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de Havilland Mosquito PR.Mk.IV

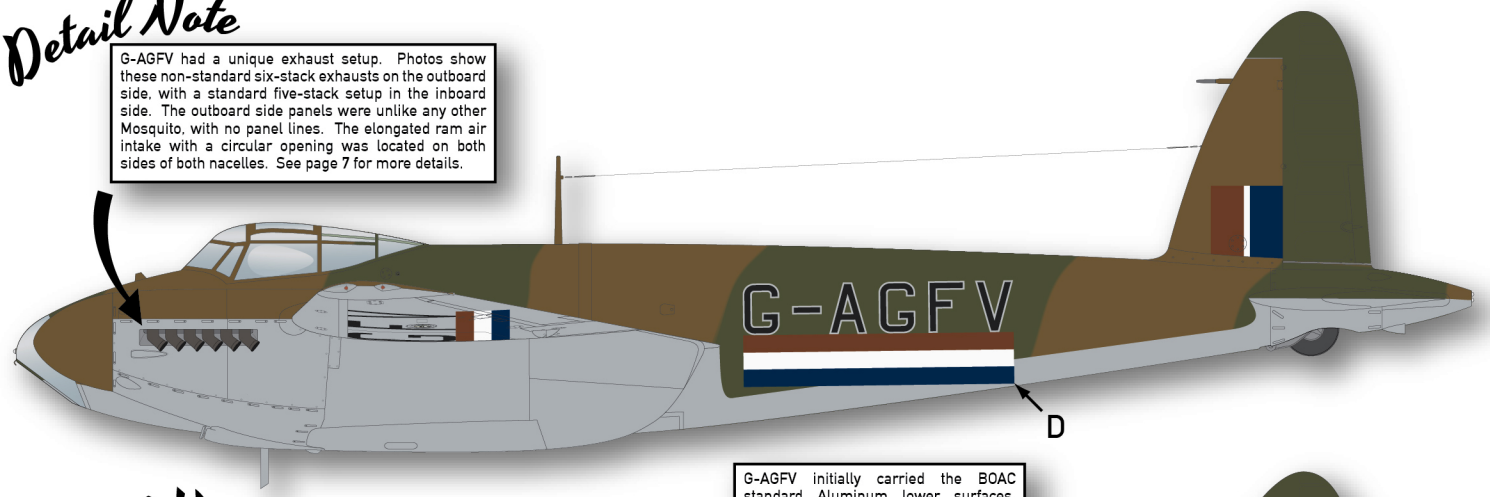
DZ411/G-AGFV

British Overseas Airways Corporation

RAF Leuchars, Scotland 1943-1944

Detail Note

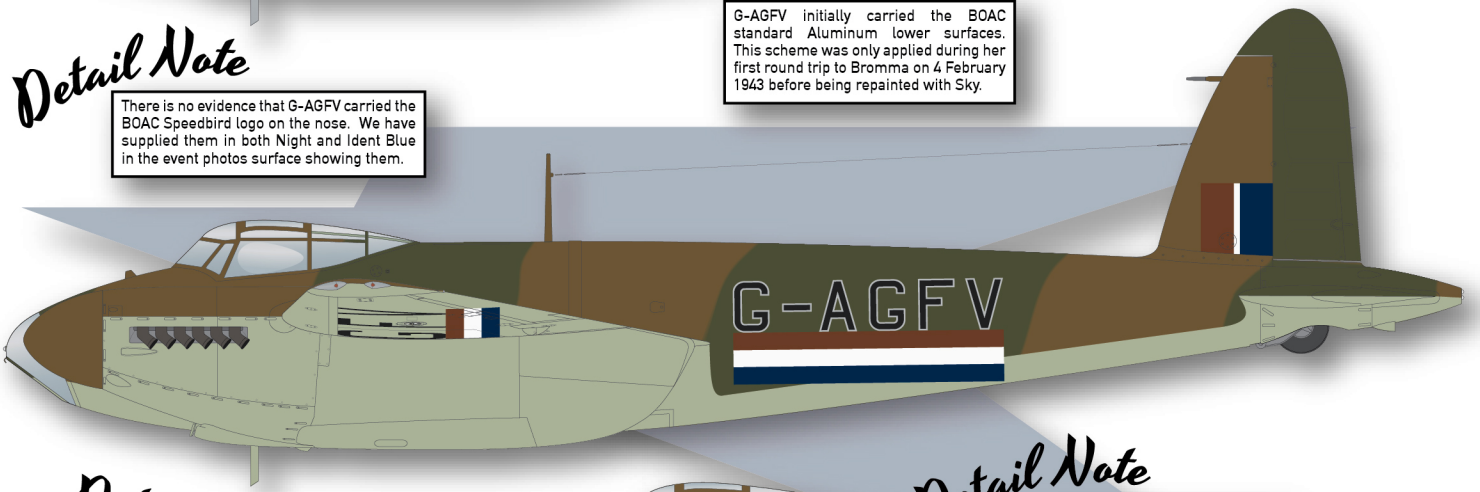
G-AGFV had a unique exhaust setup. Photos show these non-standard six-stack exhausts on the outboard side, with a standard five-stack setup in the inboard side. The outboard side panels were unlike any other Mosquito, with no panel lines. The elongated ram air intake with a circular opening was located on both sides of both nacelles. See page 7 for more details.



G-AGFV initially carried the BOAC standard Aluminum lower surfaces. This scheme was only applied during her first round trip to Bromma on 4 February 1943 before being repainted with Sky.

Detail Note

There is no evidence that G-AGFV carried the BOAC Speedbird logo on the nose. We have supplied them in both Night and Ident Blue in the event photos surface showing them.

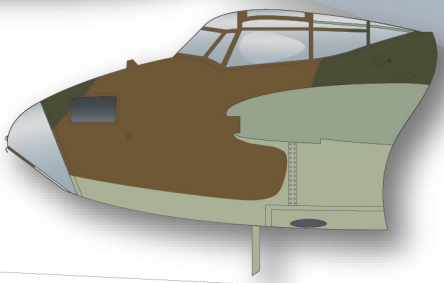


Detail Note

All BOAC Mosquitos had the solid hub main wheels.

Detail Note

No photos exist of G-AGFV carrying external wing fuel tanks. These were a standard fit on BOAC's FB.VIs.



Detail Note

G-AGFV had the original 'needle tip' propellers throughout her life.

Detail Note

Note the relationship between the fuselage reinforcing strap and the stripes and registration letters.

Hjertelig takk!

Special thanks to Mr. Nils Mathisrud for his kind generosity and assistance on this project. His research made it possible!

