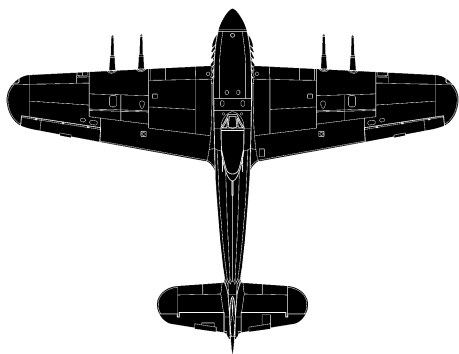


Airpower Classics

Artwork by Zaur Eylanbekov

Typhoon



The Typhoon, Britain's renowned World War II fighter-bomber, became one of history's deadliest close air support aircraft, but it did so only by a circuitous route. Designed by Hawker Co. as an interceptor, the Typhoon was supposed to replace the Hurricane as a destroyer of German escort fighters in air-to-air combat. It went through a long and troubled development, finally becoming an altogether different animal—a bristling, heavyweight scourge of Nazi Germany's land and close-in naval forces.

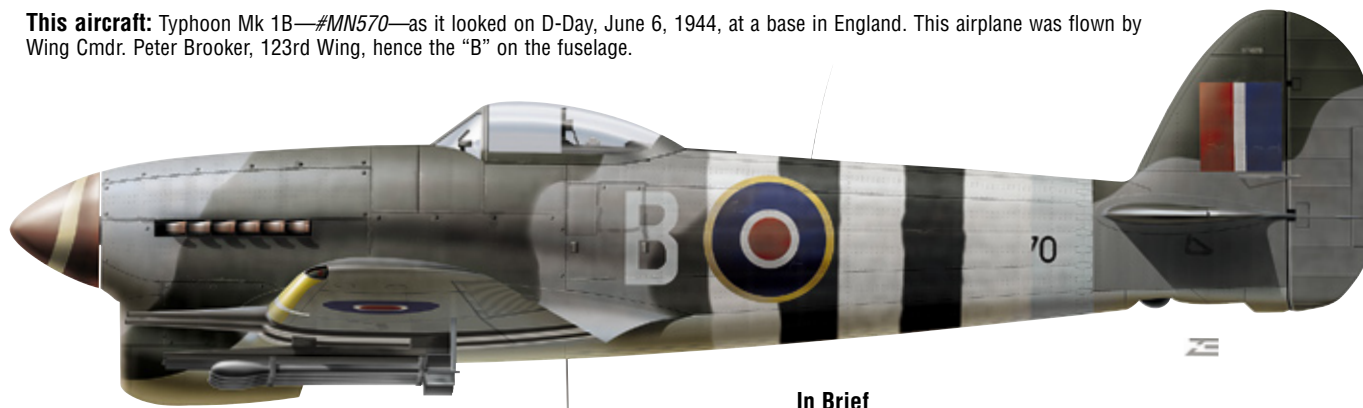
Work began in 1937. The all-metal Typhoon had a thick wing incorporating wide-track landing gear and, initially, 12 machine guns. It suffered many setbacks, including engine fires, rear fuselage failures, and poor low-speed handling. Yet it was speedy at low altitudes and was the only aircraft able to intercept Fw-190s raiding Britain. More importantly, the Typhoon had swapped its machine guns for cannon, rockets, and bombs and could generate immense firepower. It was

said that a single Typhoon could produce a fusillade equal to a destroyer's broadside. And it had a champion, RAF Wing Cmdr. Roland P. Beamont, the famous test pilot and ace. He believed in the Typhoon and promoted its use in close support, a mission at which it excelled.

From mid-1943 onward, the Typhoon rolled up a stellar record strafing Nazi coastal convoys, communications, transport facilities, troop concentrations, and armored vehicles. The Typhoon's greatest triumphs came on and after D-Day at Normandy in June 1944, when near-constant air attacks, guided by forward air controllers, wreaked havoc on German targets. The Typhoon was a key factor in the 1944 slaughter of German ground forces at Falaise Gap in France. It destroyed up to 150 locomotives per month. Once an air combat fighter of dubious value and reliability, it had become one of the truly awesome weapons in the Allied arsenal.

—Walter J. Boyne

This aircraft: Typhoon Mk 1B—#MN570—as it looked on D-Day, June 6, 1944, at a base in England. This airplane was flown by Wing Cmdr. Peter Brooker, 123rd Wing, hence the “B” on the fuselage.



In Brief

Designed by Hawker ★ built by Hawker and Gloster ★ first flight Feb. 24, 1940 ★ crew of one ★ number built 3,330 ★ **Specific to Mk 1B:** one 24-cyl Napier Sabre IIC engine ★ armament, four 20 mm Mk 2 cannon, eight 3-inch rocket projectiles, two 500 lb or 1,000 lb bombs ★ max speed 412 mph ★ cruise speed 330 mph ★ max range 610 mi ★ weight (loaded) 13,250 lb ★ span 41 ft 7 in ★ length 31 ft 11 in ★ height 15 ft 4 in.

Famous Fliers

RAF Aces: Wing Cmdr. J.R. Baldwin (top Typhoon ace, 15 victories), Wing Cmdr. R.P. Beamont, Wing Cmdr. Pierre Clostermann, Group Capt. T.P. Davidson, Group Capt. Billy Drake, Group Capt. Hugh S. Dundas, Group Capt. D.E. Gillam, Sq. Leader R.A. Lallémand. **RNZAF Aces:** Sq. Leader F. Murphy, Group Capt. D.J. Scott. **Notable:** Wing Cmdr. (later, Air Marshal) Dennis Crowley Milling; Paul Richey, author of *Fighter Pilot*.

Interesting Facts

RAF's first 400 mph fighter ★ called “Tiffy” by pilots ★ used in attack that wounded German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel ★ given black-and-white wing stripes to differentiate from Luftwaffe Fw-190 ★ nicknamed “Bombphoon” (bomb-equipped type) and “Rocketphoons” (rocket carriers) ★ 141 lost in a day (Jan. 1, 1945) in Operation Bodenplatte ★ FR 1B used for photoreconnaissance ★ only one surviving Typhoon, displayed in RAF Museum.



RAF airmen reload a Typhoon on May 3, 1944.