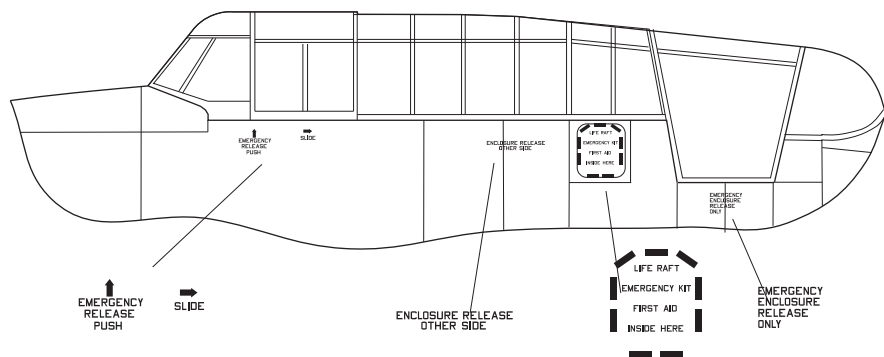


Yellow stencil locations; Starboard side similar



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### Belcher Bits Decal BD38: RCN TBM/AS3 1/72

#### Background

When the Royal Canadian Navy looked for a replacement for the Fairey Firefly in the ASW attack role, the Grumman Avenger was a natural choice. Rugged and war tested, it could operate from the smaller carriers in RCN service, yet was capable of carrying airborne radar as well as torpedos or rockets. During the period 1950-52, the RCN took delivery of 125ex-USN TBM-3Es. These were put to use as delivered, but soon were modified to make them more capable ASW machines. Fairey Aviation modified a number of machines to the AS3 standard. This involved the removal of the turret and the extension of the greenhouse in a manner similar to (but NOT identical) to the USN TBM-3S. Early machines had a short greenhouse extension; later machines were fitted with a slightly longer version. In all cases, the turret race was retained and a rotating seat for the Observer was installed instead. In the after part of the greenhouse extension, flight and navigation instruments were mounted as well as a radar repeater for the AN/APS-4 radar mounted under the starboard wing. Below the Observer was the Observer's Mate position; at its after end was stowage for sonobuoys and smoke markers. These were ejected through a launch tube exiting through the blanked off ventral gunners position. The Observer's Mate's takeoff and landing position was in a rearward-facing folding seat on the aft side of the turnover pylon; this position was accessed through a crawlway linking the after compartment with the radio compartment.

#### Markings

Originally quickly overpainted with RCN roundels and lettering on the delivery Gloss Sea Blue overall scheme, the TBM-3Es were standard USN issue. Once modified to the 3S configuration, the aircraft were painted with Dark Grey over Light Grey in which they remained until scrapped.

#### Modelling the TBM

My opinion is that the Hasegawa kit is the best starting point, but the older Airfix kit is also a TBM-3 (as opposed to a TBF or TBM-1, which have only the top cowl intake, not top AND bottom as needed for a TBM-3). Either way, the lower dorsal window must be removed for a TBM-3E on which all RCN Avengers were based.

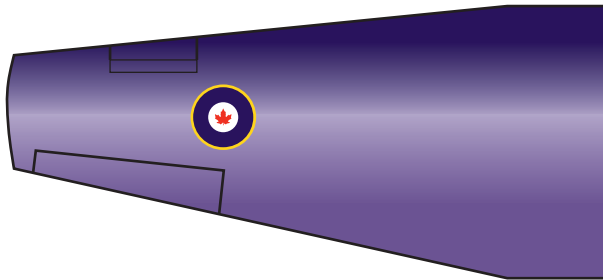
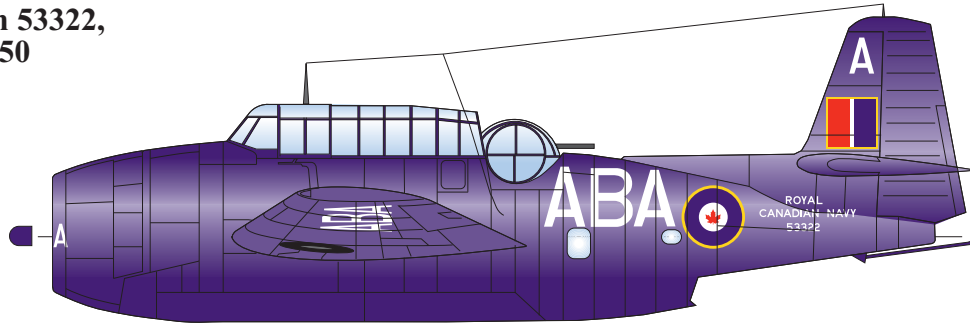
#### Modelling the AS3

