

8 July 2015

Summer surveillance on board the Nimrod R.1

Date: 11-31 July 2015

Time: 15 minute tours between 10am and 1pm

Cost: £5 per person

This summer visitors to the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford, will have the exciting opportunity to climb on board the Hawker Siddeley Nimrod R.1 XV249 and learn about its intelligence gathering role in the Royal Air Force.

Visitors will have exclusive access on board the aircraft for the first time since its arrival in 2012, in the new Nimrod Tours, available on selected dates throughout July. During the tours lasting around 15 minutes, aviation fans will learn about the history of the aircraft, hear about the crews on board and view some of its sophisticated surveillance equipment.

The Nimrod flew in both the Maritime patrol and electronic intelligence gathering role. Maritime surveillance, anti-submarine operations and intelligence gathering have been key tasks for the Royal Air Force for much of its long history. When the Nimrod was finally retired from service in 2011, the type had operated with distinction for over 40 years in all these roles, and more.

Nimrod R.1 XV249 is one of only four R.1's produced from a total Nimrod production run of 46 aircraft. The R.1 was an electronic-intelligence gathering variant, three of which originally entered service with the RAF in 1971. They carried up to 29 crew members and were involved in all major conflicts in the latter part of the 20th and early 21st centuries. When one of the original R.1 aircraft was lost following an accident in 1997, XV249 was selected as a replacement and, after conversion, served with No 51 Squadron from RAF Waddington. XV249 amassed over 18,000 flying hours during its service life and took part in operation Ellamy over Libya in 2011, thus remaining operational until its withdrawal from squadron service on 28 June 2011.

During its earlier career, the aircraft on display at the Museum was flown by the Museum's Curator, ex RAF Pilot Al McLean. Al has played a pivotal role in developing the tours and has pulled upon his personal experiences flying Nimrods to tell some of the many stories experienced by crew members.

RAF Museum Cosford Curator, Al McLean, said:

"I flew on Nimrods for five years and have several memories of patrols in the Mediterranean, North Atlantic and North Sea. Finding the first Soviet aircraft carrier on one of its early out-of-area deployments was quite interesting. Given the importance of the aircraft and its unrivalled contribution to the frontline, the RAF Museum is pleased to be opening up the doors to this aircraft allowing our visitors to learn more about its long and faithful career."

Nimrod Tours are available on selected dates between 11 and 31 July 2015. Tickets cost £5.00 per person and tours last 15 minutes (max 6 people per tour). Time slots can be pre-booked now via the Museum's website www.rafmuseum.org/cosford. All children must be accompanied by an adult, tours are not recommended for children under the age of 5.

For further information about the Museum, please visit the Museum website www.rafmuseum.org or call 01902 376200. The Museum is open daily from 10am and entry to the Museum is FREE of charge.

Keep up to date with the latest news and event information by following us on:

- Facebook – Royal Air Force Museum Cosford
- Twitter @RAFMUSEUM
- Instagram – rafmuseum

Ends...

MEDIA INVITE:

The media are invited to climb on board the Nimrod for photo and interview opportunities with the Museum's Curator Al McLean. If you would like to have access on board the aircraft, please email michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org to arrange a visit.

Notes to Editors:

- Follow us on Facebook – The Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford
- Follow us on Twitter – @RAFMUSEUM
- Follow us on Instagram - rafmuseum
- Royal Air Force Museum Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8UP
- Open daily from 10am
- Admission to the Royal Air Force Museum is free of charge.
- RAF Museum Cosford images & logo available at: <http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/media-vault.aspx>
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Michelle Morgans on 01902 376212 or email michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org
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Aircraft History:

HAWKER SIDDELEY NIMROD R1 XV249

Assembled at Woodford as a Hawker Siddeley HS. 801 Nimrod MR. Mk 1, one of 46 delivered to the RAF. Serials block for initial batch XV226 - XV263. Constructor's Number 8024, from the first batch of 38 aircraft ordered in January 1966 (a further eight were ordered in January 1972).

22 Dec 70 First flight from Woodford commanded by HSA pilot E. Franklin.

2 Feb 71 Delivered to RAF Kinloss, Morayshire, Scotland.

Several sorties with 206 Squadron recorded in Co-pilot's logbook of RAFM Curator S/Ldr Al Mclean; usual Captain was Canadian S/Ldr Bob Crutchlow-an AEO; first pilot was actually Steve Santon, since the captain of Nimrod aircraft wasn't necessarily a pilot.

Mar 76 Squadron deployed to Machrihanish (Op Bolthole) whilst the Kinloss runway was resurfaced.

10 Mar 76 'Cod War' (vs. Iceland) reconnaissance patrol (Operation Heliotrope). Aircraft Captain W/Cdr Gerry Peasley (a Navigator). Flight time 8.5 hours.

12 Apr 76 Flown from Machrihanish to Luqa, Malta. Flight time four hours.

15 Apr 76 Returned to Machrihanish.

2 May 76 Op. Heliotrope sortie. Flight time 8.35 hours.

15 May 77 Transferred to 203 Squadron , RAF Luqa, Malta.

9 Jan 78 Transferred to RAF Kinloss.

22 May 78 Operation 'Tapestry' flight – Fishery protection/oil and gas platform surveillance. Flight time 8.35 hours. Pilot Al Mclean, Co-Pilot Flt Lt Barr.

Jan 79 Deployed to RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus; flown from there by Al Mclean on two round trip flights on 11th and 15th January, returning from Akrotiri to Kinloss 16th January (Flight time 6.10 hours, pilot Al Mclean, Co-Pilot Flt/Lt Barr).

