

PANAVIA TORNADO GR.1B ZA457
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER X003-2283

- 1983 Built at British Aerospace Warton, Lancs. as one of 228 GR.1 aircraft for the RAF. Plane set 259, variant BS087. Batch No.3 airframe ordered 3 June 1979. Assembly Number 3123, using German and Italian built components. Serials batch ZA446 – ZA475. Batch 3 aircraft introduced under nose laser rangefinder and marked target seeker and improved radar.
- 21 Jun 83 First flight, from Warton.
- 4 Aug 83 To RAF St. Athan, Glamorgan.
- 6 Dec 83 To Tornado Operational Evaluation Unit at Boscombe Down; aircraft individual code 'O'; photographed as such at RAF Waddington March 1984.
- 10 Sep 86 To No.9 Squadron at RAF Honington, code 'AJ'.
- 2 Oct 86 Squadron moved to RAF Bruggen, West Germany as part of RAF Germany.
- 6 Feb 87 To No. 617 Squadron at RAF Marham, Norfolk.
- 18 Feb 87 Returned to No.9 Squadron at Bruggen.
- 23 Sep 87 To RAF St. Athan for maintenance.
- 7 Apr 88 Returned to No. IX Squadron at RAF Bruggen.
- 2 May 88 Flown in 1hr day, 1.25hr night sortie by Flt Lt P.R. McKernan (logbook extracts on A/C Dept Tornado file)
- 1 Jul 88 To No 15 Squadron at RAF Laarbruch, West Germany.
- 8 Jul 88 To No. 17 Squadron at RAF Bruggen.
- 1 Aug 88 Once more to No. 9 Squadron at Bruggen.
- 1990 With No.17 Squadron, code 'CE'.
- 2-4 Jan 91 Flew from Bruggen to Saudi Arabia as the crisis over the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait deepened; Bruggen-Dhahran leg flown 3 January by crew including Pilot Flt Lt Young and navigator Adam W Robinson. Flying time 8 hours.

- Jan/Feb 91 As part of the RAF Gulf Detachment, involved in Gulf War following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Based at the Royal Saudi Air Force Tornado base at Dhahran.
- Carried the code 'CE', name 'Bob' and 39 mission symbols recording its 'Operation Desert Storm' strikes on Iraqi targets from 17th January 1991, including a JP233 attack (two dropped) on Mudaysis airfield on that date. Flying time 4.35 hours.
- This unit's aircraft were named after characters from the popular TV comedy series 'Black Adder', 'Bob' being an Elizabethan female acquaintance of the main character.
- 10 Jan 91 Returned to base from four-aircraft formation due to unserviceable canopy seal – 45 minute flight – See Logbook of S/Ldr Mike J. Grout.
- 23 Feb 91 Involved in attack on Qal'at Salih airfield, dropping three Laser-Guided bombs on the runway. Flying time 3.10 hours.
- 16 Oct 92 Flown (1.10 hrs) in exercise Red Flag when a Marham-based 617 Squadron aircraft – McKernan logbook.
- 1993 Modified at RAF St Athan as one of 26 British Aerospace Sea Eagle anti-shipping missile equipped GR.1B aircraft, serving with No. 617 Squadron in the low-level maritime strike role, moving from Scampton to Lossiemouth in April 1994 and operational in that role from September 1994. Retained dual overland strike role. Nicknamed the 'Grib' each aircraft carried two such missiles beneath the fuselage, with associated software and electronics upgrades, replacing the Buccaneer in the Maritime Strike role.
- 6 Oct 93 Flown from Marham in GR1B configuration by Ft Lt McKernan in Anti-Shipping Warfare work-up flight.
- 26 Sep 96 Flown (1.15 hours) by Flt Lt McKernan as GR1B whilst serving with No 12 Squadron at RAF Lossiemouth.
- Again on 14 Oct 1996 (1.40 hours), 18 Sept 1997 (2.10 hrs) and 26 June 1998 (1.30 hrs) from Ali Al Salem.
- Dec 98 Used by No 12 Squadron crews in Operation Desert Fox over Iraq. From 16 Dec 98 the US and Britain intensified action against Iraq under this codename, with No 12 Squadron crews flying Tornado GR1s out of Ali Al Salem, Kuwait, flying a total of 28 sorties against Iraqi defence sites, airfields and Republican Guard barracks over three nights from 17 December, with all Tornados returning safely.
- 9 Sep 99 Noted at RAF Lossiemouth as AJ-J, in grey/green scheme with white fin flash, ex Operation Bolton over Iraq.

- 2000 Into overall grey scheme, still with white 'Bolton' fin flash and codes AJ-J.
- 2000 Sea Eagle missile withdrawn.
- Mar 2001 Coded as AJ-J with No.617 Squadron – displaced by upgraded GR.4 variant and transferred to No. 2 Squadron.
- Jun 01 Transferred to No.2 (AC) Squadron at RAF Marham. Initially retained the codes AJ-J.
- 2002 Reputedly being used by No.9 Squadron, in overall grey scheme, still with AJ-J markings (see RAF Markings 2002).
- Mar 02 Withdrawn from service
- 15 Mar 02 Stored at DARA St Athan; used as spares source, including both engines, for other Tornados.
- 28 Jul 2003 By road To RAFM Hendon for display, wearing No 617 Squadron codes and squadron badge and two LGB mission symbols on nose dated March 2001. Photos on arrival – Flypast October 2003 pp.4&10; Royal Air Force Museum Newsletter Autumn/Winter 2003 p.7. Displayed in main aircraft hall ('Historic Hangars') until March 2009.
- 9 Mar 2009 Dismantling by RAF team commenced prior to moving into Bomber Hall for continued display; moved to Bomber Hall 11 March, and reassembly completed the following day.

Tornado GR.1 ZA465 is preserved at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford; this is also an ex No.617 Squadron aircraft, code AJ-Q.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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