AIRCAM AVIATION SERIES

NO 4

SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE MK.I-XVI
IN RAF-SAAF-RAAF-RNZAF-RCAF & FOREIGN SERVICE


Mk. VC, No. 78 Squadron, RAAF. Green/brown uppers, pale blue unders, white tail unit. Grey code, X with white bars. Serial probably BS305.

Mk. VB, Turkish Air Force. 5512 in black, standard RAF desert scheme.


Mk. VC, Royal Egyptian Air Force. Standard RAF desert scheme with sky spinner and fuselage band. Green/white national insignia.
The basic design of the Spitfire was finalised by R. J. Mitchell in 1934. While the aircraft has often been compared with other famous types of World War II, it must be remembered that its true contemporaries were the Hurricane, P-36, and Messerschmitt Bf109, and that the Fw190, Mustang, and others, were designed three to six years later.

The success of the Spitfire was due to several factors. When used in its intended role as a defensive fighter, its performance was always equal to, and often superior to, that of its opponents. Notable examples were the Battle of Britain, the defence of Malta, and the defeat of the Japanese over Northern Australia and the India/Burma border. The aircraft was also a delight to fly, and its adaptability was quite remarkable. Therefore it remained as the supreme Allied single-seat fighter and photo-reconnaissance aircraft until 1944. Even later, it could out-maneuver many jet fighters and had a higher limiting Mach number in the dive than most until the F-86.

Coupled with the early-warning ground radar, which allowed the Spitfire to be used to its best advantage, and with the excellent Rolls-Royce Merlin and Griffon engines, it was a war-winner.

On the other hand, it must be recognised that, with the exception of the photo-reconnaissance versions—which did not have to undergo the stresses of combat—it proved rather difficult to load the lightly-built airframe with the extra fuel and bombs required from 1941 onwards. This occasionally hampered its offensive deployment and gave some headaches to the operations planners, especially before the D-day invasion.

In this publication we shall cover the operational history of the Merlin-engined Spitfires. Those versions which used the Griffon engine will be dealt with in a later issue.

The prototype, K5054, first flew in March 1936, the first production Mk. I, K9787, appearing in June 1938.

The aircraft remained in production until August 1945, when the last, a Mk. XVI, SL745, was built.

Nearly two hundred squadrons of the R.A.F. used the aircraft between August 1938 and September 1951, peak strength being reached in June 1944 when 25% of the R.A.F. on all war fronts was equipped with Merlin-Spitfires. In addition, over eighty other units, schools, etc., used this variant, together with some twenty foreign and Commonwealth Air Forces.

THE EARLY DAYS — 1938 TO JUNE 1940

Up to May 1940 this period was marked by the slow, but steady, increase in the number of operational Spitfire squadrons. After the outbreak of war in September 1939 and, while the Hurricanes went to France, the Spitfires of 72, 602, and 603 squadrons engaged in a few short, sharp battles with Luftwaffe bombers over the north-east coastline of Britain between October and December 1939. During this time the Spitfires’ qualities in fighter-to-fighter combat were an unknown quantity and, in some official circles, it was felt that manoeuvrability, exemplified by the Hurricane and P-36, was the key factor in combat.

However, Sidney Cotton, engaged in clandestine reconnaissance work for the Air Ministry, recognised the aircraft’s potentialities for photo-reconnaissance. Cotton, together with his pilots, Longbottom and Niven, formulated the concept of a modified fighter carrying cameras instead of guns and thus set a pattern which has lasted to the present day. The initial conversions were designated Spitfire A, B, and C (extra fuel tanks being added to the type B onwards), and the first successful sortie over Germany was on November 20th, 1939.

Operated by the Special Survey Flight (later 212 squadron), the Spitfires were scattered around various French airfields, and a surprisingly large number were used until evacuated in June 1940. Aircraft included...
first of the new Spitfire IIa’s (Merlin XII engine). As the daylight battles subsided, production of the Mk. II began to increase and, with cannon stoppage problems solved, the new Mk. VB entered service with 92 squadron in December.

1941 saw the R.A.F. go on to the offensive over France and the Low Countries. Backed up by the pilot output of the Operational Training Units (O.T.U.’s), equipped with the Spitfire IA and later, Mk. IIa’s, a large increase in Spitfire fighter squadrons was accomplished by the end of the year, from nineteen to sixty. Together with the bomber-escort, ground attack sorties, and the fighter “sweeps”, the wastage and loss rate was very high, especially after September when the Fw190 was encountered in increasing numbers. For example, 317 squadron, having an establishment of eighteen aircraft, got through sixty-four Mk. VB’s in the ten-month period November 1941 to August 1942.

Meanwhile, the photo-reconnaissance Spitfires were kept busy, and over one hundred and twenty were modified from fighter airframes until, in late 1941, the Spitfire D entered production as the Mk. IV (later PR. IV). In September, 140 squadron formed in England with the Spitfire G (PR. VII), and by December, 69 squadron in Malta were operating one or two PR. IV’s.

THE TURNING POINT — 1942

That year saw the tide of battle begin to turn in favour of the Allies, and a contributing factor was the increased adaptability of the Spitfire.

The high-altitude Spitfire VI entered service in April with 616 squadron, but it was never to be really successful, as the weight of its cockpit-pressure equipment reduced its effective ceiling. However, the Mk. VII overcame this problem with the new supercharged Merlin 60/70 series engine, and a few went into service in the autumn. This version was followed by the Mk. VIII (essentially a Mk. VII without pressurisation) which first flew towards the end of the year. Incorporating many refinements, it had the best handling characteristics of all the Spitfires and also the highest speed, at altitude, of all the Merlin-engined fighter variants.
However, early in the year it was obvious that the threat of the Fw190 could not wait for the Spitfire VIII. Therefore, the Mk. IX was hurriedly introduced as a "stop-gap", using the Mk. VC airframe with, initially, the Merlin 61 and 63 engine. Going into service with 64 squadron in July it averted the crisis in Fighter Command, but its introduction was rather slow until larger numbers became available in 1943.

Meanwhile another crisis had developed, this time in Malta and the North African desert. Pleas for more modern aircraft were finally answered and, starting in March, Spitfire V's were flown into Malta from the carrier H.M.S. Eagle. Further deliveries followed, both to Malta and Africa, so that by August, 126, 185, 229, 249, and 1435 squadrons were using Spitfires in Malta. In Egypt, 92, 145, and 601 squadrons were providing high-altitude cover for the 8th Army and the Desert Air Force.

Also, in that month the Special Performance Flight at Aboukir shot down their first Ju88P at over 40,000 feet, using one of the specially modified Mk. VC's. This was the task for which the Mk. VI had been created, but when the first batch of 241 VS133 and 134 arrived in October they were too late and disappointing in performance.

