



LZ295 in early May 1944. The ASW 'white' scheme has been replaced by a variation of the Special Duties Scheme A, where the white areas, (at least on the upper surfaces and fuselage sides), were over painted in 'grey', and the serial number over painted in white. The squadron adopted the 'squadron-on-airfield' numeral code '2', and LZ295 was 'Z' on the port side. The codes on the starboard side would probably have also read '2•Z'. By early 1944 this finish and markings scheme – consisting of Extra Dark Sea Grey uppers and Dark Sea Grey fuselage side surfaces – adorned many of 404 Squadron's TF.Xs. The specification also called for Sky under surfaces but photos suggest that on some aircraft any remaining ASW white may have been left untouched.

The Youngman venturis have been removed and the flaps fabric-taped shut. It has a B.20 cupola, Gee navigation system (its long whip aerial in place of the DF loop fairing) and Coastal Command bomb carrier adapter system. LZ295 was re-marked as 'EE•Z' shortly after D-Day and still wearing full AEF 'invasion' stripes, was shot down off Royan, France, on 13th August 1944.

BEAUFIGHTER TF.X LZ295 2•Z 404 SQN (RCAF), MAY 1944



MODELLER'S NOTES

Aircraft:

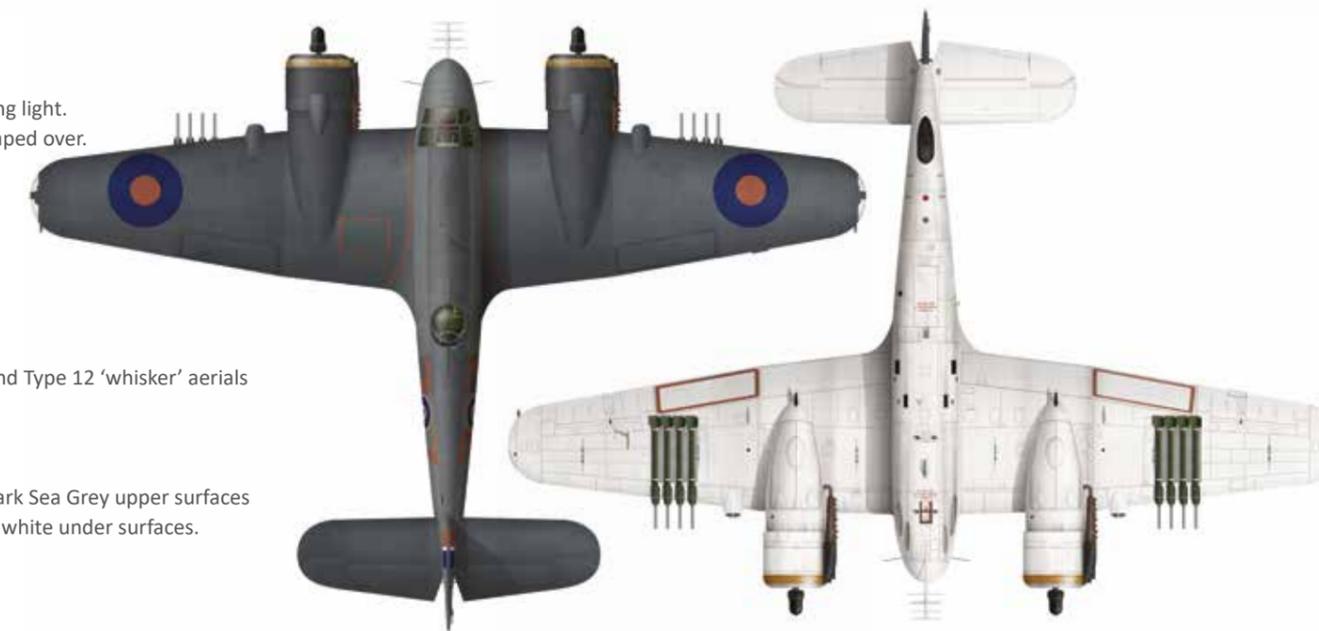
- Dihedral tailplane.
- RP blast plates and Mk I projector rails fitted.
- AP Mk I RPs.
- Sheet metal protective cover over the port wing leading edge landing light.
- Wing machine gun armament provisioning retained but faired or taped over.
- Either guns or tanks installed depending upon mission.
- Bristol B.20 rear defence gun fitted.
- DF loop and clear fairing removed late 1943/early 1944 in favour of Gee whip aerial.
- Youngman speed brake system made inoperable with the venturis removed and the flaps fabric-taped shut.
- IFF Mk III, Type 90 aerial on rear fuselage spine.
- ASV Mk II installation, with Yagi transmitter aerial under the nose and Type 12 'whisker' aerials either side of nose.

Colours:

- Finished in a variation of the Special Duties Scheme A, with Extra Dark Sea Grey upper surfaces and Dark Sea Grey fuselage side surfaces, fin and rudder, with ASW white under surfaces.
- Red code letters with narrow yellow outlines.

Discussion points:

- Under surface colour may have remained ASW white (as illustrated) for a time, before being overpainted in Sky.
- Dark discolouration over the engine cowlings extending over the nacelles.
- Codes on the starboard side should read '2•Z'.

