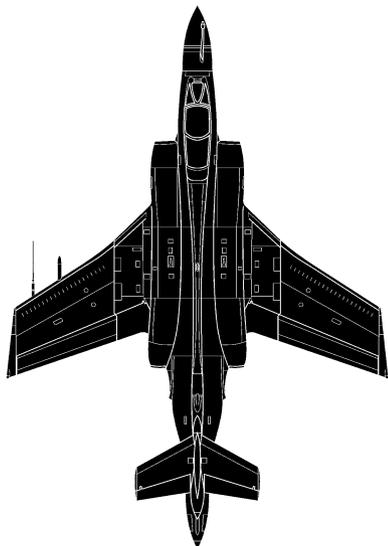


Buccaneer



The Buccaneer, designed as a naval attack aircraft, flew off Britain's conventional carriers from 1962 until the last of that class was retired in 1978. It provided the backbone of Royal Navy strike operations, including nuclear strike. Built by Blackburn Aircraft (later, Hawker Siddeley), the Buccaneer eventually found a home in the Royal Air Force, where it turned in a creditable combat performance in the Gulf War.

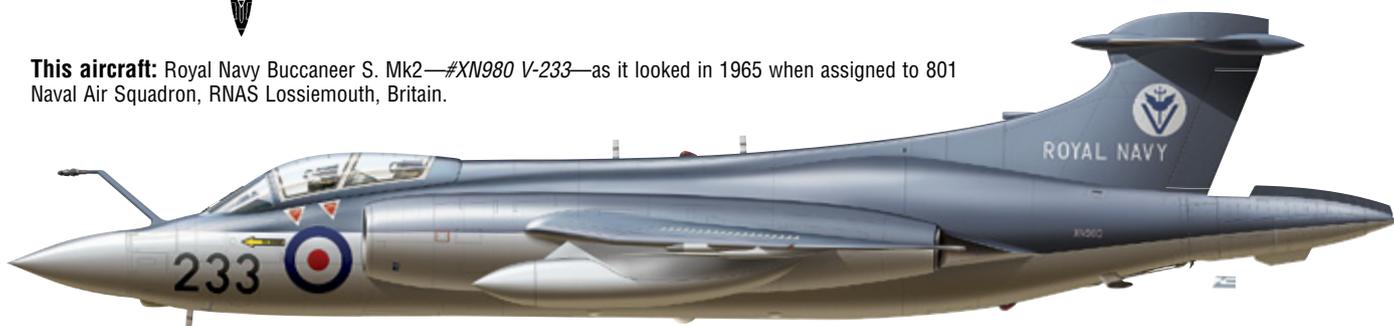
For its day, Buccaneer was a highly advanced aircraft. It was conceived in the 1950s to counterbalance an emerging threat posed by the Soviet Navy's *Sverdlov*-class cruiser. The all-metal, twin-engine aircraft featured thin wings with a 40-degree sweep. It possessed, for the time, extremely advanced electronics; this gave the Buccaneer a valuable all-weather, low-level at-

tack capability. The original variant proved to be underpowered, however, and later models sported much stronger Rolls Royce Spey engines. This subsonic strike aircraft formed a critical part of Royal Navy attack power.

It also became, some years later, a valued element of the RAF. That service procured the Buccaneer following cancellation of both the TSR2 and F-111K, the RAF's preferred options for a new strike aircraft. In addition, the RAF received all the Navy's Buccaneers when the last carriers were withdrawn. Britain even sold a few to South Africa, which used them in various border wars, but a UN embargo choked off further deliveries. After the Gulf War in 1991, all Buccaneers were soon ushered out of service.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: Royal Navy Buccaneer S. Mk2—#XN980 V-233—as it looked in 1965 when assigned to 801 Naval Air Squadron, RNAS Lossiemouth, Britain.



In Brief

Designed, built by Blackburn (absorbed into Hawker Siddeley)
★ first flight April 30, 1958 ★ number built approximately 200
★ crew of two (pilot and observer) ★ **Specific to NA 39 S. Mk2:** armament AIM-9 Sidewinder ★ munitions load up to 12,000 lbs of bombs, rockets, missiles, including Red Beard and WE.177 nuclear types ★ two Rolls Royce R.B. 168-A Spey turbofan engines
★ max speed 645 mph ★ cruise speed 510 mph ★ max range 1,730 mi ★ weight (loaded) 45,000 lb ★ span 44 ft ★ length 63 ft 6 in ★ height 16 ft 10 in.

Famous Fliers

Notables (Britain): E. R. Anson, Norman Browne, Bill Cope, J. F. H. C. de Winton, John Ford, Glenn Mason, J. C. Mather, Carl Wilson.
(South Africa): S. Odendaal, P. Webb. **Test pilots:** J. G. Burns, R. J. Chandler, Gordon Copeman, G. R. I. Parker, B. J. Watson, D. J. Whitehead.

Interesting Facts

Nicknamed "Buck" and "Banana Jet" ★ became (in 1965) first Fleet Air Arm aircraft to make nonstop, unrefueled crossing of the Atlantic
★ flew a total of 218 missions in Gulf War, designating targets and dropping laser guided bombs ★ built in six variants ★ tested by US Navy in 1965 on carrier USS *Lexington* ★ adopted by RAF in 1968 after the service had twice rejected it ★ could carry, in bomb bay, a large photoreconnaissance pack or 528-gal ferry tank ★ suffered frequent pilot-induced oscillation ★ sported very large hydraulically operated air brake in tail cone ★ used in combat by South Africa ★ replaced in RN by Sea Harrier and in RAF by Tornado ★ equipped with "retard defense"—four 1,000-lb chute-retarded bombs dropped to deter following attackers.



An RAF Buccaneer S.2B in flight at RAF Mildenhall, UK, in 1988.