

Not to be 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.

Deliveries from Hatfield started on May 5th 1949. The aircraft were flown to Switzerland by de Havilland company pilots and in particular by John Cunningham, who at that time, was the company's chief pilot. For the delivery flights, small British registrations were painted next to the Swiss serial numbers which could quickly be removed in Switzerland. The aircraft were painted according to Swiss specifications and already carried service markings in French and German.

'Operation Snowball' took place on February 8th 1950. John Cunningham carried a pair of skis attached on top of the tail booms. For the delivery flight, J-1048 had the title 'Operation Snowball' painted on the engine cowling. A total of 75 DH-100 Mk.6 Vampires were flown into Switzerland serialised J-1005 – J-1079.

In the meantime, the manufacturing lines for the license built DH-100's were being set up in Emmen, Altenrhein and Buochs. 100 Vampires (J-1101 to J-1200) were delivered to the Swiss Air Force between 1951 and 1953. The Goblin Engines were however still built in the UK and most of them were flown in by Swiss Ju-52s.

In 1953, F+W Emmen (in co-operation with de Havilland) built 3 DH-115 Mk.11 Vampire Trainers (U-1001 – U-1003). Three years later, an additional batch of 7 Vampire trainers (U-1004 – U1010) were produced and on this occasion the Mk.55s were equipped with Martin Baker Mk3 ejection seats. In 1957 however, these aircraft were re-serialised U-1201 – U-1210. By 1967, a total of 39 DH-115 Mk.55 were being flown by the Air Force, the last 9 of them being surplus RAF aircraft.

Additionally, a single DH-113 NF (night fighter) Mk.10 (U-1301) was purchased in 1958 by the KTA for trials and as a test bed for equipment used in the DH-112 Venom project. This aircraft was not modified with ejection seats and was therefore liquidated in 1961. An attractive 'Wasp' paint scheme adorned this aircraft.

During 1960, all Vampires were modified and received Martin Baker Mk.3 ejection seats, thus requiring extensive modification of the cockpit rear bulkhead. Also in 1960, three additional Vampires were built from spare parts (J-1080 – J-1082).

John Cunningham (left) at the Vampire farewell on June 12th 1990



Robert Schneider
Mülheim, June 2013



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Matterhorn Circle Decals

De Havilland

DH-115 Mk 55

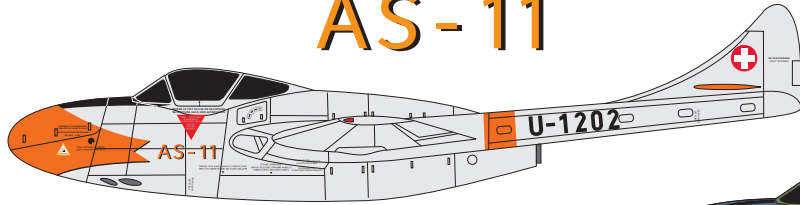
'Vampire Trainer'

1/72 scale

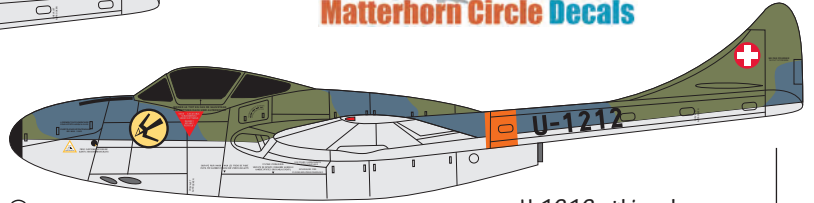
The jet age dawned for Switzerland in the summer of 1946. For test and evaluation purposes, the KTA (Weapons Procurement Agency) ordered 3 DH-100 Mk.1 'Vampires' from de Havilland in England. J-1001 was handed over at the de Havilland plant in Hatfield on July 27th 1946. The service life of this aircraft was relatively short and ended only 7 days later when it was written off during a take off accident.

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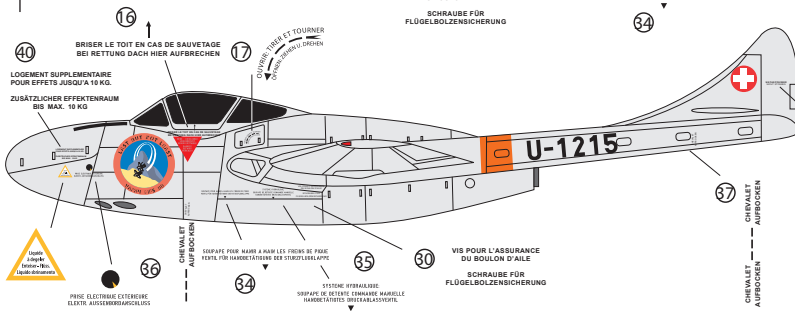
AS-11



