

Pembrokes for Sweden

Jan Forsgren tells the tale of the British transport aircraft the Swedish Air Force was determined to acquire



Above: An excellent picture of Tp 83 83009 of F 17. The photograph was possibly taken in the early 1960s. Note the Wing insignia on the forward fuselage and the faint dayglow markings on the front and rear fuselage (Arlanda Flygsamlingar Archives)

By the early 1950s, the Flygvapnet (Swedish Air Force) Junkers Ju 86Ks (designation B 3) were beginning to show their age. The majority of the surviving, licence-built Ju 86K bombers had been modified as transports, but were, basically, unsuitable for the job, lacking the capacity to carry heavy and cumbersome cargo. With the need for increased mobility among Flygvapnet operational units, additional transport aircraft were required.

C-47s, stating that it was an old aircraft. (Up until 1952, four Douglas C-47s had been purchased by Flygvapnet, with one, 79001, being shot down by a Soviet MiG-15 on 13 June 1952.)

Fresh evaluation – this time not including the C-47 – was made once again by the Aircraft Bureau of the Kungliga Flygförvaltningen (Royal Air Board). Yet again, the purchase of a number of second-hand C-47s was recommended. However, at the

personal instigation of C-in-C Nordenskiöld, the Pembroke was selected—apparently only on the strength of it being a modern aircraft. (Incidentally, it must be recalled that the C-47 and its associated variants had been out of production since 1946.)

As a result, a contract between Kungliga Flygförvaltningen (Royal Air Board) and Hunting Percival, involving 16 Pembroke C. Mk 52s, was signed on 28 July 1954. The Pembroke purchase was apparently connected to the Swedish purchase of 120 Hawker Hunter F. Mk 50s.

In Flygvapnet service, the designation Tp 83 (from the mid-1960s, subtly altered to TP 83), was allotted to the Pembroke, the 16 being serialled 83001 to 83016.

Below: A rare colour photograph of 83007 of F 3 during a visit to Bromma airport in the early 1970s. Behind the Pembroke is TP 79 79007, with a Linjeflyg Convair CV440 being visible in the left background. Both the TP 83 and TP 79 have been preserved, the former with Svedinos Bil- och Flygmuseum and the latter with Flygvapenmuseum Arlanda Flygsamlingar Archives)



A replacement was sought, with the DHC-3 Otter, Douglas C-47 and Percival Pembroke being shortlisted as potential candidates. Specifically, the required aircraft was to be able to carry ten passengers; have excellent take-off and landing performance; and be operable by a single pilot and a technician. The Otter was considered too small, albeit having excellent take-off and landing performance, with the recommendation being to obtain a number of C-47s. As C-47s were already in Flygvapnet service (designation Tp 79), as well as being both plentiful and readily available, it seemed reasonable that additional C-47s should be acquired. However, the Flygvapnet Commander-in-Chief, Bengt Nordenskiöld, vetoed the proposal to buy



Manufacturer, Hunting Percival exhibited Tp 83 83012 in F 14's markings at the September 1955 Farnborough SBAC show. After delivery, the aircraft was fitted with a Lansen radome (Dave Welch Colln, ABPic)



Above: An uncommon photograph of 83012 and 83010 of F 8. Note that the pair have retained their Lansens radomes. Below: Tp 83 83013 of F 15 Söderhamn (both Arlanda Flygsamlingar Archives)



maintenance and economic perspective to pool the aircraft together at three Wings: F 1, F 14 and F 17.

Two of these Wings, F 14 and F 17, would eventually receive the Saab A 32A Lansens two-seat (pilot and navigator) attack aircraft, with F 1 beginning to operate the J 32B all-weather fighter from 1959. As such, some Tp 83s were fitted with radar (Ericsson PS-42/A for the J 32B, PS-431/A for the A 32A and PS-431/2 for the S 32C reconnaissance variant) and used for training navigators. The radar was installed in the nose, with these aircraft being easily identifiable by means of the Lansens radome. Desks for four pupils and one instructor were installed in the cabin. With the Tp 83 being unable to match the speed of the Lansens, an Sk 16A (Noorduyn AT-16 Harvard) was normally used as a target

during the night-time training sorties. When used for normal personnel transport, the cabin seats were turned 180 degrees, so the passengers were flying 'backwards'.

On 30 October 1956, Tp 83 83003 was destroyed in a crash near Västerås during a check flight. Against regulations, several conscripts had been allowed aboard the aircraft. Tragically, out of 11 crew and passengers, six were killed. The cause of the crash was engine failure, precipitated by the use of Flygvapnet standard lubricating oil instead of the one recommended by the engine manufacturer. On 16 May 1959, a second Tp 83, 83002, was burnt in a hangar fire at F 1. Also destroyed were four J 32B Lansens (32519, 32523, 32524 and 32527).



