

Note From Derek A King about this file.

This file was sent to me by the RAF Museum with a request for Air-Britain to study the present contents and try to add any further details as we may have recorded. I am also sending a copy to our colleagues in France to request their input (in case they do not see it on this website) Please send any information to me at the usual address – derek.king@air-britain.co.uk

A/C SERIAL NO.F-HMFI
SECTION 2B

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

FARMAN F-1, 41 F-HMFI/F-FARB/9204M **MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 84/AF/449**

There is considerable confusion over the precise variant/designation and identity of this airframe. Although recorded in secondary sources as F-HMFI since at least August 1959 (see below) it was flying in 1936 marked as F-FARB and after lengthy storage still wore these marks until c.1963/64.

1913

Date of construction suggested to Royal Aeronautical Society when acquired (Journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society August 1954) 'FlyPast' Dec 84 p.60 suggests early 1914; R C Shelley in his letter to FlyPast Feb 85 p.8 says the Farman's pilot in France in 1931 told him 1916, whilst the late A R Weyl suggested 1915.

The aircraft was constructed at Buc as the prototype F.40 according to information passed to the Royal Aeronautical Society when it acquired the aircraft, and was fitted with a 130hp 12-cylinder liquid cooled Renault engine. It was reported to have made at least four flights between Hendon and Paris in 1914.

As a joint design of Henri and Maurice Farman it features the Henri Farman type tail booms and tail and Maurice Farman wings, nacelle and undercarriage. The British called such hybrids the Farman 'Horace' from the combination of the designers' two names. Ref. The Aeroplane 30 Jun 1937 p.798.

The aircraft was seemingly later rebuilt as a Farman F-1, 41 - a derivative of the F.40 with crew positions reversed (putting the pilot forward of the observer) and with modified nacelle, **the F/1 part of the designation indicating a rebuild.**

Numerous developments of the basic F.40 were built, usually with differing engines, though the F-1,40 of 1916 did have a 130hp Renault as now associated with this particular airframe.

The late Bill Sayer (RAFM) stated that the aircraft was crated in 1914 and later rebuilt.

The aircraft was kept at Farmans' Buc aerodrome, apparently as the personal property of Maurice Farman, and was painted with nacelle, wing upper surfaces and bands around struts in dark blue. It was possibly briefly registered on the French civil register as F-HMFI post WWI.

The French civil aircraft register records that Farman F.40 F-HMFI, constructor's number 6799, Certificate of Registration number 26, was registered to MM Farman at Toussus-le-Noble on 22 December 1919 and to M. Gaubert, Ville d'Avray, in January 1933

Farman F.40 F-FARB, constructor's number 6814, Certificate of Registration Number 299, was registered to MM Farman on 19 August 1920 based at Toussus-le-Noble and recorded as sold abroad December 1935. This tallies very well with the airframe acquired by Nash in 1936 – see below. Though registered as an F.40, rudder and undercarriage details suggest it was built as an F.46E.

- c.1930-31 Took part in aerial fetes in France. See letter from R C Shelley FlyPast Feb 85 p.8, who flew in the aircraft in France 6 Sep 31 with French pilot L. Gaubert who told Shelley the aircraft was built in 1916 for Maurice Farman and used by him. Mr Shelley, then in his 90s visited RC&RC Cardington in 1992, and had photos of himself by the aircraft having landed on a beach in France in 1931. (Pers comm, Roy Barber). This was probably at Boulogne on 6 September 1931 – dated copies of photos on original RAFM Henlow Historic Aircraft file, along with letter from Mr Shelley recording his flight.
- 1931 Registered to Farman, Dick, Billancourt and based at Toussus-le-Noble.
- 1932 Registered to Monsieur Le Rousse, Paris and based at Buc. Shown at French flying meetings until 1933.
- 1933/4 F-HMFI registered to Monsieur Gaubert in Paris, still based at Buc.
- The aircraft seemingly did not possess a French 'Navigability Certificate' (Certificate of Airworthiness) from 1935.
- 1936 Acquired by R G Nash - total flying hours at this time approximately 1,040. Assembled in England and flown from Brooklands, Surrey. Reassembled in workshops at RAF Hendon, with fabric replacement and doping carried out at Manston from where parts were flown to Hendon in a Vickers Valencia. Photo: Cross & Cockade GB Vol.7 No.2 p.95.
- 27 Jun 36 Flew at the RAF Hendon Air Pageant - described in the programme as a Maurice Farman. Photo: Flight Jul 2 1936 p.7. Flown by Sqn Ldr D V Carnegie AFC. 'What particularly impressed one..... was the quietness of the Renault engine; time after time it circled over the enclosures, and Sqn Ldr Carnegie must have enjoyed floating around having a look at the people' (Flight 2 Jul 36 p.11). **Carried registration F-FARB for this display and Paddock Number 3 painted on the rudder.** Took

approximately 30 minutes to fly from its base at Brooklands to Hendon.

