



SCALE-MAIL

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NEXT MEETING

First meeting of the year and as usual your slack committee have not organised anything. Bring along anything you have planned to build this year, or started over the holiday period for the usual round the table.

Tuesday 17th January - 7.30pm
Leys Institute (upstairs)
20 Saint Marys Road, Ponsonby

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- Chairman
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- Treasurer
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THE CHAIRMAN'S BIT

Welcome to 2012 - another year of some great modelling to look forward to. Hope you all had a great Christmas, enjoyed the break, and didn't succumb too much to the seasonal fare, and consequently stack on heaps of weight as punishment!

I have to congratulate everyone on an excellent model turn out for the December meet! A most impressive array and display in our 'core' categories. Unfortunately, from such a fantastic line up there can only be one winner, and the awards to the winners of the 6 categories will be presented this club night, as well as to the winner of the Avenger group build.

One comment on the Club competitions to allay any fears - it is 'peer' judging, and really comes down to which model (or models), you liked best or that appealed the most out of all those present. It is not a reflection on the build quality of any model present.

Time to make one last 'plug' for the "Frogs for February" competition started by Peter Harrison and Dimitri Berdebes. Any Frog kit built in the last 12 months is eligible, and there is one month left to complete your entry.

Lastly, start putting your thinking caps on for 2012 activities:
What subject would you like to see for a group build?
What theme would you like to see for the December 2012 meet?
Any other activities you would like to see for 2012

All suggestions are welcome. Let the Club committee know at Club night, or you can email me your suggestions if you prefer. The Committee will meet shortly to discuss options for events and competitions, and start setting the agenda for 2012, so your input would be appreciated and valued!!

See you on Tuesday night, **Martin**

FROM THE EDITOR

First up a Happy New Year. Hope this one is a successful and prosperous one for everyone in whatever way you measure those two things.

Here we are into the last year of the existence of the planet Earth, if you are Mayan at least, but for some strange reason their calendar ends long AFTER their civilisation did. Figure that one out. I plan to be around partying on Decmber 31st at least, even if no one else is.

For posterity, and the record, I can attest to a gentleman's wager between myself, Mark Robson and Keith Bunyan to get some motivation to finish something. Mark and I are slated for at least 10 completions this year and Keith for 5. Failure to meet the target will result in some stiff penalties. My first is in this newsletter and the second and third are almost done. I know Mark is going to whine about the ease of the build and that it is only a 1/72 model, so I have upped the wager in that both he and I will have 3 different scales amongs the finished 10. Now you are all witness, so watch this space.

It is time to think about our theme and build the same subjects for the year. For the subject, here is a list of possible suggestions, so we can get club feedback to finalise the subject and build timeframe:

- Messerschmitt Bf109 and variants
- Focke Wulf Fw190
- Lockheed Martin F-16 Viper
- P-51 Mustang
- Mosquito
- Sherman

See you on Tuesday, **Craig**



BUILD

Hasegawa 1/72 Grumman Tarpon II By Mark Davies



Background

The TBF/TBM Avenger needs little introduction, and is surely one of Grumman's classic designs. After an inauspicious baptism of fire with the USN it went on to serve with several air arms in WW2 and numerous more post-war, including with its former enemy Japan. During its lengthy service it fulfilled all manner of roles from torpedo and level bomber, shallow dive-bomber, radar early warning, anti-submarine, all-weather strike, COD (Carrier On-board Delivery), reconnaissance, fire-bombing, and in my country at least they were used for aerial fertilizer spreading (we Kiwi's call it top-dressing). The Avenger soldiered on in military service until mid-1960 with the RCN when it was replaced by the Grumman Tracker. Probably no other service so appreciated American designed carrier-borne aircraft as did the Royal Navy in WW2, if for no other reason than they were generally far better than any of the British aircraft available! Certainly this was the case with an Avenger versus Barracuda for example.

Initially British Avengers were called Tarpon I (TBF-1) or Tarpon

II (TBM-1/TBM1-C), although in the case of later variants the US name of Avenger was retained. Tarpons were modified to suit the RN's different crew and other compatibility requirements. These included retention of the second crew position behind the pilot, fitting of British radios, gun and bomb-sights, seat harnesses, bulbous observation windows (with drift sights I think) in rear fuselage sides, folding antenna mast (to cope with lower British hangar decks) and no doubt other features as well. This work was carried out in the USA by a detachment from the Blackburn company in the UK.

