

Vought F4U-1A Corsair

U.S. Marines VMF-111 "Devil Dogs" 1944

The Vought F4U Corsair is an elegant inverted gull wing design created for the US Marine Corps and Navy to fight in the second world war and the Korean war. Powered by a single 18-cylinder Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engine packing 2100 hp, it could reach a top speed of over 700 km/h. The reason for the gull wing design was to allow for easier folding of the wings and add clearance for the large propeller.

The 1A iteration of the design, which implemented several improvements that made it more suitable for use on aircraft carriers, made its first flight in the spring of 1943. To improve visibility the pilot's seat was raised and a simplified canopy was fitted along with a longer tailwheel strut. Another significant change was a pair of stall strips and an improved undercarriage that allowed for a smoother landing needed on a carrier deck.

The aircraft carried six 12.7 mm Browning AN/M2 machine guns mounted inside the outer wing panels. The actual length and wingspan of the aircraft is 10.2 m and 12.5 m respectively. Four 127 mm high velocity aircraft rockets could also be mounted as payload under the aircraft body.

Supermarine Spitfire Mk.Vb

RAF No. 243 Squadron 1943

The Mk V B wing iteration of the famous Spitfire served the Royal Air Force from 1941 onwards, and it was the first model of Spitfire to see action outside of Britain. The Mk V was the most produced Spitfire version with a total of nearly 6500 aircrafts manufactured. It was designed to be a short range interceptor and fighter, and powered by a 1470 hp Rolls-Royce Merlin 45 engine it could reach speeds of 600 km/h and carry loads of up to 700 kg.

The mark five was the first version of the Spitfire to feature clipped wingtips. This was to increase maneuverability and airspeed, which was necessary to compete with the German Fw190. Some aircrafts also came equipped with the M version of the Merlin engine, which produced 100 additional horsepower. The common B wing carried four 7.7 mm Browning machine guns and two 20 mm Hispano machine guns instead of earlier versions with 8 Brownings.

Most early Mk Vs were converted from Mk Is as an emergency measure to counter the German Ju 86, which featured a pressurized cockpit. The next iteration of the Spitfire, meant to introduce high-altitude flying, entered production half a year later.

Messerschmitt Bf109E-3

Colorscheme filler

Undoubtedly one of Germany's most iconic fighter planes in the second world war, the Messerschmitt Bf109 was massproduced throughout the entire war. Several were also exported to neighboring nations before the outbreak. During the early stages the aircraft was developed by Bayerische Flugzeugwerke, but the company changed ownership during production, hence the peculiar name designation.

The E model was first conceived in 1938 and improved the previous D model with a more reliable engine and bigger fuel tanks. The Daimler Benz DB 601 engine is what made the Bf109E viable to replace most of the Luftwaffe's older fighter models. Changes were also made to the cowling and the cooling system to accommodate the new engine.

Reaching speeds up to 620 km/h, the aircraft could both outrun and outmaneuver most other military aircrafts of the time, and most importantly it could rival the british spitfire. As a standard two 7.92 mm MG 17s were mounted in the cowling and a second pair of bigger 20 mm MG FF cannons were mounted in the wings instead of MG 17s. Around 35 000 Bf109s were produced, and around 3000 of them model E.