

Freightdog Models

Saunders-Roe SR.53

History

In February 1952 the Cowes based Saunders-Roe company tendered to meet specification F.124T to supply a small rocket powered interceptor, able to fire fifty unguided projectiles at its target, then glide back to base, or allow its pilot to escape via a jettisonable cabin, similar to the Bachem Natter.

Saunders-Roe were awarded an amended contract on 9th May 1952 now calling for a mixed power project. Work began on the Mach 1.3 capable SR53 high-speed research aircraft, powered by a Viper turbojet supplemented by a Spectre rocket motor. After protracted ground tests the first prototype, XD145 made its first flight on 16th May 1957, three years behind schedule. During the test program the SR.53 showed its incredible climb capability thanks to the Spectre rocket motor, climbing from 50,000 to 60,000 feet in just 17.4 seconds. on 5th June 1958 the programme was marred by the loss of the second prototype on take-off, tragically killing Saunders-Roes Chief Test Pilot John Booth. XD145 ended its test programme in October 1959, having performed forty five sorties, at which point it moved to the Rocket Propulsion Establishment at Westcott, before being placed in storage and finally moved to Binbrook in November 1978. Following restoration it joined the RAF Museum collection at Cosford in 1981 where it remains to this day.

Preparation and precautions

The injected resin parts supplied are made in Hong Kong by Anigrand Craftwork. Patterns are based on scale drawings by Barry Hygate and walk around photographs of the surviving airframe at the RAF Museum, Cosford. The rubber moulds used to cast the resin parts are coated with a release agent, if this is not removed you may have problems getting the paint to adhere correctly. To avoid this happening, prior to construction wash the kit parts in warm soapy water. As with all resin castings, we strongly recommend to avoid ingesting sanding dust, all sanding be done 'wet', and you should thoroughly wash your hands when you finished. For the above reasons this product is recommended to adult modellers only.

Resin kits do not respond to liquid Poly Cement, as the resin does not melt as with conventional plastics. Cyanoacrylate (super glue) should be used, we recommend thick gap filling formula (slow setting) for larger components and medium formula (setting between five and fifteen seconds) for smaller parts. The transparent resin part should be fitted using PVA, as using super glue can result in fogging of clear components. Some parts have small moulding blocks that need to be removed before construction can commence. Due to the manufacturing process of the resin parts, some minor flaws are to be expected, however these are within the ability of most modellers to correct as needed, the resin being incredibly easy to work using superglue as a filler.

Construction

Construction is fairly self-explanatory due to the limited number of parts, there is however a couple of minor points to clarify. We recommend the first step after cleaning up of the parts is to glue the wings to the fuselage halves before joining them, this will allow you to apply glue to the inside of the fuselage where the pegs attach the wings and avoid you having to clean up around the wing to fuselage joint. Next before joining the fuselage halves, test fit the vertical tail, this includes two pegs that insert into the top of the fuselage but the fit if tight, you will need to either slightly reduce the size of the pegs, or increase the holes for a precise fit. Next join the fuselage halves and attach the vertical tail, and also add the control column, ejection seat and two jet pipe inserts. The inserts lack detail and are identical, this is not quite correct as one is a jet pipe and the other a rocket, you may wish to modify one slightly however little can be seen once fitted in place. The horizontal tail surface can now be attached to the vertical tail using the attachment peg provided. The airframe is now virtually complete bar the nose Pitot tube, which is best left till later to avoid damage. Attach the clear resin canopy using PVA as previously mentioned. After painting the undercarriage and under fuselage HTP vent can now be added. The nose wheel door should be attached on the right fuselage side. To model the aircraft with the undercarriage down, two cuts will be needed to the main gear doors, these are marked by scribed lines on the doors and illustrated on the drawings overleaf. The smaller top door attaches to the outer edge of the gear bay, the middle section to the leg itself and the part covering the wheel attaches to the inner edge of the bay. Finally fit the pitot and if required add the data pods to the wingtips (these were not always carried but enhance the overall appearance of the finished model).

Painting and finishing

The decal sheet provided includes comprehensive stencil markings, although you may choose not to use these due to their very small size. As the airframe is finished in overall gloss white, these are quite apparent in photographs, especially those in red.

For detail painting cockpit including instrument panel, control column and seat are black (or very dark grey for scale colour). Undercarriage bays and legs should be finished in aluminium with a thin black wash to bring out detail. Nose mounted pitot is aluminium.

