

Belcher Bits Decal BD13: Seafire, Firefly and Sea Fury 1/48

In December 1945, the Naval Air branch of the Royal Canadian Navy was established and initially equipped with the Supermarine Seafire XV and Fairy Firefly FR.1. By 1949, the Seafire had been replaced by the Hawker Sea Fury, and the original batch of Fireflies upgraded to FR.1V and AS.5, being phased out a year later by the Grumman TBM.

These aircraft represent the first stages of the RCN Naval Air branch as it was being developed from its Fleet Air Arm roots. By the mid-50s, Canada's operational role was changing and becoming more closely linked with the US, and the final group of aircraft used by the RCN were all US designs (F2H Banshee and S2F Tracker)

This decal sheet allows the modeller to build a Seafire XV, Firefly FR.1 and Firefly AS.5 in any of the operational schemes in which they served. It also provides markings for the first carrier based operational scheme for the Sea Fury. Some of the Sea Furies were originally delivered and used in the current FAA scheme of EDSG over Sky, but that scheme was not common.

Unlike many Belcher Bits decals, this sheet is not generic, and specific aircraft are covered, although common lettering sizes mean some other Seafires and Fireflies are possible with a bit of mixing and matching. Specific schemes illustrated are:

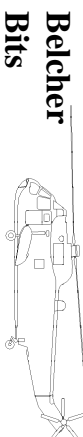
1. Seafire XV s/n PR 479, 803 Sqn, 1946
2. Seafire XV s/n PR 494, 803 Sqn, 1946
3. Seafire XV s/n PR 479, 883 Sqn, 1948
4. Seafire XV s/n PR 434, 883 Sqn, 1948
5. Firefly FR.1, s/n DK 561, 825 Sqn, 1946
6. Firefly FR.1, s/n PP 467, 825 Sqn, 1946
7. Firefly FR.1, s/n DK 563, 826 Sqn, 1948
8. Firefly As.5, s/n VH 135, 825 Sqn, 1949
9. Sea Fury, s/n TF 993, 870 Sqn, 1949
10. Sea Fury, s/n VX 592, 871 Sqn, 1951

Revised decal sheet and instructions June 2012

Other 1/48 Belcher Bits decal sets available:

- BD1: Canadian Naval Helicopters; 2 x HO4S-3, 3 x CH 124,
- BD 2: Canadian Air Force Helicopters; H-19, H-34, 4 x CH 136, 1 x CH 139,
- 3 x CH 118, 3 x CH 135
- BD6: CF-104 Starfighter
- BD9: CF-101 Voodoo

