Spitfire Mk.IXe

eduard

BRITISH WWII FIGHTER

1/72 SCALE PLASTIC KIT

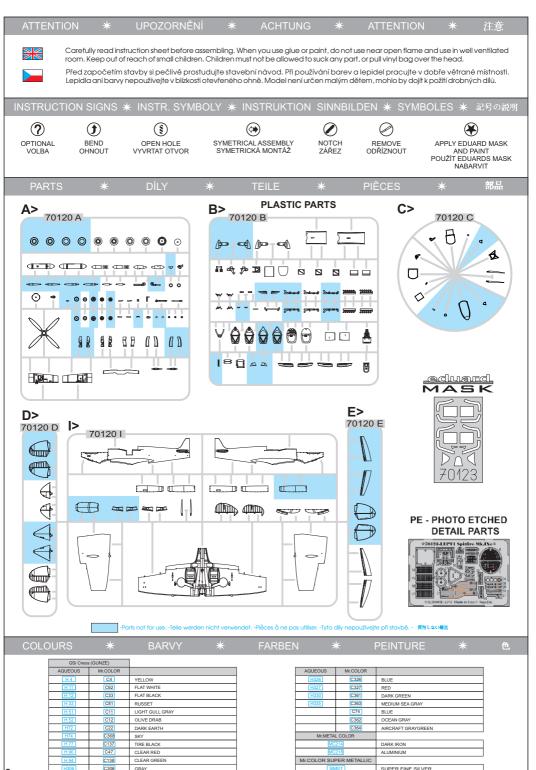
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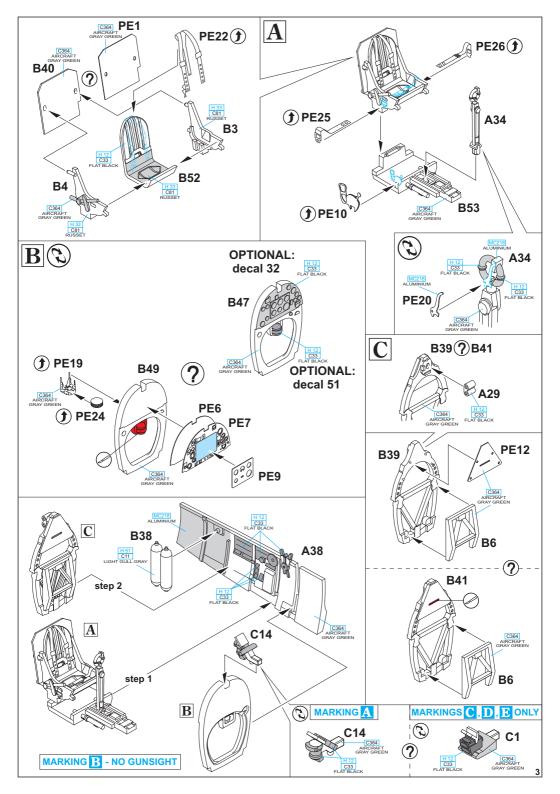
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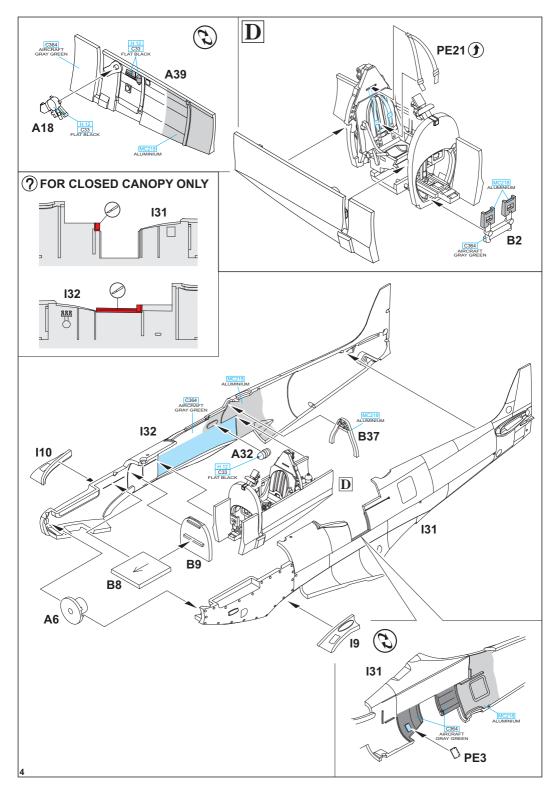


