

At that time, the K-8 already flew around in Pakistan albeit in limited numbers, also Myanmar and Zambia were in the process of receiving them. So Zimbabwe was not the first client, but they took up what we believe is the tail end of that first production run. Deliveries are confirmed in 2005, six aircraft. The total number is said to be fourteen although local press states that two batches of six were delivered, with the second sextet in August 2006 for delivery later in the same year. Eleven different (parts of) serials have been seen so far with the highest ending in an 'N', which is of course the fourteenth letter of the alphabet, maybe that fuelled the 'fourteen aircraft' story? As there was at least another early crash, two attrition replacements may have been added. Or some of the codes and serials were not used...

Units

2sq Cobra "Strike from above" Gweru-Thornhill

Confirmed serials & some construction numbers

1st batch of six:

2001A/01	2sq		2005
2002B/02	2sq		2005
2021C/21	2sq		sep16
2104E/04	2sq	L8 320 03 12	sep14
2106G/06	2sq	L8 320 03 13	sep08

2nd batch of six:

2017H/17	2sq		sep10
2703J/03	2sq	L8 320 03 19	sep16
2705L/05	2sq		sep14
2068N/68	2sq	L8 320 03 22	sep16

Applying our self-proclaimed logic, this would place them in the construction number ranges **L8 320 03 08** to **L8 320 03 13** [6], then three Sri Lankans delivered as attrition replacement, followed by Zimbabwean **L8 320 03 17** to **L8 320 03 22** [6]

Unconfirmed serials

2013D /13	2sq	(code 13 on nose)
2 ...	2sq	(e.g. 2018I , 2108I , 2072I , 2702I)
2076M /76	2sq	(code 76 on nose)
...	2sq	w/o 05sep08
...	2sq	w/o 23apr15

The serial system works by adding the 2nd, 3rd and 4th digit of the numerals to form a sequential number, and if possible they use at least two digits for that. The letter of the alphabet corresponds with that too. So 2104E = 1+0+4 = 5 = E, the fifth aircraft. They tend to always include a '0' and all K-8 serials start with a '2'. That is why we can give a limited number of possibilities for the missing "D", "I" and "M".

Production cross reference

To spur you on to check more construction numbers, we have some example shots of their locations. Primary spot, where they all seem to have it, is halfway down the fuselage, aft of the wing. Even the Pakistani, that do not have the construc-



The aileron and pylon of the same Egyptian 6332.... (Stefan Goossens)



SJT-1806, port side fuselage, above the wing. (Erwin van Dijkman)



Vertical stencils on its tail and rudder. (Erwin van Dijkman)

tion number liberally applied, have it there at least on the port side, except the 2003 batch they have nothing...

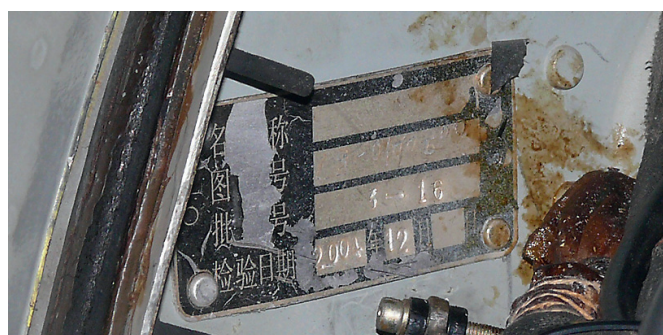
Other operators are much easier. Mostly it is also stencilled on either side of the moveable surfaces, so on the wing and aileron next to it, vertically on the tail and rudder et cetera.

If you have the opportunity, or the aircraft happens to have the port side avionics hatch open at the nose, look in that. Looking forward, the plate is attached to the bulkhead.

As per Chinese habit (or at least Nanchang's), the factory number is omitted and replaced by what looks like a '1' lying on its side. It may be (just) visible on the photo below or else you have to take our word for it.



Sri Lankan SJT-1806 with open port side nose hatch. (Hans Hoogers)



Sri Lankan SJT-1806 is '3-16', built 2004-12. (Hans Hoogers)