

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

HAWKER TEMPEST II PR536/HA457
MUSEUM ACCESSION No.1992/0345/A

One of 302 Tempest II Aircraft built from an order for 800, contract ACFT/2438/C.23 (a) by Hawker Aircraft at Langley, from the serial block PR525-PR567. 552 Tempest II aircraft actually built.

c.1946/47 Photos taken, believed to be of PR536, serving with No.5 Squadron RAF, based at Peshawar (now part of Pakistan) and several other Indian bases at this time. The photos show the aircraft as `OQ-G' and `OQ-H'. The squadron disbanded 1st August 1947 at Mauripur, having flown Tempest II's since March 1946, as one of four Tempest II equipped squadrons in India from December 1945, all of which disbanded and passed their aircraft to the Royal Indian Air Force, with whom they equipped seven squadrons, flying from Poona, Palam, Ambala and Kanpur.

No. 5 Squadron Converted to Tempests at Bhopal in March 1946, moving to Poona on 1 June 1946, and a detachment of the squadron to Risalpur on the North-West Frontier of India on 26 November 1946, moving to Peshawar on 22 January 1947, and Mauripur on 3 July 1947, where it disbanded a few weeks later on 1 August 1947.

No.5 Squadron served for a time as the Tempest conversion unit for Indian Air Force Squadrons converting to the Tempest

15 Aug 47 Partition and independence for India and Pakistan.

20 Sep 47 PR536 was one of 124 Tempest II aircraft handed over to the Royal Indian Air Force from RAF stocks in India. Given RIAF serial HA457. A further 89 Tempest IIs were supplied to India by Hawkers' in 1948/9 being refurbished as RIAF HA547-645 from ex-RAF aircraft stored at 20 MU, Aston Down. An additional 20 were purchased direct from the RAF (20 MU) in 1951.

Oct 1947 –Jan 1948 RIAF Tempests in action against insurgents in Kashmir and Jammu provinces - a 15-month campaign, providing close-air support to the Indian Army.

26 Jan 50 Royal Indian Air Force became the Indian Air Force.

- 1953 Last front-line Tempests withdrawn from Indian service (No.3 Squadron- plus 4 Squadron until 1955, despite losses to flying accidents mainly due to engine failure); Tempests remained in service for a time (up to c.1956) as operational trainers at Hakimpet and at the Armament Training Wing, Jamnagar. Others used for ground instruction and latterly, as airfield decoys – the latter having their propellers removed, supposedly to make them look like jets from the air!. The role of HR457/PR536 at this time is not known.
- 1961 Large number of withdrawn Indian Tempests noted stored at Chakeri, already partly stripped. Still carried their standard Indian colour scheme - silver overall with black anti-dazzle panel, wing-tips, rudders, and rear fuselage bands.
- Feb 1969 Nine derelict Tempest IIs discovered at Poona, five at least with wings and undercarriages; RAF PR555,659,756,779,834,867,901, and IAF serials HA622 and HA580 /MW758 now stored at Chichester. Had all reportedly moved on by 1972 to unknown destination, but 1979 photos show nine fuselages in external store at Poona amongst well-established scrub.
- November 1971 Centaurus engine and pair of Tempest II wings presented to RAFM by Indian Govt, arriving in UK c.1972. The wings came from Kanpur, from which aircraft is not recorded. This was the result of an RAFM request to India for Tempest spares in 1968.
- 1976 Eleven Tempest IIs ('Cat E') put up for tender by Indian Govt Dept. of Defence, at Halwara and Jodpur after use as airfield decoys. Six were brought back to the UK, purchased by Doug Arnolds' Warbirds of Great Britain. They were mostly complete with engines but missing propellers and often tailplanes and rudders. They had been stored outside in dry conditions for many years. The other five were apparently scrapped in India as being beyond recovery and uneconomic to transport. By 1979 they were at back at/still at Poona, stored as fuselages only
- 1979 The WOGB Tempests finally arrived in the UK. HA457 (the aircraft now at Hendon) (RAF PR536); HA557 (MW404); HA564 (MW376); HA586 (MW763); HA591 (MW810); HA604 (MW401). This is the first definite information on 'PR536' since 1947.
- c.1980 Ex-Indian Tempests acquired by Nick Grace and Chris Horsley and stored at Chichester as part of the 'Tangmere Flight'. First discussions between Nick Grace and RAFM at this time over acquisition of HA457.
- 1987 Agreement reached for RAFM to acquire fuselage and engine of HA457 in exchange for Napier Sabre and fuselage of Tempest V EJ693 acquired from Holland, the agreement being between RAFM and Nick Grace. In November 1988 HA457 moved into store at Cardington. Photos: FlyPast Jan 89 p.26; Flypast Aug 98 p.26.

