

Folland Gnat T1



1/48th Scale Airfix Kit – Arthur Banyard

1. General

Kit No A 05123 (for CFS & 4 FTS) was followed by kit No A 01524 as a Red Arrow aircraft. The sprues are identical except that the smoke pipes are not used in the trainer version. Oddly, each kit contains only one pilot figure, which is reasonable for the RA aircraft, but denies building a trainer with a fully occupied cockpit. One wonders why there are two seat inserts for pilot figures, but with one pilot the second seat must have the alternative insert with seat belts. The Gnat was only flown solo from the front cockpit so ignore the instruction pictures in steps 36 to 38! Step 10 is correct for a solo aircraft.

2. Build

2.1 Another Tamegawa quality kit from Airfix with cleanly moulded parts and superb engineering ensuring a dead fit with minimal effort (but watch how the parts are removed from the runners especially when using a sprue cutter). A swift pass with a 240 grade sanding stick will satisfactorily clean up most edges. There were 2 'short run' parts in my sample where the plastic had not reached the mould edges (one ejection seat head box was missing a side, and one tank half missing an edge). This was the only occasion when filler was needed on this model.

2.2 Having completed the model, the following is recommended:

Do fit the nav lights at section 27 and mask for painting. Fitting after painting will necessitate removal of paint from the light recesses and guarantee a ruined paint finish at the wing tips.

Don't proceed beyond Stage 28 (except for the fin/rudder) until the wing/fuselage assembly has been completely painted, decaled and finished. In other words do not fit flaps (unless in the up position), tanks, tail planes, aerials and U/C otherwise holding and masking becomes impossible.

3. Finish

3.1 I chose the 4 FTS version in Red/White/Grey as a challenge in masking and painting, using the Humbrol enamel paints specified in the kit.

3.2 On reflection it was not difficult, but thinking ahead is essential. Logical choice is white first, grey second, red third and black last. However, when applying the red, paint the wings first and let them dry so there is something to hold when painting the fuselage - and don't forget the masking between coats!!

3.3 This model was done with Satin finish paints with one coat of Klear over each colour before moving on to avoid handling marks. A second coat of Klear was applied after the decals and this gave a good level of gloss.

4. Comment

4.1 Built SFTB with nothing added produces an excellent model of the Gnat T1. There are one or two areas such as cockpit detailing and U/C fitting which can push patience to the limit, but overall it clicked together well.

4.2 Nine inches of $\frac{3}{4}$ " masking tape cut into $\frac{1}{16}$ " strips did the whole aircraft and 43 hours of my time. Would I build another - yes.

AB - Jan 15