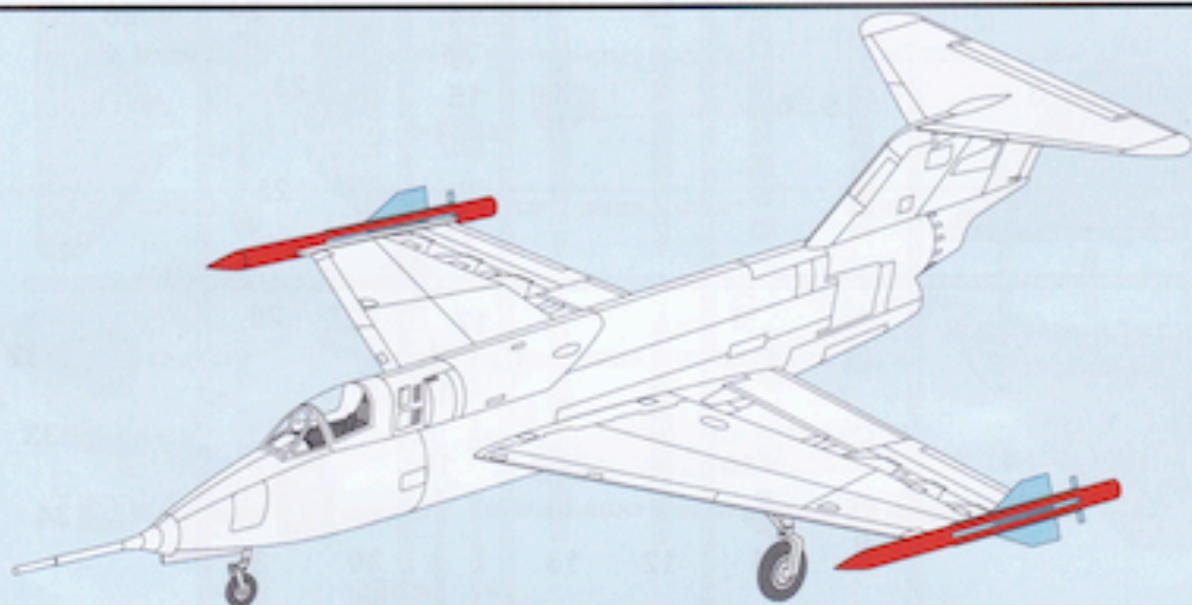


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# Saunders-Roe SR.53



## History

The Saunders-Roe SR.53 was a British prototype interceptor aircraft of mixed jet and rocket propulsion developed for the Royal Air Force (RAF) by Saunders-Roe in the early 1950s. As envisaged, the SR.53 would have been used as an interceptor aircraft, using its rocket propulsion to rapidly climb and approach incoming hostile bombers at high speeds; following its attack run, the aircraft would be able to return to its base by making use of the secondary jet propulsion instead.

In October 1951, Saunders-Roe obtained facilities at RAF Hurn, Dorset, to support the site's use as a base for test flights of the SR.53. This measure had been necessitated by a lack of suitable airfields on the Isle of Wight, where the company was based and typically conducted development from. To this end, the firm constructed a HTP storage facility at the Hurn site; specialised radio aids were also installed and initially tested using a specially-modified Gloster Meteor which had been lent by the Ministry of Supply. This setup would ultimately remain unused as flying trials were centered at RAF Boscombe Down instead.

On 28 June 1956, the completed first prototype, XD145, was dispatched for assembly by the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment at RAF Boscombe Down. On 16 January 1957, the first installed ground run of its Spectre engine was performed; on 16 April 1957, this was followed by the first installed ground run of its Viper engine. On 9 May 1957, XD145 conducted the type's first ground taxiing trial.

On 16 May 1957, Squadron Leader John Booth DFC was at the controls of XD145 for the first test flight, following up with the maiden flight of the second prototype XD151, on 6 December 1957. Test results indicated "...an extremely docile and exceedingly pleasant aircraft to fly, with very well harmonized controls". Both prototypes flew a total of 56 test flights, with Mach 1.33 speeds being obtained.

