

GENERAL DYNAMICS F-111F-CF 74-0177
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER X003-6734

- 1974 Ordered as part of a batch of twelve F-111F-CF two-seat multi-purpose attack aircraft, serials 74-0177 – 0188.
- As the final ‘Aardvark’ production variant, the F-111F featured improved avionics, including navigational and digital computer systems, improved wing structure and landing gear, and more powerful Pratt & Whitney TF30-P-100 engines; 106 were built.
- 5 Sep 75 Delivered by General Dynamics to USAF as a completed aircraft; factory number E2-95. However, the escape module currently carried was built by Boeing.
- 6 Oct 75 Delivered to 366th Tactical Fighter wing (TFW) at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho; total flying hours 5.5.
- 16 Aug 76 One of 19 F-111F ‘Aardvark’/’Vaark’ aircraft deployed with 12 hours notice after the so-called ‘Tree Chopping Incident’ where North Korean troops murdered a US Army officer on the De-militarised Zone. Based at Taegu AB South Korea.
- Jun 77 Under Operation ‘Ready Switch’, USAF F-111F force deployed to the four-squadron USAFE 48th TFW ‘Statue of Liberty Wing’, RAF Lakenheath, Suffolk, doubling the UK-based F-111 force. The aircraft were involved in range sorties and NATO exercises, and in wartime would have been tasked with attacking Eastern Bloc airfields, missile sites, and armour concentrations. Regular detachments were made to Nellis AFB Nevada for ‘Red Flag’ training exercises.
- 29 Jun 77 To 48th TFW, RAF Lakenheath.
- 10 Jan 79 To British Aerospace at Bristol for engine work; flying hours 884.7.
- 1981 With 492nd Tactical Fighter Squadron ‘Bolars/Bowlers’, 48th Tactical Fighter Wing, RAF Lakenheath. Aircraft Code ‘LN’ and serial AF74177 in white, with blue tail fin tip.
- From 1981, UK based F-111Fs featured AN/AVQ-26 ‘Pave Tack’ thermal imaging/laser target acquisition, designation and tracking system for the Paveway LGB bomb load.
- 13 Sep 83 To British Aerospace at Bristol for overhaul, returning to 48 TFW 23 September 1983.

- 14 Apr 86 48th TFW based F-111s attacked targets around Tripoli, Libya during the operation 'El Dorado Canyon' raid in response to Libyan-backed anti-American terrorist attacks. This was the longest fighter combat mission ever flown – fourteen hours to Tripoli and back, with regular in-flight refuelling using 19 KC-10s and ten KC-135s from Mildenhall and Fairford. As one of 18 F-111s involved, 74-0177 flew with Jewell cell as JEWEL 63. Using its 'Pave Tack' Thermal Imaging/laser target acquisition, designation and tracking system, dropped its four laser-guided GBU-10C/B 907kg/2,000lb bombs on the Murat Sidi Balal terrorist training camp west of Tripoli that hit the Frogman Training Pool used for training terrorists in underwater sabotage.
- The intended target was missed by 100ft (30m) as it was obscured by the smoke of bombs dropped by another aircraft. One F-111 was lost.
- 16 Jul 86 Photographed on this date-General Dynamics F-111 Aardvark (Logan) p.202.
- 12 May 88 To British Aerospace at Bristol for overhaul, returning to 48TFW 19 May 1988.
- From 1989 to 1991 the aircraft was nicknamed 'Ghost Rider'; Crew Chief was SSGT Tim Kinsey.
- 23 Aug 89 Barrier engagement-tail hook fairing damaged, reskinned at Zaragoza Air Base, Spain.
- 25 Aug 90 48th TFW began to deploy many of its 72 F-111Fs to the Royal Saudi Air Force Base at Taif, near Mecca in western Saudi Arabia in Operation Desert Shield; in the ensuing Gulf War 67 F-111Fs and 100 crews were in theatre, making some 2,500 sorties specialising in laser guided bomb attacks from the first night of the war - 17 January 1991 through to the end of the conflict on 28 February 1991, flying 4,000 sorties and accounting for the greatest proportion of targets destroyed in Iraq and Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.
- Missions included 'bunker busting' and attacks on hardened aircraft shelters, Command and Control facilities, bridges and tanks, using the guided 907kg/2,000lb GBU-24 penetration bomb, with most sorties flown at medium or low-level at night.
- Returned to UK March 1991.
- 20 Jul 91 Statically displayed at International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford as 'LN'

- 1992 Following final 48th TFW unit inactivation on 31 Dec 1991, F111F force returned to the United States after phased squadron-by squadron replacement by the F-15E Strike Eagle in the UK, the 492nd re-equipping in April 1992.
- Surviving F111Fs latterly flew with three of the six-squadron 27th Tactical Fighter Wing at Cannon AFB, New Mexico, with avionics systems updated in the 'Pacer Strike' programme, managed by Rockwell.
- 27 Jul 93 Following overhaul, 74-0177 delivered to 524th 'Hounds' Fighter Squadron of the 27th TFW, and was one of 28 F-111Fs to receive the 'Pacer Strike' digital avionics upgrade. Flying hours 4424.8. Aircraft code CC in yellow. It was latterly assigned to the 523rd 'Crusaders' Fighter Squadron but retired at this point. Aircraft Code CC in blue.
- 19 Aug 95 Statically displayed at Cannon AFB Airshow in 27FW/523 Sqn colours as 'CC'.
- 18 Oct 95 To storage at the 'boneyard' -Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center (AMARC) at Davies-Monthan AFB, Tucson, Arizona, with the last F-111Fs retired in July 1996, being replaced by the F-16 Fighting Falcon. Final flying hours 5006.1.
- 30 Jun 05 Aircraft released from storage for allocation to RAF Museum.
- 9 Jul 05 Fuselage and other components delivered to RAF Mildenhall by USAF Lockheed C-5 Galaxy.
- 3 Nov 05 Fuselage delivered onwards to RAF Cosford by road for display in new RAFM Cold War exhibition, with four truckloads of other components- wings, nose and tail parts- also delivered by road previously. Photos of fuselage on arrival – Flypast January 2006 p.5; Wingspan International 32 p.59.
- Jan/Feb 06 Repainted into European theatre style colours. Photos – Flypast April 2006 p.5; Wrecks and Relics 20th Edition.
- Other F-111s preserved in the UK are F111E 67-0120 and the escape module of an unidentified F111F at the American Air Museum, part of the IWM Duxford, F111E 68011 at USAF Lakenheath, and the escape module of F111E 68-0060 at the Dumfries & Galloway Aviation Museum.

TEXT: ANDREW SIMPSON

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