

WW2 Royal Navy Aircraft II:

This kit features twelve 1/700 scale Supermarine Walruses and Fairey Seafoxes as used aboard Royal Navy battleships and cruisers in World War II.

Packaging:

The kit comes in a standard 8.5" x 3.75" box featuring a painting of the two aircraft types in flight over a foggy and misty anchorage – most likely Scapa Flow – with a King George V class battleship just visible in the background. The aircraft sprues are moulded in grey plastic and all of the kit components come in sealed plastic bags. The kit comprises 126 parts on 12 sprues, an etch sheet with 105 pieces and a decal sheet of markings.



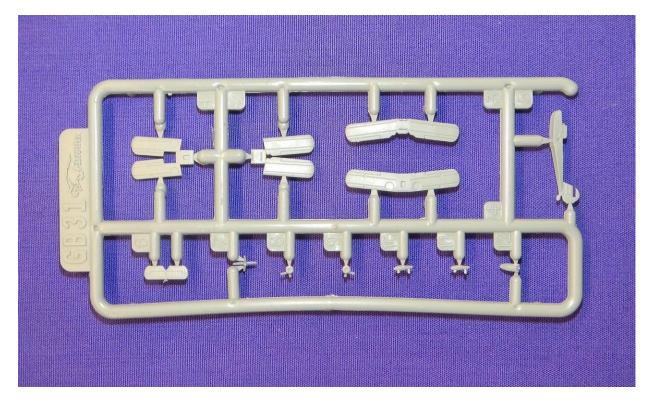
----- Box Art -----

Supermarine Walrus:

Each sprue has twelve parts for one aircraft. Six sprues are included giving a total of six aircraft, each of which can be assembled with wings folded or unfolded. Each version uses ten plastic parts: fuselage, upper and lower wing, tailplane, engine, propeller, wing floats, and landing gear.

There are raised ribs on the tops of the wings, and recessed panel lines on the top and bottom of the wing and on the fuselage. The fuselage features clearly defined windows for the cockpit, ribbing on the rudder, and a moulded-in tail wheel. The landing gear has detailed wheels and tires. The propeller is very finely moulded and includes the nose spinner. The underside of the lower wing has wheel wells in case the modeller prefers to show the aircraft with wheels retracted. The engine has raised detail and recessed attach points for each wing.

The etch parts consist of wing and tailplane struts, rear machine gun, and rear hatch, bringing the total parts count for each aircraft to 16.



Optional etch parts include engine attach struts, float attach struts, and propeller.

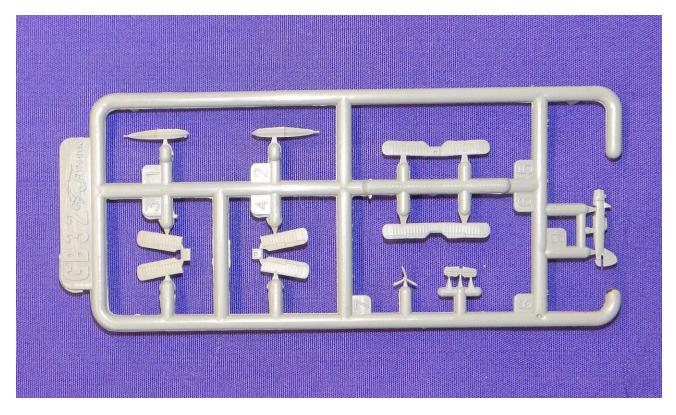
----- Supermarine Walrus -----

Fairey Seafox:

Each sprue has nine parts per aircraft. Six sprues are included for a total of six aircraft, each of which, as with the Walrus, can be assembled with wings folded or unfolded. Each version uses seven plastic parts: fuselage, upper and lower wings, tailplane, floats, and propeller.