Would the real 83017 please stand up? Above: A nice view of VIP-configured TP 83 83017 during a visit to Säve airfield on 14 May 1971. This was one of the former RDAF Pembrokes (Leif Fredin/Arlanda Flygsamlingar Archives). Below: Never used by the SwAF, ex-RAF Pembroke C.1 SE-BKH was photographed at the Västerås Roll-out airshow on 26 May 2013 (Jan Forsgren)



The Fleet Fans Out

Already in late 1957, several Tp 83s began transferring to other Wings, with F 3, F 4, F 6, F 7, F 8, F 15 and F 21 all receiving Pembrokes. The majority transferred to F 8 Barkarby north of Stockholm. The reason behind this was that F 8 was responsible for the Flygvapnet HQ air transport requirements. During the annual Cadet post-examination flights abroad, as well as military pentathlon competitions, Pembrokes usually carried technical staff, spares, etc.

Pembrokes were also used in the air-sea rescue (ASR) role, being fitted with SARA-receivers. Two aircraft were also put at the disposal of Försvarets Radioanstalt (MoD research establishment) for testing various SIGINT electronics gear. As far as can be ascertained, these aircraft were never used operationally, remaining as test and evaluation platforms. The Tp 83s were also in high demand by various government administrations, including the Foreign Office. Particularly during the late 1950s, Pembrokes were used to transport dialysis patients to the University Hospital in Lund, where the country's only artificial kidney was located.

Hans 'Pye' Palm later recalled flying the Pembroke: "From the pilot's point of view, the technical solutions were typically English! The cockpit interior was dark.

Wires and cables were visible, and a typical 'English aroma' was always present. Taxiing on the ground had to be performed by using the brakes, as with the Vampire, Hunter, etc. It was difficult making good landings in the Pembroke. With the long undercarriage legs, it was easy to experience a sideways sliding when arriving on the ground. If there were strong winds and turbulent conditions, you had to use the rudder to the full, and particularly the ailerons."

Second-hand Top-up Pembrokes

In December 1961, a contract was signed between the Royal Air Board and the Royal Danish Air Force (RDAF) for the purchase of two Pembroke C. Mk 52/2s. The remaining RDAF Pembrokes had been withdrawn from use on 1 December 1960. The two in question, RDAF s/ns 69-692 (TT 1,021 hrs) and 69-696 (TT 1,254 hrs) were sold to Flygvapnet on 9 January 1962, although formal delivery did not take place until 1963 (69-692) and 1964 (69-696). The Flygvapnet s/ns 83017 and 83018, respectively, were allotted to the former Danish Pembrokes.

In 1970, two TP 83s, 83006 and 83017, were modified as VIP transports, having room for five passengers. By the early 1970s, the TP 83s began to reach their maximum number of flying hours: 4,000 + ten percent.

On 29 June 1973, several Flygvapnet

TP 83s were declared redundant, with the aircraft being offered for sale. There were no takers, though. A few Pembrokes soldiered on, the last TP 83 struck off charge being 83008, on 28 October 1977. Most of the Pembrokes ended up as training airframes for the fire & rescue services at various Wings, with a few being transferred to vocational schools. Rather spectacularly, one TP 83, 83013, was sacrificed at F 18 on 28 August 1974, being taxied (without a crew) into a gravel pit for use as a training specimen for trainee post air-crash investigators—see Spring 2021 issue of *Aviation World*.

Two Pembrokes have been preserved at museums, 83008 with Flygvapenmuseum at Malmslätt and 83007 with the privately-owned Svedinos Bil- och Flygmuseum at Ugglarp. A third Pembroke, the former 83004, was acquired a few years ago by a children's summer colony at Vaddö in the Stockholm archipelago. For many years, this particular Pembroke, sans engines, undercarriage and left wing, was suspended above the check-out counters at an ICA-Maxi supermarket at Arlandastad. A few Alvis Leonides engines also survive, including the left one from the unfortunate 83013 at Arlanda Flygsamlingar.

A Civilian Pembroke

In 1988, a former RAF Pembroke C. Mk 1 (XK884) was acquired by Flygexpo

Flygvapnet Pembroke Individual Histories

Flyg vapnet s/n	C/n	Msn	Delivered	Accepted	SoC	Individual Codes	Remarks
83001	P66/36	PAC/K66/S/001	15 Dec 1954	1 Feb 1955	29 Jun 1973	F 1 – 31, F 1 – 1, F 8 – 8, F 8 – 81	TT 4,640 hrs. Used for fire and rescue drills at F 17 Kallinge. Noted there in 1988
83002	P66/40	PAC/K66/S/002	1 Feb 1955	19 Mar 1955	29 Jun 1959	F 1 – 32, F 1 – 2	TT 930 hrs. Dbf at F 1 Västerås-Hässlö 16 May 1959
83003	P66/42	PAC/K66/S/003	28 Feb 1955	1 Apr 1955	12 Feb 1957	F 1 – 33	TT 416 hrs. W/o 30 Oct 1956
83004	P66/46	PAC/K66/S/004	31 Mar 1955	2 May 1955	19 Feb 1955	F 1 – 34, F 1 – 4, F 1 – 84, F 4 – 84	TT 4,680 hrs. Used as GIA at Zimmermanska Västerås. Preserved Vaddö
83005	P66/47	PAC/K66/S/005	14 Apr 1955	20 May 1955	29 Jun 1973	F 1 – 35, F 1 – 5, F 8 – 82	TT 4,485 hrs. Used for fire and rescue drills at F 21 Luleå-Kallax
83006	P66/49	PAC/K66/S/006	27 May 1955	14 Jun 1955	29 Jun 1973	F 1 – 36, F 8 – 83	Modified as VIP aircraft in 1970. TT 4,460 hrs.
83007	P66/51	PAC/K66/S/007	6 Jun 1955	14 Jun 1955	20 Dec 1974	F 17 – 07, F 21 – 07, F 8 – 84, F 3 – 84, F 17 – ?	TT 4,525 hrs. Preserved with Svedinos Bil- och Flygmuseum, Ugglarp
83008	P66/52	PAC/K66/S/008	19 Jul 1955	19 Jul 1955	28 Oct 1977	F 17 – 08, F 11 – 08, F 4 – 81, F 11 – 81, F 3 – 85, F 1P3M – 85	TT 3,890 hrs. Preserved with Flygvapenmuseum, Linköping
83009	P66/54	PAC/K66/S/009	7 Jul 1955	19 Jul 1955	22 Mar 1973	F 17 – 09, F 17 – 83, F 8 – 62	TT 3,700 hrs. Used for fire and rescue drills at F 14 Halmstad
83010	P66/56	PAC/K66/S/010	16 Jul 1955	23 Jul 1955	29 Jun 1973	F 17 – 10, F 6 – 10, F 6 – 83, F 8 – 89	TT 3,490 hrs. Used for fire and rescue drills at F 13M Malmslätt
83011	P66/59	PAC/K66/S/011	23 Jul 1955	14 Sep 1955	17 Dec 1973	F 14 – 11, F 1 – 11, F 1 – 81	TT 4,400 hrs. Used for fire and rescue drills at F 1 Västerås-Hässlö. Noted there in Jul 1979
83012	P66/61	PAC/K66/S/012	29 Sep 1955	29 Sep 1955	29 Jun 1973	F 14 – 12, F 1 – 12, F 1 – 82, F 8 – 88	Damaged in crash at Bulltofta 2 Mar 1958, repaired. TT 4,095 hrs. Used for fire and rescue drills at F 17 Kallinge
83013	P66/63	PAC/K66/S/013	14 Oct 1955	25 Oct 1955	20 Dec 1974	F 14 – 13, F 15 – 13, F 15 – 83	TT 4,240 hrs. Expended in intentional crash at F 18 Tullinge on 28 Jul 1974
83014	P66/64	PAC/K66/S/014	22 Oct 1955	9 Nov 1955	6 Nov 1973	F 14 – 14, F 7 – 14, F 7 – 72, F 6 – 83	TT 3,445 hrs. Noted at F 4 Frösön scrapyard in Jun 1976
83015	P66/65	PAC/K66/S/015	7 Nov 1955	22 Nov 1955	29 Jan 1974	F 14 – 15, F 8 – 85, F 3 – 85	TT 2,945 hrs. Used for fire and rescue drills at F 14 Halmstad
83016	P66/69	PAC/K66/S/016	9 Feb 1956	9 Feb 1956	24 Oct 1977	F 14 – 16, F 8 – 86, F 3 – 86, F 13M – 86	TT 3,160 hrs. Used for fire and rescue drills at F 7 Sätenäs. To Räddningsskolan at Skövde. Wreck still present in 2011. Scrapped in 2015 (?), with left wing acquired by private individual for display in his garden
83017	P66/87	?		15 May 1963	29 Jun 1973	F 8 – 87	P/i RDAF 69-692. TT 2,920 hrs. Scrapped
83018	P66/91	?		15 Feb 1964	29 Jun 1973	F 8 – 88, F 21 – 88	P/i RDAF 69-696. TT 3,580 hrs. Scrapped

Västerås AB. It had also briefly been registered as G-BNPG. Arriving at Västerås on 29 April 1988, the Pembroke was registered as SE-BKH on 18 May 1988. The basic RAF colour scheme was retained (except roundels) with the name *Sir Percy* being added on the front fuselage. In 2000, SE-BKH was repainted in a blue-and-white VIP colour scheme, masquerading as 83017. The CofA lapsed on 31 August 2011, as well as 30 April 2014. Also in 2014, SE-BKH was offered for sale. Sadly, though, it was scrapped in 2016, with the registration being cancelled on 31 March 2017.



Right: The aftermath of the intentional crash of TP 83 83013 at Tullinge (Lars Sellberg/Arlanda Flygsamlingar Archives). Below: Tp 83 83011 of F 11 prior to taking off from a snowy airfield. Note the Lansen radome (Arlanda Flygsamlingar Archives)



Below: The wing section of a Pembroke, powered by a Rolls-Royce Meteor engine (Merlin variant) from a Centurion tank, running on Saab Viggen wheels are the principal elements of this whimsical contraption built by Per Björkqvist – who works as a technician at Flygvapenmuseum – for the Jämtlands Flyg- och lottmuseum at Optand. The creator can be seen preparing to climb into the thing for an engine test (via Per Björkqvist)

