This issue of Vuelos features the development and production of the Supermarine Spitfire to celebrate the 80\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary of its 1\textsuperscript{st} flight. But first:

**Bon Voyage Mary Broad**

On Tuesday 2nd Feb over 40 members attended a luncheon at the El Prado restaurant in San Miguel to say farewell to Mary Broad who was relocating from Spain to the UK. Mary joined the branch together with her late husband Colin, at its inception in Feb 2004. Ever since, she was at the forefront in raising funds for RAFA Welfare (the Wings Appeal). She helped Colin set up the Wings Week collection at the La Marina Iceland superstore and introduced the annual Christmas Hamper Draw. The branch will sorely miss her. Thank you Mary.

**RBL Orihuela Costa Remembrance Day Service 8 Nov 2015**

The Branch was present at the RBL Orihuela Costa Remembrance Day Service, Mil Palmeras on the 8 Nov 2015.

**Right: Branch Standard Bearer Allan Brown**
The RBL Torrevieja Remembrance Day Service took place on the 11 Nov 2016 at La Siesta Church in Torrevieja. Branch members attended the Service and presentation of wreaths and crosses at the memorial. We enjoyed a pleasant lunch afterwards at the Budapest Restaurant, Rojales.

A Silent Auction organised by Bruce was held during the General Meeting on the 17 Nov 2015 succeeded in raising 118 Euros towards the Wings Appeal.

Right: Bruce in Action.
The Branch Christmas Luncheon took place at the Maribou Lounge Restaurant on the Lemon Tree Road near Campo de Guardamar on Thur 3 Dec 2015. About 46 members and guests enjoyed a beautiful 3 course lunch with wine. Many thanks to Bruce for organising the event.

In the first week of December Torrevieja celebrates the Patronal Feast of the Immaculate Conception. As part of these celebrations organisations are invited to participate in a walk from the Sagrago Corazon Church to the Inmaculada Church and present their flowers. Allan Brown carried the Standard with Brian Todd and the Chairman carrying the two National flags. Branch participants included Brian Hewett, John and Joan Knowles, Sandy Barnes, Fay Todd and Rose Lyons. Many thanks to them all.
At the end of our Branch meeting on the 15 Dec 2015 we celebrated a successful year by indulging in Food and Drink provided by the Chairman. Alberto, owner of the Paraiso Restaurante provided some fine fare which was soon gobbled up by the hungry hordes!

Left: The Ladies prepare the ground!

On St David's Day the branch held a celebratory lunch at the La Cosecha Restaurant just outside Benijofar on the road to Almoradi. Some 40 members and guests enjoyed a superb meal for which the staff were thanked. After the lunch our new President, Noel, presented the 'Wings Trophy' to Dilys Carter in recognition of her dedication and hard work in raising funds towards the 'Wings Appeal'.

Many thanks to Brenda for organising this successful event.

Dilys accepts the Wings Trophy for 2015
Present at our General Meeting on the 15 Mar 2015 was Barry Wright from the Costa Blanca News. He wanted an update on our activities to publish in the near future. At this meeting we unveiled a plaque announcing that the Paraiso was the home location of the RAFA Costa Blanca Branch. We are indebted to Alberto, the owner of the Paraiso for his permission for us to do this. Barry took a photo to commemorate the event (shown above).

The complete article can be found in the Costa Blanca News Issue 2181 dated 25 Mar 2015.

On the 21st March, on a beautiful sunny day, RAFA Costa Blanca Branch attended the Charity Fair at the Hombre del Mar, the sea front Torrevieja. We had been invited to present a stall together with other charitable organisations in the area by Councillor Carmen Morate.
A full copy of the meeting minutes is available to members on request. The following were elected Officers of the Branch:

Chairman  David Barnes
Vice-Chairman  Tony Clarke
Secretary  No nominations.
(Chairman to continue pro tem).
Treasurer  Ken Booth
President  Noel Cork

Election of other Committee Members:

Vice-President  Brian Hewett
Honorary Welfare Officer  Bill Laverick
Membership Secretary  Noel Cork
volunteered to continue.
Publicity Member  Tony Clarke

Election of Non Committee Posts:

The Auditor  Ian Price
Life Vice-President  Bruce Heath
Wings Co-ordinator  No nominations
Conference Delegate  Bill Laverick volunteered for the Spring Conference.

