

To make things easy and expedite the procurement, all 100 aircraft were to be built in Great Britain. The first 12 aircraft, delivered between April and December 1959, were standard Mk. 6 retrieved from surplus storage at Kemble. These aircraft were used for pilot training and later returned to the UK to be modified to Swiss requirements.

The following 88 aircraft were build for Switzerland at Dunsfold as Mk. 58. The Swiss Hunters have a strengthened fuselage and landing gear fittings, due to the steep approaches required on the mountain bases. Also attachment points were fitted that allowed the aircraft to be moved inside the caverns by lifting cranes. Further, a braking chute was installed to reduce the landing distance. Hard points on the outer wings allowed for 4 Swiss made rocket launchers on each wing, which carried up to sixteen 8cm Oerlikon rockets. This capacity was later increased to 28 rockets allowing for formidable salvos. Last but not least, gun blast deflectors were installed to reduce the nose down tendency when firing the guns. Designated as a fighter, the Mk. 58 was also equipped for the ground attack role and carried the full array of weapons in the Swiss inventory. In 1964, the AIM-9B Sidewinder was also introduced.

In 1970, the Air Force had, after some losses, a requirement for 30 additional Hunters. This number was increased to 60 aircraft in 1972. Since Hawker had already ended the production of the Hunter, second hand aircraft of all marks were searched worldwide and the worthy airframes completely overhauled to zero flight hours. Hawker delivered then the empty cells and components to Emmen. These airframes were then named Mk. 58a. Hawker suggested to the Air Force the purchase of some Hunter Trainers with the consequence, that the forward fuselages for the last 8 aircraft were delivered for two seaters (Mk. 68). Mk. 58a and Mk.68 received a revised colour scheme – slightly lighter shades of dark green and medium sea grey compared to the first batch. The bottom was painted light grey versus silver paint. Another point of recognition is the fact, that the later aircraft were painted totally flat while the first one hundred were silk gloss.

Unfortunately, The Hunter had one shortcoming in common with all jet aircraft of those days. The Rolce Royce Avon engine demanded quite a big slurp of jet fuel to produce thrust and dried the fuel cells very fast, limiting the flying time considerably. Despite the fact, that the Hunter performed best without additional fuel tanks, Hawker built the Hunter with the ability to carry up to 4 under wing fuel tanks – thus the 200 plastic FLUNT (Flügel Unter Tank). The plastic tanks proved to kaput easy, posed a risk and were therefor replaced with similar looking Swiss made metal FLUNT that carried 455L / 100 GAL. Still, the fuel capacity could not satisfy the increasing operational requirements. Hawker developed for their FGA Mk. 9 model a huge 230 GAL fuel tank that required a large cut-out in the landing flap. The disadvantage was a significant reduction in speed. The Swiss solution for the same problem was a stretched 100 GAL fuel tank, that could carry 150 GAL but had the same diameter as the original tank and did not have any impact on speed. Still, an exact quarter circle of the landing flap had to go – but the cut-out was a lot smaller than on the Mk. 9. Thus said, Hunter carried their fuel tanks at all times. Flights without additional fuel did not make sense. Replacement of the fuel tanks started in 1973. On long distance flights, 4 tanks were carried (2 x 150GAL / 2 x 100GAL)

Many hymns have been sung about the beauty and elegance of the Hunter. For sure, the Hunter was very popular among the pilots who operated the aircraft in the traditional Swiss Militia System – the main advantage point of the Hunter however was not speed, but the fact that the aircraft presented an extremely stable delivery platform allowing the pilot to guide his goods to the designated target with precision. After loosing his fighter role to the F-5E Tiger, the Hunter received a major upgrade programme called KAWEST - Hunter Program 80. Next to new RWR and communication gear as well as chaff and flare counter measures, new hard points and additional pylons and weapon adaptors were installed. A number of aircraft were equipped to carry the AGM-65B Maverick. The Hunter received a second lease of live.

Swan songs for the Hunter fleet were heard in 1991 and by the end of 1994, the familiar Hunter had disappeared from the Swiss skies. Some aircraft escaped their fate and were donated to museums or sold and some kept airworthy. Today, 25 years later, the last of the 'Sportsmodels' is still a pleasing sight for the eye.