14 Mar 79 Operation 'Tapestry' flight – Pilot Al Mclean, Co-Pilot Flt Lt Sefton. Flying time 9.10 hours.

21 Jul 81 Transferred to RAF St. Mawgan.

2 Aug 83 Transferred to NMSU Kinloss for Major 5 service.

5 Dec 83 Flown to Woodford for Mr Mk.2 conversion.

26 Mar 85 Delivered to RAF Kinloss following conversion to Nimrod MR.Mk.2 standard at Woodford. (Set 24) This conversion, one of 35 delivered from 23 August 1979, involved fitting a new avionics and equipment suite, replacing the Shackleton-era ASV21D radar with the EMI Searchwater system and with an increase in crew accommodation from eleven to twelve. Served with the Kinloss Nimrod Wing as part of the Kinloss Maritime Wing along with Nos 42 (Reserve) Squadron-the Nimrod operational Conversion Unit - , 120, 201 and 206 Squadrons, an original total of 28 aircraft, pooled for servicing and operational purposes.

11 Nov 88 Transferred to RAF St. Mawgan

1989/90 Flown by Flt Lt John Langley when with No 236 OCU on seven occasions between 24 February 1989 and 27 April 1990- see LB extracts X005-5970/004. Included a 2.35-hour Staff College demonstration flight on 3rd April 1990.

7 Sep 92 Placed into storage at RAF Kinloss.

1 Oct 92 Withdrawn from service and placed into storage at RAF Kinloss having flown 11,941 hours.

16 May 95 One of No 51 Squadron's three specially-equipped Nimrod R Mk 1 aircraft, XW666, ditched in the Moray Firth following a starter motor explosion which pierced fuel tanks, causing a major in – flight fire. The seven crew all survived and the aircraft was later salvaged, but was a write-off. XV249 was then identified as a suitable replacement airframe. Nimrod R1s had replaced Signals Intelligence unit No 51 Squadron's aging Comet R Mk 2 and Canberra aircraft from May 1974.

12 June 95 Taken out of storage at RAF Kinloss.

23 Oct 95 Following major 4 overhaul at Kinloss, ferried to BAe Woodford for stripping of all ASW equipment and partial conversion to Nimrod R1 standard through addition of some antenna fairings.

- 19 Dec 96 Delivered to No 51 Squadron's new base at RAF Waddington, Lincolnshire, and underwent further work.
- 11 Apr 97 Flown as fully equipped R Mk 1 aircraft.
- By 2011, following withdrawal of the Nimrod MR.2s and scrapping of the Nimrod MRA.4 project, both in 2010, only RAF Waddington-based XV249 and XW664 remained as the last two Flying Nimrods of any variant, sister aircraft XW665 having been grounded from 27 October 2010 and broken up at Waddington in the summer of 2011, the forward fuselage going to a German museum.
- After a 90-day extension for further operations over Libya, XW664 returned to Waddington from Cyprus on 24 June 2011, two days after its last mission over Libya, marking the end of the types' involvement in support of Operations Ellamy and Unified Protector (operations over Libya)
- 23 May 2011 XV249 returned to Waddington after operations over Libya, being replaced by XW664 for operations for the final month.
- 9 Jun 2011 XV249 withdrawn from normal service.
- 28 Jun 2011 Formal retirement of Nimrod R.1 with ceremony at RAF Waddington, XV249 making the farewell flypast over the airfield at 11am, pilot Flt Lt Mike Chatterton plus six crew. Photos – Air Forces Monthly September 2011 p. 8. The type's official out of service date was 30 June 2011.
- 2/3 Jul 2011 XV249 and XW664 statically displayed at RAF Waddington Airshow. Photo – IPMS Magazine 04/2011 p.12. XW664 was flown to East Midlands Aeropark for preservation on 12 July 2011.
- 29 July 2011 Flown from Waddington to Cotswold Airport (Kemble), Glos for dismantling by Air Salvage International in their hangar at Kemble from September 2011 and forwarding in stages by road to RAFM Cosford. Photos of final landing – and last ever Nimrod flight - Aircraft Magazine September 2011; Flypast October 2011 p.9. Total flying hours over 11,000.
- Feb 2012 Dismantling proceeding, with port wing removed at Kemble 16 February, the starboard wing was removed on 28 February and the fuselage loaded onto the trailer on 1st March. The fuselage was roaded to Cosford on 11 March 2012 to join previously removed smaller components in store awaiting delivery of fuselage and wings for reassembly of the airframe. Photos – Flypast May 2012 p.9; Classic Aircraft May 2012 p.10.
- The wings went to Cosford on 17th March 2012; reassembly of wings and fuselage commenced 18th July 2012.
- With an original planned out-of-service date of 31st March 2011 for the two remaining R.1 aircraft, (brought forward from 2012) extended at the last minute by at least three months due to conflict in Libya and elsewhere in the Middle East, XV249 was, in preparation, latterly given a special set of retirement markings on both sides of the aircraft. These consisted of the 51 Squadron Goose on the nose, with lettering Nimrod R1 1974-2011, and the RAF Waddington station crest on the tail fin, lettered RAF Waddington 1995- 2011, replacing the earlier smaller goose symbol carried in that position.
- The forward fuselage of R.1 XW665 went to the Speyer Air Museum, Germany in 2011; The salvaged cockpit section of ditched Nimrod R.1 XW666 is privately preserved at Aero Venture, Doncaster.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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