At home, the operations over "Fortress Europe" continued and, in the Dieppe raid in August, the first U.S.A.A.F. Spitfire units took part; by the end of the following month the 4th, 31st, and 52nd Fighter Groups were operational with the Mk. VB. Since the latter was available in large numbers, the last Mk. II's were phased out of the fighter squadrons by June and, at the turn of the year, the original four Air Sea Rescue squadrons (275-278) were replacing their Defiants with specially modified Mk. IIC's.

Finally, in November the Axis line broke at El Alamein in Egypt. Four days later, on the 8th, the Allies landed in North-West Africa, part of the air cover supplied by nine Spitfire squadrons of the R.A.F. (72, 81, 93, 111, 152, 154, 232, 242, and 243), and six squadrons of the 31st and 52nd E.G.

1943 TO 1945

In 1943 the Spitfire came to be used on all the war fronts. In Australia, 54, 452, and 457 squadrons defended the Darwin area with their Mk. VC's, between February and June. In India, No. 3 P.R.U. (later 681 squadron) had already received their first Spitfire PR. IV, and continued to operate the type until April 1944—their last aircraft being AA786. Spitfire VC's arrived in September 1943 to replace the Hurricanes of 136 and 615 squadrons, and 607 squadron arrived from England. These three units quickly began to break up the Japanese air attacks and reconnaissance sorties intended as the prelude to their attempted invasion of India.

The first Spitfire PR. XI's for 681 squadron were flown out from England in October and, in November, the first of many Mk. VIII's arrived. They were quickly taken over by 155 squadron to replace their ageing Hurricanes. At the same time, 81, and 152 squadrons, which had just arrived from Italy, took over some of the new Mk. VIII's. By June 1944, the Japanese were retreating into Burma and their Air Force was never to recover.

The Spitfire VIII had the longest range of any of the fighter variants with an extra thirty-nine gallons of internal fuel—it was certainly needed in the Pacific. As more aircraft arrived, the Australian squadrons were re-equipped and, in December 1944, 79 (R.A.A.F.), 452, and 457 squadrons went on the offensive over the East Indies and the Philippines.

Meanwhile, in the Mediterranean, 81 squadron obtained its first Mk. VIII in January 1944 and the first Spitfire IX's at the end of January 1943 and the first Spitfire V's modified as fighter-bombers went into action with 152 squadron in April. With the German defeat in North Africa, the Allies landed on Sicily in July, and the VIII began to arrive to supplement the increasing numbers of Spitfire IX's. Among the first units to receive the Mk. VIII were 81, 92, 111, and the 50th squadron of the 31st E.G.

The invasion of Italy followed, some units initially using a combination of Mk. VC, VIII, and IX. (Many of the VIII's had extended wing-tips which has since caused some confusion with the Mk. VII. Very few, if any, of the latter saw service in the Mediterranean.) In the spring of 1944 seven Spitfire squadrons were with IX's, used the Mk. VII for United Kingdom for the D-day landings in Normandy.

For operations in 1943, preparatory to the invasion, the Spitfire LF. VB had supplemented the Mk. IX, but by D-day nearly all the first-line Spitfire squadrons had the Mk. IX. Many were fighter-bomber versions, carrying one 500 lb. and two 250 lb. bombs. During the trials earlier in 1944, 403 squadron had experimented with a 1000 lb. bomb under the centre-section of one aircraft, but the idea was abandoned after it ripped open the bottom of the fuselage!

Introduction of the Mk. IXE (0.5" guns) and the installation of gyro gunsights increased the effectiveness of the aircraft in 1944. As the Spitfire LF. XVI began to appear on the production lines in September, most Mk. IXEs's used the Mk. VII for high-altitude defence and escort duties from 1943 until just after D-day. Other squadron "rotating" on rest at Skeabrae in the Orkneys flew a small number of the Mk. VII's based there for the defence of Scapa Flow.

THE POSTWAR YEARS

As the War ended the Spitfire IX was phased out of R.A.F. service and became available for the many foreign air forces requiring new equipment. While the Belgian Air Force operated Mk. XVI's for a short while, they were traded for Mk. IX's in 1947. So apart from a short period in North-West Europe, the Spitfire XVI never saw service abroad, but soldiered on for a number of years in the Anti-Aircraft Cooperation units and in the R.A.F. Auxiliary Air Force. When the latter was recalled to active service in 1951, 612 squadron was still operating the type.

In foreign service the Mk. IX only saw action with the French, Israeli; and Egyptian Air Forces. The French
used them for ground attack in Indo-China between 1946 and 1950, operated by GC. I/7 and II/7. The Israeli and Egyptian aircraft were ex-R.A.F. and S.A.A.F., handed over to the Egyptians and resurrected from the scrap dumps by the Israelis. The two forces fought each other—and the R.A.F.—during 1948 and 1949, 105 squadron of the Chel Ha'avir using both Spitfires and Avia S-199's.

In England, No. 3/4 Civilian Anti-Aircraft Cooperation Unit at Exeter used a number of LF. 16's until 1956, while in the Irish Air Force, a few Mk. 9 Trainers were flown up to 1961.

* The Spitfire LF. XVI was simply a Mk. IXE, but with the U.S. Packard-built Merlin 266. Considerable confusion has since arisen between the IX and XVI, and their designations. The following is offered as some clarification:

LF., F., HF. IX
Built by Supermarine at Castle Bromwich. Except for one or two odd aircraft with 'B' wings, all had 'C' wings, earlier type canopies and rudders, and until June 1943 (MH 312 onwards), no tropicalisation.

LF., F., HF. IXE
All built at Castle Bromwich (NH series onwards), replacing the IX from April 1944. All with 'E' wings. After September 1944 (RK 883 onwards), had broad-chord pointed rudders. Those with serials between TD 175-TE 343, produced after February 1945, had "tear-drop" canopies. Very few F. IXE built.

LF. XVI
All with 'E' wings—official designation omits the suffix letter. All had broad-chord pointed rudder. Aircraft in the RR, SM, TB, serial batches had earlier type canopies. After February 1945, had "tear-drop" canopies, i.e., RW, SL, TD, and TE batches.

Further confusion has arisen over the semi-official designation of IXA for those with the Merlin 61/63 (F. IX), and the IXB for the Merlin 66 (LF. IX)—regardless of wing armament. It should also be noted that a few rebuilt aircraft could confuse the issue by having rudders or tropical intakes other than described above.