Robert Schneider
Müllheim, September 2019



MC48020 - ©Matterhorn Circle

HAWKER

Hawker Hunter Mk. 58 T Mk. 68

Late - 1980 - 1994



www.mc-one.ch

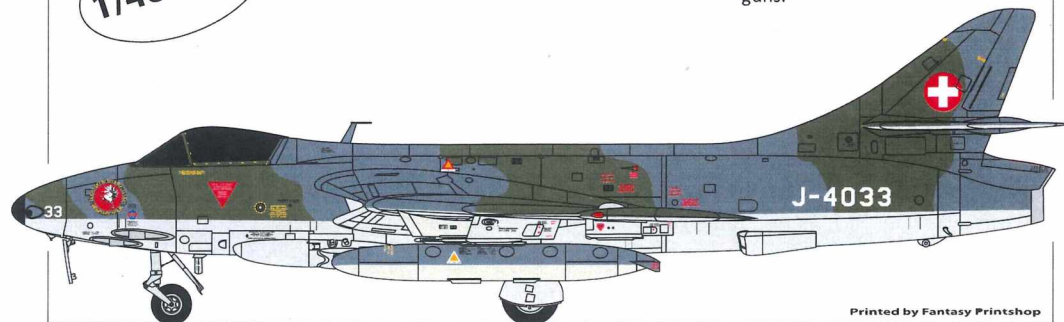
info@mc-one.ch



The Hunter is eternally connected to one name: Sir Sidney Camm – Chief designer of Hawker Aircraft Ltd. The first prototype made her maiden flight on July 20th, 1951 with Neville Duke at the controls. Even before the first flight, 400 aircraft have been ordered as a consequence of the outbreak of the Korean War. For the British aircraft industry, this was a story of success.

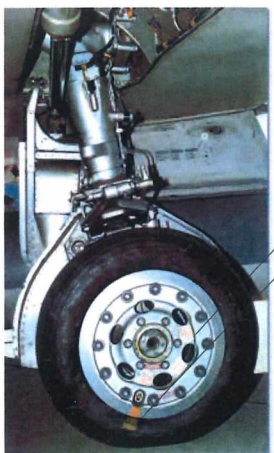
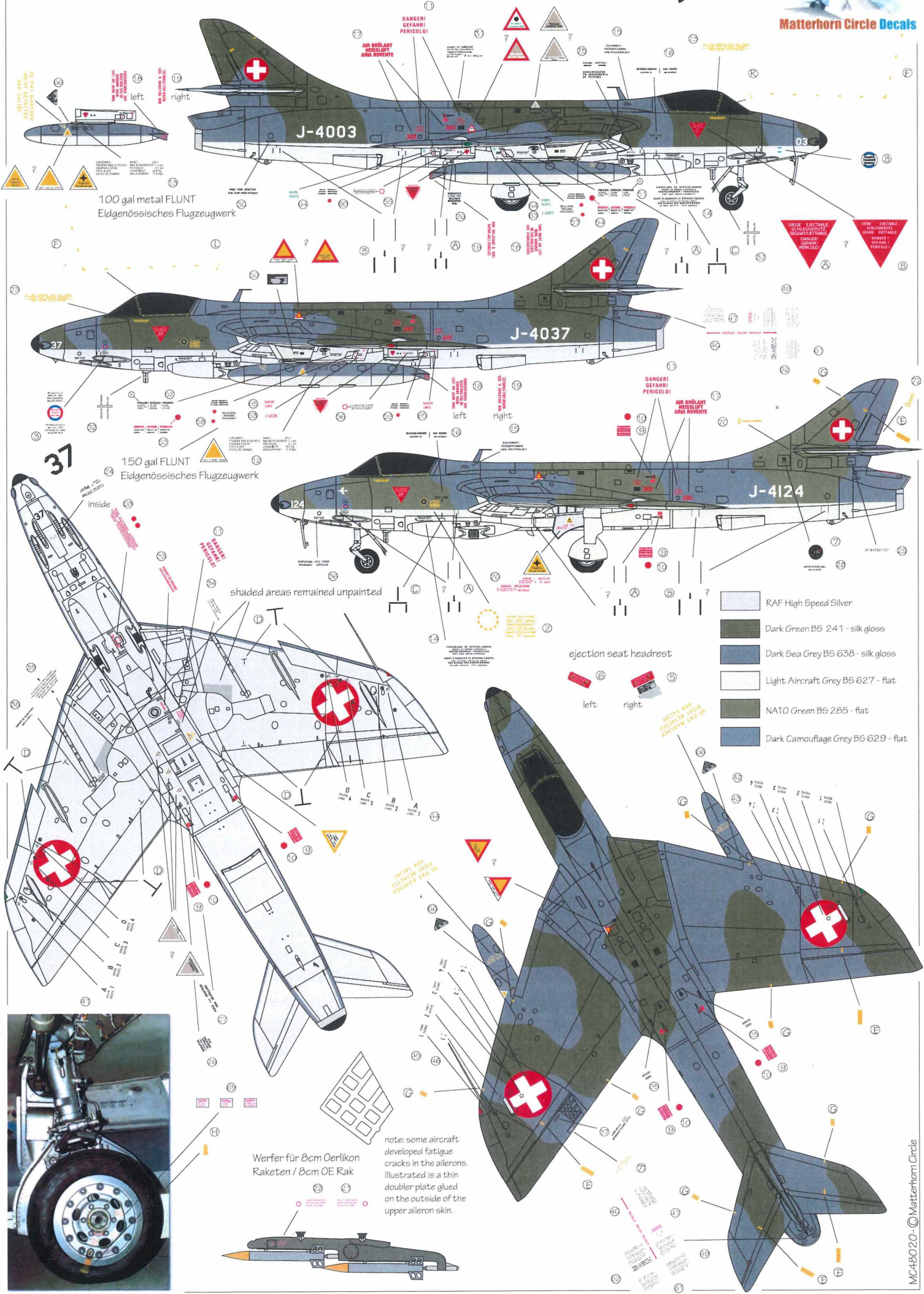
The Hawker Hunter Mk. 6 was evaluated and tested by the Swiss Air Force in February and May 1957 – the rival contender was the Canadair Sabre. On November 15th, 1957, the Swiss Parliament decided on an order for 100 Hunter Mk. 58. The 313 millions (CHF) order included 30 spare engines, 200 drop tanks as well as ammunition for the 30mm Aden guns.

