

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

HAWKER HIND (AFGHAN) BAPC 82  
MUSEUM ACCESSION NO.69/A/104

- 3 Aug 37                      Following an initial offer by Hawkers in February 1937, eight Hawker Hind Light Bomber aircraft ordered from Hawkers via the British Air Ministry by the newly established Royal Afghan Air Force, two of them with dual controls.
- Dec 37                         The eight Hinds were delivered, crated, to the airfield at Kabul by road; they had been shipped, with their armament, in October 1937 on the SS Durenda; arriving in Kabul in December with Hawker pilot-instructor Russell-Stacey and three technical instructors (mechanics and fitters) they had all been assembled, tested and handed over by April 1938. This batch seems to have included the two aircraft now preserved in the UK since neither show any real evidence of a former RAF identity. These aircraft have the following makers numbers on the main fuselage plate:
- 41.H.8. 1899 date 14 May 37. The RAF Museum aircraft. Also has ailerons dated Jul 37 and tailplane and lower port mainplane dated Oct 36 - evidence of cannibalisation from other aircraft to keep it flying in Afghan service, perhaps.
- 41.H.8. 1902 date May 37. Now preserved in flying condition by the Shuttleworth Trust, registered G-AENP, originally in Afghan colours, but now flies as `K5414' or No.15 Squadron, RAF. This Hind was recovered complete, by road from Kabul in November 1970, making its first flight in preservation 17 Aug 81. Small items were exchanged from the RAFM Hind/Hart aircraft to assist restoration. Allocated BAPC 78. Photos: Aeroplane Monthly Oct 81 and December 1999 p.50-51.
- Summer 1938                 On at least four occasions, Afghan Hinds used to help Afghan army quell tribal disturbances in Katawaz area, bombing and strafing insurgents, and also flew reconnaissance missions over disturbed areas in the eastern and southern provinces.
- May 39                         Twenty ex-RAF Hinds sold to Afghanistan, two of them minus engines. They had formerly equipped Nos 113 and 211 Squadrons in the Middle East, then re-equipped with Blenheims. Ten were shipped from Egypt in May 1939, nine flying from India and arriving at Kabul on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1939. A J Young flew one of a batch of eight, L7181, arriving at Kabul 30 Aug 39. Photo of Hind `J' at Peshawer during delivery: RAF News w/e 6 Apr 68 p.7.

Another of this batch of 13, ex-RAF No. 211 Squadron L7180, was air tested by him after delivery and erection in India 24 Aug 39.

This aircraft remained derelict (photo – Flying Review International Nov 67 p.1010) in the compound of the Civil Aeronautics Board at Kabul Airport from withdrawal until October 1975 when it was shipped to Canada for restoration by the National Aviation Museum, Ottawa, this task being undertaken to airworthy standards 1984-89, although up till now the aircraft has only been ground run. Photos: Aeroplane Monthly Mar 89 p.133; FlyPast Mar 89 ; Oct.96 p.8.

At Kabul L7180 shared the compound with the even more battered remains of the 1937-built ex- 211 Squadron RAF Hind L7181 (41.H82971) (originally recorded as K6618), also taken to Canada, where it contributed parts to the restoration of the other Hind. It is now in the UK for eventual restoration, having been acquired by Aero Vintage in 1995 and registered with the Historic Aircraft Collection as G-CBLK – Photos, Flypast July 2002 p.12 and July 2003 p.13; Aeroplane October 2003 p.29-33; Flypast February 2005 p.6; Wrecks and Relics 20<sup>th</sup> Edition (partly restored, at IWM Duxford).

