

Belcher Bits Decal BD28: Canadian Naval Helicopters 1/48

The Royal Canadian Navy was an early adopter of the helicopter, ordering its first examples of the Sikorsky HO4S in 1951. These machines remained in service until 1970. They were followed into service by the much more capable Sikorsky HSS-2 (in Canadian service, the CHSS-2 later the CH-124) Sea King. Entering service in 1962, they remain in service in 2013, proving the old adage you can have a 1000 year old hammer provided you replace the head five times and the handle eight times. This decal sheet provides markings for the following aircraft:

1. HO4S-2 s/n 961, HMCS Magnificent, 1953 (plane guard duties)
2. HO4S-3 s/n 253, HMCS Bonaventure, 1958 (ASW role)
3. HO4S-3 s/n 867, HS-50, HMCS Bonaventure, 1965
4. CHSS-2 s/n 4003, HS-50, 1964 (first RCN Sea King scheme)
5. CHSS-2 s/n 4008, HS-50, 1966 (final RCN Sea King scheme)
6. CHSS-2, s/n 4021, HS-50, 1968 (first CAF Sea King scheme)
7. CH-124A s/n 12438, 1974 (intermediate Sea King scheme)
8. CH-124A s/n 12438, 443 Sqn, 1991 (Gulf War scheme)

This decal sheet replaces Belcher Bits BD-1. It includes all the schemes on that sheet but adds additional dayglo numbers and several other smaller items.

Other 1/48 Belcher Bits helicopter products available:

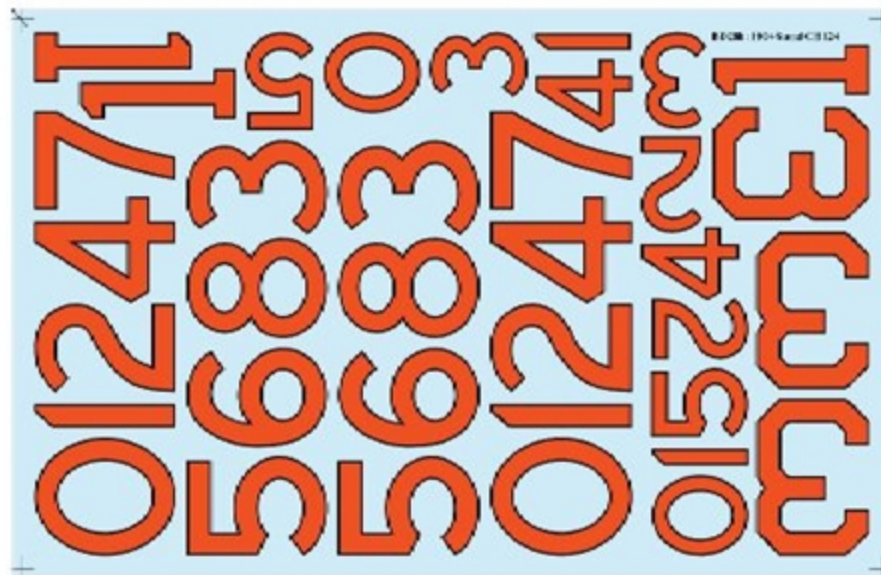
- BB1: Resin sponsors and radome for CH124 Sea King
- BB2: Resin sonobuoy launchers and CPI for CH-124A
- BB3: Resin Gulf War mods (FLIR turret, ALE-37, M-130, ALQ-144) for CH-124A
- BB8: Resin conversion set for CH-146 Griffon
- BB25: Resin APU tail for CH-113 Labrador
- BB28: Replacement wooden blades for H-21
- BB29: Replacement metal blades for H-21
- BB32: H-21 floats
- BD2: Canadian Air Force Helicopters decal (H-19, H-34, CH-118 /135/136/139)
- BD19: CH-113 Labrador / Chinook decals
- BD20: H-21 decals (RCAF / Sweden / France)

