

## **WESTLAND SEA KING HAR Mk3 XZ585**

**RAFM ACCESSION NUMBER X008-4712**

### **INDIVIDUAL HISTORY**

First of initial batch of nineteen Sea King HAR Mk 3 helicopters produced for the Royal Air Force for Search and Rescue duties; XZ585 was the first of these, serials batch XZ585 – XZ599. Constructor's number WA581.

6 Sept 1977            First Flight  
                            Jan 78            Delivered to RAF

Pete Chadwick recalled in 2018; regarding the introduction of Sea King into RAF service; Although XZ 585 is the first in the sequence of RAF Sea Kings, it wasn't the first one the RAF received. '585 was retained at Westlands as a flying test bed for additional equipment which might be installed during the early days. The first one to be delivered to Culdrose, which is where the RAF established the RAF Sea King Training Unit(RAFSKTU) in the first event, was XZ 586. I was the first to fly it on 17th Feb 1978. I was the Training Officer(CFI) of the RAFSKTU and, once the first 4 Flights were converted to type, I took over as OC 202 Squadron. (There can't be many Squadron Commanders who can claim to have trained all his own aircrew!)

RAF Sea King Training Unit by Dec 1980.

22 Squadron by 1986

29 Jan 1982            Paul Challice memoir, 4.05 hour flight to assist a fishing vessel in the North Sea with a crew member with a broken ankle. Casualty taken to Hull royal Infirmary. Pilot Dave Carey.

11 Feb 1982            Paul Challice memoir, 1 hour medical evacuation from HMS Arethusa off Yarmouth to Gorleston Hospital. Pilot Dave Carey.

5 Apr 1982            Paul Challice memoir, 0.25 hour flight search for locator beacon- found on tug tied up at Great Yarmouth. Pilot Dave Carey.

18 Jun 1982            Paul Challice memoir, 0.15 hour flight Returning from detachment at Vaerloose, Denmark, and diverted to missing 12 year old boy- found drowned and underwater. Winchman kicked boot off rubber suit and still couldn't reach body. Recovered by boat. Pilot Karl Williams.

3 Jan 1983            Paul Challice memoir, diverted to burning vessel reported by civilian helicopter off Rosehearty. False alarm. Pilot Derek Mead.

23 Jan 1983 Paul Challice memoir, 2.50 hour flight Medevac elderly female with broken femur from Harris to Stornoway. Pilot Ian McFarlane.

2 Feb 1983 Paul Challice memoir, 1.10 hour Medevac from US destroyer Compte De Grasse to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. Pilot Geoff Clements.

6 Aug 1985 Paul Challice memoir, 1.45 hour search for possible suicide on cliffs at Helmsdale – hoax – safe and well at Aberdeen. Pilot Ted Mustard.

11 Sep 1985 Paul Challice memoir, 0.10 hour flight airborne cover for Phantom with fuel problems, no action required. Pilot Ted Mustard.

17 Sep 1985 Paul Challice memoir, 2.10 hour, flight Injured crewman from fishing vessel Amethyst 20nm NW Fraserburgh to Aberdeen. Pilot Ted Mustard.

22 Sep 1985 Paul Challice memoir, 2.00 hour flight, Lossiemouth to Raigmore to pick up medical team and incubator and then to Thurso, landing Dounreay, pick up 17 year old pregnant woman – to Raigmore and gave birth 20 minutes later. Pilot Graham Cannell.

11 Oct 1985 Paul Challice memoir, 2.35 hour flight, Man overboard off Gruinard Island!) – transit via Duncansby Head and Cape Wrath due to dark, cloud and wind (Westerly 80-90 kts and increasing). Turned back when groundspeed reduced to zero west of Thurso. Pilot Steve Martin.

21 Oct 1985 Paul Challice memoir, 1.20 hour flight Two boys missing in Orkney. Found safe, no action required. Pilot Doug Scott.

9 April 1986 HQ Search & Rescue Wing, RAF Finningley – pilot Flt Lt John Prince. During a test flight undertaken to try and identify an engine/computer issue, the aircraft suffered a double engine failure in the hover at 15-20 feet. The aircraft landed safely, and this helped diagnose the problem. (See e-mail on history file)

15 July 1986 'C' Flt 202 Sqn Coltishall. Capt Flt Lt Gillow Rad/Winch Op Flt Lt Williamson. Scrambled to investigate source of SOS transmissions picked up by the international SAR satellite. Nothing found.

