

RRD4849



451 Squadron RAAF

Spitfires in the UK, MTO & Europe, 1943-45
1/48 Scale

**The
Away Team
Part 3**



Spitfire Mk Vc, BQ-Y, El Daba, Egypt, Oct-Dec 1943

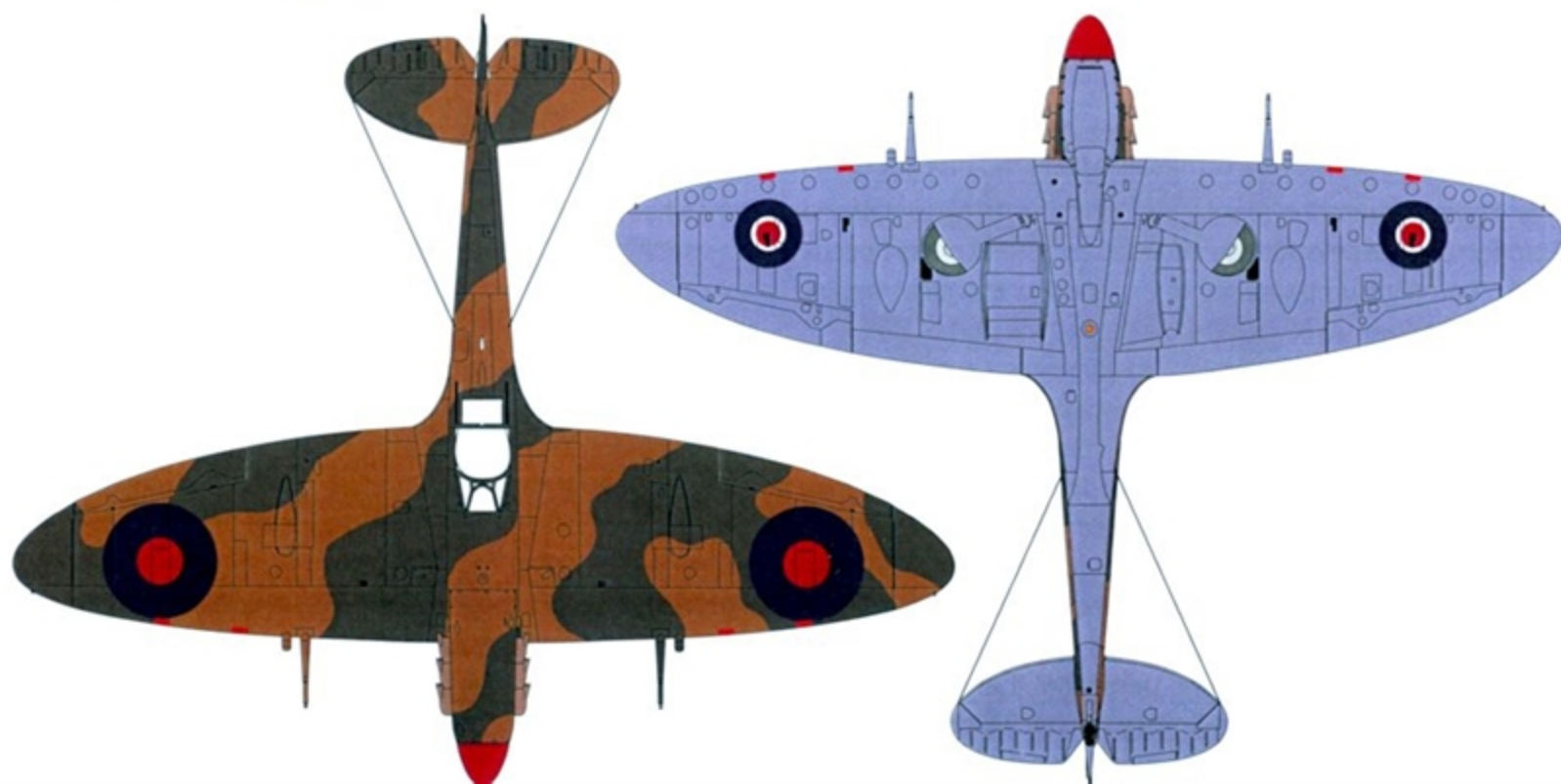
EE797 was one of the first Spitfire Mk Vc aircraft received by 451 Squadron at El Daba, Egypt in October 1943. It was flown by the CO, Squadron Leader R.N.B. Stevens and was used on the Squadron's first Spitfire sortie, a convoy patrol on 18 October 1943. Squadron Leader Stevens had come from 3 Squadron, RAAF, hence the small 'CV' marking above the aircraft code letter, a reference to the squadron code applied to 3 Squadron aircraft. The aircraft was named 'Nancy S' after his wife. It was later renamed 'Olive VI'. Squadron Leader E.E. Kirkham assumed command of the squadron in December 1943, when the squadron began to re-equip with Mk IX Spitfires. EE797 was flown by a variety of pilots during December 1943, mainly on routine convoy patrols. Its last sortie with 451 Squadron took place on 30 December 1940 when Warrant Officer A.H. Davis flew it on a patrol over convoy 'Raven'. 451 Squadron redeployed to southern Europe in early 1944.



