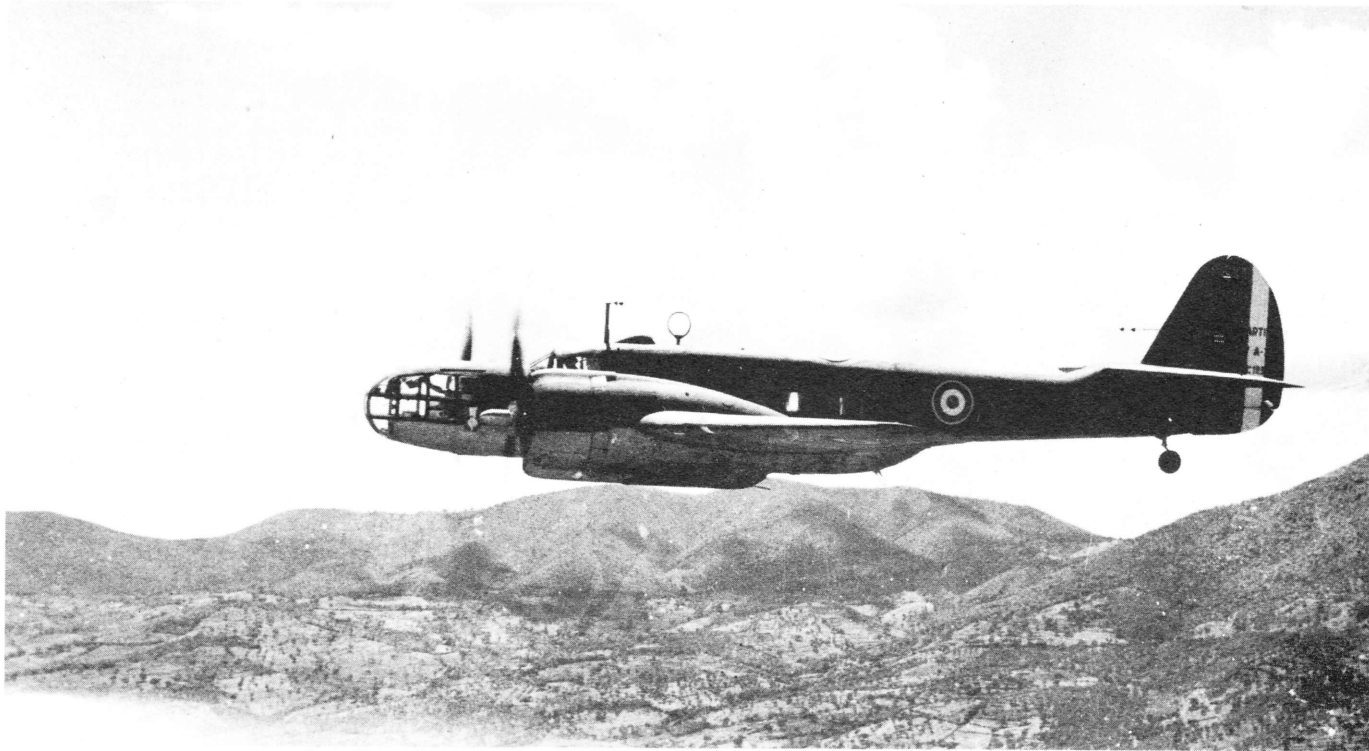




Martin 167 V.I.P. transport of General Juin in flight during 1944. (Photo - The Etablissement Cinema des Armees)

Martin 167 in French Service

By J. CUNY

The Martin 167 was designed to meet a 1938 U. S. Army Air Corps attack-bomber specification, but the single prototype, the XA-22, was unsuccessful in the competition and no orders were placed for the type. With war clouds boiling up over Europe, the French Air Force (Armée de l'Air) selected the Model 167 for its use, along with other U. S. combat and training aircraft, and an order for the type was placed on 26 January 1939.

Known in the U. S. by the production designation Martin 167 F, the French version was officially referred to, in the French Services, as the Martin 167-A3. Crews generally nicknamed the plane, "Glenn" (for Glenn Martin the builder). The machines were equipped in the French manner including French designed or specified instruments, using the metric system. One change affected the throttle control which had to be reversed to conform to French practice where the pilot pushed forward to close the throttle. (The popular expression for full throttle was "control lever in the pocket".) Bombs and bomb racks were of French manufacture and Browning machine guns, from FN, the Belgian Browning manufacturer, were used.

Generally accurate sources indicate that the exact number of Martin 167s delivered was 215 although planes with higher individual order numbers were flown in the F.A.F. No. 223 was undoubtedly in service, No. 266 was probably in service, but No. 228 was in the batch of Martins delivered to the RAF after the French collapse in June 1940. It is probable, however, that the planes were not delivered in true numerical order.

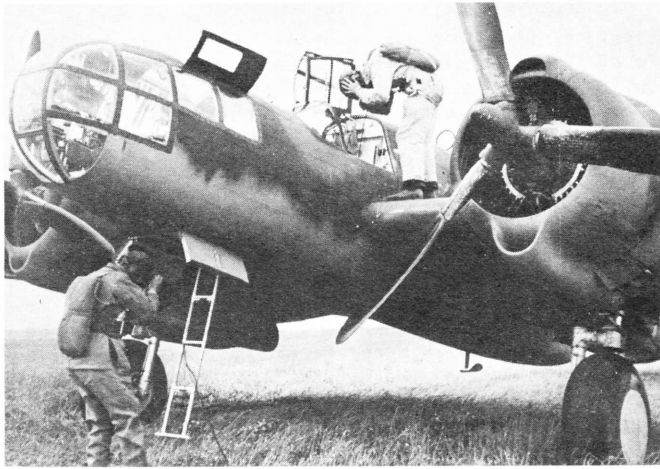
Going into service, the Martins became part of the normal F.A.F. units which were designated through much of World War II in a manner similar to U. S. units. The

largest basic unit was the Escadre (equivalent to a U. S. "Group"), made up of two Groupes (equivalent to U. S. "Squadrons") which in turn were made up of several, usually two, Escadrilles (equivalent to U. S. "Flights" with 1 and 2 Escadrille making up the first Groupe, 3 and 4 making up the second). Written unit designations referred to only the Escadre and Groupe with the latter being referred to first by a Roman numeral, succeeded by a slash and an Arabic numeral for the Escadre. Thus, the 1st Groupe (Bombardment) of 25 Escadre was referred to as, GB I/25, and the 2nd Groupe was referred to as, GB II/25. A bomber Wing (more than one Escadre) was known as a Groupement.

