

# Britten-Norman BN-2 Islander/Defender (North-Central Africa)

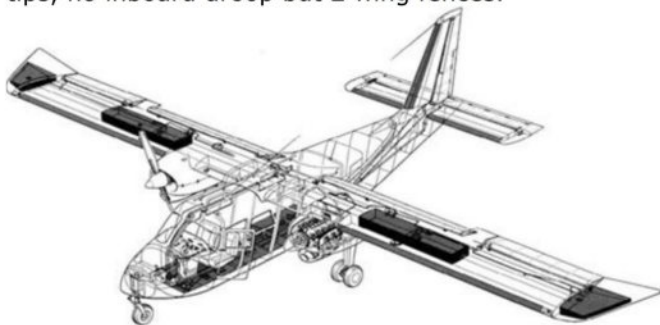
## Central Africa Republic, Mauretania, Rwanda

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 and 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 cutting 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_BN-2_Islander)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Britten-Norman\\_Defender](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>



### Central African Republic "Force Aérienne"

In Central African Republic in the middle of Africa became independent August 1960. The small air force used a large variety of aircraft and a few helicopters and that included some 5 Islanders. The main base is at Bangui and it seems a single BN-2B-26 is still active.

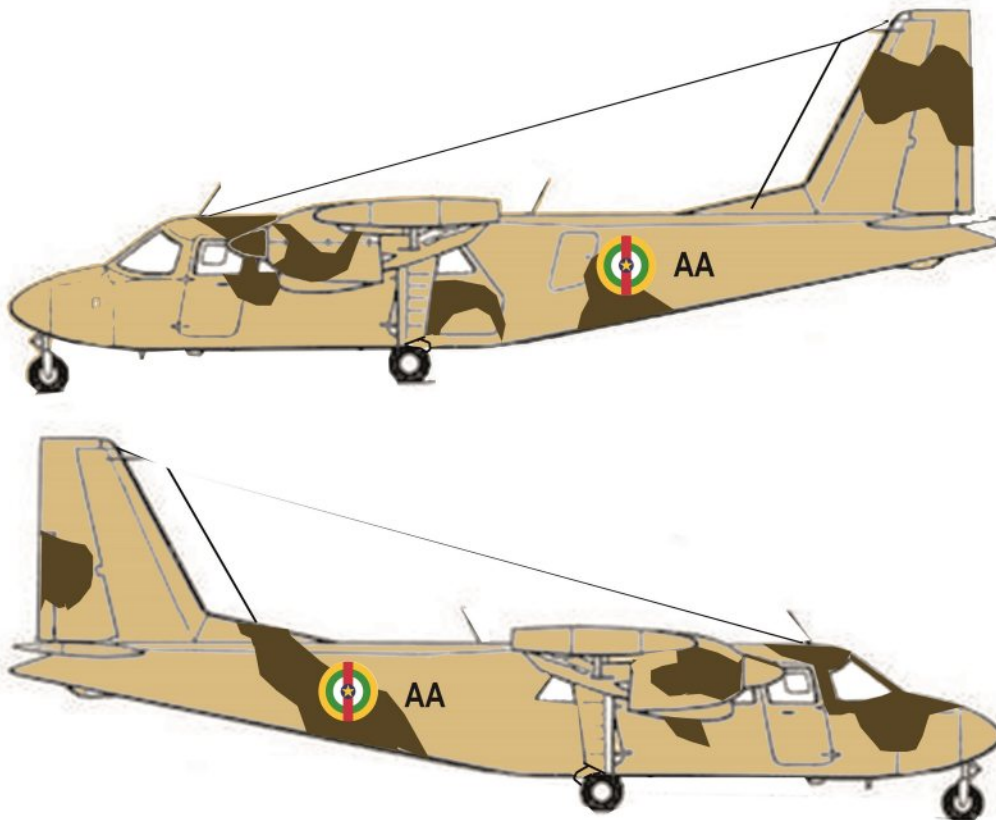
This Islander BN-2A-9 c/n 346 coded "AA" with registration TL-KAA was flown probably from 1995 to 2015.

It has *probably* the wing with span of 53 ft with "triangular" wing tips.

It has a Sahara desert camouflage scheme with sand light brown and dark brown. The upper camouflage pattern is unknown.

The 2-bladed propellers have camouflage coloured spinners, medium grey blades with white-grey-white tip stripes.

It has the long wire antennas. Probably only the "AA" code was painted on the aircraft and 2 roundels.



## MAURETANIA

Mauretania in West Africa has a small air force ("Force Aérienne Islamique de Mauritanie"). It operated aircraft like Broussard, DC-3, a pair of Skyvans and Buffalos but never fighters. Some 9 Islander/ Defender aircraft were also operated, for a long time being the only armed aircraft. (more recent EMBRAER Tucanos have been put into service and a few Chinese Z9 helicopters).

BN-2A-21 Defender c/n 765 and coded 5T-MAT was flown from the mid seventies.

It had wing with extra fuel capacity of 53 ft span with "triangular" wing tips.

The camouflage scheme is dark green (approx BSC381c: 241 / FS34079) and dark brown/ earth. (approx BSC 450 / FS30219). (the lower scheme pattern is *unknown*).

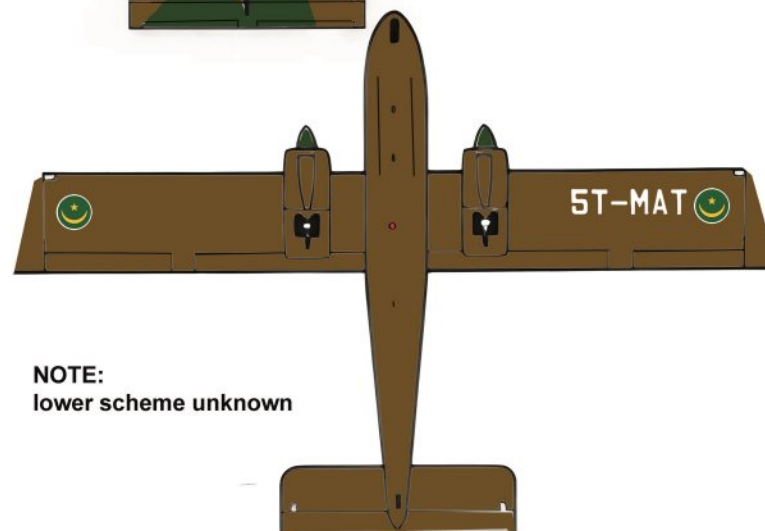
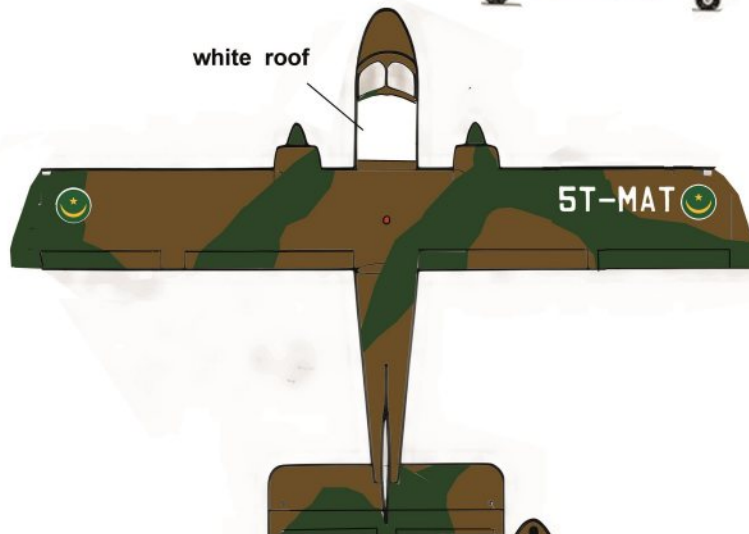
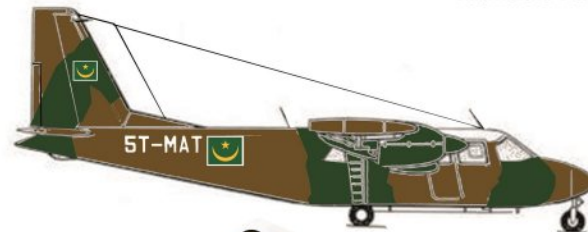
The cockpit roof is gloss white. The cabin windows have white outlined frames.

The 2-bladed propellers have dark green spinners, medium grey blades with white-grey-white tips.

Long wire antennas are also fitted as well as long antennas below the fuselage.



roundels have white border



## Rwanda

Rwanda in central Africa is a land locked country that became independent in July 1962 and was a Belgian colony. The "Force Aérienne Rwandaise" operated a small mixed fleet of aircraft and that included a few C-47 transports, few Magister attack aircraft, Alouette III helicopters.

A pair of Islanders were flown from mid seventies till mid nineties. Currently the main aircraft are Mil helicopters.

Islander BN-2A-21 c/n 811 has the registration 9XR-GW.

It had the wing with extra fuel capacity of 53 ft span with "triangular" wing tips.

It has an overall gloss white paint with cheatlines of dark red/brown (rust) and what seems Post Office Red (BSC381c: 538). The tiny upper cheat line is probably black.



Cheatlines are also on the inboard and outboard nacelles.

The wing tips *may* be gloss sky grey (about FS36463).

Fitted with long wire antennas and antenna on the cockpit roof.

The 2-bladed propellers have white spinners and medium grey blades with probably yellow tips.

Small Britten-Norman logo and Islander name on nose; these are tiny decals on the sheet.



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