

Gloster Gladiator I

In Feb 1937 the first Gladiator entered service with the RAF. Although the design was made obsolete by the new monoplanes, the type would be an important transitional step between the old biplanes and the new monoplanes.

The aircraft incorporated many modern features such as the enclosed cockpit and a cantilever main undercarriage with internally sprung wheel struts.

Gladiators were in widespread service with the RAF in the early stages of WW2 but by the time of the Battle of Britain had been mostly withdrawn to other theatres.

Gladiators were exported to 13 countries prior to the war, some of which ended up on opposing sides. During the Anglo-Iraqi war of 1941 Gladiators served with both British and Iraqi forces.

The model is marked as an aircraft of the Belgian Air Force. The Belgians had 14 serviceable aircraft when the Germans invaded but all were lost within 2 days of the German attack.

Data: *Engine:* Bristol Mercury IX 9 cylinder air-cooled radial, 620 kW. *Wingspan* 9.83m. *Length* 8.36m. *Maximum take off weight* 2084kg. *Maximum speed* 407 km/h. *Range* 680 km. *Armament* two Lewis .303 machine guns and two Vickers .303 machine guns. *Crew* 1.

Matchbox 1/72 kit completed by Steve Pulbrook in 2010.



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