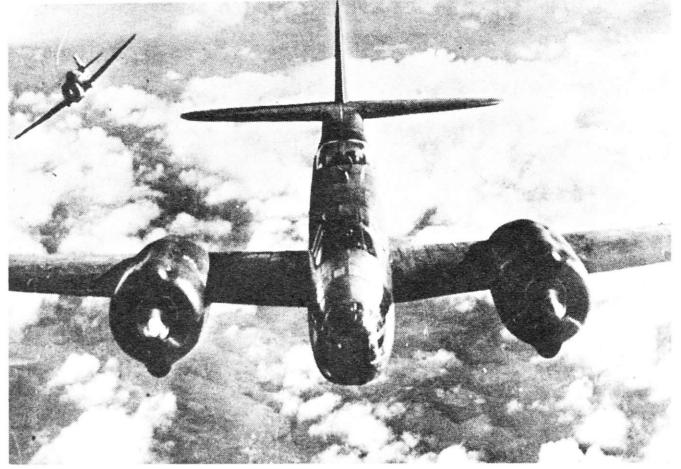
1940: OPERATIONS AGAINST GERMAN AND ITALIAN FORCES

Introduction of the Martin 167-A3 (A3 standing for "Army support, 3 seater plane") into service was influenced by two things. 1) Deliveries, despite a remarkably swift production start, were somewhat delayed--part of the delay being the result of the U. S. embargo on armament, and part resulting from the French workers' lack of familiarity with U. S. systems and standards when they were assembling the uncoded aircraft in North Africa. 2) The ground-attack role for which the Martins were intended, as shown by their designations, was a relatively new branch of the F.A.F. and called for a longer crew training period than was needed to bring level bomber units into combat readiness.

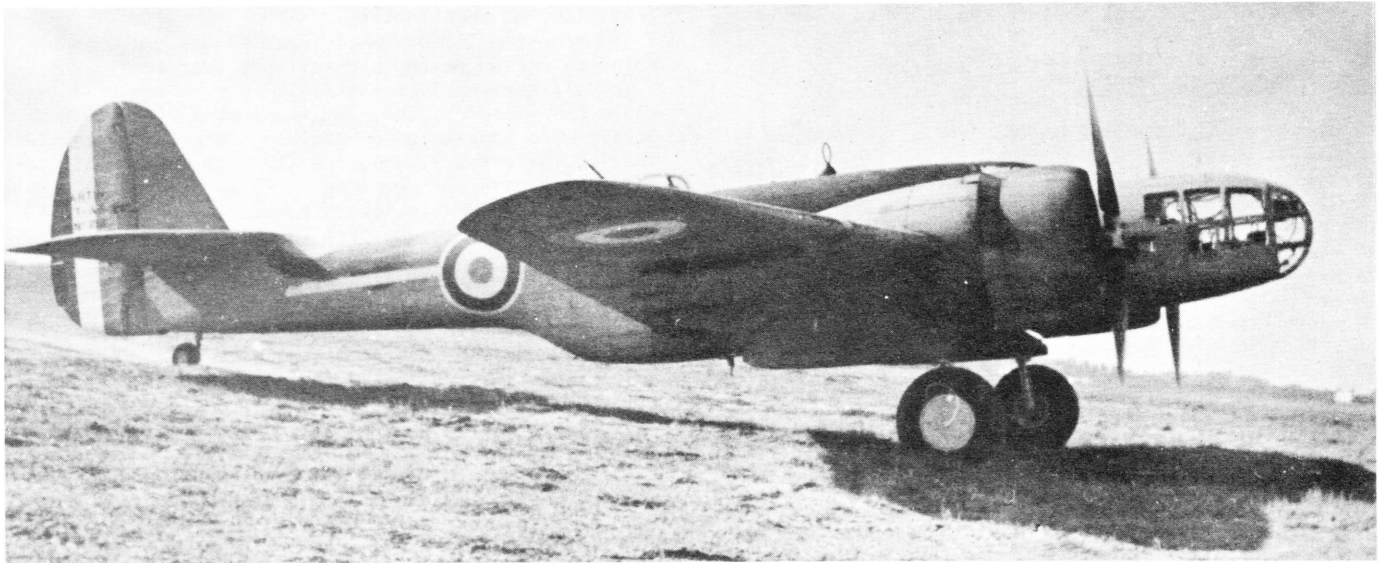
With the delivery delays and the crew training problems, plus the fact that the F.A.F. had a number of skilled level bomber crews serving in obsolete aircraft, a decision was reached to employ 167s principally



