

Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr – Flugplatz Berlin-Gatow

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The Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr – Flugplatz Berlin-Gatow (Bundeswehr Museum of Military History – Berlin-Gatow Airfield; formally known as Luftwaffenmuseum der Bundeswehr), is the Berlin branch of the Bundeswehr Military History Museum. The museum acts as an independent military department.

The museum is in Berlin at a former Luftwaffe and Royal Air Force (RAF) airfield, RAF Gatow. The focus is on military history, particularly the history of the post-war German Air Force. The museum has a collection of more than 200,000 items, including 155 aeroplanes, 5,000 uniforms and 30,000 books. There are also displays (including aeroplanes) on the history of the airfield when it was used by the RAF.



Nord 2501 Noratlas Transport

The Nord2501 Noratlas was a twin-engine military transport aircraft which was used by the West German, French, and Israeli Air Force. The Bundeswehr had a total of 186 in its inventory.

Commonly referred to as “Nora”, it was an all-metal high wing aircraft with its peculiar twin tail booms, and the cargo compartment known as the “fuselage gondola.” It was employed for humanitarian relief missions to disaster areas in Africa and the Middle East, as well as during the 1962 flood disaster in Hamburg. Commencing in 1968, the Luftwaffe replaced the Noratlas with the larger and more powerful Transall.



Percival P.66 Pembroke C.MK.54



The Pembroke is a high-wing aircraft built in Great Britain. The Bundeswehr utilized it as a transport, trainer and liaison aircraft for flight calibration and electronic warfare, while the German Navy occasionally employed it for Search and Rescue (SAR) duties.

The Pembroke transport aircraft on display was commissioned in 1957 at the Flugzeugführerschule (Pilot School) at Memmingen, and flew until 1974 for the Deutsches Zentrum für Luft-und Raumfahrt (German Aerospace Centre). During an extensive restoration, which lasted until 2013, the Bundeswehr Museum of Military History reconstructed this aircraft to the condition in which it was flown at the Flugzeugführerschule (Pilot School).



C160 Transall (1968 - today)

The C-160 twin-engine turboprop aircraft is a joint Franco-German development dating back to the 1960s. It was the first Western European armaments cooperation. The name "Transall" is a short cut for "Transporter Alliance", which was established by the four manufacturing companies. No other aircraft has seen a similar long period of service in the Bundeswehr. The Transall only requires short runways. It can operate from temporary landing strips and therefore is suitable for humanitarian operations. In 1968 the first German Transall flew relief supplies into Iran.

Apart from the German and French Air Forces, the Turkish Air Force is also using the Transall in the tactical air transport role, which means direct airlift onto the battlefield. Its primary role is the transport (or airlift) of material and personnel, medical evacuation of injured personnel, as well as dropping paratroopers and cargo. Temporarily, it was also used as a firefighting plane.



T33A Fighter Trainer (Used 1956 - 1976)

The Lockheed T-33A was one of the first jet-powered aircraft of the Luftwaffe and was used as a trainer aircraft for future jet pilots. The T-33A was based on the US Air Force F-80C fighter-bomber, a typical representative of the first generation of jet-powered fighter aircraft. The T-33A earned its nickname "T-Bird" due to its T-shaped wings.

The Luftwaffe T-33A aircraft were primarily operated by Flugzeugführerschule "B" (Pilot School B) at Fürstenfeldbruck. The T-Birds were quite popular because of their high reliability and quiet engines.



MIG-15BIS FAGOT



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The East German Air Force commenced fielding the MiG-15BIS in 1956, however it was hardly used in its operation role and instead it was primarily used for flight training of fighter pilots at the Offizierschule (Officer's School) at Kamenz. The MiG-15BIS on display, identification 3905, was last flown by Fighter-Bomber Regiment 30 "Ostrava" based at Hradec Kralove.



North American F-86K Sabre

In 1957, and only one year after establishing the Bundeswehr, procurement commenced for 88 F-86K Sabre aircraft for future Jagdgeschwader 74 (Fighter Wing 74) at Neuburg an der Donau. Final assembly of the aircraft took place at the Italian Company Fiat in Turin before they were delivered to Germany. The F-86K as an all-weather fighter aircraft, received state-of-the-art radar system so it could be employed in poor visibility. Soon after the first German fighter wings were put out under NATO control in 1962, the aircraft was regarded as outdated. By mid-1960s, the F-86K was replaced by the F104G Starfighter.

