

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

MESSERSCHMITT ME163B-1a W/NR.191614/?AM207/8481M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 85/A/66

8 May 45 Surrendered to elements of the RAF Regiment at Husum airfield, Schleswig - Holstein, close to the Danish border. By late April 1945 Husum had become the base of the last operational Me163 Unit, II/JG400 with some 80 Me163B aircraft on strength, largely grounded due to lack of fuel after a final flight on 22 April 1945, when it shot down a Lancaster after it received by rail a single delivery of fuel.

Of 48 Me163 aircraft captured intact in the British Zone of occupation, 24 were shipped back to the UK for evaluation from a total of 364 built. Only one (VF241) was actually flown (under tow, not powered) in the UK.

One of at least 11 surviving Me163 aircraft preserved in the USA, Germany, Canada, Australia and the UK, from a total of 364 built, 279 of them production models.

21 Jul 45 Some time after delivery to the UK, moved from RAE Farnborough to No.6 MU Brize Norton (Aircraft Storage Unit).

As discussed in 'War Prizes' (027726) there is some confusion over the W/Nr of this airframe; though recorded as '191614' since the 1960s it has been suggested that it could actually be 191461/AM207, the Air Min number being allocated after arrival at Farnborough; however, the starboard wing root plate is clearly marked 191 614, as confirmed by photography in January 2000. However, the inside edge of the tailcone is marked 191461; this aircraft, AM207 mentioned above, was also despatched from RAE Farnborough to No 6 MU, RAF Brize Norton, on 21 July 1945. This would make it one of the penultimate batch of 37 aircraft (w/nr 191 441 – 191 477) manufactured under contract by Junkers at Oranienburg up to the end of Me 163 production in February 1945.

Undated To Ministry of Technology Rocket Propulsion Establishment at Westcott, near Bicester, Buckinghamshire. Photo: c.1965 - Me163 Profile (013026) p.70 - repainted in generic 'Luftwaffe' colour scheme. Displayed (by appointment) alongside a V-1 and Japanese 'Okha' suicide aircraft.

1975 To Aerospace Museum at RAF Cosford, where it remains on display. Photo: War Prizes (027726) p.155.

16 Feb 76 Allocated RAF Maintenance Serial 8481M.

- Jun 87 Displayed at Biggin Hill Air Fair.
- 2000/2005 From January 2000, undergoing strip down, cleaning and conservation/repainting by members of the Cosford Aerospace Museum Society. Original paint scheme recorded and new pilot's seat made by Aerospace Society volunteer member Ray Jones and fitted to replace missing original. Work still underway in 2005, with fuselage and wings reassembled and resprayed in 'Tiger' style camouflage scheme.
- Photos - Plane Talk Spring 2000 p.10; Flypast July 2000 p.18; Aircraft Illustrated July 2000 p.87; Flypast January 2001 p.20; Air Pictorial February 2001 p.124; Flypast December 2001 p.22; Wrecks and Relics 19th Edition. Cockpit photo – Aeroplane September 2010 p.22.
- 2008/9 Aircraft again repainted as 'Yellow 14' over a ten-month period. Back on display 6 July 2009. Photos during repainting; (as of April 2009) IPMS Magazine 06/2009 p.21. Photo as completed; Flypast September 2009 p.7; Wrecks and Relics 22nd Edition.
- The aircraft received further attention to its paintwork after this.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON