

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

CANADAIR SABRE F4 XB812/MM19666/9227M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 1994/1350/A

- 14 Oct 52 Serial number allocated as part of a batch of 370 Canadair Sabre F4 aircraft.
- 16 Apr 53 First flight at Canadair airfield at Cartierville, Montreal. Constructors number 566. Allocated RCAF serial 19666 as a bookkeeping exercise only from batch of Sabres allocated RAF serials XB790 - XB839. The Canadair CL-13 Sabre Mk 4 was the licence built version of the North American F86E Sabre, constructed under the US Mutual Defence Assistance Programme (MDAP) funding.
- After testing all RAF Sabres were ferried to the UK under Operation "Bechers Brook" between 9 Dec 52 and 16 May 1954. Initially 370 F86 aircraft were ordered by the British government for service in Germany, and a further 60 for service with Fighter Command. Deliveries were undertaken by No. 1 Overseas Ferry Unit (later No. 147 Squadron) ferrying up to 64 aircraft in stages over the 3,100 miles from Cartierville via Goose Bay, Labrador, Greenland, Iceland and RAF Kinloss. Flown in groups of 30 divided into 6 flights of 5 aircraft. "Beechers Brook" was named after the famous steeple Chase jump on the Grand National racecourse at Aintree.
- 16 May 53 Flown in Canada by S/Ldr Sidney Adams RAF in formation flight in Dorval area. (logbook photocopy on Sabre file)
- 3 Jun 53 To No. 5 MU RAF Kemble for painting-all Sabres were delivered in natural metal finish and camouflaged at Kemble prior to delivery to units. Kemble also undertook acceptance tests and navigation kit modifications on the Sabres.
- 29 Jan 54 To No 112 (F) Squadron, RAF Bruggen, W. Germany, via RAF Benson, Oxon. the previous day-the squadron being in the process of converting from the De Havilland Vampire. The Squadrons ' aircraft carried Shark's teeth beneath the nose and a white fin letter. With No. 130 Squadron made up the Bruggen wing.
- 18 Feb 54 40-minute close formation practice sortie; pilot Richard Duke (logbook extract on XB812 individual history file)
- Sabres eventually equipped 10 RAF fighter squadrons in Germany and 2 in the UK as part of NATO's 2nd Allied Air Force; their main task was to patrol the Air Defence Identification Zone along the "Iron Curtain" and standing on alert to be scrambled to intercept unidentified aircraft . Until replaced by Hawker Hunters 1955-6 they provided air cover for the defences of Western Germany and the Rhine Army.
- 11 May 54 To No.93 Squadron, Jever, W. Germany, coded "U". This was part of the process of equipping No 112 Squadron with modified 'hard (wing) edge' Sabres to replace its initial allocation of 'slatted' Sabres, most of which transferred to No. 93 Squadron at this time, being little flown by No 112 Squadron after mid March 1954. Colour profile as of April 1955 – Sabre From the Cockpit (Kell, 2011) p.118.
- Also previously flying the Vampire, No 93 Squadron operated Sabres Apr.54 - Jan 56, forming the Jever wing alongside No.4 Squadron.

- 13 Aug 54 Sgt Richard Knight flew XB812 to Wildenrath to take advantage of its longer runway for the first solo flight on type by Flying Officer Hampton; knight then returned XB812 to Jever.
- 2 Sep 54 Sgt Knight flew XB812 in an air-ground firing demonstration at Fassberg.
- For flights with XB812 with No.93 Squadron at Jever 1954-1955 by Flt. Lt. Ken B. Senar see his logbook copy DoRIS MF10113/19. Routine training flights dated 21 July 1954, 14 December 1954, and 11 January 1955.
- 1 Jun 55 To No. 33 MU Lyneham as part of a gradual reduction in the squadron's Sabre complement, although it operated its last Sabres until January 1956.
- 25 Aug 55 To Aviation Traders, Stansted, Essex for repair in works to contract 6/Acft/12467- as Cat. 4 (Rehab) engine overhauled by Bristol Aircraft Co. - All under contract to the Ministry of Supply, since refurbishment of the Sabres was the financial responsibility of the British Government. As the aircraft were American owned the RAF returned them to the USAF who placed contracts with UK companies to refurbish them before they passed to the Italian and Yugoslav air forces for further service. After refurbishment the Sabres retained RAF camouflage but with RCAF serials and "US Air Force" in white on their fuselage sides pending delivery.
- 27 Jun 56 Test flown as 19666.
- 26 Jul 56 Repairs complete; Formally returned to USAF charge. (The last RAF Sabre, XB670 left RAF Benson for a civilian contractor 22 Jun 56).
- 56 Forwarded to Napoli by USAF personnel.; as US property, flown in US markings with Canadian serial. Passed to Italian Air Force, which received its first aircraft on 12 January 1956.
- In Italian service as MM19666 XB812 served with the 4a Aerobrigata at Pratica di Mare on the coast near Rome, initially coded 4-85 and later 4-11. Italy flew 179 ex RAF Sabres, initially in RAF camouflage and, after overhaul, in the overall silver finish standard for all Italian Air Force (AMI) fighters, with the RCAF serial painted under the fin.
- The 4a Aerobrigata consisted of 3 Gruppi, their Sabres being dedicated to air defence until converted to the Lockheed Starfighter in 1963; Mk.4 Sabres left front line Italian service in 1965.
- 1976 To Istituto Tecnico Industriale Galileo Galilei, Rome for use as a ground instructional airframe.
- Early 1991 Temporarily transferred to the Italian Air Force Museum in preparation for aircraft exchange.
- 18 Jun 93 Arrived at the Imperial War Museum's Duxford base for restoration by The Fighter Collection - Virtually complete and in good condition. Photos as arrived - Flypast Aug 93 p. 4; Air Enthusiast July/August 2005 p.36. Exchanged with M OD on behalf of RAFM for Spitfire Mk, V EP 120, a former gate guardian.
- Dec 93 Painted by this date - Photo Flypast Mar 94 p.5 being painted. Photos under restoration at Duxford - Flypast Feb 94 p.5; Fighter Log December 1993 pp.7-8.
- 31 Jan 94 Delivered to RAFM - assembled over following week and displayed in main aircraft hall ever since. Displayed in No 93 Squadron colours, code "U". Photos - Aircraft Illustrated Jan 95 p72; Aviation News January 2003 p.67.

- 14 Feb 94 Allotted RAF Maintenance serial 9227M.
- 3 Aug 98 One of a number of aircraft gifted to the RAFM by the MoD.
- 30 Jan 06 Fuselage and tail by road to RAFM Cosford for inclusion in new Cold War display building following dismantling by a team from the Fighter Collection 9-12 January. Wings and engine followed on 2 February.
- 24 April 06 Moved into new National Cold War Exhibition building at Cosford for suspended display. Photos – Flypast July 2006 p.20; Air-Britain Aviation World September 2007 p.103.

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