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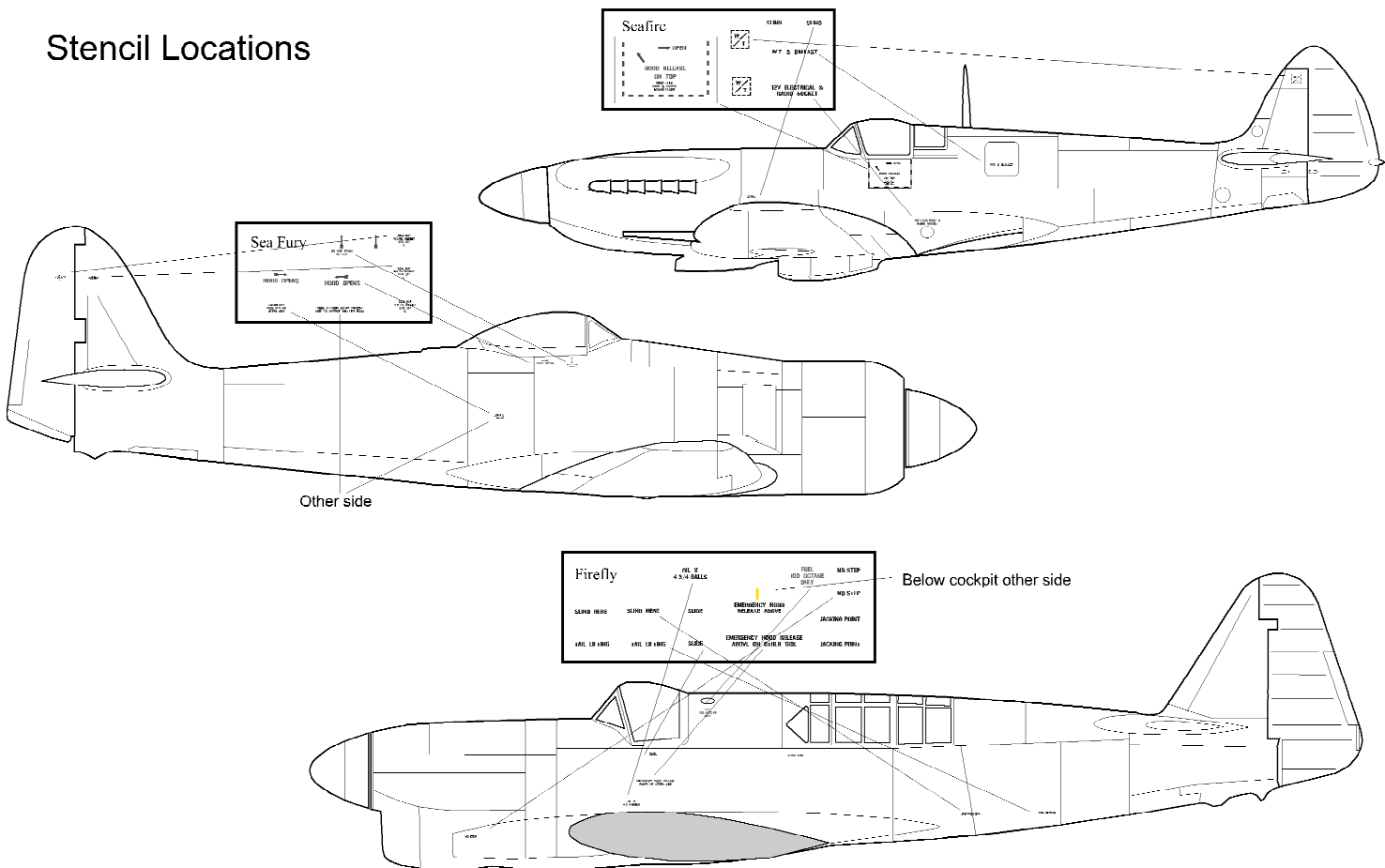
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Stencil Locations



Seafire XV in RCN Service

803 Sqn RCN was transferred from the FAA and formally established in 1946 as the fighter squadron for the newly commissioned HMCS Warrior. Although initially equipped with Seafire IIIs while training in the UK, this squadron was equipped with ex-FAA Seafire XV's in Canadian service. HMCS Warrior only served in the RCN for two years (she was not winterised) and the Seafires lasted in service only slightly longer.

In 1947, 803 handed down its machines to its newly established sister squadron (883 Sqn) and proceeded back to the UK to transition onto Sea Furies. 883 Sqn and No.1 Training Air Group continued using Seafire XV until 1949, when they were dropped from service. One of the last appearances of the Seafire XV in Canadian service was at the 1949 CNE in Toronto, a swan song marred by a mid-air collision which resulted in the deaths of two pilots. As a final note, one of the other pilots of that demonstration team, Lt. J. MacBrien, went on to win the Distinguished Flying Cross flying F9F Panthers in Korea while on exchange with the USN.

This decal sheet allows the modeller to build a Seafire XV in either operational scheme (ex-FAA Extra Dark Sea Grey/ Slate over Sky, and RCN Dark Grey over Light Grey) in which it served.