1/48 scale



Printed by Fantasy Printshop

Hawker Hunter Mk. 58 - later years

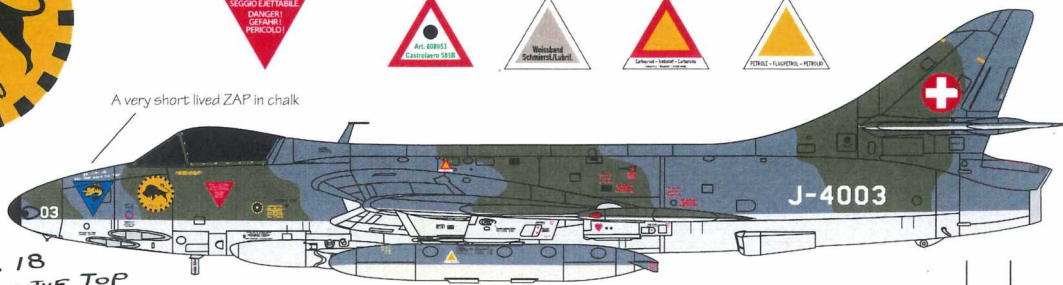




Matterhorn Circle Decals



A very short lived ZAP in chalk



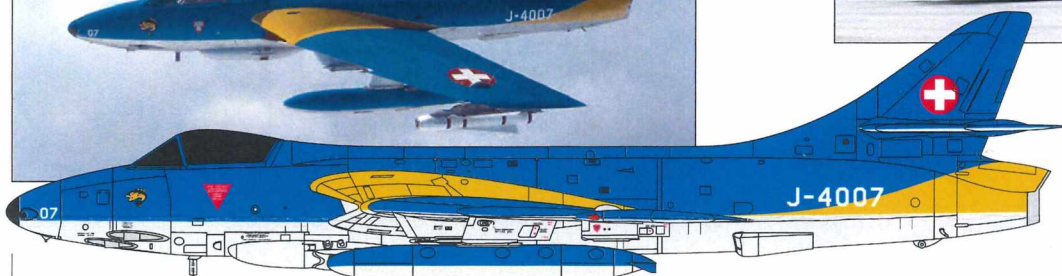
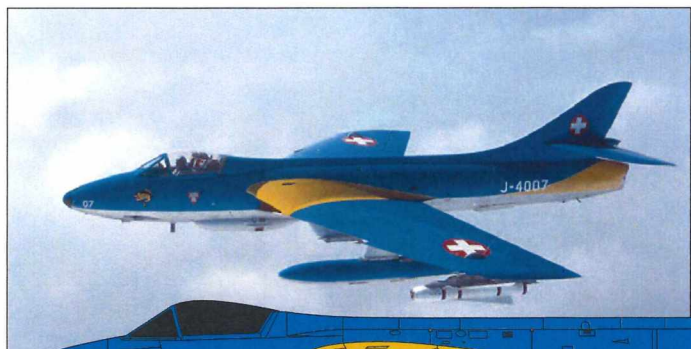
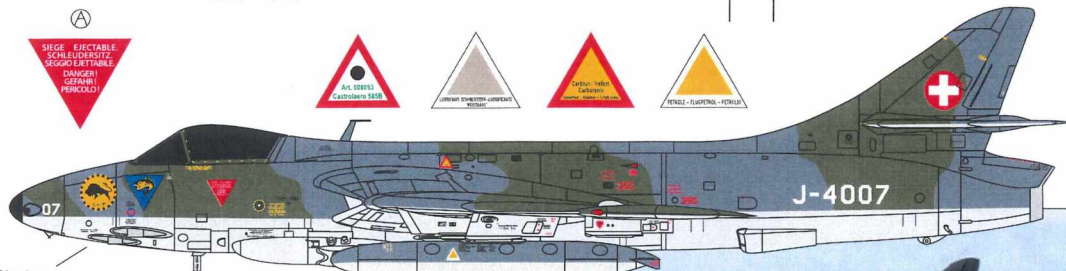
J-4003 towards the end of her career in 1994.

