

Evolved as a means of rapid identification of friendly fighters in peacetime, applied to the wing uppersurfaces and fuselage, the wing upper markings rapidly disappeared with the Munich Crisis. The basic A1 design continued on the fuselage of many aircraft until the C and C1 roundels of 1942. It also appeared as an underwing roundel during the use of tactical 'Night' underwing colours to improve visibility of the type A on the black finish.

ITEM	ROUNDEL SIZES (In Inches) - Diameter				TYPICAL APPLICATIONS
	Yellow Outer	Blue Outer	White Outer	Red	
1	35	25	15	5	<u>Fuselage</u> Battle; Beaufighter; Blenheim; Boston; Gladiator; Hampden; Hurricane; Manchester; Mohawk; Mustang; Tomahawk; Spitfire.
2	42	30	18	6	<u>Fuselage</u> Defiant; Manchester; Mosquito.
3	49	35	21	7	<u>Fuselage</u> Blenheim; Boston/Havoc; Hurricane; Lancaster; Manchester; Spitfire; Stirling; Wellington; Whitley.
4	70	50	30	10	<u>Upperwing</u> Hurricane (1938).
5	98	70	42	14	<u>Upperwing</u> Battle; Blenheim (1938).
6	56	40	24	8	<u>Upperwing</u> Whitley (1938).
7	45.5	32.5	19.5	6.5	<u>Fuselage</u> Harrow.
8	30	21	13	4	<u>Upperwing</u> Spitfire (1938).
					<u>Fuselage</u> Blenheim.
					<u>Underwing</u> Tomahawk/Mohawk.
					<u>Fuselage</u> Mustang.

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TYPE A1

▼
TYPE A

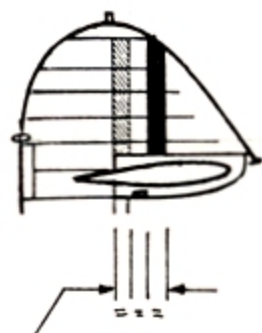
Hostilities equivalent of the pre-war type A roundel, but using dull colours, the post Munich Crisis type A was used primarily on the undersurfaces and fuselage sides. Some meteorological Halifax aircraft around 1944 also used the roundel as an uppersurface marking. Other special uses of the type A (and the type A1) were confined mainly to photo recon aircraft but in this case the colours used were frequently non-standard and beyond the scope of these standard sheets.

ITEM	ROUNDEL SIZES (In Inches) - Diameter			TYPICAL APPLICATIONS
	Blue Outer	White Outer	Red	
1	25	15	5	<u>Fuselage</u> Gladiator; Hurricane; Spitfire.
2	30	18	6	<u>Underwing</u> Spitfire.
3	32.5	19.5	6.5	<u>Underwing</u> Gladiator; Hurricane.
4	35	21	7	<u>Fuselage</u> Blenheim; Gladiator.
5	40	24	8	<u>Fuselage</u> Beaufighter; Blenheim; Spitfire; Hurricane.
6	45	27	9	<u>Underwing</u> Hurricane.
7	50	30	10	<u>Underwing</u> Buffalo; Hurricane; Defiant; Mustang; Spitfire; Whirlwind.
8	84	50.4	16.8	<u>Underwing</u> Beaufighter; Hurricane; Mohawk; Tomahawk.
9	60	36	12	<u>Underwing</u> Hurricane; Spitfire.
10	42	25.2	8.4	<u>Upperwing</u> Halifax (Met).
				<u>Fuselage</u> Wellington.
				<u>Underwing</u> Wellington.
				<u>Fuselage</u> Defiant.

The initial approach to dull camouflage schemes was that no fin or rudder markings should be used. However, following incidents during October 1939, type B markings came under review as being too invisible for recognition in certain circumstances and various new markings such as the type A fuselage roundel were introduced. These were further modified to type A1, the original production concept, during 1940 with the issue of signal x485 to all commands of 1st May, 1940. This signal also introduced the painting of a flash, red, white and blue vertical strips, on the fin. The official clarification of the fin flash requirement was that it should consist of strips of equal width, the basis of this width being the width of the fuselage roundel rings or the width of the yellow outer ring being added to the fuselage type A roundel to convert it to A1. Because of the open nature of this order and the various roundel sizes in use, all sorts of interpretations were made in the field. Almost without exception the fin flash was applied at this time to the full height of the fin on the relevant aircraft. The widths however varied widely; Blenheims for example were recorded with equal widths of 6.5 inches as a minimum, right up to 18 inches equal as a maximum. Alternatives were to use the blue and white as equal widths with the red filling up to the maximum width of the fin - e.g. the Hurricane using 9 inch blue and white, plus a gigantic red area. Initial production Beaufighters used 12 inch blue and white in a similar manner. By July 1940, the lack of standardisation was becoming more of a worry than recognition and from 1st August 1940 a standardised fin flash was ordered. This flash consisted of a three strip oblong, 24 inches wide (three equal 8 inch widths) and 27 inches high. It was introduced on the production lines first and retroapplied as convenient on operational types. Except on machines with odd sized fins where the standard flash could not apply directly, this standard became the norm until the next major marking change - the move to the C type roundels - in 1942.

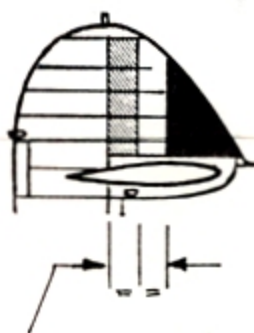
Fin flashes available on sheet A24

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FIN FLASH



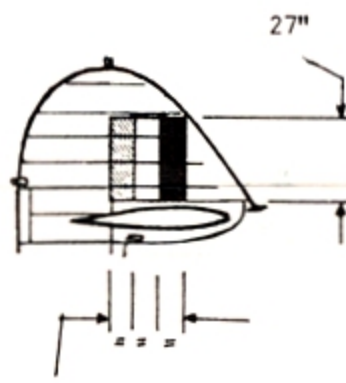
APPROX 3X WIDTH OF FUSELAGE
ROUNDEL RING

Typical Interpretation of
signal x485 from May 1940



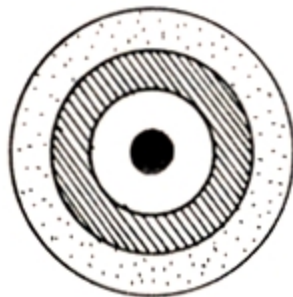
EQUAL WIDTHS BLUE & White
WHITE

Typical variation of signal
x485 from June/July 1940

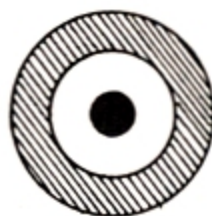


27"
24" TOTAL

Standard Flash from
August 1940 on production
and field mods when
convenient to squadron



TYPE A1



TYPE A

Research by Les Whitehouse.