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ASIAN AIR ARMS NEWSLETTER 24

December 2020/January 2021



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The Dassault Flamant in the VNAF

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Editorial

TIME FOR REFLECTION

As we turn the proverbial page from one year to the next with this edition of the Asian Air Arms Newsletter, I very much hope that you and your families continue to remain fit and healthy as we pass through these difficult times with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. With the turning of the year I had hoped to focus on some positive news with regard to a return to planning for one of the most visible signs of our Special Interest Group, that of our presence on the UK model show circuit during 2021. Sadly, and notwithstanding the very positive news on the discovery of vaccines against the COVID-19 threat, I am not at all confident that we will see many shows held during 2021. The latest global news and findings suggest that my original assessment provided back in March/April that this pandemic would take at least two years to dissipate appears to have been borne out.

I will, therefore, reserve my thoughts on how we may re-engage with the model show calendar in the future once we all have a clearer picture on how and when show organisers can develop their own plans for hosting such events in the 'new normal' environment which we are going to have to come to terms with. As I said in the last newsletter, this may be an overly gloomy prospect but I make the point again in order to reinforce the importance of the newsletter and the website as our most effective way to exchange information and news, seek alternative perspectives on new products, wonder over superb aircraft imagery or view modellers' latest masterpieces. I therefore continue to be indebted to both Steve and Gregg for maintaining these two vehicles for the exchange or viewing of information and keeping our expansive membership in touch with each other. The newsletter does not, of course, write itself so I would also ask you all to think about how you could contribute to it in the future. We do seem to continue to rely on the musings of half a dozen or so contributors and I would like to maintain the diversity and interest of the current newsletter through broader participation. I appreciate that some of you may not be confident in your English language skills, but we would really like to deliver a newsletter that is more representational of our global membership so do not be shy – share your ideas and articles with us – we still have enough capacity to be able to reshape it to fit in with the overall ethos of the SIG/Research Group.

As I finish penning this editorial on New Year's Eve it is, of course, customary for all of us to personally reflect on the last year and while I suspect most if not all of the membership will wish to forget 2020 I would like to take some time to, once again, pay tribute to our previous SIG Leader. As many of you know this will be the last newsletter that Brian will be directly involved with, since Steve Komar will be 'going solo' from February 2021. It is actually quite difficult to put into words what Brian Griffin has achieved with this Special Interest Group during the all too brief time since he first established and led the Group. It is abundantly clear to all that Brian has marshaled his considerable talents and experience in marketing to excellent effect and established a Special Interest/Aviation Research Group with true global reach. He has succeeded in bringing aviation enthusiasts, researchers, respected authors, photographers and modellers together in a remarkably short period of time to establish a group that has already gained a strong reputation for delivering high quality, factual information on a diverse range of subjects, the publication of several specialized photobooks, and last but not least some superb displays of Asian Air Arm themed models at shows up and down the United Kingdom, many of which have gained well-deserved awards for their creators. Although I am unable to verify it, I strongly suspect the Asian Air Arms SIG/Aviation Research Group is now the largest, most diverse such entity in the world, and all of this is down to Brian's unrelenting drive and enthusiasm to bring people together and share in his mutual interest for Asian Air Arms. I also have little doubt that Brian Griffin's name will be long etched into our collective memory as one who is inexorably linked with the Asian Air Arm scene and it is up to all of us to maintain the very high standards that Brian has achieved during his highly successful tenure as the Group's first Leader. On behalf of the Asian Air Arms SIG/Aviation Research Group, I would like to offer Brian our very best wishes for his very worthy, future endeavors in Deepest, Darkest Devon, and our hope that he will maintain contact with us with the odd contribution or two during a model show or in the newsletter.

This just leaves me to reiterate my plea to you all to provide us with any feedback or advice for making the newsletter or website even better and in the meantime, please make sure you and your families Stay Safe !.

Mark Attrill



Hi readers,

As the new Editor of this very highly-regarded Newsletter, I thought it would be appropriate to introduce myself very briefly to members.

I've been modelling on-and-off for some 57 years, probably more 'off' than 'on', it's fair to say, although my output has increased significantly since the start of lockdown in the UK. In fact, since March 2020 I've finished 25 aircraft, 1 airship, 12 AFVs and one car! I have a real penchant for unusual and colourful schemes and markings, and have built aircraft of all eras, from pre-WWI to Gerry Anderson's Captain Scarlet! Like most of our readership I suspect, my interests are very eclectic, and not just limited to Asian Air Arms. Indeed, what initially attracted me to this SIG was the promise of a FREE (!) Newsletter, and I never for a second suspected that one day I might be involved in its production! Thus far, I have not finished one model representing an Asian Air Arm, although I do have a couple of Japanese aircraft on my workbench which will (hopefully) soon see the light of day!

I build models entirely for my own pleasure, and have absolutely no intention or desire to have them scrutinised or judged by other far more capable and prolific modellers. I am definitely in NO way a 'rivet counter'. If I build a model and am satisfied with it, it goes into the display cabinet. If not, it goes into the bin, usually before it reaches the painting stage. My reason for taking on the editorship of the Newsletter was simple and straightforward – Brian wanted to give it up, and was desperately seeking someone with a knowledge of Microsoft Publisher who would be willing to give up a few hours every month. In my previous life as a primary school teacher, I had been the ICT Co-ordinator, and one of the programs we used frequently had been Publisher. Having been retired for 6 years, I felt that I could, and should, offer my services as a way of thanking Brian, and the other contributors to the Newsletter, for the enjoyment it has given me over the previous 3 years or so. I've really got a buzz from seeing the Newsletter slowly taking shape, and look forward to helping to produce many more in the years to come.

On that point, I feel I should re-iterate Mark's plea for members to submit their own articles, no matter how long or short they may be. We're about 10 pages short this issue due to a shortage of material. Even if English is not your first language, don't worry, I'm sure that I can help to rewrite them in readable English. I also speak some German and French, so I might be able to assist with translation from those languages if you'd prefer. Remember, it's **YOUR** Newsletter, and without **YOUR** input it probably won't be able to continue long-term.

Finally, I would like to add my thanks to Brian, without whose considerable efforts this Newsletter would not be what it is today. He has set the bar very high, and we owe it to him to try to maintain the high standards with which readers are familiar.

Take care, stay safe, and enjoy a healthy and happy 2021.



VNAF Douglas C-47 Skytrain and sub-variants

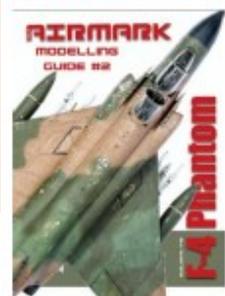
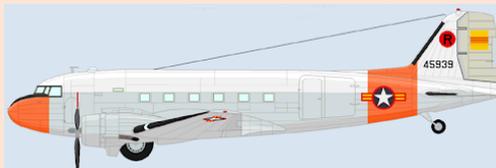
Colours and Markings, by Mark Attrill



