

**INDIVIDUAL HISTORY**

**BOULTON PAUL DEFIANT I N1671/8370M**  
**MUSEUM ACCESSION NO.74/A/16**

- Feb 38 Ordered as part of the 2nd production order for 202 Defiant Mk.I aircraft to contract 751867/37, serial numbers between N1535-N1812. Built by Boulton Paul at its Pendeford, Wolverhampton factory and fitted with a Merlin III engine.
- 07 Aug 40 Taken on RAF charge at No.6 MU Brize Norton.
- 17 Sep 40 To No.307 Lwowski (Polish) Squadron, Kirton-in-Lindsey, Lincs, with temperate land camouflage scheme. Given codes EW-D. Allocated to 'A' Flight. No.307 Squadron had formed 5 Sep 40 as the first Polish night fighter unit. The Squadron ORB records that the unit received four Defiants, including N1671, on the 17th.
- 02 Oct 40 Three Defiants from No.307 Squadron, including N1671 were dispersed to Caistor, Lincs - a regular occurrence for the unit during its work-up phase. Caistor was the relief landing ground for Kirton-in-Lindsey.
- 27 Oct 40 N1671 and three other Defiants returned to Kirton-in-Lindsay from detachment to Caistor.
- 07 Nov 40 The unit moved to Jurby, Isle of Man for shipping protection operations over the Irish sea and other daylight patrols, with a detachment at Cranage. The units full complement of 16 Defiants flew from Kirton-in-Lindsey to Jurby on this date, including N1671.
- 15 Nov 40 The Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader, later Gp Capt. Tomlinson flew N1671 with Fg Off Karwowski for air-ground firing practice - see file letter form Gp Capt Tomlinson 13 Dec 71.
- 22 Nov 40 Squadron ORB records use of N1671 as a taxi aircraft to take a pilot to RAF Shawbury, Salop to collect a Miles Magister for the squadron. Pilot Sgt Joda.
- 30 Nov 40 S/Ldr Tomlinson flew N1671 on a night flying test as training continued.
- 8 Dec 40 One-hour 'Experience on Type' flight by Sgt Edward Sanetra, Polish Air Force. (logbook extract on Defiant file)
- 10 Dec 40 30 minute 'Experience on Type' flight (Sanetra logbook)
- 11 Dec 40 1.35 hour flight – practice attacks (Sanetra logbook), followed by one-hour R/T practice flight later the same day.

- 12 Dec 40 N1671's first operational flight - a daylight patrol for 1 hour 35 minutes with no incidents. The ORB records this as a RT Practice Flight.
- 18 Dec 40 1 hour 10 minute convoy patrol - red section fired on by a ship in the convoy. Pilot Sgt Dukszte.
- 01 Jan 41 15-minute patrol over Jurby. No incidents. (Sanetra logbook)
- 04 Jan 41 40 minute R/T flight (Sanetra logbook)
- 09 Jan 41 30 minute section interception (Sanetra logbook)
- 14 Jan 41 To No.6 MU Brize Norton for fitting of VHF and IFF along with three other Defiants from the Squadron; repainted into all black night fighter scheme around this time.
- 13 Mar 41 Returned to No.307 Squadron, now based at Squires Gate, Blackpool, Lancs.
- 26 Mar 41 Squadron moved to Colerne, Wilts for coastal sweeps.
- 08 Apr 41 N1671 flew its first operational night patrol - a 20-minute flight to 9,000 feet. No interception made. Crew Sgts Piwko and Trawacki.
- 15 Apr 41 N1671 flew a 1¼-hour night patrol to 12,000 feet. Sighted an aircraft which fired at the Defiant which was at the same moment illuminated by search light beams and lost visual contact with the other aircraft, not having returned fire. Pilot Sgt Wisthal.
- 16 Apr 41 Night patrol. No interception. Flight time 1 hour 10 minutes. Crew Sgts Wisthal and Stengierski.
- 21 Apr 41 Flown by Flight Commander F/Lt. H.P.F (Paul) Patten to Middle Wallop and return. Flight time 50 minutes. See His logbook extract on RAFM 3/4/1 Defiant enclosure dated 30 April 2000.
- 23/24 Apr 41 Night patrol. No interception. Flight time 1 hour 25 minutes.
- 26 Apr 41 Squadron moved to Exeter for further coastal sweeps.
- May 41 N1671 spent a week on detachment to Pembrey, South Wales from where it flew two incident-free night patrols:
- 11/12 May 41 Night patrol. Crew Sgts Wisthal and Stengierski.
- 16 May 41 As above. Flight time one hour.
- 19 May 41 Flew 25 minute night patrol - back at Exeter. No interception. Crew Sgt Wisthal and Wozny.

