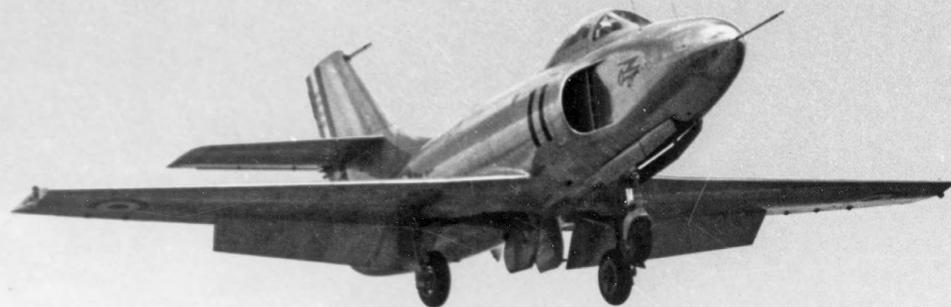


DASSAULT'S

There has long been a tradition of using production aircraft as testbeds for research into powerplants and equipment. The French were no exception — but, as Cold War specialist **TONY BUTTLER** explains, Dassault also hauled production aircraft off the line in order to experiment with the incorporation of radical changes to create completely new prototypes

X-FILES

The Ouragan 30L, Barougan, Mystère de Nuit & Mystère IVN



OPPOSITE TOP: JOEL MESNARD COLLECTION / OPPOSITE BOTTOM: AUTHOR'S COLLECTION

JOEL MESNARD COLLECTION

THROUGHOUT THE history of aeronautical design and development all over the world, production-line aircraft have been used as testbeds for new or different engines, weapons, radars and all manner of other equipment, large and small, especially in the military sector. In the UK the use of Avro Lancaster and Lincoln bombers and Gloster Meteor fighter airframes for engine testing, and English Electric Canberras for powerplant and radar trials, has been well documented. Much of the similar work undertaken in the Soviet Union and USA has also been covered in published works, but here we take a look at some rather less well-known projects developed in France by the Avions Marcel Dassault company. The two principal programmes covered in this article — Ouragan and Mystère — were primarily production machines modified originally into prototypes for alternative versions with different roles, but which failed to win any orders. Only later did they become testbeds for research.

The MD.450 Ouragan 30L

The 11th pre-production example of the Dassault MD.450 Ouragan single-seat interceptor fighter incorporated a Snecma Atar 101B turbojet engine in place of the standard Hispano-Suiza licence-

built Rolls-Royce Nene, and was fitted with fuselage-mounted air intakes just forward of the cockpit. As such it was known as the MD.450 Ouragan 30L and was first flown in this form on January 21, 1952. This machine was armed with two 30mm DEFA cannon and was used to gather experience, firstly for the planned MD.451 Aladin nightfighter variant of the Ouragan (which was subsequently abandoned), and then for the MD.453 Mystère de Nuit, of which more shortly. The research looked in particular at the different airflow required to supply air to the engine, since the Ouragan's original nose intake was to be replaced by a bulky radome.

There was also the "Barougan", a nickname derived from the names of the Ouragan and the SNCASE SE.5000 Baroudeur, the latter an experimental jet fighter designed to operate from unprepared terrain. Four production Ouragans were modified for rough-field operations, with the installation of an undercarriage featuring twin-mainwheels with low-pressure tyres on each leg, plus a brake parachute. The new undercarriage arrangement had to be accommodated in a new fairing under the wing roots as they were now too large for the original bays. Initially, Ouragan serial 140 not only had its mainwheels doubled but also had a short skid positioned in between.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP With flaps fully extended, the sole MD.450 Ouragan 30L comes in to land during its trials programme after its first flight in January 1952. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM An early view of the MD.454 Mystère IVN. ABOVE The Ouragan 30L's revised side-mounted air intakes and solid nose are shown here to good effect.