

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

De HAVILLAND DEVON C.2/2 VP952/8820M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 1987/0015/A

- 1947 Built by De Havilland, Hatfield, Herts as a Devon C.1 (militarised communications version of the Dove) to contract 6/Acft/235/CB10a. First production aircraft, serials batch VP952 - VP981. Constructor's number 04048. Originally laid down as a civil Dove, but modified during manufacture to become the prototype Devon C.1. The differences included that of radio and aerial fit, jettisonable cabin door, crash hand holds, Very pistol, dinghy and sunshade roof.
- 24 Jul 47 Allotted to De Havilland at Hatfield for flight trials to check VHF aerial.
- 25 Jul 47 Awaiting collection.
- 10 Oct 47 To Handling Squadron, RAF Hullavington, Wilts for acceptance trials. Photo as delivered in overall natural metal; Flight 13th November 1947 p.563.
- 19 Nov 47 Transport Command Major Servicing Unit, RAF Honington, Suffolk.
- 4 May 48 Confirmed damaged, Cat. AC
- 9 Sep 48 Repairs complete - repaired on site by De Havilland staff from 24 June.
- 13 Sep 48 Returned to TCMSU strength.
- 8 Feb 49 RAF Hendon Station Flight, serving as the personal aircraft of AOC Transport Command, coded CB-A.
- 2 May 51 Transport Command Communications Flight (TCCF) at RAF Upavon, Wilts.
- 27 Aug 52 Damaged, cat. 4R. To No. 58 MU, RAF Honington.
- 15 Nov 52 Repaired in works by De Havillands.
- 26 Feb 53 Repairs complete.
- 31 Mar 53 To No. 27 MU, RAF Shawbury, Salop.

8 Sep 53 To H.Q Allied Air Forces Central Europe (AAFCE)

10 Nov 53 Maintenance Command Communications Flight, RAF Andover, Hants

15 Apr 54 To No. 27 MU, RAF Shawbury, Salop.

20 Apr 55 From RAF Shawbury to A&AEE, Boscombe Down for blower tunnel tests of cabin door jettisoning function.

20 Jun 55 Returned to No. 27 MU, RAF Shawbury.

11 Aug 55 Home Command Communications Squadron.

10 Oct 55 H.Q Bomber Command Communications Flight, Booker, Bucks.

10 Nov 55 Metropolitan Communications Squadron, RAF Hendon.

12 Apr 56 To De Havillands for modifications.

1 Jun 56 Modifications complete.

5 Jun 56 Returned to the Metropolitan Communications Squadron at Hendon.

10 Jul 56 To RAF Upavon Communications Flight, Wilts.

25 Apr 57 To No. 49 MU for 'Special Fit'. Work completed 10 July.

4 Nov 57 One of the last aircraft flown out of RAF Hendon upon its closure to flying, taking part in a farewell flypast alongside a Chipmunk and Anson; unit moved to RAF Northolt.

30 Oct 61 To De Havillands for maintenance, completed 14 December.

1 Jan 62 Training Command Communications Flight.

Jun 62 Photographed in colour at RAF Upavon, Wilts airshow in RAF Transport Command Colours-Aeroplane Museums/Displays Supplement, April 2003

18 Jun 63 To De Havillands for modifications.

8 Jul 63 Modifications Complete - to RAF Upavon, Wilts Station Flight

6 Nov 64 Transport Command Southern Communications Squadron. Photo at RAF Cranwell, Lincs June 1965 - Control Column 18/2, 1984 p.26.

- 17 Jan 68 Damaged - Cat. 3R. Repaired on site by No. 71 MU.
- 11 Apr 68 Returned to Southern Communications Squadron (SCS) RAF Bovington, Herts.
- 24 Jun 68 Western Communications Squadron (WCS) at RAF Andover, Hants.
- 3 Feb 69 Western Communications Squadron renamed No. 21 Squadron, still at RAF Andover, Hants.
- 25 Sep 70 To Hawker Siddeley at Chester for Modification to C2/2 standard by the installation of more powerful 400hp Gypsy Queen 175 engines and an enlarged cockpit canopy.
- 18 Mar 71 Returned to No.21 Squadron, RAF Andover, Hants.
- 2 Nov 72 Damaged - Cat. 3R. Repaired on site by No. 71 MU.
- 12 Dec72 Back on No. 21 Squadron strength following repair.
- Photo with 21 Squadron c.1973; Royal Air Force News w/e 23 June 1973 p.7.
- 29 May 74 To No. 207 Squadron, RAF Northolt. By 1984 this unit operated 13 Devons, nine from Northolt, plus a detached flight of three aircraft at RAF Wyton, Cambs and one from Edinburgh/Turnhouse. Ferried senior officers of all three services around the UK and Europe, and also operated a regular 'round robin' courier service, carrying documents and packages between UK bases; another task was the transporting of Technical personnel to recover RAF aircraft reported unserviceable away from base.
- 29 Jun 84 Penultimate flight - flying time 55 minutes.
- 30 Jun 84 Last Devons retired from 207 Squadron, which disbanded that day - the last Devons in the RAF, although one was later transferred for use by the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight for several years.
- 5 Jul 84 Final flight; from its former squadron base at RAF Northolt to RAF St. Athan Regional Aircraft Collection, South Glamorgan. Upon retirement, VP952 was the oldest operational aircraft in the RAF, and also the longest serving, and was still barely halfway through its airframe life. Total Airframe hours 8626.35; 13,234 landings. Maintained in serviceable condition until the starboard engine developed an oil pressure problem in November 1985. Allotted instructional serial 8820M.

- Feb 86 Aerospace Museum, RAF Cosford, Salop; originally allotted there 25 July 1985.
- 1992 Repainted by a team from Cosford's No. 2 School of Technical Training. Photo - Flypast February 1992 p.8.
- 9 Jun 96 Displayed outside during Cosford Air Display. Photo - Flypast August 1996 p.62.
- 3 Aug 98 One of a number of aircraft donated to the RAFM by the Ministry of Defence.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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