

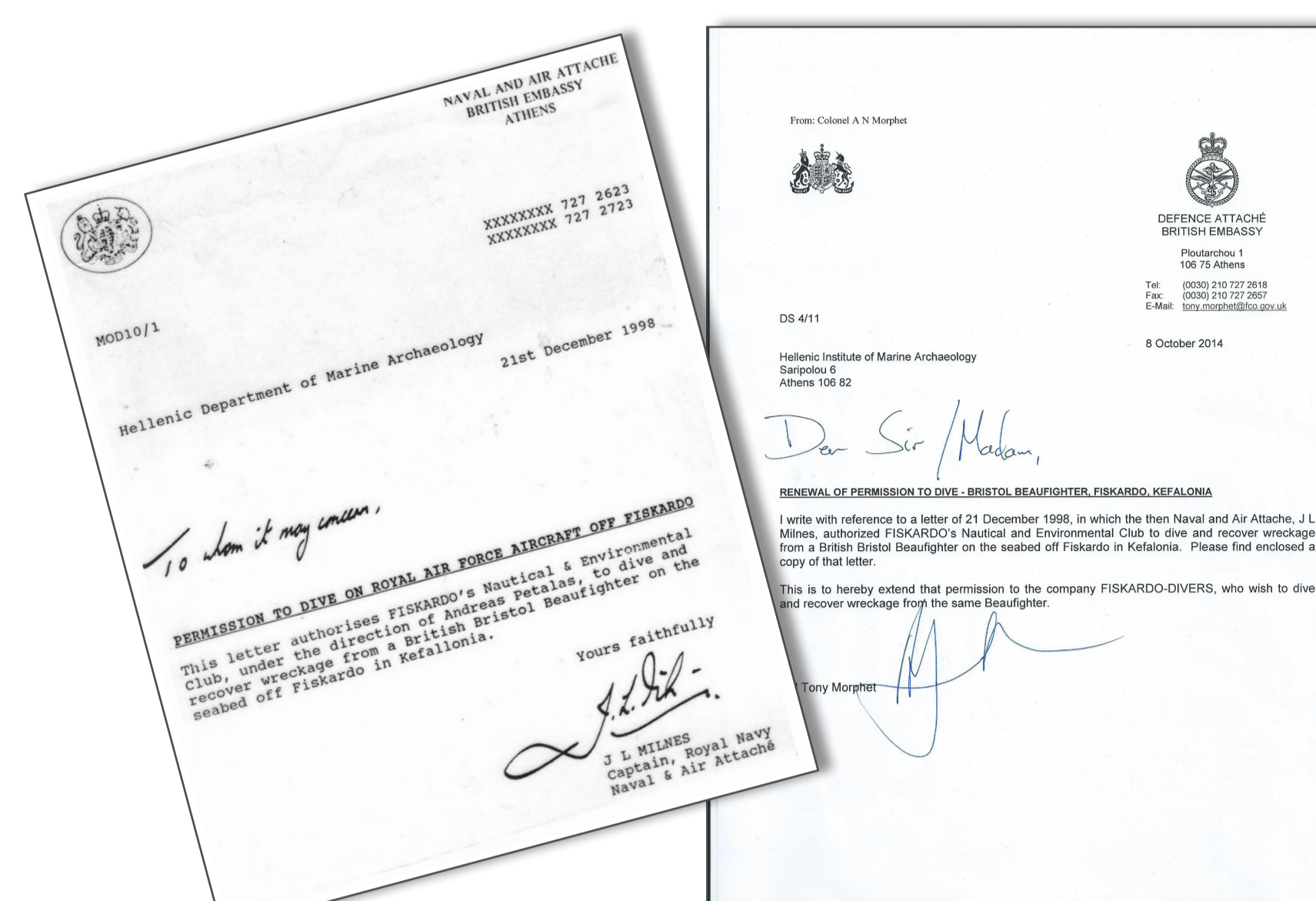
THE STORY OF BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER NE595 & ITS CREW