Presidents Trophy

President’s Trophy – The President announced that he had no hesitation in awarding the President’s Trophy for 2015 to Bill and Pauline Laverick. Bill and Pauline took over as HWO and Assistant in May last year. They were immediately faced with several complicated and distressing welfare cases. Their activities included travelling many miles, dealing with much correspondence and making and receiving many phone calls. They faced much bureaucracy and delays but persevered in their wish to resolve the cases and in doing so made contact with many other agencies involved with welfare. Bruce then presented Bill and Pauline with the President’s Trophy.
SPITFIRE 1ST FLIGHT 80TH ANNIVERSARY

On the 5 March 1936 the Supermarine Spitfire flew for the very 1\textsuperscript{st} time. This article tracks Spitfire development and production to celebrate the 80\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of this event.

DEVELOPMENT

The Supermarine Type 224 was developed in 1931 in response to Air Ministry Spec F.7/30. RJ Mitchell at Woolston, Southampton, designed a monoplane with a low gull wing, open cockpit, fixed landing gear and a Rolls-Royce Goshawk engine. It flew on Feb 19, 1934. However the winner of the contest to meet the specification was the biplane Gloster Gladiator.

Both Types at the Hendon Air Show 1934.

The Type 224 design was improved to create the Type 300 with the familiar Spitfire wing design and the new Rolls-Royce PV 12 (Merlin) engine. Taking over a year to design (the Eurofighter Typhoon took about 8 years!) it proposed an all-metal stressed-skin fuselage, metal wings with fabric covered control surfaces, 8 Browning machine guns, a Merlin C engine, providing 990 hp and a 2 bladed fixed pitch wooden propeller. The Air Ministry gave Supermarine a contract to produce a prototype under Spec F37/34.

The prototype, K5054, was first flown by Vicker’s Chief Test Pilot, Capt Joseph Summers on 5 March 1936. After the 8 minute flight he said "Don't touch anything". K5054 was very quick for its time, nearly 350 mph in level flight against the Hurricane 315 mph, and the Messerschmitt Bf109B, 298 mph.

King George VI Pre-Flight on K5054.

Reginald Joseph Mitchell – Designer
Joseph Summers Chief Test Pilot
Joseph Smith Chief Draughtsman
On 3 June 1936 Supermarine received an order for 310 production Spitfires and it made its public debut on 27 June 1936 at the Royal Air Force Pageant at Hendon. On 11 June 1937 Mitchell died of cancer, aged 42.

Mitchell was succeeded by Joseph Smith, the Chief Draughtsman. It was Smith who would evolve the Spitfire through twenty models over 10 years including 6 years of war. The basic design turned out to be highly adaptable, remaining a front line high performance fighter throughout the war. Over 22,000 were built, more than any other fighter of the WWII.

PRODUCTION

The first production aircraft was completed in June 1938 and in August, the first one was received by 19 Squadron replacing the Gloster Gauntlet. At the outbreak of war on 3 September 1939, 306 Spitfires had been delivered to eight Spitfire squadrons. Incredibly 36 Spitfires had already been written off!

In constant development during its production run pre-war changes included the replacement of the level canopy (above the pilot) with the familiar curved bubble canopy, armour plating and a bullet proof windscreen.

From the 78th aircraft the two blade wooden propeller was replaced by a de Havilland two-speed 3-blade metal propeller and from the 175th aircraft, the engine was changed from the 1030 hp Merlin II to the Merlin III, which could take either the de Havilland propeller or the Rotol propeller. These changes increased the performance of the Spitfire at different speeds, as the angle of the propeller blades could be altered to suit high or low speed situations. The de Havilland propeller increased the maximum speed by 10 mph whilst the Rotol propeller increased the rate of climb.

By 1940 production of the Spitfire at Woolston was at full capacity and by June 1940 the RAF had 19 Spitfire squadrons. On 26 Sep 1940 two daylight bomber raids destroyed the Woolston works killing 110 people.

Supermarine Woolston (Pre-War)

Supermarine Factory after Sep 1940 (note Heinke He111 in LH picture !!)

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The situation was extremely grim. Lord Beaverbrook the Minister for Aircraft Procurement came to Southampton and insisted that the Spitfire must be produced locally in any location where aircraft could be built. Fortunately many of the production jigs and machine tools had already been relocated to small facilities throughout the Hampshire area. Amongst those requisitioned were Vincent's Garage in Reading (Spitfire fuselages), and Anna Valley Motors, Salisbury, (leading-edge fuel tanks and other components). The drawing office was relocated to Hursley Park, near Southampton. This site also had an aircraft assembly hangar, and where many of the prototype/experimental Spitfires were assembled and flown. By the end of the War 8,000 Spitfires had been built in this way.

The Spitfire MkI’s first major contribution to the war came in June 1940 when squadrons reached beyond the beaches of Dunkirk to defeat the Luftwaffe Bf109. Consequently, in Sep 1940 with the help of the Dowding inspired home defence chain of radar stations and Air Defence System, the Spitfire and Hurricane defeated the Luftwaffe’s daytime offensive in the Battle of Britain.

The Hurricane was at its best at around 15,000 feet, the Spitfire at 18,000. The Hurricane was ideal for intercepting Luftwaffe bombers, who usually flew at or below 17,000 feet, leaving the Spitfires to deal with the higher flying Bf 109s. In all 1566 Spitfire MkIIs were produced.

Full production of the Spitfire MkII began at a new factory at Castle Bromwich constructed under the government 'shadow' factory scheme in June 1940. Fitted with a Merlin MkXII engine, it provided an extra 120 hp over the Merlin MkIII and used either the de Havilland or Rotol propeller. The 1st delivery was to 611 Sqn in Aug 40. 1000 Spitfire MkII were ordered. 750 MkIIa, with 8 machine guns and 170 MkIIb, with two 20mm cannon and 4 machine guns. The MkI and MkII were phased out in 1941 in favour of the Spitfire MkV, the last 80 of the order were MkV's.
This unusual configuration had the Spitfire MkIIa fitted with a 30 gallon fuel tank under the port wing giving it the range to escort bombers into Europe. 60 were produced and 3 Sqns equipped (66, 118 and 152). Top speed was reduced (from 357 to 344 mph) and stability suffered. This version was phased out in Mar 1942.

In 1943, 50 MkIIb Spitfires were converted to MkIIc to perform the air sea rescue role. They had a small bomb rack fitted to carry 2 smoke marker bombs inboard of the oil cooler and a space provided under the fuselage for a dinghy and flare pack that could be dropped to marooned sailors or downed pilots.

The first major redesign of the Spitfire was the Mk III. It had a modified fuselage to carry the new Merlin XX engine, producing 1240 hp with a two-speed supercharger, giving improved high altitude performance. Other changes included a shorter clipped wing, which increased the roll rate and the tail wheel made retractable. The “c” wing could take four 20mm cannon and eight machine guns, or two cannon and four machine guns. Maximum speed increased to 385 mph.

Because the Merlin XX was also used by the Hurricane the engine for the Spitfire was swapped for the Merlin 45, which could be also be used in a MkI or MkII. The Merlin 45 did not require an expensive fuselage redesign and the MkIII was abandoned in March 1941 with only one delivered.
The first Mk V produced in Jan 1941, was based on the MkI/MkII design and therefore less complex to build than the MkIII. In Feb 1941 the first was delivered to 92 Sqn. Production was divided between the MkVa ('a' wing with 8 machine guns) and the MkVb ('b' wing with 2 cannon and 4 machine guns).

In October 1941 the Mk Vc appeared. This used the “c” wing which carried either 8 machine guns and 4 cannon or 2 cannon and 4 machine guns, the most popular being the 2 cannon variant due to weight and thus performance.

