



1/72 scale Airfix Fairy Swordfish Mk 1 Aircraft K8449 RNAS Squadron 820

H.M.S. Courageous March 1939

The kit contained a lot of plastic for a small model. The instructions were profuse but vague in places. I did not find this aircraft easy to construct. I chose the folded wing mode which did not help as the wing mounting points were small to non-existent! I used rattle cans for the main colouring.



The Swordfish was considered obsolete and it was proposed to replace it with the Albacore however this proved to be unsuitable and the Swordfish was reinstated. Like several aircraft at the beginning of the war considered obsolete it went on to give sterling service to the end of the war.



2391 were built...the Fairey Company's most famous aircraft all fitted with a Bristol Pegasus radial engine of 690 hp which was later upgraded.

On 11 April 1940 a Swordfish from HMS Furious made the first torpedo attack from a carrier in naval history. 2 days later U64 was destroyed. The first by a RNAS aircraft in the war.

Operations - raided The French fleet in Oran - covered Dunkerque - hit the Italian fleet in Taranto - massive damage - involved in sinking Bismark There were losses of course 5 survived from a channel raid on 3 major German ships out of 18. Lt Cdr Esmonde earned the first VC (postumous) awarded to a FAA pilot.

HMS Courageous was originally a Battlecruiser built in 1916. Lightly armoured and armed. Between the wars it was converted to an aircraft carrier vessel no 50. Equipped with 2 squadrons of Swordfish. Nos 811 and 822. In September 1939 she was on submarine patrol with Ark Royal Ark who was attacked on 14th September. On 17th of September 2 escort destroyers and aircraft were diverted to aid a merchantman. On return of the aircraft she had to turn into the wind for landing. This put her broadside to U29 who fired 3 torpedoes. 2 struck. In 17 minutes she sank with loss of 720 crew including the captain. From that time carriers were not used on submarine patrols.

820 Squadron is now the dedicated helicopter squadron on HMS Queen Elizabeth.