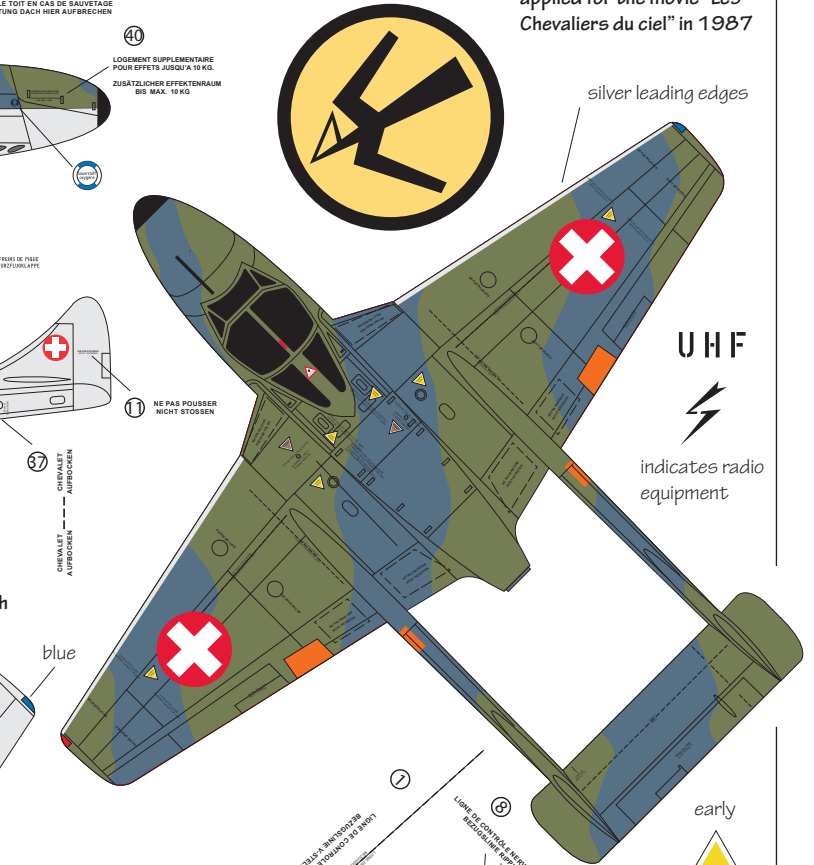
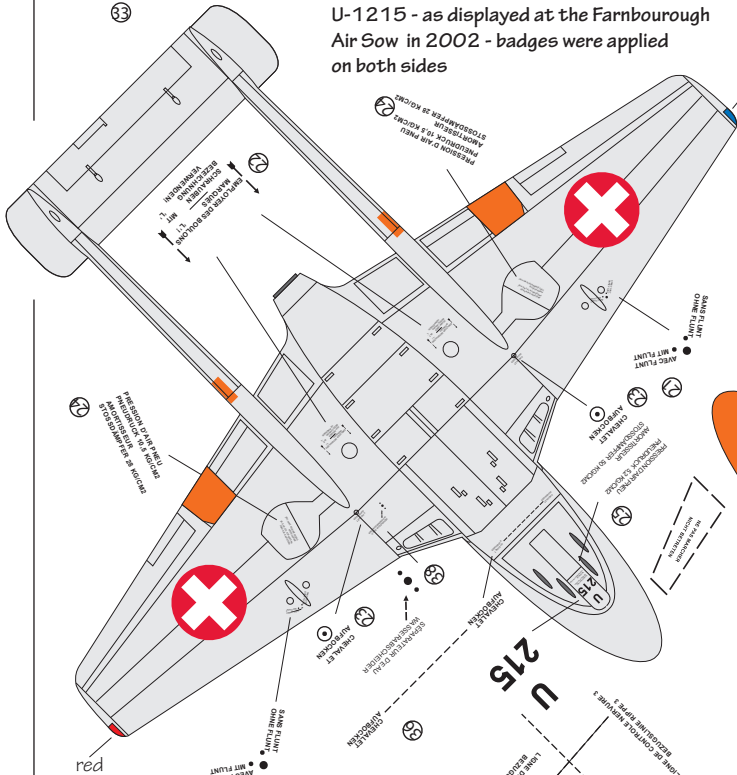
U-1202 - one of the AS-11 guided missiles training aircraft



U-1212 - this scheme was applied for the movie "Les Chevaliers du ciel" in 1987



U-1215 - as displayed at the Farnborough Air Show in 2002 - badges were applied on both sides



silver leading edges

UHF
indicates radio equipment

- Blue-grey 602 378
- Blue-green 602 379
- Silver
- Dayglo Orange



AUTOMATIC
indicates modification of the ejection seats