



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

### **GLOSTER METEOR F8 A77-851 (WK683)**

*Twin engine single seat military fighter*

#### **History of A77-851**

This aircraft was originally assigned Royal Air Force (RAF) Serial WK683. It was delivered to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) on August 20, 1952. It served with 77 Squadron, RAAF, during the Korean War. On 27 March it destroyed a MiG-15 in combat while being flown by Sgt George Hale. Another 'probable' kill was recorded to the aircraft. Its Korean service included taking part in 77 SQN's last strike.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

JK0683



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The aircraft returned to Australia in December 1954 and was allocated to 23 SQN. It was damaged in March 1957 when the ejection seat drogue gun inadvertently fired. The aircraft was repaired and allocated to WRE at RAAF Edinburgh in October 1960. Fairey Aviation converted it to a U.21A model Target Drone by fitting a new nose section. The modified aircraft was put into service in March 1963. Soon after, it crashed on landing at Woomera during an unmanned trial flight. The old nose section (which is on display) was preserved and came to the Museum in 1990.



A77-851 at Kimpo, South Korea, in 1953/54.



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**Please Note:** [Temora Aviation Museum \(N.S.W.\) has a Meteor](#) in flying condition which has been painted in the livery of A77-851. This aircraft was built by Gloster in 1949 and carried RAF serial number VZ467, serving until 1982. Its last military role was as a target tug. After being retired from the RAF, the Meteor was privately owned and operated in the UK. Upon being purchased by the Temora Aviation Museum, the aircraft was disassembled, transported to Australia and reassembled at Bankstown NSW. In August 2001, the Meteor flew from Bankstown to its new home in Temora, where it is maintained in an airworthy condition, making it the only Gloster Meteor F.8 flying in the world. Since being re-painted by the Museum, the aircraft carries the markings of a Korean War era Meteor operated by RAAF 77 Squadron and flown by Sgt. George Hale.

### **George Hale**

Born and raised in Tasmania, George Hale, joined the RAAF in February 1951. He completed pilot training at No 1 Flying Training School, Point Cook, and then converted to jets at RAAF Williamtown at No 4 Operational Training Unit (Fighter). With 288 hours flying time and the rank of Sergeant, he was posted to No 77 Squadron.

Hale arrived in Japan in late 1952 and converted to the Meteor in Japan in only 2 weeks. In mid December he joined 77 Squadron at the base at Kimpo. He called his aircraft Halestorm having the name emblazoned underneath the cockpit on the aircrafts fuselage.

On 27 March, Hale and SGT David Irlam were on a routine reconnaissance mission over North Korea in the afternoon when they saw and engaged two MiG fighters. As Hale flying A77-851 dived into attack, he then identified another two enemy aircraft. In the ensuing dogfight, Irlam's aircraft was damaged and returned to base. However, Hale destroyed one enemy aircraft and then after being confronted by another pair of MiGs, scored hits on one of these as well. Having used all his ammunition in the engagement, Hale broke off contact and returned to base.



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This was the last time that No 77 Squadron aircraft engaged in aerial combat in Korea, and the last air to air engagement that the RAAF has been involved in to this date. In all, Hale completed 131 combat missions in Korea returning home in June 1953.

### **History of Type**

On 15 May 1941, the experimental Gloster E28/39 made the first flight by a British jet-propelled aircraft, and, on 5 March 1943, the Gloster Meteor became the Royal Air Force's first operational jet aircraft. For over a decade, Meteor F 4s and F 8s were the main RAF interceptors, and other versions included the Meteor T 7, FR 9, PR 10, and Armstrong-Whitworth Meteors NF 11 to 14.

In 1946 a Meteor captured Australian newspaper headlines when it flew over Melbourne at 788 km/h (490 mph). Imported on 7 June 1946, this Meteor F 4 carried out trials at Laverton and Darwin and, at one time, carried two identification numbers - the RAF serial EE427 and the RAAF allocation A77-1. However, it was not until 1951, when Meteors went into action with No 77 Squadron in Korea, that these aircraft made their mark in RAAF history. Ninety-three Meteor F 8s and six Meteor T 7s were allocated to the Korean War with scattered serial numbers ranging between A77-2 (T 7) and A77-982 (F 8). They were used mainly in the ground-attack role, but also accounted for three MIG-15s. Forty-one F 8s and three T 7s returned to Australia aboard HMAS *Vengeance*, and by 1958 most Meteors had been replaced by CAC Sabres.

The remaining Meteors served with Citizen's Air Force squadrons until the RAAF "officially" retired the Meteor in 1963. However, Meteors with RAAF and RAF serials continued to fly on Ministry of Supply trials at Edinburgh and



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Woomera, and included F 4s, T 7s, F 8s, U Mk 15 and 16, U Mk 21 and 21A, and NF 11s (including A77-3).

### **Technical Specifications**

**Engines:** 2 x 16 kN (3,600 lb) thrust Rolls-Royce Derwent centrifugal flow turbojets

**Max take-off weight:** 8,664 kg

**Length:** 12.6 m

**Wingspan:** 13.1 m

**Height:** 3.96 m

**Cruising Speed:** 339 kt (629 kph)

**Range:** 1,100 km (594 nm)

**Crew:** 1 pilot

**Armament:** 4 x 20mm Hispano Cannon