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Model
AIRCRAFT
Monthly

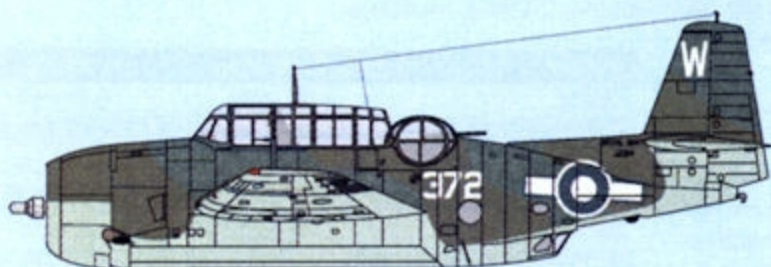
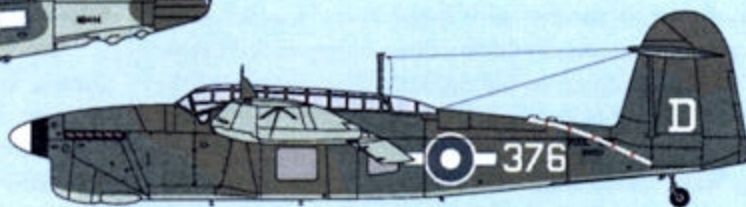
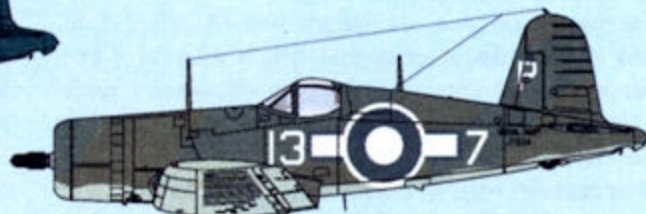
Fleet Air Arm

British Pacific Fleet Decal Set

4 sheets for 1:48

- Roundels & Bars
- White & Sky Codes
- Night & White Serials

£10.00



SAM PUBLICATIONS

D481205002

British Pacific Fleet

National markings, codes and serial numbers

This pack of decal sheets has been designed as a generic set to allow the modeller to finish a variety of aircraft types used by the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm British Pacific Fleet, and should be used in conjunction with the two-part 'British Pacific Fleet' features in the August (Vol 4/8) and September (Vol 4/9) 2005 issues of 'Model Aircraft Monthly'.

The British Pacific Fleet, (BPF) arrived in Sydney on 10 February 1945, and it is thought that the 'roundel and bar' national marking was introduced a few weeks later in March 1945. The new marking consisted of a Blue and White roundel flanked by White bars, similar to those carried by US aircraft. The length of each White bar was equal to the radius of the roundel and the width was equal to half the radius of the roundel. A border, equal to one eighth of the diameter of the roundel, was added around the whole design in White around the Blue roundel and in Blue around the White bars.

It was intended that these new BPF markings would be in the same locations as those on corresponding US Navy aircraft, ie on the upper surface of the port wing, the under surface of the starboard wing and on both sides of the fuselage. The fin flash was removed altogether. Two sizes were specified - 32 inch diameter and 48 inch diameter. However, it soon became apparent that these specified sizes were often inappropriate for a number of aircraft and an 'unofficial' 40 inch size was developed and as may be seen from the table below, became the most common size!

Of these three main sizes, the largest was 48 inches diameter with an 18 inch diameter centre, which with its 3 inch wide border essentially created a 54 inch diameter roundel marking. The 40 inch diameter roundel with its 2 1/2 inch wide border created a 45 inch diameter roundel, and the 32 inch diameter roundel with its 2 inch wide border created a 36 inch diameter roundel. On several, if not all, overall Glossy Sea Blue painted aircraft, just White outline only 'roundel & bars' were applied, which have been included in a selection of sizes.

The overall diameter of the new marking and the accompanying bars caused problems on some aircraft, occasionally resulting in the serial number and 'Royal Navy' legend either being moved or overpainted and the three figure aircraft symbols being split fore and aft of the roundel. Photographs of the real aircraft to be modelled should be consulted if possible. New aircraft of US manufacture, (ie Corsairs, Hellcats and Avengers), were invariably delivered with the new BPF national marking applied during production, whilst those already in service and British manufactured aircraft, (ie Seafires, Fireflies and Barracudas), had their markings modified in service.

At the same time as the change to BPF markings, the decision to change the format of the identity codes was made. The markings which had been previously carried were removed and replaced by a carrier deck letter and a three figure number which was applied to the sides of the fuselage. The deck letter, which was applied to the fin, identified the parent aircraft carrier; and the fuselage codes identified the type of aircraft - one, two or three seat - and the squadron. Numbers from 111 to 169 were used to identify single-seat aircraft; 270 to 298 were used to identify two-seat aircraft;

and 370 to 398 were used for three-seat aircraft. Where a carrier carried more than a single squadron operating a single type, the allocation was split, with each squadron using numbers from different halves of the allocation.

For example:

- HMS Indomitable was allocated the deck letter and tail code 'W' which was carried by the aircraft of No 1839 Sqn equipped with Hellcats, coded 111-128; No 1844 Sqn also equipped with Hellcats, coded 131-146; and No 857 Sqn equipped with Avengers coded 370-377 and 380-386
- HMS Victorious was allocated the deck letter and tail code 'P' which was carried by the aircraft of No 1834 Sqn which was equipped with Corsairs coded 111-128, No 1836 Sqn, also equipped with Corsairs, was coded 131-150 and No 849 Sqn equipped with Avengers coded 370-385.
- HMS Indefatigable was allocated the deck letter and tail code 'S' which was applied to the Seafires of No 887 Sqn, coded 111-134; No 894 Sqn coded 135-159; the Fireflies of No 1770 Sqn coded 270-281; and No 820 Sqn equipped with Avengers coded 370-389.
- HMS Illustrious was allocated the deck letter tail code 'Q' which was applied to the tails of the Corsairs of No 1830 Sqn coded 111-128; No 1833 Sqn coded 129-147; and the Avengers of No 854 Sqn coded 370-381.

From photographic evidence, the codes ranged in approximate size from 12 to 24 inches in height. The characters were nominally applied in White, but 'darker' shades were also recorded, on machines finished in the Temperate Sea Scheme, which could have been Sky, Medium Sea Grey or possibly 'India' white, (ie pale blue). However, we have opted for Sky as the alternative to White. Machines finished in Glossy Sea Blue appear to have had their markings applied just in white. A selection of the main sizes, (12 inch, 18 inch and 24 inch), are included, in the two main styles in various stroke widths. A selection of 4 inch high serial number prefixes - for Seafires, Fireflies, Hellcats, Corsairs and Avengers - plus 4 inch high numerals and ROYAL NAVY legends have also been included in White and Night.

We have covered as many options as we could in four sheets, but it should be remembered that such sweeping changes in markings was not carried out overnight and that for a short time at least, some aircraft would have carried the new BPF 'roundel & bar' marking in conjunction with the previous British East Indies, (BEI), and South East Asia Command, (SEAC), markings.

Aircraft	Fuselage	Wings
Seafire	40 inch	40 inch
Hellcat	32 or 40 inch	48 inch
Corsair	40 inch	48 inch
Firefly	40 inch	40 inch
Barracuda	40 inch	48 inch
Avenger	32 inch	40 inch

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