

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

DE HAVILLAND DH9A F1010
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 77/A/921

Built by Westland Aircraft works at Yeovil as part of their first production batch of 150 aircraft serialled F951-F1100. F1010 carried the constructors number WA8459AMA, and was fitted with a 400HP Packard Liberty 12A V12 engine with 2-blade propeller. Its original engine No.62164 is one of only eight assembled in May 1918 and shipped to the UK in June 1918.

Late June 1918 Build date. The brand new F1010 was one of 18 early examples from the first Westland batch of DH9As to be delivered later to No.110 Squadron at its new base at Kenley, Surrey. All of these aircraft, forming the squadrons' initial equipment were financed by His Serene Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad - the first time that anyone had funded an entire squadron like this. In recognition of this, each aircraft was marked with a suitable inscription and from that time on the unit was officially titled No.110 (Hyderabad) Squadron, and eventually the Nizams' crest depicting a demi-tiger was used as the basis of the squadron badge. The squadron was also the first unit to receive the DH9A.

All 18 of the squadrons' aircraft were inscribed on both sides of the nose `Presented by his Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad, Hyderabad No..... Aircraft were individually numbered from 1-18, but superstition ensured that F1010 became No.12A rather than 13, being coded `C', and carrying standard PC10 finish.

8 Aug 18 Recorded at No.7 Air Park Kenley.

21 Aug 18 Officially allocated to No.110 Squadron at Kenley.

31 Aug 18 The Squadron moved to Bettoncourt, France as a day bomber unit in the RAFs Independent Force for use in strategic bombing on German targets. Bettoncourt remained the units' base until the Armistice.

14 Sep 18 The squadron - and F1010 - began operations with a raid on the German aerodrome at Boulay.

By this time F1010 had acquired a regular crew - 23-year-old Pilot Captain Andrew Glover Inglis from Liverpool and 27-year-old observer Lt William George Lewis Badley from Capetown, South Africa. Both had joined the squadron on 2nd August 1918. The raid on Boulay involved two formations of six aircraft each. F1010 was number five in the second formation which ran into low cloud which persisted to the target, forcing a return with bomb loads intact due to nil visibility. The lead formation did however manage to bomb the airfield. There was only slight AA fire and no enemy fighters were seen.

15 Sep 18 The next day, F1010 did drop bombs in anger for the first time, on the German aerodrome at Buhl. Again two formations were used. Six in the first and four in the second, in which F1010 was number three.

Visibility was good and opposition light, and the airfield was bombed, starting a fire.

25 Sep 18 This was the next raid - two formations of six attacked Frankfurt, and involved the squadron in 5½ hours of combat with many formations of German fighters. The Liberty engines were having icing problems at the high altitude - 15 to 17,000 feet being flown. The usual squadron tactic at this time was to operate in close formation at around 17,000 feet at which altitude the maximum bomb load could be carried without losing too much height. The typical bomb load being three 112lb bombs. For this raid, take off was at 9.55am, the target being attacked at 12.05pm. One aircraft returned early at 11.30. Six aircraft were lost, and two German fighters claimed in return, one of them, A Fokker D.VII near Saverne, by the crew of F1010 (Inglis and Bodley) - the German aircraft went down out of control. Bombs were dropped on the railway.

F1010's successful combat occurred at 12.30pm near Saverne at a height of 16,500 feet whilst on its way to the target. The following is quoted from the combat report; held in the PRO (copy in File) Fokker biplane. Fast machine. Good climb. Front of machine painted dark grey. Fuselage partly grey and partly white. Rudder white.

Fokker with six others came up on formation from the right. This particular machine stalled up at leader of formation, then fell away, but he came up on a climbing turn with the rear of the formation. He then stalled again, upon which 2nd/Lt Badley fired a burst and EA went down obviously out of control".

01 Oct 18 F1010 participated in squadron raid on Cologne, with two formations of six aircraft. Although Cologne was the intended target cloud forced the first formation to turn back, following F1010, which returned early with engine trouble. The second formation bombed Trier instead. By this time F1010 had amassed some 25 hours flying time.

05 Oct 18 A thirteen aircraft raid was arranged to attack Cologne, Coblenz or Ehrange in that order of preference. F1010 flew as No.3 in the second formation, flying at 17,000 feet. Again there were constant enemy fighter attacks both there and back, which coupled with a strong westerly wind forced the formations off course so Kaiserslautern was attacked instead, being reached at around 14.00. One German fighter was definitely destroyed and six driven down out of control for the loss of four DH9As, including F1010, all being posted as missing. F1010 landed intact and the uninjured crew Inglis and Badley were taken prisoner by the Germans, returning to Britain after the Armistice. Their forced landing may have been caused either by engine trouble or by Flak damage - anti aircraft fire was medium - heavy and accurate during this mission. (See copy of PRO held entries.) F1010 was one of 17 aircraft lost by the squadron between 14th September 1918 and the Armistice.

