

Seafires Part 1

(aka Sea Spitfires)

September 2026

Early Merlins

Discussion Format — Identifying the Mark, paint schemes, best kit in scale. MGPC Episode 131 (published 12 September 2026) for Mk Ib, Ilc, and III.

Except where noted “aluminum” denotes paint, not bare metal. Always remember: Build to a reference photo if possible.

Mk Ib

Background - History

- 1938 -- FAA had long term need for modern interceptor and began to gel as a formal requirement.
- 1940 -- A single Spitfire Mk I had an A-frame tailhook fitted as a mockup.
- May 1940 -- Winston Churchill nixed requirement for folding wing Spitfire and any Spitfires for carrier use.
- Summer 1940 -- Need did not go away so FAA requested 181 Grumman F4F Wildcats as the Martlet after assessing other RAF types.
- Jan 1941 -- FAA continued to want Spitfire performance...Mk V became their desire.
- Early 1941 -- MAP did not want to divert production of Mk V but admitted requirement had to be met. Later diverted a few Mk I and 48 Mk Vb with promise of 200 Mk Vc at a later date.
- Dec 1941 -- Catapult spools and arrestor hooks added to modified Mk Vb aircraft.
- Feb 1942 -- Testing began at Farnborough.
- Jun 1942 -- First operations w Air Service Training Unit & No 801 Squadron FAA.
- Oct 1942 -- No 801 Squadron embarks on HMS Furious

Note: Early Vb deliveries were used for shore based training, full conversions were done with 48 Mk Vb airframes beginning March 1942 with another 118 new builds by Cunliffe-Owen in Southampton.

Details of the Seafire Mk Ib compared to the Spitfire Mk Vb

- A-frame tailhook
- Catapult spools
- Slingshot points
- Fuselage strengthening
- Tropical filter
- Rotol prop (broad chord at base)
- Added internal 30 gal fuel tank
- Re-serialised if a conversion

Schemes

- All painted in Temperate Sea Scheme -- Extra Dark Sea Grey, Dark Slate Grey upper surfaces with Sky undersurfaces.
- Spinners delivered in Sky but could be in Flight colors for individual squadrons
- National markings based on timeframe
- Unit codes varied -- yellow usually means a training unit, red or white for fleet units

Kits

- 1/72
 - Admiral / KP -- limited run, good result with care
 - CMR -- resin, very accurate
 - Freightdog -- resin conversion
- 1/48
 - Hasegawa
- 1/32
 - Revell (1967!!)

Mk IIc

Background - History

- Feb 1942 -- Testing began at Farnborough on converted Mk Vc
- May 1942 -- First deliveries
- May 1943 -- No 807 Squadron operational

Details of the Seafire Mk IIc compared to the Spitfire Vc

- A-frame tailhook
- Catapult spools
- Slingshot points
- Fuselage strengthening internally
- Tropical filter
- 4-blade Rotol prop
- Individual exhaust stacks
- Added internal 30 gal fuel tank
- RATO points

Schemes

- All painted in Temperate Sea Scheme -- Extra Dark Sea Grey, Dark Slate Grey upper surfaces with Sky undersurfaces.
- Spinners delivered in Sky but could be in Flight colors for individual squadrons
- National markings based on timeframe, US star for TORCH landings
- Unit codes varied -- yellow usually means a training unit, red or white for fleet units

Kits

- 1/72
 - Airfix -- older conversion that includes 1979 Mk Vb kit
 - CMR -- resin
 - High Planes -- limited run but accurate, difficult to build
 - Legato / KP -- limited run, decent result with least effort
 - Sword -- best of the options and most recent
- 1/48
 - Special Hobby
 - Airwaves resin conversion
- 1/32
 - Scratch Conversion only

Mk III

Background - History

- Oct 1942 -- Conversion of first Seafire IIc to incorporate folding wing
- Nov 1943 -- No 894 Squadron operational
- In use by FAA until 1946

Details of the Seafire Mk IIc compared to the Spitfire Vc

- A-frame tailhook
- Catapult spools
- Slingshot points
- Fuselage strengthening internally
- Single cannon each wing, shorter barrel
- Provision for 4 rockets on 3 locations as well as 500lb bomb on centerline
- Aero-Vee tropical filter (same as on Mk IX)
- 4-blade Rotol prop
- Individual exhaust stacks
- Added internal 30 gal fuel tank
- RATO points

Schemes

- All painted in Temperate Sea Scheme -- Extra Dark Sea Grey, Dark Slate Grey upper surfaces with Sky undersurfaces.
- Spinners delivered in Sky but could be in Flight colors for individual squadrons
- National markings based on timeframe and location (FAA) and country
 - FAA standard markings
 - Far East Fleet (Blue/White roundels)
 - British Pacific Fleet (Blue/White roundels with white bars & surround)
 - Irish AF post war
 - French Aeronavale post war
- Unit codes varied -- yellow usually means a training unit, red or white for fleet units

Kits

- 1/72
 - CMR -- resin
 - High Planes -- limited run but accurate, difficult to build
 - Octopus -- Avoid!
 - Sword -- best of the options and most recent
- 1/48
 - Airfix -- based on their older Vb kit with added parts
 - Special Hobby
- 1/32
 - Scratch Conversion only