

Fairey Barracuda



Le Fairey Barracuda est un bombardier-torpilleur, bombardier en piqué de l'aéronavale britannique (Fleet Air Arm), utilisé durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Il fut le premier appareil de ce type construit entièrement en métal. Destiné à remplacer les vieillissant biplans Fairey Swordfish et Fairey Albacore, il joua un rôle important dans l'attaque du cuirassé allemand Tirpitz et était connu pour son allure insolite lorsqu'il avait les ailes repliées. Le projet Barracuda tient son origine de la Spécification S.24/37 de l'Air Ministry de 1937, pour un bombardier-torpilleur monoplane. Six projets sont soumis, les projets de Fairey et de Supermarine avec son Type 322 furent les deux sélectionnés pour une pré-commande de deux prototypes. Le prototype du Fairey Barracuda vole le 7 décembre 1940 et le Supermarine Type 322 quant à lui ne vole pas avant 1943. Le Barracuda est à cette époque en production, le projet type 322 est arrêté. Le Barracuda est un monoplane tout en métal à ailes hautes dites cantilever avec un fuselage ovale. Il est équipé d'un train d'atterrissage rétractable et d'une roulette de queue fixe. Ce train hydraulique en forme de "L" doit être remonté manuellement pour venir se loger dans un espace situé dans le bord du fuselage, les roues quant à elles se logent dans les ailes. La crose d'appontage est montée juste avant la roulette de queue. Les trois membres d'équipage sont placés en tandem sous une verrière continue. Le pilote à une verrière coulissante et celles des deux autres membres est articulée. Les deux membres d'équipage à l'arrière peuvent changer de place, le navigateur utilisant alors les hublots situés sous la ligne des ailes pour avoir une meilleure visibilité vers le bas. Les ailes possèdent de très larges volets Fairey-Youngman qui augmentent la surface alaire au décollage (inclinaison à 20°) et qui peuvent servir d'aérofreins (inclinaison à 30°) pour le bombardement en piqué. Bien qu'originellement équipé d'une dérive conventionnelle, la queue du second prototype est transformée avec une configuration en "T" quand les tests en vol démontrent que la stabilité doit être améliorée. Le Barracuda doit être à l'origine équipé d'un moteur Rolls-Royce Exe de 24 cylindres en "X" (Moteur avec deux lignes de cylindres en V opposées), mais la production de ce moteur ayant été abandonnée, les essais sont retardés le temps de trouver un remplaçant. Les prototypes prennent finalement leur envol avec un moteur V-12 moins puissant, le Rolls-Royce Merlin 30 de 1 260 chevaux, qui actionne une hélice De Havilland tripale. Les tests suivants avec les prototypes ainsi que les premiers exemplaires de production de la version Mk. I révèlent que l'avion est largement sous-motorisé en raison du poids des appareils rajoutés depuis la conception finale.