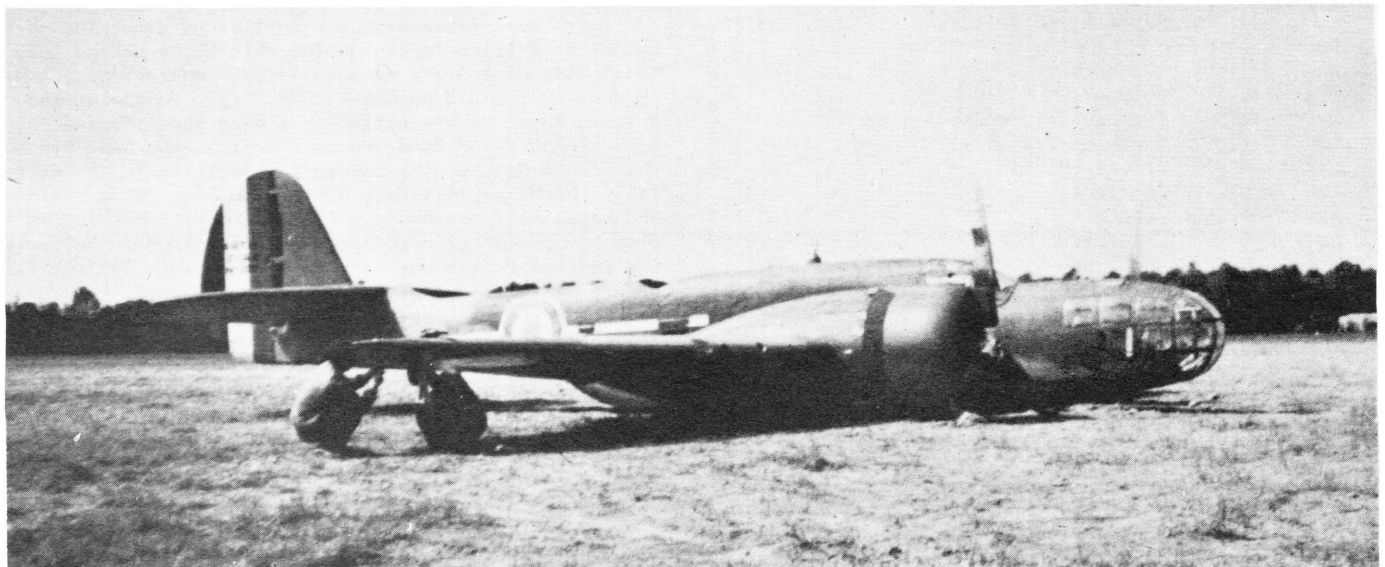
Martin 167 bomber of the Armee de l'Air before a mission in 1940. (Photo - The Etablissement Cinema des Armees)



Another Martin 167 bomber in flight, this one accompanied by a Curtiss Hawk H75 fighter. (Photo - E.C.A.)



During the Vichy period, 1940 to 1942, this 167 served with GR 1/22. (Photo - From the Colonel Brian Collection)



A crash landed 167 belong to GR 1/22 which was based at Rabat, Morocco between 1940-42. (Photo - M. Boubel)

in the day, level bomber role. Thereafter, during March and April of 1940, the crews of four Groupes converted to the new planes in North Africa and a fifth unit was reequipped in Syria.

When Germany launched its big offensive in the West on 10 May 1940, the Martin 167 units were GB 1/62 and 1/63, ready for action and based in southwest France, and GB 11/62 and 11/63, in North Africa with the former ready for action and the latter still training. These four Groupes, equipped with 12 to 18 planes each and made up of four Escadrilles, formed the newly created Groupement No. 1. This large unit was sent to the North Front in France, where the main attack was in progress, on 22 May and engaged in bombing missions against German forces from that day until 14 June. With Italy's infamous entry into WW II and attack on southern France, Grt No. 1 was transferred to face the Italian forces and carried out a number of operations against Mediterranean targets from 15 June until 24 June 1940, when armistice terms were signed with Italy. Total operations for the Martins were approximately 363 sorties against German forces (17 planes lost in action) and 55 sorties against Italians (one plane lost in action). The following table lists the missions flown by the 167s, although some Douglas DB-7s took part in the third mission of 8 June.

DATE	NO. A/C	TARGET	LOSSES
22 May	12	Cambrai Region	1 Damaged
	12	" "	1 Lost, 4 Dam.
23 May	2	Le Tréport Region	
24 May	18	Cambrai Region	2 Lost
	12	" "	2 Lost
25 May	6	Abbeville Region	
26 May	12	Somme River Region	2 Lost
28 May	21	Amiens Roads	
29 May	6	Abbeville Bridges	
	24	Abbeville Region	1 Lost
30 May	2	" "	
	2	" "	
	13	" "	
31 May	18	" "	3 Damaged
5 Jun	18	Péronne & Somme Bridges	2 Lost
6 Jun	10	Oise River Bridge	
	15	Roye Region	1 Lost
7 Jun	9	" "	
	15	" "	
	13	" "	1 Lost
	6	Poix Region	
8 Jun	13	Gournay Region	1 Damaged
	18	Braye Region	
	12	Aisne River Bridges	1 Lost (DB-??)
9 Jun	4	" "	
12 Jun	17	Bergencourt	4 Lost
	15	Suippes	
13 Jun	10	Chateau-Thierry Region	
14 Jun	18	South of Epernay	
15 Jun	6	Tripoli Harbor	
16 Jun	6	Cagliari	
19 Jun	6	Zouara	
22 Jun	6	Trapani Harbor	
	5	" "	
	6	" "	
23 Jun	3	Quara	
	4	Palermo	
	3	" "	1 Crashed
24 Jun	10	Cagliari	

A further commentary on these missions was the collective mention in dispatches of GB 11/63: "...elite squadron which, from its first action and under the strong and active impulse of its chief, Commandant Bezu, confirmed brightest qualities.... From its arrival on the French Front, despite particularly efficient enemy flak action and more numerous aerial opposition, this unit intervened constantly, and with all its means.

...from May 23 until June 14, 1940, a great number of missions, including one hundred low-level day bombings, in direct support of friendly Land forces (were carried out). It thus contributed appreciably to slowing the enemy advance by causing important losses to some armored columns. From June 22 to 24, it obtained remarkable results in 15 day bombing missions launched against military targets in Sicily and Libya."

In general, the missions flown by the Martins were successful, but the invading forces were so numerous that the little lasting damage done could not stem their attacks. The majority of targets were German panzer concentrations, supply convoys and vital bridges. Level attacks were usually carried out between 300 and 3000 feet. Flak was very accurate and caused considerable damage with most of the Martins lost undoubtedly falling to the fire of 20mm and 37mm Wehrmacht guns. As the French fighters, although not numerous, were extremely aggressive and efficient during this campaign the bombers suffered only a small proportion of losses to enemy fighter interception. (1) Some losses resulted from the bombers carrying out low altitude reconnaissance flights on their return to base, but the good sea level performance, armament and maneuverability of the aircraft limited such losses.