A low level variant, the Spitfire LFMkV was produced which used modified Merlin engines, (45M, 50M and 55M), that produced their optimum power at low altitudes.

The standard MkV became the FMk V. The MkV also saw the introduction of 30 gallon drop tanks for extra fuel and later an 80 gallon version. The MkV was also the first Spitfire to be adapted to carry bombs.

In Sept 1941 the Luftwaffe Focke-Wulf Fw190 appeared and proved superior in all but turn radius to the Spitfire MkV, except at high altitudes. To compete, changes were made to the MkV, the most significant of which was fitting a carburettor designed to work under negative-G, thus improving its dog fighting capability.

The Mk V was produced in greater numbers than any other mark of Spitfire. It was the main version of the fighter during 1941, replacing the Mk I and MkII.
Spitfire MkVI

The Spitfire MkVI was designed as a high altitude fighter, to deal with the threat posed by high flying Luftwaffe aircraft, in particular the Junkers Ju86. The MkVI used the same airframe as the Mk V, with a Merlin 47 engine, providing 1,415hp and a four bladed propeller.

Spitfire MkVI 124 Sqn North Weald 1942

The Spitfire MkVI had its wing span extended to over 40ft, 4 feet more than the standard Spitfire. Designed to increase performance at high altitude, it had a locked pressurised cockpit which made it unpopular with pilots. Its performance at high level, (for which it was designed), was disappointing, and was outperformed by modified MkVs. Consequently, only 97 MkVI were built (Dec '41 to Oct '42), and it was removed from the front line and used for training. Five were converted to the Photo Reconnaissance role for the Middle East.

Spitfire MkVII

The arrival of the high performance Merlin 61 and 71 with two-stage superchargers required yet further Spitfire modification. A new cooling system, was necessary which included fitting an air scoop under each wing. The fuselage was strengthened and increased in length to 31ft 3.5in. Above: Spitfire MkVII at Langley USA Jul'44.

The Mk VII used the “c” type wings with the extended wing tips. A more advanced pressurisation system with a sliding canopy was fitted. The best high altitude version of the Mk VII powered by the Merlin 71 could reach 416mph at 44,000 ft. From August 1942 until early 1944, only 140 Spitfire MkVII were produced as the developing MkIX was proving rather better at high altitude.
Spitfire MkVIII

The Mk Spitfire MkVIII featured a strengthened fuselage with a retractable tail wheel. Each wing carried a 14 gallon self sealing fuel tank. The fuselage fuel tank was increased in size to hold 96 gallons. The changes made the MkVIII faster than the MkV but with the same range. The MkVIII also had a new pointed-tip rudder and a Vokes Aero-Vee tropical filter. The MkVIII used the “c” wing, a cut-down rear fuselage and a new bubble canopy to improve rear visibility.

Spitfire MkVIII – (with pointy fin)

The Spitfire MkVIII design became the basis for later Spitfires including the MkIX, MkXVI and Mk20 onwards. 1,657 Spitfire MkVIIIs were produced in 3 versions. The Spitfire FMkVIII using the Merlin 61 was the standard fighter model. The high altitude Spitfire HFMkVIII used the Merlin 70 and the low altitude Spitfire LFMkVIII the Merlin 66.

Spitfire MkIX

The Spitfire Mk IX was originally developed as a stop gap to combat the Luftwaffe FW190A. The new Merlin 61 engine with a two-stage supercharger, was fitted to Spitfire Mk III N3297, and the on 27 Sep1941 it reached a maximum speed of 414 mph at 27,200 feet and could reach 354 mph at 40,000 feet. This became the MkIX. Rapid production was possible as it used a slightly modified Mark Vc fuselage with the same Merlin 60/70 engines as the Mk VIII.

Spitfire FMkIX – Bubble Cockpit

The standard “c” wing was used. From 1944 some were built with the “e” wing, which replaced the four .303 inch machine guns with two .50 inch heavy machine guns. The Spitfire MkIX entered front line service with 64 Sqn at Hornchurch in July 1942, a year before the debut of the MkVIII. In July 1942 a captured Fw190A was flown against an early MkIX and the two had similar performance

Spitfire MkIX with Bombs - Normandy 1944

contd/
Three main versions of the Mk IX were produced. 1,255 Spitfire FMkIX using the Merlin 61, 4,010 Spitfire LFMkIX optimised for lower altitudes with the Merlin 66, and finally, 470 Spitfire HFMkIX using the Merlin 70 optimised for high altitude. The MkIX was produced in larger numbers than any other type of Spitfire. 284 were converted from older versions, 557 built by Supermarine around Southampton, and another 5117 at Castle Bromwich. Another 1053 were produced and became the MkXVI because they were fitted with a Merlin 266 (based on the 66) built by Packard in the USA.

The MkIX allowed the RAF to go on the offensive in Europe, and remained in service until the end of the war. On 5 Oct 1944 Spitfire MkIXs of 401 Sqn were the first to shoot down the jet engine powered Luftwaffe Me 262.

One intriguing feature of the Spitfire story is that the two most important versions introduced during the war, the MkV and the MkIX, were both seen as interim designs, to fill a gap while more heavily modified and theoretically more advanced versions entered production.

The Mk XII was the first production version of the Spitfire to use the Rolls-Royce Griffon engine developed from the engine used in the Supermarine Schneider Trophy racing seaplanes of the late 20s and 30s. The Griffon II with a single-stage two-speed supercharger, producing 1,735 hp. The airframe needed strengthening to cope with the increased power and torque of the new engine. The MkXII was very fast at low levels, reaching a speed of 372 mph at 5,700 feet and 397 mph at 18,000 ft. The MkXII was strictly an interim design, did not enter mass production.

(Now pay attention). This Spitfire started off as a MkIV and first flew in Nov 1941. Soon after it was re-designated the MkXX, to avoid confusion with the Spitfire PR MkIV and finally, in April 1942 it became a MkXII. (How everyone kept track goodness knows but many anomalies appear in published information). Only 100 MkXII were built, equipping 41 and 91 Sqns. The low level performance of the MkXII excelled at dealing with raids by the Fw190, and the V1 flying bomb.
The Spitfire MkXIV was the most important of the Griffon powered Spitfires. It used the two-speed two-stage supercharged Griffon 61 or 65, giving 2,050 hp and significantly improving performance at higher altitudes. It had a 5 bladed Rotol propeller for which a new tail unit with a taller, broader fin and a bigger rudder was required. Based on the Mk VIII fuselage, the MkXIV had the “c” type wing, and later the “e” wing. Because the Griffon rotated in the opposite direction to the Merlin, the Griffon powered MkXIV veered right during taxi as opposed to left for the Merlin Spitfire.

The menace of the V1 flying bomb was countered by the superior performance of the MkXIV. Based at West Malling, 91 Sqn, shot down a record 184 V1s. From Sep 1944 the MkXIV was used with the 2nd Tactical Air Force equipping its 20 Spitfire squadrons between D-Day and VE-Day. It could carry up to 1000 lbs of bombs, or in a PR role 500 lbs of bombs and a camera. Due to its high performance, the wing surface showed signs of rippling. Consequently in 1945 clipped wings were fitted as was a tear-drop canopy.

The Spitfire MkXVI was a derivative of the MkIX fitted with an Merlin 66 engine built by Packard in the USA. The engine was re-numbered 266 to distinguish it from the Rolls-Royce model. 1,053 MkXVI were produced from Sep 1944 to Aug 1945.
Spitfire MkXVIII

Externally the Spitfire MkXVIII was very similar to late production MkXIV. It had the bubble canopy and cut back fuselage. It was armed with the “e” wing, with two 20mm cannon and two .50in machine guns, or four 20mm cannon. The Mk XVIII was identical in most respects to the Mk XIV but it was modified to carry extra fuel and therefore had a stronger wing structure. 300 were produced, up to early 1946, 200 of which were modified for Fighter Reconnaissance.

