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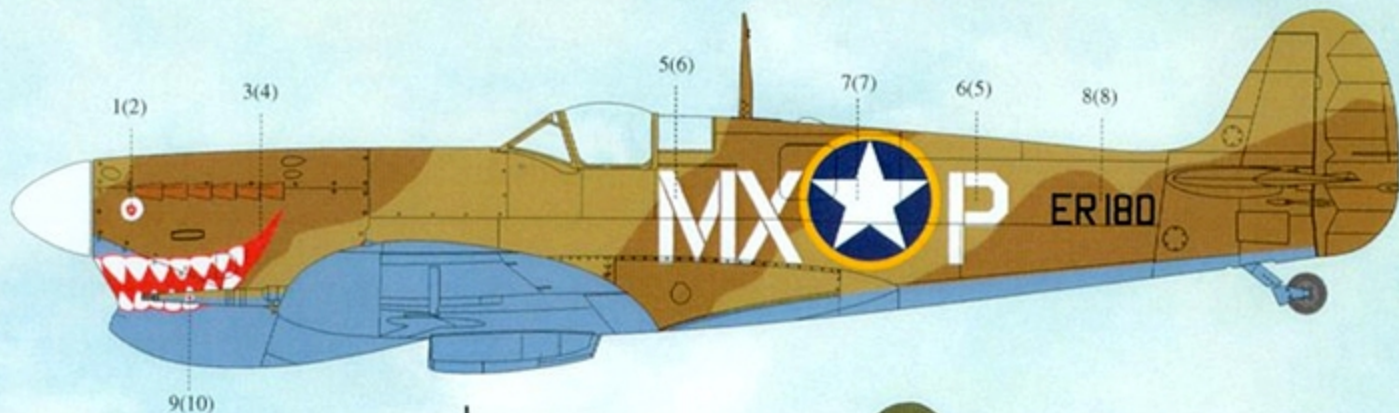
PRODUCTS

US SPITFIRES

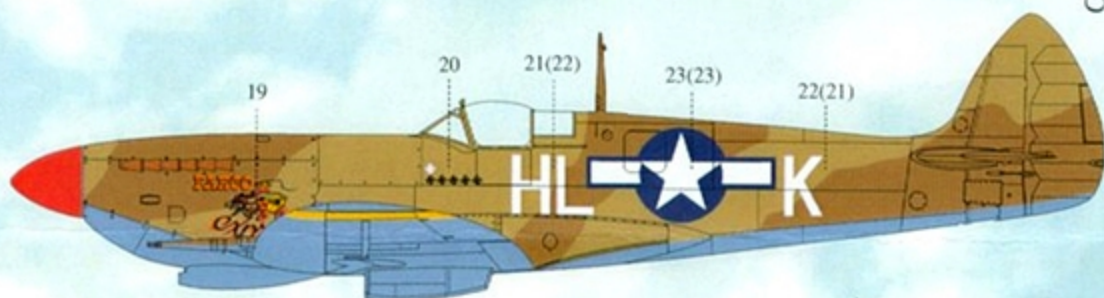
AFRICA & ITALY



Suggested Kit: Hasegawa/Airfix/Tamiya Spitfire Family



Notice earlier faded E.D.S.G. color under US on left side and VY on Right side.



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When Supermarine Spitfires were supplied to the various USAAF units operating them, the aircraft came from the same stocks which supplied RAF squadrons. In the spring of 1941 RAF Spitfire squadrons began confronting the Luftwaffe over the western seaboard of Europe and the Dark Green and Dark Earth upper surfaces with Sky lower surfaces camouflage of the early-war period proved ineffectual over the English Channel. A new camouflage scheme was developed for the ETO; a disruptive pattern of Dark Green and Ocean Grey upper surfaces with Medium Sea Grey lower surfaces. This was known as the Temperate Land Scheme. The new colours officially came into effect on 11 August 1941 and were always to be applied to new-build aircraft in the same pattern. Supermarine factories used a system of flexible mats draped over the airframe as a form of masking to achieve the consistent camouflage pattern required. See figures 1, 3 and 4. As far as the authors have ascertained, all Spitfire Mk Vs supplied to the 31st FG in England from June 1942 onwards were Dark Green/ Ocean Grey/ Medium Sea Grey aircraft. When the 31st FG was posted to North Africa it collected Spitfire Mk V (trop) aircraft in Gibraltar before moving on to participate in Operation Torch. These Spitfires were in the standard RAF Desert Scheme of Dark Earth and Mid-Stone upper surfaces and Azure Blue lower surfaces. On the production lines in England the Dark Earth replaced Ocean Grey and the Mid Stone replaced the Dark Green (figure 2). From black and white photographs the two different colour schemes are easily discerned because the Ocean Grey is the lighter of the two upper surface colours in the Temperate Land Scheme and the Dark Earth which replaced it in the Desert Scheme is the darker of the two upper surface colours in that scheme. As the Allies advanced into Sicily and Italy, in England new-build Spitfire Mk IXs for the MTO were now being finished in the Green/Grey Temperate Land Scheme. Some of these aircraft were issued to the 31st FG. By the time the Group relinquished its Spitfires in March 1944 a large proportion of 307th FS and 309th FS Spitfire Mk IXs were in the Temperate Land Scheme. The 308th FS standardised on Mk VIII which continued to be supplied in the Desert Scheme.

This 307th FS Spitfire Mk Vc (trop) was one of a number to have a shark's mouth applied. Note the eye painted on the 20mm cannon as well. Color scheme is the RAF Desert Scheme of Dark Earth and Mid-Stone upper surfaces and Azure Blue lower surfaces.

MB113 was a Seafire IIc of the Royal Navy's Force H, with bogus US Navy markings for Operation Torch, November 1942. The Seafires were in the Fleet Air Arm's Extra Dark Sea Grey and Dark Sea Grey upper surfaces with Sky under surfaces. Blue and white Cocardes were carried in six positions, 36 on upper wings and fuselage and 32 on lower wings.

Captain Leland P Molland flew this Spitfire Mk VIII at Castel Volturno, Italy, February/March 1944. Some publications have incorrectly illustrated Fargo Express coded as HL-X. This Spitfire Mk VIII wears a faded Dark Earth and Mid stone camouflage scheme with Azure Blue under surfaces.

Lieutenant John Fawcett flew Spitfire Mk IX Lady Ellen III with the 309th FS in Italy, early 1944. MH894 was delivered new to the 309th FS in the RAF Temperate Day Scheme of Dark Green and Ocean Grey upper surfaces with Medium Sea Grey lower surfaces. Its fuselage star-and-bars are 34" overall height and centred over the factory applied 36" RAF roundels. The 34" upper wing star-and-bars are also centred over the old RAF markings, with the upper surface camouflage pattern carefully restored using green and grey paint, rather than just one colour.