



## **Photography hints and tips**

Your flight with the Spitfire will live long in your memory but for many people photographs of your air-to-air experience will be the “icing on the cake” and here are a few hints and tips on how to get the best results

- Firstly, you don't have to be a skilled photographer to get some good photographs of the Spitfire. It flies close enough at times to see the glint in Charlie's eyes as he looks across to you in the helicopter. The helicopter windows are clear and plenty large enough.
- A compact camera or mobile phone will get you photos which you can be pleased with but for those of you with digital (or film) SLRs, skip to a little further down the list of tips.
- With a compact camera, standard or “landscape” mode will probably suffice but you may want to choose “action” or “sports” mode to reduce the risk of blurred shots. Either way, make sure that you hold the camera as steady as possible when you take the picture.
- Try to keep the Spitfire in the centre of the picture. If you have a zoom facility, use it and take some close-ups to go with the other photos. Try getting the Spitfire to fill the viewfinder as well as some wider angles with plenty of sea/land/sky in view.
- Whilst you can get some good silhouette shots shooting into the light, the best photos are likely to be taken with any sun behind you illuminating the Spitfire better.
- Try to hold the camera level – if the horizon has a really obvious slope, there are no mountain ranges around Dover which would account for this!!! You can of course correct this if you want to use photo-editing software afterwards but it really does detract from the picture if the horizon is heavily askew.
- For those people with digital SLRs, the first thing to say is that you don't need a big lens. I took an 18-85mm and 100-400mm lens on my flight and the smaller lens was adequate 95% of the time. An 18-200mm or similar would be perfect.



- Fast shutter speeds are not essential because the relative speeds of the Spitfire and camera ship are matched most of the time. Occasionally the Spitfire will accelerate across your path and a faster shutter speed helps then.
- If you can blur the Spitfire's propeller whilst still getting sharp results, so much the better. I prefer to use shutter priority and  $1/100^{\text{th}}$  or  $1/125^{\text{th}}$  does the trick but anything above  $1/250^{\text{th}}$  tends to "freeze the propeller" and reduce the impression of motion. An image-stabilised lens helps to minimise any slight movements of the helicopter and makes lower shutter speeds easier but take plenty of shots and vary the speeds if you are not completely confident with the lower ones.
- Average weighted metering works well most of the time especially if the Spitfire is below or level with you. Partial or spot metering may help against the sky or over a sunlit sea but I used average weighting all the time and 95% of shots were perfectly exposed.
- If you have a zoom, use it! Wide angle shots of a small aircraft with a "big sky" can look great as well as close-ups of Charlie in the cockpit along with everything in between.
- Finally, take lots of pictures! The Spitfire is a beautiful machine from every angle and you get lots of opportunities to click away. However I really would urge you to put the camera down as well and enjoy the moment. For a few minutes you recreate a moment in history, flying alongside a legendary machine over the Kent coastline where battles were fought which determined the outcome of a World War. Enjoy the photography but don't let that sense of history pass you by!

Chris Bosworth  
November 2010