- RAF Dark Green
BS 381C:241 (ex 641)
- RAF Dark Earth
BS 381C:450
- RAF Azure Blue
BS 381C:450
- Dull Red
- White
- Dull Blue
- Yellow

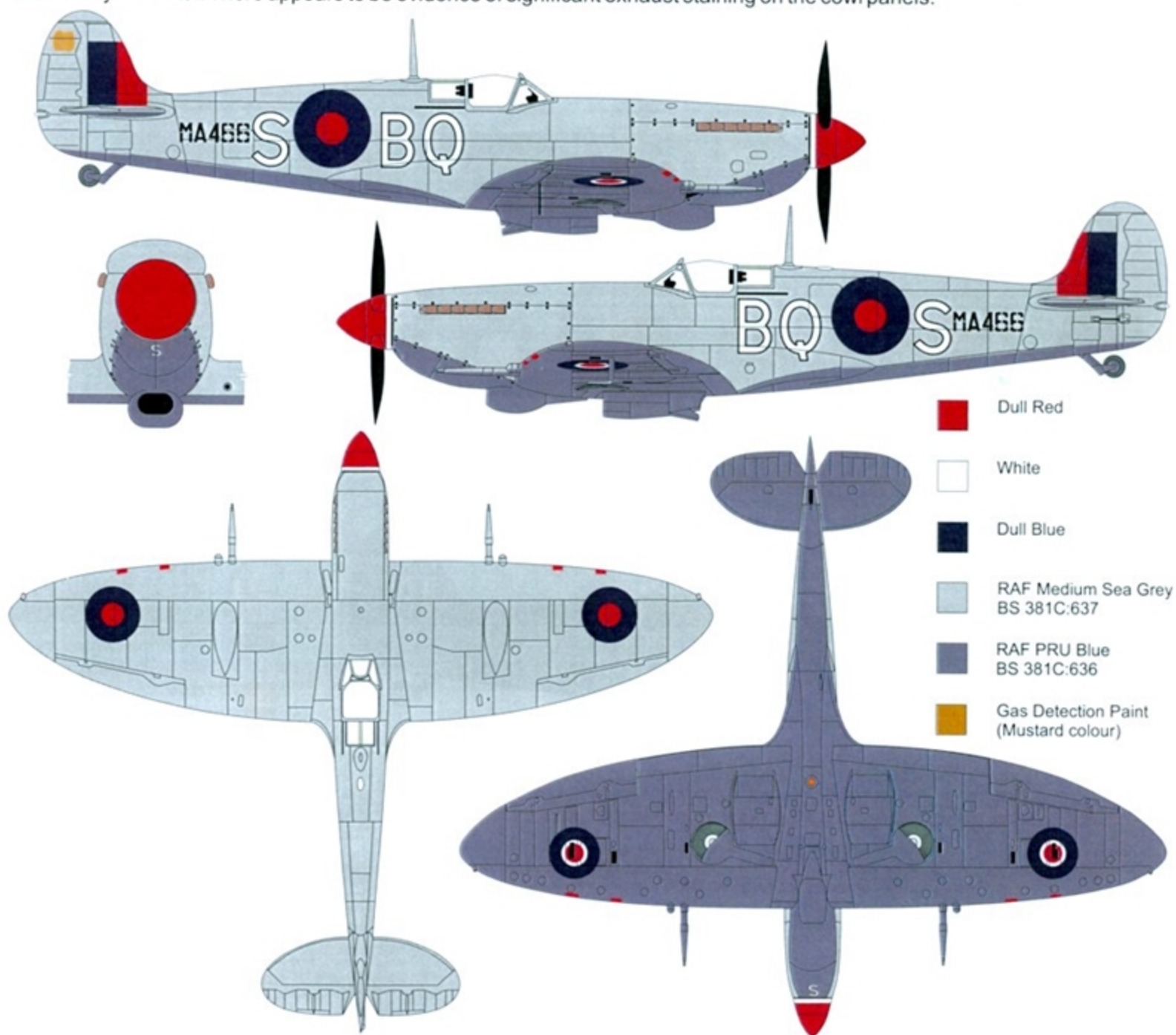


The aircraft featured Dark Green and Dark Earth upper surfaces over Azure Blue lower surfaces. The code letters were white with black serials. The aircraft had originally been finished in desert camouflage of Dark Earth and Middle Stone over Azure Blue. The Middle Stone was oversprayed with Dark Green, with a slight overspray onto the lower surfaces of the fuselage sides, that resulted in the scheme depicted. The spinner was thought to have been red. The Squadron Leader's pennant was displayed beneath the windscreen on the left side and the white aircraft name was carried on the left engine cowl beneath the exhausts. A small white 'Y' was carried on the nose of the aircraft. This aircraft had covered wheels with tyre creep marks, a square rear view mirror, broad style cannon bulges on the wings and an early IFF fitment. The gun heating pipes were removed from the exhausts.