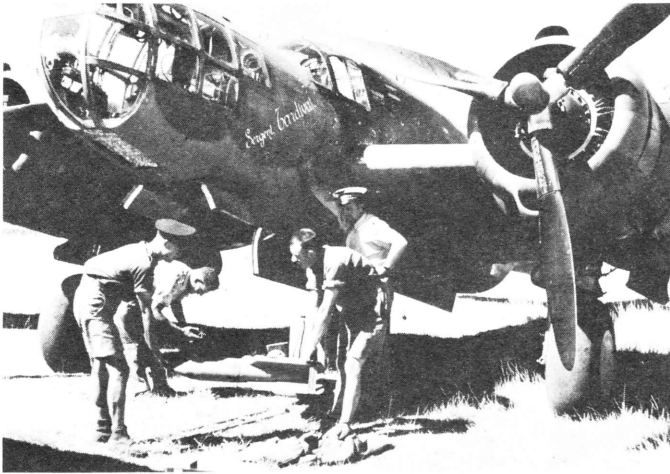
The Martin 167 was well liked by its crews whose major objection to the aircraft was that it did not have self-sealing fuel tanks. With such tanks, losses would have been reduced. However, even without them, losses were kept at a low ratio in relation to sorties: the 167 suffering 4.7% losses (in missions against German forces only) as compared to 15.9% for the LeO 45. (2) Only other Martin 167 unit was the Syria based GB 1/39 which did not take part in war operations.

1940-42: VICHY AIR FORCES

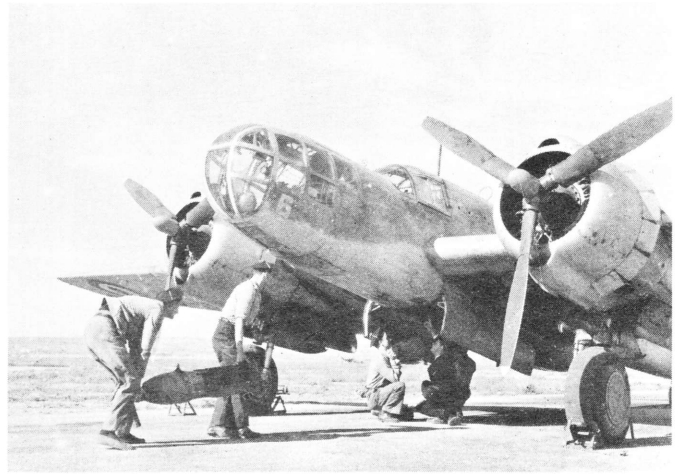
Armistice with the Germans and Italians took effect from 25 June 1940, and from that date there were no flyable Martin 167s remaining in France's metropolitan territory. Two Groupes had retreated to Algeria while the other two were in Tunisia. Reorganization occurred in the following months and during this time the West African and Syrian Air Commands and the Naval Air Service bombing units standardized on the 167. GB 1/39 remained in Syria. GB 1/62 and 1/63 at Bamako (Mali) and GB 11/62 and 11/63 at Thies (Senegal) were in West Africa. The Aéronavale (French Naval Air Service) had reequipped its bombing Escadrilles with 167s also, and five units, all initially based in North Africa, were flying the type--2B, 3B, 5B, 6B and 7B. GR 1/22 also operated some Martin 167s during this period from Rabat, Morocco.

There were frequent opportunities to attack or reconnoiter British forces during this Vichy period, and Naval 167s were often engaged in such operations between 25 June 1940 and 8 November 1942. (3) Following the British Royal Navy's attack on French Naval Forces in Mers-el-Kebir and Dakar harbors (which gave new life to the French Navy's old, concealed hostility to the British), the Naval 167s took part in bombing raids against, and recon missions over, Gibraltar. British ships were dive bombed (or glide bombed--the cruiser HMS Sheffield and several destroyers were damaged by such 167 attacks) before a status-quo situation was recognized.

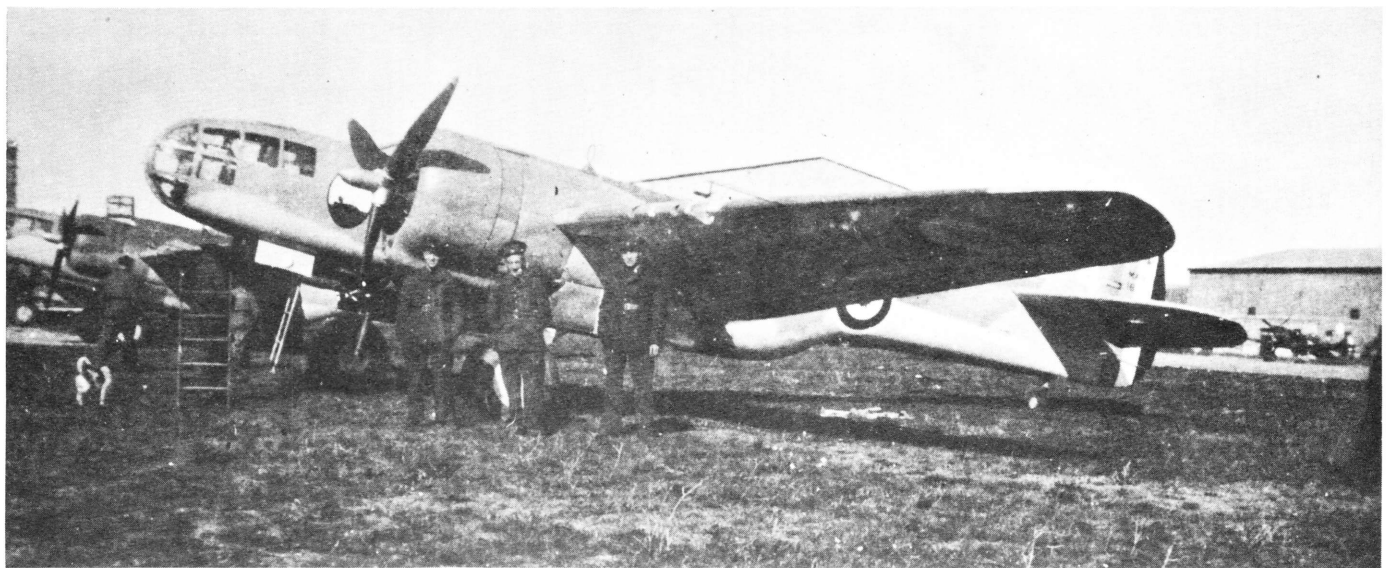
Later in this period, 5B reinforced the Armée de l'Air Groupes in West Africa and, there, flew recon missions over Freetown to prevent possible reinforcement of British Forces for offensive actions toward Dakar. During such a flight, the famous French Naval flyer, Cdt Dallières, was killed by Hurricanes over Freetown. He'd become famous for his very low altitude night bombing raids over Germany, going so far as Berlin or Rostock, with an armed, four engine transport plane (Farman 2234). Only his extremely fine navigation and the surprise of his low level attacks over remote regions had permitted such missions. Tragically, he was killed only one month before the Allied North African landings,