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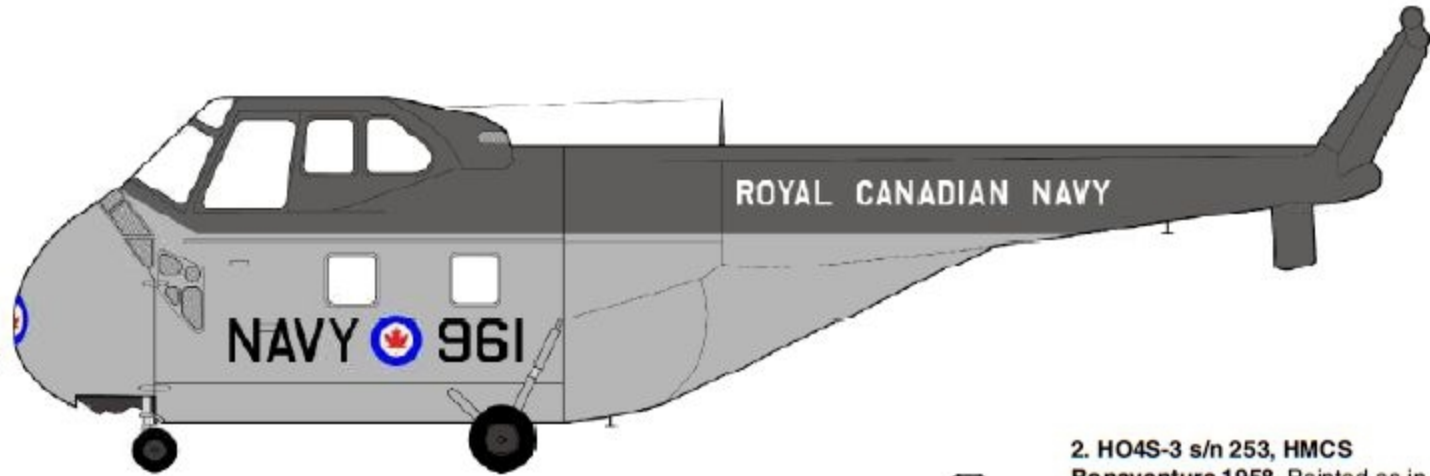
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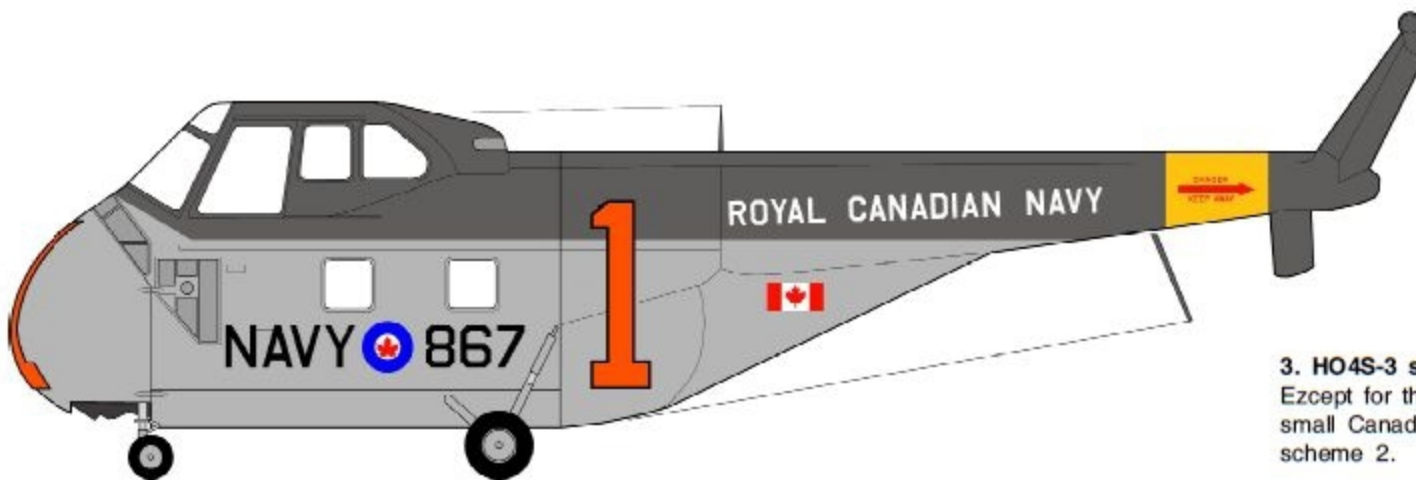
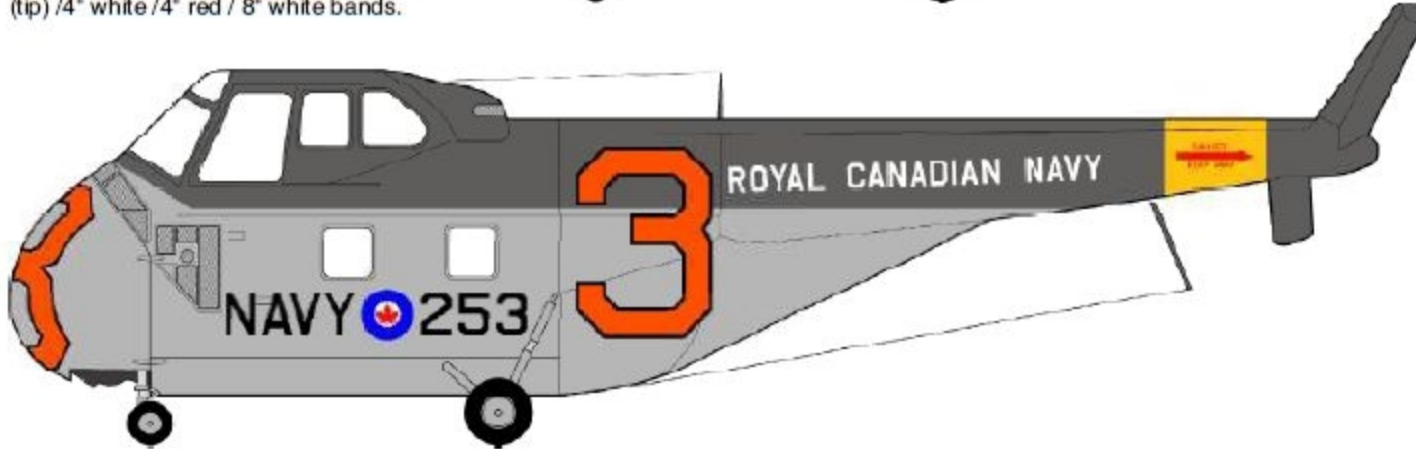
Sikorsky HO4S in Canadian Service

