

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

FOLLAND GNAT F.1 XK724/7715M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 1987/0025/A

- Aug 55 Ordered by Ministry of Supply to specification F.163, contract No. 15250, as one of a development batch of six Gnat single seat fighter aircraft (XK724; 739-41, 67-8) for evaluation purposes, constructor's number FL2; in the event this variant was not adopted by the RAF.
- Built by Folland Aircraft Ltd, Chilbolton, Hants. Photo as rolled out - Flight 1st June 1956 p.662. The aircraft was fully armed with two 30mm cannon and operationally equipped.
- 26 May 56 First flight, at Chilbolton- the first of the development batch to fly. Test Pilot was S/Ldr E.A. 'Teddy' Tennant. Photo in flight at this time - Air Enthusiast No.24 p.4. Colour Photo – Folland Gnat (Bingham) p.68.
- Used in gun firing trials, including air firing, at A&AEE Boscombe Down until August 1956.
- Sep 56 Displayed at the SBAC show at Farnborough, Hants, flown by Teddy Tennant and Dick Whittington. Photo - Flight 14 September 1956 p.474.
- 19 Oct 56 Allotted to Folland Aircraft Ltd for development flying.
- 4 Sep 58 Flown by Bristol Test Pilot Godfrey Auty for 20-minute engine test.
- 22 Jun 59 Allotted to Folland Aircraft at Chilbolton for trial installation of liquid oxygen system and preliminary investigation of ground handling
- 20 Oct 59 Allotted to Folland Aircraft at Chilbolton as chase and support aircraft for the development flying of the Gnat Trainer aircraft, in conjunction with the continuing trials of the liquid oxygen system.
- 30 Sep 60 Aircraft released by RAF.
- 25 Feb 61 From Chilbolton to RAF Technical College, RAF Henlow, Beds, following allotment on 17 February 1961.
- 21 Mar 61 Allotted RAF Instructional serial 7715M.

To No. 71 Maintenance Unit, RAF Bicester for mobile display use.

c.1967 To RAF College at RAF Cranwell, Lincs, possibly having moved there early the previous year. Latterly painted with upper surface camouflage and silver undersides.

1985 Restored at Cranwell for display at the summer passing out parade.

14 Aug 85 To Aerospace Museum, RAF Cosford, Salop for display. Photo- Folland Gnat (Bingham) p.124. Photo during refurbishment at the current RAF Museum, Cosford, March 2007; Wrecks and Relics 21st and 22nd Editions.

Fellow prototype XK740 is also part of the RAFM collection, currently being displayed at the Southampton Hall of Aviation. Gnat F.1 XK741 is also preserved, at the Midland Air Museum, Coventry.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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