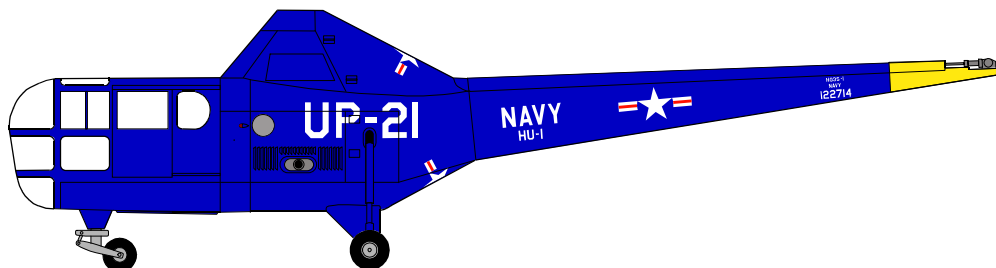


Belcher Bits BB-43: Sikorsky S-51 1/48

If this looks familiar, it should. This decal (and resin parts) were included in the Belcher Bits kit BK-2 of the Sikorsky S-51. With the advent of a new injection moulded kit of the same subject by AMP Models, that resin kit has been retired. This set allows the modeller to make use of the still-useful decals which were supplied with that kit, including markings of the machine seen in the film 'The Bridges at Toko-Ri'. A resin figure of Mickey Rooney and his characteristic green top hat are also supplied.

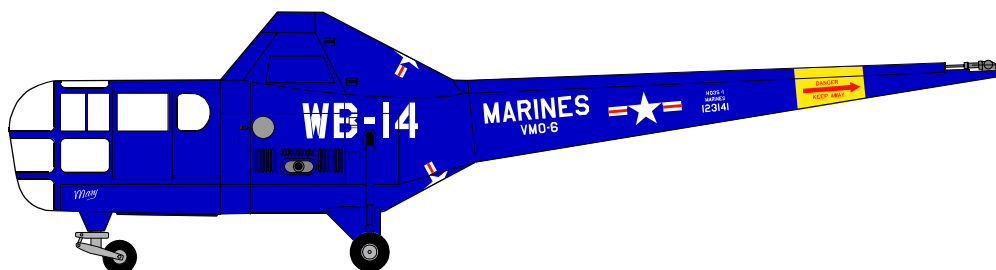


HO3S-1 (BuAer No.122714 / UP-21) HU-1, Korea 1950

Helicopter Utility Squadron HU-1 commissioned in April 1948 and equipped with the Sikorsky HO3S-1. It provided helicopter detachments to fleet carriers for plane-guard duties with one aircraft remaining aloft during launch and recovery operations. Helicopters also provided convenient means for visits to other ships; this machine was photographed on the flight deck of the Royal Navy carrier HMS Glory.

Overall Gloss Sea Blue with yellow tip to tailboom. National insignia is on both sides of the tailboom and above and below the rear fuselage; in the latter two locations, the top point of the star faces forward. Rotor blades are black with yellow tips. Wooden main rotor blades, three bladed tail rotor.

Reference: Air War over Korea, p.42.



HO3S-1 (BuAer No.123141 / WB-14) VMO-6, Kimpo, Korea 1950

The HO3S was the first helicopter type operated by the Marines, starting in 1948. It was used for aerial resupply, observation, rescue and medevac missions in the Korean war. Swift evacuation of wounded saved many lives and helped to prove the concept of airborne transportation of casualties to emergency medical facilities.

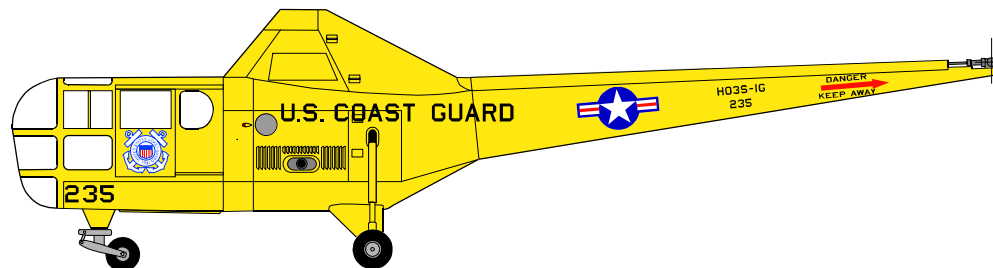
Overall Gloss Sea Blue with yellow band on tail and red tail rotor warning arrow. The name 'Mary' is written in white script below the pilot's door. National insignia is on both sides of the tailboom and above and below the rear fuselage; in the latter two locations, the top point of the star faces forward. Rotor blades are black with yellow tips. Wooden main rotor blades, three bladed tail rotor.