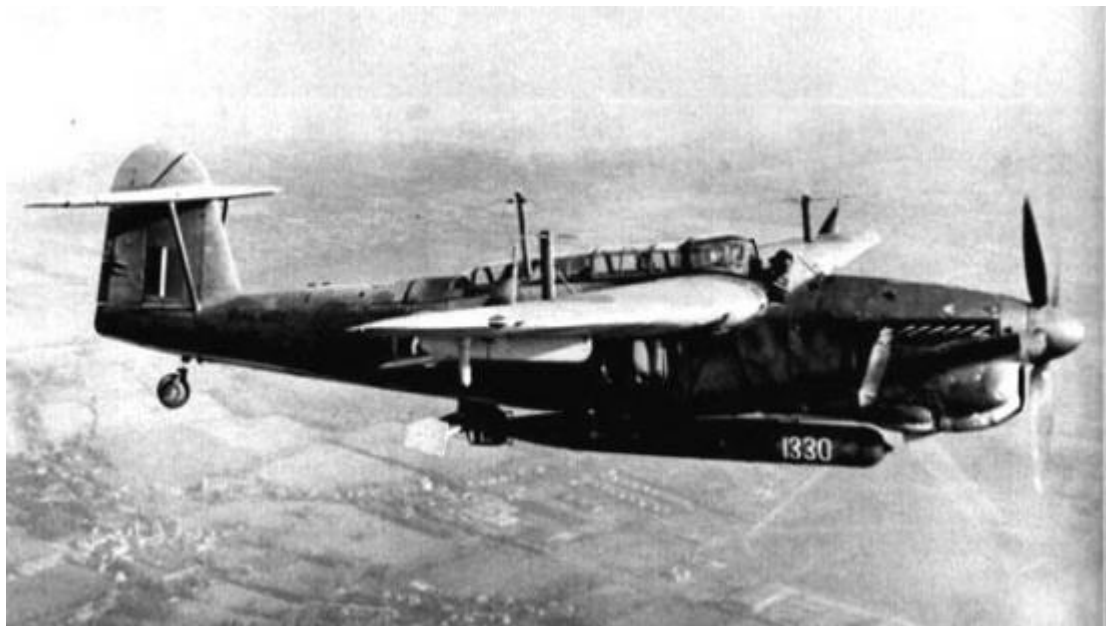
Seulement 30 exemplaires du Barracuda Mk I sont construits (25 par Boulton Paul et 5 par Westland) et utilisé uniquement à des fins de tests et de formation. Le remplacement du poussif Rolls-Royce Merlin 30 par un Rolls-Royce Merlin 32 de 1 640cv et l'ajout d'une hélice quadripale, donne naissance à la version définitive du Barracuda Mk. II. 1 688 exemplaires sortent des chaînes de production de Fairey (675 unités construites dans les usines de Stockport et Ringway), Blackburn (700), Boulton Paul (300) et Westland (13). Cette version embarque en plus un radar de lutte ASM (Air to Surface Vessel radar Mk II) avec une antenne Yagi-Uda au-dessus des ailes. La version Mk. III du Barracuda est un Mk II optimisé pour la lutte anti-sous-marine, dont le radar ASV métrique est remplacé par un radar ASV centimétrique placé sous le fuselage arrière. 852 variantes Mk. III furent produites (406 par Fairey et 392 par Boulton Paul). Au total toutes versions confondues, 2 607 Barracudas furent mis en service. La version Barracuda Mk. IV qui ne dépassa pas le stade de la planche à dessin, et dont la version suivante et finale appelée Mk. IV fut équipée d'un moteur Rolls-Royce Griffon à la place du Merlin. La puissance supplémentaire et le couple généré par le Griffon requièrent des plusieurs modifications aérodynamiques : La dérive fut élargie, l'envergure des ailes augmentée... La version Mk. IV basée sur une Mk III convertie, vola pour la première fois le 16 novembre 1944 et Fairey ne put construire que 37 exemplaires avant la fin de la Guerre. Les premiers Barracuda Mk. I étaient sous-motorisés et souffraient d'une trop faible vitesse ascensionnelle. Cependant en vol, celui-ci s'avérait relativement facile à piloter. La version tardive Mk. II avec son moteur Merlin 32 augmentait la puissance initiale de 400cv. Les pilotes appréciaient les larges aérofreins et la bonne visibilité de l'appareil, qui rendaient les atterrissages plus faciles. La mise en marche des aérofreins à grande vitesse pouvait entraîner un changement brusque d'assiette qui jetait l'appareil dans un brusque cabrage. Cet incident s'est avéré fatal à au moins cinq reprises durant des exercices de torpillage. Durant sa première mise en service actif, le Barracuda connut un taux élevé d'accidents mortels inexpliqués, impliquant souvent des pilotes expérimentés. Ce n'est qu'en 1945, que l'on connut le fin mot de l'histoire, ces accidents étant causés par des petites fuites du circuit hydraulique. Le point commun à ces fuites était qu'elles se produisaient au niveau de la jauge de contrôle sur le tableau de bord, le jet allant directement dans le visage du pilote. Du fait que les fluides hydrauliques utilisés contenant un grand part d'éther et que ces avions n'étaient que rarement équipés de masques à oxygène (les équipages les mettant en plus rarement en dessous de 3 000 m d'altitude) firent que les pilotes devenaient rapidement inconscients, entraînant un accident fatal. Un ordre de l'amirauté passa en mai 1945 pour exiger que tous les appareils soient équipés de masque à oxygène et que les équipages les portent à tout moment. Les premiers Barracuda entrèrent en service le 10 janvier 1943 au sein du 827 Naval Air Squadron au-dessus de l'Atlantique Nord. Au final, plus de 23 squadrons de la Fleet Air Arm et de la Royal Air Force furent équipés de ce type d'appareils. A partir de 1944, Les Mk. II en service étaient accompagnés en mission par des Mk. III pourvus de radar pour la lutte ASM. Le baptême du feu du Barracuda eut lieu en juillet 1943 au large des côtes de Norvège avec le 810 squadron du HMS Illustrious, avant de partir soutenir le débarquement de Salerne sur le front méditerranéen. L'année suivante, il entra en service actif sur le front pacifique. La Royal Air Force utilisa quant à elle, des Barracudas Mk. II, à partir de 1943 au sein du No. 567 Squadron RAF basé à Detling. En 1944, d'autres squadrons en furent équipés : le 667 Sqn. de Gosport, le 679 Sqn. de Ipswich et le 691 Sqn. de Roborough. Tous ces appareils furent livrés entre mars et juillet 1943,4. Les Barracudas anglais furent aussi utilisés comme bombardier en piqué et jouèrent un rôle crucial dans l'attaque du Fjord Kaa (Norvège) contre le cuirassier allemand Tirpitz. Le 3 avril 1942, 42 appareils appartenant aux 827, 829, 830 et 831 Naval Air Squadron des porte-avions britanniques HMS Victorious et HMS Furious réussirent à toucher 14 fois le bâtiment de guerre allemand avec des bombes de 730 kg et 230 kg. Cette attaque priva la Kriegsmarine de son plus grand navire de guerre pendant plus de deux mois pour réparation. À partir d'avril 1944, Les Barracudas du No 827 Squadron' du HMS Illustrious menèrent des opérations contre les forces japonaises sur le front pacifique, en prenant part aux raids contre Sabang à Sumatra (Opération Cockpit)⁷. Les performances initiales des Barracudas furent réduites à cause du climat du pacifique, l'autonomie se voyant réduite de 30 %. Les squadrons de bombardier-torpilleur britanniques de la British Pacific Fleet se virent donc rééquipés avec des Grumman Avengers⁸.

