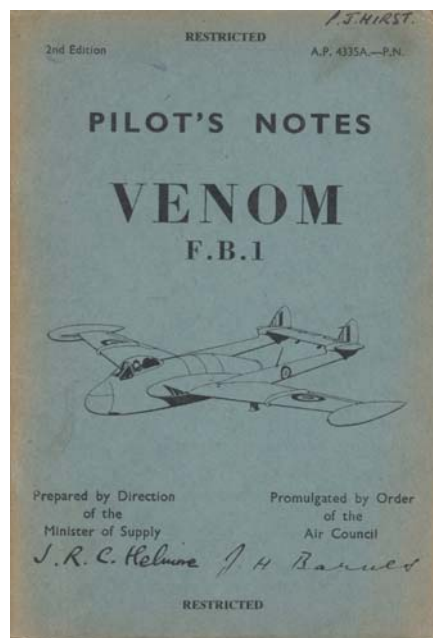




Low Life

By Nick Lee

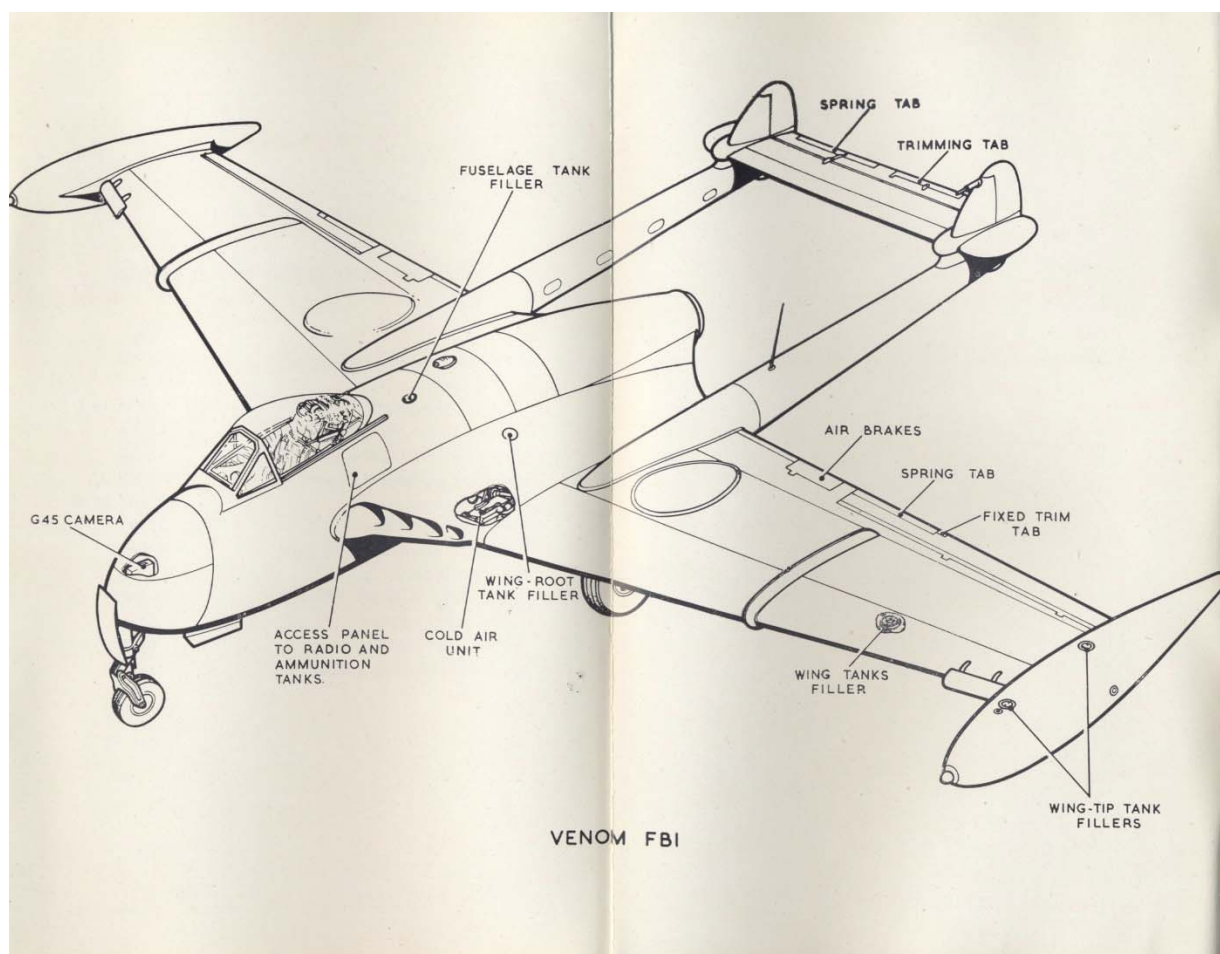


Low Life in Germany

Although we often exchanged good-natured insults with them, our connection with the Army was one based on mutual respect. We realised that no matter how good we might think of ourselves in the air, the dirty work and hard graft came on the ground, and both parties needed a very good understanding about how the other half worked. During World War 2, 2nd. TAF as it then was had close air support as a major task, and we had inherited the same role. Although the Venom had its limitations as a high-altitude fighter, it was a dream closer to the ground. It was nippy, very manoeuvrable and packed quite a punch for those far-off days. Much of our training was devoted to rushing around the North German Plain in low level battle formation while practising the art of accurate low-level navigation and precise adherence to the requests of the Army on the ground for air strikes. These were received in the Squadron Ops. Room on the Form D which gave the information about what was wanted, exactly where it was wanted, and precisely when it was wanted. The last item was probably the most vital, because just before the time of the air strike, the friendly forces would need to withdraw at high speed from the target area. If we were late on target, the enemy would already have occupied the vacated ground, and our name would be mud, so getting there spot on time was quite a nail-biting business. Navigation was complicated by a lack of accurate navigational aids, frequently atrocious weather, flocks of migrating birds, high tension cables accompanied by lousy visibility – you name it.

Luckily, we had a priceless asset in the form of a Ground Liaison Officer (GLO) who was a genial Army Officer attached to the Wing who not only educated us about how the Army went about its business, but also manned the Tentacle, which was a Landrover with a VHF radio on board. He would position himself on the edge of the target area, and then talk us on to the target. Given the vagaries of VHF transmissions near the ground, we were often almost on top of him before contact could be established, so between getting his input about the pull-up point, pulling up, and recognising the target area before hitting it, and then getting out again at high speed, life could be quite interesting at times! So, let it be said, could his...