In spite of its less than glamorous role in the VNAF, largely fulfilling a variety of valuable support roles, the C-47 Skytrain and all of the sub-variants employed by the Air Arm sported a surprisingly wide range of interesting colour schemes and markings, as a result of both the types' longevity in service and the variety of sources of supply. Early examples, transferred from the Armée de l'Air, were largely delivered to their new owners in the overall natural metal scheme, with some examples still sporting a crudely applied coat of black on the under surfaces and up the sides of the rear fuselage. It had long been thought that the original Vietnamese pre-1955 yellow and red roundel seen on the Morane-Saulnier MS.500 Criquet and Beech C-45G, was not applied to any C-47s, but at least one photograph has emerged showing these markings on an ex-Armée de l'Air C-47A Skytrain (s/n 43-347965/Z) in an overall natural metal scheme with the aforementioned black under surfaces, presumably operated by the so-called Vietnamese Liaison Flight that had been established by the French in the early 1950s. The earliest example of the more common VNAF 'Stars and Bars' national markings was observed on another C-47A (s/n 42-24336/S), although these



appear to be of a non-standard size and design that was reportedly applied to aid better recognition of Vietnamese aircraft operating outside of Vietnamese airspace. These early aircraft, operated by the 1st Transport Squadron, wore the Vietnamese flag on the rudder surfaces and retained the red single letter code in a yellow circle on the fin surfaces, that had been part of their previous owners' airframe identification system. As the VNAF C-47 transport fleet grew with the formation of the 2nd Transport Squadron, smaller individual unit designation letters were added (N for the 1st TS which became the 413th TS, and E for the 2nd TS, which became the 415th TS). The vast majority of aircraft also wore the 33rd Tactical Wing insignia on the starboard side of the nose, with some aircraft wearing individual squadron insignia on the port side. The original US Government serial numbers were, in most cases, retained but appeared in several different styles. Some aircraft sported the full number, while others wore an abbreviated version. As the United States supplied more aircraft in the mid-1960s, so the number of different colour schemes and markings increased. A number of ex-USAF aircraft were supplied with white upper fuselage surfaces over natural metal and this scheme was not restricted to pure transport variants, with several converted EC-47D/P aircraft sporting the same scheme, possibly as part of a deception plan to make it difficult for the enemy to determine how many of each specialist variant were held on strength. The majority of these aircraft wore the type-F style of VNAF insignia although the size and position of those applied to the rear fuselage varied on some aircraft. The two-letter identification codes applied to the fin were changed from red to black. A small number of the 'White-Top' C-47Ds also sported 'Dayglo Orange' fuselage bands and, in some cases, the nose was also finished in Dayglo Orange.



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VNAF Douglas C-47 and sub-variants Identification Codes

Unit	Variant	Air Base	Tail Code	Notes
1 st Transport Squadron	C-47A/B/D	Tan Don Nhut	N	Re-designated 413 th TS in 1963
2 nd Transport Squadron	C-47A/B/D	Tan Son Nhut	E	Re-designated 415 th TS in 1963
314 th Special Mission Squadron	VC-47D	Tan Son Nhut	C	
716 th Reconnaissance Squadron	E/RC-47D/P	Tan Son Nhut	M	
718 th Reconnaissance Squadron	EC-47P	Tan Son Nhut	T	
718 th Reconnaissance Squadron	EC-47P/Q	Da Nang	W	
817 th Attack Squadron	AC-47B/D	Nha Trang	K	

The VIP-configured VC-47D fleet initially operated by the 312th Special Mission Squadron (SMS) were observed in the natural metal or overall silver scheme with single-letter codes and type-F national insignia with the flag on the rudder. As outlined above, the unit was subsequently re-numbered the 314th SMS and started to receive and operate some of its specially re-configured aircraft in an airline-style colour scheme, reminiscent of that applied to contemporary Air France DC-3s. The majority of these aircraft sported a rather elaborate dark blue cheatline down the fuselage sides, which incorporated the unit insignia on the port nose surfaces below the cockpit, and the 33rd Tactical Wing badge on the starboard side. A similarly-coloured 'Shark Fin' design was applied to the majority of the fin surfaces with the individual aircraft serial number and codes superimposed over the top. At least one or two aircraft sported the same scheme, but substituting the dark blue with a deep red, possibly maroon, colour. It is understood that these particular aircraft were reserved for the transportation of the very highest Vietnamese Government or foreign dignitaries. One of these aircraft was VC-47D s/n 439500/EW, which was subsequently transferred to the 415th TS, with which it was lost in a non-fatal landing accident at Vung Tau airfield. Some aircraft in these airline-style colour schemes sported the two-letter aircraft code in red/yellow while other examples were noted with the more commonly applied black/yellow codes applied to the fin surfaces. In keeping with much of the



Image courtesy of ACVu at Deviantart.com

W.A.H. JUN. 2012

VNAF C-47 fleet, photographic evidence does confirm that the VC-47Ds were not exclusively operated by the 314th SMS, with several different unit insignia appearing on the individual aircraft from time to time.



Yet more variation was introduced to the VNAF C-47 fleet from the mid-1960s when the then-new 'South East Asia' camouflage scheme was introduced and retrospectively applied to all tactical fixed-wing VNAF aircraft including all transport types, with the exception of some C-47s, particularly those associated with VIP transport duties with the 314th SMS. The camouflage consisted of Dark Green (FS34079), Green Olive Drab (FS34102) and Tan (FS30219) for the upper and side surfaces with Light Grey (FS36622) for the lower surfaces. In spite of the adoption of a less conspicuous colour scheme, the majority of VNAF C-47s retained the type-F national insignia, full-sized flag on the rudder and black/yellow individual aircraft codes. At this time, and in recognition of their specialised role, some C-47Ds and EC-47D/Ps had black applied to the lower surfaces in order to conduct nocturnal infiltration missions in North Vietnam and, occasionally, into Cambodia.



The frequent exchange of aircraft between units, together with the conversion and re-conversion of aircraft to cope with the ever changing requirements of the VNAF, ultimately played havoc with attempts to introduce any kind of standardised marking or coding system, so observers were constantly noting variations and, not surprisingly, this situation remained extant until the last days of the war. One VNAF C-47D with the s/n 43-0882 amply illustrates this situation. Originally delivered to the VNAF as a C-47D and sporting the then standard 'White Top' colour scheme for service with the Transport Squadrons, the aircraft was subsequently converted to a EC-47D or -P variant and served with the 716th TS, retaining its 'White Top' colour scheme but now coded MA. Some time later the aircraft received the SEA Camouflage scheme with black lower surfaces and reduced national insignia but when observed landing at U Tapao AB in Thailand during the mass evacuation on 29/30 April 1975, it wore non-standard MC tail codes and a 'last three' aircraft serial number in white.

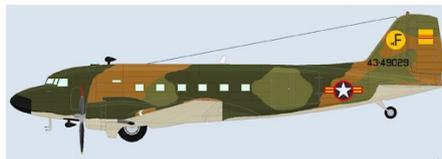
A wide selection of published and online references have been consulted in order to produce as comprehensive a picture as possible of the various colour schemes and markings that have been applied to the C-47 in Service with the VNAF but the author feels sure that there are yet more to be uncovered. Suffice to say, any one contemplating a build of a VNAF C-47 Skytrain or any of the sub-variants should consult as many references as possible for their particular airframe, if they are striving for absolute accuracy.



VNAF C-47 Deliveries - 1955-75

Type	Number	Date	Notes
Douglas C-47D	76	1954 onwards	Includes first sixteen ex-French Armée de l'Air aircraft
Douglas AC-47D	22	1969-1974	Disarmed in 1974 - Some aircraft returned to cargo configuration
Douglas EC-47D	14	1970-1975	Included some standard C-47Ds converted in 1972
Douglas EC-47P	36	1973-1975	ELINT Operations
Douglas RC-47D	3	1972-1975	Photo and infra-red reconnaissance
Douglas VC-47D	6	1954 onwards	VIP Transportation - May have included C-47D conversions
Total	157 ¹		

¹Subject to verification. It is difficult to ascertain a 100% accurate number of deliveries since some aircraft were converted or re-converted in-country as the VNAF evolved and missions/tasks, as described in the main text.



