

# AEROMILITARIA

The AIR·BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly



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The AIR-BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly

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It is not one of Air-Britain's habits to reprint past monographs (although we had to with 'Royal Air Force Aircraft K1000 to K9999' and, of course, recently to 'The Squadrons of the Royal Air Force') but as enquiries had been flowing in from numerous points, we have made an exception.

'The Halifax File' sold out in a relatively short time so it has been decided to reprint a quantity of this monographs using the original printing plates. Delivery is in December 1985 so by the time this issue reaches its faithful readers, copies will be available from the Sales Dept at £6.00 for members and £9.00 for non-members, both post free.

In case anyone is unaware of the fact, updates for the first printing of 'The Squadrons of the Royal Air Force' are available from the editor at the above address. Send one stamped self-addressed envelope larger than the page size of the book plus two first class stamps to obtain one. Outside the UK send three IRCs.

While we are on our sales pitch, mention should be made of two more colour print sets (each with twelve photos). No.3 consists of military transports and No.4 of civil airliners. They cost £3.60 per set post free.

#### IN THIS ISSUE

When we asked Ray Sturtivant of SOTFAA fame for any shots he had of activities aboard HMS Battler, we did not expect the pile which arrived. Many of these have been incorporated in this issue's rundown on the operations of this escort carrier.

The US Navy complained about the length of time British-manned and US-built escort carriers took to get into action after delivery. The Admiralty, on the other hand, regarded them as floating bombs and they all spent some time in dock being modified.

It is 'aeronecrophilia' time as one repeated reader dubbed our annual list of RAF Write-offs. This year it is 1955 that gets the treatment. Only 23 relate to wartime aircraft, taking into account the mark numbers and not the basic type. The last of the Harvards were departing in 1955 and Hunters were appearing in numbers. As usual, the majority of accidents were suffered by the single-seat fighters but the numbers of accidents and fatal casualties were well down on previous years.

Among the odder types of accident were examples of minor incidents that, at 500 mph + turned into write-offs, such as losing the canopy. In slower aircraft this had little effect but the sudden inrush of air at high speed could disrupt the airframe. Memories of the Polish pilot who complained to us that his Spitfire's canopy had fallen off as soon as he pulled the yellow knob to open it on approach are still with us. Finding the Polish for jettison handle took some time.

The greatest loss of life was when two Shackletons collided while on exercises south of Ireland. Although not proven, a collision seemed the only logical explanation for two aircraft disappearing in the same area without any SOS being received.

Another airfield history has been produced, in this case JJH's local one at Turnhouse, now Edinburgh Airport. Memories of wartime flying from there seem inseparable from the effect of the quarry close to the end of the normal runway in use. This caused a sickening lurch at precisely the wrong moment in certain weather conditions.

Wind was frequently a factor in flying from Turnhouse where we saw our first vertical take-off aircraft. With several husky matelots on each wingtip, a Swordfish was lined up into the teeth of a howling gale and the old airship cry of 'Hands Off' probably went up. So did the Stringbag - vertically. After a few seconds apparently hovering, it began to make some headway. It was alleged that the Met Section never went out of their office. Instead they stuck a finger through a hole in the wall. If it came in wet, the prevailing wind was westerly. If it was an east wind, it dropped off.

The problems with Turnhouse's runways post-war was that they were very short. BEA began a daily service (but Mondays to Fridays only) with a DC-3 which left mid-morning and returned from London mid-afternoon. As a link between the two main financial centres of the UK, it lacked appeal and in winter BEA took it off completely, not believing that anyone would want to fly the route in winter. We did, and spent three hours in the dark with ice flying off the props into the fuselage, having to make a stop en route at Birmingham.

A change of regime in BEA resulted in first Viscounts and then Vanguards being put on the route and seats began to be hard to get even with a dozen flights a day. Even British Eagle had a Britannia on the London route, serving tea in real china cups to upmarket the BEA plastic. Thanks to No.603 Squadron's Vampires, a new extended runway was built and today the old Turnhouse is virtually unrecognisable.

Our thanks to Colin Read for providing background on the lifesaving dinghies from the Dunlop archives and also for the photographs of the Mamba-Balliol.

#### THE HANGAR MYSTERY

In AM.2/85, we had some photographs of RAF aircraft and uniforms posed in front of a hangar. One eagle-eyed reader (who remains anonymous as his letter has vanished into the paper dunes for the moment) spotted the fact that the marks on the concrete also appear in 'Action Stations' Vol.8 on page 189 as 'L1592 of No.56 Squadron at North Weald in 1939'! As the 'DT' code of No.257 Squadron is clearly visible and L1592 is in the same state as shown in the AM photo, we must doubt this.

John Bagley, who has L1592 in his Science Museum Collection tells us that it was on the Horse Guards for the 1946 and 1950 Battle of Britain Weeks at least as DT-A. In 1952 it appeared in 'Angels One Five' as US-D or N in washable paint. It went to the Science Museum on 16 December 1954 as DT-A and was refurbished in 1961 as KW-Z.

Thus the location is still not definite but it might be the hangar at Stanmore.

#### COVER PHOTOS

On the front cover is Victor B.1 XH949 of No.57 Squadron and at the back is an unusual formation with ex-Aeronavale Lancaster G-ASXX leading a Victor of No.55 Squadron and a Canberra of the RAAF over Singapore.

# HMS BATTLE



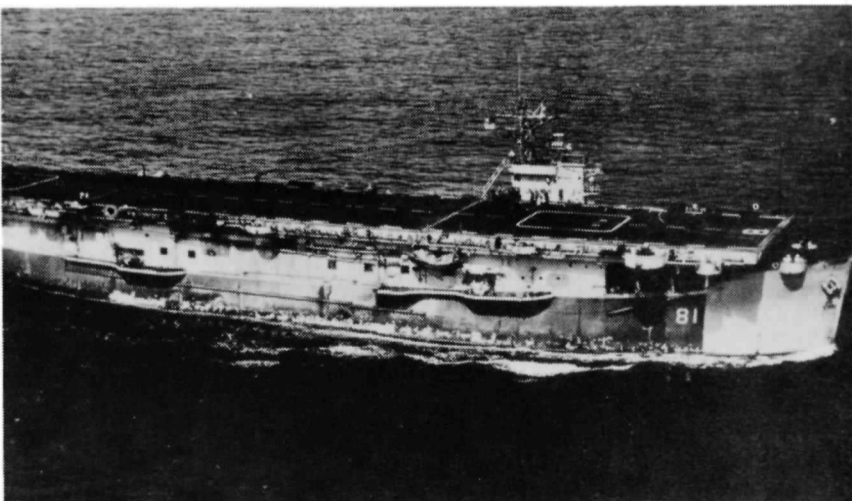
HMS Battler was launched on 4 April 1942 by the Ingalls Shipbuilding yard in Louisiana, having been laid down as a cargo ship to become the Mormacmail. The need for escort carriers had resulted in her take-over by the US Navy as the USS Altamaha (AVG-6) but when she commissioned at Pascagoula on 31 October 1942, it was the White Ensign that was hoisted.

Now named HMS Battler, she ran her sea trials off the mouth of the Mississippi before sailing east to Norfolk where she embarked aircraft and personnel for transfer to the UK. Off Norfolk, she embarked three Swordfish and the first to land, at 1053 on 12 December, was Battler's first decklanding.

On 21 December, she left New York to join an eastbound convoy, her Swordfish flying patrols for the first few days, a duty not helped when the steering broke down. The Swordfish left for Quonset Point NAS on the 26th, leaving Battler to sail as part of the convoy with her load of Martlets of 890, 892 and 894 Squadrons. On 8 January 1943, she flew off 23 Martlets in the approaches to the Clyde and headed for Liverpool.

The next three months were spent modifying the ship to British standards by the fitment of British armament and numerous safety modifications. She emerged on 3 April and headed for the Clyde to begin a period of decklanding training and catapult trials with Albacores, Swordfish, Martlets and Seafires. On 24 April Seafire MB259 of 808 Squadron stalled and hit the sea just ahead of the carrier, S/Lt Shinfield being killed. No.835 Squadron lost Swordfish HS363/X on 29 April after a heavy landing.

*A starboard side view of Battler with Swordfish on deck*



On 5 June, Battler left Belfast for convoy escort duty to Gibraltar. No.835 Squadron supplied a detachment of five Swordfish, one of which (HS371) went into the barrier on 6 June, followed by HS294/F on the 11th while No.808 bounced Seafire NM926 into the forward deck park. On arrival, seven Seafires were flown off to North Front but one crashed on take-off and the pilot was lost.

Leaving for the return trip on 22 June, No.808 was in action on 24 June when two Seafires were launched at night and succeeded in shooting down a Fw 200, a second dropping bombs in the sea nearby.

On 3 August, Battler was off again for Gibraltar where she carried out decklanding training and gunnery trials. No.807 Squadron brought its Seafires aboard and lost one on the 14th when it crashed in the sea off the port quarter. On 9 September, Battler's fighters were flying patrols over the Salerno beachhead. A strip was ready ashore on the 12th at Paestum and No.807 spent five days there of great discomfort, the airstrip being within range of German guns in the hills. Battler, in the meantime, put in at Bizerte and, after recovering No.807's Seafires, returned to Gibraltar. No.834 Squadron's Seafires and Swordfish had embarked from Malta and with these aboard Battler sailed east to Egypt and through the Suez Canal to Aden, losing a Swordfish upside on landing on 22 September but the crew was saved. While some boiler-cleaning took place at Aden, six Swordfish were detached to Riyan for patrols. The voyage continued to Bombay where Battler was to be based for the rest of 1943, carry-out anti-submarine patrols over the Indian Ocean.

*Avengers and Corsairs being ferried from Cochin to Sydney*



For the first quarter of 1944, Battler was engaged in convoy escort and anti-submarine patrols over the western parts of the Indian Ocean until putting in to Durban on 21 March for a refit. No.834's Seafires and Swordfish had been busy, losing HS211/S when it crashed on approach on 10 March 1944, the crew being picked up, One U-boat had been attacked at night close enough for the carrier to see its flak.

Anti-submarine sweeps were resumed when Battler left Durban at the end of June for Ceylon. On 8 August, Wildcat JV484 crashed in the sea off Colombo after a trial catapult launch, the pilot being lost. Wildcats had replaced No.834 Squadron's Seafires fully in August. During October, decklanding training took place with Hellcats, Avengers and Corsairs.

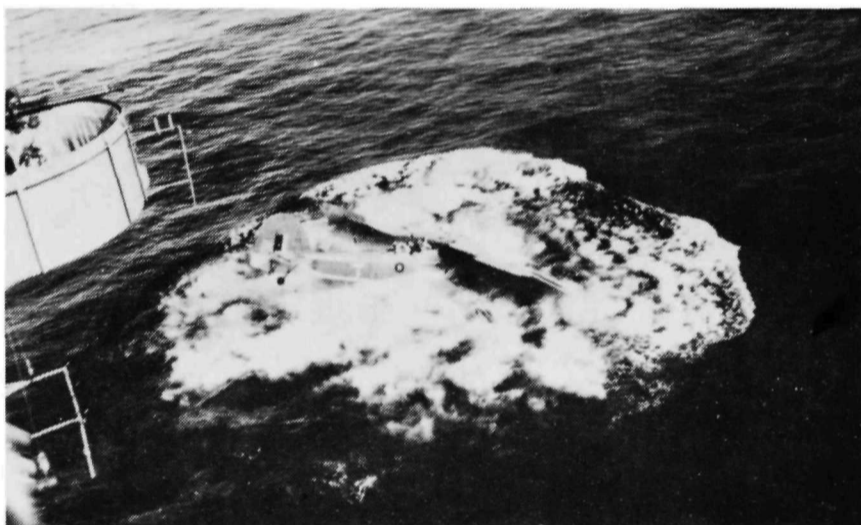
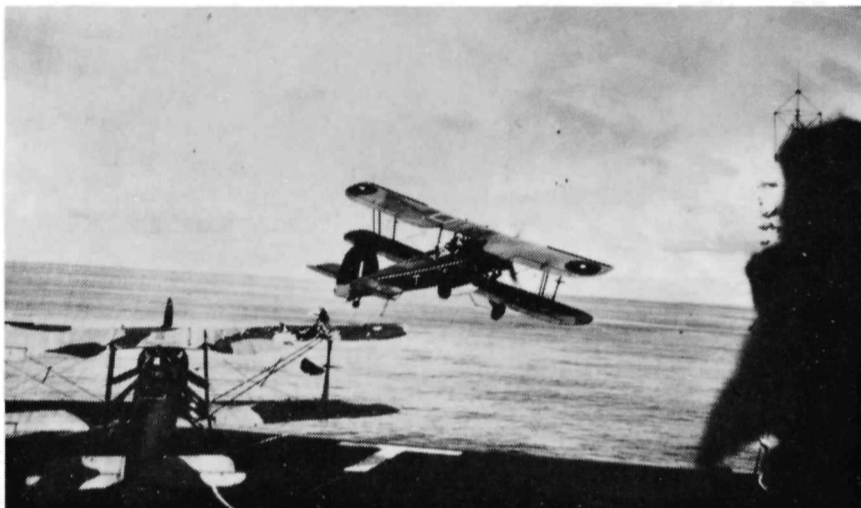
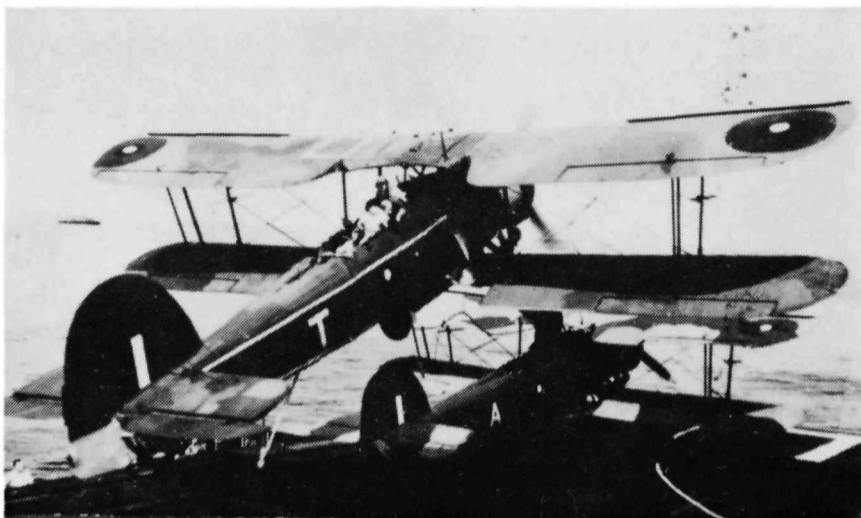
On 8 November, Battler left Ceylon for Suez, having disembarked No.834 for the last time. She now became a transport and in December embarked aircraft for the British Pacific Fleet and took them to Sydney.

Instead of returning to India, Battler sailed eastward across the Pacific, passed through the Panama Canal and put in at Norfolk and New York to embark another load of aircraft for Liverpool. Next stop was the Clyde to act as a deck for training squadrons. Wildcats, Seafires, Corsairs, Avengers and Hellcats carried out decklanding training, a task resumed after the carrier moved to the Forth in June 1945. Barracudas and Fireflies joined the types engaged in DLT from FAA stations in the East of Scotland while even at this late stage of the war Swordfish were regular visitors.

There were the usual deck crashes inseparable from training, mainly into the crash barrier but a few proved fatal. On 5 May a Wildcat hit the island and went upside, the pilot being picked up. But when a Seafire one of the port bow guns on take-off on 12 May, it crashed in the sea with the loss of its pilot.

The surrender of Japan brought an end to the massive training programme for carrier pilots and on the afternoon of 19 December 1945, the last aircraft to use Battler's deck took off. At the end of the year, the carrier was relieved of further requirements and prepared to return to the USA on the cessation of Lend-Lease. On 19 January 1946, she sailed from the Clyde for Norfolk where she was handed over to the US Navy on 12 February 1946.

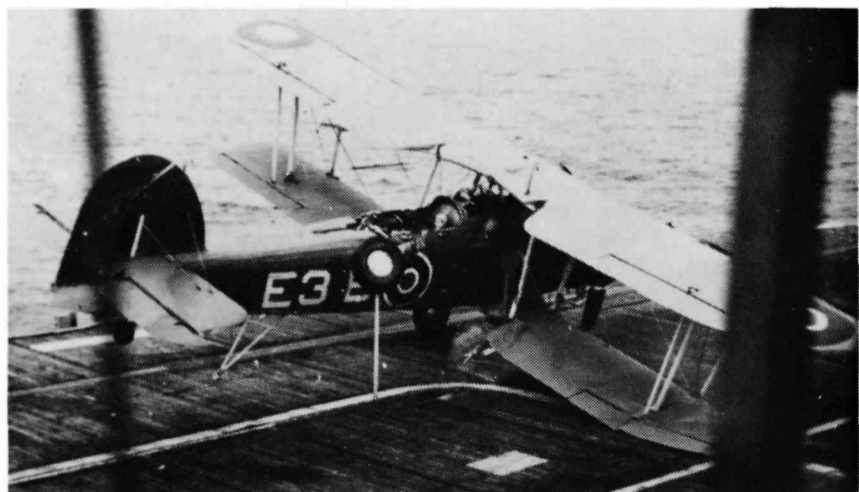
Although many escort carriers were sold after the end of the war and converted to merchant ships, Battler was sent to the scrap yard. As one of the earliest escort carriers transferred to the Royal Navy, she had sailed many miles on escort and transport duties and had been one of the few carriers to sail round the world in the course of her wanderings.



*Above top to bottom: Swordfish LS513 overshoots the wires and decides to go round again but hits the top wing of 'A' and splashes off the starboard bow. The crew was picked up*

*Below left: A Swordfish from 737 Squadron at East Haven loses a wheel during deck landing training in the Forth*

*Below right: LS187 of 834 Squadrons squats on landing 1.9.44*





Wildcat 'Q' landing on



Seafire III with hook down

MOVEMENTS

Place	Arrived	Sailed
Commissioned at Pascagoula, La	31.10.42	11.11.42
New Orleans. La	11.11.42	15.11.42
Key West, Fla	17.11.42	18.11.42
Norfolk, Va	23.11.42	17.12.42
New York NY	18.12.42	21.12.42
Campbeltown	8.1.43	9.1.43
Liverpool	10.1.43	3.4.43
Greenock	4.4.43	12.4.43
Rothesay	12.4.43	24.4.43
Greenock	24.4.43	26.4.43
Rothesay	26.4.43	1.5.43
Greenock	1.5.43	3.5.43
Rothesay	3.5.43	7.5.43
Greenock	7.5.43	15.5.43
Belfast	16.5.43	28.5.43
Greenock	28.5.43	3.6.43
Belfast	3.6.43	5.6.43
Gibraltar	14.6.43	22.6.43
Greenock	28.6.43	12.7.43
Moville	12.7.43	13.7.43
Rothesay	13.7.43	16.7.43
Greenock	16.7.43	3.8.43
Gibraltar	9.8.43	1.9.43
Malta	5.9.43	8.9.43
Palermo, Sicily	12.9.43	13.9.43
Bizerte, Tunisia	13.9.43	18.9.43
Gibraltar	20.9.43	22.9.43
Port Said, Egypt	28.9.43	29.9.43
Suez, Egypt	29.9.43	1.10.43
Aden	4.10.43	17.10.43
Bombay, India	26.10.43	4.11.43
Bombay, India	9.11.43	11.11.43
Bombay, India	17.11.43	12.12.43
Bombay, India	19.12.43	26.12.43
Aden	1.1.44	6.1.44
Mauritius	19.1.44	19.1.44
Durban, South Africa	4.2.44	20.2.44
Mauritius	24.2.44	5.3.44

\* \* \* \* \*

Place	Arrived	Sailed
Mauritius	16.3.44	17.3.44
Durban, South Africa	21.3.44	28.6.44
Kilindini, Kenya	4.7.44	11.7.44
Colombo, Ceylon	22.7.44	24.7.44
Cochin, India	25.7.44	28.7.44
Colombo, Ceylon	29.7.44	23.8.44
Addu Atoll, Maldives	7.9.44	8.9.44
Addu Atoll, Maldives	10.9.44	13.9.44
Addu Atoll, Maldives	14.9.44	15.9.44
Colombo, Ceylon	22.9.44	24.9.44
Cochin, India	25.9.44	5.10.44
Trincomalee, Ceylon	7.10.44	8.11.44
Suez, Egypt	18.11.44	23.11.44
Cochin, India	2.12.44	9.12.44
Sydney, Australia	25.12.44	12.1.45
Balboa, Panama	1.2.45	3.2.45
Norfolk, Va	8.2.45	13.2.45
New York, NY	14.2.45	19.2.45
Liverpool	1.3.45	4.3.45
Greenock	5.3.45	1.5.45
Rothesay	1.5.45	24.5.45
Bangor	25.5.45	26.5.45
Rothesay	27.5.45	28.5.45
Belfast	28.5.45	30.5.45
Rothesay	30.5.45	2.6.45
Methil	4.6.45	13.8.45
Greenock	15.8.45	28.8.45
Methil	30.8.45	30.9.45
Rosyth	30.9.45	15.10.45
Methil	15.10.45	19.10.45
Rosyth	19.10.45	30.10.45
Methil	30.10.45	10.11.45
Rosyth	10.11.45	19.11.45
Methil	19.11.45	20.12.45
Rosyth	20.12.45	4.1.46
Greenock	6.1.46	19.1.46
Norfolk, Va	1.2.46	12.2.46
Paid off		

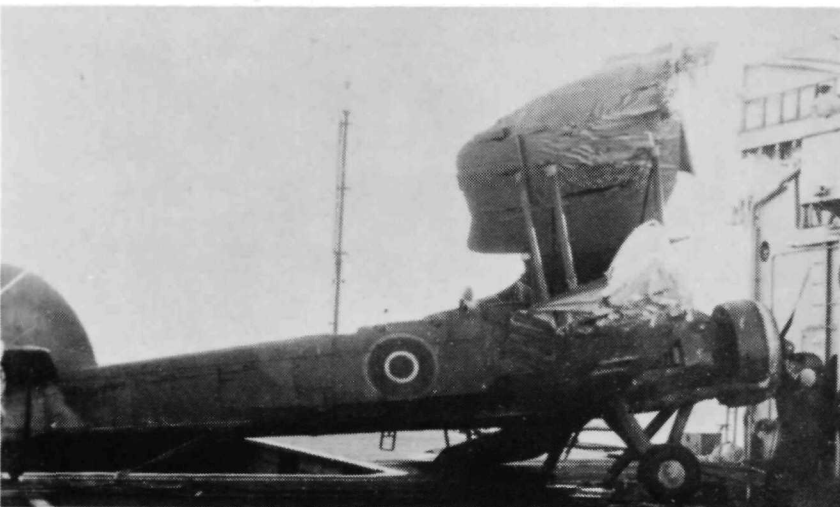
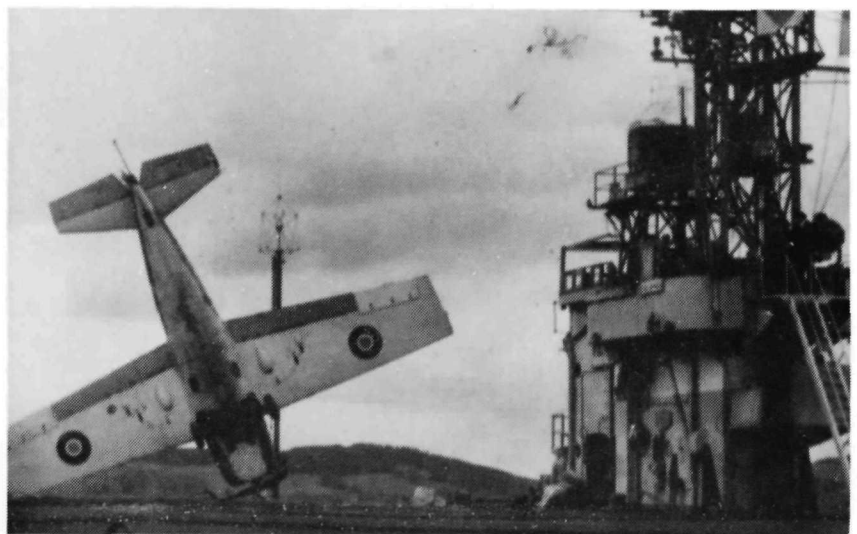
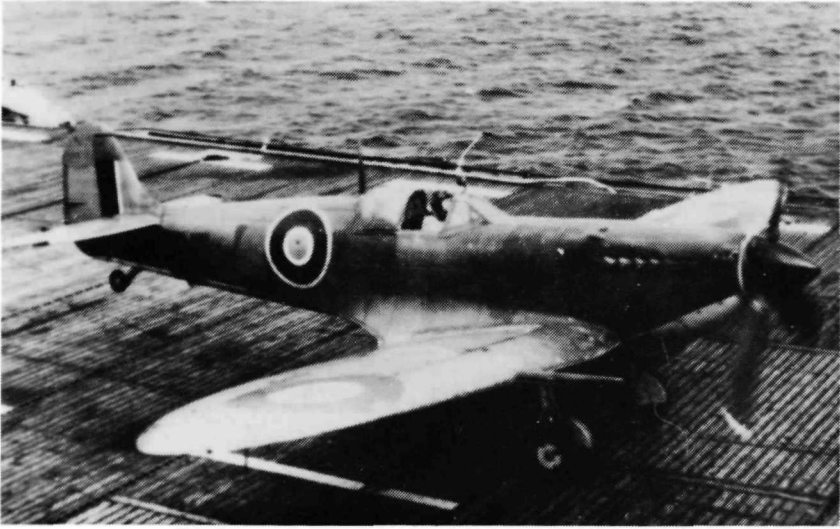
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Blackburn-built Swordfish II HS665 of 768 Squadron



Avenger during DLT in the Clyde





*Left-hand column, top to bottom:*

*Seafire III NN198 of 768 Squadron during decklanding training, Aug/September 1945*

*Swordfish HS741/5F of No.835 Squadron landing on.*

*Swordfish LS422 of No.768 Squadron after hitting the barrier, 1 September 1945*

*Right-hand column, top to bottom:*

*Unidentified Swordfish of 834 Squadron after a crashlanding in the Indian Ocean*

*A Wildcat nose-stands after landing during training in the Clyde, 1945*

*A Corsair drops a leg during DLT in the Clyde, 1945*

*Right:*

*Avengers being hoisted inboard from a lighter off Cochin, December 1944*

*Far right:*

*Avengers stored as deck cargo en route from Suez to Cochin, November 1944*





*Battler in the Indian Ocean with a deck load of Avengers in transit and its own No.834 Squadron aircraft forward.*

#### DETAILS OF SHIP

Displacement: 10,200 tons (14,400 tons FL)  
 Dimensions: Length: 465 feet  
 Beam: 82 ft max  
 Draught: 23 ft 3 in (mean)  
           26 feet (full load)  
 Machinery: Westinghouse geared turbine  
               8,500 shp  
 Max speed: 18.5 kts  
 Armament: 20 aircraft  
            Two 4-in  
            Four 40mm Bofors (paired)  
            Ten 20mm Oerlikon (8 paired)  
 Complement: 646  
 Catapults: One  
 Radar: Type 79/279 air warning  
           Type 271/272 surface

#### AIRCRAFT EMBARKED

Squadrons which operated from HMS Battler were:  
 Nos.757, 768, 807, 808, 831, 834, 835, 840, 890,  
 892 and 894.

The first two were engaged in decklanding training and were shorebased units which sent detachments aboard for periods. Other training units operated from shore bases on a day-to-day basis.

Initially No.835 provided Battler with fighter and ASW aircraft and was replaced by No.834. No.807 was embarked to cover the Salerno landings.

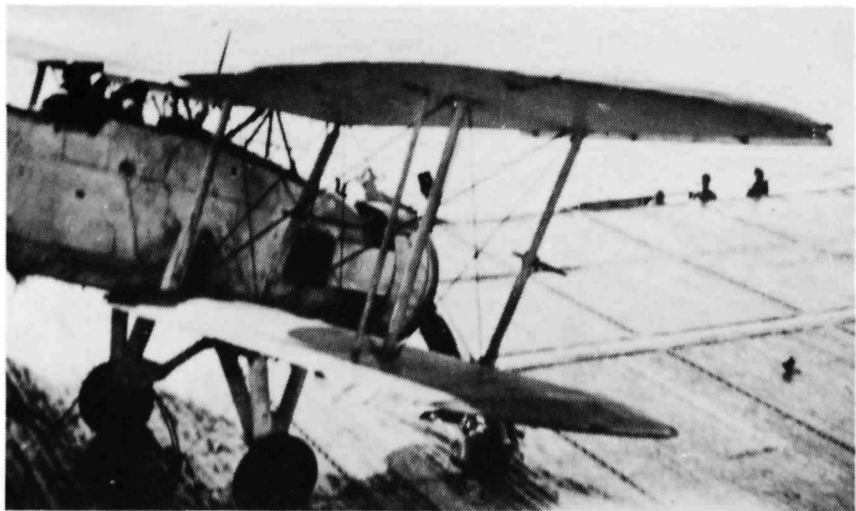
After November 1944, Battler had no operational squadron embarked, being used for decklanding and transport duties.

Types known to have flown from Battler were:

Seafire IIC, III; Swordfish; Sea Hurricane IIC; Wildcat (Martlet) IV and V; Corsair; Barracuda; Hellcat; Firefly I; Albacore

*No.834 Squadron's Wildcats and Swordfish were disembarked to Katukurunda in July 1944 while Battler was at Cochin*





*An unusual accident: C/834 tips up after landing and throws out S/Lt Johnson on to the elevator before being dragged back by the landing wire*

*Above left: A Barracuda lands on during DLT in the Clyde    Above right: A Seafire catches the sixth wire during DLT*

*Below left: A Corsair rather off the landing line*

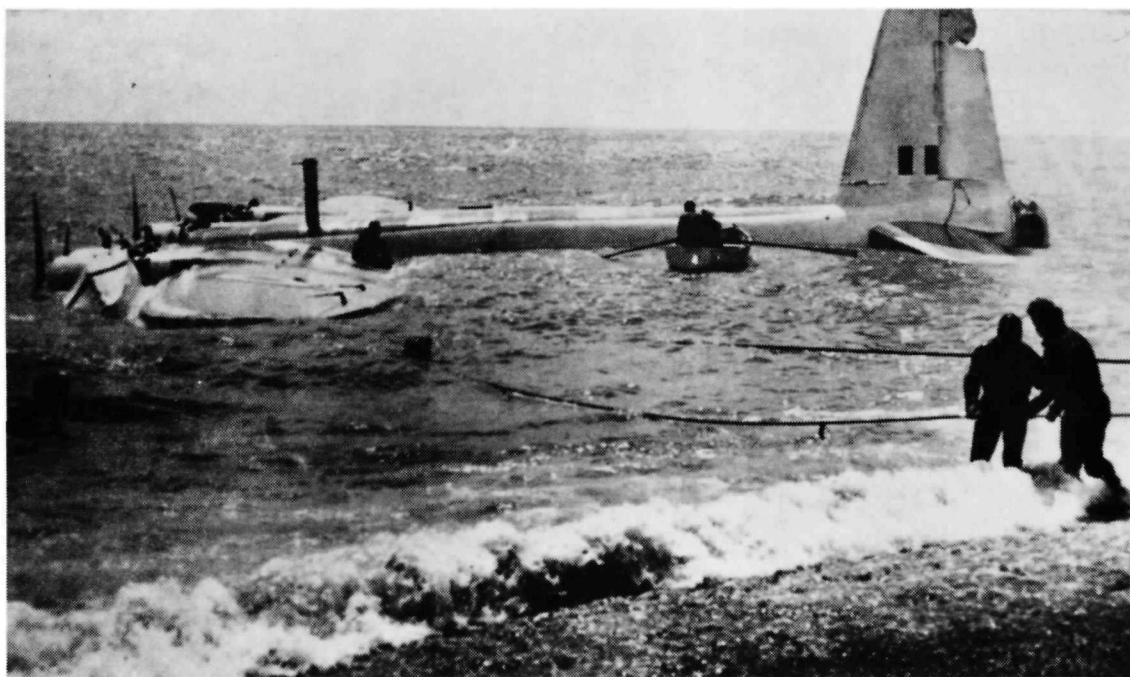
*Below right: A Hellcat is batted on during DLT in the Clyde*

*Bottom left and right: Two views of Battler reveal her mercantile hull and camouflage scheme*





# R.A.F. WRITE-OFFS 1955



*RN288 of No.201 Squadron towed into the beach at Eastbourne, Sussex, 4.6.55*

Date	Type	Serial	Unit	Location	Cause
10.1.55	Meteor T.7	WA666	12 FTS	1½m NNE of Weston Zoyland	Dived into ground after take-off (2)
10.1.55	Meteor T.7	WL342	FTU	1½m NE of Nettlebed, Oxon	Dived into ground after take-off from Benson (1)
10.1.55	Vampire FB.9	WR122	249 Sqn	Fayid, Egypt	Caught in slipstream on take-off; dropped wing and slid along runway
11.1.55	Harvard T.2B	KF160	Mcr UAS	Woodvale	Swung on landing and ground-looped
11.1.55	Meteor T.7	WF783	72 Sqn	1½m S of Church Fenton	Yawed on overshoot and dived into ground (2)
11.1.55	Spitfire PR.19	PM652	Thum Flt	High Erccall	Engine lost power; bellylanded
11.1.55	Shackleton MR.2	WL743	42 Sqn	S of Fastnet Rock,	Missing on exercise; presumed collided (9)
11.1.55	Shackleton MR.2	WG531	42 Sqn	off Ireland	approx 5137N:1025W (9)
14.1.55	Harvard T.2B	KF346	3 FTS	Feltwell	Engine cut on climb-out from practice forced landing; hit cables and DBR; SOC on return
18.1.55	Anson C.19	VM309	Ismailia	Off Kuwait	Crashed in sea; cause not known (6)
21.1.55	Vampire FB.9	WR155	249 Sqn	Near Amman, Jordan	Hit birds; DBR and SOC on return
25.1.55	Auster T.7	WE540	267 Sqn	Medang, Malaya	Sank on approach; undercarriage collapsed
25.1.55	Meteor NF.12	WS670	46 Sqn	Odiham	Heavy landing at night; undercarriage broke off
25.1.55	Meteor NF.14	WS835	46 Sqn	Nr.Kingsley Green, Hants	Ran out of fuel at night; abandoned
27.1.55	Auster AOP.6	VW992	651 Sqn	Nr.Ismailia, Egypt	Hit slipstream of Meteor at low altitude and hit ground
29.1.55	Sabre F.4	XD713	92 Sqn	Linton-on-Ouse	Tyre burst on take-off; undercarriage raised to stop
30.1.55	Sycamore HC.14	XE316	194 Sqn	Fort Selim, Malaya	Swung in gust and sank into ground; overturned
1.2.55	Meteor F.4	VT115	4 FTS	1½m SSE of Neasham	Dived into ground in circuit at night (1)
1.2.55	Meteor T.7	WF849	ITF	2m N of Nicosia, Nicosia Cyprus	Stalled after take-off and dived into ground (1)
1.2.55	Vampire FB.5	WA262	5 FTS	Landbeach, Cambs	Abandoned in spin (1)
2.2.55	Meteor T.7	WL408	12 FTS	Durstun, Somerset	Flew into ground on low-level exercise (2)
4.2.55	Sabre F.4	XB760	71 Sqn	2m W of Julich, W.Germany	Control lost in cloud; dived into ground (1)
10.2.55	Sabre F.4	XB839	26 Sqn	8m SSW of Oldenburg, West Germany	Dived into ground (1)
12.2.55	Mosquito PR.34	PF669	81 Sqn	Seletar, Singapore	Undercarriage retracted on landing
12.2.55	Vampire FB.5	VZ123	613 Sqn	Ringway	Undercarriage jammed; bellylanded
15.2.55	Meteor T.7	WH194	12 FTS	Lympsham, Somerset	Abandoned in spin during aerobatic practice
15.2.55	Venom NF.2	WR781	23 Sqn	½m S of Rougham, Norfolk	Hit tree after take-off and crashed (2)
16.2.55	Hornet F.3	PX332	45 Sqn	Tengah, Singapore	Canopy shattered; SOC on return due to over-stressing of airframe
16.2.55	Vampire FB.5	VZ147	5 FTS	4½m WSW of Cambridge	Flew into ground after take-off from Oakington (1)
19.2.55	Lincoln B.2	SX984	49 Sqn	8m NNW of Kiambu, Kenya	Hit huts during low run and dived into ground (6+3)
22.2.55	Auster AOP.6	VW986	1967 Flt	Nr.Camster, Caithness	Flew into snowdrift in white-out during supply drop
22.2.55	Meteor NF.11	WM169	87 Sqn	Wahn, West Germany	Stalled on emergency approach and hit ground (2)
24.2.55	Auster AOP.6	VX129	656 Sqn	Negri Sembilan, Malaya	Caught in downdraught in valley; turned to fly out but hit tree during turn
24.2.55	Sabre F.4	XB623	26 Sqn	Oldenburg, W.Germany	Yawed on take-off and hit snowbank
25.2.55	Harvard T.2B	FX393	1340 Flt	60m N of Mt.Kipipiri, Kenya	Stalled turning in valley and hit trees
26.2.55	Meteor F.8	WE884	63 Sqn	1m N of Wendling airfield, Norfolk	Hit birds; engine caught fire; abandoned
26.2.55	Vampire FB.9	WG865	28 Sqn	Sek Kong, Hong Kong	Stalled on approach and dived into ground (1)
28.2.55	Mosquito PR.34	RG205	81 Sqn	Butterworth, Malaya	Undershot landing and undercarriage collapsed
1.3.55	Anson T.21	WB463	CNCS	2½m SW of Shawbury	Engine cut after take-off; forced landed in field and hit hedges
2.3.55	Hastings C.2	WD484	RRE	Boscombe Down	Took off with elevators locked; stalled and dived into ground (2)
3.3.55	Meteor F.8	WE963	34 Sqn	2m W of Paines Wood, Sussex	Collided with FAA Vampire XG765 and crashed (1)
7.3.55	Meteor T.7	WL461	211 AFS	Worksop	Hit trees on night approach in snow shower
8.3.55	Lancaster GR.3	SW285	SMR	St.Mawgan	Swung on take-off and undercarriage collapsed
9.3.55	Meteor T.7	WH200	CFS	Broadwell airfield, Oxon	Spun into ground (2)

Date	Type	Serial	Unit	Location	Cause
10.3.55	Vampire FB.5	WA195	5 FTS	5m NW of Kings Lynn, Norfolk	Abandoned after engine explosion
11.3.55	Canberra B.2	WH728	27 Sqn	Kasfareet, Egypt	Lost power while taking off in dust cloud and crashlanded
14.3.55	Auster AOP.6	WJ355	656 Sqn	Guron, Kedah, Malaya	Swung while landing on road; fell down embankment into ditch
14.3.55	Balliol T.2	WG130	RAFC	Barkston Heath	Swung on landing and hit snowbank; undercarriage collapsed
15.3.55	Auster AOP.6	TW581	SF	4m SW of Famagusta, Nicosia Cyprus	Hit soft patch landing on road and overturned
16.3.55	Meteor T.7	WL354	211 AFS	5m SE of Retford, Notts.	Dived into ground during aerobatics (2)
16.3.55	Sabre F.4	XD755	66 Sqn	½m SW of Driffield	Stalled on approach and dived into ground (1)
17.3.55	Mosquito PR.34	RG177	81 Sqn	Seletar, Singapore	Swung on landing and undercarriage raised to stop
20.3.55	Auster AOP.6	VX108	661 Sqn	2m SSW of Chitterne, Wilts	Failed to climb fast enough and flew into rising ground
20.3.55	Meteor T.7	WA670	604 Sqn	Martin Mill Station, 3m NE of Dover, Kent	Hodd blew off; abandoned
23.3.55	Meteor NF.11	WD650	228 OCU	3m W of Masham, Yorks	Crashed after abandoning GCA approach to Leeming (2)
23.3.55	Venom FB.1	WK472	249 Sqn	3m ENE of Amman, Jordan	Lost tip tank; rolled and dived into ground (1)
28.3.55	Chipmunk T.10	WP777	Hull UAS	Brough	Hit bank on approach and crashed
28.3.55	Varsity T.1	WJ888	2 ANS	1½m W of Colyton, Devon	Abandoned after engine fire
29.3.55	Prentice T.1	VS372	Bruggen	Oldenburg, W.Germany	Undershot landing and hit bank
30.3.55	Oxford T.1	PH411	Eastern Sector	Horsham St.Faith	Undercarriage collapsed when engines started
1.4.55	Auster AOP.6	VF568	656 Sqn	Pahang, Malaya	Lost propeller; hit obstruction in forced landing and overturned
1.4.55	Chipmunk T.10	WP780	Durham UAS	6m N of Otterburn, Northumberland	Hit stand during low-level display and cartwheeled (0+6)
1.4.55	Meteor T.7	WL474	211 FTS	2½m NE of Gamston	Dived into ground during asymmetric overshoot at Gamston RLG (2)
1.4.55	Vampire FB.5	VZ288	5 FTS	Oakington	Undercarriage collapsed on landing
2.4.55	Hornet F.3	PX350	45 Sqn	Butterworth, Malaya	Collided during run over airfield (1)
2.4.55	Hornet F.3	PX362	45 Sqn	Butterworth, Malaya	and crashed (1)
2.4.55	Valetta C.1	WD163	110 Sqn	Lahat Datu, N.Borneo	Aileron control locked; swung on landing and undercarriage collapsed
2.4.55	Venom FB.1	WE428	6 Sqn	3m S of Habbaniya, Iraq	Abandoned in spin (1)
3.4.55	Auster AOP.6	TW539	663 Sqn	3½m ESE of Whitchurch, Salop.	Hit ground avoiding HT wires
3.4.55	Vampire FB.5	VZ325	612 Sqn	Brimmond Hill, near Dyce	Spun into ground during roll (1)
5.4.55	Anson C.19	TX238	2 TAFCS	1m E of Wildenrath,	Collided with Sabre XB634 on approach (2)
5.4.55	Sabre F.4	XB634	67 Sqn	West Germany	Collided with Anson TX238 on approach (1)
5.4.55	Sabre F.4	XD710	92 Sqn	Acklington	Abandoned take-off and swung on to grass
7.4.55	Harvard T.2B	FX265	1340 Flt	20m NW of Nyeri, Kenya	Failed to climb out of valley and crashlanded in clearing
10.4.55	Vampire FB.5	WG831	502 Sqn	Nr.Crumlin, Co.Antrim	Engine cut; bellylanded in field
13.4.55	Meteor F.8	WK755	FCCS	Bovingdon	Overshot landing; swung and undercarriage collapsed
14.4.55	Beaufighter TT.10	RD783	5 CAACU	3m WNW of Hooton Park	Yawed on approach and bellylanded on Bromborough Golf Course, Wirral
14.4.55	Meteor F.4	VT235	8 FTS	Leconfield	Bellylanded
15.4.55	Meteor T.7	WL355	79 Sqn	Horst, Netherlands	Both engines cut; bellylanded
16.4.55	Harvard T.2B	KF626	Mal Aux Air Fce	Kuala Lumpur, Malaya	Swung on landing and overturned
17.4.55	Oxford T.2	T1398	CUAS	Cambridge Airport	Collided with NM357 on approach; overshoot and landed but SOC as DBR
17.4.55	Vampire FB.5	WA432	603 Sqn	10m S of Haddington, East Lothian	Flew into hill in cloud (1)
19.4.55	Meteor F.8	WH378	56 Sqn	5m E of Peterborough,	Collided with WK726 and abandoned
19.4.55	Meteor F.8	WK726	56 Sqn	Northants	Collided with WH378 and abandoned
19.4.55	Vampire T.11	XD518	5 FTS	Marham	Throttle jammed; undershot emergency landing
19.4.55	Venom FB.1	WK433	FWS	Leconfield	Undercarriage retracted on landing; caught fire
20.4.55	Pembroke C.1	WV712	APSF	Aden Harbour	Both engines cut due to lack of fuel and ditched
20.4.55	Vampire FB.9	WR256	8 Sqn	Wadi Halfa, Sudan	Caught fire refuelling
21.4.55	Meteor NF.11	WD754	256 Sqn	6m SSE of Oldenburg, West Germany	Dived into ground after take-off (2)
21.4.55	Meteor T.7	WL364	CFS	Little Rissington	Undershot landing and undercarriage collapsed
21.4.55	Venom FB.1	WR343	249 Sqn	11m NE of Amman, Jordan	Elevator jammed; abandoned in dive
22.4.55	Provost T.1	WV570	CFS	1½m ENE of Kemble	Lost wing recovering from dive; abandoned (1)
26.4.55	Hornet F.3	PX367	45 Sqn	Butterworth, Malaya	Sank back on take-off; SOC on return
26.4.55	Varsity T.1	WF426	2 ANS	Onnaing, France	Taken on unauthorised flight by foreign mechanic under training and hit houses (1+4)
26.4.55	Meteor F.4	VT328	8 FTS	Driffield	Overshot landing and undercarriage collapsed
28.4.55	Anson C.12	PH717	HCCF	Fairoaks	Undercarriage leg collapsed while taxiing
28.4.55	Auster AOP.6	WJ376	656 Sqn	Kulai, Malaya	Swung on landing and overturned
28.4.55	Meteor F.4	VZ392	12 FTS	Whitchurch, Somerset	Bounced off ground in cloud; SOC on return
29.4.55	Anson T.22	VV358	81 GP CS	1m SE of Weston-super- Mare airport, Somerset	Engine cut on take-off; bellylanded in field and hit hedge
29.4.55	Auster AOP.6	WJ408	656 Sqn	Jeransong, Pahang, Malaya	Het tree while leaflet dropping (1)
2.5.55	Hunter F.1	WW640	54 Sqn	Odiham	Caught fire starting up
2.5.55	Harvard T.2B	KF126	267 Sqn	Butterworth, Malaya	Swung on landing and undercarriage collapsed
3.5.55	Sabre F.4	XB615	234 Sqn	1m E of Puffendorf, West Germany	Engine flamed out; forced landed in field

<i>Date</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Serial</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Cause</i>
3.5.55	Venom FB.1	WE357	14 Sqn	6m NW of Munsterlager, West Germany	Hit tree during practice attack (1)
4.5.55	Sycamore HC.14	XE315	194 Sqn	Kuala Krau, Malaya	Tail rotor failed on approach; dropped into river and sank
7.5.55	Tiger Moth T.2	T7292	Sing. AAF Sqn	Tengah, Singapore	Swung on landing and overturned
9.5.55	Meteor NF.11	WM268	141 Sqn	15m NE of Cromer, Norfolk	Crashed in sea; cause not known (2)
10.5.55	Canberra B.2	WH716	231 OCU	2½m SSW of Stowmarket, Suffolk	Dived into ground at night (3)
10.5.55	Meteor F.8	WA819	63 Sqn	1m N of Cogishall, Essex	Abandoned after control lost (1)
11.5.55	Auster AOP.6	WJ398	656 Sqn	20m NE of Kroh, Malaya	Lost power; forced landed in clearing and hit trees
12.5.55	Meteor F.8	WE904	211 FTS	Millthorpe, Derbyshire	Dived out of cloud and hit ground recovering (1)
13.5.55	Lincoln B.2	RF539	83 Sqn	Hemswell	Swung on take-off and undercarriage retracted to stop
13.5.55	Venom FB.1	WR358	249 Sqn	18m E of Zerka, Jordan	Abandoned in spin during aerobatics
13.5.55	Vampire FB.5	WA300	501 Sqn	Hallen March, Glos	Stalled in circuit and spun into ground (1)
13.5.55	Venom FB.1	WE385	147 Sqn	Fassberg, West Germany	Stalled on take-off and wing hit ground; DBF
14.5.55	Sabre F.4	XD780	92 Sqn	Linton-on-Ouse	Stalled on to runway and undercarriage collapsed
16.5.55	Auster AOP.6	WJ405	1914 Flt	Paroi, Malaya	Abandoned take-off and swung
16.5.55	Sabre F.4	XB699	3 Sqn	Lontzen, Netherlands	Control lost; dived into ground (1)
20.5.55	Meteor NF.11	WD605	29 Sqn	16m SSW of Selsey Bill, Sussex	Crashed into sea during air-to-air firing exercise (2)
21.5.55	Lancaster MR.3	SW334	SMR	St.Mawgan	Engine cut on approach; attempted overshoot but crashlanded
23.5.55	Valetta C.1	VW834	216 Sqn	Fayid, Egypt	Undercarriage collapsed on landing
24.5.55	Vampire T.11	XE832	4 FTS	Stocksfield, Northumberland	Abandoned after false fire warning
26.5.55	Meteor F.8	WE916	211 FTS	4m SE of Sheffield, Yorks	Dived into ground at night; cause not known (1)
29.5.55	Vampire FB.5	VZ121	501 Sqn	Filton	Sank back after take-off; brakes failed on landing and swung off runway
31.5.55	Provost T.1	WW435	RAFC	2m NNE of Biggleswade, Beds.	Engine cut; overshoot forced landing and tipped up
31.5.55	Vampire FB.5	WA442	3 CAACU	Exeter	Sank back after take-off and caught fire
4.6.55	Sunderland MR.5	RN288	201 Sqn	Off Eastbourne, Sussex	Bounced on landing in swell and nosed in (4)
4.6.55	Venom FB.1	WR355	8 Sqn	Khormaksar, Aden	Engine blew up on starting
6.6.55	Vampire FB.5	VV483	233 OCU	Pembrey	Wing hit runway on take-off; skidded and caught fire
10.6.55	Meteor F.8	WK933	26 APC	Nicosia, Cyprus	Lost canopy; SOC on return
13.6.55	Meteor F.4	RA425	8 FTS	Driffield	Undercarriage jammed; bellylanded
14.6.55	Hunter F.1	WT644	43 Sqn	3½m W of Leuchars	Flew into hill on overshoot (1)
15.6.55	Meteor F.4	VT263	8 FTS	Seamer, Yorks	Dived into ground; presumably due to anoxia (1)
16.6.55	Sabre F.4	XD712	66 Sqn	9m E of Scunthorpe, Lincs	Broke up recovering from dive and spun into sea (1)
21.6.55	Balliol T.2	WF995	RAFC	Dowsby Fen, Lincs	Stalled during practice forced landing, hit ground and cartwheeled
21.6.55	Vampire T.11	XD424	5 FTS	½m N of Whipsnade Church, Beds.	Abandoned in spin
22.6.55	Vampire FB.5	WA416	4 FTS	Middleton St.George	Stalled on take-off from roller landing and wing hit ground
24.6.55	Chipmunk T.10	WK508	63 Gp CF	Hawarden	Engine cut on take-off; stalled and hit ground
24.6.55	Meteor FR.9	WL265	79 Sqn	2m SSE of Limburg, West Germany	Hit obstruction during tactical reconnaissance exercise and caught fire; abandoned (1)
24.6.55	Vampire FB.5	VX987	7 FTS	Valley	Overshot abandoned take-off and undercarriage collapsed
24.6.55	Sabre F.4	XB677	92 Sqn	Linton-on-Ouse	Failed to become airborne; overshoot and DBF
26.6.55	Lincoln B.2	WD131	199 Sqn	7m NW of Bitburg, West Germany	Collided with F-86D 52-3933 of 496th FIS at night and crashed (6)
26.6.55	Sabre F.4	XB633	3 Sqn	Eindhoven, Netherlands	Sank back on take-off and overshoot runway
27.6.55	Balliol T.2	WN171	238 OCU	Wattisham	Undercarriage retracted during abandoned take-off
29.6.55	Chipmunk T.10	WG287	Bristol UAS	Swinderby	Engine failed to pick up after practice cut on take-off; hit ground
29.6.55	Vampire T.11	WZ566	4 FTS	2½m WNW of Stockton-on-Tees, Co.Durham	Dived into ground at night (1)
30.6.55	Meteor NF.12	WS662	153 Sqn	West Malling	Failed to become airborne and overshoot runway (2+2)
2.7.55	Pembroke C.1	WV708	APSF	Lodar, Aden	Engine caught fire; bellylanded on strip
5.7.55	Sabre F.4	XB950	112 Sqn	1m E of Heerlen, Neth.	Engine blew up; aircraft caught fire and dived into ground (1)
5.7.55	Supermarine 525	VX138	AAEE	2m SSE of Boscombe Down	Spun into ground (1)
6.7.55	Auster T.7	WE614	656 Sqn	Negri Sembilan, Malaya	Lost propeller; hit tree stump in forced landing and overturned
7.7.55	Hunter F.4	WT762	247 Sqn	Fleet, Hants.	Abandoned after power lost in Farnborough circuit (1)
7.7.55	Meteor F.8	WA891	63 Sqn	Trevose Head, Cornwall	Dived into cliff out of cloud (1)
7.7.55	Meteor F.8	WL178	72 Sqn	Church Fenton	Abandoned take-off and undercarriage raised to stop; DBF
8.7.55	Sycamore HC.14	XF268	SF	Summit of Mount Olympus, Nicosia Cyprus	Sank into ground
8.7.55	Vampire FB.9	WL557	60 Sqn	Tengah, Singapore	Undercarriage jammed; bellylanded
8.7.55	Vampire FB.5	VZ356	7 FTS	Valley	Overshot landing and undercarriage raised to stop
10.7.55	Vampire FB.9	WR197	147 Sqn	55m SE of Delhi, India	Engine cut; forced landed
11.7.55	Auster AOP.6	VX124	666 Sqn	12m NNW of Minden, West Germany	Hit fence on take-off, stalled and overturned into ditch

Date	Type	Serial	Unit	Location	Cause
11.7.55	Varsity T.1	WJ904	2 ANS	4½m N of Thorney Island	Wrong prop feathered during single-engined flying practice; crashlanded
12.7.55	Balliol T.2	WG132	RAFC	Barkston Heath	Sank on to runway on approach and DBR
12.7.55	Hunter F.1	WT581	43 Sqn	1m WNW of Leuchars	Engine flamed out; abandoned (1)
12.7.55	Sabre F.4	XB932	130 Sqn	Bruggen, W.Germany	Undershot landing
14.7.55	Lincoln B.2	WD128	230 OCU	Upwood	Hit truck on take-off; undercarriage collapsed on landing
15.7.55	Sabre F.4	XB880	71 Sqn	Bruggen, W.Germany	Lost height on approach and hit ground; blew up (1)
15.7.55	Vampire FB.5	WA337	7 FTS	Valley	Wing hit ground after take-off
15.7.55	Vampire FB.9	WL499	28 Sqn	Kai Tak, Hong Kong	Engine cut; veered on landing and hit hut (1+1)
18.7.55	Hunter F.1	WT628	ETPS	Southwood Farm, Cove, Hants	Engine cut on approach to Farnborough; dived into ground (1)
19.7.55	Meteor F.8	WH348	19 Sqn	Church Fenton	Tyre burst; skidded into wall
19.7.55	Venom FB.1	WK469	145 Sqn	2m W of Tinum, W.Germany	Caught fire in air; abandoned
19.7.55	Venom FB.1	WK480	145 Sqn	3m E of Hornum, W.Germany	Abandoned after fire warning
19.7.55	Venom FB.1	WR362	8 Sqn	23m NW of Khormaksar, Aden	Abandoned, presumably in spin (1)
26.7.55	Hastings C.2	WJ341	24 Sqn	Abingdon	Sank on approach and undershot
28.7.55	Anson C.12	PH618	2 TAFCS	5m SW of Iserlohn, West Germany	Flew into high ground in cloud (5)
28.7.55	Vampire FB.5	VV530	7 FTS	½m N of Ruthin, Denbigh	Engine cut; dived into ground (1)
29.7.55	Valiant B.1	WP222	138 Sqn	2¼m ENE of Wittering	Aileron malfunctioned; turned into ground after take-off (4)
1.8.55	Valetta C.1	VW143	Aden CS	Sanau, Aden	Engine cut on overshoot; crashlanded in desert
3.8.55	Auster AOP.6	TW534	652 Sqn	Nr.Detmold, W.Germany	Hit fence on take-off from strip and overturned
3.8.55	Hunter F.5	WN989	263 Sqn	7m E of Bawdsey, Suffolk	Abandoned in dive after controls failed
3.8.55	Sabre F.4	XB548	93 Sqn	Meppen ranges, W.Germany	Flew into ground recovering from dive (1)
4.8.55	Vampire FB.5	WA113	5 FTS	3m E of Sculthorpe	Dived into ground recovering from loop (1)
5.8.55	Meteor PR.10	VS986	81 Sqn	Seletar, Singapore	Failed to become airborne; undercarriage raised to stop; DBF
5.8.55	Valetta C.1	VW140	84 Sqn	2m N of Fayid, Egypt	Forcelanded after fire warning on overshoot
8.8.55	Meteor F.8	WH379	45 Sqn	Butterworth, Malaya	Undershot landing
9.8.55	Lincoln B.2	RF574	83 Sqn	Hemswell	Undercarriage retracted on landing run
9.8.55	Meteor F.8	WL158	54 Sqn	Baginton	Undercarriage collapsed on landing
11.8.55	Venom FB.1	WE412	145 Sqn	Wunstorf, W.Germany	Engine cut; cartwheeled on landing (1)
15.8.55	Meteor F.8	WH395	FWS	Lissett, Yorks	Collided with WK982 and crashed (1)
15.8.55	Meteor F.8	WK982	FWS	Lissett, Yorks	Collided with WH395 and crashed (1)
16.8.55	Meteor F.8	VZ549	613 Sqn	Gibraltar	Hit sea on approach and crashlanded on runway
16.8.55	Meteor NF.11	WD632	256 Sqn	2½m NNE of Sylt	Engine cut on take-off; forcelanded
16.8.55	Sabre F.4	XB808	20 Sqn	Meppen ranges, W.Germany	High speed stall recovering from dive; hit ground (1)
17.8.55	Sabre F.4	XB700	26 Sqn	3m E of Yeovilton	Collided with Sea Hawk WM964 in circuit
18.8.55	Anson C.19	TX180	61 Gp CF	Beach Farm, Chelsham, Surrey	Engine cut during asymmetric training; bellylanded in field
18.8.55	Hunter F.4	WT714	14 Sqn	3m E of Bassum,	Collided with WT807 and abandoned (1)
18.8.55	Hunter F.4	WT807	14 Sqn	West Germany	Collided with WT714 and abandoned
18.8.55	Meteor F.8	WK732	FWS	-	Overstressed after pilot suffered anoxia
18.8.55	Tiger Moth T.2	T7342	Sing AAF	Kuala Lumpur, Malaya	Caught tailplane on PSP; fuselage distorted
23.8.55	Chipmunk T.10	WB561	CUAS	South Cerney	Control column jammed; sideslipped into ground
26.8.55	Whirlwind HC.4	XJ408	155 Sqn	Kuala Lumpur, Malaya	Hydraulics failed; control lost on landing
27.8.55	Auster AOP.6	TW621	651 Sqn	Gebel Ataqa, Egypt	Stalled and spun into ground (2)
27.8.55	Meteor F.8	WH249	19 Sqn	8½m ENE of Northallerton, Yorks.	Flew into high ground in cloud (1)
30.8.55	Whirlwind HAR.2	XJ436	22 Sqn	10m SSW of Selsey Bill, Sussex	Engine cut during ASR demonstration
2.9.55	Brigand T.4	RH768	238 OCU	Colerne	Brakes failed while taxiing; hit bowser and swung into building
2.9.55	Hunter F.1	WT655	229 OCU	½m W of Chivenor	Collided with WT689 during landing break (1)
2.9.55	Hunter F.1	WT689	229 OCU	½m W of Chivenor	Collided with WT655 and abandoned (1)
2.9.55	Sabre F.4	XB735	234 Sqn	Brindisi, Italy	Engine cut on approach; hit pylon and broke up (1)
4.9.55	Anson T.21	VS579	42 Sqn	Nr.Long Marston, Worcs	Both engines failed due to fuel contamination; forcelanded in field
5.9.55	Meteor FR.9	WB122	79 Sqn	1m NE of Eindhoven, Netherlands	Lost power and crashed on approach (1)
5.9.55	Vampire T.11	XD378	28 Sqn	Kai Tak, Hong Kong	Lost aileron control; bounced on landing, hit fence and fell into river
6.9.55	Chipmunk T.10	WZ852	LAS	Middle Wallop	Engine failed to pick up after practice cut; hit fence and crashlanded
11.9.55	Auster AOP.6	TW582	664 Sqn	Otterburn, Northumberland	Stalled and dived into ground (1)
13.9.55	Hastings C.1	TG584	242 OCU	Melmerby, Yorks.	Spun into ground overshooting Dishforth (5)
13.9.55	Provost T.1	WW395	2 FTS	Hullavington	Collided with WV623 on landing
13.9.55	Sycamore HC.14	XE318	194 Sqn	Sungei Besi, Malaya	Rolled on take-off and overturned
13.9.55	Venom FB.1	WK497	32 Sqn	Nicosia, Cyprus	Stalled on take-off and hit ground; DBF (1)
14.9.55	Meteor F.8	WH375	APS Sylt	Sylt, West Germany	Undercarriage damaged in heavy landing in rain
15.9.55	Meteor F.8	WK820	245 Sqn	Stradishall	Mushed into ground recovering from loop (1)
16.9.55	Auster T.7	WE596	1913 Flt	Telgte, West Germany	Engine cut; forcelanded and hit hedge
17.9.55	Chipmunk T.10	WP806	SF Watt- isham	Wattisham	Stalled recovering from dive during display and hit ground
17.9.55	Venom FB.1	WK422	8 Sqn	Khormaksar, Aden	Undercarriage retracted after landing; caught fire
20.9.55	Valetta C.1	VW204	30 Sqn	½m W of Dishforth	Flew into ground on overshoot
21.9.55	Meteor FR.10	WB169	81 Sqn	Seletar, Singapore	Lost hydraulic pressure and bellylanded
21.9.55	Meteor BF.12	WS621	AWOCU	Church Broughton, Derby	Hit by WS683 on night interception and abandoned (1)
21.9.55	Meteor NF.12	WS683	AWOCU	Great Gubley, Derby	Collided with target aircraft WS683 on night interception and abandoned (1)
22.9.55	Venom FB.1	WK489	8 Sqn	Khormaksar, Aden	Engine cut; forcelanded on approach

Date	Type	Serial	Unit	Location	Cause
23.9.55	Meteor FR.9	WL262	79 Sqn	Laarbruch, W.Germany	Engine caught fire; bellylanded
24.9.55	Canberra B.2	WH640	104 Sqn	2m W of Gutersloh, West Germany	Sank into ground on night overshoot (3)
24.9.55	Chipmunk T.10	WZ848	HCCS	White Waltham	Hit mast on take-off and forcelanded
26.9.55	Canberra B.2	WK136	231 OCU	3¼m E of Stowmarket, Suffolk	Tail actuator failed; abandoned (1)
26.9.55	Meteor NF.11	WD682	68 Sqn	1m SE of Bonn, W.Germany	Collided with WH236 on night interception and abandoned
26.9.55	Meteor T.7	WH236	68 Sqn	As above	Hit by WD682 while acting as target; abandoned
27.9.55	Chipmunk T.10	WP916	Glas UAS	Scone	Bounced on landing and swung into post
27.9.55	Venom FB.1	WE430	16 Sqn	Ahlhorn, W.Germany	Undercarriage jammed; bellylanded
29.9.55	Hunter F.5	WN968	56 Sqn	2m NE of Waterbeach	Engine flamed out in circuit; forcelanded in field
30.9.55	Mosquito T.3	RR306	81 Sqn	Seletar, Singapore	Swung on take-off and undercarriage raised to stop
30.9.55	Provost T.1	WV637	CFS	1m WSW of South Cerney	Engine cut; undercarriage collapsed in forced landing
30.9.55	Valetta C.1	VW845	Aden CS	Mukheiras, Aden	Sank on approach and hit ground; swung on landing and tipped up
1.10.55	Sabre F.4	XB822	93 Sqn	1¼m E of Jever, West Germany	Engine cut; undershot landing
1.10.55	Whirlwind HAR.2	XJ434	22 Sqn	Thorney Channel, Sussex	Lost power and ditched during winching practice
3.10.55	Valetta C.2	VX571	MECS	Nicosia, Cyprus	Lost height during asymmetric overshoot and bellylanded
5.10.55	Balliol T.2	WG112	RAFC	6m N of Sleaford, Lincs.	Dived into ground during tail-chase (1)
7.10.55	Venom FB.1	WK501	60 Sqn	Tengah, Singapore	Bellylanded in error
11.10.55	Hunter F.1	WW607	229 OCU	2m W of Chivenor	Engine lost power on overshoot; forcelanded in sand dunes
12.10.55	Vampire FB.5	VV556	7 FTS	Blackhall, Co.Durham	Abandoned in spin
13.10.55	Neptune MR.1	WX510	217 Sqn	130m W of Barra	Crashed in sea on SAR mission (9)
13.10.55	Venom FB.1	WR334	73 Sqn	45m ESE of Amman, Jordan	Engine flamed out; bellylanded in desert
13.10.55	Venom FB.1	WR369	45 Sqn	Butterworth, Malaya	Lost power on take-off; undercarriage raised to stop
14.10.55	Provost T.1	WV502	1 FTS	Winkburn Park, Notts.	Dived into ground; cause not known (2)
14.10.55	Vampire T.11	XE865	4 FTS	3½m WSW of Middleton St.George	Engine cut on take-off; bellylanded
16.10.55	Meteor T.7	WH115	605 Sqn	Honiley	Brakes failed; overshot into ditch
18.10.55	Canberra B.6	WH950	617 Sqn	Mauripur, Pakistan	Stalled on approach and hit ground after engine lost power
20.10.55	Hunter F.4	WT738	118 Sqn	20m W of Hamburg,	Collided with WT757 during practice attack (1)
20.10.55	Hunter F.4	WT757	118 Sqn	West Germany	Hit by WT738 during practice attack (1)
20.10.55	Vampire FB.5	WA253	8 FTS	Faldingworth, Lincs.	Engine flamed out; overshot forced landing on disused airfield and undercarriage collapsed
21.10.55	Hunter F.1	WT579	229 OCU	5m NNW of Chivenor	Dived into sea; cause not known (1)
21.10.55	Venom FB.1	WE479	187 Sqn	5m WNW of Upton-on- Severn, Worcs.	Dived into ground; cause not known (1)
22.10.55	Hunter F.4	WV271	4 Sqn	Oldenburg, W.Germany	Dived into ground after roll over airfield (1)
24.10.55	Harvard T.2B	KF419	Bham UAS	Castle Bromwich	Swung on landing and undercarriage collapsed
24.10.55	Provost T.1	WV627	2 FTS	Yatton Keynell, Wilts	Collided in Hullavington circuit at night (1)
24.10.55	Provost T.1	WV631	2 FTS	As above	As above (1)
25.10.55	Vampire FB.5	VZ352	¾CAACU	Exeter	Engine lost power; forcelanded on approach
1.11.55	Auster AOP.6	TW631	1910 Flt	Kharcha, Cyprus	Hit tree and crashed
1.11.55	Vampire T.11	XE961	8 FTS	4m N of Holbeach, Lincs.	Abandoned in spin
1.11.55	Venom FB.1	WK503	60 Sqn	Singapore	Hit by 20mm shell during cannon attack on target
3.11.55	Dragonfly HC.2	VZ960	194 Sqn	4m N of Kuala Lumpur, Malaya	Engine cut; tail rotor shaft broke; crashlanded on sports field
3.11.55	Hunter F.4	WT709	54 Sqn	Horsham, Sussex	Ran out of fuel and abandoned
3.11.55	Vampire T.11	XD539	Odiham	Frensham, Surrey	Ran out of fuel and abandoned
4.11.55	Meteor T.7	WG947	231 OCU	Merryfield	Lost power on take-off and rolled into ground (1)
8.11.55	Venom NF.3	WX924	173 Sqn	2½m W of Hatfield	Engine cut after take-off from Hatfield; forcelanded
11.11.55	Meteor F.8	WH377	Sylt	Sylt, West Germany	Sank back after take-off and ventral tank caught fire; landed safely but SOC
11.11.55	Vampire FB.5	VV675	8 FTS	1¼m SW of Swinderby	Stalled during loop and spun into ground (1)
14.11.55	Vampire T.11	XD451	5 FTS	2m NNE of Oakington	Engine cut after roller landing at night; hit trees; DBF
17.11.55	Sycamore HR.13	XD197	275 Sqn	Thornaby	Sank into ground during practice autorotation and rolled over
19.11.55	Meteor F.8	WH253	600 Sqn	Biggin Hill	Stalled on approach and crashlanded
21.11.55	Meteor F.8	WL133	19 Sqn	Kinloss	Brakes failed while taxiing; hit hangar
26.11.55	Hunter F.5	WP128	41 Sqn	Biggin Hill	Undershot powerless landing
27.11.55	Canberra B(I).8	WT326	AAEE	Salisbury, Wilts	Spun into ground soon after take-off from Boscombe Down (2)
27.11.55	Vampire FB.5	WA457	605 Sqn	1m S of Honiley	Engine cut in circuit; hit trees (1)
28.11.55	Mosquito T.3	HJ970	233 OCU	Filton	Undercarriage leg jammed up; bellylanded
28.11.55	Venom FB.1	WK411	16 Sqn	Sylt, W.Germany	Nosewheel jammed up; crashlanded
29.11.55	Meteor F.8	WL141	65 Sqn	Duxford	Undercarriage jammed, collapsed on landing and aircraft swung off runway
2.12.55	Auster AOP.6	WJ399	1907 Flt	14m N of Tapah, Malaya	Caught in downdraught and hit trees
5.12.55	Hunter F.5	WP118	1 Sqn	East Grinstead, Sussex	Controls failed; abandoned in dive
8.12.55	Hunter F.4	WV373	118 Sqn	4m W of Ahlhorn, West Germany	Dived into ground after control lost (1)
8.12.55	Javelin FAW.1	XA561	AAEE	Roeborough Corner, Isle of Wight	Abandoned in flat spin

Date	Type	Serial	Unit	Location	Cause
10.12.55	Hunter F.5	WP187	41 Sqn	Biggin Hill	Caught fire starting up
12.12.55	Vampire T.11	XE989	8 FTS	Swinderby	Engine caught fire; crashlanded and DBF
12.12.55	Venom FB.1	WK426	FWS	Leconfield	Nosewheel collapsed on landing; caught fire
15.12.55	Sycamore HR.14	XG501	275 Sqn	21m E of Leuchars	Tail rotor hit mast while dropping bags on Bell Rock lighthouse; dropped on to rocks and DBF (2)
16.12.55	Venom FB.1	WR352	73 Sqn	12½m SW of Nicosia, Cyprus	Abandoned in spin in cloud
19.12.55	Vampire FB.5	VV566	233 OCU	6m NW of Brecon,	Collided with VZ871 and abandoned
19.12.55	Vampire FB.5	VZ871	233 OCU	Brecknockshire	Collided with VV566 and abandoned
23.12.55	Auster AOP.9	WZ695	1911 Flt	Johore, Malaya	Engine cut; crashed in forced landing
30.12.55	Meteor T.7	VW449	FTU	Benson	Lost hydraulic power; bellylanded
30.12.55	Meteor NF.14	WS732	25 Sqn	West Malling	Tyre burst on take-off; overshoot abandoned take-off and caught fire
31.12.55	Vampire FB.5	VV554	7 FTS	3m NNW of Llangefni, Anglesey	Dived into ground; presumed canopy detached and hit tail (1)

\* \* \* \* \*  
 In 296 accidents and write-offs, there were 76 fatal casualties, one of them not a member of aircrew or a passenger. Below are breakdowns of the numbers, areas and types of accident.