26 Jun 37 Again flown at the Hendon Air Display. Photos: The Aeroplane 30 Jun 37 p.798; FlyPast Dec 84 p.60. Still carried the display No.3 on the rudder.

Its display, again flown by the now Wg Cdr D V Carnegie was event No.5 'Big Game Shooting' - 'carrying a sportsman armed with a double-barrel 12 bore' (Flight) and shot down a barrage balloon masquerading as a 'monster' from the 'stratosphere'.

27 Apr 38 Flown at the Parliamentary Air Pageant at Northolt. Stored, presumably at Brooklands, after this date.

Jun 40 Moved from Brooklands to storage elsewhere at request of Brooklands Aviation Ltd.

19-21 Jul 51 First (static) post-war appearance at the Daily Express 50 Years of Flying Display, RAF Hendon. Photos: the Aeroplane 27 Jul 51 p.89; air Pictorial March 2001 p.222.

Late 1953 Nash collection purchased by the Royal Aeronautical Society - nine aircraft including the Farman. The collection had been stored at Brooklands/Weybridge for many years. Photo newly acquired: Flight 21 May 54 p.634.

13 Jun 54 The Farman and other 'Nash Collection' aircraft were displayed at the Royal Aeronautical Society Garden Party at London Airport. Photos: Journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society Aug 54 p.565; Flight 18 Jun 54 p.785. The Aircraft were assembled by Vickers Armstrongs of Weybridge under the direction of Mr J Knott, Viscount Servicing Foreman.

15 Jul 56 Displayed at Royal Aeronautical Society Garden Party at Wisley.

Jul 56 To No.15 MU Wroughton with other Nash Collection Aircraft.

Aug 57 By road to RAF Hendon for storage

1958 Again stored at Weybridge?

1959 Stored with other Nash Collection aircraft at RAF Hendon in the care of the 'Historic Aircraft Maintenance Group'. **By the time UK -held historic airframes were listed in the August 1959 issue of the Journal of the Royal Aeronautical Society, the aircraft was listed as 1920-built Farman F.40 F-HMFI, this being the identity recorded in UK historic aviation sources ever since.**

1961 Stored at London Heathrow with other Nash Collection aircraft. **Listed at the time as being marked as F-FARB, the marks carried since at least 1936.**

- 1963 At RAF Upavon - the Nash Collection having been dispersed to various RAF stations for storage and restoration.
- c. Jul 1964 Moved in dismantled state from RAF Odiham to RAF Benson, Oxon by No.71 MU -under rebuild there by 1965; fuselage rebuilt and recovered. At RAF Benson - Photo and restoration notes at RC&RC Cardington. Displayed partly assembled at Bensons' Sep 66 Battle of Britain Open Day. Photo- Wrecks and Relics- The Album p.8.
- 1968 At RAFM store at Henlow, Beds by this date. Still present 1974.
- 1976 At RC&RC Cardington by this date, stored dismantled. Photos: Aeroplane Monthly Feb 77 with wings temporarily erected.
- 1986/87 Wings repaired and partially recovered at RC&RC Cardington.
- Mar 92 Purchased, along with rest of Nash Collection, by Ministry of Defence from the Royal Aeronautical Society from whom the collection was on loan.
- 19 Jul 93 Allotted RAF Maintenance serial 9204M.
- c. Jan 00 Moved to storage at temporary RAFM facility at RAF Wyton due to closure of RC&RC Cardington.
- 7 Jan 02 Fuselage moved to new restoration centre at RAFM Cosford; one of the last items to leave Wyton (wings already transferred to RAFM Stafford late 2000). Photos at Cosford – Flypast July 2002 p.23; Wrecks and Relics 20th Edition.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON