



## Camouflage and Squadron Markings

### Camouflage

The Hunter F.4s and F.6s issued to the squadrons based in Germany were finished in the prevailing day fighter camouflage scheme conforming to British Standard 381 colours, comprising upper surfaces in Dark Sea Grey 638, over which a specific disruptive pattern of Dark Green 641 was applied, while under surfaces were in High Speed Silver. All these colours were in a gloss finish when new but after comparatively brief exposure to everyday squadron service they dulled to a semi-gloss condition.

The only deviation to these colours relate to a small number of F.4s that were re-finished while in service in Germany, with PRU Blue 636 under surfaces replacing the original Silver. In the absence of colour photographs such revisions are difficult to substantiate, but the monochrome illustration of XF368 'C' of 3 Squadron in this publication seems to confirm that this was one of those aircraft with PRU Blue under surfaces, and others in this scheme were reported in service with 118 Squadron.

Given that immediately prior to the entry into service of the Hunter F.4 in Germany, PRU Blue had been the standard lower surface finish on its predecessors in the form of the Vampire FB.5s, 9s, Venoms, Meteor FR.9s, PR.10s, and Sabres of 2 TAF, and later some Swift FR.5s, then it is reasonable to suppose that stocks of this colour paint would be abundant at RAF fighter bases in Germany, and could therefore easily have been applied to a few Hunters.

Another unusual, but more widespread phenomenon was the

removal of camouflage from the rear fuselage of some Hunter 4s. This was approximately at the position of frame 61 aft of the fin, and extended diagonally forward and downwards. Although apparently mainly restricted to relatively few F.4s at Oldenburg (14, 20, and 26 Sqn.), and at Brüggen (e.g. 130 Sqn), this feature was also to be found on Dutch and Belgian-built F.4s and F.6s. It has been suggested that some of the F.4s issued to German-based units had a problem with high frequency vibration in the rear fuselage which could cause metal fatigue cracks in the structure, and this area may have been stripped of paint to facilitate easier regular inspection by the engineers. It may also have involved the replacement of that part of the rear fuselage, because this phenomenon was

*Hunter T.7 WV372 'R' of 2 Sqn after take-off from Gütersloh, circa 1969/70. Note that the serial number beneath the starboard wing is incorrectly painted as WV327. (Günther Kipp)*

observed mostly during late 1956 / early 1957.

Some German-based squadrons, including Nos. 2, 4(FR), 67, 71, and 234, painted the gun ports of their Hunters in gloss black, which made them smarter in appearance, and also easier to clean after gun-firing.

Several Hunter squadrons also painted the wingtips of their aircraft white or yellow; while this may have enhanced appearance the prime purpose was to improve conspicuity when the (monochrome) cine gun camera films were analysed.



*(Centre Right) FR.10 XF457 'T' of 2 Sqn banking somewhere over the typical terrain of the North German Plain. (MoD)*

*(Right) The same aircraft, XF457 'T' of 2 Sqn in September 1970 exhibiting an early attempt at 'toning down' long before the so-called B-style roundels, without the white ring, were officially introduced. The experimental roundel returned to its original red white and blue colours after little more than a month. (E. Westersotebier)*