

de Havilland “Vampire”

The Hickory Aviation Museum’s Vampire Side# WD187, a T.11 version, is the successor to those flown during WWII. This is one of two non-US aircraft the museum owns and is still considered airworthy. Kregg & Kyle Kirby, Jeff Wofford Coordinated.



Role	Fighter Aircraft
National origin	United Kingdom
Manufacturer	de Havilland English Electric
First flight	20 September 1943
Introduction	1945
Retired	1979 Rhodesian Air Force
Status	Retired
Primary users	Royal Air Force Fleet Air Arm
Number built	3268
Propulsion	1 × de Havilland Goblin centrifugal turbojet
Unit cost	<\$1M 1945
Developed Into	De Havilland Venom

The de Havilland Vampire is a British jet fighter developed and manufactured by de Havilland. Having been developed during the Second World War to harness the newly developed jet engine, the Vampire entered service with the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1945. It was the second jet fighter, after the Gloster Meteor, operated by the RAF, and its first to be powered by a single jet engine.

The RAF used the Vampire as a front-line fighter until 1953, when it was given secondary roles such as pilot training, although 103 Flying Refresher School had them deployed in that role from 1951. It was retired by the RAF in 1966, replaced by the Hawker Hunter and Gloster Javelin. It achieved several aviation firsts and records, including being the first jet aircraft to cross the Atlantic Ocean. The Vampire had many export sales and was operated by various air forces. It participated in conflicts including the 1948 Arab–Israeli War, the Malayan emergency and the Rhodesian Bush War.

General characteristics

Crew: 1
Length: 30 ft 9 in (9.37 m)
Wingspan: 38 ft (11.58 m)
Height: 8 ft 10 in (2.69 m)
Wing area: 262 ft² (24.34 m²)
Empty weight: 7,283 lb (3,304 kg)
Max. takeoff weight: 12,390 lb ^[75] (5,620 kg)

Performance

Maximum speed: 548 mph (882 km/h)
Range: 1,220 mi (1,960 km)
Service ceiling: 42,800 ft (13,045 m)
Armament
Guns: 4 × 20 mm (0.79 in) Hispano Mk.V cannon with 600 Rounds total. **Rockets:** 8 × 3-inch "60 lb" rockets.
Bombs: or 2 × 500 lb bombs or two drop-tanks

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Operational history

RAF and Royal Navy service

In postwar service, the RAF employed the Gloster Meteor as an interceptor and the Vampire as a ground-attack fighter-bomber (although their roles probably should have been reversed).

The first prototype of the "Vampire Fighter-Bomber Mk 5" (FB.5), modified from a Vampire F.3, carried out its initial flight on 23 June 1948. The FB.5 retained the Goblin III engine of the F.3, but featured armour protection around engine systems, wings clipped back by 1 ft (30 cm), and longer-stroke main landing gear to handle greater takeoff weights and provide clearance for stores/weapons load. An external tank or 500 lb (227 kg) bomb could be carried under each wing, and eight "3-inch" rocket projectiles ("RPs") could be stacked in pairs on four attachments inboard of the booms. Although an ejection seat was considered, it was not fitted.

At its peak, 19 RAF squadrons flew the FB.5 in Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. The FB.5 undertook attack missions during the British Commonwealth's campaign to suppress the insurgency in Malaya in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The FB.5 fighter-bomber became the most numerous single-seat variant with 473 aircraft produced.

The NF.10 served from 1951 to 1954 with three squadrons (23, 25 and 151) but was often flown in daytime as well as night time. After replacement by the Venom conversions were made to NF(T).10 standard for operation by the Central Navigation and Control School at RAF Shawbury. Others were sold to the Indian Air Force.

The RAF eventually relegated the Vampire to advanced training roles in the mid-1950s, and the type was generally out of RAF service by the end of the decade. Following carrier-landing trials on the carrier HMS *Ocean* with a modified prototype Vampire, the Royal Navy ordered a navalised variant of the Vampire FB.5 as the Sea Vampire, the first Royal Navy jet aircraft. Two prototypes were followed by 18 production aircraft which were used to gain experience in carrier jet operations before the arrival of the two-seat Sea Vampire T.22 trainers.

The final Vampire was the T (trainer) model. First flown from the old Airspeed Ltd factory at Christchurch, Hampshire on 15 November 1950, production deliveries of the trainer began in January 1952. Over 600 examples of the T.11 were produced at Hatfield and Chester and by Fairey Aviation at Manchester Airport, in both air force and naval models. The T models remained in service with the RAF until 1966. There was a Vampire trainer in service at CFS RAF Little Rissington until at least January 1972.

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