There is raised ribbing on the top of the wings and tailplane, and recessed panel lines on the wing bottoms and fuselage. The fuselage has a clearly defined cockpit and windowed after-compartment, a ribbed rudder, upper wing attach points, and engine and exhaust details. The floats feature a keel and clearly defined step. The propeller is very finely molded and includes the nose spinner.

The etch parts consist of wing and float struts, bringing the total parts count per plane to ten. Optional etch parts include upper wing attach struts and propeller.



----- Fairey Seafox -----

Decals:

The decal sheet is extensive with fuselage and wing roundels as well as tailfin markings for each type of aircraft. There are enough decals provided to equip two extra planes of each type.

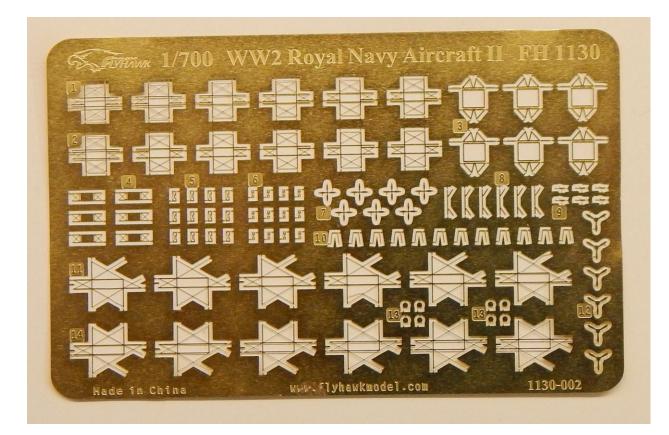


----- Decal Sheet -----

Photo-Etch:

The etch sheet contains the port and starboard wing struts for both aircraft types, float attach struts for the Seafox, rear gun, tailplane struts, and hatch for the Walrus. Optional parts include the aircraft propellers, engine and float attachments for the Walrus, and wing attachments for the Seafox.

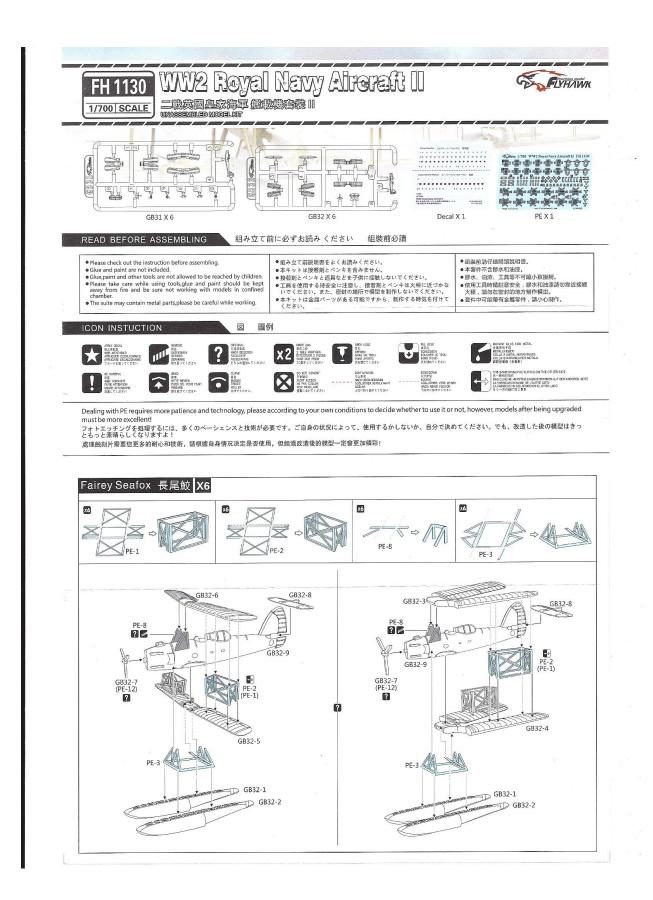
Each wing strut consists of a 'box' with the inner and outboard struts connected with the bracing wires. This is a very clever feature but does require careful trimming and folding.

