

**A/C SERIAL No. XV424
SECTION 2B**

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

**McDONNELL DOUGLAS PHANTOM FGR2 XV424/9152M
MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 1994/1348/A**

- 26 Oct 66 Ordered as one of 118 Phantom aircraft for the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy within the serial block XV406 - XV442. A total of 5,195 Phantoms were built. The RAF total included 118 F-4M (RAF FGR Mk 2) and 52 externally virtually identical F-4K aircraft (RN/RAF FG.1 variant), XV424 being a F-4M-35-MC variant from serials batch XV418-XV436, used in the strike-reconnaissance and later Air Defence roles. Constructor's number 3084.
- 12 Feb 69 Delivered to No 23 Maintenance Unit RAF Aldergrove, Northern Ireland, having been flown across the Atlantic.
- 13 Feb 69 Taken on RAF charge.
- 24 Apr 69 To RAF Coningsby, Lincs for service with newly formed No 6 Squadron (The RAFs' first Phantom FGR.2 Unit) as part of No 38 Group, Air Support Command on ground attack and army close support duties, with secondary tactical reconnaissance and air defence roles. The Squadron was declared operational from 06 May 69 with ten Phantoms, later increased to twelve. Its role was to deploy at short notice to support NATO or British out-of-area commitments, with regular squadron exchanges to France, Italy and Germany, with Armament Practice Camps mainly in Cyprus. Individual code 'H'
- 1 Jul 69 No.6 Squadron's 12 Phantoms took part in the fly past for HRH Prince of Wales' investiture at Caernarfon Castle, North Wales. They carried the Squadron's unofficial Flying Can-opener emblem, recalling its tank-buster role in World War Two.
- To no.288 OCU May 1969; 54 Squadron 23 May 1969, code 'E' by December 1971; returned to no 6 Squadron as 'B' October 1972.
- Mar 70 Coded 'O'.
- 24 Jan 72 To No.54 Squadron, also at Coningsby, being replaced as No.6 Squadron 'G' by XV499.Served in interceptor role.
- Mar 72 Coded 'E' around this time as temporary replacement for XV429.
- 12 May 72 Loaned to No.228 Operational Conversion Unit until 22nd May 1972.
- 23 May 72 To No 54 Squadron.

- 25 May 72 Returned to No.6 Squadron at RAF Coningsby.
- Jun 72 Coded 'B'.
- 22 Mar 73 Declared Cat.3R damage following birdstrike in Scotland that day whilst on a low level training sortie with another Phantom. Details in accident report DoRIS ref. AC96/28/7.
- 27 Mar 73 Allotted to Hawker Siddeley Aircraft for modification and probable repair.
- 12 Feb 74 To No.228 OCU at RAF Coningsby.
- 29 Apr 74 To No.6 Squadron, RAF Coningsby probably still coded 'B'.
- 9 May 74 Declared damaged Cat.3R and repaired on site by a team from No 71MU from 15 May.
- 25 May 74 Repairs completed.
- 12 Aug 74 Two-day loan to No.41 Squadron at Coningsby, the third unit of the Coningsby Wing, this unit specialising in the tactical fighter reconnaissance role. Photographed at RAF Coningsby September 1974 – British Phantoms 1966-1978 (Patrick Martin) p.139.
- Aug-Sept 74 Nos. 6 and 54 Squadrons to Cyprus on stand - by during the Turkish invasion of the island.
- 30 Sep 74 No.6 Squadron disbanded at RAF Coningsby to work up as a Jaguar unit. XV424 transferred to No 29 (Designate) Squadron the same day.
- Nov 74 Coded 'B' with No.29 Squadron by this date for service in the air defence role. Carried the unit marking of a black stripe with three linked letter X across the top of the fin and rudder, possibly due to a misunderstanding of the Roman XXIX for 29.
- 1 Jan 75 Unit formally became No.29 Squadron based at RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire becoming fully operational in the air defence role May 1975.
- 7 Oct 75 Declared damaged Cat.3.
- 2 Feb 76 Returned to No.29 Squadron.
- 10 Sep 76 Transferred to No.111 Squadron, RAF Leuchars being replaced by XV465 as No.29 Squadron 'B'. This was again an air defence role unit.
- 6 Dec 78 Flown in by Flt Lt D J (Dave) Gledhill – logbook X006-3337. Transit to RAF Valley. Pilot Flt Lt Claxton.

