

## Second World War aircraft

These notes are intended for adults who are supporting school groups around the Museum.

<p>Avro Lancaster</p> 	<p>This aircraft flew on 137 sorties; more missions than any other allied bomber, except one which no longer exists. Most Lancasters didn't survive more than 22-25 missions. Lancasters were used for the Dambusters mission.</p>
<p>Boeing B17 "Flying Fortress"</p> 	<p>American daylight bomber. The B17 was nicknamed the "Flying Fortress" because it was heavily armed and could survive, and inflict, heavy damage. This aircraft was the primary bomber of the U.S. Eighth Air Force in the last years of World War Two. Formations of over 850 US bombers flew over Europe in the daytime, while RAF Bomber Command carried on the night offensive.</p>
<p>Bristol Beaufigther</p> 	<p>Known as "Whispering Death". Reputed to be difficult to fly when it came into service. In his book <i>Enemy Coast Ahead</i>, Guy Gibson tells the story of a squadron ordered to convert to Beaufigthers which they refused to do. Instead of adopting a heavy handed approach, the authorities sent a Beaufigther to perform spectacular aerobatics which the pilots watched. Crowding round the aircraft afterwards, they discovered the pilot was a girl from the ATA. After this, of course, they had no problems in flying the Beaufigther!</p>
<p>Bristol Beaufort</p> 	<p>The Beaufort operated very successfully as a torpedo bomber, but also carried out the essential role of mine layer. In the spring of 1940 they began dropping magnetic mines in enemy coastal waters and continued to do so until mid-1943.</p>
<p>Bristol Blenheim</p> 	<p>The Blenheim was a light bomber which was used in daylight bombing raids in 1940.</p>
<p>Consolidated B24 Liberator</p> 	<p>American four-engined bomber supplied to the RAF. The B24 Liberator served in the Far East at the end of World War Two, was transferred to the Indian Air Force who later presented it to the RAF Museum.</p>

<p>Curtiss Kittyhawk</p> 	<p>American aeroplane operated overseas by the RAF. Painted with a shark mouth to make it look scary!</p>
<p>de Havilland Mosquito</p> 	<p>The Mosquito was a remarkable aircraft for its time; not only was it made largely of wood but it was designed as an unarmed bomber, relying on its superior speed to escape enemy fighters. It was nicknamed 'The Wooden Wonder'.</p>
<p>Fairey Battle</p> 	<p>Overweight and underpowered. This is a composite aircraft made up of several relics and is painted to look like a Battle which crashed in Iceland during the war and which was later recovered in the 1970s.</p>
<p>Fiat Falco</p> 	<p>The Falco here at the Museum was flown by Sergente Pilota Pietro Salvadori who had to perform an emergency landing on a beach in Suffolk. He became a prisoner and commented that he was happy to be out of the war, was dissatisfied with the Italian officers, and didn't like Belgian weather, the Germans, or their food!</p>
<p>Focke Wulf Fw190</p> 	<p>Very powerful fighter which outperformed the Spitfire of the day. This is a rare two-seater trainer version.</p>
<p>Handley Page Halifax</p> 	<p>Lost on its first operation to attack the Tirpitz. This battleship was hidden in a Norwegian fjord. The Halifax was hit by anti-aircraft fire and came down on a frozen lake into which it sank in due course. Recovered about 30 years later and displayed in "as found" condition.</p>

<p>Hawker Hurricane</p> 	<p>British single-seater aircraft which played a vital role during the Battle of Britain. The arguments continue about which was better – Hurricane or Spitfire? What do you think?</p>
<p>Hawker Tempest</p> 	<p>Single-seater fighter aircraft. With the use of drop tanks, these planes could travel as far as 1,640 miles in one trip.</p>
<p>Hawker Typhoon</p> 	<p>The typhoon was introduced in 1941 and was the first 400mph fighter in the RAF. During the Second World War it was used as a tank destroyer.</p>
<p>Heinkel He111</p> 	<p>The He111 was a fast and manoeuvrable medium bomber which was used extensively by Germany in the early part of the Second World War.</p>
<p>Heinkel He162</p> 	<p>Single engine jet fighter. The Heinkel He162 was one of Nazi Germany's last ditch attempts to win back the control of the skies with a cheap jet fighter capable of being flown by almost anyone. This plane came too late to have any effect on the outcome of the war.</p>
<p>Junkers Ju87</p> 	<p>Widely known as the "Stuka", the Ju87 was one of the most feared aircraft during World War Two. It had a fearsome siren which terrified those who heard it.</p>
<p>Lockheed Hudson</p> 	<p>Useful aeroplane. The wooden lifeboat was designed to be dropped by Hudsons to rescue airmen who had ditched. This one served in the Far East so no red spot on the roundel – the Japanese symbol was a red disc.</p>

<p>Messerschmitt 109</p> 	<p>Germany's fighter, operating at the limit of its range in Battle of Britain. It could spend only 15 minutes or so over England before having to return to refuel. More heavily armed than the Spitfire and equipped with a fuel-injected engine.</p>
<p>Messerschmitt 110</p> 	<p>The Messerschmitt 110 was used as a night fighter. The RADAR antennae sticking out at the front look like a deer's antlers. They were used to detect enemy aircraft.</p>
<p>North American B25 Mitchell</p> 	<p>After Pearl Harbour, the Americans wanted to hit back at Japan by dropping bombs on Tokyo. The Mitchell was one of the best allied medium bombers of World War Two. In April 1942, 16 Mitchells, operating from the American aircraft carrier USS Hornet, made one of the most daring bomber raids in World War Two. They took off on a near impossible mission to bomb Tokyo in a raid of great psychological, if of little military, value.</p>
<p>North American Harvard</p> 	<p>Second World War trainer – hence bright yellow for visibility.</p>
<p>North American P-51 Mustang</p> 	<p>The Mustang was used as a long-range escort for American bombers. They had drop fuel tanks which were dropped when empty. These were actually made out papier-mâché!</p>
<p>Republic Thunderbolt</p> 	<p>American designed and built fighter bomber, used by the RAF in South East Asia Command.</p>
<p>Supermarine Spitfire</p> 	<p>British single-seater fighter aircraft which played a big role during the Battle of Britain.</p>

Supermarine Stranraer



Flying boat. The only survivor of this type. This one served in the Royal Canadian Air Force. These planes were not particularly well-received by air and ground crews and had several nicknames including "flying meccano set".

Taylorcraft Auster



Look up to see this light aeroplane intended to be used for artillery spotting.