intro

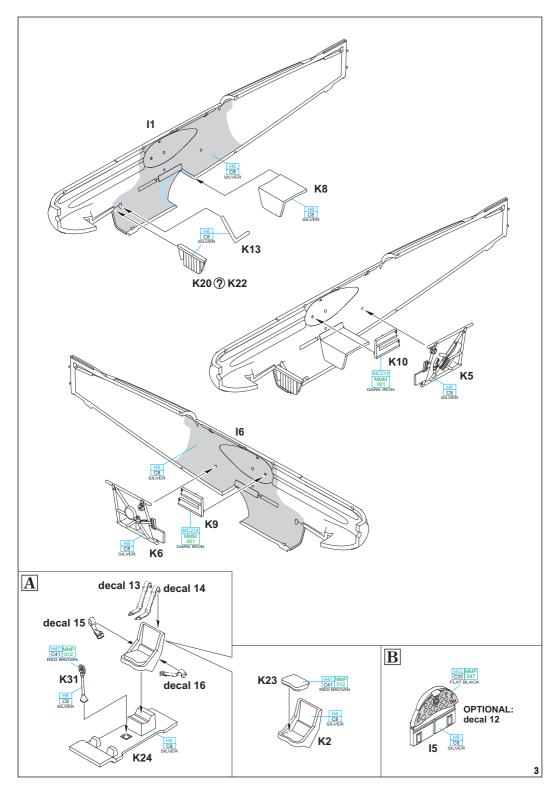
The Avia B.534 was developed in 1934 as an extension of the B.34 fighter. In this incarnation, which was produced in small numbers for the Czechoslovak Air Force (the majority of which were attached to No.3 Fighter Regiment in Slovakia at the beginning of the Second World War), there were several engine/airframe combinations tried. The B.234 prototype served as the basis for the re-engined (Hispano Suiza 12 Ydrs for the original Avia R-29 radial) type that became the true B.534. This was the 1934 victor in a tender for a new standard fighter for the air force, and in June of that year, Avia received an order for an initial 34 aircraft. The orders accumulated to a total of 568 units, built in several production blocks.

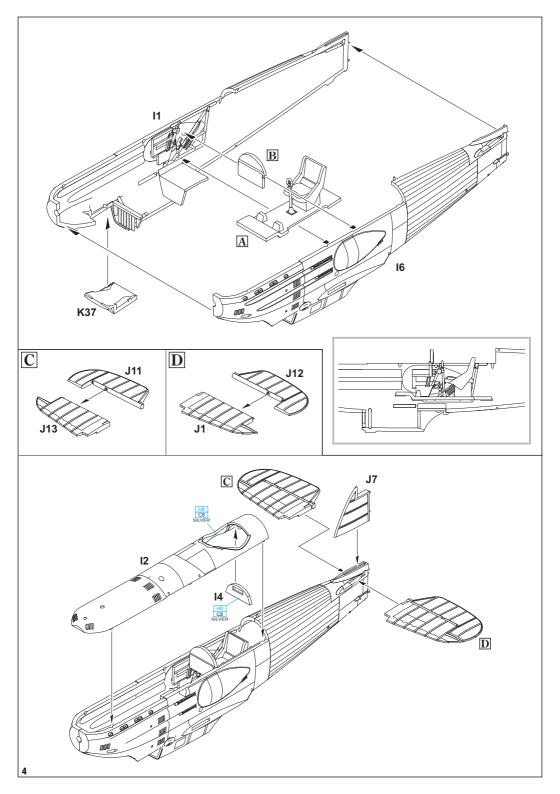
Assessments of the aircraft are somewhat variable. At the time of its development, it was an aircraft that was technically sound and utilized progressive construction techniques, but by the time of the Munich Crisis, the technology was slowly but surely entering the realm of the obsolete. To top it off, the politics of the situation during the Crisis disallowed the chance of combat. The chance for combat missions to be flown didn't occur until a few years later, in 1941, in the services of the Slovak State, fighting for the side that had previously been the aggressor against which they were to stand. Slovak pilots flying the B.534 on the Eastern Front gained good results, and these can be viewed upon as being the climax of the career of the type. A year later, it was apparent that replacement by more modern types was necessary, and inevitable. Bulgarian attempts to combat Ploesti raiding B-24 Liberators with the B.534 was a failure, and the aging planes were not able to climb to the Liberator's operational altitudes. In Slovakia, as in Bulgaria, the type was destined for second line relegation.