Douglas C-47D and sub-variants – VNAF – As at 30 September 1969

Type	Number	Losses	
Douglas C-47D	61	20	
Douglas RC-47D	3	0	
Douglas EC-47D	1	0	
Douglas AC-47D	19	4	
Totals	84	24	

Douglas C-47D and sub-variants – VNAF – As at 31 March 1972

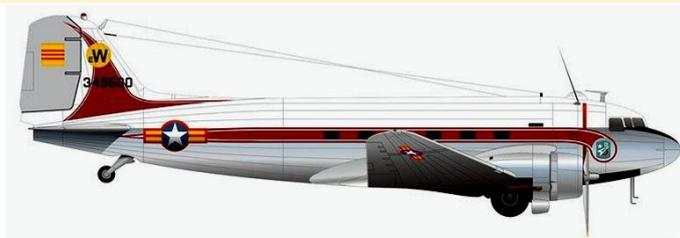
Douglas C-47D	64	42	
Douglas RC-47D	3	0	
Douglas EC-47D	2	0	
Douglas VC-47D	6	0	
Douglas AC-47D	22	7	
Totals	97	49	

VNAF C-47 (and sub-variants) Units – 1955-75

Unit	Wing	Location	Variant	Date/s
1 st Transport Squadron	N/A (1)	Tan Son Nhut	C-47D	1 July 1955
312 th Special Mission Squadron	N/A (1)	Tan Son Nhut	VC-47D (2)	1 July 1955
2 nd Transport Squadron	1 st Air Transport Group (3)	Tan Son Nhut	C-47D	July 1956
314 th Special Mission Squadron	33 rd Tactical Wing	Tan Son Nhut	VC-47D	1963-1975
413 th Transport Squadron	33 rd Tactical Wing	Tan Son Nhut	C-47D	1963-1968
415 th Transport Squadron	33 rd Tactical Wing	Tan Son Nhut	C-47D	1963-1973
83 rd Special Operations Squadron	33 rd Tactical Wing	Tan Son Nhut (4)	C-47D	1965-1968
817 th Attack Squadron	62 nd Tactical Wing (5)	Nha Trang	AC-47D	1968-1975
716 th Reconnaissance Squadron	33 rd Tactical Wing	Tan Son Nhut	R/EC-47D	1970-1975
718 th Reconnaissance Squadron	33 rd Tactical Wing	Tan Son Nhut	EC-47P	1974-1975
718 th Reconnaissance Squadron (6)	33 rd Tactical Wing	Da Nang	EC-47D	1974-1975

- (1) The VNAF was officially formed on 1 July 1955 and all operational units were directly subordinated to the Air Department of the Headquarters Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
- (2) Not confirmed – These aircraft may have been locally modified standard C-47Ds rather than specially configured VC-47Ds
- (3) Both the 1st and 2nd Transport Squadrons were subsumed under the 1st Air Transport Group in July 1956
- (4) The C-47Ds operated by the 83rd SOS were home based at Tan Son Nhut but operated mainly from Nha Trang AB
- (5) Initially formed at Nha Trang AB under the 62nd Tactical Wing before relocation to Tan Son Nhut under the 33rd Tactical Wing. Circa 1973 the unit returned to Nha Trang AB to serve under the 62nd Tactical Wing
- (6) 718th RS maintained a detachment at Da Nang AB

Note: These tables have been compiled using a variety of references and sources to deliver as accurate a picture as possible of VNAF C-47D and sub-variant deliveries and unit allocation. Although a large number of Douglas C-47s served with units of the 33rd Tactical Wing at Tan Son Nhut Air Base for the majority of their VNAF service, full accountability has not been possible for a number of reasons. The original source of individual aircraft, with many coming from in-country French Armée de l’Air or USAF units following respective periods of so-called “Vietnamization” between 1955-72, combined with the rather haphazard arrival of more specialised C-47 sub-variants in the latter stages of US involvement in the Vietnam conflict, results in information that may not be 100% accurate. The covert use and shortage of the valuable EC-47D and RC-47D sub-variants was not, for obvious reasons, well recorded at the time so some of the dates are subject to conjecture.

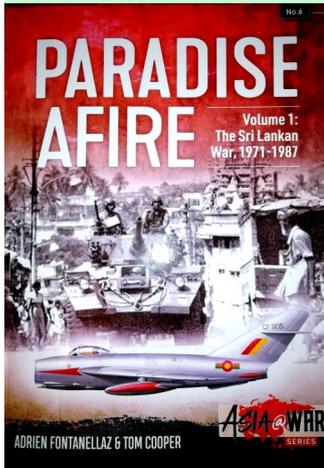


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'Paradise Afire, Volume 1: the Sri Lankan War, 1971-1987'

Reviewed by David Thomas



This volume on the early years of the Sri Lankan civil war was published by Helion and Co. in their series "Asia@War" in 2019. The book covers the period from the beginnings of the war to the short cease fire in 1987 and the increased involvement of Indian interests after that point.

It begins, as might be expected, with a resumé of the causes of the conflict, with much of the responsibility for what eventually occurred being placed on British rule which controlled the island for about 100 years prior to independence in 1948, and left two competing races, the Sinhalese and Tamils, in power. Ultimately, as the former group achieved a greater share of power, it led to the passing of what were essentially a number of "anti-Tamil" laws, including removal of the right of some Tamils to vote, and later saw the introduction of the "Sinhala only" acts which made Sinhalese the sole official language and made fluency in this a condition of entry to the civil service; effectively removing Tamils from positions of authority and influence. Further changes lead to riots, both pro and anti-Tamil and finally to a State of Emergency being declared in 1961.

Although this was lifted in 1963, Tamils were increasingly restricted from gaining access to higher education, leading to the combining of several formerly separate political groups into the Tamil United Liberation Front. However, a growing number of younger Tamils were of the opinion that it was time for fundamental change and that the goal of an independent Tamil Republic in the north of the island could only be achieved by armed action.

The author follows this background by an assessment of the forces available to the Sri Lankan government and points out that for many of the years after independence, spending on the defence forces was a low priority. The increasingly violent nature of the Tamil protests left these forces largely unprepared in both men and materials when things escalated after April 1971. However, things changed rapidly after this point and this was certainly the case for the Sri Lankan Air Force, which will probably be the area of most interest to the members of the Asian Air Arms Group. Many of the aircraft used by this force in the years covered by the book are illustrated as profile drawings in the colour section typical of this series of publications.

Things continue through the remainder of the book with an examination of the events of the war and an assessment of how both sides both obtained and utilised a wide range of weapons. Initially, the Air Force had depended on aircraft donated by the British at the time of Independence, and found updating equipment quite difficult as most western powers largely refused to provide anything. Eventually though, aircraft came from the USSR, and later (and more importantly) from China.

The major development of what became a very vicious conflict was the increased involvement of Sri Lanka's large neighbour, India. India had a significant population of Tamils living in the south-west of the country, and in the light of political pressure from these groups the national government supported the Tamil side. This led to pressure from India for a cease-fire which was announced in June 1985. Although talks were started in July 1985, they largely collapsed after August as both Sri Lankan factions were against the proposals being pushed by the Indians. Also there were several violations of the cease-fire by both sides, which soon led back into renewed full-scale conflict. From this point air power played an increasingly important role as the SLAF increased its transport fleet to ensure it could maintain supplies to areas over which it was attempting to establish control in the north.

Throughout this escalation, the Indians continued to allow Tamil training camps to operate in the area of SW India where many of the population were ethnic Tamils, but increased tension between them and the Indian population, including the death of several civilians, led to a change of heart but no real change, as the Tamil insurgents were not willing to accept anything other than full independence. In the end the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi determined that the only way forward was to increase pressure on both sides in order to reach an agreement.

