

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

HAWKER HUNTER FGA9 XG154/8863M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 1990/0698/A

Ordered from Hawkers, Kingston as part of third production batch of 110 Hunter F.6 aircraft, with Rolls-Royce Avon 203 engine. Sub-contracted to Sir W G Armstrong-Whitworth Aircraft Ltd, Coventry as part of their first production batch of F.6 aircraft, XG150-XG168

13	Jun	56	First Flight, from Bitteswell.
23	Oct	56	Awaiting collection from Armstrong-Whitworth at Baginton, Coventry.
26	Oct	56	No.19 MU St Athan.
27	Nov	56	To No.66 Squadron, Linton-on-Ouse, one of 19 RAF Squadrons to fly the Hunter F.6. At this time the squadron was in the process of converting from the Hunter F.4. XG154 became aircraft 'T' with the squadron and would have worn the squadron's insignia - nose badge showing squadron badge on a white disc flanked by blue-outlined white bars.
17	Jan	57	8½ hours only on airframe by this time.
	Feb	57	No.66 Squadron moved to Acklington.
29	Jan	58	Cat 3R accident (repairable on site). No accident card.
31	Jan	58	No.60 MU/repared on site.
06	Feb	58	Ex-ROS (i.e. repairs completed).
10	Feb	58	Returned to strength on No.66 Squadron. The squadron flew frequent detachments in the Middle East, and had sixteen Hunters on strength.
04	Mar	59	Damaged - Cat 3R. Incident occurred at 1640pm whilst being flown by Fg Off M T Chapman. The aircraft was on a live firing exercise at Warcop ranges when it was struck by a 30mm cannon round ricochet during one of four air/ground firing runs. Safety height was not violated, and the damage was found after landing. (Accident Card - DoRIS accident card microfilm roll 136).
09	Mar	59	No.60 MU/repared on site.
	Apr	59	Ex-ROS - repairs completed.

04 May 59 Returned to strength of No.66 Squadron.

1959 Modified to interim Mk.9 standard by RAF and company working party (CWP) at Horsham St Faith, Norfolk. This was part of the second conversion contract, C/A/10345 dated 24 February 1954, to modify 36 F.6 a/c to interim Mk.9 standard, retaining the Avon 203 engine, replaced later by the Avon 207 upon full conversion.

The Hunter FGA9, to which standard XG154 was later fully converted, was originally intended for exclusive use in the Middle East. The main modifications were the fitting of a 13' 6" diameter tail parachute, increased ventilation for the cockpit, and to increase ferry range, increased pilots oxygen supply and the provision of 230 gallon fuel tanks on the inboard pylons.

A total of 129 Hunter FGA9 aircraft served with the RAF, including 36 interim conversions, of which XG154 was one, where the main modification was the fitting of the 230 gallon fuel tanks. Primary weapons of the FGA9 to supplement the four 30mm cannon of the F.6, were 3" (76mm) rockets, 12 of which could be carried under each wing. Alternative loads included 1000lb bombs, rocket pods and Napalm tanks. The first conversion flew July 1959 and the type entered RAF service from January 1960.

20 Jun 60 To No.43 Squadron, Leuchars, where it carried the code 'B'. Squadron markings at the time consisted of white wing tips with black checks and the squadrons 'Fighting Cock' symbol on the nose.

20 Jun 61 Squadron moved to Nicosia, Cyprus to become the resident FGA (Fighter/Ground Attack) Squadron in the Near East Air Force and provide reinforcements for the Kuwait crisis that Summer.

26 Feb 62 No.131 MU.

21 Nov 62 No.5 MU.

26 Feb 63 To No.8 Squadron, RAF Khormaksar, Aden. Carried the individual code 'H'. At this time the Aden protectorate was suffering a growing problem with Egyptian backed Yemeni insurgents.

03 Oct 63 Detachment to Bahrain (Island base of RAF Muharraq).

06 Oct 63 Returned to Khormaksar.

Dec 63 State of emergency declared by British authorities in South Arabia and border with Yemen closed, as subversion in Aden increased.

03 Apr 64 Detachment to Muharraq (Bahrain).

06 Apr 64 Detachment to Kenya.

From late 1961, Nos.8 and 208 Squadrons, and from March 1963 No.43 Squadron also, plus 1417 photo-reconnaissance flight, formed a strike wing, known as the Khormaksar Tactical Wing or Aden Strike Wing. The Bahrain based squadron was intended to counter any threat to Kuwait, whilst the Khormaksar based unit covered Aden and East Africa.

From Jan 64 the three squadrons, started operations by rotation in the Radfan area north of Aden in operation 'Nutcracker' - a show of force intended to teach Yemeni and Egyptian- supported dissident tribesmen a lesson. Many targets were attacked with cannon fire and rockets. Operations continued until the last rebels capitulated 18 Nov 64. This defeat caused the insurgents to switch to subversive activities in the urban areas of the Aden state around the port itself, along with Khormaksar airfield and the oil refinery.

