

Bilder von Bill Bedford vom 1. April 1988



To General Walter Dürig, Commander in Chief
Weir Air Force and Anti-Aircraft Corps.
Greetings Walter. You really would have enjoyed my privilege
of presenting the Honorary Fellowship of the Society
of Experimental Test Pilots to Sir Thomas Sopwith!
SIR THOMAS SOPWITH on Tuesday 15 March 1988.
Best wishes to you and all in
the Weir Air Force.
Sincerely Bill Bedford
1 April 1988

Dies Bilder hat mir Peter Arengo-Jones im Auftrag von Bill Bedford überreicht.



Bill Bedford (* 18.11.1920 † 20.10.1996) war ein britischer Kriegsveteran und bekannter Testpilot. Bei der Einführung des Kampfflugzeugs Hunter bei den Fliegertruppen erwarb er sich die Freundschaft zahlreicher Schweizerpiloten. Er liebte es, in die Schweiz zu kommen und bei den Anlässen der Flieger- und Fliegerabwehrtruppen anwesend zu sein.

Sir Thomas Octave Murdoch Sopwith CBE (* 18.01.1888 in Kensington; † 27.01.1989 in Hampshire) war ein Flugpionier, Unternehmer und Segelsportler.

Pauschalfrankiert
Affranchi à forfait

Mr. A.W. Bedford
The Chequers
West End Lane
West End

Esher, Surrey

Great Britain

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
SWISS AIR FORCE AND
ANTI-AIRCRAFT TROOPS
CH-3003 Berne

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
SWISS AIR FORCE AND
ANTI-AIRCRAFT TROOPS

