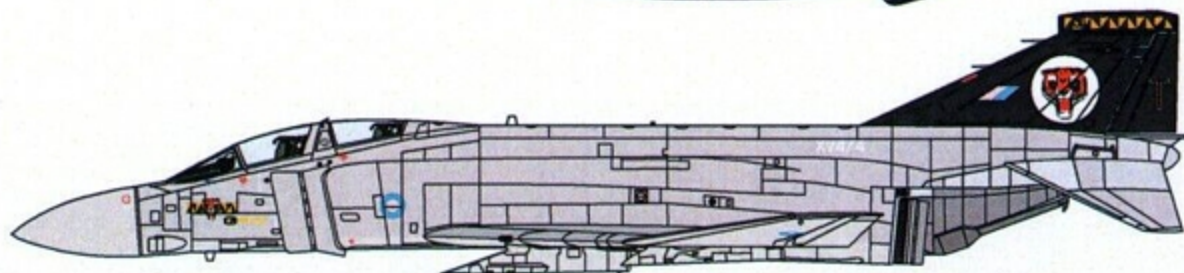
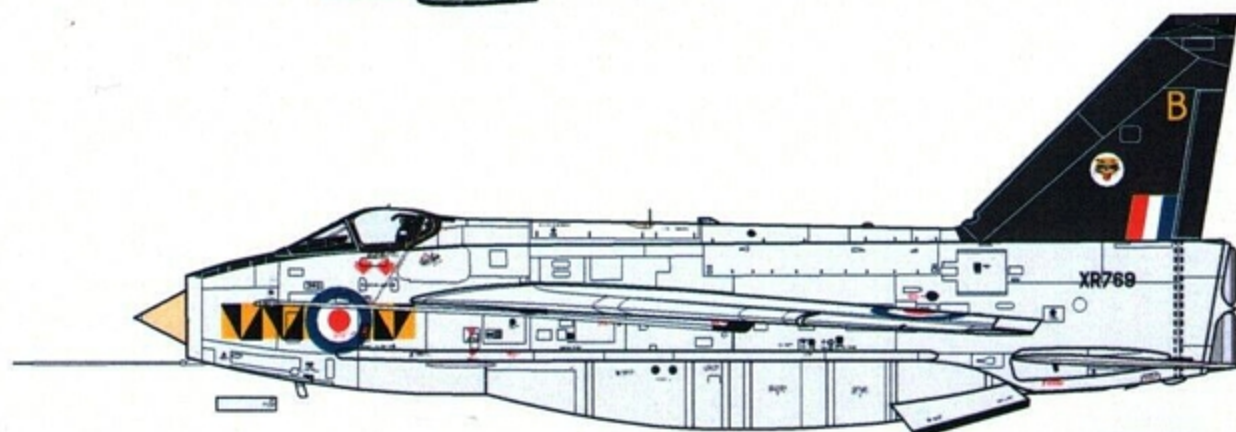
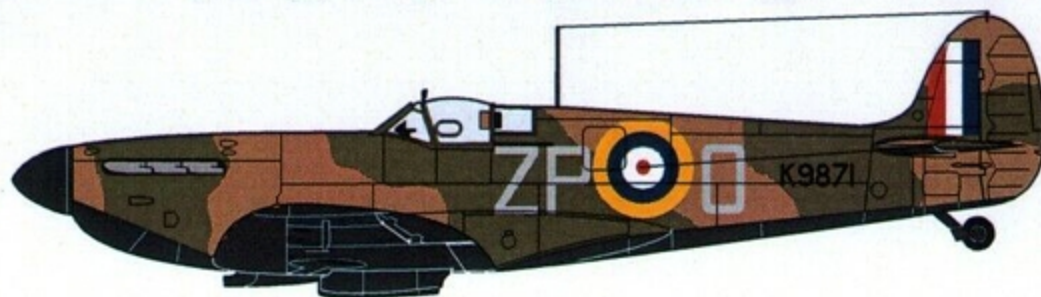


## RAF 74 (Tiger) Squadron History



For the best results these decals should be applied to a gloss surface such as provided by either Xtracolor or Xtracrylix paints. Cut out the decal required and soak in warm water until the decal is released from the backing paper. Wet the area to be decaled with MICRO SET which will help to eliminate air trapped under the decal and position the decal.

After 5 or 10 minutes wet the decal with MICRO SOL which will soften the decal and ensure that it settles down over any surface detail. Allow the decal to dry for at least 12 hours. During this time some wrinkling of the decal may occur, this is normal. Do not touch the decal at this time.

Carefully check for small air bubbles and if there are any prick with a needle and apply a drop of MICRO SOL. After all air bubbles have been eliminated and the decals are dry wash the entire model with water to remove any excess decal adhesive.

When completely dry the whole model should be sprayed with a coat of Xtracolor or Xtracrylix with a coat of Flat, Satin or Gloss varnish depending on the finish required.

Store in a cool dry place, avoid sunlight, dampness or extremes of temperature and/or humidity.



## The History of 74 (Fighter) Squadron

74 Squadron was formed at Northolt on July 1st 1917 as a training squadron of the Royal Flying Corps but was subsequently moved to London Colney where it was established as a front line unit and on 20th March 1918 was sent to France equipped with SE5a aircraft. It was in France that it earned its 'Tigers' nickname as a result of the aggressive spirit shown by its pilots, amongst whose ranks were to be found the likes of Mick Mannock, Ira Jones and Keith Caldwell. Within seventy days of 74's arrival on the Continent, 100 enemy aircraft had been shot down with the loss of just one. By the war's end, and after just seven months in theatre, this total had risen to 224 - 140 confirmed, 68 probables and 15 balloons.