Prompted by reports of shortages of both food and medical supplies in the north of the island, the Indians despatched a small fleet of fishing boats carrying supplies, but these were opposed by the SL Navy and they returned to India. Instead, supplies were then dropped to the affected areas by Indian A.F. transport aircraft supported by four Mirage 2000s. They were not opposed by the SLAF. Ultimately the success of this mission led to the despatch of an Indian peace-keeping force. This is covered in Volume 2, which will be reviewed in a future newsletter.

In summary, this book covers the whole gamut of events leading up to and occurring during these years, the initial phase of the war in Sri Lanka. **Adrian Fontanellaz** writes with both knowledge and understanding of the many threads that were involved, but never loses sight of the humanitarian cost of this war. The book is well written, although relatively short, with only some 60 pages. It is well illustrated and contains several interesting profile drawings of the machines used by both sides, drawn as is so often the case with these books by AAA member **Tom Cooper**. It can be recommended as an inexpensive introduction to anyone wishing to study both the history of warfare in Asia after World War Two, and the rise of the Sri Lankan Air Force as a tool of power projection by the government.





Zvezda 1:72 Scale Lockheed C-130H Hercules

(Product No. ZVE7321) reviewed by Mark Attrill

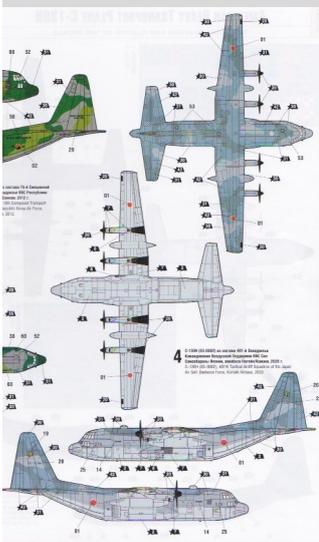


As many of you are aware I am a serving Royal Air Force Officer, and my formative years were largely spent on what was then known as the Air Transport Force where I logged well over 1000+ hours as supplementary aircrew on the C-130K Hercules, so this aircraft has always been very high on my modelling 'must do' list. In fact I built my first C-130 kit as a teenager from the old Airfix kit, complete with a Bristol Bloodhound surface-to-air missile as the load, and have subsequently struggled with both the Esci and Italeri kits in the meantime. I have always been mystified by the fact that Revell did not follow up their excellent 1:72 scale C-160 Transall release with a kit of the arguably more popular Lockheed C-130 Hercules, so the announcement earlier this year from Zvezda was a real surprise to this reviewer. Needless to say, the news was greeted with some enthusiasm in the modelling world since Zvezda have become a real *tour de force* in recent years, producing some excellent aircraft kits, most notably World War II era subjects in 1:48 scale, and airliners and airlifters in 1:144 scale. I am fortunate enough to currently live in Estonia where new Zvezda kits tend to arrive earlier than at other destinations and are also very reasonably priced, so I was probably one of the earliest recipients of this eagerly awaited new release.

Bottom line, up front, this is, by a long shot, the best kit of a C-130 I have seen, and we should now all very reluctantly accept that our carefully nurtured Airfix, Esci and Italeri kits (along with a myriad of improvement/conversion sets) probably need to be consigned to the 'collectors corner'. It really is that good!

The Zvezda kit arrived in a suitably sized and robust box, which featured a very attractive portrayal of an Oklahoma Air National Guard C-130H, one of the decal options, on the lid. Inside the box were eight medium grey and one clear plastic runners, separately packaged for protection. The kit features a very clear assembly and painting guide which, along with the decal placement instructions, is in full colour, which is always a great aid for the modeller. All of the plastic parts are superbly moulded and detailed; the panel lines are very finely rendered, so care will need to be taken at the painting stage. As always, construction starts with the cockpit and this part of the kit is extremely well detailed, although rather like their Mil Mi-24 kit, Zvezda have opted for decals to replicate instrument panels, dials, circuit breakers etc. I have little doubt this will look very effective in the smaller scale cockpit where there is not very much in the way of visual access (unlike the Mil Mi-24 Hind, which came in for a bit of criticism for this approach to replicating cockpit instrumentation). In fact I have noted that at least two manufacturers, including Eduard, have already announced the future release of photo-etched colour sets for this kit, including a full cockpit interior. The bench seat 'rest area' behind the crew stations is nicely reproduced although the purists will want to add the second, upper bunk even though the whole area is largely obscured once the fuselage comes together. The kit includes three superbly rendered crew figures which all have different poses and wear headsets, rather than flying helmets, which is accurate for most 'trash-hauling' operators. One of the pilot figures is even sporting sunglasses! The rest of the interior is also well rendered although, once again, aftermarket manufacturers have already announced the future release of interior sets to cover the cargo bay area, floor, ramp and those iconic red paratroop seats. That said, the kit parts for the interior are far from basic and build up nicely, providing a nicely 'furnished' cargo area, which will be more than adequate for most modellers, particularly if the model is completed with the ramp closed. A careful examination of the kit instructions reveals the need to trim some of the main upper cargo bay components, including the forward ceiling panels, to cater for the C-130H variant. This is a clear indication that Zvezda intends to release a kit of the stretched 'long wheelbase' C-130H-30 (C Mk.3 in RAF terminology) in the future, which has also seen service with several Asian Air Arms, including those of Indonesia and Malaysia.

My only concern at this stage of the build was with the forward fuselage and the inclusion of separate inserts to cater for differing access door and window arrangements for the sub-variants included in the kit. However, my fears were unfounded as a quick test-fit confirmed that the panels fit very neatly with the minimum of cleanup. Following the assembly sequence attention is then focused on the fuselage sponsons with different parts to cater for the differences between various sub-variants, including APU housings and the deflector doors associated with paratroop operations.



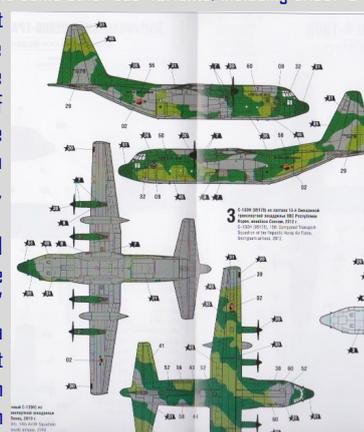
One of the major weaknesses with other 1:72 scale C-130 kits is that related to keeping the wings on – I have seen more than one of the older Airfix or Italeri examples, which featured butt joints with rather modest locating tabs, with the wings having a pronounced droop or completely separating from the airframe. Zvezda appear to have addressed this with a fairly robust centre section with staggered upper and lower wing components, although I will most probably also investigate the possible introduction of some additional plasticard wing spars for added strength. The Allison engine nacelles are very comprehensive components in their own right, with no less than 19 parts making up each one. This is one area where you can see a real difference in quality between this kit and the others, although to be fair to the aforementioned manufacturers, their kits are more than 30 years old so I would expect this to be the case. Other nice touches are the different radomes, which, once again, demonstrate Zvezda's attention to detail with this kit. Modellers should however note that the different tail fairings included with the kit are not correct for some of the decal options. The distinctive 'beaver tail' fairing fitted to RAF C-130s and some other sub-variants, including JASDF C-130Hs, is not catered for although it can be reproduced from the longer squared-off example that is in the kit. This recreated fairing would also apply to a Sri Lankan Air Force machine since these are ex-RAF C-130Ks. As always, check your references for a particular airframe/operator to be sure of accuracy. Final construction is concentrated on the undercarriage and propellers, all of which are nicely moulded and detailed – if I have one criticism with this kit it would be with the mainwheels – I personally think the weighted look has been slightly overdone but this is a personal preference. The ramp area is very nice too, all providing a great deal of interest, especially if you pose the model with the ramp and para-doors open.