- 21 May 41 Evening Patrol. No interception. Flight time one hour.
- 31 May 41 15-minute evening patrol. No interception. Crew Sgts Bilau and Wozny.
- 09 Jun 41 Made two short patrols in the morning, then despatched with five other Defiants on dispersal to Church Stanton for the night. made the 10 minute flight, piloted by Sgt Bilau but since the landing 'T' was incorrectly laid out the aircraft swung off the runway on landing and suffered Category 3 damage (repairable off site).
- 14 Jun 41 To Reid and Sigrist (a satellite factory of Boulton Paul) for repair.
- 08 Oct 41 Flown to No.46 MU Lossiemouth following repair - to No.307 Squadron having re-equipped with Beaufighter II aircraft in Aug 41.
- 30 Oct 41 To the newly formed No.153 Squadron (codes TB-) at Ballyhalbert, Co Down, Northern Ireland (with detachments at Limavady and Eglington) to assist in the defence of Belfast. Formed from 'A' Flight of No.256 Squadron, this was the last Defiant night fighter unit to form.
- 31 Dec 41 N1671 flew its only operational sortie with No.153 Squadron - a 1 hour 10 minute flight, with no interceptions made. Pilot Sgt Luxford. This concluded N1671's operational flying - a total of 13 hours 35 minutes in 15 sorties.
- 22 Jun 42 To No.285 (Anti-Aircraft Co-operation) Squadron at Wrexham Clywd - No.153 Squadron having replaced its Defiants with Beaufighters from Jan 1942. With No.285 Squadron the aircraft carried the codes VG - and would have been used for simulated attacks to exercise anti-aircraft defences.
- 29 Oct 42 Unit moved to Honiley, Warwickshire. The squadron also maintained detachments at Wrexham and Woodvale and later at High Ercall, Salop (from 21 Jan 43).
- 22 Feb 43 To Reid and Sigrist for major inspection.
- 21 Apr 43 Awaiting collection.
- 16 May 43 No.10 MU Hullavington (Aircraft Storage Unit).
- 7 Apr 44 Air Historical Branch request for Defiant aircraft of Battle of Britain vintage for museum display. On 18 April 1944, H.Q 41 Group replied that three suitable aircraft, including N1671, were held at No. 10 MU.
- 21 Apr 44 AHB request for N1671 to be 'suitably prepared and packed for storage as a museum exhibit'.( National Archives/PRO AIR 2/10,184); request acknowledged by HQ 41 Group 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1944.
- 4 Sep 44 Allotted from No.10 MU to No. 52 MU; for ferrying by ATA.