3 Sep 1986 Paul Challice memoir, 2.25 hour flight, 61 year old man, cliff faller near Gairloch – very broken legs and arm. Dropped winchman and then lifted 4 Dundonnell Mountain Rescue Team

- to move casualty clear of cliff for winching. To Raigmore. Pilot Paul Longden.
- 25 Oct 1986 Paul Challice memoir, 2.45 hour flight, Search for man missing near Loch Quoich – Mountain Rescue Team lifted – man found safe. Pilot Doug Scott.
- 7 Nov 1986 Paul Challice memoir, 6.30 hour flight, Mountain Rescue Team from Lossiemouth to Sumburgh , then search for wreckage and bodies from BAH Chinook crash 2nm E Sumburgh. MRT then returned to Lossiemouth.Pilot Steve Martin.
- 5 Dec 1986 Paul Challice memoir, 4.40 hour flight, Search for two missing hill walkers near Kintail. Girl found dead in the snow, boy found dead next day by search dog. Pilot Paul Longden.
- 16 Dec 1986 Paul Challice memoir, 1.15 hour flight, Medevac Road Traffic Accident team victim & doctor & nurse from Elgin to Aberdeen. Pilot Steve Martin.
- 25 Jan 1987 Paul Challice memoir, 2.20 hour flight Casevac young Danish fisherman with severed fingers from FV Tide 100nm E Peterhead. Sea rough. To Aberdeen Dyce. Pilot Steve Hodgson.
- 25 Jan 1987 Paul Challice memoir, 2.25 hours flight, Diverted from above to take pregnant woman from Aberdeen to Glasgow return via Great Glen. Pilot Steve Hodgson.
- 4 Feb 87 Paul Challice memoir, 3.05 hours flight, fishing vessel Thalassa taking water off Point of Stour – lifeboat on scene so returned to base, no action required. Pilot Steve Hodgson
- 12 Feb 87 Paul Challice memoir, 2.00 hours flight Lossiemouth to Raigmore to pick up incubator + doctor + midwife – to Wick. Return to Raigmore with two incubators with babies – high speed run due to failing incubator battery! 2:00. Pilot Steve Hodgson
- 13 Feb 87 Paul Challice memoir, 3.20 hours flight, Medevac suspected appendicitis from fishing vessel Polar Fisk, off Barra, to Oban. Pilot Steve Hodgson.
- 14 Feb 87 Paul Challice memoir, 1.35 hours flight, fishing vessel Guide Onward on fire 70nm NE Lossiemouth – local boat – 8 crew in two life rafts returned to Lossiemouth. Pilot Steve Hodgson.
- 1/2 Mar 87 Paul Challice memoir, 8.20 hours flight, Search for Danish fishing vessel Fabien 80nm E Shetland disabled by big wave

smashing wheelhouse, all night search in poor weather but nothing found – found safe 50nm downwind. Pilot Steve Davidson.

- 2 Sep 1987 'A' Flt 202 Sqn Boulmer. Capt Flt Lt Fairbairn Rad/Winch Op Flt Lt Williamson ('A' Flt Cdr). Scrambled to Otterburn Range to casevac injured soldier to the RVI Newcastle.
- 18 Dec 88 Paul Challice memoir, 2.05 hours flight, Search for two missing climbers in the Cairngorms, no action required, walked out safe. Pilot Paul Redfern.
- 30 Dec 88 Paul Challice memoir, 5.05 hours flight, Missing walkers Loch Arkaig – walked out safe. Pilot Steve Hodgson.
- 28 Jan 89 Crashed on high ground at Craig Meagaidh, near Loch Loggan by Fort William, Scotland, whilst with 202 Squadron, when it lost an engine at low level due to a gearbox input failure. Subsequently skidded on the ground, nosedived in a ditch and rolled over. Carrying nine crew, taking off from RAF Lossiemouth; thankfully no fatalities. Severe damage to forward fuselage.
- Rebuilt at Royal Navy Aircraft Yard, Fleetlands, Gosport, Hants by March 1992 following accident.
- With 22 Sqn C Flt (Valley) by December 1997.
- 28 Jan 1998 Flying logbook of S/Ldr Nicola Smith (copy with RAFM Archives and Library) records 2.05 hour search for red flares off Bangor- nothing found.
- 30 Jan 1998 Two rescue flights (Smith LB) – 12-year old asthmatic girl from Rhinog Fawr, Snowdonia, to Bangor Hospital – 1.15 hrs, and crewman with chest pains off Rig support vessel Britannia Endeavour to Blackpool Hospital- 1.20 hours.
- 21 Aug 1998 Multi-seat dinghy drill, 30 minutes (Smith LB)
- 26 Aug 1998 Walker with heart problem near Conway to Glan Clwyd Hospital – Smith LB. 1.10 hour flight.
- 14 Sep 1998 Fallen walker Tryfan – Bangor Hospital. 1.05 hrs, Smith LB.
- 23 Sep 1998 Medevac flight ; 2-day old baby from Liverpool Broadgreen to Newcastle Freeman Hospital. 3.15 hrs, Smith LB.