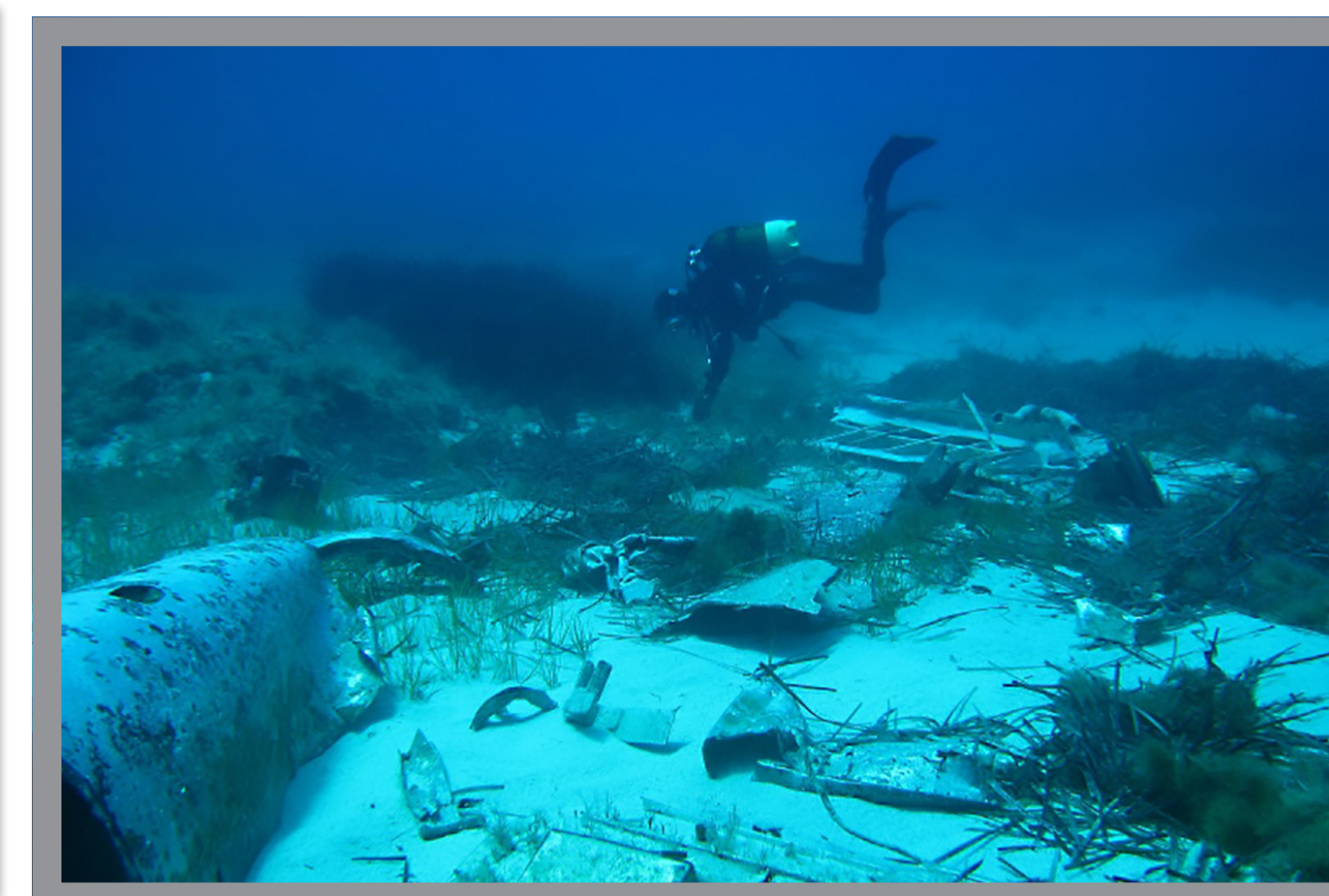
Example of a Bristol Beaufighter Mk X with rockets (NE255/EE-H of No. 404 Squadron RCAF, of RAF Coastal Command at Davidstow Moor, 21 August 1944, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bristol_Type_156_Beaufighter_ExCC.jpg)