Many IX's and XVI's had clipped-wings from 1944. LF. XVI's were re-designated LF. 16 after 1948. There was no such aircraft as a IXF. It should also be noted that there has often been confusion (in official publications particularly) between the Mk. XIV and XVI.
One of the few Battle of Britain formation shots in existence today. A neat vic by three Mk 1a's of No. 610 'County of Chester' Squadron based at Biggin Hill. K N3259. (CH739 IWM)

Mk 1a's of No. 501 'County of Gloucester' Squadron, same formation as heading shot. (CH2825 IWM)

Three aircraft of the above formation showing to good advantage the graceful Spitfire plan-form. Note roundel variations. (CH 2822 IWM)

Only a publicity shot of K5054 the prototype but it shows the camouflage pattern in good detail. (HU1665 IWM)
Good detail shot of a Mk. Ila of No. 41 Squadron, flown by Sqn.-Ldr. D. O. Findlay, D.F.C. Serial was P7618 later to No. 54 Squadron as KL-Z and subsequently shot down. Sky blue under surfaces. (CH1890 IWM)

Mk. Ila probably of No. 58 OTU. Code BO-K. (via Frank P. Smith)

Mk. Ila's of No. 303 'Kosciuszko' (Polish) Squadron, aircraft taxiing carries the presentation name 'Garfield Weston III' on fuselage. Code RF-L. (J. B. Cyrnik)

Mk. Ila's of No. 308 'Krakowski' (Polish) Squadron being refuelled early in 1942. Code ZF-F (farthest a/c). (J. B. Cyrnik)
A Spitfire Mk. IIA P8394 of No. 91 Squadron at Hawkinge, April 1941. Four months earlier the squadron had been formed from No. 421 Flight. (via L. Bachelor)

Mk. IIA's of The Air Fighting Development Unit. Sky blue under surfaces, sky band, spinner and code. Serial P7290. (CHS771 IWM)

Mk. IIb of No. 52 OTU. Presentation name on fuselage in white 'British and Friends Ex Japan'. Note unusual position of serial. P3348. (CH6397 IWM)

Formation of Mk. Vb's of No. 122 'Bombay' Squadron getting airborne. Code MT. (CH5761 IWM)
Good detail shot of W3902, a Mk. Vb of No. 302 'Poznan' (Polish) Squadron. Note cannon and wheel blisters. (J. B. Cynk)

Same aircraft as above showing port side marking details. Note Polish national insignia just aft of cockpit. (J. B. Cynk)

Starboard side detail of W3902.
(J. B. Cynk)

Mk. Vb's of No. 303 'Kosciuszko' (Polish) Squadron beginning their take-off run.
RF-A AB183.
(J. B. Cynk)
Mk. Vb’s of No. 303 ‘Kosciuszko’ (Polish) Squadron being put through their paces high above the clouds. (J. B. Cynk)

Mk. Vb of No. 317 ‘Wilno’ (Polish) Squadron. Note non-standard roundel. Serial W3970. (J. B. Cynk)
Mk. Vb of No. 317 'Wilno' (Polish) Squadron with standard roundel. Note squadron insignia below cockpit (on JH-Y aft of cockpit). (J. B. Cynk)

Mk. Vb of No. 312 (Czechoslovak) Squadron being re-armed. Note Czech national insignia below cockpit, serial EP660, square, stencil style letters. (via Leif B. Hansen)

Line-up of Mk. Vb's of No. 485 RNZAF Squadron, nearest aircraft named 'Wellington I', serial AB918, Code OU-. (CH5752 IWM)

Mk. Vb of No. 64 Squadron, Squadron Leader's pennant and name 'Atchashikar'. (CH5760 IWM)
Nice flying shot of a Mk. Vb of No. 12 ("Eagle") Squadron, "Olga" in white below cockpit, serial BM590, stencil style. (IWM)

Neat stepped up formation by No. 81 Squadron, Mk. Vb's. Nearest two aircraft have had their serials overpainted, FL-A BM461, stencil style. (IWM)

Low level pass by a Mk. Vb of No. 412 RCAF Squadron, serial unknown. (IWM)
Mk. Vb, YO-C, the CO's aircraft of No. 401 RCAF Squadron, winter 1942-43. The name on the cowling is 'Phyl-Marie'. (Canadian Dept. of National Defence)

Nice flying shot of a LF Vb of the Air Fighting Development Unit in 1943. Code AF-O, serial AA937. (Canadian Dept. of National Defence)

Mk. Vb's of No. 332 (Norwegian) Squadron. (via Frank F. Smith)

Mk. Vb's of No. 331 (Norwegian) Squadron, nearest aircraft is FN-O, serial overpainted. (CH6512 IWM)
Mk. Vb of No. 452 RAAF Squadron, serial W3821. Note Hurricane in background with unusual code 7-DX, No. 245 Squadron. (F.F.S.)


Mk. Vb, AD563 of No. 452 RAAF Squadron. (F.F.S.)

Mk. Vb of No. 350 (Belgian) Squadron (above left), note unusual double camouflage on nose, code MN-M. (Left) Another unusual nose scheme on a No. 350 Squadron Mk. Vb. (M. C. Terlinden)

An LF Vb, BM449 (serial high up on sky band in very small letters), this Spitfire has an incorrectly painted code. The aircraft was H of the Air Fighting Development Unit in 1943, whose code was AF-. (via Ted Hooton)
Neat formation of Mk. Vb’s, nearest aircraft A8502 flown by Wing-Cdr. I. R. Gledd, Leader No. 224 Wing, other aircraft from No. 601 'County of London' Squadron, farthest aircraft UF-F has the squadron badge, a Winged Sword above fin flash, Neto Wing-Cdr's pennant under cockpit, 'Figaro' on starboard side (see Battle of Britain Special for details). code IR-C dark blue outlined white. Aboukir filters and azure blue under surfaces. (CNA821 CNA818 IWM)

UF-7 a Mk. Vb of No. 601 Squadron landing on a recently prepared airstrip in North Africa. (CNA1099 IWM)
Mk. Vb's probably of No. 243 Squadron on the airfield at Maison Blanche shortly after the North African landing. Note crowbar on door of EP650. (CNA30 CNA33 IWM)

Nice shot of a Mk. Vc of an unknown unit in North Africa. (CNA2272 IWM)

Mk. Vc of No. 81 Squadron damaged during Luftwaffe raid. FL-4 outlined white, serial JK322. Sicily, August 1943. (via Frank P. Smith)

Mk. Vc of No. 43 Squadron raising the dust on an airfield in the Naples area. Code FT-. (CNA1638 IWM)
One of the less successful, and not so popular Spitfires was the Mk. VI. Note cabin pressurisation intake and extra frame on front of canopy, AB334 was later flown on No. 616 'South Yorkshire' Squadron in 1942 by 'Johnny' Johnson. (HU2195 IWM)

Mk. VI of No. 124 'Baroda' Squadron. (CH18087 IWM)

HF VII of No. 131 'County of Kent' Squadron, overall pale blue. (?)

HF VII in pale blue upper surfaces and azure blue under surfaces. (IWM)
LF VIII LV729 of No. 145 Squadron flown by Sqn-Ldr G. H. S. McKay, Italy, 1944. 500 lb. bomb under fuselage.

MT928 was the replacement aircraft for LV729 early in 1945. (both photos via L. Bachelor)

No. 145 Squadron insignia, silver sword, gold handle, red cross on white disc.