The kit provides decals for five aircraft, and readers will be delighted to learn that two of decal options are for Asian aircraft; a Japan Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) C-130H operated by the 40th Tactical Airlift Squadron and featuring the very attractive four colour light blue/grey 'Cloud' camouflage scheme; and a Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) aircraft operated by the 15th Composite Transport Squadron and sporting a three-colour green/grey tactical colour scheme. The decal sheet/s are another area where Zvezda have excelled themselves with this kit release. Not only do they provide five very interesting and attractive options, but the decals themselves are a significant improvement on those in previous kits (which were already good). Gone is the rather matt finish, to be replaced by high-gloss 'Cartograf' style decals with excellent register and colour saturation and including a considerable amount of special-to-type stencilling, maintenance markings etc.

We are obviously going to see other versions kitted by Zvezda since there are some parts included in the kit that are not applicable to the decal/markings options included in the box. The most obvious are the large DAS fairings now seen on the rear fuselage of some US (and other) C-130s although these parts will come in handy for those wanting to model options from aftermarket decal sheets, most notably the recent release from Xtradecal, which featured in the last newsletter. Since the Lockheed C-130 Hercules has probably been the most popular and widely used military transport aircraft since the legendary Douglas C-47 Skytrain/DC-3 Dakota, operated by over 60 air forces worldwide and in a dazzling array of standard and special colour schemes, I have little doubt that we will see a number of new decal sheets emerging to provide alternatives to the already attractive schemes included in the kit and early releases such as the aforementioned Xtradecal sheet. There are currently no less than 12 Asian Air Arms that operate the C-130E/H Hercules variant (this figure does not include India, which only operates the newer C-130J Hercules) and the variant was also formerly operated by the Vietnamese Nationalist Air Force (South Vietnam) until 1975 so hopefully we will see even more options appearing soon.

If you are a fan of the Lockheed C-130 Hercules, or military transport aircraft in general, or just want to build a big 1:72 scale model then this is the kit for you. I think it is tremendous value for money – I truly believe it is my personal 'buy-of-the-year' in terms of cost vs. value.

Very highly recommended – Preview sample courtesy of my wallet!





A (very) brief history of the Manchukuo Air Force, 1932-1945, by Steve Komor

As I've already mentioned (p.2), I've always been a sucker for unusual markings and colour schemes, and while browsing through the [Blue Rider](#) catalogue online a few years ago, I came across a sheet featuring very some very unusual and colourful markings that I'd never seen before! Closer inspection revealed them to be the markings of the Air forces of Manchuria (which I'd heard of) and Manchukuo (which I hadn't). Of course, I had to buy the decal sheet there and then, and when it arrived, it went straight into the stash. But the purchase prompted me to find out more, particularly about Manchukuo.

In 1931, the State of Manchuria was invaded by the Japanese, and became a puppet state of the Empire of Japan in Northeast China and Inner Mongolia, which the Japanese called Manshūkoku (anglicised to Manchukuo). Although it became a constitutional monarchy in 1934, Manchuria remained under the control of Japan until the Japanese defeat in 1945, when the government was dissolved. After the surrender of Imperial Japan the territories claimed by Manchukuo were first seized in the Soviet invasion of Manchuria in August 1945, and then formally transferred to Chinese administration in the following year.



The Japanese occupiers revived the Manchurian Air Force in 1932, as well as a para-military airline, the Manchurian Air Transport Co. (Manchu Kokuyoso Kabushiki Kaisha, or MKKK), which was used in support of the Japanese occupying force, mainly on transport and reconnaissance duties. The markings used were derived from the colours of the Manchukuo flag, in the form of 5 concentric circles. Aircraft used during this period included the De Havilland D.H.80A 'Puss Moth', Junkers Ju86Z-1/-2 and the Messerschmitt Bf 108 'Taifun'. 13 MKKK aircraft, formed into an 'Independent Volunteer Battalion', saw action in support of the Inner Mongolian Army during the campaign in Suiyuan province in 1936.



In February 1937, a fully-fledged Manchukuo Air Force was formed and equipped with mainly Japanese aircraft, wearing the same markings. However, until July 1940 these aircraft were flown and maintained by Japanese personnel. In mid-1940, the Japanese finally decided to form a modern Manchukuoan Air Force with personnel from that country. This expansion plan suffered a serious setback, however, when 100 trained pilots rebelled, killed some Japanese instructors, and escaped in trucks to join guerrilla freedom fighters. Eventually, they were captured and court-martialled, and the reorganisation proceeded as planned.



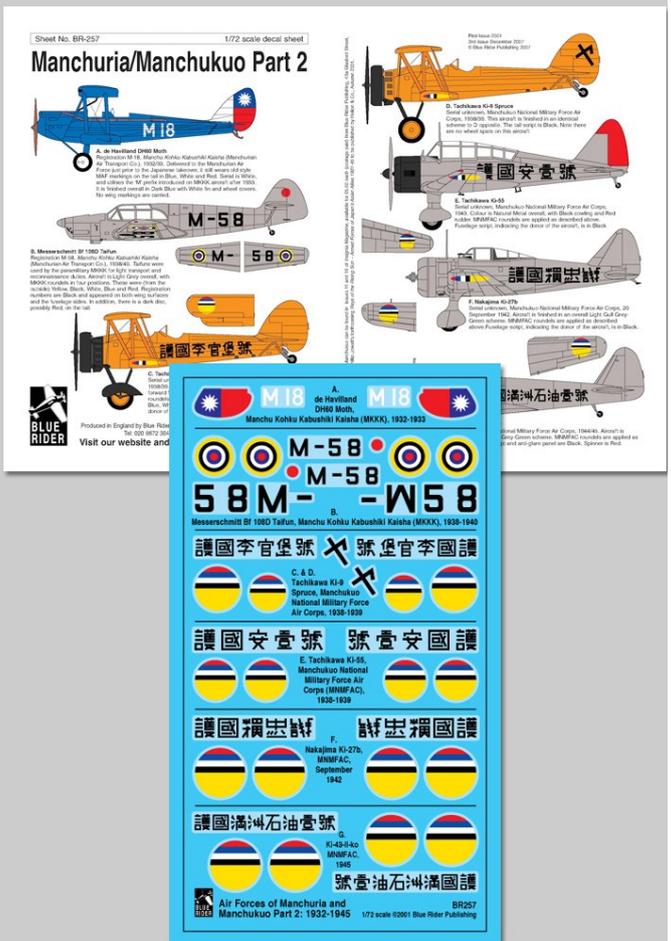
In 1942, the markings were modified to a different, but equally colourful variant, this time with horizontal stripes instead of the earlier circles. Most aircraft were overall natural metal, although trainers were painted 'trainer orange'. Aircraft no longer carried national markings on the rudder. Many aircraft carried large Japanese characters on the fuselage, and research has shown that these were the names of companies which had been 'persuaded' to donate money to purchase individual aircraft, usually oil, steel or industrial companies. The Air Force received a number of Nakajima Ki-27 'Nates', and in 1945 a very small number of Ki-43 'Oscars' was added to the fighter force, which were to be used to try

to intercept B-29 bombing raids. They were largely unsuccessful, although it has been reported that at least one B-29 was downed by a Ki-27 which crashed into it, kamikaze-style.

When the Soviet army attacked and invaded Manchukuo in August 1945, they did so with such overwhelming strength that all resistance by the Japanese and Manchukuoan forces crumbled. The Manchukuo Air Force virtually ceased to exist by the time of the Japanese surrender.

