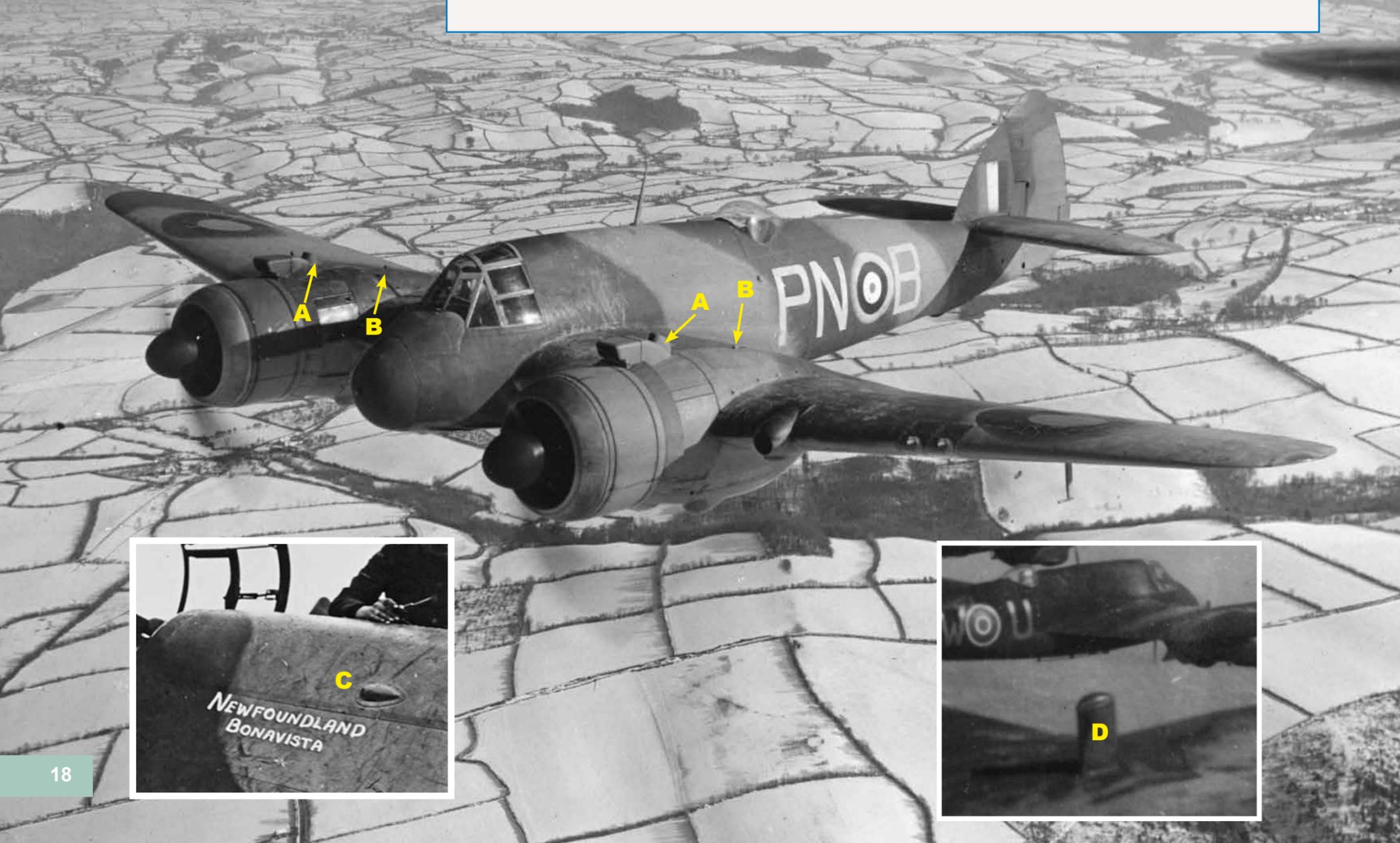


AIR VENTS

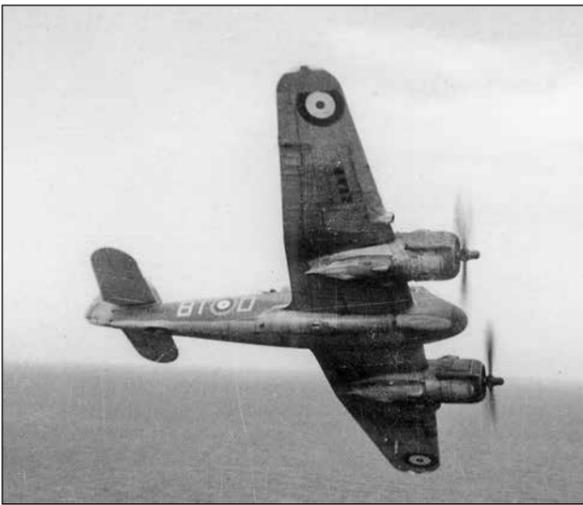
Another great photo of R2198 showing some clear details of the early Mk I. The two extra intakes (A) are believed to provide ram air for the steam boiler heating system used on the early Mk Is. The small protrusions marked (B) are fuel tank vents which needed to be higher than the fuel tanks when on the ground and so were installed on top of the engine cowlings. The fuel system was eventually redesigned and these vents were replaced by two smaller items mounted each side of the fuselage (C). On the Mk II, because the Merlin cowlings were very low, the vents were installed in tall 'posts' (D).



