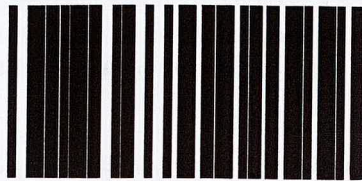


# Digital 1/48



OMD1068



## RNZAF Avengers – Pacific Theatre 1943-45



TBF-1C, NZ2521, with 30 Squadron at Piva, Bougainville, sometime in April or May, 1944. NZ2521 was delivered on 15th December, 1943, and was shot down at Talli Bay, Rabaul, by anti-aircraft fire on 31st May, 1944, with the loss of all three crew.



Two aircraft at Piva North in March, 1944, carrying codes typical of all RNZAF Avengers based at Piva, Bougainville. The last three digits of the serial number were on the rear fuselage forward of the roundel and on the lower front of the engine cowl.



TBF-1C, NZ2523 being armed at Piva, Bougainville. The airmen are replenishing the .5-inch wing machine guns.



### **Background / History**

The RNZAF operated a total of 48 Avengers. The first 6 aircraft NZ2501-6 were TBF-1 and the remainder TBF-1C. The first aircraft was delivered in September 1943 and the last in Feb 1944. All aircraft were delivered to, and assembled at, Hobsonville.

The first 25 aircraft after assembly and testing were passed to 30 Squadron, and post Jan 44 to 31 Squadron, at Gisborne. The two squadrons were deployed to Espiritu Santo in Jan 44 and May 44 respectively. The six TBF-1 were never deployed, and one TBF-1C (NZ2516) was lost in a crash in NZ in Dec 43. The later aircraft were mostly despatched directly to 30 SU in the Pacific after assembly for use by 30 and 31 Sqns, excepting NZ2527 and NZ2539 which were sent Naussori in Fiji joining the Communications Flight there. NZ2526, 33, 35, 36, 41 and 48 also remained in NZ with 33 and 48 being written off in accidents. Some of the older TBF-1Cs returned to NZ.

Avenger operations in the Pacific ceased in May 44, the squadrons disbanding in Aug 44, six aircraft (12, 18, 21, 30, 41 and 44) having been lost in service. In Oct 44 the remaining aircraft (16 of them) were returned to the USN at Santo, in Jan 45 the 2 aircraft in Fiji returned and were allocated to 42 Sqn. The remaining aircraft in NZ were distributed between 40 and 41 Sqns at Hobsonville and 42 Sqn at Ohakea. In September 1945 nine TBF-1Cs (09, 10, 11, 14, 17, 22, 23, 35 and 41) were passed to the RN FAA in Auckland. This left 12 aircraft (the 6 TBF-1s and TBF-1Cs 19, 26, 27, 36, 39 and 42) which appear to have been mainly used as target tugs based at Ohakea, Hobsonville and Gisborne.

Post WWII the 12 survivors continued on mainly target tug duties until Mar 1948 when all except 27 and 39 (still with 42 Sqn) were placed on in long term storage. In May 48 four (03-06) were brought out for R&D crop dusting trials that lasted until Nov 49 during which 06 was lost. Meanwhile in Aug 48 six (01, 02, 19, 26, 36 and 42) were disposed of by tender. At the end of the crop dusting trials 03-05 joined 27 and 39 at 42 Sqn as target tugs at Ohakea, 03 being lost in that role in 1956. The remaining aircraft were withdrawn and disposed of in 1959.

**This Decal Set**

This set is intended for the aircraft in the Pacific Theatre. By late 43 No 30 Sqn aircraft were deployed, followed by No 31 Sqn in early 1944. White bars have been added to the RAF type C roundels and photographs at Whenuapai just prior to deployment suggests the red centres of the roundels were replaced by the RNZAF Pacific medium roundel blue (but not in 01-06 which got the bars but retained the red centres). Later photographs in 1944 show the Type C roundels replaced by the RNZAF Pacific roundels in blue/white/blue.

The roundels without bars are for the underside which was already white. They were placed closer to the wing edge such that the roundel just fits in the space between the leading edge and the ailerons.

I have also included a detail set. This is based on the known detail set in the 1950s. There is some evidence that the aircraft did carry some detail markings but in white so I have provided a white version of that set. Use as you feel appropriate.