With special thanks to Arnold Chiu, Jon Davies, Jon Freeman, Paul Martell-Mead and Barry Hygate for their contributions to the production of this model kit.

Recommended References:

British Secret Projects: Jet Fighters since 1950 by Tony Buttler (2002)

Project Cancelled, by Derek Wood (Revised edition 1990)

British Experimental Jet Aircraft, by Barry Hygate (1990)

From Sea to Air by A.E.Tagg and R.L.Wheeler (1989)

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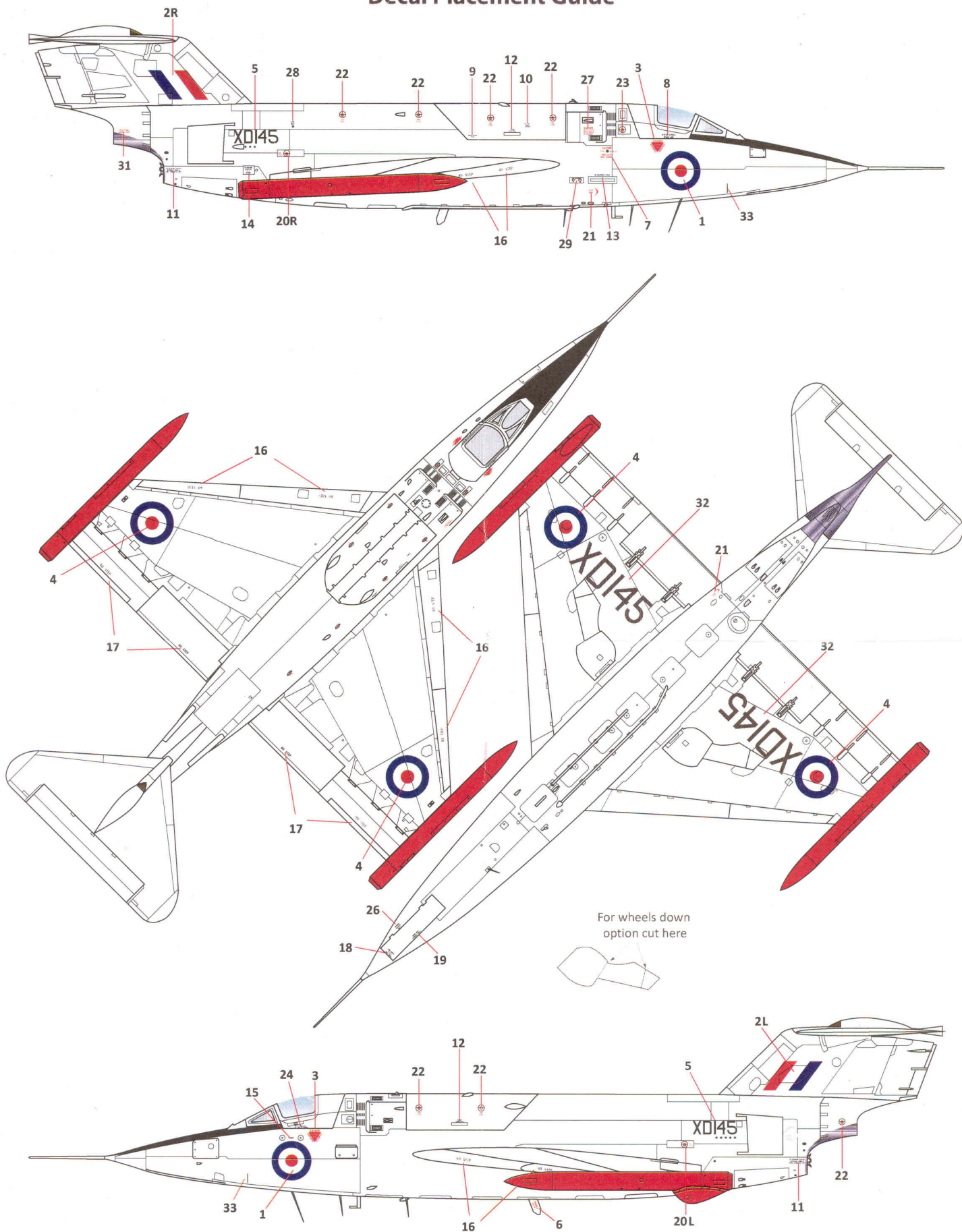
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Saunders-Roe SR.53 XD145 Decal Placement Guide

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