

WW2 Royal Navy Aircraft I:

This kit features 18 1/700 scale Fairey Fulmars, Fairey Swordfish, and Hawker Sea Hurricanes as used aboard Royal Navy aircraft carriers in World War II.

Packaging:

The kit comes in a standard 8.5" x 3.75" box featuring a painting of the three aircraft types in flight over rugged and snowy coastal terrain, most likely Norway. The aircraft sprues are moulded in grey plastic, all of the kit components come in sealed plastic bags. The kit comprises 160 parts on 8 sprues, an etch sheet with 80 pieces and a decal sheet of markings.

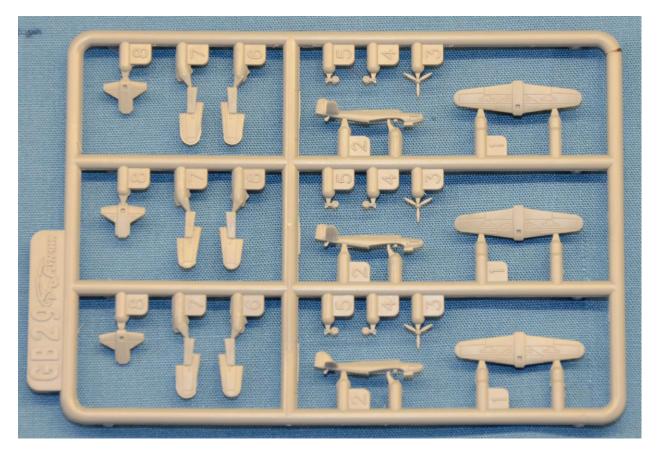


----- Box Art -----

Fairey Fulmar:

Each sprue has 24 parts for 3 aircraft. Two sprues are included giving a total of 6 aircraft, each of which can be assembled with wings folded or unfolded. The unfolded version has 5 parts: fuselage, wing, landing gear, and propeller. The folded wing version has port, starboard, and centre wing pieces.

There are recessed panel lines on the top and bottom of the wing and on the fuselage. The fuselage features clearly defined windows for the cockpit and aft compartment, engine exhausts, and moulded in tailplane and tail wheel. The landing gear has detailed wheels and tires. The propeller is very finely moulded and features a nose spinner.

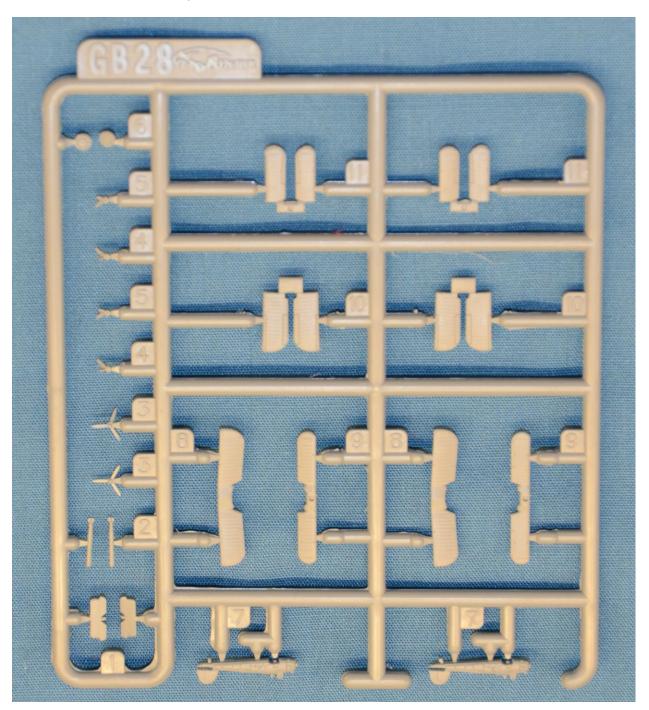


⁻⁻⁻⁻⁻ Fairey Fulmar -----

Fairey Swordfish:

There are 2 aircraft and 22 parts per sprue, with four sprues included giving a total of 8 aircraft with each aircraft having the option to be assembled with wings folded or unfolded. The unfolded version has 12 parts: fuselage, upper and lower wings, tailplane, engine cowling, torpedo, wing struts, rear machine gun, landing gear, and propeller. The folded wing version has an extra wing strut; each folded wing is a single piece. The wing struts and rear machine gun are in photo-etch.

There is raised ribbing on the top of the wings and tailplane, recessed panel lines on the wing bottoms and fuselage. The fuselage has recessed cockpit and rear gunner compartments, a moulded in tail wheel, and engine and exhaust details. The landing gear has detailed wheels and tires. The engine cowling shows detail of the front of the engine and the torpedo has fins. The propeller is very finely molded and features a nose spinner.