10 Apr 87 To assist in restoration, the rear fuselage of a Tempest II, spuriously marked as `KB418' was acquired from the Royal Navy Engineering College, Manadon.

This is now fitted to the aircraft at Hendon, making it a composite of three airframes - rear fuselage from Manadon, wings from Kanpur c.1971, leaving just the forward fuselage from PR536, this identity being found in the tailwheel well before the rear fuselage sections were exchanged. The original rear fuselage was later traded for spare parts.

1990/91 Restored to static display condition at Duxford by The Fighter Collection in exchange for the RAFM Sea Fury II VX653 which TFC intended to rebuild to airworthy condition. Actually moved to Duxford late 1989. Photo as delivered to Duxford - Aeroplane Monthly Feb 90 p.71 and Warbirds Worldwide No.12 p.9.

Restoration photo Aeroplane Monthly Mar 91 p.135 and Jul 91 p.390; Aircraft Illustrated Jan 91 p.50 and Aug 91 p.442. Given the propeller from a Vickers Varsity, a sea Fury canopy, Hurricane control column and undercarriage legs from near Manchester.

Photo as completed at Duxford – Fighter Log December 1991 p.2.

13 Nov 91 Moved Duxford - Hendon on completion of restoration. Displayed at Hendon since then, in 5 Squadron markings as OQ-H. Photos: FlyPast Feb 92 p.70; Flypast May 2002 p.58.

The original rear fuselage of HA457 has now passed to Ted Sinclair, Norwich for use in a Tempest V project with a genuine ex-scrap yard Tempest V Cockpit section.

Several other ex-Indian Tempests survive:

HA557/MW404 Formerly with Tangmere Flight; parts with Tempest Two Ltd, Gainsborough. Stored unrestored 2009; fuselage at Wycombe with Parkhouse Aviation by September 2011; to Chris Miller, Texas, USA, October 2012.

HA564/MW376/G-BSHW South-East of France 1996; to New Zealand for rebuild June 2012; to British Columbia for continued work 2015.

HA580/MW758 Formerly with Tangmere Flight; parts with Tempest Two Ltd, Gainsborough.

HA586/MW763/G-TEMT Was at Tempest Two Ltd, Gainsborough, Lincs-under restoration to fly. To North Weald, Essex 14 May 2014; later to Anglia Aircraft Restorations at Great Dunmow.

HA591/MW810 Bentwaters, Suffolk. Fuselage only, ex USA (Nelson Ezell, Texas).

HA604/MW401/G-PEST Tempest Two Ltd, Gainsborough, Lincs-under restoration. Later stored by Anglia Aircraft Restorations, Great Dunmow.

HA623 /MW848 Indian Air Force Museum, Pallam.

Up to 14 others at one time rumoured to still be stored in India following use as decoys.

The other extant MK. II is prototype LA607/N607LA, ex Skyfame Museum, owned by Kermit Weeks and displayed at Florida Air Museum at Sun'n'Fun until 2014 (photo – Flypast August 2014 p.18), when returned to storage at the Fantasy of Flight storage facility at its Polk City HQ.

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