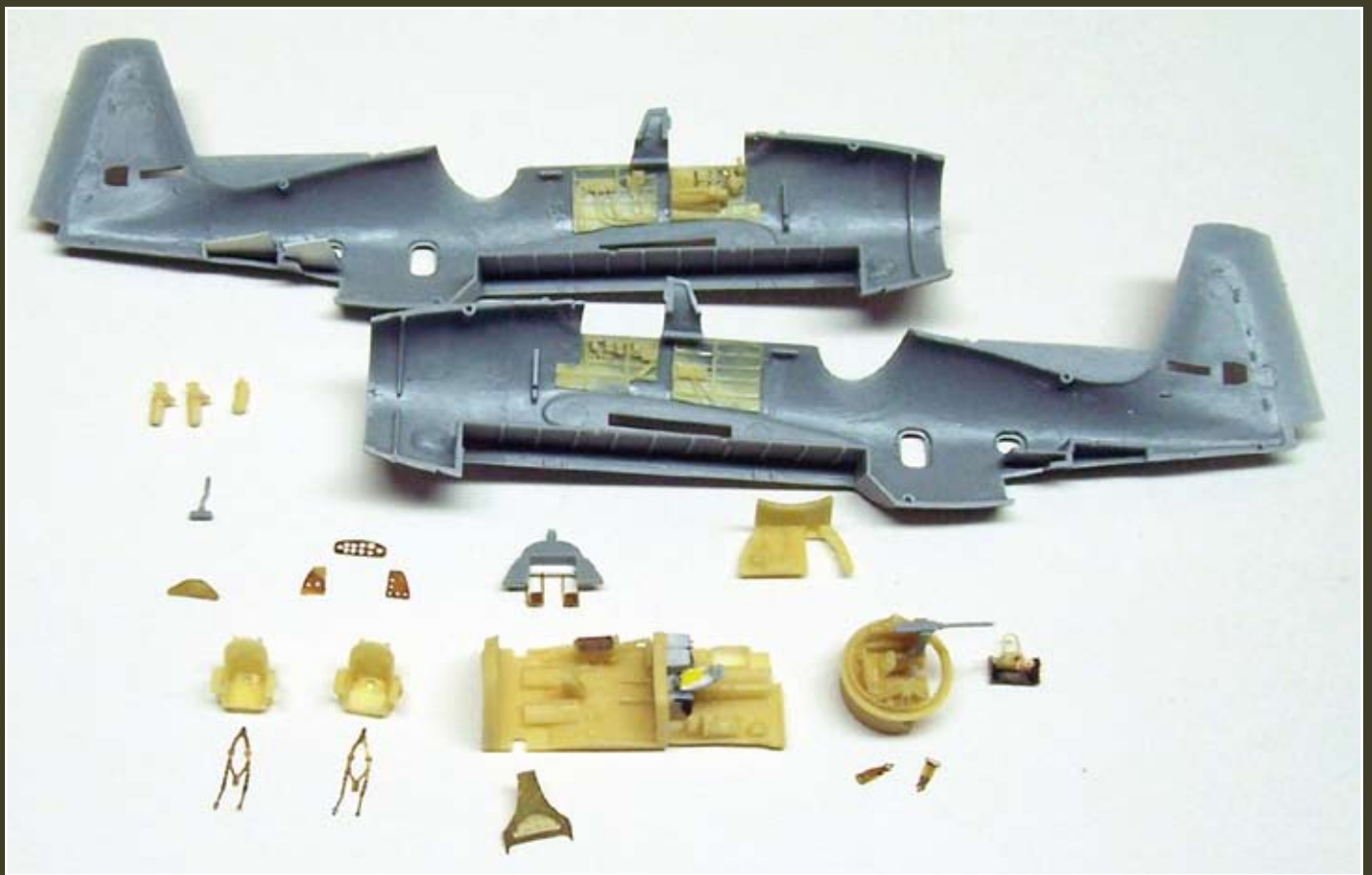
Tarpon Colours

The Avenger was manufactured by a number of companies and this has a bearing on the paint colours used. Grumman-built aircraft (Tarpon I's) had Bronze Green cockpit interiors, grey cowling interiors, and Dupont paints that matched British Slate Grey, Dark Sea Grey & Sky. Eastern-built aircraft (Tarpon II and Avenger III) had Interior Green cockpit interiors, Zinc-Chromate cowling interiors, and used another paint system, possibly ANA. Ignoring overall Sea Blue Avenger III's, it

