



Grumman F8F Bearcat

Last of the line of piston-engine carrier-based fighters which Grumman began with the FF of 1931, the Grumman F8F Bearcat was designed to be capable of operation from aircraft carriers of all sizes and to serve as an interceptor fighter.

By the last half of the Second World War, most new US fighter designs were much heavier and more complex than earlier fighters. When planning a replacement for their successful F6F Hellcat carrier fighter, however, Grumman chose to build as lightweight a design as possible around the most reliable large radial engine. The result was the F8F Bearcat, which was often called a "hot rod" by its pilots for its fantastic acceleration and climbing ability.

Using the well-proven Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engine, the first Bearcat prototype flew on August 21, 1944. After minor modifications, including the addition of a dorsal fin, early production F8F-1s began armament tests and carrier qualification trials in early 1945. By May of 1945, the Bearcat was cleared for operations, with very few restrictions on its flight operations over its wide speed range. A total of 654 F8F-1s were delivered, all fitted with the 2,100 hp R-2800-34W engine.

The Bearcat was the first US Navy fighter to feature a full "bubble" canopy, giving excellent all-around vision. It was also fitted with so-called "Safety Wing Tips", the outer 40 inches of which were designed to break off cleanly in case of the wing being overstressed in a dive or other maneuver. After several incidents where one or both wing tips tore off, this feature was eliminated from later production Bearcats. Two squadrons, VF-18 and VF-19 were equipped with F8F-1s, and training was onboard the carrier USS Langley, enroute across the Pacific, when the war ended on August 16, 1945.

The final production Bearcat was the F8F-2, with a more powerful R-2800-30W engine of 2,250 and an automatic variable speed supercharger. The extra power required an extra foot be added to the vertical fin, and F8F-2s carried a heavier armament of four 20mm cannons. The F8F-2P was a photoreconnaissance version, fitted with up to three cameras in the fuselage. By 1956, the last Bearcats were taken out of service and stored or scrapped, having been replaced by the new age of jets.

By the time production ended, Bearcats were serving with some 24 U.S. Navy Squadrons. Some of these, with a modified fuel system, were supplied to the French Armée de l'Air for service in Indochina under the designation F8F-ID. One hundred similar F8F-1Ds and 29 F8F-1Bs were also supplied to the Thai Air Force.

Technical specifications (F8F-2)

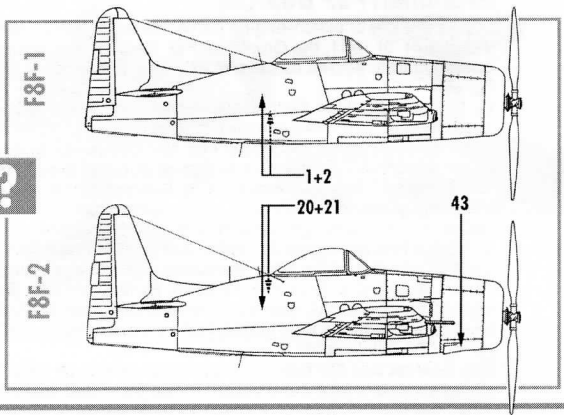
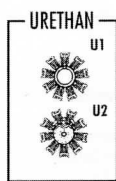
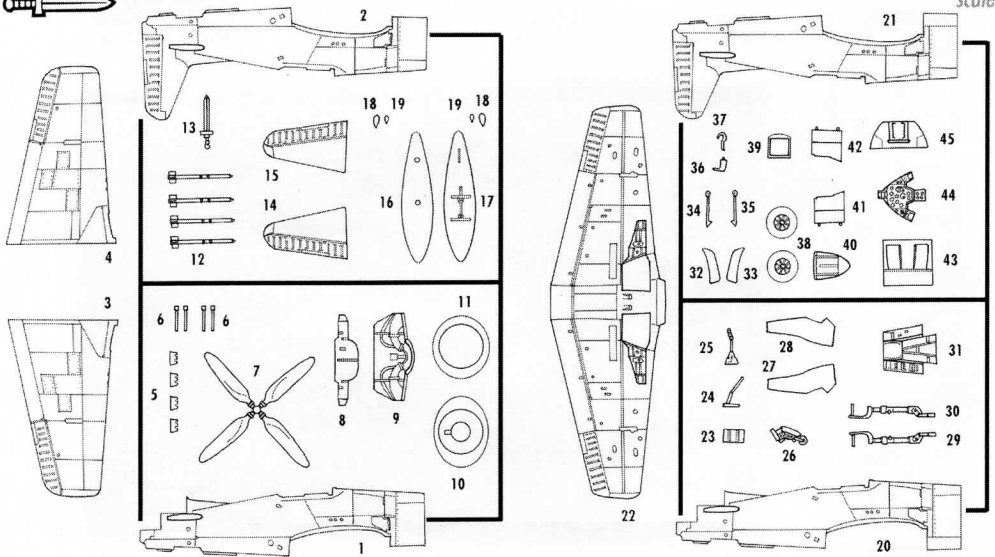
Wing span 35'6" (10.80 m)