Dark Earth | Dark Green | Sky | Aluminum

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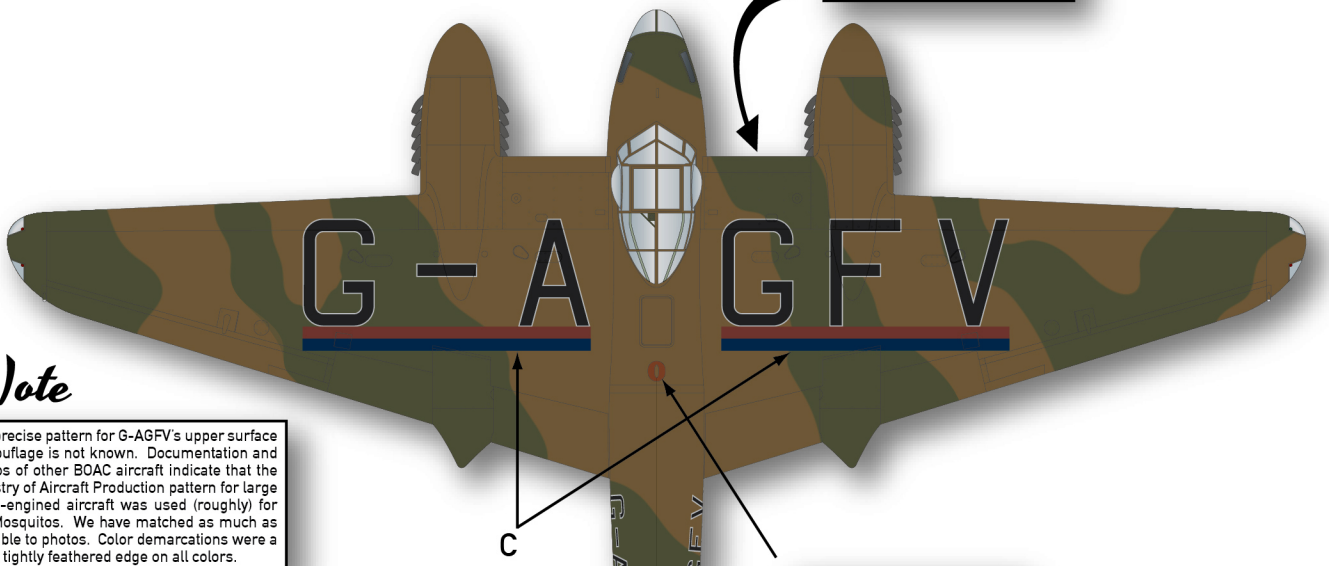
It does not appear the no step markings were reapplied to the radiator housings when the civilian camouflage scheme was applied.



C

The antenna mast was mounted in a red-brown colored Bakelite type material that appears to have been left unpainted.

Detail Note

The precise pattern for G-AGFV's upper surface camouflage is not known. Documentation and photos of other BOAC aircraft indicate that the Ministry of Aircraft Production pattern for large multi-engined aircraft was used (roughly) for the Mosquitos. We have matched as much as possible to photos. Color demarcations were a fairly tightly feathered edge on all colors.

Photo: fündekals collection

G-AGFV back on her feet after the 4 July 1943 crash at Stockholm. This view shows the smaller registrations originally carried on the Sky lower surfaces.