seems that Tarpon II's were painted in colours that were very similar to their British equivalents, but possibly greyer in tone. I have also read that in fact the colours used were Olive Drab FS 34130 for Slate Grey (FS 34096), Sea Gray FS 36173 for Dark Sea Grey (FS 36118), and Sky FS 34504 for the British Sky (FS 36373). This information is largely based notes I made of past Hyperscale 'Plane Talking' posts by Paul Fontenroy & Bruce Archer. This said I can't find them now. I decided to run with the correct Tarpon II interior colours described above and just use Xtracolor's interpretations Slate Grey, Dark Sea Grey and Sky. My plan was for a weathered and faded beast, so I was not too hung up on small tonal differences with the external finish.

The Build

The build was prompted by the fact a group of my mates were building Avengers. I had the Hasegawa Tarpon II kit for about 12 years or so, and also a second-hand but unused Aires cockpit set for a TBF-1 (so two seats provided). The kit engine was Okay, but certainly had room for improvement. Quickboost came to the rescue with a good-value and simple one-piece resin engine



GRUMMAN TARPON

SCALE-MAIL



needing only scratch-built push-rods and ignition harness.

The Avenger/Tarpon had an interesting canopy and with a resin interior modeling it open seemed a good idea. Surprisingly I could find no vac-from canopy for the Hasegawa kit. I had some very nice Falcon canopies for the old Airfix kit and some quite reasonable Pavla canopies, although the kit they are intended for wasn't stated. A quick check showed the Pavla items weren't within a bull's roar of fitting the Hasegawa kit. In fact I almost think they might be the dreadful offering from Aoshima that purports to be 1/72-scale but is smaller). So Falcon for Airfix it had to be. The turret was a perfect fit, and the observer's canopy was close enough. However, the windscreen and pilot's sliding panels were too big and the wrong shape in the case of the windscreen where it fits the

fuselage. But I figured I could make these pieces fit, so I had a plan. I didn't have any aftermarket decals, but the kit came with Aeromaster decals which were probably better than Hasegawa decals from 12 or years ago, but also potentially stiff as a board and totally resistant to decal solvent if my prior experience of this brand was anything to go by.

I mentioned I had a plan, but failed to point out that I barely had a clue as to the layout of the observer's cockpit in the Tarpon. It seems that I'm not alone, as despite requests and searches definitive proof of the layout was not forthcoming. I had a walk-around of a warbird Tarpon, but it I suspected that the observer's cockpit seemed optimised more for joy-rides than authenticity. I figured I'd run with a largely TBF-1 layout, off-set seat and speculative radar scope (which I now feel is too large). The USN had the radar scope

"downstairs" in their Avengers, but I felt sure that in the FAA that the Observer would man the radar rather than the TAG (Telegraphist Air Gunner).

So typically I started with the cockpit. The Aires parts were a good fit although I did away with the rear decking before the turret. This, like the kit part, had a curved edge to surround the turret and was smooth on its upper side. Instead I scratch-built some decking with an angled structure around the turret with ribs on its upper surface based on observation of photos. PE British harnesses were added. They may not be the right style, but they are clearly not US-style ones which is what I wanted avoid.

The Aires resin turret was a solid "bucket" for the gunner to sit in, so I ground away all the un-required resin so that just the seat was

suspended as it should be and a see-through effect to the ventral gun would theoretically be possible. A quick note on ventral guns, some but not all Tarpon II's had their gun replaced with an F.24 camera, but I like guns so I replaced the kit blob with a Browning .30 from the spares box. To finish the turret I made a small gun control handle, and oxygen hose and some gun solenoid wiring to dress things up a bit, and in this case kept the US-style lap-belts. Before I could close the fuselage halves I needed to finish the engine. I've found two handy ways to do push-rods on 1/72-scale radials. One is to drill through the top of the rocker housing and insert the rods down to the crankcase, glue and trim off at the rocker. In this case it was easier to drill the crankcase, allowing a slightly over-length rod to be inserted and moved up to the rocker for final fixing. Then it was time for some lead wire to make the ignition harness, some paint and a few licks of washes. I used Mr. Colour Aluminum lacquer for the cylinders, and Gunze Engine Gray and black for the gear housing and pushrods

respectively. For engines I quite like to make a wash using acrylic paints and Future. It flows nicely and leaves and shiny oily look.