Length 27'6" (8.36 m)

Max. speed 455 mph at 28000 ft (730 km/h at 8512 m) Service ceiling 40800 ft (12400 m)

Normal Range 865 miles (1387 km)

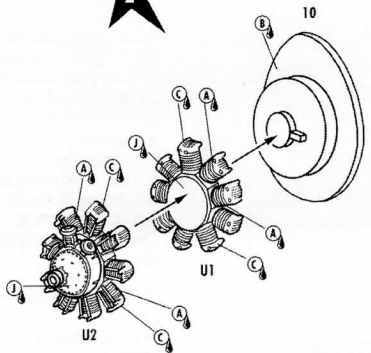
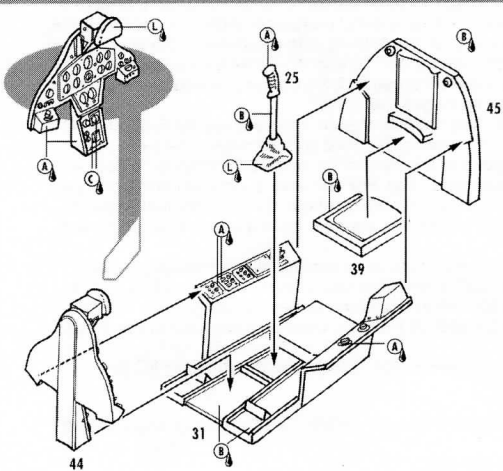
Maximum range 1435 miles (2300 km)