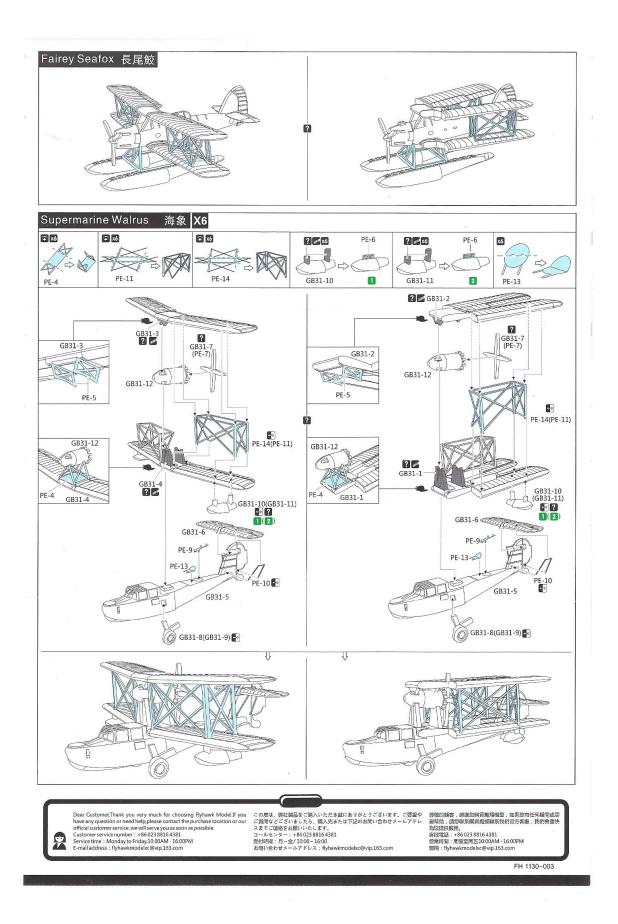


----- Photo-etch sheet -----

Instructions:

The instructions are on a double-sided full colour page with sub-assemblies for each aircraft, with the folded and non-folded versions of each aircraft presented side by side. 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.

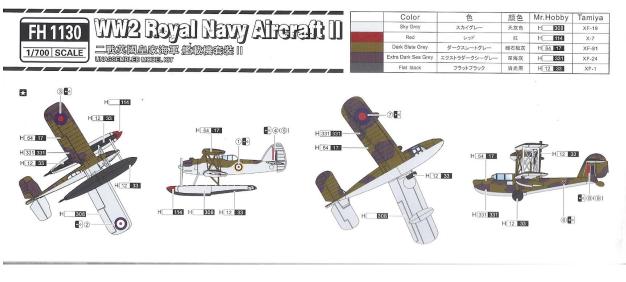




----- Instructions -----

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:

I assembled the non-folded version of the Walrus by gluing the main plastic pieces together – fuselage, lower wing, tailplane, landing gear, wing floats, and engine – and then allowing it all to dry. I did not use the optional etch pieces for the engine and float attachments. This step went very smoothly as all the parts fit into well-defined slots on the attaching piece. The landing gear fit quite easily as there is a square slot that it fits into which makes the wheel hang straight down and the support strut extend aft along the fuselage.

The wing struts and cross bracing form 'strut boxes' which were assembled by first folding the boxes together, applying CA glue and then allowing them to dry. The struts are very delicate and won't take much rough handling so go very carefully with this step. There are distinct 'strut boxes' for the port and starboard wings – take care to fold them accordingly.

Once they were dry, it was a simple step to attach them to the lower wing as there are small holes in the wing to align the 'strut box' with. Once they were on and allowed to dry, the top wing was attached to the tops of the 'strut boxes' and the engine.