The MkXVIII saw service after the Second World War, in India, Malaya and Palestine. The Royal Indian Air Force purchased 20 ex-RAF MkXVIII in 1947.

Spitfire Mk21

The Spitfire Mk21 was the last fighter variant of the Spitfire to see service during WWII. To cope with the extra horsepower of the Griffon 61 work on a new wing began in Feb 1942. The gentle curve of the classic Spitfire wing was lost nearly resulting in a change of name to the 'Victor'!! The new wing carried four 20mm cannon. Fuselage changes included a new larger 5 bladed propeller which in turn demanded longer undercarriage legs to achieve ground clearance. So far so good: but then the legs would not retract into the space available. By a clever use of levers the legs were made to fit. The legs were covered by a triangular panel when retracted

The first Mk 21 was produced in Sep 1944, but it was unstable in flight requiring yet further changes. Longer ailerons were fitted and the wings covered with stronger, thicker metal making them more rigid. Consequently the first squadron delivery, to 91 Sqn, was delayed until Jan 1945.

There was little opportunity for the Spitfire Mk21 to engage the enemy before the war ended, but 91 Sqn scored a rare success when, on 26 April 1945 they sunk a German midget submarine. Over 3,000 Mk21s were ordered, but only 120 built before the order was cancelled. The Spitfire Mk21 remained in service until 1952.
The Spitfire Mk22 was a development of the Mk21. It used the cut-down fuselage and teardrop canopy seen on most other late Spitfires, but this reintroduced the instability seen in the Mk 21. The reaction was to install a much larger tail, increasing the area of the control services by over 25%. Production began in Mar 1945 and 260 Mk22s were produced. None saw active service.

Finally, in November 1946, ten years after the first Spitfire prototype, the Spitfire Mk24 appeared. This version carried rocket projectiles. Eighty one Mk24s were produced, and saw service in Malaya after the end of the war.

The Spitfire was the only British fighter aircraft to be in continuous production before, during and after the Second World War.
How many of the Spanish words below can you translate into English?

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<th>sal</th>
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A new RAFA year starting with some departures of long serving members – we are sorry to see them go - and the addition of some new members – welcome to the Branch! My thanks go to last year’s Committee members for their support throughout a difficult year. My thanks to Alberto for allowing us to designate El Paraiso as our permanent meeting place as witnessed by the new plaque on the front of the restaurant. I also welcome Tony as the new Vice Chairman and Publicity Member which fits in nicely with his editorship of Vuelos. The Committee remains committed to maintaining a high standard of social events and a high profile in the local area. We encourage all members to involve themselves in our fund raising efforts and enjoy to the full benefits of our Branch membership.

**FUTURE EVENTS 2016**

21 Apr  Queen's 90th Birthday Celebration Dinner with Jazz **(cancelled)**

23 Apr  St Georges Day – Emerald Isle - La Florida – 11:00 for 12:00.
Mini Parade with Standards – RAFA Stall – manning reqd.

29 May  RBL Fun Day – Playa Flamenca 11:00 for 12:00
Mini Parade with Standards – RAFA Stall – manning reqd.

15 Sep  Battle of Britain Service – La Siesta Torrevieja – 11:00hrs
Followed by Lunch – La Cosecha – Brenda kindly organising.

22 Sep  Battle of Britain Dinner/Dance details tbd.

22 Oct  Branch members participate in Cruise – Brenda again!

*Each Member is requested to take a RAFA collecting tin and request a local shop, bar, restaurant etc to keep it on their counter for customers’ small change. Its amazing how much this can add up to. Just replace it with an empty one every month or so, and bring the full one (hopefully) to the next meeting.*
# COMMITTEE MEMBERS – 2016

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**For News, Photos etc please visit our website:**

www.rafacb.com

*Branch Meetings every 3rd Tues in the Month at 14:30 hrs*
*Preceded by Lunch at El Paraiso (optional) at 12:30 hrs.*
*Please check on the website.*

*Held at Restaurante El Paraiso, Jardin Del Mar #3, Torrevieja.*
*(near Carrefour/Habaneras)*