

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

HAWKER SIDDELEY ANDOVER E.3A XS639/9241M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 1994/1475/A

- 1967 Built by Hawker Siddeley Ltd to contract KU/11/013 as one of 31 Andover C.1 tactical transport aircraft. Serials batch XS637 - 647.
- 28 Apr 67 Awaiting Collection.
- 1 May 67 No. 46 Squadron, RAF Transport (later Air Support) Command, RAF Abingdon, Oxon. Colour photo as delivered, in tactical transport camouflage of sand/brown/black; white cockpit surround; Aircraft Illustrated October 1970 p.407. Unit badge of three red arrowheads carried on the fin. Other photos of XS639 with No. 46 Squadron; Aircraft Illustrated October 1969 p.418; Provided battlefield support for the Army in tactical exercises, NATO Duties and regular Germany - UK casualty evacuation flights.
- 1 Nov 68 No. 60 Maintenance Unit, RAF Leconfield, Yorks.
- 6 Feb 69 Rejoined No. 46 Squadron.
- Jul 69 No. 46 Squadron involved in ACE mobile force during unrest on the Island of Anguila.
- 9 Sep 70 No. 46 Squadron moved to RAF Thorney Island, Hants.
- 8 Mar 71 Logbook of Movements Controller Robert (Bob) Thacker (extract on file) records flight from Abingdon via Warton to Istres (6 March) and Luqa, Malta (7 March-back to Istres same day) to collect Sepecat Jaguar engine from Warton, and deliver it to an unserviceable Jaguar in Istres, hence to Luqa to collect engine change kit and engineers from a Jaguar squadron on deployment.
- 29 Aug 75 No. 46 Squadron disbanded due to reductions in the RAF transport force due to defence cuts.
- 11 Nov 75 No. 32 Squadron, RAF Northolt for communications duties.
- 17 Dec 75 No. 5 MU, RAF Kemble, Glos for storage.

- 1976 One of eight redundant Andover C.1 aircraft converted to E.3/E.3A standard for landing aid and radar check and calibration work at British military airfields in the UK and Germany, Cyprus, Belize and Gibraltar replacing the A.W Argosy in the same role between November 1976 and January 1978.
- 27 Sep 76 To No. 115 Squadron, RAF Brize Norton, Oxon operating all the E.3/E.3A aircraft as part of No. 90 Group. 115 Squadron was the RAF's flight calibration squadron, calibrating all navigation and landing aids at RAF and RN airfields throughout the UK and Europe, including instrument landing system – ILS; Precision Approach Radar – PAR – Tactical Aid to Navigation – TACAN – and Area Radar – AR., with a secondary training, aeromedical flight and transport role.
- Painted in a high visibility scheme of white and light aircraft grey with signal red cheatline, engines, wingtips and tail unit. Operated transport tasks in addition to calibration duties.
- XS639 was one of three E3A 'hack' aircraft used by the Squadron in a variety of roles, primarily transport of passengers and freight as well as PAR, TACAN and AR – but not ILS- duties. Though not fitted with specialist radar equipment, the E3A could be used as a passive radar target.
- They were identical to the C.1 though with the addition of an extra crew position alongside the navigator. No.115 Squadron was also the Operational Conversion Unit for other RAF Andover units. Selected squadron crews retained the original Andover tactical take-off and landing capability; aeromedical evacuations were also flown, plus 'on demand' communications flights and logistics support for the 'Elder Forest 92' Air Defence Exercise, and occasional VIP flights. In the summer season transport was provided for the RAF Falcons Parachute Team from RAF Brize Norton, using the rear ramp for the mass exit.
- 29 Jun 79 To RAF Kemble, Glos; returned to No. 115 Squadron 15 Aug 79.
- 18 Apr 80 Electronic Warfare Avionics Unit, RAF Wyton, Cambs.
- 24 Oct 80 Returned to No. 115 Squadron.
- 4 Jan 83 No. 115 Squadron moved to RAF Benson, Oxon.
- 16 Apr 1984 Captain's flying Logbook of Andy Lee (extracts on Andover History file) records MCT (Monthly continuation flying) – local flight to practice simulated aircraft emergencies, including shutting down one engine in flight and restarting it. Flight time 1.30 hrs.

- 17 Apr 84 Lee LB records PAR (T) flight at RAF Wittering – Precision Approach Radar test conducted with aid of ground-based theodolite. 2.35 hours.
- 10 Oct 84 Lee LB records being at Gibraltar – TACAN (Tactical Aid to Navigation) /CADF trial 3.35 hours - and back to RAF Benson via Versailles two days later. – flight time 7.15 hours.
- 19-21 Mar 85 Lee LB records Benson – Northolt – Barrow – Kinloss – Benson – a tour for Royal Navy Officers undergoing the famous ‘Perisher’ course for potential Submarine Commanders, Barrow being the submarine building facility and Kinloss the base for Nimrod maritime patrol/sub-hunter aircraft.
- 22 Oct 85 Lee LB – Benson – Gutersloh – Wildenrath – Northolt – Benson – Aeromedical flight, probably for a British Forces in Germany member or family member. Flight time 2.25 hours.
- 1992 The third of the three E.3A’s transferred from No. 115 Squadron to No. 32 Squadron, RAF Northolt from Jan 1992; latterly in use for runway aid calibration duties. Initially on loan, formally transferred to No. 32 Squadron 1 April 1992. This meant that the Andover Conversion Unit and Falcons Transport tasks also passed to No. 32 Squadron.
- 13 Jul 94 Last flight, to Aerospace Museum, RAF Cosford, Salop for display. Crew for the last flight were Sqn Ldr Steve McBain and Flt Lts. Jim Rooney and Julian Spencer.
Photo as of April 1995; Wrecks & Relics 15th Edition.
- Allotted instructional serial 9241M
- 3 Aug 98 One of a number of aircraft donated to the RAF Museum by the MoD.
- Jun/Jul 00 Repainted by RAF Cosford Trainees.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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