Cependant les porte-avions légers (HMS Colossus, HMS Glory, HMS Venerable et HMS Vengeance) du 11th Aircraft Carrier Squadron qui se joignirent à la flotte britannique du pacifique en juin 1945 furent dotés par navire d'un squadron de bombardier-torpilleur Barracuda (18 appareils) et un squadron d'avion de chasse F4U Corsair (24 appareils). En plus de sa victoire sur Le Tirpitz, le Barracuda accrocha 2 U-boat allemands à son tableau de chasse. Le premier le 27 octobre 1944, quand les 828 et 841 RNA Squadrons du HMS Implacable aidés par deux Fairey Firefly du 1771 RNA Squadron endommagèrent gravement le U-10601011 au sud de Brønnøysund. Ce sous-marin fut finalement achevé par deux Handley Page Halifax du 502 RAF Squadron et deux Consolidated B-24 Liberator de 311 RAF Squadron. Le second fut un U-boot de poche Seehund Type XXVIIB coulé le 13 avril 1945 par un Barracuda du 810 RNA Squadron à 14 miles des cotes hollandaises. Le Barracuda fut utilisé pour tester plusieurs innovations aéronautiques comme par exemple les fusées JATO (l'acronyme de Jet Assisted Take-Off) pour l'assistance au décollage ou une hélice à pas inversable pour ralentir l'appareil à l'atterrissage. Il servit au sein de la Fleet Air Arm jusqu'au milieu des années 1950 avant de se faire remplacer par des Grumman

Fairey Barracuda :

- Moteur Rolls-Royce Merlin 32
- 1640 Ch
- 350 Km/h
- 2 Mitrailleuses 7.7 mm 6 bombes de 115 Kg ou 1 torpille de 735 Kg
- 6385 Kg en charge
- 6585 m de plafond pratique
- 1165 Km en distance franchissable
- 3 Equipiers





Source : <http://les-avions-de-legende.e-monsite.com/pages/les-bombardiers/les-bombardiers-anglais/fairey-barracuda.html>