Despite its wartime achievements it was disbanded in July 1919 and was not re-established until September 1935 which happened on board ship with Hawker Demons as part of the British government's response to the Abyssinian crisis.

Returning to the UK in August 1936, 74's new home was Hornchurch and it was whilst here that the Squadron's tiger head badge and famous 'I Fear No Man' motto was authorised. In April 1937 the Demons were exchanged for Gloster Gauntlets and then in February 1939 the first Spitfire 1.

The outbreak of the Second World War found 74 still at Hornchurch. By this time Sailor Malan had joined the Squadron and in the following months he and his colleagues, including H M Stephen, John Freeborn and John Mungo Park, were to be involved in extensive operations against the Luftwaffe. In the Phoney War there was little operational activity but when the Low Countries were invaded in May 1940, 74 flew extensively on offensive operations, over the beaches of Dunkirk and on convoy protection and patrols over the French coast.

During the Battle of Britain and with Sailor Malan now its Commanding Officer, 74 flew against German raiders over London and the Thames estuary with considerable success. On 11th August, for example, took off 4 times and at the end of the day claimed 24 enemy aircraft destroyed and 14 damaged. From the Chief of the Air Staff came a telegram: 'A magnificent day's fighting, 74... Mannock started it and you keep it up.'

The hectic pace of operations took its toll and on 14th August the Squadron was retired to Wittering for a short rest before moving to Kirton-in-Lindsey, Coltishall and then in October back to the front line at Biggin Hill. The RAF had now gone on to the offensive and during November 1940, 74 destroyed 26 enemy aircraft. In February 1941 it moved to Manston but was then sent to Acklington, Llanbedr and Long Kesh where, after the hectic pace of operations, they found themselves in a backwater by comparison. It was at this time that the Governor of Trinidad made a presentation of Spitfires to 74 which subsequently became known as 'Trinidad' Squadron. This remained so until the 1950s.

In 1942 74 set sail for the Middle East, reaching Palestine in the July - but it was a squadron without aircraft, the ship carrying those which it was due to have flown having been sunk. For a while, in an unprecedented move, 74 were used to provide maintenance facilities for a USAAC Liberator unit before moving to Teheran where it started to receive Hawker Hurricane IIbs. Under the command of Sqn Ldr 'Spud' Hayter it transferred to the Western Desert and undertook convoy escort duties in the eastern Mediterranean as part of 219 Group. On 23rd July it took part in a large offensive operation over enemy occupied Crete in which transport, stores dumps, RDF stations and barracks were attacked and severely damaged.

In August the Squadron exchanged its Hurricanes for Spitfire Vbs and Vcs and transferred to Cyprus from where it was sent to the Aegean islands of Cos and Simi, only to be caught up almost immediately in the German invasion. Air and ground crew were drafted in to help in the islands' defence and there are many stories of bravery within Squadron ranks as well as those of adventurous escapes. Unfortunately 1 member was killed and 17 ground crew were captured and became POWs.

The Squadron itself was withdrawn to North Africa and continued to fly offensive sweeps and convoy patrols before returning to England and North Weald and Lympne in April 1944, flying Spitfire IXs, attacking enemy railway yards and transport and escorting bombing raids on V1 sites in France prior to D Day. On that day itself 74 flew patrols over the invasion fleet and after the landings attacked German positions. In July it moved to Tangmere as part of 134 Wing and then to France as part of 2nd TAF with 145 Wing. Flying in support of the advancing Allied armies 74 was credited by the Canadian 4th Armoured Brigade as providing the 'closest air support to date!' The Squadron advanced as the Allies advanced and it was based fleetingly at Lille, Courtrai, Duerne and Schijndel. In March 1945 it received Spitfire XVI's which it flew alongside its LFIXs. By April it was at Droebe in Germany and that is where, on May 2nd, it received news of the German surrender.

Returning to the UK, 74 was one of the early squadrons to equip with the Meteor F3. Based initially at Colerne it moved briefly to Bentwaters and then took up a long residency at Horsham St Faith where it became a component of Fighter Command's first post war jet fighter wing. In December 1947 the Meteor F3 gave way to the F4 and then in October 1950 the F8. 74 became the first winner of the Duncan Trophy, awarded to the day fighter squadron making the greatest contribution to day flying in all weathers. This was at a time when the RAF did not have specific 'all weather' squadrons. 74 won the Duncan Trophy again in 1952 and 1953 the Dacre Trophy for weapons firing at the Acklington gunnery school.

In March 1957 the Hunter F4 was introduced followed a few months later by the F6. In July 1960 the Tigers proudly became the squadron chosen to introduce the Lightning F1 into RAF operational service. Under the command of Sqn Ldr John Howe and by now with Coltishall as its home, displays were flown at Farnborough and Paris. At the same time they were working hard to iron out the many teething troubles that beset this demanding, exciting aeroplane. At the 1961 Farnborough show, nine Lightnings were rolled in formation: in 1962 'The Tigers' became Fighter Command's leading aerobatic team. A move to Leuchars in 1964 saw an end to display flying and in its place the equally demanding Intensive Flying Trial, designed to prove the operational capabilities of the aircraft which were by now Lightning F3s. Whilst at Leuchars 74 hosted its first Tiger Meet, the gathering of NATO squadrons with the tiger as their emblem and an Association of which 74 had been a founder member in 1961. Tiger Meets continue to this day, embracing the world's Tiger Squadrons. Meets combine social and operational aspects of squadron life and are used to further the understanding of roles, aircraft and operational procedures on the ground and in the air.

