

Of the 150 Venoms built, 126 were DH-112 Mk 1, serialled J-1501 to J-1625 and J-1650. 24 Venoms were built as Mk 1R reconnaissance aircraft, serialled J-1626 to J-1649, as replacements for the ageing P-51 'Recon Mustangs'. The Venom Mk 1 entered service in 1951 at a rate of approx. 6 aircraft per month.

De Havilland was already working on an improved version of the Venom, the Mk 4. The improved Venom featured hydraulic powered ailerons and to improve the roll rate, an increased aileron area. Externally, the Mk 4 can be easily distinguished from the Mk 1 by the shape of the tail area. While the Mk 1 featured rounded twin fins, the Mk 4 also had an increased rudder area with a squared off appearance. Another batch of 100 Mk 4 'Venom' was built under license, in the J-1701 to J-1800 serial batch. These aircraft entered service from 1956 onwards.

Initially, all aircraft entered service in a silver / natural metal livery. This meant the wings, tails and booms were unpainted aluminium, while the fuselage was largely made of plywood, covered with fabric and over painted in silver dope. Of course the rear hot section of the fuselage around the engine was constructed of metal as was the nose cone and gun pod.

Some fifteen to twenty years into service, trials were undertaken to camouflage the Venoms. These trials included variants with all black to very dark grey upper sides as well as two tones of greens. Finally, all Venoms were painted in a blue-grey / blue-green camouflage scheme with ivory undersides. In general, all aircraft received the same pattern of camouflage, but slightly different patterns appeared, particularly towards the wingtip tanks. It must be stressed at this point, that the Venom's colour scheme faded very quickly. The camouflage was only touched up and it appears that sometimes not even the original tones were used, therefore sometimes creating a scheme which represented a four-tone camouflage ranging to a very mottled effect. Camouflaged Venoms had the speed brakes painted dayglo orange and carried dayglo orange bands on the outside of the tail booms.

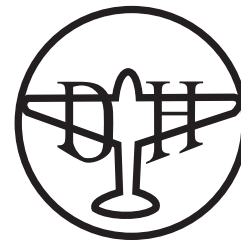
From the early 1970s it was decided, that all Swiss military aircraft had to be equipped with an IFF transponder. The Venom's cramped avionics nose bay had no space for any additional equipment, which meant that a new styled pointed nose was designed, which provided the required space. This nose was unique to Swiss Venoms and was retro fitted on the remaining Vampire single seaters. At about the same time, the black serials were replaced by white numbers for better long distance legibility. In the mid 1980s the DH-112 Venoms were retired from service, the final farewell taking place at Interlaken airfield in the Bernese Oberland.

This decal sheet features squadron badges of the various squadrons that operated the Venom. Please note that against common misconception, aircraft were never exclusively issued to a specific squadron, rather they were rotated through the various squadrons based on hours flown to keep the hours spread across the fleet. Therefore squadron badges appeared only frequently and for short periods at a time. While squadrons were not encouraged to apply special markings back in those days, depot maintenance at the BAMF depots quickly removed any artwork. It is possible; that the same aircraft carried different badges at different times and it is impossible to know which aircraft carried badges in retrospect.

My gratitude for support goes to the Swiss Air Force Museum in Dübendorf as well as to Michel Bérard for his research on the Venom previously published in the Swiss IPMS magazine Virus Plasticus.



Robert Schneider
Winterthur, September 2007

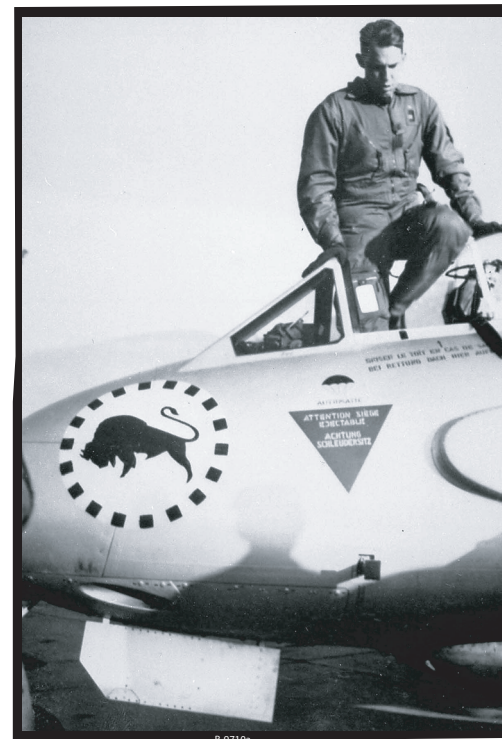


Mk 1 / Mk 1R / Mk 4



De Havilland

DH-112 'Venom'

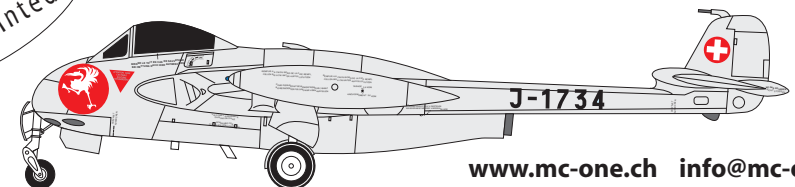


The jet age dawned for Switzerland in the summer of 1946. For trials, the KA (Kriegstechnische Anstalt) ordered 3 DH-100 Mk 1 'Vampire' from de Havilland in England. J-1001 was handed over at the de Havilland plant in Hatfield on July 27th 1946. The service life of this aircraft was relatively short and ended only 7 days later when it was written off during a take off accident on August 2nd.

Not to be not discouraged however, the Government ordered 75 DH-100 Mk 6 'Vampires' at the end of 1948. These aircraft were to be built by de Havilland, while a further batch of 100 Vampires were to be built under license in Switzerland.

The evolution of jet aircraft moved very quickly in those days and the DH-112 'Venom' was evaluated while the Vampires were still in production during 1951. The Venom proved to be a superior aircraft and it was decided to build 150 of these aircraft under license as a follow up to the Vampires. For the first time, Switzerland was able to acquire a license to build jet engines. The Ghost 48 was to be produced in Winterthur by the Sulzer Brothers Company.

1/48 scale
alps printed



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