

Supermarine Spitfire, Survey Project

May 2016



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The Supermarine Spitfire is a British single-seat fighter aircraft, was one of the most famous fighter aircraft of all time and a symbol of the Royal Air Force (RAF). It used by the RAF and the allied air forces during the Second World War.



71 years after.....

The motivation for research about the Spitfire aircrafts was from the reports presented in list "Supermarine Spitfire losses in Greece 1942-1953" edited by Manolis Bardanis and the official website of Hellenic Air Force. [2]

| 23 | 29/12/44 | PA905 | Spitfire Mk.VB.XIV | 582Sqn. Force landed near Alexandria. No survivors. |
|-------------|----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---|
| 1945 | | | | |
| 1 | 05/01/45 | ER663 | Spitfire Mk.VB | 137Sqn. 948gm. Hit trees attacking MT near Mandria. Pilot: F/Sgt. E.J. Andrews. MIA. "Took off to strafe the ELAS forces at Megara and Elevalia. Strayed while attacking the motor transport as he was unable to pull up without hitting some trees." Pilot: F/Sgt. E.J. Andrews. MIA. |
| 2 | 05/01/45 | MJ992 | Spitfire Mk.IF.IX | 725Sqn. 728gm. Missing on sweep near Athens. |
| 3 | 11/02/45 | MH672 | Spitfire Mk.IX | 223AAF. 948gm. Engine cut on air test; overshot emergency landing, Hassani. Pilot: T/Sgt. Donald K. "Don" later "Frances" Hill, RAAF 1803438. Safe. |
| 4 | 27/02/45 | MA507 "Lady of the Lake" | Spitfire Mk.Vc | USAAC, 735sqn. 328gm. 337Wg. Collided with Spitfire, NH397 and crashed 5m S of Salonika. Leading a formation of Greek Air Force Spitfires on a demonstration flight over Salonika on Feb 27th in rough flying weather, one of the Greek aircraft (NH397) from 316 Squadron struck Woodruff's Spitfire whilst changing station, severing the fighter's entire tail unit and causing it to plummet into the sea. Pilot: W/Cdr. Patrick Woodruff DFC. Been killed. |
| 5 | 27/02/45 | NH397 | Spitfire Mk.IF.IX | ... 338Sgn. Collided with Spitfire MA507 and crashed 5m S of Salonika. Pilot: P/L Sophocles Saltatzis. survived. |
| 6 | 01/04/45 | ER194 | Spitfire Mk.X | ... 338Sgn. Stravengen Xanthi. 320 and 316 units took part in the operation against the Axis forces via the Aegean islands. Pilot: P/O Georgios Nikolaopoulos (Ανθυπομάρτυρς Παύλος Νικολόπουλος του Ιωνίου) Age 24. EIA. |

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Between 4 April - August 7, 1945, three Supermarine Spitfire crashed in the area of Vari. The aircraft belonged to Squadron 335 and 336 of the Greek Royal Air Force. According to reports two of them crash in the wider sea area of Vari bay. The third aircraft does not specified the crash area.

No 335 (Greek) Squadron

Formed on 10 October 1941 at Aqir airfield in Palestine.

Initially it was equipped with Hurricane Mk I aircraft. The squadron began operations over the Western Desert, where it operated continuously until late 1942, participating in convoy protection, bomber escort and ground attack roles. It remained there on offensive operations until after the Battle of El Alamein when it moved into shipping protection duties along the Libyan coast.

In January 1944 it was re-equipped with the newer Spitfire Mk Vb and Vc aircraft. In September moved to Italy, where it conducted operations over Albania and Yugoslavia. In November the squadron returned to its homeland, from where it attacked German forces in the Greek islands of the Aegean and Crete.

On 15 September, the squadron was moved along with its sister unit to the Italian theatre, from where it carried out operations primarily over occupied Yugoslavia.

The letter codes allocated to this squadron were the FG - maybe for Free Greeks .