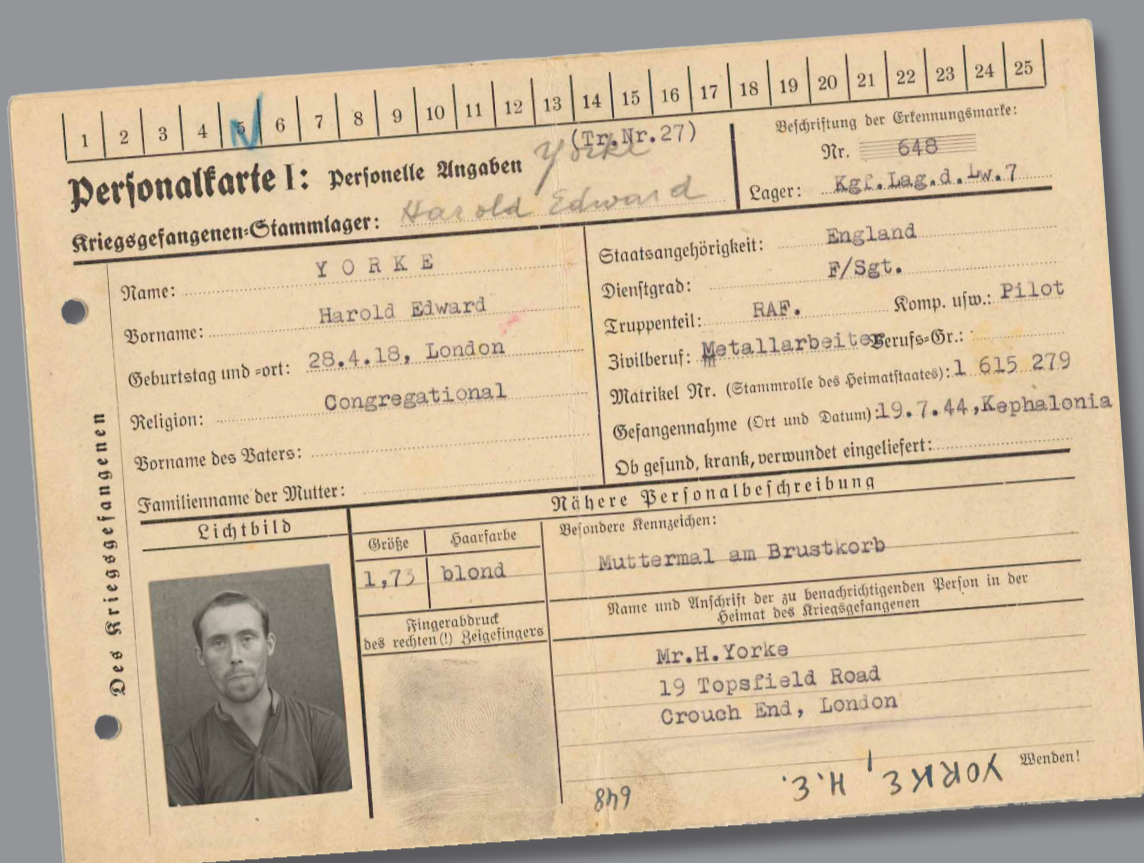
Aerial photo taken from a Bristol Beaufighter as it attacked a small cargo vessel and a naval patrol boat moored in the harbour at Fiskardho on the island of Cephalonia (<http://media.wm.org.uk/wm/mediaLib/97/media:9461/large.jpg>)



Dive and wreck recovery authorisation letter from the Naval & Air Attaché at the British Embassy in Athens, December 1998; Renewal of authorisation letter from the Defense Attaché at the British Embassy, October 2014



The wreck was blown up for scrap in the 1960's, however there are still pieces to be seen. Photo: Diver on the wreck (Fiskardo-Divers)



On the 19th July 1944 a mark 10 Bristol Beaufighter from the 603 Squadron took off from Royal Air Force Base Gambut in Libya with two other aircraft to carry out an offensive sweep (attack patrol) of the west coast of Greece and the Ionian Islands.

Striking out across the Mediterranean, the small formation flew to Zakynthos and commenced their sweep up from there to Kefalonia. After finding nothing in Sami, they went north and made an attack on a small caique near Agia Efimia, and then continued further north to Fiskardo.