In June 1967, 74 undertook a logistically impressive deployment to Tengah, Singapore, where it became a component of the Far East Air Force. Refuelled en route by Victor tankers, the deployment of the thirteen Lightning F6s with which the Squadron was by now equipped was the largest to be undertaken thus far with such support. Four of 74's aircraft which later flew from Tengah to Darwin in northern Australia in June 1969 set a 2,000 mile record for the longest non stop flight made by a Lightning. Once at Darwin they participated in an air defence exercise with the RAAF.

After four years in Tengah, the Tigers disbanded on 25th August 1971. Their Lightnings were flown to Cyprus where they were taken on charge by 56 Squadron. 74 themselves lay dormant for thirteen years until October 1984 when they reformed at RAF Wattisham under Wg Cdr Dick Northcote on the F-4J (UK) Phantom. These aircraft, unique to the RAF and wearing a very distinctive duck egg blue paint scheme, the origins of which nobody is sure, were purchased from the US Navy and after rework at the San Diego Naval Facility were ferried back to the UK in batches of three accompanied by VC10 tankers, the last arriving at Wattisham on January 5th 1985.

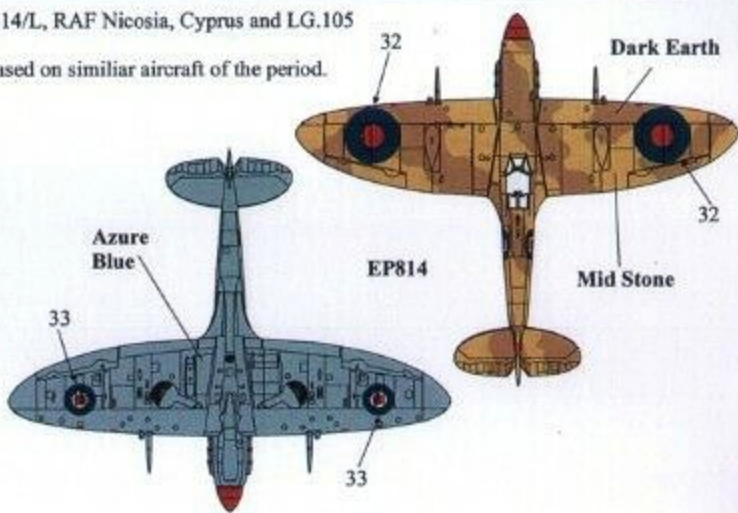
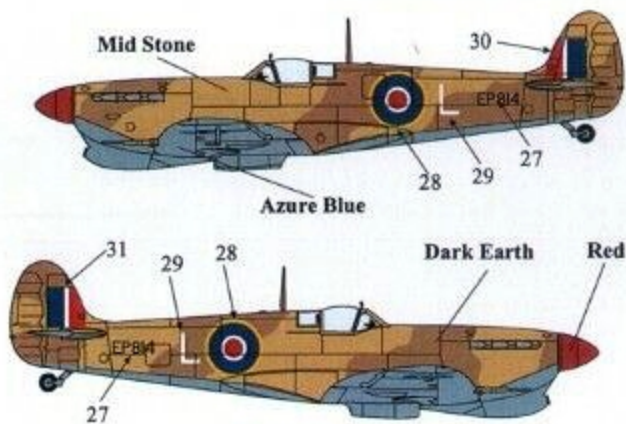
Declared operational on 31st December 1985, 74 flew this mark of Phantom until it was retired and replaced by the Spey-engined FGR2. 74 disbanded again in October 1992, this time as the last Phantom operator in the Royal Air Force - but stood up again immediately at RAF Valley with the BAe Hawk which it flew until September 22nd 2000 in the training role.

74 has always played a pivotal role in the story of the RAF, introducing new aircraft into operational service (such as the Lightning), developing new tactics (as did Sailor Malan during the Second World War) and as the Squadron through which all air defence and ground attack RAF pilots passed on their way to the front line (which they did at Valley).

On 22 September 2000 74(F) Squadron disbanded again and probably for the last time as the RAF reduced its 3 training squadrons to 2. In a low-key ceremony outside its hangar at a windswept Valley, the standard was paraded for a final time in front of Air Vice Marshal Robinson, who broke the news that 74 definitely wouldn't be re-appearing as a Eurofighter squadron in the foreseeable future so 74 doesn't feature in the RAF of the future. It brings to an end a long tradition, with its finest hour being as with many other fighter squadrons over the skies of southern England in 1940. The Tigers have a proud tradition which is maintained by the 74 (F) Tiger Squadron Association which brings together Tigers from all eras at an Annual Reunion and by means of newsletters. 'Tigers' by Bob Cossey (published by Arms and Armour Press in 1992) and 'I Fear No Man' by Doug Tidy (published by J&KH Publishing in 1998) are available from Bob Cossey. More information at <http://www.74squadron.org.uk/>