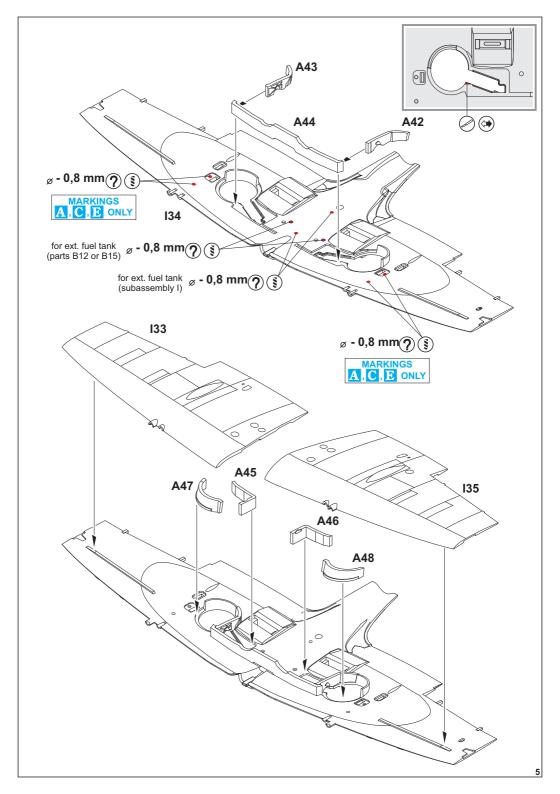
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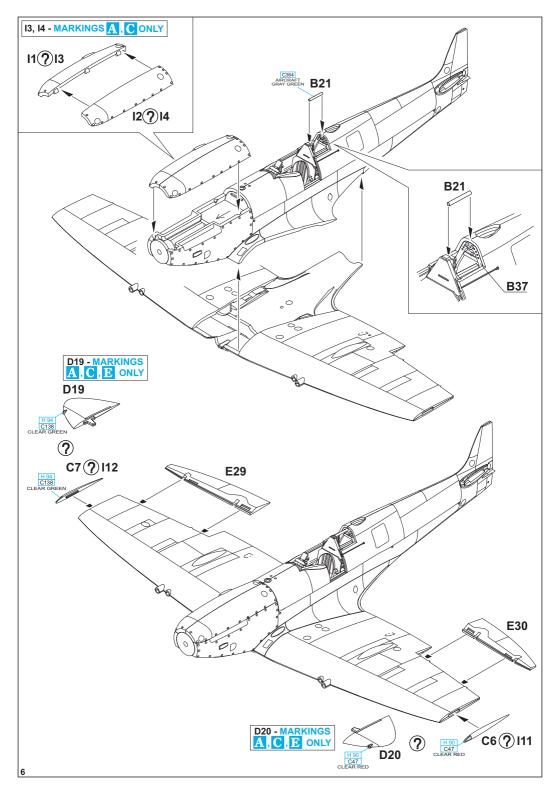
In September 1941, a hitherto unknown German radial engine fighter appeared in the west european sky. The new airplane was superior to British fighters, most distressingly to the Spitfire Mk.V. The German design was soon recognized as the Focke-Wulf Fw 190A. The losses suffered by the RAF over western Europe rose rapidly and the crisis was serious enough that the RAF ceased the majority of daytime operations in November 1941. The next attempt to resume these types of sorties was made in March 1942. Loss rates remained unacceptably high and the RAF was forces to stop ops once again. All this was thanks to the Focke-Wulf Fw 190A. The first response to the new German weapon was the Spitfire Mk.VIII, but the design changes were so complex that initiating timely production was not possible. In June 1942 a German pilot landed by mistake on a British airfield delivering a completely intact Fw 190 fighter into RAF hands. Comparative trials between the Focke-Wulf and Spitfire Mk.V began almost immediately. These mock encounters confirmed the situation over the front – the chances of a British fighter surviving an encounter with the Fw 190 were slim. The only British fighter aircraft deemed suitable to oppose them were the Spitfire Mk. VII and VIII powered by the Merlin 61 engine. As mentioned above these were some time away of being ready for series production. But there was another way of getting a powerful fighter quickly - by mating the Merlin 61, with its two-stage supercharger, with the fuselage of the Spitfire Mk.Vc. Two Mk.Vc airframes, AB196 and AB197, were selected for this purpose and were strengthened with modified longerons to accommodate the more powerful and heavier engine. The example was finished on February 26th and the second on March 27th, 1942. Flight trials were