12	Aug	64	Flying accident, Cat 3R - placed on disposal account.
21	Aug	64	To No.8/43 Squadron, Khormaksar. Code 'B'. Part of the Aden Strike Wing Pool.
21	Sep	64	Flown by Flt. Lt. Roger J Wilkins of No.43 Squadron on 'Rhubarb' sortie. . (Log Book Microfilm with DoRIS, 2005) Photo of pilot ; Flypast June 2016 p.121.
14	Oct	64	Flown twice by Flt. Lt. Wilkins, low-level cross-country to Sharjah, thence on to Muharraq.
15	Oct	64	Flown by Flt Lt Wilkins, Muharraq to Masirah.
25	Nov	64	Flown by Flt Lt Wilkins on dawn strike.
03	Mar	65	Flown by Flt Lt Wilkins, Djibouti
28	Apr	65	Flown by Flt Lt Wilkins on naval co-operation with aircraft carrier HMS Eagle
16	Dec	65	No.19 MU.
01	Jul	66	No.5 MU.
17	Aug	66	To No.208 Squadron, Bahrain. Code letter 'J'. Again part of the Aden Strike Wing. Unit markings - white wing tips and squadron badge on nose on blue/yellow arrowhead, which was not used when the aircraft was pooled in the wing. Carried SNEB rocket pods. Squadron carried out live firings, SAR patrols, anti-smuggling patrols and Long-range night flying exercises in case the need arose to reinforce No.8 Squadron in Aden.
18	Apr	67	At Khormaksar, Aden.

Whilst the British presence in Aden was run down for a pull-out deadline of 1969 the strike wing Hunters continued to operate in support of the South Arabian army against insurgents.

30	May	67	To No.8/43 Squadron Pool, Aden.
	Oct	67	Sea Vixen and Buccaneer aircraft from HMS Eagle began to take over

the Hunters air defence tasks.

09	Nov	67	Last Hunter ground attack sorties flown by No.43 Squadron against rebels in the Kirch area. Squadron then disbanded and its aircraft re-allocated.
28	Nov	67	Last RAF aircraft left Khormaksar (Aden), ending 48 years of RAF presence in the colony.
01	Dec	67	To No.8 Squadron, Muharraq (Bahrain), joining No.208 Squadron to form an offensive support wing. The Squadron relinquished its Hunter 9 aircraft the same month, disbanding on the 21st.
11	Dec	68	No.7 Engineering Squadron St Athan.
24	Jun	69	No.5 MU Kemble.
06	Aug	69	To No.208 Squadron Bahrain once more, as part of the strike wing which existed until British withdrawal from the area in December 1971. The two squadrons became the last two operational ground-attack Hunter squadrons in the RAF.
19	Jul	71	St Athan. By this date several aircraft each month were being flown back to the UK as the British withdrawal date approached.
20	Aug	71	No.5 MU.
17	Sep	71	No.229 OCU, Chivenor - the longest serving RAF Hunter operating unit.
11	Oct	72	Cat 3R accident - placed on disposal account.
16	Oct	72	Repaired on site.
12	Apr	73	Repairs completed. Returned to 229 OCU charge.
27	Apr	73	Cat 3R flying accident - birdstrike. During a low level continuation training sortie via Macrahanish the aircraft struck a gull at 250 feet, south of Oban. The aircraft landed safely at Macrahanish with a damaged drop tank and engine. See full report in AC96/28.
30	Apr	73	Disposal account.
03	May	73	Repaired on site by No.71 MU.
29	Jun	73	Disposal account - Repaired on site by No.71 MU.
07	Mar	74	Disposal account following repairs.
17	Jun	74	Returned to No.229 OCU.

03	Aug	74	Unit disbanded, and replaced by Tactical Weapons Unit (TWU) at Brawdy, Pembrokeshire from 2 Sep 74.
10	Jun	75	Disposal account - Damaged, Cat 3R.
12	Feb	76	To TWU, Brawdy. The unit provide a `stepping stone' between No.4 FTS Valley and the Front line tactical OCUS.
18	May	76	ADA.
	Oct	76	To Fleet Air Arm, RNAS Brawdy.
03	Feb	77	TWU, Brawdy.
18	Nov	77	ADA.
09	May	78	To No.1 TWU (Shadow unit - No.79 Squadron) Brawdy. Code `M' No.79 Squadron provided Hunter refresher courses.
11	Feb	81	No.5 MU Kemble - major overhaul.
14	Jul	81	Returned to TWU RAF Brawdy, who then operated, through No.79 Squadron, 19 assorted single-seat Hunters. Wore the code `54' on the fin Photo- Wapaint No 8 -Hawker Hunter p.38.
29	Jun	84	Flight test by Flt Lt Sommer at Brawdy.
02	Jul	84	Further flight test by Flt Lt Sommer at Brawdy.
25	Jul	84	XG514 participated in the special final sortie of single-seat Hunters in RAF service, nine aircraft - 5 FGA9s and 4 F6s - giving displays at Chivenor and Brawdy.
26	Jul	84	To St Athan for long term storage, together with the other remaining single-seat RAF Hunters. This was XG154s last flight.
02	Aug	84	Prepared for storage.
30	May	85	Allotted ground instructional number 8863M, Cat 5 for RAFM display. Total airframe hours 5523.05 675 landings. Aircraft logs held in DoRIS, including ECU Log Cards, Aircraft Inventory, Job Cards, and Form 700s.
	Jul	85	Engine (RR Avon 207 No.8222) given ground instructional number 5083A.
28	Oct	85	Form 700 closed. A/C Cat 5 (Display).
	Oct-23 Nov	88	Repainted into 8/43 Squadron Khormaksar markings at RAF St Athan.
17	Nov	89	To RAFM Hendon replacing Hunter F5 WP185/7583M on display.

Displayed in main Aircraft Hall ever since; Pilot Flt Lt R.J. Roger Wilkins name added to cockpit January 2016. Photon- Flypast June 2016 p.121..

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON