

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

ARMSTRONG WHITWORTH ARGOSY C Mk.1 XP411/8442M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 1988/0098/A

Built by Sir W.G. Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft Ltd. at Bitteswell, to contract KD/2K/011/CB.10 (a) as one of 56 Argosy aircraft built for the RAF, from the serials batch XP408 - XP413, allocated 20 Apr 1960. Constructor's number 6766.

- 6 Apr 62 First flight, from Bitteswell.
- 29 May 62 Awaiting Collection.
- 30 May 62 Dispatched to RAF Benson, Oxon.
- 1 Jun 62 To the newly re-formed No.105 Squadron at RAF Benson as part of the RAF Transport Command fleet. Carried standard RAF transport aircraft colour scheme of white upper sides, blue cheat line and grey/silver undersides.
- 17 Jun 62 No. 105 Squadron moved to Khormaksar, Aden - then the busiest RAF station in the world. The Squadron was the first RAF unit to operate the Argosy overseas when its first five Argosies, including XP411, flew to Khormaksar from Benson the previous day. Initial duties at Khormaksar included route proving flights and tropical trials. As part of the RAF medium range transport force the squadron ferried British and South Arabian Federal Army and RAF units to exercises together with routine training flights and supply dropping tasks, and later supplemented locally based Shackletons in the Search and Rescue role, together with regular flights to Bahrein and Africa, particularly Kenya and intermediary route stations at Riyan, Salalah, Masirah, and Sharjah. Photos of XP411 at this time - RAF Battle of Britain Yearbook 1964 p.35; RAFM photo collection P1458 (on the ground at Khormaksar)
- 13 Aug 62 Issued to Air Forces Middle East of which No.105 Squadron was part.
- 11 Mar 63 With 105 Squadron as part of Air Forces Middle East, part of Middle East Command.
- 24 Jan 64 No.105 Squadron Argosies and other aircraft ferried troops of the Staffordshire Regiment from Khormaksar to Entebbe to put down a mutiny by the Ugandan Army.

- Late 64 No.105 Squadron Argosies engaged in supporting Army units during the fighting with dissident tribesmen in the Radfan area north of Aden until they capitulated 18 November 1964.
(Also flying from Khormaksar in support of the Radfan operation at this time were RAFM collection Belvedere XG474 and Hunter FGA.9 XG154, both displayed at Hendon)
- 65 Following the Rhodesian UDI No.105 Squadron Argosies were heavily involved, the first task being to fly radio transmission equipment to Francistown in Bechuanaland.
- Also in 1965 No.105 Squadron detached aircraft and crews to RAF Changi, Singapore to reinforce the Far East Air Force for supply dropping in Borneo during the Indonesian Confrontation.
- Dec 65 Aden based Argosies engaged in airlifting fuel to Zambia, unloading at Ndola and Lusaka and then flying across the Congolese border to Elizabethville to refuel for the return flight to Nairobi. The Argosies also resupplied the temporary RAF base at Majunga in Malagasy used by detachments of Shackletons patrolling the Mozambique Channel to enforce the UN blockade of Rhodesia.
- 1966 Terrorist activities in Aden intensified, necessitating more airdrops to troops on the ground. The pilot's flying logbook of F/L Graham Humberstone records a number of flights in XP411 at this time, with copy in Aircraft Dept files.
- 9 May 66 1.20-hour flight – 'circuits and letdowns'
- 27 Jun 66 Staged flight, Khormaksar – Nairobi (Kenya) – Aden
- 10 Aug 66 Night circuits and landings – one hour flight.
- 7-8 Nov 66 Staged flight, Khormaksar-Riyan-Salalah-Masirah Island – and return.
- 21 Nov 66 Night circuits
- 6 Jan 67 Day categorization flight, 2.10 hours.
- 23 Jan 67 Co-pilot undertaking circuits and letdowns.
- 13-14 Feb 67 Staged flight, Khormaksar- Sharjah-Bahrein and return.
- 7 Mar 67 Day circuits and landings – 1.40 hours

- 28/29 Apr 67 Staged flight, Khormaksar – Riyan-Salalah-Masirah and return.
- 18 May 67 Co-pilot continuation; 1.10 hours.
- 30 Jun 67 Return flight to/from Khormaksar-Djibouti
- 11 Jul 67 Muharraq-Sharjah-Khormaksar; total flying time 4.35 hours
- 6 Aug 67 No. 105 Squadron moved to the Persian Gulf - RAF Muharraq, Bahrein due to the impending British withdrawal from Aden.
- 23/24 Oct 67 Staged flight Muharraq-Sharjah-Khormaksar-Muharraq.
- Nov 67 No.105 Squadron involved in transporting troops the 1,000 miles from Khormaksar to Muharraq on the first stage of their journey home to the UK during the final British evacuation from Aden, completed 29 November. One of the flights took out the last 16 RAF staff from the closed Al-Mansura prison, flying from khormaksar to Bahrain. See file note dated 21 July 2008.
- 14/15 Nov 67 Staged flight Salalah-Masirah-Sharjah-Muharraq
- 19 Nov 67 Sharjah-Muharraq – flight time 1.20 hours
- 24 Nov 67 Day circuits and letdowns
- 30 Nov 67 Day-night continuation. 1 hour 35 minutes.
- 12 Dec 67 Co circuits – similar flights on 14 December.
- 18 Dec 67 Night categorization flight.
- 20 Jan 68 No. 105 Squadron disbanded at Muharraq, Bahrein.
- 31 Jan 68 Allotted to Nos. 114/267 Squadron pool at RAF Benson; the two units formed the Benson Argosy Wing of No. 38 Group, with the aircraft controlled by the station and allotted to either Squadron as required on a priority basis.
- 17 Feb 68 Logbook of Flt Lt Brian Prior, Senior Squadron Navigator, 267 Squadron, records 1.15 hour flight Muharraq – Sharjah for CSE Show.
Plus 1.40 hour flight Sharjah - Masirah the following day, 18 Feb, and 1.50 hour flight Masirah – Salalah on 19 Feb. Pilot for all flights Flt Lt Nicolle.
- 16 Jul 68 Exercise Effie – 1.15 hour flight (Prior logbook)