successful and the order for series production was issued almost immediately. Series production began in June 1942 and the first Mk.IXs found their way to No. 64 Squadron in July. Performance improved significantly in comparison to the Mk.V. A top speed of 409 mph at 28,000 feet was higher by 40 mph, and the service ceiling rose from 36,200 to 43,000 feet. The Mk.IX could climb at 4,000 feet per minute. The RAF finally had a fighter aircraft capable of opposing the Fw 190A. Three main versions of the Mk. IX were produced. The F.IX was powered by the Merlin 61 and was the only version on the assembly line in early 1943. The next version was the LF Mk.IX powered by the Merlin 66. This engine was designed to do its best at low altitudes. The third version, manufactured along with the LF, was the high-altitude HF Mk.IX with the Merlin 70. The majority of Mk.IXs manufactured were equipped with the so-called 'C' wing. Four 20 mm cannons or two 20 mm cannons and four .303 machine guns could be installed in the wings. From 1944 the strengthened 'E' wing was produced. Four .303 machine guns were replaced with two .50 heavy machine guns. Bomb racks for 250 lb bombs were fitted under each wing typically. The Mk.IX became the second most numerous version of the Spitfire with a total of 5653 examples being built. The Mk.IX began to replace the Mk.V from June 1942. Thanks to the new fighter, the RAF was ready to fight against the Luftwaffe over occupied Europe. Spitfire Mk.IXs served with the RAF to the end of war. In the postwar era, foreign air forces flew this version as well. Czechoslovak, Norwegian, Danish, and Canadian air forces operated numbers of Mk.IXs and they were not alone. Spitfires would find themselves in combat again. Czechoslovakia sold its Spitfire Mk.IXs to Israel in 1948 and these aircraft formed the backbone of the newly born Israeli air force in the fight against their Arab neighbours. 70123 - NAV1

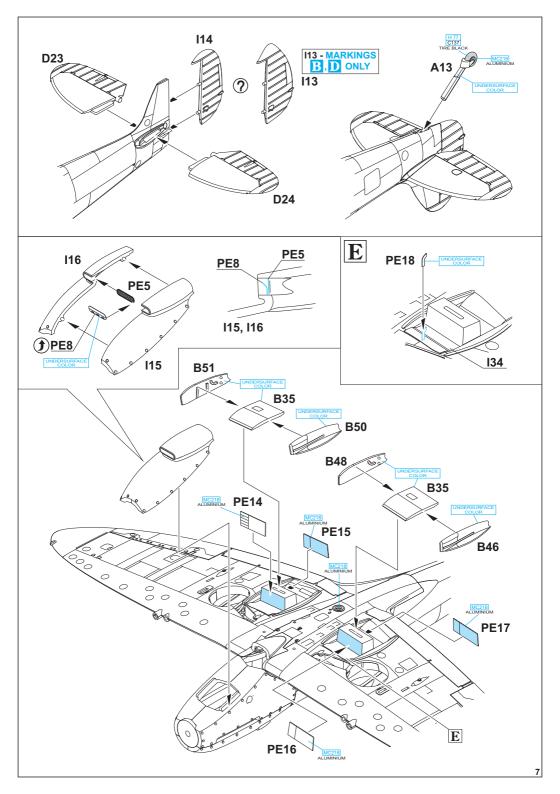


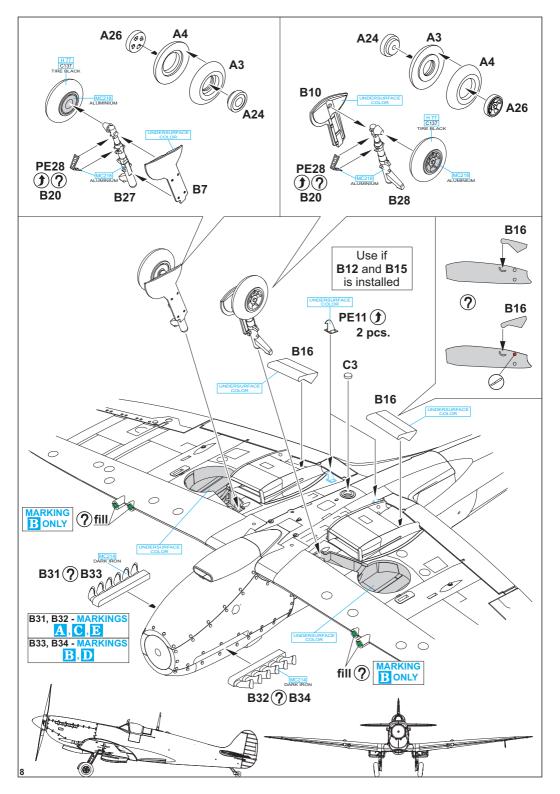


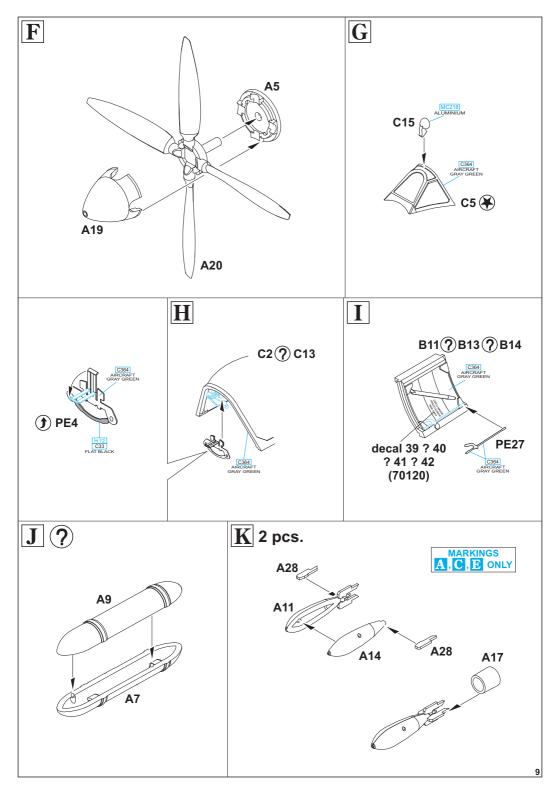


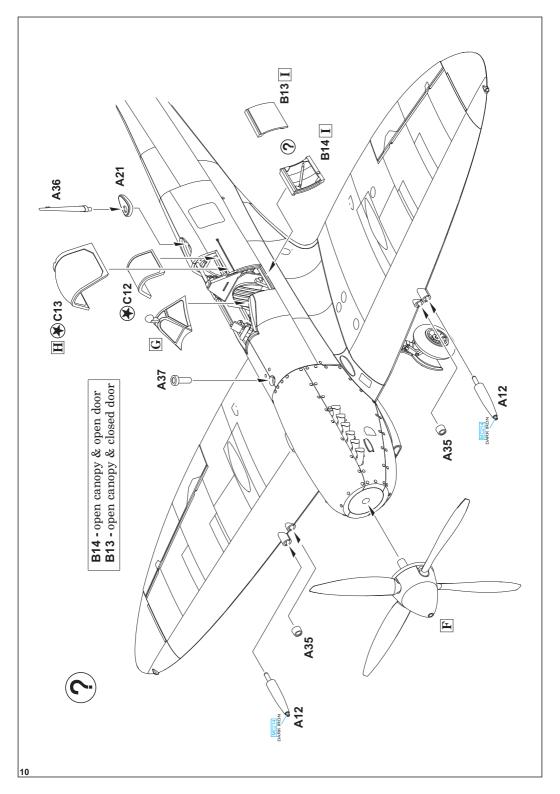


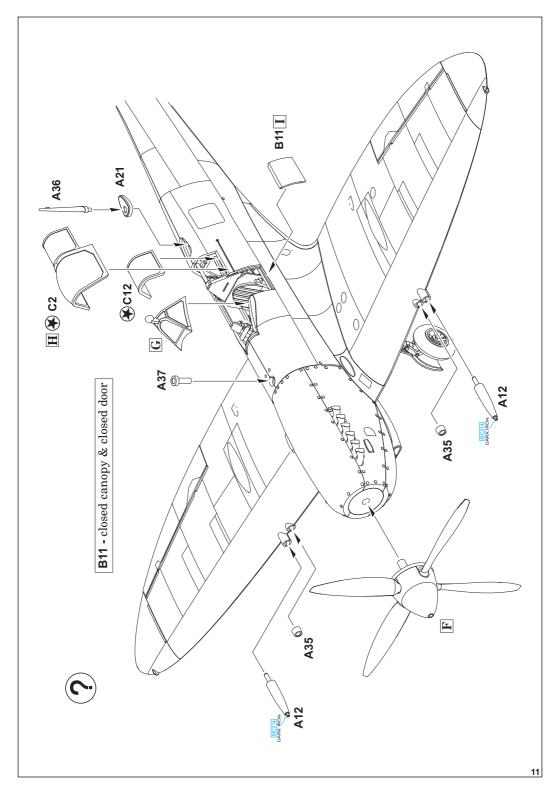


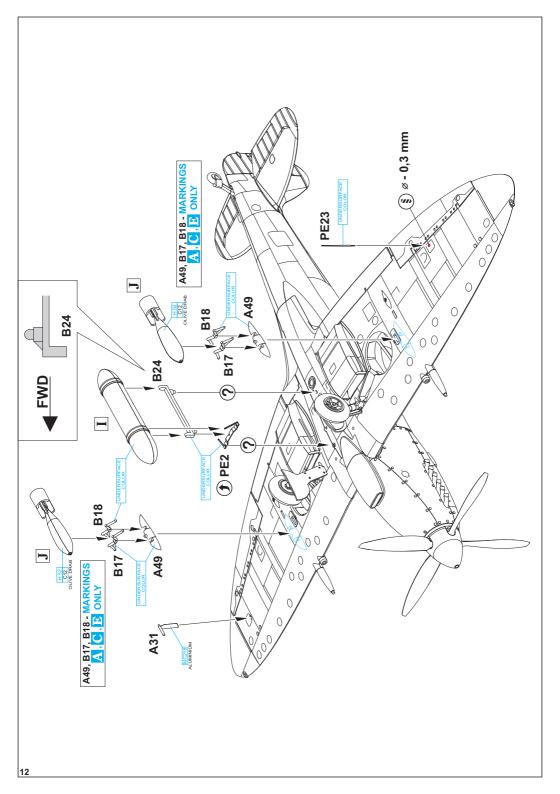


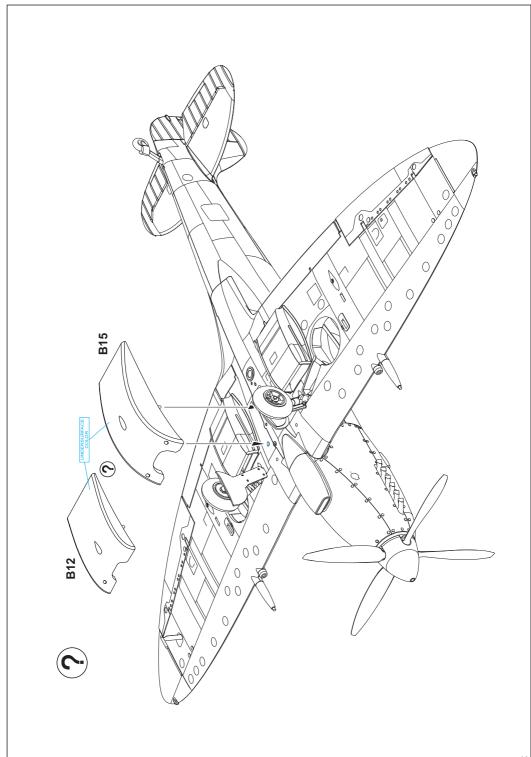


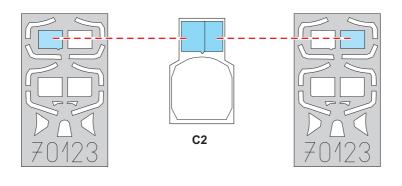


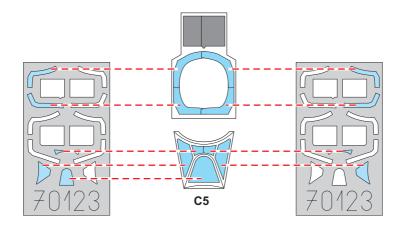


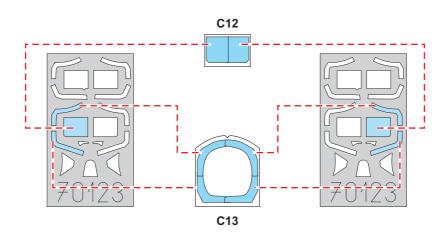






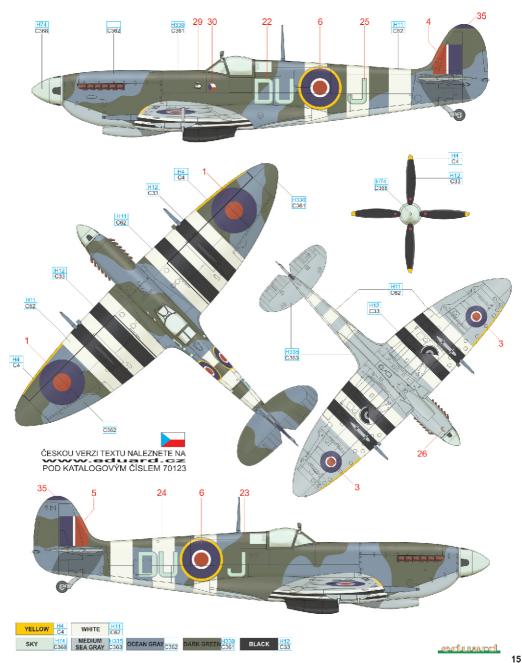






