

Notes on a High-Wing Monoplane



Twinkle twinkle little¹ plane,
Cruising² on your cloudy lane,³
Which ingenious hand or eye
Did frame thy pleasant symmetry?



No spotter's dream or bird of prey,
But fitted with an eagle eye,⁴
All passengers⁵ could safely nap,
While the cam went snap, snap, snap.

Once they thought they saw an aeroplane
Heading out towards the sea,
Then looked again and found it was
A mock-attack by Flogger B.⁶



But in the corridor they did stay,⁷
Until eventually he went away,
And that is all one ever heard,
Of this old bird.

Time for a toast:
Here, Pemmie, is to you:
May you rise and shine,⁸
And once more⁹ spread your wings,
In FS9.

Notes

¹ Span 64 ft. 6 in; length 46 ft.; height 16 ft.

² Max. speed 223 m.p.h (359 km.h.) at sea level and 229 m.p.h. (368 km.h.) at 5,000 ft. (1,525 m.). Max. weak mixture cruising speed 166 m.p.h. (267 km.h.) at sea level, 178 m.p.h. (286 km.h.) at 5,000 ft. (1525 m.). Stalling speed, power off, flaps down 75 m.p.h (121 km.h.).

³ The black-and-white picture shows WV 705 climbing out of Wildenrath in the early seventies. Pictured below is a flight line of six Pembrokes on the Wildenrath apron (plus an Argosy, a Canberra, and the station commander's VIP Heron XM296).



⁴ When deployed to Malaysia in 1956, six Pembrokes including XF796 were briefly designated C (PR) 1.

⁵ “Standard cabin interior arrangement has seats for eight passengers with central gangway 14 ½ in. (37 cm) wide. Overhead racks for personal luggage. Toilet compartment at rear on starboard side opposite main entry door. With toilet bulkhead removed, two or four additional passengers seats can be installed or alternatively all interior equipment can be removed and entire cabin space used for freight-carrying” (*Jane’s All the World’s Aircraft*).

⁶ The picture presents the inspired box art of Special Hobby’s recently released plastic model kit, made in the Czech Republic (see <http://www.hannants.co.uk/>). The Flogger carries GDR national markings, but it is unlikely that a GDR plane ever risked buzzing an allied one. Russian jets, on the other hand, did this fairly frequently. The Special Hobby flyer claims that “we are the first in the world to reveal the story of the Pembrokes’ clandestine reconnaissance flights over the former DDR”, and a historical note added to the assembly instructions indicates that

The final unit to use the Pembroke operationally was 60 Sqn. RAF, based at RAF Wildenrath in Germany. The seven aircraft of the Sqn were a familiar sight in the air corridors between West Germany and Berlin, which were established after the Berlin Blockade, but until very recently their true function was known only to a very few in the military. The Pembrokes were used on one of the most sensitive intelligence missions flown by the RAF during the Cold War, known as Operation HALLMARK.

The aircraft were fitted with high-powered reconnaissance cameras and they photographed Soviet and East German military installations and airfields underneath the tightly controlled air corridors. The air photographs were then analysed by imagery experts, who recorded any changes to the powerful Warsaw Pact forces facing the West. Changes to Order of Battle, the introduction of new equipment and units moving out of barracks were all items of interest to be reported.

⁷ In January and March 1964, at the height of the Cold War, two American planes which had strayed from the Berlin corridors were in fact shot down by Russian jets. On 24 June 1964, “a Pembroke C1 en-route from Wildenrath to Gatow was intercepted” (Taylor 107), possibly the incident alluded to in the kit’s box art.

⁸ There is no specular shine on the model, but repainters can use the DXT3 alphachannel to add a reflection map, if they so wish.

⁹ There are two earlier freeware versions of the Pembroke – an FS98 model designed by Chris Lampard and Dave Haskell, and an FS2000 model built by Bertil Nilsson.

The present model is the author's first gmax model, and I want to acknowledge the help of the following organizations and people.

The Freeflight Design Shop (www.freeflightdesign.com), which specializes in tutorials, utilities, and downloadable gmax files by some of the best modelers in the field, proved to be a mine of useful information. The plane's propellers were in fact copied from a gmax source file available at this site, Milton Shupe's Aero Commander. Similarly, Chris File's tutorials at <http://thegreatptmd.tripod.com/> supplied essential modeling tips, as did Hugh Shoults's excellent *The Stupid Idiots' Guide to starting with gMax* http://www.simviation.com/gryphon/tutorials/gMax_00.htm.

The plane's cfg and air files were adapted with very few changes from Mike Stone's Cessna 404 available at <http://www.pmstone.com/>.

Three aircraft enthusiasts deserve special mention; without their help and encouragement the project would never have materialized. In Canada, Georg Hauzenberger of D-GHHH simulationware (who brought us the Hastings, the Ensign, and the Ambassador) never tired of helping the author overcome problems and outright disasters. In the UK, Chris Hughes generously supplied a large number of detailed photographs. And in Thailand, Peter Huch checked out the visual, flying, and AI-worthiness of the model. To all of them, my heartfelt thanks.

References

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