- 27 Mar 68 Allotted by HQ Maintenance Command to Hawker Siddeley Aircraft at Bitteswell, Warwicks for trial installation of a hydraulic jettison valve on behalf of the Ministry of Technology.
- 1 Apr 68 Arrived at Bitteswell on loan to Ministry of Technology.
- 11 Apr 68 Operated trials at A&AEE Boscombe Down from this date.
- 22 Apr 68 Released from trials.
- 23 Apr 68 Departed from Bitteswell and returned to Nos.114/267 Squadrons.
- 4 Jun 70 Damaged Cat. 3R.
- 9 Jun 70 Repaired on site by No.71 MU.
- 30 Jun 70 Repairs completed.
- 30 Jun 70 Returned to Nos.114/267 Squadrons pool; No.267 Squadron disbanded the same day.
- 7 July 70 No.70 Squadron at RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus, with whom it was named 'Excalibur'. Flew schedules between Cyprus and the Near East Air Forces' other station at Luqa, Malta and supported detachments of NEAF Lightnings and Vulcans and exercised with troops in the Sovereign base areas and various units training in Cyprus. There were also exercises in Turkey and Iran and a continuing Search and Rescue role.
- Sep 70 When civil war broke out in Jordan No. 70 Squadron Argosies flew medical units and supplies from Cyprus to Amman at the request of King Hussein. For these flights the Argosies carried Red Cross markings and the crews wore civilian clothes.
- 16 Dec 70 No. 27 MU RAF Shawbury, Salop for storage following No, 70 Squadron's partial re-equipment with the Lockheed C130-K Hercules.
- 21 Mar 72 No. 5 MU, RAF Kemble, Glos.
- 8 Mar 74 No. 23 MU, RAF Aldergrove for overhaul; resprayed in red/white training scheme. Photo; Air Enthusiast Jul/Aug 2003 p.60.This was the only Argosy in Training Command Colours - its Air Support Command contemporaries were in White/grey with a blue cheat line or camouflaged, the latter being affectionately nicknamed 'Dougalls' from the likeness (when seen from the front) to the 'Magic Roundabout' dog character of that name.

- 16 Sep 74 Flown to No. 60 MU, RAF Leconfield by a crew from A&AEE Boscombe Down and allocated to the MU the following day.
- 8 Oct 74 Air tested at Leconfield, then flown to the Vickers Varsity equipped No. 6 Flying Training School at RAF Finningley, Yorks; flew in red/white RAF Training colours, aircraft code 'Y' as Redesignated Argosy T.1. XP411 was the first of what should have been 10 or so Argosies for crew training at Finningley, to replace the Varsities.
- Used for crew familiarisation pending anticipated delivery of Argosy T Mk.2 aircraft which were cancelled in 1975 due to defence cuts.
- 1 Nov 74 First flight since delivery, due to a spate of 'mysterious' fuel leaks. In November 1974 17 hours 10 minutes were flown, on crew familiarisation and cross-country exercises; 'Pupils' included OC Flying Standards (S/Ldr R. Kimmings) and Wing Commander 'Flying'.
- Dec 74 27 hours 15 minutes flown. Landings at RAF Cottesmore, Benson, Brize Norton, Shawbury, and Aldergrove.
- 20 Dec 74 A 'Christmas Special' with pick-ups and put-downs at Leuchars, Kinloss, St. Athan, and St. Mawgan, accounting for 6.5 hours of the 27 hours 15 minutes flying time for December. All ETA's were 'spot on' and all seats filled on each leg of the journey.
- Jan 75 23.05 hours flown. General conversion training and 1st solo on type by S/Ldr. Kimmings on 30th January. Landings at Cottesmore and Abingdon.
- Feb 75 20 hours 40 minutes flown. Landings at Kinloss, St. Mawgan, Little Rissington, Thorney Island, Lossiemouth, and Cottesmore. CFS Little Rissington Commandant Air Commodore John de Severne did 20-minute familiarisation trip.
- Mar 75 11.35 hours of general flying.
- Apr 75 8.50 hours flown. Stress tests for Hawker Siddeley with landings at Woodford. Special short field landing/take off tests at Deptford Down and Salisbury Plain. Tyre pressures lowered for field landings - hence white spots on tyres.
- May 75 8 hours 15 minutes flown.
- 12 May 75 Issued ground instructional serial 8442M.

22 May 75 Made redundant by the cancellation of the Argosy training fleet, XP411 made its last flight - From Finningley to No. 2 School of Technical Training, RAF Cosford via RAF Cottesmore; Pilot Flt Lt Tommy Thomas.

Engines and propellers removed by June 1979. Retained code 'Y' as part of Cosford's own coding system.

Apr 88 Transferred across to Aerospace Museum, RAF Cosford.

Time expired ex RAF Halton ground training Dart 102 engines fitted.

8 Oct 93 Replacement Dart engines sold by MoD and removed for fitment to a privately owned ex MoD Vickers Viscount and dummy engines (using Dart casings) fitted in their stead.

The cockpit of Argosy C.1 XN819 is preserved at Newark Air Museum.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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