J-4007 repainted with Squadron 7 badges on each side of her nose. She participated at the TIKAS 89 (Tieflug Kampagne 1989) in Sweden. Later, Squadron 20 added their mark on her.

FL KP. 18
THE TOP OVER THE TOP

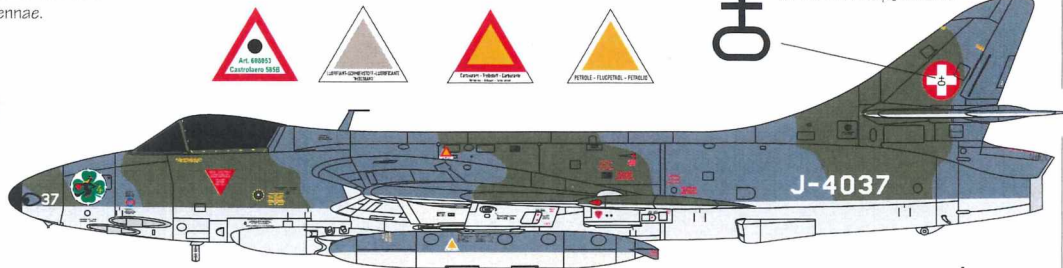


note: Squadron 7 badge also on the r/h side

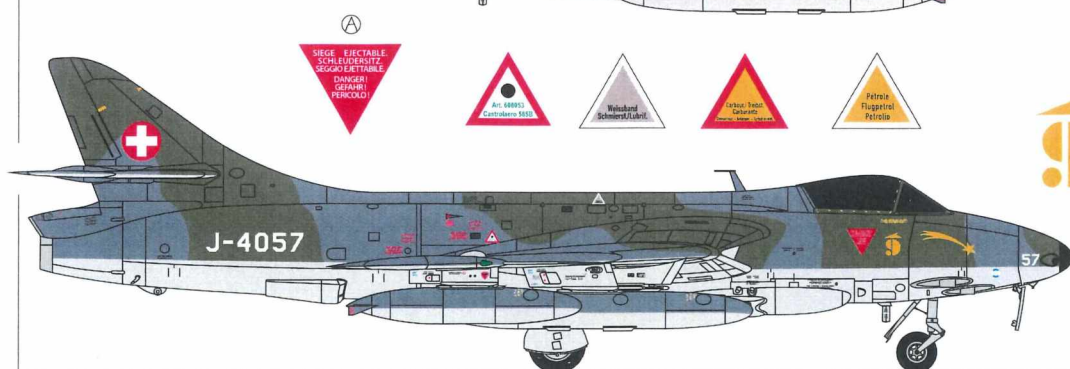
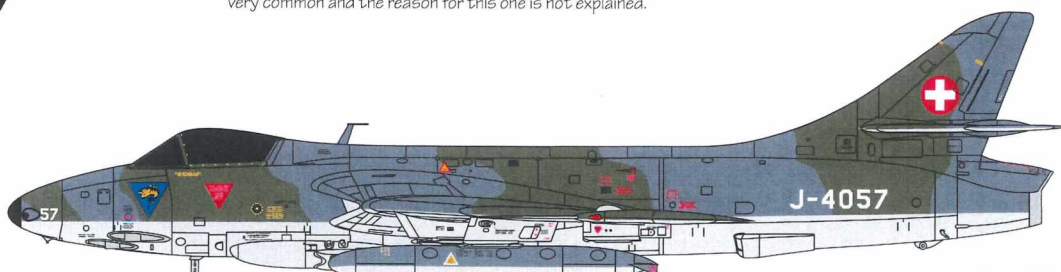