Version anglaise Wikipédia

The **Fairey Barracuda** was a British [carrier-borne torpedo](#) and [dive bomber](#) designed by [Fairey Aviation](#). It was the first aircraft of this type operated by the [Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm](#) (FAA) to be fabricated entirely from [metal](#). The Barracuda was developed as a replacement for the [Fairey Albacore biplanes](#). Development was protracted due to the original powerplant intended for the type, the [Rolls-Royce Exe](#), being cancelled. It was replaced by the less powerful [Rolls-Royce Merlin](#) engine. On 7 December 1940, the first Fairey prototype conducted its [maiden flight](#). Early testing revealed it to be somewhat underpowered. However, the definitive Barracuda Mk II had a more powerful model of the Merlin engine, while later versions were powered by the larger and even more powerful [Rolls-Royce Griffon](#) engine. The type was ordered in bulk to equip the FAA. In addition to Fairey's own production line, Barracudas were also built by [Blackburn Aircraft](#), [Boulton Paul](#), and [Westland Aircraft](#). The type participated in numerous carrier operations during the conflict, being deployed in the [Atlantic Ocean](#), [Mediterranean Sea](#), and the [Pacific Ocean](#) against the Germans, Italians, and Japanese respectively during the latter half of the war. One of the Barracuda's most noteworthy engagements was a [large-scale attack](#) upon the German [battleship Tirpitz](#) on 3 April 1944. In addition to the FAA, the Barracuda was also used by the [Royal Air Force](#), the [Royal Canadian Navy](#), the [Dutch Naval Aviation Service](#) and the [French Air Force](#). After its withdrawal from service during the 1950s, no intact examples of the Barracuda were preserved despite its once-large numbers, although the [Fleet Air Arm Museum](#) has ambitions to assemble a full reproduction.

Design and development

Background

In 1937 the British [Air Ministry](#) issued [Specification S.24/37](#), which sought a [monoplane torpedo bomber](#) to satisfy *Operational Requirement OR.35*. The envisioned aircraft was a three-seater that would possess a high payload capacity and a high maximum speed.^[1] Six submissions were received by the Air Ministry, from which the designs of Fairey and [Supermarine \(Type 322\)](#) were selected. A pair of prototypes of each design were ordered.^[2] On 7 December 1940, the first Fairey prototype conducted its [maiden flight](#).^{[3][4]} The Supermarine [Type 322](#) did not fly until 1943 and, as the Barracuda was already in production by then, its development did not progress further. The Barracuda was a shoulder-wing [cantilever](#) monoplane^[1] It had a retractable [undercarriage](#) and non-retracting tailwheel. The [hydraulically](#)-actuated main landing gear struts were of an "L" shape which retracted into a recess in the side of the fuselage and the wing, with the wheels within the wing. A flush [arrestor hook](#) was fitted directly ahead of the tail wheel. It was operated by a crew of three, who were seated in a [tandem](#) arrangement under a continuous-glazed [canopy](#). The pilot had a sliding canopy while the other two crew members' canopy was hinged. The two rear-crew had alternate locations in the fuselage, the navigator's position having bay windows below the wings for downward visibility.^[4] The wings were furnished with large [Fairey-Youngman flaps](#) which doubled as [dive brakes](#). Originally fitted with a conventional tail, flight tests suggested that stability would be improved by mounting the stabiliser higher, similar to a [T-tail](#), an arrangement that was implemented on the second prototype.^[1] For carrier stowage the wings folded back horizontally at the roots; the small vertical protrusions on the upper wingtips held hooks that attached to the tailplane.



Barracuda Mk II carrying an 18-inch (46 cm) [aerial torpedo](#). The ASV radar "Yagi" antennae are visible above the wings.

The Barracuda had originally been intended to be powered by the [Rolls-Royce Exe X block, sleeve valve](#) engine, but production of this powerplant was problematic and eventually abandoned, which in turn delayed the prototype's trials.^{[1][6]} Instead, it was decided to adopt the lower-powered 12-cylinder [V-type Rolls-Royce Merlin](#) Mark 30 engine (1,260 hp/940 kW) to drive a three-bladed [de Havilland](#) propeller and the prototypes eventually flew with this configuration.^{[1][6]} Experiences gained from the prototype's flight testing, as well as operations with the first production aircraft, designated *Barracuda Mk I*, revealed the aircraft to be underpowered which apparently resulted from the weight of extra equipment that had been added since the initial design phase. Only 23 Barracuda Mk Is were constructed, including five by [Westland Aircraft](#). These aircraft were only used for trials and conversion training.^[6] Carrier landing the Barracuda was relatively straightforward due to a combination of the powerful flaps/airbrakes fitted to the aircraft and good visibility from the cockpit. Retracting the airbrakes at high speeds whilst simultaneously applying [rudder](#) would cause a sudden change in [trim](#), which could throw the aircraft into an inverted dive.^{[7][6]} Incidents of this occurrence proved fatal on at least five occasions during practice torpedo runs; once the problem was identified, appropriate pilot instructions were issued prior to the aircraft entering carrier service.^[7]