Dark Earth
Dark Green
Sky

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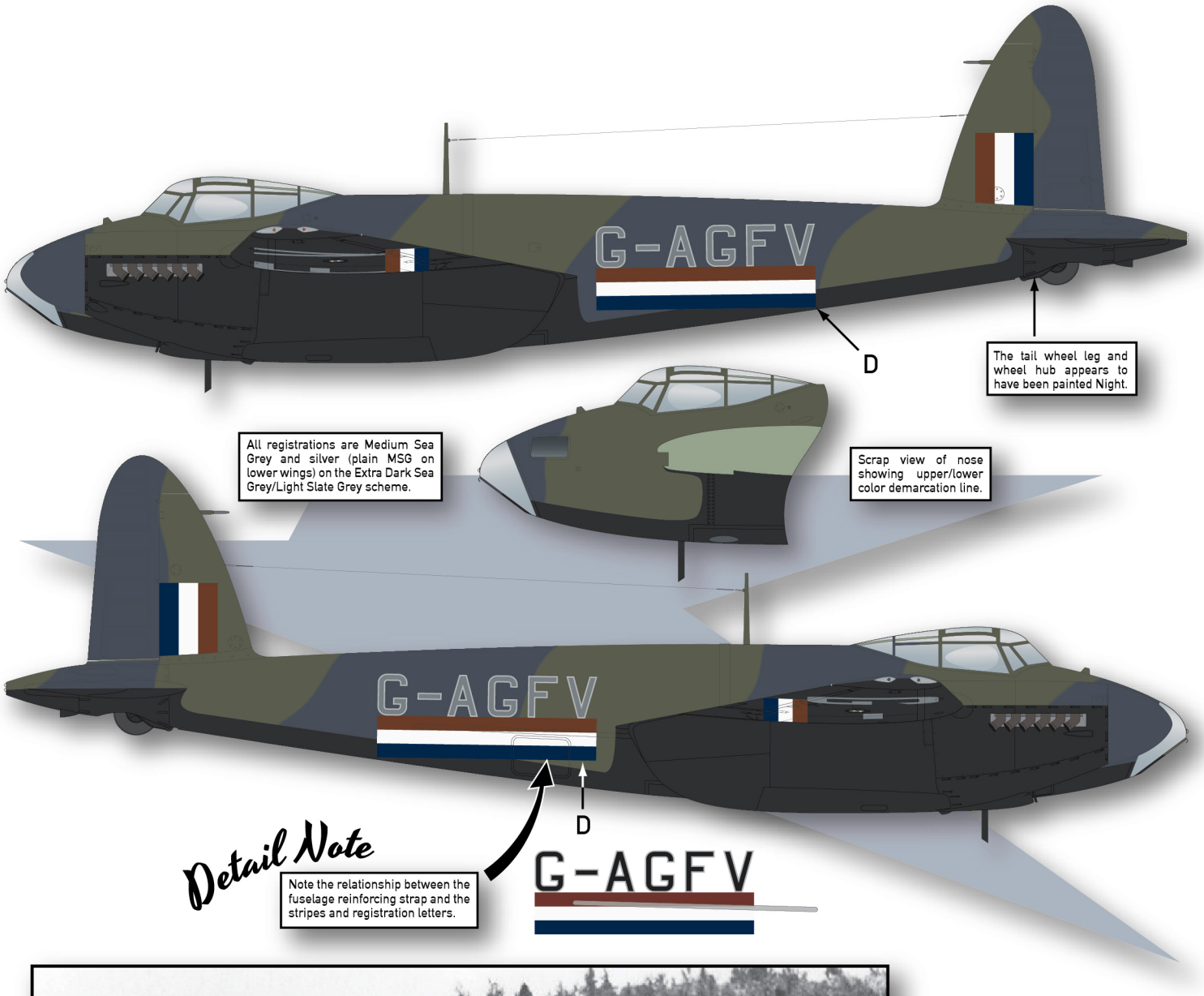

G-AGFV looking forlorn after her 4 July 1944 crash at Stockholm Bromma Airport. She is clearly in the EDSG/DSG/Night scheme at this point, and other than the camouflage pattern on the right aft fuselage, and the Medium Sea Grey codes outlined in silver, there is not much we can conclude from this image.

This is the only photo of G-AGFV in her later colors that has surfaced to date. We sincerely hope other photos of this unique and historic aircraft will eventually come to light.

