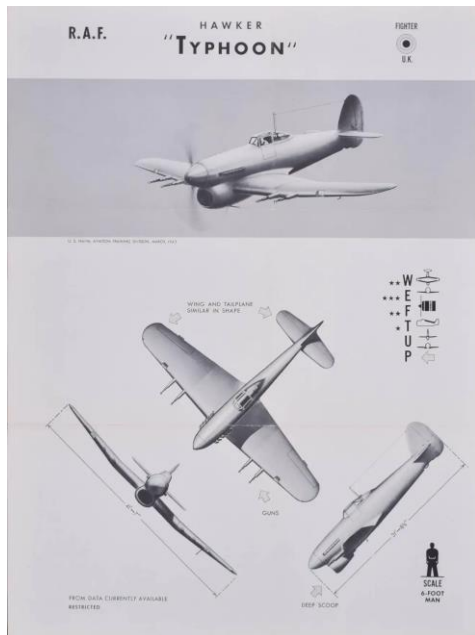


WWII U.S. Naval Aviation Aircraft Identification Posters



R.A.F. Hawker Typhon

Posters were used as a training tool as well as an in-theater identification poster to help U.S. and other allied pilots, bomber crews, and other naval personal to identify both allied and enemy aircraft. These posters used a coding system: W.E.F.T.U.P. for the purpose of aircraft identification and recognition.

- Wing
- Engine
- Fuselage
- Tail
- Undercarriage
- Peculiarities

World War II saw some of the first introductions of these aircraft ID posters. The posters were designed to prevent so-called friendly fire, and to facilitate more accurate plane recognition in combat. It was believed these posters alone could save countless lives from friendly aircraft-on-aircraft, or friendly anti-aircraft fire. These posters could also reduce precious seconds that pilots, bomber gunners, and naval gun crews would have had to identify a plane flying towards them, in turn possibly saving their lives by allowing them to shoot first.

Background

The Parkville Frame Gallery is fortunate enough to have recently acquired a relatively large collection of a wide variety of vintage WWII U.S. Naval Aviation Aircraft Identification posters. See one example of a R.A.F. (British Royal Airforce) aircraft identification poster pictured to the left. These posters measure 18 ½ by 25 inches (unframed). They are printed on sturdy paper, and are in excellent condition. Prices may vary.

These original 'RESTRICTED' aircraft identification posters were published by the U.S. Naval Aviation Training Division in 1943.

Each poster provides aircraft silhouettes, dimensions, and other relevant information to educate both air and ground personnel in aircraft identification. Immediate identification of aircraft, friendly or not, was essential in order for the observer (whether in the air, e.g., pilot, gunner, or patrol observer, or on the ground, anti-aircraft crew) to determine his next course of action (i.e., acknowledge, attack, evade, or report). Each poster depicts a large, clean-sky and background image of the specified aircraft shown as the main top image on the poster. The poster also contains important 'peculiarities' such as where certain gun emplacements are located, other special aircraft features, as well as wing and aircraft length measurements. The poster for the R.A.F. Hawker Typhoon is featured here as just one example of an identification poster. There are, of course, many other aircraft shown in the collection.

Hawker Typhoon:

The Hawker Typhoon, or "Tiffy", in R.A.F. slang, was a British single-seat fighter-bomber manufactured by Hawker Aircraft Limited. It was intended to be a medium to high-altitude interceptor as a replacement for the Hawker Hurricane, but several design problems were encountered and it never completely satisfied that requirement.

The Typhoon was originally designed to mount twelve .303 inch (7.7 mm) Browning machine guns, and be powered by the latest 2,000 horsepower engine. Its service introduction in mid-1941 was plagued with problems, and for several months the aircraft faced a doubtful future. When the German Luftwaffe brought the formidable single-seat, single-engine Focke-Wulf Fw 190 into service in 1941, the Typhoon was the only R.A.F. fighter capable of catching it at low altitudes. As a result it secured a new role as a low-altitude interceptor.

