

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.

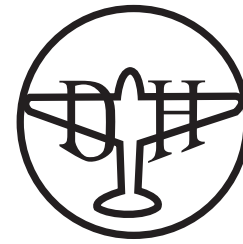
Additionally, a single DH-113 NF (night fighter) Mk.10 (U-1301) was purchased in 1958 by the KTA for trials and as a test bed for equipment used in the DH-112 Venom project. This aircraft was not modified with ejection seats and was therefore liquidated in 1961. An attractive 'Wasp' paint scheme adorned 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, May 2009



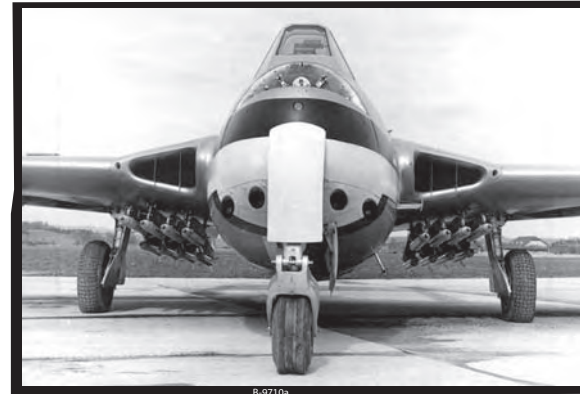
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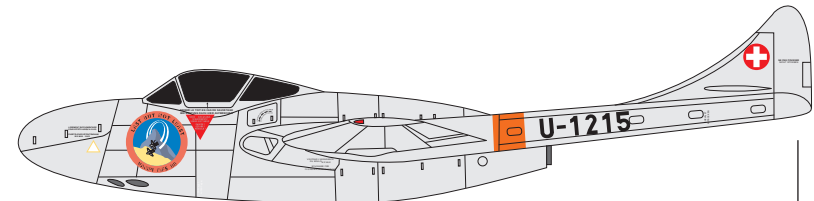
De Havilland

DH-100 Mk 6 'Vampire'

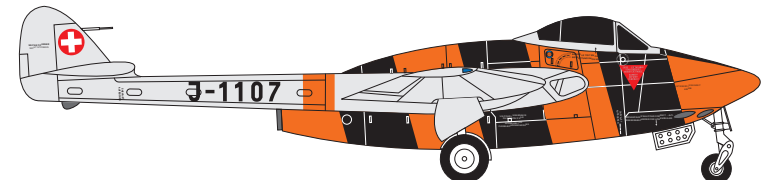
DH-115 MK 55 'Vampire Trainer'



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.



1/48 scale
alps printed



General notes:

Vampire fuselages were built from plywood, and painted silver. The wings, tail booms and control surfaces were made of aluminum. They were kept very clean. The cockpit was black.

Swiss Vampires were not colorful and did not carry squadron badges. However, there were various camouflage trials (black birds) and quite a number served in latter years as target towing aircraft, featuring an eye-catching orange/black livery. There were some changes during the near 40 years of service life. The nose step areas markings changed to a dashed style. Ejection seats were fitted during 1960 and therefore the red warning triangles were applied – also their style changed. Very early, the dayglo orange high visibility markings were applied on the outside of the tail booms and the speed brakes.

In 1977, J- 1081 & J-1107 were used for trials with high visibility markings as target towing aircraft – at that time they still had the original nose. The dayglo yellow / black stripes did not serve the purpose and both aircraft were repainted with dayglo orange stripes. The Swiss nationality roundels on the wings received a white outline. Also, the Pinocchio noses installed on the Venoms were also fitted to the Vampire. The larger noses were necessary to house the new IFF transponders.