Until recently, not an easy job but with the release of the Sword 1/72 kit of the TBM-3S, a welcome addition to the RCN collection. Apparently, the radio and radar fit was similar to USN TBM-3S but not identical. However, any differences would be difficult to spot in this scale.

#### References

The Grumman Avenger in the Royal Canadian Navy, Leo Pettipas, 1988  
 RCN Aircraft Finish and Markings 1944-1968, P. Martin, 2007

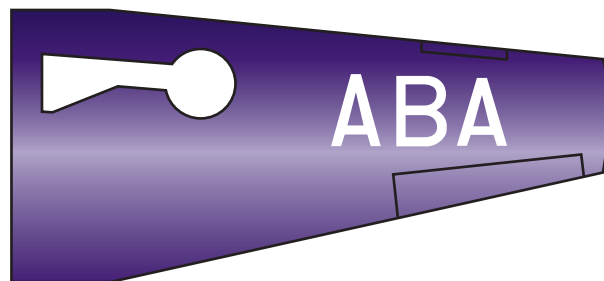
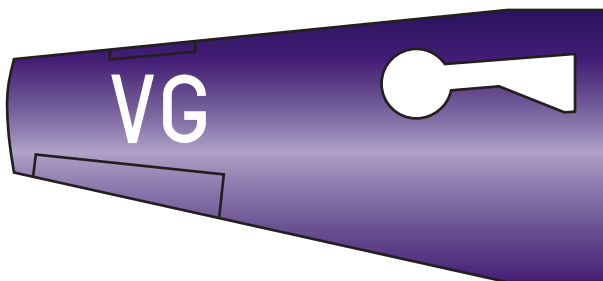
**TBM-3E s/n 53322,  
826 Sqn, 1950**



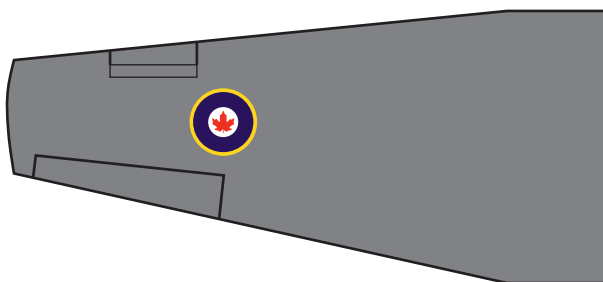
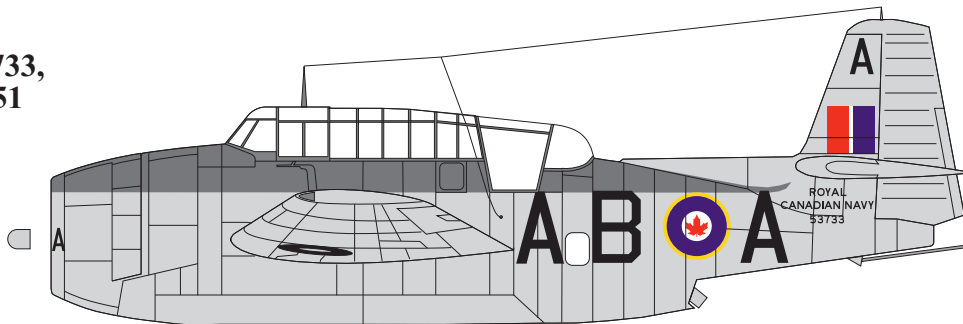
Above, the first marking scheme for the TBM-3E in RCN service. This machine is overall Gloss Sea Blue (in fact, on some machines one can see where the US markings were painted out and RCN markings overpainted).