In November 1944 the Greek squadrons returned to liberated Greece, where they were engaged in operations against the remaining German garrisons in the Aegean islands and Crete.

On 31 July 1945, the squadron was disbanded from the RAF and transferred to Greek control.

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No 336 (Greek) Squadron

The second squadron to be formed from Greek personnel, took place at Landing Ground 219 in the Western Desert on 25 February 1943.

From then until February 1944 the squadron was involved in shipping protection and air defense duties along the Libyan coast. Together with unit, No 335, it moved to Italy in September 1944, from where it operated over Albania and Yugoslavia.

In November 1944 it returned to its homeland and carried out attacks against German forces in the Greek islands of the Aegean and Crete.

The squadron moved to Thessaloniki in May 1945, where on 31 July it was transferred to Greek control. The letter codes allocated to this squadron were the ZP, however they never appeared on the fuselage of aircraft which were carrying only the one letter aircraft identity. [1]



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Killed in action (KiA)



P/O Georgios Nikolopoulos

Age 24. KiA.

04/04/45

Crashed in the sea during Wellington JA354, SAR operation.

Aircraft: Supermarine Spitfire



F/Lt. Panagiotis Argyropoulos

Age 30. KiA.

15/06/45

Mission to Vari bay (Attiki).

Crashed in the sea and sunk with the target..

Aircraft: Supermarine Spitfire BR 375/B



W/O Panagiotis Kostaras

Age 27. KiA.

07/08/45

Crashed in Varkiza area during training flight.

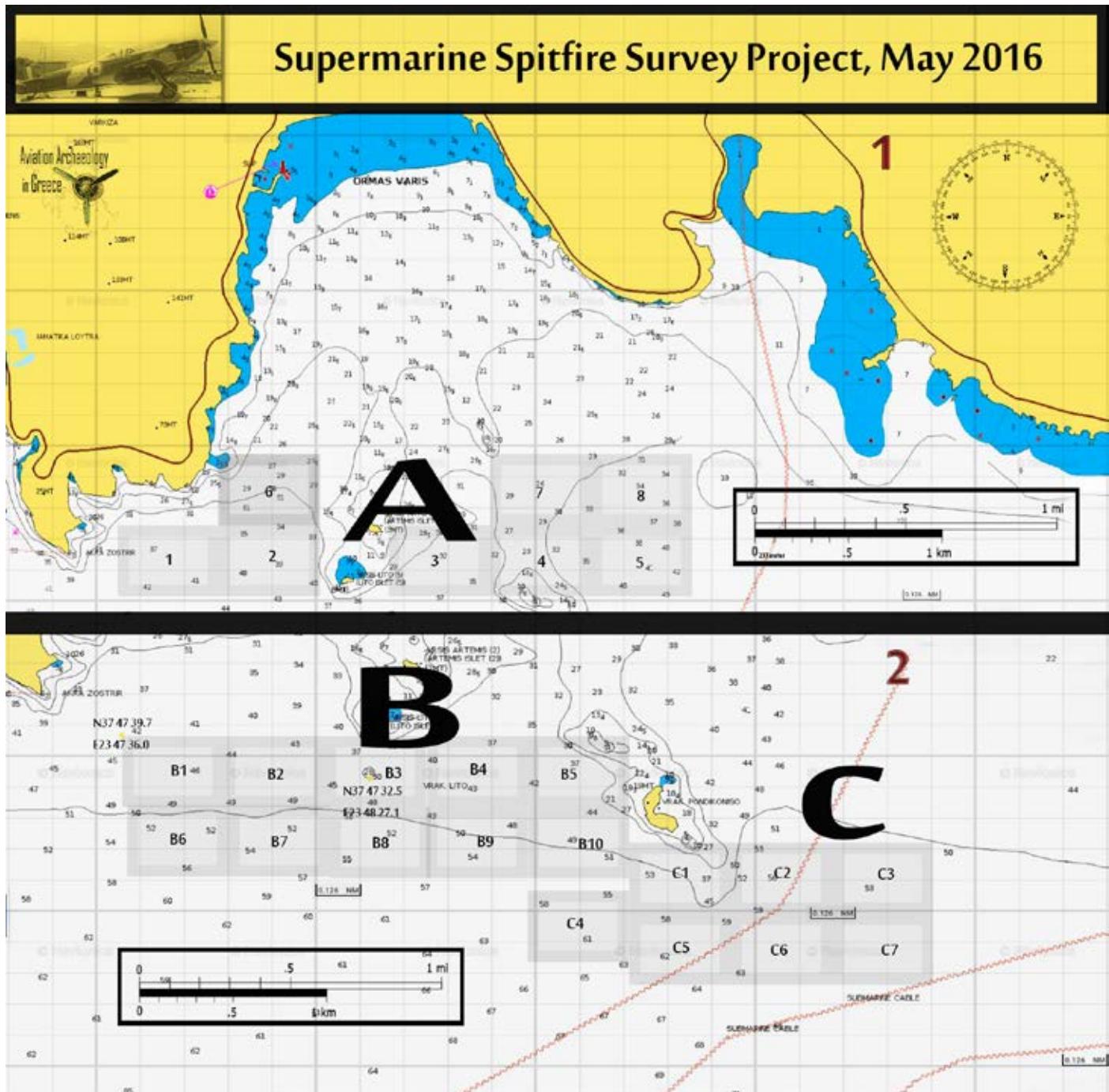
Aircraft: Supermarine Spitfire ER 194 [2]