The Royal Canadian Navy received three Sikorsky HO4S-2 helicopters in 1952 for plane guard duties on HMCS Magnificent. In 1954, the RCN started experimenting with the use of helicopters in ASW. HS-50 was formed and equipped with twelve Sikorsky HO4S-3 helicopters, based at CFB Shearwater. At first operating from the carriers HMCS Magnificent and HMCS Bonaventure, later experiments on the frigate HMCS Buckingham showed that they could also operate from small ships. The HO4S was capable of carrying both a homing torpedo and a dunking sonar set, but not far ... range was very limited. They did lay the groundwork for the Sea King ASW helicopter as used from RCN destroyers, and after transferring to HU-21 for utility and SAR duties, they were retired in 1970.

1. HO4S-2 s/n 961, HMCS Magnificent, 1953. Dark grey 501-102 (similar to EDSG) over light grey 501-106 (similar to Sea Grey Medium). Initially, these machines were maintained by the RCAF and this machine sported RCAF-style roundels on the sides and nose. Early HO4S variants had a smaller intake screen under the cockpit and a non-reinforced tail boom. The white ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY on the tail was parallel to the top of the boom. Wheel hubs are painted black. Main rotors are black with yellow tips; tail rotors black with 4" red (tip) / 4" white / 4" red / 8" white bands.



2. HO4S-3 s/n 253, HMCS Bonaventure, 1958. Painted as in scheme 1. This machine has the RCN-style roundel (thicker blue ring, simpler leaf) on fuselage sides. Large black-bordered day-glo red numbers on the nose and rear fuselage sides. The tail boom has a reinforcing rib on either side and the white ROYAL CANADIAN NAVY is centered on the rib. There is a 36" yellow band just ahead of the stabilizers, with red warning arrow and black text. Main rotors are black with yellow tips; tail rotors are black with 6" red (tip) / 6" white / 6" red bands.