F VIII of No. 417 RCAF Squadron taking off from a landing strip in Italy. (NAC 1061 IWM)

F VIII, JF526 of No. 417 RCAF Squadron on an airfield in Italy during the winter of 1943-44 below AN-1 of same unit. (Canadian Dept. of National Defence)
**LF VIII, JF814 flown by Air Vice Marshall Sir William F. Dickson in Italy. (via Stan Staples)**

**Mk. VIII, No. 3 RFU, Peona, Serial MT562. Note spiral on white spinner. (via C. H. Thomas)**

**Mk. VIII of the Burma Command Flight, Mingaladon 1945. (W. Wright)**

Interesting shot of 811's 'Ace of Spades' being chased by the 'Panther' of 152 Squadron. Mk. VIII, Imphal Main, July-August 1944. (F)

(Below) Mk. VIII of No. 155 Squadron raising the dust in Burma. (CF271 IWM)

(Bottom) Mk. VIII's of No. 136 Squadron in the Cocos Islands at the close of the Japanese war, 1945. The squadron provided fighter defence for the island base from which Nos. 99 and 356 Squadrons operated Liberators. (IWM)
First squadron to equip with the Mk. IX was No. 64 Squadron in July 1942. One of their early aircraft is shown here. Note code letters aft of roundel. (?)

Two Mk. IXc’s of No. 611 ‘West Lancashire’ Squadron, autumn 1942. (Flight International)

Mk. IXc, UZ-Z, BS456 of No. 306 ‘Torun’ (Polish) Squadron at Northolt, late 1942. (Flight International)

Mk. IXc’s of No. 317 ‘Wilno’ (Polish) Squadron in France, August 1944. (MH6552 IWM)
Mk. IXc's of No. 453 RAAF Squadron in France, June 1944. (MH6847 IWM)

Mk. IX of No. 312 (Czechoslovak) Squadron. Note national insignia below cockpit. (via Leif B. Hansen)

Mk. IX of No. 332 (Norwegian) Squadron. LZ915.

Mk. IX's of No. 349 (Belgian) Squadron. (CH12434 IWM)

Mk. IX of No. 322 (Dutch) Squadron in 1944. Note invasion stripes only under the wings. (?)
Mk. IX's of No. 241 Squadron, note sky fuselage band, unusual in Mediterranean area. Lower photo shows same two aircraft flying past Mount Vesuvius. RZ-R serial MA425. (CNA2487 CNA2486 IWM)

Mk. Ve's and Mk. IX's of No. 152 Squadron on an airfield in the Naples area. Black codes on IX's and white on Ve's. (CNA1643 IWM)
Mk. IXc of No. 1435 Squadron in Italy, probably early 1945. Code V-.

Mk. IX's of No. 73 Squadron operating from an airfield in Yugoslavia in support of the local patriot forces (see colour illustration).

(CNAJS27 CNA3525 IWM)

Early production LF IX with E-type wing. Flown by C.O. of No. 87 Squadron in Italy early 1945. Note sky fuselage band.
(via L. Bachelor)

LF IXc, PV117 of No. 208 Squadron, probably photographed in 1946. Note white aerial mast and upper wing roundels.


5. Mk. Vb, No. 121 'Eagle' Squadron, RAF. 1942. BM590. 'Olga.'


2. Mk. VI, No. 616 'South Yorkshire' Squadron, June 1942. BSIII.


5. Mk. VIII, No. 131 'County of Kent' Squadron, Summer 1943. MD163.

6. Mk. IXc, No. Squadron, Italy 1943. EN204.
1. Mk. IXe, No. 126 Squadron, MK126.

2. Mk. IXe, No. 312 (Czechoslovak) Squadron, RAF. 1944. Serial over-painted.

3. Mk. IXe, No. 73 Squadron, Yugoslavia 1944, SM147.

4. Mk. VIII, No. 152 'Hyderabad' Squadron, Comilla, Bengal, SEAC, May 1944. ('A' Flight a/c) MT557.

5. Mk. IXe, No. 43 'China-British' Squadron, Retfleeg, Austria, 1946. RK855.


2. Mk. VIII flown by Group-Capt. C. R. Caldwell, OC and Wing Leader No. 80 Fighter Wing, No. 1 TAF, RAAF, Morotai 1945. AS8-528.


5. Mk. VIII, No. 452 Squadron, No. 80 Fighter Wing, No. 1 TAF, RAAF, Morotai 1945. AS8-516.

1. HFIXe, No. 1 Squadron, South African Air Force, Waterkloof 1946. 5539.

2. HFIXe, No. 1 Squadron, South African Air Force, Waterkloof 1950. 5581.


3. Mk. IXb flown by Wing-Cdr. Rolf Arne Borge, OC No. 132 (Norwegian) Wing, Serial PV 6198 or R90194.


5. Mk. IXc, No. 322 Squadron, Netherlands East Indies Air Force.

1. HFXe, No. 725 Squadron, Royal Danish Air Force, Karup 1947-52. (FV304).


4. LF16, Central Gunnery School. RW396.

5. LF16 flown by the AOC of No. 21 Group, RAF. 1946. TE199.

Above, While most Mk. IX aircraft did not have the "tear-drop" canopy, a few late-production models incorporated this feature, as TE215, a HF IXe of No. 130 "Punjab" Squadron at Odiham in 1946. (via L. Bachelor)

Nice flying shots of two Mk. XVI's of No. 349 (Belgian) Squadron. Above, GE-V, right, GE-L. (via M. C. Terlinden)

LF XVI flown by Sqn-Ldr. Laermend, OC No. 349 (Belgian) Squadron at Fassburg 1946. (via M. C. Terlinden)
From the end of 1945 until early 1949 No. 631 Squadron flew LF XVI's. One of their a/c, SL614, is shown here before the unit was renumbered No. 20 Squadron, and continued using the aircraft for anti-aircraft co-operation work until early 1951. (Via L. Bachelor)

LF XVI, SL669, RP-K of No. 288 Squadron, flew anti-aircraft co-operation duties after the war, until the squadron was disbanded in June 1946. (Via L. Bachelor)

LF16 of No. 609 'West Riding' Squadron, R.Aux.A.F. at Church Fenton. These aircraft were in use on the squadron from 1948 to 1950 when they were replaced by Vampires. (F)

LF 16, RW376 of No. 601 'County of London' Squadron, R.Aux.A.F. at North Weald in 1950-51. After the Reserve code RAH was replaced by HT. (Via L. Bachelor)

Line-up of LZ 16's of No. 631 Squadron at Llanbedr. SM360 in foreground. (F. W. Fielding)
This PR IV was extensively modified by No. 103 MU at Abouqir, Egypt, in the winter of 1942-43. Its apparently ragged appearance is the result of much sealing and sanding to give a smooth finish. Fitted with locally made pointed wing tips, a highly tuned engine and Abouqir type filter, it was one of several later used by No. 680 Squadron for long range sorties over Salonika.