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Survey Methodology

The survey is scheduled for May 2016, and includes the wider sea area of the Bay of Vari and which is illustrated in the following charts.

The detection of aircraft wreckage is difficult and this is mainly due to the size of the Spitfire aircraft as well as in the absence of information or indications of the crash site. The depth of research area ranging from 20 to 65 meters.



The sea surface area to be covered during the survey is 3 NM².

For more efficient and a better distribution of the survey, the area is divided into three main sectors where each of them is divided into segments of 1NM.

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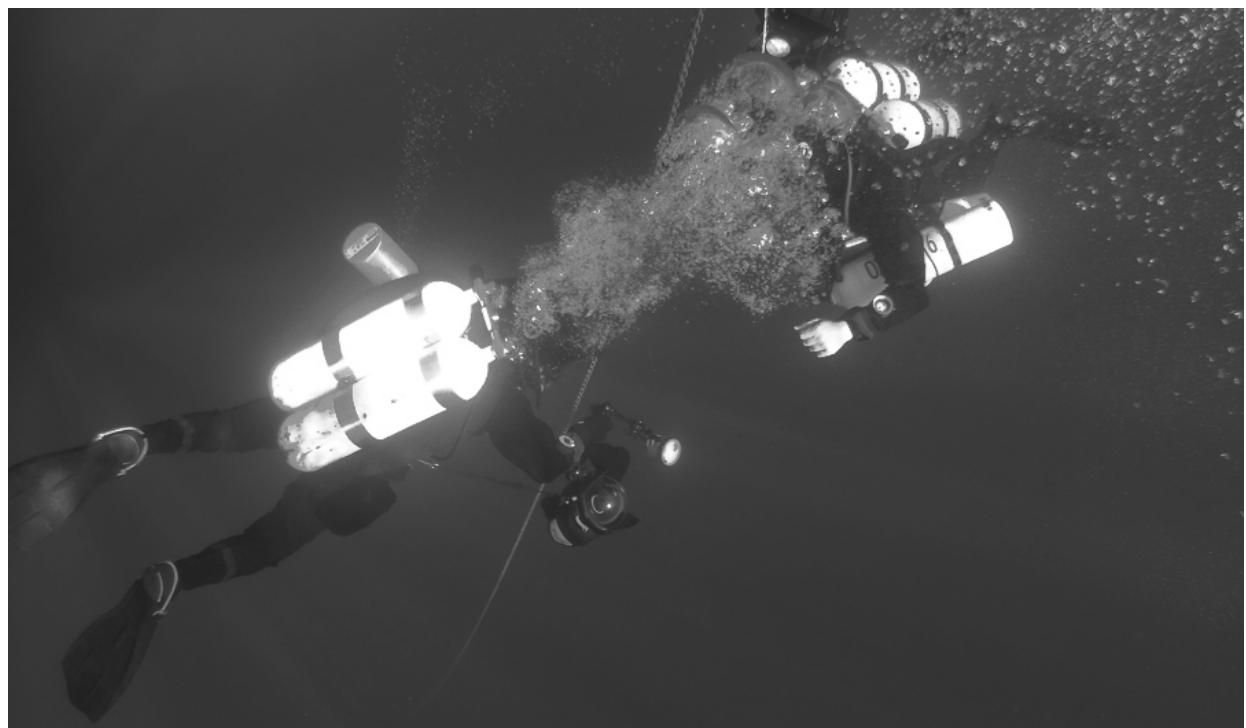
Survey Methodology