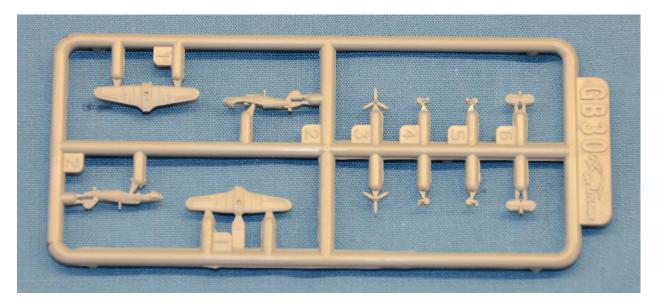


----- Fairey Swordfish -----

Hawker Sea Hurricane:

There are 2 aircraft and 12 parts per sprue, with two sprues included giving a total of 4 aircraft. As the Sea Hurricane did not feature folding wings, there is only one version of the aircraft. Each aircraft consists of 6 parts: fuselage, wing, tailplane, landing gear, and propeller.

The fuselage and wing feature recessed panel lines. The fuselage has clearly defined cockpit windows, engine exhausts, ribbing aft of the cockpit, the radio antenna mast, and the tail wheel. The landing gear features the partial wheel coverings. As with the other aircraft, the propeller is very finely molded and features a nose spinner.



----- Hawker Sea Hurricane -----

Decals:

The decal sheet is very extensive with markings for all the aircraft with a choice of alternate markings in some cases.

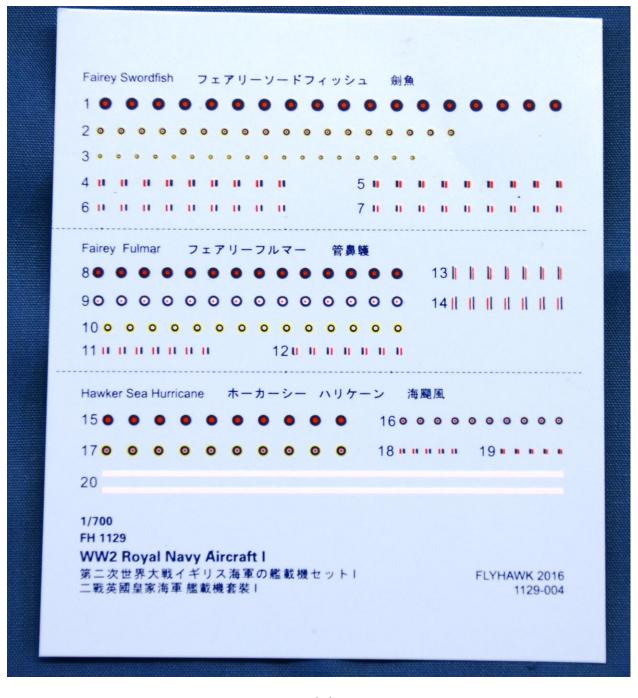
The Fulmar has roundels for the top and bottom of the wings, and for the fuselage side. Two different tailfin markings are provided.

The markings for the Swordfish include roundels for the top of the upper wing, two different fuselage roundels, and alternate tailfin markings.

The Sea Hurricane has roundels for the top and bottom of the wings and for the side of the fuselage. There is also a white fuselage band. Two alternate tailfin markings are included.

Enough of the alternate markings are provided to equip each type of aircraft with the same ones, if desired. Research would be necessary to determine which sets of markings should be applied.

Flyhawk has considerately included markings for an extra aircraft of each type to allow for losses when applying the decals.

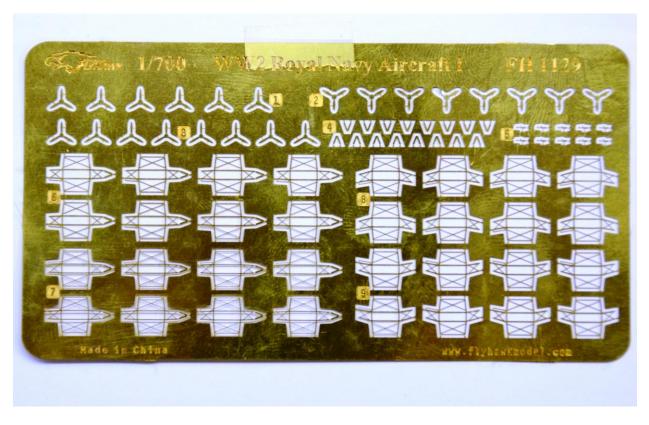


----- Decal Sheet -----

Photo-Etch:

The etch sheet has propellers for all of the aircraft if the builder decides to forego using the plastic ones. The rest of the etch sheet are parts for the Swordfish. There are two types of wing struts: folded and non-folded, with each type having specific port and starboard struts.