A word about Sky. FAA aircraft in the fifties were Extra Dark Sea Grey over Sky, and since many of these aircraft ended up being transferred to Canada, the question has been raised about whether the lower colour of RCN aircraft was Sky or Light Grey. Leo Pettipas is the dean of RCN Air Arm research and I believe he has nailed down the situation recently. Basically, Seafires and Firefly FR I's which were originally delivered in EDSG/Slate over Sky were repainted in Canada in the two grey scheme. Some (but not all) batches of Firefly FR IV's and Sea Furies were delivered in the two grey scheme, and some were painted in EDSG over Sky ... in error. It is possible to determine which was which by careful examination of the paintline between the two colours. The error related to different interpretations of the Canadian paint spec, and was sorted out for the final batches.

References:

1. The Supermarine Seafire in Royal Canadian Service, Leo Pettipas, 1987

1. Seafire XV s/n PR 479 /L, 803 Sqn, 1946

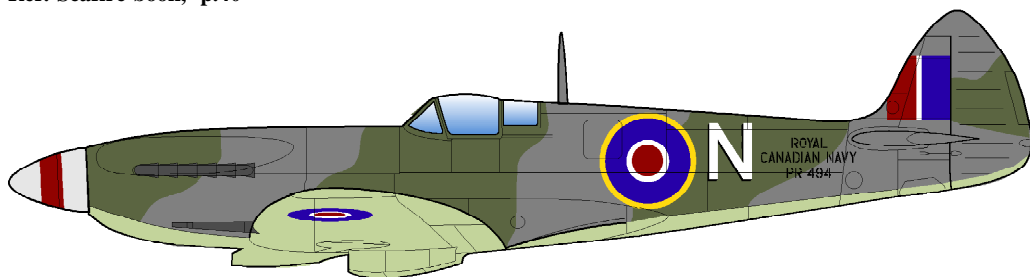
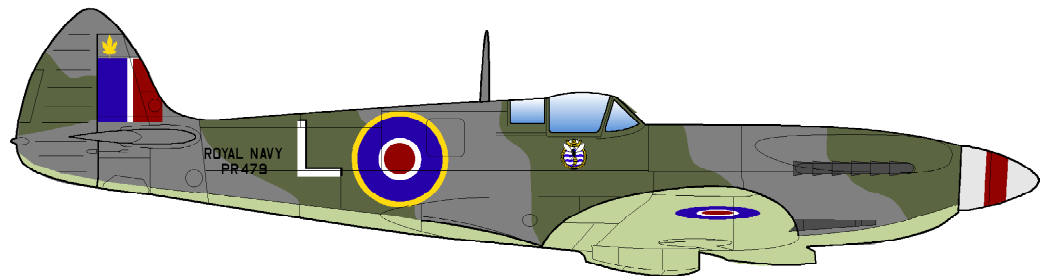
This is typical of the earliest scheme.

Extra Dark Sea Grey and Slate over Sky.

24" x 24" fin flashes on the tail (red forward). 36" Type C1 roundels (use the 32" Type C and add a yellow ring) on the fuselage sides, 50" Type B roundels above the wings, 32" Type C below. Some of these aircraft retained their Royal Navy identification in 4" black letters (solid, not stencilled) on the rear fuselage; this was one. Above the fin flash was a small yellow maple leaf of unusual shape ...

looks more like marijuana, but I think that's lack of artistic talent rather than a social statement. On the starboard side below the cockpit was an 803 Sqn crest. Spinner was aluminum laquer with a red band. The aircraft code letter was white with black shadowing.

Ref: Seafire book, p.40



2. Seafire XV s/n PR 494 /N, 803 Sqn, 1946

Same squadron, same time period. This aircraft displays the more typical stencilled Royal Canadian Navy and serial number on the rear fuselage.