3. HO4S-3 s/n 867, HMCS Bonaventure, 1965. Except for the large day-glo tactical number and the small Canadian flag on the tailboom, identical to scheme 2.

Modelling the HO4S in 1/48

The Revell H-19 is accurate in outline but suffers from too-heavy rivet detailing. The cockpit needs lots of work as well. There should not be a floor, the seats are poor and the rotor drive cover is too small. The rotor head should be refined.

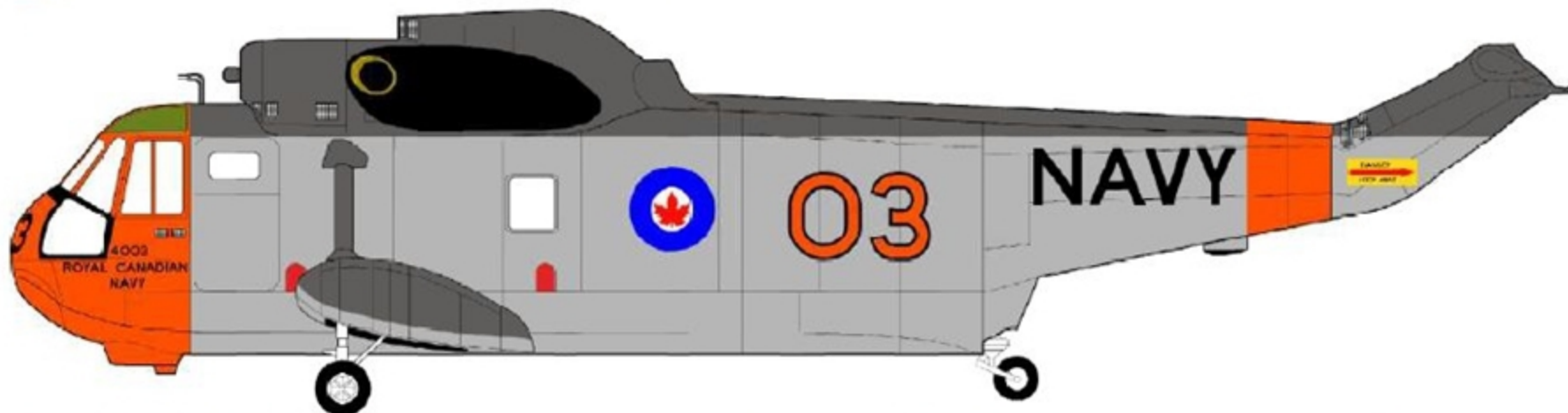
Sikorsky CH-124 Sea King in Canadian Service

In 1960, the Royal Canadian Navy decided to procure the Sikorsky HSS-2 Sea King for use in the ASW hunter-killer role, operating from flight decks on frigates and destroyers. The use of such a large machine from relatively small ships was ambitious and only made possible through the development of the 'Bear Trap', a system where the helicopter lowers a messenger line to the flight deck where the trap captures it. A haul-down system in the helicopter then winches the helo down to the deck. Finally, the trap pulls the helicopter along a track into the hangar.

The Sea King has been in Canadian service for a long time and has changed significantly over the years, both in appearance and in capability. The first four of 41CHSS-2 purchased were identical to the USN SH-3A; the remainder, assembled from kits in Montreal, incorporated minor changes including flotation bags on the sponsons and FOD deflectors. All machines were delivered by 1964 to HS-50 of the Royal Canadian Navy, the squadron providing detachments to ships as required. With the amalgamation of the Canadian Armed Forces in 1965, Sea Kings were painted similarly to other a/c in Maritime Command like the Argus and Tracker. In 1974, HS-50 was split into HS-423 and HS-423.

