



RAAF WAGGA

AVIATION HERITAGE CENTRE

CAC Canberra Bomber

A84-235

The Canberra bomber is a relic of the 'golden era' of Australian aviation manufacturing. A84-235 served with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) from October 1956 and was retired from service in July 1973.

The Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) [Canberra Bomber](#) A84-235 undertook its first flight from Avalon Aerodrome in Victoria on 3 September 1956. It was delivered to the RAAF on 22 October 1956.

The aircraft served with No 2 Squadron (2SQN), deploying to RAAF Butterworth in Malaysia in 1958, as part of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, before operating in Vietnam as part of the United States Air Force's 35th Tactical Fighter Wing. 2SQN arrived at Phan Rang Air Base in Vietnam in May 1967 and returned to Australia in August 1970.

A84-235 was struck off charge at RAAF Amberley in Queensland on 27 July 1973. The aircraft was then sent to the RAAF School of Technical Training in Wagga in NSW as a training aid and was later placed as a gate guard at the front gate. The aircraft underwent an external refurbishment in May 2011, and is currently on display in the RAAF Wagga Aviation Heritage precinct.

Technical Specifications

DESCRIPTION: Two-crew tactical bomber.

POWER PLANTS: Two 28.9kN (6500lb) thrust Rolls-Royce/CAC Avon Mk.1 or 33.3kN (7500lb) thrust Avon Mk.109 turbojets.

DIMENSIONS: Span 19.50m (64ft 0in); length 19.96m (65ft 6in); height 4.75m (15ft 7in).

WEIGHTS: Empty 11,521kg (25,400lb); loaded 22,680kg (50,000lb).

ARMAMENT: Max bomb load 3629kg (8000lb); typical Vietnam load six 340kg (750lb) bombs, four in bomb bay and one under each wingtip.

PERFORMANCE: Avon 109 engines: max speed 933km/h 580mph at 10,668m (35,000ft); normal cruise 703km/h 437mph; initial climb 457m/min (1500ft/min); operational ceiling 13,716m (45,000ft); combat radius with 2040kg (4500lb) bomb load 1822km (1132 miles); max ferry range 5841km (3629 miles).

Government Aircraft Factories Canberra Mk.20

As a jet-powered successor to the Avro Lincoln heavy bomber, the Canberra quickly proved its worth and garnered international recognition.

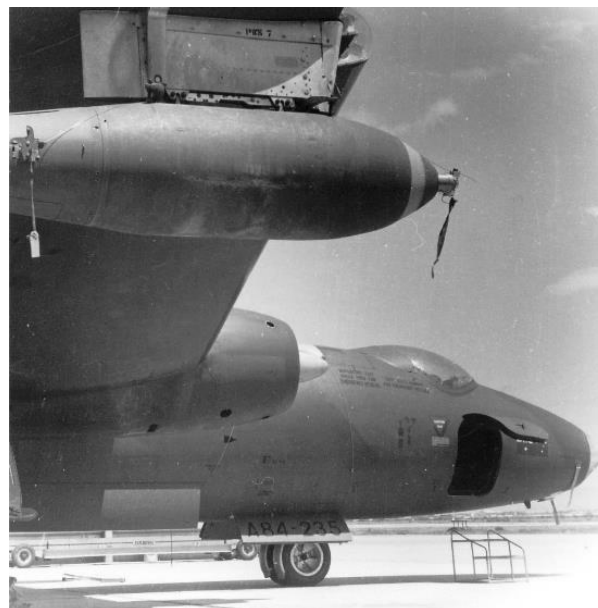
Predicting the impending obsolescence of the Avro Lincoln in the late 1940s, the RAAF embarked on a quest for a modern replacement. The result was a decision to order 48 English Electric Canberra jet bombers in 1950. These aircraft were built under licence in Australia by Government Aircraft Factories, with the Rolls-Royce Avon engines being manufactured domestically by the CAC.

The Canberra, conceived by W E ('Teddy') Petter, was Britain's first jet bomber. It showcased exceptional versatility and an enduring design that garnered significant success. Its production spanned the early 1950s, with a global reach that saw service in 17 nations.

The Australian version, designated as the Canberra Mk.20, was based on the British B.2. It incorporated enhancements such as an increased internal fuel capacity. Notably, the Canberra Mk.20 featured a revised radio suite and reduced crew, with a pilot and combined navigator/bomb aimer. The initial aircraft were powered by Avon Mk.1 engines, while later models used the more powerful Avon Mk.109 engines.

The Canberra Mk.20's operational capabilities spanned various roles, including bombing, photo reconnaissance, and dual-control training. 2SQN was the first unit to convert to Canberras in December 1953, with subsequent squadrons, including Nos 6 and 1 Squadrons, converting later.

The Canberra remained operational until 1982.



*A84-235 with M117 750lb bomb.
Source: ADF Serials, Bob Howe*

Sources

Richardson, D & Wood, P 2021, *Aircraft of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Big Sky Publishing, Newport, pp 341–346.

Wilson, S 1989, *Lincoln, Canberra & F-111 in Australian Service*, Aerospace Publications, Weston Creek, pp 77–126.

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