

COLORS OF WAR

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OF CHALLENGE PUBLICATIONS
BY MICHAEL O'LEARY

The Supermarine Spitfire was adapted as a fill-in naval fighter to create a modern aircraft that could deal with the naval aerial threat imposed by the Axis powers. With the start of WWII, the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm was distinctly lacking in effective combat aircraft, especially fighters. The modified Spitfire was named Seafire but it was not particularly well-suited to operate from carriers and the narrow landing gear caused numerous accidents. The FAA only began operating effective fighters with the arrival of the Grumman Wildcat and Hellcat along with the Vought Corsair. These Seafires were photographed aboard HMS *Indomitable* during 1942 and it is interesting to note that the carrier is also camouflaged. Commissioned in October 1941, the carrier immediately went to war but ran aground in Jamaica on its initial voyage, preventing its timely arrival in Southeast Asia to provide air cover for Force Z — the naval battle group attempting to prevent the Japanese from taking over Singapore. The carrier then headed to the Mediterranean where it saw plenty of action against German and Italian aircraft. *Indomitable* became homebase for Nos. 807, 819, and 880 Squadrons flying Seafires and these Seafires are being prepared for engine start prior to launching on a mission in the Atlantic.