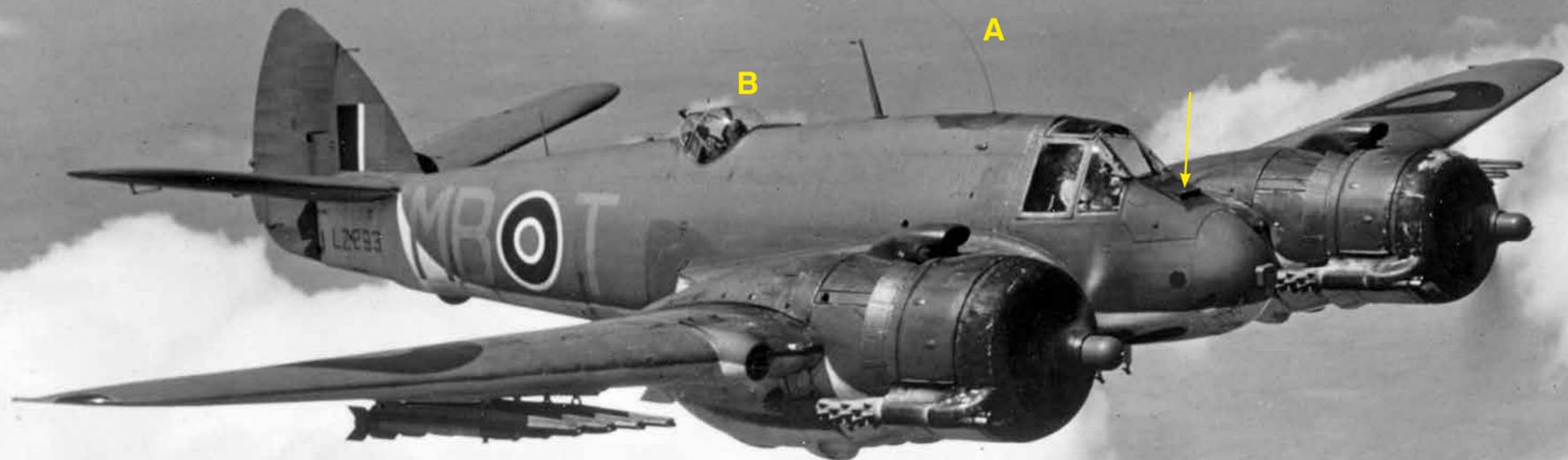




LZ293 (as seen on p18 in the 'white' ASW scheme) now in 236 Sqn markings after work at 46 MU in late April 1944. Gee (indicated by the five and a half foot whip aerial above the forward fuselage) (A) and the B.20 turret (B) have been added. Also of note is the Coastal Mod venturi box (arrowed) above the nose designed to clear rain and sea spray from the windscreen. ASV II has been removed (no Yagi aeriels).

236 was not a 'torpedo squadron', so the F.46 camera was removed but the nose cap and bezel plate remained. The new scheme for Coastal Strike aircraft; Extra Dark Sea Grey upper surfaces with Sky under surfaces to Pattern No 1, (introduced in late 1943), looks relatively fresh.

Unusually for this period, the assigned 236 Sqn code letters – MB – were applied instead of the 'squadron-on-airfield' number/letter then in use on most other Coastal Command squadrons until shortly after D-Day.



TFX NE812 'M' of 455 Sqn RAAF flew only one operational sortie - on 14th May 1944 - after which it crash landed at Langham. It had been delivered on 10th May 1944 to replace 'M' NE206 lost on 6th May.

Features include the near-pristine EDSG and Sky finish, extended tropical carburettor intakes above the engine cowlings, and the Gee aerial*. The scheme had been applied at the MU, which left the rudder in the factory Temperate Sea Scheme colours. The presence of the tropical carburettor filters indicates that this aircraft was originally MU prepared for overseas service. The lack of machine gun ports in the wing leading edges indicate that the bays were fitted with long range tanks. The venturi box on the nose ahead of the windscreen and modified nose cap (with a doped fabric cover over the F.24 camera lens orifice) are also Coastal specific items.

Like the Wick/Davidstow Moor Strike Wing, the Leuchars/Langham Strike Wing was also subject to Coastal Command's short-lived number/letter 'squadron-on-airfield' markings system by the time first Beaufighter TF.Xs for 455 Sqn RAAF, started to arrive in December 1943.

**Note how the Gee aerial (A) stands vertically when stationary.*



With the invasion of Europe looming, the Wick Strike Wing – 144 and 404 Sqns – was relocated to Davidstow Moor in early May 1944 where these photos were taken. Operational since September 1943, 404 Sqn had ample experience with RPs, which became a lethal anti-shipping weapon. The squadron's TFXs could be armed with either 60lb (anti-flak) or 25lb (for hull penetration) warheads in this period.

Right: NE355 2•H awaiting its crew. The rockets have 60lb SAP HE warheads which, before the end of the month, would be relegated to special missions only and very rarely used by this squadron. The presence of the Gee aerial (arrowed) on NE355 is noteworthy, for the squadron training on this navaid began in earnest in early May 1944.

