

# Vickers – Armstrong Supermarine Spitfire MK. IIB Serial No. P8332

*Researched by: Philip Markham*

The firm that designed and built the Spitfire had its origin in October 1913, when Noel Pemberton Billing founded Pemberton-Billing Limited to produce his Supermarine aircraft. Its home was on the River Itchen at Woolston, Southampton, and the Supermarine Works continued to be located there until well after they were damaged in the heavy German air raids of September 1940.

In 1916 the company had been renamed the Supermarine Aviation Works Limited. That same year, Reginald Joseph Mitchell, who was to design the Schneider Trophy winners and the Spitfire, joined the firm. During the First World War, repair and experimental work was carried out for the British Admiralty, but in addition, several novel prototypes were built including the little N.1B Baby flying-boat fighter, which led to the Sea King and racing Sea Lions.

The Sea Lion 11, designed by Mitchell, won the 1922 Schneider Trophy Race. Supermarine flying boats served the Royal Air Force well during the twenties and the thirties, the best known of them being the Southampton and the Stanraer, which also served the Royal Canadian Air Force.

A long line of amphibians was also produced, including the Walrus of the Second World War. The "S" series of racing seaplanes won the Schneider Trophy for Britain in 1927, 1929 and 1931.

In 1928 the Supermarine Aviation Works Ltd. had been taken over by Vickers (Aviation) Ltd., and in 1938 the companies at Weybridge and Woolston were taken over by Vickers-Armstrongs Ltd.

The first "Spitfire", Type 224 F.7130, was a gull-winged, fixed undercarriage monoplane with a 600 hp Rolls-Royce Goshawk engine.

Only one was produced and it bore little resemblance to the F.7130 development - the classic Spitfire - which Mitchell was authorized to design free of any official specification, except that it should have eight guns. The Spitfire prototype first flew on 5 March 1936, in the hands of Flight Lieutenant Joseph Summers, and it was evident that the Merlin-engined aircraft was a winner. The rest is history, but Mitchell did not live to see it. He died of cancer in 1937, at age 42.

After Mitchell's death, development was carried on by two modest and able men, Joseph Smith as Chief Designer and Alan Clifton as Head of the Technical Office.



**Spitfire IIB P8332 as it appeared on 11 June 1941 when being flown on a height test to 36,000 feet by F/O J.H. Burgess of No.222 Squadron, then based at Matlaske in Norfolk. Burgess flew P8332 through all its time in No.222 Squadron. He survived the war as a prisoner of war, being cut off by six Focke-Wulf 190 fighters and shot down during a fighter-bomber raid on Comiso aerodrome in southern Sicily on 26 November 1942. NAM 14803**

Spitfire Mk.IIB P8332, Constructors No. 711, which is on display in the Canadian War Museum, was built by the Castle Bromwich shadow factory as one of 1,000 ordered under Contract B.981689/

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39/C11123(c). It was designated as a presentation aircraft and named SOEBANG, having been paid for with money subscribed by the people of Soebang, Netherlands East Indies.

It was delivered to No. 45 Maintenance Unit (MU), Kinloss prepared for issue, and ferried to No.222 (Natal) Squadron at Coltishall, Norfolk, on 21 April 1941. Coded ZD-L, it was flown on convoy patrols and sweeps over France, until damaged on 23 August.

Salvaged by No. 43 MU, it was repaired by Air Service Training Ltd. at Hamble, and then delivered to No. 82 MU, Litchfield, via No. 8 MU, Little Rissington.



**This photograph of P8332 was taken by S/L R.C. Love, DFC, Commanding Officer of No. 222 Squadron, from another Spitfire. PAC 14804**

On 1 April 1942, P8332 was transferred to the RCAF, arriving in Canada via the SS Manchester Port. It was taken on strength by No. 1 Training Command, Mountain View, Ontario.

The aircraft was shown at many locations for the rest of the war, used as an instructional aircraft and displayed at the Canadian National Exhibition (Toronto). In 1966 the aircraft was restored by No.6 Repair Depot, Trenton, and finished as SO-P of No.45 Squadron for display in the Canadian Armed Forces Centennial Tattoo. It is the only surviving presentation Spitfire.



***This graphic representation of P8332 was created and used with permission of William Marshall.***



**Spitfire IIB P8332 as it appeared when refurbished in 1989. PAC 20533**

The Museum aircraft is fitted with a Rolls-Royce (Packard) Merlin 29 engine, No. A3545. Originally it was fitted with a Merlin XII. The Merlin 29 was not fitted to any Mark of Spitfire, but was used in the Hurricane XIIA, built by Canadian Car & Foundry Corp., which explains its use as a replacement engine in Canada for P8332. The National Aviation Museum also has examples of Mk.IX and Mk.16 Spitfires.



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<b>Specifications: Type 329</b>	
Engine:	Rolls-Royce Merlin XII, 1175 hp.
Propellor:	Rotol constant speed, three blade
Construction:	All metal light-alloy structure
Dimensions:	Span - 36 ft. 10 in.
	Length - 29 ft 11 in.
	Height - 11 ft. 5 in.
Wing area:	242 sq. ft.
Weight:	Empty - 4,322 lb.; Loaded - 6,317 lb.
Loadings:	Wing - 26.1 lb/sq. ft.
	Power - 5.4 lb/hp.
Tankage:	Fuel - 85 Imp. gals.
	Oil - 5.5 Imp. gals.
Performance:	Max. level speed- 362 mph at 18,500 ft.
	Climb - 7 mins. to 20,000 ft.
	Range - 500 mi at 85 gallons
	Service Ceiling - 36,000 ft.
Armament	2 x 20-mm British Hispano cannons (2 x 60 rounds)
	4 x 0.303 in. Browning MG (4 x 350 rounds)
	Reflector sight

Specifications prepared by Philip Markham, who by coincidence, was employed in the Stress Office of the Supermarine Works at Woolston, late 1939 to 1940 under A.N. Clifton. He was responsible for checking the stress calculations for the fuselage of the Mk.11 Spitfire, and for stressing the wing centre section and engine mounting of the Type 309 Sea Otter.

Later he flew the Mk. 16 Spitfire on No.604 Squadron, Auxiliary Air Force.

**References:**

Jeffrey Quill, *Spitfire*, Arrow Books, 1985.

Morgan and Shacklady, *Spitfire: The History*, Key Publishing, 1987.

Andrews and Morgan, *Supermarine Aircraft since 1914*, Putnam, 1981.