Further development

The definitive version of the aircraft was the Barracuda Mk II which had the more powerful 1,640 hp (1,220 kW) Merlin 32 driving a four-bladed propeller.^[3] A total of 1,688 Mk IIs were manufactured by several companies, including Fairey (at [Stockport](#) and [Ringway](#)) (675), [Blackburn Aircraft](#) (700), [Boulton Paul](#) (300), and Westland (13).^[8] The Barracuda Mk II carried the metric wavelength [ASV II](#) (Air to Surface Vessel) radar, with the [Yagi-Uda antennae](#) carried above the wings.^[9] The Barracuda Mk III was a Mk II optimised for anti-submarine work; changes included the replacement of the metric wavelength ASV set by a [centimetric ASV III variant](#), the scanner for which was housed in a blister under the rear fuselage.^{[5][3]} 852 Barracuda Mk IIIs were eventually produced, 460 by Fairey and 392 by Boulton Paul.^[3]



A Barracuda Mk. V; notice the squared off wing tips and the enlarged radiator and spinner for the Griffon engine. The lack of the larger fin and wing radar pod suggests that this is the prototype.



Stockport-built Barracuda V with final enlarged pointed fin at Ringway in May 1946

The Barracuda Mk IV never left the drawing board. The next and final variant was the *Barracuda Mk V*, in which the Merlin was replaced with the larger [Rolls-Royce Griffon](#) engine. The increased power and torque of the Griffon necessitated various changes, which included the enlargement of the vertical stabiliser and increased wing span with tips being clipped. The first Barracuda Mk V, which was converted from a Mk II, did not fly until 16 November 1944. Fairey had only built 37 aircraft before the war in Europe was over. Early Merlin 30-powered Barracuda Mk 1s were deemed to be underpowered and suffered from a poor rate of climb, but once airborne the type proved relatively easy to fly. During October 1941, trials of the Barracuda Mk 1 were conducted at [RAF Boscombe Down](#), which found that the aircraft possessed an overall weight of 12,820 lb (5,830 kg) when equipped with 1,566 lb (712 kg) torpedo. At this weight the Mk 1 had a maximum speed of 251 mph (405 km/h) at 10,900 ft (3,300 m), a climb to 15,000 ft (4,600 m) took 19.5 minutes, with a maximum climb rate of 925 ft/min (4.7 m/s) at 8,400 ft (2,560 m), and a service ceiling of 19,100 ft (5,800 m).^[10] The later Barracuda Mk II had the more powerful Merlin 32, providing a 400 hp (300 kW) increase in power. During late 1942 testing of the Mk II was performed at RAF Boscombe Down. When flown by naval test pilot Lieutenant [Roy Sydney Baker-Falkner](#) at 14,250 lb (6,477 kg) it achieved a climb to 10,000 ft (3,000 m) in 13.6 minutes,^[11] with a maximum climb rate of 840 ft/min (4.3 m/s) at 5,200 ft and an effective ceiling of 15,000 ft (4,600 m).^[10] During June 1943, further testing at Boscombe Down by test pilot Baker-Falkner demonstrated a maximum range while carrying either a 1,630 lb (750 kg) torpedo or a single 2,000 lb bomb (909 kg), of 840 statute miles (1,360 km), and a practical range of 650 statute miles (1,050 km), while carrying 6 x 250 lb (114 kg) bombs reduced the range to 780 miles (1,260 km) and 625 miles (1,010 km), respectively.^[12] During the earlier part of its service life the Barracuda suffered a fairly high rate of unexplained fatal crashes, often involving experienced pilots. Experienced test pilot Baker-Falkner was brought in to address the issues and boost morale amongst operational squadrons.^{[13][14]} During 1945 the cause was traced to small leaks developing in the hydraulic system. The most common point for such a leak to happen was at the point of entry to the pilot's [pressure gauge](#) and was situated such that the resulting spray was directed straight into the pilot's face. The chosen hydraulic fluid contained [ether](#) and, as the aircraft were only rarely equipped with [oxygen masks](#) and few aircrew wore them below 10,000 ft/3,000 m anyway, the pilot quickly became unconscious during such a leak, inevitably leading to a crash.^[15] At the end of May 1945 an [Admiralty](#) order was issued that required all examples of the type to be fitted with oxygen as soon as possible, and for pilots to use the system at all times.