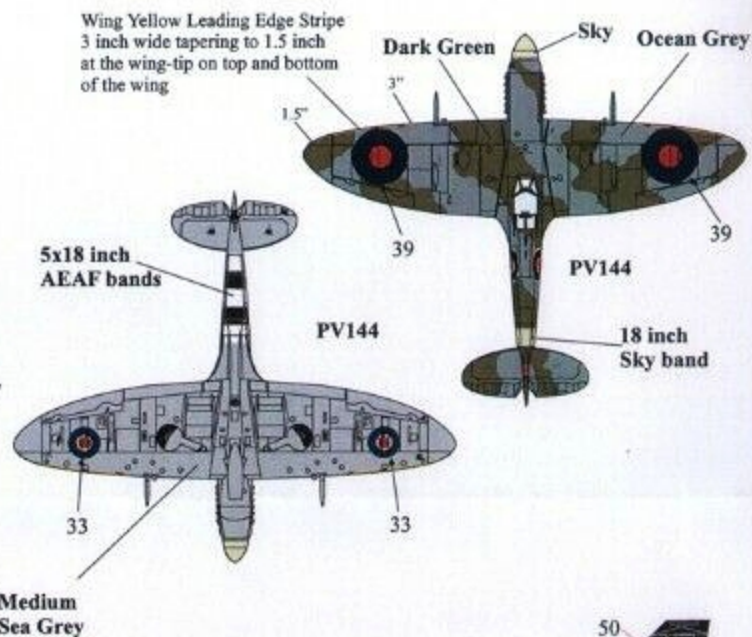
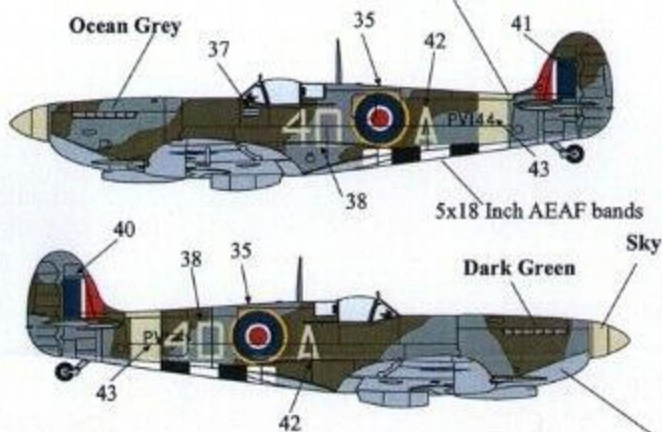
Supermarine Spitfire Mk.VC, EP814/L, RAF Nicosia, Cyprus and LG.105 Idu, Egypt, circa September 1943.  
(Ref: C&M;Sqn list). Speculative, based on similar aircraft of the period.



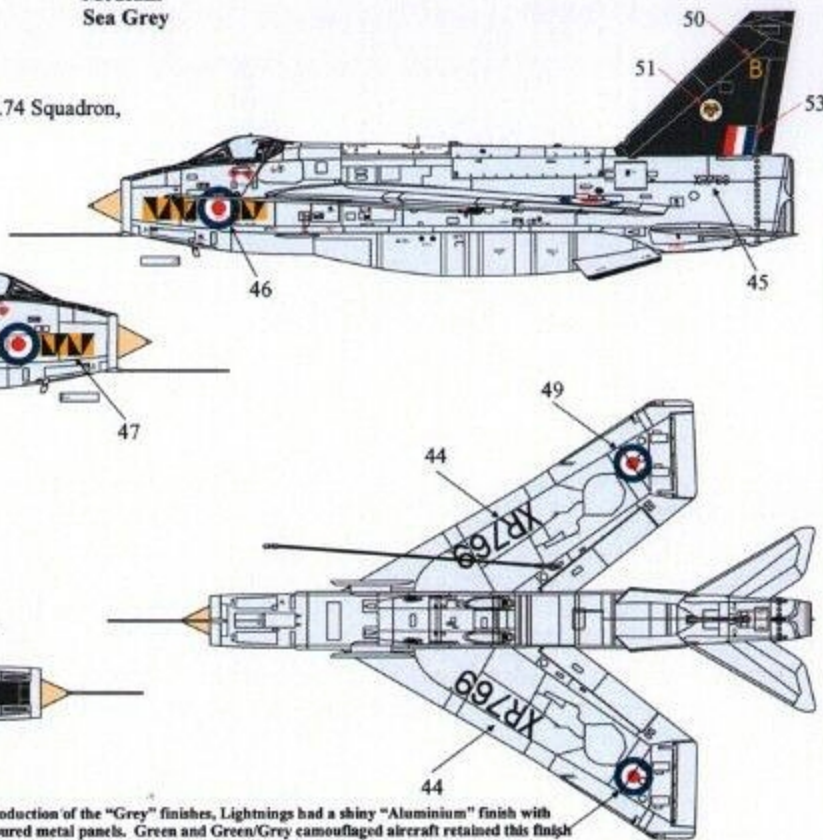
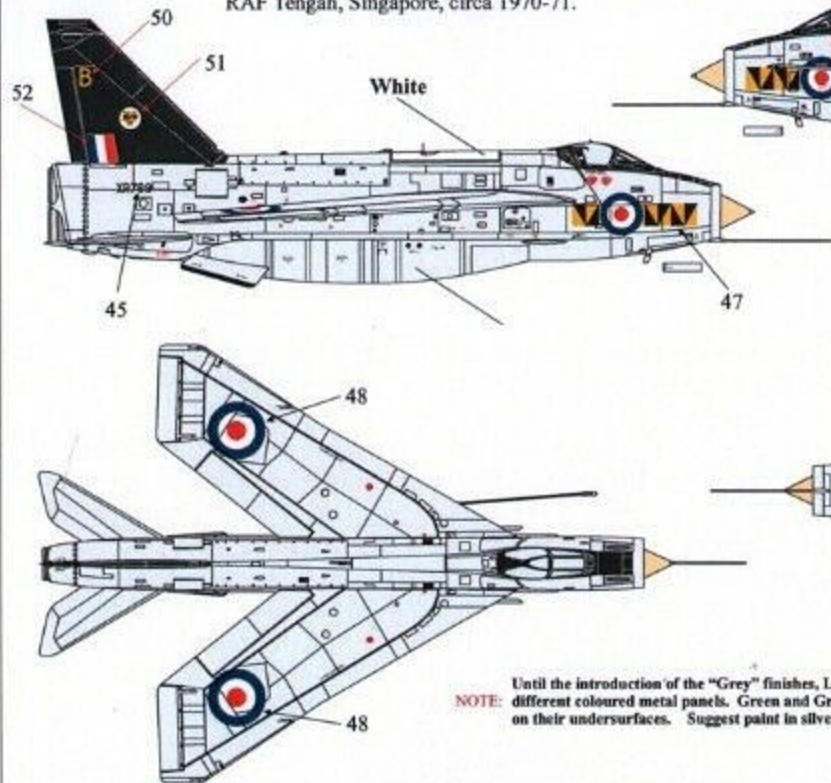
Supermarine Spitfire Mk.IXe, PV144/4D-A, flown by Sqd.Ldr. J.C.F. Hayter, B.70, Duerne, Belgium, November 1944.  
(Ref: 2 TAF Vol2, Pg 374).

