

Jaguar



The Jaguar was an important first-line strike aircraft for the Royal Air Force and France's air force from the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s. The twin-engine Jaguar was built by SEPECAT, a consortium of British Aircraft Corp. and Breguet (later Dassault). Jaguars were exported to Oman, Ecuador, Nigeria, and India—where it still is in active service.

The Jaguar was an orthodox swept-wing, single-seat supersonic monoplane. However, it had a strange history. Conceived as a trainer, it evolved into a rugged Cold War attack aircraft of impressive power and nuclear bite. Twin engines were selected for survivability. Ease of maintenance was key. Component production was split 50/50 between Breguet and BAC, and assembly took place in Britain and France. France's A variant

emerged first, to mixed reviews. Britain's later Jaguar S—called GR1 in the RAF—was more sophisticated, with advanced nav-attack systems. Jaguar has been upgraded to provide excellent service for decades.

Jaguar entered operational service in 1973, assigned to support land forces resisting a Soviet assault and to conduct tactical nuclear strikes. The fighters did not see actual combat until 1977, when France sent them to fight Polisario rebels in Mauritania. French Jaguars saw considerable action in Chad. Though past its prime in the 1990s, Jaguar won praise for reliability and precision striking ground and naval targets in Kuwait in the Gulf War. The fighter also did well in the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Indian Jaguars also saw action against Pakistan.

—Robert S. Dudley with Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: Royal Air Force Jaguar GR3A—#XX117 "PA"—as it looked in February 2005 when assigned to No. 16 (R) Squadron, RAF Coltishall, Britain.



USAF photo by SMSgt. John Chappan

A British Jaguar flies over Iraq during Operation Northern Watch in 2000.

In Brief

Designed by SEPECAT (Breguet-British Aircraft Corp.), built by SEPECAT, Hindustan Aeronautics ★ purpose attack ★ first flight Sept. 8, 1968 ★ number built 616 ★ crew of one or two ★ **Specific to A/S:** two Rolls-Royce/Turbomeca Adour Mk 101 or 102 turbofan engines ★ defensive armament two 30 mm DEFA or ADEN cannon and two Magic or AIM-9 AA missiles ★ load 10,000 lb of bombs, rockets, missiles, nuclear weapons ★ max speed 1,056 mph ★ max combat radius 564 mi ★ weight (max T/O) 34,612 lb ★ span 28 ft 6 in ★ length 55 ft 2 in ★ height 16 ft ★ service ceiling 45,900 ft.

Famous Fliers

RAF Notables: DFC—William Pixton, Michael Gordon, Malcolm Rainer, Jez Milne ★ AF Cross—Jerome Connolly, William Pixton, Stephen Griggs; Dave Bagshaw (4,000 flying hours) ★ Keith Collister, J. Marsden (KIA Gulf War training); Ian Hall (author of *Jaguar Boys*); Terry Carlton (first op commander); T. M. Bushnell (first fatality, 1976); Stephen

Griggs (shot down, accidentally, by RAF F-4, 1982); Andy Blythe, Paul Shakespeare (last flight, 2007). **France Notable:** Michel Croci (KIA, Chad, 1984). **India Notables:** D. R. Nadkarni (first commander), M. McMahon, J. S. Sisodia, S. C. S. Adhikari, D. C. Kumaria, D. D. S. Kumar, S. P. Tyagi, N. A. K. Browne. **USAF Notable:** David Buteau (exchange pilot, died in accident, 1986). **Test pilot:** M. Bernard Witt (first flight).

Interesting Facts

Flew first RAF bombing raid in Europe since World War II (Bosnia, 1994) ★ in Indian exercise, successfully "sank" US carrier ★ called "Shamsher" ("Sword of Justice") in India ★ dropped eight kiloton French nuclear bomb on Mururoa Atoll ★ features overwing launch rails for air-to-air missiles ★ was first RAF aircraft designed in metric ★ requires 30 minutes for engine change ★ made landings and takeoffs on British highway, German autobahn with full weapons load ★ credited with sinking or damaging 15 Iraqi vessels ★ nicknamed "Big Cat" and "Desert Cat" ★ posted Gulf War readiness rate of 98 percent.

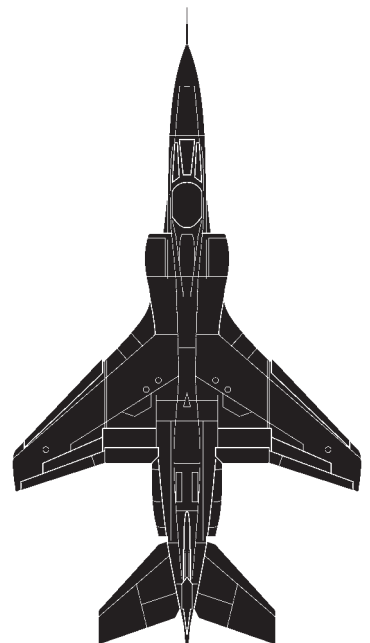


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