

# Supermarine Spitfire Mk.IX (PL256)



**The combination of superb aerodynamics and one of the best aero engines ever produced, the Supermarine Spitfire created by R.J.Mitchell was a true thoroughbred in fighter design that was to become an aviation legend. The original design for the ‘Spit’ can be traced back to the Supermarine seaplanes of the early 1930’s that successfully represented Great Britain in the Schneider Trophy international seaplane competitions for speed and endurance.**

R.J. Mitchell’s first monoplane fighter, the Type 224 was rejected in favour of the Gloster Gladiator biplane. However a new design, the Type 300 featured the famous elliptical wing and was combined with a new Rolls Royce 12-cylinder engine (soon to be named Merlin) that offered an excellent power to weight ratio for the fighter.

At this time (the mid 1930’s) the rapid development of monoplane fighter designs in Germany posed a real threat and it was clear that the RAF needed a new fighter for the home defence interceptor role.

The first prototype (K5054) flew from Eastleigh, near Southampton on the 5th of March 1936 with Supermarine’s Chief Test Pilot ‘Mutt’ Summers at the controls. A production order for 310 Spitfire Mk1’s followed in June 1936. The first of these aircraft with a RR Merlin rated at 1,060hp and armed with eight Browning machine guns arrived at No.19 Squadron, RAF Duxford in August 1938.

Considered by many to be the Spitfires ‘Finest Hour’ came in September 1940 when, along with the Hawker Hurricane, a relatively small number of pilots, ground crew, and machines assisted by ground control, repelled the might of the Luftwaffe’s fighters and bombers as they attempted to destroy the RAF over Southern England in the aerial combat immortalised as ‘The Battle of Britain’. Prime Minister, Winston Churchill summed up this momentous victory with the famous quotation “Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few”.

From the initial Mk 1 design, over 20 distinct variants were to follow in the development of the Spitfire & Seafire (Naval version) with the final aircraft, a Mk 24 coming off the assembly line in February 1948 completing a total of over 20,000 aircraft produced.