Lastly in late 1943 in Gisborne permission was given to 30 Sqn to add individual motifs to aircraft. I have seen photographic and written evidence of 12 but have sufficient detail to reproduce nine of these. Three of these were on aircraft never deployed so are not on this set. For the rest, for two the aircraft is known – Grumpy 09 and Plonky 18. I have also done the motifs of Pluto, Donald Duck, Flying Kiwi and Dumbo for which the aircraft identity is not known (but would have been in the NZ2501-25 range). These were carried on the starboard cowl above and immediately to the rear of the exhaust. The exception was Grumpy which was instead on the port cowl in the same position.

### **Painting**

All RNZAF TBF's were delivered in the Standard U.S.Navy '4 Tone' scheme of: upper fuselage and leading edge of wings: Non-Specular Sea Blue (Fs.35042), upper wings and tailplanes: Semi-Gloss Sea Blue (Fs.25042), mid fuselage and fin/rudder: Intermediate Blue (Fs.35164), undersides of fuselage, wings, tailplanes, landing gear struts and interior of wheel wells: Insignia White (Fs.37875), wheel hubs: Natural Metal, Prop hubs: were either Natural Metal or Gloss Black, interior: cockpit: Bronze Green (Fs.34048) - to wall of rear cockpit, remainder of interior: Interior Green (Fs.34151), and bomb bay: Bronze Green.

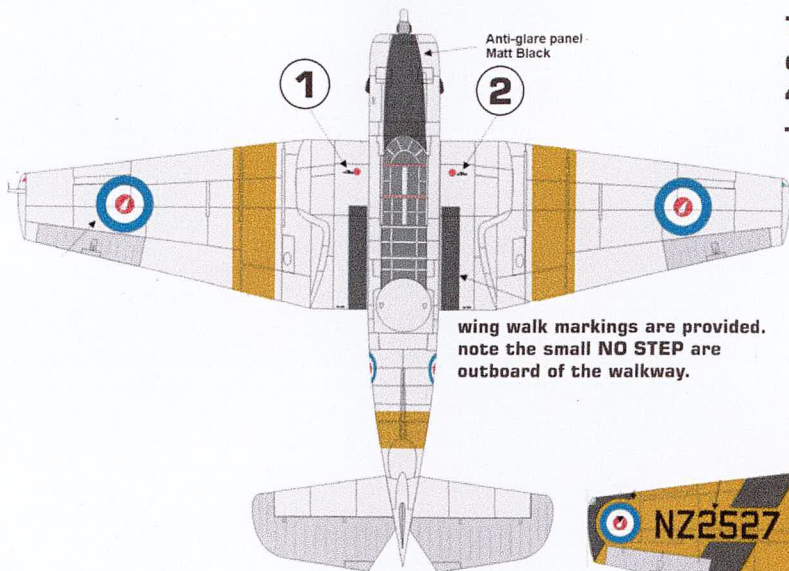
Hope these comments are of help.

As always, remember this is a hobby and ENJOY!