Above: By the time R2153 joined 252 Squadron it looks like the camouflaging confusion had been sorted as PN•W appears to have been finished in a factory-applied scheme of Dark Earth/Dark Green upper surfaces with Sky undersides. Strangely, the underwing roundels appear to have been painted out, and again, no wing armament appears to have been installed, there being no machine gun ports in leading edge of wings and no underwing cartridge case ejection chutes.

Above left: Although at first glance another photo of PN-B over the snowy fields, this is actually PN-L, note the lack of propeller spinners.

Left: A pair of 252 Squadron Beaufighter Mk I's – possibly R2153, PN•W in the lead (minus underwing roundels) with R2198, PN•B behind – in close formation.



Above: Following a move to Chivenor, 252 Squadron then moved to Aldergrove, Northern Ireland in April 1941, but half the squadron was detached to Malta for operations over Sicily and Greece, before moving to Edku in Egypt and changing its squadron codes to BT, illustrated here by BT•D thought to have been photographed in early 1942. Note the replacement starboard wingtip.

Top right: BT•G, (serial unknown), being cannibalised for spares next to a wrecked Ju 87.

Right: The Beaufighter was tough! This aircraft, T5197 hit a telegraph pole during a low level attack and still managed to fly a few hundred miles back to base. Note the weathering around the cartridge case ejection holes, and the hole where the outer wing fuel tank has been removed.



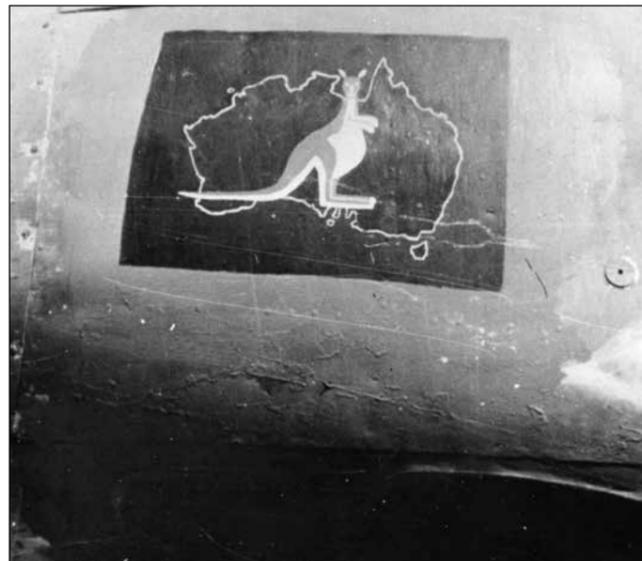
Left: T5040 undergoing repair after a forced landing judging by the bent propeller blades in the foreground. The Dark Green areas of the original Temperate Land Scheme appear to have been overpainted in either Light Earth or Mid Stone, leaving the serial number on a masked out rectangle of Dark Green.



Beaufighter Mk IC, thought to be T3314 of 272 Squadron, running up its engines either at Abu Sueir or Edku, in Egypt, in late 1941. The 'circle' on the nose is thought to be the aircraft's code letter 'O'. Other points of interest include the heavily oil spattered nose section, DF loop behind the cockpit for long range operations over the sea, heavily doped 20mm cannon ports and undercarriage doors with the rear clearance bulges cut out (arrowed) to expose the mainwheels when retracted, T3314 was lost not long after this photo was taken in a forced landing near Mersa Matruh on 9 January 1942.



This page and opposite: T3316 'M' named 'Pegasus' (on the port side) of 272 Squadron, obligingly revealing the large amount of red dope applied over the cannon troughs which has even been extended up the nose and on to the fuselage...



Above left and right: T4892 'T' of 272 Squadron, based at Edku in 1942, obviously flown or crewed by Australian nationals judging by the personal marking on the side of the nose! The fuselage roundels and fin flash have been upgraded to the post-May 1942 style, leaving the underwing roundels in the original dimensions.

Right: T3316's upper surface camouflage may still be in an (albeit well worn and faded) Dark Earth and Dark Green, with Sky under surfaces? This is another aircraft where the undercarriage doors have had the rear clearance bulges cut out to expose the mainwheels when retracted. Note also the badly oil streaked under surfaces.