Some of the Army officers still seemed a bit hazy about how we went about things though. After one of the many inter-service summer exercises, we went to a combined services cocktail party where an archetypal Army Colonel of the old school was holding forth about his men. "Damn fellows won't keep their heads down. Every time they hear you coming they get out of cover and gawp up at you and your aeroplanes! Completely gives the game away! Can't you chaps do something about it? Fire break-up shot at them or something?" I had to confess that the closest we had to break-up shot were 60 pound practice rockets with concrete heads. His eyes lit up. "Capital!" he said. "Just the ticket! That should keep their heads down all right!".



PART II—LIMITATIONS

NOTE.—A few early aircraft are not fitted with Mod. 51 which strengthens the wing root joints and the fuselage cross tubes. These aircraft which are distinguished by red bands on each wing and are fitted with visual accelerometers must not be flown at normal accelerations exceeding 6g.

(ii) *Maximum speeds in knots*

(a) Clean aircraft	...	...	...	...	535
(b) Clean aircraft with:—					
Tip tanks, full or empty	...	...	...	...	510
R.P.'s	...	...	...	...	500
(c) Gun firing (until fitted with new type link chutes)	...	...	...	...	450

NOTE.—When R.P.s or bombs are carried in combination with empty wing tip tanks manoeuvres involving high "g" should be avoided.

(iii) *Other maximum speeds, in knots*

Max. speed during and after lowering undercarriage	...	...	...	...	200
Max. speed during and after lowering flaps fully	...	...	...	...	155
Max. speed during and after lowering flaps to 30°	...	...	...	...	180

(iv) *Maximum weights*

(a) Take-off and all permitted forms of flying (without bombs)	...	...	...	...	14,000 lb.
(b) Landing (tip tanks empty except in emergency)	...	...	...	...	11,700 lb.

PART II—LIMITATIONS

(v) *Limitation on size of pilots*

Owing to the possibility of injury when using the ejection seat, only pilots with a nude thigh length of 25 in. or less may be allowed to fly the aircraft.

(vi) *Carriage and release of bombs*

- (a) The aircraft is cleared for the carriage and release of
4 - 25 lb. bombs or
2 - 1,000 lb. MC. Mk. 7 bombs.

Trials have covered the release of bombs in dives up to 60°.

(b) *When 4 - 25 lb. practice bombs are carried:—*

Maximum permissible speeds for carriage and release

Up to 4,000 ft.	500 kts.
Above 4,000 ft.	0.80M.

(c) *When 2 - 1,000 lb. MC. Mk. 7 bombs are carried:—*

Maximum weight for take-off and all forms of flying—15,610 lb.

Maximum permissible speed for carriage

Up to 14,000 ft.	420 kts.
Above 14,000 ft.	0.80M.

Maximum permissible speed for release 350 kts.

NOTE.—In steep dives it is recommended that bombs be released as follows, to allow sufficient height for the pull-out:—

If above 300 kts. with 1,000 lb. bombs, release above 5,500 ft.

If above 400 kts. with practice bombs, release above 4,000 ft.