I still have that decal sheet in my stash, needless to say, and I have kits of the Bf 108 'Taifun' and the Ki-43 'Oscar' which I intend to finish in the two different styles of Manchukuoan markings. A new 'lockdown' project, methinks!

For anyone wishing to find out more about this subject, Philipp Jowett's book 'Rays of the Rising Sun, Volume I: Japan's Asian Allies 1931-45, China and Manchukuo', published by Helion in 2004, is an excellent source of information on not only the air forces but the armies and navies of the Japanese-occupied territories in China. I picked up the Kindle version on Amazon for £3.79! A highly recommended read!





Hawker Siddeley HS.748 Andover CC.2/T.2

(MKM144121) reviewed by Mark Attrill

Czech manufacturer, Mark I, have built a solid reputation for producing high quality 1:144 scale aircraft kits, with a nice balance between the more popular subjects and some more esoteric types. The Hawker-Siddeley HS.748 Andover probably falls into the latter category, having been produced in rather modest numbers for a commercially-orientated commuter aircraft, although it did enjoy some success with the RAF and a surprisingly large number of military operators overseas. This kit is one of several releases of the basic kit and is marketed as the "HS.748 Andover CC.2/T.2 in Asian and Australian Service". There is, in fact, only one Asian Air Arm decal option in the kit, although Mark I have also issued an aftermarket sheet for it which will also be featured in this review.

The kit comprises 51 parts, all extremely well moulded in a mid-grey plastic, of which 48 are applicable to this particular variant. There are no clear parts – the windscreen and passenger windows are portrayed in decal form, which is normally acceptable for a kit in this scale. The kit also includes a well laid out and easy to follow set of assembly instructions, full colour decal placement instructions and a printed card display base to simulate a concrete hard standing on which to display the completed model, which is a nice touch.

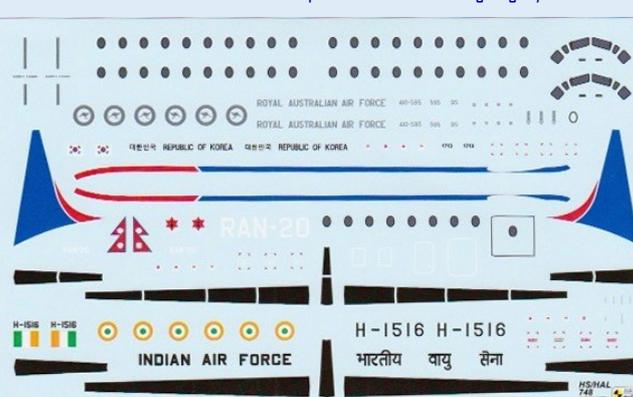
All of the plastic parts are superbly moulded and detailed; the panel lines are very finely rendered in this scale so care will need to be taken at the painting stage. Assembly starts with the two part fuselage, which incorporates the fin, and the forward nose undercarriage bay. The two part engine nacelles and main wings follow – the wings are a simple butt joint without a locating tab so you may want to introduce small sections of plastic or brass rod to strengthen the join between fuselage and wing. The main undercarriage is nicely moulded with separate undercarriage doors and oleos. The four-bladed propellers are moulded in one piece and are particularly fine which aids painting and finishing. There are a number of very small aeriels and antenna, and care needs to be taken to determine which ones are applicable to the particular aircraft you want to build.

© Hawker Siddeley HS.748 (Ser.2 Model 207), 60303 (re-serialised from 60203, ex-Thai Airways Co. Ltd. HS-THC, c/n 1569), 50th Anniversary 1964-2014, No.603 Sq., No.8 Wing, Royal Thai Air Force (Kong Thap Aorat Thai), Royal Thai Air Force Base Don Muang/Bangkok, Thailand, 2014.

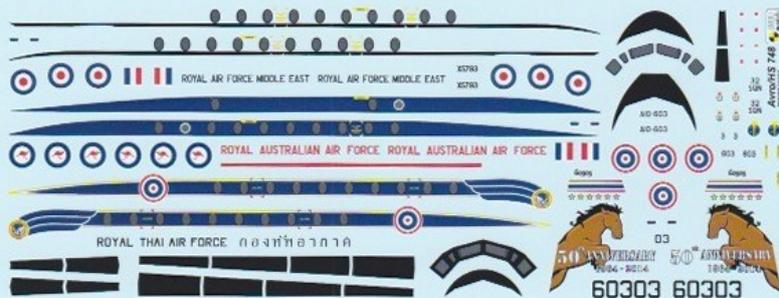
As previously stated, the kit provides decals for three aircraft including a rather attractive HS.748 Series 2 Model 207, operated by Number 6 Wing of the Royal Thai Air Force from Don Muang Air Base. This particular aircraft was finished in an airliner-style light grey and white colour scheme, with a complex blue and yellow cheatline and featuring special markings, in the form of a large horse motif and suitable titling on the fin to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the RTAF in 2014.

If this option/colour scheme does not interest, you then Mark I have also released a separate aftermarket decal sheet (Reference No. DMK144-501) which features four HS.748/HAL-748s including three Asian Air Arm examples. The first is a licence-built Hindustan Aeronautics HAL-748 operated by the Fixed Wing Training Faculty (FWTF) of the Indian Air Force at Yelahanka Air Force Station in 2015, sporting an overall medium grey colour scheme. The second option covers a HS.748 Series 2A Model 271 operated by the 11th Brigade, Nepal Army Air Wing at Tribhuvan (Kathmandu) International Airport,

Nepal. This particular aircraft has an overall dark green colour scheme with natural metal upper engine nacelles, and modellers should note that the kit parts will require some minor modification which involves scribing an additional rear cargo door on the starboard fuselage side. The third Asian option, which marks a return to the civil airliner-style colour scheme, is for a HS.748 Series 2A Model 248 operated by the 257th Special Flight Squadron, 35th Flying Group of the Republic of Korea Air Force (ROKAF) from Seoul Air Base, South Korea. This aircraft sports an attractive light grey and white colour scheme with red/blue cheatlines and tail markings.



Review samples courtesy of my wallet



HS.748/HAL-748 Military
 Australia, South Korea,
 Nepal, India
 (for MARK I model)

1:144

MARK I Ltd
decals
DMK144-501
 MARK I Ltd.
 PO Box 98, G2-100 31 Prague 10
 Czech Republic
 www.apta-publications.com



for those that do not want to scribe the detail on the kit. All in all, a very nice sheet that provides for a variety of different colour schemes and markings with which to adorn one or more of the kits.

For those modellers who experience challenges with display space, particularly for larger aircraft types such as multi-engine bombers or transport aircraft, or who prefer to build several examples of the same type, then 1:144 may be the way to go, with manufacturers like Mark I now producing high quality kits, aftermarket parts and decal sheets in this increasingly popular scale. Highly recommended!

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Early French Aircraft in the Service of Asian Air Arms: Part 2 - Marcel Dassault MD312/315 Series, by Brian Griffin



Image courtesy of ACVu at Deviantart.com

VokhArty@mlty, 2019

The Marcel Dassault MD-300 Flamant (Flamingo) series of aircraft started with the MD-303 (first flew in 1947) built for the Armée de l’Aire (AdIA) for colonial communications. It was then developed into the MD-311 as a bombing and navigation trainer, with a distinctive glass nose only seen on this model. This was followed by the MC-312, a six seat transport, fulfilling both training and communications roles. The final version was the MD-315, a ten seat utility transport aircraft. Flamants went on to serve in France’s North African and Indo-Chinese colonies, as well as at home, from 1949, on occasions flying light ground-attack missions armed with rockets and machine guns. The last Flamants were withdrawn from AdIA and Aeronavale service in the early 1980s..