## Specifications

### Dimensions:

**Length:** 9.16m (30ft 6in)

**Wingspan:** 11.23m (36ft 10in)

**Height:** 3.59m (11ft 8in) Tail down with propellor vertical

### Powerplant:

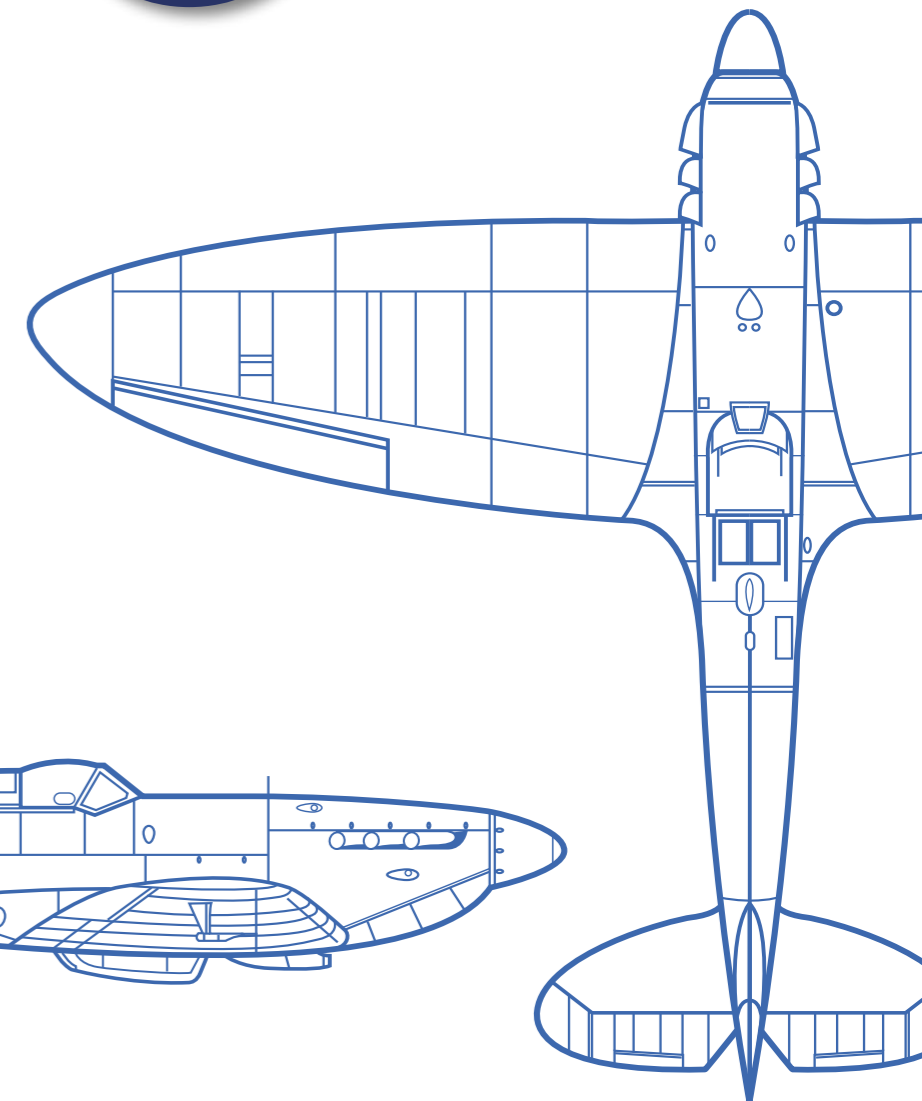
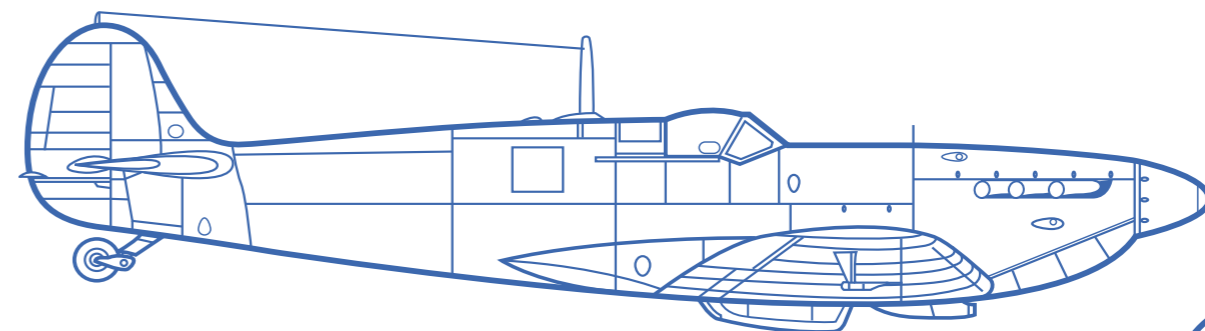
1 Rolls Royce Merlin 61 series engine

### Maximum Speed:

408 mph at 7620m (25,000 ft)

**Service Ceiling:** 13,411m (44,000ft)

**Range:** 698km (434 miles)



## The Aeropark Spitfire

The Aeropark Spitfire is a replica of a Mk IX. Many of these aircraft were originally used as ‘Gate Guardians’ at RAF Stations throughout the UK, replacing real aircraft when it was realised how valuable the real Spitfires were becoming. Since that time many of the real aircraft have been restored to flying condition. The aircraft represents a Spitfire Mk IX of ‘504’ County of Nottingham’ Squadron, coded TM-L and flown by the Squadron’s Commanding Officer, Squadron Leader Banning-Lover at RAF Manston, Kent in 1944. Its main role was in bomber escort duties across the channel attacking enemy shipping and port installations on the Continent.

*The aircraft has been kindly loaned to the Aeropark by Mr. Kevin Wheatcroft of the Donington Park Motor Racing Circuit.*