



South Australian Aviation Museum
66 Lipson Street, Port Adelaide, S.A. 5015
Ph: 08 8240 1230

ENGLISH ELECTRIC CANBERRA T4 COCKPIT

Twin engine military bomber

History of WD954

This aircraft was built by AVRO at Woodford, UK, in 1951 as a B2 bomber version. After a period on loan to the Aircraft & Armament Experimental Establishment, where she took part in the type's tropical trials evaluation in Kenya, the aircraft returned to formal RAF service, and underwent modification into a T4 trainer variant during 1956. This conversion, among other things, involved the removal and replacement of her original forward fuselage and cockpit (which amazingly still survives in Britain today). The refurbished WD954, with her brand new forward fuselage, was ready for service by the end of November, 1956, joining the Station Flight at RAF Helmswell initially, before moving on to the Station Flight at RAF Upwood, and eventually joining the books with 76 Squadron at that location.

WD954 moved to Australia for pilot training duties on January 9th, 1959. She took up residence at what is now RAAF Edinburgh, near Adelaide. (Note: The Royal Australian Air Force had a fleet of Canberras in service at that time, including forty-eight examples that rolled off Australian production lines at the Government Aircraft Factory in Fishermans Bend, Victoria.)

By January 1960, WD954 had moved on to the Long Range Weapons Establishment, Woomera as a missile tracking aircraft. She served there for much of the next decade, before finally retiring formally from flying duties at RAAF Edinburgh on February 13th, 1970. WD954 then endured duties as a weapons target, suffering damage during the Karinga cluster bomb trials. However, she survived long enough to enter preservation as a wing-less hulk with the now sadly defunct Warbirds Aviation Museum at the former RAAF Mildura.

The aircraft was acquired by SAAM in 1993 as a source of parts to complete the restoration of our Canberra B2 (RAAF WK-165). Following the removal of all needed parts, the cockpit was separated from the fuselage and restored as a separate display by SAAM members.



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The Display

As part of our Vietnam War Display, SAAM has dedicated this cockpit display to the memory of Flying Officer Herbert & Pilot Officer Carver, who were lost in action in Vietnam flying Canberra A8-231. They disappeared in Nov 1970, in poor weather after a night time bombing operation in the Da Nang area. Flying as Magpie 91, the pilot, FLGOFF Herbert, last reported that he was flying at 22,000ft after just having released his bombs over a target under the direction



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of a USAF (not USMC as reported previously) Captain Bill Hanig working from OL-24 (Operating Location) located at Phu-Bai. Acknowledging a transmission from the controller, releasing Magpie 91 at 20:22hrs, the aircraft was not heard from again. Standard procedure was for aircraft to head east then track south to Phan Rang. An intensive 3-day search was mounted, which saw the squadron fly 38 sorties with no success. The aircraft had flown a total of 4193.35 flight hours at the time of its loss. In 2009 'Operation Magpies Return' found the crash site in the rugged countryside of Quang Nam Province, Vietnam, near the Laotian border. The remains of FLG OFF Michael Herbert and PLTOFF Robert Carver have been recovered and returned to their families in Australia.

History of Type

The Canberra had its origins in 1944 as a replacement for the de Havilland Mosquito bomber of the RAF. In May 1945, a contract was signed with English Electric, but with the post-war military wind-down, the prototype did not fly until May 1949. Total worldwide Canberra production was 1352.

The Canberra had two crew under a fighter-style canopy, but delays of the intended automatic radar bombsight resulted in the addition of a bomb aimer's position in the nose. The Canberra entered service with RAF in May 1951. Built in 27 versions, it equipped 35 RAF squadrons, and was exported to many countries including Australia. In the USA it was built under licence as the Martin B-57.

In Australia, the Government Aircraft Factory (GAF) built 48 for the RAAF, broadly similar to the British B2. Canberras replaced the Lincoln bombers from 1954 and were used by the RAAF in the Vietnam War. Armament was typically 4 x 340kg (750lb) M1117 bombs in the weapons bay plus two others mounted externally. The maximum internal bomb load was 3,629 kg (8,000 lb).

Canberras remained in front-line service with major air forces throughout the 1950s, '60s and '70s, and a few continued through the '80s and '90s. After sterling service, the last RAAF Canberra was withdrawn from service in June 1982.



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Technical Specifications

Engines: 2 x Rolls-Royce RA-3 Avon Mk 1

Maximum take-off weight: 21,312 kg

Length: 19.96 m

Wing span: 19.5 m

Height: 4.75 m

Cruising speed: 458 kt (871 kph at 40,000 ft / 12,200 m)

Ceiling: 47,800 ft (14,600 m)

Range: 5,470 km (3,200 nm) with maximum payload

Crew: 1 pilot and 1 navigator/mission specialist