

SPIT & POLISH

78 SQUADRON STYLE

Pilots and their hard-working ground-crews serving abroad on operational squadrons may have had affection for certain machines but operational demands meant that this was usually translated into high levels of serviceability rather than anything cosmetic. At home, many instructors in training units gave their machines exotic colour schemes and kept them spick and span. This set of photos suggests that personnel on 78 Squadron, at Sutton's Farm on Home Defence, also had both the inclination and time to express pride in their Sopwith Camels by maintaining them in showroom condition.



The machine above must have been an early example with the unit; it had a Clerget engine and appears to have lacked night-flying equipment. In addition to its spot-burnished cowling, it had red/white/blue markings on its rear fuselage (as seen on some of the unit's 1½ Strutters) and wheel discs, and even on the 'bullet' of the centre section bracing. :RAFM It seems likely that the machine was B3902, shown right, which had the same fuselage, wheel and 'bullet' colours. The number 1 also appears in black under the lower wing in the photo above. The rudder stripes are reflected on the glossy elevator. :via Mick Davis