Type	Acc	FC	UK	EU	ME	FE	CoL	EF	AF	Grd	Ldg	TO	GA	LF	CL	NK
Anson C.12	2	5	1	1						1			1			
Anson C.19	3	8	1	1	1		1	1								1
Anson T.21	2		2					2								
Anson T.22	1		1					1								
Auster AOP.6	18	4	4	2	4	8		2		8	3	3			2	
Auster T.7	3			1		2		2			1					
Auster AOP.9	1					1		1								
Balliol T.2	5	1	5								3	2			1	
Beaufighter TT.10	1		1								1					
Brigand T.4	1		1										1			
Canberra B.2	5	7	2	1	1	1			1		2	1				1
Canberra B(I).8	1	2	1												1	
Chipmink T.10	9		9					3	1		2	1			2	
Dragonfly	1					1		1								
Harvard T.2B	7		3		2	2		1		1	4				1	
Hastings C.1	3	7	3								1	1				1
Hornet F.3	4	2				4	2		1			1				
Hunter F.1	8	6	8				2	3		1			1			1
Hunter F.4	8	6	2	6			4	2							2	
Hunter F.5	5		5					2	2				1			
Javelin	1		1												1	
Lancaster MR.3	2		2								1	1				
Lincoln B.2	5	12	3	1	1		1				1	2		1		
Meteor F.4	6	2	6						1	1	2				2	
Meteor T.7	17	15	14	2	1		1	1	2		5	4		1	3	
Meteor F.8	25	9	20	3	1	1	5	1	1		8	2	2		5	1
Meteor PR.9	3	2		3				2						1		
Meteor PR.10	2					2			1			1				
Meteor NF.11	7	10	3	4			1				2	2				2
Meteor NF.12	4	4	4				2				1	1				
Meteor NF.14	2		2					1				1				
Mosquito T.3	2		1			1					1	1				
Mosquito PR.34	3					3					3					
Neptune MR.1	1	9	1													1
Oxford	2		2				1						1			
Pembroke C.1	2				2			2								
Prentice T.1	1			1							1					
Provost T.1	6	5	6				2	2	1							1
Sabre F.4	21	11	7	14			2	4	1		4	5			4	1
Shackleton MR.2	2	18	2				2									
Spitfire PR.19	1		1					1								
Sunderland MR.5	1	4	1								1					
Supermarine 525	1	1	1												1	
Sycamore	6	2	2		1	3			1	1	1	1			2	
Tiger Moth T.2	2					2					1		1			
Valetta C.1	8	4	2		5	1		1	2		5		1			
Vampire FB.5	26	7	26				2	6	1	1	2	7			6	1
Vampire FB.9	7	2			3	4		2	1		1	1	1			+1
Vampire T.11	10	1	9			1		3	1		2	1			3	
Varsity T.1	3	1	2	1				2		1						
Venom FB.1	24	7	3	8	10	3		4	5	1	4	3	1		3	2 +1
Venom NF.2	1	2	1									1				
Venom NF.3	1		1					1								
Whirlwind HAR.2	2		2					2								
Whirlwind HC.4	1					1		1								
	296	76	174	49	32	41	28	57	23	16	63	42	10	3	39	13 +2

The areas shown are UK, Europe, Middle East, Far East. The prime causes of accidents are shown as follows:

CO: collisions; EF; engine failure (incl. out of fuel); AF: airframe failures; Grd: Hitting ground during flight; Ldg: approach, landing and overshoot; TO: take-off; GA: accidents on ground; LF: due to low flying; CL: control lost through pilot error or flying deficiencies of aircraft; NK; cause not known.

Some accidents were caused through a combination of errors; the main cause has been listed above.

## R.A.F. TURNHOUSE



*Turnhouse photographed from the east displays its elaborate camouflage scheme (RAF Museum W1/1/EX6)*

Turnhouse airfield saw its first unit in May 1916 when No.26 Reserve Squadron was formed to train pilots. Later named Training Squadrons, the Reserve Squadrons flew a variety of types as and when they were available before passing on their trainees to new squadrons being formed or posting them as replacements to France. Later in the war, training units became more formalised but in the early days they used whatever aircraft could be found after the needs of active squadrons had been filled.

In September 1917, No.26 was replaced by No. 73 Training Squadron. Earlier in the year, the headquarters of No.77 Home Defence Squadron had moved to Turnhouse from buildings in Edinburgh, its flights being scattered to landing grounds at Penston, New Haggerston and Whiteburn. In 1916, a flight from No.36 Squadron at Cramlington had been detached to Turnhouse after L14 and L22 had bombed Edinburgh on the night of 2/3 April while trying to find the naval base at Rosyth and the Forth Bridge, 13 people being killed and 24 injured. Other attempts to attack these targets went far astray as winds blew the Zeppelins off course.

The proximity of Rosyth and the basing of the Battlecruiser Squadron in the Forth meant that a home had to be found for the Fleet's disembarked aircraft. Donibristle on the north shore of the Forth was chosen but until its facilities could be completed, Turnhouse became the Fleet Aircraft Repair Depot and Fleet Practice Station until the end of the war. Camels and Sopwith 1½-strutters were common types to be seen at this period being disembarked from the flying-off platforms of battleships and battlecruisers while the fleet was in harbour.

The airfield remained in Air Ministry control after the end of the war but was little used until squadrons of the Auxiliary Air Force and Special Reserve began to be formed in the mid-1920s. No.603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron was one of the first to be formed and took up residence at Turnhouse in October 1925 to fly D.H. 9A day bombers.

In common with other AAF squadrons, No.603 had a town headquarters in addition to its aircraft and servicing echelon at Turnhouse. Wapitis, Harts and Hinds were received in succession. In the 1920s, the annual training camp was at Leuchars but in 1930 the squadron took its new Wapitis all the way down to Manston. One of No.603's oddities was that for a time its CO provided the squadron with a bombing range on his estate near Peebles, where he kept his private Moth!

The beginning of the RAF Expansion Scheme resulted in Turnhouse acquiring a Station Headquarters which formed on 4 August 1936 to administer RAF units at Turnhouse. Previously No.603 had run the airfield as its sole occupier. On the same day, a new day bomber squadron (83) was formed with Hinds.

On 24 October 1938, No.603 was redesignated a fighter squadron and at the end of March 1939 received its Gladiators, having passed from No.6 (Auxiliary) Group to No.12 Group, Fighter Command on changing role. Conversion to Spitfires was imminent when war broke out and on 15 September 1939, seven Spitfires arrived followed next day by five more. The Gladiators were passed to Nos.141 and 152 Squadrons in October.

At the outbreak of war, work was in progress on expanding the airfield buildings on the north

*A closer view of the camouflage pattern, January 1943 (RAFM)*



*Looking up a ploughed section towards the main site (RAFM)*





side of the main road that skirted the airfield boundary. There was a single modern hangar, a C Type occupied in October 1936, but since 24 August No.603's fighters had been dispersed around the airfield. Part of the airfield had been camouflaged.

Action was not long in coming. On 8 September, a section was scrambled to intercept a German aircraft over Glasgow which turned out to belong to British Airways. On the 27th, the destroyer *Valorous* reported she was being bombed by four aircraft off the mouth of the Firth of Forth. No.603's Green Section was sent to the rescue, found no aircraft but was shot at by a ship!

On 16 October, a real threat materialised. Twelve Ju 88s from I/KG.30 flew in over Edinburgh to attack ships off Rosyth, cheered by an assurance from their Intelligence section that there were no Spitfires anywhere in Scotland. One bomb from the commander of I/KG.30 hit the superstructure of HMS *Southampton* and passed through to the sea without exploding. Splinters also hit the cruiser *Edinburgh* and the destroyer *Mohawk*.

At that point Spitfires L1050, L1070 and L1061 began shooting bits off the commander's luckless Ju 88 which splashed into the sea off Port Seaton. A second went down in the Firth and the remainder scattered for home at wave-top height. German Intelligence redeemed itself by producing a photograph of a bomb bursting on the Forth Bridge, trusting that the German public would not realise it was a small island on which one of the bridge's piers rested.

No.948 Squadron entered the war on 27 October by hoisting its first barrage balloon for the Forth Bridge barrage, a development not viewed with much favour by the users of Turnhouse, a couple of miles to the south. On 20 October, Spitfires claimed a He 111 off St. Abbs Head

while on the 28th Red Sections of Nos.602 and 603 caught another He 111 which crashlanded six miles south of Haddington, the first enemy aircraft to land on British soil during World War Two. Intact apart from numerous small holes, it was seized upon by Air Ministry investigators.

Turnhouse's tendency to flood in rainy weather owed much to having the Gogar Burn flowing through the landing area and in December 1939, work started on hard runways, these being completed in June 1940. A new airfield at Kirknewton was selected as a satellite at the end of 1939.

Since the Forth area was one of the easiest to be reached from Germany, the neutral Low Countries blocking access to southern England, German aircraft were frequently on the plotting tables of Turnhouse Sector and a number were caught and shot down. The invasion of Norway brought additional forces in. On 25 June, a He 111 was shot down from between sixteen and twenty enemy aircraft reported over the Forth. Nine raids were reported in the next two days but fell away as Luftwaffe units were moved south for what was to become the Battle of Britain.

Squadrons moved to Turnhouse after frantic activity in No.11 Group while others left to relieve them, No.603 among those that were released from local air defence and convoy patrols for the defence of London.

During the winter of 1940/41, Turnhouse's fighters saw few enemy aircraft by day. Intercepting the German aircraft that droned overhead to Glasgow and Clydeside was a task for night fighter squadrons based elsewhere.

No.340 Squadron, the first Free French squadron to form, began its life at Turnhouse on 7 November 1941 and brought a new uniform to join the light blue of the RAF and the dark blue of the Fleet Air Arm which sent detachments to Turnhouse for operational experience in a fighter sector station.



## UNITS BASED AT TURNHOUSE

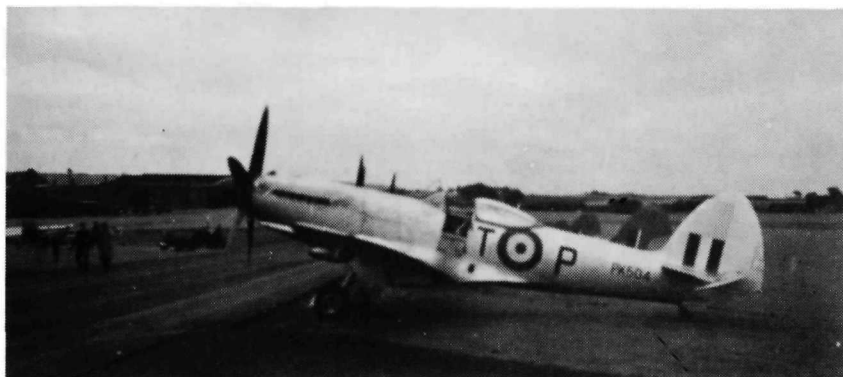
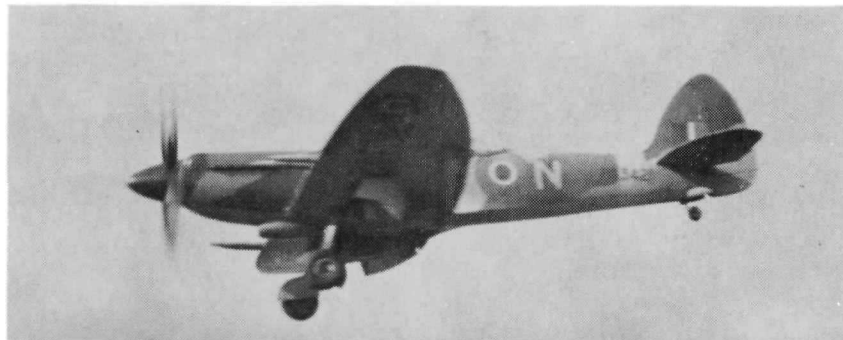
Unit	From	Date in	Date out	To	Aircraft
No.26 Reserve /Training Sqn	Formed	22.5.16	22.9.17	Harlaxton	Various
No.77 Sqn	Edinburgh	16.4.17	4.18	Penston	Avro 504K
No.73 Trg Sqn	Thetford	17.9.17	20.2.18	Beaulieu	Various
No.104 Sqn	France	1.2.19	3.3.19	Crail	-
No.603 Sqn	Formed	14.10.25	16.12.39	Prestwick	D.H.9A/Wapiti/Hart/Hind/Gladiator/ Spitfire I
No.83 Sqn	Reformed	4.8.36	14.3.38	Scampton	Hind
No.141 Sqn	Reformed	4.10.39	19.10.39	Grangemouth	Gladiator
No.603 Sqn	Drem	5.5.40	27.8.40	Hornchurch	Spitfire I
No.245 Sqn	Drem	5.6.40	20.7.40	Aldergrove	Hurricane I
No.141 Sqn	Grangemouth	28.6.40	12.7.40	West Malling	Defiant I
No.253 Sqn	Kirton-in-Lindsey	21.7.40	23.8.40	Prestwick	Hurricane I
No.65 Sqn	Hornchurch	28.8.40	29.11.40	Kirton-in-Lindsey	Spitfire I
No.141 Sqn	Prestwick	30.8.40	15.10.40	Drem	Defiant I
No.3 Sqn	Castletown	14.9.40	9.10.40	Dyce	Hurricane I
No.59 OTU	Formed	16.12.40	20.2.41	Crosby	Hurricane I, Master I
No.122 Sqn	Reformed	1.5.41	26.6.41	Ouston	Spitfire IIA
No.123 Sqn	Reformed	10.5.41	5.8.41	Drem	Spitfire I
No.64 Sqn	Hornchurch	16.5.41	20.5.41	Drem	Spitfire IIA
No.13 Gp AAC Flt	Formed	7.6.41	12.11.41	Kirknewton	Blenheim IV, Lysander
No.64 Sqn	Drem	6.8.41	4.10.41	Drem	Spitfire IIA
No.340 Sqn	Formed	7.11.41	20.12.41	Drem	Spitfire IIA
No.81 Sqn	Russia	6.12.41	6.1.42	Ouston	Spitfire VA
No.81 Sqn	Ouston	14.2.42	14.4.42	Ouston	Spitfire VA
No.242 Sqn	Reformed	10.4.42	15.5.42	Ouston	Spitfire VB
No.289 Sqn	Kirknewton	20.5.42	7.5.45	Acklington	Various
No.232 Sqn	Llanbedr	3.8.42	11.8.42	Debden	Spitfire VB
No.232 Sqn	Debden	1.9.42	25.11.42	North Africa	Spitfire VB
No.243 Sqn	Ouston	2.9.42	24.11.42	North Africa	-
No.197 Sqn	Formed	21.11.42	25.11.42	Drem	-
No.341 Sqn	Formed	15.1.43	21.3.43	Biggin Hill	Spitfire VB
No.340 Sqn	Biggin Hill	20.3.43	30.4.43	Drem	Spitfire VB
No.268 Sqn	Thrupton	7.11.43	17.1.44	North Weald	Mustang I
No.63 Sqn	Macmerry	26.7.43	8.11.43	Thrupton	Mustang IA
No.290 Sqn	Long Kesh	18.8.44	31.1.45	Belgium	Various
No.340 Sqn	Drem	31.1.45	8.2.45	Netherlands	Spitfire IXB
No.341 Sqn	Belgium	2.2.45	9.3.45	Netherlands	Spitfire IXB
No.329 Sqn	Netherlands	9.3.45	3.4.45	Skeabrae	Spitfire XVI
No.603 Sqn	Coltishall	28.4.45	7.5.45	Drem	Spitfire XVI
No.164 Sqn	Germany	6.45	19.11.45	Fairwood Common	Spitfire IX
No.603 Sqn	Skeabrae	26.7.45	15.8.45	Disbanded	Spitfire XVI
No.303 Sqn	Andrews Field	28.11.45	5.1.46	Wick	Mustang IV
No.164 Sqn	Fairwood Common	5.1.46	25.3.46	Tangmere	Spitfire IX
No.1353 Flt	West Freugh	31.1.46	15.6.46	Disbanded	Spitfire XVI, Vengeance IV
No.603 Sqn	Reformed	10.5.46	10.3.57	Disbanded	Spitfire LF.16, F.22/ Vampire FB.5
No.66 Gp CS	Formed	10.9.46	28.2.58	Disbanded	Anson C.12, C.19
No.1968 Flt	Formed	1.5.49	10.3.57	Disbanded	Auster AOP.6, T.7
No.18 Gp CF	Leuchars	15.11.59	13.5.60	Leuchars	Anson C.19

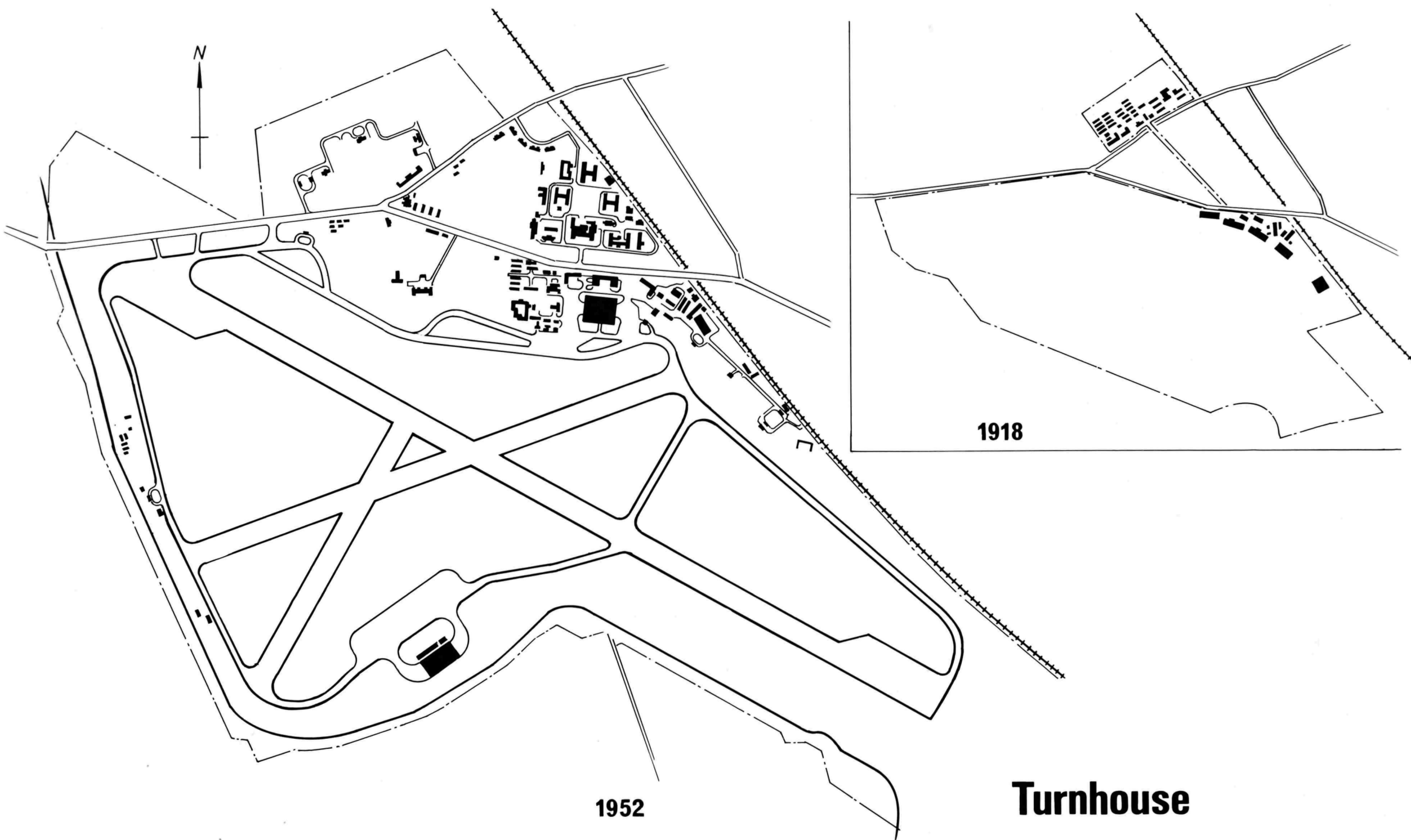
A variety of units moved in and out of the airfield during the rest of the war, from fighter squadrons to man the Sector to anti-aircraft cooperation units for liaison with the gun defences of the Forth. The old flying club airfield at Macmerry, east of Edinburgh became a stallite of Turnhouse again, being the old Penston landing ground of World War One. Army cooperation squadrons were based there for exercises with the army, particularly with the Polish troops.

A few days before the end of the war, No.603 were back at Turnhouse but moved over to Drem from where its Spitfires intercepted the three Ju 52/3ms which came in from Stavanger to arrange the surrender of the German forces in Norway. This resulted in a regular shuttle via Turnhouse to Norway by 110 Wing, supplemented by BOAC Dakotas and Lodestars

In the post-war years, No.603 was reformed as an auxiliary squadron, flying first Spitfires and then Vampires. For the latter, the main runway was extended which helped cope with the increasing numbers of BEA Viscounts and Vanguards, these eventually giving way to shuttle services with jets from London. A major face-lift in the 1970s resulted in a modern airport for Edinburgh capable of handling any jetliner.

Below: Spitfire F.22s of No.603 Squadron. PK342 'N' is on approach in the top photograph while PK504 'XT-P' is parked, September 1948





1918

1952

**Turnhouse**

## DOWN IN THE DRINK



*A J Type dinghy casts off from a ditched Whitley*

*(RAF Museum P7875)*

With the development of aerial warfare, a major problem to be overcome was the fact that a combat that started in the air did not necessarily finish there. Many occupants of stricken aircraft had to abandon over the sea or either crashed or ditched in it so some means of ensuring their safety in reasonable comfort had to be devised. The effects of cold, exhaustion and prolonged immersion in salt water, as well as loss of life by drowning, was a monumental problem for the Air Ministry in the early stages of World War Two. Considerable leeway had to be made up to achieve even parity with the enemy in this field.

During the First World War, aircraft in service with the British air services were mainly of wood and the majority of aircraft that ended up in the sea were either seaplanes or shipborne types with inbuilt flotation. The former tended to have floats which could be used for buoyancy in the event of a forced landing at sea and the latter could remain afloat for hours. This latter ability remained part of the specification of aircraft used over the sea throughout the inter-war years. One Shark used for flotation trials had to be declared a hazard to navigation and sunk. Rammed by a destroyer, both halves bobbed up and continued to float.

Most of the mass production of fighters and bomber had no such capability and tended to ditch at speeds which considerably damaged the aircraft structure. Most sank rapidly so it became imperative that large quantities of dinghies be made in various sizes.

At this time, Dunlop was producing vast quantities of rubber-proofed dry cloth for barrage and other balloons and as this material was ideal for dinghy production, the initial requirements were made known by the Ministry of Aircraft Production. The fighter pilot was the first to be equipped as, after baling out and landing in the sea, he had only his 'Stole' or 'Mae West' to keep him afloat while hoping for rescue. His new lifesaver was the K Type dinghy which, when folded, fitted into the pack on which the pilot sat. Inflation was by means of a CO<sup>2</sup> bottle, thus saving him the physical effort of inflating it by bellows, a very real advantage to a wounded pilot.

The weight of the packed unit was quite light

weighing only twenty pounds (9 kg).

Next was the J Type, used for carrying large bomber crews who had been forced to land in the sea. Being larger, it was also heavier and needed the assistance of a bellows when fully loaded, initial inflation being by means of a CO<sup>2</sup> bottle. This dinghy was of the type that was packed in the Lindholme Rescue Apparatus that saved thousands of lives throughout the war in all parts of the world.

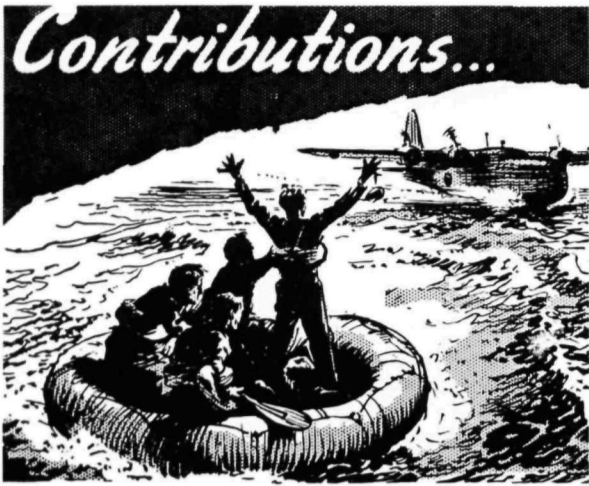
The Lindholme Gear, as it was normally called, consisted of five containers linked together which were dropped to distressed aircrews from the bomb racks of searching aircraft. Four of these contained food and other supplies with the fifth containing the dinghy. All the airmen had to do was haul in the buoyant lines.

A special feature of this dinghy was its instant inflation on hitting the water, an ability that saved many lives. Bomber aircrews carried yet another type, known as the Q Type, which was more on the lines of a sailing dinghy with fully rigged mast, sails and rudder. It was 14½ feet long when inflated and was capable of holding seven men. In its pack, which was the size of a large suitcase, it weighed only 93 lb (42 kg).

Such was the degree of comfort and accommodation afforded by the larger dinghies that as many as ten persons could stay afloat on minimal rations until rescued, an important morale builder.

Production of all types of dinghies was carried out with the full cooperation of Dunlop's numerous factories and subcontractors. Although they supplied all the proofed material, assembly space was not available so in order to achieve the highest possible priority in production, seven sets of jigs and assembly units were made within one week and demonstrations lasting only two days given to selected subcontractors. Simultaneous delivery of jigs and proofed material resulted in each manufacturer submitting his first sample within a week for approval. Within a month, dinghies numbering several thousand had been supplied to fighter pilots.

By the end of the war, almost 100,000 dinghies of all types had been supplied from Dunlop units to the Air Ministry, an impressive record.



**No. 14 SAVING LIFE AT SEA**

A hundred thousand Dinghies for fighter and bomber crews, and over a million Life Belts used by Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen the world over, were made by Dunlop.

by **DUNLOP**



*Above left: One of Dunlop's advertisements that kept the brand name alive during wartime.*

*Above right: A J-Type dinghy suitable for ditched bomber crews. The CO<sup>2</sup> bottle used for inflation is visible and the difficulty in moving from the lifeline to (relative) dry interior can be seen. Although our only recourse to dinghies was in practice, large dinghies always seemed to inflate upside down. Righting was carried out by standing in the lifeline and flipping it*

*right side up. The unwary were then hit on the head by the CO<sup>2</sup> bottle!*

*Below: Another wartime Dunlop advert*

*Below right: Afloat in a K-Type dinghy*



The dinghies which save the lives of our incomparable airmen are made with rubber - one reason why you must wait for your new Dunlop hot water bottle.

**PART OF THE  
DUNLOP  
WAR EFFORT**



# MAMBA - BALLIOL



As a replacement for the Master and Harvard trainers in service with the Royal Air Force at that time, Specification T.7/45 was issued for a three-seat advanced trainer powered by a turbo-prop. The promise of gas turbine engines for a variety of new types of aircraft made the choice of a turbo-prop a far-sighted one but things did not work out exactly as envisaged.

Perhaps the most obvious miscalculation was the departure of the Harvard from RAF training units. While the Master disappeared quickly from the flying training scene, the Harvard became the RAF's standard trainer, a large number being purchased on the winding-up of Lend-Lease. These basically pre-war aircraft remained in service with the RAF until 1954.

The availability of a suitable turbo-prop also met delays. The Armstrong Siddeley Mamba and Rolls-Royce Dart were both suitable but still required development when the first Balliol was ready to fly. To get it into the air, a Bristol Mercury radial engine was installed and a first flight took place on 30 May 1947 by VL892.

The second prototype, VL917, had a Mamba fitted and on 24 March 1948 became the first single turboprop in the world to take to the air. It was followed by the third prototype, VL935 on 17 May 1948 and later VL892 had its Mercury replaced by a Mamba.

The second contender for the T.7/45 was the Avro 701 Athena but the first of these did not

fly until 12 June 1948. Two of the Athena prototypes had Mambas and one a Dart.

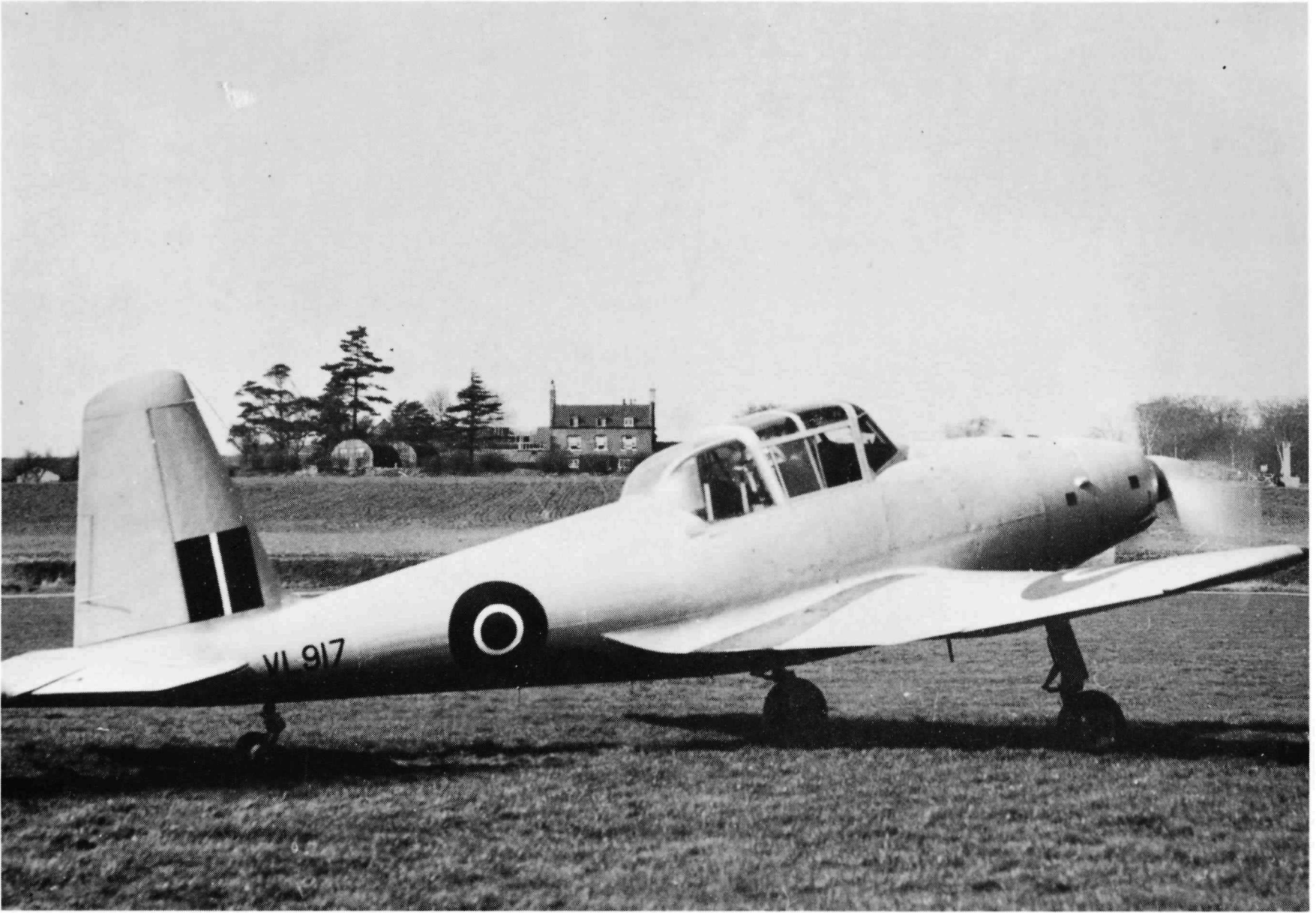
The concept of carrying a third occupant on training aircraft also fell by the wayside. A trial installation had been fitted to Miles M-28 Mk.III PW937 in 1944. The two pupils sat side-by-side and the instructor had a set of controls in the back that could override the pupil's. The Central Flying School evaluated the idea and decided that it was not to be recommended.

Nevertheless, the Prentice appeared with three seats although whether any pupil gained much by watching another under instruction is doubtful. Being in the hands of a pupil under instruction as he bounced down the runway probably did nothing for his morale either.

The scheme did give the RAF side-by-side seating in its trainers, a layout continued in the Provost and Jet Provost.

In due course, the turbo-prop trainer also lost its attraction and Specification T.14/47 was issued which called for the installation of a piston engine. The Rolls-Royce Merlin 35 was chosen as there were large stocks of engines and spares to draw upon.

The Balliol lost its sleek nose and acquired a large radiator. The Athena was also converted to a Merlin but the pre-production batch of fifteen were not followed by any more. The Balliol was built in larger numbers, 159 being delivered for the RAF, ten being diverted to Ceylon.



*Above and below: Taxiing shots of VL917 show to advantage its wide-track undercarriage and the clean lines of the Mamba turbo-prop. (Photos courtesy Boulton-Paul)*



XK426 Rolls-Royce thrust measuring rig  
 XK429, XK434, XK436 Cancelled Bristol Type 188s  
 XK440 to XK443; XK467 to XK473 Cancelled Canberra PR.9s  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Four Saro Skeeter AOP.10s delivered in December 1956  
 and January 1957 to Contract 6/ACFT/12206

XK479 Hdlg Sqn/Cv T.11/CFS SOC 5.7.62  
 XK480 651/6 ILF/AACC/  
 CFS/AACC/AACDTC To AAC 1.9.57  
 XK481 651/1906 Flt/  
 6 ILF/AACC SOC 15.12.62  
 XK482 Mkrs/Hdlg Sqn/  
 Mkrs/AACC To 7840M 5.3.64 and  
 preserved  
 \* \* \* \* \*

XK486 to XK491; XK523 to XK536 Buccaneer S.1s for Royal  
 Navy

XK542 to XK548; XK569 to XK571 Cancelled Grasshopper  
 TX.1 gliders

XK577 Javelin T.3 for Ministry of Aviation  
 \* \* \* \* \*

24 de Havilland Vampire T.11s delivered between May and  
 November 1956 by de Havilland, Chester, to Contract No.  
 6/ACFT/12203

XK582 CFS SS 31.3.65  
 XK583 MCCF SS 11.7.60  
 XK584 7 FTS Abandoned in spin 5m E of  
 Holyhead, Anglesey, 24.4.61  
 XK585 8 FTS SS 21.4.64  
 XK586 CFS SS 30.6.64  
 XK587 SLAW/MCCF SS 11.7.60  
 XK588 MCCF/7 FTS/1 FTS/  
 7 FTS/5 FTS/8 FTS SOC 11.9.63  
 XK589 7 FTS/RAFC SOC 2.3.62  
 XK590 7 FTS/4 FTS/CATCS Sold 6.2.70; preserved  
 XK623 5 FTS Sold 6.12.68  
 XK624 7 FTS/MoA/CFS/  
 23 Gp CF/83 Gp CF/  
 23 Gp CF/1 FTS/  
 7 FTS/3 FTS/CFS Sold 14.12.71; preserved  
 XK625 7 FTS/1 FTS/4 FTS Sold 4.12.68; preserved  
 XK626 RAFC Engine cut after take-off;  
 forcedlanded in field 2m W  
 of Cranwell, 16.6.60  
 XK627 CFS/DH/CFS/8 FTS Sold 3.12.68; preserved  
 XK628 CFS/RAFC SS 30.6.60  
 XK629 CFS To 7553M 12.57  
 XK630 CFS To 7560M 3.58  
 XK631 CFS Abandoned after engine  
 failure near Bromyard,  
 Herefordshire, 7.4.59

XK632 CFS/3/4 CAACU Sold 6.1.72  
 XK633 CFS/1 FTS Veered on take-off and un-  
 dercarriage collapsed,  
 Rufforth, 10.7.63  
 XK634 229 OCU/3/4 CAACU Sold to HSA 4.2.64 for  
 Austrian AF as 5C-VE  
 XK635 8 FTS SS 5.3.64  
 XK636 RAFC Sold 15.12.64  
 XK637 7 FTS/4 FTS Sold 30.11.67; preserved  
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One EEC Canberra B.2 delivered in May 1956 by EEC,  
 Preston, to Contract 6/ACFT/12265



XK641 SF Binbrook/12/  
 Cv B.15/45 Rolled and dived into ground,  
 Taseh Chini, Pahang, Malaya  
 4.4.66

Two EEC Canberra T.45s built by EEC, Preston, to Contract  
 6/ACFT/12265

XK647 - To Indian AF as IQ994  
 XK648 - To Indian AF as IQ995  
 \* \* \* \* \*

13 de Havilland Comet C.2s and T.2s (XK669 and XK670)  
 delivered between June 1956 and February 1958 to Con-  
 tracts 6/ACFT/11808 (first three) and 6/ACFT/11809



XK697 with No.51 Squadron

(D.N.Blades)

XK655 Mkrs/Cv R.2/192/51 Ex G-AMXA; Sold 1.8.74 and  
 preserved  
 XK659 Cv R.2/192/51 Ex G-AMXC; SOC 13.5.74  
 XK663 Cv R.2/192/51 Ex G-AMXE; destroyed in han-  
 gar fire, Wyton, 13.9.57  
 XK669 216/Cv C.2/216 Ex G-AMXB 'Taurus';  
 SOC 24.4.66  
 XK670 216/Cv C.2/216 Ex G-AMXF 'Corvus';  
 to 7926M 29.11.66  
 XK671 216/51 Ex G-AMXG 'Aquila';  
 to 7927M 14.11.66  
 XK695 216/Cv R.2/51 Ex G-AMXH 'Perseus';  
 to IWM 10.1.75; preserved  
 XK696 216 Ex G-AMXI 'Orion';  
 SOC 27.10.66  
 XK697 216/51 Ex G-AMXJ 'Cygnus';  
 SOC 20.12.72; preserved  
 XK698 216 Ex G-AMXL 'Pegasus';  
 to 8031M 4.69  
 XK699 216 Ex G-AMXM 'Sagittarius'  
 to 7971M 6.67 and preserved  
 XK715 216/51/216 'Columbo'; to 7905M 4.66  
 XK716 216 'Cepheus'; to 7958M 5.67  
 \* \* \* \* \*

XK724, XK739, XK740, XK741, XK767 Folland Gnat F.1s for  
 Ministry of Supply



Gnat F.1 XK741 of A & AEE at Farnborough

(PMC)

No service with RAF. XK724 became 7715M 25.2.61  
 XK740 became a display airframe  
 XK767 was abandoned on test flight near Stapleford,  
 Wilts., 15.10.58  
 XK768 went to the Indian AF as IE1059  
 \* \* \* \* \*

XK773 Skeeter 6 G-ANMG for trials at A & AEE, 1955  
 XK776, XK781, XK784 M.L.Utilities for trials  
 XK788 to XK790; XK819 to XK824 Grasshopper gliders for ATC and CCF  
 XK831 to XK835; XK850 to XK854 Vickers Wild Goose models for variable geometry trials

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**Six Percival Pembroke C.1s delivered between February and October 1956 to Contract 6/ACFT/12518**

XK859 SF El Adem Ran out of fuel and belly-landed 10m NW of El Adem, 28.5.57  
 XK860 SF Amman/SF Habbaniya SOC 15.4.59  
 XK861 AAFCE/BCCF/Hdlg Sqn/2 TAF CS SOC 28.2.62  
 XK862 MECS/SF Gibraltar/WCS/SF El Adem/70/21 To 8194M 25.4.72  
 XK884 MECS/SF Nicosia/MECS/70/SCS/207/21/60  
 XK885 267/209/S & TTF Seletar/B & TTF Seletar/WCS/21/60 To 8452M 9.75  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 XK889 Percival P-74 prototype; not flown  
 XK895 to XK897 Sea Devon C.20s for Royal Navy  
 XK902, XK903 Sycamore HR.51s for Royal Australian Navy  
 XK906 to XK912; XK933 to XK945 Whirlwind HAS.7s for Royal Navy

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**Four EEC Canberra B(1).8s delivered in August and September 1956 by EEC, Preston, to Contract 6/ACFT/6445**

XK951 88/14/16/3 Sold to Marshalls 22.6.73 for Peruvian AF as No.248  
 XK952 59/3/16/MoA/16/14/16 SOC 6.4.73  
 XK953 - To Indian AF as IF895  
 XK954 - To Indian AF as IF898

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XK964 Skeeter 6 G-ANMI for evaluation by A & AEE

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*Whirlwind HAR.10 XK968 with No.110 Squadron in Malaya*

**Nine Westland Whirlwind HAR.2s delivered between May and December 1956 to Contract 6/ACFT/12881**

XK968 JEHU/22/Cv HAR.10/110/103/28 To 8445M 24.7.75; preserved  
 XK969 JEHU/225/CFS/Cv HAR.10/228/202/230/202/SAR Wg To 8646M 16.11.79  
 XK970 JEHU/228/Cv HAR.10/MoA/SAR Flt Khormaksar/CFS/230/84 To 8789M 7.82  
 XK986 JEHU/228/Cv HAR.10/230/84 To 8790M 7.82  
 XK987 22/1360 Flt/217/22/228/Cv HAR.10/110/103 To 8393M 3.10.73

XK988 JEHU/CFS/Cv HAR.10/103/110/103 To RN as A2646, 1.7.75  
 XK989 22 Lost height and ditched during winching practice 1m off Thorney Island, 26.2.57; to 7415M  
 XK990 JEHU/Cv HAR.10/228/202 Engine failed during landing practice; hit ground ¼m N of Acklington, 27.10.67  
 XK991 JEHU/Cv HAR.10/228 Rotor hit mast of pinnacle while winching; ditched in Bridlington Bay, Yorks., 7.5.63; to 7810M

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**Five Westland Whirlwind HAR.4s delivered between November 1956 and January 1957 to Contract 6/ACFT/12881**

XL109 Mkrs/CFS/Cv HAR.10/MoA/110/28 Engine cut; ditched 2m NE of Sai Kung, Hong Kong, 17.10.70  
 XL110 Mkrs/217/228/Cv HAR.2/Cv HAR.10/230/84 Lost rotor blade while hovering and crashlanded, Nicosia, 6.2.73  
 XL111 RRE/Cv HCC.8/QF/CFS/225/22/Cv HAR.10/SAR Flt Khormaksar Engine cut; forced landed in soft sand and rolled over, Khormaksar, 1.4.67; to 8000M 12.2.68  
 XL112 217/228/Cv HAR.10/1563 Flt/1564 Flt/SAR Flt Khormarsar/22/202 Control lost in cloud; crashed at Patrick Brompton, Yorks., 20.11.70  
 XL113 228 Engine cut during winching practice; ditched in Cullercoats Bay, Northumberland, 5.8.61

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*Beverley C.1 XL150 of No.34 Squadron (M.W.Prime)*

**Eight Blackburn Beverley C.1s delivered between May and October 1957 to Contract 6/ACFT/12264**

XL117 - To XL130  
 XL118 - To XL131  
 XL119 - To XL132  
 XL130 30/242 OCU/30/84 SOC 29.8.69  
 XL131 30/47 SOC 29.8.69  
 XL132 242 OCU Engine caught fire on approach to Thorney Island; crashed in Chichester Harbour, Sussex, 17.5.62  
 XL148 242 OCU/30 SOC 25.3.70  
 XL149 242 OCU/84/30 To 7988M 7.11.67  
 XL150 RAE/84/47 & 53/34 Flew into high ground in bad weather 72m N of Seletar, 14.12.67  
 XL151 47 & 53/84 Flew into ground at night 15m NE of Khormaksar, 10.10.60  
 XL152 30 SOC 25.3.70

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Victor SR.2 XL193 of No.543 Squadron at Wyton (P.Howard)

**18 Handley Page Victor B.2s delivered between November 1961 and February 1962 to Contract 6/ACFT/12996**

XL158	MoA/139/Witt Wg/ Cv K.2/55/57/55	
XL159	AAEE	Stalled and hit house during recovery, Stubton, Notts., 23.3.62
XL160	MoA/100/Witt Wg/ Cv K.2/55/57	
XL161	MoA/Cv SR.2/543/ Cv K.2/55/57/55	
XL162	MoA/139/Witt Wg/ Cv K.2/57/55/57	
XL163	139/100/Witt Wg & Victor Trg Flt/ Cv K.2/232 OCU/ 55/57/55/57	
XL164	MoA/Cv K.2/57/ 55/57	
XL165	15/100/232 OCU/ MoA/Cv SR.2/543/ Victor Flt Wyton	SOC 30.10.75
XL188	232 OCU/Witt Wg/ VTF/Witt Wg/ Cv K.2/55	
XL189	232 OCU/Witt Wg/ 232 OCU/Witt Wg & VTF/Cv K.2/232 OCU/ 55/57/55	
XL190	139/Witt Wg/ Cv K.2/232 OCU/55	
XL191	139/Witt Wg/ Cv K.2/232 OCU/55	
XL192	100/232 OCU/Witt Wg & VTF/Cv K.2/ 57	
XL193	100/232 OCU/Cv SR.2/543/Victor Flt Wyton	SOC 10.11.75
XL230	IFTU/232 OCU/ Cv SR.2/543	Sank into ground on overshoot and blew up, Wyton, 10.5.73
XL231	139/Witt Wg/VTF/ Witt Wg/Cv K.2/ 57/232 OCU	
XL232	139/100/232 OCU/ Witt Wg/Cv K.2/ 55/232 OCU/55/57/ 55/57/55	Engine blew up on take-off, Marham, 15.10.82 DBF
XL233	MoA/Witt Wg & VTF/ Cv K.2/232 OCU/55/ 57/55/AAEE/55	

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XL237 to XL241; XL269 to XL276; XL305 to XL313  
Sea Hawk FB.50s for Royal Netherlands Navy

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**24 Avro Vulcan B.2s delivered between July 1961 and November 1962 to Contract 6/ACFT/12305**

XL317	MoA/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/Scampton Wg/230 OCU/617/ 230 OCU/617	To 8725M 1.12.81
XL318	617/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/617/Wadd Wg/230 OCU/617	To 8733M; preserved in Bomber Command Museum 4.1.82
XL319	617/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/617/230 OCU/35/Wadd Wg	Sold 20.1.83; preserved
XL320	617/Scampton Wg/230 OCU	SS 31.8.81
XL321	617/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/Scampton Wg/230 OCU/617/ 230 OCU/Wadd Wg/ 230 OCU/35/617/ 35/50	To 8759M 19.8.82
XL359	617/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/35	SS 11.82
XL360	617/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/Wadd Wg/ 230 OCU/617/35/101	To exhibition aircraft, 26.1.83
XL361	617/MoA/Scampton Wg/230 OCU/230 OCU & 27/617/35/9	Damaged at Goose Bay, Labrador, 13.11.81; not repaired and became display airframe
XL384	230 OCU/Scampton Wg/Wadd Wg/Scamp- ton Wg/230 OCU/ Scampton Wg & 230 OCU	SOC 14.1.75
XL385	9/Scampton Wg/617	Engine failed on take-off and caught fire, Scampton, 6.4.67; DBF
XL386	9/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/27/230 OCU/28/230 OCU/ Wadd Wg	To 8760M 20.8.82
XL387	230 OCU/Scampton Wg/617/230 OCU/ Wadd Wg	To 8748M 28.1.82
XL388	9/Scampton Wg/ Wadd Wg	To 8750M 2.4.82
XL389	230 OCU/Scampton Wg/230 OCU/617 & 230 OCU/Wadd Wg	SS 31.8.81
XL390	9/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/617	Stalled during low run during display and crashed, Glenview NAS, Ill., USA, 11.8.75
XL391	MoA/BCDU/MoA/ Akrotiri Wg/ Wadd Wg	SOC 11.2.83; preserved
XL392	Scampton Wg/617/35	To 8745M 1.3.82
XL425	83/Scampton Wg/ 617 & 27/617	SOC 4.1.82
XL426	83/Scampton Wg/ 27/617/50	
XL427	83/Scampton Wg/ Wadd Wg	To 8756M 13.8.82
XL443	27/Wadd Wg/Cott Wg/Akrotiri Wg/ Wadd Wg/35/230 OCU/35/44/50	
XL444	27/Scampton Wg/ 230 OCU/Scampton Wg/617 & 230 OCU/ 617/35/Wadd Wg	SS 12.82
XL445	27/Wadd Wg/Akor- tiri Wg/Wadd Wg/ 230 OCU/35/44/ Cv B.2K/50	To 8811M 5.4.84
XL446	27/Wadd Wg/230 OCU/Akrotiri Wg/ 35/Wadd Wg/617/35	SS 11.82

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XL449 to XL456; XL471 to XL482; XL493 to XL503  
Fairey Gannet AEW.3s for Royal Navy

XL507 Sycamore HR.51 for Royal Australian Navy

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Three Handley Page Victor B.2s delivered between July  
and September 1963 to Contract 6/ACFT/12996

XL511 139/Witt Wg &  
Victor Trg Flt/  
Cv K.2/55/57

XL512 139/Witt Wg/  
Cv K.2/55/57

XL513 139/VTF/Witt Wg/  
Cv K.2/55/232  
OCU/55

Hit bird on take-off and  
overshot, Marham, 29.9.76

\* \* \* \* \*

Ten Scottish Aviation Pioneer CC.1s delivered between  
May and July 1956 to Contract 6/ACFT/13190

XL517 78/230/209 Ex G-AOGK. Hit trees in turn  
and crashed, Long Pa Sia,  
Borneo, 15.7.66

XL518 78/SOAF SOC 30.10.62

XL519 78 SOC 10.7.57

XL520 78 Failed to become airborne  
and hit ridge, Beihan,  
13.9.57

XL553 78 Blown onto runway by gust on  
landing, Wadi Ain, Aden,  
19.9.57

XL554 78 To SOAF 5.8.59

XL555 230 Stalled on take-off and dived  
into ground, Upavon, 29.4.60

XL556 215/Hdlg Sqn/  
215/230 Undercarriage collapsed on  
landing, Middle Wallop,  
22.9.58

XL557 215/230 Wing hit ground in gust on  
approach; undercarriage coll-  
apsed, Watchfield, 9.8.60

XL558 215/230/209 DBR in storm, Vientiane,  
Laos, 18.4.68

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Hunter T.7 XL611 of No.56 Squadron

55 Hawker Hunter T.7s delivered between December 1957 and  
February 1959 by Hawkers, Kingston, to Contract No.  
6/ACFT/12626

XL563 Mkrs/MoA/I Avn Med MoA aircraft; no RAF service

XL564 Mkrs/229 OCU/  
Hdlg Sqn To MoD(PE) 1.4.76 for ETPS

XL565 Mkrs/8/1417 Flt/  
8/SF West Raynham/  
8/208/4 FTS/237 OCU To Royal Navy 23.11.81

XL566 AAEE/43/1417 Flt/  
208/4 FTS/SF Laar-  
bruch To Royal Navy 23.11.81

XL567 229 OCU/19/4 FTS/  
SF Laarbruch/1 To 8723M 23.2.82

XL568 Hdlg Sqn/74/  
Cv T.7A/MoA/74/  
12

XL569 229 OCU/TWU/1 TWU/  
2 TWU/MinTech/12/  
237 OCU/15/SF  
Laarbruch/237 OCU/  
SF Laarbruch/237  
OCU/216/12/1 TWU

To 8833M

XL570 229 OCU Dived into sea after take-  
off 3½m W of Chivenor,  
25.9.58

XL571 229 OCU/FCIRS/92/  
2/229 OCU/TWU Abandoned after engine cut  
1m W of Strumble Head,  
Pemb., 8.9.77

XL572 229 OCU/TWU/  
2 TWU/1 TWU

To 8834M .84

XL573 FCS/229 OCU/  
4 FTS/237 OCU/  
SF Laarbruch/  
237 OCU

XL574 AAEE

To MoD(PE) 1.4.61

XL575 229 OCU/FCIRS/  
229 OCU

Flew into high ground in bad  
weather 2m E of Devils Ridge,  
Aberystwyth, Cardigan,  
8.11.71

XL576 229 OCU/TWU/1 TWU

To 8835M .84

XL577 229 OCU/TWU/1 TWU/  
237 OCU/2 TWU

To 8676M 16.3.81

XL578 229 OCU/TWU/1 TWU

XL579 229 OCU

To MoA 14.12.65

XL580 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL581 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL582 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL583 229 OCU/1 TWU

Engine cut on approach and  
abandoned, Brawdy, 1.12.81

XL584 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL585 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL586 229 OCU/1 TWU/  
2 TWU/1 TWU

To MoD(PE)

XL587 229 OCU/1 TWU/  
237 OCU/208/  
12/237 OCU/  
SF Laarbruch

To 8807M 3.84

XL591 FCS/229 OCU/  
4 FTS/RAE/4 FTS/  
237 OCU/208/237  
OCU/208/237 OCU

XL592 229 OCU/TWU/1 TWU

To 8836M .84

XL593 FCS/229 OCU/TWU/  
1 TWU/2 TWU/1 TWU

Engine lost power; abandoned  
4½m NW of Carmarthen, Dyfed,  
5.8.82

XL594 FCIRS/19

Hit ground recovering from  
dive ¼m NNW of Carnaby,  
16.4.64

XL595 FCS/DFCS/229 OCU/  
TWU/2 TWU/1 TWU

XL596 54/1 & 54/HCT/  
4/4 FTS

Flew into ground on approach,  
Shawbury, 2.11.73

XL597 66/208/1417 Flt/  
208/8/4/20/4 FTS/  
237 OCU

Engine lost power; abandoned  
½m S of Little Saxham,  
Suffolk, 29.5.80

XL598 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL599 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL600 65/111/4 FTS/  
237 OCU/SF Laar-  
bruch/TMTS Scampton

XL601 1/SF West Raynham/  
1/4 FTS/229 OCU/  
4 FTS/237 OCU/208/  
237 OCU

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL602 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL603 -

T.8 for Royal Navy

XL604 -

Sold to HSA 6.4.66 for

XL605 12/229 OCU

Saudi AF; retd to RAF 5.72  
and renumbered XX467

XL609 56/4 FTS/237 OCU/  
216/12

XL610 111/56

Rolled and hit ground 1m SW  
of North Kelsey, Lincs.,  
7.6.62

XL611 43/CFS/Cv T.7A/  
56/19

To MinTech 22.12.67

# BOOKSHELF

HUNTER SQUADRONS of the Royal Air Force and Fleet Air Arm by Richard L Ward (Linewrights Ltd £5.95)

Hunter Squadrons is a pictorial record of the units which flew Hunters, not only squadrons but also training and experimental establishments. The centre section is in colour and we counted 185 black and white photographs of all marks and colour schemes. There are also drawings of the badges of each unit and eight side-view drawings showing typical camouflage schemes and the location of markings.

The captions all lengthy and informative and the whole package is an attractive tribute to a well-loved fighter and trainer.

THE CUXHAVEN RAID by R D Layman (Conway Maritime Press £11.95)

This one brings back prewar memories of finding a bound volume of 'War Illustrated' for 1914/15 in the family bookcase and reading an account of the raid in this weekly periodical. Pictures of the gawky Short seaplanes seemed to be from a bygone age compared with the sleek Ospreys one saw in 'Boy's Own'!

It was a good try for the first naval air strike from ships at sea to take place, even if the damage done was trivial. A good read, specially for those who thought ship-borne air attacks started with Taranto.

NORWEGIAN PATROL by Gron Edwards (Airlife £11.95).

Forty-odd years after the event, the memoirs still flow - and who is to say that is a bad thing. The passing of the Thirty Year barrier has meant that the participants in many actions can now look up the official background to their activities, probably with mixed feelings.

Flying a modified airliner to a coastline often in mist and cloud stuffed with mountains is not a recipe for longevity. If one could see the mountains, there was a good chance that enemy fighters could also see their quarry. This account of Hudsons traversing the stormy North Sea to bomb shipping and coastal targets, or simply to report enemy movements, catches the mood of the time excellently.

MOHAWKS OVER BURMA (Midland Counties £14.95)  
ESCAPE FROM SINGAPORE (Canada's Wings \$5.95)  
by Gerry Beauchamp

In AM.2/80, we reviewed the Mohawk in RAF service and probably surprised a few readers with the fact that it was still in front-line service in January 1944.

Gerry Beauchamp's keen interest in the type put him in touch with many former Mohawk pilots who now have their own 'MOMS', Men of the Mohawk Squadrons Association. Their tales are contained in 'Mohawks over Burma', an excellent record of this overlooked type and the men who flew them.

'Escape from Singapore' is edited by Gerry from the accounts of Bill Maxwell and Fred Thurlby, ex No.232 Squadron whose Hurricanes came too late to affect the outcome of the campaign in Malaya early in 1942. Both were ground crew and give a graphic account of what it was like to be on the ground while an enemy air force had air superiority.

BEAUFIGHTERS OVER BURMA by David J Innes (Blandford, £9.95)

Another account of flying in Burma, this time by a ground-attack squadron, No.27. Originally intended for maritime strikes, the enemy did not oblige by providing sufficient targets so

the squadron was transferred to the Burma front. With its heavy armament, the Beaufighter was an ideal aircraft for strafing enemy communications, bridges, camps, dumps, railways, river craft and anything else that moved.

Well illustrated, it is a useful account of the activities of No.27 Squadron before the powers-that-be turned it into an 'air-jungle rescue' unit, an earthy equivalent for air-sea rescue.

THE WORLD WAR II FACT BOOK by Christy Campbell (Book Club Associates £9.95)

The blurb declares this to be a 'vast compendium of facts and figures' on all aspects of World War Two and such a book is a useful adjunct to any bookshelf if it does its job. Unfortunately, the one missing fact that is sought usually seems to have been missed out!

Sadly this one is unlikely to fill many gaps. It is divided into 'Operations', 'People', 'Weapons', 'Organisations' and 'People's War'.

There is a chronology of events of varying importance, a list of codenames and a record of which countries were involved. Did you know that Cuba declared war on Germany on 13 December 1941, Turkey on 1 March 1945 and Australia, well she isn't listed as having declared war on anybody. Neither apparently did Romania, Yugoslavia or Poland.

The 'Campaigns' section starts with the German invasion of Poland. Apparently the Polish Air Force was destroyed in the first couple of days. The culling of information seems to have been not very selective.

There are brief descriptions of aircraft and tanks but nothing here for anyone seeking a comprehensive reference on World War Two.

LIONS RAMPANT by Douglas McRoberts (William Kimber £11.50)

A history of No.602 Squadron during its years with the Spitfire, this is a readable account of a famous Auxiliary Air Force squadron. Apart from three months with Second TAF on the Continent, No.602 remained in the UK throughout World War Two, which probably gives it added attraction to the more insular of our readers.

OPERATIONAL GRAPPLE by Kenneth Hubbard (Ian Allan £12.95)

When Valiant XD818 dropped Britain's first H-bomb at Christmas Island in May 1957, it was the culmination of a major operation to build up a task force and island base a long way from anywhere.

A useful account of the problems involved and the equipment used, topical at a time when the Australians want £100 million to clean up the mess from earlier tests on the Australian mainland and criticism of the conduct of nuclear testing by Britain is widespread.

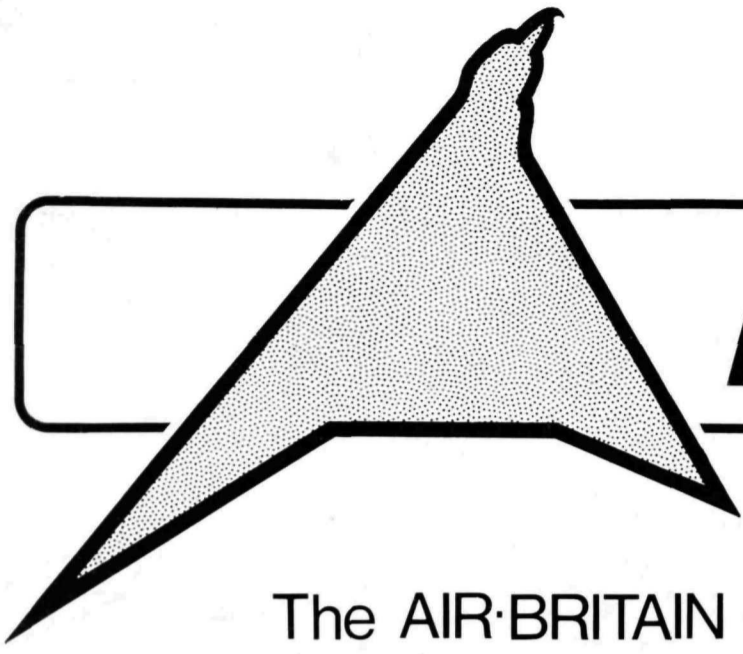
SPITFIRE AT WAR:2 by Alfred Price (Ian Allan £10.95)

A second helping of articles and accounts of the most famous fighter in the world, not just Spits but Seafires. A lot of previously-unseen photos and a useful chapter on testing the Spiteful. A PR sortie by a pilot of the 14th Photo Squadron of the 8th Air Force from Mount Farm gives another side of the Spitfire Story and the whole book brings on attacks of nostalgia.

GRUMMAN X-29 by Bill Gunston (Linewrights £3.50)

Interesting 36 page profile of Grumman's oddly-shaped forward-swept experimental aircraft with good background on its construction and development. Nice photographs, both colour and mono.





# AEROMILITARIA

The AIR·BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly



**No. 2**  
**1986**



# AEROMILITARIA

The AIR-BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly

Edited by James J Halley and Peter M Corbell

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Nineteen eighty-six appears to have opened with a drizzle of military monographs. In March came The Lancaster File and the latest addition to the series on RAF aircraft, the SA100 to VZ999 register.

The Lancaster File runs to 196 pages and covers the type in the same style as with earlier publications on the Halifax, Stirling and Typhoon. It is not intended as a general history of the Lancaster as that has been covered in a number of books. What the 'Files' aim to do is to provide background information that may not be available in commercial publications.

Details are therefore provided on the units which operated Lancasters, individual aircraft histories and fates, details of civil Lancasters and Lancastrians, overseas use by the RCAF, French Navy and the spasmodic activities of the Argentine and Egyptian examples.

New to this File is the code/serial crossindex and there are items on preserved Lancasters, testbeds and a complete listing of Bomber Command raids with the numbers of Lancasters despatched, lost or crashed in the course of them.

The price is £8.00 post-free to members (or £12.00 to non-members).

The latest batch of alphanumericology in the RAF register series covers the immediate post-war production for the RAF plus those aircraft delivered just before the end of the war. This effectively completes the post-war production of RAF aircraft up to the point where the XA series began as a feature in Aeromilitaria, the WA-WZ volume filling the gap between that and VZ999. The cost is £6.00 and £9.00 post-free.

Before anyone phones their favourite consumer body, we should point out that SA100 to VZ999 starts at SL541! All serials prior to that number were allocated to Lend-Lease aircraft that were never required.

Just about to be delivered is a history of No.80 Squadron by Chris Shores. Titled 'Strike True' (it relates to a bell, not an industrial dispute) it has 56 pages and around 120 photographs. To remind those who cannot recall No. 80's activities immediately, it flew Camels in World War One, Gauntlets, Gladiators (in the Western Desert and Greece), Hurricanes, Spitfires, Tempests, Hornets and Canberras.

The prices are £4.00 and £6.00 post-free from the sales department. Please remember to use the sales reception address - 11 Thurlestone, Thundersley, Benfleet, Essex SS7 3YW.

Finally, awaiting tenders from the printing industry is 'The Whitley File' from Nick Roberts who compiled 'The Halifax File', which has now been reprinted by popular demand at £6.00 and £9.00 post-free.

The data on the Whitley follows the now-familiar pattern, giving a short history of the development of the type, production details, individual aircraft histories and fates, Whitley raids by Bomber Command, the civil Whitleys, code/serial tie-ups, etc. Watch this space.



*One Lancaster that did not get into 'The Lancaster File'. It is a RCAF Mark 10 with the codes 'DC-A' and has gone through the barrier. Is that the pilot legging it by the roundel? He seems to have a chute on. But where and when did this incident take place and which aircraft was involved? None of the RCAF write-offs seem to fit the case.*

## IN THIS ISSUE

George Kernahan has been digging into the pre-war aircraft of the US Navy and has come up with the Vindicator which had a brief and ineffective war service after Pearl Harbor.

A few turned up in British roundels but far too late to be considered an operational type. Were they the tail end of the French orders or a few direct from the end of the production line?

Ernest Sockett has been making a study of No.608 Squadron and Thornaby and has produced some notes on the pre-war aircraft used by the squadron. At last we now know for certain that No.608's pre-war code letters were carried on their Demons.

Splashing about in Austers occupied the MAEE for short periods but did anyone see the aircraft sent to Singapore? Presumably they would have been erected at Seletar but information on their activities, if any, is lacking. Perhaps, in the prevailing heat, they never got off the water - or even out of their packing cases. Nobody seems to claim to have flown them as landplanes either!

The XA-onwards register pushes on for a further four pages. As always, any supplementary information would be appreciated.

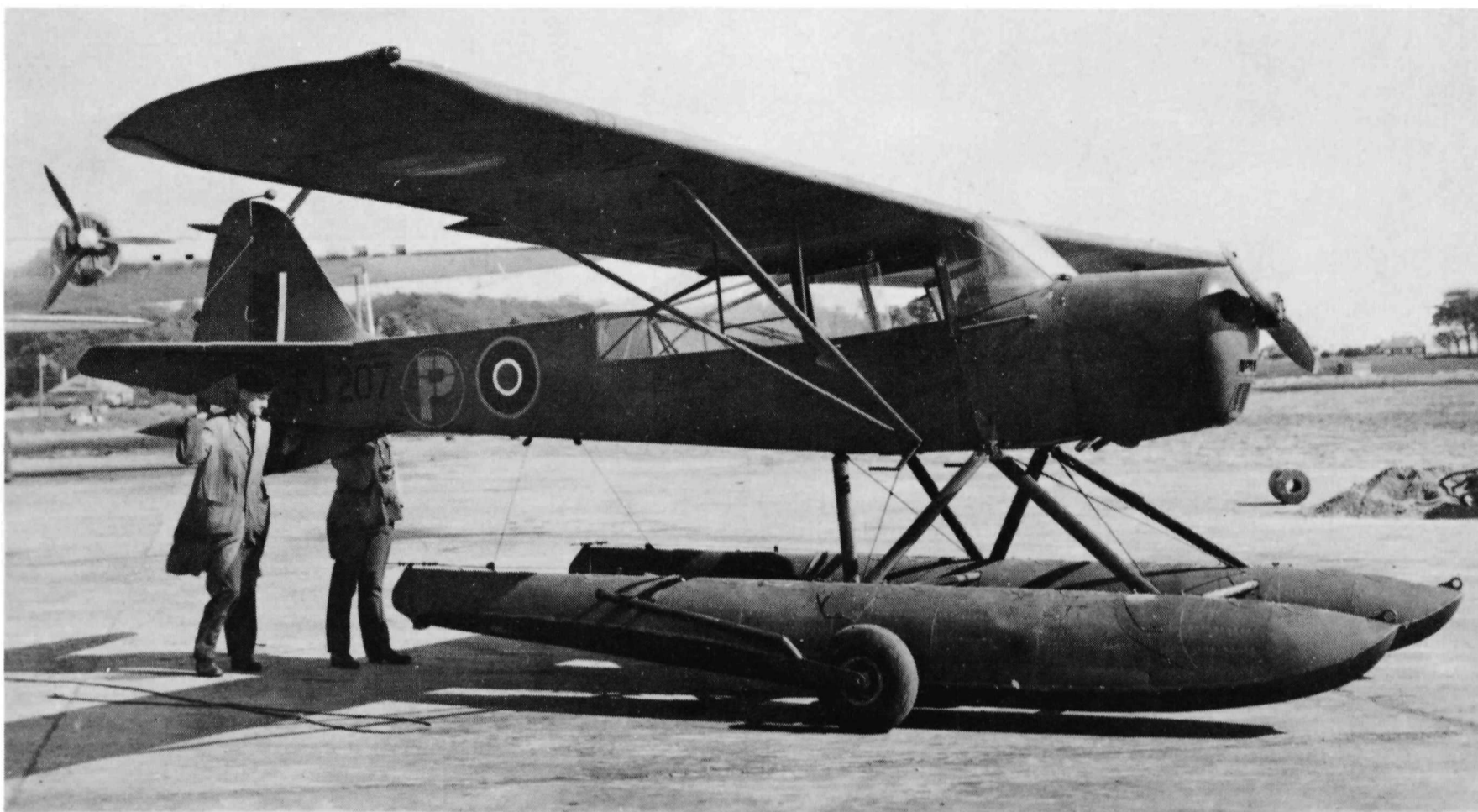
## LEIGH-MALLORY'S YORK

A letter from Oleg Drobycheff in France has provided a chance to look into the loss of MW126 and also to amend AM.1/84 where the date of the loss is shown as 31 October 1944. In fact, this date was that of the final report on the missing aircraft.

MW126 (callsign 'Hen 82') left Northolt on 14 November and sent its last signal at 0929Z. The route from Northolt to Naples/Pomigliano was via Cherbourg, Poitiers, Toulouse, Sete and Toulon, thus keeping clear of operational areas in Eastern France and the dense air traffic there.

A Top Secret signal arrived at SHAEF Main Air (the Air Ministry building) from Naples reporting that the aircraft had not arrived. Ninth Air Force immediately despatched a dozen C-47s to search the areas around St.Lo and Poitiers while twenty more covered Clermond-Ferrand, Lyon, Beziers and Istres. Some FFI aircraft searched around central France but nothing was found. The wreckage was found on 4 June 1945, 30 miles west of Grenoble on the mountain above Le Rivier d'Allemont, well off course. Both Leigh-Mallory and his wife were killed, along with the crew of eight. Secret papers carried aboard were recovered, these having occasioned some alarm as they had not officially been booked aboard.

## AUSTERS WITH BOOTS ON



By the end of 1944, Commonwealth forces were advancing through Burma and planning was well advanced for future landings in Malaya or the Dutch East Indies once troops became available from Europe after the defeat of Germany.

The provision of airstrips in jungle areas had been a difficult task in the absence of roads over which materials could be hauled. Those airstrips which could be built were occupied by fighter-bombers providing close support for the army and which had to be based as close to the front as possible. Rough clearings were adequate for light aircraft but these were subject to damage from soft patches, roots and stones.

As south-east Asia was, if nothing else, a wet region of the world, there were many rivers and lakes and it was inevitable that interest was focussed on these as a method of operating light aircraft without the need for preparing airstrips and detracting from the effort needed to build operational airfields.

In January 1945, tests were begun with an Auster V at the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment at Helensburgh. The aircraft involved was TJ207 and, predictably, the floats came from the Queen Bee target aircraft which had been in production for some time. The Lycoming O-290/3 produced 130 hp.

The beginning of testing was delayed by damage to the float struts. From 9 to 16 January, various tests were carried out but were ended when TJ207 was placed u/s when the skin around the front float attachment was found to be buckled.

At 1,700 lb and, later, 1,820 lb weight, the floats were barely adequate for buoyancy and stability and at 1,820 lb were safe only in calm conditions. The view on take-off was poor but once off the water the seaplane was easy and pleasant to fly and without any vices. Despite the low power, take-offs were easy but there was a lot of spray flying around the cockpit.

