



The nose section of the CASA has been completely disassembled at Ezell for restoration. (Chuck Gardner)



Preparing to demate the nose from the fuselage. (CG)



The center fuselage after demate. The aircraft wears its Battle of Britain film paint. (CG)

CASA RESTORATION

BRINGING A SPANISH-BUILT VARIANT OF THE HEINKEL 111 BACK TO LIFE
BY CHUCK GARDNER



Preparing the disassembled CASA for its road trip to Breckenridge. (CG)



Near the end of its service life, a fully armed CASA 2.111B was photographed in flight. At this point, the upper surfaces of the bomber were sprayed aluminum while the undersurfaces were azure blue.



Work going on in the nose section, (CG)

When the forces of Francisco Franco won the devastating Spanish Civil War with considerable help from Nazi Germany, a firm tie was developed between Spanish and German aviation. During the Civil War, Germany supplied the Spanish Nationalist Air Force with Heinkel He 111B bombers and these were flown by German crews of the Condor Legion against the Spanish Republican forces, which were being supplied by communist Russia. The Heinkels proved to be very effective against the Republicans and after the conclusion of the Civil War, Franco made the decision to form an agreement with Germany to produce the bomber in Spain.

A licensing agreement between *Construcciones Aeronauticas SA (CASA)* and Heinkel was set up in 1940 to build 200 examples of the He 111H-16 but the start of production was extremely slow. The aircraft would be built at the CASA factory in Seville but German support soon dropped off as the war began to occupy all of that nation's resources.

Engines were main problem but Spanish engineers found a supply of Jumo 211F-2 powerplants in France and these were procured and moved to Seville. This allowed the construction of 130 Jumo-powered aircraft but only 117 were delivered since the engine problem

was acute and many Jumos had to be cannibalized to create airworthy units. The aircraft were given the designation of CASA 2.111 and they were built in three primary configurations. The CASA 2.111A was a medium bomber; the 2.111C a recon bomber; and the 2.111F was a dual-control training aircraft.

To give an idea of just how slow production was, the first Spanish-built example did not fly until 23 May 1945 and this was after the German surrender. It was obvious that Spain was not going to get any further engines for the aircraft so a deal was worked with Rolls-Royce to obtain Merlin 500 powerplants. The engine was supplied in a nacelle that Rolls-Royce had developed for the Beaufighter Mk. II and the Avro Lancaster. A contract for 173 Merlin 500s was signed in April 1956 and the engines were quickly completed and shipped to Spain.

With the Merlins, the medium bombers were redesignated 2.111B while the recon bombers became 2.111D. Production continued at a very



Wearing its Luftwaffe-style splinter camouflage CASA 2.111D BR2-I-129 was photographed arriving at Le Bourget Airport for inclusion in the *Musee de l'Air* and display at the 1975 Paris Airshow.