- 28 May 39                      During a military review at Kabul, 12 Hinds participated in a flypast.
- 4-18 Sep 39                    Log book of A J Young records that he carried out delivery tests and demonstration flights on seven of the newly delivered ex-RAF Hinds, Afghan Nos.11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17. The numbers were applied before the test flight, in Persian script, on to the fuselage. No tie-up with RAF serials is given. These aircraft had arrived on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1939.
- 18 Oct 39                      Final three ex RAF Hinds reached Kabul, completing the order for 20. After the outbreak of War in September 1939, when Afghanistan remained neutral, three Hinds were stripped of all unnecessary equipment and used as a Fighter Flight in case of enemy air attack against Kabul.
- The Afghan Hinds seem to have equipped Nos.1 and 3 Squadrons of the Royal Afghan Air Force, each squadron flying at least eight aircraft. They were based at Kabul (Sherpur) airfield together with a squadron of Italian supplied Meridionali IMAM Ro.37 bis aircraft, 17 of which were obtained 1937-39 (the remains of one of which was recovered back from Kabul scrapyard to the Italian Air Force Museum at Vigna di Valle in September 2006, with five others later returned to Italy of the eight found in the scrapyard-Aeroplane May 2006 p.7), with another in the UK (sold to Spanish Air Force Museum 2010) and one in the Italian Embassy compound at Kabul. In winter when Kabul airfield was unserviceable due to snow, a flight of Hinds went east to Jalalabad, near the Indian (now Pakistan) border.

Skis purchased for the Ro 37s were tested on the Hinds. Later in the war Hinds were used for training as Italian supplied Breda 25 aircraft became unserviceable due to lack of spares, the Flying Training School being based at Kabul, flying three Hinds, two of them dual control, by 1943.

- 1939 Afghan Hinds supported Afghan army in counter-insurgency role in the Zamindar area. Photo of Afghan Hinds in service - Flypast June 2008 p.112. By December 1939 the Afghan Air Force had 28 Hinds, of which one was unserviceable.
- 1940/41 Further Hind-backed counter-insurgency operations in Mohmund area; in April 1940 No 1 Squadron had 12 Hinds, and No.3 Squadron 10 Hinds, one of them dual control; by April 1946 these two squadrons still operated 14-16 serviceable Hinds.
- 24 July 1944 A flypast by the Afghan Air Force featured 21 Hinds and six Ro 37s. In early 1944, nine ex-RAF Hawker Audaxes were offered to replace the Ro37s, but the Afghans unsuccessfully requested nine more Hinds instead!
- Jan 47 Single Afghan Hind visited RAF base at Peshawar, India (now Pakistan) prior to partition and British withdrawal.
- The aircraft still carried bomb racks, but no rear gun, and wore the overall silver c/s seemingly standard for Afghan Hinds. Photos; Air Enthusiast July/August 2003 p.63.
- In the summer of 1947 both Nos 1 and 3 Squadrons had 12 Hinds, one with dual controls, each.
- 1948 The remaining Afghan Hinds were supplemented by twelve new Avro Anson Mk.18 aircraft, these two types still forming the bulk of the Air Force c.1950, the Hinds reconditioned with spares provided by Hawker Aircraft; In December 1949, 19 Hinds remained in service with Nos 1 and 3 Squadrons and for training (and ten Ro 37s). At this time the Royal Afghan Air Force was still maintained purely for the internal policing of tribal territories.
- 1956 Suggested withdrawal date for remaining Afghan Hinds, at least 4 being stored at Kabul (Bagram) and all now rescued for preservation. (One report says six still present 1966).
- 1957 Afghan Air Force re-equipped with MiG 17s and other Russian supplied aircraft, following an agreement signed in 1955.
- 1966 First mention of Hinds surviving in Afghanistan in RAFM files. Early museum correspondence sought to purchase two Hinds, valued by RAFM at between £100 and £200 each!