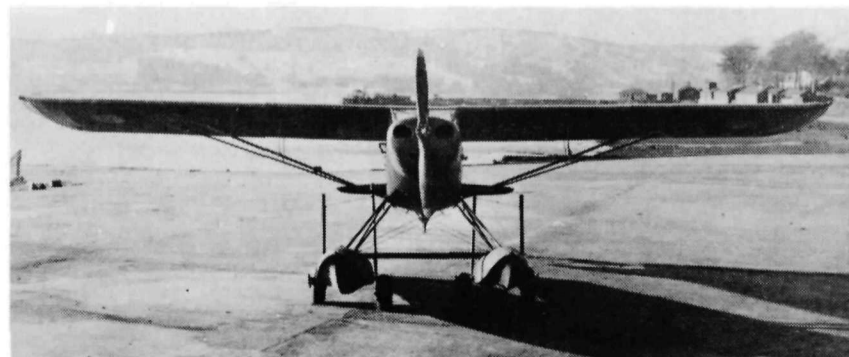
The maximum permissible diving speed was 156 mph. On approach, the aircraft tended to sink rapidly when gliding but power-on approaches at 1,200 rpm were flatter but it still sank fairly fast by comparison with its landplane version. It was difficult to judge height above the water due to the curved side panels of the windscreen unless the side window was opened.

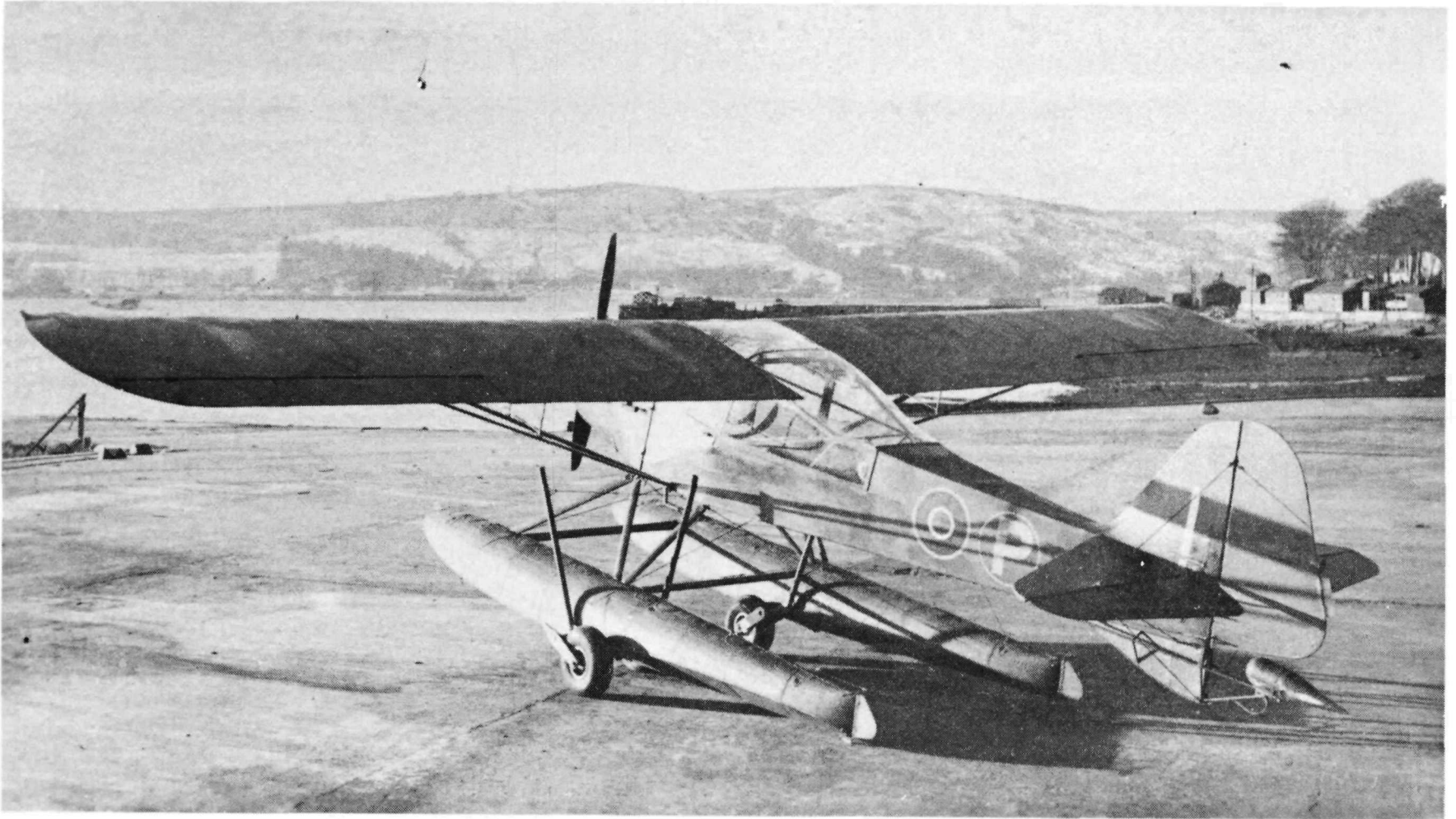
Once on the water, the seaplane proved very manoeuvrable in calm conditions and the turning circle was under 50 yards. The propeller was also clear of spray in these conditions but in a crosswind or a one-foot sea state, spray began to hit the propeller and windscreen. The slowest landing speed was calculated as 39 mph.

The skin-buckling problem was taken in hand by the manufacturers and with modified attachments TJ207 resumed testing on 1 March 1945. On 6 March a front float attachment failed and the aircraft went back to the makers for repair, being received back at Helensburgh on 28 March.

Sufficient flying had been done to prove several things. Even in temperate conditions, performance was marginal. In the tropical heat of Burma and Malaya, it would have deteriorated to some extent and climb-out would have been gradual even after a prolonged take-off run.

*Head-on view of TJ207 at Helensburgh, January 1945 (AAEE)*

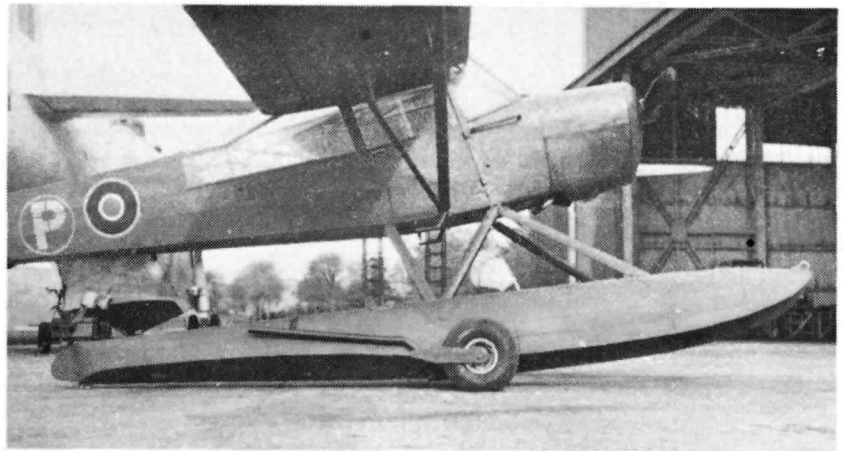




The floats proved satisfactory in themselves, not surprising in view of the fact that they had stood up for many years to unpiloted landings while attached to Queen Bees. The Bee was, however, a biplane and lighter than a fully-loaded Auster V so perhaps a specially designed float for the Auster would have been an improvement.

Nevertheless, two Auster V floatplanes were built, TW521 and TW522 and delivered in April and May 1946. Both were shipped out to Singapore but details of their activities, if any, have not yet been traced.

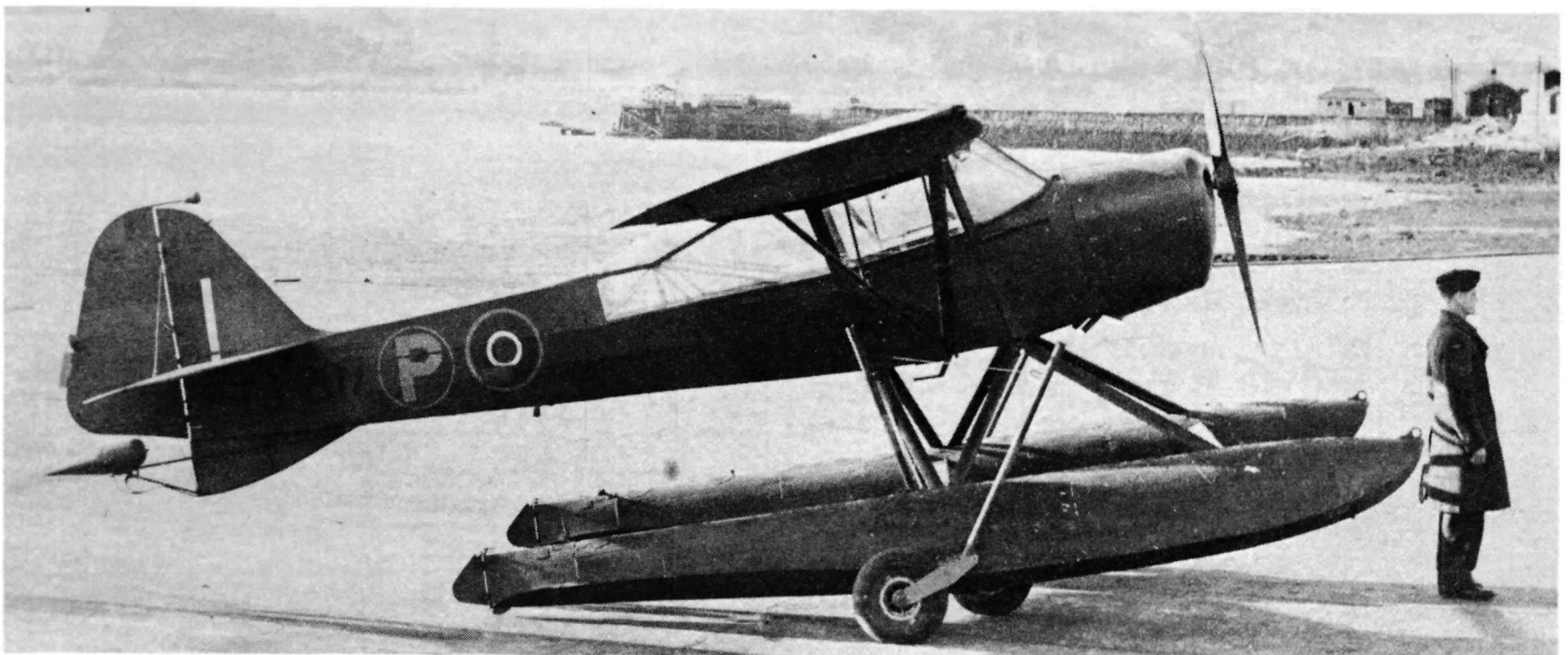
The destruction of the Japanese armies in Burma and the fact that the invasion of Malaya turned into an occupation force meant that many Japanese-built airfields became immediately available so the urgency of providing accommodation for AOP and liaison aircraft vanished overnight. A few years later, the activities of Communist guerilla bands in Malaya revived the need for light aircraft to operate in jungle areas and further trials of an Auster floatplane began.



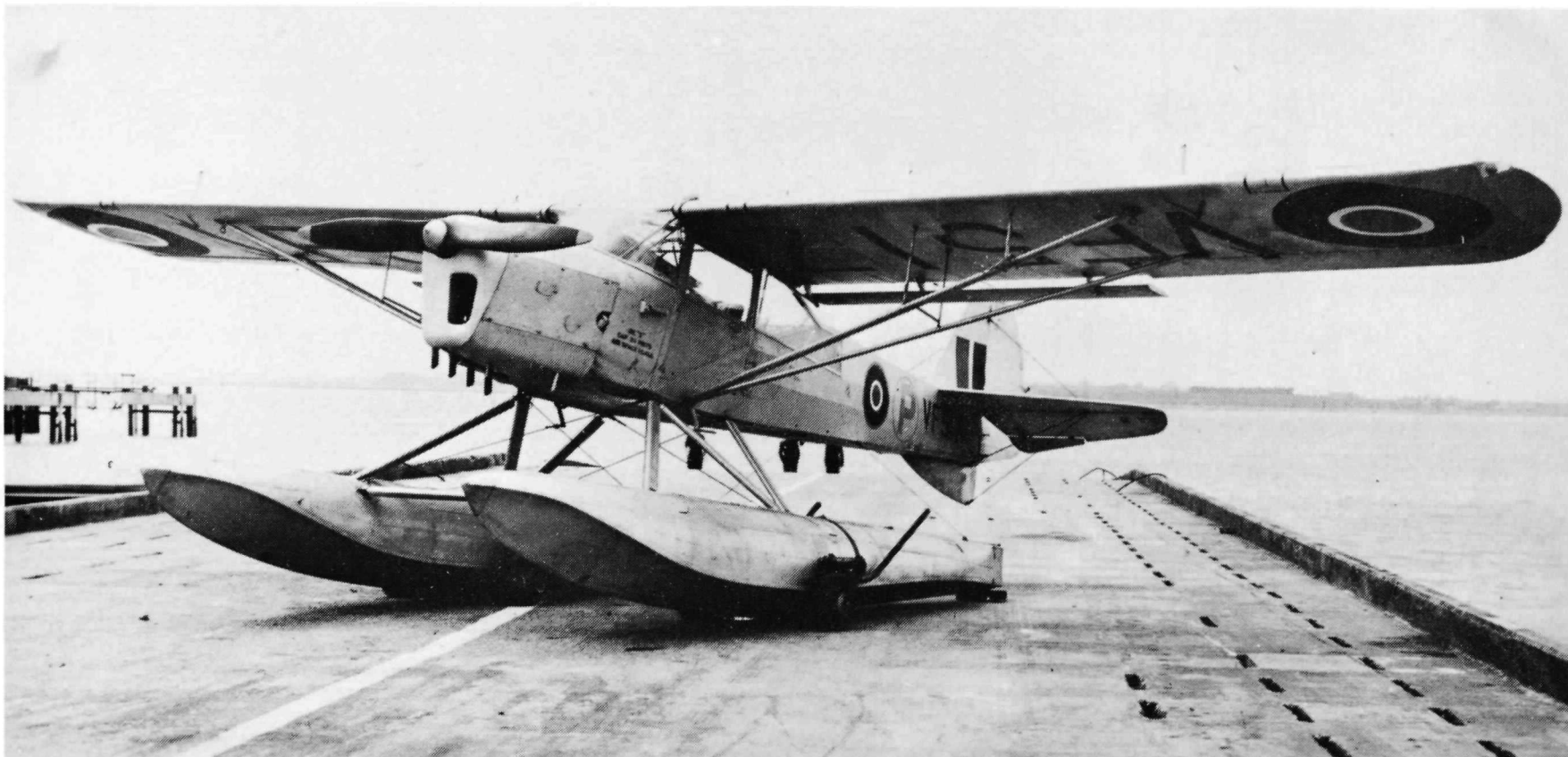
*Top: TJ207 with its original beaching legs on the ramp at Helensburgh*

*Above: The modified beaching legs later used. Note the water rudders and the eyes on the noses of the floats for towing. In the background is Sunderland ML750*

*Below: An RAF sergeant provides scale for this side view which shows the additional underfin and ballast.*







*Auster VI VF517 was the subject of floatplane tests at the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment, Felixstowe*

Between June and August 1947, a further series of trials was undertaken at the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment, now moved back to its pre-war station at Felixstowe. This time the aircraft was VF517, an Auster VI fitted with a 145 hp de Havilland Gipsy Major VII of more power than the Mark V's 130 hp. In the post-war years, it had replaced the earlier marks of Auster and was the standard AOP aircraft of the RAF.

This time the floats were specially built by Saro and an additional underfin was fitted to provide directional stability. Although the normal loaded weight of an Auster VI was 2,160 lbs, the seaplane carried out its tests at 2,460 lbs and under simulated tropical conditions.

Even in temperate conditions, the aircraft was found to be seriously underpowered. The length of take-off run and the initial rate of climb were found to be completely unacceptable for a service type. The take-off time varied between 42 and 76 seconds, according to sea conditions while the rate of climb at sea level

was only 425 feet per minute.

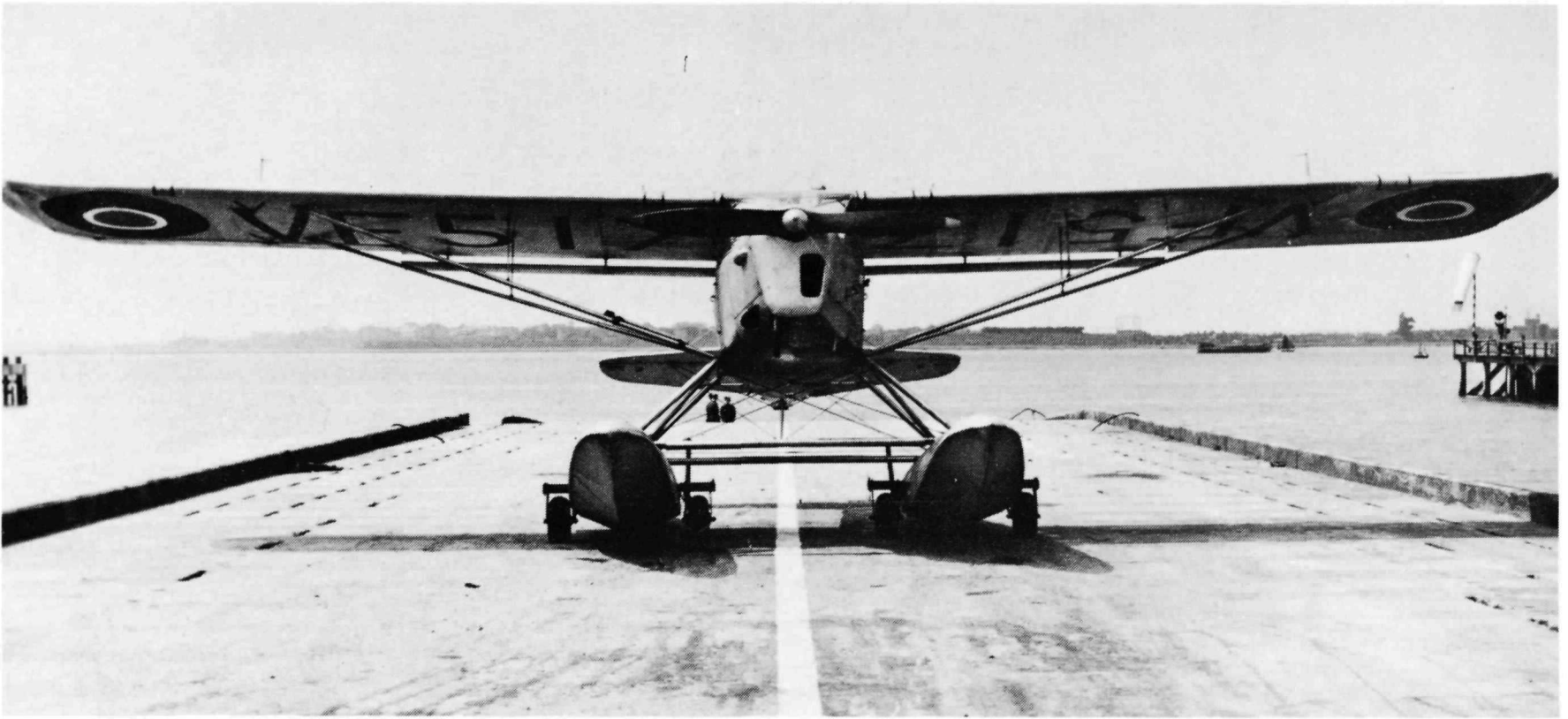
The floats, however, gave good buoyancy but sea handling was limited to a 15 kt wind and a  $1\frac{1}{2}$  foot sea state. Once airborne, the handling left something to be desired.

There was no stall warning and sideslipping proved dangerous at low speeds. Turning was difficult and a sideslip developed early.

It was found that the cabin was difficult to enter, the gap between the floats and the cabin door necessitating some prolonged negotiation. The cabin was inadequately ventilated for the tropics and would, in a short time, have become unbearably hot. Even in an English summer, it became stuffy. Once inside, the view forward and downward was good and not troubled by the optical problems faced on the Mk.V. The engine proved difficult to start and hand-starting while afloat was not a practicable exercise so the internal self-starter was a vital element in operating the aircraft.

On 7 August 1947, the starboard float collapsed when the aircraft was landing off Felixstowe.





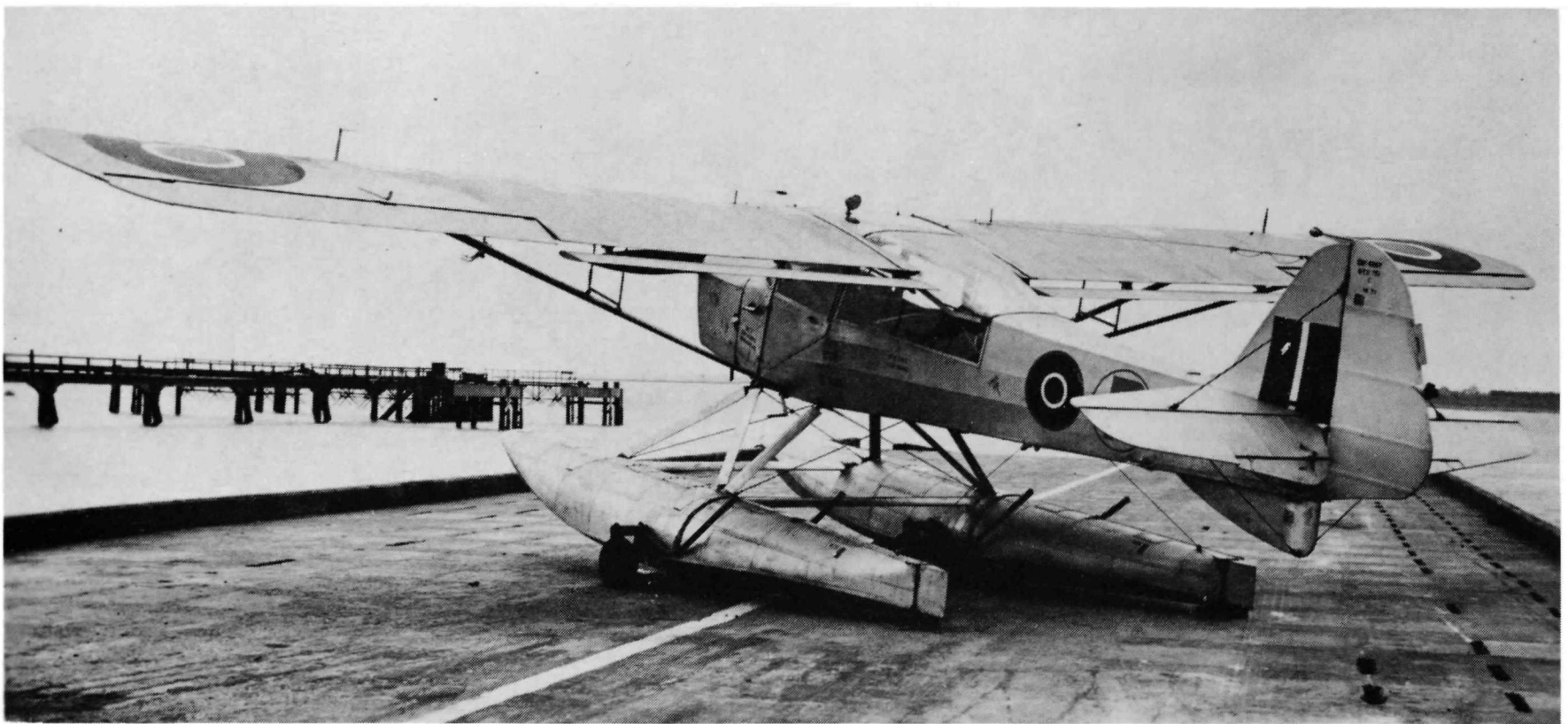
After this incident, interest in an Auster AOP seaplane waned. Specification A.4/45 had been issued for an AOP and liaison aircraft which would have STOL performance. Hopefully, this would provide a sturdy vehicle for getting in and out of primitive airstrips but the winner of this competition did not enter service until 1953.

The failure of the Auster seaplanes was primarily due to the state of the art of its design. It had been developed from a pre-war American light aircraft and produced in the UK for private and club use. The Taylorcraft designs were ideal for this purpose but the needs of war had resulted in their being developed beyond the limits of their original purpose. While easy to maintain and repair, they lacked the capacity to fill more than basic AOP duties.

If the intention of the Auster seaplanes had been mainly communications duties, their small size made them of restricted use. Any serious consideration of a water-based communications aircraft must have brought in the Canadian-built Norseman which had been designed for just such a purpose, albeit in a civil environment.

By the time the Auster VI floatplane was tested, the DHC Beaver was being assembled and could have been made available to the RAF much sooner than the Army Air Corps examples which were used solely on wheels.

Another consideration that would have doomed any improved Auster seaplane was the growing use of the helicopter. When no airfield was available it could drop into small clearings. After widespread use in Korea, the British Government decided to investigate its possible utility!



# VOUGHT SB2U VINDICATOR



*Vindicators of VS-41, September 1942*

*(National Archives 80-A-19131)*

Readers of the article on the Douglas SBD-2 in AM.2/85 will have noted that in the summer of 1934, the US Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics held a design competition for two distinct types of carrier-based dive bomber, a VSB-class aircraft capable of carrying a 500-lb bomb and a heavier VB-class to carry a thousand-pounder. As related therein, the winner of the latter competition emerged in production form as the Northrop BT-1 and was eventually developed into the famous Douglas SBD series, the mainstay of the US Navy's scout-bomber strength for the first two years of the Pacific War.

Although the XBT-1 had also been put forward for the VSB competition, the Navy decided to award contracts to four of the other entrants. These included two monoplane designs, the low-wing Vought XSB2U-1 and the midwing Brewster XSBA-1, and two biplanes, the Curtiss XSBC-2 and Vought XSB3U-1. While their prototypes were in the course of construction, both Vought (for the XSB2U) and Curtiss sought and received authorization from the Navy to modify their designs so as to permit the carriage of the heavier 1,000-lb bomb, thus blurring the distinction between the VB and VSB categories. In fact, of the four 1934 finalists, only these two saw large-scale service with the Fleet. In 1936, production contracts were placed for the Curtiss SBC-3 and Vought SB2U-1.

First flown on January 4, 1936, the XSB2U-1 was an advanced aircraft for its time. While biplanes were still very much in fashion - and especially so for carrier operations - the new scout-bomber was a low-wing monoplane of all-metal construction featuring a retractable undercarriage and folding wings. Its Pratt and Whitney R-1535 engine of 750 hp gave it a top speed of 230 mph and the aircraft could carry a 1,000-lb bomb over a distance of 530 miles. Defensive armament consisted of two 0.30-in

machine guns, one in the wing and the other on a flexible mount at the rear of the long glass-house enclosing the pilot and rearseatman.

One major technical failure beset the SB2U series throughout its career, this being simply that the original form of dive brake, a reversible pitch propeller, failed to live up to expectations and, as a consequence, in fleet service dives were braked by the expedient of lowering the landing gear. Less than optimum dive angles had, however, to be used, reducing bombing accuracy and rendering the aircraft more vulnerable to enemy anti-aircraft fire.

As mentioned previously, in 1936 Vought received a contract for 53 production SB2U-1s (BuNos 0726 to 0778), distinguished from the prototype mainly by the installation of extra internal equipment which added 300 lbs to the empty weight. A further contract followed in 1938 for 58 outwardly-similar SB2U-2s (BuNos 1326 to 1383). Squadrons often operated both -1 and -2 versions simultaneously.

To fulfil a Marine Corps requirement for a long-range expeditionary scout aircraft, the final SB2U-2 was converted to the XSB2U-3. Two wing-mounted 0.50-in guns replaced the single 0.30-in of the earlier models while internal fuel capacity was increased from 180 to no less than 420 gallons. Correctly anticipating that their next war would be fought against Japan on the broad reaches of the Pacific, where airfields were few but islands plentiful, the Marines requested that provision be made for the installation of floats and, although the XSB2U-3 was successfully tested in floatplane form, the feature was not adopted in the production version. Fifty-seven SB2U-3s (BuNos 2044 to 2100) were ordered in 1939 and delivery was completed in 1941.

In December 1937, VB-3, assigned to the Sara-

toga (CV-3) Air Group, became the first squadron to receive the SB2U-1. Deliveries continued until towards the end of the following year with VB-2, from Lexington (CV-2) also being equipped with the type. Production of the SB2U-2 then got underway and while the first squadron to operate the aircraft, VB-4, was normally assigned to the Ranger (CV-4) Air Group, it spent the first few months of 1939 operating out of San Diego aboard Saratoga. On 1 July of that year, VB-4 was redesignated VB-3 while the original VB-3, mentioned above in connection with the SB2U-1, became the new VB-4 and transferred to Ranger. VB-2 also received a few SB2U-2s to operate alongside its SB2U-1s.

Peacetime training occupied VB-2 and VB-3 over the next few years, their carriers operating out of US West Coast ports or Pearl Harbor in the Hawaiian Islands. By the late summer of 1941, both squadrons had been re-equipped with the Douglas SBD. Two SB2U squadrons made their appearance on the East Coast in mid-1939, when the new VB-4 began operating from Ranger and VS-72 was commissioned as part of the Wasp (CV-7) Air Group. At the outbreak of World War Two in September, both Ranger and Wasp formed part of the US Fleet's Atlantic Squadron and so became involved with the implementation of the Neutrality Patrol. This was a scheme for safeguarding the neutrality of the waters off the US East Coast by patrolling out to longitude 65 degrees west and reporting any movements by warships of the belligerent nations.

*Ranger Air Group SB2Us being unloaded from the carrier at Norfolk, Va, August 1942 (NA 80-G-35100)*

In late 1940 and early 1941, the Air Groups on the two carriers underwent reorganisation. So far as Ranger was concerned, this resulted in VB-4 being redesignated VS-41 and the second scouting squadron of the Air Group, VS-42, being re-equipped with the SB2U in place of the SBU biplane. Changes were more complicated in Wasp. Its bombing squadron, VB-7, which had flown the SB2U from June 1940 became VF-71, a fighting squadron, while its other scouting squadron, VS-71, followed VS-42 in exchanging its SBUs for SB2Us. Thus, by mid-1941, with the USA gradually being drawn into the Battle of the Atlantic, four USN carrier squadrons were operating the SB2U in that ocean, namely VS-41, VS-42, VS-71 and VS-72.

The pace continued to quicken in October 1941 when Wasp provided escort for a troop convoy carrying a garrison to Iceland and, in November, Ranger escorted a UK-bound convoy from Halifax, Nova Scotia, out to 20 degrees west. With American entry into the war in December, not only was patrol activity stepped up but demand for the two carriers to provide decks for training the rapidly-expanding Naval Air Force also increased greatly. In between such assignments, Wasp joined the British Home Fleet at the beginning of April 1942 and, with most of her air group disembarked to Hatston (see AM.3/83), made two trips into the Mediterranean, ferrying Spitfires to Malta. Upon her return to the US in May, both VS-71 and VS-72 re-equipped with the Douglas SBD before the carrier sailed for the Pacific. The two Ranger scouting squadrons retained their SB2Us for a little longer, VS-41 until September and VS-42 three months more.





SB2U-2s of VS-41 and VS-42, with a F4F of VF-41, ready for take-off from Ranger, 15 November 1941

(NA 80-G-291590)

Only two other VSB squadrons operated the aircraft. When Air Group 9 was commissioned on 1 March 1942 for service aboard Essex (CV-9), VS-9 and VB-9 received some SB2U-1s. However, after only a few weeks, the two units were ordered to Quonset Point, RI, and there, from April to August, they flew anti-submarine patrols with Vought OS2Us. Returning to Norfolk at the end of August, some more SB2Us were assigned and these continued to be operated until February 1943 when re-equipment with SBDs was effected. It is worthy of note that during the latter period VS-9 and VB-9 became the first squadrons to receive the Curtiss SB2C-1, successor to the SBD, but engineering problems led to its withdrawal after only a few weeks.

More than three years after VB-3 began receiving its SB2U-1s, the first SB2U-3s were delivered to the Marine Corps. VMS-1 at MCAS Quantico, Va, and VMS-2 at MCAS Ewa, Oahu, the scouting squadrons of the First and Second Marine Aircraft Groups, commenced operations with the type in the Spring of 1941. That July, the squadrons were redesignated VMSB-131 and VMSB-231 respectively, while the parent Groups became Marine Air Wings. During December 1941, VMSB-131 moved across country to San Diego where it continued to operate the SB2U until September 1942. Meanwhile, with matters hotting up in the Pacific, seventeen of its sister squadron's aircraft had been embarked in Lexington on 5 December 1941 for ferrying to Midway Island where they would form part of the garrison. En route on the morning of 7 December, the day of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, they were

able to escape the fate of the seven remaining SB2U-3s left behind at Ewa. These, plus one other assigned to VMJ-252 for utility duties, were destroyed on the ground.

Returning to the chaos of Pearl Harbor on 10 December, their mission temporarily cancelled, VMSB-231 disembarked to Ewa where they remained until the 17th. On that date, taking advantage of the dash 3's increased fuel capacity and guided by a Navy PBV, they made the 1,100-mile flight to Midway in 9 hours, 45 minutes. For the next five months, the squadron led a peaceful existence, the only events of significance being its change of designation to VMSB-241 in March 1942 and its augmentation by four further SB2U-3s in April and nineteen SBD-2s in May. Thus, when the Battle of Midway opened on 4 June, on hand were twenty-one SB2Us and nineteen SBDs.

On the morning of the 4th, soon after the Japanese Fleet had been located, sixteen SBDs and eleven SB2Us took off to attack. The latter selected an enemy battleship as target but apparently failed to score any hits. Three were shot down. A second attack launched later in the day failed to find the enemy but one more SB2U failed to return. The aircraft's swansong came on the morning of the 5th when six SB2Us joined six SBDs in attacking the damaged heavy cruisers Mogami and Mikuma. Hit in the engine by AA, the leader of the SB2U flight, Capt. Richard E. Fleming, dived his aircraft into the after gun turret of the latter. Little additional damage was inflicted on the ships. Shortly after the end of the battle, VMSB-241's remaining SB2Us were sent

back to the West Coast for overhaul. Later in 1942, a few did find their way back to Midway where 241 was still the garrison squadron but their remaining service life was short and uneventful.

Following retirement from first-line squadrons, surviving Navy and Marine SB2Us were relegated to training units. During 1941 and 1942, newly-commissioned scout-bomber pilots had the opportunity of flying the aircraft at the Advanced Carrier Training Group, Norfolk NAS, the purpose of which was to act as a bridge between the training command and the fleet squadrons. Towards the end of 1942, most of its functions were transferred to the rapidly-expanding Air Operational Training Command at its Florida bases while the remainder became the province of the newly-established Carrier Qualification Training Unit. In May 1943, the latter moved from Norfolk to NAS Glenview, near Chicago. Vought SB2Us saw service with all three organizations until, in August 1943, they were finally withdrawn from use. Interestingly, the greatest single day's losses of SB2Us came on 6 March of that year when a freak storm in the Jacksonville, Fla., area destroyed nine at Cecil Field OTU.

In December 1937, just as VB-3 was receiving its new monoplane SB2U-1s, the Saratoga Air Group's fighting squadron was still equipped with fixed-undercarriage biplanes. Yet only four years later, at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, the SB2U was obsolete and its subsequent performance in combat unimpressive. Nevertheless, in between times it gave the Navy valuable experience in the operation from carriers of high-performance monoplanes, boasting folding wings and retractable undercarriages. With the increased offensive capability these developments conferred, the SB2U must be given some credit for advancing tactical thought from the position where the function of the carrier-borne scout aircraft was to search ahead on behalf of the fleet's main striking arm, the battleships, to that where the latter became merely one element in the carrier task force's defensive screen.

Apart from the US Navy, SB2Us were also flown by the Royal Navy and the French Navy. Intended for use from escort carriers, the Fleet Air Arm rejected to Chesapeake due to its over-long take-off run. The French Navy Vought V-156s were virtually wiped out during the campaign in France during May and June 1940.

#### MISCELLANEOUS UNITS

VT-3 This, Saratoga's torpedo squadron, operated a number of SB2Us at San Diego between February and June 1939. Their purpose was to train crews for VS-72, commissioned in July as part of the Wasp Air Group

#### VMSB-142, 143, 144

These squadrons operated a number of SB2U-3s in the autumn of 1942 while undergoing training at San Diego

AGCs Flown by Air Group Commanders aboard Lexington, Ranger, Yorktown and Wasp

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#### VMJ-2, VMJ-152, 153

VMJ-152 operated a single SB2U-3 on utility duties between July and December 1941 while based at Quantico, Va. and San Diego, Cal. VMJ-2, redesignated VMJ-252 in July 1941, also had a single aircraft at Ewa from May to December. It was destroyed during the attack on Pearl Harbor

VFs Several fighter squadrons had a single SB2U for such utility duties as target towing.

#### SQUADRON ASSIGNMENTS

0726	Vought/Anacostia/NACA			0732	VB-3	1.38- 4.39	
	Langley as test a/c	7.37-10.39			VB-4	7.39-12.39	
	VB-2	10.39-12.39			VS-42	8.41-12.42	
	VF-2	7.40-10.40			CQ	12.42	
	VB-3	10.40- 5.41	Ditched		OT	12.42- 3.43	Cr. 20.3.43
	VS-42	9.41- 2.42	7.2.42	0733	VB-3	1.38-12.38	
0727	VB-3	12.37- 4.39			VB-2	9.39- 1.41	
	VB-4	7.39			VS-71	1.41- 5.41	Ditched 26.5.41
	VB-4/VS-41	3.40- 3.42		0734	VB-3	1.38- 3.38	Cr 17.3.38
	AC	3.42-10.42	Crashed	0735	VB-3	2.38- 5.39	
	OT	10.42- 1.43	13.1.43		VB-4	7.39-12.39	
0728	VB-3	1.38-12.38			VB-4/VS-41	4.40-11.41	
	VB-2	10.39-12.40			AC	2.42- 3.42	
	VS-71	1.41- 8.41			VS-41	5.41- 9.42	
	VS-41	12.41- 9.42			VS-9	9.42-12.42	Crashed on USS
	VS-42	9.42-12.42			CQ	12.42- 1.43	Charger 2.1.43
	CQ	12.42		0736	VB-3	2.38- 4.39	
	OT	4.43- 5.43	Str. 31.5.43		VB-4	7.39- 6.40	
0729	VB-3	1.38-12.38	Cr. 5.12.38		VB-4/VS-41	12.40- 4.42	
0730	VB-3	1.38- 4.39			AC	6.42-10.42	
	VB-4	7.39- 8.39			CQ	10.42- 2.43	Cr 2.2.43
	VB-4/VS-41	1.40-12.41		0737	VB-3	2.38- 5.39	
	VB-9	2.42- 3.42			VB-4	7.39- 9.39	
	VS-41	3.82- 8.42			VB-4/VS-41	2.40- 3.42	
	AC	10.42			AC	3.52- 6.42	
	OT	10.42- 8.43	Str. 23.8.43		VS-41	8.42- 9.42	
0731	VB-3	1.38- 4.39			VS-9	9.42- 1.43	Str. 23.7.43
	VB-4	7.39- 8.39		0738	VB-3	2.38- 7.38	
	VB-4/VS-41	1.40-10.41			VB-3	12.38- 5.39	
	AC	10.41-11.41			VB-4/VS-41	7.39- 4.41	
	AC	2.42- 6.42			VS-42	7.41-11.42	
	VS-41	9.42			CQ	3.43- 8.43	Str. 23.8.43
	VS-9	9.42- 1.43					
	OT	1.43- 8.43	Str. 23.8.43				

0739	VB-3	2.38- 6.39		0745	VB-2	3.38- 3.39	
	VB-4	7.39- 3.40			VF-4	8.39- 2.40	
	VB-3	7.40- 3.41			VB-4	5.40- 6.40	
	VS-42	4.41-12.41			VB-4/VS-41	9.40- 5.42	
	VS-41	3.42- 7.42			AC	5.42- 6.42	
	VB-9	11.42-12.42			VS-42	8.42-12.42	
	CQ	12.42	DBR by gale		VB-9	12.42	
	OT	12.42- 3.43	6.3.43	0746	OT	12.42- 7.43	Str. 23.7.43
0740	VB-3	2.38- 6.39			VB-2	3.38- 3.39	
	VB-4	7.39- 1.40			VB-4	12.39- 9.40	
	VB-4/VS-41	5.40-12.41			VS-42	1.41-11.41	
	VS-9	3.42			VS-42	2.42- 4.42	Cr. 30.4.42
	VS-42	3.42-11.42		0747	VB-2	3.38-12.39	
	VS-9	11.42- 1.43	DBR by gale,		VB-2	2.40-12.40	
	OT	1.43- 3.43	6.3.43		VS-42	1.41-10.41	
0741	VB-3	2.38- 5.39			AC	2.42-10.42	
	VB-4	7.39- 2.40			CQ	10.42-12.42	
	VB-2	6.40- 8.40			OT	12.42- 5.43	Cr. 5.5.43
	VB-3	10.40- 5.41		0748	VB-2	3.38-10.39	
	VS-71	8.41-10.41			VB-2	12.39- 1.41	
	AC	2.42- 4.42			VS-71	1.41-10.41	
	VS-41	4.42- 9.42			AC	1.42- 5.42	
	VB-9	9.42-12.42			VS-41	5.42- 9.42	
	OT	1.43	Cr. 19.1.43		VB-9	9.42	
0742	VB-3	2.38- 5.39			CQ	1.43	
	VB-4	7.39- 3.40	Cr. 3.4.40		OT	4.43- 7.43	Str. 30.7.43
0743	VB-3	3.38- 6.39		0749	VB-2	3.38- 3.40	
	VB-4	7.39- 3.40			VB-2	9.40- 1.41	
	VB-3	7.40- 5.41			VS-42	1.41- 7.41	
	VS-41	9.41-12.41	DBR 12.12.41		VS-41	9.41- 8.42	
0744	VB-3	3.38- 6.39			VB-9	10.42- 1.43	
	VB-4	7.39- 3.40			OT	1.43- 7.43	Str. 23.7.43
	VB-3	7.40- 5.41					
	VS-71	6.41- 3.42					
	VS-41	5.42- 9.42					
	VB-9	9.42-10.42	Cr. 30.10.42				

*SB2U-2 of VS-72 amid the snow and ice on the flight deck of USS Wasp, Winter, 1940*



0750	VB-2	3.38- 3.39		0767	VB-3	5.38- 5.39	
	VB-4/VS-41	12.39-12.41			VB-4	7.39- 4.40	
	VS-9	2.42- 3.42			VS-41	8.40- 7.41	Lost at sea 3.7.41
	VS-42	3.42-11.42		0768	VB-3	5.38- 4.39	
	CQ	11.42-12.42			VB-4	7.39- 5.40	
	OT	12.42- 2.43	Crashed 8.2.43		VB-3	10.40- 6.41	
0751	VB-2	3.38- 2.40			VS-42	9.41- 9.42	
	VB-2	6.40- 1.41			CQ	1.43- 8.43	SOC 27.8.43
	VS-71	1.41- 6.41		0769	MC Quantico	5.38-11.39	
	VS-71	9.41- 2.42	Crashed, Ranger, 11.2.42		VS-71	3.41- 4.41	
0752	VB-2	4.38- 1.39			VS-42	8.41-12.42	
	VB-2	5.39-11.39			CQ	12.42- 4.43	Crashed 14.4.43
	VB-2	2.40-12.40		0770	Test aircraft at Wright Fld, Anacostia, NACA,		
	VS-42	1.41- 3.42			Vought and Goodyear		SOC 15.12.43
	AC	3.42- 6.42		0771	VB-3	5.38- 4.39	
	VS-41	9.42			VB-4	7.39-11.39	
	VB-9	9.42-12.42			VB-4/VS-41	8.40- 7.42	
	CQ	12.42			VB-9	9.42-12.42	
	OT	12.42- 5.43	Crashed 2.5.43		CQ	12.42- 1.43	Crashed 24.2.43
0753	VB-2	4.38-11.39	Crashed 19.10.39	0772	VB-3	5.38- 5.39	
0754	VB-2	4.38-11.39			VB-4	7.39- 3.40	
	VB-2	1.40- 1.41			VB-3	7.40- 5.41	
	VS-71	1.41- 3.41			AC	8.41-12.41	
	VS-42	7.41-11.41	Lost at sea 28.11.41		VS-42	12.41- 6.42	
0755	VB-2	4.38- 9.39			VS-41	9.42	
	VB-2	11.39-10.40	Crashed 1.10.40		VB-9	9.42- 2.43	
0756	VB-2	4.38-10.39			CQ	2.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43
	VB-2	1.40-12.40		0773	VB-3	5.38	
	VS-42	1.41-12.41			VB-3	10.38- 5.39	
	AC	2.42- 3.42			AGC Ranger	7.39- 6.40	
	VS-71	3.42- 6.42			VB-3	10.40- 5.41	
	AC	9.42-11.42	Crashed 27.11.42		VS-71	8.41-10.41	
0757	VB-2	4.38- 3.40			AC	1.42- 3.42	
	VB-3	11.40- 3.41			VS-71	3.42- 6.42	
	VS-41	3.41- 3.42			AC	7.42-10.42	
	AC	5.42-11.42			OT	10.42- 3.43	Crashed 23.3.43
	OT	11.42	Crashed 8.11.42	0774	AGC Lex'ton	6.38- 1.40	
0758	VB-2	4.38-10.39			VB-2	3.40-12.40	
	VB-4/VS-41	12.39-12.41			VS-42	1.41- 7.41	Crashed 29.7.41
	VB-9	3.42		0775	VF-2	7.38-12.38	
	VS-41	3.42- 5.42	Crashed 18.5.42		VF-3	12.38- 7.39	
0759	VB-2	4.38- 1.40			VF-2	7.39- 7.40	
	Lexington	3.40- 8.40			VB-2	10.40- 1.41	
	VB-3	10.40- 3.41			VS-71	1.41- 5.42	
	VS-41	3.41- 9.41			AC	5.42-10.42	
	AC	12.41			OT	1.43- 7.43	SOC 29.7.43
	VS-41	12.41- 1.42	Crashed 28.1.42	0776	VB-3	7.38- 5.39	
0760	VB-2	4.38- 6.38	Crashed 23.6.38		VB-4	8.39	Crashed 28.8.39
0761	VB-2	4.38-12.39		0777	VB-2	7.38- 5.39	
	VB-4/VS-41	3.40-12.41			VB-2	10.39- 8.40	Crashed 20.8.40
	VS-9	3.42		0778	VB-3	12.38- 6.39	
	VS-42	3.42-11.42			VB-4	7.39- 7.40	
	CQ	11.42- 1.43	Crashed 1.2.43		VB-4/VS-41	12.40- 9.42	
0762	VB-2	4.38- 1.39			VB-9	9.42-12.42	
	VB-2	5.39- 1.40			CQ	12.42- 2.43	Crashed, Charger, 17.2.43
	VB-2	3.40- 1.41		0779	XSB2U-3 test aircraft at Anacostia, Vought,		
	VS-71	1.41-12.41			Norfolk, Philadelphia		
	AC	12.41- 5.42	Crashed 11.5.42		OT	4.43- 7.43	SOC 15.7.43
0763	VB-2	5.38-12.39					
	VB-2	3.40-12.40					
	VS-42	1.41- 6.41					
	AGC Yorktown	6.41-10.41					
	AC	1.42- 5.42					
	VS-41	8.42- 9.42					
	VS-9	9.42- 1.43					
	OT	1.43- 7.43	SOC 23.7.43				
0764	VB-2	5.38-12.39					
	VB-2	3.40-12.40					
	VS-42	1.41- 3.42					
	AC	3.42- 5.42					
	VS-41	7.42- 9.42					
	VB-9	12.42- 1.43					
	CQ	1.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43				
0765	VB-2	4.38-10.39					
	VB-2	1.40-12.40					
	VS-42	1.41-12.41					
	VS-41	3.42- 9.42					
	VB-9	9.42-11.42					
	CQ	2.43- 6.43	SOC 21.6.43				
0766	VB-3	5.38- 5.39					
	VB-4	7.39- 3.40					
	VB-3	7.40- 5.41					
	VS-71	7.41- 5.42					
	AC	5.42-10.42					
	CQ	1.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43				



1330	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-11.40			
	VS-72	3.41-12.41			
	AC	12.41-10.42			
	OT	10.42- 1.43	SOC 30.11.43		
1331	VB-4/VB-3	12.38- 9.40			
	VB-4	11.40- 3.41			
	VS-71	4.41- 6.41			
	VS-72	7.41- 8.41			
	VS-71	8.41- 5.42			
	AC	5.42-10.42			
	CQ	10.42-12.42			
	OT	12.42- 3.43	DBR in gale, 6.3.43		
1332	VB-4/VB-3	12.38- 5.40			
	VB-4	9.40- 6.41			
	VS-42	8.41- 8.42			
	CQ	12.42			
	OT	12.42- 7.43	SOC 29.7.43		
1333	VB-4/VB-3	12.38- 7.40			
	Saratoga	10.40- 5.41			
	VF-71	5.41- 6.41			
	VS-72	6.41- 5.42			
	AC	5.42-10.42			
	OT	10.42-12.42	SOC 31.12.42		
1334	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-11.40			
	VB-4	1.41- 3.41			
	VS-72	4.41- 6.42			
	AC	6.42-10.42			
	OT	10.42-12.42	SOC 31.12.42		
1335	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-11.40			
	VS-72	3.41- 6.42			
	AC	7.42-10.42			
	OT	10.42- 2.43	Crashed 12.2.43		
1336	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-12.40			
	VF-72	4.41- 6.41			
	VS-72	6.42-12.41			
	AC	12.41- 5.42			
	VS-41	8.42- 9.42			
	VS-9	9.42- 1.43			
	OT	1.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1337	VB-4	12.38- 4.39			
	VB-2	11.39- 1.41			
	VS-71	1.41-10.41			
	AC	1.42- 3.42			
	VS-71	3.42- 5.42			
	AC	5.42-10.42			
	OT	10.42- 7.43	SOC 23.7.43		
1338	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-10.40			
	VB-4	1.41- 3.41			
	VS-71	4.41- 3.42			
	AC	6.42-10.42			
	CQ	10.42- 5.43	SOC 8.6.43		
1339	VB-4/VB-3	12.38- 8.39			
	VB-2	1.40- 6.40			
	VF-72	8.41-11.41			
	VS-71	11.41-12.41			
	AC	12.41- 2.42			
	VS-42	5.42- 8.42			
	CQ	12.42- 3.43	DBR in gale, 6.3.43		
1340	Record missing		SOC 13.3.43		
1341	VB-4/VB-3	12.38- 9.40			
	VB-4	12.40- 3.41			
	VS-71	4.41- 5.42			
	AC	5.42- 9.42	Crashed 24.9.42		
1342	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-10.40			
	VS-42	1.41-12.41			
	VS-42	2.42-10.42	Crashed 11.10.42		
1343	VB-4/VB-3	12.38- 8.40			
	AC	9.41-11.42			
	VS-42	12.41-11.42			
	CQ	2.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1344	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-10.40	Crashed 15.10.40		
1345	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-10.40			
	VB-4	1.41- 5.41			
	VS-72	6.41- 5.42			
	AC	5.42-10.42			
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1346	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-10.40			
	VS-42	1.41- 6.41			
	AC 9.41-10-41				
	VS-71	10.41- 6.42			
	OT	10.42- 2.43	Crashed 9.2.43		
1347	VB-4/VB-3	12.38-12.40			
	VS-42	9.41- 3.42			
	AC, CQ	6.42- 2.43	SOC 31.12.44		
1348	VB-2	1.40- 1.41			
	VS-42	1.41- 7.41			
	VS-72	10.41- 6.42			
	AC	7.42- 9.42			
	VS-9	12.42- 1.43			
	OT	1.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1349	AGC Lexington	2.40- 8.40			
	VB-7/VF-71	9.40-12.40			
	VS-42	12.40- 3.42			
	AC	3.42- 5.42			
	VS-42	6.42-11.42			
	VS-9	11.42- 2.43			
	CQ	2.43- 8.43	SOC 26.8.43		
1350	VB-2	2.40- 4.40	Lost at sea 11.4.40		
1351	VB-4/VB-3	5.39- 7.40			
	VB-7/VF-71	7.40-12.40			
	VS-41	12.40- 4.41			
	VS-42	7.41- 9.42			
	VS-9	9.42- 1.43			
	OT	1.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1352	VB-2	1.39- 5.39			
	VB-2	10.39-12.40			
	VS-71	1.41- 3.41			
	VS-72	6.41- 5.42			
	AC	5.42-10.42			
	OT	10.42- 3.43	DBR in gale, 6.3.43		
1353	VB-2	1.39-10.39	Crashed 19.10.39		
1354	AGC Yorktown	9.39- 6.41			
	VS-42	6.41-12.41			
	AC	2.42- 3.42			
	VS-71	3.42- 6.42			
	AC 7.42-10.42				
	OT	10.42- 3.43	DBR in gale, 6.3.43		
1355	Anacostia	2.39-12.40			
	VS-72	6.41-12.41			
	AC	12.41- 4.42			
	VS-41	7.42- 9.42			
	VS-42	9.42-11.42			
	CQ	11.42-12.42			
	OT	12.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1356	VF-7/VF-72	9.39-12.40			
	VS-72	12.40- 4.41			
	VS-72	8.41- 5.42			
	AC	5.42-10.42			
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1357	VS-72	7.39- 8.41			
	VS-42	12.41-11.42			
	VS-9	11.42- 1.43			
	OT	1.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1358	VS-72	7.39- 7.40	Crashed 9.7.40		
1359	VT-3	2.39- 6.39			
	VS-72	9.39- 4.40	Collided with 1364, 29.4.40		
1360	VS-72	7.39- 2.40			
	VS-72	5.40- 5.42			
	AC	5.42- 6.42			
	VS-42	8.42- 9.42			
	VS-9	9.42- 1.43			
	OT	1.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		
1361	VT-3	3.39- 6.39			
	VS-72	8.39- 3.41			
	VS-72	7.41- 5.42			
	AC	5.42- 9.42			
	Glenview	10.42	Crashed 14.10.42		
1362	VT-3	3.39- 6.39			
	VS-72	9.39- 1.41			
	VS-71	4.41- 6.41			
	VS-72	6.41- 8.41			
	VS-72	8.41- 3.42	Lost at sea 27.3.42		
1363	VS-72	7.39- 6.41			
	AC	9.41-10.41			
	VS-71	10.41- 4.42	Crashed 23.4.42		
1364	VT-3	3.39- 6.39			
	VS-72	9.39- 3.41			
	VS-72	7.41- 4.42	Lost at sea 14.4.42		
1365	VT-3	3.39- 6.39			
	VS-72	8.39-12.40			
	VS-71	4.41-10.41			
	AC	10.41-12.41			
	VS-41	12.41- 4.42	Crashed 30.4.42		
1366	VS-72	7.39- 6.41			
	VS-71	6.41- 7.41			
	AC	9.41-10.41			
	VS-71	10.41-11.41	Lost at sea 5.11.41		

1367	VS-72	7.39- 6.41		
	AC	0.41-10.41		
	VS-71	10.41- 3.42		
	AC	4.42-10.42	SOC 30.11.42	
1368	VT-3	3.39- 6.39		
	VS-72	8.39- 1.41		
	VS-71	4.41- 6.41		
	VS-72	6.41- 8.41		
	VS-71	10.41- 1.42	Lost at sea 23.1.42	
1369	VS-72	7.39- 7.41		
	VS-71	10.41-12.41	Lost at sea 15.12.41	
1370	VS-72	7.39- 6.41		
	AC	9.41-10.41		
	VS-71	10.41- 5.42	Crashed 8.5.42	
1371	VS-72	7.39- 6.41		
	VS-72	10.41- 6.42		
	AC	7.42-10.42		
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43	
1372	VS-72	7.39- 3.41		
	VS-72	6.41- 6.42		
	VS-9	9.42- 1.43	Ditched 5.1.43	
1373	VS-72	7.39- 4.41		
	VS-71	7.41- 6.42		
	AC	7.42-10.42		
	OT	10.42- 7.43	SOC 23.7.43	
1374	VS-72	7.39- 7.41		
	AC	11.41-12.41		
	VS-42	12.41-11.42		
	OT	12.42- 4.43	DBR in gale, 6.3.43	
1375	Worlds Fair	4.39-11.39		
	VB-4/VS-41	12.40-12.41		
	VS-42	3.42-12.42		
	VB-9	12.42- 1.43		
	OT	1.43- 7.43	SOC 23.7.43	
1376	VS-72	5.40-10.41		
	AC	1.42-10.42		
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43	
1377	VB-2	10.39- 3.40		
	VB-4	4.40-12.40		
	VS-72	12.40- 8.41		
	VS-71	10.41- 6.42		
	AC	7.42-10.42		
	CQ	10.42-12.42		
	OT	12.42- 2.43	SOC 29.2.43	
1378	VB-2	10.39- 2.40	Crashed 23.2.40	
1379	AGC Wasp	7.39- 7.41		
	AC	9.41-10.41		
	VS-72	10.41- 6.42		
	AC	7.42-10.42		
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43	
1380	VB-2	10.39- 3.40		
	VS-72	3.40-10.41		
	VS-71	12.41- 6.42		
	AC	9.42-10.42		
	OT	10.42- 4.43	Crashed 22.4.43	
1381	VB-3	3.40- 5.41		
	VS-72	8.41- 6.42		
	AC	7.42	Crashed 22.7.42	
1382	VB-4	10.39-12.40		
	VS-72	12.40-10.41		
	VS-42	12.41- 7.42	Lost at sea 31.7.42	
1383	VB-4	10.39- 7.40		
	VB-7/VF-71	7.40-12.40		
	VB-4/VS-41	12.40- 9.42		
	VB-9	9.42- 2.43		
	CQ	5.43- 6.43	SOC 28.7.43	
<u>SB2U-3</u>				
2044	Anacostia/Philadelphia/Vought	2.41-10.41		
	VMSB-131	12.41- 4.42	Crashed 30.4.42	
2045	VMS-2	3.41-10.41		
	VMSB-231	11.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	5.42- 6.42	Lost, Midway, 5.6.42	
2046	VMS-2	3.41- 6.41		
	VMSB-231	9.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43	
2047	VMS-2	3.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41-12.41	Dest at Ewa, 7.12.41	
2048	VMS-2	3.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 3.43	Lost at sea 20.3.43	
2049	VMS-2	3.41- 4.41		
	VMSB-131	3.42- 9.42		
	VMSB-142	9.42		
	VMSV-143	9.42-11.42		
	OT	11.42- 3.43	DBR in gale 6.3.43	
2050	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41-12.41	Dest at Ewa 7.12.41	
2051	VMS-2	3.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41-12.41	Dest at Ewa 7.12.41	
2052	VMS-2	3.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 7.43	Crashed 15.7.43	
2053	VMS-2	3.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	VMSB-241	9.42		
	OT	11.42- 1.43	Lost at sea 15.1.43	
2054	VMS-2	3.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43	
2055	VMS-2	3.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 7.43	SOC 31.7.43	
2056	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42	Spun in, 30.10.42	
2057	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 7.43	Crashed 15.7.43	
2058	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 7.43	Crashed 15.7.43	
2059	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	VMSB-241	9.42-11.42		
	OT	11.42- 4.43	Crashed 22.4.43	
2060	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41-12.41	Dest at Ewa, 7.12.41	
2061	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 9.41		
	VMSB-131	7.42- 9.42		
	VMSB-142	9.42		
	VMSB-144	9.42-11.42		
	OT	11.42- 4.43	Crashed 6.4.43	
2062	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43	
2063	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB 231	7.41-12.41	Dest at Ewa 7.12.41	
2064	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43	
2065	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	4.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	OT	10.42- 1.43	Crashed in take-off, 23.1.43	
2066	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42	Missing 4.6.42	
2067	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42	Missing 4.6.42	
2068	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41-12.41	Dest at Ewa 7.12.41	
2069	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41-12.41	Dest at Ewa 7.12.41	
2070	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMXB-231	7.41- 9.41		
	VMJ-252	9.41-12.41	Dest at Ewa 7.12.41	
2071	VMS-2	4.41- 7.41		
	VMSB-231	7.41- 4.42		
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42		
	VMSB-241	9.42		
	OT	11.42- 3.43	SOC 31.3.43	

2072	VMJ-2	5.41- 7.41		2089	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41	
	VMSB-131	12.41- 1.42			VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42	
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42	Lost, Midway, 4/5.6.42		VMSB-142	9.42	
2073	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41			VMSB-144	9.42-10.42	
	VMSB-131	7.41- 2.42	Lost at sea 10.2.42	2090	OT	12.42- 8.43	SOC 26.8.43
2074	Records missing. Lost with VMSB-131	13.1.42			VMS-1	6.41- 7.41	
2075	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41			VMSB-131	7.41- 7.42	
	VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42			VMSB-143	10.42-11.42	
	VMSB-142	9.42			OT	11.42- 7.43	SOC 16.7.43
	VMSB-144	9.42-10.42		2091	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41	
	OT	1.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		VMSB-131	7.41- 8.42	
2076	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41			OT	11.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43
	VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42		2092	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41	
	VMSB-142	9.42			VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42	
	VMSB-143	9.42-10.42			VMSB-142	9.42	
	OT	12.42- 3.43	SOC 31.3.43		VMSB-143	9.42-10.42	
2077	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41			OT	12.42- 7.43	SOC 16.7.43
	VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42		2093	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41	
	VMSB-142	9.42			VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42	
	VMSB-143	9.42-10.42			VMSB-142	9.42	
	OT	12.42- 2.43	SOC 28.2.43		VMSB-144	9.42-10.42	
2078	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41			OT	2.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43
	VMSB-131	7.41-10.41	Crashed 21.10.41	2094	VMS-1	7.41- 7.41	
2079	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41	Crashed 6.7.41		VMSB-131	7.41- 9.41	
2080	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41			VMSB-131	12.41- 2.42	
	VMSB-131	5.42- 9.42			VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42	
	VMSB-142	9.42			OT	10.42- 2.43	SOC 28.2.43
	VMSB-144	9.42-12.42		2095	VMS-1	7.41	
	OT	12.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43		VMSB-131	7.41- 9.41	
2081	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41			VMSB-131	12.41- 9.42	
	VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42			VMSB-142	9.42	
	VMSB-142	9.42			VMSB-143	9.42-10.42	
	VMSB-143	9.42-10.42			OT	12.42- 2.43	SOC 28.2.43
	OT	12.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43	2096	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41	
2082	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41			VMSB-131	7.41-11.41	
	VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42			OT	10.42- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43
	VMSB-142	9.42			VMSB-131	8.41- 3.42	Crashed 23.3.42
	OT	11.42- 7.43	SOC 28.7.43	2097	VMSB-131	8.41- 9.42	
2083	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41			VMSB-142	9.42	
	VMSB-131	7.41- 1.42			VMSB-144	9.42-12.42	
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42	Lost, Midway, 4/5.6.42		OT	12.42- 5.43	Crashed 7.5.43
2084	VMS-1	5.41- 7.41		2099	VMSB-131	8.41-12.41	
	VMSB-131	12.41- 2.42	Crashed 8.2.42		AC	12.41	Crashed 5.12.41
2085	VMS-1	6.41	Crashed 12.6.41	2100	VMJ-152	7.41-12.41	
2086	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41			VMSB-131	12.41- 9.42	
	VMSB-131	7.41- 5.42			VMSB-142	9.42	
	VMSB-142	9.42			VMSB-143	9.42-10.42	
	VMSB-144	9.42-11.42			OT	12.42- 5.43	Crashed 2.5.43
	OT	11.42- 2.43	SOC 28.2.43				
2087	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41					
	VMSB-131	7.41- 9.42					
	VMSB-142	9.42					
	VMSB-143	9.42-11.42					
	OT	2.43- 8.43	SOC 23.8.43				
2088	VMS-1	6.41- 7.41					
	VMSB-131	7.41- 1.42					
	VMSB-241	4.42- 6.42	Lost at Midway, 4/5.6.42				

Chesapeake Is of No. 811 Squadron, FAA

Notes:

SOC Standard AM abbreviation used: USN equivalent was 'Stricken'

AC = Advanced Carrier Training Group

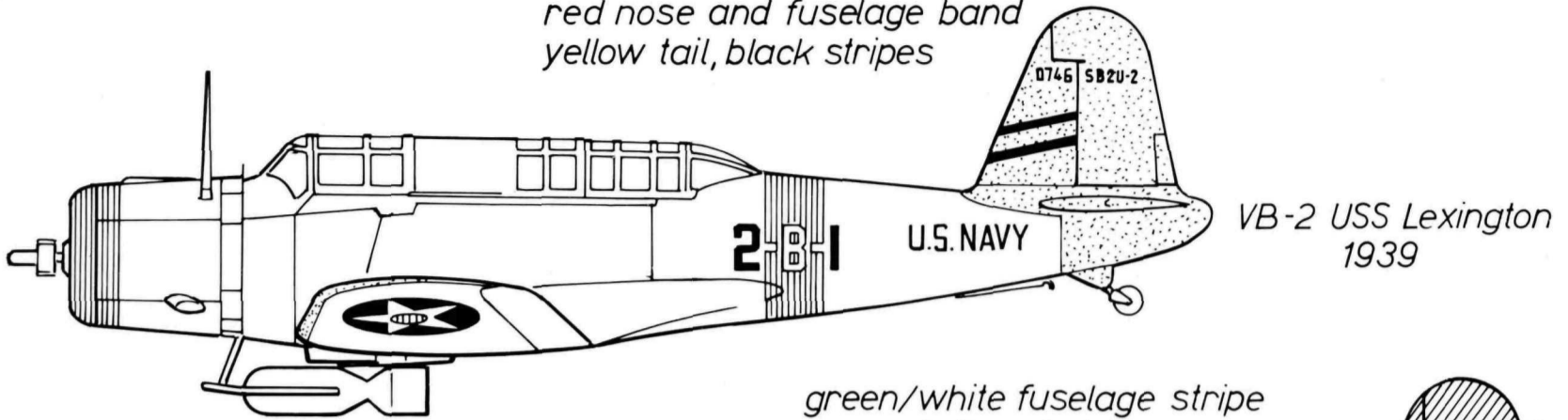
CQ = Carrier Qualification Training Unit

OT = Naval Air Operational Training

Double dates are given for losses at Midway as the aircraft lost on these two dates cannot be identified individually.

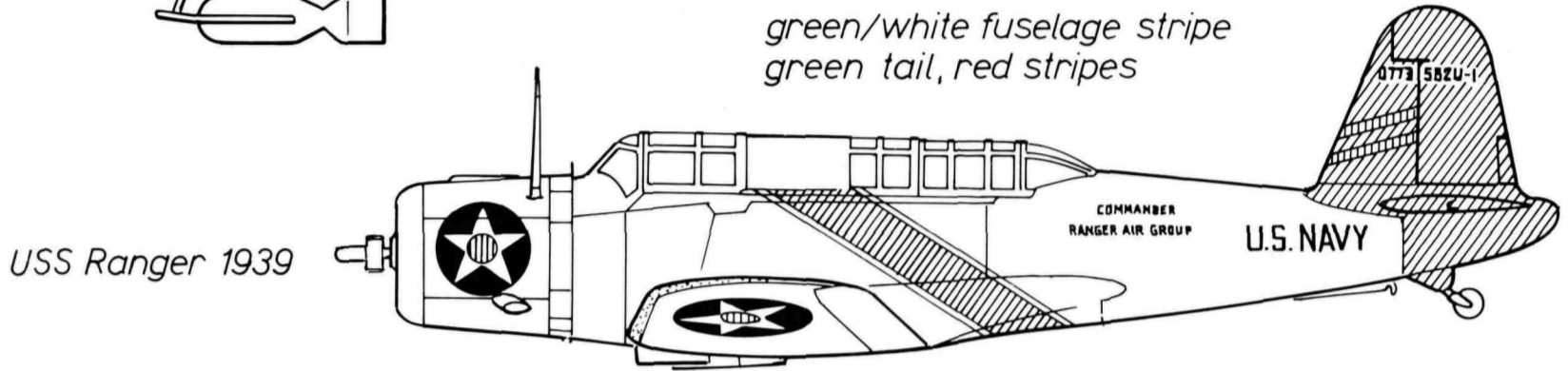


red nose and fuselage band  
yellow tail, black stripes



VB-2 USS Lexington  
1939

green/white fuselage stripe  
green tail, red stripes



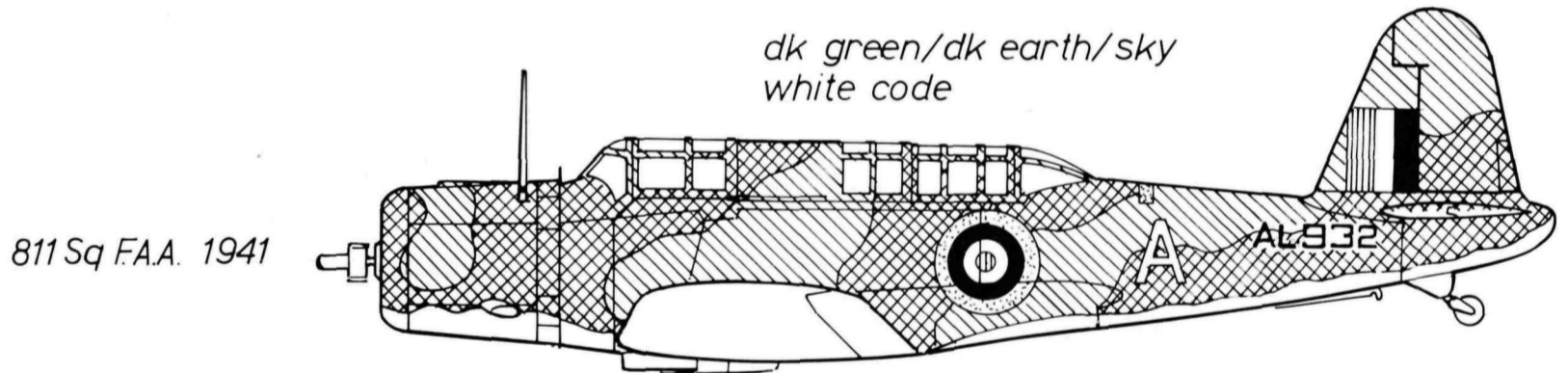
USS Ranger 1939

light grey overall  
white codes

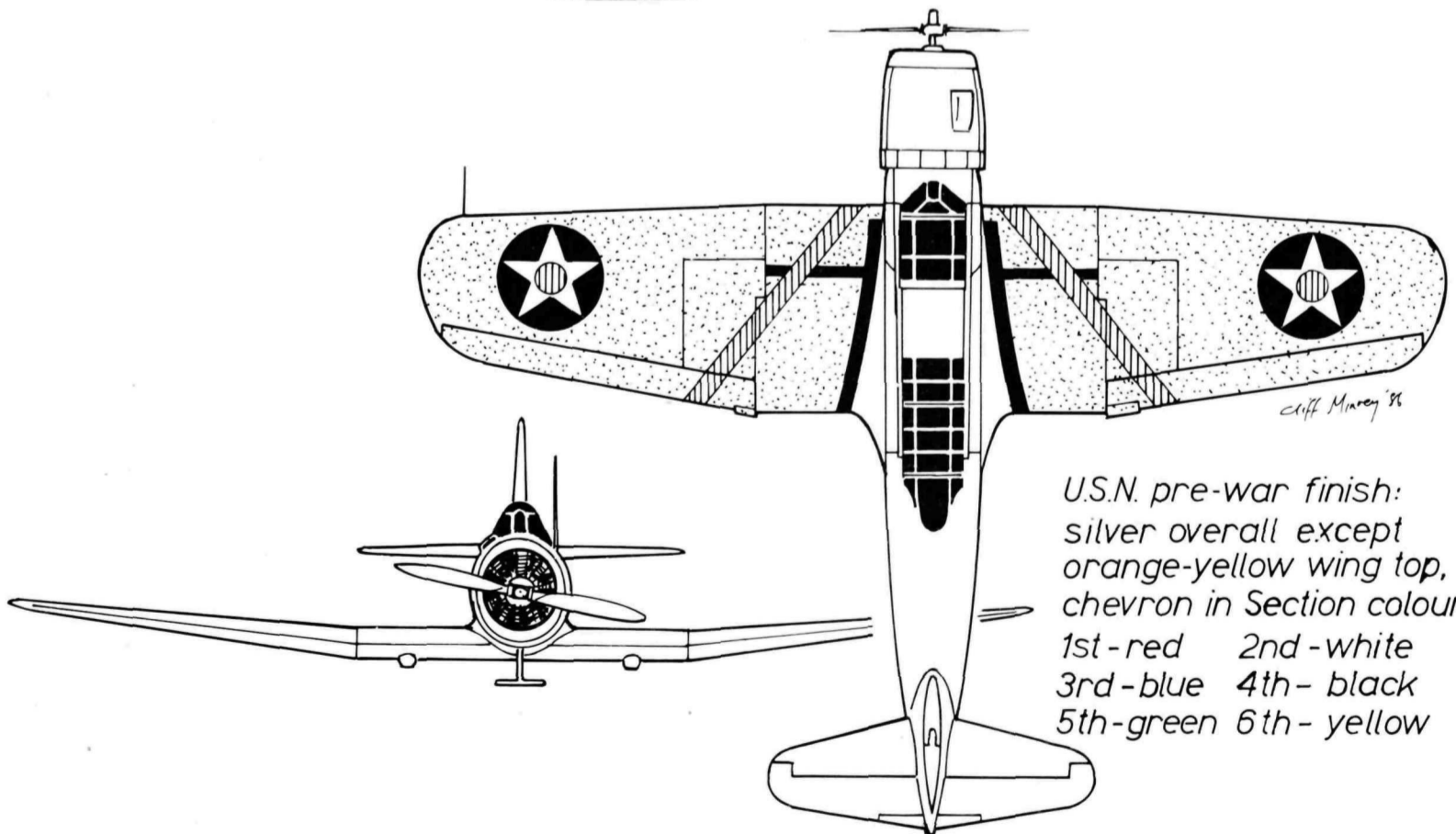


VMSB-131 (ex-VMS-1)  
1941

dk green/dk earth/sky  
white code



811 Sq FAA. 1941



U.S.N. pre-war finish:  
silver overall except  
orange-yellow wing top,  
chevron in Section colour:  
1st - red 2nd - white  
3rd - blue 4th - black  
5th - green 6th - yellow

## No. 608 SQUADRON: THE PRE-WAR YEARS



The following notes come from Ernest Sockett, who has made a study of his locally-based 608 Squadron and relate to the aircraft used pre-war.