The Flamant was used extensively by the AdIA in its struggles in Indo-China and in 1954 several MD-312/315s were passed on to the fledgling Republic of Vietnam Air Force (RVAF). Six former AdIA MD-315Rs were delivered to Cambodia in February 1964 and continued in service with Groupe de Liaison et Transporte of the Aviation Royale Khmère and the Khmer Air force until c. 1968.

A flying example of an MD-312 (F-AZED) has, until recently, been seen at French airshows – in Vietnamese markings. A temporary and apparently airworthy guest at the Musée Européen de l’Aviation de Chasse museum, in nice South Vietnamese markings, with its faded Night Mission nose art visible behind the engine. This Flamant arrived at the museum in 2001, but left in late 2010, after having been registered to Blue Bear Air on 5 October 2010. On 6 April 2011 it was registered to Association Dassault Passion and in June 2011 the aircraft was noted at Le Bourget, in bare metal with "Dassault Passion" titles.

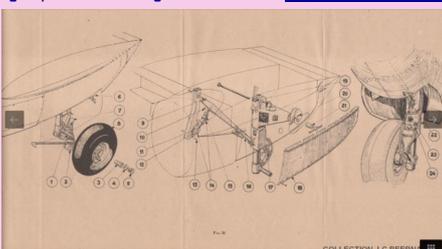
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXGQcxIFZ3I>. A Youtube video interviewing the crew of a restored MD-312 at le Bourget air show 2011. It’s all in French, but early footage shows vintage engine details (black and white) and later clips show cockpit details (in colour).



Video of VNAF replica flying <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhDhDdQvKPI>



Sign up to the Avialogs website here (<https://www.avialogs.com/>) – for access to Maintenance Manual of MD.315





KITS PRODUCED (or intended to be produced!)

1/48 Fonderie Miniature <https://modelingmadness.com/review/korean/previews/FM/6059.htm>



1/72 Azur/Special Hobby <https://hangar47.com/morane-dassault-312315-preview/> ; <https://modelingmadness.com/scott/korean/preview/mpm-sh/a028.htm>



1/72 Aerokit <https://www.britmodeller.com/forums/index.php?/topic/235038952-172-dassault-md-312-flamant-resin-kit-by-fsc-aerokit-released/>



1/72 Replica MD-311/312/315. <https://www.scalemates.com/kits/replica-marcel-dassault-flamant-md-311-312-315--1140332>



MD-312 Special Hobby kit built by member Peter Sharpin



Guideline Publications



Brunei Air Force/ Angkatan Tentera Udara Diraja Brunei

by Brian Griffin, with additional material provided by Mark Attrill



The Air Service of the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment was established in 1965, equipped with two Sikorsky S-55 helicopters, piloted by contractors. In 1966, RAF pilots took over with three Westland Whirlwinds. In 1967 it was renamed the Helicopter Platoon and received 5 Bell 206A Jet Rangers.

In 1981 a second squadron was created and equipped with Bolkow Bo.105, followed the next year with SIAI-Marchetti SF-260 equipping a third squadron. In the late-1980s, the Royal Brunei Armed Forces participated in a series of UK-sponsored South East Asian exercises, which had been derived to strengthen ties with several ASEAN nations and also provide a showcase for British military equipment, including carrier-based BAe Sea Harriers and both of the Panavia Tornado variants operated by the RAF. As a result of these exercises, the Government of Brunei gave serious consideration to the acquisition and establishment of a fixed-wing fast jet training and

operational unit, which the UK MOD supported with the creation of an in-country Project Office. Several in-depth studies were undertaken to consider the introduction to service of two variants of the BAe Hawk and even the Panavia Tornado. In the end, the huge costs involved in setting up and maintaining the training and maintenance facilities necessary to support such a quantum leap in operational capability for the fledgling Air Force were deemed too great and the project was abandoned in the mid-1990s. In 1991 it was renamed the Royal Brunei Air Force. 1997 saw the establishment of three further squadrons equipped with, respectively Sikorsky S-70A Blackhawk, CN-235 and Pilatus PC-7 Mk.II. As well as these aircraft, the RBMR/AS and RBAF have operated small numbers of other aircraft such as Wessex, Avro 748, Piper Cherokee, Bell 205, 212 and 214.

HISTORICAL AIRCRAFT

TYPE	NUMBER	FROM	TO
Bell 205	3	1970	1981
Bell 206A	4	1967	1998
Bell 212	15	1974	2014
CASA/IPTN CN-235M	1	2000	2012?
HS.748	1	1971	1981
Piper PA-28 Cherokee	2	1976	1982
SF.260 Warrior	2	1982	1986
Sikorsky S.70A	4	1997	2012?
Westland Whirlwind 3	3	1965	1971
Westland Wessex 54	2	1967	1971

CURRENT AIRCRAFT

TYPE	NUMBER	FROM
Bell 206B	3	1979
Bell 214	1	1986
CASA/IPTN CN-235MPA	1	2013
MBB Bo-105	6	1981
Pilatus PC-7 Mk.II	4	1997
Sikorsky S.70i	12	2013
Westland Whirlwind 3	3	1965
Westland Wessex 54	2	1967



AIRCRAFT ON ORDER

TYPE	NUMBER	FROM
Lockheed C-130J	1	2020?

ORBAT

WING	SQUADRON	AIRCRAFT TYPES	NAME
1 Wing	11 Squadron	S-70i	
	12 Squadron	Bo105CB	<i>Stingers</i>
	14 Squadron	S-70A, S-70i	
7 Wing	15 Squadron	CN235-110M	
	73 Squadron	PC-7 Mk2, Bell 206B	

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

Sikorsky S-55 (or Westland Whirlwind)

The Royal Brunei Air Force was established as the Air Wing of the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment in 1965 and was first tasked to fly doctors to rural area with two civilian operated Sikorsky S-55 aircraft. In 1966 the Royal Air Force provided three Westland Whirlwind helicopters, operated by service pilots, to provide the same service.



Avro 748



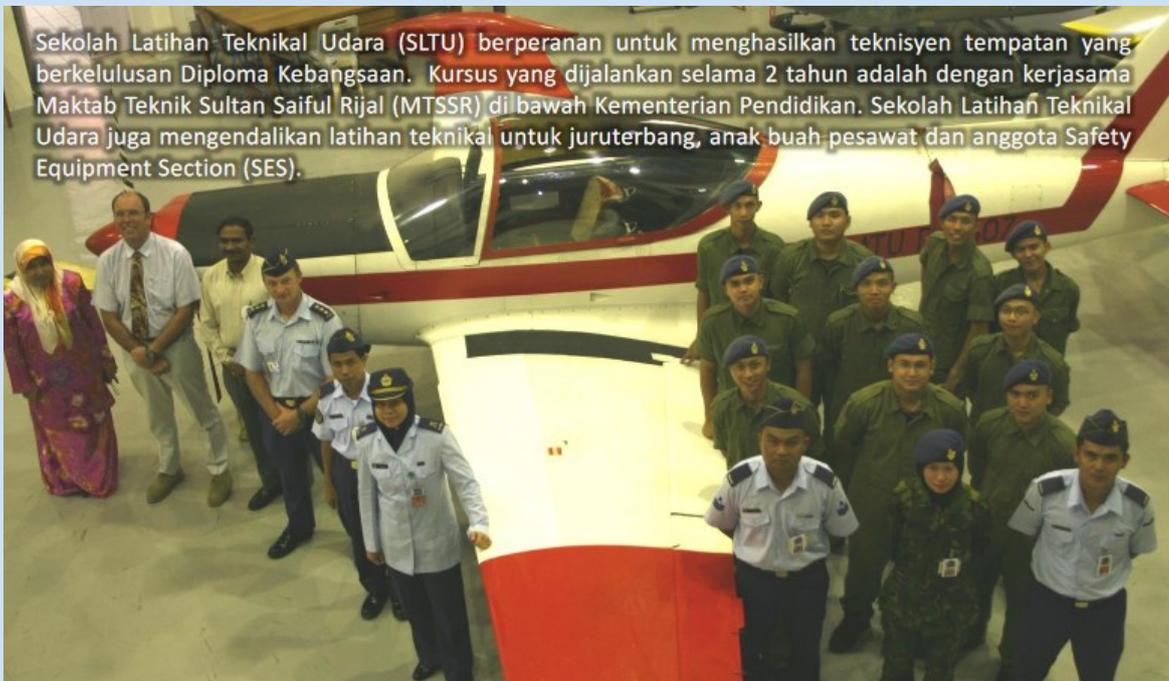
Piper Cherokee





SIAI-Marchetti SF-260

A third squadron was established in 1982 and equipped with the Italian-built SIAI-Marchetti SF260 trainer aircraft.