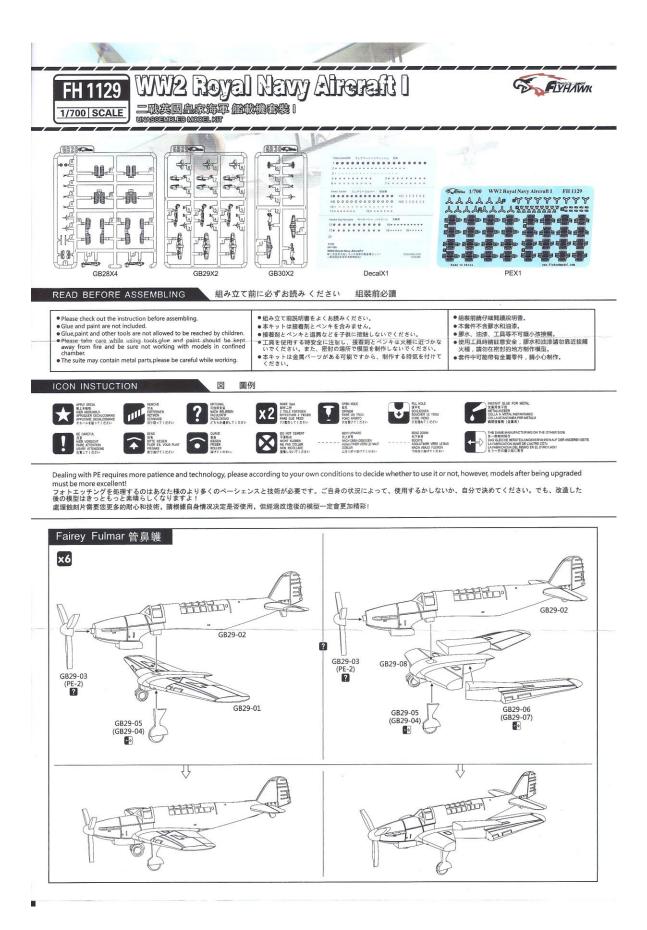
Each strut consists of a 'box' with the inner and outboard struts connected with the bracing wires. This is a very clever feature but does require careful trimming and folding. Enough struts are provided to build all of the Swordfish with folded or non-folded wings. There is also a rear gun for the observer.

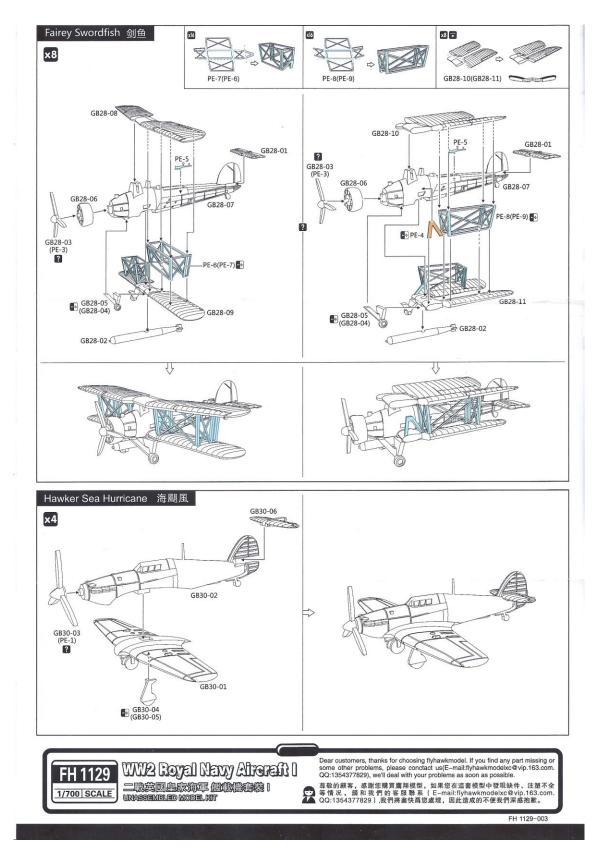


----- Photo-etch sheet -----

Instructions:

The instructions are on a double-sided full colour page with sub-assemblies for each aircraft, with the folded wing versions of the Fulmar and Swordfish treated as separate sub-assemblies. They are very clear and comprehensive and also feature a drawing showing each sprue, the decal sheet, and the etch sheet included in the kit.

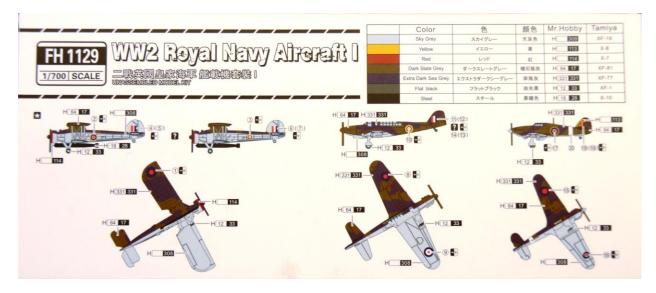




----- Instructions -----

Colour scheme:

Full colour painting and decal placement instructions are on the bottom of the box, with references to the Mr. Hobby and Tamiya ranges.