The squadron was formed at Thornaby on 17 March 1930 and although volunteers came mainly from the Durham and North Riding regions, some reported from as far afield as Carlisle and the West Riding, despite the fact that working hours covered a five and a half day week at that time. By 24 July, a hangar was ready and and three Avro 504Ns flew in from Catterick to be followed about a year later by Wapitis.

In 1936, No.608 changed from being a bomber to a fighter unit, receiving Demons for the defence of Thornaby and its new residents, the 48 Ansons of Nos.224 and 233 Squadrons.

The squadron's badge consisting of the old North Riding Shield of a red cross on a white background, surmounted by a light blue label with three white Yorkshire Roses was changed to a falcon's leg, belled and fessed, plus a Latin motto meaning 'with all talons'. The earlier badge had been carried on the fins of Wapitis in black but now light blue and dark blue triangles adorned the silver fuselages of 608's aircraft, as recorded on early Dufay colour film, until 1938 when the Czechoslovak crisis caused the Demons to be camouflaged and the code letters 'PG' applied without fuselage roundels.

In March 1939, No.608 joined Coastal Command with Ansons and in August the squadron went off to summer camp at Warmwell. This was abruptly interrupted at one hour's notice on 23 August when orders came through to mobilise. Protective walls and air raid trenches were hurriedly constructed at Thornaby, the roads were camouflaged with peat and a dummy air-

field laid out at Seamer. Flying training was continued, lost ships were shepherded to safety and industrial targets were photographed in Dufay colour film to test their camouflage. On 27 October, Anson N5204 was shot down by a Hurricane and to avoid future tragedies, No.608 enlarged its roundels and flew patrols with the undercarriage locked down.

### SQUADRON AIRCRAFT

Wapiti IIA J9868 and J9871 are quoted as being with No.608 but the record cards of these aircraft were destroyed at the beginning of World War Two.

K1143, K1149, K1153 (crashed on take-off at Thornaby 22.2.36), K1154 (hit Tutor K1238 on take-off, Manston, 11.8.32), K1322, K1323, K1324, K1329, K1330, K1342

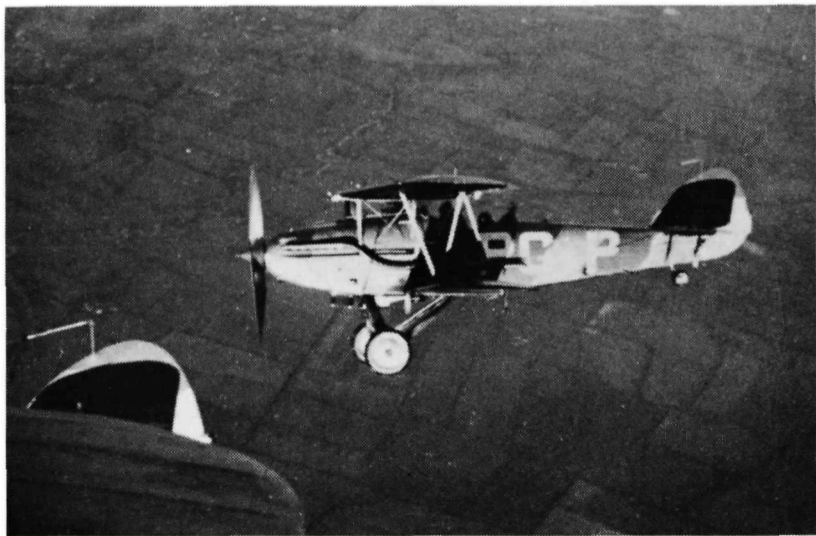
Wapiti VI K2242

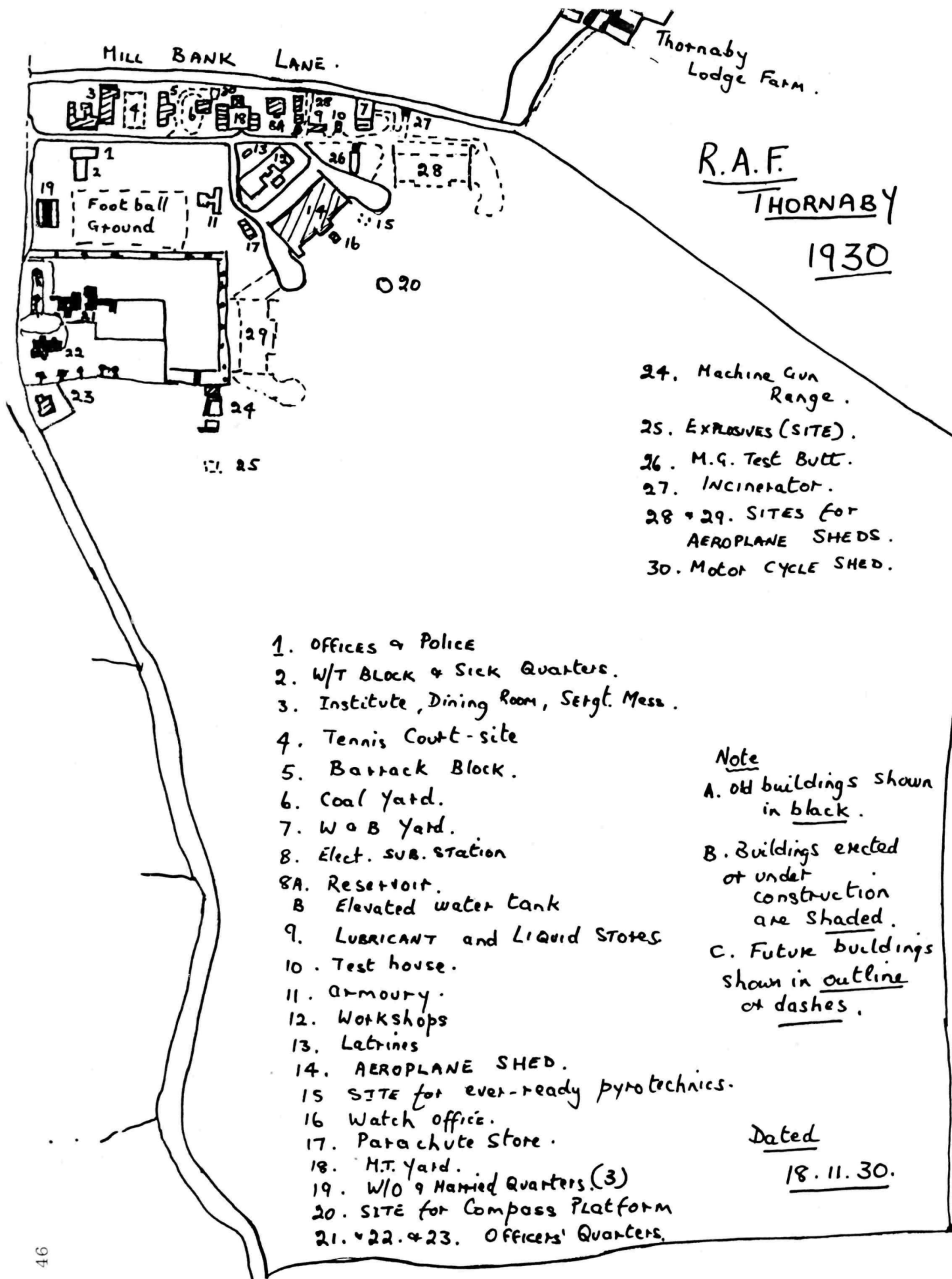
Wallace There is no conclusive evidence that any were used by No.608 although the Consultant Historian to Westland Helicopters Ltd, Elfan ap Rees, wrote that 'Westland Wallace aircraft were used by 608 Squadron during 1936 and Mk.II only was used'. All the movement cards for Wallaces survived and there is no mention of an allotment to No.608 although I saw one aircraft of this type at Thornaby about this period. There is no mention in the squadron operations record book of the type.

Avro 504N K1044 (SOC 22.8.36), K1243 (went to No.1 FTS), K1799

D.H.60M Moth K1833

Hart K3052 (which came from a returned to No.603 Squadron), K6483, K6499 (went to 611 Squadron), K6467 (arrived June 1938)  
The Hart Trainers were doped yellow with aluminium engine area.





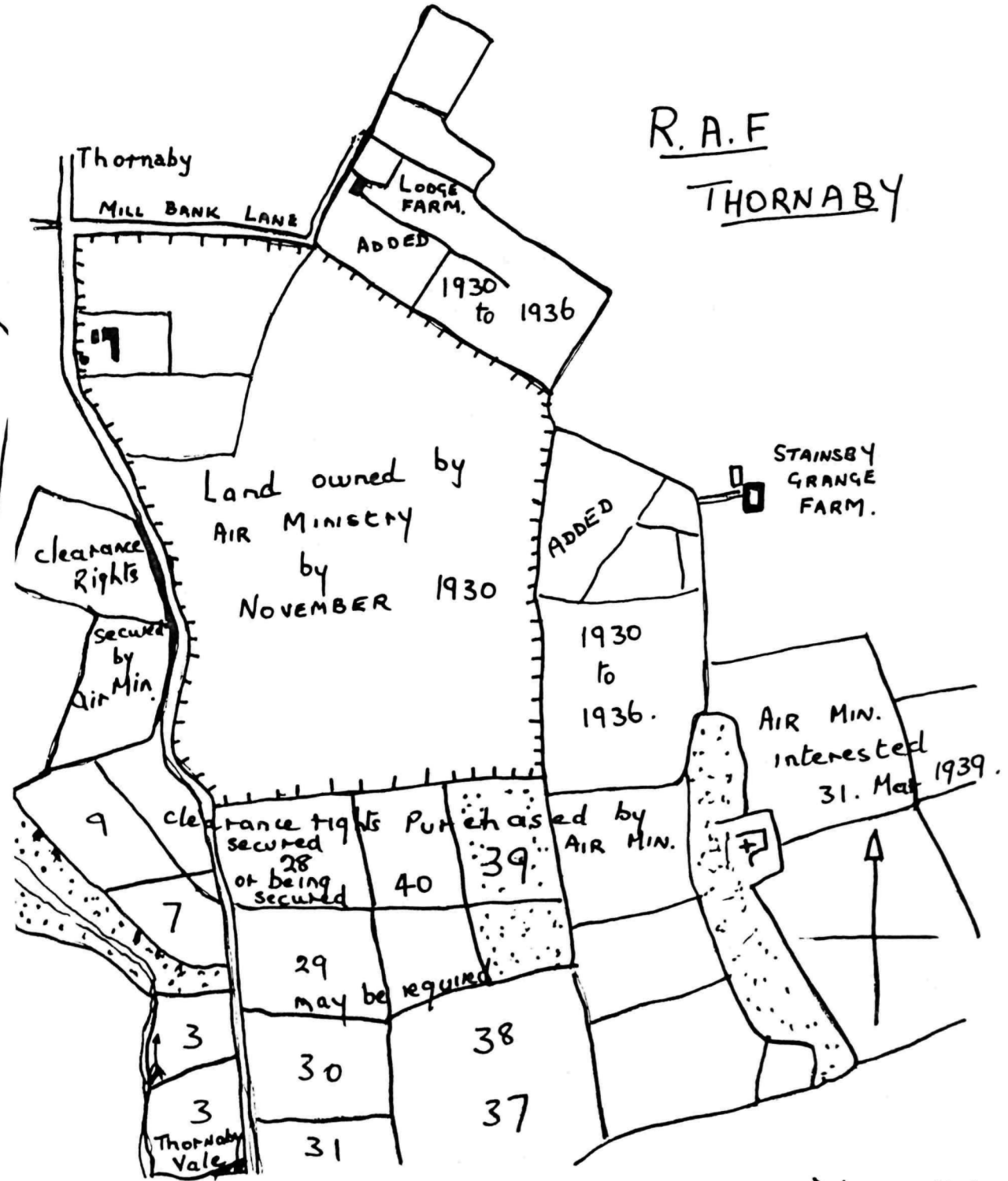
R.A.F.  
THORNABY  
1930

- 24. Machine Gun Range.
- 25. EXPLOSIVES (SITE).
- 26. M.G. Test Butt.
- 27. INCINERATOR.
- 28 + 29. SITES FOR AEROPLANE SHEDS.
- 30. MOTOR CYCLE SHED.

- 1. OFFICES & Police
- 2. W/T BLOCK & Sick Quarters.
- 3. Institute, Dining Room, Sergt. Mess.
- 4. Tennis Court-site
- 5. Barrack Block.
- 6. Coal Yard.
- 7. W & B Yard.
- 8. Elect. sub. station
- 8A. Reservoir.
- B Elevated water tank
- 9. LUBRICANT and LIQUID STORES
- 10. Test house.
- 11. Armoury.
- 12. Workshops
- 13. Latrines
- 14. AEROPLANE SHED.
- 15 SITE for ever-ready pyrotechnics.
- 16 Watch office.
- 17. Parachute Store.
- 18. M.T. yard.
- 19. W/O & Married Quarters (3)
- 20. SITE for Compass Platform
- 21. + 22. + 23. Officers' Quarters.

Note  
 A. Old buildings shown in black.  
 B. Buildings erected or under construction are shaded.  
 C. Future buildings shown in outline or dashes.

Dated  
18.11.30.



R.A.F.  
THORNABY

SCALE 6 ins. to 1 mile

Date 4.2.1936  
and amended  
31/3/39



*A pair of No.608's Ansons flying with their undercarriages down. There are no fin flashes and Type A roundels are painted on. Although No.608 flew with enlarged roundels and with undercarriages down after being attacked by a Hurricane from Digby, there does not appear to be any gun in the turret, suggesting that this was immediately prior to the outbreak of war.*

Tutor K3319, K3320 (crashed on take-off, Thornaby, 12.11.36), K3265, K3397, K3419, K3451, K3460 (Thornaby Stn Flt). K3265 was in use during the 1938 Crisis and was doped yellow with the light and dark blue squadron markings running the whole length of the fuselage and across the top wing. K6094 was noted in August 1939.

The above information checks with JJH's 'RAF Aircraft K1000 to K9999'.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### Demons with No.608 Squadron

These aircraft were normally doped aluminium but in 1938 there was an increasing tendency to decorate the fuselage roundel with a shortened form of the dark and light blue triangles but to have the normal spacing of five dark blue triangles across the top wings. During the Munich period, all serials were removed and the aircraft painted in standard camouflage for the period i.e. brown and green upper surfaces with black and white underneath. The squadron code letters on the side of the fuselage were so large that no side roundels were carried, nor were fin flashes or underside roundels. The code was 'PG' nearest the tail on the starboard side with a small gap followed by the individual code letter under the gunner's position. On the port side, 'PG' read from left to right also.

K2844 (ex-23 Sqn), K2848, K2849, K2851, K3977 (new a/c), K4510 (ex-29 Sqn), K4515 (ex-64 Sqn), K4543 (ex-64 Sqn), K3768 (crashed at Thornaby, 11.7.37), K3771, K3772, K3779, K3795, K3807. Former 25 Sqn aircraft: K8205, K8206, K8208, K8211, K8212, K8213

New aircraft: K8209 overturned taxiing on 30 April 1939 and a photograph of this unfortunate aircraft shows it to have broken its back.

#### Ansons of No.608 on strength, September 1939

These aircraft were camouflaged although if memory is correct, some were originally aluminium doped with serials. When camouflaged, they carried red, white and blue roundels, with yellow surround on wings and fuselage side. One on the port side, the individual letters preceded the squadron code, e.g. N + PG.

N5053 A; N5054 K; N5068 B; N5197 Q;  
N5198 D; N5199 M; N5201 H; N5202 E;  
N5203 F; N5357 R; N5358 T; N5359 usually  
N but also B for a short time; N5361 J;  
N5362 ; N5203 F; N5204, shot down by Hurricane off the Humber, 27.10.39; N5206 O;  
N5207 P.

In October 1939, N5195 was transferred from No.220 Squadron to No.608 and coded M

In November 1939, N5067 was coded L and crashed at Guisborough on 16 June 1940.

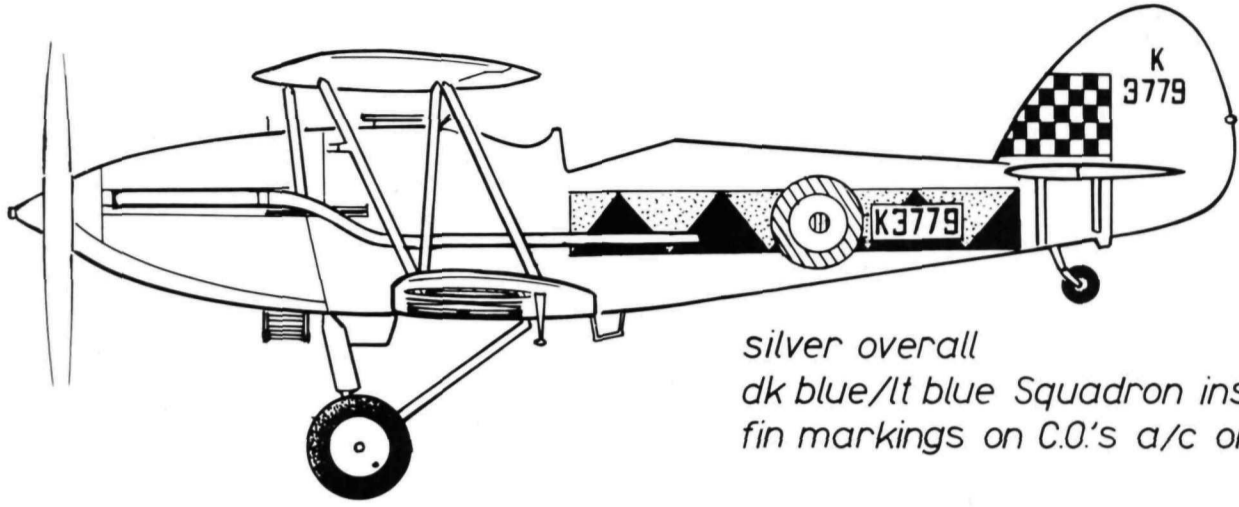
In May 1940, R3316 was coded M.

Position at June 1940 prior to the arrival of Bothas:

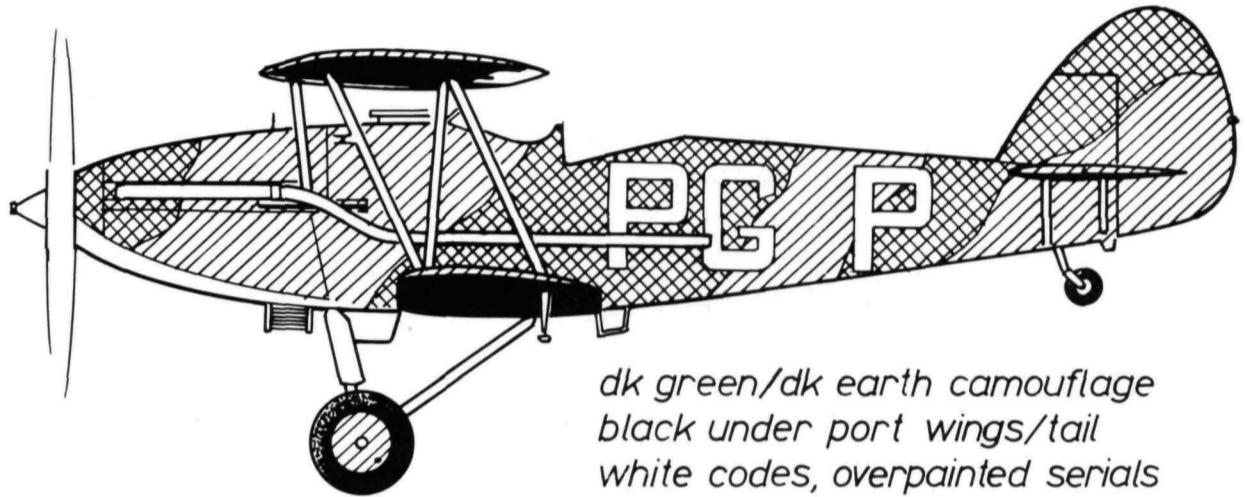
N5053 A; N5054 K; N5068 B; N5197 Q;  
N5198 D; N5195 G; N5201 E; N5202 E;  
N5203 F; N5206 O; N5207 P; R3316 M;  
N9742 U; R3404 V; N5357 R; N5358 T;  
N5361 J; N5359 N; N5067 L; R9577 L (sic)

#### Note on Bothas at Thornaby

L6208 N; L6209 O; L6194 V (to 22 MU 1.12.40)  
L6193 ; L6192 O (to 22 MU 15.11.40);  
L6195 R (to 33 MU); L6190 L; L6191 M;  
L6198 G; L6237 ; L6238 ; L6239 A or B;  
L6213 Y; L6215 Q all but L6239 to 22 & 33 MU  
in November/December 1940.  
L6128, L6381, L6382, L6380, L6155 (P)  
L6170 (F) crashed on take-off 19.9.40  
L6172 E; L6173 D; L6189 K; L6239 Z; L6208 N.  
L6155, L6174, L6188, L6235, L6164, L6171

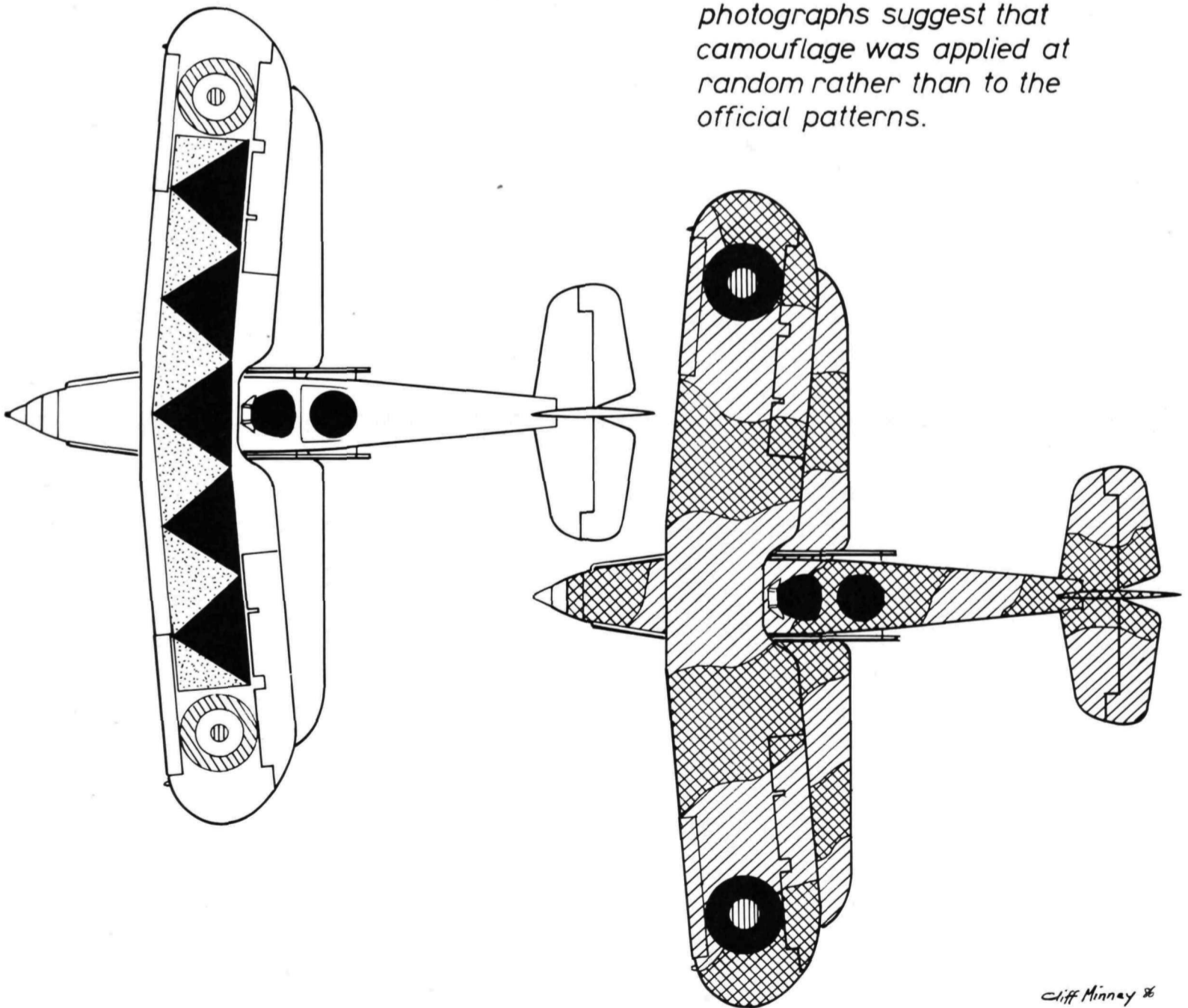


*silver overall  
dk blue/lt blue Squadron insignia  
fin markings on C.O.'s a/c only*



*dk green/dk earth camouflage  
black under port wings/tail  
white codes, overpainted serials*

*photographs suggest that  
camouflage was applied at  
random rather than to the  
official patterns.*



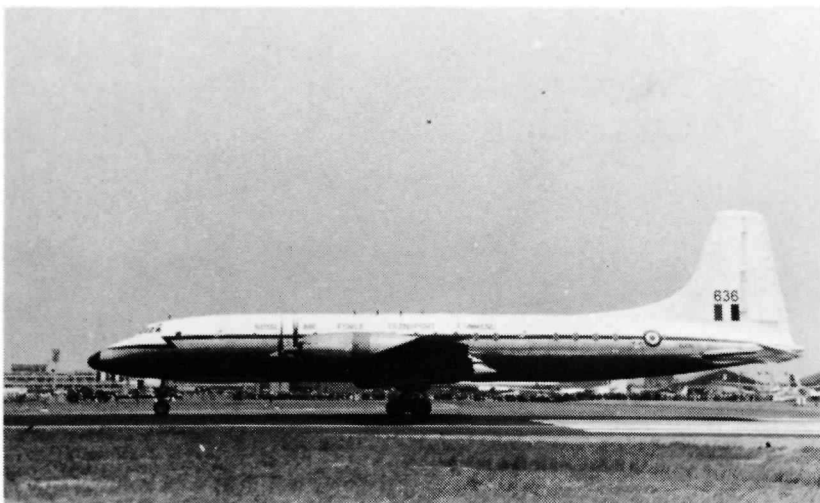


*Hunter T.7*

XL612	APS Sylt/1417 Flt/ 8	To MinTech 19.2.70 for ETPS
XL613	8/208/8/1417 Flt/ 8/1417 Flt/208/8/ 45/4 FTS/237 OCU/ SF Laarbruch/ 237 OCU	
XL614	APS Sylt/Cv T.7A/ 111/RAE/12/RAE/ 237 OCU/SG Honing- ton/237 OCU	
XL615	8	Flew into ground at night 13½m W of Khormaksar, 1.6.60
XL616	APS Sylt/Cv T.7A/ 23/19/MoA/SF Laar- bruch/208	
XL617	4/SF Jever/SF Gut- ersloh/229 OCU/ 54/229 OCU/TWU/ 1 TWU/237 OCU/1 TWU	To 8837M
XL618	14/229 OCU/TWU/ 1 TWU/2 TWU	To Royal Navy 23.11.81
XL619	20/14/20/45/Hunter Wg/TWU/2 TWU/1 TWU	Abandoned in spin 50m SW of Brawdy, 21.10.82
XL620	66/74	To HSA 13.4.66 for Saudi AF as 70/616. Retd to RAF 7.74 as XX466 To RAF charge 5.5.83
XL621	MoD(PE) 238 OCU/RAE	
XL622	93/SF Jever/SF Sylt/111/229 OCU/ 4 FTS	Flew into hill in low fly- ing area and blew up 3m NE of Blaenau Ffestiniog, Merioneth, 17.5.71
XL623	65/54/92/43/1/ 19/74/54/229 OCU/ TWU/1 TWU	To 8770M 3.12.82
	* * *	* * *

**Two English Electric Lightning T.4 prototypes for Minis-  
try of Aviation**

XL628	Mkrs	Crashed in sea off Isle of Man on test, 1.10.59
XL629	Mkrs & AAEE/ETPS	Preserved at Boscombe Down
	* * *	* * *

*Britannia XL636 on the runway at Le Bourget (PMC)***Ten Bristol Britannia C.1s delivered between May 1959  
and April 1960 by Short Bros. & Harland, Belfast**

XL635	99 & 511	'Bellatrix'; sold 5.9.75 and became OO-YCA
XL636	99 & 511	'Argo'; sold 6.5.76 and became OO-YCE
XL637	99 & 511	'Vega'; sold 8.3.76 and became OO-YCH
XL638	99 & 511	'Sirius'; overshot landing, Khormaksar 12.10.67 and abandoned on vacation of airfield
XL639	99 & 511	'Atria'; sold 10.2.76 and became EI-BDC
XL640	99 & 511	'Altares'; sold 13.1.76 and became EI-BCI

XL657	99 & 511	'Rigel'; sold 31.12.75 and became 9U-BAD
XL658	99 & 511	'Adhara'; sold 26.5.76 and became EI-BBY
XL659	99 & 511	'Polaris'; sold 5.9.75 and became OO-YCB
XL660	99 & 511	'Alphard'; sold 14.5.76 and became G-BEMZ
	* * *	* * *
<b>12 Scottish Aviation Pioneer CC.1s delivered between Sep- tember 1956 and February 1957 to Contract 6/ACFT/13670</b>		
XL664	Sc Avn/230/ Sc Avn/AAEE	Engine cut; undershot forced landing into wood 6m WNW of Kidderminster, Worcs., 16.6.61
XL665	78/Hd1g Sqn/ 230/209	SOC 26.10.67
XL666	Sc Avn/230/209/20	SOC 1.1.70
XL667	230	Wingtip hit ground on appr- oach and swung off strip ½m S of Kingussie, Fife, 12.5.62
XL668	-	Diverted to Ceylon AF
XL699	209	Sank back after take-off and overturned, Bareo, Borneo, 24.7.60
XL700	MoS/209	Failed to climb after take- off and hit trees, Patik, Labuan, 10.2.63
XL701	78	Collided with Landrover after landing, Awabi, Muscat, 1.7.58
XL702	230/MoA/209/20	SOC 1.1.70
XL703	230/209	To 8034M 1.10.68; preserved for RAF Museum
XL704	209	SOC 18.4.67
XL705	78/209	Damaged and SOC 11.8.67
XL706	78/SMOAF/209	SOC 25.7.68
	* * *	* * *

**One de Havilland (Canada) DHC-3 Otter allotted serial for  
1956 British Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition**

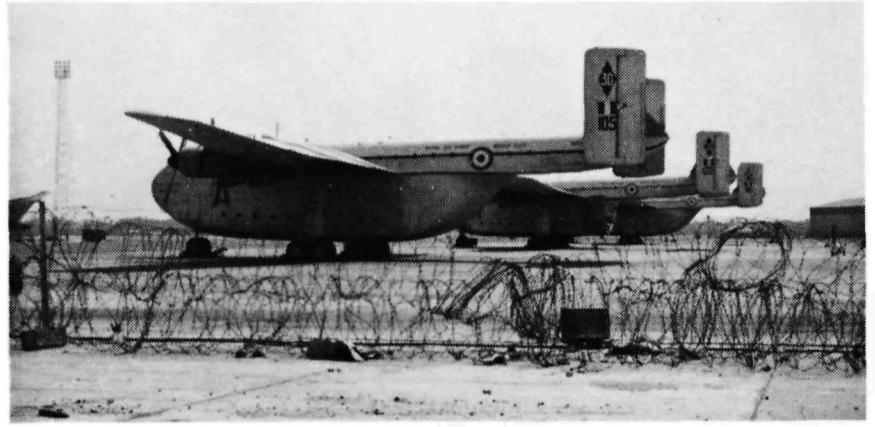
XL710	BCTAE	Ex BuAer 147574; to RNZAF as NZ6031
	* * *	* * *
XL714 to XL717	Four Tiger Moths for Royal Navy	
XL722	Sikorsky S-58 (ex-BuAer 141602 for development trials at Westland and AAEE	
XL727 to XL729	Three Westland Wessex HAS.1s for Royal Navy development trials	
XL734 to XL740		
XL762 to XL773	27 Skeeter AOP.12s for Army Air Corps	
XL806 to XL814		
	* * *	* * *

**Ten Bristol Sycamore HR.14s delivered between February  
and December 1957 to Contract 6/ACFT/13888**

XL820	284/CFS	Lost rotor blade and crashed, Ternhill, 25.3.64
XL821	275/110	SOC 30.6.67
XL822	194/110	Engine cut; crashlanded in thicket 8m ENE of Tanahrata, Sarawak, 8.11.58
XL823	228/CFS	SOC 22.5.68
XL824	284/103/1564 Flt/ CFS	To 8021M 2.7.68; preserved for RAF Museum
XL825	194/110	Lost rotor blade and caught fire; fell into trees, Mal- akoff Estate, Malaya, 28.9.62
XL826	275/CFS	Rolled on take-off and rotor hit ground, Ternhill, 28.2.66; to 7916M
XL827	APS Sylt/MCS/ HDU/CFS	SOC 16.8.68
XL828	Hd1g Sqn/MoS/ SAR Flt Aden	Rotor blades shattered on landing due to resonance 23m NNW of Ahwar, Aden, 18.12.59

*Sycamore HC.14**Sycamore XL821 over Singapore**(RAF Seletar)*

XL829	SF El Adem/SF Khor-					
	maksar/SAR Flt Khor-					
	maksar/MCS	Sold 18.12.71; preserved				
	* * *	* * *				
XL833 to XL854						
XL867 to XL884	45 Whirlwind HAS.7s for Royal Navy					
XL896 to XL900						
XL905 to XL907						
XL920 to XL925	Cancelled Saro SR.177s					
	* * *	* * *				
<b>Seven Percival Pembroke C.1s delivered between February and September 1958 to Contract 6/ACFT/13975</b>						
XL929	BCCS/FCCS/TCCS/ SCCS/207/60					
XL930	2 TAF CS/MoA/RAFG CS/CS Wildenrath/ 60	SOC 18.8.70				
XL931	2 TAF CS/60	SOC 18.8.70				
XL953	2 TAF CS/NCS/ RAFG CS/60	Caught fire during servicing, Wildenrath, 16.5.80; DBR				
XL954	2 TAF CS/RAFG CS/ 60					
XL955	SF Bahrain/78/SF Khormaksar/Gulf CF/SF Muharraq	SOC 17.3.69				
XL956	152/70/SF El Adem/ MinTech	SOC 1.10.71				
	* * *	* * *				
<b>One de Havilland Heron 2 for Royal Tour in Africa during September and October 1956</b>						
XL961	QF	Ex G-AMTS; reverted to G-AMTS				
	* * *	* * *				
<b>12 Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer CC.1s delivered between February and November 1958 to Contract 6/ACFT/14074</b>						
XL966	AAEE/78/21	Flew into rising ground on supply drop, Mount Meru, Tanganyika, 2.3.61				
XL967	209	Both engines cut; crashlanded on approach, Kota Tinggi, Malaya, 19.4.62				
XL968	AAEE/21/78/21	SOC 18.12.67				
XL969	209	SOC 12.10.67				
XL970	SF Katunayake/209	SOC 20.12.68				
XL991	FSS/78/209	Both engines cut; ditched 3m E of Tioman airstrip, Malaya, 29.9.67				
XL992	78/21/152	SOC 30.10.68				
XL993	78/21	To 8388M 6.2.69; preserved				
XL994	78/152	Dived into ground in circuit 1m W of Bu Hafafa, Oman, 18.4.63				
XL995	209	SOC 20.12.68				
XL996	230/SF Odiham/152	SOC 30.10.68				
XL997	209	SOC 1.10.68				
	* * *	* * *				

**Ten Blackburn Beverley C.1s delivered between November 1957 and May 1958 to Contract 6/ACFT/13088***Beverley XM105 of No.30 Squadron at Muharraq, Bahrain*

XM103	242 OCU/30/ 242 OCU/84	SOC 29.8.69
XM104	47 & 53/30	SOC 14.2.68
XM105	47 & 53/30	SOC 25.9.69
XM106	84	Taxied over land mine and undercarriage blown off, Habilayn, Aden, 21.6.67; not repaired
XM107	84	SOC 1.11.62
XM108	84/30	SOC 25.3.70
XM109	84/30	SOC 25.3.70
XM110	47 & 53/84	DBR by time bomb, Beihan, and SOC 28.10.61
XM111	47 & 53/84/MoA/ 84/47/30/84	SOC 29.8.69
XM112	30/48/34	SOC 14.2.68
	* * *	* * *
XM117 to XM126	Ten Hunter T.7s diverted to Royal Nether- lands Air Force as N311 to N320	
	* * *	* * *
<b>48 English Electric Lightning F.1s and F.1As (from XM169) delivered between March 1960 and August 1961 to Contract 6/ACFT/12715</b>		

*Lightning F.1A XM169 of No.23 Squadron at Leuchars, 15.9.73*

XM134	Mkrs & AFDS/Hdlg Sqn/ AAEE/74/226 OCU	Undercarriage leg jammed up; abandoned 30m E of Happisburgh, Norfolk, 11.9.64
XM135	AFDS/74/226 OCU/ Leuchars TFF/ Wattisham TFF	SOC 20.11.74; preserved
XM136	AFDS/74/226 OCU/ Wattisham TFF	Engine lost power on approach; abandoned, Coltishall, 13.9.67
XM137	AFDS/74/226 OCU/ FCTU/Binbrook TFF/ 5/Wattisham TFF	SOC 4.11.74
XM138	AFDS	Fire bottle exploded after landing and aircraft caught fire, Coltishall, 16.12.60
XM139	74/226 OCU/Leuchars TFF/Mkrs/Wattisham TFF	To 8411M 28.5.74; preserved

## Lightning F.1/1A

XM140 74/226 OCU/111 SS 16.12.66  
 XM141 74/226 OCU SS 16.12.66  
 XM142 74 Abandoned after hydraulic failure off Cromer, Norfolk, 26.4.63  
 XM143 74/226 OCU SS 16.12.66  
 XM144 74/226 OCU/Lecon-  
 filed TFF/60 MU/  
 Wattisham TFF/  
 Leuchars TFF/23/  
 LTF To 8417M 28.5.74; preserved  
 XM145 74/226 OCU/  
 Leuchars TFF SOC 24.6.74  
 XM146 74/226 OCU/111 SS 16.12.66  
 XM147 74/226 OCU/  
 Wattisham TFF To 8412M 28.5.74  
 XM163 AFDS/74/226 OCU/  
 Wattisham TFF SS 23.5.74  
 XM164 74/226 OCU/FCTU/  
 5/Binbrook TFF/  
 Leuchars TFF SOC 12.6.74  
 XM165 74/226 OCU SS 16.12.66  
 XM166 74/226 OCU SS 16.12.66  
 XM167 74/226 OCU SS 16.12.66  
 XM168 - Used as static test airframe  
 XM169 Mkrs/111/56/5/  
 Binbrook TFF/  
 226 OCU/23 To 8422M 13.6.74  
 XM170 Mkrs To 7877M 6.4.65  
 XM171 AAEE/56/226 OCU SOC 29.3.74  
 XM172 56/226 OCU To 8427M 10.7.74; preserved  
 XM173 56/226 OCU/Leuchars  
 TFF/23/11 To 8414M 28.5.74; preserved  
 XM174 56/226 OCU/  
 Leuchars TFF Caught fire and abandoned  
 8m E of Leuchars, 29.11.68  
 XM175 56 To BAC for test rig, 6.4.73  
 XM176 56 SOC 3.5.74  
 XM177 56/226 OCU/Leuchars  
 TFF/Wattisham TFF/  
 Leuchars TFF/Watt-  
 ishham TFF SOC 22.3.74  
 XM178 56/226 OCU/  
 Leuchars TFF/23 To 8418M 28.5.74  
 XM179 56 Collided with XM181 during  
 bombburst and abandoned,  
 Great Bricett, Suffolk,  
 6.6.63  
 XM180 56/226 OCU To 8424M 10.7.74  
 XM181 56/111/56/  
 Binbrook TFF To 8415M 28.5.74  
 XM182 56/226 OCU/23/  
 Binbrook TFF/  
 226 OCU/Leuchars  
 TFF To 8425M 10.7.74  
 XM183 56/226 OCU/Binbrook  
 TFF/5/Binbrook TFF To 8416M 28.5.74  
 XM184 111/226 OCU Caught fire on landing,  
 Coltishall, 17.4.67; DBR  
 XM185 111 Undercarriage and airbrakes  
 jammed; abandoned 1m N of  
 Levenham, Suffolk, 28.6.61  
 XM186 111 Abandoned in spin during  
 aerobatic display 1m N of  
 Wittering, 18.7.63  
 XM187 111 Bounced on landing and under-  
 carriage collapsed, Wattis-  
 ham, 19.11.63; to 7838M  
 XM188 111/226 OCU Throttle jammed open while  
 taxiing; hit hangar,  
 Coltishall, 21.6.68  
 XM189 111/226 OCU To 8423M 9.7.74  
 XM190 111/56/226 OCU Abandoned after fire warn-  
 ing 5m N of Coltishall,  
 15.3.66  
 XM191 111 Caught fire on approach and  
 DBR after landing, Wattis-  
 ham, 9.6.64; nose to 7854M  
 XM192 111/226 OCU/Bin-  
 brook TFF/Watt-  
 ishham TFF To 8413M 28.5.74; preserved  
 XM213 111/56/226 OCU Undercarriage prematurely  
 retracted on take-off; veered  
 off runway and hit fence,  
 Coltishall, 6.5.66

## Lightning F.1A

XM214 111/226 OCU To 8420M 19.6.74  
 XM215 111/226 OCU To 8421M 14.6.74  
 XM216 111/226 OCU To 8426M 10.7.74  
 XM217 - Not built  
 XM218 - Not built  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 XM223 Devon C.1 for Royal Aircraft Establishment  
 XM228, XM229 Cancelled Canberra T.4s  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
**20 English Electric Canberra B(I).8s delivered between August 1958 and March 1959 by English Electric, Preston, to Contracts 6/ACFT/6445 and 11158**  
 XM244 16/3/16/3/16 To 8202M 8.6.72  
 XM245 B-P & AAEE/14/  
 AAEE/3/16 SOC 6.6.72  
 XM262 16/3 SOC 23.3.73  
 XM263 16/3 Sold to Marshalls 13.3.74;  
 for Peru as No.255  
 XM264 16/3/14/16 To 8227M 19.6.72  
 XM265 16/AAEE/16 To 8199M 6.6.72  
 XM266 59/3 Engine cut; dived into ground  
 at night 2m E of Tiverton,  
 Devon, 21.11.61  
 XM267 16/3 Rolled on overshoot and hit  
 ground near Akrotiri,  
 15.12.70  
 SOC 8.3.73  
 XM268 16/3  
 XM269 SF Wildenrath/  
 88/14/16 SOC 6.6.72  
 XM270 88/16 Spun into ground on approach,  
 Gutersloh, 5.6.66  
 To 8204M 21.6.72  
 XM271 59/3/MoA/3/16  
 XM272 SF Wildenrath/  
 88/16 SOC 20.6.72  
 XM273 88/14/3 Sold to Marshalls 6.2.74;  
 for Peru as No.253  
 To 8170M 24.8.71  
 XM274 SF Bruggen/3/16 SOC 20.6.72  
 XM275 SF Laarbruch/  
 16/3/16 SOC 20.6.72  
 XM276 59/3/RAE/3 Sold to Marshalls 18.4.74;  
 for Peru as No.256  
 XM277 SF Geilenkirchen/  
 88/14/3/16 SOC 23.6.72  
 XM278 16/14/3 Sold for spares 3.4.74  
 XM279 16/3 Sold to Marshalls 19.3.74;  
 for Peru as No.257  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
**Eight Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer CC.1s delivered between July and October 1958 to Contract 6/ACFT/14074**  
 XM284 FSS/78/21/152 SOC 27.11.67  
 XM285 230/SF Odiham/  
 225/SRCU Sold 29.11.69; became G-AYFA  
 XM286 78/152/21/152 SOC 30.10.68  
 XM287 78 Both engines cut; forced landed  
 and overturned 30m W of Khor-  
 maksar, 8.4.59  
 XM288 78 Both engines cut on approach;  
 ditched ½m W of Khormaksar,  
 8.4.59  
 XM289 152/78/21/152 SOC 30.10.68  
 XM290 152/21 Tipped up after landing,  
 Kalimikui, Kenya, 13.3.63  
 XM291 152/78/152/21/152 SOC 30.10.68  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
**Two de Havilland Heron CC.4s delivered in March and April 1958 by de Havilland, Chester, to Contract 6/ACFT/14194**  
 XM295 QF Sold 4.11.68; became CF-XOK  
 XM296 QF/RAFG CS/60 To Royal Navy 7.72  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 XM299 to XM301; XM326 to XM331 Nine Wessex HAS.1s for  
 Royal Navy  
 \* \* \* \* \*

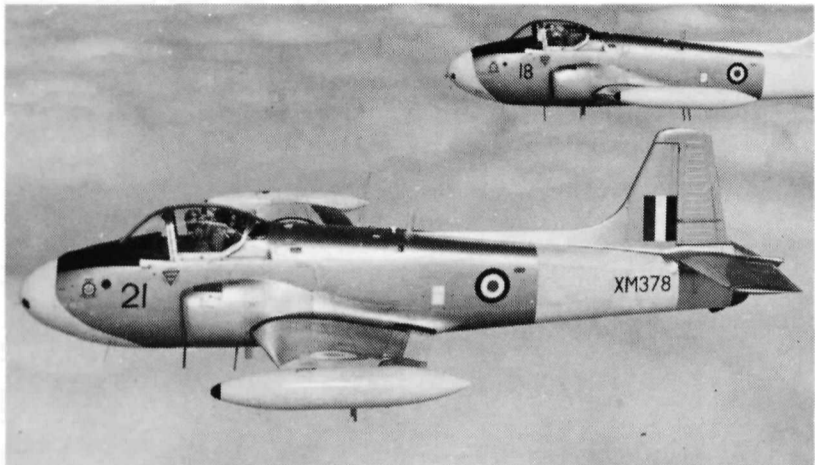
One Gloster Javelin T.3 delivered in August 1959 to Contract 6/ACFT/11262

XM336 FCIRS/226 OCU Both engines cut; abandoned and crashed in Saujac, near Orange, France, 5.11.63

XM337 to  
XM341 - Cancelled

\* \* \* \* \*

100 Hunting Jet Provost T.3s delivered between June 1958 and July 1960 to Contract 6/ACFT/14157



Jet Provost T.3 XM378 of No.2 FTS (MoD)

XM346 Mkrs/AAEE/CFS/RAFC SOC 9.6.69  
 XM347 Mkrs/AAEE/2 FTS Engine cut; abandoned near Wragby, Lincs., 23.3.51  
 XM348 Mkrs & AAEE Caught fire in air and crashed, Twyford, Berks., 4.9.58  
 XM349 AAEE/2 FTS/CFS/RAFC/CFS  
 XM350 AAEE/RAFC/1 FTS/7 FTS  
 XM351 Hdlg Sqn/2 FTS/7 FTS/1 FTS/3 FTS To 8078M 25.2.70  
 XM352 AAEE & Mkrs/3 FTS/1 FTS/7 FTS  
 XM353 BSE SOC 3.9.68  
 XM354 2 FTS/1 FTS SOC 8.8.74  
 XM355 CFS/7 FTS/1 FTS To 8229M 17.10.73  
 XM356 CFS/7 FTS SOC 3.12.69  
 XM357 CFS/3 FTS/2 FTS/1 FTS  
 XM358 2 FTS/7 FTS/CFS/RAFC/CFS/1 FTS/3 FTS/1 FTS  
 XM359 CFS/7 FTS/2 FTS/6 FTS/2 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
 XM360 CFS Flew into high ground in cloud, Brown Clee Hill, Abdon, Salop., 24.1.69  
 XM361 CFS/7 FTS/RAFC SOC 8.8.74  
 XM362 2 FTS/3 FTS To 8230M 17.10.73  
 XM363 2 FTS SOC 6.8.69  
 XM364 2 FTS/CFS SOC 28.5.76  
 XM365 Mkrs/2 FTS/3 FTS/1 FTS  
 XM366 2 FTS/CFS Engine cut; abandoned near Holme-in-Spalding-Moor, Yorks., 22.10.81  
 XM367 2 FTS/3 FTS To 8083M 2.2.70  
 XM368 2 FTS Abandoned in spin 2½m SW of Pateley Bridge, Yorks., 29.4.63  
 XM369 2 FTS To 8084M 19.3.70  
 XM370 2 FTS/1 FTS/7 FTS  
 XM371 2 FTS/3 FTS/CFS/RAFC/CFS  
 XM372 2 FTS/1 FTS  
 XM373 2 FTS/CFS/3 FTS/1 FTS/RAFC/7 FTS Stalled on take-off and sank back on to runway, Syerston, 29.6.61; to 7726M  
 XM374 2 FTS/CFS/3 FTS/RAFC/7 FTS  
 XM375 2 FTS/3 FTS/RAFC To 8231M 4.12.73  
 XM376 2 FTS/RAFC/CATCS/3 FTS/1 FTS/RAFC/7 FTS

Jet Provost T.3

XM377 2 FTS Radio aids failed; belly-landed avoiding aircraft on runway, Syerston, 4.2.60  
 XM378 2 FTS/CFS/2 TWU/SF St.Athan  
 XM379 2 FTS/6 FTS/3 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
 XM380 2 FTS Engine cut; abandoned after fire warning 1m S of Seagrove, Leics., 29.7.63  
 XM381 2 FTS/RAFC To 8232M 4.12.73  
 XM382 2 FTS Abandoned in spin ¾m NNE of Melton Mowbray, Leics., 17.6.60  
 XM383 2 FTS/AAEE/2 FTS/BSE/6 FTS/RAFC/1 FTS/7 FTS  
 XM384 2 FTS Collided with XP631 over Woodborough, Notts., and abandoned 26.5.66  
 XM385 2 FTS Undershot landing at Syerston after engine cut on overshoot, 8.3.60  
 XM386 2 FTS/CFS To 8076M 3.70  
 XM387 2 FTS/3 FTS/CFS  
 XM401 2 FTS/CFS/3 FTS/1 FTS To 8055AM 21.11.65  
 XM402 2 FTS/6 FTS To 8055BM 21.11.65  
 XM403 2 FTS/1 FTS/CFS  
 XM404 2 FTS/3 FTS  
 XM405 2 FTS/1 FTS/RAFC/1 FTS  
 XM406 2 FTS Abandoned in spin ¼m NE of Mansfield, Notts., 12.11.65  
 XM407 2 FTS/6 FTS SOC 31.10.69  
 XM408 2 FTS/MoA To 8233M 20.11.73  
 XM409 2 FTS To 8082M 13.5.70  
 XM410 2 FTS/7 FTS/RAFC To 8054M 23.10.69  
 XM411 CFS To ~~8034M~~ 10.11.71 8434M  
 XM412 2 FTS/3 FTS/1 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
 XM413 CFS/7 FTS/2 FTS  
 XM414 2 FTS/RAFC/6 FTS/1 FTS/RAFC/7 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
 XM415 2 FTS/3 FTS  
 XM416 2 FTS/7 FTS/2 FTS/6 FTS/3 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
 XM417 2 FTS/7 FTS/6 FTS To 8054BM 23.10.69  
 XM418 2 FTS/CFS/6 FTS/3 FTS Engine caught fire on runway, Leeming, 25.3.71; to 8593M  
 XM419 2 FTS/RAFC/6 FTS/RAFC/3 FTS/CFS/RAFC/CFS/3 FTS/7 FTS  
 XM420 2 FTS/6 FTS SOC 18.12.69  
 XM421 2 FTS/CFE/7 FTS Abandoned after control lost in cloud 2m NW of Church Fenton, 13.12.63  
 XM422 2 FTS/CFS/6 FTS Flew into ground during aerobatic display practice ¼m SW of Acklington, 8.5.62  
 XM423 CFS Engine cut; abandoned at night 3m SE of Kidderminster, Worcs., 30.8.61  
 XM424 CFS/6 FTS/RAFC/3 FTS/1 FTS  
 XM425 CFS/3 FTS/RAFC/1 FTS/7 FTS  
 XM426 CFS/6 FTS/2 FTS/3 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
 XM427 RAFC Flew into ground on night approach 1½m NNE of Waddington, 16.10.62  
 XM428 CFS/3 FTS Collided with XN631 and abandoned 1½m E of Northallerton, Yorks., 20.4.65  
 XM451 RAFC  
 XM452 RAFC Struck by lightning and abandoned after control lost 1m S of Rauceby Hospital, Lincs., 5.4.62  
 XM453 RAFC/3 FTS & 26/CFS Abandoned and crashed near Ingleby, North Yorks., 21.11.83  
 XM454 RAFC SOC 8.8.74

# FEED BACK



## MORE ON RAF DAKOTAS

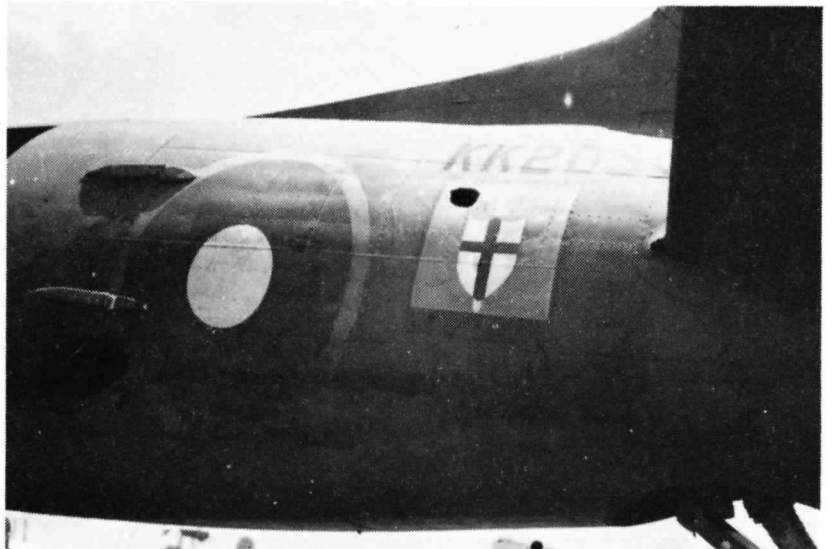
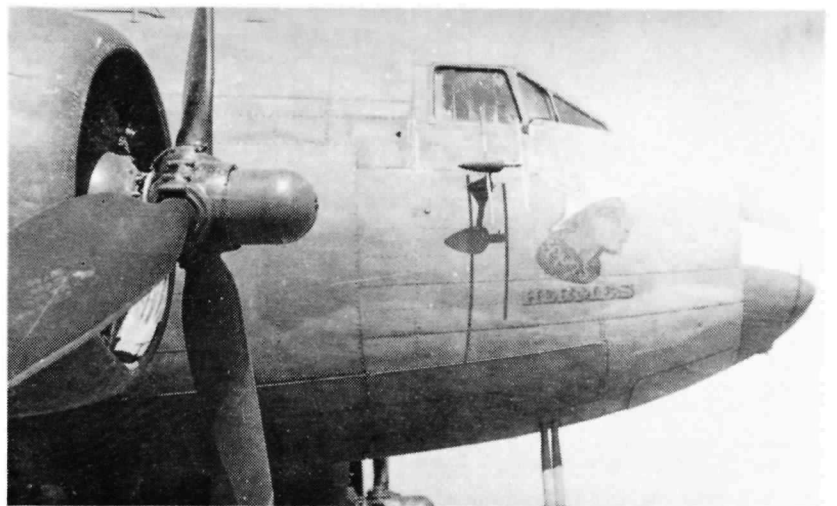
The intriguing photograph above has been sent in by Allan Church and is an interesting variation on the more usual theme of aircraft hitting the runway. In this case, the runway has overshot the aircraft.

KN594 was photographed at the end of August 1945 at Mingladon during the time the airfield was being extended after its capture from the Japanese. Such was the urgency in extending the runway that KN594 failed to get out of the way in time! We have not pinned down any unit for this aircraft or any reason why it got into this bizarre situation but it would be reasonable to assume that it undershot the existing airfield shortly before the photograph was taken. Some cannibalisation has been undertaken so one must assume that the forward end was sufficiently damaged to make it not worth while to salvage the airframe.

KN594 was not struck off charge until 30 May 1946. Presumably nobody could find it since the previous August. Depending on the rusting period of alclad in Burmese soil, one wonders if a dent developed later in the runway.

On the right are two close-ups of KK205 which was with the Netherlands East Indies Communications Squadron early in 1946 when Allan was in the crew. The nose was painted in 15 Corps colours with the badge of Allied Land Forces, SE Asia aft of the roundel. There were three stars on the outside of the rear door.

The nose art showed the head of Hermes (if our Greek holds out after forty years his name is round his collar) and the title 'Hermes' is in English below the painting.





Dakota KK205

In the tables of Dakotas on page 98 of AM.4/85 a batch of twenty aircraft were omitted in error. KK200 which follows KK219 should read KK220 and be followed by KN200 to KN219 as follows:

KN200	-	Diverted to RCAF
KN201	-	Diverted to RCAF
KN202	194	Missing between Mekteila and Payagyi, 3.5.45
KN203	238/52	Crashed on overshoot, Mingaladon, 28.2.47
KN204	52	SOC 30.5.46
KN205	31/267	Prop ran away on take-off; forced landed near Saigon, 11.2.46; DBF
KN206	31	SOC 21.7.46
KN207	238/62/267	Retd to US 27.11.47
KN208	238/435/436	Crashed on supply drop 2m SE of Leckthe, 7.7.45
KN209	117/62/215/117/48	SOC 5.9.50
KN210	238/436	SOC 13.9.45
KN211	31/52	Retd to US 31.10.47
KN212	31/52/110	Sold 24.4.53
KN213	436/96	Retd to US 12.11.47
KN214	238/96	Sold 10.5.51
KN215	238/436/233/ 1 PTS/Aden CF	To MAAG 22.5.53
KN216	436/194	Retd to US 27.11.47
KN217		SOC 26.6.45
KN218	216/117	Broke up in cloud over Burma, 26.6.45
KN219	52	To Belgian AF 23,2,49 as K-24

KN217 poses a problem. Although shown as SOC on 26.6.45, it is noted by No.52 Squadron in March 1946. This is probably another prefix error but a further note shows an operational loss date of 3.5.45, although no loss on this date has been located and no squadron records this aircraft as being on its charge, nor is there an accident card for it on this date.

Incidentally, the aircraft sold to civil operators in the early 1950s had a proviso in the contract of sale that the aircraft could be reclaimed by the RAF in the event of a national emergency.

The reason for this is not very clear as, in a national emergency, presumably any civil aircraft could be requisitioned. The wholesale impressment of civil aircraft at the outbreak of World War Two was automatic.

## MEMORIES OF 1315 FLIGHT

Brian Robinson (of BAPC fame) has sent in some comments on No.1315 (Transport) Flight with which he served in 1945/46. This outfit must have been the biggest flight the RAF ever had. It was formed at Merryfield on 1 January 1945 with an establishment of fifteen Dakota IVs, raising the question of why it was not classified as a squadron. It was shipped to Canada and picked up its aircraft at Dorval. The route to Australia for all but three of the aircraft was as follows:

Dorval, Elizabeth City NC; Atlanta, Ga; Dallas, Texas; Tucson, Ariz.; El Paso (why?); Sacramento, Cal.; Honolulu; Palmyra; Canton Island; Nandi, Fiji; Auckland; Camden.

Why El Paso got into the route is not clear; No. 243 Squadron also trekked out to Australia and flew directly from Tucson to Mather Field, Sacramento.

Aircraft used by No.1315 were:

KN354 - VM-YBZ;	KN355 - VM-YCE;	KN356 - VM-YBQ
KN358 - VM-YBR;	KN360 - VM-YBS;	KN361 - VM-YBT
KN362 - VM-YCC;	KN365 - VM-YCD;	KN368 - VM-YBU
KN369 - VM-YBV;	KN370 - VM-YBW;	KN371 - VM-YBX
KN375 - VM-YBO;	KN531 - VM-YCJ	

Also used but callsigns unknown were KN374 and KN376, the latter being the only aircraft lost by the unit.

The bulk of the flight moved back to the UK in March 1946, shedding some aircraft at Hong Kong to support the Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. The route taken by most aircraft was:

Archerfield - Cloncurry - Darwin - Balikpapan - Singapore - Penang - Rangoon - Akyab - Calcutta - Gaya - Allahabad - Jodhpur - Karachi - Jask - Bahrein - Shaibah - Habbaniya - Ismailia - Cairo - Tobruk - Luqa - Marselles - Rennes - Cherbourg - Holmsley South - Blakehill Farm.

The home of No.1315 Flight in Australia was at RAF Camp, Muckley, which was adjacent to Archerfield aerodrome.

No.300 Wing controlled RAF transport units in the Pacific and as well as 1315, Nos.238 and 243 provided logistic support for the Pacific Fleet.

# BOOKSHELF

FALKLANDS: THE AIR WAR by The British Aviation Research Group (DPR Marketing & Sales, 27 Heath Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW1 4AW £19.95 post free)

Some books we can recommend as a starting point for research into a particular subject but this is not one of them. By the time one has waded through to page 468 where we find that Cessna F172P c/n F.2083 became VP-FBJ and learned of its movements, it is quite obvious that starting out on more research on the subject of the Falklands is sheer masochism.

The preceding pages form a finely-detailed account of the use of aircraft on both sides of the conflict with individual histories of the aircraft involved, accounts of the actions in which they were engaged and losses.

The headings are broken down into types and units, first of the Argentine forces and then for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. Within this framework can be found details of colour schemes, personnel, armament, tanker conversions, ships, civil aircraft and virtually anything else one would want to know about the Falklands operation.

The book is lavishly illustrated, with 43 colour photographs and three pages in colour of badges and insignia. There are drawings of various types showing their markings and even a reproduction of the log book of Iroquois AE-409.

Our advice is buy the book and then get down to some other subject, e.g. Czech Air Force tyre markings, 1919-1923.

THE AIR WAR 1939-1945 by Janusz Piekalkiewicz (Blandford £12.95)

When a book written by a Pole is published in German, then translated by, apparently, a Dutchman into American-english and then republished in Dorset, odd things can happen. And they do, in quantity.

The format consists of periods of the war divided into two sections each. One quotes from official statements from various countries plus a general review of air operations which sometimes puts the former in context with reality. Oddly, the reviews are reasonably written while the extracts read very quaintly in many places. Even the British official statements sound as though they have been written by someone not acquainted with colloquial English, presumably due to the translation process.

Thus we find some very odd statements. The Bristol Blenheim was an 'auxiliary destroyer' (a frigate?), Hurricanes with bombs racks are 'hunter-bombers', while ships that escort convoys are translated not as escort vessels but guard ships (which any sailor will tell you are very different things and not a type of ship).

There are some interesting photographs even if some of the captions are dodgy. Swordfish were made of sheet metal, fabric and plywood; the photo, almost inevitably, depicts Albacores. There is a shot of a silhouetted Lockheed 12A 'just after take-off from Habbaniya on its flight over the Soviet oil fields at Baku'. Did a clandestine operation really formate with a photographic aircraft for air-to-air pictures? Dauntlesses on the deck of a carrier in April 1942 are Avengers, which were not on any carrier's deck in April 1942. There are several of what are apparently airfield scrap dumps taken by the Germans, one entitled as Moranes destroyed on the ground having in the foreground the rear half of Blenheim L9248 of 57 Squadron. Russian fighters on a forward airfield 'at the time of the German attack' seem to be lacking

certain parts, in one case an undercarriage leg.

There is an appendix which the blurb claims to be the first time details of the structure and organisation of the belligerent air forces have been revealed. This does not seem possible and the information given is rather blurred. The RAF consisted of Home Command and Overseas Command. The tactical unit was the Group consisting of between nine and twenty-four squadrons with between six and eighteen aircraft each so had a strength between 54 and 432 aircraft at the outbreak of war. Fortunately, massive aid was at hand since the Canadians had twenty groups and Australia twelve!

Everywhere, the definition and designation of units is confused in translation. There is a photograph of a Maryland of 22 Squadron, 1st Bomber Group, French Air Force, presumably of GB.I/22, and No.39 Squadron, 1st Bomber Group is mentioned for GB.I/39. Did the famous daylight raid on the Philips works at Eindhoven really include an Indian Air Force wing? The Air Ministry is supposed to have said so in its communique. The 'RAF's 141st Group' flew Beaufighters with Serrate and the Civil Air Guard was a fire brigade.

Not one for the bookshelf but worth getting from your local library just for amusement.

BURTONWOOD by Aldon P.Ferguson (Airfield Publications, 54 Fidlers Walk, Wargrave, Reading, RG12 8BA £9.25 post free)

Another valuable addition to the growing number of airfield histories is this hardback volume on what became one of the largest military complexes in Europe.

While the more glamorous airfields like Biggin Hill and Hornchurch have a wealth of action reports to flesh them out, an airfield which has always been in a supporting role requires a lot of digging to produce a readable account. Happily, this is the case with Burtonwood and its varying fortunes have been illustrated with numerous photographs and maps in its 136 pages.

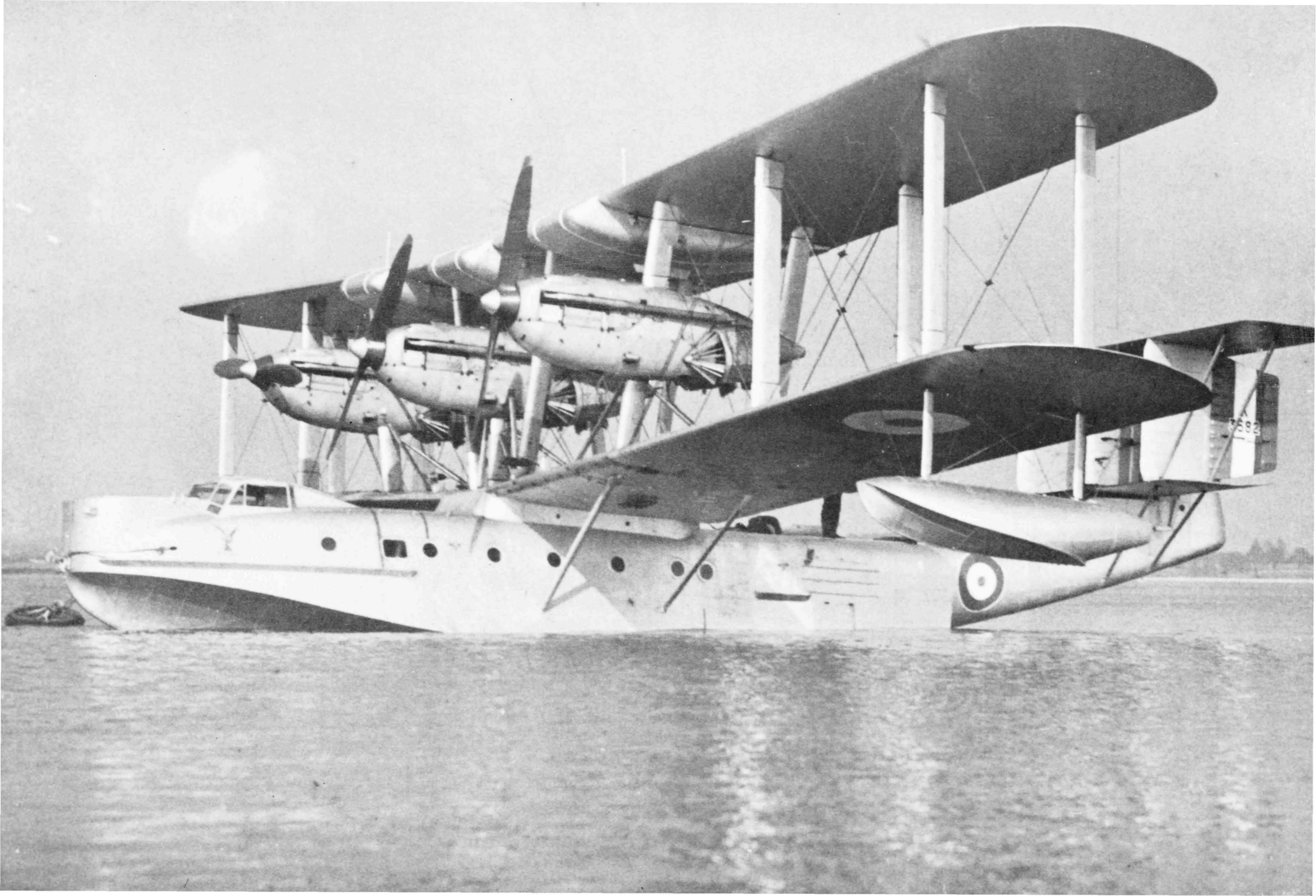
One question for our readers. On 6 November 1941 an aircraft crashed at Burtonwood killing Sgt. Sim from Uxbridge and a civil servant from the RAE. What aircraft was it?