Sky band repainted and moved slightly forward from original position

Wing Yellow Leading Edge Stripe 3 inch wide tapering to 1.5 inch at the wing-tip on top and bottom of the wing

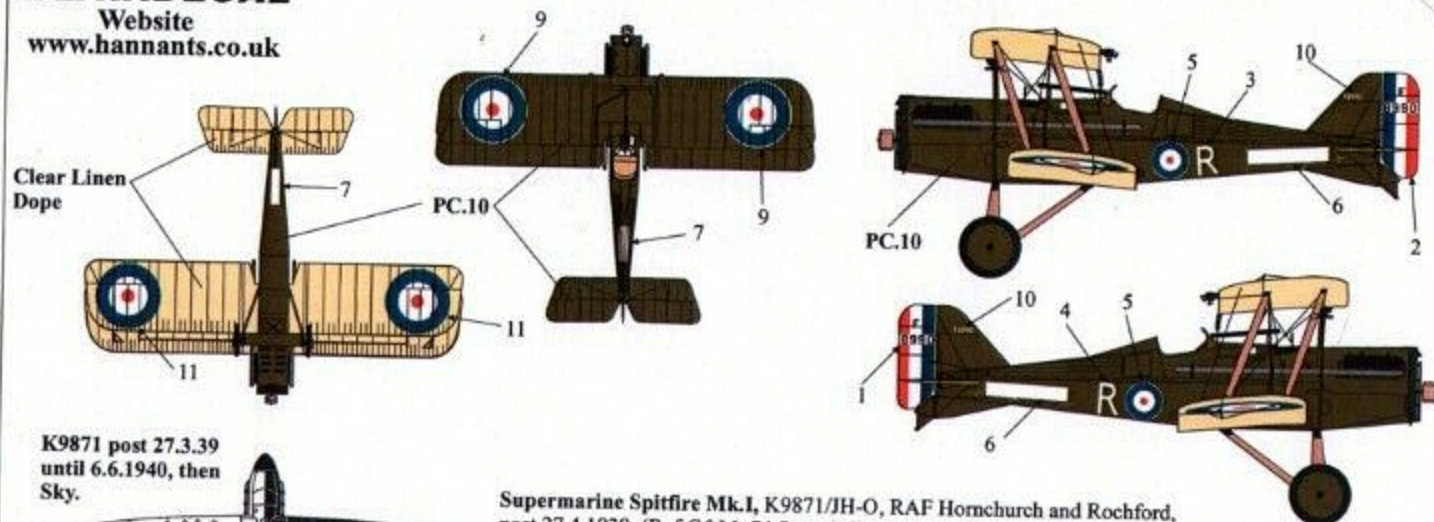


EE(BAC) Lightning F.6, XR769/B of No.74 Squadron, RAF Tengah, Singapore, circa 1970-71.

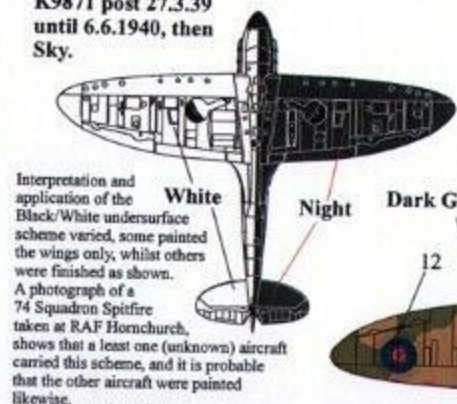


NOTE: Until the introduction of the "Grey" finishes, Lightnings had a shiny "Aluminium" finish with different coloured metal panels. Green and Green/Grey camouflaged aircraft retained this finish on their undersurfaces. Suggest paint in silver with selected panels in different silver shades.





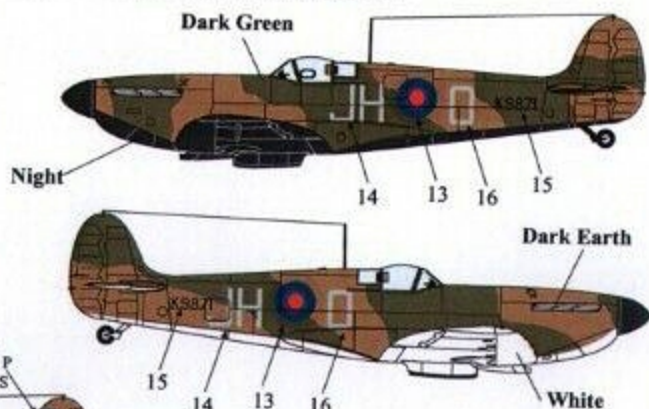
K9871 post 27.3.39 until 6.6.1940, then Sky.