Fuselage roundel was 30" diameter with a 1-1/2" yellow ring. On these machines, the maple leaf in the centre of the roundel is smaller than standard RCN style. There was a 1-1/2" border to the fin flash on the tail (flashes have red forward on both sides). Squadron code and aircraft number (ABA) in 30" white letters. Markings are symmetrical; ABA is forward of the roundel on the starboard side. Aircraft number repeated on the tail (18") and nose (12").

Upper surface markings were 30" roundels with 1-1/2" yellow ring. Under surface markings were VG (starboard) and ABA (port) in 36" white letters.

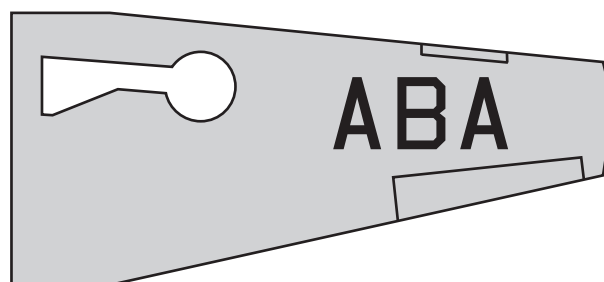
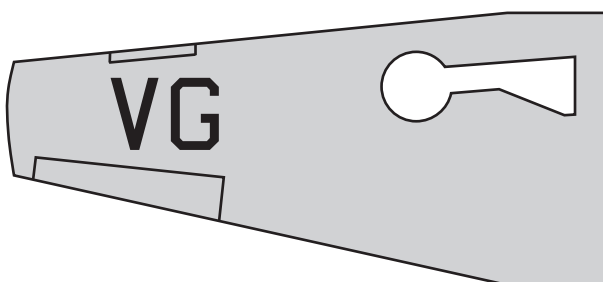


**AS-3 s/n 53733,  
826 Sqn, 1951**

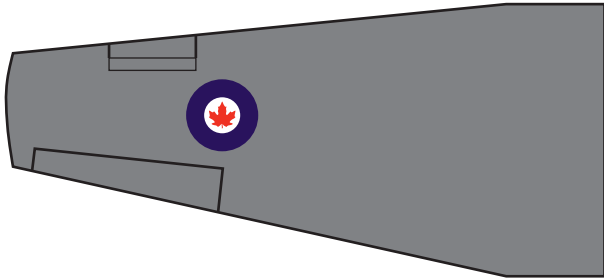
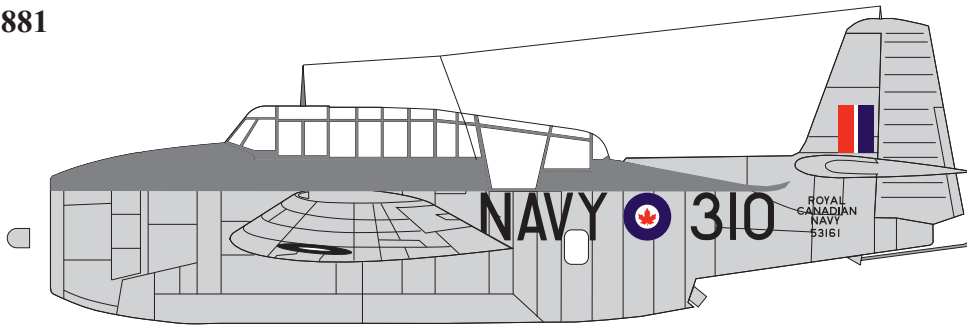


This represents one of the early short greenhouse versions of the AS3. Colours are dark grey 501-102 (similar to EDSG) over light grey 501-106 (similar to Sea Grey Medium). Fuselage roundels are 30" diameter with the larger RCN style leaf and 2" yellow ring. Squadron codes and aircraft number are 36" black letters. Aircraft numbers are repeated on the tail (18") and nose (12"). The fin flash is 24" square. Starboard side markings are similar, but shifted so that only the aircraft number A is forward of the roundel, with AB behind.