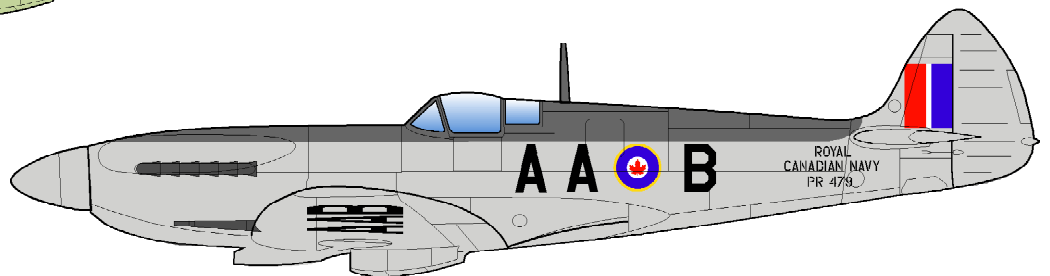
Ref: Seafire book, p.4

3. Seafire XV s/n PR-479 /AA-B, 883 Sqn, 1948

Same aircraft as scheme 1, at a later date.

This is typical of the second and final scheme. Dark Grey over Light Grey. 18" x 24" fin flashes on the tail (red forward). 18" RCN ringed roundels (use the 16" RCN roundel and add a yellow ring) on the fuselage sides and upper wings. Below the starboard wing, VG in 36" black letters; under the port wing AAB. Royal Canadian Navy and serial number in 4" black stencilled letters.

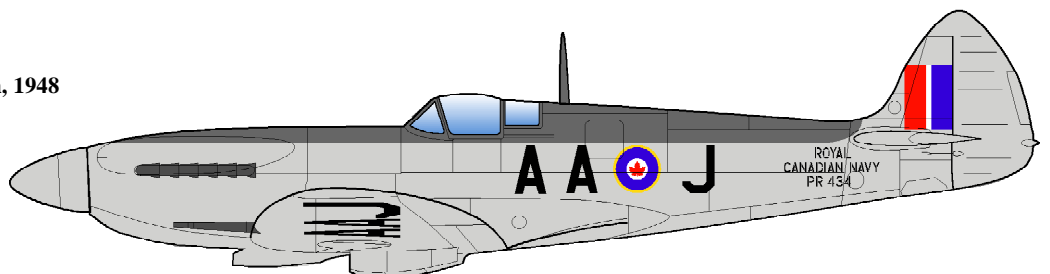
Ref: Seafire book, p.55



4. Seafire XV s/n PR 434 /AA-J, 883 Sqn, 1948

Similar to scheme 3.

Ref: Seafire book, p.55



Firefly FR.1 and AS.5 in RCN Service

825 Sqn RCN was formally established in 1946 as the fighter-reconnaissance squadron for the newly commissioned HMCS Warrior, equipped with ex-FAA Fairey Firefly FR.1s. HMCS Warrior only served in the RCN for two years (she was not winterized), but the Firefly lasted longer, serving on board HMCS Magnificent as well.

In 1947, 825 Sqn handed down its machines to its newly established sister squadron (826 Sqn) to transition onto the Firefly FR IV. The RCN later went on to use the Firefly FR IV and AS.5 (both leased from the RN) until 1950 when replaced by the Grumman TBM. The original FR.1s though were not leased but Canadian owned (part of Britains WWII reparations, along with the Seafires) and these were eventually sold to Ethiopia. A number of years later, two of these ex-Ethiopian machines came back to museums in Canada ... still sporting RCN paint schemes!

This decal sheet allows the modeller to build Firefly FR.1s in either operational scheme (ex FAA Extra Dark Sea Grey/ Slate over Sky, and RCN Dark Grey over Light Grey) in which it served and one of several AS.5s.