John

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20 September 2016

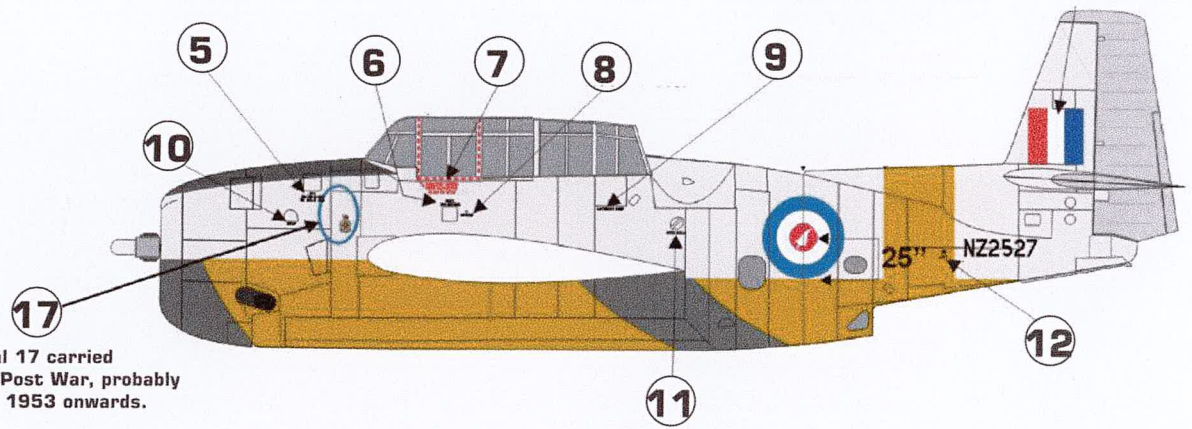


wing walk markings are provided. note the small NO STEP are outboard of the walkway.

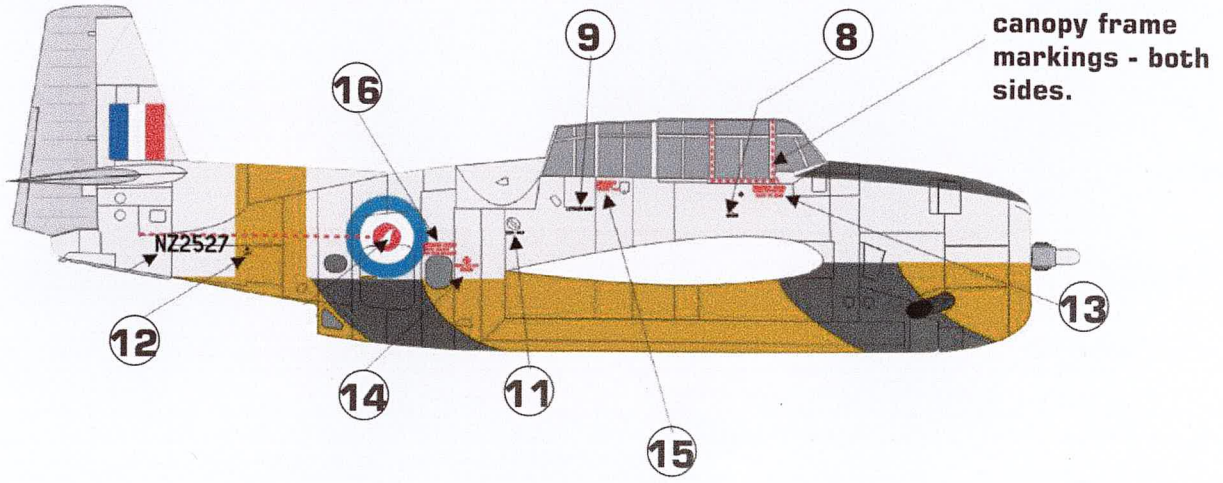
The paint work is the late period (1957 onwards) scheme carried by the five 42 Sqn aircraft. 1953-57 was similar - just plain roundels.



Some decals were definitely carried during WWII. In general these were in white and the relevant decal sheet provides for this. Decal 18 was a feature on all USN aircraft.



Decal 17 carried only Post War, probably from 1953 onwards.





## PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE COMMITTING THE DECALS TO WATER

These instructions on decal preparation are generic and use apply to most decal brands.

**These decals are a continuous sheet.** Therefore you need to cut out around each decal. Digital decals will also stand being cut into pieces – this may help with large decals.

**The backing stock (the clear areas) tend to be very thin.** This may also be the case with **dark colours**. Experiment with spare bits, an overcoat of gloss/satin/matt clear coat maybe appropriate.

On the other hand some **white and light coloured** decals printed before April 2016 tend to be quite **thick** – this is caused by the white ink that needs to be thick to avoid “see through” opacity when applied over dark paint. This can make the decals difficult to bend and contour to the model. The use of Microsol or DACO or other brand similar products is recommended.

**Please note that most decal stock do not like being over-soaked.** Dip them just enough to become wet, remove and leave for a minute or so until they slide off. **If over soaked they may lose their “stickiness”.** If this happens the use of Microset or DACO or other brand similar products is recommended.

Generally there are extra bits and/or options on most sheets – I suggest you play around with them and then do the "real" decal application.



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FUEL HOISTAGE

FUEL HOISTAGE

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