Oct 9, 1987

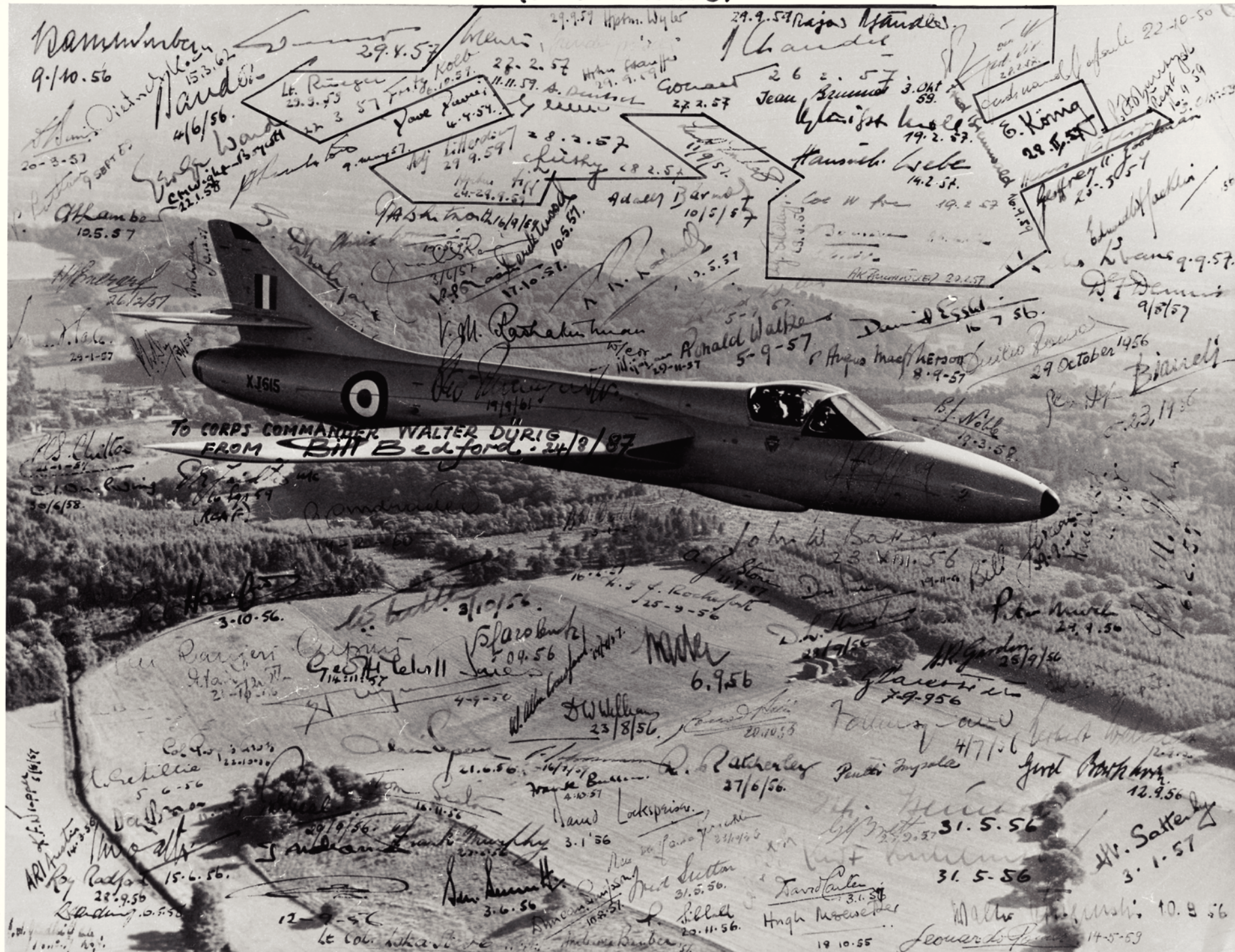
Dear Bill

For the very interesting, even amazing
Photographs of the Hunter Aircraft with
all those very prominent signatures,
my best thanks and deep gratitude.

I wish you all the best and look
forward to meet you soon again.

Yours sincerely Walter Strip

(SWISS CORNER)



SOME OF THE INTERNATIONAL FRATERNITY WHO FLEW THE HAWKER HUNTER TWO SEATER WITH BILL BEDFORD

A.W. (BILL) BEDFORD O.B.E. A.F.C. F.R.Ae.S

AVIATION CONSULTANT

THE CHEQUERS
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ESHER
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TEL. ESHER (0372) 62285

General (ret'd) Walter Dinnig.

18.1.90

Dear Walter

Belated thanks for your
kind letter of Dec. 89 and for
the superb photo of the Blue
Hunter so tastefully mounted

May I wish you & your
family all success and happiness
in the New Chapter of the
life of the Dinnigs and to
congratulate you on achieving
the pinnacles of success as
Commander in Chief Swiss Air
Force and Anti Aircraft Corps.

Thank you for your professional
support & friendship
Yours Sincerely
Bill

13. OCT. 1993

A. W. (BILL) BEDFORD
OBE, AFC, FRAeS
THE CHEQUERS
WEST END LANE, Esher
SURREY KT10 8LF
TEL: 0372 462285

LT. GEN FERDINAND CARREL

No. 037.92

Commander in Chief Swiss
Air Force and Anti Aircraft Corps
3003 Berne
Switzerland.

Monday 11 Oct 1993

10.10.93

My Dear Cin C.

Words cannot express my sincere appreciation of the way you and your colleagues welcomed me and honoured me as your guest, to celebrate my "40 years of flying, friendship with the Swiss" in parallel with the Jubila at Payerne, to pay congratulations to Brigades 31, 32, 33 and 35 on their distinguished 25th anniversaries.

The programme was beyond my wildest dreams and made me feel 10 mths tall and 40 years younger especially after flying the beautiful Hunter again under the experienced control of Maestro Walter Schapfroth. Although I was somewhat rusty the Hunter remained a true friend. The rendezvous and formation flying with the "Swiss Ambassadors", the famous Patrouille Suisse, was nothing short of magic and will remain among one of my most treasured memories. Please thank G. Ramseier and his team and give them the warmest congratulations of British Aerospace for maintaining the highest standards and performing brilliantly yet so smoothly.

My slide talk on 40 years of Switzerland brought back some striking experiences which form a unique chapter in my life and emphasise the close bond, friendships and cordial relationships that aviation has created between our two countries.

Be assured our full support and friendship will continue through the years and if there are any problems, unsolved Bk and our loyal colleague Peter Arango-Jones will give them urgent attention. We want the Hawk and Rapier to serve you well as I believe try and large, our products have done in the past.

Congratulations on a most professional and successful Jubila at Payerne.

Again many thanks, Ferdinand and should the SAF, AVIA or the media feel that a future slide talk on 40 yrs of Switzerland / Aviation would be appropriate, please ask your staff to contact P.A.J.

