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Israeli Spitfires – 66th anniversary

By Yoav Efrati

 Israel's first Spitfire ד-130 took to the air on July 23, 1948. The test flight conducted by former WWII South African Air Force Spitfire pilot, the late Boris Senior, initiated Israel's love affair with the Spitfire which began 66 year ago. Most of Israel's Spitfires were retired from service prior to the October 1956 Suez War, some ending up as kid's toys in Kibbutz playgrounds and others in airworthy condition over the skies of Europe. One Spitfire, known as "Ezer's Black Spitfire" was retained in Israel, thrilling on lookers during pilot's acceptance ceremonies and holiday IAF museum openings.

 Last year's release of new tooled 1/72 Spitfire Mk.9e kits by AZmodels and Sword models of the Czech Republic, inspired me to build eight Israeli Spitfires that saw service between 1948 and 1956. The text below provides colors notes used to paint my Israeli Spitfires.

1. Israel's first Spitfire 130-ד – Israel's War of Independence - Summer 1948:

AZmodel 1/72 scale D-130 is painted overall Testors Model Master # 2062 RAF interior green

(FS 24172). Red used on spinner and rudder stripes "Ferrari Red" Humbrol 220.

Star of David roundels1/72 dimensions - large roundel on the sides of the fuselage, 17.5mm inches diameter, 16.5mm diameter under wing roundels. Tail number ד-130, and blue used in tail band and stars of David roundels are Humbrol 15 Midnight blue (~RAL5008).

Note that on the real aircraft, the rear view mirror was taken from a car, and thus its forward end comes to a sharp point. The wing is a C-wing and the locations of the cannons are inboard, unlike the E-wing on all other IAF Spitfires.

1. Spitfire no.15 – Israel's War of Independence, winter 1948-49:

AZmodel 1/72 scale "Villveta II" non-stop flight delivery of Spitfires bought from Czechoslovakia in 1948. It is shown in it's ferry flight configuration with a pair of German designed fuel tanks and a centerline slipper tank. Spitfire no.15 is painted in standard RAF colors of: Dark Green Humbrol 163 (FS 34079) and Ocean Grey Humbrol 106 (FS 36152) upper surface with Medium Sea Grey Humbrol 165 (FS 36270) lower surface. Spinner and rudder stripes are painted Humbrol 220 "Ferrari Red". The blue Star of David is slightly lighter than RAL5008 and also slightly lighter than f.s.25045. Humbrol 15 Midnight blue is a close match.

1. Spitfire no.58 – "Costa's Spitfire" – 1949-1950:

AZmodel 1/72 scale Spitfire no.58 was the flag ship of the Czechoslovakian Spitfire squadrons after World War II. It was sold to Israel and assigned to Israeli Air Force pilot with the last name of Costa, who was born in Czechoslovakia, and trained by the Czechoslovakian air force to fly the Spitfire. Overall fuselage color is White Aluminum, wing leading edges High Speed Silver. Rudder stripes, spinner and red fuselage zig zag are Humbrol 153 Insignia Red (f.s.31136). Blue Star of David - slightly lighter than RAL5008 and also slightly lighter than f.s.25045; Humbrol 15 Midnight blue is a close match.

1. Spitfire no.52 – 1950-56:

 Sword Models 1/72 Spitfire Mk.9e is shown in Scorpion squadron markings featuring a squadron insignia on the left side of the nose, yellow spinner and yellow and black stripped rudder. Standard RAF camouflage colors of Dark Green Humbrol 163 (FS 34079) and Ocean Grey Humbrol 106 (FS 36152) upper surface with Medium Sea Grey Humbrol 165 (FS 36270) lower surface.

1. Spitfire no.79 – early 50s

AZmodel 1/72 scale Spitfire no.70 of the Flying Tigers OTU, in early 1950's overall color is "High Speed Silver". The squadron insignia is found on the left side of the nose. The blue used for the spinner, rudder stripes and stars of David is slightly lighter than RAL5008 and also slightly lighter than f.s.25045, Humbrol 15 Midnight Blue is a close color match.

1. Spitfire no.03 –– prior to October 1956:

 AZmodel 1/72 scale Spitfire no. 03 wears the Scorpion Squadron insignia on the left side of the nose, along with a yellow spinner and yellow and black rudder stripes. The camouflage colors match US f.s.595b standard: Gray f.s.26373 lower surface with upper surface camouflage Blue f.s.25045 and Brown f.s.30145. Blue used for the star of David on a white background circle is slightly lighter than RAL5008 and also slightly lighter than f.s.25045.

1. Ezer Weissman's Black Spitfire no.57 - current 2013 version:

Sword Models 1/72 Spitfire Mk.9e provides optional fish tail and round exhausts. The round exhausts were used to depict the current vintage Black Spitfire. "Ezer's Black Spitfire" is strictly a show plane and as such it lacks the bumps atop the wings and shell ejector openings on the bottom of the wings. The Sword kit has the upper wing bumbs as an option, so it's easy to just leave them out. The short gun stubs were made of round plastic rod. Note blade antenna at bottom of fuselage and whip antenna just aft of upper fuselage mast. Red used is Ferrari Red, Humbrol 220. The airplane's overall color is Humbrol no.21 gloss black, with a layer of Future Gloss applied on top. Cockpit and over wing walkways are f.s.36370 (close to f.s.36375 but without the blue hue to it). Blue used for Star of David roundels is f.s.15102, and was found in an

F-16 decal sheet.