Dark Slate Grey
Extra Dark Sea Grey
Night

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DZ411/G-AGFV
British Overseas Airways Corporation
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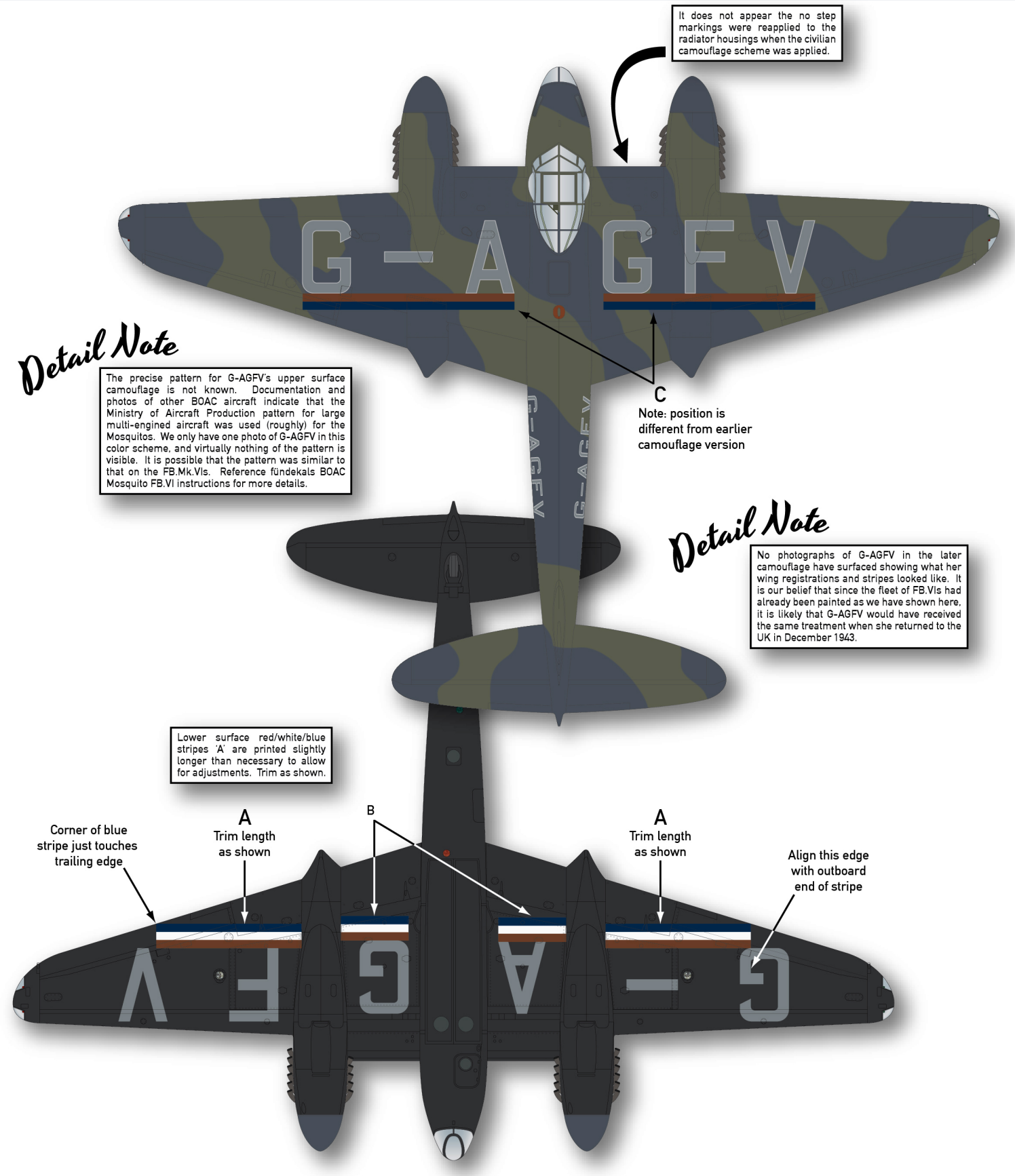

British Overseas Airways Corporation Mosquito History

British Overseas Airways Corporation was formed in November 1939 by the merger of British Airways, Ltd. and Imperial Airways, Ltd. The two flew as separate entites until April 1940, when BOAC was formed. With the outbreak of war, almost all civilian air traffic in Europe was suspended. The British embassy in neutral Sweden remained open (as it would throughout the war), and the British government maintained a diplomatic air link using aircraft of the state-owned BOAC.

By 1942 it was clear that in order to avoid German interceptors, the Stockholm run required a faster transport than the Lodestars, Hudsons, and Whitleys then in use. Although such air service was technically allowed under the rules of war, "diplomatic" flights across hundreds of miles of hostile territory were still a dicey proposition. The aircraft were supposed to be conspicuously "civilian", and unarmed, and although BOAC complied with these rules, its aircraft were still the subject of the attentions of the Luftwaffe. BOAC's link with Sweden allowed the delivery of mail, diplomatic pouches, newspapers and magazines (a counter to German propaganda about how England was losing the war), and high priority passengers, not a few of whom were MI6 and OSS agents.