(PR. M. Cooper-Slipper)

Abouqir modified PR IV, upper surfaces PR blue under surfaces light blue. (T. P. M. Cooper-Slipper)

PR IV refuelling at Marble Arch airfield, Western Desert, unit unknown. All white under surfaces, PR blue on top of cowl, wings and tailplanes. (Col. D. C. Davies, SAAF, via A. Blake)

Converted from a Mk. IA to a F in early 1941, X4492 is shown here in Canada as a PR IV. flown by No. 13 Photo Survey Squadron, Rockcliffe, it was used to photograph an eclipse of the sun in July 1945. (Canadian Dept. of National Defence)

Originally known as a G when converted by Boston Aircraft, this PR VII is possibly one of those that were painted pink and used by No. 1416 Flight which became No. 149 Squadron in 1941. (T)

A strong cross wind caused this upset to a PR XI, one of the first of its type, on delivery to No. 682 Squadron, Maison Blanche, Algeria, in early 1943. (T. H. Goeb)
Mk. IX modified for PR duties. Unit unknown, serial 5536. South African Air Force. (SAAF)
Very mixed formation of Mk. IXe's of No. 1 Squadron, South African Air Force. Note variation in presentation of national insignia. Standard RAF camouflage, orange, white, blue roundels and fin flash. (SAAF)

Mk. IXe of No. 2 'Flying Cheetah' Squadron, SAAF.
(SAAF)

Mk. IXe, serial 5555, No. 1 Squadron, Waterkloof, 1950. (SAAF)

Mk. IXe, serial 5581. Note bomb and rocket attachment points. (SAAF)

Mk. IXe, serial 5621 in green uppers, grey unders. (7)

Rather rare flying shot of a Mk. Vc of No. 452 Squadron, RAAF, Darwin 1943. Scheme as above, serial EE609. (via Frank F. Smith)

Mk. VIII, No. 79 Squadron, serial AS8-517 in black. Note all white tail unit. Morotai 1945. (via Frank F. Smith)

Mk. VIII, No. 452 Squadron, No. 80 Fighter Wing, Morotai 1945. (Note the 'Ace of Spades' should face forward on the port side of colour illustration, facing aft on starboard side.) (via Frank F. Smith)
Formation shot of No. 452 Squadron, all green/brown uppers with white leading edge to wings. (via Frank F. Smith)


A58-611 of No. 457 Squadron revving up prior to take-off on op. Note white fuselage band. (via Frank F. Smith)

Line-up of 'Shark mouted' Mk. VIII's of No. 457 Squadron on Morotai, 1945. (via Frank F. Smith)
Mk. Vb, 31st Fighter Group, 309th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, USAAF.

Mk. Vb, BM635 of the 67th Observation Group, Membury, March 1943. At this time no code letters had been issued to the unit and the aircraft still carries the code of its previous owners—the 309th Fighter Squadron. (USAF)


Mk. Vb, BL60 used on communication duties in UK. USAAF

Mk. Vb, PL761 of the 7th Photo Reconnaissance Group, 14th PR Squadron, 8th Air Force, USAAF. Mount Farm 1944-45. (?)

A late production PR XI, PL767 of the 7th Photo Reconnaissance Group, 14th PR Squadron, 8th Air Force, USAAF. Mount Farm 1944-45. (?)
Rare formation shot of USAF Spitfire Mk. Vb's of the 617th Observation Group. Leading aircraft with no fuselage bands are coded VX (probably 12th Squadron). The three aircraft in the rear are coded 2M, 153rd Squadron. (USAF)

Mk. Vb of the 4th Fighter Group, 80th Fighter Squadron, 8th Air Force, USAAF. Based at Debden. Code QP-V. (7)

Mk. IXc flown by Col. E. F. Allen, 9th Tactical Air Command in England in 1944. Bare metal with OD anti-glare panel and black code letters. (7)


Mk. IX's of an unknown Free French Air Force unit, probably No. 341 'Alsace' Squadron. (E.C.A. via J. Cuny)

Mk. IXc's of No. 340 'Ile de France' (Free French) Squadron taking off from a UK airfield. (IWM)


Mk. IXc's taxiing out to the runway, unknown French Air Force unit. France 1944. (IWM)

Mk. IXc of unknown French Air Force unit in France. Note long range tank and invasion stripes on fuselage only. (FRA200453 IWM)
Mk. Vc. GC II/7, 4th Escadrille, high over the Corsican coastline (see colour illustration). In 1943 some aircraft of this unit, when operating from Chisonaccia, sported RAF roundels, others French. Black "Panther" insignia port side only. (via J. C. Cluny)

Two Mk. Vc's of GC II/7 on the airfield at Ajaccio, Corsica, 1943. (CNA1833 IWM)

Mk. IXc used by training unit in Algeria, French Air Force. 1950. (via J. C. Cluny)

Mk. IX's of an unknown French Air Force unit, probably in Indo-China. (via J. C. Cluny)

Mk. Vc of No. 352 (Yugoslav) Squadron coming in to land, note national insignia in all positions. (CNA3102 IWM)

Mk. Vc, No. 352 (Yugoslav) Squadron being re-armed. Note USAAF insignia on wings. Standard RAF camouflage. (CNA3096 IWM)
Mk. IX's of the Operational Training Unit, Bruchem, Belgian Air Force. Bare metal finish with black anti-glare panel, yellow fuselage and wing bands. Blue outline to national insignia. (via M. C. Terlinden)

LF XVI of No. 350 Squadron, Belgian Air Force, Hasselt, 1946. (M. C. Terlinden)

Mk. IX's of No. 312 Squadron, Czechoslovakian Air Force, upon their return to Prague in 1945. Note Czech roundel under wings. Czech flag on fin and rudder. (Zdenek Titz)

Mk. IX (S-98) of the Letecká Vojenska Akademie (Central Flying School) Hradec Kralove, 1946. Czechoslovakian Air Force. Serial on fin MM7538, ex No. 312 Squadron. (Zdenek Titz)

Line-up of Czechoslovakian Mk. IX's, unit unknown, serial of nearest aircraft SL634. (Zdenek Titz)
1939 Upper surface insignia.
A2/3 Typical upper surface scheme. Even number scheme but with red/blue roundel as A1.

Typical Sky under surface scheme showing 36 in. roundel well outboard.

Note:
Even number scheme more or less standard from late 1941.

A1 Sqdn. insignia, black on white.


A2 Typical Sky Blue under surfaces with 48 in. roundel.

Note: Further Spitfire colour schemes may be found in the AIRCAM AVIATION SERIES book on the single seat fighters of the Battle of Britain.

PR IV, Marble Arch, Western Desert, see page 33.

A1 Under surface scheme.

A4/5/6 etc. Typical under surface scheme as from September 1941.
B2
Typical upper surface details, Mk. VI, No. 616 Sqn.
June 1942.

C4 Mk. VIII, No. 152 Sqn.
Roundels
dark blue/pale blue.

SEAC
Under surface identical except white band does not cover flap.