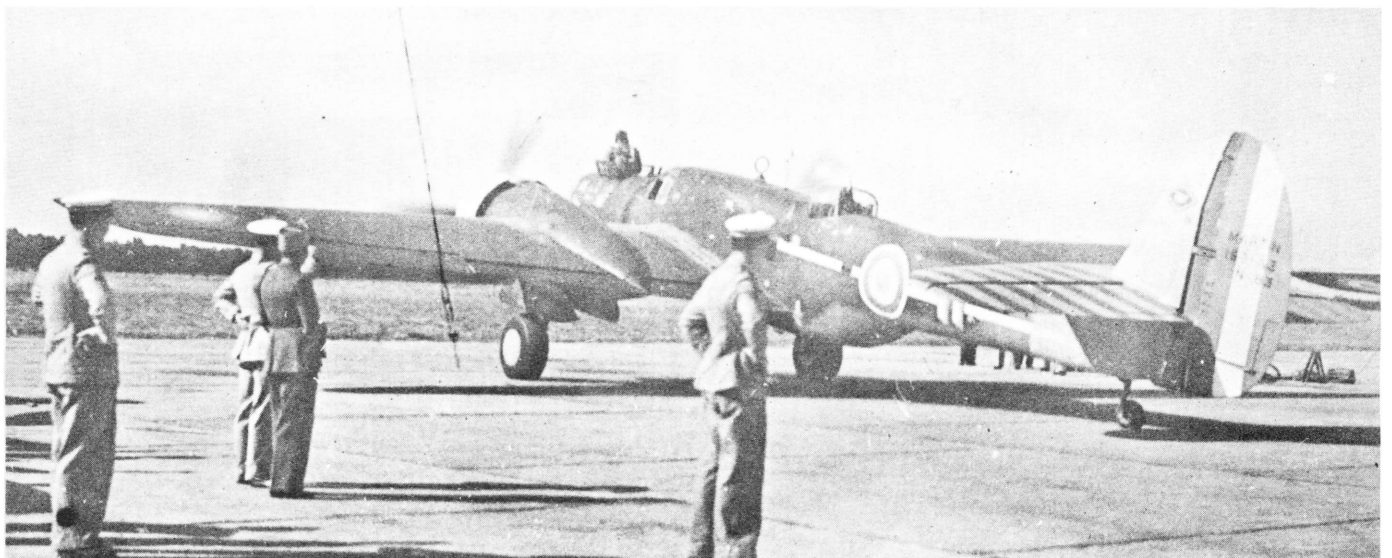
Named "Sergent Cardinal" this Martin 167 of GB 1/39 is seen while based in Syria, 1941. (Photo - E.C.A.)



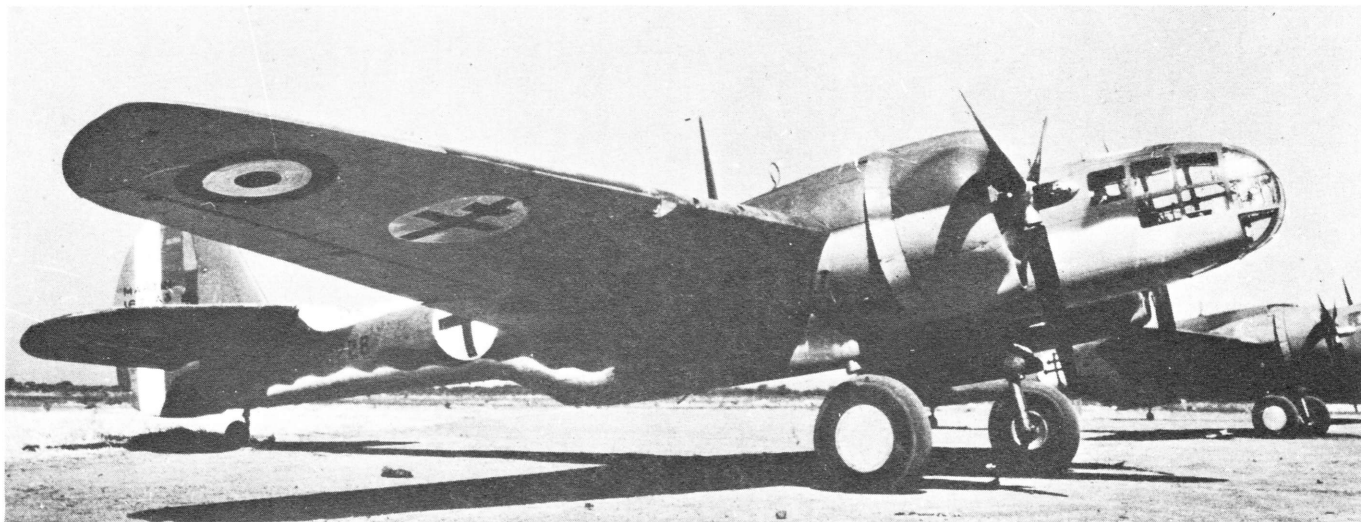
Loading bombs on aircraft No. 6 of an Aeronavale Escadrille in Algeria, 1941. (Photo - E.C.A.)