Yours Sincerely

Bill Bedford

P.S. I thought the SAF museum at Dübendorf was B
I.e. Walter Dürig and all concerned. B



Beiträge zur Geschichte der Flieger- und Fliegerabwehrtruppen

Hinschied von Bill Bedford

Luftwaffenzeitung Nummer 5 – Februar 1997

Zum Gedenken

Bill Bedford †

Bill Bedford ist am 20. Oktober 1996 gestorben. Bereits zu Lebzeiten in die Legende eingegangen als Pionier des vertikalen Fluges und als einer der fabelhaftesten Testpiloten der Nachkriegszeit, hatte er mit uns Schweizern und unserer Militäraviatik eine ganz besondere Bande geknüpft. Als leuchtende Persönlichkeit mit grosszügigem und warmherzigem Temperament hatte er sich im Schosse unserer Luftwaffe unzählige und treue Freunde gemacht, angefangen beim Kommandanten.

Unauslöschlich mit der Geschichte unseres Hunter verbunden, mit dem er der Schweiz den ersten «Überschallknall» bescherte, hegte Bill Bedford eine tiefe Beziehung zu unserem Land. Am 24. September 1993 hatten wir das Vergnügen, ihm einen Flug im Hunter-Doppelsitzer in Begleitung von Oberst Walter Schafroth zu offerieren. Beim Rückflug wurde er von den sechs Flugzeugen der Patrouille Suisse eskortiert. Es war dies unsere Art, die «40 Jahre



Bill Bedford 1993 im Cockpit seines geliebten Hunters.

fliegende Freundschaft mit der Schweizer Luftwaffe» zu feiern.

Alle, die Bill Bedford gekannt haben, werden ihn als aussergewöhnlichen Testpiloten, als Mann mit Herz und kostbaren Freund für immer in Erinnerung behalten.

Korpskommandant
Fernand Carrel

Bill Bedford †

Bill Bedford nous a quitté le 20 octobre 1996. Entré vivant dans la légende comme pionnier du vol vertical et comme un des plus fabuleux pilotes d'essais de l'après-guerre, il avait noué des liens très particuliers avec notre pays et notre aviation militaire. Personnage haut en couleur, au tempérament généreux

et chaleureux, il s'était fait d'innombrables et fidèles amis au sein de nos Forces aériennes, à commencer par leur Commandant.

Lié de façon indélébile à l'histoire de notre Hunter, avec lequel il produisit le premier «bang» supersonique dans notre pays, Bill Bedford était profondément attaché à la Suisse. Le 24 septembre 1993, nous avons eu le plaisir de lui offrir un vol en Hunter-biplane, en compagnie du Colonel Schafroth, au retour duquel il fut escorté par les six avions de la Patrouille Suisse. Ce fut notre façon de célébrer «40 ans d'amitié avec les Forces aériennes suisses».

Tous ceux qui ont connu Bill Bedford garderont de lui le souvenir ineffaçable d'un pilote d'essais exceptionnel, d'un homme de coeur et d'un ami délicieux.

Commandant de corps
Fernand Carrel

«A total aviation person»

Bill Bedford was a *Schulbeispiel* of a «total aviation person». And Switzerland never had a truer friend. His death last autumn brought to an end a distinguished career, one of the highlights of which was what he proudly called his «40 years of flying friendship with Switzerland».

The Times opened its obituary tribute to him by stating that «he did more than any other test pilot to take post-war British military aircraft to the edges of established technology», and went on to say: «He was at his

peak when the British aviation industry was the undisputed world leader». His early Royal Air Force (RAF) career had taken him to South-East Asia during and just after World War II, flying Hurricanes, Thunderbolts and Mustangs, but it was at the Empire Test Pilots' School in 1949 that (to quote *The Times* again) «his extraordinary aviation skills and ice-cold ability to keep calm under extreme stress were recognised and developed». He was associated with the development of the jet engine and left the RAF in 1951



Le commandant de corps Fernand Carrel et Bill Bedford lors de sa visite à Payerne en 1993.

Zum Gedenken

to join Hawker Aircraft, where the Hunter was being perfected, becoming Chief Test Pilot in 1956.

Over the next 20 years, Bill became, as *The Times* put it, «a household name for his pioneering work in discovering the handling capabilities - and limitations - of vertical flight in what later became the Harrier». Not content with that, he was also a brilliant glider pilot with eight records to his credit, all height records being achieved in thunder clouds, which involved much turbulent pioneering aviation in the unknown.

His test flying career ended in 1967, to be followed by 20

with his felt-pen trade mark of «Go VSTOL»).

The last ten years of Bill Bedford's life were spent officially in retirement, but in fact ceaselessly on the go fulfilling special assignments for BAe and the RAF and roaming the world in vigorous support of various causes, especially industrial innovation and aviation safety, where he could draw on the lessons learned from personal experience, such as when (through over-confidence) he very nearly ran out of sky on recovering from a smoking spin from 18'000 feet over Emmen in 1956. After his death last October his widow and son (a senior RAF officer) were showered with messages and tributes from all over the world.