THE WINGED BOMB by Ken Delve (Midland Counties Publications, £11.95)

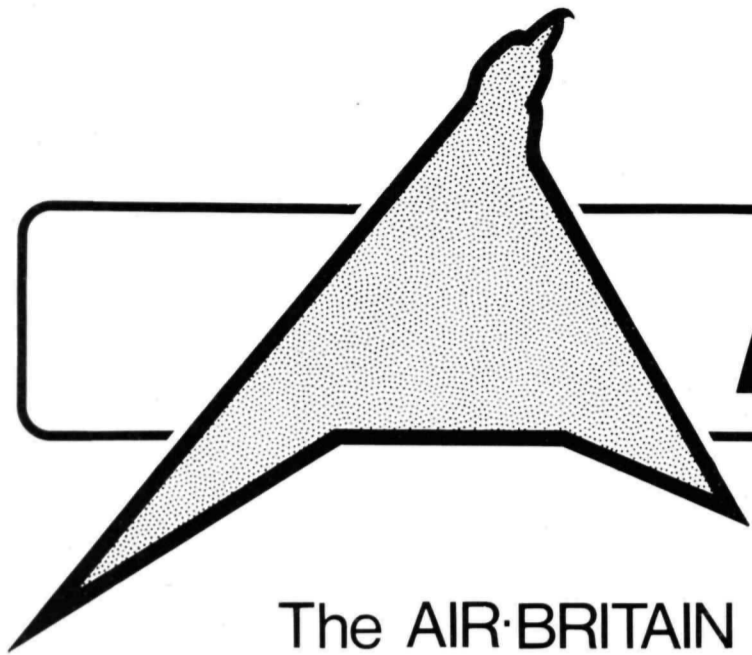
More and more RAF squadron histories are appearing in hardback and this is a worthy account of No.39 Squadron. Like Burtonwood, No.39 was not one the more famous units, having spent World War One as a Home Defence squadron, albeit one with a fair number of pilots who went on to greater things - including a nominally-neutral Norwegian, Trygve Gran, who, if our memory serves us correctly, was the first man to fly the North Sea from the UK to Norway. Another pilot, Leefe Robinson, gained the VC with the squadron.

After a period in the UK after the war with Nine-Acks, No.39 went to India and spent World War Two in the Med. with Blenheims, Beauforts, Beaufighters and Marauders, staying there in the post-war years with Tempests before becoming a night fighter unit with Mosquitoes and Meteors. Reforming as a PR unit at Malta, No.39 later came to Wyton which was its base until disbandment in June 1982.

Useful appendices list aircraft flown by No.39 by serial number, details of sorties, lists of COs, locations and battle honours and decorations and an item on ASV Mk.II as fitted into the squadron's Beaufighters. With 204 pages and many illustrations, it is a useful book.







# AEROMILITARIA

The AIR·BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly



No. 3  
1986



# AEROMILITARIA

The AIR-BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly

Edited by James J. Halley and Peter M. Corbell

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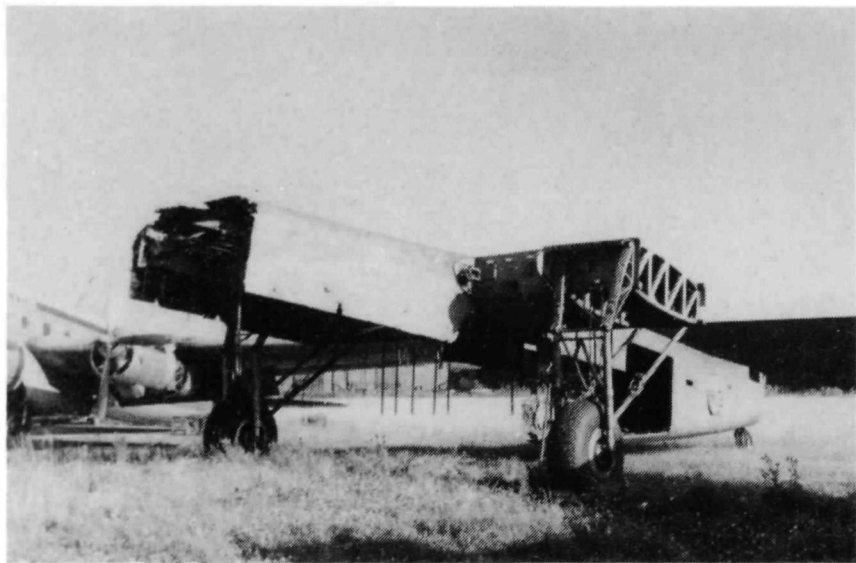
This issue of Aeromilitaria is being completed before AM.2/86 has been seen due to an urgent requirement for your editor to flee the country and proceed to the antipodes. One snag about this is that it is difficult to remember precisely what we said in the last issue except that we forgot to put in captions for the cover photographs. The cover photo of Fulmars was, we believe, taken at Yeovilton. The back cover had a photograph of an aeroplane, exactly which one escapes us. Unfortunately the village photocopier was out of action when AM.2/86 had to be handed over.....

Now to hand are copies of "Strike True", the history of No.80 Squadron and its Camels, Gladiators, Hurricanes, Spitfires, Tempests, Hornets and Canberras. Written by Chris Shores, it provides an excellent account of a fighter squadron at various stages of its career. The price is £4.00 to members and £6.00 to non-members.

As we write, 'The Whitley File' is at the printers. The format is similar to that of 'The Lancaster File' and lists every Whitley with the units that flew each aircraft and its final fate. Nick Roberts, who wrote 'The Halifax File' (now reprinted) has compiled that of the Whitley which has 72 pages, 79 photographs, and a cutaway drawing. There are the usual tables of units flying the Whitley and details of all the raids in which the type took part, showing which aircraft was lost on which raid.

The price is £4.50 to members and £6.75 to non-members. Orders to Air-Britain Sales Department, 11 Thurlstone, Thundersley, Essex, SS7 3YW.

After four military monographs going to the printer in the first four months of 1986, there will be a slight pause before launching into the next batch. We can, however, say that BA/BZ will be the next RAF register.



## COVER CAPTIONS

Our cover photograph is ultramodern by AM standards and depicts four Phantom FG.1s of No.43 Squadron over the Firth of Forth. We are, however, comforted by the thought that the markings are not current.

Mention of 'The Fighting Cocks' reminds us that Jim Beedle's early account of No.43's exploits first published in the 1960s has been revised and reprinted. Copies are available from him at 12A Haddon Court, Harpenden, Herts., price £12.95 post-free. There are 389 pages and 60 photographs in this edition.

On the back cover is a photograph of No.40 Squadron's Blenheim IVs on the greensward at Wyton, presumably taken in the summer of 1940. The squadron got Blenheims in December 1939 and replaced them by Wellingtons in November 1940. The aircraft have T-serials and the trees are in leaf. T1849 'BL-L' was delivered around August 1940. However, they could have had a sunny day in autumn.

No.40 was one of the 'slog-on' squadrons that did not achieve fame. After being a fighter squadron in World War One, it reformed in 1931 as a light bomber squadron. It went to France with Battles on the outbreak of war but was fortunate in being sent back to England for conversion to Blenheims, thus avoiding the inevitable disaster that would have occurred if it had remained in France with Battles.

After its ten months with Blenheims, it became a night bomber unit and by the end of February 1942 was completely in the Middle East, having sent aircraft and crews to Malta from October 1941. For all but the last month of the war, it flew its Wimpeys at night, Liberators arriving too late to make any impression. After short periods with first Yorks and then Canberras, No.40 vanished from the Order of Battle of the RAF in December 1956.

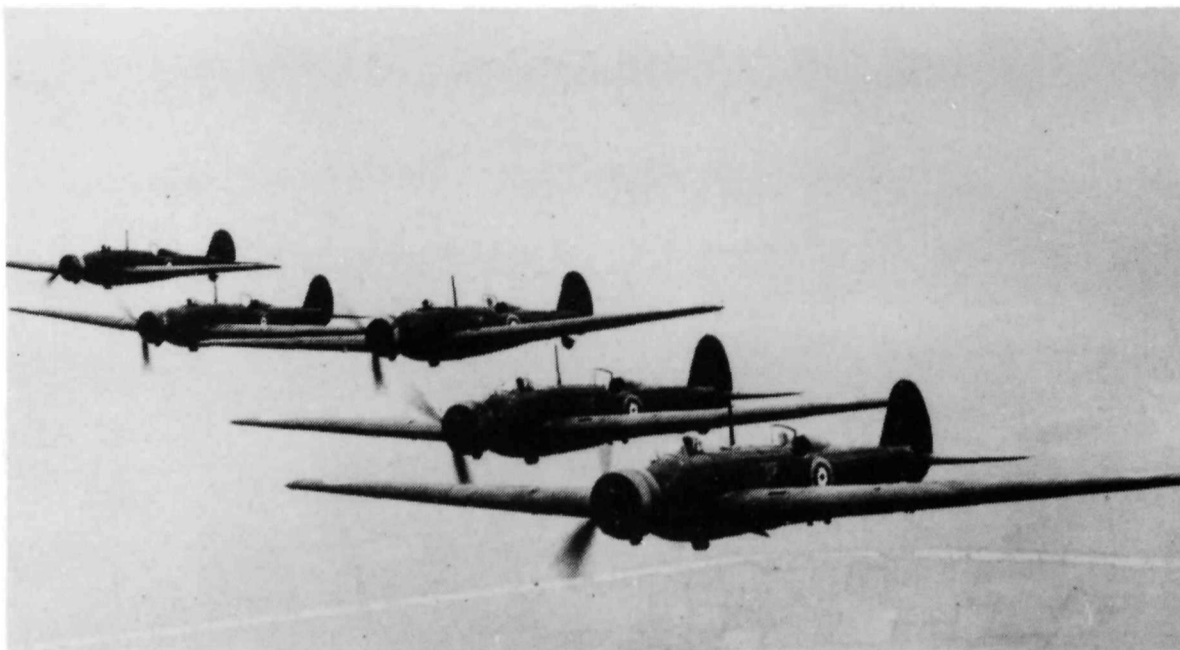
## PUZZLE PIX

A couple of photographs to exercise the brain box. The airfield has a dozen four-engined bombers but no runways. It also seems to be very short of hangars.

The aircraft was once a workhorse of the Royal Air Force but is obviously awaiting the arrival of spares.....



# WELLESLEYS



Photographs via Andy Thomas

*A quintet of No.76 Squadron Wellesleys flying near Finningley in 1937/38*

The Wellesley will always be thought of as an ungainly bomber that was an anachronism before the outbreak of war in the Middle East found it on operations against the Italians in East Africa. It did not, however, start life as a bomber but as a general purpose aircraft.

Specification G.4/31 called for a three seat aircraft capable of bombing, army support and able to carry a torpedo. Several firms responded by producing biplanes to meet these requirements, including Vickers which offered a large biplane powered by a Bristol Pegasus engine (photograph in AM.1/85). It was also proposed that the specification be filled by a monoplane design and both featured Barnes Wallis' geodetic construction but a conservative Air Ministry preferred the traditional biplane. This first flew on 16 August 1934 at Brooklands but as a private venture, Vickers had begun construction of the G.4/31 monoplane. This flew on 19 June 1935 after trials on the biplane had resulted in the Air Ministry ordering 150 of the aircraft.

The performance of the G.4/31 monoplane caused a review of the position as the performance of the monoplane was much better than the biplane even though both had the same engine. In September 1935, the order was altered to 96 monoplanes under an amended specification 22/35. An undercarriage problem caused the prototype to crash on landing at Brooklands on 23 July 1935 where it had been flying under the company registration O-9. It was then rebuilt as K7556 and reappeared with enclosed cockpits, bomb containers and many other improvements.

*The prototype Wellesley K7556 at Brooklands. Note the retractable 'airstairs' to provide access to the cockpits.*



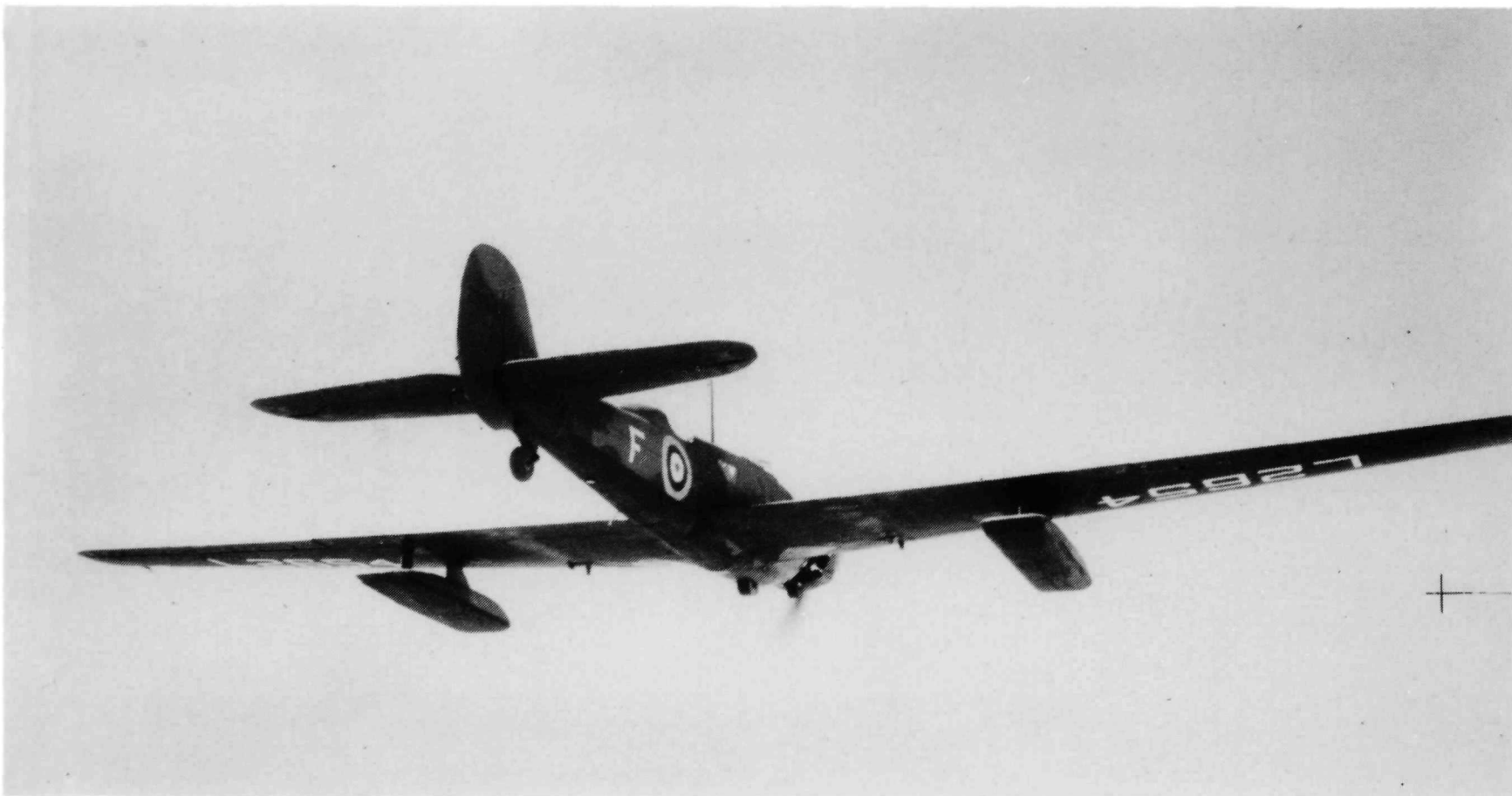
The bomb containers that made the Wellesley unique were required because the geodetic construction of the fuselage prevented the fitment of a bomb bay although subsequent development meant that these could be fitted to later Wellingtons and Warwick's without jeopardising the structural integrity of the system.

K7556 was extensively modified over its test period and was responsible for introducing many new concepts at a time when virtually the entire inventory of the Royal Air Force consisted of biplanes with fixed undercarriages and open cockpits. The Air Ministry had dropped the GP requirement and when the first production Wellesley, K7713, first flew on 30 January 1937, the type was destined for bomber squadrons.

The first aircraft to go into service were delivered to No.7 Squadron in April 1937 but only to 'B' Flight which was detached to form No.76 Squadron at Finningley on 12 April. Next to receive the Wellesley was No.148, reformed at Scampton on 7 June. The first arrived on 15 June and on 2 July the first flight was formed, followed by a second on 1 September.

During July 1937, No.35 Squadron also began to replace its Gordons with Wellesleys at Worthy Down and the second Worthy Down squadron, No.207, followed suit in September. In November, No.77 replaced its Audaxes at Honington, completing the Bomber Command establishment of Wellesley squadrons. Nos.35 and 207 changed to Battles in 1938, 148 to Heyfords, 77 to Whitleys and, in 1939, No.76 got Hampdens.





*L2654 of No.14 Squadron shows off the Wellesley's vast wingspan and the underwing bomb panniers*

(MoD H.373)

In the Middle East, Wellesleys began to appear in November 1937 to replace No.45 Squadron's Gordons, the squadron's 'B' Flight being detached to Kenya at that time. It was followed by No.14 Squadron at Amman, in Transjordan, which replaced its Gordons in March 1938. In June 1938, eight Wellesleys were ferried out to East Africa to replace the Vincents of No.223 Squadron, formerly 'B' Flight of No.45 Squadron. Finally, in June 1939, No.47 Squadron received Wellesleys at Khartoum but still retained some Vincents for use on the rough airstrips and open country of the Sudan. Sophisticated ultra-modern aircraft like the Wellesley were restricted to proper airfields!

The Wellesley normally flew with a crew of two, the pilot being in a cockpit with a sliding hood and the gunner well aft in another enclosed cockpit. The forward part of his glass house hinged upwards to provide a windscreen and permit him to swing his single 0.303-in machine gun. The screen was a major drag producer. Between the two cockpits there was space for a third crew member to act as navigator. There was some consideration of extending the pilot's cockpit aft to the gunner's position by means of a continuous canopy and K7744 is known to have had this fitted. Whether any others had this modification is unclear and the designation Wellesley II for such aircraft was not officially adopted.

With its single engine and relatively large size, the Wellesley looked a good choice for an attempt to set up a world record for non-stop flight. K7717 was allocated for trials and fitted with a Pegasus XXII engine in place of the standard Mk.XX. In January 1938, the Long Range Development Flight was set up at Upper Heyford and five Wellesleys allotted. These were standard Wellesleys which had been modified for the task in hand by the fitment of Rotol constant-speed propellers, Mk.IV automatic pilots, tanks for 1,255 gallons of fuel and long-chord cowlings. As the trials aircraft, K7717 was first flown on 21 January 1938. L2637, L2638, L2639, L2680 and L2681 were the aircraft chosen for the LRDF. All had various fuel-watching devices fitted.

As a preliminary, four of the Wellesleys, L2638, L2639, L2680 and L2681 flew out to the Persian Gulf from Cranwell on 7 July 1938 before turning back to land at Ismailia after a flight of 4,300 miles in an elapsed time of 32 hours. They returned to Upper Heyford but on 5 November were back in Egypt and ready for their major effort. Three aircraft, L2638, L2639 and L2680, took off from Ismailia for Australia.

Despite bad weather over the Bay of Bengal and even worse over the Dutch East Indies, with heavy rain, thunderstorms and towering cumulus clouds, the existing record was passed by all three aircraft. However, L2639 reported to the other two that fuel consumption was higher than planned and the aircraft could turn into a glider before Darwin was sighted. It therefore diverted to Koepang in Portuguese Timor to refuel.

Forty-eight hours after take-off, the remaining two aircraft landed at Darwin after 7,157 miles, a record not exceeded until the post-war years. All aircraft were in good conditions apart from fabric damage from the adverse weather. The Pegasus engines had behaved faultlessly throughout the flight and the RAE's auto-pilots had done everything expected of them without snags.

At home, the Wellesley squadrons were converting to newer aircraft and there was no requirement for their ability to bomb targets 3,500 miles from base as some of the contemporary newspapers believed the flight denoted. Omsk and Washington were still safe from Bomber Command.

Almost all surviving Wellesleys were shipped to the Middle East apart from a few in use by the Royal Aircraft Establishment and the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment. Two also went to the Torpedo Development Flight, later the Air Torpedo Development Unit, at Gosport. The original specification called for the ability to carry a torpedo but whether any actual torpedo drops were made is not clear. K7772 was used as a Hercules testbed.



*K7779, K of No.45 Squadron at Ismailia in the first half of 1939. In the background is the airship mooring mast for R-101*

When Italy entered the war on 10 June 1940, the Wellesley squadrons were concentrated in the Sudan. In September 1939, No.223 had come from Kenya to reinforce No.47 at Khartoum and in May 1940, No.14 moved south from Egypt to Port Sudan. Forward airfields had been set up at Summit and Erkowit. south of Port Sudan and No.223 moved to Summit and No.47 to Erkowit. Nine Gladiators of No.112 Squadron formed the only fighter defence of the Sudan.

On 11 June, No.14 sent off nine Wellesleys to bomb the port of Massawa, No.47 sent eight to Asmara airfield and No.223 despatched nine to Gura. While No.47 dispensed 250 lb, 40 lb and numerous incendiary bombs from low level over Asmara airfield, K7730 was hit by ground fire and forced landed, the crew being taken prisoner. Nine aircraft returned next day, each with four 250 lb bombs. There was no damage from flak and a sole Fiat CR.32 which appeared sheered off when fired upon. No.223, however, lost K7747 which was damaged beyond repair by CR.42s over Gura.

*A Wellesley of No.47 Squadron takes-off from a Sudan airstrip*



On 14 June, No.14 lost K7743 when it was shot down by a CR.42 at Acico while on the 15th, No.223 suffered a series of mishaps. A flare igniting during loading wrote off L2711, L2654 failed to return from Gura and two more crash-landed on return.

The prominent bomb containers slung under the Wellesley's wing provided an ideal recognition feature so when K7742 began to patrol over Gedaref as a primitive form of AEW on the 17th, a trio of Gladiators from Summit, 12 miles away, failed to recognise it and riddled the wing and fuel tank before the identification flares went up. Terse signals were exchanged between the two units.

Asmara and Massawa continued to be targets for the Wellesleys while smaller bases were attacked from time to time. Nine aircraft from 14 and 223 Squadrons attacked fuel dumps near Massawa on 30 June and one of No.223's aircraft failed to return. Its identity is in doubt as the serial was not recorded and it is probably

*L2670, BF-L of No.14 Squadron, after landing, Beersheba*





*K7774 on delivery to No.223 Squadron in the Nubian Desert awaiting recovery*

one of several struck of charge on later dates. No.47 despatched five aircraft from Khartoum to shoot up Italian troops at Metemma and K7777 was shot down by ground fire. Next day, L2652 dropped out of a formation of three engaged in reconnaissance and it was later shot down by a CR.42.

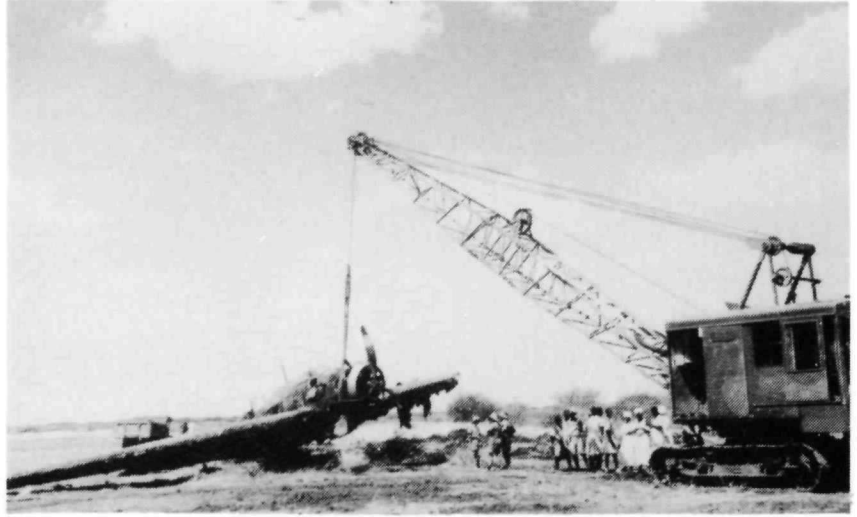
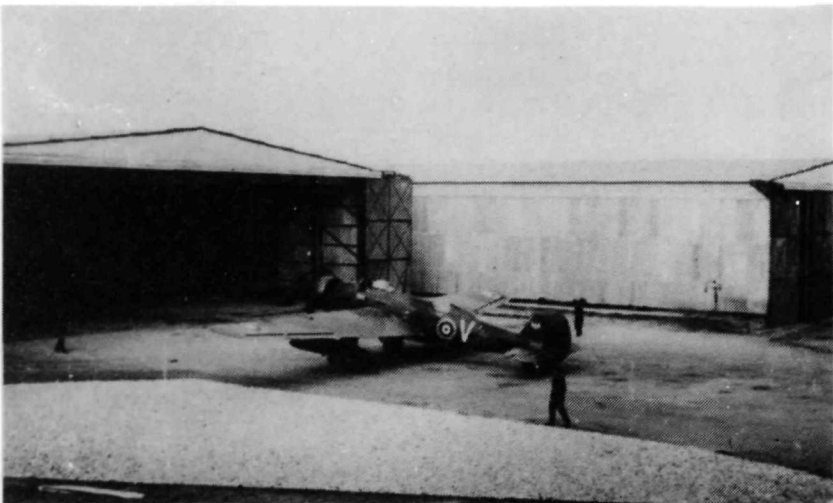
No.14 had done some modifying of the armament on its Wellesleys, initially by fitting a ventral gun and then by installing Lewis guns in the side windows. One of these spotted a S.81 on a reconnaissance mission and its pilot decided to convert to interceptor fighters forthwith. The forward-firing Vickers gun jammed so the crew resorted to broadsides in the best naval tradition. With three of its crew wounded the S-81 tried to forceland but hit the ground hard and bounced back into the air and made off low over the sea. After a further exchange of shots, the S-81 dived into the sea. On return, the Wellesley crew soon discovered that their fighter-like activities had been carried out with their bomb load still aboard.

On 12 July, both K8520 and L2667 were reported missing after an attack by eleven Wellesleys of 14 and 47 Squadrons on Massawa airfield. Four days later, L2641 collided with K7771 over Massawa and crashed, the second aircraft being badly damaged and subsequently struck off. L2661 of 223 Squadron was attacked by CR.32s at the same target on 23 July and badly damaged, being struck off two days later.

Another Wellesley was written off on 29 July when CR.32s damaged two of 223's aircraft during a raid near Massawa. K8524 was struck off on return as beyond repair.

An attack on Gura on 9 August was intercepted by fighters and K7756 of No.47 Squadron was damaged, its undercarriage collapsing on return

*L2655 outside the 14 Squadron hangars at Amman in 1939*



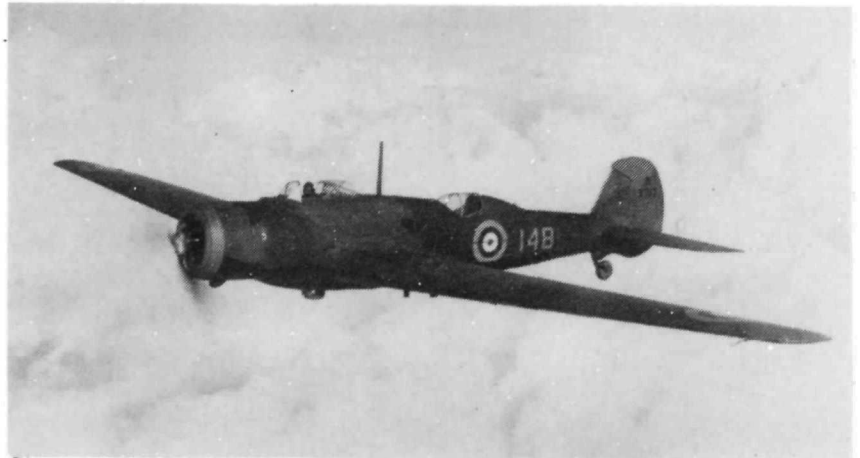
*Recovering a 223 Squadron Wellesley after night flying at Summit, probably K7747 on 12 June 1940*

resulting in the aircraft being written off. K7757 was reported lost on 15 August and was probably the aircraft that forcelanded after an engine fire while No.223 Squadron was moving to Aden on detachment on the 14th. It was found by Vincents at Dar Majahar and the crew reached safety.

L2703 was reported as ditched on 19 August but details are unknown. On the 26th, K7731 was shot down by fighters over Asmara while L2669 was the sole 14 Squadron Wellesley on reconnaissance over Harmil Island which met a gaggle of fighters and was forced to crashland on the island.

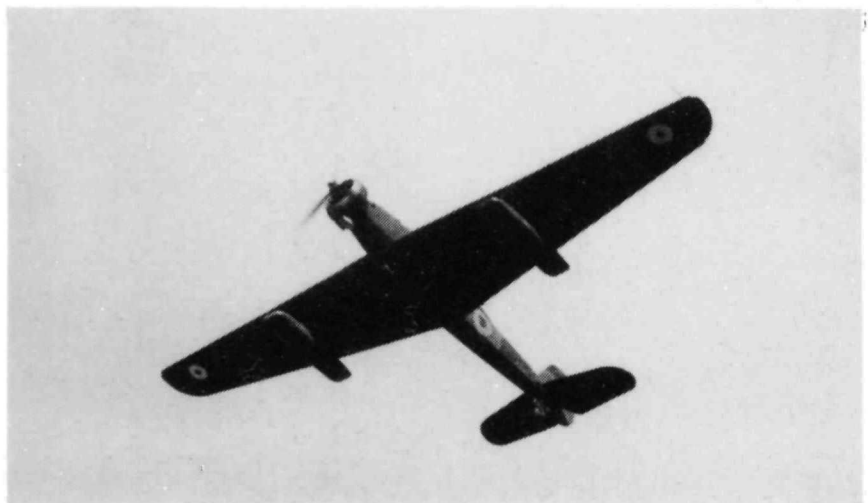
On 10 September, K7763, one of three of No.14 Squadron's aircraft bombing ground positions at Kassala, was shot down by two CR.42s. No.223 lost L2708 on the 16th when it failed to return from Gura. Fighter protection was provided on 5 October for a trio of No.47's Wellesleys bombing Gallabat in the shape of two Gauntlets!

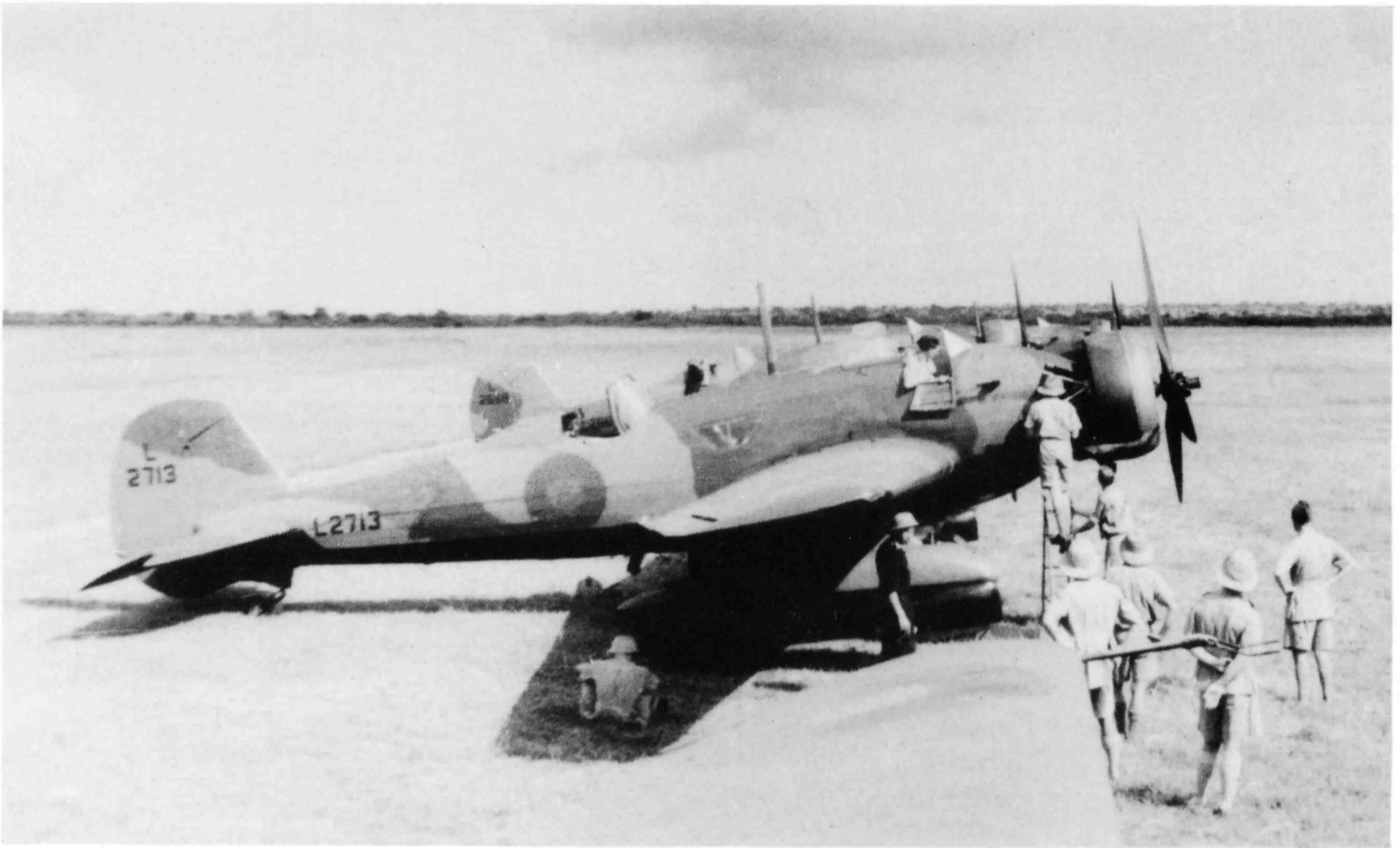
No.47 had been operating from an advanced airfield at Gedaref and on 16 October it found the



*K7717 of No.148 Squadron*

*One of 223 Squadron's aircraft over the Nairobi bombing range*





*No.223 Squadron's Wellesleys lined up at Juba on a transit flight between Nairobi and Summit in September 1939*

tables turned. A SM.79 with nine CR.42s turned up without warning and proceeded to demolish all eight of No.47's aircraft on the undefended airfield. These were K7742, K7762, K7779, K7781, L2650, L2675, L2677 and L2688 plus two of No.430 Flight's venerable Vincents, K4657 and K4731. Five days later, K7774 crashed on landing at Summit.

No.14 Squadron had been receiving a trickle of Blenheim IVs and flew its last Wellesley sortie on 26 November. As Blenheims arrived, its Well-lesleys were transferred to the two remaining squadrons. On 6 November, K7733 of 47 Squadron crashed on take-off from Blackdown airstrip and was written off. L2695 of 223 Squadron did not return from a night raid on Massawa on the 16th.

On 6 December, four Wellesleys of 47 Squadron were attacking the fort at Burie when CR.42s arrived and shot down K8521. Italian fighters operating at night claimed to have shot down a bomber on the night of 12/13 December and L2659 of No.47 Squadron is shown as missing on the 14th. Despite the attentions of Gladiators,

*A Wellesley undergoing maintenance at Khartoum; K2657??*



Gauntlets and Furies, the Italian fighters still operated from well-hidden lairs in the vastness of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The Wellesleys now operated mainly by night but during December they dropped supplies to Force 101, Orde Wingate's guerilla force that was the precursor of his Chindits in Burma. K7775 of No.47 Squadron was engaged in this task when it forced landed in the desert and had to be abandoned.

The new year saw the Wellesleys frequently in action without suffering any losses. February, however, brought casualties, K8525 failing to return from a reconnaissance on the 7th while on the 14th, K7788 of 223 Squadron was shot down by flak while attacking the Caproni workshops at Mai Edaga. On the 28th, K7765 of No.47 Squadron was shot down by flak over Burye. Accidents during the month claimed K7722 on the 6th, K7782 on the 11th and K7723 on the 18th.

The attack on the Italian stronghold at Keren was supported by regular bombing raids by both L2665 of No.14 Squadron after a forced landing in 1940





L2637 'U' and L2708 'W' of No.14 Squadron flying over Transjordan in the Spring of 1939. Lots of fresh air for the crew.

squadrons. K8527 was shot down by five CR.42 over Keren on 16 March and two days later the airfield at Agordat was attacked by five CR.42s and K7786 was destroyed. K7735 and K7725 were lost in crashes on the 5th and 20th respectively, all the aircraft coming from No.47 Squadron. Keren fell on 27 March and the back of Italian resistance in the north was broken. The much-bombed airfield at Asmara was captured on 1 April.

The port of Massawa was now untenable and the Italian destroyers based there put to sea on the 3rd. Unfortunately, HMS Eagle's Swordfish had flown down to Port Sudan while the carrier passed through the Suez Canal and sank two destroyers while damaging two more. One of these fell victim to Blenheims of 14 Squadron and was beached. The two remaining destroyers were beached on the Saudi Arabian coast and No.223 joined No.14 in bombing them. The destroyer 'Kingston' arrived later to finish them off.

The action cost No.223 two of its remaining Wellesleys as K7720 forced landed 15 miles south of Jeddah. K8530 landed to help and tipped up. Other Wellesleys then landed and picked up the crews, both aircraft being set on fire since Saudi Arabia was neutral territory and it saved a lot of diplomatic correspondence.

K7736, 'A' of 35 Squadron at Thorney Island in 1937



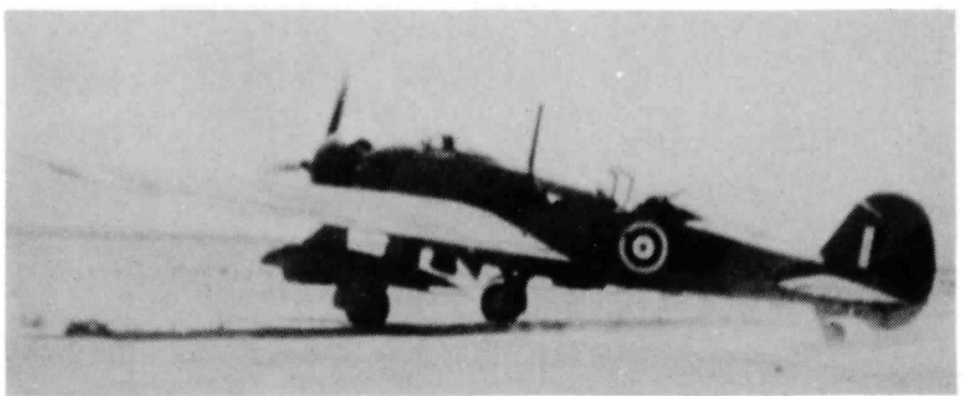
During April, Italian resistance in Ethiopia crumbled and the capital, Addis Ababa, was captured by South African troops, enabling the ex-Emperor, Haile Selassie, to return. He had, incidentally, flown back to join his guerilla forces some months earlier in a 47 Squadron Wellesley.

The needs of the Royal Air Force in Egypt resulted in No.223 Squadron being transferred north during April, leaving its remaining aircraft behind for No.47 Squadron.

As ground forces and the majority of RAF and SAAF squadrons were withdrawn for service in Egypt, the remaining Italian troops were contained mainly by Ethiopian irregulars, apart from the large concentrations at Gondar and Amba Alagi. Some CR.42s still flew and as late as 2 July, L2713 was shot down by a CR.42 while bombing Gondar, the last Wellesley to be lost.

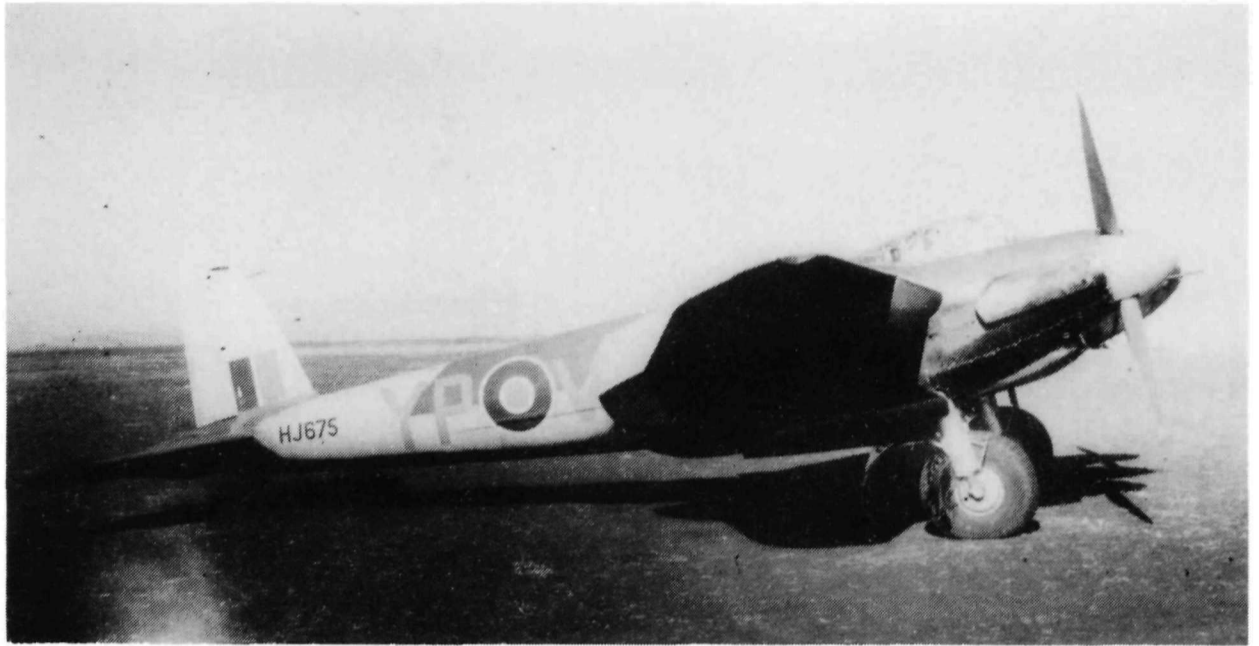
No.47 moved to Egypt in December and continued to fly Wellesleys on anti-submarine patrols. It converted to Beauforts in July 1942 but retained a Wellesley flight until it was disbanded on 3 March 1943. For anti-submarine duties, 250-lb depth charges were slung under the bomb containers. Long after it had been dismissed as obsolete, the Wellesley had finally retired.

L2645 'B' on one of the last Wellesley operations with 47 Squadron, Burg-el-Arab, April 1942. Note 250 lb DC on pods.





## R.A.F. LITTLE SNORING



*Mosquito VI HJ675 YP-V of No.23 Squadron at Little Snoring*

Set in the quiet of the Norfolk countryside seven miles inland from the north coast of the county, Little Snoring seems the epitome of the quaintly-named RAF airfield. But in the later years of World War Two, Norfolk was no quiet haven as the operational airfields of both the Royal Air Force and US Army Air Forces lay almost side-by-side throughout East Anglia.

The site was selected in 1942 as a satellite airfield for Foulsham and work continued until July 1943 when it was declared open to traffic. As was normal for the times, there was no very good reason to pick a specific date since work was still in progress but the Air Ministry was persuaded that there was only an outside chance of an aircraft meeting a steam roller on the runway. This was celebrated on the 25th by a B-17 from Snetterton Heath crashlanding beside the runway.

On 23 July 1943, Little Snoring was transferred from No.2 to No.3 Group and became independent of its planned parent station. There were two runways ready for use but the operations block and control tower were still unfinished, the latter being occupied on 9 August.

The first lodger was No.15 Glider Maintenance Section of No.249 Maintenance Unit at Snailwell to look after the storage of a consignment of 32 Horsas. Many operational airfields had parks of gliders awaiting their day of glory. On 5 August, the day after Station Headquarters were taken over from the builders, two Lancaster IIs of No.115 Squadron arrived from East Wretham. Next day, 22 more flew in and the ground party marched in. Four days later, the squadron despatched fourteen aircraft on the station's first operation - to Nurnberg.

At the same time, No.1678 Heavy Conversion Unit moved in, its task being to convert crews to Lancaster IIs which equipped only a small number of squadrons. As with all training units there was a danger to the local populace. When DS608 overshot the main runway, it fell on to the Little Snoring - Great Snoring road. While salvage parties were clearing the wreckage, DS670 trundled down the runway, failed to get airborne and crashed into the wreckage! DS825 broke a lot of windows when it crashed on take-off and three mines went up while the crew ran for it.

No.1678 was not just a conversion unit; as part of the course, crews went out on mine-laying sorties. On 16 September 1943, the unit moved out to Foulsham. No.115 continued its raids until it moved to Witchford on 26 November 1943.

The harbingers of a new role for Little Snoring arrived on 28 November 1943 in the shape of No.1473 (Radio Countermeasures) Flight from Feltwell with its Mosquitoes. It did not stay long and departed for Foulsham on 12 December.

On 7 December 1943, the station was handed over by No.3 Group to No.100 (Special Duties) Group. The new formation had been formed to coordinate the activities of the bomber support units which had developed various methods of baffling the German defences, from interfering with enemy radar to issuing contradictory orders to enemy night fighters.

From 8 December, Little Snoring was invaded by aircraft and ground crews from several units. No.169 Squadron arrived from Ayr with its Mosquito IIs and the first batch of No.1692 (Special Duties) Flight flew in with six Defiants from Drem. Five of their Beaufighters arrived on 13 December and the flight was complete by the 14th.

The SD Flight's task was to train crews from Nos.169 and 239 Squadrons on 'Serrate' before they set off to hunt German night fighters over their own territory, thus distracting them from their prime task, to say the least.

On 15 December, No.515 Squadron came in from Hunsdon with a mixture of Beaufighters, Beauforts and Blenheim Vs. The last two were non-operational types used for training and development work. No.515 were old hands at electronic warfare, having started out with Defiants which the Telecommunications Research Establishment had fitted with radar jamming devices from October 1942 under the code name 'Moonshine'. The Defiants were left behind when the squadron moved to Little Snoring and the Beaufighters were replaced by Mosquitoes for operational use in February 1944.

The state of the squadrons in January 1944 was not good. They were only up to 50% of their nominal strength and the general condition of No.169's equipment was described as 'poor'. In this they were fortunate as No.515 and 1692 Flight's status was deemed to be 'appalling'. Most of the aircraft were old and the Defiants of No.1692 Flight were distributed among Nos.141 169 and 239 Squadrons as reserves.

Group Captain L.C.Slee took over as CO on 6 February and during the month more Horsas were towed in by Whitleys. An odd unit based at Little Snoring between 21 February and 27 April was the 'Special American Flight' with two P-51s and two P-38s.



Little Snoring airfield facing north-east with Little Snoring village in the foreground. Photograph taken shortly after closure. Only one of the five main hangars remains. Two of the runways were 1,400 yds and one of 2,000 yds, 50 yds wide. The airfield's position was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles NE of Fakenham at Latitude 52.21.38 North, 00.54.45 East.



*Mosquito of No.23 Squadron*

At the beginning of February, No.1692 Flight handed in its Defiants in exchange for Beau-fighter VIs and between 15 and 22 March, 18 Mosquito VIs arrived from Hatfield for No.515 Squadron whose crews were doubtless overcome by the sight of nil-houred aircraft. In April, No.169 Squadron's turn came when a further eighteen Mosquito VIs arrived and were ferried off to No.218 MU Colerne for installation of their black boxes.

The necklace of Horsas around the peritrack disappeared early in April, the last being tugged out on 8 April. They missed the visit by the Luftwaffe on the night of 19/20 April when anti-personnel bombs were scattered around the centre of the airfield. Twenty-two of them failed to explode and had to be dealt with by bomb disposal teams. Nobody was hurt and no damage was done except to the grass.

No.169 Squadron had been flying sorties against the German night fighter force since 20 January and No.515 joined in from 6 April. The toll of Bf 110s and Ju 88s began to grow as the Mosquitoes homed in on the German night fighters' radar emissions. When gadgets were fitted to warn of the approach of a Mosquito from astern, they homed in on them too. Not content with lurking around German airfields at night, No.515 took to day intruding from time to time.

On 3 June, the advance party of No.169 Squadron and six Mosquitoes left for its new base at Great Massingham, followed by the remainder of the squadron on the following day. During May, fifteen Mosquito VIs arrived for No.23 Squadron and on 2 June the first of its ground personnel began to arrive. No.23 had been the first RAF intruder squadron when it flew its Blenheims over France and Belgium at the end

of 1940. It also claimed to be the premier Mosquito intruder squadron in the Mediterranean, a claim helped by the fact that it had been the only Mosquito intruder squadron in the Mediterranean.

On 5 July, No.23 despatched its Mosquitoes for the first time on intruder missions from Little Snoring and the station's aircraft put in claims for six enemy night fighters destroyed. A change of operation came on 11 August when six of No.515's Mosquitoes provided fighter escort for No.5 Group Lancasters carrying out a daylight raid on Bordeaux. The Mosquitoes refuelled at Winkleigh before picking up the bombers. The operation was repeated on the 12th and 13th.

Two of No.515's Mosquitoes went astray on 30 September. NS993 and PZ440 were on a day intruder mission to the area between Munich and Vienna and had shot up a pair of seaplanes identified as Do 22s on the Chiemsee while looking for targets at Prien. On the way back 993 suffered an engine failure and both found themselves intercepted by fat Messerschmitts which on closer examination turned out to be D-3801s in Swiss markings. Both Mosquitoes put down at Dubendorf and were subsequently turned over to the Swiss Air Force, the crews being classed as 'shipwrecked mariners' and eligible for repatriation. Allied armies on the French-Swiss border made this easier than in the past.

Early in October, a dozen Mosquitoes from No.515 and 23 Squadrons went to Dallachy to escort a raid on the Bergen U-boat pens by Lancasters. Various new bits of electronics with names like 'Monica' and 'ASH' appeared from the shelves of 218 MU. On 26/27 February 1945, five B-24s of the 492nd Bomb Group of the 8th

Air Force went on a supply drop to resistance forces in Denmark and along went no less than 24 Mosquitoes from Little Snoring as escort. During March, anti-flak patrols were added to the long distance 'Ranger', night intruder and bomber escort tasks.

One last gasp by the Luftwaffe came on 20 March 1945 when a German intruder fired a two-second burst over the airfield, at what remaining unclear. The local searchlight located the culprit and the nearby flak claimed to have winged it.

On 2 May 1945, the Little Snoring squadrons flew their last operation. Ten Mosquitoes of No.23 went looking for targets at Hohn and Flensburg airfields while nine of No.515 did the same at Sylt and Jagel.

No.515 Squadron disbanded on 10 June 1945 and was replaced by No.141 Squadron on 3 July with its Mosquito NF.30s and their bulbous AI noses. They did not stay long as No.141 was disbanded on 7 September and its aircraft flown off to maintenance units.

On 25 October, the airfield was declared closed to flying and on 17 December it was transferred from Bomber Command to Maintenance Command, becoming No.112 Sub Storage Unit of No.274 MU at Swannington. On 28 September 1946, the airfield became alive again as 69 Mosquitoes were prepared for flying out. All had gone by 29 November but on 20 July 1951, No.2 Civilian Anti-Aircraft Cooperation Unit was formed and flew its Spitfire LF.16s until it moved to Langham on 23 March 1953 and the RAF presence at Little Snoring ended.

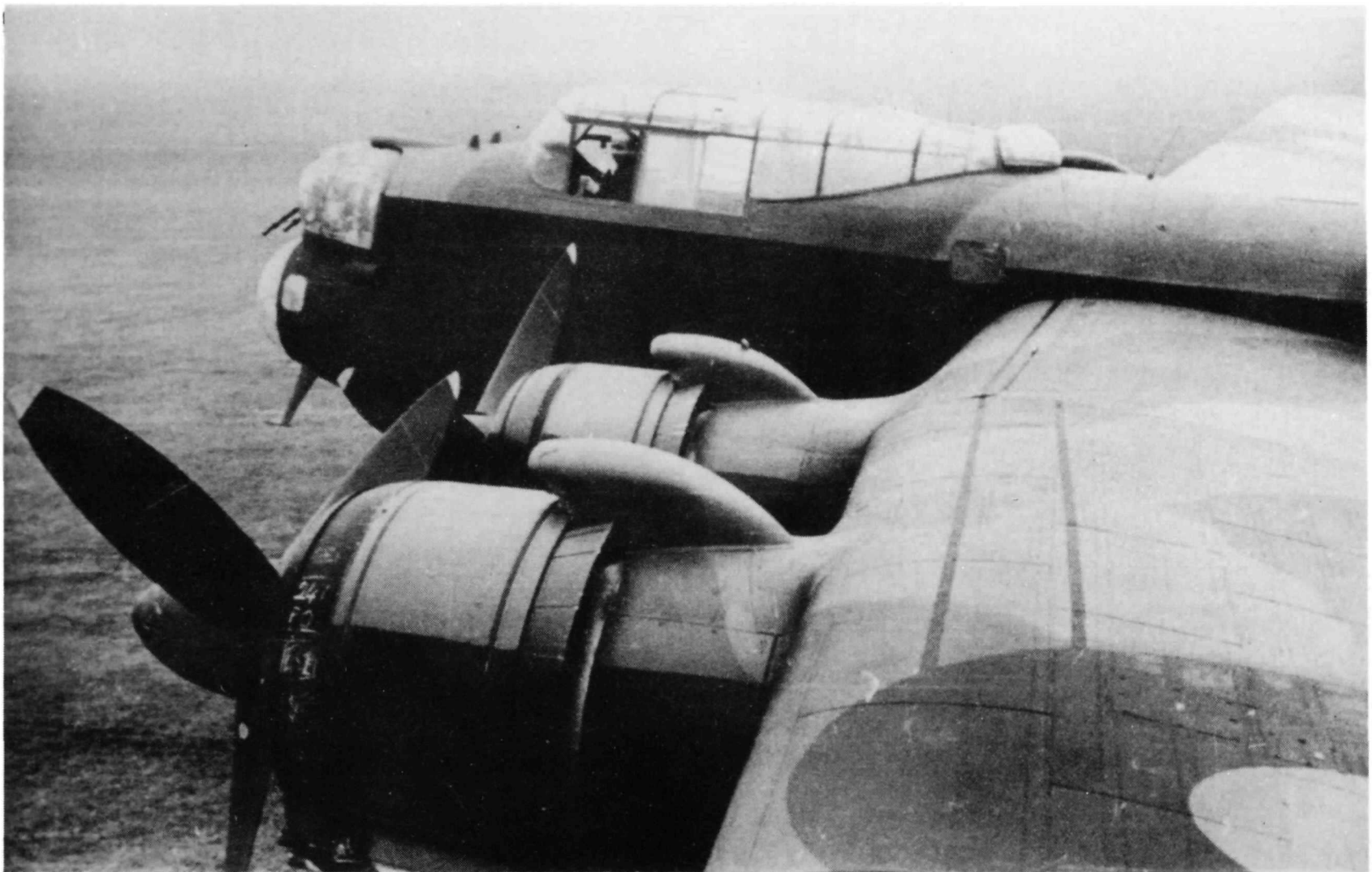
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#### UNITS BASED AT LITTLE SNORING

Unit	From	Date in	Date out	To	Aircraft
No.115 Squadron	East Wretham	6.8.43	- 26.11.43	Witchford	Lancaster II
No.1678 HC Flt	East Wretham	6.8.43	- 16.9.43	Foulsham	Lancaster II
No.1473 (RCM) Flt	Feltwell	28.11.43	- 12.12.43	Foulsham	Mosquito IV
No.169 Squadron	Ayr	8.12.43	- 4.6.44	Great Massingham	Mosquito II,VI
No.1692 (SD) Flt	Drem	8-14.12.43	- 22.5.44	Great Massingham	Defiant/Beaufighter
No.515 Squadron	Hunsdon	15.12.43	- 10.6.45	Disbanded	Beaufighter II/ Mosquito II, VI
No.23 Squadron	Mediterranean	2.6.44	- 25.9.45	Disbanded	Mosquito VI
No.141 Squadron	West Raynham	3.7.45	- 7.9.45	Disbanded	Mosquito NF.30
No.112 SSU	Formed	17.12.45	- 20.12.46	Swannington	-
No.2 CAACU	Formed	20.7.51	- 23.3.53	Langham	Spitfire LF.16E

\* \* \* \* \*

*The Lancaster II powered by Bristol Hercules engines was built in small numbers but equipped the Little Snoring units.*



## KINGFISHERS



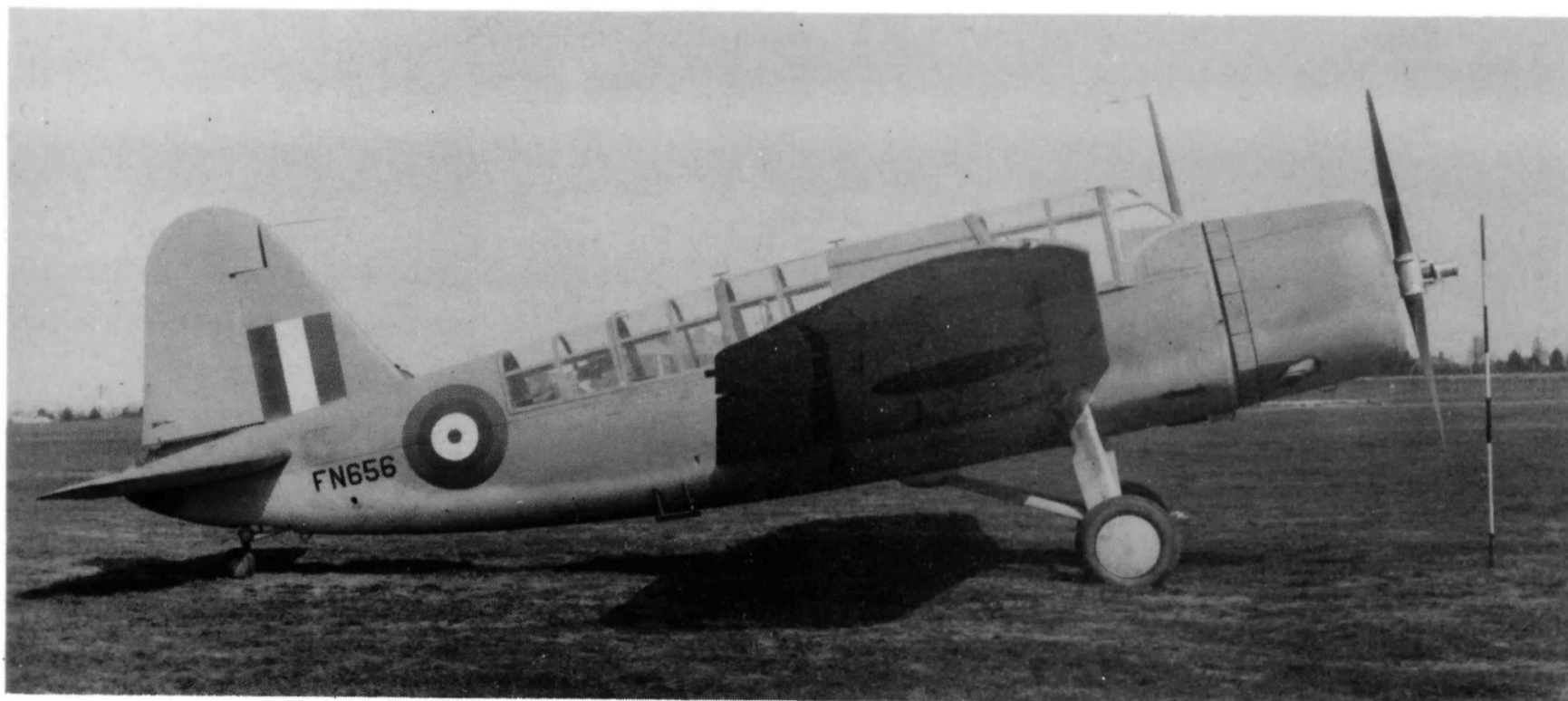
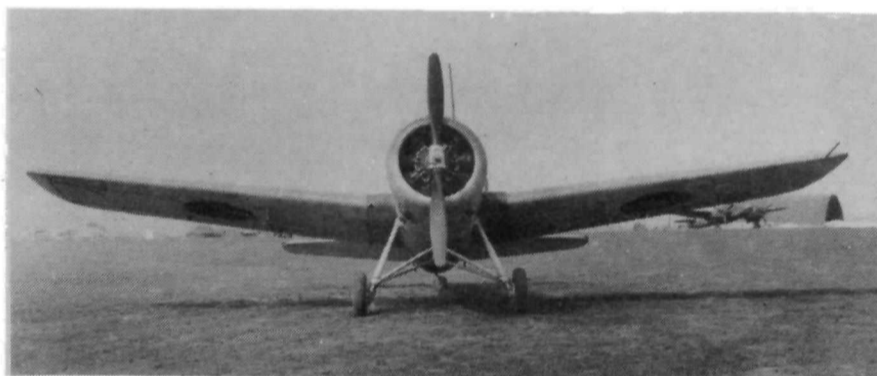
At the beginning of 1942, capital ships of the Royal Navy still carried a gaggle of catapult aircraft, mainly Walruses. Aboard cruisers, some Seafoxes still lingered on and both types were awaiting their replacement, the Sea Otter. but it would be 1943 before this became available and then not as catapult aircraft.

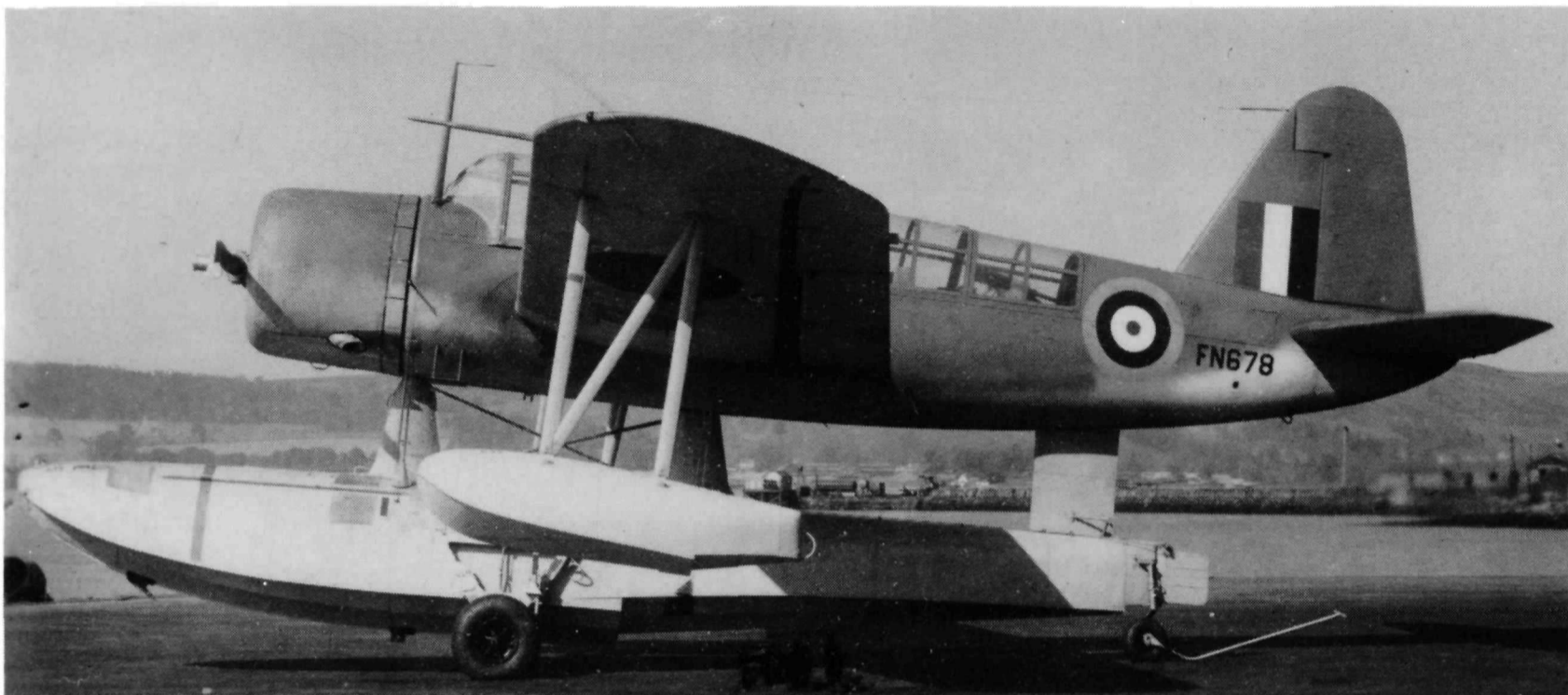
A possible replacement had been in view for some time. The Vought OS2U had flown on 20 July 1938 and the first entered service with the US Navy in August 1940. It was a sturdy single-float monoplane designed for catapulting and would make a useful replacement for the light Seafoxes which were operating mainly from merchant cruisers in areas hopefully remote from enemy warships, extending the horizon in the endless search for German commerce raiders. The major problem was extracting some from the US Navy who wanted them to both replace the SOC

Seagulls aboard ships and to equip new coastal reconnaissance units for anti-submarine patrols.

Both the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment and the Marine Aircraft Experimental Establishment got their hands on two Kingfishers in May 1942, for testing in both landplane and floatplane configurations.

The A&AEE's example was FN656 although they later tested FN615 between August and October 1942. The aircraft had a 450 hp Pratt & Whitney R-985-AN-2 engine and was flown at a loaded weight of about 4,900 lbs. It was found to be easy to fly in all flight conditions except when the engine was cut; then the elevator trimmer was found to have insufficient range to permit the aircraft to be flown hands-off below 90 mph. It had a good all-round view except when taxiing. The seating was comfortable and noise was reason-





able.

Access to both cockpits was found to be easy but the need to enter the pilot's cockpit via the leading edge of the wing brought a warning about the danger of falling into the propeller disc. There was no cockpit heating, which was a drawback for operations in northern waters.

Performance testing resulted in the following characteristics being plotted: a maximum speed of 171 mph at 3,900 ft, service ceiling 15,500 ft and an estimated absolute ceiling of 17,000 ft. The Kingfisher would take-off in 215 yards in zero wind conditions. Give it a 20 mph wind and it was airborne in 65 yards, which was a useful figure should it be decided to put the Kingfishers on escort carriers.

The rate of climb was not brilliant, 6.7 minutes to 5,000 ft but it was not a type which would be expected to operate at any great height. Should anyone wish to get up to 15,000 feet, it would take 33.4 minutes!

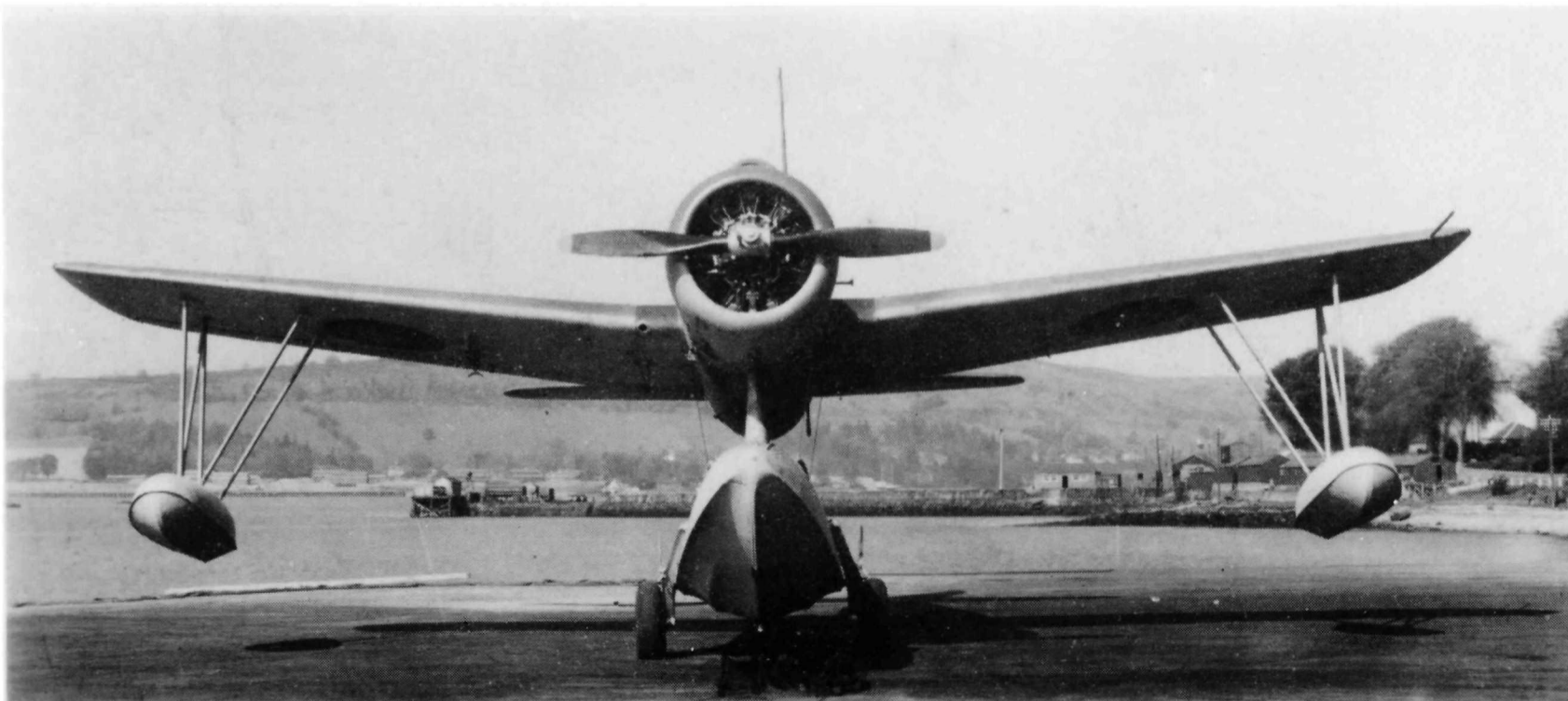
One snag which the US Navy had not advised was the tendency for carbon monoxide to gather in the cockpits. This had entered the fuselage via a hole around the tail wheel mounting and a temporary seal was fitted. It was recommended

that a permanent modification be incorporated which would seal the fuselage at the rear bulkhead.

As an anti-submarine aircraft, the Kingfisher was adapted to take two 250 lb depth charges which brought the total weight up to 5,435 lb and promptly dropped the rate of climb to 440 ft per minute instead of 800. It now took 11.6 minutes to reach 5,000 ft - even without a float! The maximum speed dropped to 163 mph and the service ceiling to 11,600 ft. The take-off run lengthened to 310 yards in zero wind and 105 yards in a 20 mph wind.

The test pilots regarded the take-off and climb as not good but acceptable. The aircraft still handled well.

Meanwhile, up in Scotland the MAEE was splashing around off Helesburgh in FN678. Flight testing ran from the 6th to 13th of May 1942 and the floatplane version topped out at 5,350 lb. Being nautically minded, the Establishment recorded the maximum speed as 137 kts at sea level. The initial rate of climb was 566 ft per minute - at least they did not measure altitude in fathoms - and the service ceiling was 15,600 feet. Take-off time was 36.6 seconds and the range calculated as 485 nautical miles.