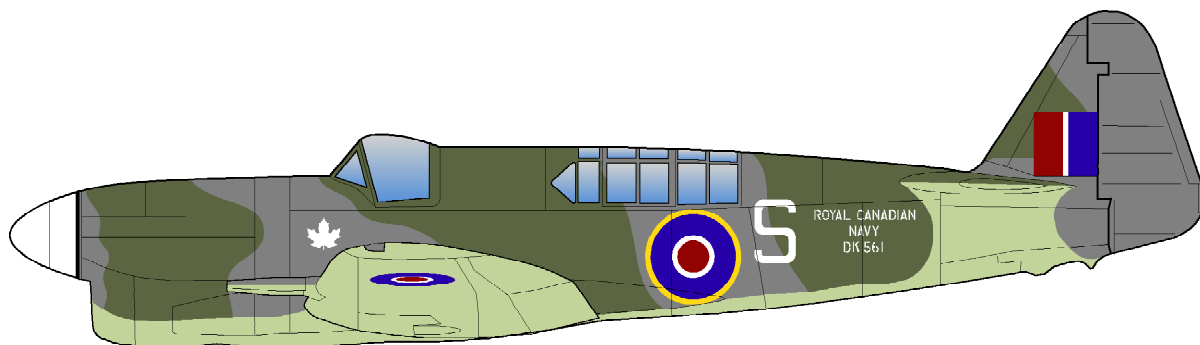
References:

1. The Fairey Firefly in Royal Canadian Service, Leo Pettipas, 1987

5. Firefly FR.1 s/n DK 561 /S, 825 Sqn, 1946

This is typical of the earliest scheme. Extra Dark Sea Grey and Slate over Sky. 24" x 24" fin flashes on the tail (red forward). 36" Type C1 roundels (use the 32" Type C and add a yellow ring) on the fuselage sides, 50" Type B roundels above the wings, 32" Type C below. Royal Canadian Navy and serial number were in stencilled 4" white lettering. Spinner was white. The aircraft code letter was white as was the maple leaf on the forward port fuselage.

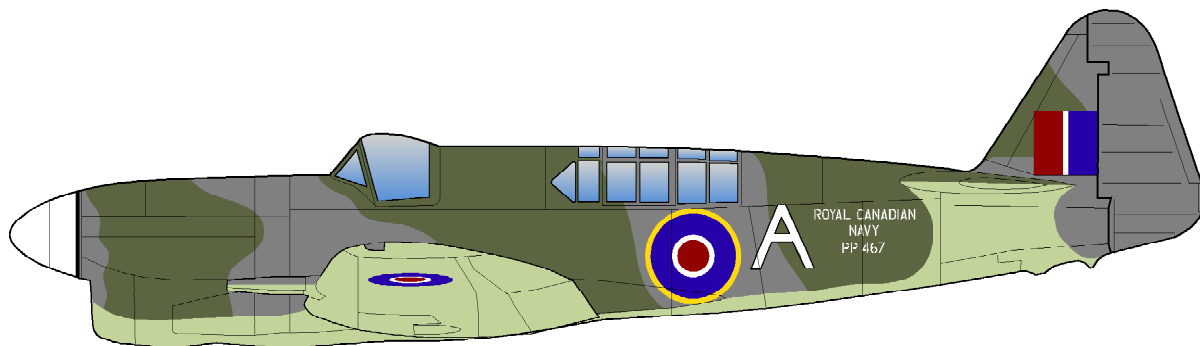
Ref: Firefly book, p.23



6. Firefly FR.1 s/n PP467 /A, 825 Sqn, 1946

Similar to previous scheme. The aircraft letter A was white with a black border.

