

Pavla Focke Achgelis Fa-330, kit number 72015, 1/72 scale

The Kit:

The kit comes in a thin cardboard box that opens from both ends. The box itself is quite large, approximately 8 inches by 10 inches in size, while the kit inside is extremely small, packaged in a small plastic bag that takes up no more than a quarter of the 8x10 inch instruction sheet to which it is stapled.

Inside the box you'll find a fret containing 20 photo-etch pieces for the body parts, seat, belts, tail planes, rudder and other odds and ends. There are nine plastic parts for the rotor hub, rotor blades, body, control stick, parachute pack and landing skids. These are contained on one sprue of low pressure injected plastic.

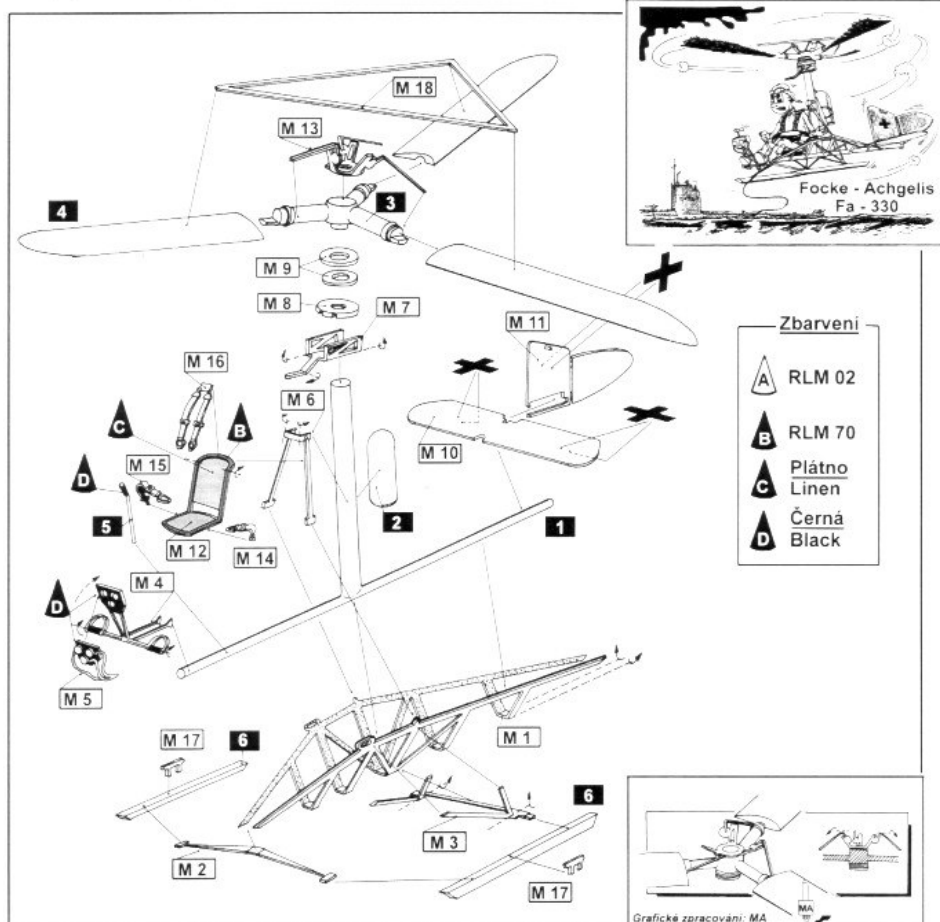


PLASTIKOVÁ STAVEBNICE V MĚŘÍTKU 1:72
PLASTIC KIT IN 1:72 SCALE

Focke Achgelis Fa 330

Bezmotorový pozorovací vrtník pro ponorky. Focke Achgelis Fa 330 Bachstelze, zkonstruoval v roce 1942 Heinrich Focke. Vrtník se vyznačoval jednoduchou skládací konstrukcí a malými rozměry. Byl určen pro velké oceánské ponorky typu IX, ze kterých měl startovat z plošiny za věží. Vrtník s pozorovatelem byl vlečen nad ponorkou na 300metrovém laně, umožňující mu vstup 220 metrů. Závodny Weser-Flugzeugbau v Hoyenkamp vyrobily na 200 exemplářů vrtníku Fa 330. Ty byly poprvé nasazeny v létě 1942 v jižním Atlantiku, častěji však byly využívány ponorkami operujícími v Indickém oceánu.

The Focke Achgelis Fa 330 Bachstelze rotor-kite for submarines was designed by Heinrich Focke in 1942. The rotor-kite of simple construction and small dimensions was assigned to German class IX ocean submarines. With an observer the Fa 330 was to take off from a platform behind the submarine's tower. Then it was towed at the end of a 300 m cable enabling ceiling of 220 m. Two hundred production Fa 330s were built by the Weser-Flugzeugbau factory at Hoyenkamp. The Fa 330 first saw limited service in the Southern Atlantic in 1942 summer, but more often it was used over the Indian Ocean.



The rotor head is much too big and fat for this scale. I contemplated replacing this part with a scratch built unit, but decided that I did not want to complicate matters with the extra work involved, when all I really wanted to do was learn to build a kit that was predominantly photo-etch.

Construction:

For the most part, the kit was built basically straight from the box. The majority of the photo-etched parts are small and require a delicate touch while being bent. Crazy glue was used to attach all the parts together. Care must be taken to ensure that the body and the frame are aligned properly, so that the rotor shaft is perpendicular.

Construction was straight forward and fairly easy considering this was my first attempt at putting together a large amount of photo-etched parts. Inspect the instructions closely. They can be a bit vague as to where the parts are located and how they join. For example, the vertical stabilizer/rudder combo (part M11) does not show that the thin lower extension that goes under the horizontal stabilizer (part M10) needs to be trimmed and should attach to the end of the fuselage, (part 1) not lie along the top as shown.

As for the angles required for the bends on some of the parts, all you can do is guess what they are initially and then adjust them with some dry fitting before attaching. Particularly troublesome are parts M1, M3 and M13. I did not attach parts M17 to the skids. Try as I might, their tiny size made it too difficult to attach them. No matter what method I tried I either got either too much glue or too little glue on them and they would either stick to my tweezers or not stay attached to the model.

A couple of changes were made. The first one was the modification of the rotors to rotate in the correct direction (counter clockwise when viewed from above). Each blade has a notch intended as the attachment point to the rotor head. A new notch was filed into the plastic on the other side of each blade, and the old notch was filled with crazy glue and sanded to shape. Then the blades were attached to the rotor head using the new notches. After the blade/rotor assembly was painted, I substituted some no.9 guitar wire for the photo-etched piece (part M18) used for the bracing wires between the rotor blades.

I discarded the parachute pack (part 2) since it was not done very well done. Removing it didn't really bother me since I have seen a few photographs of the Fa-330 minus the parachute pack anyway.

The model was painted overall with Aeromaster RLM 76 light blue. The instructions state the colour as RLM 02 light grey, but I did not agree with this colour choice and used the light blue instead.

Decals come on a tiny sheet and are comprised of six very small German crosses. The decals sit down well on a glossy surface. Some spare decals were used for the instruments and for the black leading edges at the tips of the rotor blades.

Conclusion:

Overall this is a reasonably easy kit to build and I would recommend this kit for those who want to get some experience working with photo-etched parts. Patience with the cutting and bending of the parts should reward you with a neat and unique model.