For take-off, the ailerons could be drooped, thus providing additional lift to augment the flaps. Aileron control was then shifted to a pair of spoilers on the top surface of the wing just forward of the ailerons. These were found to be effective and the aileron controls were themselves light and responsive.

Tests were also carried out with 250 lb depth charges aboard in September 1942 with similar results to the land-based Kingfisher. Standard armament was one fixed 0.30 gun firing forward and a second on a mounting in the rear cockpit.

Once the Kingfisher was in operational service with the Royal Navy, reports began to come in criticising the amount of spray which was thrown up during taxiing in other than calm water. This was causing excessive corrosion to the engine and damage to propeller blades,

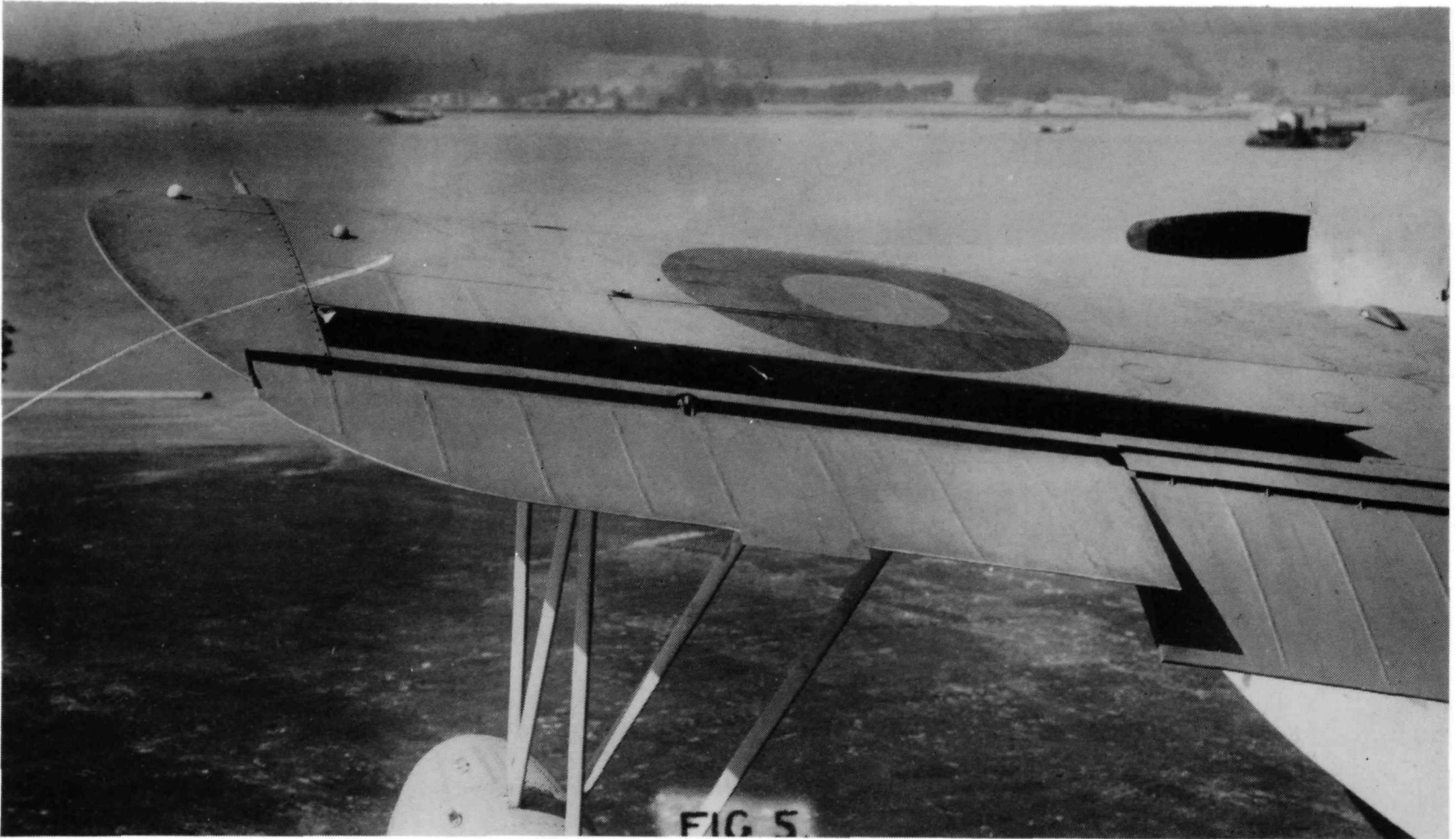
To alleviate the problem, deflector strips of 12 swg sheet were fitted 1½ inches wide along the chine at the nose of the float on each side. This reduced the amount of spray but in rough water a lot of spray was still thrown up at all speeds.

By the time the Kingfisher was cleared for service with the Royal Navy, the need for catapult aircraft in capital ships had been overtaken by radar. The idea of seaplanes being catapulted to spot the fall of shot had gone and it was left to a dozen armed merchant cruisers to give the Kingfisher an operational home.

German and Japanese commerce raiders were still at large in the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans and AMC's had the ceaseless task of locating these, so relieving the pressure on the Fleet's cruisers. The Kingfishers could patrol far beyond the vision of a crow's nest and could direct its ship to any suspicious vessel while being able to scrutinise it for hidden weapons. The essence of commerce raiding was concealment and many of the German raiders were heavily armed and capable of sinking converted liners used as AMCs.

No.703 Squadron had the responsibility of furnishing the AMCs with aircraft and in addition supplied the light cruisers 'Emerald' and 'Enterprise'. These two elderly cruisers were busy in the search for surface raiders, the latter belying its age by chasing a blockade





runner into the Bay of Biscay before disposing of a couple of heavy destroyers that rashly came out to escort the blockade runner into one of the Biscay ports.

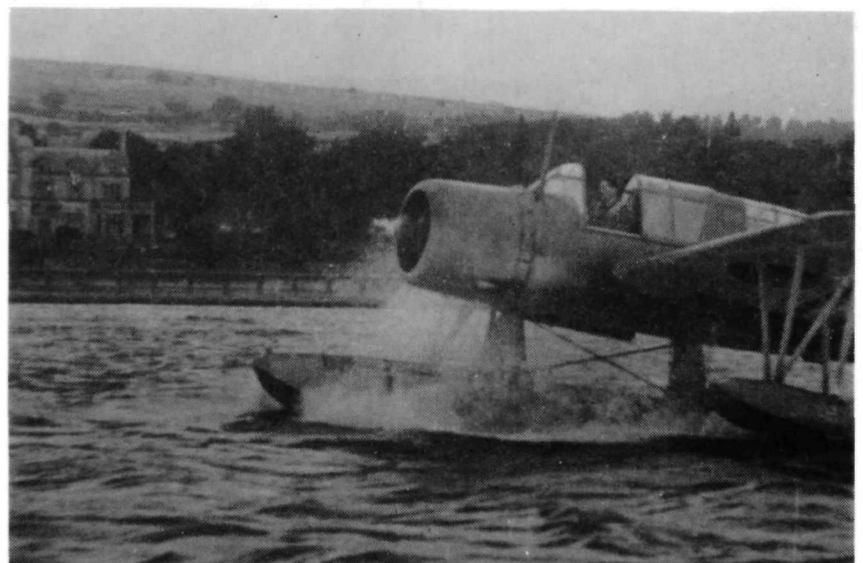
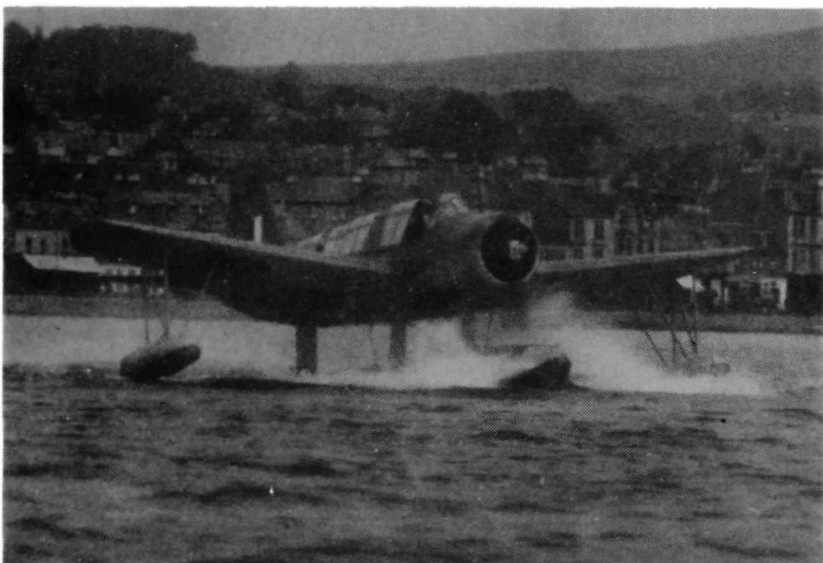
Most of the British-based Kingfishers were used for training, in common with its less-successful sister, the Seamew.

Unlike the Seamew, however, the Kingfisher was used almost entirely in its natural element, the main users being Nos.764 and 765 Squadrons at Lawrenny Ferry and Sandbanks respectively. The former was upriver from Pembroke Dock and Sandbanks is on the spit at the eastern arm of the entrance to Poole Harbour in Dorset. Logically, both stations are now sailing clubs.

These two squadrons trained Fleet Air Arm pilots on seaplanes and had been previously almost entirely equipped with Walruses. Another unit was No.740 Squadron at Arbroath which had landplane Kingfishers for observer training to supplement the ubiquitous Walruses.

In South Africa, No.726 Squadron at Durban used a few Kingfishers for miscellaneous tasks while at Wingfield, the civil airport for Cape Town, No.789, a Fleet Requirements Unit, also had a few.

The 100 Kingfishers supplied (FN650-FN749) went out of service after 1943 apart from a few retained for communications and odd jobs. In the US Navy they had seen extensive service aboard capital ships and cruisers as well as for coastal patrols, over 1,200 being built. It was the standard seaplane trainer for the US Navy after initial training in N3Ns.





## THE FRANKS SUIT



*Seafire IIs of No.885 Squadron operating from 'Formidable' during 'Torch'*

The landings in French North Africa known as Operation 'Torch' marked the end of the defensive phase for the Allies and with the war beginning to turn against the Axis, this operation opened up a new concept of warfare, mass landings by a seaborne force.

In total, there were seven carriers with thirty-seven Albacores and 137 other types embarked. It was during these landings that the Fleet Air Arm first used its new carrier fighter, the Seafire, in numbers, these being flown by No.885 Squadron in 'Formidable' and Nos.801 and 807 Squadrons in 'Furious'.

'Formidable' was part of Force 'H', a strong task force of carriers and capital ships employed to cover the landings from any possible interference from the Italian fleet with 'Furious' taking a very active part in the landing at Oran by providing air cover. It was during these landings that the Seafire carried out its work using equipment which was very much secret at the time, namely the ability to perform aerobatic manoeuvres which had long been deemed impossible without the pilot blacking out due to the enormous stresses on the human body entailed by pulling out of a dive rapidly or twisting and turning violently at high speed.

The secret was the use of a Franks Flying Suit (technically an anti-G suit) and the development and eventual triumph of this product forms one of the more dramatic chapters of the entire war. Aviators had realised that ever since the early Schneider Trophy days, continuous improvement in the performance of fighter aircraft was bound to bring about a stage when any increase in high speed manoeuvring of aircraft would be of little value if man, with his limited physical resistance to black-out, remained unprotected against the ever-increasing forces he would be called upon to meet.

Aeronautical physiologists had for a long time been concentrating on this problem which had killed many pilots. The importance of this needed no emphasis as it was clearly seen that protection against these forces, even if only in a small way, would give superiority in air warfare to the side first protected. The reason why British pilots could go through such man-

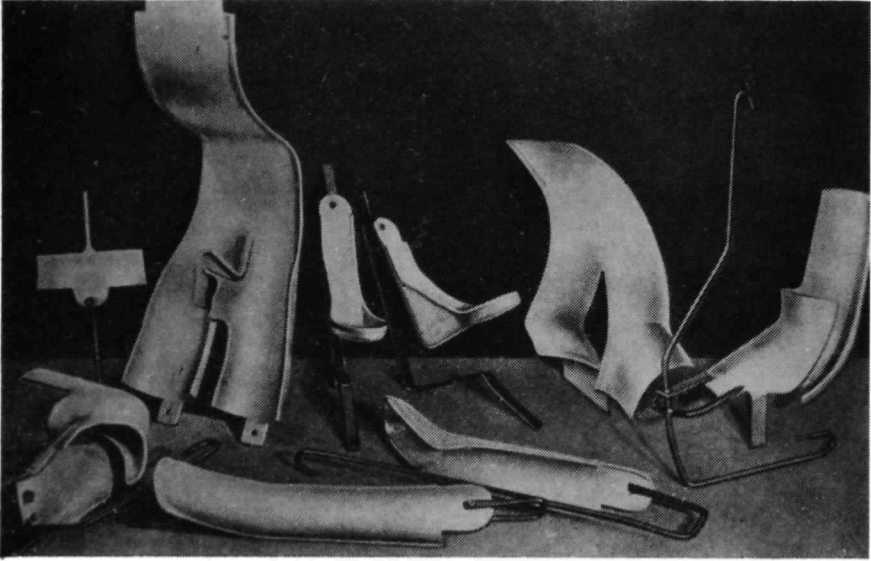
oeuvres was one of the best-kept secrets of the Second World War, a great credit to not only the service personnel who made the numerous and exhaustive tests and carried out intensive training but also to the loyalty and abstention from careless talk on the part of operatives and staff at the Dunlop Company who made the achievement possible.

As far as can be explained without recourse to technical and scientific language, the Franks flying suit was invented to prevent a downward rush of blood from the head to the lower body extremities caused by the centrifugal force set up during violent flight manoeuvres which robbed the heart of its normal supply of blood. This in turn reduced the pressure in the small capillaries at the back of the eye against the normal constant pressure within the eyeball, causing loss of vision - first a greying of the sight and then complete darkness or blackout.

The idea of this suit was to balance the increased internal pressure in a pilot's body by applying an equal one externally. The first experiments of such a method were demonstrated on mice in Canada in 1939 by Dr.W.R.Franks (later to become Wing Commander) then doing medical research at the University of Toronto.

In those early days he enlisted the help of Dunlop's Canadian company and in 1940 built the first suit tailored to fit himself and so successful was the general principle that the following year all work was transferred to Dunlop's UK factories in Manchester. In September 1941, a development contract for the first fifty suits, known as the Mk.I, was placed by the Ministry of Aircraft Production with the Dunlop General Rubber Goods Division and arrangements made for service representation, headed by Dr.Franks, then a Flight Lieutenant, and J.B.Wilson of the RAF Physiological Laboratory to cooperate in carrying out the contract.

First, a department of Dunlop known as their Special Products Division was authorised to design and produce experimentally a cloth to form the outer cover of the suit that had to be strong with a textile strength of at least 200 lbs per square inch, virtually indestructible and, most importantly, light in weight,



*The aluminium frames used to produce the latex water bags*  
 a difficult specification. However, with the assistance of their own textile laboratory and cotton mills at Rochdale, a cloth was produced. To make it into a required form by sewing the seams caused further problems. Several weeks later, repeated tests showed that a natural rubber weld of pure latex after vulcanisation was in fact stronger than the actual cloth. Inner bags to contain a liquid, in this case water as it had a density almost equal to that of blood, were no problem as Dunlop were well known for this type of product. Initial tests showed that almost one gallon of water would be required for each suit.

These fifty suits were made in three sizes which it was hoped would be sufficient to cover the majority of aircrew shapes but sadly this was not the answer as just about every pilot seemed to have a different body size and all the work was wasted. However, with manufacturing techniques being perfected, a further batch of suits in seven sizes was laid down after measuring no fewer than 750 persons. At first the pilot tried on each suit as it was being made but time was at a premium and inflatable rubber dummy figures were produced on to which the suits were fitted. By the autumn of 1942 when the first pilots were being fitted out, one hundred substantial changes had been made to the design and methods of construction, involving the working out of 1,200 different pat-

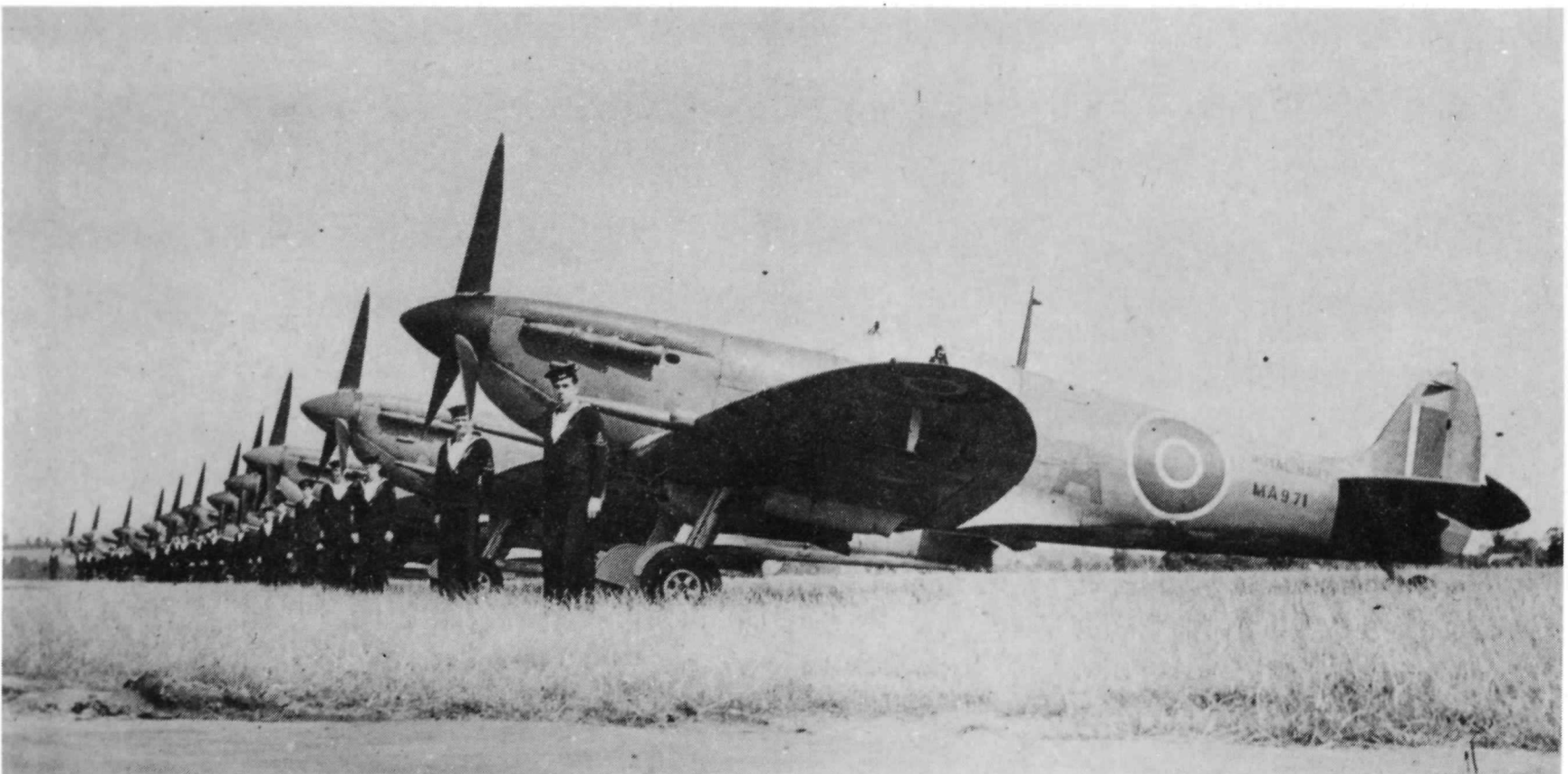


*The Franks Suit fitted to a dummy*

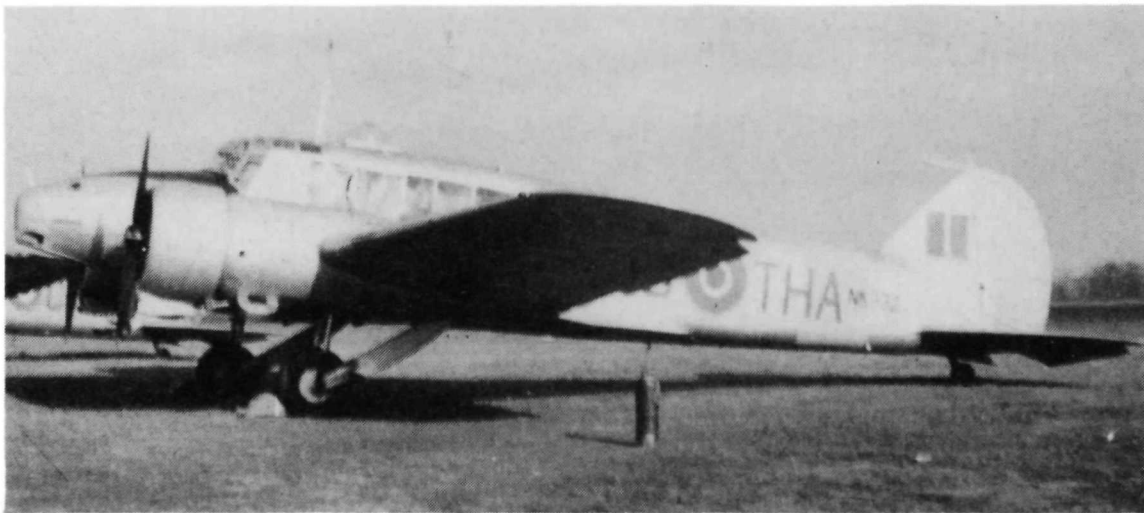
terns before a final range of no less than 266 sizes was perfected, an indication of the various shapes of pilot!

Production contracts were placed for several thousand of these early type anti-G suits that had taken just over a year to produce to RAF requirements. During research for this article, reference was found that in a situation where a pilot crashed in territory where water was a precious commodity, he could be expected to drink the contents of his suit....

*A line-up of Seafire IIs of No.807 Squadron at Yeovilton prior to its embarkation for Operation 'Torch'*



# TECHNICAL TRAINING COMMAND CODES 1946 - 51



*Anson C.10 NK932 THA-B of Station Flight, Halton*

Unit codes for RAF aircraft were initially introduced in 1938 for use on squadron aircraft. They comprised a two-letter symbol denoting the squadron, and a single letter identifying the particular aircraft within that squadron, these codes being painted either side of the fuselage roundel. Their use was soon extended to other units within operational Commands.

Shortly after the end of World War II, the system was again extended, to embrace aircraft of non-operational Commands. Each Command had its own system of allocation, but all used three-letter unit codes, of which the first letter denoted the relevant Command. Thus in the case of Flying Training Command the codes all commenced

with the letter 'F', those of Reserve Command with the letter 'R' and those of Technical Training Command with the letter 'T'. In most cases an individual letter was also used, though there were exceptions to this. The application of the codes varied, sometimes being painted in a complete sequence, but more usually broken by the fuselage roundel. The individual letter was sometimes hyphenated from the unit code.

Listed below are all known examples of codes used by aircraft of Technical Training Command between about March 1946, when the system is believed to have been introduced, until the Spring of 1951 when it was dropped. Additions from readers to this list would be welcome.

#### **TAL - Aldermaston Communications Flight**

Connotation - based Aldermaston  
No evidence this code was ever used.

#### **TBR - RAF Staff College Flight**

Connotation - College based BRacknell.  
This communications element is believed to have been based at White Waltham.

Codes:

TBR-A V3742 Oxford	TBR-L TE199 Spitfire F.16
TBR-B T1389 Oxford	TBR-L JF275 Spitfire F.18
TBR-C V3513 Oxford	TBR-M LB344 Auster AOP.3
TBR-D HG719 Dominie	TBR-R HM344 Proctor C.3
TBR-E HM293 Proctor C.3	TBR-R X7398 Dominie
TBR-H DX236 Proctor C.3	TBR N3805 Magister
TBR-K L6907 Magister	TBR T9830 Magister

#### **TCA - No.1 Radio School**

Connotation - based Cranwell (North)  
Codes:

TCA-B PP214 Halifax B.6	TCA-V NP286 Proctor C.4
TCA-B RG874 Halifax B.6	TCA-W NP158 Proctor C.4
TCA-C RG875 Halifax B.6	TCA-Y NP280 Proctor C.4
TCA-D RG876 Halifax B.6	TCA-Z NP244 Proctor C.4
TCA-Q NP223 Proctor C.4	

*Anson C.12 NL171 THA-A of Station Flight, Halton*



#### **TCE - Station Flight Carew Cheriton**

Connotation - based CarEw Cheriton  
No evidence this code was ever used.

#### **TCN - Station Flight Cranwell**

Connotation - based CraNwell (North)  
Codes:

TCN-B HM302 Proctor C.3

#### **TCO - Station Flight Cosford**

Connotation - based Cosford

Codes:

TCO-B NL760 Tiger Moth TCO EG190 Anson I

#### **TCR - No.1 Radio School**

Connotation - based Cranwell (North)

TCR-A NP178 Proctor C.3	TCR-H HN472 Oxford
TCR-A NP183 Proctor C.3	TCR-K DE975 Tiger Moth
TCR-A VV365 Anson T.22	TCR-L NP163 Proctor C.3
TCR-B NP282 Proctor C.3	TCR-M NP228 Proctor C.3
TCR-B VV366 Anson T.22	TCR-N NP230 Proctor C.3
TCR-C NP234 Proctor C.3	TCR-O NP337 Proctor C.3
TCR-C NR678 Dominie	TCR-Q HG692 Dominie
TCR-D Proctor C.3	TCR-R HG729 Dominie
TCR-F NP263 Proctor C.3	TCR-U NR678 Dominie
TCR-G MX452 Proctor C.3	

*Spitfire PR.11 PL993 TOC-D of No.1 OATS*





*Oxford T.1 NM356 TDE-G of the Empire Radio School*

**TCW - Station Flight Carew Cheriton**

Connotation - based Carew Cheriton  
No evidence this code was ever used.

**TDE - Empire Radio School**

Connotation - based DEbden  
Formed 7.3.46 from Nos 12 and 14 Radio Schools at Debden. Became the Signals Division of the RAF Technical College on 20.10.49, and continued to use code TDE until 1951 when it changed to 'S'.

Codes:

TDE-A EG642 Anson I	TDE-E LT154 Anson I
TDE-A VS601 Anson T.22	TDE-E NK620 Anson I
TDE-B AX636 Anson I	TDE-E VS598 Anson T.22
TDE-B EG588 Anson I	TDE-F MH124 Anson I
TDE-B NK620 Anson I	TDE-G NM356 Oxford
TDE-B VS602 Anson T.22	TDE-H T7997 Tiger Moth
TDE-C LT357 Anson I	TDE-M T7997 Tiger Moth
TDE-C VS603 Anson T.22	TDE-N NP341 Proctor C.3
TDE-D N9904 Anson I	TDE-O VS598 Anson T.22
TDE-D VV358 Anson T.22	TDE-S NP173 Proctor C.3
TDE-E NP173 Proctor C.3	TDE-T MX455 Proctor C.3

**TFA - No.1 School of Photography**

Connotation - based FARNborough  
Code changed to TWM when the school moved to Wellesbourne Mountford 6.1.48.

Codes:

TFA-A NK340 Anson I	TFA-B NK312 Anson I
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**TGX - No.27 Group Communications Flight**

Connotation - not clear  
Code changed from TSO when moved from Fairford to Debden 18.9.47.

TGX VM358 Anson C.19

**THA - Station Flight Halton**

Connotation - HALton

Codes:

THA-A R9548 Dominie	THA-F NR750 Dominie
THA-A NR671 Dominie	THA-F BV651 Proctor C.3
THA-A NL171 Anson C.12	THA-G NK932 Anson C.10
THA-B Z7255 Dominie	THA-H NR739 Dominie
THA-B HG719 Dominie	THA-H TX154 Anson C.19
THA-B NR671 Dominie	THA-I X7392 Dominie

THA-B NK932 Anson C.10	THA-I NR717 Dominie
THA-C NR678 Dominie	THA-J NR804 Dominie
THA-C NR738 Dominie	THA-J LA589 Proctor C.3
THA-C NK832 Anson C.1	THA-L T6984 Tiger Moth
THA-C VM314 Anson C.19	THA-M R4758 Tiger Moth
THA-C VM340 Anson C.19	THA-N PH553 Anson C.12
THA-D X7370 Dominie	THA-O NP324 Proctor C.3
THA-D X7395 Dominie	THA-P R9562 Dominie
THA-E X7395 Dominie	THA-R HM343 Proctor C.3
THA-E HG731 Dominie	THA-T NP159 Proctor C.3
THA-E TX187 Anson C.19	

**THE - Parachute Test Flight**

Connotation - based HEnlow

Codes:

THE KG311 Dakota C.3	THE	Tiger Moth
THE RG871 Halifax B.6	THE	Anson

**THI - Aircraft and Armament Experimental Establishment**

Connotation - not known.

Based at Boscombe Down

Codes:

THI Dominie (unconfirmed)

**THL - No.24 Group Communications Flight**

Connotation - based HALton

Codes:

THL-P P6242 Proctor C.1

**THO - Station Flight Hornchurch**

Connotation - based HOrnchurch

No evidence this code was ever used.

**TIH - No.1 Film Production Unit**

Connotation - not known.

Aircraft believed based at Benson. No evidence this code was ever used.

**TLO - Station Flight Locking**

Connotation - based LOcking

Codes:

TLO-A P6243 Proctor C.1 TLO-B LX804 Proctor C.4



*Tiger Moth T.2 R4758 THA-M of Station Flight, Halton*

**TMA - No.4 Radio School**

Connotation - based Madley  
Unit codes changed to TSM on moving to Swanton Morley in 3.49.

Codes:

TMA-A MX453 Proctor C.4 TMA-N NP352 Proctor C.4  
TMA-B NP239 Proctor C.4 TMA-P NP301 Proctor C.4  
TMA-J NP232 Proctor C.4 TMA-R NP365 Proctor C.4  
TMA-J NP281 Proctor C.4 TMA-S NP224 Proctor C.4  
TMA-L NP309 Proctor C.4 TMA-W VS592 Anson T.21

**TMD - No.4 Radio School**

Connotation - based Madley  
Unit codes changed to TSM on moving to Swanton Morley in 3.49.

TMD-D NP356 Proctor C.4 TMD-M NP401 Proctor C.4  
TMD-J NP362 Proctor C.4 TMD-N NP369 Proctor C.4  
TMD-L NP361 Proctor C.4 TMD-O NP403 Proctor C.4

**TME - No.4 Radio School**

Connotation - based Madley  
Unit codes changed to TSM on moving to Swanton Morley in 3.49.

TME-D T6167 Tiger Moth

**TML - No.4 Radio School**

Connotation - based Madley  
Unit codes changed to TSM on moving to Swanton Morley in 3.49.

Codes:

TML-A HG673 Dominie TML-C NR769 Dominie  
TML-B HG718 Dominie TML-C RL963 Dominie  
TML-B NF863 Dominie TML-D HG718 Dominie

**TOC - No.1 Officers' Advanced Training School**

Connotation - Officer Cadets  
Based at Digby until moving to Hornchurch 4.47.

Codes:

TOC-C RM225 Proctor IV TOC-D PL993 Spitfire 11

**TSA - Station Flight St.Athan**

Connotation - based St.Athan

Codes:

TSA-A HM351 Proctor C.3

**TSI - RAF Training (Belgian) School**

Connotation - based Snailwell

No evidence this code was ever used.

**TSM - No.4 Radio School**

Connotation - Swanton Morley

Codes:

TSM-C NP301 Proctor C.4 TSM-P VS595 Anson T.22  
TSM-C NP339 Proctor C.4 TSM-Q VS596 Anson T.22  
TSM-D RM224 Proctor C.4 TSM-S NR769 Dominie  
TSM-F Proctor C.4 TSM-S VS599 Anson T.22  
TSM-G NP403 Proctor C.4 TSM-T HG718 Dominie  
TSM-N VS597 Anson T.22 TSM-T VS600 Anson T.22  
TSM-O VS594 Anson T.22

**TSN - RAF Training (Belgian) School**

Connotation - based Snailwell

No evidence this code was ever used.

**TSO - No.27 Group Communications Flight**

Connotation - based Southrop

Codes:

TSO-A X7412 Dominie TSO-C RL948 Dominie  
TSO-A VM358 Anson C.19 TSO-D DL856 Master T.2  
TSO-B NP161 Proctor C.4 TSO-D VM365 Anson C.19  
TSO-B VM365 Anson C.19 TSO- PH589 Anson  
TSO-C NP173 Proctor C.4



*Proctor C.3 HM343 THA-R of Station Flight, Halton (above)*

*Anson T.22 VV366 TCR-B of No.1 Radio School (right)*

*Halifax B.6 PP214 TCA-B of No.1 Radio School (bottom)*

**TTE - No.22 Group Communications Flight**

Connotation - based Ternhill

Codes:

TTE-A VM359 Anson C.19	TTE-C NP346 Proctor C.4
TTE-B TX195 Anson C.19	TTE-D LZ804 Proctor C.4
TTE-C X9340 Vega Gull	TTE-E RM230 Proctor C.4

**TWM - No.1 School of Photography**

Connotation - based Wellesbourne Mountford

Codes:

TWM-A NK340 Anson I	TWM-B NK312 Anson I
TWM-B MG496 Anson I	

**TWY - Technical Training Command Communications Flight**

Connotation - based Wyton

Codes:

TWY-A MX451 Proctor C.4	TWY-F NP287 Proctor C.4
TWY-B TX192 Anson C.19	TWY-F RM226 Proctor C.4
TWY-C X7514 Dominie	TWY-G RL961 Dominie
TWY-C VP515 Anson C.19	TWY-G NP185 Proctor C.4
TWY-D HG721 Dominie	TWY-H R7566 Proctor C.3
TWY-D RL949 Dominie	TWY-H PH589 Anson C.12
TWY-D MX455 Proctor C.4	TWY-J NJ637 Auster AOP.5
TWY-D RM224 Proctor C.4	TWY-K R7566 Proctor C.3
TWY-E MX451 Proctor C.4	TWY-O RH424 Messenger



XM455	RAFC/3 FTS/ 26 & 3 FTS/1 FTS/ CFS/3 FTS/CFS		XM490	All pooled between Nos.99 & 511 Sqns	'Aldebaran'; sold 29.10.75; became G-BDLZ
XM456	RAFC/MoA	Crashed near Histon, Cambridge, 22.8.62 SOC 8.8.74	XM491		'Procyon'; sold 8.9.75; became EI-BBH
XM457	2 FTS/7 FTS/1 FTS		XM496		'Regulus'; sold 6.1.76; became G-BDUP
XM458	RAFC/BSE/3 FTS/ 26/3 FTS/1 FTS/CFS		XM497		'Schedar'; sold 23.4.76; became OO-YCF
XM459	RAFC/3 FTS/26/ 3 FTS		XM498		'Hadar'; sold 9.4.76; became OO-YCG
XM460	RAFC/CFS	Bounced on landing; overshot and hit power cables and crashed, Little Rissington, 14.12.64	XM517		'Avior'; sold 21.10.75; became 9Q-CAJ
XM461	RAFC/3 FTS/CFS/ 3 FTS/1 FTS		XM518		'Spica'; sold 4.3.76; became OO-YDC
XM462	RAFC	SOC 18.12.69	XM519		'Capella'; sold 13.2.76; became G-BDUR
XM463	RAFC/1 FTS		XM520		'Arcturus'; sold 16.9.75; became 9G-ACE
XM464	RAFC/3 FTS/1 FTS			* * *	* * *
XM465	RAFC/1 FTS/7 FTS			20 Saro Skeeter AOP.12s for Army Air Corps XM524 to XM530; XM553 to XM565	
XM466	RAFC/1 FTS/CFS/ 1 FTS/7 FTS/1 FTS			<b>40 Avro Vulcan B.2s delivered between February 1963 and January 1965 by Avro, Woodford, to Contract 6/ACFT/12305</b>	
XM467	RAFC/1 FTS/6 FTS	To 8085M 25.2.70	XM569	27/Wadd Wg/Cott Wg/ Ak Wg/27/Wadd Wg	To Wales Aircraft Museum, Cardiff, 21.1.83
XM468	RAFC/6 FTS	To 8081M 6.5.70	XM570	27/Wadd Wg/Cott Wg/ Ak Wg/27/35/230 OCU/ 35/617	SS 29.1.82
XM469	RAFC/1 FTS	Abandoned in spin 5m NNE of York, 5.5.61	XM571	83/Cott Wg/Wadd Wg/ Wadd Wg/Cott Wg/Af Wg/27/35/Wadd Wg/ 35/617/Wadd Wg/617/ 101/AAEE/44/AAEE/ Wadd Wg/50	To 8812M for display at Gibraltar, 9.5.84
XM470	1 FTS/6 FTS/2 FTS/ CFS/3 FTS/CFS		XM572	83/Wadd Wg/ Ak Wg/35/9	SS 11.82
XM471	CFS/6 FTS/RAFC/ 2 FTS/3 FTS/CFS/ 1 FTS		XM573	83/Wadd Wg/230 OCU/ Ak Wg/Wadd Wg/230 OCU/Wadd Wg	To Offutt AFB, 6.82
XM472	CFS/7 FTS/1 FTS/ 3 FTS/1 FTS		XM574	27/Scam Wg/Wadd Wg/ Ak Wg/617	SS 29.1.82
XM473	1 FTS/3 FTS/CFS/ 1 FTS/7 FTS/1 FTS		XM575	617/Scam Wg/Wadd Wg/ Scam Wg/617/Wadd Wg	Reg'd G-BLMC for display at East Midlands Airport 25.1.83
XM474	CFS/6 FTS/MoA/ 6 FTS/MinTech	To 8121M 10.5.71	XM576	Scam Wg	Wing hit ground on over- shoot; swung and skidded into control tower, Scampton, 25.5.65
XM475	2 FTS/7 FTS/RAFC/ TWU/RAFC/26/RAFC/ 7 FTS				To Newark Air Museum, Winthorpe, 29.1.83
XM476	2 FTS/7 FTS	Collided with XN466 on landing, Church Fenton, 29.1.63; DBR	XM594	27/Scam Wg/Wadd Wg	
XM477	1 FTS	Abandoned after fire warn- ing 2m S of Dishforth, 28.3.61	XM595	617/Scam Wg/230 OCU/ 617/230 OCU & 617/ 617/35	SS 11.82
XM478	1 FTS/7 FTS/1 FTS		XM596	-	Fatigue test airframe
XM479	RAFC/1 FTS		XM597	12/Cott Wg/ Wadd Wg/50	To Museum of Flight, East Fortune, 12.4.84
XM480	1 FTS/6 FTS	To 8080M 21.4.70	XM598	12/Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	To 8778M 19.1.83
	* * *	* * *	XM599	35/Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	SS 29.1.82
			XM600	35/Con Wg/Wadd Wg	Caught fire in air and crashed near Spilsby, Lincs., 17.1.77
XM484, XM485	Allotted to Jet Provosts; details of allocation not known		XM601	9	Wingtip hit ground during asymmetric approach; broke up, Coningsby, 7.10.64; DBF
	* * *	* * *	XM602	12/Cott Wg/Wadd Wg/ 230 OCU/35/Wadd Wg	To 8771M as display air- frame. St.Athan, 12.3.83
			XM603	9/Cott Wg/Wadd Wg/ BAe	
			XM604	35/Cott Wg/9	Caught fire in air and flew into ground on app- roach to Cottesmore, Burley, Rutland, 30.1.68
			XM605	9/Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	To Castle AFB 2.9.81
			XM606	12/Cott Wg/MoA/ Ak Wg/Wadd Wg	To Barksdale AFB, 14.6.82
			XM607	35/Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	To 8779M 19.1.83 for display at Waddington
			XM608	9/Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	SS 2.12.82



Britannia C.1 XM520 at Lyneham

XM487 Pooled 99 & 511 'Denebola'; Sold 10.2.76;  
became OO-YCC

XM609	12/Cott Wg/230 OCU/ Cott Wg/Watt Wg	SS 31.8.81
XM610	9/Con Wg/Wadd Wg	Caught fire in air; abandoned and crashed Wingate, Co.Durham, 8.1.71
XM611	9/Cott Wg/Ak Wg/ Wadd Wg	SOC 27.1.82
XM612	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	To Newark Air Museum 19.1.83
XM645	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg/ 230 OCU/Wadd Wg/ Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	Undershot landing at Luqa and blew up on attempted overshoot, Zabbar, Malta, 14.10.75
XM646	Cott Wg/Ak Wg/ Wadd Wg	SOC 26.1.82
XM647	Cott Wg/Ak Wg/ Wadd Wg	To 8765M 17.9.82
XM648	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	SS 12.82
XM649	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	SS 2.12.82
XM650	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	To GI airframe 16.3.83
XM651	Cott Wg/Ak Wg/ Wadd Wg	SS 11.82
XM652	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg/50	SOC
XM653	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	SS 28.7.51
XM654	Cott Wg/Ak Wg/ Wadd Wg	SS 12.82
XM655	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg/50	Sold; to G-VULC 27.2.84
XM656	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	To 8757M 30.3.83
XM657	Cott Wg/Wadd Wg	To 8734M 5.1.82
	* * *	* * *

Fifteen Westland Whirlwind HAS.7s for Royal Navy  
XM660 to XM669; XM683 to XM687



Gnat T.1 XM709 of CFS, March 1963

Fourteen Folland Gnat T.1s delivered between February  
1961 and January 1962 by Folland Aircraft, Hamble, to  
Contract No.6/ACFT/15434

XM691	Mkrs	MoA aircraft
XM692	Mkrs	MoA aircraft
XM693	Mkrs	To 7891M 8.65
XM694	Mkrs & BSE	MoA aircraft
XM695	BSE	MoA aircraft
XM696	AAEE	Lost tyre on take-off; crashed on landing, Boscombe Down, 12.10.62
XM697	Mkrs	MoA aircraft
XM698	MinTech	To 8090M 1.5.70; later to 8497M
XM704	CFS	Damaged undercarriage on landing and slewed off runway, Kemble, 28.9.66; to 7992M
XM705	CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8574M 21.12.77
XM706	CFS/4 FTS	To 8572M 2.12.77
XM707	CFS	Abandoned after tailplane control lost 2½m WNW of Kemble, 30.6.67
XM708	Hdlg Sqn/CFS/ 4 FTS	To 8573M 2.12.77
XM709	CFS/4 FTS	To 8617M 4.3.79
	* * *	* * *

Five Handley Page Victor B.2s delivered between January  
and May 1963 to Contract KD/C/08

XM714	100	Stalled after night take- off and spun into ground 3½m E of Wittering, 20.3.63
XM715	139/100/232 OCU/ Cv SR.2/543/Cv K.2/ 232 OCU/55	SOC 31.3.76
XM716	139/100/232 OCU/ Cv SR.2/543	Lost tail after high- speed run, bunted and blew up, Wyton, 29.6.66
XM717	100/Witt Wg/Cv SR.2/ 543/Cv K.2/55/57	
XM718	100/Cv SR.2/ 543/232 OCU	SOC 31.3.76
XM719	to	
XM721	-	Cancelled
XM745	to	
XM756	-	Cancelled
XM785	to	
XM794	-	Cancelled
	* * *	* * *
XM797,	XM819	Edgar Percival EP.9s for AAC trials
	* * *	* * *

Two de Havilland Comet 1XBs for Ministry of Aviation to  
Contracts 6/ACFT/15321 and 15417 respectively

XM823	DH/HSA	Ex G-APAS; Dectra trials. SOC 8.4.68 as 8351M for RAF Museum
XM829	AAEE	Ex G-AOJU; SOC 20.2.64
	* * *	* * *

40 Westland Wessex HAS.1s for Royal Navy  
XM832 to XM845; XM868 to XM876; XM915 to XM931  
\* \* \* \* \*

One EEC Canberra B(I).8 delivered in March 1959 by  
English Electric, Preston, to Contract KD/E/01

XM936	59/3	Sold to Marshalls, 11.2.74 for Peru as No.254
	* * *	* * *

Twelve Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer CC.1s delivered  
between October 1958 and January 1959 to Contracts  
6/ACFT/14074 and KC/K/08

XM939	152/78/21/209	SOC 9.10.68
XM940	Sc.Avn/230/SF Odiham/SRCU/78/ 21/152	SOC 30.10.68
XM941	224 Gp Support Flt/209	Both engines cut; force- landed 4m W of Paloh, Malaya, 9.3.60
XM942	209	Hit soft patch on landing and undercarriage broke off, Long Akah, Borneo, 29.5.64
XM943	78	Swung off strip and hit trees, Manawa, Aden, 16.9.64
XM957	78/21/AAEE/209	SOC 20.7.67
XM958	21/152	SOC 30.10.68
XM959	21/152	Ran into ruts on runway on landing and tipped up, Tayibah, Oman, 14.9.67 SS 3.9.68
XM960	21/78/21	
XM961	21/230/SF Odiham/ SRCU	To 7978M 28.7.67
XM962	MoS & Alvis/209	SOC 9.10.68
XM963	21/78/21/209	SOC 14.8.68
	* * *	* * *



20 EEC Lightning T.4s delivered between June 1962 and January 1963 by English Electric, Preston

XM966 MoA/Cv T.5/Mkrs Crashed in Irish Sea 12m off St. Bee's Head, Cumbria, 22.7.65

XM967 RAE Built as T.5 prototype; to 8433M

XM968 AAEE/226 OCU/92 Abandoned after hydraulic failure near Gutersloh, 24.2.77; 8541M NTU



Lightning T.4 XM969 of No.226 OCU, September 1964

XM969 LCS/226 OCU/92/226 OCU To 8592M 19.6.74

XM970 LCS/226 OCU/19 SOC 1.1.77; 8529M NTU?

XM971 LCS/92/LCS/226 OCU Radar fairing came off; ingested into engine; abandoned 2m E of Coltishall, 2.1.67  
SOC 11.6.74

XM972 LCS/226 OCU

XM973 AFDS/226 OCU/111/CFE/23/226 OCU/19 SOC 1.1.77

XM974 AFDS/74/226 OCU Engine cut; caught fire and abandoned off Happisborough, Norfolk, 14.12.72

XM987 LCS/226 OCU SOC 25.6.74

XM988 19/74/92/226 OCU Abandoned in spin 23m NE of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, 5.6.73

XM989 56 Sold to BAC 7.4.66 for Saudi AF as 54-650

XM990 LCS/226 OCU Abandoned after control lost during Battle of Britain display, Little Plumstead, Norfolk, 19.9.70

XM991 LCS/226 OCU/19 Caught fire on ground, Gutersloh, and to 8456M 24.10.75; later NTU

XM992 111/19/111 Sold to BAC 12.2.66 for Saudi AF as 54-651

XM993 LCS Undercarriage collapsed on landing; swung and rolled over, Middleton St. George, 12.12.62; DBF  
SOC 29.4.74

XM994 19/LCS/226 OCU SOC 1.4.77; 8542M NTU?

XM995 19/92 SOC 2.7.74

XM996 LCS/226 OCU

XM997 LCS/226 OCU/92/226 OCU SOC 22.11.74

XM103 to

XM112 - Cancelled

\* \* \* \* \*

Hunting Jet Provost T.3 prototype (ex-T.2 G-23-1)

XM117 AAEE Used for ground-attack trials in Aden. Reverted to makers.

\* \* \* \* \*

Folland Gnat F.1 for ground-attack trials in Aden

XN122 AAEE To Indian AF as IE1064  
9.68

\* \* \* \* \*

Two Westland Whirlwind HCC.8s delivered in August and November 1959 to Contract KC/2N/01

XN126 QF/Cv HAR.10/2 FTS To 8655M

XN127 QF/Cv HAR.10/CFS/2 FTS Dived into ground out of control, Shawbury, 8.5.80

\* \* \* \* \*

XN132, XN133 Sud Alouette AH.2s for Army Air Corps

\* \* \* \* \*

Hunting Jet Provost T.3 delivered in August 1960 to Contract 6/ACFT/14157 as replacement for XM348

XN137 Mkrs/CFS/3 FTS SOC 28.5.76

\* \* \* \* \*

XN142 DHC-2 Beaver 2 for evaluation by Army Air Corps

19 Slingsby Sedbergh TX.1 gliders for ATC and CCF  
XN146 to XN157; XN183 to XN189

24 Slingsby Cadet TX.3 gliders for ATC and CCF  
XN194 to XN199; XN236 to XN253

40 Westland Whirlwind HAS.7s for Royal Navy  
XN258 to XN264; XN297 to XN314

\* \* \* \* \*

Four Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer CC.2s delivered in July 1959 to Contract KC/K/08

XN318 230/209 Flew into trees, hit cliff and fell into river 6m N of Long Semodo, Sarawak, 14.2.63

XN319 209 SOC 9.10.68

XN320 209 SOC 20.12.68

XN321 209 Engine cut on take-off; undercarriage collapsed in forced landing, Butterworth, 28.4.67

\* \* \* \* \*

Folland Gnat F.1 delivered in February 1959 for trials

XN326 AAEE Ex G-39-11; to Finland as GN-113

\* \* \* \* \*

XN332 to XN336 Saro P.531s for Royal Navy trials

XN339 to XN355 Saro Skeeter AOP.12s for Army Air Corps

15 Westland Whirlwind HAS.7s for Royal Navy  
XN357 to XN362; XN379 to XN387

\* \* \* \* \*

Three Bristol Britannia C.2s delivered in October, March and April 1959 by Short Bros. & Harland, Belfast, to Contract 6/ACFT/11804

XN392 All pooled between 'Acrux'; ex G-APPE; Nos.99 & 511 Sqns Sold 18/12/75

XN393 'Altair'; ex G-APPF; Sold 11.9.75; to 9Q-CPX

XN404 'Canopus'; ex G-APPG; Sold 17.12.75

\* \* \* \* \*

15 Auster AOP.9s for Army Air Corps  
XN407 to XN412; XN435 to XN443

Three Bristol Sycamore HR.50s for Royal Australian Navy  
XN448 to XN450

\* \* \* \* \*

de Havilland Comet 2E for Ministry of Aviation

XN453 AAEE/RAE Ex G-AMXD; to ground  
experiments, 1973

\* \* \* \* \*

100 Hunting Jet Provost T.3s delivered between August  
1960 and February 1962 to Contract KC/E/031  
(XN467 and XN468 built at T.4 prototypes)

XN458 1 FTS To 8234M 14.2.73  
XN459 1 FTS  
XN460 2 FTS Abandoned in spin,  
Castle Bytham, Lincs.,  
1.2.61

XN461 1 FTS/7 FTS/  
3 FTS/1 FTS  
XN462 1 FTS/2 FTS/CFS/  
3 FTS/7 FTS  
XN463 AAEE/BSE/AAEE Engine lost power; crash-  
landed into trees, Teffont  
Evias, Wilts., 26.10.60  
XN464 CFS/6 FTS SOC 31.7.69  
XN465 CFS/3 FTS Abandoned in spin 1m N of  
Easingwold, Yorks.,  
24.2.71

XN466 1 FTS/7 FTS/1 FTS  
XN467 Mkrs & AAEE/CFS To 8559M  
XN468 BSE/1 FTS/TAFC/CFS SOC 1.10.71  
XN469 1 FTS Engine cut; undercarriage  
collapsed in forced land-  
ing on disused airfield,  
East Moor, 22.6.70

XN470 1 FTS/7 FTS  
XN471 1 FTS/RAFC/TWU/  
3 FTS/RAFC/1 FTS  
XN472 CFS/1 FTS/CFS/  
RAFC/7 FTS/1 FTS  
XN473 RAFC/7 FTS Abandoned take-off after  
hitting birds and nose-  
wheel collapsed, Cranwell,  
15.8.84; to 8862M  
XN492 RAFC/6 FTS To 8079M 18.3.70  
XN493 RAFC/7 FTS/3 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
XN494 RAFC/1 FTS  
XN495 RAFC/7 FTS/2 FTS/  
1 FTS/RAFC/7 FTS Engine lost power; under-  
shot emergency landing,  
Church Fenton, 30.3.83;  
To 8786M 13.4.83  
SS 10.7.69

XN496 RAFC  
XN497 RAFC/3 FTS/1 FTS  
XN498 RAFC/3 FTS/1 FTS  
XN499 RAFC/3 FTS/1 FTS/  
CFS  
XN500 RAFC/3 FTS/26/  
3 FTS/RAFC/7 FTS  
XN501 1 FTS/CFS  
XN502 1 FTS/2 FTS/CFS  
XN503 AAEE/6 FTS/MinTech/  
2 FTS/4 FTS/MinTech SOC 28.5.76  
XN504 1 FTS Engine lost power; aband-  
oned on approach ½m N of  
Rufforth, 14.3.63

XN505 1 FTS/RAFC/1 FTS  
XN506 1 FTS/7 FTS/RAFC/  
3 FTS/6 FTS/3 FTS/  
3 FTS & 26/CFS/  
RAFC/7 FTS/1 FTS/  
7 FTS  
XN507 1 FTS SOC 8.8.74  
XN508 1 FTS/CFS/  
3 FTS/7 FTS  
XN509 1 FTS/6 FTS/RAFC/  
1 FTS/2 FTS/1 FTS  
XN510 1 FTS/7 FTS/RAFC/  
3 FTS/1 FTS

XN511 CFS/1 FTS/CFS SOC 28.5.76  
XN512 CFS To 8435M 10.11.71  
XN547 RAFC/1 FTS  
XN548 CFS/RAFC/7 FTS  
XN549 CFS/1 FTS To 8335M 13.12.73  
XN550 CFS SOC 28.5.76  
XN551 RAFC/6 FTS/3 FTS/  
1 FTS/RAFC/7 FTS  
XN552 RAFC/CFS/7 FTS  
XN553 RAFC/1 FTS  
XN554 CFS To 8436M 17.11.71  
XN555 RAFC SOC 8.8.74  
XN556 1 FTS/6 FTS/1 FTS Stalled on overshoot  
and hit runway,  
Linton-on-Ouse, 17.3.70  
SOC 8.8.74  
Ingested bird; abandoned  
on approach, Dishforth,  
29.6.71  
SOC 1.2.74  
SOC 28.5.76

XN557 CFS/7 FTS/2 FTS  
XN558 RAFC/3 FTS

XN559 RAFC/7 FTS/RAFC  
XN573 CFS/1 FTS  
XN574 3 FTS/1 FTS  
XN575 1 FTS/7 FTS/3 FTD Stalled on take-off and  
and wing hit ground,  
Leeming, 30.9.69  
Engine cut; abandoned  
over Northleach, Glos.,  
4.9.69

XN576 CFS SOC 18.12.69

XN577 RAFC/7 FTS/1 FTS  
XN578 RAFC/6 FTS  
XN579 RAFC/TWU/RAFC/  
1 FTS/7 FTS/1 FTS  
XN580 RAFC Caught fire in air and  
abandoned, Scopwick,  
Lincs., 15.6.64

XN581 RAFC/7 FTS/6 FTS/  
3 FTS/CFS/RAFC/  
CFS/3 FTS/CFS  
XN582 RAFC/3 FTS/  
1 FTS/7 FTS  
XN583 RAFC/7 FTS Flew into wood during  
aerobatics 2½m S of  
Harrogate, Yorks, 12.9.64

XN584 RAFC/TWU/RAFC/  
CFS/RAFC/CFS  
XN585 RAFC/1 FTS Abandoned after fire  
warning on take-off,  
Linton-on-Ouse, 28.3.79



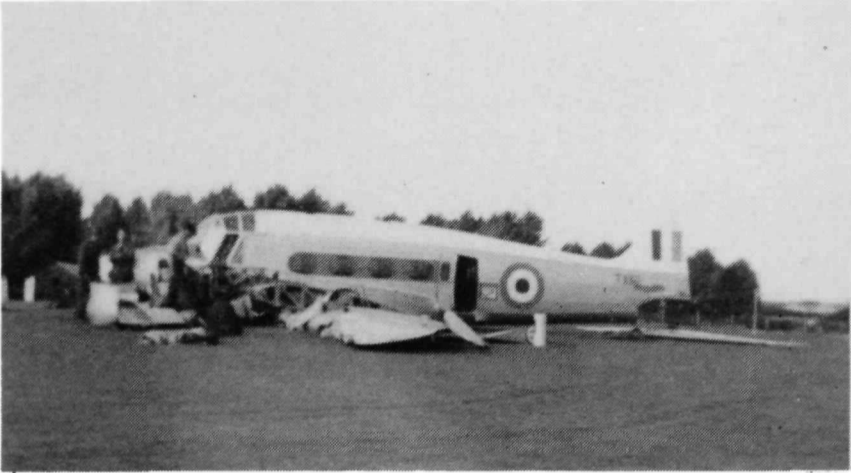
Jet Provost T.3 XN586 of No.1 FTS

XN586 RAFC/2 FTS/CFS/  
1 FTS/7 FTS  
XN587 RAFC To GI airframe at Cranwell  
27.12.69  
XN588 RAFC/1 FTS Dived into ground near  
Wharran-le-Street, Yorks.,  
18.5.67

XN589 RAFC/1 FTS  
XN590 6 FTS/RAFC Hit birds and lost power  
after roller landing near  
Elvington, 31.7.80  
SOC 18.3.70  
SOC 28.5.76

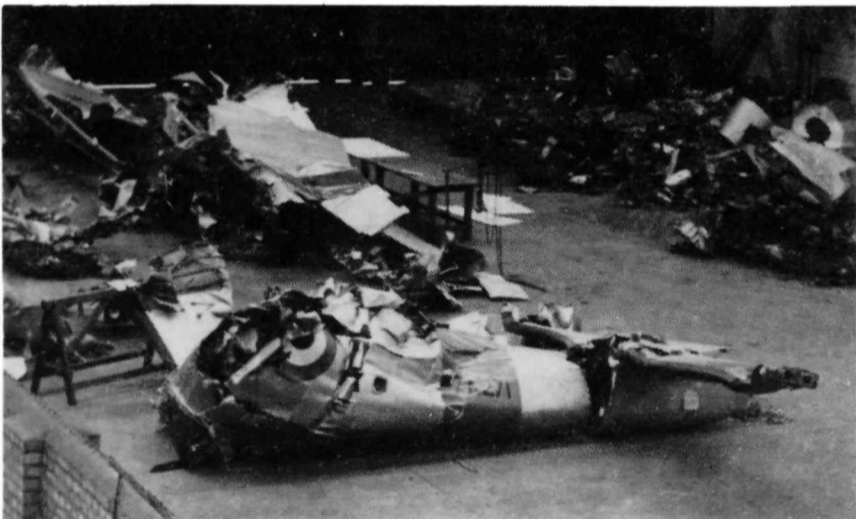
XN591 1 FTS/MoA  
XN592 6 FTS/1 FTS/2 FTS  
XN593 2 FTS/1 FTS

# BACK FEED



An addition to the SA100 to VZ999 RAF register is the above photograph of TX161 after it had overshoot landing at Northolt on 10 August 1954. At the time of its mishap, it belonged to the Home Command Communications Squadron and appears to be in the course of dismantling to enable the wreckage to be hauled off to the scrap heap.

From the first page of the XA-XZ register that appeared in AM.4/83, Marathon XA271 is shown below after the bits of wreckage had been collected for AIB investigation. It transpired that the wing had failed and detached itself from the aircraft, causing it to dive into the ground 1½ miles SSE of Calne, Wilts on 30 September 1954.



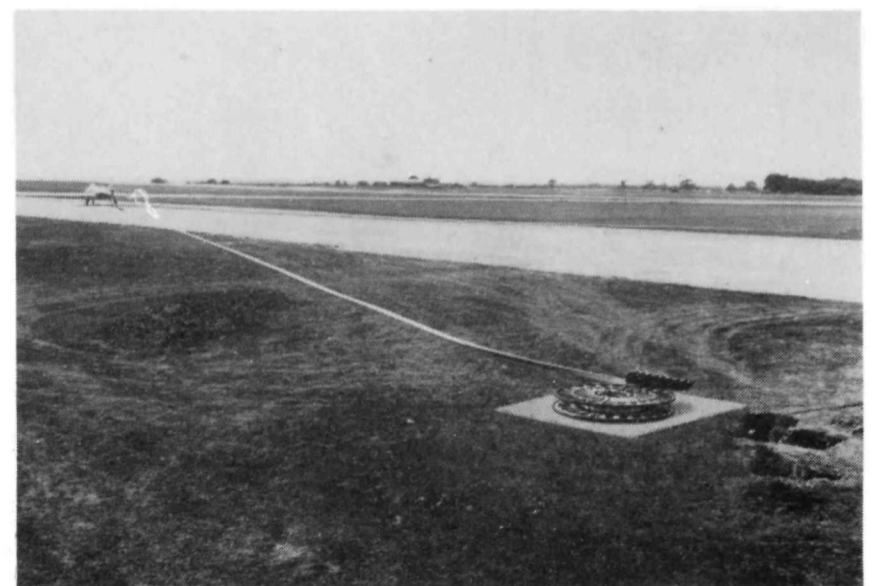
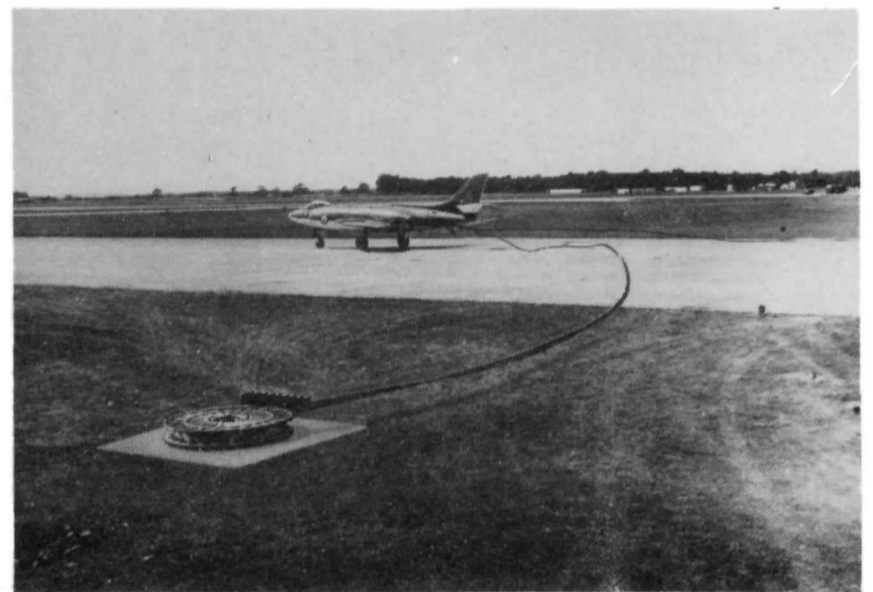
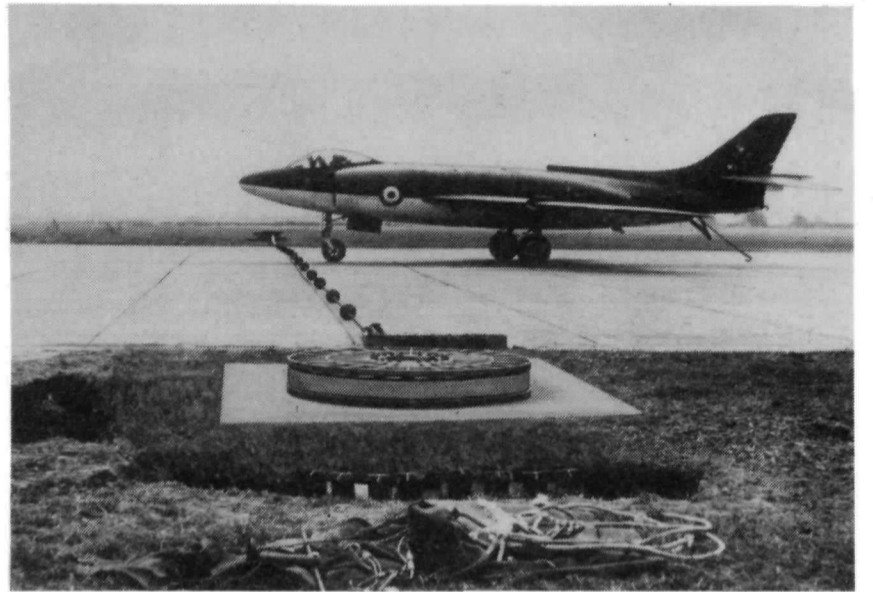
On the right is a sequence of shots of a Scimitar doing trials of an arrester system. The photographs come from Dunlop Aviation Division by courtesy of Colin Read but there seems to be some doubt about the circumstances.

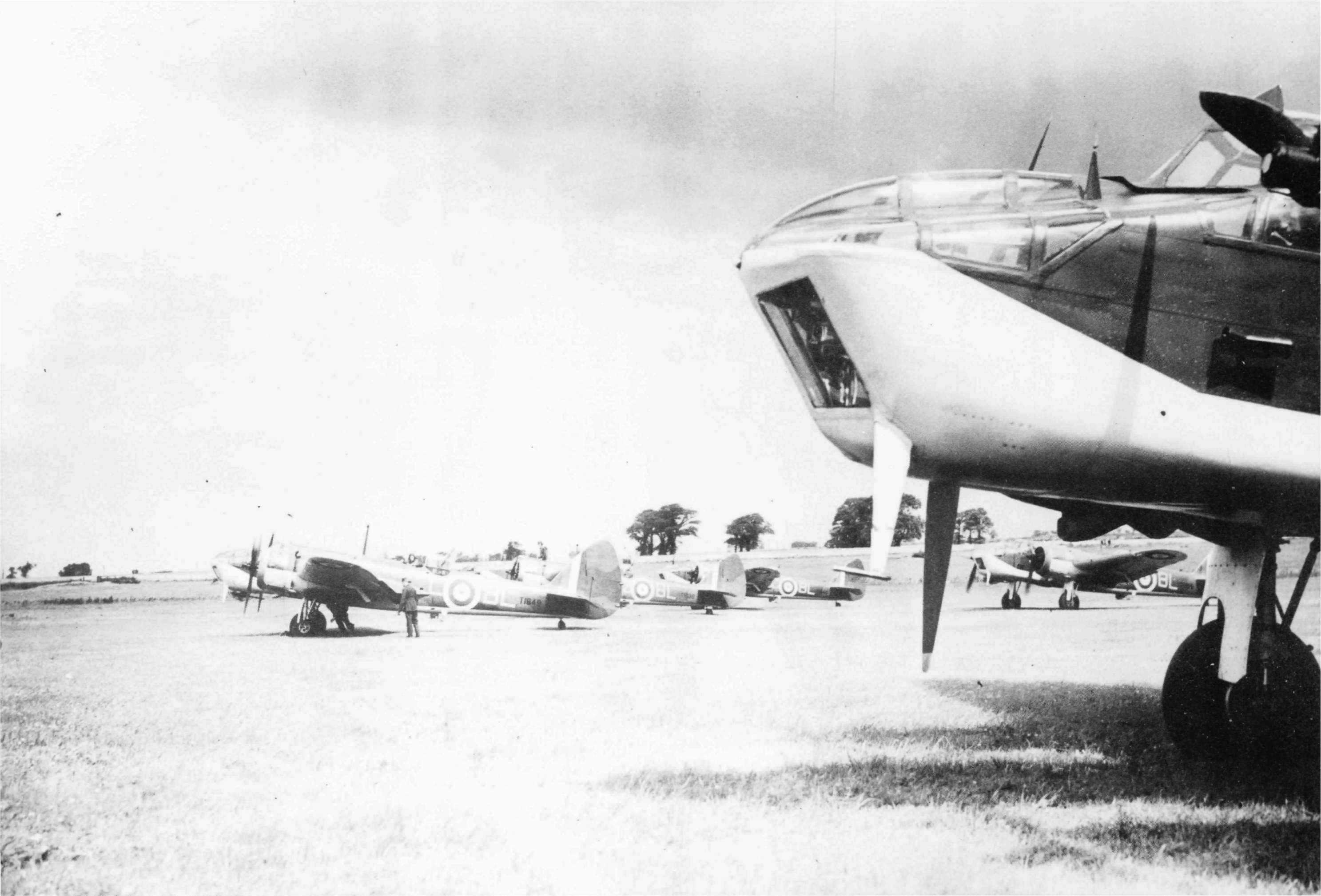
The captions connect the series with the demonstration of arrester gear at the 1961 Farnborough display but the aircraft would appear to be the N.113 prototype WT854.

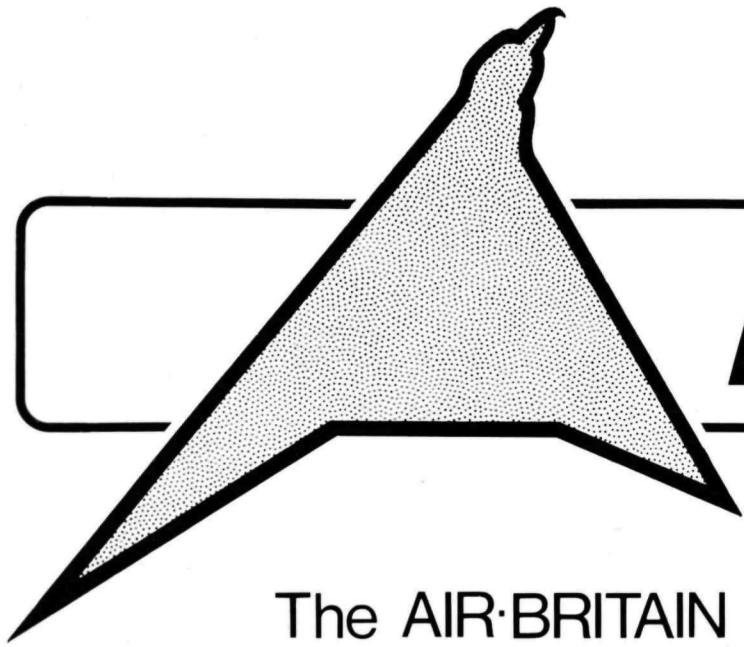
Although it originally carried a pointed nose with a yaw meter, WT854 later acquired a snub fairing when the probe was removed. It was engaged in arrester gear tests at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Bedford in the first three months of 1956 and the background suggests that it was during these that the aircraft was photographed. In April 1956, WT854 carried out deck-landing trials aboard 'Ark Royal'.

Two Dunlop energy absorbing systems were tested in 1961 for use on airfields when aircraft required to be retarded before expensive noises came from the end of the runway. These could make use of carrier-borne aircrafts' hooks and since the RAF inherited ex-Navy Phantoms and Buccaneers, they had a use at places other than naval airfields.

No.23 Squadron's Phantoms found their hooks useful when faced with operating from a short runway on being posted to RAF Stanley in the Falkland Islands pending completion of Mount Pleasant airfield.







# AEROMILITARIA

The AIR·BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly



**No. 4  
1986**



The AIR-BRITAIN Military Aviation Historical Quarterly

Edited by James J Halley and Peter M Corbell

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Shepperton, Middlesex,  
TW17 ORW

An editorial sortie to Down Under resulted in a massive pile of paper accumulating Up Over that is just about being cleared as we write this. A steady drizzle of new paper to add to the pile did not speed the process.

Hopefully, the decline in the numbers of Royal Air Force types which can have their tables of allocations and fates included in one issue of AM without swamping the entire publication may be stemmed slightly by including some Royal Australian Air Force types next year.

As noted in the last issue, 'The Whitley File' is now available at £4.50 per copy (members' price) or £6.75 for outsiders. Both prices include postage and orders should be sent to the Sales Department.