With 202 Sqn E Flt by Sep 2000, 203(R) Sqn (Akrotiri) by 2003, 203(R) Sqn /A by 2004, 202 Sqn E Flt/A (Leconfield) by May 2005 still Oct 2005, 203(R) Sqn/A Nov 2005 until Jan 2006, SKMF Jan 2006, SKAMG Apr 2007, to 203(R) Sqn/A Apr 2007, 22Sq C Flt/A May 2007

- 12 May 2005      Serving with E Flight of 202 Squadron, RAF Leconfield at this time. Logbook of Sqn Ldr Adam Shipley records 'Female faller at Barker Crags, 10m S of Middlesbrough; radar operator/winchman Donal McGurk. And later that day, search for missing man, Scarborough area. RO/Winchman McGurk. Shipley LB – extracts on Aircraft dept Sea King file.
- Photo with 202 Squadron - History and Heroism – RAF Museum in Focus (2018) p.87.
- 4 Jun 2005      Radar operator/Winchman Logbook of Wing Cdr Donal McGurk records appearance at 'Redcar Lifeboat day – 3.30 hours flying time. Also report of two people in water – 10 minute flight. Extracts also in Aircraft Dept Sea King file.
- 6 Jun 2005      Role Training. 2.45 hours. McGurk LB
- 30 Jun 2005      Baby evacuation flight – stood down. 20 mins. McGurk LB.
- 1 Jul 2005      Chronic Hernia case to Hull Royal Infirmary – McGurk LB.
- 2 Jul 2005      Search for vessel in distress, Flamborough – Scarborough area – nothing found. McGurk LB. 1.25 hours. Also diver with arm injury from vessel in Humber Estuary to Hull RI. 1.50 hours.
- 3 Jul 2005      Diverted from training to search for faller, Scarborough area- nothing found. Shipley LB.
- 5 Jul 2005      Injured walker on Kinder Scout – to Sheffield Hospital. Shipley LB.
- 9 Jul 2005      Search for missing person, Humphrey Head – nothing found. McGurk LB. 0.35 hours.
- 11 Jul 2005      Role Training flight, 2.30 hours – McGurk LB.
- 7 Aug 2005      Person in Water report, Fraisthorpe – Found Safe. McGurk LB. 0.25 hours. Also Role demonstration and role training – 3.15 hours.

9 Aug 2005	Navigation and role training flight, 2 hours. Also search for Suicidal Female, Flamborough Head – 0.45 hours (night flying). McGurk LB.
16 Aug 2005	80-year old female, possible stroke, Yorkshire. 1.20 hours. McGurk LB.
17 Aug 2005	Collapsed runner at Leconfield. 0.35 hours. McGurk LB.
18 Aug 2005	Six-year old girl, fallen 150 feet; Filey-Scarborough, 1.10 hours. McGurk LB.
July 2010	Flown at Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford  Latterly with 203(R) Squadron, Royal Air Force, RAF Valley, Anglesey, code 'A'
6 May 2013	SAR operation, Man Over Board (MOB), Berkley Sound, East Falkland, 2.00 hours, Pilot Flt Lt Hearnshaw, AEOp MACR Rick Jones.
9 May 2013	SAR operation, Injured crewman on fishing vessel Hsiang Ching Tsao, 140nm NW of Falkland Islands, 3.00 hours, Pilot Flt Lt Hearnshaw, AEOp MACR Rick Jones.
16 May 2013	SAR operation, RIC (Resident (or Roulement) Infantry Company), back injury, B27-Mount Pleasant Airport, 1.00 hours, Pilot Flt Lt Lynch, AEOp MACR Rick Jones.
1 Apr 2015	3.30 hour flight via RAF Lossimouth (a regular routing) – with 10 winch lifts - , followed by 3.40 hour flight the following day (no lifts)
23 Apr 2015	Final flight, from RAF Valley to HMS Sultan, Gosport, Hants, for storage alongside other withdrawn Sea Kings awaiting disposition/sale. Take off time 09.00, landing at 11.30. Crew : Flt Lt Dave Wells, Flt Lt Ian Griffiths, Sgt Paul Bramley. Final airframe hours 14472.45; winch lifts 533.
Sept 2015	Gifted to RAFM by MoD.
4 Oct 2015	Final Royal Air Force SAR operations, with two Sea King HAR3A aircraft of No 22 Squadron 'A' Flight at Royal Marine Base Chivenor; all UK SAR flights now undertaken by Bristow Helicopters.
6 Dec 2017	By road from HMS Sultan Disposal Reserve to RAFM Hendon; movement by JARTS team from MoD Boscombe Down;

installed in Hangar One (former BoB Hall) for new RAF First 100 Years exhibition, opening summer 2018. Assembled for display upon arrival.

Photos arriving at site – RADAR Issue 20 Spring 2018 p.37.

Photo as arrived – Aeroplane February 2018 p.9.

Photos on display- Aeroplane August 2018 p.6; History and Heroism – RAF Museum in Focus (2018) pp. 36, 84/5, 86.

Final Form 700, 2014, with RAFM Archives.

Fellow Sea King HAR.3 XZ592 is preserved at Morayvia, Kinloss, Scotland, arriving 31 July 2015.

**TEXT; ANDREW SIMPSON**

**RAF MUSEUM 2018**