So almost time for the fuselage to be closed, just the fuselage windows and the Tarpon's bulged observation ports needed to go in. The bulged windows are supplied mounted on an oval surround that conforms to the normal Avenger-pattern side windows. As is so often the case, the clear parts didn't fit perfectly, leaving some filling to be done to hide the kit's Avenger-optimised origins. Once this was done I closed up the fuselage and lined the tail-wheel bay with 5-thou plasticard to hide a join line. I found that the cowling ring was a less than perfect match to the fuselage, and that filler and some filing was needed in this area. Then I dry-fitted the wings and tail, requested permission to make aeroplane noises, and glide-bombed my modeling bench. This is an essential phase of any model-plane build as it provides motivation to push on with annoyingly fiddly jobs

like scratch-building clear wingtip lights.

With wing-halves joined and the wing-tip lights installed I decided to turn my attention to plumbing the wheel wells. Avenger walk-arounds indicated the need for two U-shaped hydraulic lines in the wheel well, plus brake-lines and various electrical cables to undercarriage solenoids. I knew that the wheel wells would be the same as the underside colour (Sky or its Eastern equivalent), but was less sure about the undercarriage legs and wheel colour. Initially I opted for Sky, maybe because everything would be easier to plumb if the legs were fixed to the wings. So this is what I did. But I was uncomfortable about this decision, so I made a request for information on "Plane Talking" which turned up a helpful reply from someone who actually got to handle an old Tarpon U/C leg, and he recalled it was white. After much searching I found a colour photo of a Tarpon wearing Slate Grey, Dark Sea Grey and Sky with distinctly white legs and wheels - So I then had to brush pint the legs which by





this stage were fully plumbed and painted Sky. I also added tie-down rings to the undercarriage legs and what I assumed to be catapult hooks that fix to the main legs and protrude through holes in the main U/C doors. One nice thing about this kit is the ability to paint it without the wings on until the very end. So I returned to the fuselage and fitted the tailplanes. I then realised that the kit had a solid panel above the ventral gun rather than some more open framing. So I did a bit of hacking, improved overall accuracy and wasted about an hour as nothing can be seen!

Painting & Weathering

Time then for paint, and I'll confess here and now that I'm not a pre-shader. My intellectual reason (in other words excuse) for this position is that weathering is a post rather than pre-paint application process, and pre-shaded models, whilst looking quite sexy, often seem too uniform to be realistic to me. My practical reason (the truth)

is that I like a good gloss finish from my Xtracolour and so I need good coverage (I'm the same with whatever paint I'm using), and this tends to eliminate any pre-shading. As I mentioned, I chose to stick with British paint shades even though this model represented an Eastern-built airframe. I used blue-tac sausages for most masking, and Tamiya tape where hard lines were appropriate. The ventral gunner's windows were masked with adhesive metal foil, the bulged windows with tape and PVA glue, and the oval windows with punched tape. My vac-from canopies were to be framed with painted decal strips, so no masking worries there.

Once the paint was dry I could decal. As I had expected, the Aeromaster decals supplied with the kit were stiff as a board. I had planned to use the kit option with Pacific theatre blue and white roundels inside US-style bars, I soon found it was impossible to make a roundel and bars decal conform to the rear fuselage because they were so inflexible (including

trying to float them into place on a puddle of Future). So I made a quick decision to run with the other kit decals using conventional British roundels. Being from the same sheet these were of course just as stiff, but being smaller I could manage to get them into place. Once dry I found that they would not react to Microsol. I considered diluting some Acetic Acid Glacial (quite acidic and flammable) with water to make my own killer-brew of decal solvent, as I have softened Aeromaster decals this way before. However if the brew is too strong it dissolves the decal ink and sometimes even the decal! On this occasion I opted to just run my little fingernail through the decals where the panel lines were. This done I brushed on a coat of Future as weathering-prep.