C5 Mk. IXc, No. 43 Sqn, 2nd TAF.
Note revised upper surface roundel, with and without outer thin white border.

C2
Under surface.
Upper surface roundel, identical.

C4 152 Sqn. SEAC.
Roundels dark blue/pale blue.

C2
Standard D-Day Invasion stripe positions, under surfaces identical.
There were many variations both in position and width of strips.

C4
Note under surface roundels red/white/blue.

Mk. Vc, No. 79 Sqn., RAAF.
Grey spinner.
See inside front cover.

C6 Mk. Vb, 309th FG., 31st FS., USAAF.
Typical upper surface presentation, national insignia starboard under surface.

Mk. Vb, No. 81 Sqn.
JK322.

Typical Desert scheme.
See front cover.

D1 Personal score.

D1 Mk. VIII flown by Grp.-Capt. C. R. Caldwell.
Typical upper surface scheme, white leading edge used with both large and small roundels.
Note 4 X 20 mm. cannon.

LF IX in bare metal scheme, serial MJ642. Black anti-glare panel, note wing-walk area and size and position of national insignia on wings. (via G. H. Kamphuis)

H-28 in standard RAF scheme somewhat altered due to code letter changes. (via G. H. Kamphuis)

Rear view of Spitfire IX Trainer, code 3W-22, serial BS147, colour scheme as for 3W-11 above.

BS147 in earlier camouflage scheme, serial below fin flash. (R.Neth.A.F.)
A line-up of Mk.1s of No. 331 (Norwegian) Squadron, splendid in their national markings, on their return to Norway, Kjøvik, by 1945. K.Z. PL187 is LF IXe. IL2819 (WM).

Formation by No. 331 Squadron for Norway in their national insignia. (W/W)

HF IXe of No. 725 Squadron, Royal Danish Air Force, Karup 1947-52. (Lof B. Hansen)

PR XI of No. 722 PR Squadron, Royal Danish Air Force, Karup 1954. Serial PM134. (via Jacob Stoppell)
Mk. IXe's of the Israeli Defence Force/Air Force.
(S. P. Peltz)

Mk. IXe of the Italian Air Force (see colour illustration).
(Italian Air Force)

Mk. Vb, Portuguese Air Force. (Portuguese Air Force)

Mk. Vb's in Russian markings await collection at Abadan, April 1943. All in green/grey camouflage, first aircraft is AD194 built at Castle Bromwich in the autumn of 1941.
(E23982 IWM)

Spitfire IX Trainer of the Irish Air Corps in early scheme and markings, Greenish-yellow overall, black wing-walk and 161. National insignia green and orange. (Irish Air Corps)

Spitfire IX Trainer of the Indian Air Force.
(Hawker Siddeley)

161 in later bare metal scheme, black anti-glare panel, red spinner, black 161. National insignia now green, orange, white.
(P. R. Marchi)
### SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE MERLIN ENGINE
### ROYAL AIR FORCE SQUADRONS
### List by TED HOOTON

The following list covers all known squadrons using Merlin-engined Spitfires from 1938 to 1951. A few units excluded from the list only used Spitfires for a short training period, or a few for strictly non-operational purposes.
For reasons of clarity, the exact dates by months are not shown, and some numbers are given in roman numerals. For the same reason, function prefixes are deleted with the exception of the LF VIb and the PR VII. The LF and F VII are shown as 7.
In some cases, squadrons re-equipped with Griffon-engined Spitfires or other types of aircraft or disbanded, but returned to Merlin Spitfires later. In such cases, two separate lines are shown for the same unit and the same practice has been followed for changes in code letters.

#### The following abbreviations apply:

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<th>Base</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>ETO</td>
<td>North-West Europe, including the United Kingdom.</td>
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<td>FE</td>
<td>India, Burma, Cocos Islands and New Guinea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td>Mediterranean, Including Southern France and Gibraltar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom.</td>
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#### DUTY

- AAC: Anti-aircraft co-operation (Target-towing etc)
- ASR: Air Sea Rescue.
- F: Fighter and Fighter-bomber.
- FR: Fighter Reconnaissance.
- MET: Meteorological.
- PR: Photographic-reconnaissance.
- RDC: Radar Calibration.
- TR: Tactical photo-reconnaissance and gun-spotting.

#### SQDN. DUTY BASE YEAR CODE VERSIONS

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Miscellaneous units, including those using other types of aircraft but partially equipped with Spitfires for purely training or non-operational duties. Also included are those that were fully equipped with Spitfires, but only for a period less than a month. With the exception of 162 squadron in the Middle East, all were in the United Kingdom. Code letters are given after date.

- 24 Transport
- 137 Fighter
- 138 Bomber
- 141 Fighter
- 162 Special
- 168 Army Co-op
- 239 Army Co-op
Spitfire Operational Training Units (OTU's) 1940-1947

5 Fighter. Renumbered 55 OTU, with Hurricanes and Typhoons only.
7 Fighter. Renumbered 57 OTU.
8 Photo-reconnaissance
41 Army Co-operation BE Partial equipment.
52 Fighter 6R Partial equipment.
53 Fighter CT GK NS OQ TJ
56 Fighter QG
57 Fighter FE GF OD Partial equipment.
58 Fighter JZ LV PW XO
61 Fighter DEHX KR TO UU Partial after 144.
63 Fighter MV
71 Army Co-operation (Egypt) Null Partial equipment.
73 Fighter (Egypt) Null Partial equipment.
30 Fighter (Free French) 3H
151 Fighter (India) ?

Other OTU's using Merlin-engined Spitfires. The code letters given are those used on the Spitfires only.

6 Coastal K7
10 Bomber UY
17 Bomber AY JG
20 Bomber JM
21 Bomber UH
28 Bomber QN

Advanced Flying Units: No. 5 (P) EA? FBE
No. 9 (P) ?
No. 21 (P) FDA

Advanced Flying School: No. 203 (later became part of 226 OCU) HX JH UU

Communications Flights: No. 2 Group K2
No. 11 Group JC
No. 12 Group WQ
S.E. Sector, Fighter Command SO
Staff College TBR
Reserve Command RCA

Establishments: Aircraft and Armament Experimental Nil
Central Bomber DF
Central Fighter AG GO
Royal Aircraft Nil

Operational Conversion Unit: No. 225 (ex-61 OTU & 203 AFS) HX KR UU

Photo-Reconnaissance Flights:
Heston (later No. 2 Camouflage Unit) Nil
Special Survey (later 212 sqdn.) Nil

Schools:
Armament Practice QK WH 81
Army Co-operation IP
Bomber Command Instructors BL
Central Flying FDJ FD W
Central Gunnery GFR FJT FJV FJW
Control and Reporting 3L
Empire Air Armament FGA FGC
Empire Air Navigation FGF
Empire Flying FCW
No. 17 Flying Training FCF FCG
No. 2 Initial Training TGC
No. 17 Reserve Flying RCJ
Test Pilots (later E.T.P.S.) Nil

Units:
Air Fighting Development (later C.F.E.) AF GO HP
Air-Sea Warfare Development P9
No. 1 Camouflage Nil
No. 2 Camouflage (later P.D.U.) Nil
Coastal Command Fighter Affiliation Training 40
Gunnery Research Nil?
Photographic Development Unit (later No. 1 P.R.U.) Nil?
No. 1 Photographic Reconnaissance (later 541-544 sqdns.) LY
No. 2 Photographic Reconnaissance (later 680 sqdns.) Nil
No. 3 Photographic Reconnaissance (later 681 sqdns.) Nil
No. 4 Photographic Reconnaissance (later 682-688 sqdns.) Nil
No. 20 Maintenance Unit 9X
No. 2 Tactical Exercise PQ XB ZZ

Commonwealth Squadrons (Unit numbers outside the 400 series).
All listed here were fighter or fighter bomber units with the exception of No. 40 (S.A.A.F.), tactical reconnaissance.