----- Colour scheme -----

Assembly:

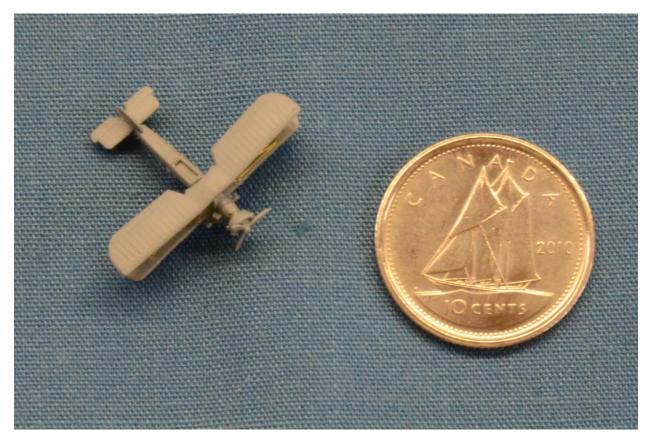
The non-folded version of the Fulmar was very easy to assemble with only 5 pieces. The wing clipped very easily into the slot in the bottom of the fuselage, leaving only a very small gap which could be filled with CA glue. There is a slight moulding seam on the bottom of the fuselage, be sure to trim it away before fitting the wing. The landing gear fit easily into recesses under the wing. I had more difficulty with the folded wings as it was hard to position them correctly so that they fit under the tailplane and above the tail wheel. Be careful to position them at the correct angle before the glue sets.



----- Folded Fulmar -----

The 12 parts that make up the non-folded version of the Swordfish were more difficult to manage than the relatively simple Fulmar. There are no slots under the wing for the landing gear and it needs to be positioned right at the front of the wing so that the protruding strut fits into a small recess on the fuselage under the engine. This is best accomplished by attaching the lower wing and allowing it to dry fully before attaching the landing gear. Tailplane, torpedo, engine cowling, rear gun, and propeller posed no problems. The wing struts were easily folded and fitted to the lower wing. Be sure to fold the port and starboard struts correctly the first time, they are very delicate and consequently don't like much handling. One set folds up, and the other set folds down. Once the glue has completely set attach the upper wing. While the wing bracing is interesting, it might be much easier to just cut out and apply the struts and not bother with the bracing. Some sort of clamp to hold the fuselage steady while applying all the parts would be of great benefit.

In contrast, I found building the folded Swordfish to be much easier, no doubt because of the experience I gained with the non-folded version! The wings need to be slightly twisted upwards to the correct angle before gluing; this is noted in the instructions. The same remarks about the struts apply to this version as well.



----- Non-folded Swordfish -----



----- Folded Swordfish -----

The Sea Hurricane went together very easily, with only 5 parts to fit. The wing fit perfectly into the fuselage slot, the very small seam left behind can be easily filled with CA glue. Be sure to trim the mould seam under the fuselage before fitting the wing in place. The landing gear fits into recesses under the wings.



----- Sea Hurricane -----

All of the aircraft separated easily from the sprue, but use a knife instead of sprue cutters to minimize any possibility of damage. All the parts fit together very well, the landing gear on the Swordfish is troublesome and be careful with the photo-etch struts as they won't stand much handling before bending or breaking.

I chose to use the plastic propellers as they are very thin and include the spinner nose cone.

Overall Impression:

This aircraft set is of very high quality, the planes are packed with detail. The panel lines, cockpit windows, raised ribbing, wheels, and tires are quite extraordinary. All the parts are precision molded with absolutely no flash, the only seam lines that I could see are under the bottoms of the fuselages.

All the aircraft scale out to within a foot of the actual dimensions. The only minor criticism is that there are no tail hooks provided.

The fineness of detail does not imply fragile pieces; the tailplanes on the Fulmars were slightly bent and I managed to straighten them very easily with no damage. Despite the small size, most modellers will have no problems assembling the aircraft, if you run into problems with the Swordfish struts, trim away the wire braces and just fit the struts themselves.

This is another impressive release from Flyhawk, well-researched, well-engineered, and well-packaged and is very highly recommended. They will make great deck loads for the just released Flyhawk HMS Hermes and the announced HMS Illustrious. As this is Set 1, I eagerly await the appearance of Set 2, could we see Sea Gladiators, Skuas, and Albacores in the near future?



Review kit courtesy of Flyhawk Models