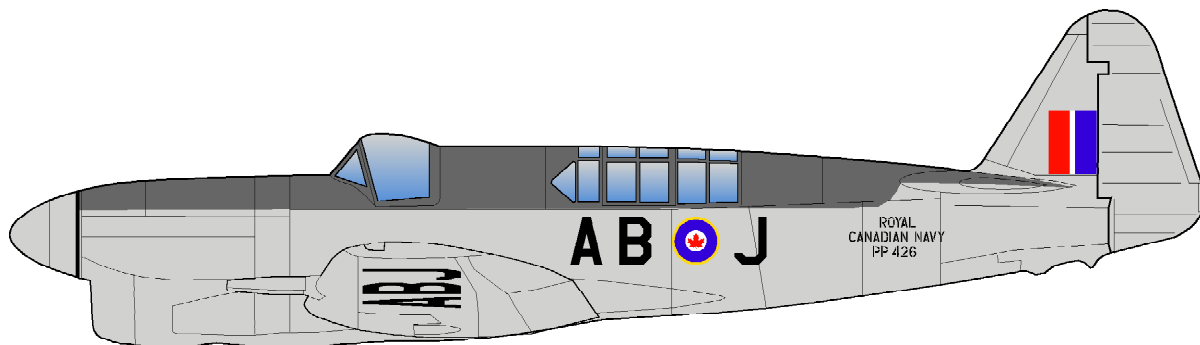
Ref: Firefly book, p.80



7. Firefly FR.1 s/n PP 426 /AB-J, 826 Sqn, 1948

This is typical of the second and final scheme for the early Fireflies. Dark Grey over Light Grey. 18" x 24" fin flashes on the tail (red forward). 18" RCN ringed roundels (use the 16" RCN roundel and add a yellow ring) on the fuselage sides and upper wings. Below the starboard wing, VG in 36" black letters; under the port wing ABJ. Royal Canadian Navy and serial number in 4" black stencilled letters.

Ref: Firefly book, p.39

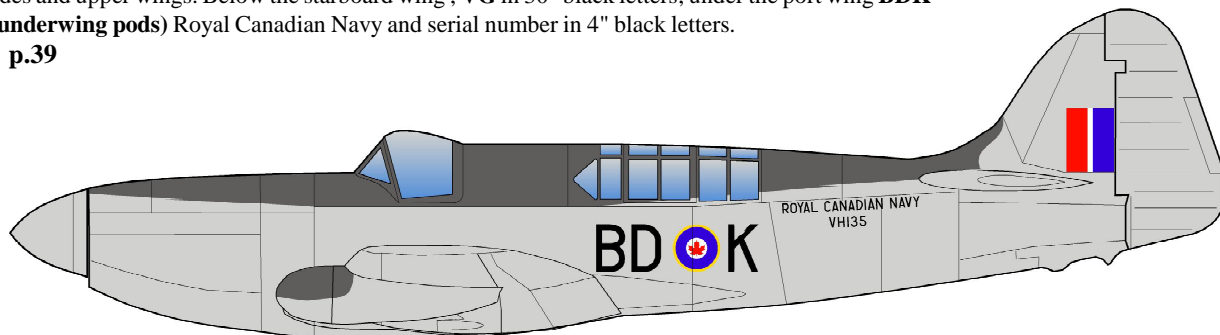


Note: The decal sheet also includes serial numbers and markings for AB-F (DK 563) and AB-C (DK 535) in an identical layout to this.

8. Firefly AS.5 s/n VH135/BD-K, 825 Sqn, 1949

This is typical of the scheme for the later Fireflies. Dark Grey over Light Grey. There was some variation of the colour separation lines; note how the front and rear slope up somewhat. 18" x 24" fin flashes on the tail (red forward). 18" RCN ringed roundels (use the 16" RCN roundel and add a yellow ring) on the fuselage sides and upper wings. Below the starboard wing, **VG** in 30" black letters; under the port wing **BDK** (both inboard of the underwing pods) Royal Canadian Navy and serial number in 4" black letters.

Ref: Firefly book, p.39



Note: The decal sheet also includes serial numbers and markings for BD-C (VH134), BD-N (VX414), BD-H (VX418) and BD-O (VX415) in an identical layout to this.

Sea Fury in RCN Service

In 1947, 803 Sqn handed its Seafires to 883 Sqn and proceeded back to the UK to transition onto Sea Furies. In 1951, RCN squadrons were renumbered; 803 to 870 and 883 to 871.