For weathering I did basic blacky-brown oil-paint sludge wash on the glossy surface using artist's turpentine. I don't try to achieve a totally uniform fill of the panel lines as rarely do real planes seem to be uniform in their staining. I did a few

oily black stains around the cowl and trailing on the underside. Then I hit everything with matt household polyurethane varnish because I like doing my final weathering on a matt surface because stains key to it far better than they do to a gloss finish. In some places I like to run a soft graphite pencil into panel lines, and I also grind graphite to mix with artist's turps to make stains. I find you can build up the density and wash the mix around. I like it for fuel stains and so on. I also used some more oil-paint washes, Gunze Acrylic "Oil" mixed with Future to thin. I also like to dry-brush light grey in places to highlight and also represent wear on the wing walkways. I sponged on some brown and black oil paint around the wing roots and the fuel fillers to simulate that mixture of dirt and gasoline that gets trodden in to these areas by deck-crew. Ground chalk pastel in colours slightly lighter than the camouflage colours was dusted onto the applicable surface areas to simulate fading and general wear. Some dirt was applied around the gun service hatches, but not

the ammo hatches as these could be serviced from the deck using a special ladder when the wings were folded, meaning crew did not need to crawl around in this area. My prop was painted so that the rear of the blades faded from black to metal (I got this idea from a mate, Andy Hosking, who does this with his props). I also did some chipping of the blades, faded the paint with pastel and made sure I had some irregular hydraulic leaks running down the blades. The aerial mast was painted using an oil paint brown over acrylic sand-colour to simulate wood.

Vac-form Canopies

The canopies were a bit of a challenge. My first attempt at the turret was difficult because I cut out the gun slot just like the kit part. This was tricky because the acetate is very thin as you approach the top of the turret dome, and is inclined to collapse beneath the pressure of even a new scalpel blade (essential

for vac-form canopies). I then realised from photos that there was a sliding strip within the slot, and all that was needed was a hole for the gun - Doh! Fortunately I had a second set of the required falcon canopies to hand.

Cutting the observer's door out just needed care. I do a lot of my straight cutting of canopies using a Stanley knife blade and a hammer. I line the blade up on the canopy, which in turn is placed on a cutting mat, and give it one fairly hard swift hit. The result is a usually nice precise cut. Otherwise I cut using repeated gentle scores of a brand new scalpel blade, occasionally I will use nail-cutters or good quality side-cutters, and more rarely scissors. I use files, nail-boards and wet & dry paper for final adjustments with frequent checking. For the pilot's sliding panels I used my Stanley blade and hammer to lop about 1.2mm off its width by cutting inside the outer frames on both sides. I also removed the top centre section as this would be replaced with a scratch-built rail.



The windscreen was frankly a pain to make fit, so different must the Airfix kit be from Hasegawa's. It took two attempts and is less than perfect. I considered chopping off the Hasegawa windscreen, but it would have looked too thick. The other tricky bit was cutting some clear styrene to make the clear panel that sits behind the observer sealing off the open area of the canopy. Again less than perfection was the result.

I figured the canopies as this provided a better surface for decal strip to adhere to and to protect from super-glue fumes. Then I

set about cutting strips of painted decal film and applying it. The turret was a bit of challenge with its round panes; but a circle cutter son too care of this. For some reason Falcon's turret does not have the two small gun-service panels on the gun's side of the turret (I have seen early Avengers with just one hatch, and the prototype with none). The best

way to have done this would be to print the required shape onto decal paper, but I didn't have any suitable for my ink-jet. So instead I got a scribing template and cut the tiny shapes from decal film with a scalpel. Not perfect but good enough for me. The curved frames on the windscreen were done using a circle-cutter again. I lock in dried decal strip with Future, if the framing gets too shiny I brush on matt varnish, but remember canopies were kept clean and polished so more sheen on the framing is okay in my view.

Sometimes I get great results with decal strips framing on vac-form canopies, but this wasn't one of them. Never mind, I wanted to move on and had had enough. The canopies were fixed in place with superglue and I just remembered to pop in a Quickboost gun-sight before fixing the windscreen. I won't bore you with how many goes it took to get the pilot's sliding panels to stay in place.....

With the canopies in place all that was left to do was to add the antenna mast and stretched-sprue wire. Not



that it matters, but I finished the model on December 31st, giving me a sense of a clean modeling-start for 2012 (if I ignore 30+ unfinished projects!).

Conclusion

Hasegawa's Avenger/Tarpon kit remains clearly the best in 1/72-scale, which is not surprising given the age of its Airfix, Frog and Academy rivals (Academy may not be as old as the first two, but

it's much like and engraved detail version of Frog's Tarpon). I don't feel I should dignify Aoshima's effort by including it in the same sentence as the other three.

