

## PRESS NOTES

### VISIT TO NO. 46 SQUADRON, EQUIPPED WITH GLOSTER JAVELINS, AT R.A.F. STATION, ODIHAM, HANTS., JULY 2, 1956

#### GENERAL

The Gloster Javelin Mark 1 has been in service with No. 46 Squadron, R.A.F. Odiham, since February. Later this year other squadrons are planned to re-equip with the Javelin Marks 2 and 4. These incorporate several improvements, chief of which is the provision of a "flying tail".

The Javelin represents a new category of aircraft for the Royal Air Force - the all-weather fighter - which supersedes the old night-fighter class. In the past night fighters were invariably modifications of aircraft designed for other purposes. The Meteor NF.11 to 14 night fighter series, for example, was developed from the Meteor day fighter.

The Javelin is Fighter Command's first aircraft specifically designed to seek out and destroy enemy bombers by night or by day in good weather or bad. It was the first delta-winged aircraft to enter squadron service in any air force.

Javelin performance details are still secret but the aircraft is greatly superior in all respects to the current R.A.F. night fighters. To give but one example, it can climb to 40,000 feet in half the time taken by the aircraft it replaces. It has been designed to fly and fight at heights in the neighbourhood of 50,000 feet at speeds above 600 m.p.h. It can exceed the speed of sound in a dive.

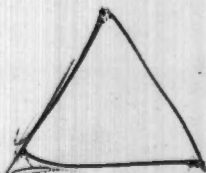
It is equipped with new A.I. (airborne interception) radar which has longer range than earlier A.I. sets. In the Javelin both pilot and navigator have a visual radar indication of their target and there is also provision for "blind" firing of the guns when the target is within range. Previously the radar presentation of the target was confined to the navigator who directed his pilot until the target could be seen by the human eye.

The all-weather fighter is still initially directed towards its target by a G.C.I. (Ground Control of Interception) station, but the country's radar defence system as a whole is now undergoing a remarkable transformation. Automatic devices are taking the place of the old manual plotting tables, and the Controller is presented with an accurate and immediate picture of all air activity within a very wide radius.

#### THE AIRCRAFT

The Javelin is a delta-winged aircraft powered by two Armstrong-Siddeley Sapphire turbojets. It carried a crew of two - pilot and navigator. It has fully powered ailerons and power-assisted rudder and elevators. It is armed with four 30 m.m. Aden guns installed in the wings and is also capable of carrying air-to-air guided weapons. It has Mark 3J Martin Baker ejection seats designed to operate from altitudes as low as 100 feet. It is fitted for the standard Fighter Command rapid "scrambling" system whereby the pilot, sitting at readiness in his cockpit, receives instructions to take off by direct land-line telephone from a controller in touch with the battle situation. The telephone cable is automatically disconnected as the fighter moves to take off.

The Javelin is the largest and most complex fighter aircraft ever used by the R.A.F. Weights and power may not be published but it can be said that the Javelin is heavier than the biggest R.A.F. bombers in use at the start of the Second World War, or a medium transport aircraft. The thrust produced by its two Sapphire engines is roughly equivalent to the total horse-power of a whole squadron of wartime night fighters.



The Javelin cockpit is pressurized by air bled from the engine compressors. Starting is by cartridges and the aircraft employs pressure refuelling. It can carry two 250-gallon drop tanks beneath the fuselage. There is a large servicing bay reached from a manhole below the fuselage which gives access to components requiring regular inspection. Teething troubles have been fewer than might have been expected in such an advanced new type of aircraft.

The Javelin is pleasant and easy to fly and conversion training has proceeded smoothly. It has a very short take-off - becoming airborne in less distance than a Hunter and handles well with one engine out of action. It has powerful air brakes which may be used to full advantage in air combat.

#### INTENSIVE FLYING TRIALS

No. 46 Squadron is now engaged on intensive flying trials with the Javelin and to avoid interrupting these no special flying display will be staged during this visit.