It is also subscription renewal time and we are pleased to say that the increase in membership has enabled us to keep the subscription for Air-Britain Digest and Aeromilitaria at last year's figure of £10.00, despite rising costs. Please help the Hon. Registrar by sending back your renewal form (in September/October issue of Digest) before the end of the year so that print runs for all our magazines can be calculated. An unprecedented increase in subscriptions to Aeromilitaria in 1986 has resulted in a shortage of spare copies for the first two issues of 1986 so late renewal could have meant that no back numbers were left for late arrivals. We will boost the print run for 1987 but the crystal ball could still be clouded if we have another run of new readers. Apart from that, renewing before 31 December helps the annual accounts to show future trends.



#### WRITE-INS

In the book review page in AM.2/86, we noted a gap in the details of crashes at Burtonwood in Aldon Ferguson's excellent tome on the history of that neglected airfield. We asked what this aircraft was and again more one of our readers was on the spot at the time.

Owen Thetford has identified the aircraft as a Havoc painted in all-black RDM2. Only an hour before he had been chatting with the man from the Royal Aircraft Establishment who was killed in the crash. He was a Scientific Officer specialising in radar named Butts.

A search through the Havocs located an odd pair of Havoc Is, DG554 and DG555, and it was the latter that was involved in the crash on 6 November 1941. DG555 was on the strength of No.37 MU at the time and was a standard Havoc I night fighter.

#### IN THIS ISSUE

Tank-carrying gliders were not prolific during World War Two and the Hamilcar was the only Allied operational aircraft of this type. Its use was limited and specialised, despite the newspapers' belief that the release of information on the Hamilcar heralded the airborne invasion of the Third Reich by full armoured divisions. The use of a Hamilcar X to test airborne early warning was unexpected. We had previously assumed that the Hamilcar was a target for experiments in locating wooden aircraft by TRE! The photos were kindly loaned by Bruce Robertson and Ray Sturtivant.

HMS Ravager was a training carrier for most of her career but Ray Sturtivant came up with some nice photos of deck-landing training on her.

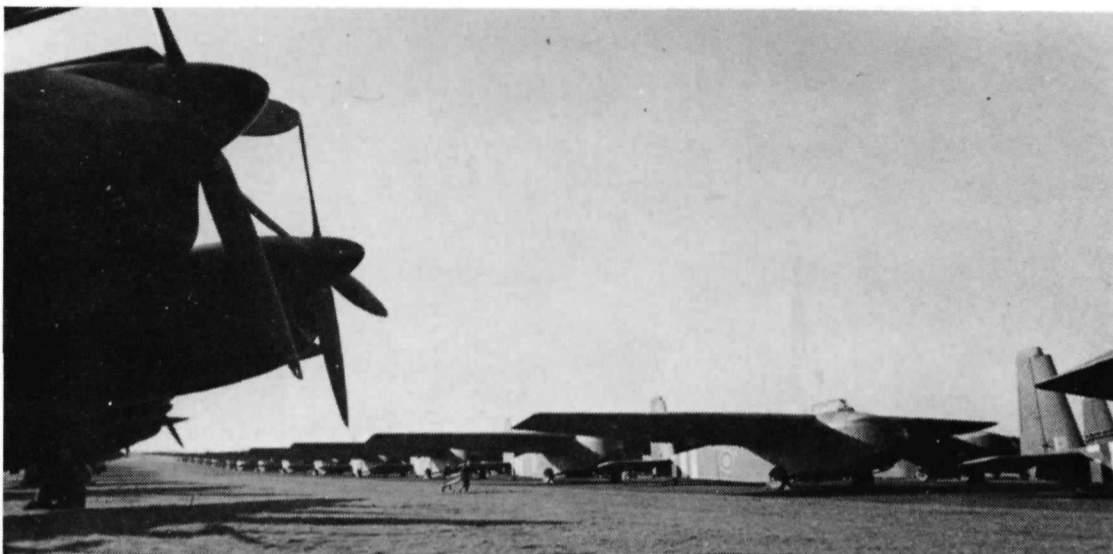
Our thanks to Pete Williams for his article on the early days of Sharjah one of the lonelier outposts of Empire between the wars.

Cover photo is of Audaxes of No.9 FTS and the back cover shows Harts of 18 Squadron. But.....

#### PUZZLE PIX

Last month showed a York (next to a Tudor V) and Thame airfield. But what RAF station is shown below? Good camouflage, or is it?

# HAMILCAR



*Ranks of Hamilcars with 'invasion markings' ready for D-Day*

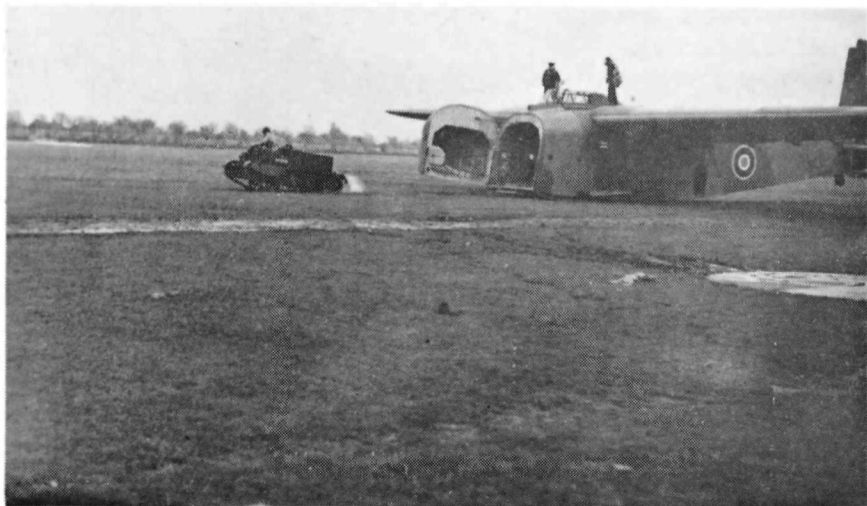
The use of troop-carrying gliders by the Germans during the invasion of the Low Countries in May 1940, albeit on a small scale, prompted the British Government to investigate the use of these by the Army in future operations. In June 1940, the Central Landing School was set up, initially to train parachute troops. As an invasion of the British Isles seemed imminent, there was a certain amount of optimism involved in the setting up of an organisation of this type.

In September 1940, a glider training section was formed using small civilian gliders impressed for service with the Royal Air Force. The first real troop-carrying glider flew in November 1940 in the shape of the General Aircraft Hotspur which could carry eight persons. This type was used exclusively for training, the two operational gliders being the Airspeed Horsa and the General Aircraft Hamilcar.

The Horsa was the standard workhorse of the airborne forces and was built in large numbers. Although capable of carrying respectable loads, it lacked the internal space for bulkier items. To cope with these, Specification X.27/40 was issued for a large cargo glider and General Aircraft at Hanworth Air Park, makers of the pre-war Monospars and Cygnets and responsible for the Hotspur, designed the G.A.L.49, later named 'Hamilcar'. Two prototypes were built, the first of which was taken to Snaith airfield in Yorkshire as Hanworth was too small to fly out a glider as large as a Hamilcar.

On 27 March 1942, DP206 made its first flight and was found to be a stable aircraft and apparently suitable for its intended role. DP210/G was delivered to the Airborne Forces Experimental Establishment at Ringway for handling tests, the establishment moving to Sherburn-in-Elmet in Yorkshire in August 1942.

*A Hamilcar disgorges a gun carrier*



The Hamilcar had a 68 ft-long fuselage built of wooden longerons with plywood covering. The wing was a twin-spar wooden structure of 100 ft span covered in plywood but with fabric covered control surfaces. The final all-up weight was 36,000 lbs of which no less than 17,400 lbs was its military load. The wing loading was 21.7 lbs/sq.ft., a very high figure for a glider.

Two alternative undercarriages were fitted; for training, there was a fixed undercarriage and for operations, the wheels could be jettisoned and the glider would land on four wooden skids. In the event, it was found that a skidborne Hamilcar rendered it highly immobile so the normal wheeled undercarriage was retained which allowed a Hamilcar to be moved out of the way if it was found to be obstructing a landing strip.

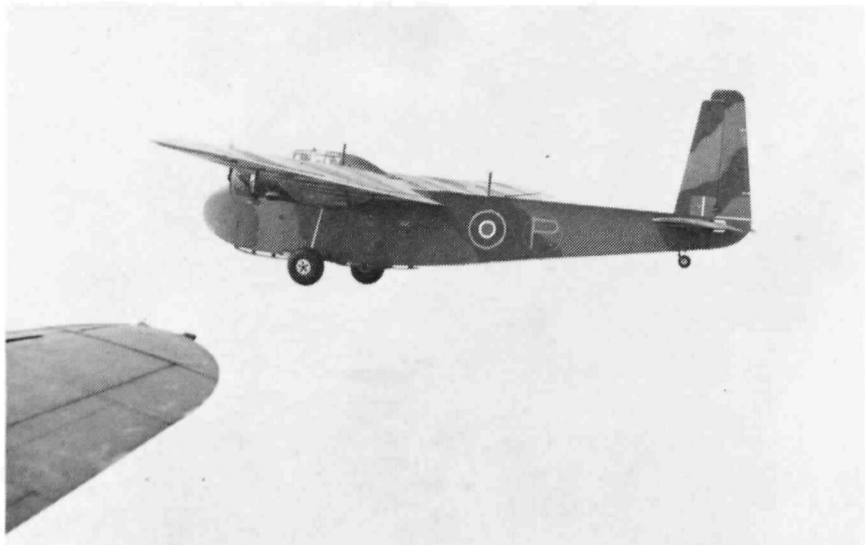
The cockpit was mounted above and separate from the hold. A ladder gave access to a hatch in the roof of the fuselage from which access to the cockpit was gained by a short catwalk. Initially this was a dangerous operation in damp weather until a better-gripping surface was fitted. The view from the front seat was very good but that from the rear seat was not adequate except when the glider was in the low tow position when the tug became visible.

The hold could take a variety of loads and the following were officially approved:

- Tetrarch Mk.IV tank
- Locust T.9 tank (US built)
- Two Bren carriers
- Three Rota trailers
- Two armoured scout cars
- One 17-pounder gun with tractor
- One 25-pounder gun with tractor
- Self-propelled Bofors gun

*Hamilcar's collapsing undercarriage and large nose door*





*The prototype Hamilcar X LA728 in flight*

One Jeep and carrier  
 One Universal carrier for 3-inch mortar  
 plus eight motor cycles  
 Bailey Bridge equipment  
 48 stores panniers  
 D-4 tractor with angledozer  
 Scraper with Fordson tractor  
 Grader  
 HD10 or HD14 bulldozer (in three Hamilcars)

Vehicle engines were started before landing and their anchorages could be released by a lanyard in the vehicle. The initial forward movement of the vehicle opened the locking device for the doors which swung apart automatically. The shock absorber struts could be collapsed by releasing the oil pressure, thus lowering the glider's nose to permit easy exit of vehicles. The record stood at 15 seconds!

Operational trials were carried out by the AFEE at Newmarket between 6 August and 9 September 1942. DP210/G was picketed in the open for this period with only tarpaulins as cover. Despite it being typically English summer wea-

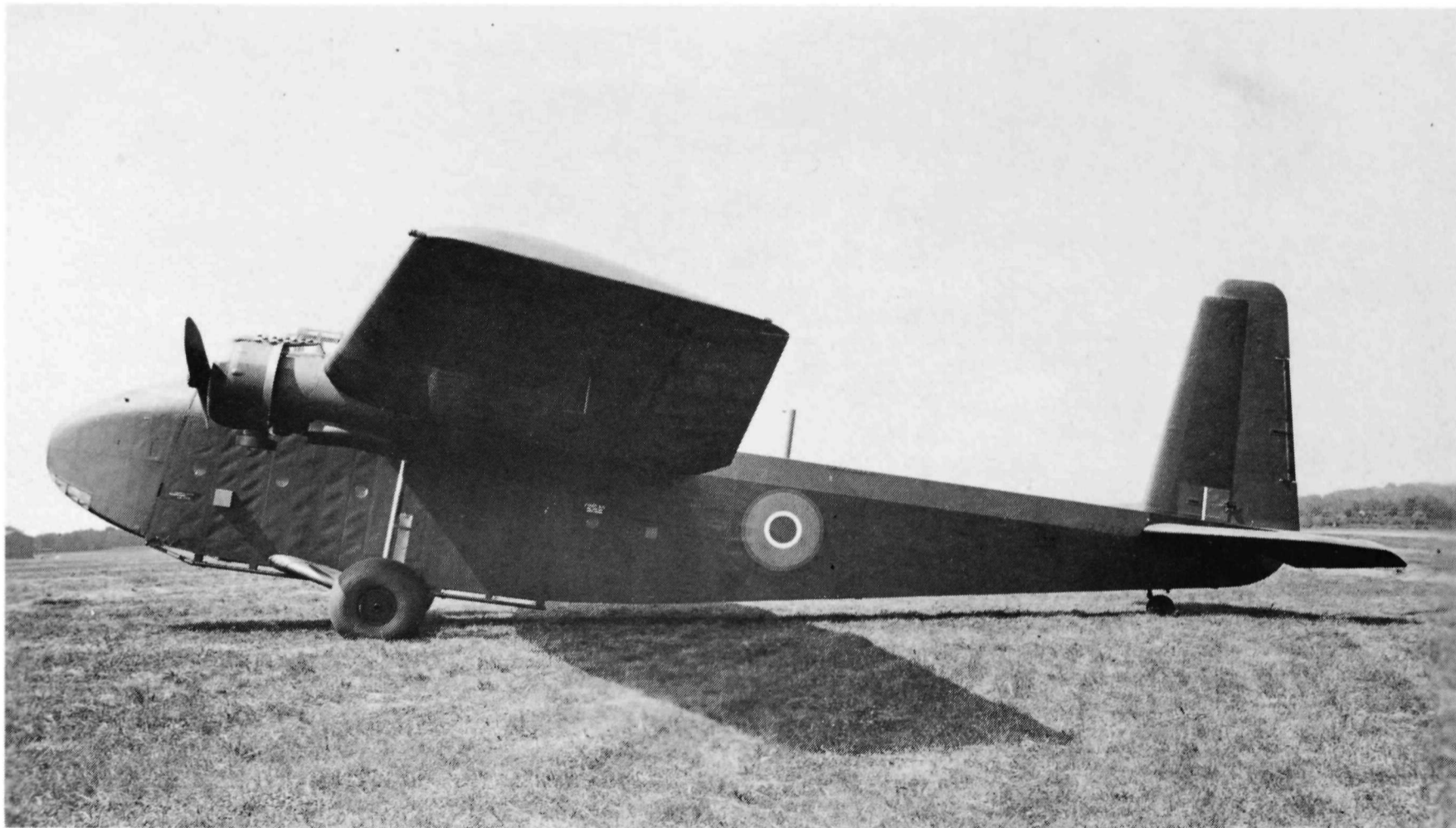
ther, the considerable rain and drizzle had little effect on the wooden structure. A few joints opened up but were repaired on the spot. The fuselage leaked a little.

The steel towing ropes used for ground handling failed several times and were replaced by normal rope cable made up locally by the maintenance crew and worked well. It was found difficult to fit control locks. A pair of special jacks had been supplied to lift the aircraft for fitting undercarriage legs but Stirling jacks could be used with care. Twenty-three flights were made in 18 flying hours.

On 8 September, the undercarriage broke away on one side during take-off over rough ground. The fuselage was damaged but the glider flew normally despite this incident.

The controls were well-balanced and stability in free flight good. The brakes were very effective. Among items required for production aircraft were cockpit lighting and a more sensitive altimeter. Among later tests, trefoil

*Hamilcar X RZ431 at Beaulieu*







*A Hamilcar I being towed by a Halifax V over Dorset (RAF Museum 6029-12)*

parachutes were used to drop the undercarriage from around 350 feet but this practice was not proceeded with in view of the decision to retain the undercarriage on operational flights. It was judged unsuitable to operate the Hamilcar with full load from rough surfaces but in the event they invariably flew operationally from hard runways.

Getting the Hamilcar off the ground required the selection of suitable tug aircraft and a variety of boosters (see AM.2/80). To permit the ferrying of gliders, particularly in the Far East, some Hamilcars were fitted with two Mercury engines as the Mk.X (see AM.3/81).

The first tug selected to tow Hamilcars was the Stirling I. BK645 undertook trial tows in May 1943 at training and ferrying loads. Take-off was long but not difficult. The initial rate of climb was poor due to the lengthy time required to raise the undercarriage. The climb out at 105 mph was below the normal safety speed of the aircraft and the engines overheated. Because of these factors, no attempt was made to tow a Hamilcar with an operational load aboard.

Using a Stirling IV EF432, the climbing speed rose to 140 mph but with a training load the performance was poor. Although towing with an operational load was abandoned for these trials it fell to the Stirling to tow the Hamilcar into action.

Towing tests were also carried out with Lancaster III LM451 but take-off and climb out were still critical. However, using a Lancaster II (DS819) was found to be satisfactory with all loads. The needs of Bomber Command prevented this mark of Lancaster being supplied to the airborne support squadrons.

On D-day, a total of 70 were available at Tarrant Rushton. Only four Hamilcars were in the initial waves of gliders. Of these, three arrived intact and the fourth had to land in Dorset when the tow parted. On the evening of 6

June, operation 'Mallard' saw 246 gliders out of the 256 despatched arrive safely on the landing zones in Normandy. Thirty Hamilcars towed by Stirlings were in this wave, all but one arriving.

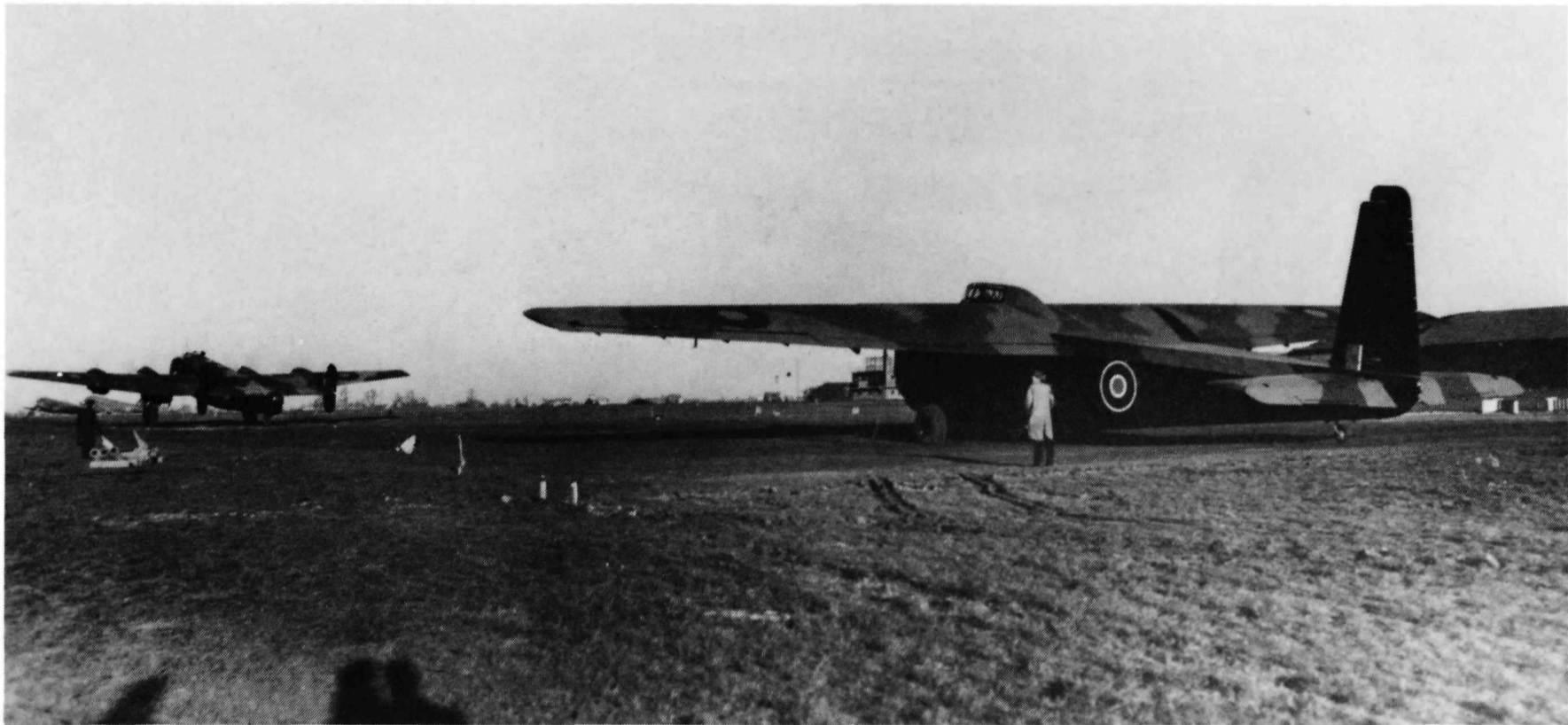
At Arnhem, 28 Hamilcars were employed and at the Rhine crossing, Operation 'Varsity', only four were used.

Casualties in these three operations amounted to 100%! Although little damage was done by the enemy, the enormous bulk of the Hamilcars made them virtually unrecoverable. No.38 Group had formed a glider recovery unit in April 1944 and many Horsas were salvaged from Normandy. Tests had shown that a Dakota with a 8,000-lb winch could pick up an unladen Horsa or Hadrian. A dozen C-47s equipped with pick-up winches were exchanged for a dozen Dakotas, six going to No.1 HGSU, three to No.46 Group and three into reserve. The HGSU towed out forty Horsas but many had to be abandoned. Thirty had been damaged by artillery or bombing but many more had fallen victim to the brutal and licentious soldiery who looked on broken gliders - after all the tails had fallen off the Horsas - as a useful source of firewood and packing.

It was impossible to tow off any Hamilcars and no beachmaster would appreciate the arrival of barn-like objects blocking his road system. So the Hamilcars remained where they were. At Arnhem there was no such problem; all the gliders remained in enemy-occupied territory.

After the end of the war in Europe, it was anticipated that Hamilcars would be used in the Far East and three were shipped out for acclimatisation tests. However, the Japanese surrender forestalled any airborne operations using Hamilcars.

At the end of the war in Europe, towing tests were in hand with other types. In March 1945, a Halifax VI, TW780, without its mid-upper turret and H2S dome was checked out as a tug. With a full load weight of 60,014 lbs, it could tow a



*A Halifax II Series I (Special) prepares to tow off a Hamilcar at No.33 MU, Lyneham, January 1944 (RAF Museum P9366)*

Hamilcar off in 1,630 yards but this stretched to 2,625 yards to clear a 50-foot obstacle. A second Halifax, NP849, joined these trials with modified engine cooling and reduced the latter figure to 2,320 yards. Under tropical conditions this grew to 2,750 yards.

The Halifax VI was found satisfactory for use under tropical conditions but with a tendency to overheat at full weight.

In May 1945, testing of Halifax III LL615 began, this time with Hamilcar X LA728 in tow. The mid-upper turret and scanner were again removed. Using a concrete runway and with both tug and Hamilcar at full power, the combination could clear 50 feet in 2,450 yards under tropical conditions. The Mercury 31s had been added to the Hamilcar as the Mk.I had proved virtually useless in hot climates while the powered Mk.X gave an extra boost to take-off while allowing a longer approach. The Mk.X had a still air range of 1,050 miles at which point the Halifax still had 600 gallons of fuel left.

Before the Japanese surrender, a Hamilcar I had been successfully towed by a Halifax III but the Mk.X was considered a more useful tool for the forthcoming airborne landings. Planning came to an abrupt halt in August 1945 but the search for a suitable tug for the Hamilcar continued.

*A Hamilcar X in flight*

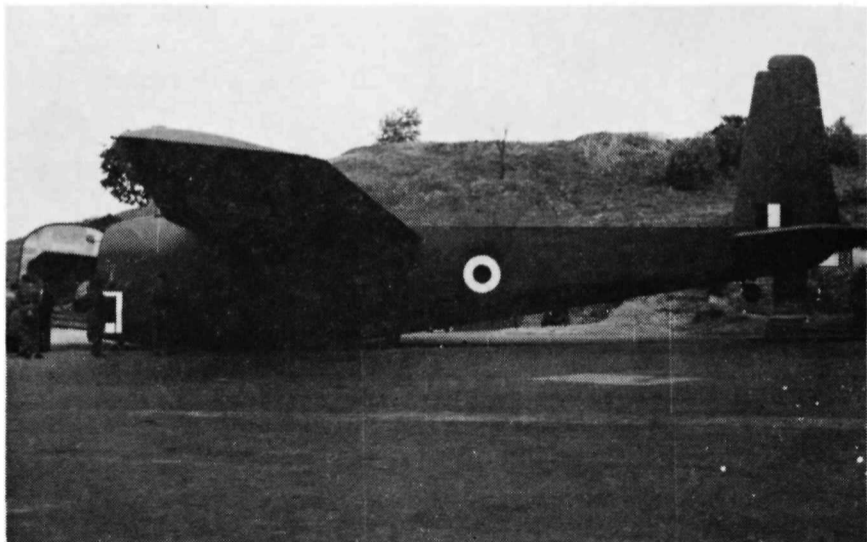


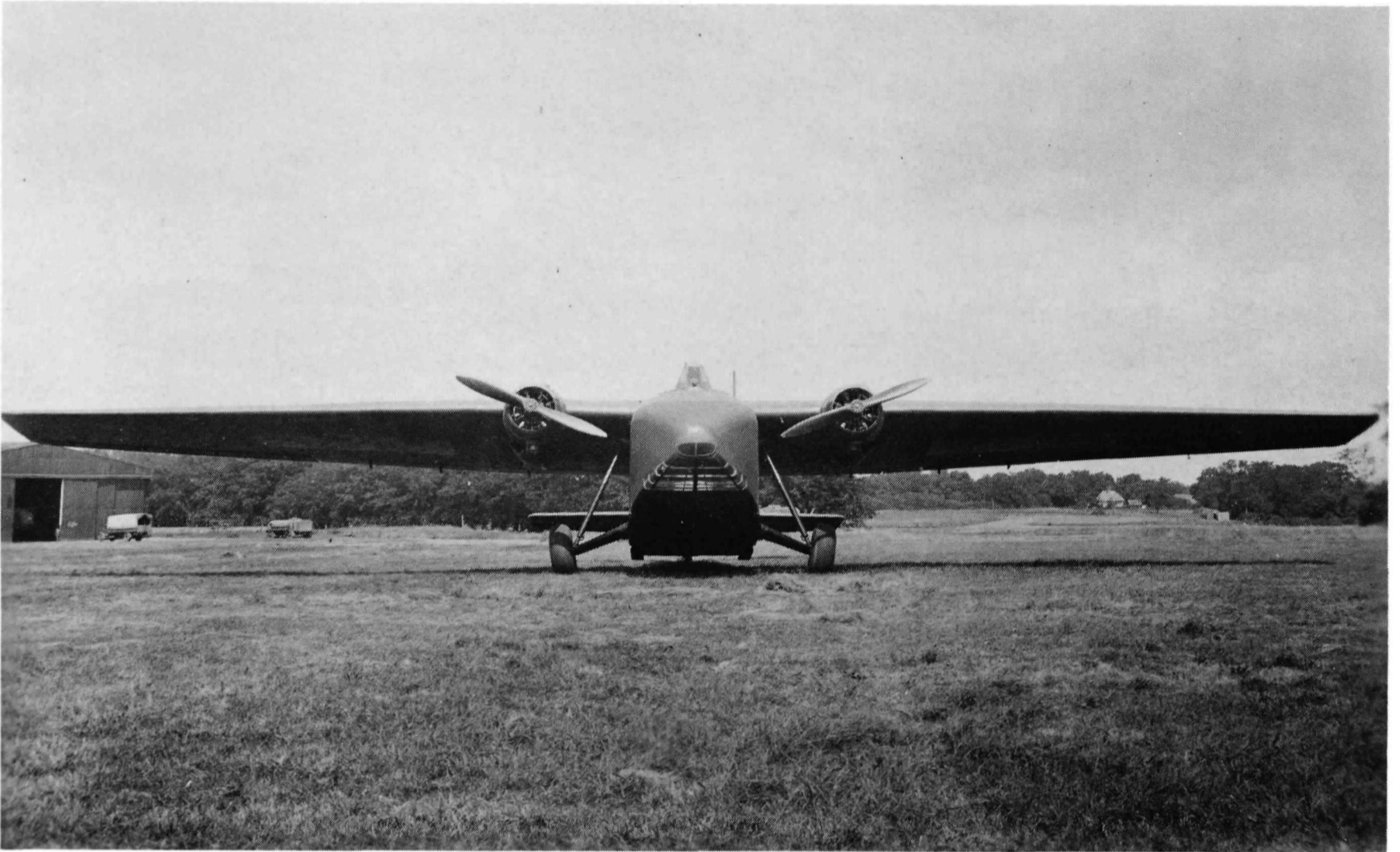
In October 1945, test began using Halifax TW780 again but this time fitted with a pannier under the fuselage. There was little change in the performance figures produced by TW780 in its original configuration. The Mark IX became the standard airborne support aircraft in the post-war years and RT758 began trials with the Hamilcar in January 1946. Cooling fans were fitted on all engines and at full load, the combination cleared 50 feet at 2,500 yards.

Towing trials with a Hamilcar X in January 1947 produced similar figures to the Mk.III trials. However, a new shape was on the horizon as the first Hastings appeared at Beaulieu. It was TE583 which began trials with a Hamilcar I in May 1947. TE583 was a non-standard aircraft but could clear 50 feet in 1,970 yards, albeit with some engine overheating problems. Trials ended in November 1948 with the Hastings being judged a satisfactory tug for the Hamilcar with some modifications to improve engine cooling.

Finally, Hastings TG533 and Hamilcar RZ427 were sent to Shaibah for test under adverse climatic conditions in July 1949. These were curtailed as the Hamilcar's structure deteriorated rapidly in the high temperatures and low humidity of the Persian Gulf. Although this could be held in check with good maintenance and the few flights carried out had showed the combination to be suitable for operations in

*Hamilcar I RR942 in 1950*





*Head-on view of a Hamilcar X*

such climes, the writing was on the wall for gliders and Britain's airborne forces concentrated entirely on parachute dropping in the Fifties.

One final set of trials bordered on the bizarre. In August 1947, Hamilcar X LA728 went to Defford for use by the Telecommunications Research Establishment. There it was fitted with Airborne Warning Installation in the nose and tests were carried out with the Establishment's Beaufighter RD835.

In 30 September 1947, LA728 went to the Air-Sea Warfare Development Unit at Thorney Island and on 11 November 1947 to the Central Fighter Establishment at West Raynham. It was back in a few days due to problems with the Hamilcar's alternator but returned to CFE on the 24th only

to be grounded by bad weather. It was sent down to Thorney Island to carry these out in view of Thorney's better weather record.

On 1 December 1947, LA728 returned to Defford for further trials which were completed in January 1948. Flying ended in March with the verdict of 'very successful' being recorded. The AWI was removed prior to the aircraft being scrapped.

Unfortunately, the official report of these trials has not yet been found so the reason for using a Hamilcar X remains obscure. Presumably its size and low speed made it suitable for testing this primitive ancestor of AWACS.

*AEW trials Hamilcar LA728*

*Glider-towing Halifax A.9 RT764 (RAF Museum P5625)*



## Production:

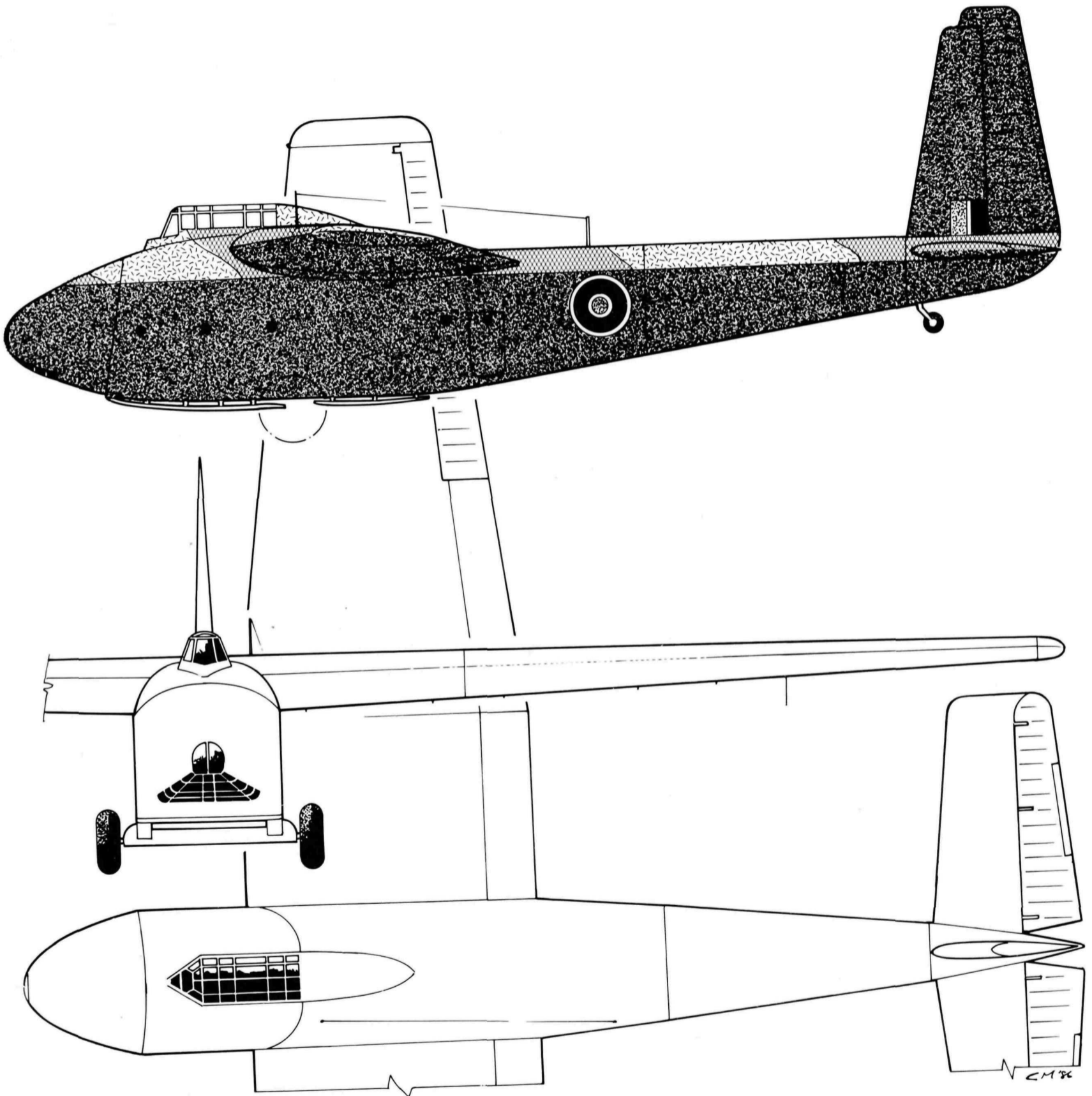
DP206	Tarrant Rushton	SOC 18.7.44	LA645	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44
DP210	AFEE	To 4081M 17.9.43	LA646	1 HGSU	Undershot landing at Tarrant Rushton, 9.3.45
DR851	AFEE	Hit ridge on landing, Sherburn-in-Elmet, 19.8.43	LA647	1 HGMU	Tug lost power; cast off and fell into sunken road on landing near Blandford, Dorset, 1.3.44
DR852	RAE	To 4311M 6.11.43	LA648	1 HGSU	Overshot landing and hit tree, Tarrant Rushton, 23.4.44
DR853	GAL	SOC 10.1.45	LA649	1 HGSU	Undershot night landing and hit tree, Tarrant Rushton, 25.4.44
DR854	RAE	SOC 21.6.44	LA650	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44
DR855	-	To 4457M 4.1.44	LA651	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44
DR856	AFEE	To 4528M 8.2.44	LA652	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44
DR857	-		LA653	-	To 6243M 30.1.47
DR858	1 HGMU	DBR by tank leaving glider, Tarrant Rushton, 21.1.44; blown away in gale, 23.1.44	LA654	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
DR859	1 HGMU	Undershot landing and hit power cables, Tarrant Rushton, 19.4.44	LA655	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44
DR860	-	SOC 3.2.46	LA669	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44
HH921	AFEE	SOC 6.8.47	LA670	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44
HH922	1 HGSU	Forcelanded in bad weather near Radnor, 11.1.45	LA671	-	Lost, Normandy, 5.6.44
HH923	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA672	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH924	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA673	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH925	-	SOC 28.1.47	LA674	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH926	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA675	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH927	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA676	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH928	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA677	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH929	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA678	-	SOC 28.1.47
HH930	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA679	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH931	Tarrant Rushton	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44	LA680	-	Lost, Arnhem, 18.9.44
HH932	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA681	-	SOC 24.4.47
HH933	Tarrant Rushton	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44	LA682	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH934	-	SOC 7.4.45	LA683	1 HGSU	DBR in gale, Tarrant Rushton, 18.1.45
HH935	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA684	1 HGSU	DBR in gale, Tarrant Rushton, 18.1.45
HH957	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA685	-	SOC 7.4.45
HH958	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44	LA686	1 HGSU	Control lost on landing, Bentwaters, 18.4.45
HH959	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA687	1 HGSU	SOC 28.1.46
HH960	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA688	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH961	1 HGMU	Overshot landing and hit nissen huts, Tarrant Rushton, 20.1.44	LA689	-	SOC 7.4.45
HH962	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA690	-	SOC 7.4.45
HH963	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA691	-	Crashed in sea en route to Arnhem, 16.9.44
HH964	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA704	Cv X/Mkrs/AFEE	SOC 4.4.50
HH965	1 HGMU	Broke tow and crashlanded 2½m NW of Fordingbridge, Hants., 12.4.44	LA705	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH966	1 HGMU	Tow rope broke; crashlanded near Spettisbury, Dorset, 13.11.44	LA706	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH967	AFTDU/AATDU	Blown into Horsa LW307 by squall, Netheravon, 18.1.45; to 5013M 27.1.45	LA707	-	SOC 7.4.45
HH968	1 HGSU	DBR in gale, Tarrant Rushton, 18.1.45	LA708	-	SOC 6.8.47
HH969	ATTDU	SOC 20.12.46	LA709	-	SOC 7.4.45
HH970	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA710	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH971	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44	LA711	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH972	1 HGSU	Undershot landing and hit obstruction, Tarrant Rushton, 24.5.44	LA712	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH973	FE		LA713	1 HGSU	DBR in gale, Tarrant Rushton, 18.1.45
HH974	FE	To GI airframe, 13.6.45	LA714	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
HH975	USA/India	SOC 21.5.45	LA715	-	SOC 7.4.45
LA632	-	SOC 15.5.47	LA716	33 MU	Hit ground on approach on test flight, Lyneham, 9.5.44
LA633	SAS Old Sarum	To 6617M 21.11.46	LA717	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
LA634	1 HGSU	Tug hit ground after take-off; cast off and forcelanded 1m W of Tarrant Rushton, 27.5.44	LA718	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
LA635	1 HGSU	Undershot landing and hit LA708 and LA736, Tarrant Rushton, 4.3.45	LA719	-	SOC 7.4.45
LA636	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA720	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
LA637	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA721	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
LA638	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA722	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
LA639	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA723	-	Lost, Rhine, 24.3.45
LA640	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA724	-	Lost, Arnhem, 17.9.44
LA641	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA725	-	SOC 11.4.47
LA642	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA726	-	SOC 28.1.47
LA643	1 HGSU	Flap jammed; DBR in heavy landing, Tarrant Rushton, 26.4.44	LA727	1 HGSU	DBR in gale, Tarrant Rushton, 18.1.45
LA644	-	Lost, Normandy, 6.6.44	LA728	Cv X/Mkrs/AFEE/ TRE	SOC 3.9.48
			LA729	-	SOC 7.4.45
			LA730	-	SOC 7.4.45
			LA731	-	SOC 7.4.45
			LA732	-	SOC 18.8.47
			LA733	-	SOC 7.4.45
			LA734	-	SOC 7.4.45
			LA735	-	SOC 7.4.45
			LA736	1 HGSU	Hit by LA635 while parked, Tarrant Rushton, 4.3.45

LA737	1 HGSU	Tow rope broke; hit trees in forced landing 2m W of Tarrant Rushton, 11.2.45	NX874	1 HGSU	Tug burst tyre on take-off; cast off and hit Halifax NA115, Tarrant Rushton, 17.4.45
LA738	-	SOC 7.4.45	NX875	-	SOC 7.4.45
LA739	-	SOC 11.4.47	NX876	-	SS 23.7.53
LA740	-	SOC 7.4.45			
LA741	-	NFT 29.1.46			
LA742	1 HGSU	Undershot and crashed in wood, Tarrant Rushton, 5.4.45; to 5219M	RR923	AFEE	SOC 31.5.48
LA743	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR924	1 HGSU	Stalled on approach 1m W of Tarrant Rushton, 11.4.45
LA744	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR925	-	SOC 6.9.46
LA745	-	Lost, Rhine, 24.3.45	RR926	-	SOC 6.9.46
LA746	-	SOC 28.1.47	RR927	-	SOC 6.8.47
LA747	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR928	-	SS 23.7.53
LA748	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR929	-	SOC 19.9.46
LA749	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR930	-	SOC 6.8.47
LA750	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR931	-	SOC 18.7.46
NX805	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR932	-	SOC 14.11.46
NX806	-	SOC 24.4.47	RR933	-	SS 23.7.53
NX807	-	SOC 24.6.46	RR934	1 HGSU	DBR in gale, Netheravon, 16.3.47
NX808	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR935	-	SOC 3.4.47
NX809	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR936	-	To 6046M 6.8.46
NX810	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR937	-	SOC 28.1.47
NX811	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR938	297	DBR on ground, 29.5.47
NX812	-	SOC 7.4.45			
NX813	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR939	-	SOC 6.9.46
NX814	1 HGSU	Tug lost power; cast off and hit tree in forced landing, Woodbridge, 24.3.45	RR940	-	SOC 2.2.49
NX815	RAE	Sold 27.4.51	RR941	-	SS 23.7.53
NX816	-	SOC 28.1.47	RR942	-	SOC 29.8.50
NX817	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR943	-	SOC 3.4.47
NX818	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR944	-	SOC 6.9.46
NX819	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR945	-	SS 31.7.53
NX820	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR946	-	SOC 3.4.47
NX821	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR947	-	SOC 6.10.54
NX822	-	DBR, Rhine, 24.3.45; SOC 7.4.45	RR948	Cv X	To 6770M 12.6.50
NX823	-	Lost, Rhine, 24.3.45	RR949	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
NX824	1 HGSU	Undershot landing at Tarrant Rushton, 10.4.45	RR950	47	SOC 10.7.47
NX825	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR951	297	SOC 13.7.48
NX826	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR952	-	SOC 10.8.51
NX827	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR953	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
NX828	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR954	-	SS 23.7.53
NX829	-	SOC 17.10.46	RR955	-	SS 23.7.53
NX830	-	SOC 17.10.46	RR956	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
NX831	-	SOC 7.2.46	RR957	-	SOC 18.8.47
NX832	-	SOC 18.10.46	RR958	-	SOC 18.8.47
NX833	-	SOC 17.10.46	RR959	1 HGSU	Stalled on landing and under-carriage collapsed, Tarrant Rushton, 19.8.46
NX834	-	SOC 7.2.46	RR973	-	SOC 26.2.52
NX835	-	SOC 17.10.46	RR974	-	SS 23.7.53
NX836	-	SOC 16.5.47	RR975	-	SS 23.7.53
NX837	-	Sold 23.7.53	RR976	-	SS 23.7.53
NX838	1 HGSU	Tug tyre burst on take-off; cast off and overturned 1m W of Tarrant Rushton, 12.4.45	RR977	297	SOC 15.5.47
NX851	-	SOC 18.8.47	RR978	47	DBR 20.5.47; NFD
NX852	-	SOC 15.5.47	RR979	-	SOC 17.10.46
NX853	-	SOC 11.4.47	RR980	-	SS 23.7.53
NX854	-	SOC 7.2.46	RR981	-	SOC 3.4.47
NX855	-	SOC 6.8.47	RR982	-	SOC 6.10.54
NX856	-	SOC 24.6.46	RR983	ATDF	DBR 9.10.50
NX857	-	SOC 15.5.47	RR984	-	SOC 30.11.50
NX858	Mkrs/AFEE	SS 23.2.51	RR985	297/TCDU	SS 28.8.53
NX859	-	SOC 18.8.47	RR986	Cv X/AFEE	SOC 4.5.48
NX860	-	SOC 18.8.47	RR987	-	To 5597M 11.2.48
NX861	297	SOC 2.2.48 after forced landing on 15.1.48	RR988	-	SOC 20.12.46
NX862	AFEE	Lost tow and forced landed near Eindhoven, 26.6.45	RR989	-	SOC 26.2.52
NX863	-	SOC 4.7.46	RR990	-	SS 28.8.53
NX864	AFEE	Damaged by gale, Beaulieu, 24.10.45; SOC 17.1.46	RR991	-	SOC 6.10.54
NX865	-	SOC 6.8.47	RR992	TCDU	SOC 6.10.54
NX866	-	SOC 4.7.46	RR993	-	To 6773M 21.6.50
NX867	-	SOC 6.8.47	RR994	47	SS 28.8.53
NX868	ATTDU/TCDU	SS 23.2.50	RR995		Damaged 5.9.47; To 6444M 27.9.47
NX869	-	SOC 18.8.47	RZ410	-	SS 23.7.53
NX870	ATTDU	SOC 6.8.47	RZ411	-	SS 28.8.53
NX871	-	SOC 6.8.47	RZ412	-	SS 28.8.53
NX872	-	SOC 7.4.45	RR413	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
NX873	-	SOC 15.5.47	RZ414	-	SS 23.7.53
			RZ415	-	SOC 20.12.46
			RZ416	-	SOC 6.10.54
			RZ417	-	SOC 6.10.54
			RZ418	-	SOC 6.10.54

RZ419	297	SS23.7.53	TK735	Cv X/TCDU	SOC 17.10.49
RZ420	-	SOC 6.10.54	TK736	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
RZ421	-	SOC 6.10.54	TK737	Cv X	SOC 15.5.50
RZ422	47/297	SS 28.8.53	TK738	Cv X	To 6769M 6.6.50
RZ423	47	Damaged 17.11.47; SOC 11.12.47	TK741	Cv X	SOC 15.5.50
RZ424	AFEE	SS 23.7.53	TK742	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
RZ425	297	SOC 6.10.54	TK743	Cv X	SOC 15.5.50
RZ426	-	SS 23.7.53	TK744	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
RZ427	ME	SS 31.10.49	TK746	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
RZ428	-	SS 28.8.53	TK747	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50
RZ429	47/TCDU	SOC 4.5.48			
RZ430	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50			
RZ431	Cv X	To 6768M 6.6.50			
TK722	Cv X	SOC 20.10.50			
TK726	Cv X	SOC 10.8.51			

Remainder of batch:

TK714-750; TK763-791 Only above delivered to RAF  
TK792-798; TK810-826 Cancelled



## H.M.S. RAVAGER



*HMS Ravager transporting Corsairs*

HMS Ravager was one of the American-built escort carriers of the Royal Navy which saw no action against the enemy. Throughout its service, it was engaged in training and ferrying duties.

One of eleven of her class, Ravager was laid down on 11 April 1942 and launched on 16 July 1942. After fitting out at the Willamette Iron & Steel Co's shipyard at Portland, she was commissioned on 26 April 1943.

After acceptance trials and working up of the Washington coast, Ravager set sail for Norfolk via the Panama Canal. Her armament consisted of two 4-inch, four twin-40 mm Bofors and ten 20 mm Oerlikon guns according to the ship's documents. After picking up a load of aircraft and stores at New York, she crossed the Atlantic in convoy to Belfast where her cargo was unloaded before proceeding to the Clyde.

Based on Greenock, Ravager's future role was set when she was ordered to replace HMS Activity as a training carrier. This entailed not only the training of pilots in deck-landing procedures but also provided experience for new Deck Landing Control Officers. At first, these officers gained experience in handling aircraft on deck before graduating to the onerous, and frequently hazardous, task of 'Batsman'.

Although the aircraft used to train batsmen were normally flown by pilots experienced in deck landing, there was sometimes a combination of a pilot converting to a new type and a batsman under training, which added interest to the event. Also aboard were other specialists under

*An Avenger gives scale to Ravager's narrow deck*



training, for example meteorologists, while on most occasions the deck-handling crews included aircrew awaiting posting from flying training, such experience of carrier life being useful in the future.

Deck landing training was undertaken by units based at Fleet Air Arm shore stations, which normally provided aircraft from training squadrons. However, refresher training and landing practice by operational squadrons often took place before these squadrons embarked on their carrier. Normally four landings were allotted for the latter but pilots new to deck landing were given six, these following two dummy runs to get them accustomed to the approach.

Pilots originally trained in the USA where many Corsair, Hellcat and Avengers were formed had a certain amount of unlearning to do. In US Navy practice, the batsman used his bats to inform the pilot of the attitude of the aircraft and this advice helped him to line up and catch the arrester wires. In the Royal Navy, the batsman controlled the aircraft, the pilot obeying the instructions passed on to him until on the deck.

One piece of equipment carried for the benefit of the batsman was a net just below flight deck level abaft his position. Then if an aircraft went badly astray and seemed about to take the batsman with it down the deck, he did a rapid evacuation over the side and out of the path of several tons of wayward machinery.

Deck landing training proceeded normally until 29 November 1943 when Ravager collided with the escort carrier Pretoria Castle. Fortunately

*Wildcat JV346 of No.768 Squadron, June 1945*





*A Corsair being positioned on the elevator*

damage was relatively minor and Ravager was soon back at work. The training area consisted of most of the Firth of Clyde and the carrier often anchored at Lamlash Bay, off the Isle of Arran, or in the sheltered waters of Rothesay Bay instead of weaving her way through the mass of shipping off Greenock for the night.

A change came on 8 June 1944 when Ravager sailed for Belfast to embark aircraft. These were only for ferrying to Gibraltar where they were disembarked on 20 June, being replaced by six Seafires being returned for overhaul. She sailed as part of a convoy in both directions and had no operational role as part of the escort.

After another spell of deck landing training, Ravager made a further trip to Gibraltar in October, this time with forty Seafires and six Hellcats. After disembarking these, she did not return this time to the UK but sailed as part of another convoy to Norfolk, Virginia. Then, as part of a UK-bound convoy, she loaded air-



*Avenger on approach with hook down*

craft and miscellaneous cargo at New York and arrived back at Belfast on 26 November.

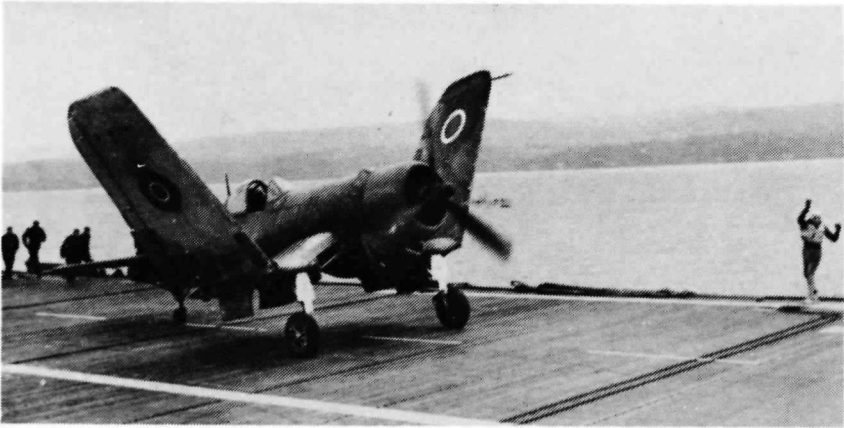
Ravager then sailed down to Sheerness before being sent up the Thames to King George V Dock for engineering repairs by Harland & Wolff at North Woolwich. Returning to the Clyde for a short period of deck landing training, she was soon transferred to a similar task in the Firth of Forth, operating with aircraft from Crail Arbroath and Drem. After two weeks it was back to the Clyde to train new pilots for the Pacific Fleet, a task that lasted until the end of 1945. After the Japanese surrender, the amount of flying decreased as the need for new pilots waned and on 25 January 1946, Ravager sailed for Norfolk for the last time.

On 19 February 1946, Ravager proceeded up-river to Berkley where she was decommissioned on 27 February 1946. There being no use for her in the post-war US Navy, the ship was sold and converted to a freighter, being renamed Robin Trent.

*Sea Hurricane NF722 overshoots into NF 728, 4 October 1944*







Left: A Corsair II unfolds its wings for take-off  
Right: Corsair II on take-off, June 1945

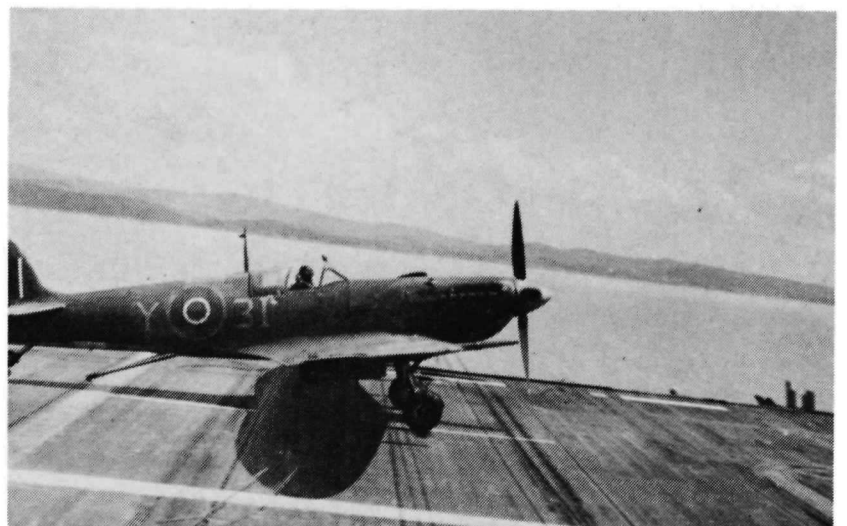
Place	Arrived	Sailed
Commissioned	26.4.43	
Portland, Oregon	-	15.5.43
Seattle, Wash.	16.5.43	35.5.43
Cristobal, Panama	26.5.43	7.6.43
Norfolk, Va.	13.6.43	12.7.43
New York, NY	13.7.43	15.7.43
Belfast	28.7.43	3.8.43
Greenock	3.8.43	17.8.43
Belfast	17.8.43	18.8.43
Clyde	18.8.43	1.9.43
Belfast	1.9.43	2.9.43
Clyde	2.9.43	12.10.43
Belfast	12.10.43	13.10.43
Londonderry	13.10.43	13.10.43
Greenock	14.10.43	8.6.44
Belfast	8.6.44	12.6.44
Gibraltar	19.6.44	27.6.44
Greenock	4.7.44	8.7.44
Methil	10.7.44	14.7.44
Greenock	15.7.44	16.10.44
Rothesay,	17.10.44	18.10.44
Belfast	18.10.44	20.10.44
Gibraltar	25.10.44	28.10.44
Norfolk, Va.	7.11.44	9.11.44
New York, NY	10.11.44	15.11.44
Belfast	26.11.44	28.11.44
Greenock	28.11.44	29.11.44
Sheerness	1.12.44	4.12.44
King George V Dock, London	4.12.44	15.12.44
Sheerness	15.12.44	21.12.44
Rosyth	22.12.44	2.1.45
Greenock	4.1.45	8.2.45
Rosyth	11.2.45	27.2.45
Greenock	1.3.45	15.10.45
Bangor	15.10.45	18.10.45
Greenock	18.10.45	30.10.45
Rosyth	1.11.45	4.1.46
Greenock	6.1.46	12.1.46
Faslane	12.1.46	18.1.46
King George V Dock, Glasgow	18.1.46	22.1.46
Belfast	22.1.46	25.1.46
Norfolk, Va.	9.2.46	19.2.46
Berkley, Va.	19.2.46	27.2.46
	Decommissioned	

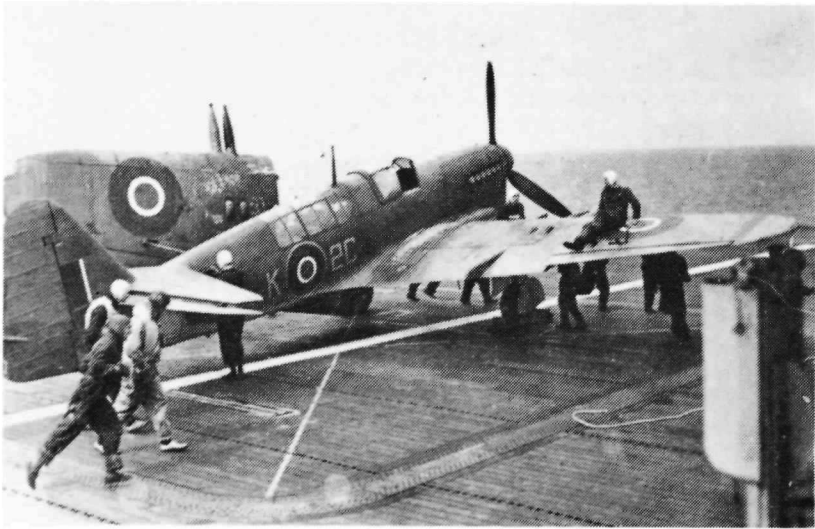
#### DECK LANDING ACCIDENTS

The following is a sample of what befell naval aircraft during DLT aboard a training carrier.

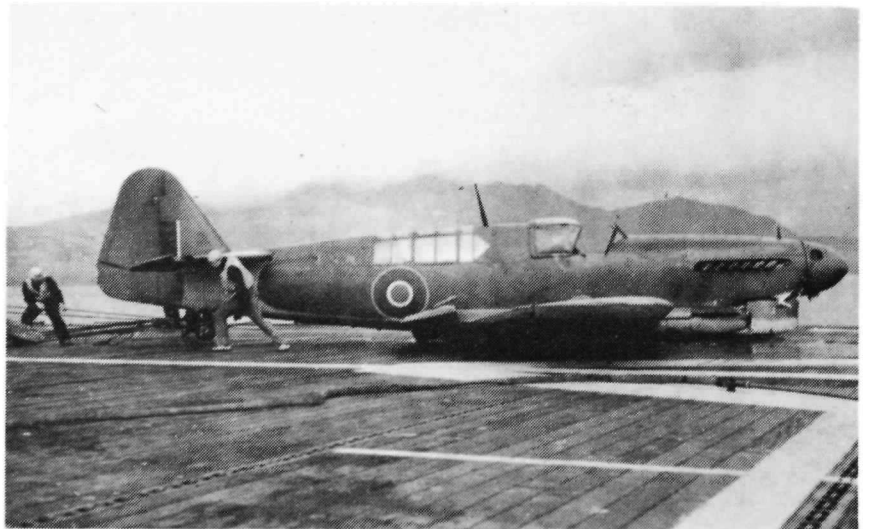
2.7.43	Avenger I FN791/846	Stalled on to deck, opened up and went over port side
3.7.43	Avenger I FN787/846	Engine cut on take-off;
4.7.43	Avenger I FN788/846	Stalled on take-off; crew of three killed
7.7.43	Avenger I FN790/846	Incorrectly mounted on catapult; crashed in sea
18.10.43	Hellcat I FN356/804	Crashed
22.10.43	Hellcat I FN340/804	Crashed into barrier
3.11.43	Hellcat I FN337/800	Crashed into barrier
20.11.43	Barracuda I P9666/768	Tailwheel caught round down
25.11.43	Spitfire VB W3796/768	Crashed over side
17.12.43	Spitfire VB AR297/768	Hook hit round down
31.1.44	Barracuda II DP865/768	Crashed into barrier
8.2.44	Avenger I FN900/832	Crashed into barrier
18.2.44	Avenger II JZ406/768	Bounced over wires into barrier
10.3.44	Avenger II JZ416/768	Propeller struck barrier
13.3.44	Spitfire VA BL818/768	Crashed into net
29.3.44	Spitfire VB BL343/768	Propeller struck barrier
14.4.44	Barracuda II P9738/768	Crashed into barrier
14.4.44	Barracuda II P9794/768	Undercarriage collapsed on landing on
1.5.44	Seafire IB MB342/768	Crashed into port catwalk

Left: Wildcat JV351 of 768 Squadrons hits the barrier  
Right: Seafire NM981 of No.758 Squadron





*Firefly I of No.766 Squadron being folded*

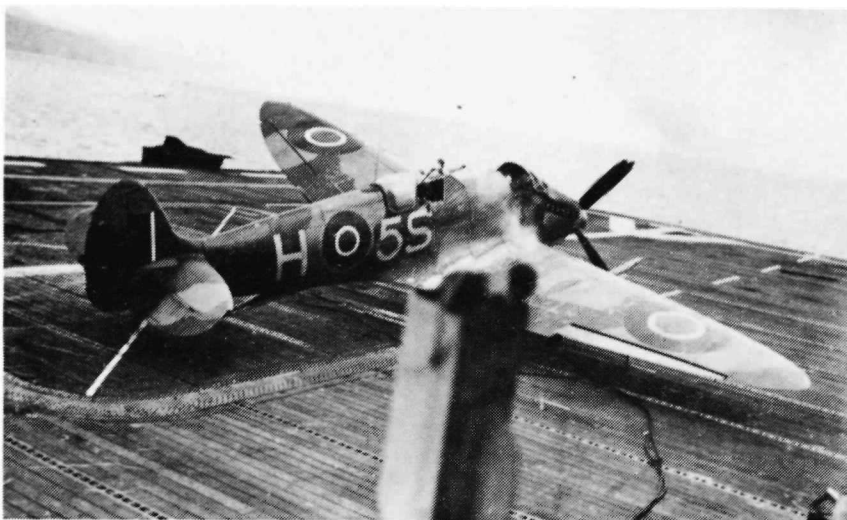


*Firefly I Z1959 of 768 Squadron after crashlanding*

3.5.44 Seafire IIC Damaged in heavy landing  
MB200/768  
12.7.44 Barracuda II Crashed into barrier  
LS691/768  
24.7.44 Barracuda II Crashed into barrier  
LS632/768  
10.8.44 Spitfire VA Over side into catwalk  
BL818/768  
16.8.44 Avenger I Crashed into barrier  
FJ799/768  
16.8.44 Avenger I Crashed into barrier  
FN789/768  
21.8.44 Seafire IB Starboard leg collapsed  
MB342/768  
1.9.44 Seafire IIC Stalled on to deck  
LR650/768  
1.9.44 Seafire IIC Propeller hit barrier  
MB148/768  
16.9.44 Seafire IIC Crashed over barrier  
MA995/768

17.9.44 Seafire IIC Crashed over port side  
MB148/768  
18.9.44 Seafire IIC Crashed into barrier  
MB204/768  
22.9.44 Avenger II Crashed through barrier into  
JZ406/768 sea, damaging JZ409  
25.9.44 Wildcat I Swung over port side on  
AJ128/768 take-off  
3.10.44 Hellcat I Crashed into barrier  
FN372/768  
10.10.44 Barracuda II Crashed into barrier  
LS683/768  
14.10.44 Seafire IIC Crashed into barrier  
NF598/768  
26.10.44 Seafire IIC Crashed into barrier  
LR650/768  
22.3.45 Seafire IIC Went over side on take-off  
NF581/768  
5.4.45 Wildcat V Crashed into barrier  
JV350/768

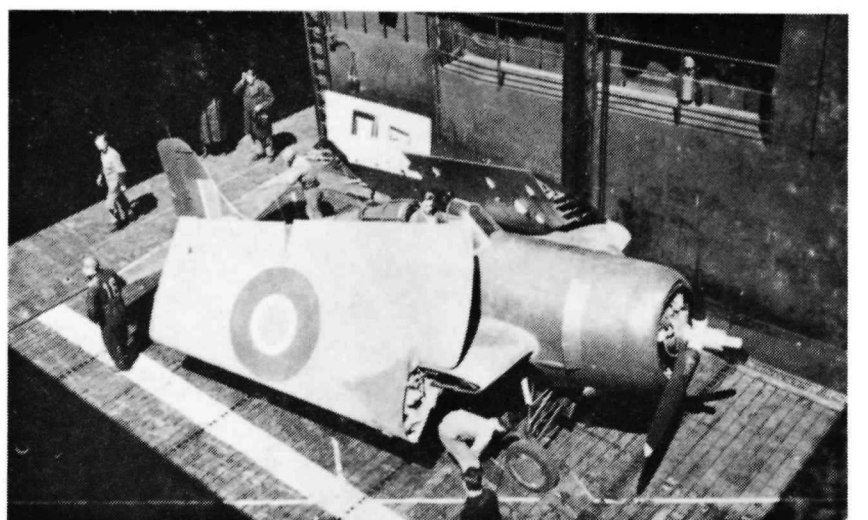
*Seafire LR625 loses its engine in the barrier, 30.5.45*



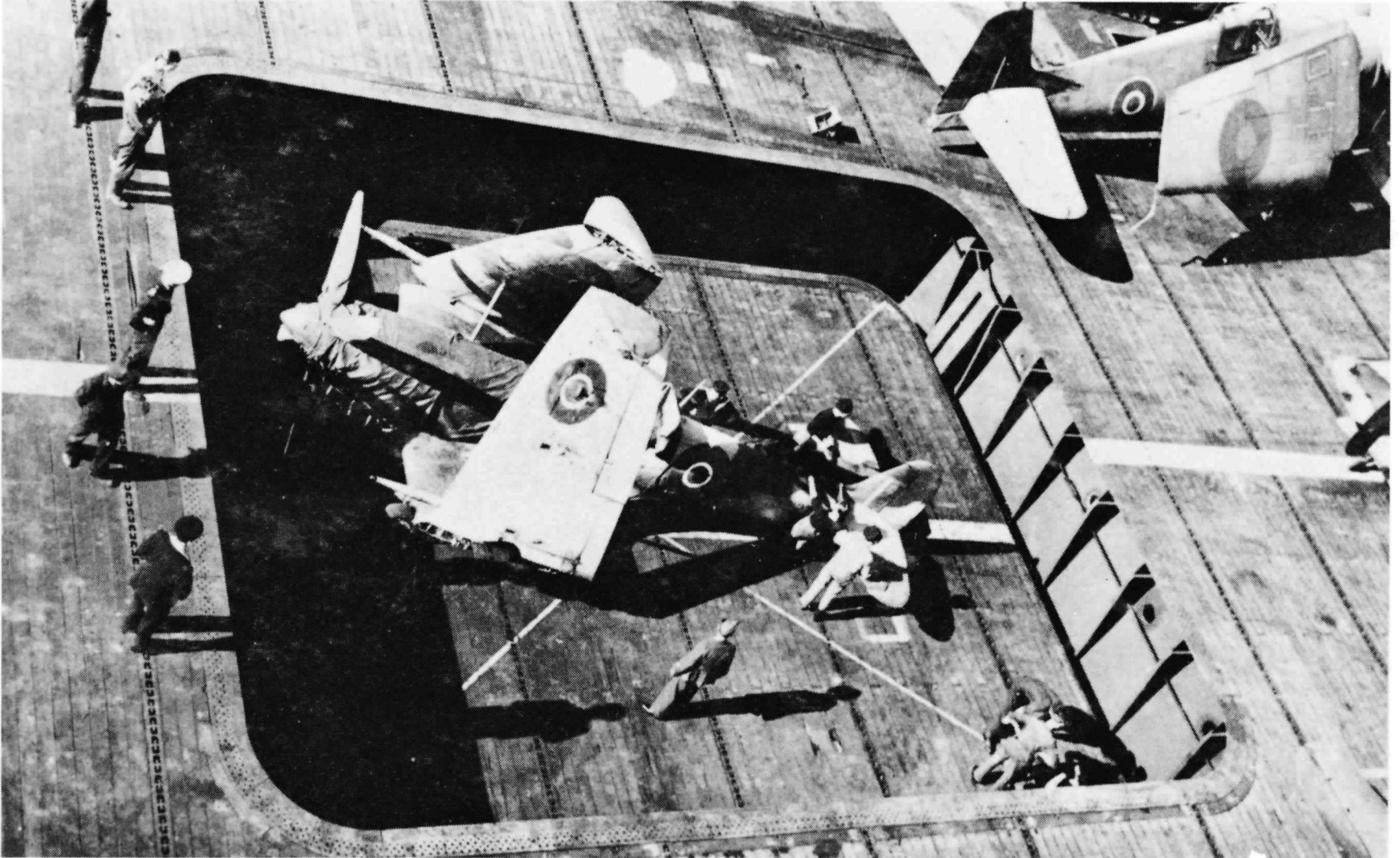
*Striking down a Barracuda*



*Seafire LR817 heads for the barrier*



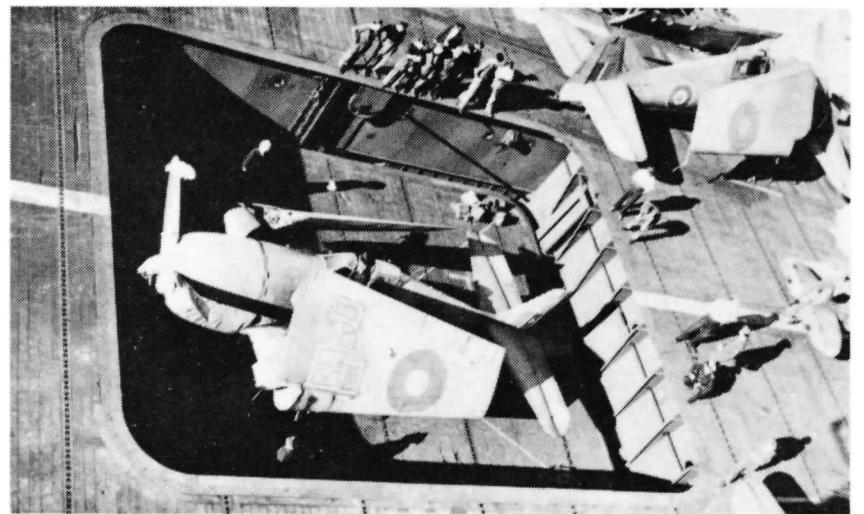
*Wildcat being struck down forward elevator*



*Seafire NF627 on elevator, Hellcat JV215 on right*

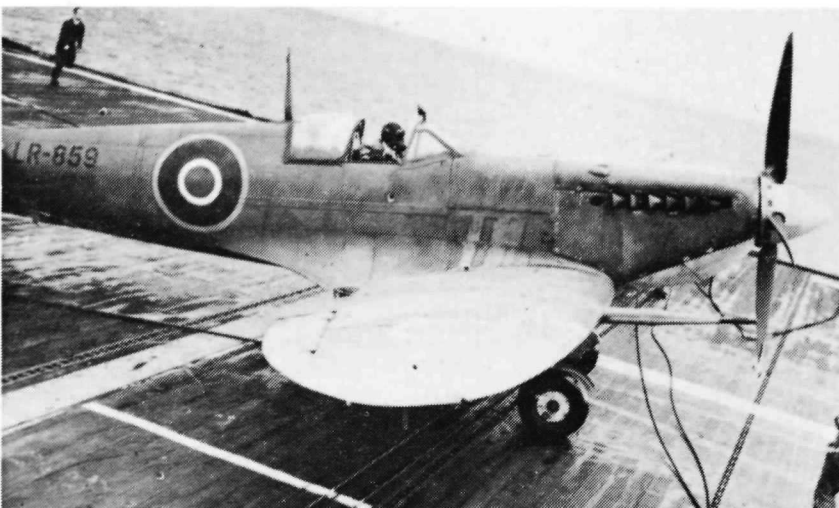
- 20.6.45 Seafire III Crashed into barrier  
PP940/761
- 21.6.45 Seafire IIC Stalled and went over side  
MB198/768
- 1.7.45 Seafire IIC Crashed into barrier  
LR836/768
- 5.7.45 Seafire IIC Floated into barrier  
LR848/768
- 11.8.45 Seafire IIC Crashed into barrier  
MA985/768
- 21.8.45 Seafire III Spun into sea  
RNZNVR pilot killed  
NN310/768
- 22.8.45 Seafire IIC Stalled on approach and  
hit round down  
LR688/761
- 6.12.45 Corsair III Crashed through barriers  
into sea. Pilot killed  
JS769/768
- 28.12.45 Seafire IIC Undercarriage leg collapsed  
in heavy landing  
LR853/768

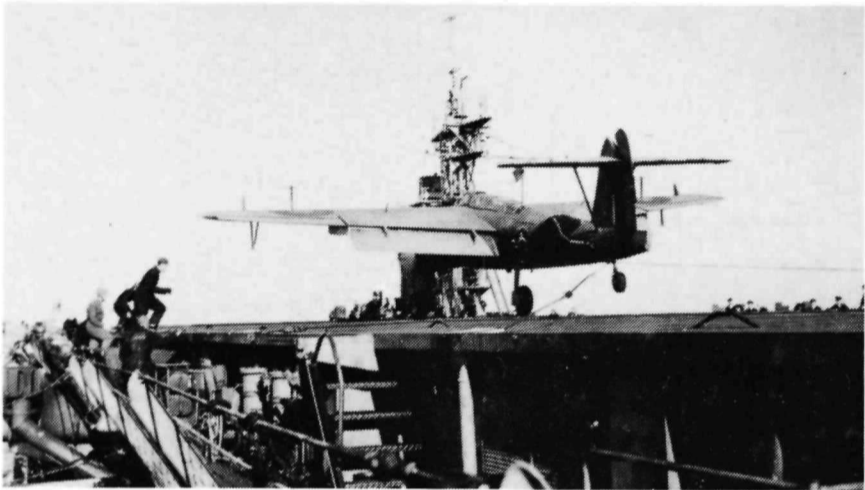
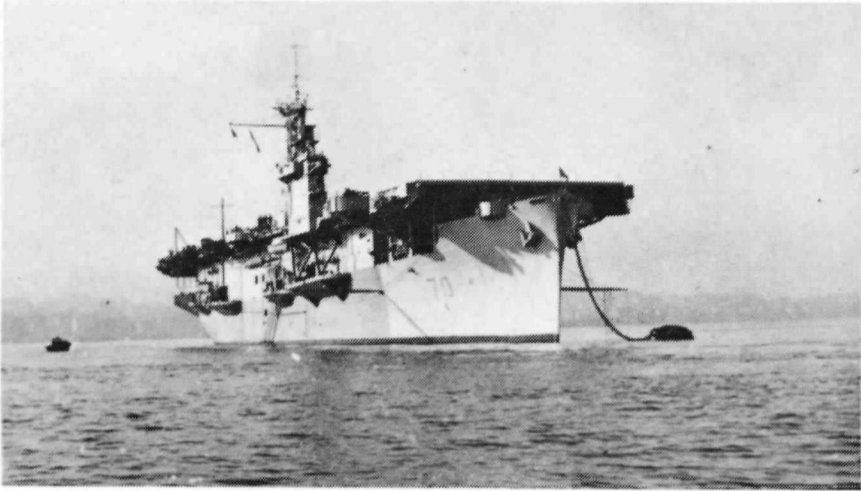
*Centre: Hellcat JV215 being struck down; JV172 on right  
Bottom: Seafire BL818 runs out of flight deck*



The above are typical of landing mishaps during DLT. There were numerous minor accidents in addition.