BOAC requested Mosquitos to fill this role, and on 5 August 1942 a trial run was made from the BOAC base at RAF Leuchars, Scotland to Stockholm using a borrowed RAF Mosquito B.Mk.IV (DK292) of No. 105 Squadron. All of her military markings were removed, and her crew flew without military rank insignias. After the success of that first mission, Mosquito PR.IV DZ411 was delivered to BOAC on 15 December of 1942. All of her military equipment except the pilot's armor plate was removed, and she was fitted with unshrouded six-stack exhausts to improve performance. As a result of these modifications DZ411 is believed to have been the fastest Mosquito flying at the time. She was given the registration G-AGFV, along with standard BOAC red/white/blue striping and Dark Green, Dark Earth, and Aluminum camouflage paint.

The first Stockholm flight by G-AGFV was made on 4 February 1943. The speed of the Mosquito convinced BOAC that the flights could be safely accomplished in daylight, previous flights having been made under the cover of night. After AGFV's first mission, BOAC requested a change from Aluminum to the then-current RAF Sky lower surface color, as it was felt this would be less conspicuous when seen from the ground. This was duly approved, and subsequent missions were flown with a Sky belly.

Operations continued into the spring of 1943 with G-AGFV. On the night of 22/23 April 1943, she was attacked by Fw190s and forced down in Sweden with serious damage. The aircraft was repaired on site, finally returning to the UK on 10 December 1943.

The success of operations with G-AGFV (her near-shootdown notwithstanding) led BOAC to request six new Mosquito FB.Mk.VIs from RAF stocks. These arrived during April and May of 1943, and were delivered to the BOAC maintenance base at RAF Bramcote, where de-militarization and repainting were accomplished. No passengers were carried by G-AGFV, but provisions (be they rudiumentary) for them were fitted to the FB.Mk.VIs.

Given that the majority of the route from Leuchars to Stockholm was over water, BOAC had requested and received permission to switch from the temperate land scheme colors to a scheme more appropriate for operations over the North Sea. The standard Ministry of Aircraft Production temperate sea camouflage scheme at the time used Dark Slate Grey and Extra Dark Sea Grey, and this scheme was approved for BOAC's new FB.Mk.VIs. As with the Mk.IV, the Mk.VIs were painted using a modified MAP large multi-engine aircraft camouflage pattern, with the lower surfaces in the previously approved Sky.

As a result of the Fw190 incident, BOAC resumed night operations in mid-1943. With this operational change, in July 1943 BOAC requested a change in its Mosquito camouflage. The lower surfaces were now to be finished in Night, with Medium Sea Grey codes, and retaining the red/white/blue stripes - both of which were contrary to what the official regulations stipulated!

After her return to the UK following the Fw190 incident, G-AGFV was repainted into the temperate sea scheme, which had been approved for Mk.VIs during her sojourn in Sweden. The Sky belly on the FB.VIs was changed to Night while she was away, thus she never carried the temperate sea scheme with a Sky belly.

On 4 July 1944, G-AGFV suffered another incident at Stockholm Bromma airport, when her undercarriage collapsed. Fortunately the aircraft was not a writeoff, and she was given temporary repairs, returning to Leuchars on 23 October 1944.

After American 8th Air Force bombing missions in August 1943 destroyed much of Germany's ball bearing manufacturing capacity at Schweinfurt, Britain negotiated with Sweden to purchase its entire production, thus robbing Germany of an alternate source for these critical items. BOAC Mosquitos were then fitted with special baskets in the bomb bays and began to carry cargos of ball bearings on the return flights from Stockholm.

In all, BOAC's Mosquitos made 520 round trip flights to Sweden between February 1943 and May 1945. Much of their heroic saga will probably remain lost to history, but it undoubtedly played a significant part in bringing the European war to a successful conclusion. All of BOAC's surviving Mosquitos were returned to the RAF in 1945 and 1946.