While testing at RAE Boscombe Down, XD151 crashed on 5 June 1958 during an aborted takeoff on its 12th flight. Running off the runway, the aircraft struck a concrete approach light, exploding on impact and killing its pilot, Squadron Leader Booth. The remaining prototype continued to fly with Lt Cdr Peter Lamb taking over the flight test programme.

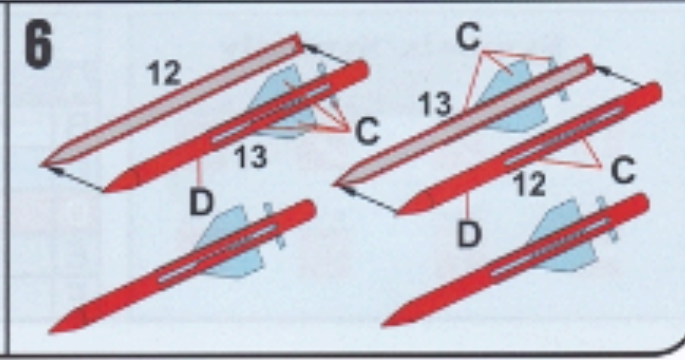
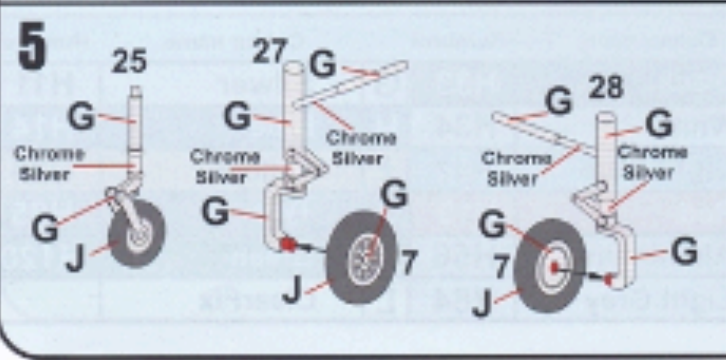
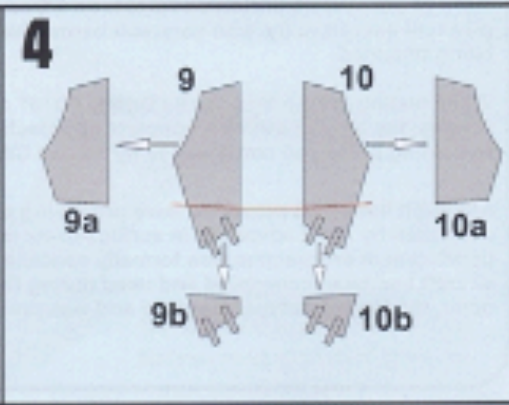
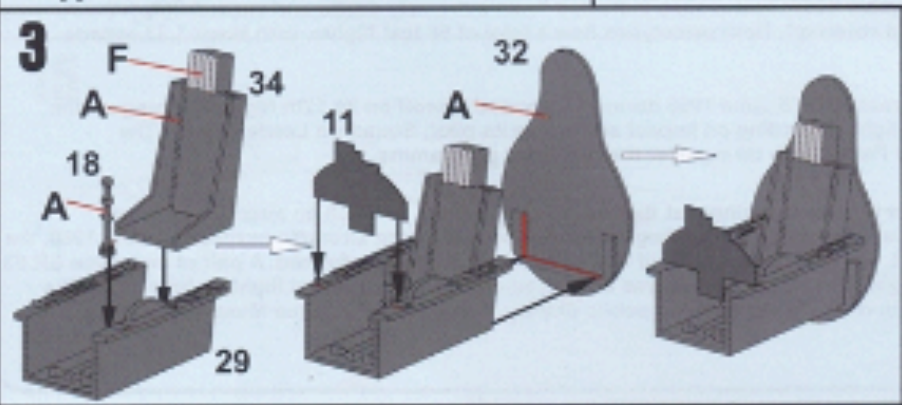
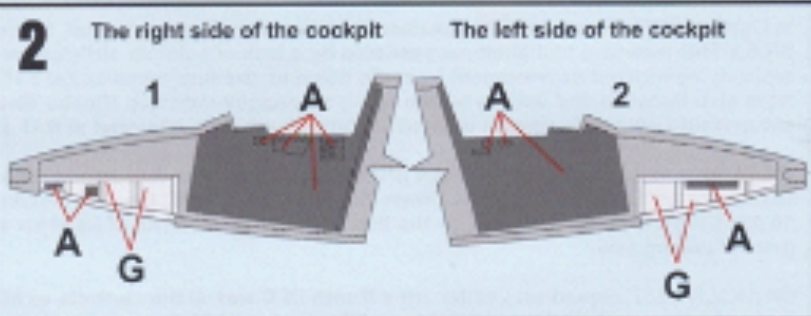
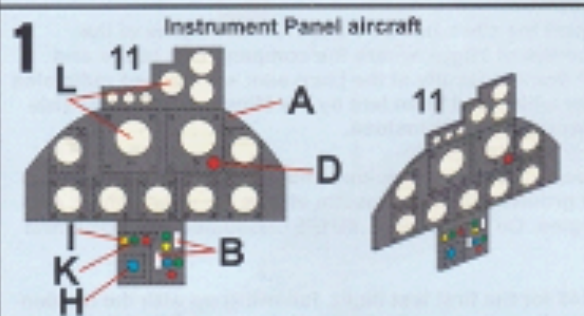
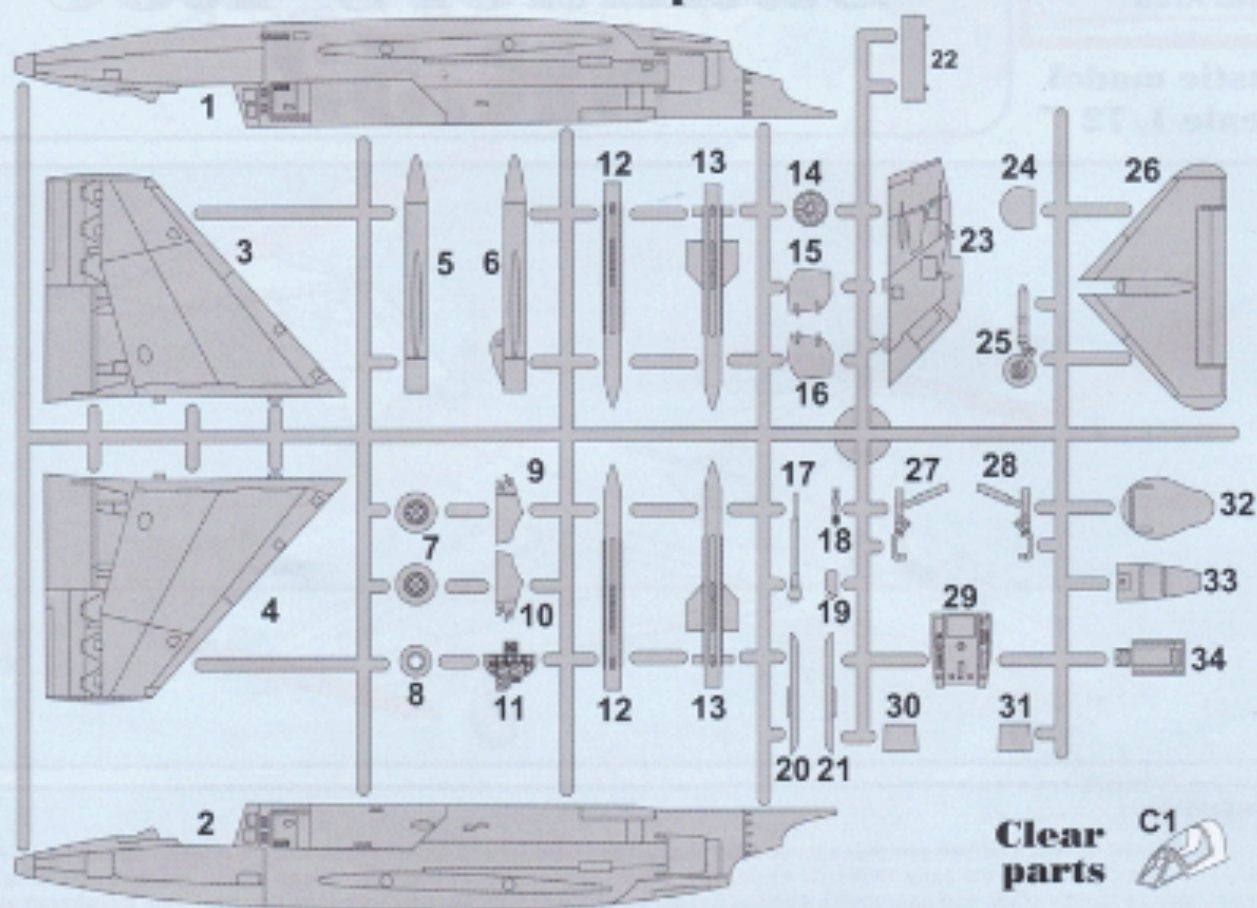