A PL124, No. 312 Squadron RAF, B-10 Airfield Plumetôt, France, June 1944

Czechoslovak pilots flew the Spitfire Mk.IXe for the first time during the Normandy landings. Czechoslovak RAF squadrons were re-armed with low-altitude Merlin 66 Spitfires because these had underwing bomb racks and were more suitable for operations over the Normandy beachhead. The first unit to get the new Spitfires within No. 134 Wing was No. 312 Squadron, which received the aircraft on June 11th, 1944. The E-type wing Spitfires served with the wing till July 3rd, 1944 when the F and HF.IXc machines arrived and the LF Mk.IXe were passed on to other units. Photos of PL124 show that the quick identification black & white bands were not fully painted on the fuselage. The black stripes are missing. Note the dark, probably blue, rudder tip.



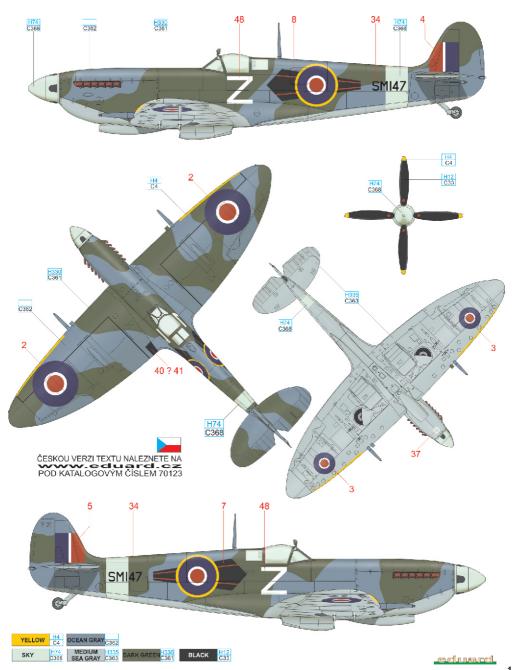
B SM 26, Vorderings Vliegschool/Ecole de Pilotage Avancé, Brustem Air Base, Belgium, 1952