J-4007 James Bond in 1989. Fliegerkompanie 9 fixed the r/h side of the nose with their logo, note the still missing VHF antennae.

note: this ZAP symbolizes the earth or simply a church

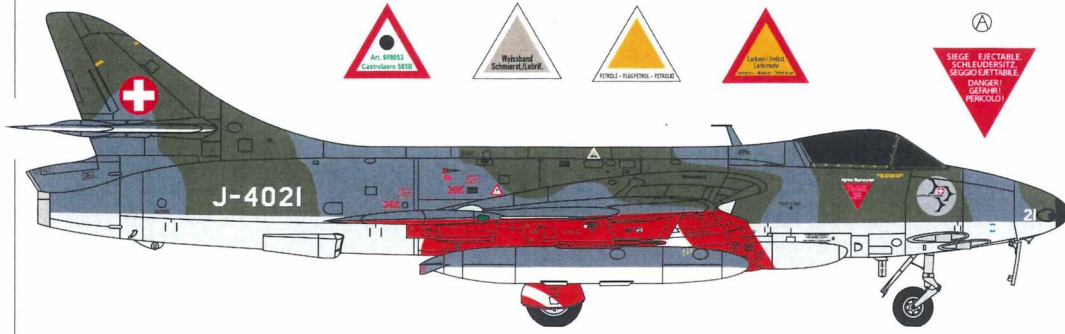


Emmen, May 14th 1991. Squadron 4 with J-4037. Zap's by the ground crews are not very common and the reason for this one is not explained.

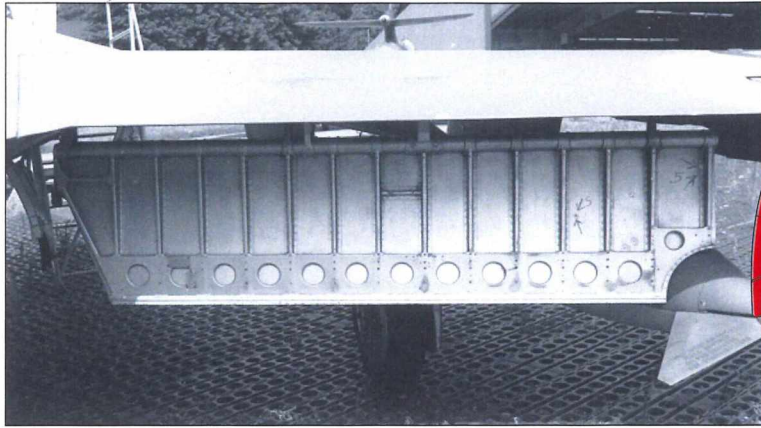


Fliegerkompanie 9

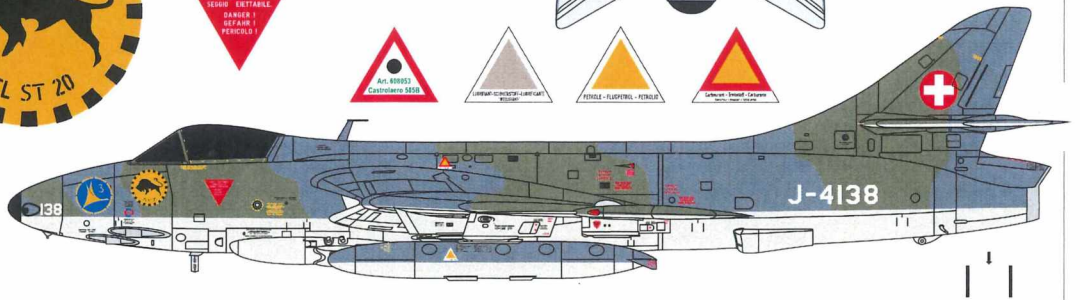
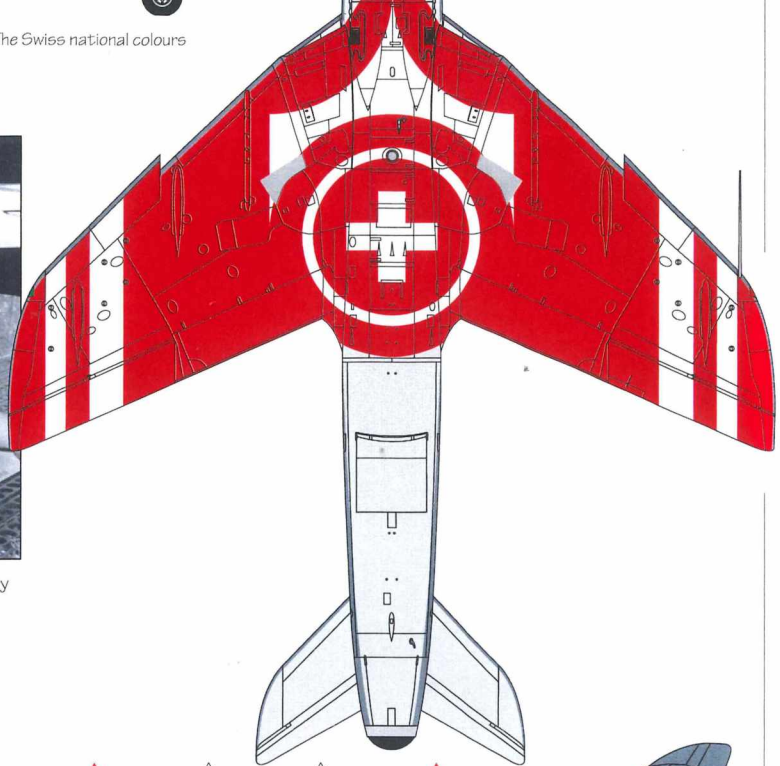
On very rare occasions, a Hunter carried 4 FLUNT. J-4057, Raron, May 5th 1993



