



Romanian Hurricanes #2

Hawker Hurricane Mk.I
in Romanian service - part 2



ED 48013

ED 72013

Hawker Hurricane in Romanian service

At the end of 1938, after King Carol II of Romania inspected the Hurricane production line at Odiham, *Aeronautica Regală Română* (Royal Romanian Aeronautics) placed an order for 50 Hurricanes, only twelve of which had been delivered at the start of World War II, well behind schedule. As Romania joined the Axis powers, no more deliveries of Hurricane could be made.

Those Hurricanes had Rolls-Royce Merlin III engines with three bladed propellers, metal stressed skin wings and bulletproof windscreen.

In the middle of 1941 Romania bought from Germany three (or six) ex-Yugoslav Zmaj-built Hurricanes. Ex-Yugoslav planes had Rolls-Royce Merlin III engines with three bladed propellers, fabric covered wings and non armored windscreen. Three of them received numbers "13", "14", "15" and rest of them had been used for spare parts. Those planes came to Romania before 22nd June 1941.

All Romanian Hurricanes served with the *Eskadrila 53 Vânătoare* (53rd Fighter Squadron) responsible for the defence of the Constanța Harbour and Cernavodă Railway Bridge.

Eskadrila 53 Vânătoare was the most successful fighter squadron in Romanian service in the early stage of war. Its pilots were credited with 32 confirmed and 3 unconfirmed air victories in the first ten days of the Bessarabian campaign without a single combat loss. Romania's top fighter ace, Cpt. Av. Constantin "Băzu" Cantacuzino, scored his first kill flying a Hurricane "4" on 10th July 1941.

Another Romanian Hurricane pilot (Lt. Av. Horia Agarici) became a national hero, when took-off from Mamaia Airfield (23th June 1941) in his Hurricane "3" that was undergoing repair, with the engine cowling removed, and attacked an unescorted formations of seven Soviet bombers attacking Constanța Harbour, shooting down three of them. The wrecks of three bombers were identified on ground at Valul lui Traian, Săcele and Mamaia Sat.

After the Bessarabian campaign, all remaining Hurricanes were sent to IAR Braşov for general overhaul but they were no longer used in combat. The main reason was the shortage of spare parts and possibility that Romanian AA might mistake them for Soviet Hurricanes.

The last known flight of a Romanian Hurricane was on 8th August 1944 when Hurricane "8" defected to Turkey.

info based on Teodor Liviu Morosanu & Dan Alexandru Melinte book „Romanian Fighter Colours 1941-1945” and Horia Stoica & Vasile Radu book “Hawker Hurricane - British Aircraft in Romania No.1”



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