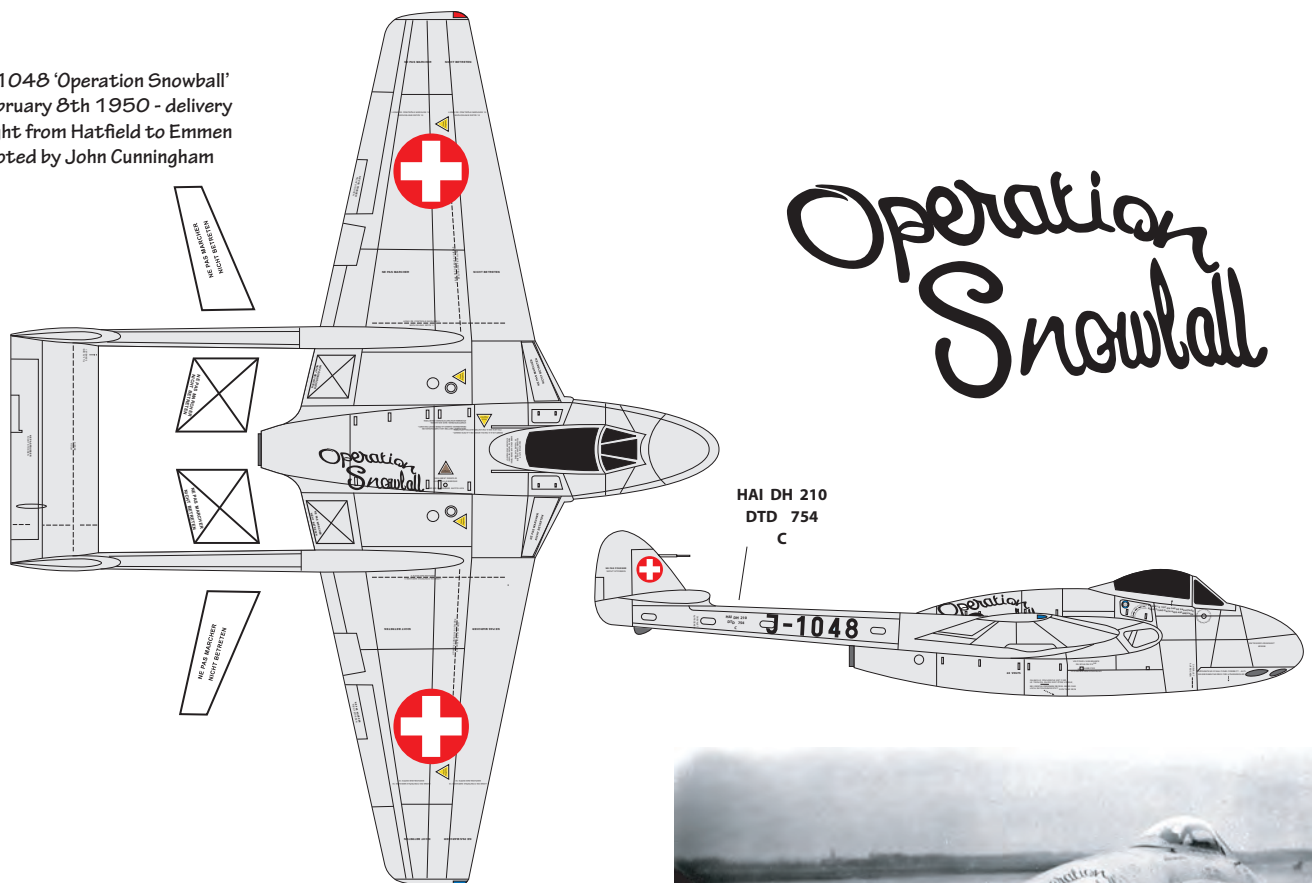
Towards the end of its service life, some big badges were painted on Vampires; several are depicted on this decal sheet. And then... there were the few days of the sharks...

This decal sheets features enough markings and data to build two complete aircraft. I suggest using the white roundels supplied underneath the Swiss roundels for the target towing aircraft in case the opacity of the white is not strong enough.

These decals are printed on an Alps printer onto a continuous decal film. It is recommended that you cut out each decal before placing it into lukewarm water for a few seconds. As the paint is printed on top of the decal film, it is prone to scratches. For protection, the decal sheet is sealed with a thin coat of Johnsons Future acrylic lacquer. The decals react well to softening agents like Micro Sol or Micro Set, but any contact with thinners will be fatal!

My gratitude for support goes again to the Swiss Air Force Museum in Dübendorf as well as to various friends who supplied loads of information.

J-1048 'Operation Snowball'
February 8th 1950 - delivery
flight from Hatfield to Emmen
piloted by John Cunningham



Resin Pinocchio Noses and underwing fuel tanks
in 1/48 & 1/72 scale can be obtained from:

Michel Bérard
Av. Grand Champsec 9
CH-1950 Sion
Switzerland

michel.berard@netplus.ch

