



SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE TR.9 MH367

SPECIFICATIONS

Length:	9.52m	(31 ft 3 in)
Height:	3.58m	(11ft 9in)
Wingspan:	11.23m	(36ft 10in)
Powerplant:	Packard Merlin 266 V12, 1710hp, 2 stage-2 speed supercharger.	
Maximum Speed:	657 km/h	(408 mph)
Range:	698 km	(434 miles)
Service Ceiling:	13,106m	(43,000 ft)

Conroy, G (2011). "Precious Metal" (Pg 45)



Built in July 1943, MH367 was constructed at the Castle Bromwich Factory as a Mk IX fighter powered by a Rolls Royce Merlin 61.

She was assigned to No. 65 (RAF) squadron as part of 65's conversion from Mk V Spitfires. The first four Mk IX's, including MH367, arrived at the squadron on the 5th of July, 1943. Given the squadron code YT-C, MH367's first operation was over a month later on the 15th of August and was flown by F/L J.R Heap. She was reassigned to 229 squadron on the 3rd of September 1944.



With 12 other aircraft from 229 Squadron she took part in a major airborne landing operation over southern Holland. This was to be known as Operation Market Garden which was one of the largest unsuccessful Allied military operation of the Second World War. It was also up to that point the largest single airborne operation in history. Early December saw 229 Squadron convert to the Mk XVI Spitfires. MH367 completed 28 combat missions with 229.

She was then transferred to 312 (Czech) Squadron and given squadron code DU-Z. Here she escorted Lancaster bombers over Western Germany. With 312 Squadron she took part in Operation Varsity, the airborne assault that preceded General Montgomery's crossing of the Rhine. 312 escorted 100 Lancaster bombers. The last combat flight for MH367 was on the 18th of April 1945 escorting 822 Lancasters to Heligoland (VE day was the 8th of May). After the war, MH367 was transferred to Air Services Training, where it was re-engined with a Merlin 63, and in 1947 was transferred to the Empire Central Flying School. Unfortunately in 1948 MH367 suffered a serious landing accident and was scrapped at the Flowers Scrapyard near Chippenham. She was discovered 40 years later.

THE REBUILD

Englishman Peter Godfery who at the time was based in Florida, approached Harry Stenger about getting a spitfire project underway. Harry took on the project in which the forward half of the fuselage of MH367 was incorporated into the build, which also included the 'two seat' conversion parts of ML417 which was one of the original 20 Mk IX's converted to the TR 9 specification. Several other spitfires were used for components. Her first post restoration flight was in November 2006.

In December 2007 she was purchased and arrived in New Zealand early May 2008. She was repainted in the colours and markings of Group Captain Colin Gray's Mk IXc Spitfire flown in the North African campaign. MH367 first flight in New Zealand was on the 21st of May 2008.



Both Above: Godfery, P (2004). Key Publishing.

SQUADRON LEADER COLIN GRAY DSO, DFC

Colin Gray (1914-1995) is New Zealand's highest scoring Ace with 27 confirmed aerial kills. He took part in the Battle of France, the Battle of Britain, the North African and Italian campaigns. MH367 is painted as Colin Gray's Mk IXc Spitfire EN520 of 81 (RAF) Squadron which was based in Algeria. She was given the squadron code FL-A.