In 1975, the Sea Kings were upgraded to CH-124A standard and were fitted with a dorsal radome. In 1980, a lower fuselage sonobuoy launch tube array and crash position indicator were added. In 1984, CH-124As started to be finished in a lo-vis scheme of overall medium grey, with dark grey markings. In 1990, several CH-124As were modified with a nose-mounted IR camera, ALE-37 and M-130 flare dispensers and ALQ-144 IR jammers for service in the Gulf War. Following their return, much of this equipment was removed but some retain the shelf for the IR camera.

A contract to replace the aging Sea King fleet with the EH-101 was signed but later canceled in 1993. Now due to be replaced by the Sikorsky S-92 sometime after 2014.



4. CHSS-2 s/n 4003, HS-50, 1963. RCN scheme of dark grey over light grey. Applicable to a/c 4001-4005 only. Nose, tail band and horizontal stabilizer are dayglo red. Side numbers are 40" in height. Black-painted area behind exhaust. There is a black anti-glare strip below the windscreen and around the lower windows. Green tint on overhead glass. Nose numbers 03 are 18" black, centered between floor level and anti-glare strip. Red tail rotor warning on yellow background on tail. On the starboard side, the 36" roundel is centered 47" behind the aft edge of the fuselage window. Fueling alcoves are red. Landing gear is white. Main rotors are grey on top, black underneath with 12" yellow tips. Tail rotors are black with 6" red/ 6" white/ 6" red tips. Two pitot tubes are mounted above the cockpit, starboard side.



5. CHSS-2 s/n 4008, HS-50, 1966. Similar to scheme 4 above. However, side numbers are now 60" in height and note the small Canadian flag on the sponson.