The aircraft on display was mothballed by the Bundeswehr directly after its delivery from the United States and never flown again. In the early 1980s it received the fictional identification JD-249 and was put on static display at the Luftwaffenunterstützungskommando (Air Force Support Command) at Karlsruhe. In 1989 it was handed over to the Luftwaffenmuseum (German Air Force Museum), now Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr – Flugplatz Berlin-Gatow



F-104G STARFIGHTER

The Starfighter was developed to intercept high-altitude bombers. The Bundeswehr also employed it for anti-ship operations, reconnaissance and fighter bomber missions. Management mistakes and training errors along as the multi-role missions with their high demand on personnel and material led to a high accident rate. Nearly one in three aircraft was lost and 116 pilots lost their lives. This Starfighter on display flew with the Fighter-Bomber Wing 32 and 34 before it was handed over to the museum in 1992.



F104 with JATO ... a VERY brave pilot was needed for this ride.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75qnxMd1YSY>



MIG-23 BN FLOGGER H (Used 1979 - 1990)

Only as late as the 1970s, an air attack component appeared on an organizational level in the Air Force of the National People's Army, next to the air defense component already in place, both integrated into the command & control authority of the "Frontal Aviation and Army Air Forces." In order to improve the ground-attack capability of the MiG-23 fighter-bomber version, it received modern technology for target acquisition with air-to-surface missiles. The variable-geometry wings provided lift during low-speed flight. Therefore, the fighter-bomber only required short take-off and landing distances on combat airfields.

Since 1980, the aircraft on display, identification 710, was assigned to Jagdbomber-geschwader 31 (Fighter-Bomber Wing 31) at Cottbus-Drewitz. A total of twenty-two MiG-23BN aircraft were delivered to the wing between 1979 and 1983.



SU-22M-4 FITTER K (used 1984 - 1990)

In a series of combat aircraft, the Su-22 was the latest development by the Sukhoi Company. The fighter-bomber was designed for high speeds at low altitudes and was equipped with an electronic target acquisition system for ground targets. To increase their inventory of aircraft for the support of ground forces, the East German Air Force received 48 Su-22M-4 fighter bombers since autumn 1984. The Su-22M-4 on display, was assigned to Jagdbomber-geschwader 77 at Laage, near Rostock.



My friend Lutz Möller and the SUCHOJ SU-22 UM3K FITTER G (Used 1984 - 1990)



MIKOJAN-GUREWITSCH MIG-23 UB FLOGGER C (Used 1978 - 1990)



RF-4E Phantom Reconnaissance (Used 1971 – 1992)



RF-4E Phantom Reconnaissance



Window in the nose for RF-4E SLAR system

The McDonnell Douglas RF-4E Phantom was the reconnaissance version of the F-4F fighter jet and was fielded in the Luftwaffe during the 1970s. In the late 1970s, the RF-4E was modified with a Side-Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR) system and employed for reconnaissance missions along the inner-German border in order to detect military movements in East Germany early on.

Between 1978 and 1982, the Luftwaffe furthermore converted and upgraded the unarmed RF-4Es with the capability to employ air-dropped weapons in order to be used for close air support (CAS) missions. The aircraft on display, identification 35+62, was operated only for a short period by Aufklärungsgeschwader 51 (Reconnaissance Wing 51) at Bremgarten and Aufklärungsgeschwader 52 at Leck, prior to being turned over to Technische Schule der Luftwaffe 3 (Air Force School of Engineering 3) at Fassberg, where it served for the next 30 years as a ground training aircraft for future aircraft mechanics.



AERO L-29 DELFIN MAYA (Used 1965 - 1980)

During a competition of the socialist states, the L-29 Delfin was selected as the standard jet trainer aircraft for the Warsaw Pact forces. Apart from the standard trainer version, a single-seat aerobatic version (L-29A Delfin Akrobat), and a true fighter and reconnaissance version (L-29R), equipped with cameras in the nose and under wing hardpoints for missiles, was built.

The aircraft on display, identification 338, was operated by Jagdfliegerausbildungsgeschwader 25 (Fighter Pilot Training Wing 25) at Bautzen from 1965 until 1980. The wing was assigned to the Offiziersochschule der Luftstreikräfte der NVA (East German Air Force Officer's Academy). This establishment conducted the entire flight training for future military pilots, ranging from basic flight training to instrument flying.

Now, we've move inside to the hangar exhibit ...



The Halberstadt CL.IV flew from 1918 in WW1.