Nils Mathisrud is currently (late 2015) working on a new book on BOAC Mosquito operations, to be entitled "The Stockholm Run," which will feature much more information on this fascinating piece of WWII history.

BOAC Mosquito Fleet Details

Mosquito PR.Mk.IV:

G-AGFV DZ411

Mosquito T.Mk.III

HJ898
HJ985
LR524

Mosquito FB.Mk.VI:

G-AGGC HJ680
G-AGGD HJ681 (lost January 1944)
G-AGGE HJ718
G-AGGF HJ720 (lost 17 August 1943)
G-AGGG HJ721 (lost 25 October 1943)
G-AGGH HJ723
G-AGKO HJ667
G-AGKR HJ792
G-AGKP LR296 (lost 18 August 1944)

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British Overseas Airways Corporation
Mosquito History

This map (with current borders) illustrates BOAC's main routes from Leuchars to Stockholm. The route across the North Sea and up the Skagerrak was the only one used by British crews, while the expatriate Norwegian Mosquito crews perferred the northerly routes over their familiar home territory. German air domination over Norway and Denmark made life "interesting" for the unarmed BOAC Mosquitos and their brave crews.

Two photos of G-AGFV believed to have been taken at the de Havilland plant at Hatfield prior to her delivery in December 1942. Note the narrow chord props and the six-stack unshrouded exhausts. Also note her very un-Mosquito-like camouflage pattern, Aluminum belly, and black registrations with Aluminum outlines.

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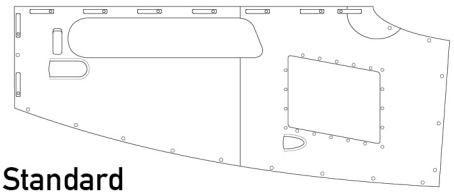
Detail Note

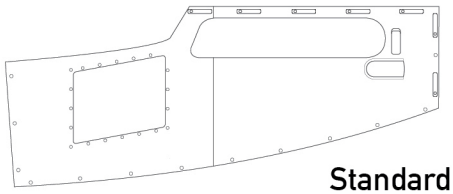
Along with a number of other bomber and PR.Mk.IVs, G-AGFV had a "speed mod" that consisted of removing the exhaust shrouds and modifying the exhaust configuration. The factory standard five-stack setup was replaced (on the outboard cylinder bank only) with six individual stacks that had a slightly more flared "fishtail" opening. This asymmetrical exhaust setup was reputed to confer an additional 10-15 mph of speed from the thrust created by the exhausts.

The outboard side panels were thus comletely different from the inboard side. This setup was very similar to (but not identical to) the cowling on the two-stage Merlin Mosquito. The exhaust opening was rectangular with slightly rounded cornders, it was set somewhat lower, and was considerably longer. There was an elongated intake on both sides just below and ahead of the exhaust opening on both sides. On these single stage airplanes this intake featured a completely circular opening. On later two-stage airplanes this was simply a "U" shape.

We had never taken much notice of this modification, but once you start looking, you find it on a goodly number of early single stage Mosquitos.

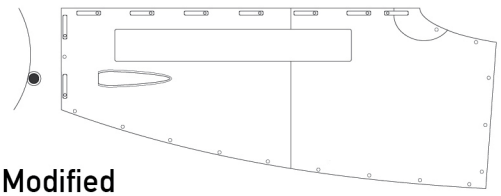


Standard
Outboard Cowl
Panel

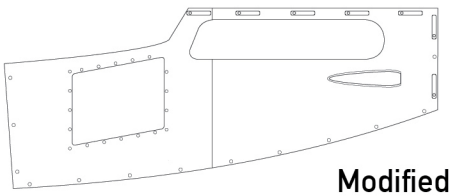


Standard
Inboard Cowl
Panel

1/32



Modified
Outboard Cowl
Panel with front view of intake



Modified
Inboard Cowl
Panel