

**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.IX Squadron at RAF Honington, code 'AJ'.
- 1 Oct 86 Squadron moved to RAF Bruggen, West Germany as part of RAF Germany, completing the 'Bruggen Wing' of nos. IX, 14, 17 and 31 Squadrons.
- 6 Feb 87 To No. 617 Squadron at RAF Marham, Norfolk.
- 18 Feb 87 Returned to No.IX Squadron at Bruggen.
- 23 Jul 87 Aircrew logbook of A.J. Smith (X007-9179/002) records Hi-Lo-Hi and bounce; 1.55 hours; pilot Flt Lt Williams.
- 28 Jul 87 40-minute High Level transit flight, to Marham (Smith LB; pilot Flt Lt Burbidge); followed by lo-Hi return to base, 1.50 hours.
- 5 Aug 87 Smith LB records pairs low-level flight; diving and strafing Nordhorn ranges, 1.30 hrs.
- 17 Aug 87 Smith LB records 1.25-hr flight being No.3 of 4 bounced aircraft; diving attack on Nordhorn ranges. 1.25 hours.
- 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)

- 5 May 88 Smith LB records 1.45-hr transit flight, Bruggen – Deci for armament practice camp, with 45-minute strafing flight on 9 May.
- 13 May 88 Smith LB records 1.45 hour transit flight, Deci- Gibraltar, returning 16 May.
- 19 May 88 Smith LB records two 40-minute armament practice camp strafing flights; pilot Flt Lt Gibson. Similar 40-minute flight the following day; pilot S/Ldr Brooks., followed by a 550minute sortie, pilot Flt Lt Wood; Smiths 100<sup>th</sup> crew sortie.
- 20 Jun 88 Smith LB – 1.10 hr flight, Ex. TAM 88, weapons day, Heuberg, Munsingen, Baumholder.
- 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.
- 2 Sep 88 Ex. Ample; landed at Norvenich; 1.10 hrs, Smith LB. Followed by 1.30 hour flight to Ardennes. Pilot for both flights F/Lt Gillies.
- 6 Oct 88 1.05 hr flight, 3 of Wing mixed formation – Smith LB; pilot F/Lt Williams.
- 13 Oct 88 1.45 hr flight, Lay @ dive, Nordhorn; pilot Flt Lt Brownlow.
- 25 Oct 88 2.10 hr flight, Hi-Lo-Hi UK, Honington/Marham/Coningsby; pilot Flt Lt Brownlow; Smith LB.
- 15 Nov 88 Two-hour flight; Hi-Lo-UK; LL Scotland, Land Turnhouse; pilot Flt Lt Wood; Smith LB. Followed by 1.30-hr flight (30 mins by night), Scotland & NE England.
- 17 Oct 88 1.10hr flight, Salmond Trophy competition Range Sorties, pilot Flt Lt Wood; Smith LB.
- 1990 With No.17 Squadron, code 'CE'.
- 5 Nov 90 2.05 hr flight, Hi-Lo-Hi UK; No 2 of pair; pilot Fg Off. Lawson; Smith LB.
- 12 Nov 90 Two-hour air-air refuelling flight, pilot Flt Lt Easton, Smith LB.
- 15 Nov 90 1.05 hrs, Hi Lo UK; Landed at RAF Finningley, followed by LL flight back to Lossiemouth; pilot Flt Lt Adair; Smith LB.

- 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 12 Feb 91 Pilots FLBs of Wg Cdr J J Witts (X007-9179/006) and his Navigator A.J. Smith (RAFM X007-9179/002) record 4.10 hour Desert Storm flight leading mixed RAF/USAF six-ship formation of two F4G Phantoms, one EF-111, F15 on Combat air patrol, two VC10s for AAR– two 1000lb laser-guided bombs attacking Al Asad airbase, Iraq; one hardened aircraft shelter (HAS) destroyed. Followed by 3-hour flight with two 1000lb LGBs attacking HAS at Tallil airfield.
- 15 Feb 91 Witts and Smith LBs record further Desert Storm flight as part of mixed RAF/USAF formation of two Buccaneers, two F4G Phantoms, two EF111s Again lead ac in 6-ship attack formation attacking Tallil airfield dropping two 1000lb LGBs; one VC-10 for AAR. Dropped chaff.
- 23 Feb 91 Commencement of 'Ground War' - 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.

23 Feb 98 2.45 hr flight, Operation Southern Watch, AAR from RAF VC-10; pilot Flt Lt Simpson; Smith LB x007-9179/003.

19 Mar 98 65-minute flight, AAR with RAAF B.707, Operation Southern Watch; Pilot Flt Lt Hargreaves; Smith LB.

1 Apr 98 1.30-hr flight, Operation Bolton; RAF 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Flypast, Kuwait. Pilot S/Ldr Lunt; Smith LB.

19 Apr 98 1.10 hr flight, Al Abraç; ‘Lay, Loft, Strafe’ Pilot Flt Lt Gambold, Smith LB.

Dec 98 Used by No 12 ( B )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 617 Squadron 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.
- 4 April 2017 Moved to former Milestones building at Hendon for further display in new 'Age of Uncertainty' Exhibition opened May 2018, for which the swing –wings were again removed and refitted by an RAF JARTS team.

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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