It has for some years been the practice to undertake such trials with all new aircraft entering R.A.F. squadron service. Eight of the Javelins are being flown at approximately three times the intensity normally achieved during routine squadron training. To meet this requirement, the Javelins have been taking off in pairs at half-hourly intervals from 8.30 in the morning to 2.30 the following morning. This will continue until an aggregate of 1,000 hours is reached. The trials have several objects - to discover as soon as possible any items which may require modification so that they may be changed in the production lines; to work out servicing schedules and assess turn round time between operational sorties; to obtain data on the consumption of spares; to find out what special ground equipment may be required and various other points.

Air and ground crews work in shifts to keep the aircraft flying without interruption and special recording teams supervised by Air Ministry scientific staff are assembling all data.

#### CONVERSION TRAINING

Pilots of No. 46 Squadron range in experience from approximately 600 to 2,000 flying hours, most of them being now on their second jet flying tour of duty.

There is at present no dual-control version of the Javelin and initially two squadron pilots completed a conversion course at the Boscombe Down experimental station. From this stage all conversion training was done on the squadron. Before making their first flight in the Javelin pilots were required to answer with 100% accuracy a questionnaire on the aircraft and its handling. They made their first flights as passengers with a fully qualified pilot at the controls then went straight on to flying the Javelin with their own navigators. Six day flights were made before the first night flight and twelve flying exercises completed before operational training sorties were undertaken.

Navigator training has followed a generally similar pattern except that the navigators have received instruction in a special A.I. trainer.

Senior members of the ground servicing staff completed a course on the Javelin at the makers' factory.

#### SECURITY

It is emphasised that apart from the facts given in these Notes, details of weights, loads, performance, and military equipment of the Javelin and operating techniques may not be published. Photographs showing internal construction and equipment may not be taken.



#### NO. 46 SQUADRON

When No. 46 Squadron's badge was approved by King George VI in 1937 the unit flew 230 m.p.h. Gloster Gauntlet biplanes. The three arrowheads symbolised aircraft climbing into action, but none would have been bold enough to prophesy that in less than 20 years No. 46 would be the first squadron to fly a new aircraft so closely resembling the symbols in the badge.

No. 46 Squadron was formed in April, 1916, and went to France equipped with Nieuport two-seaters for army co-operation duties. A year later it armed with Sopwith Pup fighters and was frequently in combat with the German fighter "circuses". In July, 1917, No. 46 was one of the squadrons recalled from France to help combat the Gotha raids and for six weeks operated from an airfield in Essex. Returning to the Western Front it was actively engaged in high-altitude "dog-fighting", interspersed with low-level attacks against ground targets. For the final year of the war the squadron flew Sopwith Camels.

Perhaps the highlight of No. 46 Squadron's second war history was the gallant struggle of its Hurricanes against greatly superior German forces in Norway. It had already scored successes against enemy raiders off the British coasts when in May, 1940, it was ordered to Norway. The aircraft flew off the deck of H.M.S. "Glorious" - the first time that Hurricanes had flown from an aircraft carrier - and joined No. 263 Squadron's Gladiators at Bardufoss for the defence of the Narvik area. Within two days the Hurricanes had destroyed eight enemy aircraft, but as the Germans advanced, it soon became necessary to evacuate the area. Rather than abandon the Hurricanes, the Squadron Commander, Squadron Leader K.B.B. Cross (now Air Vice-Marshal) asked that they should attempt to land on the "Glorious" although earlier deck-landing tests in England had been unsuccessful. All the Hurricanes landed perfectly but fate dealt a final blow. On the return passage the "Glorious" was sunk by the "Scharnhorst" and "Gneisenau", the only survivors from the squadron pilots being Squadron Leader Cross and one other.

The squadron reformed in time to play its part in the Battle of Britain, and in 1941 went to the Mediterranean to help in the defence of Malta. In 1942 it became a night fighter squadron, flying Beaufighters and in 1942 helped to cover the invasion of Sicily.

Towards the end of the war No. 46 Squadron returned home to join Transport Command and in 1948-49 took part in the Berlin Air Lift. It was disbanded in 1950, and reformed in 1954 at Odiham with Meteor night fighters.