Spitfire Mk IXc, BQ-S, Corsica, France, May 1944

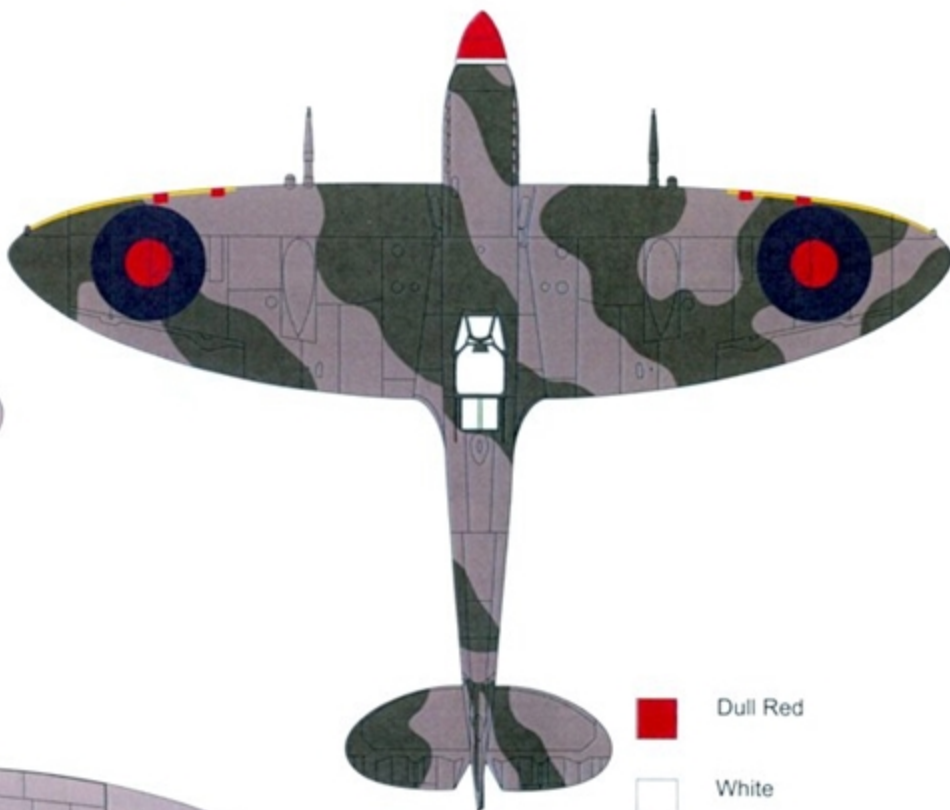
MA466 was photographed at Poretta, Corsica in southern France during May 1944 after 451 Squadron was redeployed to support the Allied invasion of Italy and southern Europe. The aircraft was finished in the high altitude interceptor scheme which consisted of Medium Sea Grey upper surfaces over PRU Blue lower surfaces. The code letters were white with a black outline and black serials were carried. B type roundels were carried on the fuselage and upper wing surfaces; C type roundels on the lower wing surfaces. The spinner has been quoted elsewhere as PRU Blue, however we believe it to have been red with either a white or natural metal base plate. The aircraft has 5-spoke wheels and early style elevators. It has also been modified with an Aboukir style air filter. There appears to be evidence of significant exhaust staining on the cowl panels.



