

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

DE HAVILLAND VAMPIRE F3 VT812/7200M  
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 78/A/873

Built under contract by English Electric, Preston. One Goblin turbojet. One of 117 Vampire F3s built between April 1947 and May 1948, VT793-836 being built to Contract No.6/ACFT/936/CB.7 (a) dated 6 December 1946.

- 24 Oct 47            Awaiting Collection
- 24 Nov 47            To 5 MU Kemble
- 19 Aug 48            Flown out via Manston following allocation for service in Middle East and Mediterranean.
- 30 Dec 48            To 32 Squadron Nicosia, Cyprus - part of the squadron's gradual re-equipment, replacing Spitfire FR18s (completed by May 1949). The 32 Squadron Vampires were the first RAF jet fighters to serve outside NW Europe and the first jet fighters to operate in the Mediterranean zone, carrying out tropical trials in the area. At Nicosia, used as the 'personal' aircraft of Fg Off Henry Litherland.
- 05 Jul 50            Returned to UK - 32 Squadron re-equipping with Vampire FB5 aircraft from March 1950.
- 12 Jul 50            To 614 (County of Glamorgan) Squadron R Aux AF based at Llandow - the squadron re-equipped with Vampires to replace Spitfire 22 aircraft that month.
- 14 Jan 52            To 601 (County of London) Squadron RAuxAF based at North Weald.
- 04 Apr 52            Suffered Cat 3 damage (beyond repair capacity of unit).

The accident record card held by DoRIS, Ref.MFC77/16/129 gives the following details:-

`Just after take-off there was a loss of power..... pilot joined the circuit and made a bad approach with dive brakes out and full flap. Aircraft undershot and undercarriage collapsed on hitting a soft spot'

`Pilot showed extremely bad airmanship during approach. He could have made a good landing with 7500rpm but he left dive brakes out... panicked in his cockpit procedure.

`Pilot to be discharged from squadron for this and other reasons as unlikely to become an efficient fighter pilot'

21 Apr-  
11 Dec 52 Repairs on site by de Havilland staff.

12 Dec-  
22 Jun 53 Further repairs on site by 58 MU

08 Aug 53 Joined 602 (City of Glasgow) Squadron RAuXAF based at Abbotsinch. Most of the Squadrons' Vampires were FB5s at this time.

23 Nov 53 Last flight to 48 MU Hawarden. (No.602 Squadron retired its Vampire F3s that month).

25 Oct 54 Transferred to non-effective stock.

04 Apr 55 Allocated 7200M for ground instructional use.

18 May 55 To No.2 Recruit Centre, RAF Cardington for display use. Displayed near main gate by 1961. Colour Photo – Wrecks and Relics – The Album p.72.

09 Jun 64 To RAF Colerne for display with station museum. Displayed in 601 Squadron's colours as code `N'.

c. 6 May 68 To Abingdon for Royal Review (Jun 68). Moved to/from Colerne by 71 MU Bicester. Refurbished at Abingdon by 22 February 1968. Photo: RAF News w/e 15 Jun 68; de Havilland Vampire (028145) p.57. Colour Photos; Warpaint Series De Havilland Vampire p.11; Aeromilitaria Winter 2002 rear cover; Flypast May 2006 p.30.

21 Aug 75 Colerne closed due to defence cuts March 1976, so several aircraft moved prior to this, VT812 going by road to Shawbury, where it was partly re-assembled prior to transfer to Cosford.

Apr 76 To Cosford Aerospace Museum for display.

Jul 78 To Hendon - move generated by opening of BofB Hall, using space made available by move of other aircraft to BofB Hall. Displayed in 601 Squadron markings.

May 89 Aircraft loaned to RAF Benson for temporary display.

Jul 89 Aircraft returned to Hendon, and displayed in main hall since then. Photo at Hendon - Aircraft Illustrated Aug 80 p.350

- Nov 97 Transferred by road to RC&RC Cardington for complete restoration and treatment of corrosion following dismantling from 4 Nov. Final parts - the wings - taken to Cardington 13 Nov.
- Aug 98 Fuselage nacelle at Skysport Engineering, Hatch, Beds for restoration. Photo of nacelle at Cardington - The Flying M Yearbook 1998 p.31.
- 99 Further restoration included replacement of damaged port tail boom, undercarriage door and lower nacelle skinning with new, unissued items obtained from De Havilland Aviation Ltd at Swansea.
- 7 Jan 2000 Fuselage pod by road to temporary RAFM facility at RAF Wyton, Cambs due to closure of RAF Cardington. Wings followed later. Photo at Wyton with wings and replacement engine installed; Flypast January 2001 p.27.
- 19 Nov 2001 By road to RAFM Cosford due to closure of RAFM facility at RAF Wyton. Photos in Cosford paintshop – Flypast July 2002 p.23 and July 2003 p.15, and Airfield Review July 2003 p.57.
- 2 Jun 2003 By road to RAFM Hendon for further display in 'Historic Hangars'.

**TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON**