

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER NOSE SECTION
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 67/A/99

- 1941/42 Likely construction date if, as suspected, this aircraft was built as a Merlin XX engined Mk.IIF. 450 of this version were produced by Bristol at Filton between Mar 41 and Apr 42 in the serial ranges R2270 - R2479, T3009 - T3447, and V8131 - V8218. They served operationally with 8 night fighter squadrons on home defence duties from Apr 41, and a number remained on charge in 1945.
- Jul 45 Sectioned forward fuselage of Beaufighter displayed at Royal Australian Air Force Exhibition held at one of the largest shopping stores in Paris, the Magasin du Printemps. Photo - The Aeroplane Jul 20 1945 p.62. Here it is described as a Mk.21, but lacks the characteristic nose fairing of this mark. The bi-lingual interior equipment captions remain today.
- Jan 55 By this date the fuselage section was in use as an instructional exhibit at the College of Aeronautics, Cranfield, which had been established in 1944. See 'Flight' 28 Jan 55 p.130. Probably on site by Mar 52 - see Flypast Dec 97 p.8 See ' Air Britain Digest Aug 1960 p.92. Displayed in the 'Museum' hangar. Photos - Veteran and Vintage Aircraft of the World (001770); Flypast Jun 97 p.29.
- Jun 66 Donated to the Royal Air Force Museum by the College of Aeronautics. Described by the College at this time as a Mk.1. Moved to RAFM store at RAF Henlow. Still at Cranfield August 1966. - photo RAFM PC73/59/107
Photos at Henlow - Lysander Special (010811) p.55; Wrecks and Relics – The Album p.56 (colour, June 1968); The Flying M Autumn 2008 p.8.
- 1972 Displayed in side gallery when RAFM Hendon opened. Photos - Scale Aircraft Modelling Vol 11 No.10 (interior views) p.462 -3 and Scale Models May 1974 p.260.
- 1991 Moved to main Aircraft Hall.

- 27 Nov 91 Moved to Imperial War Museum Duxford by road on loan to The Fighter Collection. Photos -Flypast Jan 92 p.8 and Flypast May 2003 p.67.Intended to provide pattern for TFC's own airworthy Beaufighter restoration project.
- 1996 - 97 Refurbished by TFC prior to return to Hendon.Restoration indicate that the instrument fit is that of an early British built aircraft.
Given overall black nightfighter colour scheme as it may have been a Merlin engined Mk.II.
- 26 Feb 97 Returned to RAFM for display in main aircraft hall.
- 11 Dec 00 By road from Hendon to Museum of Flight, East Fortune, Scotland on loan to act as display and pattern airframe following that Museums' acquisition of an ex-Portuguese Beaufighter X TF.10, for restoration.
Photo on display – Wrecks and Relics 19th Edition.
- 17 Dec 04 Returned off loan by road to RAFM at Hendon. Photos back on display – Flypast April 2005 p.21; Wingspan International No.27 pp.74-75.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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