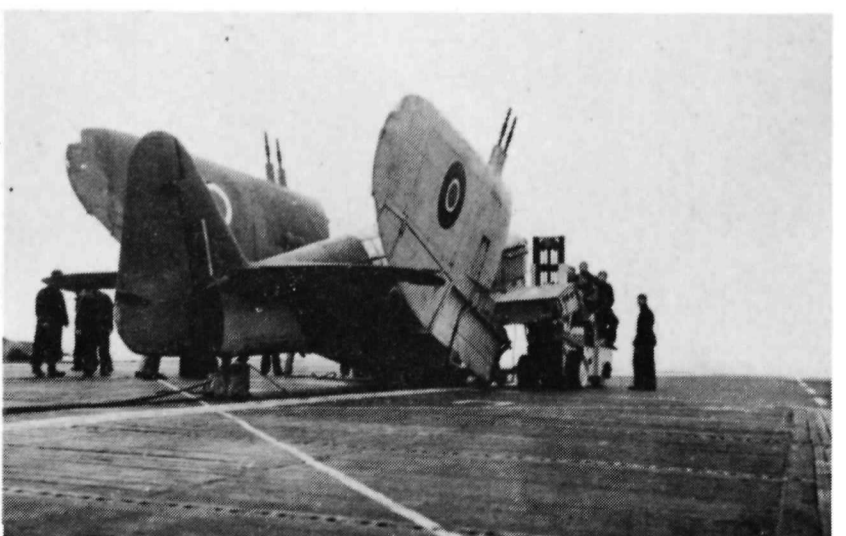
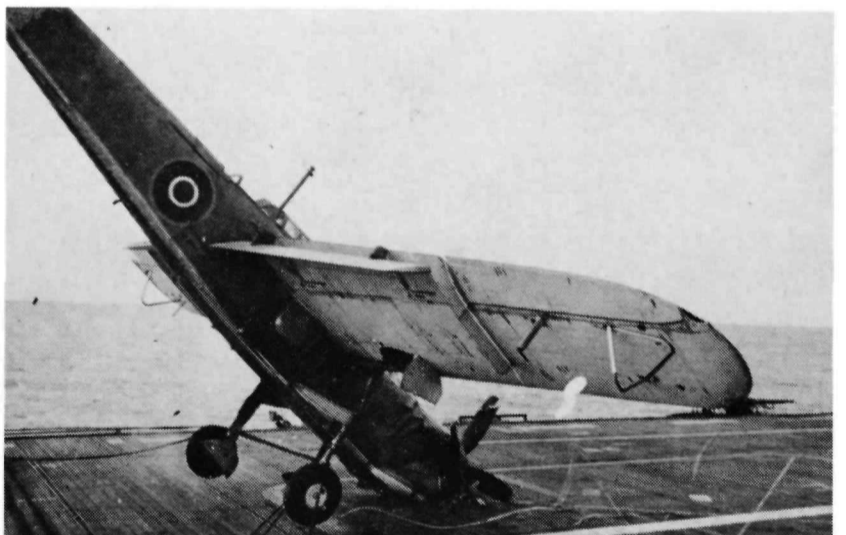
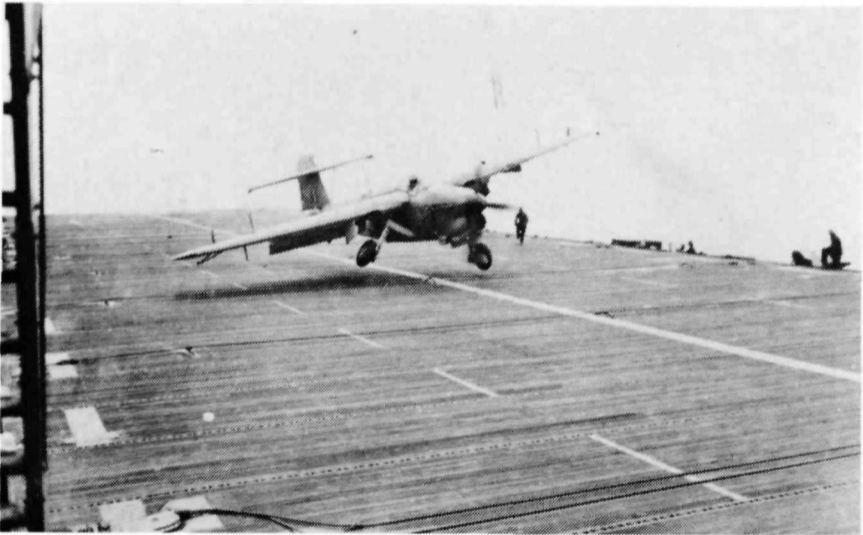
*Seafire LA859 of No.761 Squadron hits the barrier*



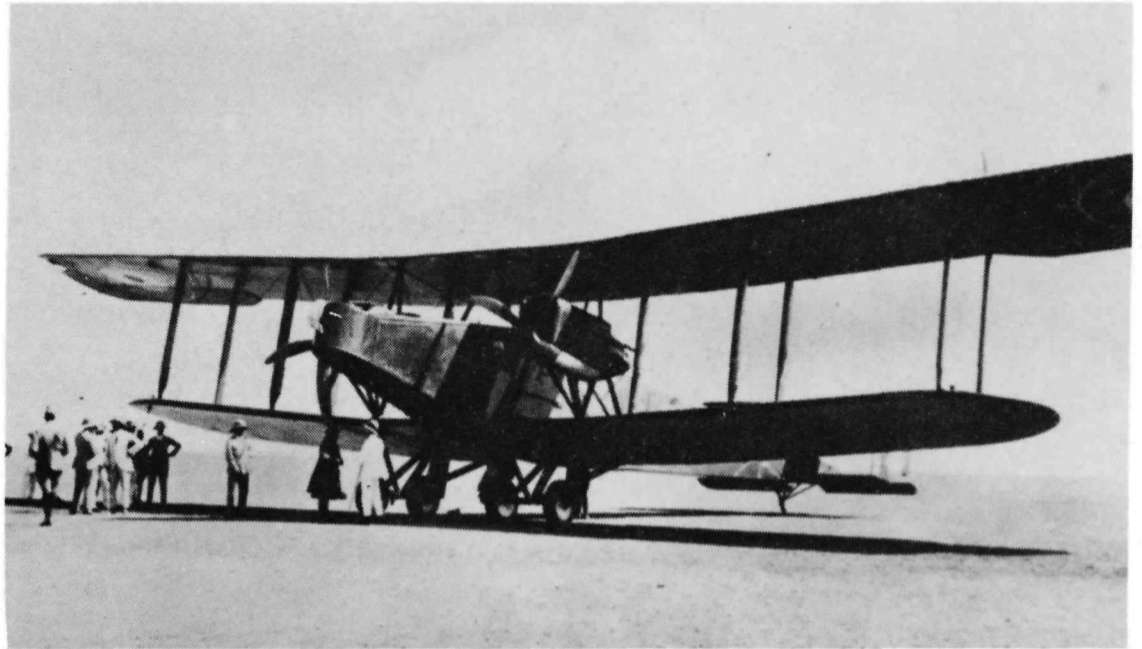


*Ravager at anchor in the Clyde  
Barracuda landing on, July 1944  
Barracuda lands with jammed undercarriage, July 1944  
Barracuda LS683 heads range awaiting take-off*

*A Seafire goes over the side, 15 March 1945  
A Firefly I of 768 Squadron tips up, 4.6.45  
Barracuda LS691 of 768 Squadron tips up in barrier  
Firefly I of 768 Squadron folded on elevator*



## R.A.F. SHARJAH The Early Years



*Handley Page O/400 C9681*

Smile - you're in Sharjah. So says the sign at the boundary of Sharjah town and indeed, for the locals, there is now much to smile about. Hospitals and schools have been built, education and medical treatment are free, all subsidised by an oil-based economy. The creek is lined with prestige hotels and from the town, two-lane highways fan out across the desert. Urban sprawl has enveloped the old airfield and is spreading so fast that soon Sharjah and Dubai will be as one.

Even by Gulf standards there have been few more dramatic and unexpected changes during the last thirty years. Whilst the change is the result of the local discovery of oil, it is air travel which has generally sped the process.

### EARLY FLYING IN THE GULF

With bases and units established in Egypt and Mesopotamia (Iraq) during World War One, early flying in the Gulf region was carried out by the Royal Air Force. Two significant landplane flights were made in the area at the war's end. A Handley Page O/400 was flown out from the UK to Egypt in the summer of 1918. This aircraft, C9681, after operations in support of General Allenby's offensive and the desert campaigns of Col. T.E. Lawrence, was flown on to Delhi in December, 1918 to survey a projected Imperial air route to India.

The first through flight to India was undertaken by a H.P.V/1500, HMA 'Old Carthusian', so called because both pilots were educated at Charterhouse School. Leaving Martlesham Heath on Friday, 13 December 1918, it reached Karachi

on 15 January 1919. Though there were several unscheduled stops on the way, the 5,560 miles were covered in a flying time of 72 hours, 41 minutes.

The route taken by 'Old Carthusian', and that previously surveyed by C9681, followed the northern shores of the Gulf by way of Ahwaz, Bushire and Bandar Abbas. It was much later before the air routes of the southern coast were opened up - by seaplanes. No.203 Squadron, based on the Shatt al Arab at Basra, made the first sorties south of Kuwait, flying as far as Merbat in 1931 and, in 1932, continued through to Aden. The Supermarine Southamptons were supported by HMS Penzance.

A British Resident had been established at Sharjah since 1823. It was he who had suggested a truce amongst the constantly-warring tribes to safeguard the pearling season and, as the commercial benefits of the truce became obvious the region prospered and the name 'Trucial States' evolved.

Along the Trucial coast, the native Bedouin, though often friendly, was always suspicious. The ruling Sheiks were not over-anxious to see landing grounds established on their territory but, curiously, a flying boat at anchor was accepted. The initial use of seaplanes by the RAF was a happy chance which encouraged a timely change of attitude because political events were soon to force a dramatic increase in air travel on the southern route.

*Wapiti K1392 of No.55 Squadron*



*Vincent K6330 of No.55 Squadron*



IMPERIAL DAYS

In the early 1930s, negotiations with the Persian Government regarding the use of its airfields by Britain broke down. Consequently, the necessary overflight and landing permissions to sustain a viable northern Gulf route were withdrawn.

The switch to a southern route was expensive and the primitive landing grounds at Bahrain and Sharjah needed improvement while at Sharjah facilities were needed for overnight accommodation. Trouble with the northern route having been anticipated, this latter work was well in hand, undertaken by personnel drawn from Imperial Airways in India.

Formal agreement for the use of the airfield was now obtained and air rights secured to the British Government under an eleven-year treaty dated 22 July 1932. Additional to a monthly rent of 800 Indian Rupees, and water charges, a fee of five Rupees per aircraft landing was to be paid to the Sheikh. He distrusted paper money and cheques and for years paid a monthly visit to the station to collect the silver coinage.

The treaty respected the Sheikh's authority over his subjects and specifically forbade interference with his subjects (male or female), camels or divers. A particular promise was made that 'no evil doers shall be allowed to take refuge in the resthouse'. During the war years the treaty was renewed, British and Allied military aircraft being accorded full rights without payment of extra charges.

The aircraft being used on Imperial's service to India, four Handley Page 42Es, had been specially constructed for the Eastern route. Bag-

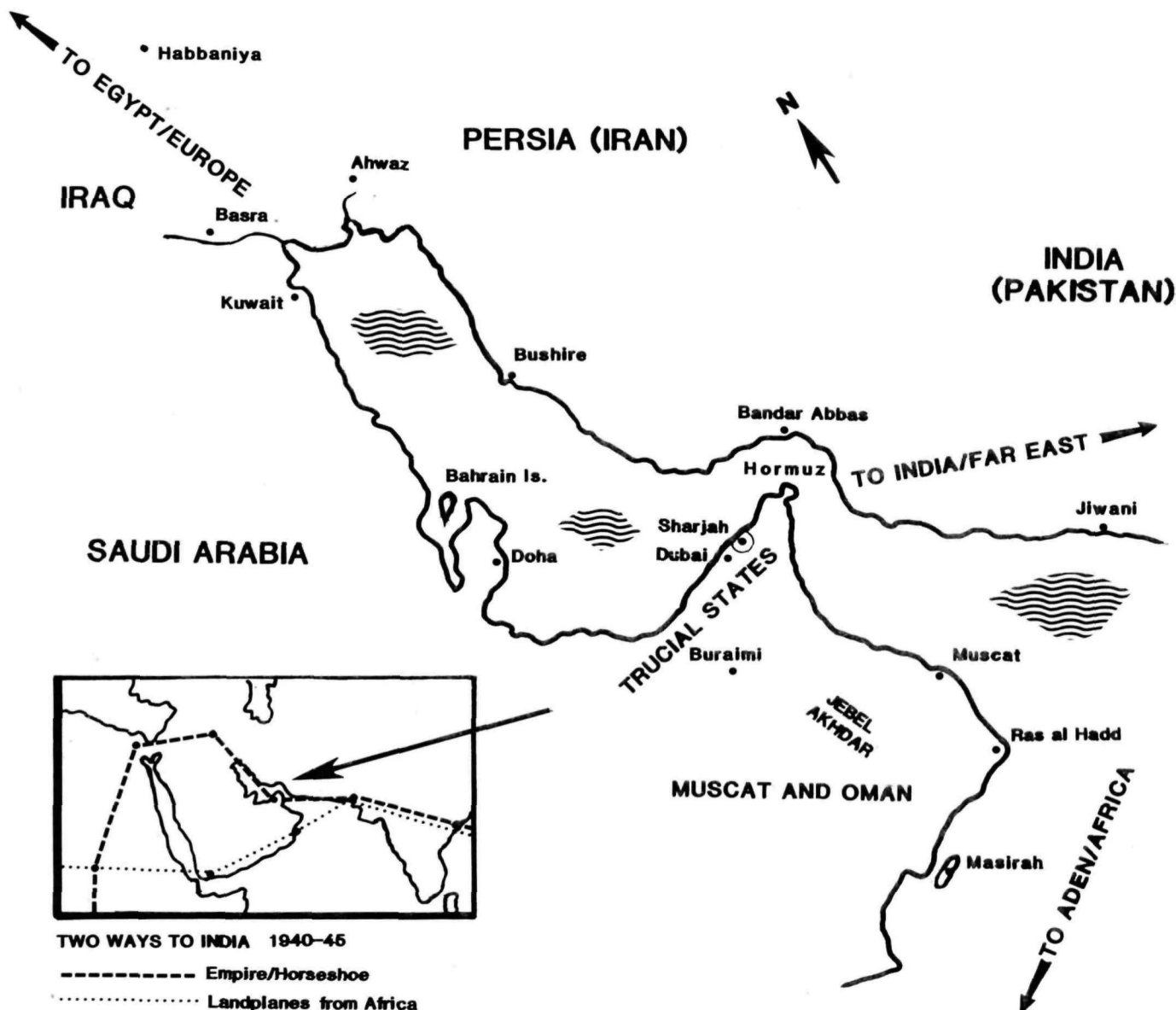
gage space was increased at the expense of passenger accommodation but now extra fuel tanks were also required for the longer stage lengths of the southern route. The first flight left Croydon for India on 5 October 1932, with overnight stops at Athens, Gaza, Basra and Sharjah. During the next year, the route was consolidated and extended and, in 1934, the first through mail to Australia staged by way of Sharjah carrying two tons of letters and parcels.

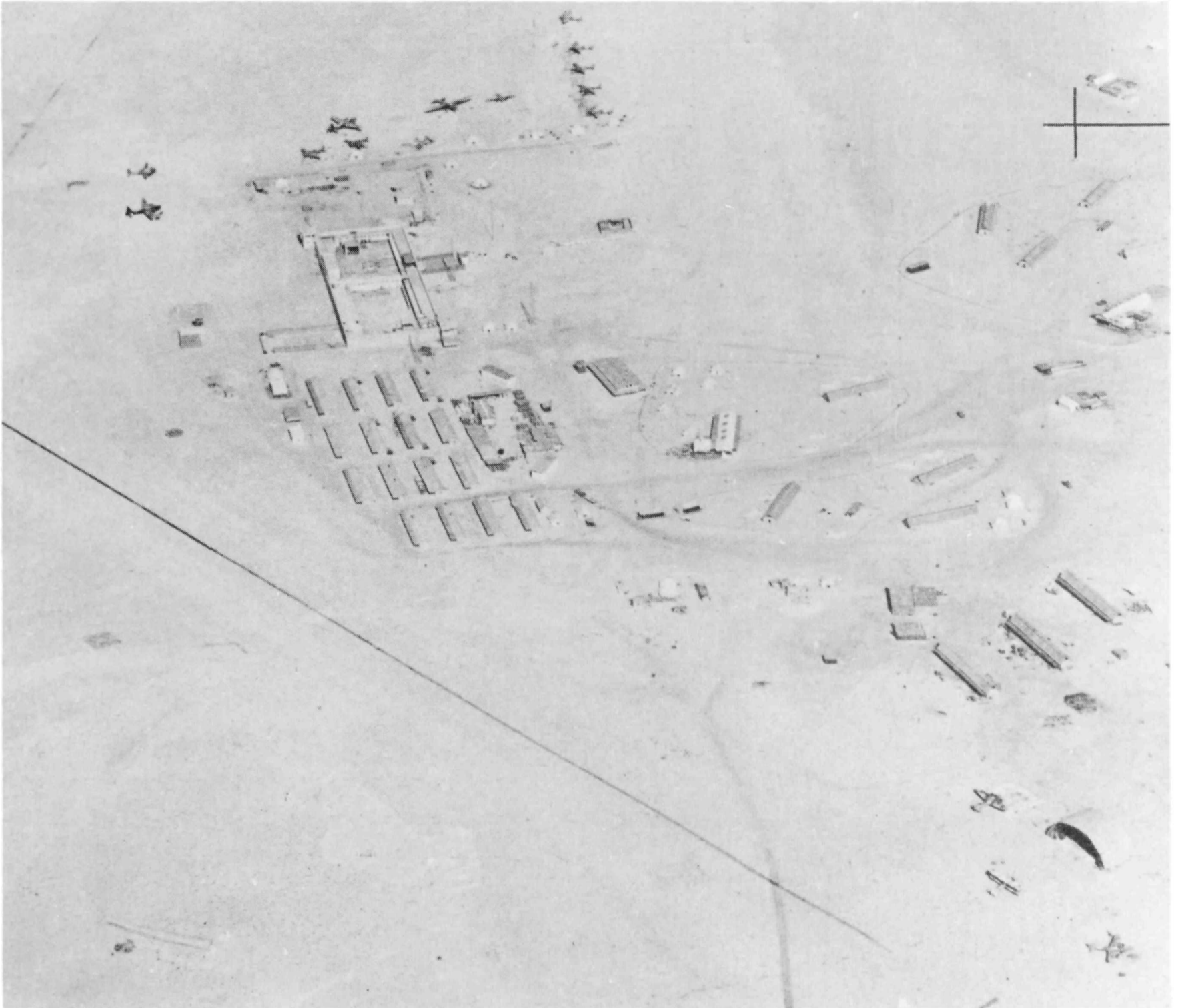
Safe overnight accommodation was provided at Sharjah in the resthouse. Built in the form of a fort, it was square, battlemented and white-washed - and the pride and joy of the local inhabitants. In the view of many passengers it was a romantic spot. The Sheikh, cloaked and mysterious, often paid an evening visit, the rifles of his escorts banded in solid gold.

Besides Sharjah, landing grounds had been marked out by the RAF at Doha, Muscat and on Masirah Island. By 1933, flights to these areas by service aircraft had become routine, with the Vickers Victorias of No.70 Squadron and the Westland Wapitis of Nos.55 and 84 Squadrons being regular visitors. The peaceful intentions of these callers were always emphasised and the Bedouin invariably gathered around the 'sky camels' when the dust of landing had settled.

The Arabs were quick to take offence at any breach of hospitality and, reportedly, had painfully-embarrassing ways of revenge. Being offered a light refreshment of curdled camel's milk could cause problems for unwary aviators. Apparently the answer was to offer in return some 'milk' from the sky camel. A sip of petrol for the Bedouin and of camel's milk for the airmen was sufficient for each to retain face.

Between the wars, the Middle East became the





*Sharjah in 1943. Among the Blenheims and Wellingtons is the last Vincent of No.244 Squadron (J.Willshire)*

proving ground for Service air transport activity. All the RAF squadrons with large transport aircraft on strength were deployed there. Iraq-based Valentias and Victorias droned between the remote staging posts set around the Arabian Peninsula, to and from Aden. Sharjah, with its permanent buildings, was now an established feature on the route. Even so, it was a forbidding place, surrounded by a salty marsh with a sand bar as the only protection from the sea. It was bare of vegetation, remote from anything save sand and flies and the heat struck as though someone had opened a furnace door.

#### THE HORSESHOE

Travel by Imperial Airways was promoted for its comfort and safety rather than its speed. The leisurely progress of the four-engined H.P.42 biplanes was indeed safe. The aircraft never killed a passenger. However, the appearance of high-performance American monoplanes brought increasing competition and the speed of air travel became an important factor.

Progress with RAF flying boat operations had shown the way and in 1934 a most ambitious plan was devised for speeding Empire communications. To be known as the Empire Air Mail Scheme, it was intended to carry all mail between Britain and the Empire by air without any surcharge.

The cost of sending a letter from London to Australia would be the same as to destinations in the UK - 1½d (less than 1p). A new fleet of flying boats was ordered to implement the plan, the Short C-Class Empire boats.

The first regular C-Class service through the Gulf, from Alexandria to Karachi via Habbaniya and Sharjah (Dubai) took place in October 1937. It was to continue for the next ten years, initially on the Empire routes and later as the 'Horseshoe' route of BOAC, the vital wartime link between Africa and the Far East. The flying boats landed on the sheltered waters of the creek, some twelve miles south of Sharjah. A resthouse was established at Dubai for the passengers who were ferried ashore while the aircraft was refuelled and serviced.

At this time, the economy of Sharjah was on the wane. The harbour had silted up and trade was being lost to neighbouring Dubai. A world depression and the acceptance of a cultivated pearl was killing the pearl fishing industry. Tribal differences erupted once again; Sharjah and Dubai were at war. It was a war fought with the muskets and cannon used by pirates three hundred years before. Understandably, cannon balls were in short supply and the battle area was searched each evening to recover enough for the next day's fighting.

In spite of these local difficulties, the Gulf flying boat routes became firmly established until the Italian declaration of war in June 1940. This, and the later collapse of France, placed a hostile force in the Mediterranean which effectively cut Britain off from the rest of the Empire by air.

The 'Horseshoe' plan was to join parts of the two former Empire routes, Britain to South Africa and Britain to Australia. Flying boats would fly back and forth on a long horseshoe-shaped section that linked sixteen countries between Durban and Sydney. The route through the Persian Gulf staged through Basra, Bahrain and Sharjah. Thus Sharjah, and its outstation on Dubai creek, became vital staging posts for both landplanes and seaplanes during the years of World War Two.

#### NO.244 SQUADRON

The growing need to provide anti-submarine and shipping escort patrols in the Gulf and its approaches led to the establishment of the first permanent squadron at Sharjah. No.244 Squadron arrived at the station late in January 1942 with a detachment of thirty men, eight Vincents and an Oxford.

The squadron had been formed at Shaibah in November 1940 from a unit known as 'S' Squadron whose Vincents had been inherited from No.84 Squadron and various other sources. At Sharjah, it began a survey of landing grounds during which one Vincent was lost (K4121).

Armed with four 250-lb anti-submarine bombs, the Vincents began patrols in February 1942 but were soon replaced by Blenheim IVs. Serviceable Vincents were returned to serve with the Persian anti-locust flight but one, K4738, previously struck off charge, was repaired and remained at Sharjah until late 1943 as the squadron hack.

At first, RAF personnel shared accommodation with BOAC in the fort but soon moved out into tents pitched by the landing ground. Stores and equipment for the new station was transhipped at sea to barges and landed across the beach. It was the beach that provided one of the few spare time pleasures - swimming - though it was dangerous and five airmen died there in wartime swimming accidents.

Gradually a 'permanent' camp of barusti huts was established, the fibre matting walls and roof giving some protection while permitting a welcome through-flow of air. The fort was the centre point, however, providing homes for the W/T section, met office and service and civilian passengers in transit.

Until the establishment of No.4 Ferry Control Unit at Sharjah (later No.44 Staging Post) it fell to the engineering staff of No.244 Squadron to handle the variety of Service aircraft passing through. Many of these aircraft were flown by inexperienced crews and every landing was an event to be watched. During one period, three Hudsons lay on the airfield in various states of disrepair following crashlandings. Engineering teams from the maintenance units at Shaibah and Drigh Road (Karachi) working in the open with a minimum of facilities, rebuilt two of these aircraft and had them flown out to India.

The Indian Rupee had been adopted as the local currency. It was then worth one shilling and sixpence (7½p). Arabs employed as labourers were paid 12 annas per day (16 annas equal one rupee as you will all recall) while those fortunate on the water and sanitary squads re-



*A disused barusti building, the old Station Sick Quarters (C.Lightfoot)*

ceived a whole rupee. Well, not entirely, for the Sheikh claimed half and his agent attended pay parades to make sure he got it.

Water was brought in by donkey caravan, the beasts loaded with four-gallon cans which rattled and clanged at each step. A water distillation plant was later built and christened 'Betsy'. Its temperamental and erratic nature was obviously feminine and Betsy ensured that the nightly sounds of water-carrying donkeys remained a camp feature for many years.

Another financial arrangement with the Sheikh was the hiring of watchmen to protect the aircraft but the temptation of machine gun ammunition aboard the planes and the lead ballast weights stacked on the dispersals proved too much. The Arabs' obsession with lead to manufacture bullets also frequently caused them to cut and remove lengths of electrical cabling around the camp. Eventually a company of RAF Levies arrived from Iraq to guard the more sensitive installations and the locally-employed watchmen were moved to other duties.

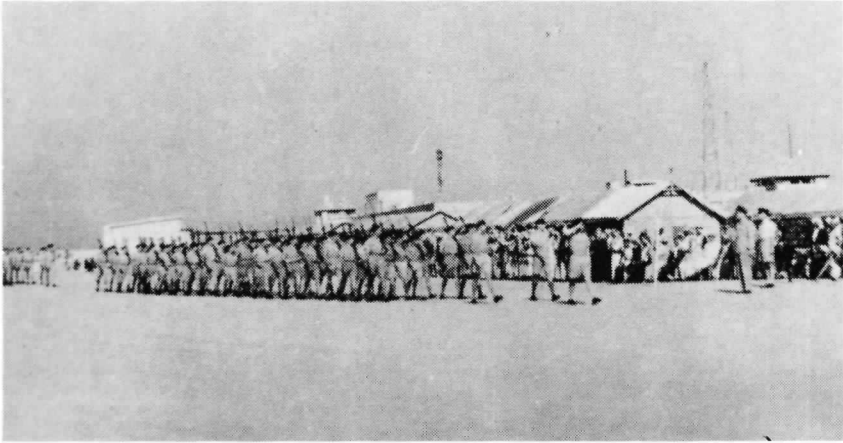
Small dumps of fuel and ordnance to support Blenheim operations were established at landing grounds around the Gulf including one at Ras-el-Hadd. Here, in the most easterly point of the peninsula, a 244 Squadron detachment served under conditions which made those at Sharjah seem luxurious by comparison. From Sharjah and the outposts, 244 flew daily sweeps and patrols in protection of shipping lanes crowded with northbound supply convoys to Russia and southbound convoys to the Far East.

Ex-members of 244 Squadron still tell you proudly that they never lost a ship under their protection. Indeed, the first sortie from Ras-el-Hadd caught a Japanese submarine on the surface and damaged it sufficiently to ensure its later destruction. On 16 October 1943, an aircraft piloted by Sgt. Chapman sank U-533 in the Gulf of Oman, the lone survivor being brought ashore to Sharjah by the Royal Navy.

During 1943, the squadron received the Blenheim V but these aircraft had been held in store in the Middle East for some time and suffered from engine corrosion. They were plagued by power losses due to oiling-up and though just able to maintain height on one engine it was a trait that did not endear the aircraft to its crews, many of whom were Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians. One such landing attempt on one engine ended up in the sea off Ras-el-Hadd in October 1943 and the wreck of this aircraft, BB154, still rests on the beach.

In February 1944, the squadron started to re-





*Sharjah marchpast on the 25th Anniversary of the RAF  
(L.J.Roberts)*

equip with Wellingtons and during the process moved its base to Masirah. The squadron ground personnel left Sharjah during March and sailed off to 'tin can island' aboard the SS Baroda. A final gift to the Sheikh was made by the squadron - 5,000 rounds of 0.303 ammunition.

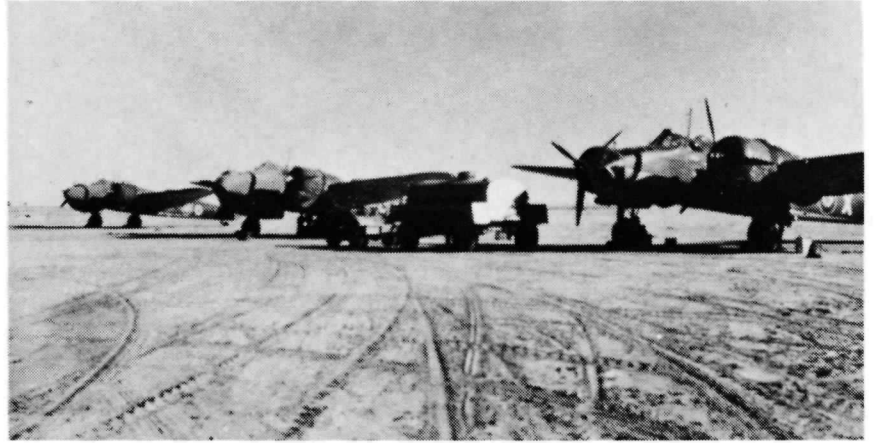
#### ROUTE STATION

With the departure of 244 Squadron, Sharjah adapted to the more ordered tempo of a staging post. Besides No.44 Staging Post at Sharjah, others in the Gulf region were No.43 at Bahrain and No.42 at Shaibah. These units were controlled by HQ No.151 Wing at Habbaniya on behalf of No.216 Group.

There was some American-inspired construction at this time to cater for increasing Allied air movements to the Far East. Facilities and accommodation had expanded considerably by 1944 though the constructions were still primitive, making much use of locally-obtained materials. The fort, occupied by the Anglo-Indian employees of BOAC, still provided the only measure of civilised living - for those lucky enough to have the right of access. There was an Airways bar, some basic air conditioning and the open central areas were enclosed by shady verandahs around which tame gazelle roamed.

However, the fort did provide one facility that was universally available. A portion of the exterior wall was whitened to provide a screen and regular cinema shows were given to the airmen, blanket-wrapped against the chill night-time air and seated on petrol tins. There was also a notable ENSA show starring Nancy Evans and Walter Widdop, two well-known concert singers of the day. Miss Evans' appearance stunned the audience, most of whom had not seen a woman for six months. The departure of the con-

*Halifax G-AGXA 'Waltzing Matilda' en route to Australia  
(C.Lightfoot)*



*Three Blenheim Vs of 244 Squadron at Sharjah, February 1943*

cert party was delayed by aircraft unserviceability so the show was repeated next day.

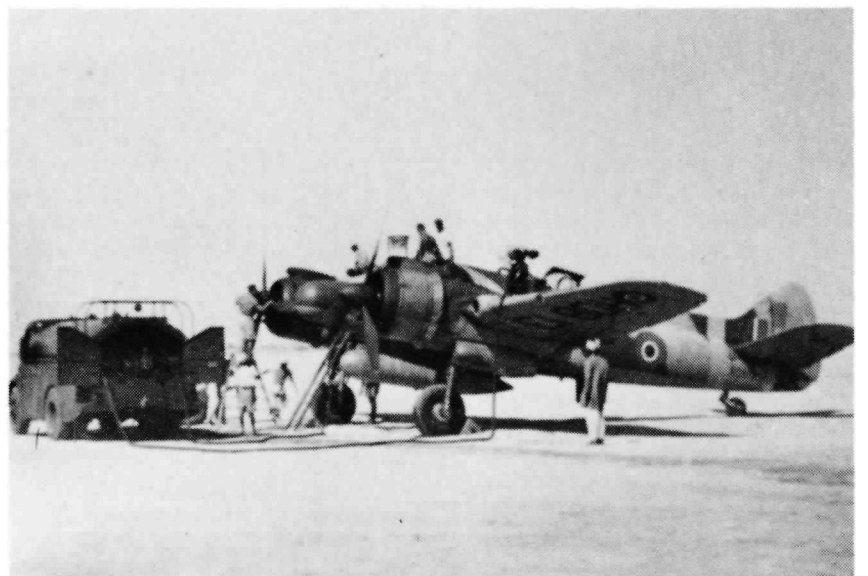
In the cool season, from September onwards, two or three fiercely-competitive football matches were played each week between teams from the messes and various base flights. The pitch was laid out over rolled sand with the markings poured on with used engine oil.

The same method was in daily use to maintain the runway centrelines. The triangular arrangement of hardened sand runways had two subsidiary lengths of 1,100 and 1,400 yards and a main runway length of 1,500 yards. The lengths were adequate for most aircraft types in hot desert conditions but officially were restricted to use by single- and twin-engined machines, four-engined 'heavies' being accepted on an emergency basis only.

To build up war stocks against the Japanese, the US Air Transport Command were pouring aircraft and supplied eastward along the Cairo to Calcutta route that staged through Sharjah. Another route had been established along the Hadramaut coast from Aden by way of Riyan, Salala, Masirah and Ras-el-Hadd. While the war was in progress, both routes were vital to Allied needs in India and the Far East but at the end of the war they were quickly to lose their importance.

Two flying units were attached to the station in the final year of the war. A detachment of No.294 Squadron arrived in mid-1945 for air-sea rescue duties. The squadron's Walrus, Wellington and Warwick aircraft were under the control of the Aircraft Safety Centre - Persian Gulf, with headquarters in Bahrain. Spitfires also operated from the station when No.680 Squadron used it briefly during a photographic survey of Persia and Iraq.

*A Refors Beaufighter X RD813 being refuelled*



الحكومة البريطانية



BRITISH GOVERNMENT

## الى كل عربي كريم

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته وبعد، فإمام هذا الكتاب ضابط بالجيش البريطاني وهو صديق وفي لكافة الشعوب العربية. فترجو أن تعاملوه بالمعطف والاحترام، وأن تحافظوا على حياته من كل طارئ. ونأمل عند الاضطرار أن تقدموا له ما يحتاج اليه من طعام وشرب، وأن ترشدوه الى أقرب معسكر بريطاني، وسنكافئكم بسخاء على ما تسدونه اليه من خدمات.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

القيادة البريطانية العامة في الشرق الاوسط

To All Arab Peoples - Greetings and Peace be upon you. The bearer of this letter is an Officer of the British Government and a friend of all Arabs. Treat him well, guard him from harm, give him food and drink, help him to return to the nearest British soldiers and you will be rewarded. Peace and the Mercy of God upon you.

The British High Command in the East.

## SOME POINTS ON CONDUCT WHEN MEETING THE ARABS IN THE DESERT.

Remove footwear on entering their tents. Completely ignore their women. If thirsty drink the water they offer, but DO NOT fill your water-bottle from their personal supply. Go to their well and fetch what you want. Never neglect any puddle or other water supply for topping up your bottle. Use the Halazone included in your Aid Box. Do not expect breakfast, if you sleep the night. Arabs will give you a mid-day or evening meal. Always be courteous.

REMEMBER, NEVER TRY AND HURRY IN THE DESERT, SLOW AND SURE DOES IT.

## A few useful words.

English	Arabic	English	Arabic
English	Ingleezi	Day	Yume
American	Amerikani	Night	Lail
Friend	Sa hih, Sa-deck.	Half	Nuss
Water	Moya	Half a day	Nuss il Yume
Food	Aki or Mungara	Neat	Gareeb
Village	Balaad	Far	Bared
Tired	Ta-ehan		

Take me to the English and you will be rewarded I  
English Flying Officer.

How far (how many kilos?)  
Enemy.

Hud nee eind el Ingleez wa talud  
JMu-ka-la.  
Za hi Ingleezi Tye-yara.  
Kam kilo?  
Germani, Taliari, Siziliani.

Distance and time: Remember, Slow & Sure does it.  
The older Arabs cannot read, write or tell the time. They measure distance by the number of days journey. "Neat" may mean 10 minutes or 10 hours. Far probably means over a days journey. A days journey is probably about 30 miles. The younger Arabs are more accurate.  
GOOD LUCK.



Personnel of No. 44 SP with transit Dakotas

Chit carried by all aircrews flying over desert (K.Wallace)

## THE QUIET YEARS

At the end of hostilities, the Middle East was scattered with scores of bases, airfields and landing grounds that would never be used again. As the Class A and Class B release men and tour-expired regulars flooded back to the UK, there was a great contraction and disbandment of units.

When No.294 Squadron disbanded in April 1946 it left the Command (AHQ Iraq) without an operational squadron under its control. The last Walrus at Sharjah (W3062) left at the end of April en route for Shaibah to be broken up but suffered terminal engine failure on the way and was ceremoniously burnt at Doha.

No 151 Wing at Habbaniya was disbanded and control of the staging posts reverted to their parent units. This probably ensured Sharjah's survival in the immediate post-war years. It was one of only four stations retained within the Command. With the decrease in traffic, the station was reduced to virtually a care and maintenance basis with a personnel strength of about thirty.

Despite the rundown of stations and facilities, there was a flurry of VIPs doing the rounds at this time. During June 1946, Sharjah was variously visited by Field Marshal Montgomery (CIGS), Sir Claude Auchinleck (GOC-in-C India), the Hon.A.V.Alexander (First Sea Lord) and several unnamed Air Officers. Perhaps the visits had some practical use because air conditioning was installed in some billets and messes before the year's end.

With little active work to occupy them if no aircraft movements were notified, the majority of airmen decamped to the beach for the afternoon. On one such occasion, a DC-3 joined the circuit and landed. The duty ATC officer rushed the mile or so back to the station and reached it just in time to greet the aircraft as it taxied up to the tower. Breathlessly he apologised to the pilot for the lack of radio con-

tact. The Captain of the DC-3 seemed surprised. Apparently he had received all the appropriate approach and landing instructions. The correct procedure had been followed throughout. Mistified, the controller climbed up into the tower to find that the native boy employed for tea-making and cleaning duties had responded to the crisis.


The war-weary C-Class flying boats of BOAC were being broken up during this period and, as if to signal the end of its importance to world air travel, the last flight on the old Empire route staged through Dubai creek in January 1947. Faster, longer-ranged landplanes now made the stop-over unnecessary.

The station and the general area seemed set for a decline into obscurity. Few, if any, could foresee the changes in the coming years. Political and strategic changes that would turn the airfield into a major RAF/Army base and economic changes that would transform Sharjah State from near-poverty to great riches.

Field Marshal B.L.Montgomery with station staff  
July 1946 (C.Lightfoot)



XN594 2 FTS/7 FTS/6 FTS To 8077M 21.4.70  
 XN595 2 FTS/CFS/3 FTS/  
 7 FTS  
 XN596 6 FTS To Singapore as GI air-  
 frame SAFTECH 1, 4.9.69  
 XN597 2 FTS Nosewheel collapsed in  
 heavy landing, Wymeswold,  
 28.6.67; nose to 7984M  
 XN598 6 FTS/3 FTS/  
 1 FTS Control lost; crashed in  
 Gouthwaite Reservoir,  
 Pately Bridge, Yorks.,  
 1.6.78  
 XN599 6 FTS Swung off runway and skid-  
 ded into bank, Acklington,  
 27.3.62  
 XN600 3 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
 XN601 6 FTS Lost power on take-off and  
 hit ground  $\frac{1}{2}$ m W of Ackling-  
 ton, 16.10.62  
 XN602 6 FTS To 8088M 2.3.70; preserved  
 at Brampton  
 XN603 6 FTS Abandoned after fire warn-  
 ing on approach 2m SW of  
 Acklington, 29.7.65  
 XN604 6 FTS Abandoned after false fire  
 warning 5m S of Acklington,  
 9.5.62  
 XN605 6 FTS/1 FTS/RAFC/  
 CFS  
 XN606 3 FTS/6 FTS/  
 1 FTS  
 XN607 3 FTS SOC 28.5.76  
 XN629 3 FTS/RAFC/1 FTS  
 XN630 3 FTS/RAFC/1 FTS/  
 7 FTS Sank back on take-off and  
 bellylanded, Biggin Hill,  
 23.7.69  
 XN631 3 FTS Collided with XM428  $\frac{1}{2}$ m E  
 of Northallerton, Yorks.,  
 and abandoned, 20.4.65  
 XN632 3 FTS To 8352M 30.11.73  
 XN633 3 FTS To 8363M 30.11.73  
 XN634 6 FTS/RAFC/7 FTS  
 XN635 RAFC/3 FTS To G.I.airframe, 16.7.73  
 XN636 RAFC/1 FTS  
 XN637 3 FTS SOC 11.3.74; preserved  
 as G-BKOU  
 XN638 6 FTS SOC 18.12.69  
 XN639 6 FTS SOC 31.10.69  
 XN640 6 FTS/CFS/3 FTS/  
 RAFC/7 FTS  
 XN641 3 FTS/RAFC/1 FTS Damaged in landing accid-  
 ent, Linton-on-Ouse,  
 11.5.84; not repaired;  
 to 8865M  
 XN642 3 FTS Abandoned after flame-out  
 on take-off 2m from  
 Leeming, 19.2.63  
 XN643 3 FTS/1 FTS Engine cut; abandoned near  
 Snainton, Yorks., 30.7.81  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 XN635 Sycamore HR.51 renumbered XR592  
 XN647 to XN658; XN683 to XN710 Sea Vixen FAW.1s for  
 Royal Navy  
 XN714, XN719 Hunting H.126s for Ministry of Aviation  
 XN719 not built  
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**44 English Electric Lightning F.2s delivered between  
 September 1962 and October 1963 by EEC, Warton, to  
 Contract KC/2D/03**  
 XN723 R-R Caught fire on test flight  
 and abandoned, Keyham,  
 Leics., 25.3.64  
 XN724 Mkrs/Cv F.2A/19 To 8513M 8.12.76

XN725 Cv F.3/Mkrs/Cv F.3A/ Used for barrier trials;  
 Mkrs & AAEE/RAE to PEE, 3.9.74  
 XN726 CFE/19/92 SOC 1.4.77; 8545M NTU and  
 airframe to PEE  
 XN727 19/92 SOC 1.4.77; 8547M NTU  
 XN728 92 SOC 1.4.77; to 8546M  
 XN729 AFDS Sold to BAC 25.1.67; to  
 Saudi AF as 52-659  
 XN730 19/92 SOC 8.7.76; to 8496M  
 XN731 92/19 SOC 1.1.77; to 8518M  
 XN732 92 SOC 1.1.77; to 8519M  
 XN733 92/19/92/19 SOC 1.1.77; to 8520M  
 XN734 Cv F.3/Mkrs &  
 AAEE & R-R/Cv  
 F.3A/AAEE To 8346M 25.5.73;  
 later G-27-239  
 XN735 92/19/92 SOC 1.4.77; to 8552M  
 XN767 - Sold to BAC 10.5.66; to  
 Saudi AF as 52-655  
 XN768 92 To 8347M 3.5.73  
 XN769 92/19/92 To 8402M 28.6.74;  
 preserved at W.Drayton  


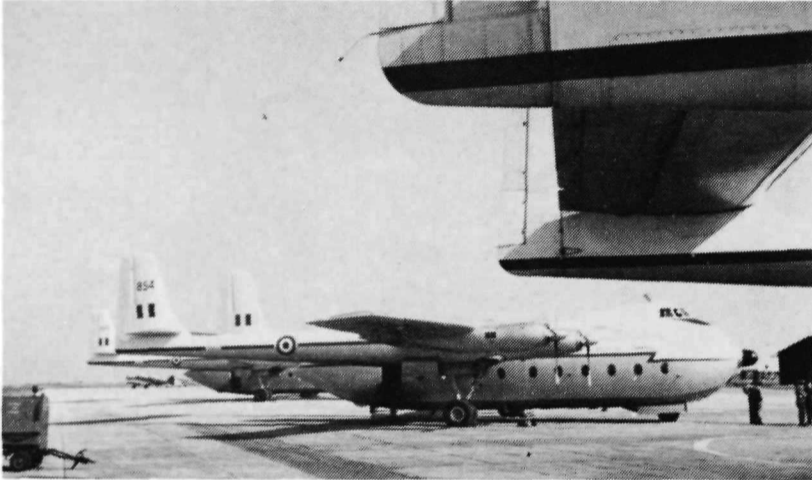
*Lightning F.2A XN787 of No.19 Squadron*

 XN770 - Sold to BAC 5.5.66; to  
 Saudi AF as 52-656  
 XN771 CFE/19 To PEE  
 XN772 MoA/92 Abandoned in spin  $\frac{1}{2}$ m E of  
 Diepholz, West Germany,  
 28.1.71  
 XN773 MoA/92 SOC 1.1.77; to 8521M  
 XN774 19/92 SOC 1.4.77; to 8551M  
 XN775 19/92 To 8448M 24.8.75  
 XN776 19 SOC 1.4.77  
 XN777 AFDS/CFE/19 SOC 1.4.77; to 8536M  
 XN778 19/92 SOC 1.4.77; to 8537M  
 XN779 19 To 8348M 3.5.73  
 XN780 19/92 SOC 30.9.75  
 XN781 19 SOC 1.4.77; to 8538M  
 XN782 19/92 SOC 1.4.77; to 8539M  
 XN783 92/19 SOC 1.1.77; to 8526M  
 XN784 19 SOC 1.4.77; to 8540M  
 XN785 92 Ran out of fuel and crash-  
 landed 5m N of Leconfield,  
 27.4.64  
 XN786 92/19/92/19 Caught fire near Gutersloh;  
 SOC on return, 4.8.76;  
 to 8500M  
 XN787 19/92 SOC 1.1.77; to 8522M  
 XN788 92 SOC 1.4.77; to 8543M  
 XN789 92/19 SOC 1.1.77; to 8527M  
 XN790 92/19 SOC 1.1.77; to 8523M  
 XN791 92 SOC 1.1.77; to 8524M  
 XN792 92 SOC 1.1.77; to 8525M  
 XN793 92/19/92 SOC 1.1.77; to 8544M  
 XN794 92/19 To 8349M 26.5.74  
 XN795 Mkrs & AAEE Sold to MinTech, 21.12.67

XN796 - Sold to BAC 29.4.66; to  
Saudi AF as 52-657  
XN797 - Sold to BAC 29.4.66; to  
Saudi AF as 52-658  
XN798 to  
XN803 - Cancelled

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20 Armstrong Whitworth Argosy C.1s delivered between December 1961 and April 1964 by Armstrong Whitworth, Bitteswell, to Contracts KU/K/031 (first seven) and KD/2K/01 (remainder)



Argosy C.1 XN854 of No.114 Squadron

XN814 Mkrs/Cv E.1/115 To MoD  
XN815 MoA/114/242 OCU/114/115 Sold 12.9.75  
XN816 MoA/Cv E.1/115 To 8489M 30.3.76  
XN817 MoA/Cv E.1/115 Sold to MinTech 21.5.70  
XN818 MoA/267/242 OCU/267/215/70/114 Sold 12.9.75  
XN819 MoA/105/267 & 114 To 8205M 8.72  
XN820 114/105/114 & 267/70 Sold 18.8.75  
XN821 AOCU/240 OCU/114 & 267/242 OCU/70 Sold 22.5.75  
XN847 AOCU/105/AOCU/114/MoA/114/267/70 8220M NTU; SOC 21.8.72  
XN848 AOCU/242 OCU/267/114/70/AEAES 8195M NTU; SOC 7.4.72  
XN849 AOCU/105/114/105/114 & 267 Sold 15.6.73  
XN850 AOCU/242 OCU/114 Sold 25.4.75  
XN851 AOCU/242 OCU/114/215/115 Sold 10.2.76  
XN852 AOCU/114/105/114 & 267/114/SF Benson Sold 22.5.75  
XN853 114 Sold 18.8.75  
XN854 114/AOCU/242 OCU/114 Sold 22.5.75  
XN855 114/AOCU/242 OCU/Cv E.1/115 To 8556M 3.8.77  
XN856 114 Sold 18.8.75  
XN857 114 Sold 18.8.75  
XN858 114/242 OCU/70 Sold 7.10.75

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XN865 to XN876; XN896 to XN907 Northrop Shelduck D.1 target drones

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XN922 to XN935; XN948 to XN975 Buccaneer S.1s for Royal Navy

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Ten Blackburn Buccaneer S.2As and S.2Bs delivered by Hawker-Siddeley, Holme-in-Spalding Moor, for Royal Navy as S.2s. Six subsequently transferred to RAF and modified to S.2A and S.2B status.

XN975 RAE Control lost avoiding helicopter and abandoned near Oelde, West Germany, 14.6.78  
XN976 12  
XN977 237 OCU/Cv S.2B/15 SOC  
XN978 12 Control lost in cloud during air-to-air refuelling demonstration at low altitude for Paris Air Show and abandoned over Forêt de Compiègne, 5.6.71  
XN981 Cv S.2B/208/12/208/12  
XN983 12/15/12/208/12

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XP103 to XP118 Westland Wessex HAS.1s for Royal Navy  
XP137 to XP160

XP165 to XP167 Westland Scout AH.1s for Army Air Corps  
XP185 to XP192

XP197 to XP199 Fairey Gannet AEW.3s for Royal Navy  
XP224 to XP229

XP232 to XP254 Auster AOP.9s for Army Air Corps  
XP277 to XP286

RAF use:

XP278 38 Gp CF Groundlooped on landing, Benson, and DBR, 23.8.66

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Three Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer CC.2s delivered between March and May 1961 by Scottish Aviation, Prestwick, to Contract KC/K/030

XP293 Hdlg Sqn/209 SOC 20.12.68  
XP294 SF Odiham/ AAEE/209 Skidded into ditch on landing on wet strip and undercarriage collapsed, Bario, Borneo, 11.9.64

XP295 230/SF Odiham/1310 Flt/MoA/SF Odiham Sold 26.8.70; to G-AZHJ  
XP296 - Cancelled

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52 Westland Whirlwind HAR.10s delivered between July 1961 and November 1962 by Westland Helicopters, Yeovil, to Contracts KF/2N/037 (first twelve) and KF/2N/042 (remainder)

XP299 MoA/CFS/230/QF/1563 Flt/230/22/SAR Wg To 8726M; preserved at Cosford, 9.12.81

XP300 MoA/1563 Flt/1564 Flt/CFS SOC 14.7.77

XP301 MoA & Mkrs/225/103/28 SOC 9.3.76

XP302 CFS/230/84 To 8443M 22.7.75

XP303 MoA/110/103/  
110/28 Rolled over during hover,  
Peak Alpha, Hong Kong,  
24.1.71; DBF

XP327 225 Lost tail rotor and crashed  
into hill near Serio,  
Sarawak, 25.9.65

XP328 225/110/225/  
110/28/21/32 Sold 27.4.82; to G-BKHC

XP329 225/110/103-110/  
230/84 SOC 7.82; to 8791M

XP330 225/110/230/  
32/21 Sold to CAA 26.1.76

XP331 CFS To GI airframe 8.2.80

XP332 225/103/28 Engine cut; ditched 1m E  
of Brothers Island,  
Hong Kong, 13.5.69

XP333 CFS SOC 8.2.80; to 8650M

XP338 225/CFS/HDU/CFS SOV 17.1.80; to 8647M

XP339 225/103/32 Sold 10.5.76; preserved

XP340 225/103/28 SOC 6.2.76

XP341 CFS To 8340M 5.5.73

XP342 CFS Flew into HT wires; lost  
tail cone and crashed near  
Llangollen, Denbigh, 2.6.66

XP343 CFS Rotor blade hit roof on  
take-off; tail hit ground  
and broke off, Valley,  
26.11.69

XP344 CFS/SAR Wg/22 To 8764M 20.10.82

XP345 CFS/202/  
1563 Flt/84 SOC 7.82; to 8792M

XP346 225/22/84 SOC 7.82; to 8793M

XP347 225/22 Tail rotor failed on land-  
ing; hit ground and rolled  
over, Koksijde, 3.6.81

XP348 225/22 Lost blade; flew into  
ground 2m SW of Midhurst,  
Sussex, 3.6.64

XP349 225/22 Engine lost power; ditched  
in Holyhead Harbour,  
Anglesey, 13.12.72

XP350 225/22/SAR Wg To Cornwall Aero Park,  
Helston, 3.3.82

XP351 22/SAR Wg/2 FTS To 8672M 9.2.81

XP352 22/202/SAR Wg SOC 31.7.82; to 8701M

XP353 22/1564 Flt/  
1563 Flt/202/SAR Wg To 8720M 3.11.81

XP354 22/202 To 8721M 4.11.81

XP355 CFS/MinTech/21 SOC 6.2.76; to 8463M

XP356 CFS/MoD(PE)/CFS Sold to MoD(PE) 17.11.75

XP357 225/110/230/22 Forcelanded on Newgale  
Sands, Dyfed, and overtaken  
by tide, 13.6.76; to 8499M

XP358 225/103/110/103/28 To RAE 10.5.76



Whirlwind HAR.10 XP359 of No.110 Squadron

XP359 225/103/110/103 SOC 31.10.75; to 8447M

XP360 225/CFS Sold 31.3.76; preserved

XP361 225/110/103/22/  
SAR Wg To 8731M 25.10.82;  
preserved at Boulmer

XP362 225/230/103 SOC 26.2.76

XP363 230/103/110/103/28 To 8228M 30.4.73

XP393 225/103/28 To RAE 10.5.76

XP394 CFS To Royal Navy 10.12.79

XP395 230/22 To 8674M 2.2.81

XP396 230 Tail rotor drive failed;  
yawed and flew into ground  
7m SE of Leicester, 7.6.69

XP397 230 Lost power and tail rotor  
hit ground in forced land-  
ing  $\frac{1}{2}$ m N of Gutersloh,  
17.8.64

XP398 225/110/103/202/  
1563 Flt/22 SOC 7.82; to 8794M

XP399 230/1563 Flt/32 Sold 10.5.76; preserved

XP400 230/110/103 To 8444M 23.7.75

XP401 230/110/103/28 SOC 6.2.76

XP402 230 Lost power and ditched off  
Victoria, Labuan, 3.7.65

XP403 228/202/SAR Wg/22 SOC 31.10.81

XP404 228/202/SAR Wg/22 To 8682M 10.82

XP405 CFS To 8656M 3.9.80

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20 Armstrong Whitworth Argosy C.1s delivered between  
April 1962 and March 1963 to Contract KD/2K/011



Argosy C.1 XP442 of No.267 Squadron

XP408 105/114 & 267/  
114 Sold 15.6.73

XP409 105/114 & 267/70 To 8221M 9.72

XP410 105/114 & 267/70 Sold 15.6.73

XP411 105/114 & 267/  
70/6 FTS To 8442M 5.75

XP412 105/114 & 267/  
115/70 Sold 22.5.75; to G-BDCV

XP413 105/242 OCU/  
Cv E.1/115 SOC 1.5.76

XP437 105/114 & 267 Sold 7.10.75

XP438 105/114 Sold 7.10.75

XP439 105/Cv E.1/115 To 8558M

XP440 105/114/SF Benson Sold 22.5.75

XP441 114/267/114 Bounced on landing; wingtip  
hit ground, broke up,  
Benson, 4.6.70

XP442 114/MoA/114/  
114 & 267/114/  
SF Benson/Cv T.2 To 8454M 10.75

XP443 114 Sold 18.8.75

XP444 267/215/70 To 8455M 11.75

XP445 267/215/70 Sold 15.6.73

XP446 267/215/70 Sold 26.1.76; to 9Q-COE

XP447 267/215/70/Cv T.2 Sold 10.2.76; to N1430Z

XP448 267/215/Cv E.1/115

XP449 267/215/70/  
Cv E.1/115 Sold 13.10.75

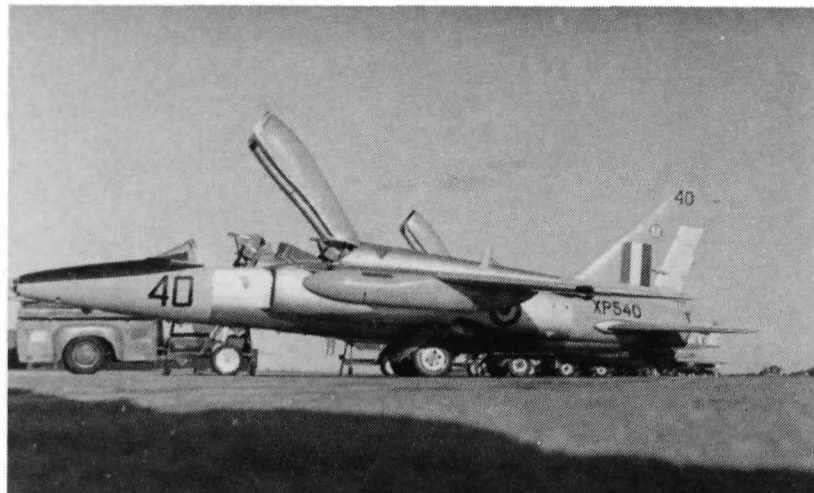
XP450 267/215/70/Trials  
Flt Cottesmore/70 Sold 22.5.75; to RP-C-1192

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XP454-464; XP487-495 Slingsby Grasshopper gliders

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30 Hawker-Siddeley Gnat T.1s delivered between November 1962 and July 1963 to Contract KC/2B/05



Gnat T.1 XP540 of No.4 Flying Training School

XP500	4 FTS	To 8557M 24.8.77
XP501	CFS	Undershot after hydraulic failure landing at Fairford, 13.6.69
XP502	4 FTS	To 8576M 25.1.78
XP503	4 FTS	To 8568M 31.10.77
XP504	4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8618M 4.3.79
XP505	MoA/CFS/MoA	Sold to MinTech 7.1.69
XP506	4 FTS	SOC 15.5.77
XP507	4 FTS	Flew into sea on approach, Valley, 13.4.66
XP508	4 FTS	Engine lost power on take-off; abandoned $\frac{1}{2}$ m SW of Valley, 6.9.73
XP509	4 FTS	Bellylanded at Valley, 14.12.67; DBR
XP510	4 FTS	Abandoned after control lost in dive off Nevin, Caernarvon, 14.11.68
XP511	4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8619M 4.3.79
XP512	4 FTS	Abandoned after control lost 1m SSW of Valley, 23.8.67
XP513	4 FTS/MoD	Sold to MoD(PE) 5.12.78
XP514	4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS/RAFC	To 8635M 19.9.79
XP515	CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8614M 12.3.79
XP516	4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8580M 8.2.78
XP530	CFS/4 FTS	To 8606M 29.9.78
XP531	CFS/4 FTS/CFS	SOC 12.3.76
XP532	4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8577M 9.3.79
XP533	4 FTS/CFS	To 8632M 21.9.79
XP534	CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8620M 3.79
XP535	CFS/4 FTS/CFS	To A2679 (SAH-2) for Royal Navy, 9.79
XP536	CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	Collided with XR983 and crashed 3m E of Dolgellau, Dolgellau, Merioneth, 30.4.76
XP537	CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	SOC 15.5.78
XP538	4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8607M 29.9.78
XP539	4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS/CFS	Abandoned near Leeming, 22.5.79
XP540	4 FTS/MoA/4 FTS	To 8608M 12.10.78
XP541	4 FTS	To 8616M 4.79
XP542	4 FTS/CFS/4 FTS	To 8575M 5.1.78

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100 Hunting Jet Provost T.4s delivered between October 1961 and December 1962 to Contract KC/E/041

XP547	AAEE/RAFC/CATCS/SRF/1 TWU	
XP548	Hdlg Sqn/RAFC/6 FTS	8404M NTU; SOC 25.1.74
XP549	CFS/CAW	SS 22.11.68
XP550	CFS/2 FTS	SS 22.11.68
XP551	CFS/CAW	SS 22.11.68
XP552	CFS/3 FTS	SOC 1.10.71
XP553	CFS	SS 20.11.68
XP554	CFS	SS 22.11.68
XP555	RAFC	SOC 1.10.71
XP556	RAFC/6 FTS/SRF/CATCS	
XP557	RAFC/6 FTS	To 8494M 30.6.76
XP558	RAFC/3 CAACU/CAW	To Royal Navy as GI airframe A2628, 13.5.74; later to 8627M
XP559	RAFC	SOC 16.1.70
XP560	RAFC/6 FTS	SOC 22.12.75
XP561	RAFC/1 FTS	Abandoned after control lost in cloud 15m SW of Linton-on-Ouse, 21.2.68
		SS 18.12.70
XP562	RAFC/3 FTS	
XP563	RAFC/CATCS/6 FTS/SRF/CATCS	
XP564	RAFC/3 FTS/CATCS/6 FTS/CATCS/1 TWU	Abandoned after engine lost power; crashed near Nant-y-Moch Reservoir, Llandeilo, Dyfed, 22.4.82
XP565	RAFC	SOC 14.8.72
XP566	RAFC	Flew into ground on night approach 2m NW of Cranwell, 30.4.70
		To 8510M
XP567	RAFC/6 FTS/CATCS	SOC 1.10.71
XP568	RAFC	Spun into ground, East Drayton, Notts., 30.12.66
XP569	RAFC/2 FTS	SS 22.11.68
XP570	CFS/RAFC/6 FTS	SS 22.11.68
XP571	CFS/6 FTS	SS 22.11.68
XP572	CFS	SS 22.11.68
XP573	CFS/1 FTS/BSE	To 8336M 9.8.73
XP574	3 FTS	SS 17.2.70
XP575	CFS/RAFC/CAW	SS 11.11.69
XP576	3 FTS	Abandoned after engine cut, Leeming, 16.3.70
		SS 18.12.70
XP577	3 FTS	SS 17.2.70
XP578	3 FTS	SS 13.5.69
XP579	3 FTS	SOC 7.1.69
XP580	3 FTS/1 FTS/CAW	SS 11.11.69
XP581	3 FTS	SS 22.11.68
XP582	3 FTS	
XP583	RAFC/6 FTS/CAW/4 FTS	To 8400M 11.1.74
XP584	RAFC	SOC 1.10.71
XP585	RAFC/6 FTS/RAFC	To 8407M 7.10.74
XP586	RAFC	SS 14.8.72
XP587	3 FTS	SS 13.5.69
XP588	CFS	Abandoned after fire warning 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ m N of Chedworth, Glos., 2.5.63
		SS 18.12.70
XP589	1 FTS	SS 18.12.70
XP614	2 FTS	SS 15.2.71
XP615	1 FTS	
XP616	1 FTS	Flew into hill in bad weather $\frac{1}{2}$ m NW of Helmsley, Yorks., 14.9.66
		SS 18.12.70
XP617	3 FTS/7 FTS/2 FTS	SS 15.2.71
XP618	3 FTS	SS 17.2.70
XP619	2 FTS	SOC 1.10.71
XP620	2 FTS	
XP621	1 FTS/3 FTS	Abandoned after fire warning 5m SW of Catterick Camp, Yorks., 15.11.65
		Engine cut on take-off; undercarriage collapsed on heavy landing on grass, Wymeswold, 20.9.63
XP622	2 FTS	

# BOOKSHELF

617 SQUADRON: THE DAMBUSTERS AT WAR by Tom Bennett (Patrick Stephens Ltd. £10.95)

The first reaction to the title is perhaps pardonable. Another book on the Dambusters! However, this is not a chronological history but a series of episodes and characters involved in the legend of 617.

Much depends on the memories of the surviving members of the Squadron but reference to the records of squadron, station, group and command can help to prompt and correct the inevitable inaccuracies that beset the memories of all but a few individuals.

The detail provided by each chapter is excellent and gives a vivid impression of the uncertainties which were inescapable in wartime. If many appeared in fiction, they would probably be dismissed as too fantastic to make a credible tale.

A lengthy chapter covers the activities of Tom McLean, who joined 617 as a Flight Sergeant air gunner with a meticulous feeling for guns and ammunition. He survived the war as a Warrant Officer with the DFC and DFM and credited with no less than nine enemy fighters.

Another chapter deals with the rather hairy raid on Politz on 21/22 December 1944 and what befell the 617 crews in its course. The weather was bad and on return, many aircraft had to be diverted to fog-free airfields along the Moray Firth.

In this chapter, the author checked out the accident cards held by the Ministry of Defence but could only find three. From this, he has deduced that most of the records were destroyed in the years after the war. This is not true; the reason for no accident cards appearing was the ruling that only flying accidents were recorded. Aircraft returning from operations were treated as operational losses and no Form 765c was required. Thus if two aircraft took off in succession and both suffered engine failure, only one might appear on an accident report. It was going off on an air test; the other on an air-sea rescue patrol. Hence the latter was an operational loss - even though the same engine part failed. Towards the end of the war, some operational accidents began to be collated if enemy action was not seen to be involved - but a little late in the day.

Well worth a read for a good account of Bomber Command's specialists at war.

LIONS RAMPANT by Douglas McRoberts (William Kimber: £11.50)

An interesting account of No.602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron of the Auxiliary Air Force from its inception. The first of the Auxiliary units to be formed (on 15 September 1925) it was not immediately operational. At dawn on that day, there were one Squadron Leader and one Flight Lieutenant on 602's Order of Battle. On 7 October, D.H.9A H144 put 602 into the air but recruiting took some time. We like the story of one potential recruit who was rejected as being a subversive until it suddenly became clear

that his description of his role as 'Red Leader' had more to do with shipbuilding than Marxism. Do they still coat ships with red lead?

The squadron's subsequent career is described in vivid detail up to the end of the war with the post-war years being, inevitably, dismissed in a few pages. Unlike most recent squadron histories, there are no appendices showing the movements, COs or aircraft of the squadron but there is a nice selection of photographs, many from private albums.

AIR RAID! by Michael J.F. Bowyer (Patrick Stephens Ltd. (£14.95)

On the 23rd of February 1944, Dornier 217M-1 U5+DK was abandoned over Acton and proceeded to make its own way northwards to Cambridge before flopping into allotments in Chesterton. There it was duly closely inspected by the Air Ministry boffins and even more closely by young Mike Bowyer who homed in on the contractor's plates! Into the notebook went details of colour scheme and markings for future reference. It was a few more years before Air-Britain was formed but the spirit was already alive and kicking.....

Over forty years later, the fruits of this recording of events as they happened has emerged in the form of an account of the German air attacks on East Anglia written by one who was there. It is an intensely-interesting history which merges research from Allied and enemy sources with personal observations.

Air Raid is a compilation of enemy air activity in all its forms and its effects on both the targets and the people who had to stand up to the upheaval in their previously-tranquil lives. Into the pot goes Air Raid Precautions, the Auxiliary Fire Service, German bomb containers, AA defences, coastal steamers, doodlebugs, airfields, factories and a hundred other facets of the six years of war.

As an evocation of the days when everything changed it is highly successful. Schoolboy curiosity was rampant and their ability to identify aircraft awesome. There was a lot of truth in the suggestion that AA posts should have had a permanent rota of ATC cadets on hand to make sure they shot at the right aircraft.

Many of the targets were relatively small. It did not take many bombs to destroy the centre of Lowestoft, especially if delivered in daylight from low altitude. The photographs show just what effect even relatively small bombs had on the homes and shops of East Anglia, in particular the line of bombs from a Do 17Z that wrecked the main street of Newmarket and caused 110 casualties on a Tuesday afternoon in February 1941.

The detail is painstaking, almost every bomb being pinpointed and personal experiences recorded. Particularly to anyone with detailed knowledge of East Anglia and who can identify the places mentioned, this brings back memories of a dark, but stimulating, time. Fortunately, the certain knowledge that we couldn't lose helped! Perhaps it was just as well we would not see the official records for thirty years.



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