Reference: USN/USMC over Korea, p.28.

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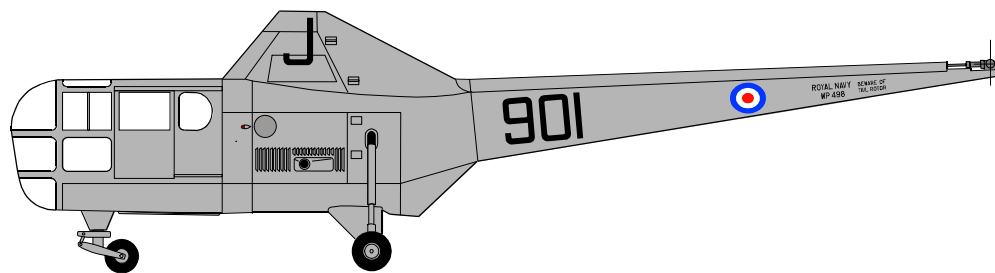
Phone: 813-836-6575, Email: info@belcherbits.com Web: www.belcherbits.com



HO3S-1G (s.n. 235) USCG, 1950

The USCG acquired 9 of the 91 USN HO3S-1s and operated them from 1947-1950. They were used for SAR duties and one feature which was often seen on SAR variants (also seen on USAF and RCAF machines) was twin searchlights mounted in the lower nose. The markings in the kit represent those worn by the HO3S-1G on display in the US Naval Aviation Museum at Pensacola. It is overall Chrome Yellow. Rotor blades are grey on top, black underneath with yellow tips, tail rotor blades are white with red band and yellow section at trailing edge of tip. Metal main rotor blades, two bladed tail rotor.

Reference: Personal photos.

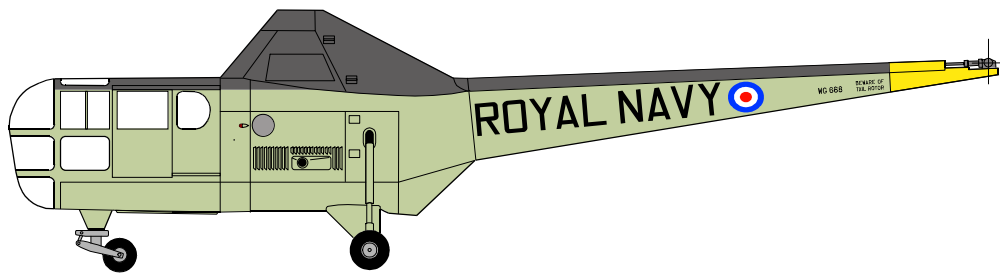


Dragonfly HR.3 (WP498, 901/J) HMS Eagle, 1954

Initial delivery of the Westland-built license production of the S51 included 13 to the RN (HR Mk 1, equipped for air-sea rescue with a hoist) and 3 to the RAF (HC Mk 2, equipped for casualty evacuation with stretcher panniers). All HR 1s were delivered in 1950 to 705 Sqn at Gosport who used them for operational trials and training. These early machines had wooden rotor blades which were judged to be unsatisfactory for operational use and the 58 subsequent HR Mk 3 had metal blades. HR 3s were also operated by 701 and 728 Sqns, primarily in the SAR role. The last RN Dragonfly was phased out of service in 1967. This HR Mk 3 of HMS Eagle's Ships Flight in 1954 is finished in the earliest of three RN schemes, overall aluminum lacquer. Rotor blades are black with yellow tips. Metal main rotor blades, three bladed tail rotor.

Note that although markings for RN Dragonflies are included on these sheets, UK-built examples had a different engine fitted, and the port exhaust was different. Also, most Westland machines had an extended lower rear fuselage. Those parts were included in the original resin kit, but are not part of this set.

Reference: Fly Navy, p.43.