SQDN. BASE YEAR CODE VERSIONS

Indian Air Force:
1 FE 45 ? 8
3 FE 45 ? 8
10 FE 45 ? 8

Royal Australian Air Force:
79 AUS 43-45 UP 5c 8
Also No. 2 O.T.U. with 5c and 8

South African Air Force:
1 ME 43-45 AX 5c 9 8
2 ME 43-45 DB 5c 9
3 ME 44-45 CA 9
4 ME 43-45 KJ 5c 9
5 ME 45 GL 5c
7 ME 43-45 ND? 9
40 ME 43-45 WR 5b 5c 9
CAMOUFLAGE U.K. and N.W. Europe. Fighter aircraft.

Upper surfaces.
1. 6/38 to 8/41. Dark green and dark earth. ‘Mirror’ patterns to Scheme ‘A’ and ‘B’ used until early 1941, but did not always follow correct alternating sequence with even and odd serial numbered aircraft.
2. 8/41 to 4/46. Dark green and dark sand grey.
3. 4/46 onwards. Officially authorised as silver, but usually aircraft were not re-painted until they received a major overhaul, so green/grey was quite common until 1950.

Under surfaces.
2. 4/39 to 4/40. Port side—black. Starboard side—white. Variations rather numerous initially, with tails and fuselage often left in the original silver.
3. 4/40 to 7/44. Sky blue (light blue).
4. 9/40 to 8/41. Sky (duck-egg green). Exception—12/40 to 4/41, port wing black, with yellow surround to roundel.
5. 8/41 to 10/44. Medium sea grey (light grey).
6. 10/44 onwards. Silver, but see upper surfaces (3) above.

Remarkable Exception: Some Mk. V aircraft carrying through Egypt during 1942 and early 1943, most (but not all) Spitfires were left in their factory colours, so the particular version often is a good clue as to camouflage.

Mark V. Some initial deliveries to Malta early in 1942 in temperate green/grey. Remained, and those to Egypt, repainted dark earth and middle stone (light sand brown) on upper surfaces; azure (medium blue/mauve) or sky blue under. Azure seems to have been more common up to 1945, and a few aircraft had Mediterranean dark blue. However, from 7/42 onwards, all Mk. V’s leaving Castle Bromwich (along with the P39s) were painted in the desert scheme with sky blue undersides.

Mark IX. All delivered in green/grey, but some locally repainted in the desert scheme with sky blue (e.g. 232 Sqdn.).

Mark VIII. All early aircraft, up to and including the MD serials, delivered in the desert scheme. Later deliveries varied, some being in green/grey temperate type.

Far East and Australia.
All Mk. V and VIII delivered in desert schemes were re-painted so that dark green replaced the middle stone, leaving the dark earth and sky blue. Deliveries in green/grey temperate-type were untouched.

Photo-Reconnaissance Aircraft.
Prior to the production models of the PR IV, all PR Spitfires were modifications of fighter versions. With the exception of those intended for low-altitude work (which were left in their fighter-type camouflage—notably some PR VIIIs and probably all the RP XIXs), many different schemes were tried on those modified for high-altitude work. In the U.K. between 1940 and 1942, sky, white and pink were all used. In the Middle East, white and/or Mediterranean dark blue were common in various combinations.

Production PR IV and IX were generally in PRU blue overall. This was a rather muddy dark blue-grey with a slight greenish tinge. Some PR X and a few PR XI were Mediterranean light blue, but this was the exception, not the rule.

MARKINGS


Roundels and fin flash.
1. 6/38 to 4/39. Red-white-blue (RWB) all surfaces, yellow (Y) surround on fuselage and upper surfaces.
5. 5/40 to 7/47. Fuselage—RWB. 6. 4/40 to 7/42. Fin flash size standardised at 2½’ by 2’.
7. 7/42 to 5/44. Reduced thickness of yellow and white in fuselage/under-wing roundels and fin flash, the latter being standardised at 2’ square.
8. 1/43 to late ’45. Australia and New Guinea. All surfaces—WB roundel and flash.
9. 9/43 to late ’45. India and Burma. All surfaces—15’ light blue/dark blue roundel. Some RWB on under surfaces from 1944.
11. 5/47 onwards. Original pre-war style RWB roundel on all surfaces introduced. Took some time to effect, even on production aircraft, and was not really universal until late 1950.

Spinners. U.K. Generally black until 9/40, then sky. Some multi-colours, but this was not common.

2nd T.A.F. Mostly sky, some other colours until 1/45 when black was standardised.

Middle East. Black or same colour as under surfaces. Other colours were quite common, and red was mandatory for invasion of Southern France—8/44.

Far East. Most aircraft on delivery had black, many having been changed to white in service. In India/Burma in early 1944, the following squadrons had individual colours: 81 (FL) red; 136 (HM) green; 152 (UM) brown; 607 (AF) dark blue; 615 (KW) light blue bands. Rear fuselage sky band introduced 12/40 for all U.K. aircraft. Very rarely seen on aircraft in Mediterranean except for most MK. VIIIs, which were delivered at Cairo. Not used in Far East, and deleted from 2nd T.A.F. aircraft from 1/45.

Wing leading-edge yellow band (½” span) introduced 8/41 in U.K. It generally remained for as long as the camouflage lasted.

It was quite rare in the Middle East, except for many of the Mk. IX’s, and it was very rare in the Far East. In Australia, most aircraft were painted with a large full-span white band.

Cross-wise wing and tail bands in white were introduced in Burma 3/45, and at about the same time some Australian Spitfires had all-white tail units. However, both of these schemes had apparently died out by about August 1945.

Invasion bands in Europe need no elaboration here, except to state that the black and white markings were reduced to under surfaces in mid-August 1944, and had almost disappeared by the end of the year.

From 7/42 Air Sea Rescue Spitfires carried a 1” black band on the underside of the fuselage.