This Aeronavale, North Africa based Martin 167 possibly fought in Syria during 1941. (Photo - J. Cuny Collection)



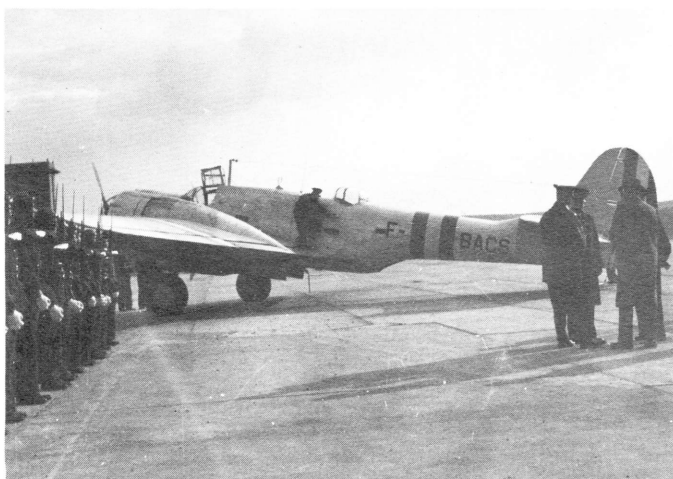
An Armée de l'Air 167 bomber, 1940 or 1941, with some of the distinctive markings of the Vichy period. (E.C.A.)



During 1941 and 1942, Martin 167s of the Free French Air Force, such as No. 228 in the foreground, operated in Fezzan, Middle Sahara. Differences in "Lorraine Cross" presentation are visible on the two planes. (Photo-E.C.A.)



Martin 167, with civil registration F-BAHC, is a long range mailplane returning from a flight to Madagascar. The number 266 on the nose of the aircraft is noteworthy. (Photo - Etablissement Cinema des Armees)



V.I.P. transport, 1942, this Martin 167 was the personal liaison aircraft of General Jannequin. A similarly civilianized aircraft was F-BAGN. (Photo - E.C.A.)



V.I.P. transport, 1944, this 167 was the personal liaison aircraft of General Juin and carries his insignia on the nose. (Photo - Etablissement Cinema des Armees)

being lost on 11 October 1942.

When British and Free French Forces attacked Vichy-held Syria in June-July 1941, to prevent the Luftwaffe from establishing bases in this territory, the local bomber unit, GB 1/39, was reinforced with two Naval Escadrilles, 6B and 7B, which came from North Africa together with Dewoitine D 520 fighters. The fighting, lasting a little over one month, was serious and for the airmen was added the additional problem of recognition since both the British and French forces used identical Martin 167 (Maryland) bombers. At the end of the fighting, the Naval units returned to North Africa with only four planes out of the thirteen originally sent.

Last Vichy-controlled forces to combat the Allies were those which contested the U. S. and British landings in North Africa on 8 November 1942. At the opening of these actions, the Martin 167s of 2B and 3B were caught on the ground by U. S. aircraft and destroyed before they could take off to attack the U. S. beachhead at Fedala. Many casualties were suffered.

Even before the return of the French Empire to the Allied side, the Vichy government had encountered enormous difficulties in establishing communications with remote territories such as Djibouti or Madagascar, separated from France by very long distances and British controlled areas. To "close the gap", long range mailplanes were used frequently, and it's perhaps surprising to note 167s were among the very long range aircraft used. (Others were principally Amiot 354, 356 and 370 bombers, well known for their range capability, or ex-transAtlantic Latécoere seaplanes.)

1940-43: FREE FRENCH AIR FORCE (FORCES AERIENNES FRANCAISES LIBRES)

Immediately after the June 1940 armistice, two Tunisian based 167s left their base to continue fighting on the side of the British. Under the command of Capitaine Dodelier they remained a separate unit, the "Escadrille de Bombardement No. 1" which operated against Italian East Africa from Aden bases between June and December 1940. Though there were only two planes, they proved efficient at a time when the RAF possessed no modern aircraft in that part of the world. One of the planes was shot down during September, and the other was shot down on 16 December, over Dire-Daoua, carrying Capitaine Dodelier to his death.

French Central Africa Forces, during 1940, began a series of offensive operations in the Sahara Desert. Under the command of Col. Leclerc, they fought with small, heavily armed and fast motorized columns which were given some aerial support by obsolete, colonial French planes. There were interesting types also, such as Lysanders, Blenheim IVs and Martin 167s. The latter had been taken from machines destined for France but delivered to the RAF after 25 June 1940. They equipped a "Detachement Permanent des Forces Aériennes du Tchad", re-designated after 1 January 1942 as GB 11/20 "Bretagne" Groupe. The last surviving Martin 167s of this unit were still flying at the beginning of 1943 when Leclerc Forces succeeded in joining the British 8th Army at Tripoli after completely crossing the Sahara and definitely destroying the Italian garrisons there. (11/20 was to become the first French unit to reequip with another Martin product, the B-26 Marauder.)

One other Martin 167 unit was created during this period with Free French pilots. This was the "Escadrille de Bombardement No. 2", born when No. 1 came to the end of its days in Ethiopia. No. 2, after some training with 223 Squadron, RAF, operated in the East Mediterranean area as a flight of 39 Squadron. Its commanding officer was the famous French pilot, Colonel de Marmier.

1943-45: RE-ENTRY OF FRANCE INTO WW II

Following the North African landings, all French

controlled territories joined Allied nations in their efforts to liberate France itself. Existing bomber units were reequipped with modern aircraft (mainly Marauders) before resuming the fight, and the Martin 167s were relegated to training and fast liaison duties. The first-line, military career of the bomber appeared to have ended, but....

After the successful Allied landings in Normandy, June 1944, guerrilla fighting increased greatly with regular and irregular French Forces trying to take control of territory even before any important Allied unit could reach such territory. Special squadrons of the F.A.F. were created to support actions against retreating German columns and remaining strongpoints. In some cases, these units were created with "forgotten" pilots from occupied territories using planes built for the Germans themselves in French factories (4), but in the main, squadrons received second-hand planes taken from North African training centers.

A transport unit, the 1/34 "Bearn" Groupe, was hastily created in July 1944 with Martin 167 and Douglas DB-7 aircraft. It flew reconnaissance missions over central France and, after the remaining German forces were pocketed in strongpoints along the Atlantic coast, flew some bombing missions. (It is probable the DB-7s, alone, flew bombing missions due to the difficulties in reequipping two types to the bomber role.) In support of the siege of the Royan and la Pointe de Grave fortresses, which blocked Allied use of Bordeaux harbor, the Groupe operated from a base near the town of Cognac. From February 1945, GB 1/34 operated Marauder bombers, and the 167s went to a second new Groupe, GB 1/31. This unit had been created in France, during August 1944, and used seized Ju 88s and Martin 167s. It was still attacking small, German-controlled coastal fortresses when the war ended.

The two related "Forces Francaises de l'Atlantique" units had flown 132 war missions (GB 1/34 "Bearn") and 420 war missions (GB 1/31 "Aunis") of which a proportion, unknown to the author, were flown with Martin 167s. No planes were shot down by German naval flak but some casualties were sustained among the crews.

After WW II, and up to 1947, a few Martin 167s were still flying as liaison planes, but the type did not survive long because of a lack of spare parts and the availability of numerous more modern and easily adaptable types. Spacious bombers, like the LeO 45, and true transport planes, like the C-47, took its place.

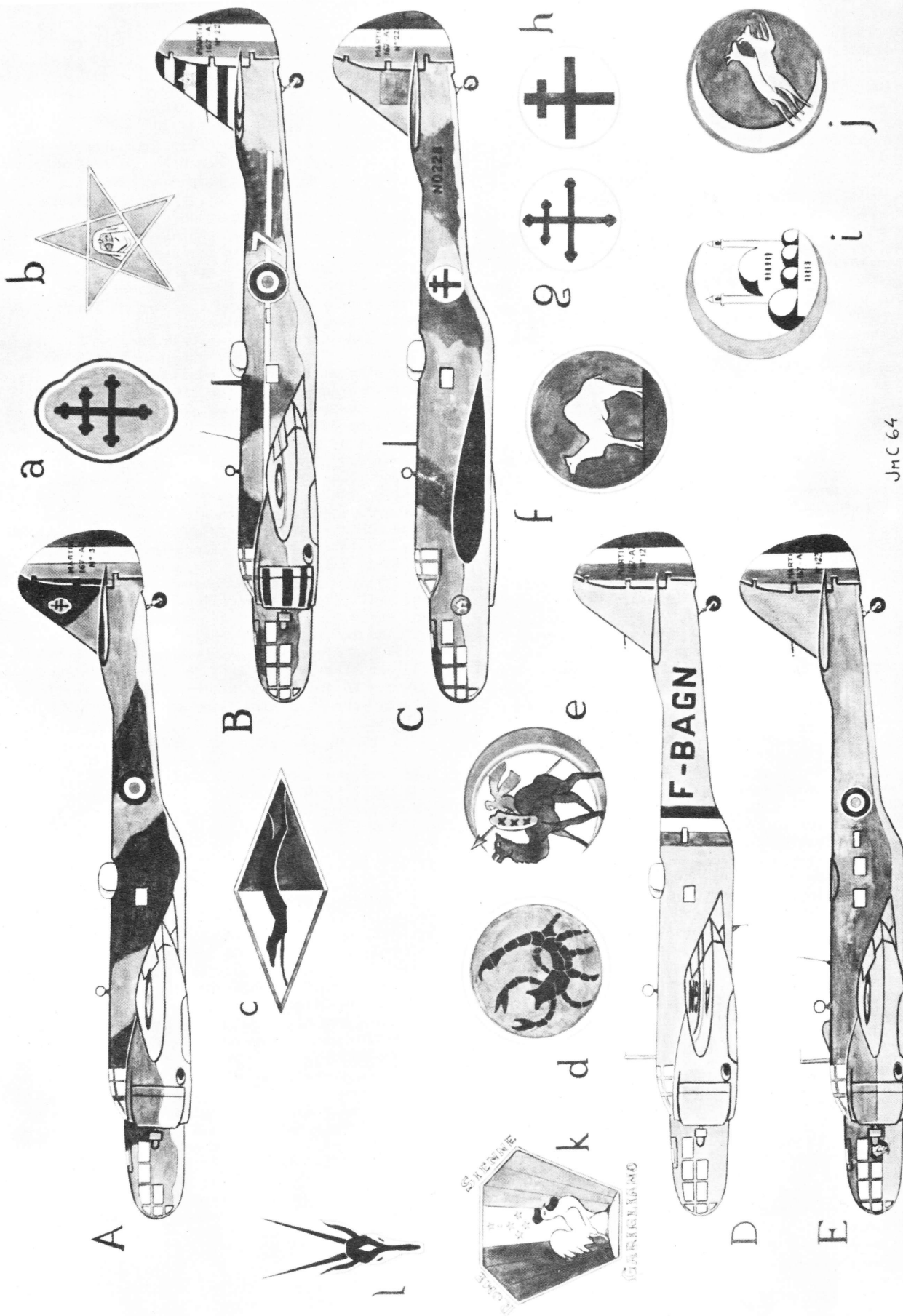
MARTIN 167: CAMOUFLAGE AND MARKINGS

When delivered in North Africa to the French Air Force, Martin 167 aircraft received the camouflage scheme then standard. Upper and side surfaces were painted either brown and forest green or (more rarely) brown, green and medium grey. There was no standard for the dimensions and form of patches. Under surfaces were painted light blue although at times this color seems to have been replaced with light grey. The separation line was always irregular, never sharp.

The RAF-owned 167s, which were later returned to the French, certainly had the standard British desert camouflage scheme, but this was applied (to at least the initial French contract planes) over the French camouflage. In time, after being exposed to the action of the desert winds, there was a shading off and mixing of the two schemes on the aircraft. The civilianized Vichy mailplanes and V.I.P. transport 167s were either aluminum painted or had natural metal finishes. Most post-WW II liaison machines were aluminum painted.

NATIONAL MARKINGS

1940 Campaign: The three national colors (light blue, white and red) were painted in vertical stripes on the rudder with the light blue ever forward. Because of the curved leading edge of the rudder, the leading



JnC 64

edge of this surface was in the same finish as the fin. The official model designation and individual aircraft number were stenciled over the rudder stripes--MARTIN 167-A3 No ---. National roundels were painted on top of and under each wing, and, some weeks before the German May offensive, they became standard on the rear fuselage sides. All roundels were painted directly over the camouflage without an outline.