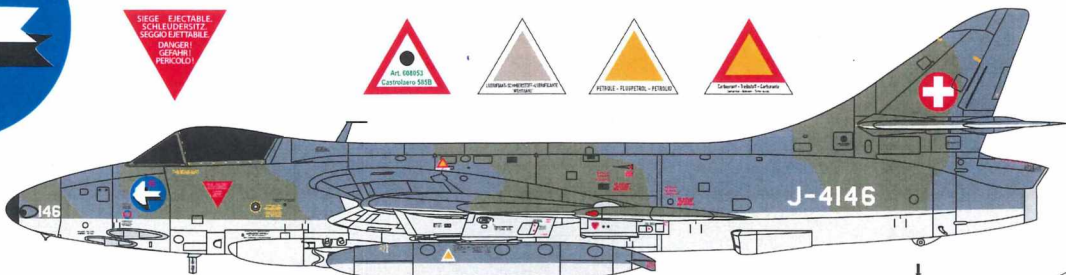
J-4021 in 1992. Hptm. Fredy Ramseier flew as Leader of the Patrouille Suisse in position Uno. The Swiss national colours were applied in 1991 to celebrate the foundation of the Eidgenossenschaft in 1291.



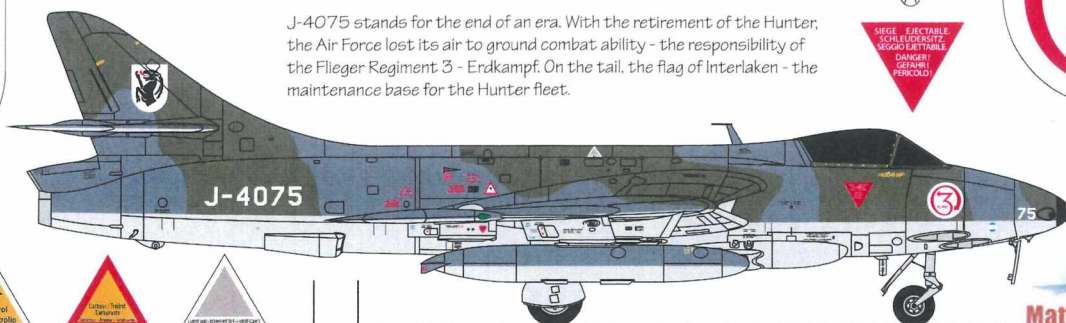
View of the unique Flap of the Hunter MK.58 / Mk. 58a and T Mk. 68. The cut-out became necessary when the new 150 GAL FLUNT were introduced.



J-4138 in it's final appearance before being retired in May 1993. The Squadron 20 badge was a very late addition.