If I'd left well alone, stuck with Hasegawa's canopies and maybe just added sets-belts to the kit interior I think I would have ended up with a technically better (read: more IPMS-competitive result). But it may have been less interesting to glance at. With me it's a straightforward case of the more things I do the more there are things to go wrong.

Given that I start to get fed up with things and want to begin another build I'm disinclined to strip all of the canopy framing off, or whatever, and start again. If it's good enough for a country job as we would say when I lived rurally, it's good enough for me.

I enjoyed this project most of the time, but the detail and scratch-building parts took way too long. I completely dragged me away from my Martin

Marlin build when I thought it would be but a brief distraction. This said I think I shall get another Hasegawa Avenger and build it basically out of the box in an Atlantic scheme like my mate Dimitri the Hairy Greek did, as his looks really smart. Moreover he could have built three or four in the time I took to finish mine. Maybe there's a benefit in doing a build like this once in awhile just to make you realise that often all you notice behind the display cabinet glass is a nice paint job!

SM

GRUMMAN TARPON

BUILD

Tamiya 1/72 Spitfire IIa By Craig Sargent



Many, many years ago, as a pre-teen, I built the old Revell 1/72 Spitfire out of the box and remember painting it with some left over oil paints from one of those paint-by-numbers sets my grandparents thought I might actually like instead of a model. There are a number of those old kits which I have fond memories of building, for one reason or another, but given the age and level of accuracy of the old Revell kits, they are not really kits I would like to build again any time soon.

This is actually the second of my "nostalgia builds", with the first being the Special Hobby build of the 1/72 Macchi C.200 in the colours of the old Revell kit a few years ago. Finding a base kit of the Spitfire I to work with was not hard, as Tamiya had the only current tooling of the Mk.I at the time. While the Tamiya kit has some shape issues, there was nothing I could not live with for this build, so did not "correct" the kit in

any way. There was also not much needed to change a Mk.I to a Mk.IIa.

The cockpit was built as per instructions and then some Eduard pre-coloured RAF seatbelts and a piece of clear acetate for the



gunsight reflector added. The rest of the model went together very quickly after that, following the instructions, and the canopy was masked ready for painting.

With major assembly completed, the only things remaining were to take care of the changes necessary for a Mk.IIa. In 1/72, this meant the Coffman Starter bulge - a small teardrop shaped bulge over the Coffman Starter on the forward

starboard side of the engine cowling, and a Rotol propellor and spinner. The bulge was taken care of by using one that was not needed from a Hasegawa Spitfire IX. The prop was a little harder.

Dave Stewart was kind enough to give me a resin one from somewhere in his spares, but after wrestling with it for some time, decided it was going to look out of place on the finished model. It was around this time that

3D-Kits came out with their Spitfire II conversion set. I ordered the set direct from www.3d-kits.co.uk, and the set arrived in under a fortnight. From the 3D-Kits website: "Rotol propeller units (or airscrews to use the WWII term) were fitted



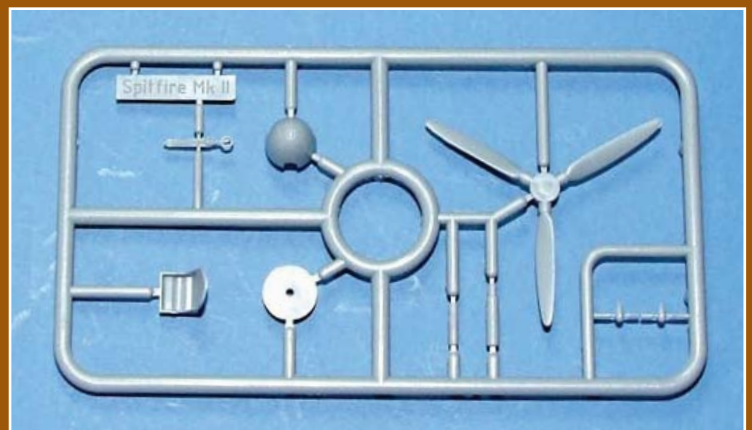
SPITFIRE

to some Mk.I Spitfires and most Mk.II's. With their rounded spinners and broad propellers they gave a distinctive powerful look to the Spitfire. Up until now these types have rarely been seen in kit form, but modellers now have the opportunity to convert any mainstream 1/72 Spitfire Mk.I or Mk.V kit to a Rotol

Mk.I or Mk.II Spitfire with our conversion kit.

