

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

BLACKBURN BUCCANEER S. Mk.1 XN962/8183M (NOSE ONLY)
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 1995/1002/A

- Sep 58 Ordered as one of 40 Buccaneer S.1 aircraft with Gyron Junior 101 Engines.
- Built at Brough by Hawker Siddeley Aviation, Hawker Blackburn Division. Serials batch XN948 - 973. Constructor's number B3-17-62. Flight tested at Holme-on-Spalding Moor following an 18-mile road tow from Brough whose runway was too short.
- 19 Jun 63 First flight.
- 9 Jul 63 Delivered to Royal Navy (Aircraft Holding Unit, Royal Naval Air Station Lossiemouth) for use by the Fleet Air Arm as a carrier borne low level strike aircraft. Initial colour scheme was all over white with unpainted nose radome, possibly with gloss extra dark sea grey upper surfaces later. Total flying hours upon delivery - 3.00.
- 24 Sep 63 To No.809 Squadron at RNAS Lossiemouth. Total flying hours - 7.00. This unit operated as the operational flying training unit for all Buccaneer crew training, including trials work and participation in exercises. The code LM (Lossiemouth) was in blue lettering on the aircraft's fin, along with the individual code '225'.
- 1 Oct 63 Suffered trim problems in dive at 20,000 feet, but landed safely. Crew L/C H.L. (Herm) Turk USN & Lt A.R.M. Hayward.
- 5 Dec 63 Suffered fuel supply problem and returned to base
- 5 Jan 64 Flap damaged in flight
- 21 Feb 64 Damaged by bird strike at 200 feet over the Moray Firth, causing starboard engine failure and single-engined landing, and grounded.
- 11 Mar 64 Returned to Aircraft Holding Unit, Lossiemouth. Total flying hours now 116.25.
- 25 Sep 64 To No.800 Squadron at Lossiemouth, flying hours 118.30.

No.800 Squadron formed at Lossiemouth, its home base, 19 March 1964, and flew from there and from the carrier HMS Eagle until August 1966 with an initial establishment of 8 Buccaneers.

- 12 Nov 64 To Aircraft Holding Unit, Lossiemouth. Flying hours 143.00.
- 18 Nov 64 Instrument problem on take off, made safe night landing.
- 19 Nov 64 AHU Lossiemouth.
- 2 Dec 64 Eagle sailed for the Far East.
- 14 Jul 65 To No. 800 Squadron onboard HMS Eagle for a much longer second tour with that unit, flying hours 145.50. XN962 carrying the code '110' in black on the nose and large 'E' for Eagle on the fin, also with the Squadron crest on a red diamond on the port air intake.
- 15 Jul 65 Trim problem; landed safely.
- 23 Jul 65 Suffered numerous bird strikes after night landing
- 5 Sep 65 Port engine vibration on catapult launch from HMS Eagle, jettisoned bombs, diverted to USNAS Sigonella, Sicily.
- 1965/6 No. 800 Squadron operated a detachment at RAF Changi, Singapore.
- 15 Mar 66 Eagle replaced HMS Ark Royal on the 'Beira Patrol' in the Mozambique Channel following the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of (UDI) - patrolled shipping lanes to prevent oil tankers reaching Beira to pipe oil to the embargoed Rhodesia. Eagle had been on similar duties off the East African Coast for several weeks in Nov 65 immediately following the Rhodesian UDI.
- 15 Aug 66 The Squadron returned to Lossiemouth from Eagle.
- 22 Aug 66 To Royal Naval Aircraft Yard, Belfast. Flying hours 447.00.
- Nov 66 No 800 Squadron completed re-equipment with Buccaneer S.2 aircraft, the conversion having started that June.
- 7 Mar 67 To Naval Aircraft Support Unit, Lossiemouth. Flying hours 450.40.

- 26 May 69 To No.736 Squadron at Lossiemouth. Flying hours 453.45. This unit had been redesignated from the former No.809 Squadron in 1965 and served as a jet strike training squadron. Wore code LM/633/635.
- 7 Jul 69 Port engine problem, returned to base.
- Dec 70 Remaining 27 Buccaneer S.1 aircraft retired.
- 20 Jan 71 To Naval Aircraft Support Unit at Lossiemouth. Final flying hours 733.10.
- Sep 71 By road to Inverness Harbour; To No.71 MU at RAF Bicester.
- 8 Oct 71 Nose/forward fuselage section allocated instructional serial 8183M as travelling exhibition/recruitment aid with No. 71 Maintenance Unit, RAF Bicester, Oxon.
- 8 Mar 72 Struck off Royal Navy charge.
- c. Apr 76 To RAF Abingdon, Oxon for continued use as a travelling recruiting and display item with the Royal Air Force Exhibition Flight following the disbandment of No. 71 MU at RAF Bicester. By Feb 1989 marked as 'XN972' (Possibly after temporary fitting to that airframe)
- c. Jun 92 To RAF St. Athan, South Glamorgan along with other RAF Exhibition Flight Equipment prior to the closure of RAF Abingdon that July.

Latterly part of the RAF Exhibition, Production & Transportation Unit, operated under contract by SERCO from 1 Dec 1992; the display airframes were based in a large yard at Pensnett Trading Estate, near Kingswinford in the West Midlands but administered from St. Athan. Confusingly, the nose is painted with the false serial XN972 on the intake sides - the original Buccaneer S.1 XN972/8181M was scrapped c.1984 following use at the Shoeburyness ranges, Essex from April 1980.

- c. Jul 95 To Aerospace Museum, Cosford, Salop.
- 25 May 99 To RAF Museum Hendon for continued display and use for public cockpit access.
- 11 May 06 By road to RAFM Cosford for display in new National Cold War Museum.

Complete Buccaneer S.1 XN964 is preserved at Newark Air Museum.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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