On their approach, aircraft 1 and 2 saw danger and pulled up and away taking cover behind Fiskardo point, but the third aircraft, NE595, saw the danger too late. Two German anti-aircraft guns - one on the old lighthouse and one on the harbour wall - opened fire, hitting the aircraft just behind the wing and starting a fire in the fuselage. The navigator, Flight Sergeant Shaw, was killed immediately, but the pilot, Flight Sergeant Yorke, with much effort was able to pull the aircraft over the ridge and deciding that a landing on Emblissi Beach was too dangerous he levelled off on the water just off the bay at Kimilia, and crashed into the sea bouncing 3 times. The pilot was able to get out of his sinking aircraft but was badly hurt, both from burns to his body and having smashed his head on the gun sight on crashing into the sea. Because of this when he swam to shore, he was not able to get far and was captured soon after. Aircraft 1 (Flight Lieutenant Deck) angered at losing one of his squadron, spun around and made an attack on the port of Fiskardo with cannon and machine gun fire. Both remaining aircraft returned home safely.

After a long and very difficult journey, and having been interrogated most brutally by the Gestapo, Flight Sergeant Yorke arrived in the German prisoner of war camp, Stalag Luft 7, reserved solely for 'flyers'. He remained there until the Russian advance forced the Germans to withdraw to Berlin taking the prisoners some 160 miles on foot during the freezing cold winter of 1944-45. Many of those captured did not survive the trek.

Those who did, reached Berlin half starved, but the Russians caught up and the men were released. Shortly after, Flight Sergeant Yorke, returned to England where he died in 2001. In 1999 NE595 had been found by divers of Fiskardo's Nautical and Environmental Club (FNEC) and a long investigation began into its history. In 2012, after much research and having found the daughter of the pilot the story was completed, though unfortunately too late to find any surviving pilots who had flown her.

BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER TF Mk X

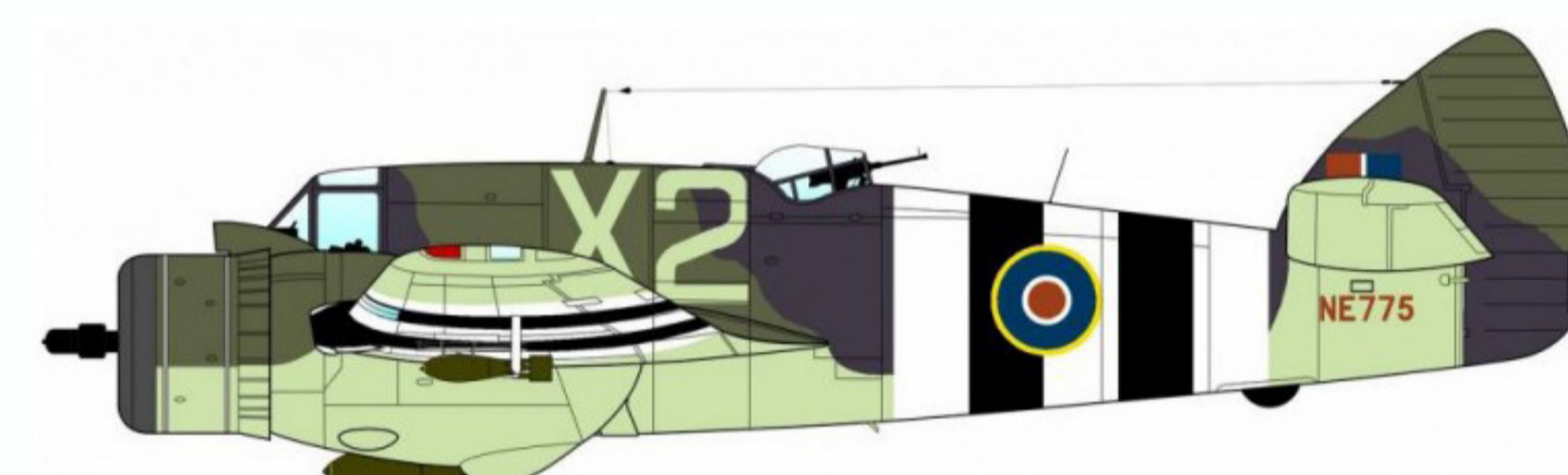
Similar to Bristol Beaufighter VI (ITF), with Hercules XVII engines for improved low altitude performance. One 0.303 in Browning or Vickers 'K' gun in observer's cupola for rear defence; AI Mk VIII in 'thimble' nose, long dorsal fin, enlarged tailplane, increased ammunition load for nose cannon, provision for third crewman behind pilot to assist in aiming torpedo and provision for underwing rocket projectiles and/or 1,000-lb (454-kg) bombs, and for two 500-lb (227-kg) bombs under fuselage in lieu of torpedo.