Vichy Period: In the Armée de l'Air, the fuselage roundels were outlined in white and a long white band was painted on the sides of the fuselage. Diagonal tri-color stripes were added to the upper and lower surfaces of the wings, these always being painted inboard of the wing roundels which were not outlined. During 1941 supplementary identification markings were added. Yellow and red stripes were painted on engine cowlings and the vertical and horizontal fins (generally including that part of the fuselage supporting the tail).

In Aéronavale service, markings were strictly the same with planes being taken from Armée de l'Air stocks. An anchor, however, was painted over each tricolor marking.

Civilian planes of the Vichy period had rudder stripes that were identical to those on the military planes, but wing and fuselage roundels were replaced by large tricolor bands.

Free French Forces: Original French rudder stripes were kept (or added) as were wing tricolor roundels. The wings also carried "Lorraine Crosses" painted on a white circle, and this Free French symbol was further painted on each fuselage side. Two versions of this cross were used at the same time, the more "squared" version being the most used. The RAF fin flashes on these aircraft were painted over but usually remained visible under the camouflage.

1943-45 Period: Markings were the same as carried on the 1940 planes (all Vichy markings disappearing), but the roundels were outlined in yellow as were the British roundels of the same years.

IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS, LETTERS AND INSIGNIAS

Rarely did the French use aircraft letters, and the author only possesses documents showing individual identification numbers used on Martin 167s. These were painted on the sides of the fuselage behind the national roundel in the same white as used on the fuselage band of Vichy aircraft. Naval 167s frequently carried the number on the fin. The ex-French-ex-British bombers flown by the Gaullist Forces lost their RAF serial number which was replaced by the original production number --No. 228 had "NO 228" painted on the rear fuselage sides.

Through much of WW II, French Air Force planes did not carry codes to identify squadrons as did RAF and AAF machines. There is no evidence that any were carried on French 167s, other than the possible use of RAF squadron codes by the Martins operating with 39 and 223 Squadrons. Naval Escadrilles had their designation (2B, 3B, etc) painted on the sides of the rear fuselage in smaller characters than the aircraft number.

At least 15 different unit insignias were painted on French 167s with each Escadrille (two to four per Groupe) having its own. About half of these are illustrated on the opposite page. It is interesting to note the importance of North African and Syrian subjects in these insignia--only GB 1/62 had a heritage dating back to WW I through its two Escadrilles (formerly SAL 8 and SAL 55). The majority of insignias were created in Algeria and Syria, taking inspiration from those countries and depicting camels, scorpions and Arabian ladies. The Free French also used the camel symbol on its planes supporting LeClerc's Sahara operations.

Individual aircraft or personal insignias were rarely painted on French aircraft. Actually, only V.I.P. planes displayed the French National Flag, rank markings or other special insignias. A most interesting example

was the French Cock insignia of General Juin. Names were more readily applied to French aircraft, but these were not the names of the airplane commander or pilot as in the USAAF but the name of some deceased person carried as a memorial.

MARKINGS DRAWINGS: AIRCRAFT AND INSIGNIA

To illustrate 167 markings, the author has created the fine plan-view on the back cover of this issue, and the drawings appearing at left which are identified as follows:

- A) Bomber of GB 1/62 Groupe, during 1940.
- B) Bomber of GB 1/63 Groupe, during 1942 Vichy period. This plane crashed in North Africa.
- C) Fezzan operations support bomber (Detachment des Forces Aériennes du Tchad), during 1941.
- D) V.I.P. transport during 1942.
- E) V.I.P. transport, General Juin's aircraft, 1944.
- a) Insignia of GB 1/62, 2nd Escadrille - Red "Lorraine Cross" on blue shield, as on "A" aircraft.
- b) Insignia of GB 1/63, 1st Escadrille - Head of Algerian woman on blue star, as on "B" aircraft.
- c) Insignia of GB 1/62, 1st Escadrille - Black greyhound on white and red diamond.
- d) Insignia of GB 11/63, 4th Escadrille - Black scorpion on red circle.
- e) Insignia of GB 11/62, 3rd Escadrille - Targui warrior on "mehari"; brown camel, all the rest silver.
- f) Insignia of Free French, Tchad based plane (perhaps a unit badge) - Sand colored camel on blue.
- g) Free French "Lorraine Cross" - This model was historically the accurate one (see "a") with red cross on white circle.
- h) Another "Lorraine Cross" which progressively replaced the more complicated, earlier type - Red cross on white circle, as on "C" aircraft.
- i) Insignia of GB 1/39, 4th Escadrille - Gold crescent, white and black mosque.
- j) Insignia of GB 1/39, 2nd Escadrille - Gold crescent and gazelles on blue circle.
- k) Personal insignia of General Juin, as on "E" aircraft - National colors, white cockerel, five gold stars (Army Commander, French general), Italian Campaign names: Garigliano, Rome, Sienna.
- l) Insignia of Naval Escadrille 2B - White and black antelope head.

FOOTNOTES

① It is often forgotten that the famous German ace, Moelders, was shot down by a Dewoitine D 520 and taken prisoner during the fighting over Northern France.

② This ratio includes only planes shot down. Total loss figures were far higher. Many planes were destroyed on the ground when they were unflyable at the time of a retreat necessitated by German advances.

The LeO 45 units received the first shock of combat and so suffered very high losses. From the early morning of 10 May, they tested tactics and, although pure level bombers, they flew more zero altitude assault missions than the 167s, sustaining enormous losses.

It is also to be noted that the Douglas DB-7 losses were relatively higher than those of the Martin 167.

③ Not only was there a long standing anti-British sentiment in the French Navy, coming from an old sailor's rivalry, but the Navy also appeared as the main military support of Vichy policy--its Commanding Officer having the second highest state position.

④ The production rate of the German-controlled French aeronautical industry (producing Dewoitine D 520, Ju 88, Ju 52, Fi 156, FW 190 and other aircraft) was very low during the occupation but rose notably after the liberation of the producing plants. Immediately used against the retreating Germans were D 520s, Fi 156s and Ju 88s.

It is interesting to note the motto of GB 1/31, "Retour à l'Envoyeur" (Return to Sender).