The Commanding Officer of No. 46 Squadron is Wing Commander H.E. White, D.F.C. and two Bars, A.F.C., (aged 33), who joined the R.A.F. in 1940. During the war he was a pilot with Nos. 29 and 141 night-fighter squadrons, shooting down thirteen enemy aircraft. He won his three D.F.Cs. with No. 141 Squadron in 1943-44, when the unit was mainly flying in support of Bomber Command's night offensive against Germany. Since the war he has spent several years as a flying instructor and has served two tours of duty at the Central Fighter Establishment. He was chief flying instructor at the night fighter operational conversion unit at R.A.F. Leeming before taking command of No. 46 Squadron.

The two flight commanders of the squadron are Squadron Leader P.D.C. Street, D.S.C., and Squadron Leader D.F.C. Ross. Squadron Leader Street (aged 34) served in the Fleet Air Arm during the war. He is one of the few pilots in the R.A.F. who can claim to have made 1,000 deck landings. During the war he served in the carriers "Indomitable", "Victorious" and "Argus" in the Mediterranean and the Pacific. He joined the R.A.F. in 1950. Squadron Leader Ross (aged 31) joined the R.A.F. in 1942 and was a flying instructor in Canada during the second war. In 1946 he flew Mosquitos with No. 84 Squadron in the Far East and in 1951-53 served with the U.S.A.F. on exchange postings as an instructor at a light bomber training unit. He has been with No. 46 Squadron since it reformed.

#### R.A.F. STATION ODIHAM

The Station Commander is Group Captain A.K. Gatward, D.S.O., D.F.C. and Bar (aged 41). He joined the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve in 1937 and served with No. 53 Squadron in 1940-41 making attacks on invasion ports, enemy airfields and naval targets. Towards the end of 1941 he joined No. 236 Squadron, Coastal Command, and on June 12, 1942, flew the Beaufighter which dropped a Tricolour over the Arc de Triomphe and shot up Gestapo headquarters in Paris.

In 1943 he joined No. 404 Squadron, R.C.A.F., which operated Beaufighters on escort and reconnaissance duties and a year later took command of the unit. Since the war he has served as R.A.F. liaison officer with the United States Air Force in Germany, at the Air Ministry, and as Officer Commanding, Administrative Wing, at R.A.F. Horsham St. Faith. He has commanded R.A.F. Station Odiham since June 1955.

Wing Commander J.R. Davenport is Officer Commanding, Administrative Wing, at Odiham. He joined the R.A.F. in 1938, having previously spent six years with the Army, and was engaged on army co-operation flying. He took part in some of the earliest experiments with air observation posts aircraft in 1940. In 1942 he commanded No. 16 Squadron and in 1943 commanded No. 123 airfield, near Odiham, which accommodated three Mustang squadrons. Towards the end of the war he was commanding No. 180 Bomber Squadron. Since the war he has held a variety of posts at home and abroad.

Wing Commander D.W.B. Farrar, D.F.C., A.F.C. (aged 34) commands the Flying Wing at Odiham. He joined the R.A.F. in 1940 and flew Beaufighters with No. 219 Squadron from North Africa in 1942-43. After a period as an instructor he rejoined No. 219 Squadron, now flying Mosquitoes and based at home, winning the D.F.C. in 1945. Since the war he has held air staff posts at the Air Ministry and at No. 12 Group, and has commanded No. 141 Squadron. He has also qualified at the R.A.F. Staff and Flying Colleges.

Wing Commander E.J. Prall, M.B.E., is Station Technical Officer. He joined the R.A.F. in 1923 as an airman and served at various stations at home and abroad and with the Fleet Air Arm before the war. He was commissioned in 1941 and spent most of the war with units of Fighter Command and the 2nd Tactical Air Force. Six days after D-Day he was in Normandy supervising the servicing of No. 125 Wing Spitfires. Wing Commander Prall, who has been at Odiham for the past three years, has worked on several hundred different aircraft types in his R.A.F. career.

Information Division,  
Air Ministry,  
Whitehall Gardens,  
London, S.W.1.