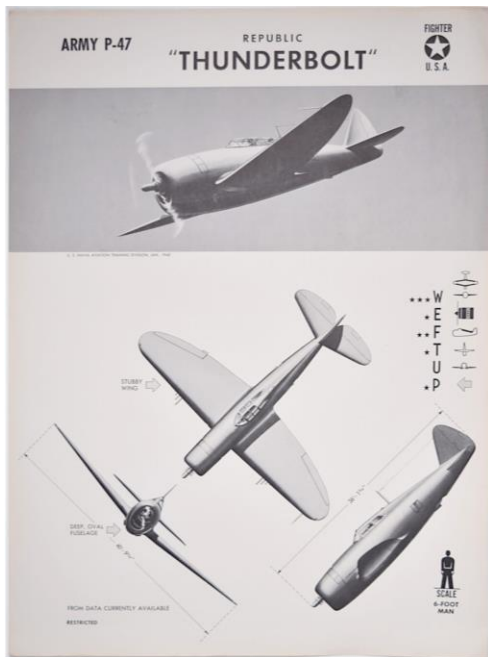
The Typhoon became established in roles such as night-time intruder, and long-range fighter. From late 1942 the Typhoon was equipped with bombs, and from late 1943 RP-3 rockets were added to its armament. With those weapons, and its four 20mm Hispano autocannons, the Typhoon became one of the Second World War's most successful ground-attack aircraft.

By 1943, the R.A.F. needed a ground attack fighter more than a "pure" fighter. The Typhoon was suited to the role, and less-suited to the pure fighter role than competing aircraft such as the Spitfire Mk IX. The Typhoon's powerful engine allowed it to carry a load of up to two 1,000 pound (450 kg) bombs, equal to the light bombers of only a few years earlier. The bomb-equipped aircraft were nicknamed "Bombphoons". They entered service with No. 181 Squadron, formed in September 1942.

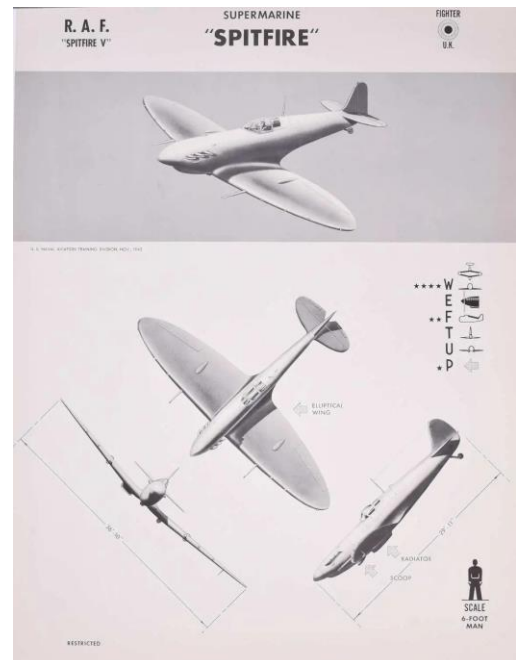
From September 1943, Typhoons were also armed with four "60 pound" RP-3 rockets under each wing. In October 1943, No. 181 Squadron made the first Typhoon rocket attacks. Although the rocket projectiles were inaccurate and took considerable skill to aim and allow for ballistic drop after firing, "the sheer firepower of just one Typhoon was equivalent to a destroyer's broadside." [Citation needed] By the end of 1943, eighteen rocket-equipped Typhoon squadrons formed the basis of the R.A.F. Second Tactical Air Force (2nd TAF) ground attack arm in Europe.

In theory, the rocket rails and bomb-racks were interchangeable; in practice, and to simplify supply, some 2nd TAF Typhoon squadrons (such as 198 Squadron) used the rockets only, while other squadrons were armed exclusively with bombs. This also allowed individual units to more finely hone their skills with their assigned weapons.

By the Normandy landings in June 1944, 2 TAF had eighteen operational squadrons of Typhoon IBs, while R.A.F. Fighter Command had a further nine. The aircraft proved itself to be the most effective R.A.F. tactical strike aircraft, on interdiction raids against communications and transport targets deep in North Western Europe prior to the invasion and in direct support of the Allied ground forces after D-Day. A system of close liaison with ground troops was set up by the R.A.F. and the army. R.A.F. radio operators in vehicles equipped with VHF R/T travelled with the ground troops close to the front lines. The radiomen called up the Typhoons operating in a "Cab Rank"; the Typhoons then attacked designated targets, marked for them by smoke shells fired by mortar or artillery on the ground.



U.S Army P-47 Thunderbolt



R.A.F. Spitfire V