Oberursel UR-2 rotary engine



Casa C-2.111, a later build of the He 111 H16



Looking at the Casa C-2.111 from the right rear

The Heinkel He 111 was a German aircraft designed by Siegfried and Walter Günter at Heinkel Flugzeugwerke in 1934. Through development it was described as a "wolf in sheep's clothing". Due to restrictions placed on Germany after the First World War prohibiting bombers, it masqueraded as a civil airliner, although from conception the design was intended to provide the nascent Luftwaffe with a fast medium bomber.

The CASA 2.111 was a medium bomber derived from the Heinkel He 111 and produced in Spain under license by Construcciones Aeronáuticas SA (CASA). The 2.111 models differed significantly in details from Heinkel's wartime He 111H design while using essentially the same exact airframe in appearance, featuring heavier armament and eventually Rolls-Royce Merlin engines



Focke-Wulf Fw 190

The Focke-Wulf Fw 190 Würger (English: Shrike) is a German single-seat, single-engine fighter aircraft designed by Kurt Tank in the late 1930s and widely used during World War II. Along with its well-known counterpart, the Messerschmitt Bf 109, the Fw 190 became the backbone of the Luftwaffe's Jagdwaffe (Fighter Force). The twin-row BMW 801 radial engine that powered most operational versions enabled the Fw 190 to lift larger loads than the Bf 109, allowing its use as a day fighter, fighter-bomber, ground-attack aircraft and, to a lesser degree, night fighter.



Fairey Gannet

The Fairey Gannet is a British carrier-borne aircraft of the post-Second World War era developed for the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm (FAA) by the Fairey Aviation Company. It was a mid-wing monoplane with a tricycle undercarriage and a crew of three, and a double turboprop engine driving two contra-rotating propellers. Due to its short range and speed and the ever increasing demands to electronic reconnaissance, the Gannet only remained an interim-solution. In 1966 it was replaced by the Breguet BR 1150 Atlantic long-range maritime patrol aircraft (MPA).



Candair CL-13 Sabre MK.6 (Licensed build of North American F-86 Sabre)

In the 1950s, the F-86 Sabre was the standard fighter aircraft of the US Air Force. During the Korean War (1950 - 1953), the F-86 put an end to the air superiority of the Soviet MiG-15 fighter jet. Improved versions featured the installation of a radar system, which allowed for all-weather operations. The Bundeswehr fielded the F-86 K commencing in 1959. The German Luftwaffe ordered an additional 225 Canadair CL13B Mk. 6 jets. Between 1964 and 1966, the F104G Starfighter replaced the F-86.



Panavia 200 Tornado

In the early 1970s, the multi-role combat aircraft (MCRA) was jointly developed by the UK, Germany and Italy. Beginning in 1981, it was fielded with the Bundeswehr, both as a fighter-bomber in the IDS (Interdiction Strike) version and in the ECR (Electronic Combat and Reconnaissance) configuration for electronic warfare. Its special terrain-following radar allows very-low-level flying at an altitude of only 60 meters.

Equipped with the optical and infrared reconnaissance assets, the Tornado on display is configured and shown in the REECE configuration. The electronic equipment is stored in a pod under the fuselage. Tornado aircraft in RECCE and ECR configuration took part in the NATO-led Operation "Allied Forces" during the Kosovo War in 1999. In addition to the reconnaissance role, their mission was the elimination of Serbian air defenses.



Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG 29

The majority of the East German Air Force's combat aircraft did not meet the requirements of the German Luftwaffe (Air Force). Along with other large-scale equipment, these aircraft were scrapped in large quantities. Solely, the advanced

Mig-29 fighter aircraft, a few helicopters and two Tupolev Tu-154 aircraft were taken over by the German Luftwaffe for a few years. With the exception of this particular MiG-29 serial number "29+03", all other aircraft of this type were handed over to the Polish Air Force by 2004.



You wouldn't want to be standing here when this monster was taking off!



It seems strange to see a German flag on the tail of the MiG-29



Royal Australian Air Force C-47B Skytrain (derivative of DC-3)

This C-47B is a long way from home. It was donated to the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr – Flugplatz Berlin-Gatow by the Australian Government to commemorate RAAF aircrews' role in the Berlin Airlift.



Potsdam Glienicke Bridge of Spies

This photo is not from the museum, however it is fitting to be included as part of the narrative of East vs. West. We crossed the Glienicke Bridge as we returned from our visit.

The Glienicke Bridge is a bridge across the Havel River in Germany, connecting the Wannsee district of Berlin with the Brandenburg capital Potsdam. It is named after nearby Glienicke Palace. During the Cold War, as this portion of the Havel River formed the border between West Berlin and East Germany, the bridge was used several times for the exchange of captured spies and thus became known as the Bridge of Spies.