Sekolah Latihan Teknikal Udara (SLTU) berperanan untuk menghasilkan teknisyen tempatan yang berkelulusan Diploma Kebangsaan. Kursus yang dijalankan selama 2 tahun adalah dengan kerjasama Maktab Teknik Sultan Saiful Rijal (MTSSR) di bawah Kementerian Pendidikan. Sekolah Latihan Teknikal Udara juga mengendalikan latihan teknikal untuk juruterbang, anak buah pesawat dan anggota Safety Equipment Section (SES).

Bell 206

Three Royal Brunei Air Wing pilots with their RAF Instructor pose by a Bell 206. The RAF personnel were on loan service to the RBAW and wore local ranks as portrayed in this image.





Bell 212

The Bell 212, which equipped the First Squadron was at one time the most numerically significant air asset in the RBAF inventory and was used in a variety of roles ranging from troop lift and casualty evacuation to Search and Rescue and VVIP transportation. The aircraft were retired from service in 2012.



Bell 214

The U.S. supplied one Bell 214ST utility helicopter, which is currently operated by the First Squadron





Pilatus PC-7 Mk.II

The Pilatus PC-7 advanced training aircraft was introduced to service with the Third Squadron in 1997, replacing the ubiquitous SIAI-Marchetti SF-260.



CASA/IPTN CN-235M

The Fifth Squadron was established in 1997 and equipped with a CN-235 twin-turboprop transport aircraft, acquired from Indonesia. The aircraft has been observed in two different colour schemes with RBAF markings and it is presumed that the original Dark Green/Brown scheme was that sported prior to delivery.





Sikorsky S.70

The Fourth Squadron was established in 1997 and initially equipped with the Sikorsky S-70A Black Hawk helicopter. The primary roles of the S-70A and the Squadron are similar to those adopted by the Bell 212 equipped First Squadron. At least four of these aircraft have been subsequently transferred to the Royal Malaysian Air Force to boost their airlift capacity in the neighbouring state of Eastern Sabah where the country is facing increased threats from militant factions. The RBAF S-70As are being replaced by Sikorsky UH-60Ms.



MBB Bo.105/107

The Second Squadron operates six German manufactured MBB Bo-107 helicopters in the flying doctor, reconnaissance, surveillance, provides close air support, VIP lift and search and locate roles.



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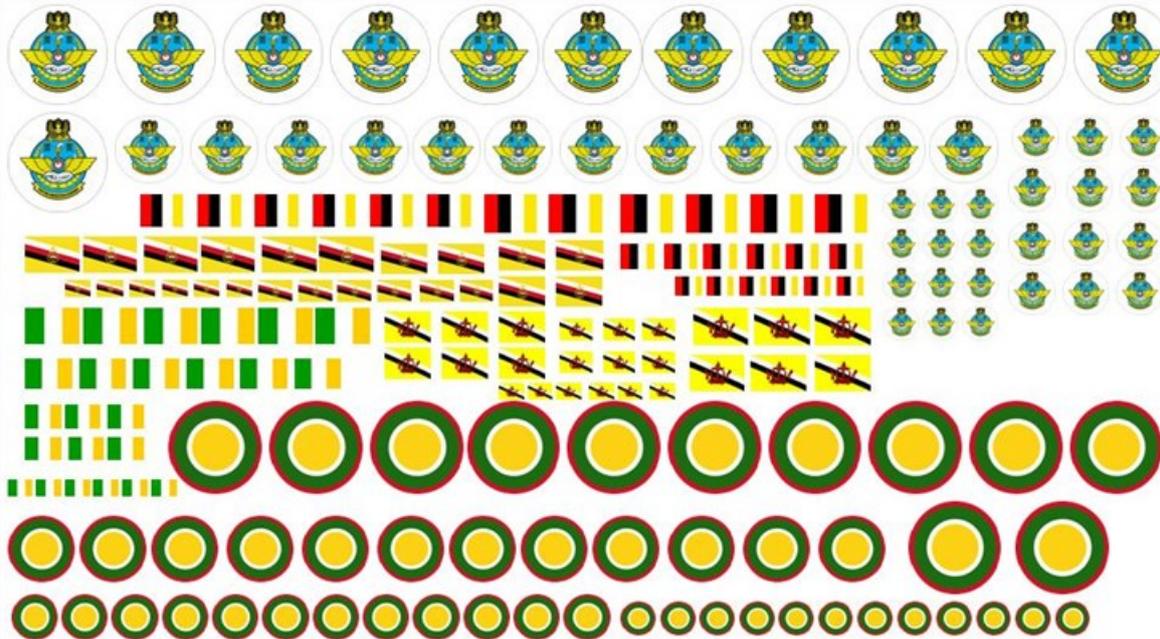
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The army of Brunei flew six Bo.105C and one Bo.105CBS, which was the private machine of the sultan. They were assigned to the 2nd squadron on the international airport of Brunei.

GENERIC DECALS OF ASIAN AIR ARMS — AS.II AIR SERVICE OF THE ROYAL BRUNEI MALAY REGIMENT/ROYAL BRUNEI AIR FORCE

Lay white decal paper, or paint, on model and allow to dry before applying decals.
White decal discs and "stars & bars" available from Fantasy Printshop—www.fantasyprintshop.co.uk



brianmgriffin1@outlook.com

brianmgriffin1@outlook.com

GENERIC DECALS OF ASIAN AIR ARMS – AS.II BRUNEI

Air Service of the Royal Brunei Malay Regiment and Royal Brunei Air Force.

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N.B. Lay white decal paper, or paint, on model and allow to dry before applying decals.

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Roundel Quiz

So readers, how many of these roundels can you identify? The first 20 are in current use by their respective air forces, but the last 5 are no longer in use, having been replaced by more modern insignia. It's just for fun, no prizes (sorry!), and the answers are on page __. Good luck!





I'd like to give a big welcome to our 4 latest members

Khai Vu from Australia; Dominic Guarnera from the USA; Daniel Haineault from Canada; Mark Griffiths from the UK

We now have 477 members from the following 55 countries!

Abu Dhabi, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bermuda, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Laos, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, Myanmar, Namibia, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, The Philippines, Portugal, Poland, Qatar, Russia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, UK, USA and Venezuela—Phew!

1916-1920	1946-1949	1973-1990	Thailand	1968-1973
China	Indonesia	Singapore	Tajikistan	Singapore
Armenia	Brunei	China	Afghanistan	Tajikistan
Singapore	Myanmar	Cambodia	Kyrgyzstan	Afghanistan
Uzbekistan	Turkmenistan	Sri Lanka	India	Kyrgyzstan
Kazakhstan	Bhutan	Azerbaijan	North Korea	India





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