

Aircraft
Venom NF.3

Serial	Codes	Arr	Dep	To
WX791		06/06/57	17/10/57	27 MU
WX855	N	08/03/56	17/10/57	27 MU
WX863	T	06/06/57	17/10/57	27 MU
WX869	J	06/03/56	17/10/57	27 MU
WX873		06/06/57	16/10/57	27 MU
WX878	G	06/03/56	16/10/57	27 MU
WX880	C	23/01/56	22/10/57	27 MU
WX884	L	08/03/56	10/08/56	Cat 5 (a)
WX907	E	01/03/56	24/10/56	Cat 5 (b)
WX908	B	16/01/56	17/10/57	27 MU
WX912	L	13/09/56	25/05/57	Cat 5 (c)
WX914	A	17/01/56	16/10/57	27 MU
WX915	H	06/03/56	17/10/57	27 MU
WX917	K	08/03/56	17/10/57	27 MU
WX918	M	12/02/56	07/11/57	27 MU
WX919	F	09/03/56	17/10/57	27 MU
WX920	R	16/04/56	16/10/57	27 MU
WX923	D	15/02/56	17/10/57	27 MU
WX927	P	03/04/56	22/10/57	27 MU
WX930	Q	28/03/56	17/10/57	27 MU
WX949		06/06/57	16/10/57	27 MU
WZ319	S	05/09/56	17/10/57	27 MU

- (a) Crashed after GCA overshoot 2 miles NE of Stradishall, (Fg Off James Douglas Henri Hammet, 23, and Fg Off Raymond Edward George Hickling killed).
- (b) Engine failed on approach to Stradishall, (Fg Off John Michael Larkin (nav) killed).
- (c) Damaged by engine fire on take off and Soc.

125 Squadron
Stradishall

The squadron had re-formed at Stradishall on 1 May 1955 as part of the UK night/all-weather fighter expansion plan with Meteor NF.11s as interim equipment, being declared operational on 6 July. A few weeks later the arrival of 3 Brigand T.5s together with instructors from 238 OCU, Colerne, announced the start of a 3-week course to train 125's navigators in the mysteries of APS-57 radar, alias AI.21 in British service. Similarly the delivery of a Vampire T.11, XD602, on 29 September plus three QFIs from the CFE to train 125's pilots that had not previously flown Vampires, was all part of the preparation for the squadron's re-equipment with Venom NF.3s, the first of which didn't materialise until 8 November, with a second on the 14th, this pair being initially utilised for instructional purposes by the engineers. By early November the Brigand mobile training unit, which had used 125's own NF.11s as radar targets, had converted most of the squadron's navigators to the new radar but they had to wait before they could put their new-found knowledge into practice, as indeed did the pilots, because only 4 more Venoms had been delivered by the end of the year, allowing 'B' Flight to convert, and cease Meteor operations.

During January '56 the full UE of 16 Venoms was obtained, enabling 'A' Flight to complete its conversion and in February the Meteor NF.11s were disposed of, 8 going to 46 Sqn to maintain continuation flying while that unit re-equipped as the first Javelin squadron, others going to MUs or Armstrong-Whitworth for refurbishment. On 1 March 125 received an informal visit from AVM W.J. Crisham, CB, CBE the AOC of 12 Group, at which various problems associated with the Venoms were aired including the high stoppage rate encountered during recent air/air and air/sea firing. In addition to PIs the squadron had also flown some low-level sorties for Rat and Terrier exercises and for the ROC. The squadron also had the benefit of a visit by instructors from the FWS in the expectation that this would



Silhouetted against the backcloth of cirrus clouds and contrails, Venom NF.3 WX911/D of 125 Sqn delights the eye. (Jack Fuller)