- 1918 The aircraft seems to have landed with little damage and may have been repaired and flown by the Germans. In the 1960s the fuselage had German printed lozenge fabric on the rear top section and a German weight table painted on the rear port fuselage. Apparently retained after the Armistice and stored.
- 20 Jun 36 Placed on public display in the 'Deutsche Luftfahrt Sammlung' (Berlin Air Museum) on the Invalidenstrasse, minus main wheel tyres and some fuselage fabric, according to one photograph, with an inscription painted on the starboard fuselage 'Englisches Bomben Flugzeug erbeutet 1918' (English bomber aircraft taken as war booty 1918). It was displayed with many other WW1 types in this magnificent collection of over 100 aircraft.
- 23/24 Nov 43 Berlin Air Museum heavily damaged by fire in RAF night bombing raid - almost half the contents destroyed. The damage to the original engine of F1010 may date to this event.
- 1943/4 At least 23 of the Museums' aircraft, plus a number of engines were transferred for safety to a forest storage site at Czarnikau, Eastern Germany (now Czarnkow, Poland) 140 miles NE of Berlin and 19 miles south of Pila – possibly even before the November 1943 raid. (See article on Berlin Air Museum 'Died in Flames...' in Flypast December 2001 issue).
- Mar 45 Area captured by Polish forces, including the aircraft collection. Moved later in 1940s to Regional Aircraft Repository at Gadki near Poznan.
- 1950-54 Stored at abandoned railway sheds at Deblin/Pilawa near Warszawa. Later to pair of exhibition sheds at Wroclaw, near Poznan.
- 1963 Muzeum Lotnictwa i Astronautyki, Rakowice, Krakow founded - most ex Berlin relics then stored there. This Museum of Aviation and Aeronautics carried out a little restoration to the by now very battered and tattered DH9A airframe that had at some stage lost its wings since the move from Berlin where it had been displayed complete. This work included some restoration of the undercarriage.
- Oct 67 'Rediscovered' by an Australian enthusiast in store at Krakow.
- May 68 Negotiations began to acquire the remains for the RAFM. It was eventually agreed with the Polish Museum authorities that F1010 would be exchanged for Spitfire XV1e SM411.
- 24 Nov 71 Treasury approval for DH9A/Spitfire exchange. There then followed protracted negotiations to cover the niceties of getting RAF recovery vehicles into Poland, then very much an 'Eastern Bloc' country.

Wed 15 Jun 77 Negotiations and arrangements complete, F1010 was loaded onto an RAF vehicle at Krakow and brought back by a party from 431 MU, RAF Bruggen as part of 'Operation Fair Exchange' which took the Spitfire out and brought the DH9A back. Photo on RAF trailer - Air Pictorial Sep 77 p.328; Air Clues September 1977 p.354; Airfix Magazine September 1977 p.14.
Photo of exchange - The D.H.4/D.H.9 File (Air Britain - Sturtivant/Page) p.273.

Tue 28 Jun 77 Delivered to RAFM restoration centre at Cardington, arriving at 2pm.

When the remains arrived at Cardington they were much as 'discovered' in store in Krakow in 1967; the cockpit was stripped bare but for one damaged instrument, the radiator temperature gauge; the engine was damaged, with a smashed overhead camshaft, possibly by the bombs in Berlin; it was replaced during restoration by a Liberty acquired in the USA where it had been used as an emergency power unit in a flower mill. The wings and horizontal tailplane were missing completely. The propeller was present but in poor condition, and was replaced by another restored example. The engine cowlings were missing together with parts of the undercarriage. The fin, rudder and centre section of the upper wing did survive, as did one wheel.

The restoration at Cardington commenced late 1978, masterminded by Bill Sayer included the design and construction of a new set of wings and missing tail section. Much of the fuselage structure was also replaced, though the metal fittings were re-used. The original wooden sections remain in store with the RAFM, presently at Stafford; the ply skin on the front of the fuselage was delaminating and had to be replaced. Still in store is the upper forward fuselage, with instrument panel, and both side panels with inscriptions, and other parts. Restoration team member John Chapman found a spent bullet lodged in one of the vertical struts. The front Vickers gun now fitted was modified from a ground use gun at Cardington. The rear cockpit has an original control column donated by a gentleman from Ashford. Photo of completed fuselage at Cardington with wings under construction Aeroplane Monthly Feb 80 p.59. See also Aircraft Illustrated Annual 1984 p.78, and Windsock International Sep/Oct 2004 pp.8-9.

May 81 Construction of new mainplanes complete by this date. Article on restoration - Aeroplane Monthly Dec 83 p.668-672; Aircraft Illustrated Jun 83 p.258-261.

Mid March 1983 Restoration completed. Moved to new Bomber Command Museum a few days later, and displayed accompanied by its damaged original engine. Photo on arrival; Windsock International July/August 2004 p.5.

23 Sep 03 Moved into main aircraft hall/'Historic Hangars' at Hendon for continued display. Detailed photo survey of airframe as displayed; AMC DH9A 'Ninak' (Windsock Datafile 139) pp.10-11, 14-15, 22-23 &26-27.

This is the only known surviving DH9A, although several DH9s do survive, including one in India and two in the UK, one fully restored at the IWM Duxford.

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