

**Volume 15**

**Number 023**

**First Allied Jet Aircraft in World  
War II**

**Lead: During World War II, the development of an allied jet aircraft lagged behind the Germans. This meant that jet to jet combat would not come until Korea.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Although the British were the first of the allies to develop jet aircraft this advance had to overcome initial doubt in the Ministry of Defense as to whether turbojet aircraft were practical or even possible. The pioneer of allied jet**

**aircraft was Lt. Frank Whittle, later Sir Frank Whittle. He had to overcome the conviction in the Royal Air Force that “gas turbines don’t work.” Fortunately, his persistence was rewarded and on the eve of war the engine design of Whittle’s company, Power Jets, Ltd., was married to the airframes being built by George Carter at Gloster Aircraft Company.**

**The first offspring of their work was purely experimental. The E.28/39 was small, low-wing monoplane with a tricycle landing gear, an 81 gallon fuel tank and four Browning 303 guns. It was successful enough, although the airplane went through multiple design alterations. By mid-**

**1943 it was turning in impressive performances, flying above 40,000 feet, though its maximum speed, 466 mph could only be attained at a much lower altitude.**

**If the E.28/29 was the prelude, the F.9/40 Meteor was the main event built in anticipation that Whittle's engines would be successful. It was used behind enemy lines and never went toe to toe with the Messerschmitt 262, but it take out one V-1 Buzz Bomb. When his guns jammed while shadowing one of the German missiles in early August 1944, Flying Officer Dean just bumped it with his wingtip, sending the V-1 crashing to the ground. There is a single E.28/39 that resides in the**

**Science Museum of London, a reminder of the early days in which the now ubiquitous jet was very much a doubtful development.**

**Research by Anthony Gattuso, at the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

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[http://www.regiamarina.net/arsenals/planes\\_it/jet/jet\\_us.htm](http://www.regiamarina.net/arsenals/planes_it/jet/jet_us.htm). \**

**Sir Frank Whittle and Dr. Hans Von Ohain panel discussion at the United States Air Force Aero Propulsion Laboratory May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1978. Retrieved from web page “An Encounter Between the Jet Engine Inventors.”**

**<http://www.ascho.wpafb.af.mil/encounter/encounter.htm>**