Although the SR.53 proved to have promising performance during test flights, the requirement for such an aircraft had been overtaken by rapid advances in surface-to-air missile technology, leading to reconsideration of the aircraft's purpose. In July 1960, the development programme was formally cancelled, by which time a total of 56 test flights had been performed. A pair of prototype SR.53 aircraft had been completed and used during flight tests. One of these was destroyed during one such test flight in June 1958. The other, the first prototype, survived and was preserved; it is currently on public display at the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford.

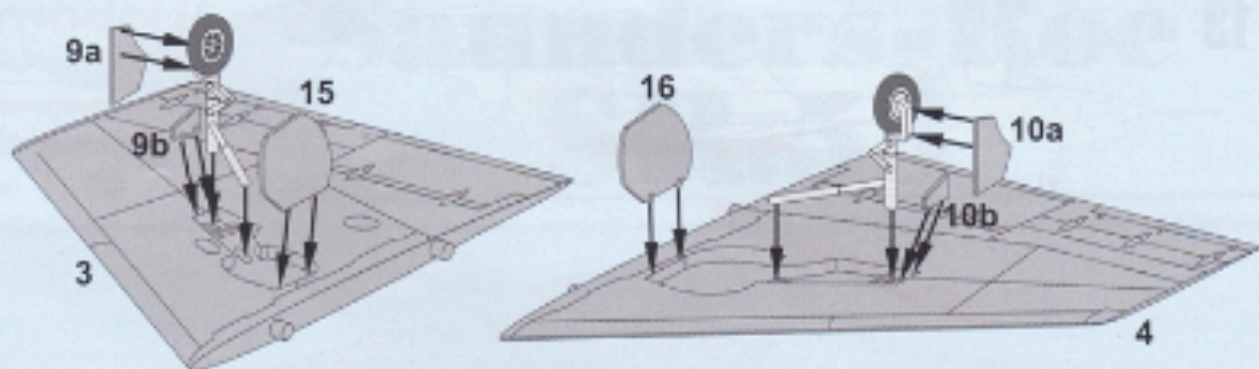
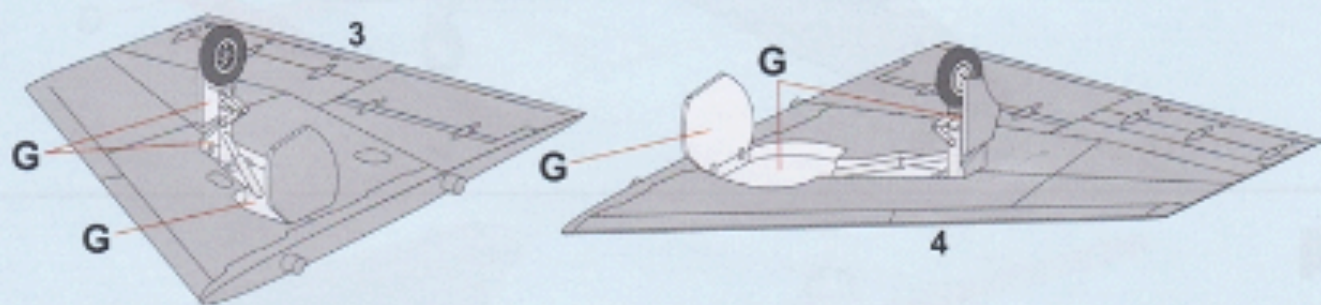
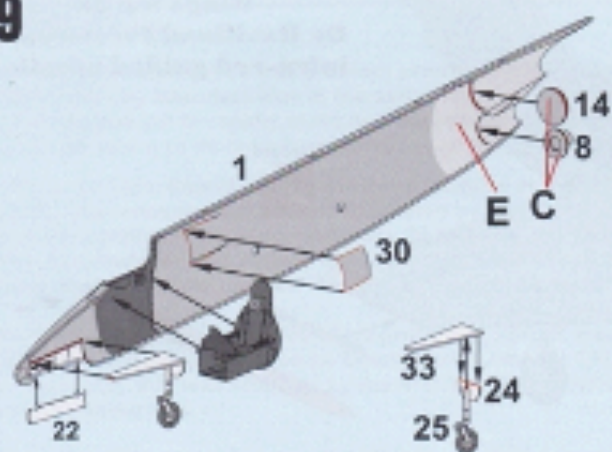
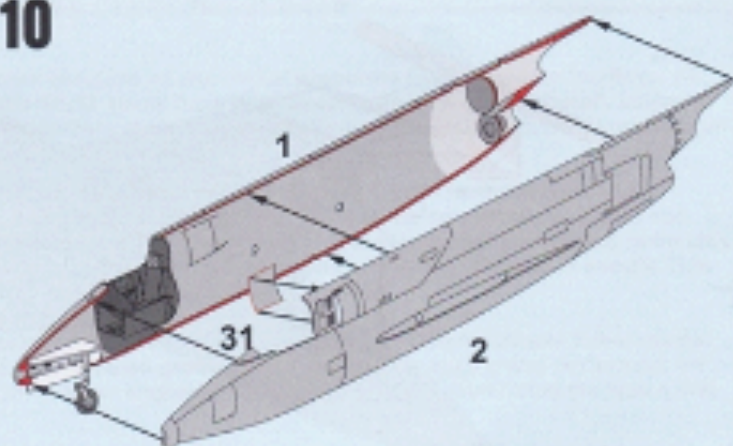
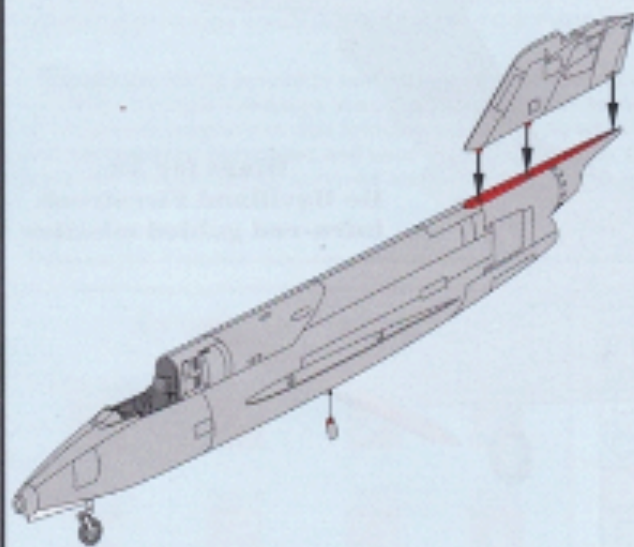
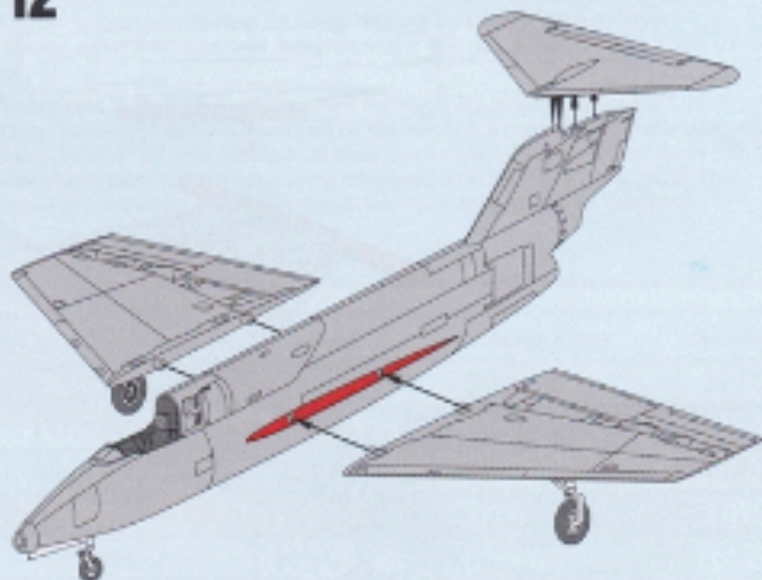
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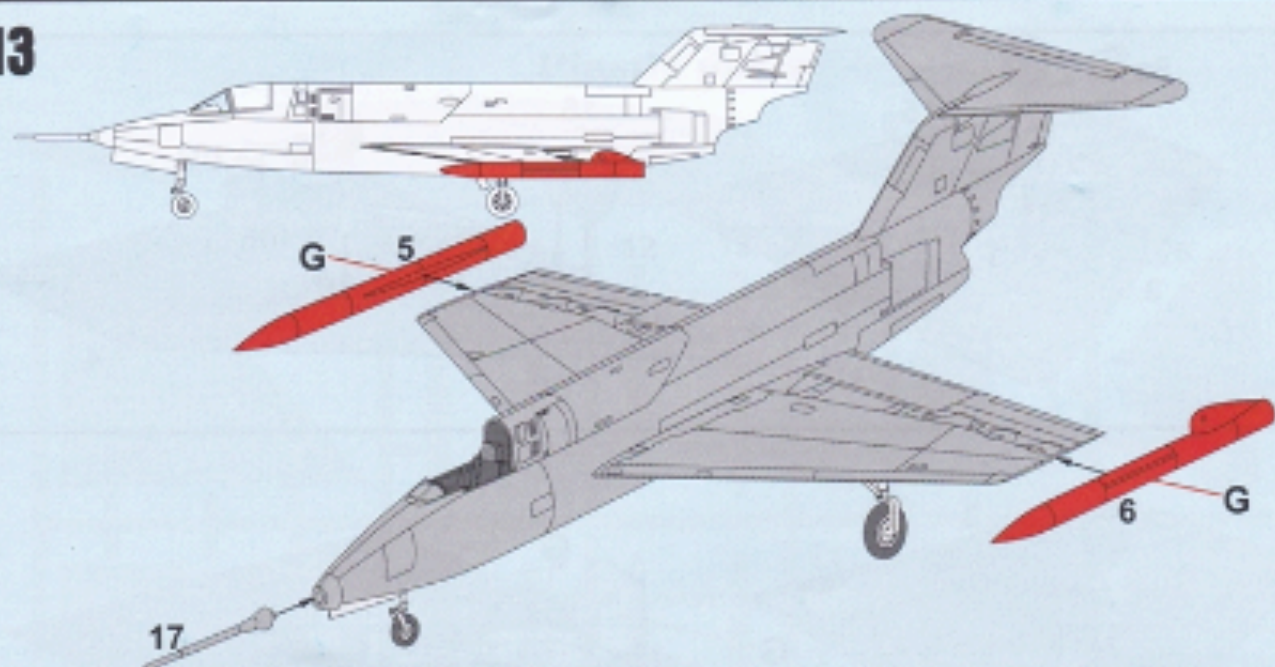