This decal sheet allows the modeller to build a Sea Fury in its early operational scheme (RCN Dark Grey over Light Grey).

Note that the two schemes shown both have the 'Canadian' colour separation line, indicating they were repainted in Canada and were definitely Dark Grey over Light Grey.

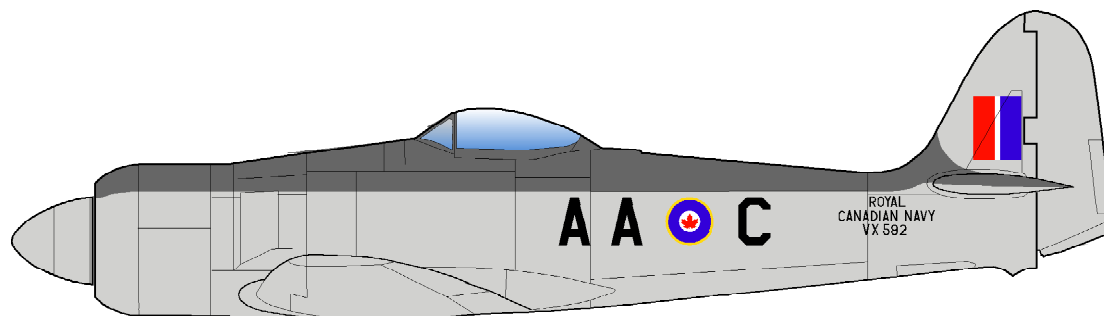
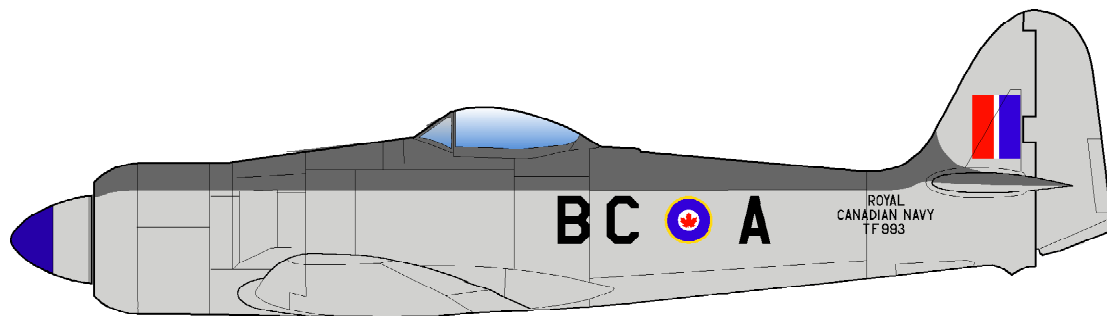
References:

1. The Hawker Sea Fury in the Royal Canadian Navy, Leo Pettipas, 1989

9. Sea Fury, s/n TF 993/BC-A, 870 Sqn, 1952

This is typical of the first operational scheme for the Sea Furies (some were originally delivered in FAA scheme of EDSG on fuselage top and sides with Sky below, but these aircraft were repainted before carrier service). Dark Grey over Light Grey. 18" x 24" fin flashes on the tail (red forward). 18" RCN ringed roundels (use the 16" RCN roundel and add a yellow ring) on the fuselage sides and upper wings. Below the starboard wing, **VG** in 36" black letters; under the port wing **BCA**. Royal Canadian Navy and serial number in 4" black solid letters. The spinner had a blue nose cap.

Ref: Sea Fury book, p.64



10. Sea Fury, s/n VX 692/AA-C, 871 Sqn, 1952

Similar to scheme 8 above, but no blue spinner cap. Note: The decal sheet gives VX 592, the correct code is VX 692 ... must get this proofreading thing down! You can of course cut the 9s from TF 993, and use them to replace the 5 ... sorry about that.

Ref: Sea Fury book, p.150