The kit has parts for the spinner, propeller and cofman starter bulge, together with an early mark control column and seat. Included are adaptors for Airfix and Tamiya kits."

As the cockpit was closed, and I had already taken care of the engine bulge, the prop was the only real item of interest from the set. Beautifully moulded in 4 parts (blades, spinner, backing plate, prop shaft), the propeller assembled quickly and easily, but was left off until after final painting.



The model was painted with Gunze acrylics, starting with the Sky undersides, which also included the prop spinner and fuselage stripe. The undersides and stripe were then masked and the Dark Earth airbrushed on. Once that was dry, paper masks were used to give a hard edge demarcation and the Dark Green was airbrushed on. The whole model was sealed with Tamiya Gloss acrylic before decals were applied.

As I wanted to replicate the Revell markings, I needed to make sure they were accurate. I managed to find a very good picture of P7665 and some history of the aircraft. The plane was flown by Pilot Officer Hill, who was shot down in this aircraft over St Omer and later ended up in Colditz after numerous escape attempts from various Luftstlag camps. The aircraft wore "East India Squadron"

presentation banners, so these and the aircraft serial were printed on my ALPS and then applied, along with the kit stencils, roundels and



fin flash. The squadron codes came from a ModelDecal set and were an almost perfect match for the Gunze Sky paint.

The wheels were painted and glued on, a new aerial mast was built (I managed to snap off and lose the kit one during painting), a new spine nav light made from some sprue and all of the lights on the aircraft painted. The exhaust was masked and painted several shades of burnt metal, and the whole aircraft given a wash of oil paint and turps. Testors matt varnish sealed all the layers, and some minor paint chips and oil, gun and exhaust stains were added to complete the build.

A very pleasing build, and another of the "nostalgia builds" out of the way. Still in that pile are the PZL P:11C, Hawk 75 and Morane Saulnier N. Coming soon to a build article near you.

SM



SPITFIRE



ON THE TABLE



Pete's 1/350 HMS Milne



Robin's 1/350 Type VIIC U-Boat



Robin's 1/35 Flak and SAS Jeep



The Lads' 1/72 North Africa diorama



Robin's 1/35 Afrika Korps Tiger



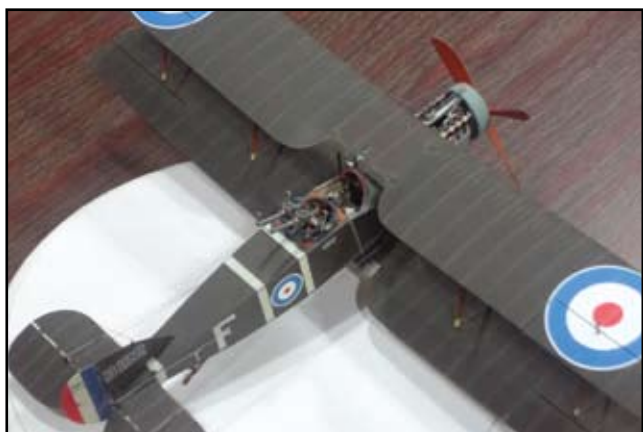
Graeme's 1/35 Sherman III



John's 1/35 M7 Priest



1/35 Meng Toyota Technical



Wingnut Wings 1/32 Bristol Fighter by Andy Hosking



1/72 Hinds and SeaKings and 1/48 Autogyro by Henry Ludlam





More 1/72 Spitfires



John's 1/32 Fieseler Storch



Rob's 1/48 Hurricane



1/72 Spitfire



Andy's 1/48 P-47D Thunderbolt



Al's 1/72 Wellington II



Rob's 1/48 P-39 Aircobra





Rob's 1/48 Martlet



1/48 Tempest



Barry's 1/48 F4U-1D Corsair



Rob's 1/48 Stuka



Jon's 1/48 EF-111A Raven



Rob's 1/48 Saab Draken



Rob's 1/48 F-86D Sabre Dog



Graeme's 1/32 F-4J Phantom

SIGN OFF



EA-18G Growler

by Koike Shigeo

Image from boxtop of new Hasegawa 1/72 kitset

In-progress sample will be on the table on Tuesday night.



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