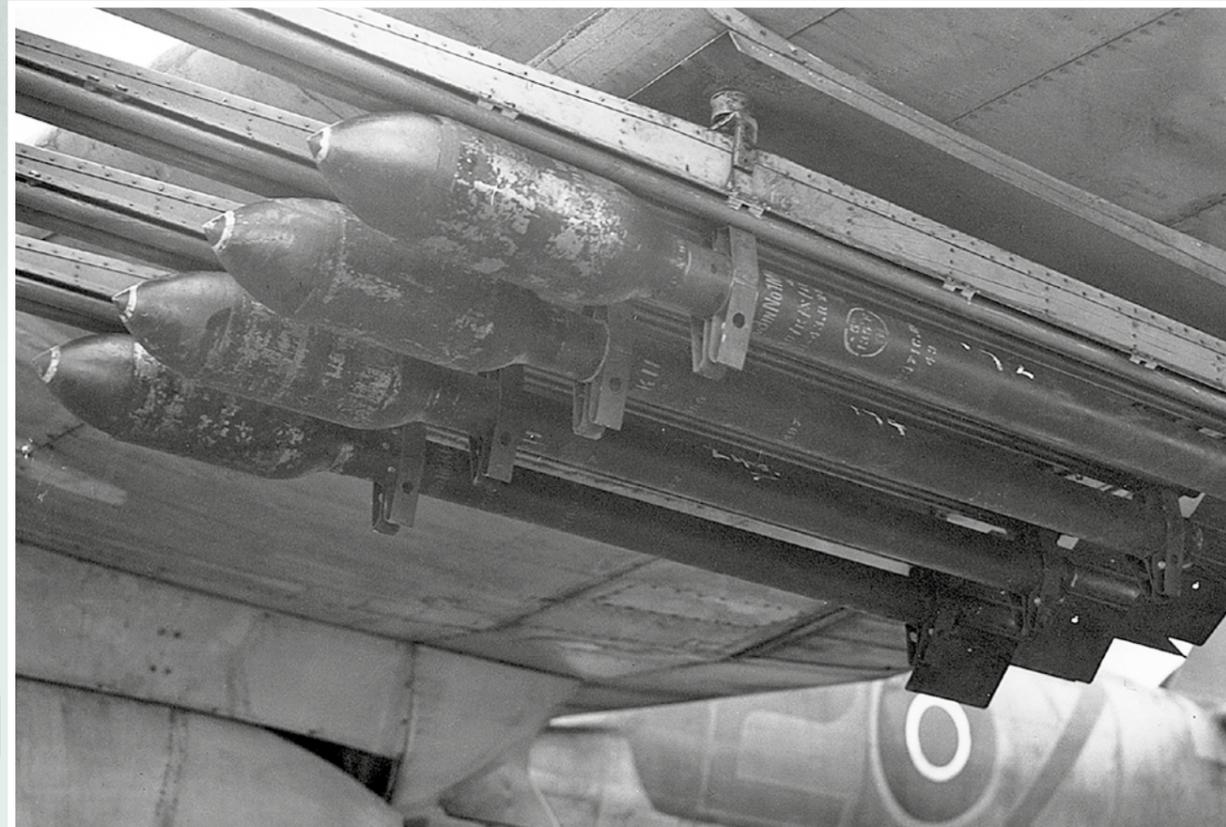
Below: NE425 2•G at the safety checkpoint where armourers plugged the rocket 'pigtails' into the aircraft's electrical system prior to take-off. In this case the RPs are tipped with 25lb AP No 1 warheads.



TFX, NE343 was used to test the 200 gallon ventral fuel tank installation, with various configurations, including an RP load as seen here, at A&AEE Boscombe Down in early 1944. This particular aircraft's fuel system was not plumbed for the tank (which was tested on a later aircraft) being used for drop tests only. Note the single 'lens' landing light also being tested at this time. NE343 was probably finished in the Temperate Sea Scheme while at A&AEE, but then went back to the MU to be brought up to full Coastal Service Standard. NE343 was allocated to 455 Squadron in July 1944, coded 'Z'.



ROCKETS



Main image: Action shot of a 404 Sqn TFX, coded 2•V, losing off a pair of RPs (Rocket Projectiles) with 60lb warheads.

Inset: Close-up of the RP armament under the port wing of LZ295 2•Z, 404 Sqn, in early May 1944, (see also pp20 and 21) with 60lb SAP (Semi Armour Piercing) tipped rockets.

Armourers loading 25lb AP (Armour Piercing) RPs on early Mk 1b rails mounted under NE825 2•G of 404 Sqn (RCAF). Note the unpainted blast plate and fairing. The letters and numbers on the outer faces of the rails refer to the aircraft, ('G') and position of the rail under the wing (S1, S2, S3, S4), Starboard 1, Starboard 2 etc ... This allowed the harmonised rails to be removed and refitted in the same positions without having to be re-aligned.

Note the three lugs provided for the standard Universal Bomb Carrier just inboard of the RP rig. Either RP, or bombs, but not both, could be carried on the standard TFX wing.