- 08 Sep 44 Flown to No.52 MU Cardiff /Pengam Moors (Packing Depot).
- On 28 Aug 44 No.52 MU packed `for Museum purposes' Spitfire Mk.1s K9942 and X4590, now at Cosford and Hendon respectively. Also during the month the same unit handled Spitfire Mk.1As P9444 (now with the Science Museum) and R6915 (now at the Imperial War Museum). Also at Cardiff that August were Hurricane Mk.1s P2617 (now at Hendon) and L1592 (Now at the Science Museum) - these and the Defiant were part of a concerted effort initiated by the Air Historical Branch in March 1944 to assemble representative examples of Battle of Britain aircraft for museum preservation, namely several Spitfires, the two Hurricanes and the Defiant. That month the unit also packed Fiat CR42 MM5701, now at Hendon, and in September the unit handled Bf109E 4101 again now at Hendon, on behalf of the AHB.
- Dec 44 Due to the museum aircraft hanger at 52MU being required for salvaged timber storage, Defiant intended to be moved to 82 MU for continued museum storage - being 'in process of packing' 20<sup>th</sup> December 1944 – National Archives/PRO AIR 2/10, 185.
- 10 Sep 45 Recorded as still at No.82MU Lichfield for immediate despatch to No.76 MU.
- 1 Feb 46 By this date the Defiant was stored in a single crate at No.76 MU, Wroughton, Wilts, which closed later that year requiring transfer of a dozen AHB aircraft to Stanmore Park.
- 21 Jun 47 Presumed Struck-off-Charge.
- Nov 54 By this date the Defiant was listed as part of the official Air Historical Branch collection of historic aircraft, then still kept stored crated at RAF Stanmore Park, Middlesex, and still there Sep 1955. (See list in Air Pictorial Nov 54), but moved back to Wroughton by Dec 55. (See Air Pictorial Jan 56 p.26).
- Jul 57 By this date Defiant `N1617' was officially listed as part of the AHB collection stored at No.15 MU Wroughton, Wilts. Note the serial number discrepancy, but as this is the only Defiant listed this is a recording error.
- 1958 By this date the AHB aircraft had been moved to storage at RAF Fulbeck, Lincs - a satellite field for RAF Cranwell. The Royal Aeronautical Society list of historic aircraft in the UK, published in `Flight' 21 Aug 59, still gives Fulbeck as the location of `N1617'. `British Museum Aircraft' (Ellis and Butler 1977) suggests that the aircraft was still at Fulbeck in Jan 60.
- 9 Sep 60 First displayed at the Royal Observer Corps at RAF St Athan, and a few days later at the station's Battle of Britain Open Day, still painted as N1617 and in day fighter green/brown upper surface camouflage and black undersides - as it was when noted at Fulbeck in 1958.

- Re-serialled N1671 by 1961. Photo at St Athan, May 61 - Air Britain Digest Jul 61 p.82, and Airfix Magazine Dec 60 p.328; also Veteran and Vintage Aircraft of the World (Hunt 1965); Warbirds (3rd Edition) p.17; Defiant File (028954) p.81; Flight 08 June 1961 p.809; Air Britain Digest Summer 1997; Flypast Oct 1997 p.61. Colour photo; Supplement to Aeroplane January 2000 p.45. Wingspan International 30 p.59 (5 Sept 1962 photo)
- Jun 1965            Brief loan out, being moved by No. 60MU to Warton on 2 June, and thence on to RAF Binbrook on 14 June for presentation of new squadron standard by HM The Queen, returning to RAF St Athan 23 June 1965.
- 1967                Still at St Athan - refurbished there by resident No.19 MU for display at the Abingdon Royal Review in Jun 68, and by 7 February 1968 repainted in night fighter colours as an aircraft from No.307 (Polish) Squadron.
- 14 Jun 68            After delivery by No.71 MU, displayed at the Abingdon Royal Review of the RAF. Photos: Air International Aug 91 p.92; Aircraft Illustrated Apr 78 p.179 (colour); Scale Aircraft Modelling Aug 96 - colour cover; Aeromilitaria Winter 2002 rear cover (colour).
- 23 Jul 68            Moved from Abingdon to RAF Finningley, Yorks by No.71 MU Bicester. Photo at Finningley 1968 - Aeroplane Monthly Nov 86 p.575; Defiant File p.101; Flypast Oct 1997 p.60.
- 01 Apr 71            Moved to RAF Museum Hendon from RAF Finningley, again by No.71 MU.
- 1978                Moved from Main Hall at Hendon into the new Battle of Britain Hall, where it remains on display today. Colour Photo - Scale Aircraft Modelling Aug 96 p.273. Also Defiant File p.62; Flypast Oct 1997 p.60; Flypast January 2002 p.59; Wingspan International 30 pp.64 – 69 Aeroplane October 2008 p.70; Britain at War Magazine April 2009 p.76 ( All Colour).
- Jan-Mar 2009        Undergoing dismantling prior to temporary dismantled storage in RAFM Bomber Hall pending moving to Medway Aircraft Preservation Society's Rochester Airport base in Kent for conservation/restoration. Parts all stored in RAFM's Bomber Command Hall by 5 March. Photos during dismantling – Flypast April 2009 p.6; Aeroplane April 2009 p.5; Flying M Spring 2009 (Cover).
- 22 Apr 2009        By road to MAPS at Rochester. Photos during unloading – Flypast July 2009 p.10; Aeroplane July 2009 p.7; Aviation News July 2009 p.71.
- Restored to No 307 Squadron night – fighter colours in a project that took 30,000 man – hours by a team of 30 volunteers. As reported in 2011, restoration revealed traces of the original 1940 temperate land camouflage scheme in the rudder/fin area, the turret area behind the cockpit, the cockpit area and the wings;