Operational history

British service

An 830 Naval Air Squadron Barracuda taking off from *Furious* at the start of Operation Mascot. The aircraft is carrying a 1,600 lb (730 kg) bomb. The first Barracudas entered operational service on 10 January 1943 with [827 Squadron](#) of the [Fleet Air Arm](#) (FAA) under the command of Lieutenant Commander [Roy Sydney Baker-Falkner](#), the former Admiralty test pilot at RAF Boscombe Down, who were deployed in the [North Atlantic](#).^[6] Eventually a total of 24 front-line FAA squadrons were equipped with Barracudas. While intended to principally function as a torpedo bomber, by the time the Barracuda arrived in quantity relatively little [Axis](#)-aligned shipping remained, so it was instead largely used as a dive-bomber.^{[1][16]} From 1944 onwards, the Barracuda Mk II was accompanied in service by radar-equipped, but otherwise similar, Barracuda Mk IIIs; these were typically used to conduct [anti-submarine](#) operations.^[17] The [Royal Air Force](#) (RAF) also operated the Barracuda Mk II. During 1943 the first of the RAF's aircraft were assigned to [No. 567 Sqn.](#), based at [RAF Detling](#). During 1944 similar models went to various squadrons, including [667 Sqn.](#) at [RAF Gosport](#), [679 Sqn.](#) at [RAF Ipswich](#) and [691 Sqn.](#) at [RAF Roborough](#). Between March and July 1945 all of the RAF's Barracudas were withdrawn from service.^{[18][19]} During July 1943, the Barracuda first saw action with [810 Squadron](#) aboard [HMS *Illustrious*](#) off the coast of [Norway](#); shortly thereafter, the squadron was deployed to the [Mediterranean Sea](#) to support the [landings at Salerno](#), a critical element of the [Allied invasion of Italy](#).^[20] During the following year, the Barracuda entered service in the [Pacific Theatre](#).^[21] As the only British naval aircraft in service stressed for dive bombing following the retirement of the [Blackburn Skua](#)^[16] the Barracuda participated in [Operation Tungsten](#), an attack on the [German battleship *Tirpitz*](#) while it was moored in [Kåfjord, Alta, Norway](#).^{[1][5]}

On 3 April 1944, Strike Leader [Roy Sydney Baker-Falkner](#) led two Naval Air Wings with a total of 42 aircraft dispatched from British carriers [HMS Victorious](#) and [Furious](#) scored 14 direct hits on [Tirpitz](#) using a combination of 1,600 lb (730 kg) and 500 lb (230 kg) bombs for the loss of one bomber.^{[22][17]} This attack damaged [Tirpitz](#), killing 122 of her crew and injuring 316, as well as disabling the ship for over two months during the critical period leading up to the Normandy invasion.^[23] However, the slow speed of the Barracudas contributed to the failure of the subsequent [Operation Mascot](#) and [Operation Goodwood](#) attacks on [Tirpitz](#) during July and August of that year, but were effective as diversionary tactics whilst the Normandy landings in [Operation Overlord](#) were underway.^{[24][25]} On 21 April 1944 Barracudas of No 827 Squadron aboard [Illustrious](#) began operations against Japanese forces.^{[1][26]} The type participated in air raids on [Sabang](#) in [Sumatra](#), known as [Operation Cockpit](#).^[27] In the Pacific theatre, the Barracuda's performance was considerably reduced by the prevailing high temperatures;^[N 1] reportedly, its combat radius in the Pacific was reduced by as much as 30%. This diminished performance was a factor in the decision to re-equip the torpedo bomber squadrons aboard the fleet carriers of the [British Pacific Fleet](#) with American-built [Grumman Avengers](#).^[29] In the Pacific, a major problem hindering the Barracuda was the need to fly over [Indonesian](#) mountain ranges to strike at targets located on the eastern side of [Java](#), which necessitated a high-altitude performance that the Barracuda's low-altitude-rated Merlin 32 engine with its single-stage [supercharger](#) could not effectively provide.^{[30][N 2]} Additionally, the carriage of maximum underwing bomb loads resulted in additional [drag](#), which further reduced performance.^[31] However, the Light Fleet Carriers of the 11th ACS (which joined the BPF in June 1945) were all equipped with a single Barracuda and single Corsair squadron; by [Victory over Japan Day](#), the BPF had a total of five Avenger and four Barracuda squadrons embarked on its carriers.^[32] A number of Barracudas participated in trial flights, during which several innovations were tested, including [RATOG](#) rockets for boosting takeoff performance (which ended up being regularly used when operating off escort carriers at high weights),^[33] and a braking [propeller](#), which slowed the aircraft by reversing the [blade pitch](#).^[34] Following the end of the conflict, the Barracuda was relegated to secondary roles, for the most part being used as a [trainer aircraft](#). The type continued to be operated by FAA squadrons up until the mid-1950s, by which time the type were withdrawn entirely in favour of the Avengers.^[1]

Canadian service

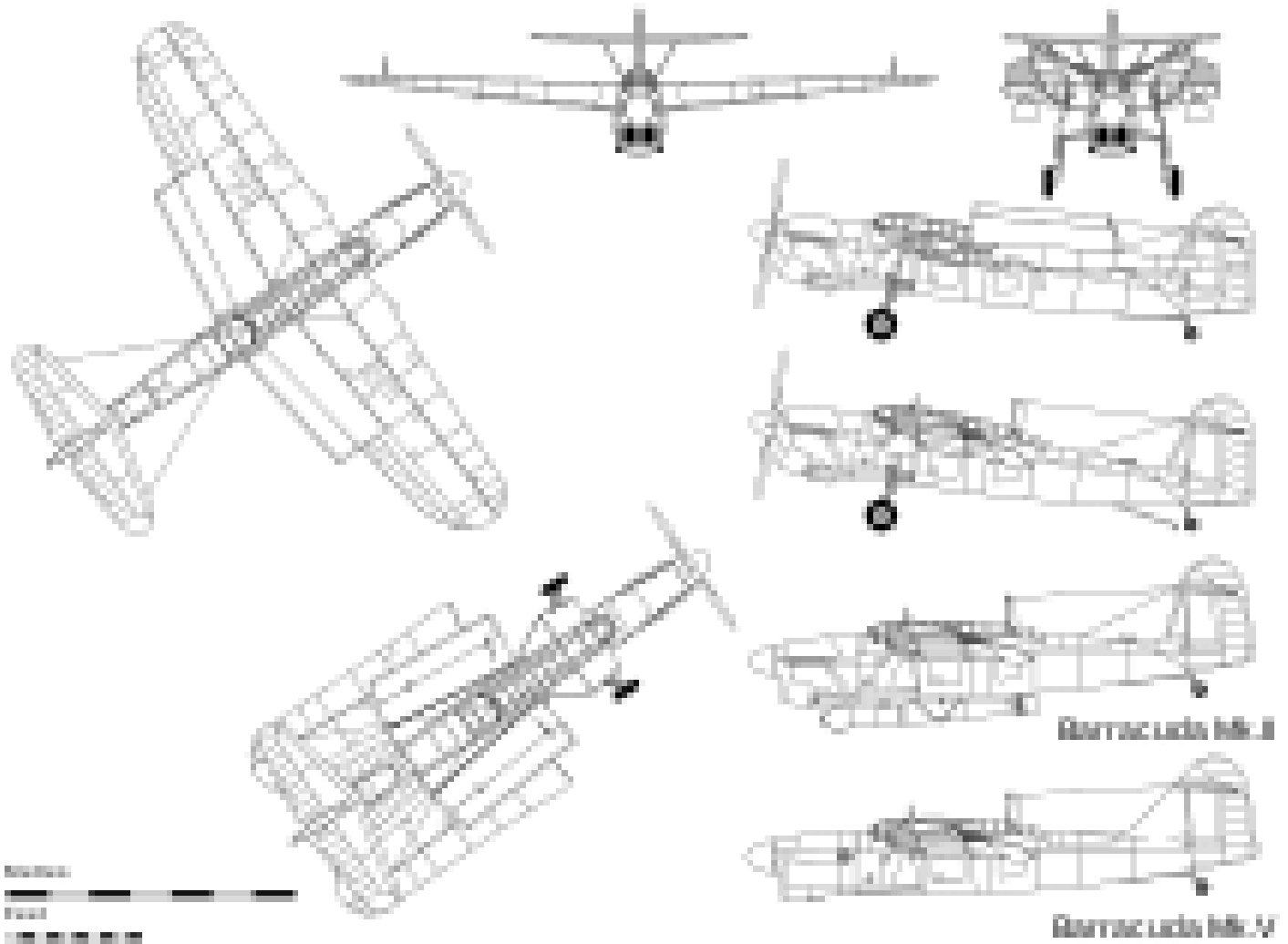
On 24 January 1946, the [Royal Canadian Navy](#) (RCN) took delivery of 12 radar-equipped Barracuda Mk II aircraft; this was a Canadian designation, in British service these aircraft were referred to as the Barracuda Mk. III. The first acquired aircraft were assigned to the newly-formed [825 Sqn.](#) aboard aircraft carrier [HMCS Warrior](#). The majority of Canadian aircraft mechanics had served during the war and had been deployed on numerous British aircraft carriers, notably [HMS Puncher](#) and [Nabob](#) which, along with some Canadian pilots, the RCN crewed and operated on behalf of the RN. During 1948, the [Warrior](#) was paid off and returned to Britain along with the Barracuda aircraft.