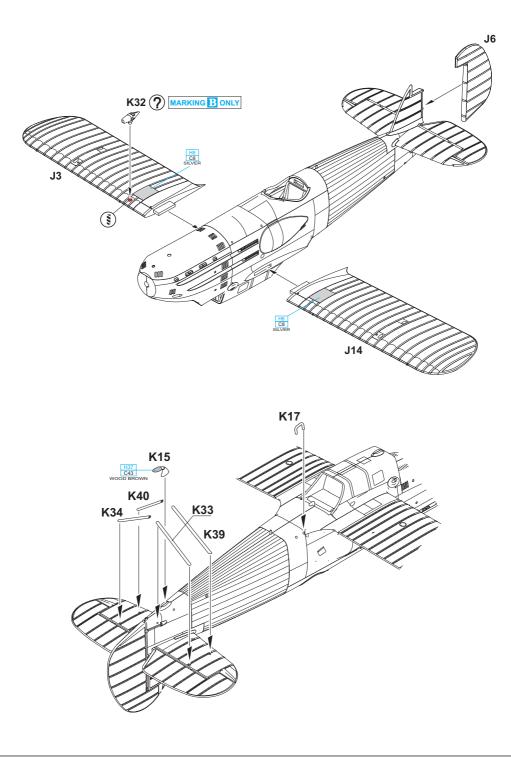
Some of the remaining B.534s were destined for final operations within the Bulgarian Air Force in operations over Hungary in 1944, and with Slovakia during the several weeks long uprising against Germany (late August early November 1944). During the Slovak National Uprising, the type was used primarily in the ground attack role, and one did manage a kill to become what is the last aerial victory of a biplane in history. It should be noted that the kill in question was that of a Hungarian transport. The fact remains that the Slovak National Uprising did end up being the swansong of the Avia B.534. Certainly, it can be said that due to the era and climate of the service of this aircraft, and the length of service it was able to achieve, the Avia B.534 has become one of the most profound symbols of Czechoslovak aviation history, a very positive symbol.

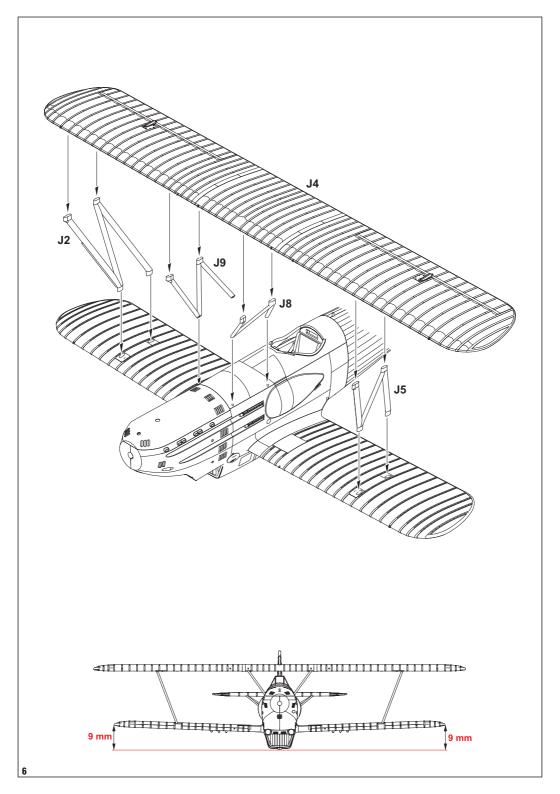
This kit presents the B.534 from its second production series. In December 1935, tests were conducted to assess the accuracy of the gun armament of the First Series (two machine guns in the fuselage sides and two in the wings) as compared to the Second Series (four machine guns in the fuselage sides). Besides being more accurate, the fuselage mounted only variant offered the advantage of the guns being accessible if they should jam. There was a total of 46 Second Series aircraft built (serialed 102-147), and they differed from the preceding series by having a larger fairing covering the paired vz.30 (Version 30) guns on each fuselage side. Besides being delivered to the Czechoslovak Air Force, two aircraft were built for Greece.

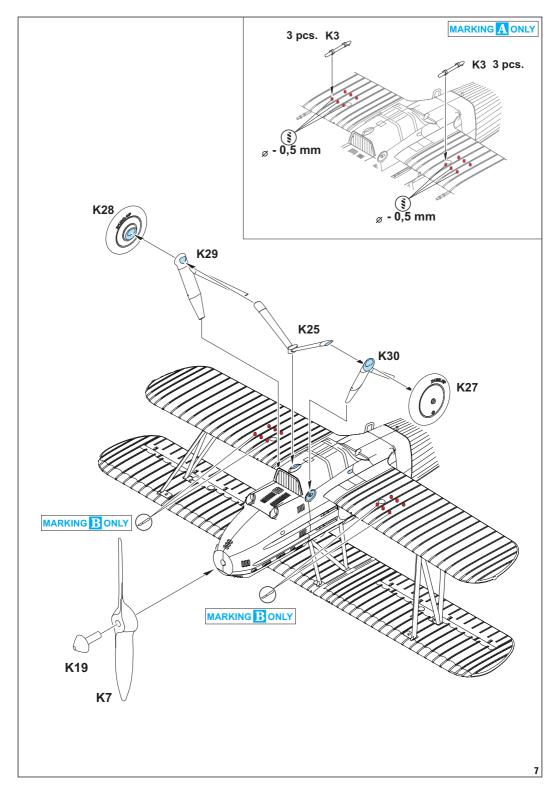
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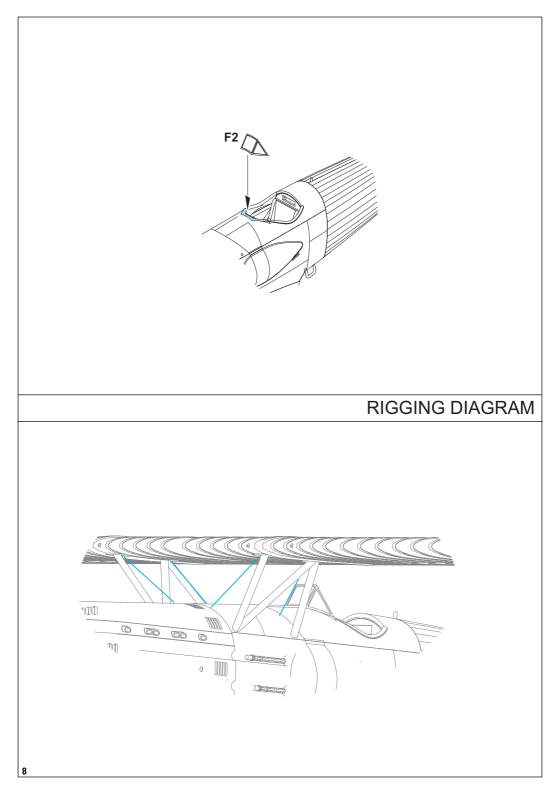