SM 26, ex RAF serial PV189, was used by the Advanced Flying School (in Dutch: Vorderings Vliegschool (VVS), in French: Ecole de Pilotage Avancé (EPA)) at Brustem Air Base between November 1948 and June 1952. All VVS/EPA Spitfires had their guns removed. The standard painting for the VVS/EPA Spitfires was silver doped with the black anti-glare panel on the nose, black serial numbers on the fuselage and below the wings. This Spitfire was considered as the "parade" aircraft of the unit, had the VVS/EPA insignia on the left side of the engine cowling, the propeller hub was painted light blue with a thin red spiral. SM 26 was writen off after fatal crash at Overrepen on June 25th, 1952, after mid-air collision with another Spitfire designed SM 23.



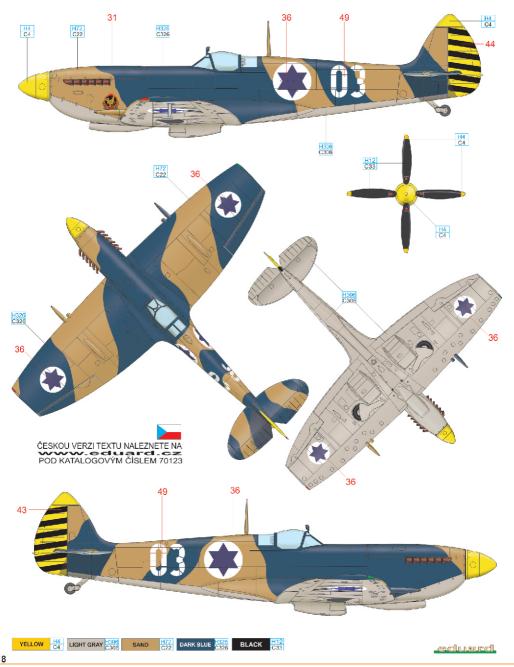
C SM147, No. 73. Squadron RAF, Prkosh Airfield, Yugoslavia, April/ May 1945

In April 1945 No.73 Squadron moved from Greece, where it helped in the fight against local communists, to Yugoslavia. The Prkosh Airfield (now Croatia) became its new home and the squadron used it to support ground forces. The squadron's Spitifres wore an unusual marking – the colored chevron – on the fuselages, more typical for the post-war era. The exact colors of the chevron are not known. A variety of colors were used, as can be seen in b&w photos. In the case of SM147, black and red are thought to have been used. Note the C-type roundels on the upper side of the wings.



D 2003 (ex TE531), 105th Tayeset, Ramat David Air Base, Israel, September 1953

This aircraft belonged to a group of three that managed to fly to Israel under Operation Velveta I in September 1948. It served in the Cheyl Ha'Avir with the 101st Tayeset and later with the 105th. It appeared as it is shown here after repairs in 1953 and carries the final form of Israeli Spitfire camouflage (consisting of upper surfaces in dark grey and brown with light grey lowers). The aircraft carries full unit markings, including the unit emblem on the engine cowl, a yellow spinner and a black and yellow rudder. Spitfire 2003 was heavily damaged during landing on December 25th, 1953 by a 107th Tayeset pilot and was written off in March of the following year.



E RK856, flown by Maj. C. Golding, CO of No. 3 Squadron SAAF, Italy, 1945

A very interesting marking – the red tail band - was applied to the Spitfires flown by SAAF No. 3 Squadron during a specific time period in 1945. The personal mount of the squadron CO, Maj. Cecil Golding, wore this band as well. Golding joined combat ops in 1942 and fought as a Curtiss Tomahawk pilot against German forces in Libya. He managed to shoot down two Ju 87 Stukas and one Bf 109F singlehandedly and shared one Ju 87 with another pilot. He also damaged an Italian FIAT Br.20 bomber. Cecil Golding was shot down on June 3rd, 1943 by a Bf 109F pilot. He is noted as being a victim of Hans Joachim Marseille in some studies. After his return from hospital, he served with other South African squadrons. On December 27th, 1944 he was promoted to Major and became the CO of SAAF No. 3 Squadron. His unit was tasked with the support of ground units and flew Spitfires in the fighter-bomber role.