- c.Aug 1967 Afghan Government decision to donate one Hind to RAFM and send a representative officer to the UK to make the formal presentation, to mark the Golden Jubilee of the RAF.
- 23 Aug 67 Official letter of donation from General Mohammed Khan, Minister of National Defence. Much negotiation carried out on Museum's behalf by Colonel R E C Trimbell, British Defence Attache in Kabul.
- Late Nov 1967 Aircraft ready for collection after refurbishment by Afghan Air Force. Supplied by Afghans complete with Vickers and Lewis guns, spare ammunition drums in the rear cockpit, parachutes, bomb racks, message pick-up hooks, flare brackets and container for personal kit.
- 19 Jan 68 Hind left Kabul loaded on recently delivered Hercules C1 XV212 of 36 Squadron, RAF, arriving at Abingdon the following day. Photos - RAF Yearbook 1974 p.45; Flight International 25 January 1968 p.112; Royal Air Force News February 10 1968 pp.8-9.
- Early 1968 Hind moved from Abingdon to Bicester by 71 MU for further refurbishment, including a complete recovering, by small team led by WO Shepherd. Photo: RAF News w/e 15 Jun 68.
- Returned to Abingdon by 71 MU c. 20 May 1968.
- 10 Jun 68 Official presentation of aircraft at Abingdon by Colonel Mohammed Akbar Khan, Chief of Staff to the C-in-C Air Force and Air Defence.
- The small ceremony also included the handover of the Gunbus replica by the Vintage Aircraft Flying Association. Photo: Scale Models Apr 73 p. 48. Both aircraft were received by MRAF Sir Dermot Boyle, chairman of the RAFM Trustees.
- 14 Jun 68 Displayed at Royal Review, Abingdon. Photos: Scale Models Apr 73 p.25; Aeroplane April 2013 p.37.
- Sep 68 Displayed at Horse Guards Parade. Photo - Flight International 3 Oct 1968 p.538.
- 1968 - 72 Stored at the RAFM store at RAF Henlow, Beds. Photo - Air Clues Mar 1971 p.213. Further restoration work undertaken, and serial number K6832 found scratched upon the compass-not really conclusive evidence of a previous RAF identity.
- 1972 Moved to Hendon and displayed there until June 2001, in full Afghan markings. In Camm Hall to 1992 (Photo - CAHS Journal Spring 1992 p.62, Wingspan International Jan/Feb 2002 p.6-7 and Flypast November 1981 p.13) then moved to opposite Stranraer, and again in 1995 to form part of the 'Wonderful Things' display.

14 Jun 01

Fuselage taken by road for storage at RAFM Cosford, following dismantling of the aircraft over the previous three days. Wings followed later, and aircraft placed on display following reassembly.

Some of the original fabric covering remains in store at RAFM Stafford; the rudder is trainer yellow beneath the Afghan markings and silver dope; the lower starboard wing was also originally in trainer yellow, and the Afghan roundels on the other three mainplanes appear to have been applied over existing RAF-style roundels, so the wings may have originated from a former RAF machine acquired in 1939.

### **Other Survivors**

In addition to the Canadian, Cosford, Aero Vintage and Shuttleworth examples from Afghanistan, a number of other Hinds survive, including NZ1518, (ex K6717) the remains of which are preserved at MOTAT after service with the RNZAF, though part of the Classic Aircraft Collection.

NZ1535/K6721 is under restoration with the Don and Mike Subritzky Classic Aircraft Collection, Albany, NZ using components from the collections' cache of three other sets of Hind remains – NZ1528/L7184; NZ1544/K6703, and NZ1554/K5465, sold in 1945. Sixty-three Hinds operated with the RNZAF until 1943.

There is a third Hind under restoration in the UK - 'K6636' with Aero Vintage, East Sussex, in addition to their ex Afghan/Canadian Hind, L7181.

In 1994/6 the frame of an ex Irish Air Corps Hind (withdrawn 1943/44) was also recovered from near Dundrum, near Dublin for restoration by the South East Aviation Enthusiast's Group, along with that of at least one Hawker Hector.

In 2004 the substantial remains of at least another six Hinds were located in a scrapyards behind the Kabul Military training area. Photo – Flypast August 2004 p.16. These, and the parts of up to eight or nine others for spares, were recovered to the UK in December 2006 and stored in Hastings, East Sussex from December 2007. They included ex-RAF K5409, K5462, K5554, K6618, K6833 (two-seat trainer) and L7191. (Flypast April 2008 p.16 and June 2008 pp.110-113, Aircraft Illustrated April 2008)

**TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON**