



Hawker Typhoon 1b: Limited Service in the RAAF ver3

Towards the end of May 1943, three Hawker Typhoons were sent for operational flight trials in the Middle East. 219 Group RAF, who were responsible for finding a lodger unit for these service trials decided finally upon 451 Sqn RAAF. The Typhoon would have been an exciting follow-on to the Hawker Hurricane 11c then operated by the squadron.

The trials were to be as follows:

- The aircraft were to be used on operations whilst carrying out the necessary trials under “sand “ conditions.
- They were to be called upon to carry out interceptions etc, in the ordinary way, but were not to be vectored out of gliding distance from land until such times that they had completed 100 hrs engine time. This included the time completed in North Africa.
- After the trials, and subject to the trials being a success, the aircraft would be used as fully operational and could be then vectored outside gliding distance of land.

451 Sqn at LG.106 near Idku under command of Sqn Ldr J Paine, having been recently withdrawn from frontline operations, would provide personnel for the tests.

At this time, 451 Sqn was flying Hurricane IIs along with a small flight of three “Marker” Spitfire Mk Vs on loan from 103MU*. The latter were to be used to intercept high flying enemy aircraft that were, at that time, performing reconnaissance missions over Alexandria, Egypt. Thus an additional type would have presented some difficulties with two different types already operated.

Two of these were **BR114 and **BR363**. (These “Markers” were specially modified Spitfire Vs that could fly to a height of 40000 ft).*

The Trial Organization

All flight line maintenance for the Typhoons was to be performed by the Squadron, with any needed modifications to the aircraft being carried out by 103 Maintenance Unit at Aboukir. The overall command of the detachment was given to Flt Lt R T Hudson, RAAF Ser#402356 of 451Sqn.

Specialists associated with the aircraft type were also made available for the trials. These included Mr. Gale (Hawker Technical Representative), Mr. Richardson (Napier Technical Representative), and Flying Officer G O Myall RAF Ser#127855 (an experience operational pilot from the UK). They oversaw the assembly of these aircraft with 145 Maintenance Unit located at Casablanca.

With only some three hours of flying per airframe after assembly, the sand filters were being damaged. The cause of the damage was attributed to the fitting of the Vokes Dry Type air filters in the UK for the desert trials. The engine, when it backfired, caused fuel to flow back down the intake trunk to the element, which then resulted in the filter burning. A new type was ordered from the UK on the 21st May 43, and was *in situ* when the aircraft reached Aboukir.

F/O Myall flew both of these operational Typhoons from Casablanca, in relay, on the 29th and 31st May 1943, to Maison Blanche. WgCdr Dundas and F/O Myall piloted the aircraft from there to LG.224 Cairo, arriving on the 3rd June 1943.

The third Typhoon, **EJ906**, had suffered a take-off accident, was damaged and required an engine change before delivery. F/O Myall returned to Casablanca to fly the repaired Typhoon directly to 451 Sqn. Both Typhoons finally arrived at Aboukir on the 5th June 1943.

On landing, **R8891** suffered a tail wheel burst and **DN323** had a hydraulic leak and had also experienced a solenoid failure for the landing gear fairing doors on take-off from LG.224. Pilots were Sqn Ldr Lucas (Hawker Test Pilot) and F/O Myall.

At the beginning of June 1943, three new RAF Typhoon pilots were transferred to 451Sqn to participate in Typhoon trials. They were Sgt. L S Pennell RAF Ser #1425749***, F/Sgt. A H Davis RAF Ser #1290616 and F/Sgt. T Hough RAF Ser #R69424. These pilots and P/O G O Myall all were posted to 451Sqn during the next three months.

****Sadly, Sgt. Pennell was later killed whilst performing shadow shooting over the desert, when his 451Sqn Hurricane flipped over and dived to the ground on the 18th September 1943.*



Profile of Typhoon 1b EJ906 in the Middle East 1943, with black spinner (GRB)

Typhoons of 451Sqn

On the 13th June 1943, **R8891** was readied and on the following day flown over to 451Sqn at RAF Station Idku where squadron pilots then carried out several handling tests over the next three days. On the 17th June 1943, the aircraft was unserviceable due to the engine attaining 30 hours thereby requiring a sleeve wear check by the Napier Representative who had not, at this stage, arrived. **DN323** fortunately had been repaired and flown over on the same day, thus training continued.



Typhoon R8891 1943 (Bob Livingstone)

Entering into July 1943, the trials involved more and more 451Sqn pilots. The first phase of the operational simulation came when two aircraft, **R8891** and **DN323** were detached to LG106 on the 13th July 1943. Flt Hudson and F/O Myall flew these aircraft respectively. Various armament testing and simulations were performed.

On separate occasions, serviceability problems continued on **R8891**, such as a tail fairing loss and an undercarriage fairing loss.

Whilst unserviceable again at Idku with 170 Hours on the engine, an engine change was to be performed on **EJ906** during August. However there were none available in the Middle East so permission was sought to hold the airframe as U/S for spares for the remaining two airframes. Two spare engines were not dispatched till late August 1943 to 103MU.



DN323 Coded Y of 451Sqn August 1943(GRB)

EJ906 had also by this time suffered a forced landing, resulting in propeller and panel damage. The propeller was removed and sent to 111MU for repair. A suitable spare, of only two in theatre, was despatched to bring this aircraft back into service by early September 1943.

The trials, having continuously performed during the past few months, culminated in armament trials in September 1943. Reports of stoppages and other armament problems arising from these trials were attributed to the lack of experienced armourers on that type.

A severe rebuke was issued to the new commanding officer of the squadron (Sqn Ldr R N Stevens who had replaced Sqn Ldr J Paine in October 1943) on that matter from the commander of 209 Group (the parent unit of 451Sqn). This resulted in having Warrant Officer Peddler being sent to the squadron from the Armament Inspection Unit to assist in resolving these issues.

These operational trials continued to the middle of October 1943 with all three aircraft successfully completing the programme.

The list of pilots that flew in the 451Sqn Typhoon trials were:

Sqdr Ldr R N Stevens, F/O G O Myall, F/Sgt. Davis, P/O T Hough, Sgt. L Pennell, F/O W Thompson, F/Lt R Hudson, Flt E Kirkhan, F/O J Bann, F/O J Schofield, SqnLdr J Paine, F/O R Bayly, Flt J Trenorden, Flt W Terry, F/O W Gale, F/O S Bartlett, Flt H R Rowlands, F/O R Sutton, and F/O J Wallis.



DN323 at LG106 8-43

The general view was one of great admiration for the aircraft. The “likes” included the 400mph level speed at 18500ft altitude, a dive speed of 525mph (Limited), the superb view out of the canopy and light and sensitive controls.

At this juncture of history, 451Sqn commenced converting fully to Spitfire MkVc.

The three trials Typhoons were then ferried to 161 MU on the 23rd October 1943.

This also coincided with the end of RAAF Typhoon operations.

As for F/O G O Myall, he departed 451 Sqn on the 15th November 1943 and was temporarily transferred to No. 22 PTA, pending an eventual return to the UK for a posting to an operational RAF Typhoon squadron.

This will be the first of several Limited Service articles with the alternating P-40E Series and the future Spitfire V articles in our ADF-Series Newsletters. My special thanks to Bob Livingstone.

Gordon R Birkett ©2004 Researcher & Co-ordinator for ADF-Series Site (Specialising WW2)

References: NAA. [No 451 Squadron] - Typhoon Aircraft (Operations and Instructions etc)

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