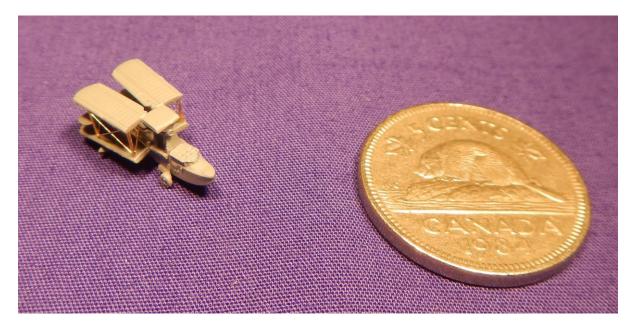
The propeller, tailplane struts, rear hatch, and machine gun were then added.

While the wing bracing is interesting, it is very delicate work getting the 'strut boxes' to align correctly and to then align the top wing to them. To avoid that, one can cut out and apply the struts and not bother with the bracing, applying them between the wings once the top wing has been glued down to the engine.

The folded version of the Walrus was assembled in the same way, which led to an unforeseen problem! The propeller, tailplane struts, hatch, and machine gun need to be attached before the 'strut boxes' and top wing are added. Once the top wing is on, there is not enough room to attach those pieces – a fact that revealed itself to me after the top wing was solidly attached. Other than this oversight on my part, assembly went very smoothly.



----- Non-folded Walrus -----



I assembled the non-folded version of the Seafox the same way: gluing the main plastic pieces – fuselage, lower wing, and tailplane – together first and then allowing it all to dry. I did not use the optional etch pieces for the upper wing attachment. There are well defined attach points for this aircraft as well, so this step went very smoothly.

The next step was to fold the 'strut boxes' and glue them together with CA glue. As with the Walrus, the struts are very delicate and won't take much rough handling. There are also distinct 'strut boxes' for the port and starboard wings, so be careful to fold them accordingly.

Once dry, they were fitted to the lower wing using the holes on the wing to align the boxes accordingly. The top wing fit quite easily to the 'strut boxes' and the attach points on the fuselage.

Once all that dried, the etch piece for the float struts was folded together and attached to the bottom of the lower wing and the fuselage. After it dried, I was able to easily attach the two floats. I then affixed the propeller.

The folded version was assembled in the same way – which went smoothly as there are no parts to be fitted to the fuselage.



----- Non-folded Seafox -----



----- Folded Seafox -----

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; be careful with the photo-etch struts as they won't stand much handling before bending or breaking.

The Seafox went together easier than the Walrus, mainly because there are fewer parts but also because the top wing fit easily onto the top of the fuselage attach points and the 'strut boxes'. The 'strut boxes' for the Walrus must be trimmed correctly in order to have the top wing attach correctly as there is just a little less tolerance built into the parts.

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

Using the optional photo-etch pieces for attaching the upper wings and floats will add even more detail, but will require some extra patience.

It takes a bit of time to assemble the aircraft and some delicate work with the CA glue, but the end results are quite impressive.

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 Walrus scales out exactly to the actual dimensions. The Seafox is also to the actual dimensions if including the length by which the floats project forward of the fuselage.

The fineness of detail of the plastic parts does not imply fragile pieces; propeller blades and wings were easily bent and re-bent without breaking. The etch parts are somewhat fragile however. Due to the fineness of detail they will only endure a limited number of folds.

Despite the small size, most modellers will have no problems assembling the aircraft. If you run into problems with the 'strut boxes', either leave them off entirely or just trim away the wire braces and fit just the struts.

I recommend this aircraft set highly. It is well-researched, well-engineered, and well-packaged; yet another impressive release from Flyhawk. The Walrus is been included with the *HMS Hermes* 1937 kit, and it would seem to be just a matter of time before we see an *Arethusa* or *Leander* class equipped with the Seafox. In the meantime, these aircraft will make great additions to other 1/700 scale Royal Navy cruisers and battleships.



Review kit courtesy of Flyhawk Models