seemingly much of the original paint had been previously stripped off, probably in the 1960s; the turret was revealed by two stamps on the rim to have been originally fitted to a Fleet Air Arm Blackburn Roc, a type now extinct. Attention given to corrosion in the centre section.

Engine found to be a low-hours unit in good condition; bullet holes presumably from 15 April 1941 incident found in fuselage behind and below the cockpit Photo at Rochester close to completion; Britain at War Magazine January 2013 p.8.

30 June 2012

Restored turret displayed at BAe Systems Rochester families day.

4 Dec 2012

Returned by road from Rochester to RAF Museum Hendon.

Photo being loaded at Rochester; Britain at War magazine January 2013 p.8. Reassembled from 8 January 2013.

Photos awaiting reassembly; Flypast February 2013 p.6; Aeroplane February 2013 p.6.

Photo as assembled and on display; Flypast March 2013 p.8 and August 2013 p.86; Aeroplane June 2013 p.34.

Although N1671 is the only known complete surviving Defiant, major components of at least two others do survive, both Mk.1s.

N1766

Engine and propeller formerly displayed at Manchester Museum of Science and Industry - crash site recovery- 96 Squadron aircraft which crashed in the Peak District 13 April 1941. Smaller remains still present at the crash site.

Hence to Yorkshire Air Museum/Nightfighter Preservation Group 1996. Photo-Flypast Oct 1997 p.63, moving to the Boulton Paul Association's Heritage Centre at Pendeford, Wolverhampton, in November 2004.

N3378

Flew into a hill at Bleaklow, near Glossop in the Derbyshire Peak District 29 August 1941. Rear fuselage, fin, tailplane, wing parts, undercarriage sections, turret ring, propeller boss and one blade, radio parts, windscreen frame and fuselage panels held by Boulton Paul Association's Boulton Paul Aircraft Heritage Project at the GE Aerospace (Former Boulton Paul) factory at Pendeford, Wolverhampton, moving into storage at RAFM Cosford in April 2013 upon closure of the Heritage Project. (Crash site recovery-other medium-sized parts remain at the crash site). Photos - Flypast July 1995 p.10; Oct 1997 p.62 -63; Britain at War Magazine April 209 p.76.

The same group have constructed a full size Defiant replica (264 Squadron -marked 'L7005') incorporating some original components such as turret cupola and wheels, which also moved to storage at RAFM Cosford in April 2013.

AA377

Former 264 Squadron aircraft crashed in Kent 26 April 1942; engine, fuselage panels etc displayed at Norfolk & Suffolk Aviation Museum,

Flixton. Photo – Britain at War Magazine April 2009 p.77.

**TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON**