

Britten-Norman BN-2 Islander / Defender

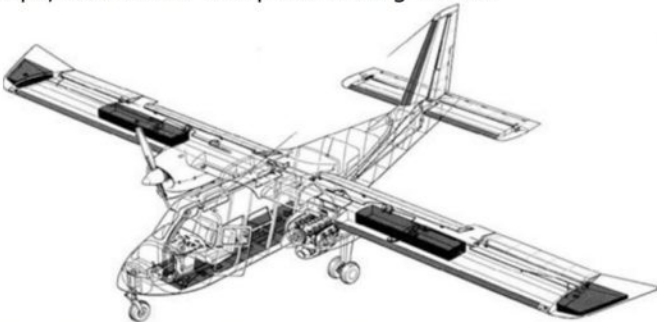
South America: Guyana and Surinam

The Britten Norman Islander BN-2 was designed as a light utility transport for 9 passengers and a pilot. It was capable to fly from tiny airfields. It got piston engines and first flight was June 1965. The Defender is the militarised version and has four under wing hard points for pylons for light armament like rocket pods or fuel tanks for extra range.

A turbine engined version was also developed with Lycoming LTP-101 in revised nacelles and a big air scoop on top of nacelle-wing fairing. First flight in 1977. The -T version got Allison 250 engines and later B17F engines. Some planes have a revised longer pointy nose profile.

Initial the BN-2 aircraft were manufactured at Britten-Norman's factory in Bembridge, Isle of Wight, UK. Later Islanders and Trislander aircraft were built in Romania, then shipped to Avions Fairey in Belgium for fitting before being flown to the UK for flight certification. Since end 2023 low rate production has returned to the U.K at the BN facility at the Isle of Wight. The Islander has been in production for over 55 years with over 1,250 planes built.

Different wings were produced over the years. The first wing had a 49 ft span (14,95 m) and "triangular" wing tips and used such as on BN-2A-1 and BN-2A-2. For extra fuel capacity, the 49 ft wing was extended 4 ft to 53 ft (16,15 m) with "triangular" wing tips, such as on BN-2A-3, BN-2A-7, BN-2B-21 and BN-2B-27. Later the 49 ft wing got modified "rectangular" curved wing tips for extra area such as on the BN-2B-20 and BN-2B-26 with also inboard leading edge droop between engine nacelle and fuselage. The BN2T had the 49 ft wing without droop and with 2 wing fences. The BN2T-4S the 53 ft wing with "rectangular" wing tips, no inboard droop but 2 wing fences.



Length 10,86 m with standard nose. Later versions length of 12,20 m with extended radar nose.

KITS

In 1/72 scale there is the good old **Airfix** kit of 1972 with a few newer releases. It has old style nacelles, 2-bladed propellers, larger 53 ft wing span and "triangular" wing tips. Modify for 49 ft wing if needed.

Omega Models has several 1/72 resin kits including for the -T turbine engined versions. These are recognized easily as these have air intake scoops on the top of the different nacelles. They have 3-bladed propellers, the 49 ft wing span with "rectangular" curved wing tips.

DECALS SYSTEM

The laser printed decal sheet has ONE continuous print film, so EACH decal needs to be cut out with fine scissors. No other prior decal preparation is needed.

Note that a decal that contains a white section is often split in two sections. To apply the full decal marking, first set the white decal section at correct position and on top of that the coloured section. On the decals sheet you will often see an "arrow" to indicate this way of application (on white surfaces, the white section is optional).

Each cut out decal can be applied as usual after soaking it a short while in water. Decals are EXTREMELY THIN, so slide off from the wet backing sheet on the model surface. Do not use tweezers! They will fold doubled!

Some tiny white borders may appear at a particular decal. Cut these off with fine scissors or over paint.

After all decals have been applied, finish the model with your preferred final gloss or semi-matt varnish coats. This will also protect the decals.

REFERENCES:

Books and magazines:

Air international Vol 49/no.1, Vol 64/no.1
Flight international no. 4054, 4247

Internet websites:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Britten-Norman_BN-2_Islander

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Britten-Norman_Defender

Through an internet search... hundreds of photos.

See for a few Airfix Islander models website:

<https://aircraftinplastic.com/models/islander-defender/islander-1.html>



GUYANA

This country in South America north of Brasil is still member of the British Commonwealth. It became independent in 1966. The population is just 817,000 living in the coastal regions with huge tropical rain forests covering the country. Recently oil has been found giving huge income. The Guyana Defense Force has a small Air Wing that was established in 1968 flying Short Skyvans and BN Islanders. Later ex-Brazil Islanders were acquired.

Islander BN-2A-6 c/n 231 has code 8R-GDQ and flown from 1972.

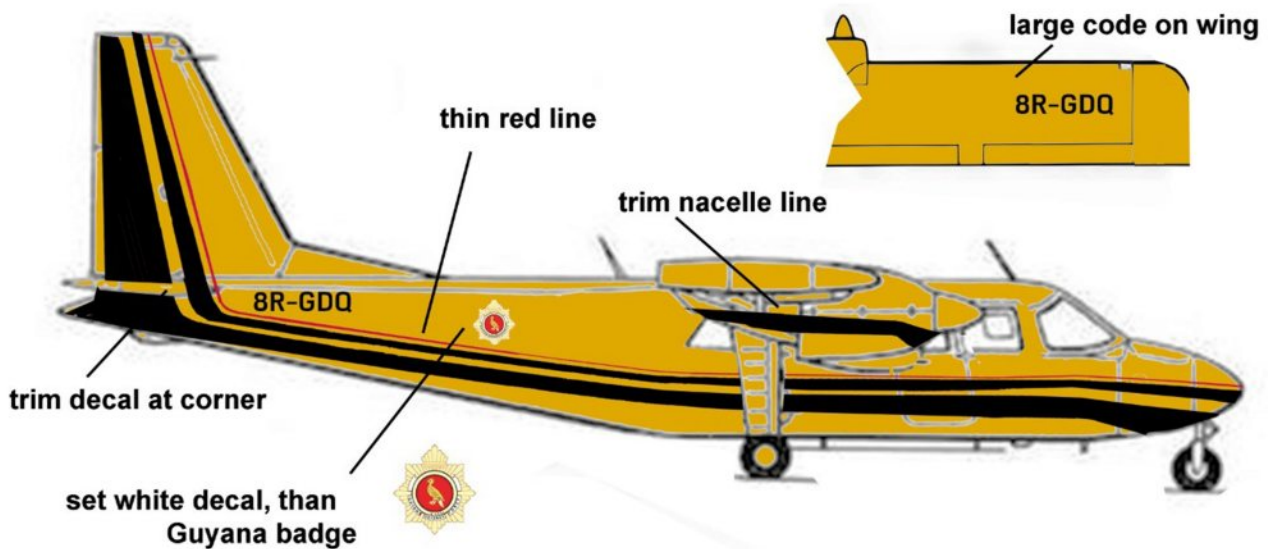
It has a 49 ft wing span with modified "rectangular" curved wing tips. The fuselage has the standard nose.

It has an overall dark yellow scheme with black cheatlines on fuselage, tail and engine nacelles. There is also a very thin upper red cheatline on the fuselage and tail. The lower nose also has the running cheatlines, trim the decals also at the tail areas.

On the starboard upper wing a code is present. It has the long wire antennas.

The yellow is about BS381c: 351 identification yellow/ FAA yellow ~FS13538 (Humbrol 154).

The 2-bladed propellers are medium grey with orange tips and yellow spinners.



SURINAM

This former Dutch Colony is on the east of Guyana and west of French Guyana on the northern shores of South America at the Atlantic Ocean. It became independent on November 25, 1975. The small population of about 575,000 lives in the coastal regions and huge tropical rain forests cover the country. Surinam is one of the least populated countries in the World per squared area. As in the Guyanas, oil has been found recently off the coast.

In 1982 an Islander was confiscated in Surinam after a jungle drug transport aircraft made an emergency landing. Later came another 3 BN-2B-21 Islanders. The small fleet had large maintenance problems and a shortage of spare parts and soon put out of service and on sale in 2014.



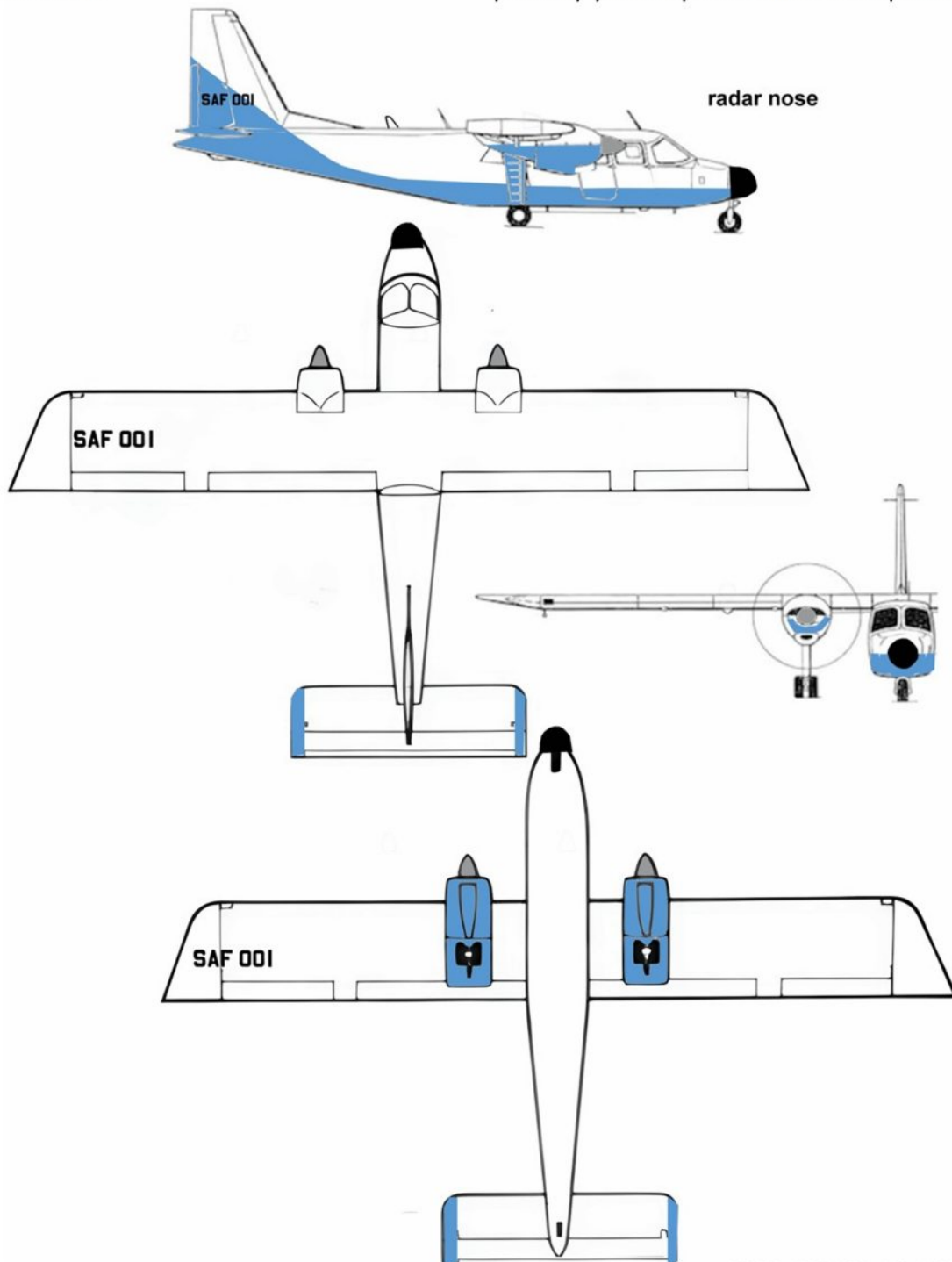
The decals are for 2 paint schemes.

[1] BN-2B Defender, coded SAF-001 is a white and blue finish. The blue is about FS35250 (Gunze Sangyo H25 acrylic). It has no specific roundels or badges.

It seems to have the wing with extra fuel capacity of 53 ft span with "triangular" wing tips. Fitted with a radar nose.

(make from scrap using a bomb bit from the spares box and putty).

The 2-bladed propellers are medium grey with probably yellow tips and aluminium spinners.

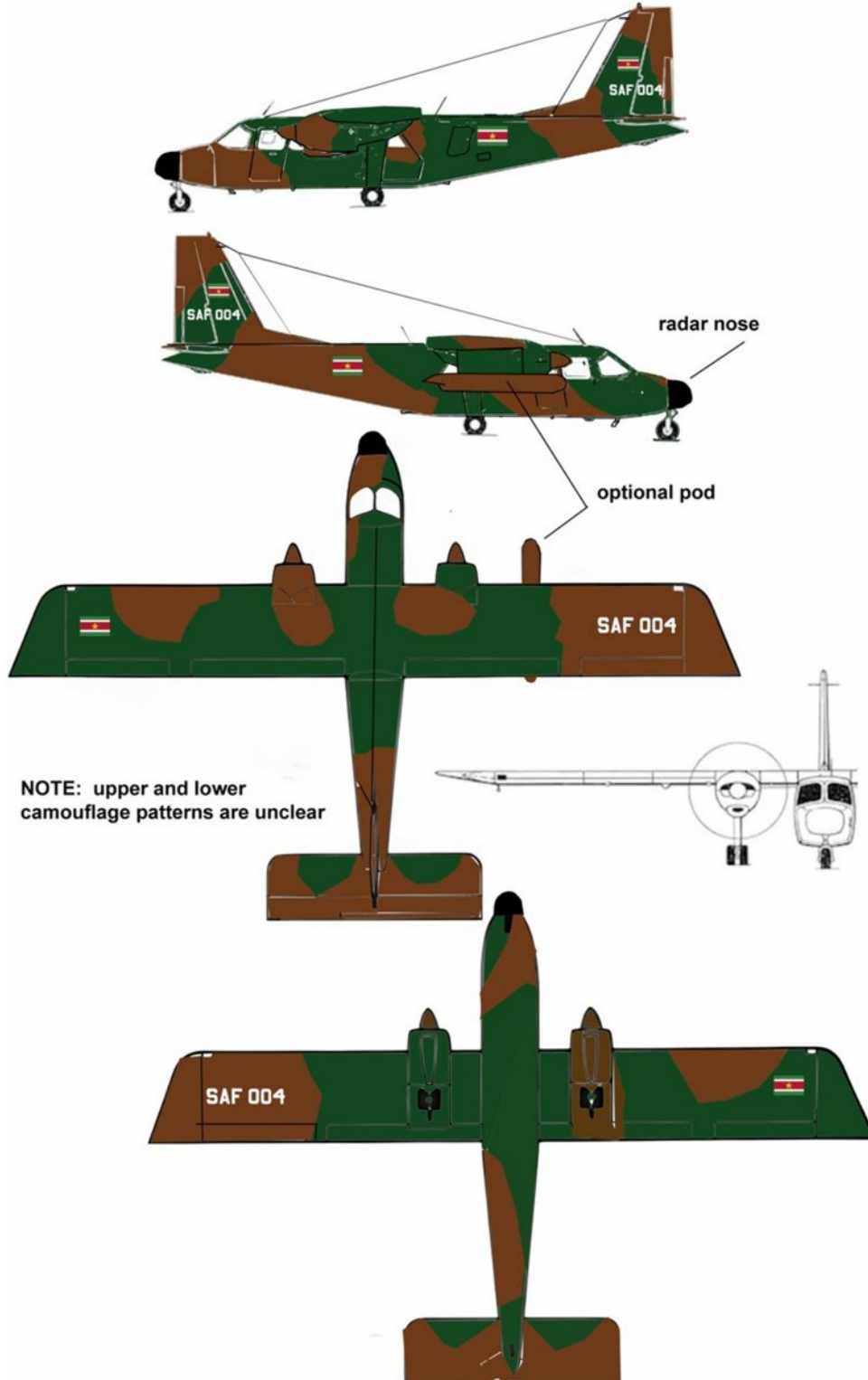


[2] BN-2B-21 Defender c/n 2108, coded SAF-004.

It has a wrap around camouflage scheme and flags on the aircraft. It was delivered from Britten Norman and used from 1982 – 1992 by the Surinam Air Force ("Luchtmacht van Suriname"). As Defender it can carry fuel tanks and light armament. It has the long wire antennas.

It has the wing with extra fuel capacity of 53 ft span with "triangular" wing tips. It is fitted with a radar nose. (make from scrap using a bomb bit from the spares box and putty).

The upper and lower scheme and colours are unknown but the dark green is *about* BS:641 / ~FS34097 and the dark brown *about* BS:450 / ~FS30095.



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