During the research will be scanning the sea bottom using Side Scan Sonar and ROV.
After scanning, the diving teams will execute dives in selecting targets



Remotely Operated Vehicle - ROV

Side Scan Sonar



AAG – Divers during decompression

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Spitfire

The British Supermarine Spitfire was one of the most outstanding fighter aircraft of the Second World War. The basic airframe proved to be extremely adaptable, capable of taking far more powerful engines and far greater loads than its original role as a short-range interceptor had allowed for. This would lead to 24 marks of Spitfire, and many sub-variants within the marks, being produced throughout the Second World War and beyond, in continuing efforts to fulfill Royal Air Force requirements and successfully combat ever-improving enemy aircraft.

Role: Fighter

Manufacturer: Supermarine

Crew: one pilot

Number built: 20,351

Length: 9.12 m

Wingspan: 11.23 m

Wing area: 22.48 m²

Loaded weight: 3000 kg

Max speed: 378 mph, 605 km/h

Power: 1 x Rolls-Royce Merlin



The Spitfire was built in many variants, using several wing configurations, and was produced in greater numbers than any other British aircraft. It was also the only British fighter to be in continuous production throughout the war. The Spitfire continues to be popular among enthusiasts, with approximately 53 Spitfires being airworthy, while many more are static exhibits in aviation museums throughout the world.

There were 24 marks of Spitfire and many sub-variants. These covered the Spitfire in development from the Merlin to Griffon engines, the high-speed photo-reconnaissance variants and the different wing configurations. More Spitfire Mk Vs were built than any other type, with 6,487 built, followed by the 5,656 Mk IXs. Different wings, featuring a variety of weapons, were fitted to most marks; the A wing used eight .303 in (7.7 mm) machine guns, the B wing had four .303 in (7.7 mm) machine guns and two 20 mm (.79 in) Hispano cannon, and the C or Universal Wing could mount either four 20 mm (.79 in) cannon or two 20 mm (.79 in) and four .303 in (7.7 mm) machine guns. As the war progressed, the C wing became more common.[122] Another armament variation was the E wing which housed two 20 mm (.79 in) cannon and two .50 in (12.7 mm) Browning machine guns. Although the Spitfire continued to improve in speed and armament, because of its limited fuel capacity its range and endurance were also limited: it remained "short-legged" throughout its life except in the dedicated photo-reconnaissance role, when its guns were replaced by extra fuel tanks. Supermarine developed a two-seat variant known as the T Mk VIII to be used for training, but none were ordered, and only one example was ever constructed (identified as N32/G-AIDN by Supermarine). In the absence of an official two-seater variant, a number of airframes were crudely converted in the field. These included a 4 Squadron SAAF Mk VB in North Africa, where a second seat was fitted instead of the upper fuel tank in front of the cockpit, although it was not a dual-control aircraft and is thought to have been used as the squadron "run-about." [3]