Surviving aircraft

Over 2,500 Barracudas were delivered to the FAA, more than any other type ordered by the Royal Navy at that date. However, unlike numerous other aircraft of its era, none were retained for posterity and no complete examples of the aircraft exist today.^{[38][39]} Since the early 1970s, the [Fleet Air Arm Museum](#) has been collecting Barracuda components from a wide variety of sources throughout the British Isles; it has the long-term aim of rebuilding an example. In 2010, help was sought from the team rebuilding [Donald Campbell's](#) record-breaking speed boat, [Bluebird](#), as the processes and skills involved were related to those needed to recreating the aircraft from the crashed remains, so between May 2013 and February 2015 'The Barracuda Project' operated as a sister project to the Bluebird rebuild. The tail section of [LS931](#) was reconstructed using only original material. During September 2014, the wreckage of a rear fuselage was delivered to the workshops to undergo the same processes. In February 2015, the Barracuda sections were transported back to the Fleet Air Arm Museum, where the work continues.^{[40][41]} During 2018 the wreckage of a Fairey Barracuda was discovered by engineers surveying the seabed for an electricity cable between England and [France](#). According to Wessex Archaeology it is the only example of the type to have ever been found in one piece and represents the last of its kind in the UK. During 2019 the wreckage was successfully recovered and it was intended at that time to be reassembled and transported to the [Fleet Air Arm Museum](#) for preservation.^{[42][38]} As of November 2023, the Fleet Air Arm Museum is running a project, including online content ^[43] to rebuild a Barracuda based on [DP872](#), a Barracuda Mk II built by Boulton Paul in 1943.

The project is expected to take 10 years and although based on *DP872*, will use parts from at least 4 other aircraft, *LS931*, *DR306*, *MD956* and *PM870*.^{[44][45]} *DP872* crashed on 29th August 1944 shortly after takeoff from [RNAS Maydown \(HMS Shrike\)](#) in Northern Ireland. The recovery crew arrived promptly but found the aircraft already sinking in a bog, Blackhead Moss, about 5 miles from the airfield and were unable to recover the crew of 3 before the aircraft sank. The remains of the aircraft were recovered in 1971 and stored at the Fleet Air Arm Museum store in Wroughton, Wiltshire.^[45]

Specifications (Barracuda Mk II)



Barracuda Mk.II drawings, with wings unfolded and folded. Profile detail of the Griffon-engined Barracuda Mk.V.

General characteristics

- **Crew:** 3
- **Length:** 39 ft 9 in (12.12 m)
- **Wingspan:** 49 ft 2 in (14.99 m)
- **Height:** 15 ft 2 in (4.62 m)
- **Wing area:** 405 sq ft (37.6 m²)
- **Empty weight:** 9,350 lb (4,241 kg)
- **Gross weight:** 13,200 lb (5,987 kg)
- **Max takeoff weight:** 14,100 lb (6,396 kg)
- **Powerplant:** 1 × [Rolls-Royce Merlin 32](#) V-12 liquid-cooled piston engine, 1,640 hp (1,220 kW)
- **Propellers:** 4-bladed constant-speed propeller

Performance

- **Maximum speed:** 240 mph (390 km/h, 210 kn)
- **Cruise speed:** 195 mph (314 km/h, 169 kn)
- **Range:** 1,150 mi (1,850 km, 1,000 nmi)
- **Combat range:** 686 mi (1,104 km, 596 nmi) with 1,620 lb (735 kg) torpedo
- **Service ceiling:** 16,000 ft (4,900 m)
- **Time to altitude:** 5,000 ft (1,524 m) in 6 minutes
- **Wing loading:** 32.6 lb/sq ft (159 kg/m²)
- **Power/mass:** 0.12 hp/lb (0.20 kW/kg)

Armament

- **Guns:** 2 × 0.303 in (7.7 mm) [Vickers K machine guns](#) in rear cockpit^[47]
- **Bombs:** 1× 1,620 lb (735 kg) [aerial torpedo](#) or 4× 450 lb (205 kg) depth charges or 6× 250 lb (110 kg) bombs^[47]



Barracuda V of 753 Squadron Lee-on-Solent 1948.



Source : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairey_Barracuda