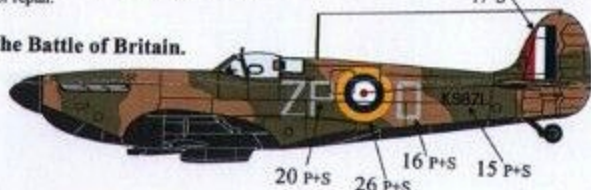
Interpretation and application of the Black/White undersurface scheme varied, some painted the wings only, whilst others were finished as shown. A photograph of a 74 Squadron Spitfire taken at RAF Hornchurch, shows that at least one (unknown) aircraft carried this scheme, and it is probable that the other aircraft were painted likewise.

**Uppersurface:**  
 Shows the 40 inch B Type roundel, modified from a 56 inch Type A. It is highly probable that this remained unchanged until the aircraft, following an accident, was sent to Air Services Training, on 20.8.1940, for repair.

Supermarine Spitfire Mk.I, K9871/JH-O, RAF Hornchurch and Rochford, post 27.4.1939. (Ref: C&M; 74 Sqn a/c list). Speculative drawing based on similar period aircraft.

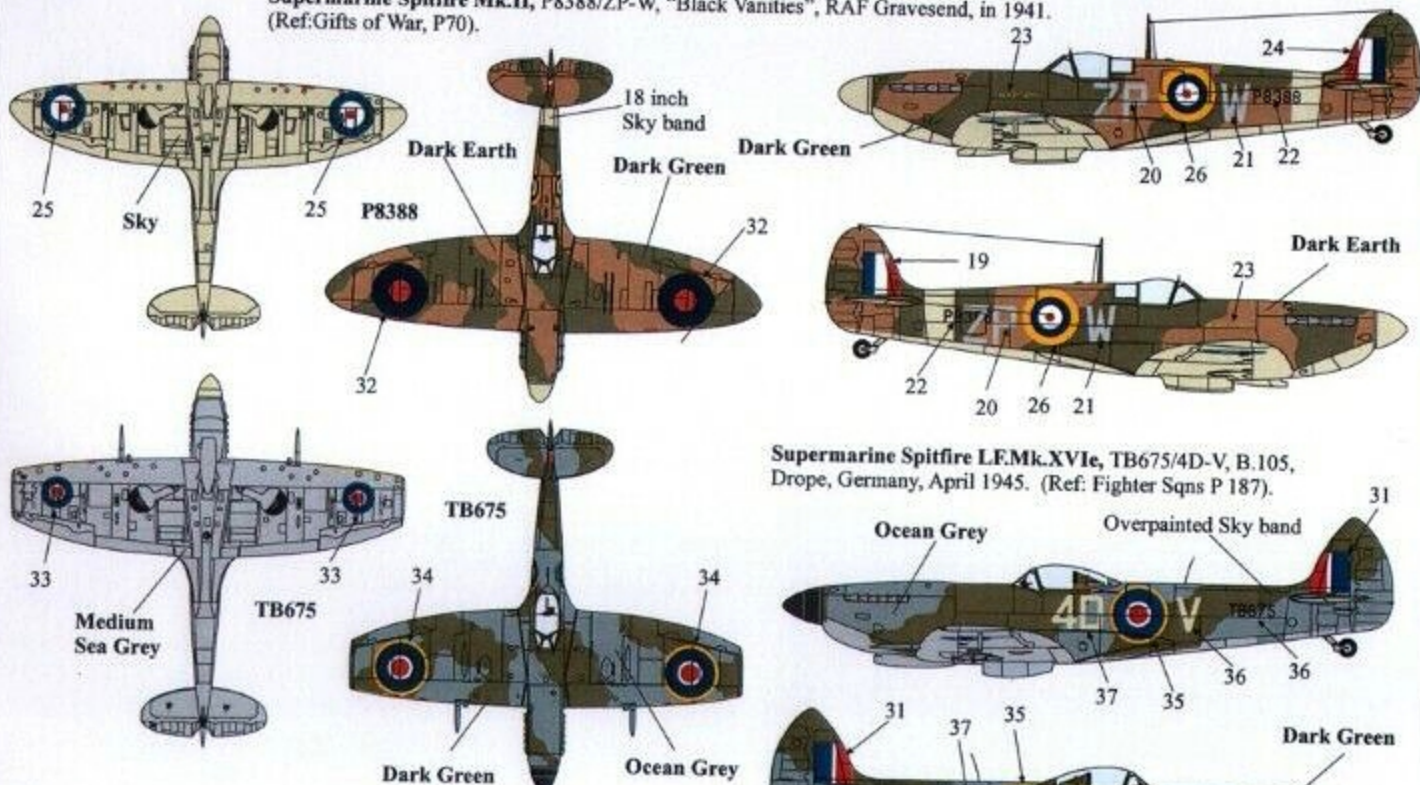


K9871 at the start of the Battle of Britain.