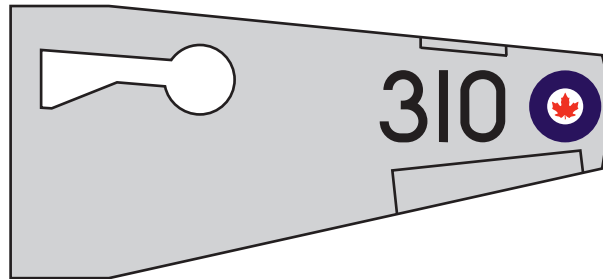
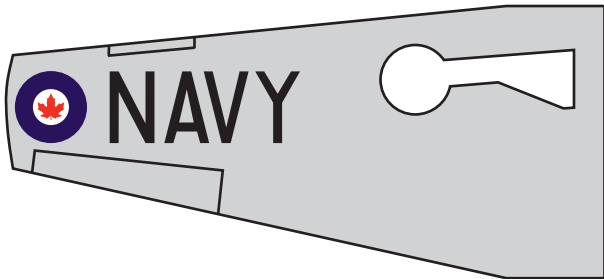
Upper surface markings were 30" roundels with 2" yellow ring. Under surface markings were VG (starboard) and ABA (port) in 36" black clipped corner letters. This scheme, as shown on 826 Sqn (later 881 Sqn) was also seen on 825 Sqn (later 880 Sqn) machines (code BD) and also by Training Air Group (TF).



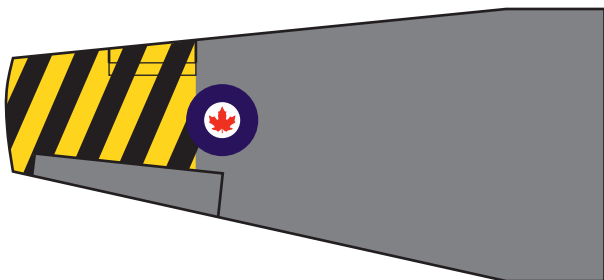
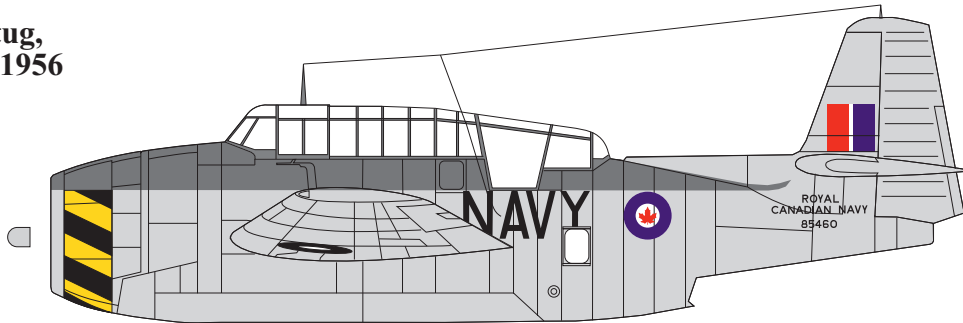
**AS-3 s/n 53161, 881  
Sqn, 1955**



This represents a later long greenhouse version of the AS3. Colours are dark grey 501-102 (similar to EDSG) over light grey 501-106 (similar to Sea Grey Medium). Fuselage roundels are 24" diameter. NAVY and aircraft number are 24" black letters. Aircraft number was sometimes repeated under the nose or on both sides of the nose in 8" black numbers. The fin flash is 18" x 24". Starboard side markings are similar, but shifted so that the aircraft number is forward of the oval window. Upper surface markings were 36" roundels. Under surface markings were NAVY (starboard) and 310 (port) in 36" black letters. Letters were aligned with the outer edge of the slats.



**AS-3 Target tug,  
s/n 85460 ca. 1956**



Similar to markings for a long greenhouse version of the AS3, but no aircraft number. Colours are dark grey 501-102 (similar to EDSG) over light grey 501-106 (similar to Sea Grey Medium). Fuselage roundels are 24" diameter. NAVY is 24" black letters, no aircraft number. The fin flash is 18" x 24". Starboard side markings are similar but roundel shifted forward to just aft of the the oval window, and NAVY behind the roundel. Upper and under surface markings were 36" roundels. Wingtips to inboard end of slat are yellow with diagonal black stripes.