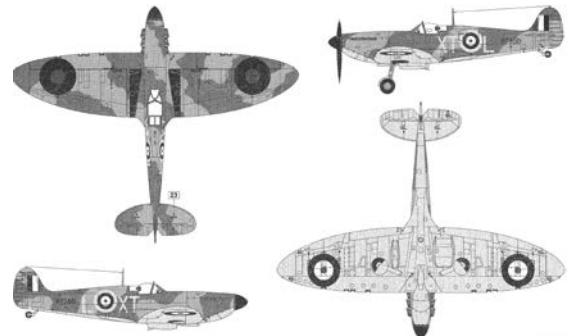
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Spitfire

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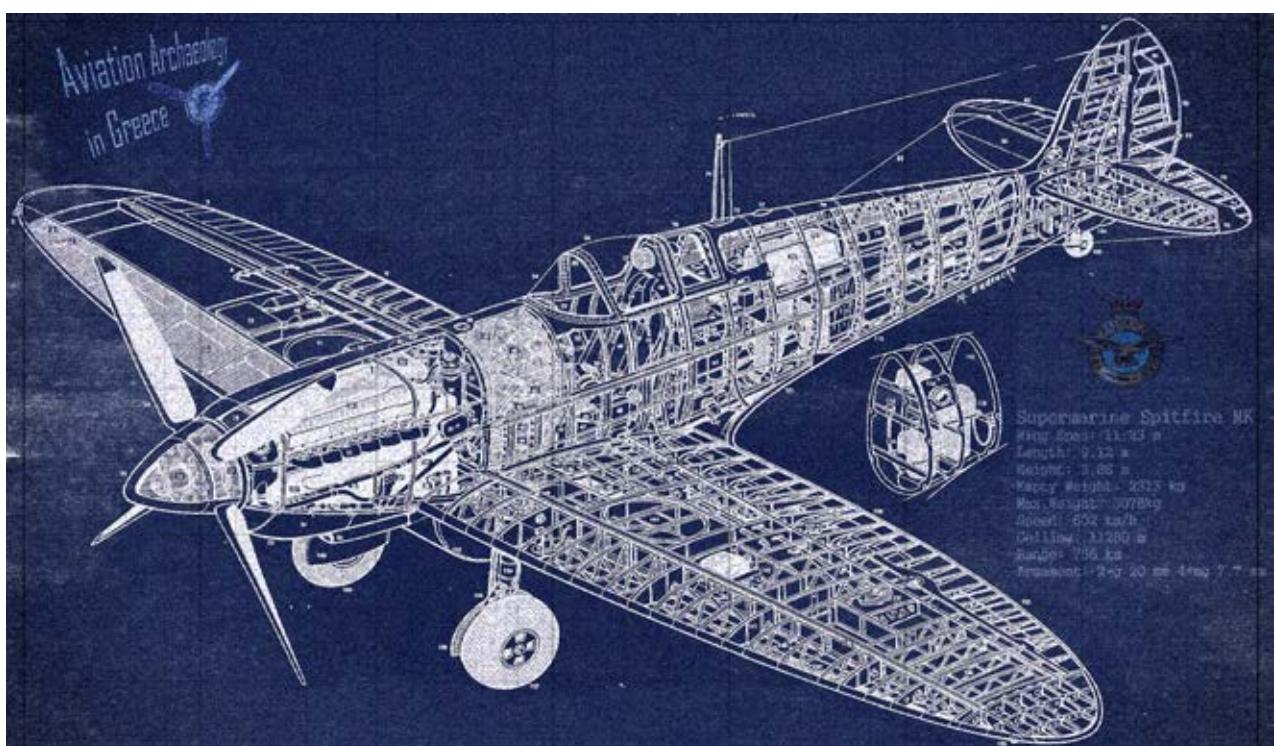


Browning Mk II .303-inch (7.7 mm).



The only unofficial two-seat conversions that were fitted with dual-controls were a small number of Russian lend/lease Mk IX aircraft. These were referred to as Mk IX UTI and differed from the Supermarine proposals by using an inline "greenhouse" style double canopy rather than the raised "bubble" type of the T Mk VIII.