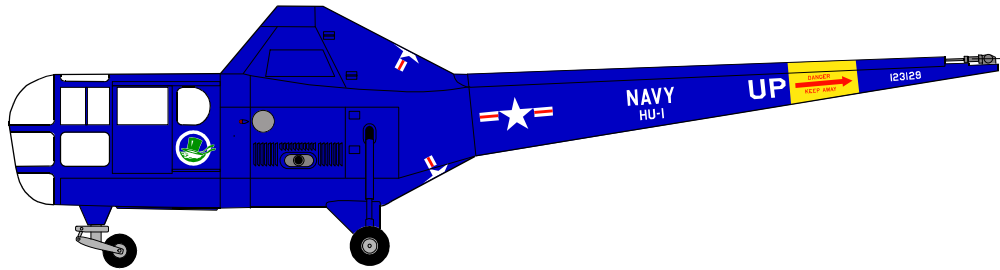


Dragonfly HR.3 (WG668, 904/B) HMS Bulwark, 1955

This HR Mk 3 of HMS Bulwark's Ships Flight in 1955 is finished in the intermediate RN scheme of Extra Dark Sea Grey over Sky, with a yellow tip to the tailboom. Main rotor blades are black with yellow tips, tail rotors are black with red/white/red tips. Metal main rotor blades, three bladed tail rotor.

Reference: **British Naval Aircraft since 1912, p.349**

Sometime in the late '50s, RN Dragonflies received their final paint scheme, overall Oxford Blue with white markings. A good photo of this can be found on p.45 of Fly Navy.



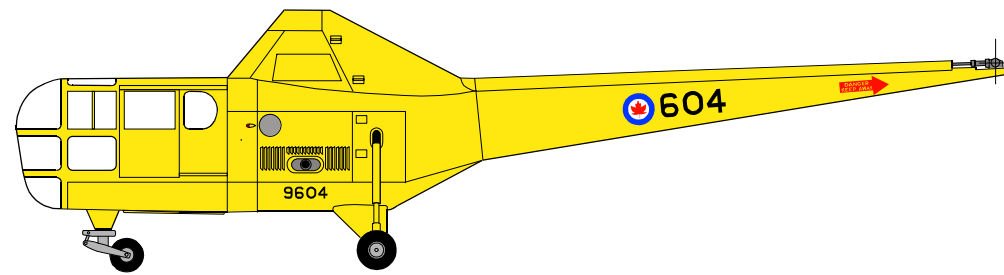
HO3S-1 (BuAer 123129 / UP-3) as seen in the film 'The Bridges at Toko-ri'

If you haven't seen this film, you should. It's a good story and full of tremendous flying footage of F9F Panthers and of course, the HO3S. The combat scenes are shot with models but they are done very well. Chief AP pilot Mike Forney (played by Mickey Rooney) is an irrepressible sort who wears a green top hat and scarf while flying his plane guard duties. At the end, Forney is shot down while trying to rescue VF-192 pilot Lt. Brubaker (William Holden) from behind enemy lines and they are both shot dead in a muddy ditch ... hardly a fitting end for a naval aviator or heroic rescue pilot.

Close examination of the film shows that more than one helicopter was used, but the markings with the kit are based on photos of the machine used in the final scenes. These markings are sort of a mix of authentic markings from different time periods. The machine is overall Gloss Sea Blue with a yellow band on the tail boom and red danger markings. Stars and bars are in standard positions. The squadron letters (UP) are just forward of the yellow band and are repeated under the tailboom. The aircraft number (3) is only shown under the tailboom along with a large NAVY; both these last markings are non-standard. Under the pilot's door is the instruction REMOVE CHUTE in yellow. Finally, there is the logo of Mike Forney's machine, a green top hat and scarf. This was seen on both sides of the aircraft, but in at least one shot, was missing from the starboard side. To go along with these markings, the kit also includes a figure of Mike Forney, complete with scarf and top hat. The figure was sculpted specially for this kit and sports authentic Korean War vintage flying gear on a five-foot nuthin frame. Flying coveralls are light khaki, boots are black and life jacket is yellow. Scarf and top hat are bright green.

References for the movie markings are, of course, the film and the Summer 1982 issue of 'The Hook' which includes a fascinating history of combat rescue, including the two incidents on which the story of 'The Bridges of Toko-ri' was based.

Special thanks to Michel Davignon who sculpted the figure of Mickey Rooney



H-5 (s.n. 9604), RCAF, 1955

The Royal Canadian Air Force acquired 7 Sikorsky S51s (civil variant) in 1947, RCAF serials from 9601 to 9607 being assigned. These were the first rotary wing machines operated by the RCAF and were used for survey work and training but primarily SAR. The seven machines were based across the country, serving in the Search and Rescue Units of the RCAF from Greenwood to Cold Lake.

Throughout its long career in the RCAF, the H-5 carried only one scheme; overall yellow. Rotor blades are grey on top, black underneath with yellow tips, tail rotor blades are black with red/white/red tips. When originally delivered in 1947, the H-5 had wooden rotor blades and these were later replaced by metal main rotor blades. However, even early photos indicate a two bladed tail rotor.

Reference: **RT Vol 13. No.2.**