Code letters. Allocation of codes is given in the unit lists following this section. The colours used varied considerably, from 4/39 to 4/40 light grey was the main colour. From then on the colours tended to be the same as the under surface camouflage—sky blue, sky, and medium sea grey. Red was occasionally used—particularly on ASR aircraft, but yellow was the standard for these types after 6/43. While quite a common colour, particularly in the Mediterranean area, and even more so in the Far East.

From 1948 onwards the letters C and I appeared in unit code letters, as did numerals. Numerals for individual aircraft identity were not used in all training units, but during 1943, squadrons having Mk. V and Mk. VIII or IX in the Mediterranean, used numerals for the VIII/IX aircraft.

Letter size varied, height usually being 20 or 24 inches, but during the Battle of Britain 30 inches was quite common, and in the Burma area, 18 inches was usual.

In 1947 the three-letter codes began appearing for Flying Training, Reserve, and Technical Training Commands. All of the Auxiliary Air Force squadrons used the appropriate ‘R’ codes, but 601, 603, and 604 squadrons used two-letter codes on their Mk.XVI’s up to 1946. Other squadrons used the codes on the units having the ‘R’ codes from 1947. All Spitfires in use with the R.Aux.A.F. in early 1950 switched to two-letter codes after being transferred to Fighter Command, late in 1949.

AIRCAM AVIATION SERIES

Each publication illustrates one type or major sub-types of a famous aircraft in the colour schemes and markings of the Air Forces of the World. Each issue will contain eight pages of colour side view illustrations, supporting black and white plan view drawings showing where necessary both upper and under surfaces. One hundred and twenty-five half-tone photographs, each issue will also contain one full colour plate illustrating twenty examples of Unit Insignia of the World’s Air Forces.

No. 1 NORTH AMERICAN P-51D MUSTANG IN USAF-USAF SERVICE.

No. 2 REPUBLIC P-47 THUNDERBOLT, In USAF-USAF; RAF; Free French; French Air Force; Mexican, Brazilian and other Air Forces.

No. 3 NORTH AMERICAN MUSTANG Mk. I-IV. In RAF; RAAF; SAAF; RNZAF; RCAF service and the NORTH AMERICAN P-51B and D MUSTANG in French; Italian; Swedish; Royal Netherlands; Netherlands East Indies; Indonesian; Israeli; Philippine; Dominican; Somali; South Korean; Chinese Nationalist; Chinese Communist, etc., Air Forces.

No. 4 SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE Mk. I-XVI, MERLIN ENGINE, In RAF; RAAF; SAAF; RCAF; USAF; Belgian; Polish; Czechoslovakian; Free French; French; R. Norwegian; R. Netherlands; R. Danish; Israeli; Italian; Greek; Turkish; Portuguese; Egyptian; Burmese, etc., Air Forces.

No. 5 NORTH AMERICAN P-51B/C MUSTANG IN USAF SERVICE. Similar content to No. 1 but with brief coverage of the P-51 and A-36.

No. 6 CURTISS (P-40) KITTYHAWK Mk. I-IV. In RAF; RAAF; RNZAF; SAAF; RCAF; Netherlands East Indies; Russian and Finnish Air Forces. The Curtis P-40 Warhawk will be covered in a future issue.

SPECIFICATION

Example chosen is the Type 361 Spitfire L.F. Mk. IXe, built at Castle Bromwich during 1944-45 and fitted with the Rolls-Royce Merlin 66 engine of 1,720 h.p.

General
Span/wing area: 36 ft. 10 in./242 sq. ft., or with clipped wing — 32 ft. 7 in./231 sq. ft. Length (flying position): 31 ft. 3 in., later rudder — 31 ft. 9 in.; (tail down): 31 ft. 0 in., later rudder — 31 ft. 4½ in. Height, propeller vertical (flying position): 11 ft. 5 in.; (tail down): 12 ft. 8 in. Internal fuel: 85 Imp. gal. in mains. Later production aircraft, 95 Imp. gal. mains and 75 Imp. gal. in rear tanks (very rarely used, and in acft. with cut-down rear fuselage the 66 Imp. gal. tanks were never used due to stability problems. External fuel: 30 or 45 Imp. gal. "slipper" tanks, or a 50 Imp. gal. "torpedo" tank. Occasional use of 90 Imp. gal. "slipper" tank.

Weights

Armament
Two 20 mm. Hispano Mk. II cannon with 120 r.p.g. and two 0.5 in. Browning machine guns with 250 r.p.g., giving a combined weight of fire of 8.6 lb. per second. Many aircraft carried one 500 lb. bomb and/or two 250 lb. bombs.

Performance
Maximum level speeds: 408 m.p.h. at 25,000 ft., and 312 m.p.h. at sea level. Maximum diving speed: Mach 0.85 (600 m.p.h. at 20,000 ft.). Cruise speed: 250-330 m.p.h. Climbing speed: 160-240 m.p.h. Initial rate of climb: 3950 f.p.m. Time to 20,000 ft.: 6.4 mins. Combat radius of action/endurance (with 45 gal. external tank): 170-190 miles in 2 hours. Best combat altitude: 15,000-25,000 ft. Normal landing speed: 90-105 m.p.h. I.A.S. Stalling speed, landing configuration: 69-82 m.p.h. I.A.S.

Note: Maximum speed of any Merlin-engined Spitfire was achieved by the P.R. Mk. XI with the Merlin 70-422 m.p.h. at 27,500 ft. The P.R. IV and XI also had the greatest operational range, many of their sorties involved flights of 1,000 to 1,300 miles.

Front Cover Illustrations.
Mk. Ia, No. 610 'Country of Chester' Squadron, Battle of Britain. N3289.
Mk. Vc, No. 81 Squadron, North Africa, 1943. JK322. 'Joy'.
Mk. IX, No. 132 'City of Bombay' Squadron, 1944. MH978.
Mk. IXe, Royal Netherlands Air Force.

SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE MK.I-XVI
IN RAF-SAAF-RAAF-RNZAF-RCAF & FOREIGN SERVICE

Illustrated by Richard Ward
Compiled by Ted Hooton and Richard Ward
Text by Ted Hooton

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Grateful thanks are extended to all who assisted with photographs and information making possible the publication of this pictorial survey of the Merlin engined Spitfire. Thanks to all those who assisted whose names are listed below in alphabetical order.


Mk. Vc flown by Wing-Cdr. C. R. Caldwell, Leader No. 1 Fighter Wing, Royal Australian Air Force, Darwin, 1942-43. Green/brown uppers, pale blue unders. BS234

PUBLISHED BY
OSPREY PUBLISHING LTD.

EDITORIAL OFFICE:
P.O. BOX No. 5,
CANTERBURY, KENT, ENGLAND.
First Published 1968
Second Impression 1970
Third Impression 1971

SUBSCRIPTION & BUSINESS OFFICE:
P.O. BOX 25, 707 OXFORD ROAD,
READING, BERKSHIRE, ENGLAND.

Not for sale in U.S.A. © Osprey Publishing Ltd. SBN 85405 003 9