is complex for many reasons (size of objects, span of materials, conditions of objects, placement etc) so there is always a need to learn more, from bringing up the level of « museum thinking » within staff and volunteers in general to conservators specialising in various material groups.

- Promotion of WWII aeronautical heritage, influence of the country's history in the conflict and the relationship to that history ?

The wreck in Linköping is the center piece in the exhibition on Sweden and the Cold War. There is no doubt that objects like these help tell the story of that era, especially to those who never experienced it themselves.