There is some controversy regarding the patch evident on the rudder. Either it is a gas detection patch (a mustard colour) or a fabric repair patch (red oxide). We have researched this conundrum and have not been able to find anything conclusive either way. There is indirect evidence that these may be gas detection patches hastily applied following the chemical disaster at Bari. Through a tragic coincidence intended by neither of the opposing sides in World War II, Bari gained the unwelcome distinction of being the only European city to experience chemical warfare in the course of that war. On the night of 2 December 1943, German Junkers Ju 88 bombers attacked the port of Bari, which was a key supply centre for Allied forces fighting their way up the Italian Peninsula. Several Allied ships were sunk in the overcrowded harbour, including the U.S. Liberty ship John Harvey, which was carrying mustard gas; mustard gas was also reported to have been stacked on the quayside awaiting transport. The chemical agent was intended for use if German forces initiated chemical warfare. The presence of the gas was highly classified, and authorities ashore had no knowledge of it. This increased the number of fatalities. Considerable amounts of mustard gas were released into the atmosphere as a result of the attack and carried away by the wind. Instructions were issued to have gas detection panels added to all aircraft engaged in low level attack operations in the MTO, which was the role being undertaken by 451 Squadron at the time. There is photographic evidence of 'squiggly' or irregular shaped gas detection patches applied to camouflaged aircraft in the region. The principal aim of these patches, which were also applied to ground equipment, vehicles, tanks, etc, was to warn ground personnel that the aircraft might be contaminated. There is also some limited evidence of modifications made to some Spitfire aircraft which involved the rudder trim tab controls, however, those photos showing such patches appear to be in a different, lower position on the rudder.

Spitfire Mk IXc, BQ-M, Corsica, France, July 1944

MH771 was photographed at Calvi, Corsica, during July 1944 when 451 Squadron had redeployed to support the Allied invasion of Italy and southern Europe. This aircraft was finished in the conventional Day Fighter Scheme but the squadron codes and aircraft code letter appear to differ in colour, probably Sky and white. The spinner appears to have been red with either a white or natural metal base plate. The aircraft has extensive re-painting of the cowling panels on the left side which appears to be slightly darker than the surrounding finish. This was probably because the repainted area was new and had yet to suffer any weathering. Note that the Sky fuselage band had been overpainted in keeping with the original camouflage scheme and that once again this area appears slightly darker than the surround and irregular in shape. The aircraft was fitted with covered wheel hubs and had tyre creep marks on the wheels. It likely had the early style elevators fitted.