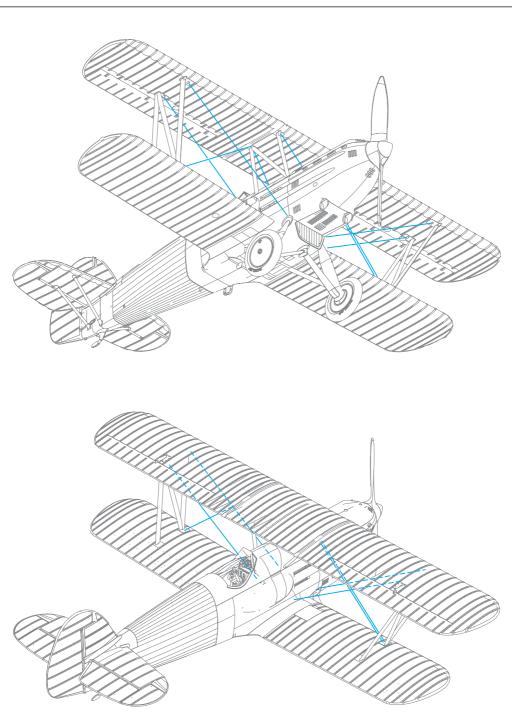






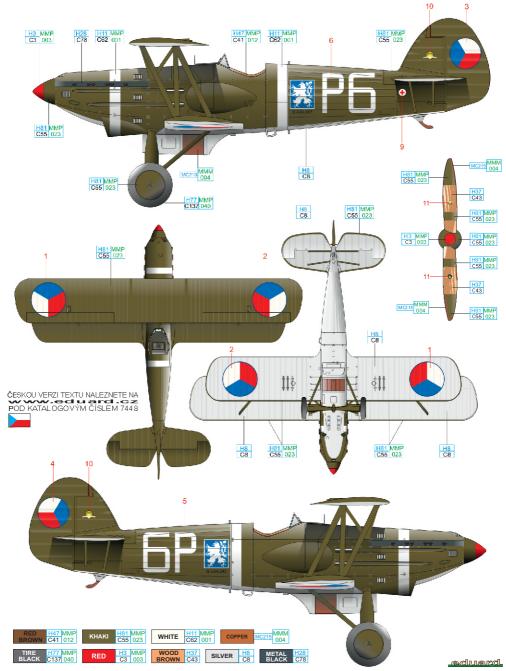


RIGGING DIAGRAM



A B.534.102, 31st Fighter Squadron, Air Regiment 1, Hradec Králové, May 1938

The CO of the 31st Flight, LP 1, Capt. Otakar Horný, crashed in this aircraft on Friday, May 13th, 1938. During landing, the aircraft went into an uncontrollable left turn, and so the pilot turned the engine off and the aircraft nosed into the ground. The Avia B.534 was typically painted on upper and side surfaces in khaki, and the lower surfaces were in a so-called 'aluminium bronze' colour. The letter 'P' and the white lion on a blue field identified this aircraft as being assigned to the 31st Fighter Squadron, LP 1 (Air Regiment 1).



B.534.113, 37th Fighter Squadron, Air Regiment 3, Kamenica nad Cirochou Airfield, September 1937

This aircraft was first flown in mid-May 1936, and after being accepted by the Air Force was assigned to the 3rd Air Regiment in Vajnory. Lance Corporal Holzl had to crash land this aircraft at the airfield in Kamenica nad Cirochou. After being repaired, the plane continued serving in the Air Regiment 3 and later flew with the Slovak Air Force. It was destroyed in an accident on August 24th, 1939, in which the pilot, Lance Corporal Bojňanský, was killed.

