

FN-150 Turret update June-July 2019

The May update ended with the gun cradles fitted, the travel interrupter partially built and some progress being made on the control linkages. The plan for June was to get the left and right support tubes fitted

These were not in the best condition to put it mildly, but there is a lot you can do with a MIG welder and abrasive wheel. These support tubes are an important part of the FN-150 as they not only support the side frames, but also provide the mounting points for the gun sight radius arm, the oxygen indicator and a two pin power socket.





The rust soon gave up the fight and there was a small amount of welding to do to get these supports back into action. Once done it was a relatively simple task to bolt them to the turret ring and side frames.



The oxygen indicator that was in the box of bits was distinctly worse for wear and, being an old luminous instrument, I opted not to dismantle it. I managed to obtain an example in better condition with the added bonus that it had most of the pipe connections still fitted.



The indicator fits onto the left support tube, with oxygen pipes going through the two holes visible below it. There was damage to the turret ring where the bare aluminium can be seen which appears to be from a support tube suffering impact.



The right side support tube mounts a second two pin power point (The first being on the control panel). I understand that these are for heated flying clothing and camera.



As mentioned earlier, the support tubes also provide the mounting points for the gun sight radius arm and, therefore, the gun sight. This assembly made the obvious choice for the next project but there was a lot of work to get this into a reasonable state.



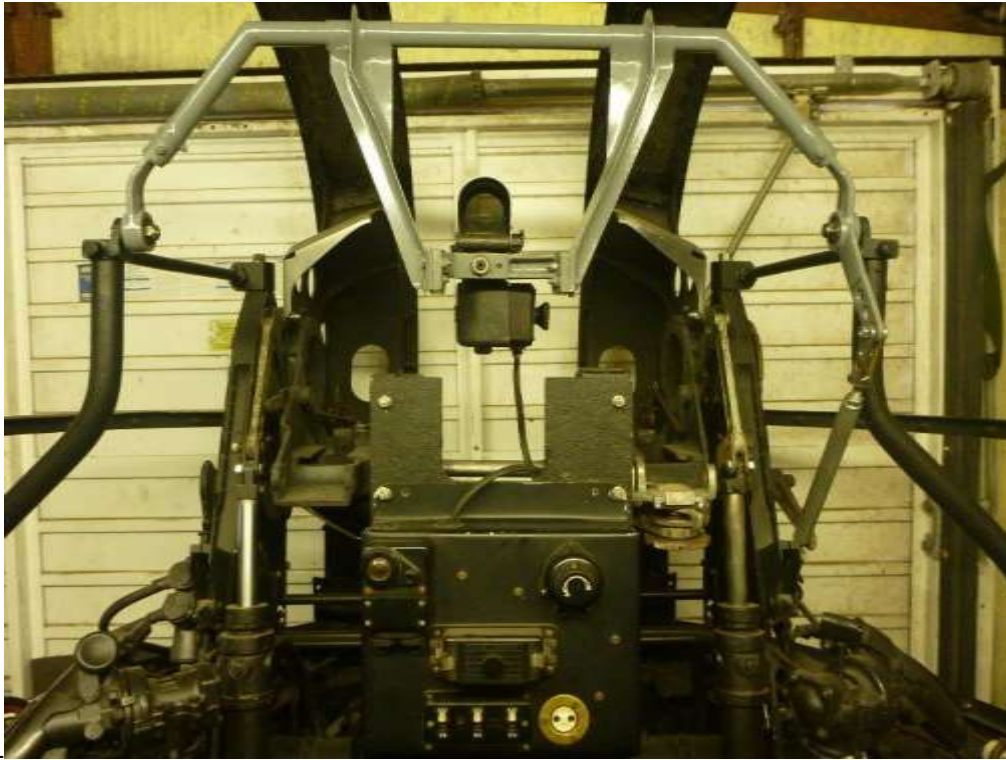
Although the original alloy castings were in very good condition, the actual radius arm which is made of steel was only really suitable to use for a pattern. The MkIIIA reflector gunsight came from a well known on-line auction site. A day or two of light hearted tin bashing produced a passable radius arm, which was bolted in to check it for size, angles and the like.



Being made of steel, it was treated to a zinc primer before being fitted with a gunsight and then re-fitted. A reproduction sight connecting link was then produced and tried for size and can be seen on the right side of the sight radius arm. It was only at this point that I realised that I had managed to get the geometry slightly wrong such that the sight would not align with the guns. Although this turret is unlikely to need sight/gun alignment to be exact, the error was too great to simply ignore.

So, it all came out again for the two top corner welds to be cut and re-welded. This in turn removed most of the primer and so it was another day before the whole lot could go back in again. It will come out again for spraying at some point soon.

With this assembly largely finished, the turret is starting to take shape and the gunner's eye view is beginning to look much busier.



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Also in June I picked up another FN turret. Admittedly it is going to need a lot of work, but my main interest was that it had that missing interrupter gear bracket.



Although very badly corroded, the alloy casting is perfectly good enough to use and the steel plunger can either be restored or used as a pattern. All ways round getting this bracket provides the last major missing item (except x2 Browning 303s). Fitting it at this point might be considerably harder than I had previously predicted, however.



The plan for August is the oxygen system. Only the indicator is currently fitted and everything else will need to be tracked down. Suitable alloy pipe is available but the connectors are very hard to come by. I'll need an oxygen economiser which in turn will need a cover and mounting brackets. That should easily take all of August.