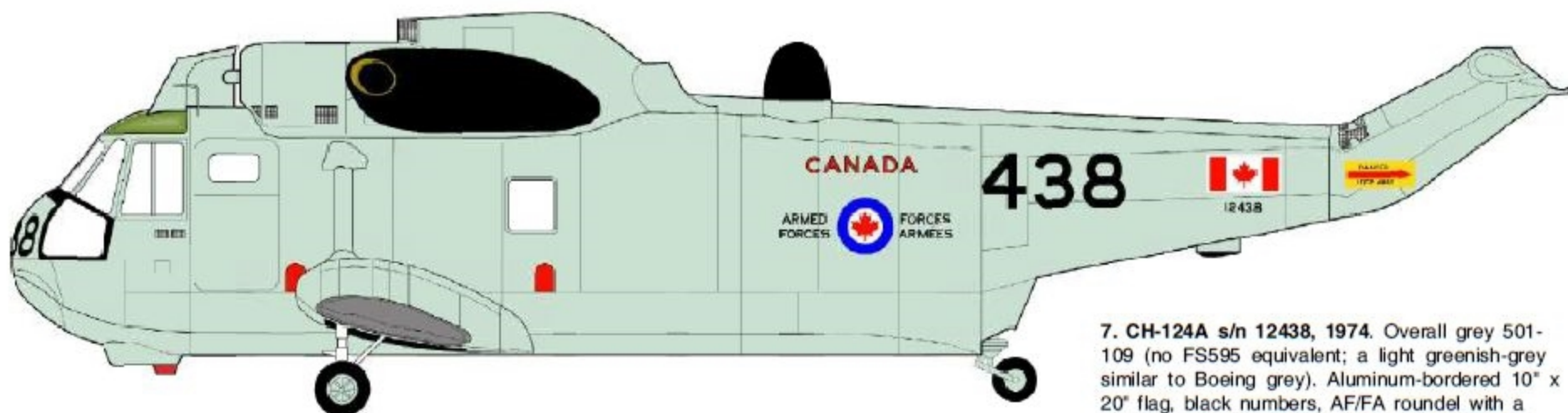


6. CHSS-2, s/n 4021, 1968

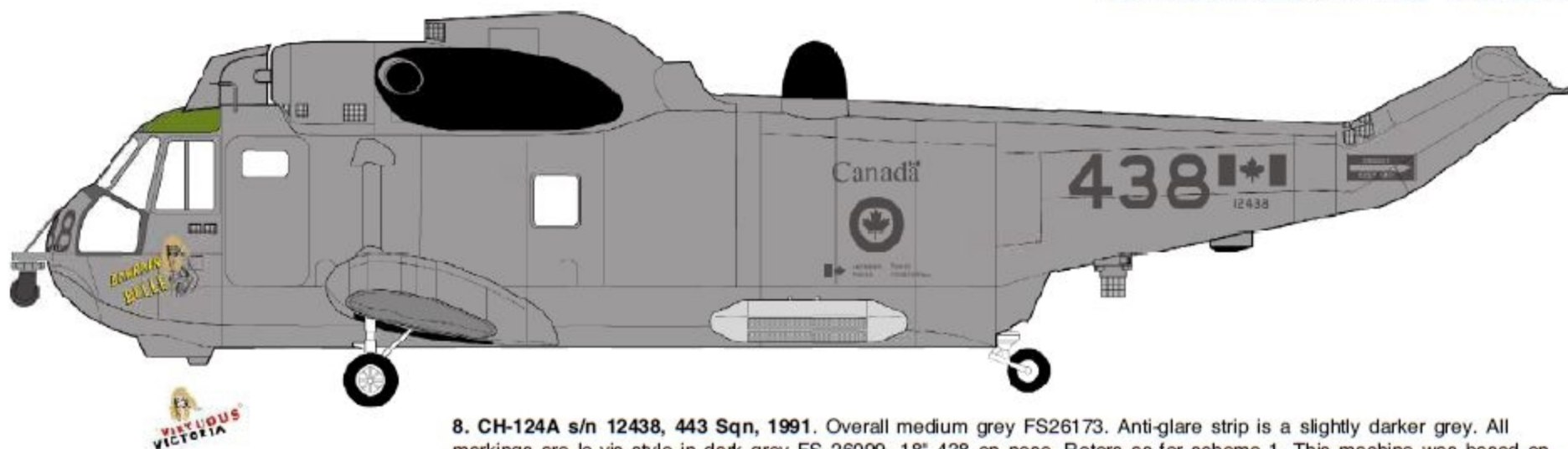
An evolution of marking schemes between RCN and CAF, this was a relatively short-lived interim scheme. The roundel is the same size and location as in the RCN scheme but it is the new CAF style. Aircraft number is 30" on the sides and 18" on the nose. Canadian Armed Forces is on the port side, Forces Armées Canadiennes is on the starboard

Modelling the CH-124 in 1/48

The only kit is by Hasegawa, but it's a good one. It represents a SH-3H, so to model any CH-124, you will require Belcher Bits resin conversion set BB1 which provides the short sponsons and radome. BB2 provides the sonobuoy launchers and CPI for the CH-124A. If you want to do the Gulf War machines, BB3 provides all the additional equipment carried.



7. CH-124A s/n 12438, 1974. Overall grey 501-109 (no FS595 equivalent; a light greenish-grey similar to Boeing grey). Aluminum-bordered 10" x 20" flag, black numbers, AF/FA roundel with a black-bordered red CANADA above. Sponson flotation bags are medium grey. Single pitot each side of the FOD deflector. Rotors as for scheme 1.



8. CH-124A s/n 12438, 443 Sqn, 1991. Overall medium grey FS26173. Anti-glare strip is a slightly darker grey. All markings are lo-vis style in dark grey FS 26099. 18" 438 on nose. Rotors as for scheme 1. This machine was based on HMCS Huron in the Persian Gulf, Jan-Aug 91. The 'last three' of the serial number in Arabic script was in dark grey on the FOD deflector. This machine had some interesting nose art. A well-endowed topless figure was painted on the port side below the cockpit, with the legend 'BAHRAIN BELLE' in black-bordered yellow. Apparently, some complaints were made about this busty babe and the offending parts were over painted, leaving only the head and shoulders. She was re-named 'VIRTUOUS VICTORIA' (black bordered red letters). Special thanks to Capt. R. Jarvis (443 Sqn) for this information and Ken Eckert for forwarding it on.

References: IPMS Canada RT Vols 15-3, 16-6 and 22-2, **Canadian Naval Aviation 1945-1968** by Leo Pettipas (1986), **Aircraft of the RCN** by Leo Pettipas (1988)