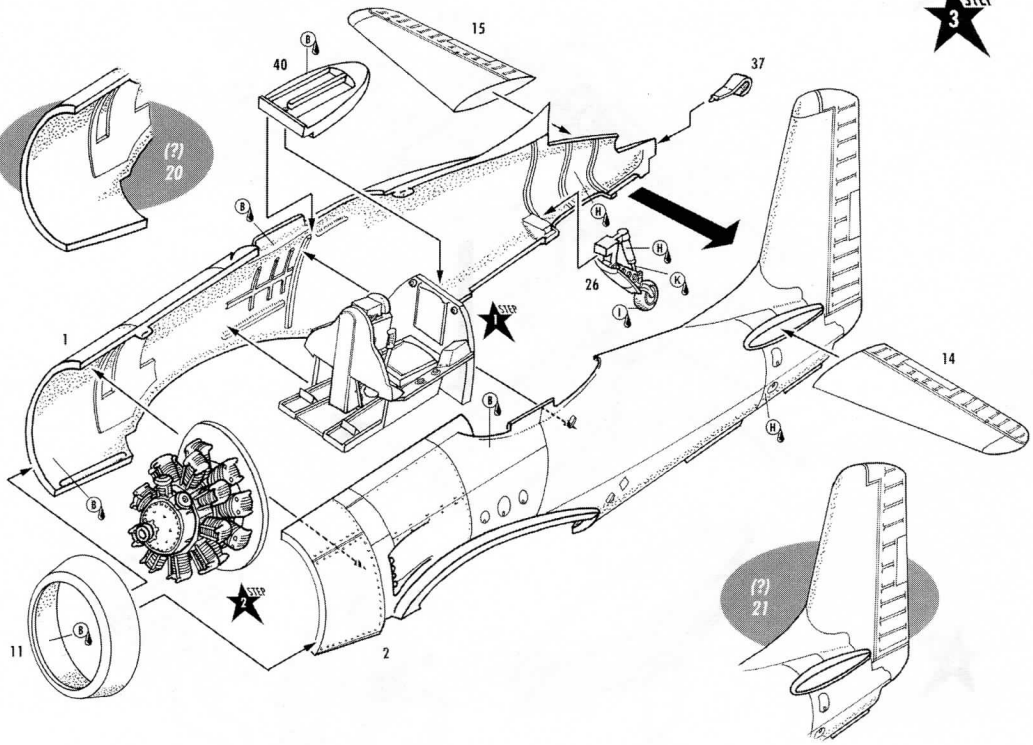
BARVA/COLOR

A	Cerná/Black
B	Interiérová zelená/ Interior Green
C	Stříbrná/Silver
D	Plátno/Linen
E	Světlá šedá/ Light Grey
F	Červená/Red
G	Žlutá/Yellow
H	Bílá/White
I	Černošedá/ Tyres Black
J	Šedá/Grey
K	Chromová/ Chrome
L	Hnědá/Brown