Switzerland was dear to Bill's heart from the first time he arrived here (with a sonic bang on Schaffhausen) in 1953, piloting a Hunter whose Sapphire engine was to be tested for the FFA P 16 fighter. His home in Esher, south-west of London, is full of Swiss mementos of all kinds, among them reminders of the Hunter evaluation of



Bill Bedford 1993 nach seinem Hunterflug zusammen mit Oberst Walter Schafroth.

years during which he threw his immense and charismatic enthusiasm into marketing aircraft on behalf of what had by then, through mergers, become British Aerospace (BAe). His tenacious advocacy of the Harrier and the Hawk was saved from becoming obtrusive by his rare combination of messianic zeal and broad humanity - his understanding of people as well as machines, his tolerance, unshakable optimism and high good humour (usually, but not always subtle; he seldom left an elevator without adorning the wall

1957 and subsequent initiation flights for the Swiss pilots of No. 8 Squadron into the extremes of the flight envelope. «Most of the pilots could fly the Hunter better than me», he later wrote, «but we found the experience of mutual value ... On departure from Emmen I was presented with a beautiful Swiss clock, which still ticks away remindfully at home. In return, I did an impromptu demonstration after take-off, terminating with a huge figure 8 in smoke over the airfield. I left for UK feeling like an honorary pilot of

No. 8 Squadron!»

One of Bill's most treasured experiences was forming on and flying with the Patrouille Suisse in a two-seat Hunter in September 1993 during the Jubila anniversaries at Payerne. He was then aged 72 but was proud of his recently confirmed medical.

What a younger-generation test pilot, John Farley, said of Bill at his funeral, applies to the great number of people he knew, and it applies very specially to those in his favourite country, Switzerland: «Bill was important to us in many ways. To

Mary he was a loving husband, while to Janet and Peter he was their loving father. To many others, both here today and spread across the world, he offered a quality and strength of friendship which was very special in its thoughtfulness and loyalty. But Bill was an important man beyond his personal relationships. His career as a test pilot, as a marketing man and as a general catalyst for progress in the aviation business was quite exceptional.»

Peter Arengo-Jones

Informationspolitik

Zeitgerechte Info

Wie denken die Amerikaner über Öffentlichkeitsarbeit? An der Präsentation der Strategie-Vision der US Air Force für das 21. Jahrhundert äusserte sich Sheila E. Widnall, Secretary of the US Air Force - für die US Air Force zuständige Staatssekretärin - zu diesem Thema (auszugsweise Wiedergabe): «Während des Kalten Krieges benötigte die Gesellschaft das Militär. Nun benötigt das Militär die Gesellschaft, deren Wohlwollen und deren Unterstützung. Wir müssen uns mehr Zeit nehmen und uns mehr Mühe geben, dem amerikanischen Volk zu erklären, was wir tun und warum wir es tun. Wir müssen pro-aktiv sein, uns konzentrieren auf das Gute, das wir tun und ebenso auf unseren Beitrag, den wir für unsere Nation und unsere Bevölkerung leisten.»

Die Staatssekretärin betonte ihre Rolle als Vermittlerin zwischen Gesellschaft und Luftwaffe, dass die für Public Affairs zuständigen Profis «die Medien informiert halten müs-

sen, sie diese beraten und über unsere Einsätze in Kenntnis setzen» müssten. Neben der Information der breiten Öffentlichkeit und der Aufrechterhaltung von guten Beziehungen zu den Medien sei es für diese Leute sehr wichtig, das Verständnis für das Innerbetriebliche der Luftwaffe und die Akzeptanz für die Prioritäten und Grundsätze der Führung zu fördern. Sheila E. Widnall weiter: «Die für die Öffentlichkeitsarbeit Verantwortlichen schulden der Luftwaffe zeitgerechte und sachdienliche Information. Sie müssen auch das Militär vom Wert der Presse überzeugen können. Bringen wir ihnen ins Bewusstsein, dass die Zäsur ein Phänomen der Vergangenheit ist!»

Zum Schluss sagte Secretary Widnall: «Wir sind eine starke, sachbezogene Organisation. Je mehr die Gesellschaft über uns weiss, um so besser geht es uns. Die Luftwaffe muss ihre Geschichte selber erzählen, sonst wird dies jemand anders tun.»