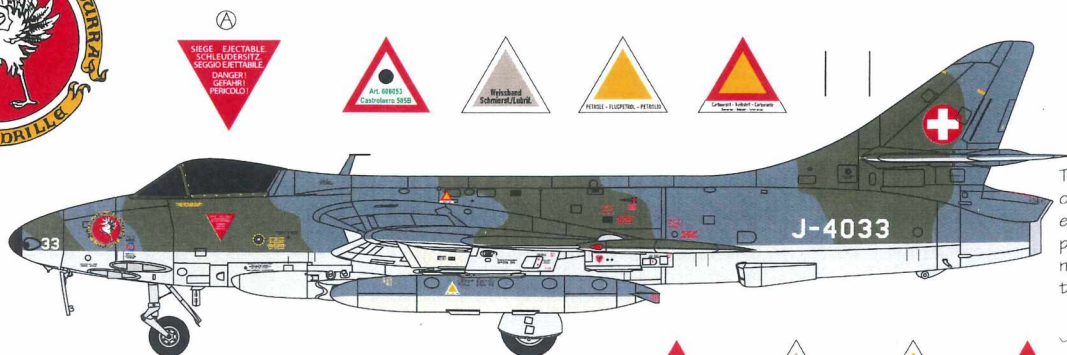
J-4146 in the colours of the Fighter Squadron 15 based in St. Stephan. With the phase out of the Hawker Hunter in 1994, Squadron 15 was also disbanded. J-4146 was retired in October 1993.



J-4075 stands for the end of an era. With the retirement of the Hunter, the Air Force lost its air to ground combat ability - the responsibility of the Flieger Regiment 3 - Erdkampf. On the tail, the flag of Interlaken - the maintenance base for the Hunter fleet.



Squadrons of the Swiss Air Force do not fly permanent assigned aircraft. To ensure a linear ageing of the fleet, the maintenance facility Interlaken assigned the Hunters to the squadrons upon requirement - most aircraft however were kept in storage. Thus a particular aircraft served with different squadrons - J-4033 carried badges of Squadron 15 and 20, before she got assigned to Squadron 2 in 1992, operating out of Turtmann.

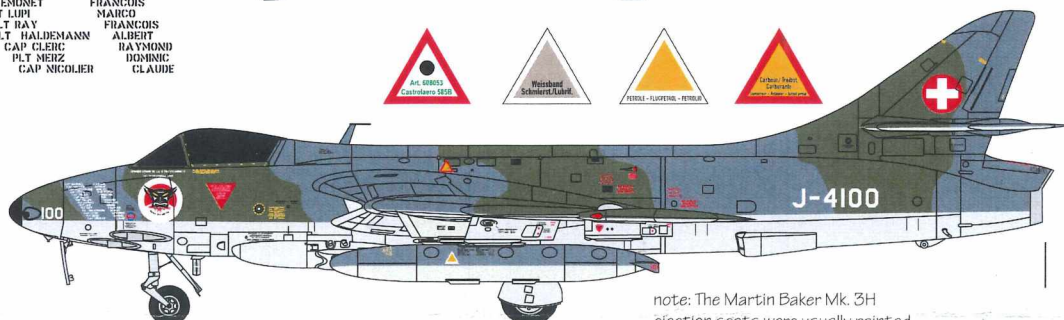
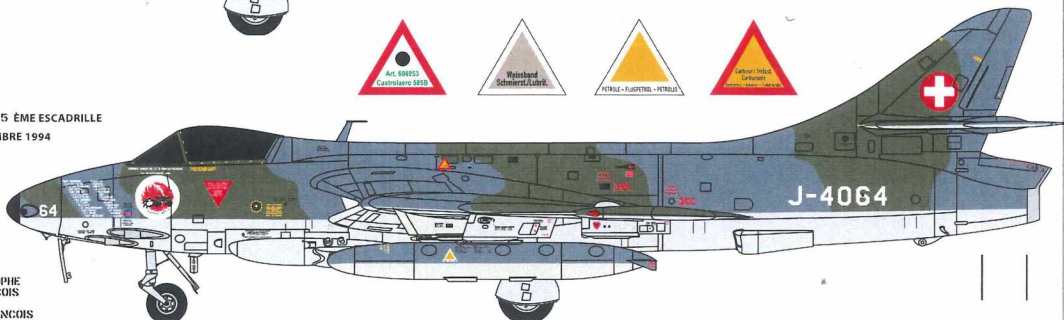


The pilots of the 5^{ème} escadrille celebrated their final training course extensively. A number of planes got patched up with their personal names - the most prominent among them, Astronaut Claude Nicolier.