- 15 Dec 78 To No. 56 Squadron at RAF Wattisham, Suffolk, again in the air defence role and coded 'D'.
- 16 Jan 79 ECM exercise against 360 Sqn Canberra. Navigator Dave Gledhill – see A/C Dept. Phantom correspondence file.
- 20 Apr 79 1.50-hour day tactics flight – Gledhill logbook; pilot Flt Lt Hodgson.
- 1 May 79 Gledhill logbook – pilot Flt Lt Roberts. 2.25 hours vs. Canberra.
- 1 Jun 79 By this date painted by Warrant Officer John Cooper, Sgt. Ken Lillico and their volunteer team at RAF St Athan in the special 'Alcock and Brown' colours for the commemorative Trans Atlantic Flight that month.
The paint scheme applied to XV424 and XV486 was specially designed by aviation artist Wilf Hardy, with XV424 to be used for the actual flight and XV486 as the back-up aircraft.
The aircraft were finished in overall gloss light aircraft grey, with a swept red, white and blue fuselage stripe with a raked Union Jack on the fin with commemorative inscriptions on the nose and underwing fuel tanks marking the Rolls-Royce engines connection of the Vimy and Phantom, (60 years of Rolls Royce aero Engines) the 30th anniversary of NATO and the IAT badge. Photos - Aeroplane Monthly Sep.79 p.451 and November 2009; Scale Aircraft Modelling Jun 80 p.400; Air Classics Vol.15 No 11 p.62 -69. Fighter Squadrons of the RAF (Rawlings) p.583; Control Column Aug/Sep 79 p.123; RAF Phantom (Foster) p.31; Aircraft August 2009 p.76; The Phantom in Focus (David Gledhill) colour plates 75-76. And p.268-270 (press day for aircraft in new scheme); British Phantoms 1979-192 (Patrick Martin) p. 96.
- 19 Jun 79 Left RAF St Athan.
- 21 Jun 79 5 hour 40 minute Commemorative flight eastbound from Goose Bay Newfoundland to the UK, flying subsonically. Flown by S/L A.J.N. (Tony) Alcock MBE (a No.56 Squadron Flight Commander and nephew of Atlantic Pioneer Sir John Alcock) and F/L W.N. (Norman) Browne, the latter a former Phantom Navigator, brought back from his Buccaneer Squadron for the occasion. In-flight refuelling was provided by Victor tankers of No.57 Squadron on five occasions during the flight. The crew carried the original toy black cat mascot - 'Twinkletoes' - from the 1919 flight.
Two days later the same crew flew the aircraft to Greenham Common, Berks to open the International Air Tattoo. Photos - Air Pictorial Aug.79 p.310; Phantom in Combat (019108) p.148; Osprey Air Combat - Phantom II (012064) p.119; Flight International 30 Jun 79 p.2329; Airshows 1979 p.43; Control Column Aug/Sep 79 p.121; Aircraft Illustrated Aug 79 p.396; Aircraft Illustrated May 2009 p.32.
- 25 Jun 79 Left Greenham Common to return to RAF Wattisham. For two weeks XV424 and XV486 flew regular interception missions from Wattisham. Photo -Air Classics Vol. 15 No.11 p.69.

