

SPITFIRES GALORE !!

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CompuServe ID: 72110,1170

Date: 15 October 1993

This ZIP contains a number of other ZIPs each of which consists of a complete Supermarine Spitfire, ready to fly and accompanied by its .AFX file so that you can monkey about with the aircraft to your heart's content. I ask only that you respect my copyright to the extent of passing on, unaltered, the complete ZIP of each individual plane, if you feel that anyone else would like a copy. Apart from that, you are welcome to alter the aircraft in any way you want for your own purposes: you'll probably be able to improve on the flying characteristics (as I'm not a pilot, I have no way of telling if the Spits handle as the prototypes did!); the complexity of the simulations preclude their use in multi-aircraft Flight Simulator setups, so you may wish to reduce detail; or you may like to remove some insignia and substitute your own. On the last subject: some of the aircraft have prototypically correct serial numbers and some don't! Some have RAF roundels, etc., but not all - there isn't enough 'room' to put everything in, much as I would have liked to! The Spitfire experts will be able to decide which serials, etc., are correct!! The other poor ignorant s*ds will just have to enjoy the flying!!!

For reference, the outlines were traced from "Spitfire in Action" by Jerry Scutts, published as Aircraft No. 39, by Squadron/Signal Publications, of Carrollton, TX.

A lot of the other details were found in "Spitfire, the History" by Eric B. Morgan & Edward Shacklady, published in 1987 by Key Publishing Ltd, P.O. Box 100, Stamford, Lincolnshire, England, PE9 1XQ for £39.95. (In Canada, in 1990, it cost \$99.50 !! - but WELL worth it, if you're a Spitfire nut like me.) It goes into incredible detail, such as listing all the serial numbers of all the Spitfires ever made with a potted history of each. The front and back end-papers show small but detailed side views, in colour, of more different-looking Spitfires than I could have imagined existed. None of the simulated aircraft in this ZIP follows any of them with more than approximate accuracy! (Most of the liveries I have used were chosen to make the aircraft easily visible in the Flight Simulator environment.)

The Spitfires I have included in this ZIP are:-

- Mark 1a - as flown in the Battle of Britain with 8 Browning .303 machine-guns.
- Mark Vb - produced mainly to counter the Bf 109f; this one with 2 cannon and 4 MGs
- Mark VII HF - high-altitude version; had extended wings, larger rudder & pressurisation, etc.
- Mark IXc - an interim development to match the Fw 190; a very well-thought-of variant.
- Mark XIV (high rear deck version) - first Griffon-engined Spit to enter large scale production.

All are complete with .SIM and .PRF files and all seem to be air-worthy! I have equipped (lumbered?!) all with 'fully-operational' landing gear, flaps, airscrews, canopies and even cockpit doors. Removal of any or all of these cosmetic addenda is at the discretion and personal risk of the user. No warranty, expressed or implied, is given that the aircraft will fly as Mitchell, Smith (and Nixon!) intended in the absence of such essential pieces of 'hardware'. However, reducing the complexity does make it easier for the limited intelligence of MS Flight Simulator 4.0 to cope with redrawing the screen. Perhaps FS 5.0 will be better; it isn't available here, yet.

For those wondering, Reginald Mitchell designed the original Spitfire in the mid-1930s; he lived to see it fly, but not to enter squadron service. His successor as chief designer at Supermarine, Joseph Smith, was responsible for the development of the many variants that were produced mainly during WWII. The last Spitfire was Mark 24. The Fleet Air Arm version, the Seafire marks ran up to 47 and the last one was completed in March 1947, 12 years and 9 months after the flight of the original prototype. Total production of Spitfires was 20,351 and of Seafires, 2,408.

I've also included a few BMPs of a Spitfire Mk Vb, which were derived from the "Souvenir Shop" feature of Aircraft Factory; they make pleasant wallpaper, startup screens or screen blankers. 'Derived' is perhaps an under-statement, as apart from adding detail, colour, etc., I find that the overall aspect ratio of the original BMP as saved to the clipboard by AAF is grossly inaccurate. Has anyone else had this problem?

On the subject of Windows Bitmaps: The most commonly found form is .BMP and some programs can't use any other type. Unfortunately, .BMP is the most greedy of formats. The .BMPs included in this ZIP are 640 x 480 pixels and in only 16 colours, but they each occupy about 150 Kb of space on your hard disk. But by using the Run Length Encoded (RLE) process, they can be compressed, without loss of any detail, to about 12 Kb - that is by a factor of 12. (Actual compression ratio depends on the structure of the graphic image.) So you can store 12 RLE-encoded bitmaps in the space used for one .BMP! Some Windows programs won't accept .RLE files - notably Paintbrush - so you have to reconvert them to .BMP if you want to employ Paintbrush on them. A versatile, easy to use graphics conversion program to be found on compuserve as shareware is PaintShopPro. It can convert between over 20 different graphics formats. But if you really want to compress your bitmaps and have an automated wallpaper system, you'd have a job to find a better program than Wallpaper Manager, also available as shareware. This one can losslessly compress bitmaps using the GLZ algorithm and in the case of the above 150 Kb graphic, you will end up with a file using as little as 4 Kb. Now that's compression! (Again, the exact ratio depends on the individual graphic. These examples are actual figures obtained from these actual graphics.) The graphics files in this ZIP are all in .BMP format so anyone can use them.

(Note: I have no connection with or interest in either of the above shareware programs, except as a satisfied customer.)

I'd like to produce some more Spitfires in the near future, but as this is my first attempt at (a) AAF-ing and (b) uploading a file, a lot depends on how successful it turns out to be. So, feedback would be appreciated!

I hope you enjoy 'flying' the world's most beautiful fighter aircraft - no ifs ands or buts!!!!