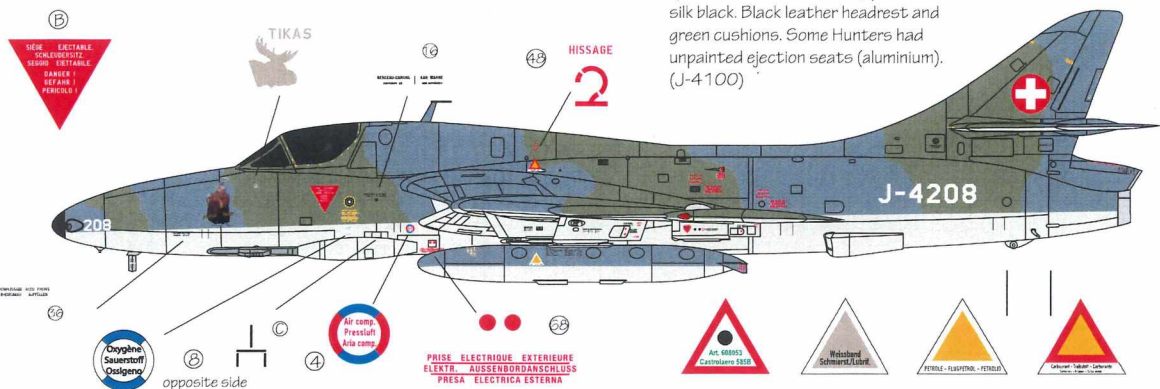


DERNIER COURS DE LA 5^{ème} ESCADRILLE
14 - 19 NOVEMBRE 1994

- | | |
|-----------------|------------|
| CAP SCHÖREN | JEAN-LUC |
| CAP BALDWIN | ANDREW |
| CAP BATTAGLIONI | ROBERTO |
| CAP ETTER | CHRISTOPHE |
| CAP GOLAY | FRANCOIS |
| CAP HAEBER | ERIC |
| CAP KELLER | FRANCOIS |
| PLT EMOINET | FRANCOIS |
| PLT LUPPI | MARCO |
| PLT RAY | FRANCOIS |
| LT HALDEMANN | ALBERT |
| CAP CLERG | RAYMOND |
| PLT MERZ | DOMINIC |
| CAP NICOLIER | CLAUDE |



note: The Martin Baker Mk. 3H ejection seats were usually painted silk black. Black leather headrest and green cushions. Some Hunters had unpainted ejection seats (aluminium). (J-4100)



J-4208 was the last of 8 Hunter T Mk. 68 and the last Hunter to be built in Emmen. As J-4152 aka Robin Hood, J-4208 became Friar Tuck - both characters based on the popular Disney Movie 'Robin Hood'. After retirement in 1994, J-4208 was sold back to England. The T Mk. 68 was equipped with two Aden 30mm Guns. Martin Baker SM HM4 ejection seats were installed.

J-4124 (page 2)

J-4124 was the only Swiss Hunter that shot down another aircraft and owned a kill mark. The victim J-4051 was the flight leader who got shot down by his wingman. The accident happened on October 20, 1982 at the 'Forel' shooting range. Fortunately, only trainings ammunition was loaded and the pilot of J-4051 managed to eject safely.

Resources:

- 'Hunter Fascination' by Christoph Donnet
- 'Hunter - ein Jäger für die Schweiz' by Peter Gunti, Olivier Borgeaud and Peter Lewis
- 'Swiss Hunter' by Peter Gunti and Peter Lewis
- 'Patrouille Suisse' by Aridio Pellanda
- The Internet



In 1982, 40 Hunters got equipped with the optically guided air to ground missile AGM-65 Maverick. Selected were those aircraft with the longest life expectancy - all aircraft are in the range of J-4056 to J-4100.

I would like to point out, that the Swiss Air Force keeps their aircraft pretty clean. Of courses the Aden guns produced a lot of soot and there were many oil stains, especially on the lower fuselage, but maintenance crews also did a lot of cleaning.

In an effort to reduce the radar reflection of their aircraft, the RAF changed the paint applied to their aircraft. This has been reflected in Switzerland too. Hunters acquired in the second and third series have a different appearance. This has been followed throughout their service lives. Only in the final years, some aircraft got repainted with a new type of flat paint that had a bluish tint. Also the camouflage edges got really soft and the whole scheme calmer.

Most Swiss Hunters never had a squadron badge applied. Pilots put them on with rattle cans during their training courses and the maintenance depot removed them again. Crew names were rarely seen except on the designated Patrouille Suisse aircraft during the last years.

While the Hawker Hunter has been operated largely by the RAF in different versions and been exported worldwide, there are some features, that make the later Swiss Hunter Mk. 58 unique. Modifications, which have not been adopted by other operators are:

- 150 GAL FLUNT – in essence a stretched version of the Hawker 100 GAL FLUNT
- Quarter circular cut-out in the Flaps
- Enlarged SABRINAS incl. Chaff and flare dispensers
- RWR sensors on nose and tail
- Inboard pylons