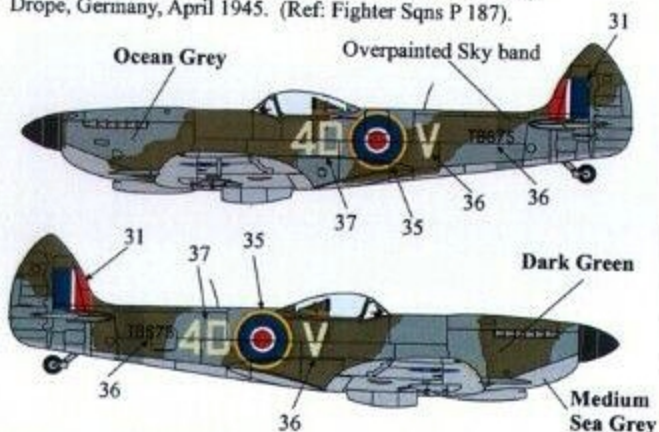


In September 1939, the identification codes were changed to "ZP". In November, the 25 inch "B" type fuselage roundels were changed to 25 inch "A" type, to which the Yellow ring was added on 1 May 1940.

Supermarine Spitfire Mk.II, P8388/ZP-W, "Black Vanities", RAF Gravesend, in 1941. (Ref: Gifts of War, P70).



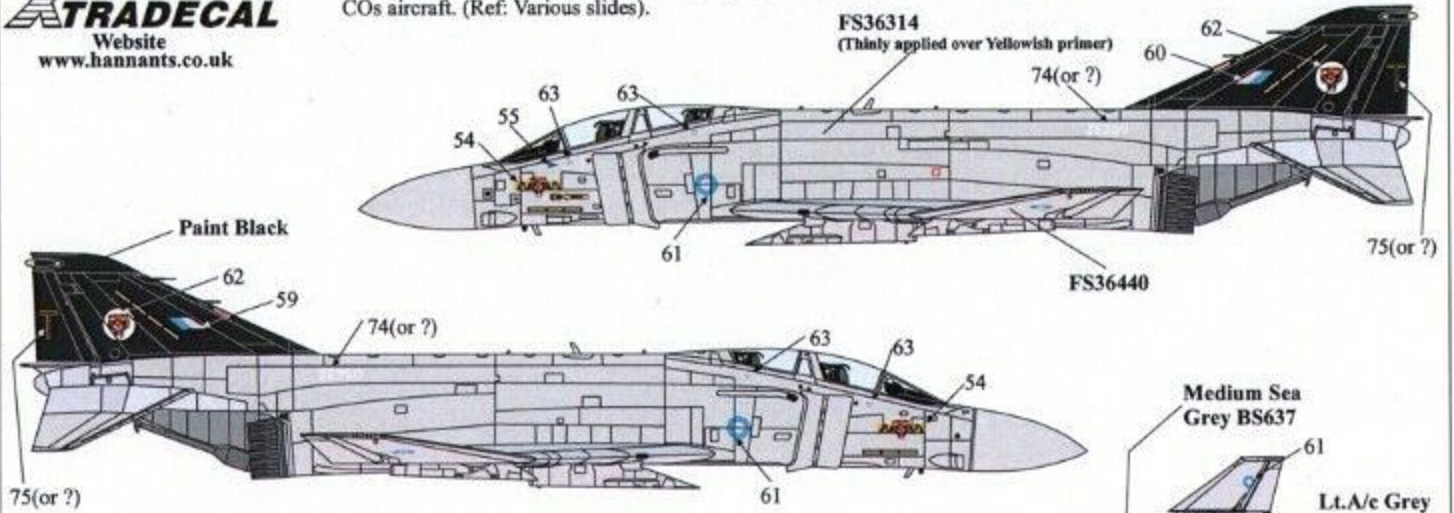
Supermarine Spitfire LEMk.XVIe, TB675/4D-V, B.105, Drope, Germany, April 1945. (Ref: Fighter Sqns P 187).



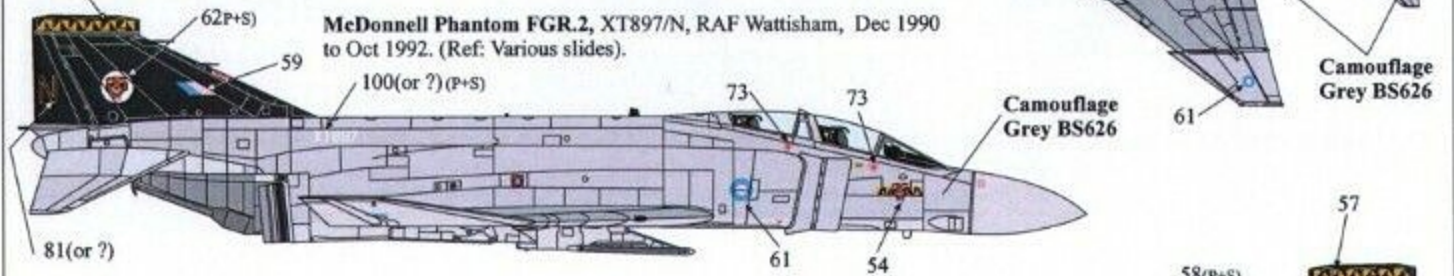
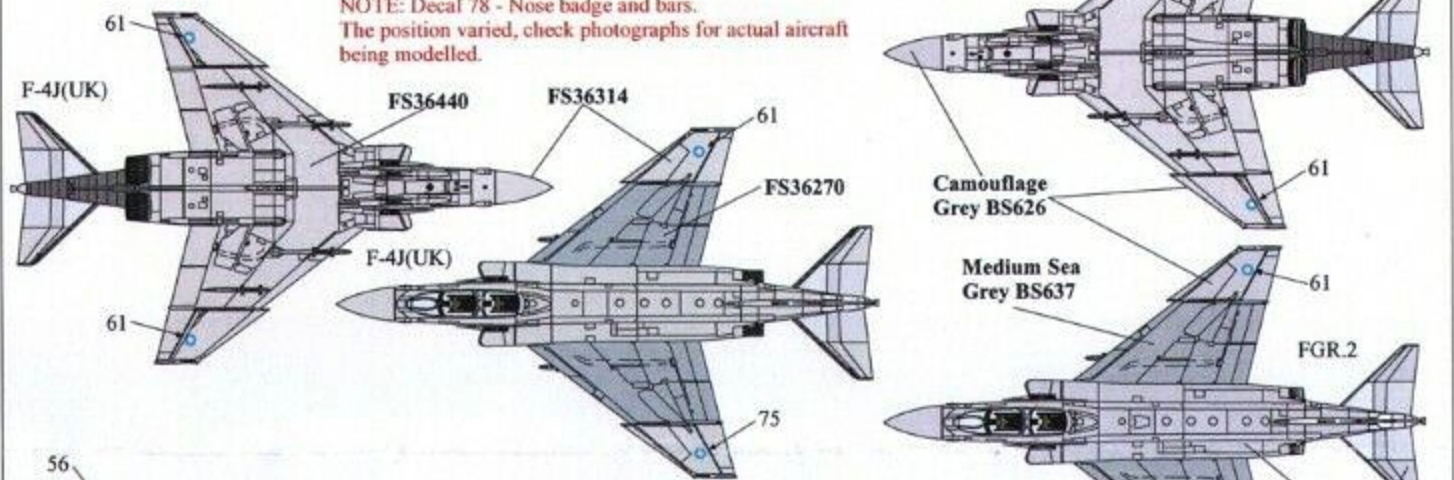
The generous assistance of No.74(Tiger) Squadron Association contributed significantly to the scope of this decal sheet and is gratefully acknowledged.