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<b>C</b>	Light blue	H47	<b>I</b>	Yellow	H24
<b>D</b>	Red	H19	<b>J</b>	Tyre	H85
<b>E</b>	Aluminium	H56	<b>K</b>	Green	H120
<b>F</b>	Light Grey	H64	<b>L</b>	ClearFix	

# Plastic parts

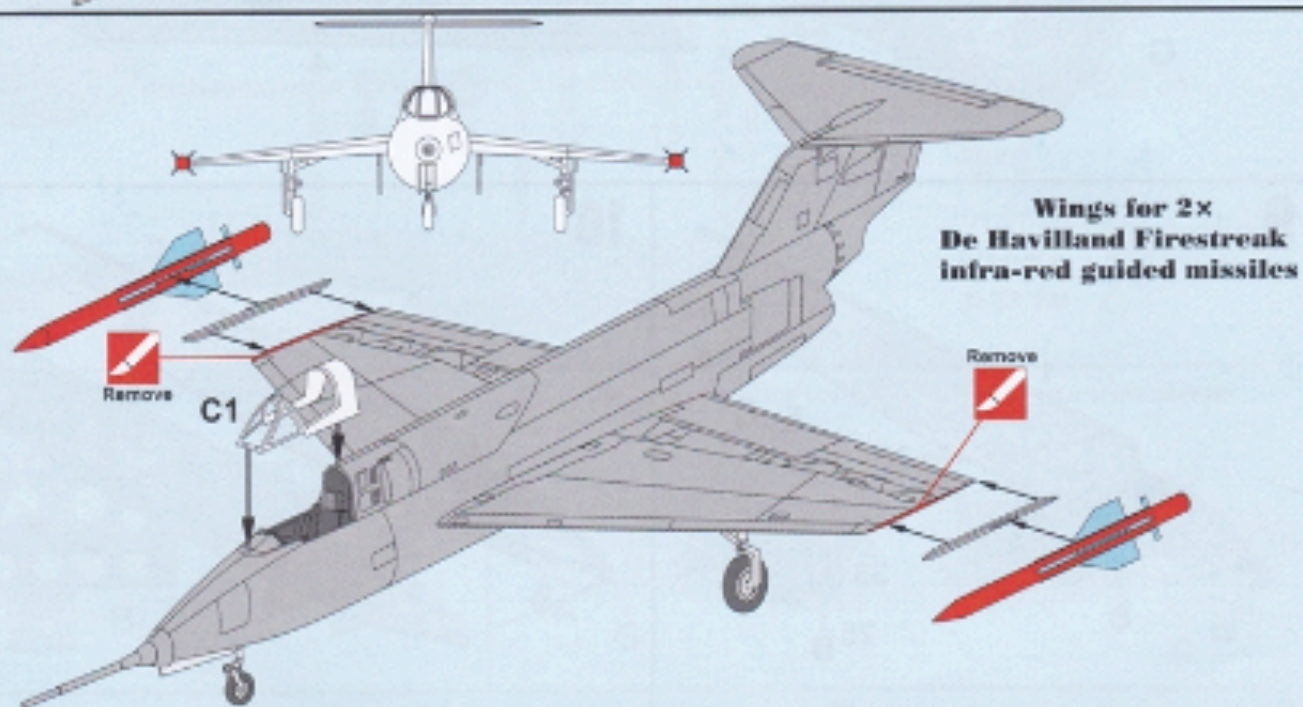


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