- 5 Jul 79 Low-level practice interceptions, 1.50 hrs, pilot Flt Lt Parkin-Gledhill logbook. Similar flight 31st July.
- 23 Jul 79 Allocated to No.228 OCU at RAF Coningsby for use as the RAFs' solo display Phantom, with XV486 as a back up.
- Nov 79 Special colour scheme removed by the middle of the month at RAF St. Athan with the aircraft resprayed in the standard air defence grey colour scheme, as the first Phantom to be painted in this scheme. Photo – Flypast May 2008 p.65.
- 30 Jan 80 Returned to No.228 OCU and coded 'M' by this date.
- 7 May 80 To RAF St Athan.
- 15 Sep 80 To No.29 Squadron, at RAF Coningsby which from Jan 1980 had been tasked with tactical air support of maritime operations.
- 13 Nov 80 Coded 'I' by this date replacing XV400.
- 3 Dec 80 Flt Lt Nigel Randall navigator's logbook – two training flights, total 2.50 hours. Pilot Ft Lt Middleton.
- 23 Jan 81 Randall logbook – Operation Shoot – 45 minute flight; Pilot Fg Off Seward.
- 12 Feb 81 Loaned to No. 228 OCU until 17 Mar 81.
- 2 Apr 81 Randall logbook – three flights, transit to RAF Valley, Live missile firing and low-level return to base at RAF Coningsby.
- 7 Apr 82 Loaned to No. 228 OCU until 28 Apr 82.
- 5 Oct 82 Pilot's Flying Logbook of Paul E. Rickard (Microfilm with DoRIS) records three-ship training flight with No.228 OCU, so apparently still on their strength. Same logbook records further flights with No.228 OCU on 24 November 1982, 17 January 1983, and 22 February 1983.
- 4 Nov 82 To No. 228 OCU; noted later that month with fin code 'G' replacing XV402.
- 26 Nov 82 To RAF St. Athan for modifications.
- 14 Dec 82 Returned to No.228 OCU.
- 1 Dec 83 Aircrew logbook of A.J. Smith (X007-9179/002) records 1.40-hour night flying navigation exercise. Pilot S/Ldr Sims.
- 29 Jun 84 Returned to RAF St Athan.
- 12 Sep 84 Noted test flying from St.Athan.

- 4 Oct 84 Returned to No.228 OCU.
- 19 Jun 85 To RAF Wildenrath, West Germany to join No.92 Squadron; coded 'W' by late July. Photo – Flypast May 2008 p.65.
- 3 Feb 86 Randall logbook – 1.25 hour flight as part of four-ship group; pilot Fg Off Clayton.
- 5 Feb 86 Randall logbook – 1.20 hour flight, fighter sweep, pilot Fg Off Clayton.
- 28 Feb 86 Flew to St.Athan but returned to Wildenrath the same day, since Phantom XV498, the crew ferry aircraft, was unserviceable.
- 4 Mar 86 To RAF St Athan for a major overhaul, being replaced as 92 Squadron 'W' by XT909.
- 9 Jul 86 Test flying from St Athan until 15 July.
- 4 Aug 86 Returned to No. 29 Squadron.
- 31 Mar 87 To No. 228 OCU.
- 22 Apr 87 Coded 'CN' by this date with transfer of No 228 OCU to RAF Leuchars, replacing XT914.
- 25 Jun 87 To British Aerospace at Brough for modifications. From 1987 onwards 75 Phantom FGR.2's received new British Aerospace built outer wing panels to extend their fatigue lives.
- 1 Mar 88 To RAF Wattisham for No.56 Squadron, coded 'Q' by 14 April.
- 28 Feb 90 Made emergency landing at RAF Wildenrath.
- Mar 90 Returned to RAF Wattisham by middle of the month.
- 27 Mar 91 Recoded 'I' -with a red fin - by this date, replaced as 'Q; by XV429 and itself replacing XV480. Photo – Flypast May 2008 p.65.
- 13 Jul 92 Last operational sortie by XV424.
- 31 Jul 92 Last flight - 55 minutes. Total flying hours 5058.40.
- Sep 92 No.56 Squadron disbanded at Wattisham.
- 12 Nov 92 Delivered by road from RAF Wattisham to the RAF Museum Hendon. Photos being assembled by RAF technicians- Wingspan Feb.93 p.50; Air Pictorial Jan.93 p.2; Flypast Jan 93 p.63; Flypast May 2008 p.65. Assembly took some 10 days. Colour Cockpit shots – The Phantom in Focus (David Gledhill)

Form 700s to RAFM DoRIS reference AC92/8. (4 boxes).
Allocated Ground Instructional serial 9152M.

Oct 97 Fitted with four Sidewinder missile drill rounds on the two wing pylons.
Photo on display – Flypast May 2008 p.64; The Phantom in Focus (David Gledhill) p.271.

The Aerospace Museum Cosford displays the nose section of Phantom FG.I XV591 in the Trans- Atlantic colour scheme carried by XV424.

TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON

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