



# SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE

**F MK IX**  
**BS 435 - FY-F No.611**  
**(West Lancashire)**  
**Squadron, RAuxAF**



## 611 (West Lancashire) Squadron

Motto: Beware, Beware

Squadron Codes Used:

GZ May 1939-Sept 1939

FY Sept 1939-Aug 1945  
1949-Apr 1951

RAR May 1946-1949

## A Brief Squadron History

Formed at Hendon as part of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force on 10th February 1936, the squadron moved north to Speke in May and received its first aircraft, Hawker Harts, in June of that year. Until January 1939 it operated as a day-bomber squadron, re-equipping with Hawker Hinds in 1938, but was then re-designated a fighter squadron.

Spitfires arrived in May 1939 and the squadron was involved in operations in cover of the UK whilst France fell to the Nazis, patrolled high above the Dunkirk beaches during the evacuation, played an active part in the Battle of Britain, took a very active part in the ill-fated Dieppe raid, covered the Normandy landings and escorted bomber intrusions over occupied France. After being equipped with Mustangs, 611 was able to provide long-range bomber cover for both RAF and USAAF raids deep into Europe. The squadron remained based in the UK at various locations throughout WWII until disbanding at Peterhead on 15th August 1945.

With the reactivation of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, 611 was reformed on 10th May 1946 at Hooton Park as a day-fighter squadron. It was initially equipped with Spitfire F14s and F22s, until June 1951 when Meteor F4s were received. These were replaced by F8s in December 1951 but, along with all the flying units of the RAuxAF, it was disbanded at Woodvale, where it had moved in 1951, on 10th March 1957.



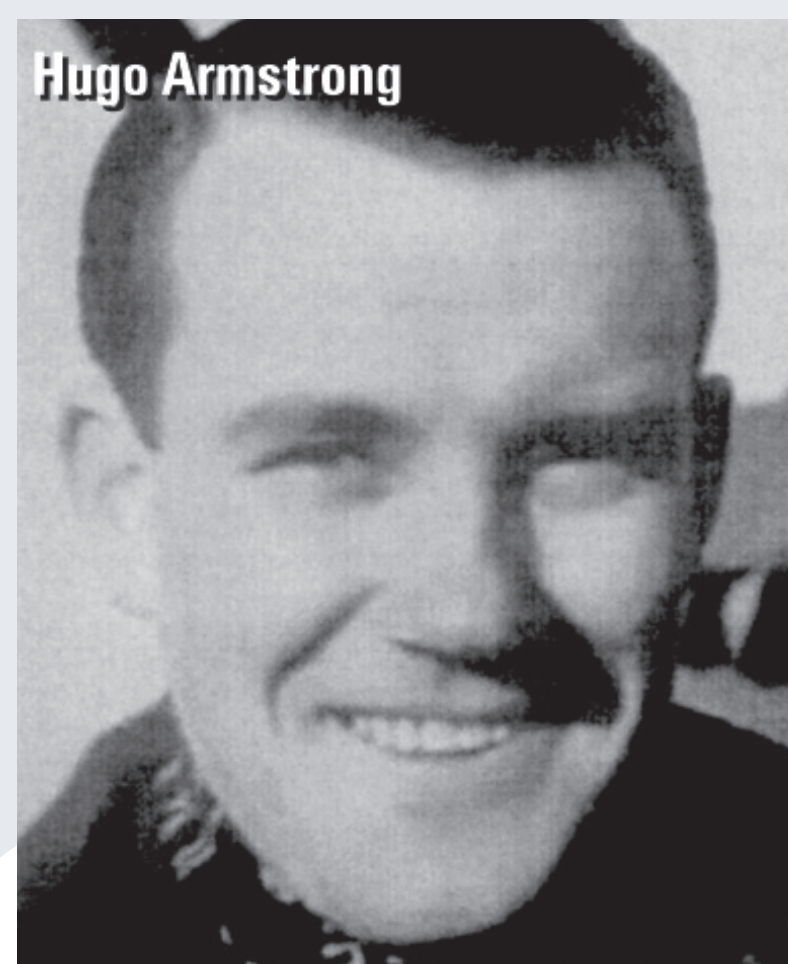
- Supplied under the fifth order of Contract No. B19713/39 dated 24th October 1940.
- It was initially to be Mk IA/B but was eventually built as an F Mk I.
- Airframe No.3324 - Built at Eastleigh, Hampshire - First flight 31st August 1942.
- Allocated to 611 (West Lancashire) Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force on 2nd September 1942.
- Received Category E damage during operations on 5th February 1943.
- This aircraft was flown by Sqn Ldr Hugo Armstrong, OC No.611 (West Lancashire) Squadron based at Biggin Hill.

### Specifications

Wing Span: 32ft 7in (9.9m)  
Length: 31ft 4in (9.5m)  
Height: 12ft 7in (3.8m)  
Weight (empty): 5,816lb (2,638kg)  
Weight (gross): 7,500lb (3,402kg)

Max. Speed: 404mph (650km/h)  
Rate of Climb: 3,950ft (1,204m) min.  
Service Ceiling: 42,500ft (12,954m)  
Range: 434 miles (698km)  
Engine: RR Merlin 61,  
1,710hp V-12

## Squadron Leader Hugo Armstrong DFC and Bar



Hugo Throssell Armstrong (nicknamed 'Sinkers') was credited with 12 kills during World War 2, all of them on Spitfires and all with RAF squadrons. Of those, the last three were while flying Spitfire Mk IX BS435 with No.611 Sqn based at Biggin Hill.

Armstrong was born in Travancore, Victoria, Australia in 1917. He was commissioned as a Pilot Officer in early 1941 and sent to Britain a short time afterwards. He served with Nos 129, 257 and 72 Squadrons until July 1942, when he was posted as OC to No 611 Sqn. In the meantime his tally had reached nine, the first kill occurring on 21 September 1941 when he downed a Bf 109 over Le Touquet while escorting Blenheims in a No 129 Sqn Mk VB.

The move to No 611 Sqn gave Armstrong his first opportunity to fly the Spitfire Mk IX and all three of his victories on this mark (plus two probables) were scored in the same aircraft, BS435/FY-F. The first of these was recorded on 2 November 1942 when an F2 190 was claimed destroyed and a Bf 109F was noted as a probable. He claimed another F2 190 probable on 9 November over Calais on a fighter sweep.

Two more scores followed on 20 January 1943 - a pair of Bf 109s south of Pevensey Bay. These aircraft had been part of a raid on Biggin Hill which remarkably coincided with the base wing (which included No 611 Sqn) coming under the control of Wg Cdr 'Sailor' Malan. In the battle which followed, the squadron managed to shoot down six aircraft, for which Armstrong was credited with two victories.

These were Armstrong's last victories as two weeks later, on 5 February, he was shot down and killed over the Channel by a formation of eight Fw 190s of II/JG 26 while attempting to join a sweep being staged by No 340 Sqn - Ofz Heinz Gomann (13 kills) was credited with the victory. Armstrong has no known grave and is commemorated at the Air Forces Memorial at Runnymede, Surrey. In the parish church of St Michael in Garston, Liverpool, a memorial plaque commemorates 21 pilots of 611 Squadron killed in action during WWII which includes Armstrong. Garston is close to John Lennon International Airport, formerly known as RAF Speke, an early home of the Squadron.