Operational from early 1944 with Bristol Beaufighter Strike Wings in Coastal Command, including RAF, RCAF, RAAF and RNZAF units operating from UK bases and in Mediterranean area, including two SAAF units as part of Balkan Air Force. Production totals, 2,095 built at Weston and 110 by Routines at Stoke-on-Trent, including 62 supplied to RAAF.

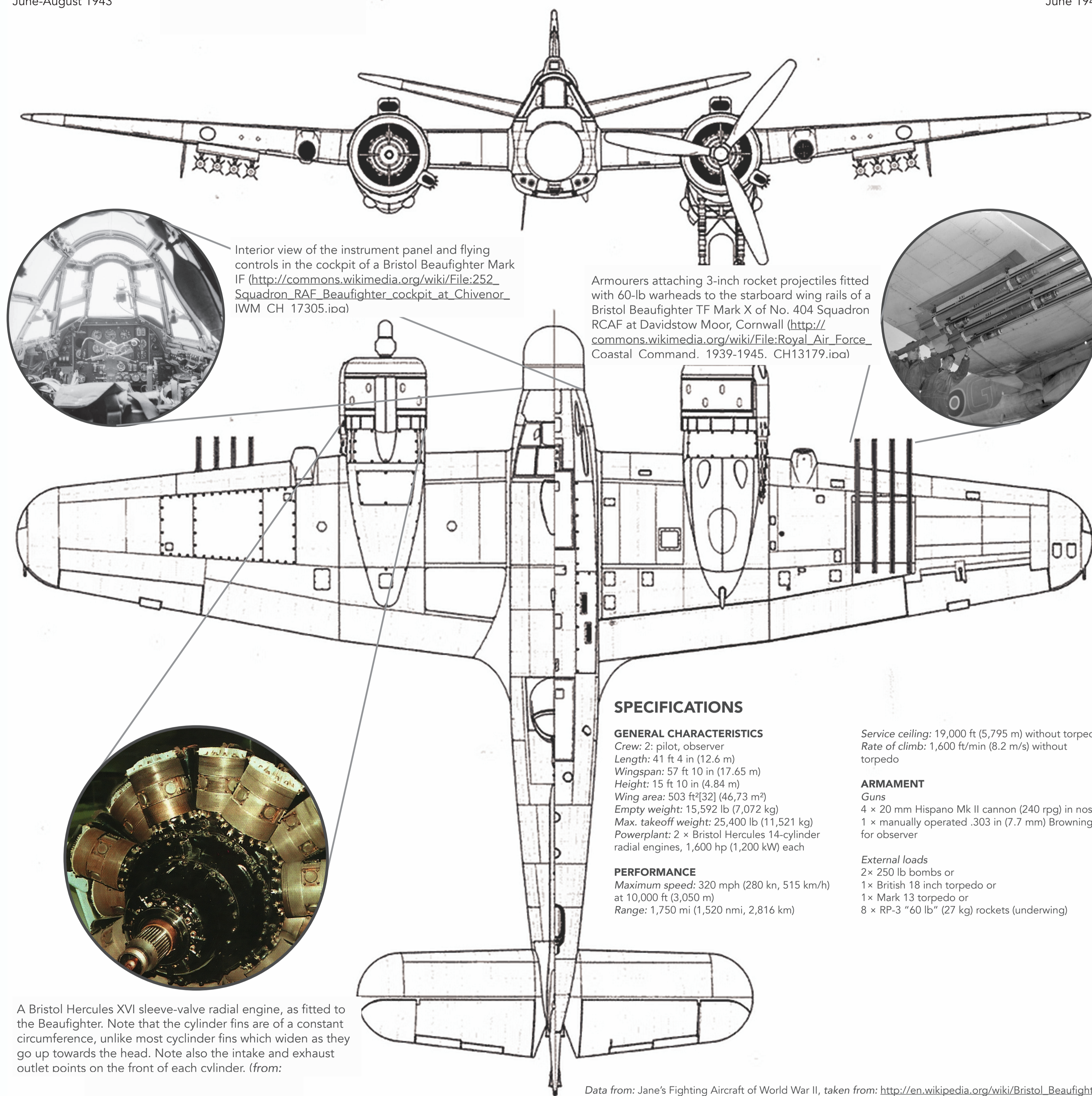
Taken from: <http://www.airpages.ru/eng/uk/beatf10.shtml>



BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER TF Mk X
Night Fighter / Torpedo-Bomber
144 Squadron, Royal Air Force Coastal Command, Scotland, UK
June-August 1943



BRISTOL BEAUFIGHTER TF Mk X
Coastal Camouflage
455 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, Norfolk, UK
June 1944



A Bristol Hercules XVI sleeve-valve radial engine, as fitted to the Beaufighter. Note that the cylinder fins are of a constant circumference, unlike most cylinder fins which widen as they go up towards the head. Note also the intake and exhaust outlet points on the front of each cylinder. (from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol_Beaufighter)

SPECIFICATIONS

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS
Crew: 2; pilot, observer
Length: 41 ft 4 in (12.6 m)
Wingspan: 57 ft 10 in (17.65 m)
Height: 15 ft 10 in (4.84 m)
Wing area: 503 ft² (46.73 m²)
Empty weight: 15,592 lb (7,072 kg)
Max. takeoff weight: 25,400 lb (11,521 kg)
Powerplant: 2 × Bristol Hercules 14-cylinder radial engines, 1,600 hp (1,200 kW) each

PERFORMANCE
Maximum speed: 320 mph (280 kn, 515 km/h) at 10,000 ft (3,050 m)
Range: 1,750 mi (1,520 nmi, 2,816 km)

Service ceiling: 19,000 ft (5,795 m) without torpedo
Rate of climb: 1,600 ft/min (8.2 m/s) without torpedo

ARMAMENT
Guns
4 × 20 mm Hispano Mk II cannon (240 rpg) in nose
1 × manually operated .303 in (7.7 mm) Browning for observer

External loads
2 × 250 lb bombs or
1 × British 18 inch torpedo or
1 × Mark 13 torpedo or
8 × RP-3 "60 lb" (27 kg) rockets (underwing)

Data from: Jane's Fighting Aircraft of World War II, taken from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bristol_Beaufighter

A BRIEF HISTORY OF RAF SQUADRON NO. 603

No. 603 (City of Edinburgh) Squadron is a squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, based in Edinburgh, Scotland. It was formed on 14 October 1925 at RAF Turnhouse as a day bomber unit.

The Squadron was based in Scotland until it moved on 27 August 1940 on rotation to Southern England, based with No 11 Group at RAF Hornchurch. It was identified as the highest-scoring Battle of Britain Fighter Squadron. In May 1941 it took part in sweeps over France and left in April 1942 for the Middle East. The squadron's aircraft were embarked on the US carrier USS Wasp and flown off to Malta on

20th April 1942 to reinforce the fighter defences of the beleaguered island.

At the end of June 1942, No. 603's ground echelon had moved to Cyprus, where it spent six months as a servicing unit before returning to Egypt. In February 1943, Bristol Beaufighters and crews arrived to begin convoy patrols and escort missions along the North African coast and in August sweeps over German held islands in the Aegean and off Greece began. Attacks on enemy shipping continued until the lack of targets enabled the squadron to be returned to the UK in December 1944.

Information taken from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._603_Squadron_RAF