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Early official flights

Museum dates, kept unblended. This sheet does not decide who ran first.

The National Air and Space Museum dates the Whittle Unit's first run to 12 April 1937, and von Ohain's HeS 1 to "early 1937." Both official wordings stand. NASA says the wartime engine was "developed independently in Germany and in England."

Official date	Wording kept on this sheet
27 August 1939	The HeS 3B powered the Heinkel He 178 on "the world's first flight of a turbojet powered aircraft." The museum object of that type is a non-working reproduction, not the flight engine.
15 May 1941	"The W.1 flew officially in the E.28/39 on May 15, 1941." The W.1X, a non-airworthy engine, had already made short, straight hops during taxiing tests.
1 October 1941	The W.1X and drawings of the W.2B were delivered to General Electric.
2 October 1942	GE's IA powered the first U.S. jet aircraft, the Bell XP-59A Airacomet.

A shorter label, kept apart

A shorter description on the W.1X page says the engine "first flew on the E.28/39 in 1941 marking the unofficial first flight of a British jet aircraft." That "in 1941" is not combined here with 15 May 1941.

A short quiz

1. Which official date does the museum give for the He 178's first turbojet flight?
2. Which engine, according to the longer label, flew officially on 15 May 1941 — the W.1, or the W.1X?
3. Does this sheet decide who ran a turbojet first in 1937?

Answers. 1. 27 August 1939. 2. The W.1. 3. No.

Wording from the National Air and Space Museum object pages for the Whittle W.1X (A19500082000) and the HeS 3B reproduction (A19810039000), and from NASA Glenn, "Gas Turbine Propulsion." Checked 17 November 2026.