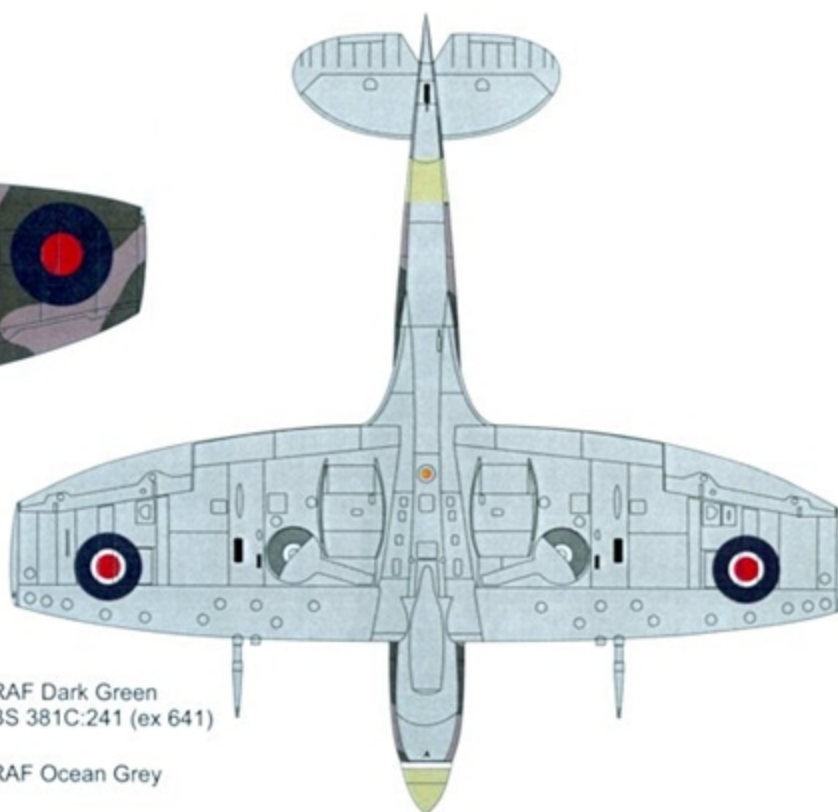
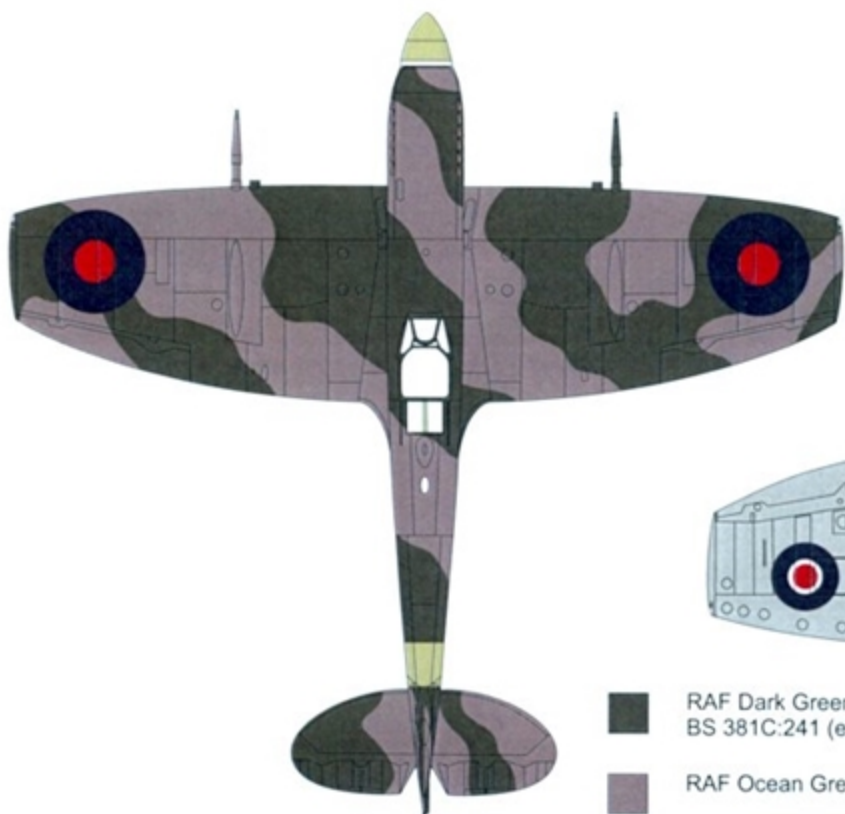


-  Dull Red
-  White
-  Dull Blue
-  RAF Sky
BS381:C 210
-  Yellow
-  RAF Medium Sea Grey
BS 381C:637
-  RAF Dark Green
BS 381C:241 (ex 641)
-  RAF Ocean Grey

Spitfire Mk XVIe, NI-V, Matlaske, UK, March 1945.

By the time TB592 was serving with 451 Squadron the squadron had been based in the UK since December 1944, operating from Hawkinge with Mk IX, then Mk XVI Spitfires. It moved to Manston in February 1945 before joining 12 Group in March. Operating from Matlaske. The squadron participated in the campaign against the V-2 rocket sites until the war's end.

This aircraft was finished in the standard Dark Green and Ocean Grey over Medium Sea Grey. The aircraft carried the 451 Squadron badge under the windscreen and had a small 'V' with shadow beneath the nose. The aircraft had four-spoked wheels with tyre creep markings and the later pointed style rudder. The propeller blades show some wear on their leading edges.



■ RAF Dark Green
BS 381C:241 (ex 641)

■ RAF Ocean Grey

■ RAF Medium Sea Grey
BS 381C:637

■ Dull Red

■ White

■ Dull Blue

■ RAF Sky
BS381:C 210

Spitfire Mk XIVe, NI-K, Berlin, Germany, October 1945

After the cessation of hostilities, 451 Squadron served with 453 Squadron as part of the occupation forces in Germany. 451 Squadron was based at Gatow airport from mid to late 1945, where it was likely that NH895 was photographed.

Finished in the standard day fighter scheme NH895 has had its Sky fuselage band over-painted which resulted in a slightly darker band ahead of the fin. The serial has been partially obscured on the right hand side. A small light coloured dot appears to have been located beneath the windscreen on the right hand side of the fuselage while the 451 Squadron badge was carried beneath the windscreen on the left side. Unlike other aircraft flown by the squadron at this time, NI-K did not have the camera ports in the fuselage overpainted.



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BS381:C 210
-  Yellow