**McDonnell F-4J(UK) Phantom, ZE350/T, RAF Wattisham, Oct 1984 to Dec 1990.**  
 CO's aircraft. (Ref: Various slides).

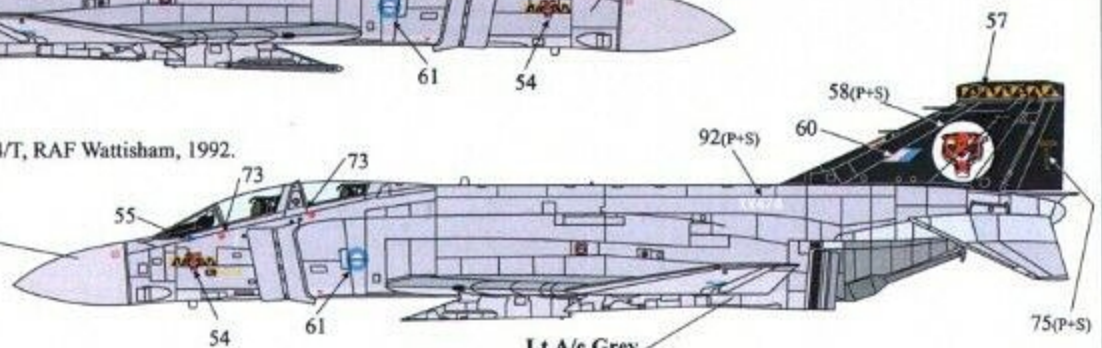


**NOTE: Decal 78 - Nose badge and bars.**  
 The position varied, check photographs for actual aircraft being modelled.



**McDonnell Phantom FGR.2, XV474/T, RAF Wattisham, 1992.**  
 CO's aircraft. (Ref: Various slides).

Nominally Camouflage Grey on radome - tones varied somewhat.



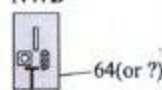
**Xtracolor Paints:**

- Dk.Green BS241 X001
- Dark Earth X002
- Med.Sea Grey BS637 X003
- Dk.Sea Grey BS638 X004
- Ocean Grey X006
- Sky X007
- Mid Stone X009
- Night X012
- Lt.Aircraft Grey BS627 X015
- Camouflage Grey BS 626 X017
- RFC Doped Natural Fabric X021
- RFC Green PC 10 X022
- Azure Blue X026
- High Speed Silver X038
- FS36270 X133
- FS36314 X143
- FS36440 X137
- White X141

**Xtracrylix Paints:**

- Dk.Green BS241 XA1001
- Dark Earth XA1002
- Med.Sea Grey BS637 XA1003
- Dk.Sea Grey BS638 XA1004
- Ocean Grey XA1006
- Sky XA1007
- Mid Stone XA1009
- Night XA0112
- Lt.Aircraft Grey BS627 XA1015
- Camouflage Grey BS 626 XA1017
- Azure Blue XA1026
- High Speed Silver (Silber) XA1216
- FS36270 XA1133
- FS36314 -----
- FS36440 XA1137
- White XA1141

**NWD**



**References:**

- Schiffer: British Av.Sqn.Markings WW1
- Osprey: On Silvered Wings
- Profile: Gauntlet
- Ducimus: C&M F.Command 1936-45
- Grub Street: Second to None (Hornchurch)
- MacDonald: Fighter Sqns of the RAF.
- SAM: C&M No.2 Battle for Britain.
- Modeldecalsheet No.76 (F-4J(UK)).
- Various slides & photographs
- No.74(Tiger) Sqn. Association

**NOTE: Tiger Head Badge:**  
 Only FGR.2 XV474 had the large Tiger Head - all others had the small version. See code letters and serial list below.

**Phantom Codes and serials**

Code	F-4J(UK)	FGR.2
T	ZE350	XV474
I	ZE351	XV401
G	ZE352	XV409
E	ZE353	XV433
R	ZE354	XV490
S	ZE355	XT891
Q	ZE356	XT895
N	ZE357	XT897