In the postwar era, the idea was revived by Supermarine and a number of two-seat Spitfires were built by converting old Mk IX airframes with a second "raised" cockpit featuring a bubble canopy. Ten of these TR9 variants were then sold to the Indian Air Force along with six to the Irish Air Corps, three to the Royal Netherlands Air Force and one for the Royal Egyptian Air Force. Currently a handful of the trainers are known to exist, including both the T Mk VIII, a T Mk IX based in the U.S., and the "Grace Spitfire" ML407, a veteran flown operationally by 485(NZ) Squadron in 1944. [3]



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Spitfire - Archive photography

Greece received the first Supermarine Spitfire Mk VB/VC from the British in the Middle East at the end of 1943. Initially they equipped the 336 Interceptor Squadron and afterwards the 335 Interceptor Squadron.

After extensive military action over North Africa and Jugoslavia, the Greek Spitfires returned to Greece in October 1944. After they took part to the early battles of the Civil War, they were replaced in combat duties by new versions and, from 1947, they were used for training in combat tactics in the Air Force Flight School. [2]



In November 1944, the Greek squadrons returned to liberated Greece. (Hasani Airfield)



1948, Supermarine Spitfire (Ioannina Airfield)

Supermarine Spitfire, Survey Project 2016

Spitfire - Archive photography



Supermarine Spitfire Mk.VB 336



Supermarine Spitfire 335 squadron

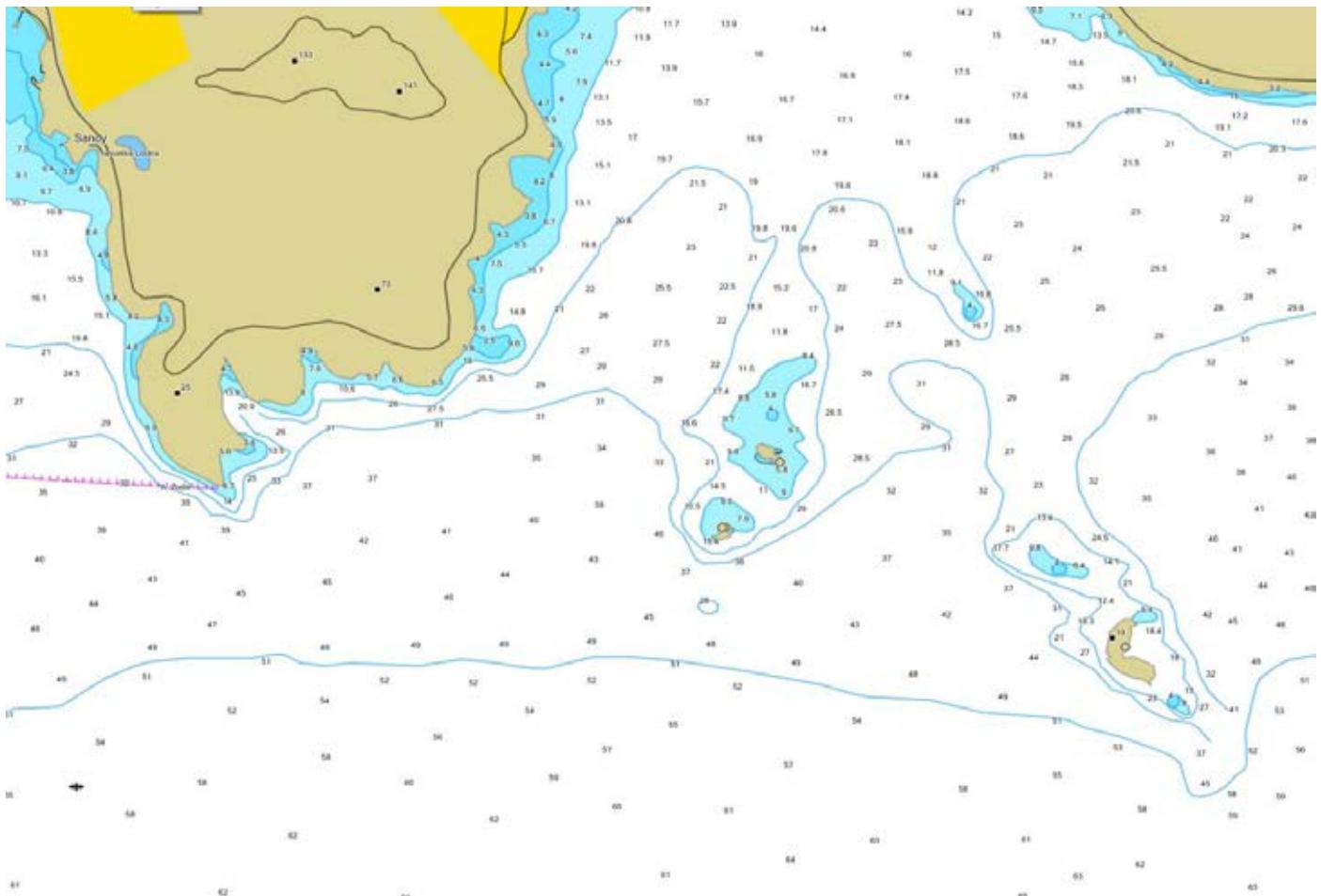


November 1944
The Prime Minister
Georgios Papandreu
visiting the Greek
Squadrons in Hasani
airport.

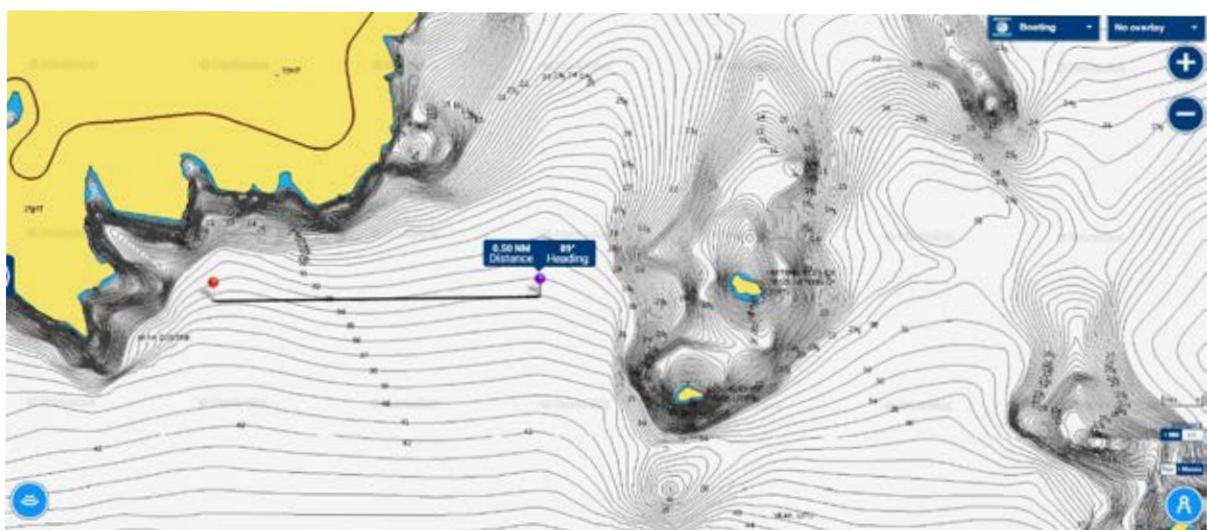


1948,
Supermarine
Spitfire
(Ioannina Airfield)

Supermarine Spitfire, Survey Project 2016 Field Maps



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NAVIONICS

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links

[1] <http://imansolas.freeservers.com/Aces/Greeks%20in%20Spitfires.html>

[2] <https://www.haf.gr>

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Supermarine_Spitfire