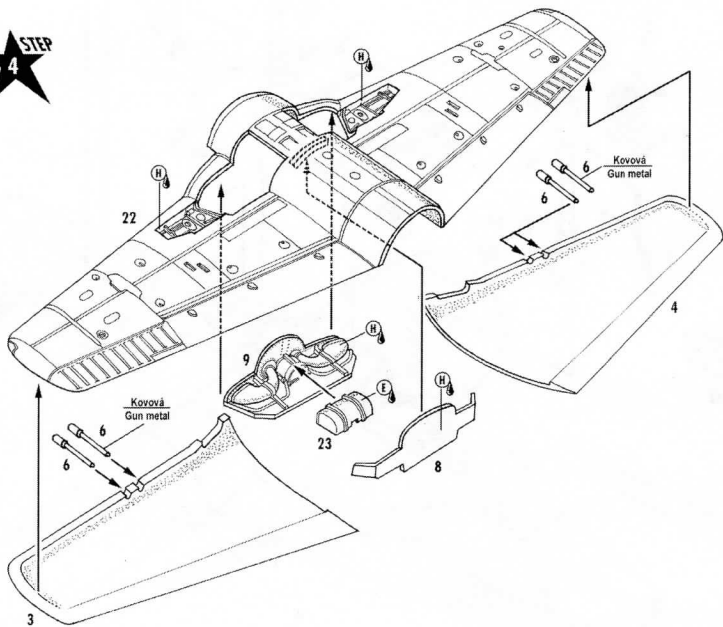
Drawings:MA 2022



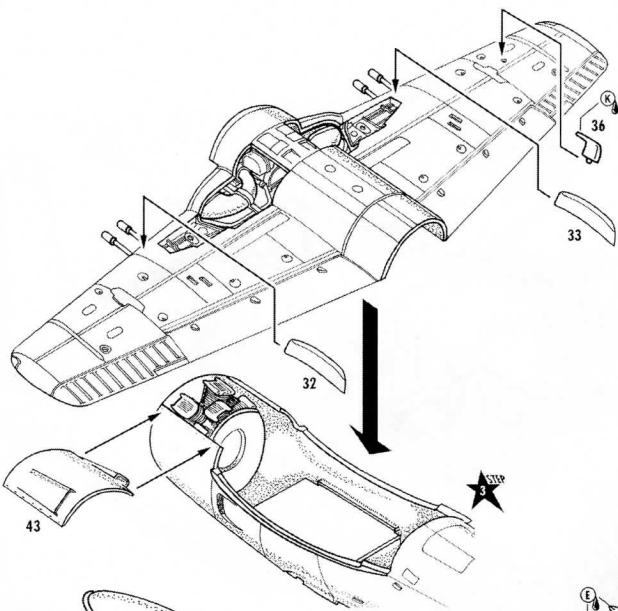
STEP 3



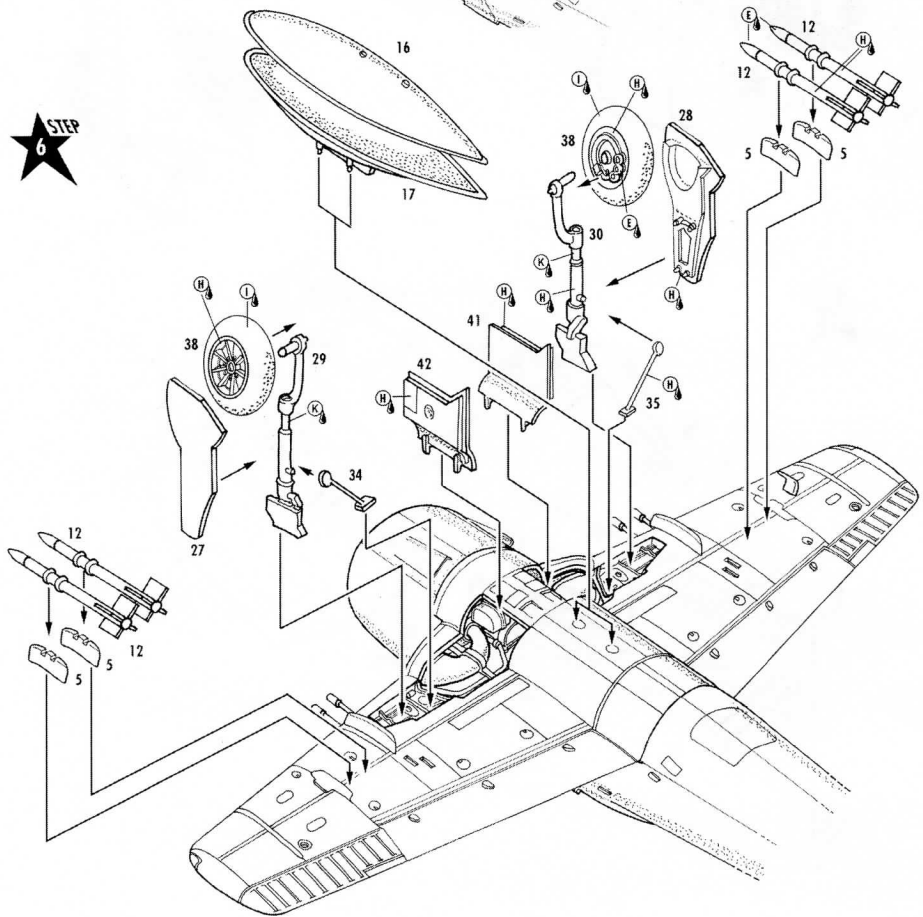
STEP 4

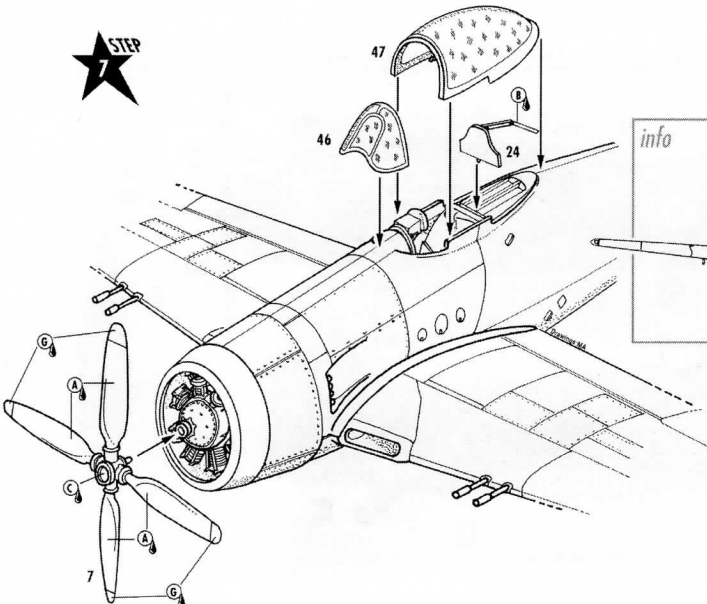


STEP 5

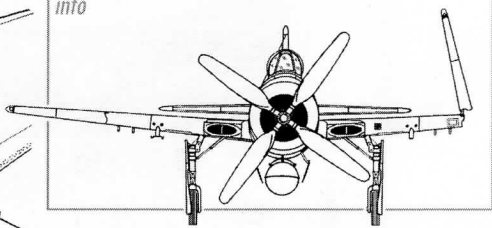


STEP 6



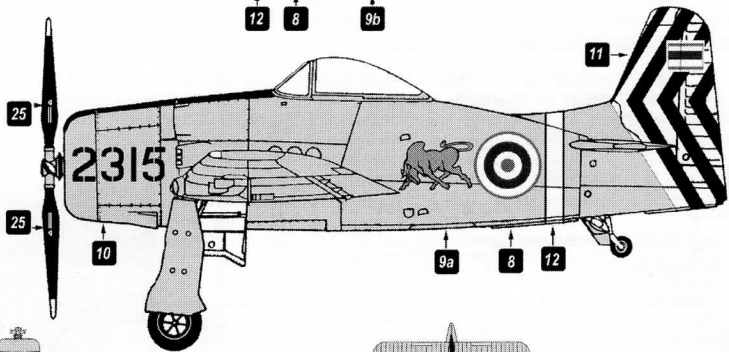
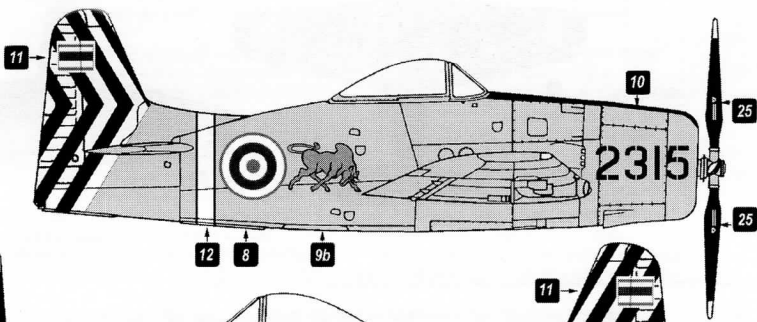


info



Camouflage and marking

F8F-1 2. Fighter Bomber Wing, Thaijské vojenské letectvo
F8F-1 2nd Fighter Bomber Wing, Thailand Air Force



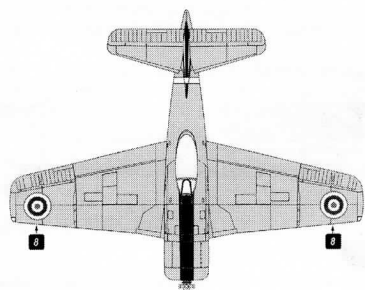
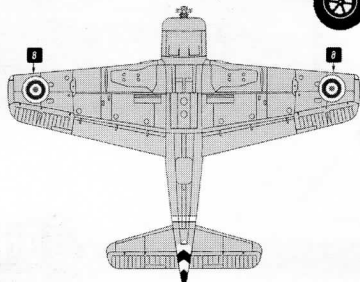
Bílá/White



Přirodní kov/
Natural metal



Černá/Black



F8F-1B francouzského vojenského letectva z jednotky GC 1/22 Saintonge v průběhu války v Indochíně
 F8F-1B Armée de l'Air, of GC 1/22 Saintonge during the French Indochina war

Půlnocní modrá
 Midnight Blue

