



# SCALE MAIL

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## NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 17th July 2018

Leys Institute (upstairs)

20 Saint Marys Road

Ponsonby

## COMMITTEE

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## From the Editor




For those of you with English heritage, commiserations, for those with Croatian roots - dobro napravljeno.

Winter is well and truly upon us and that provides plenty of indoor time for our favorite hobby, and a bit of modelling as well. At this month's meeting we get down and dirty with a workshop on weathering techniques which is a chance to pick up a tip or two.

For those of you who have paid your subs, well done. For the rest of you, please jump on your computers or smart phones and make that payment. Account details are given on the next page and don't forget to put our name in the reference box so we know who you are.

## 2018 Nationals

Here is a reminder that this year's nationals are happening little more than a stone's throw from Auckland. I know that a number of our members are already planning make the trip down to the Waikato but there will be room for more. You still have a few months to finish a project or two so now is the time to start getting serious. I can thoroughly recommend the weekend having attended last year's event and enjoying not only the modelling but the whole Armistice event of which the IPMS show is a just a part



Waikato Scale Model Club  
2018  
**IPMS** Nationals  
Model Competitions  
In Association with Armistice in Cambridge  
10th and 11th of November 2018  
Mighty River Domain, Karapiro Dam, Maungatautari Road, Cambridge

# BULLETIN BOARD

**NEW MEMBERS AND SUBS \*\*\*\*\* 2018/19 NOW DUE \*\*\*\*\***

Subs for 2018/19 now DUE -see below for club account details or see the club secretary

Membership Type	Description	Cost
Full	Living in the Auckland Metropolitan Area	NZ\$45
Out Of Town	Living 75km or more from central Auckland	NZ\$30
Junior	Same rights as full membership for those under 16	NZ\$25

IPMS BANK ACCOUNT NUMBER

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so we know who has paid!*

## EVENTS

### CLUB NIGHT EVENTS

**IPMS Auckland Meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every Month at the Leys Institute (upstairs), 20 Saint Marys Road, Ponsonby**

- **17 July** This month we have a workshop on weathering techniques

### MODELLING EVENTS

Nothing new to report the month!



# BULLETIN BOARD

## CLUB SUPPORT

The following retailers have kindly agreed to offer IPMS Auckland club members a discount on their purchases upon presentation of their current IPMS Auckland Membership card.

The discount only applies on selected product lines and remains at the discretion of the retailer.



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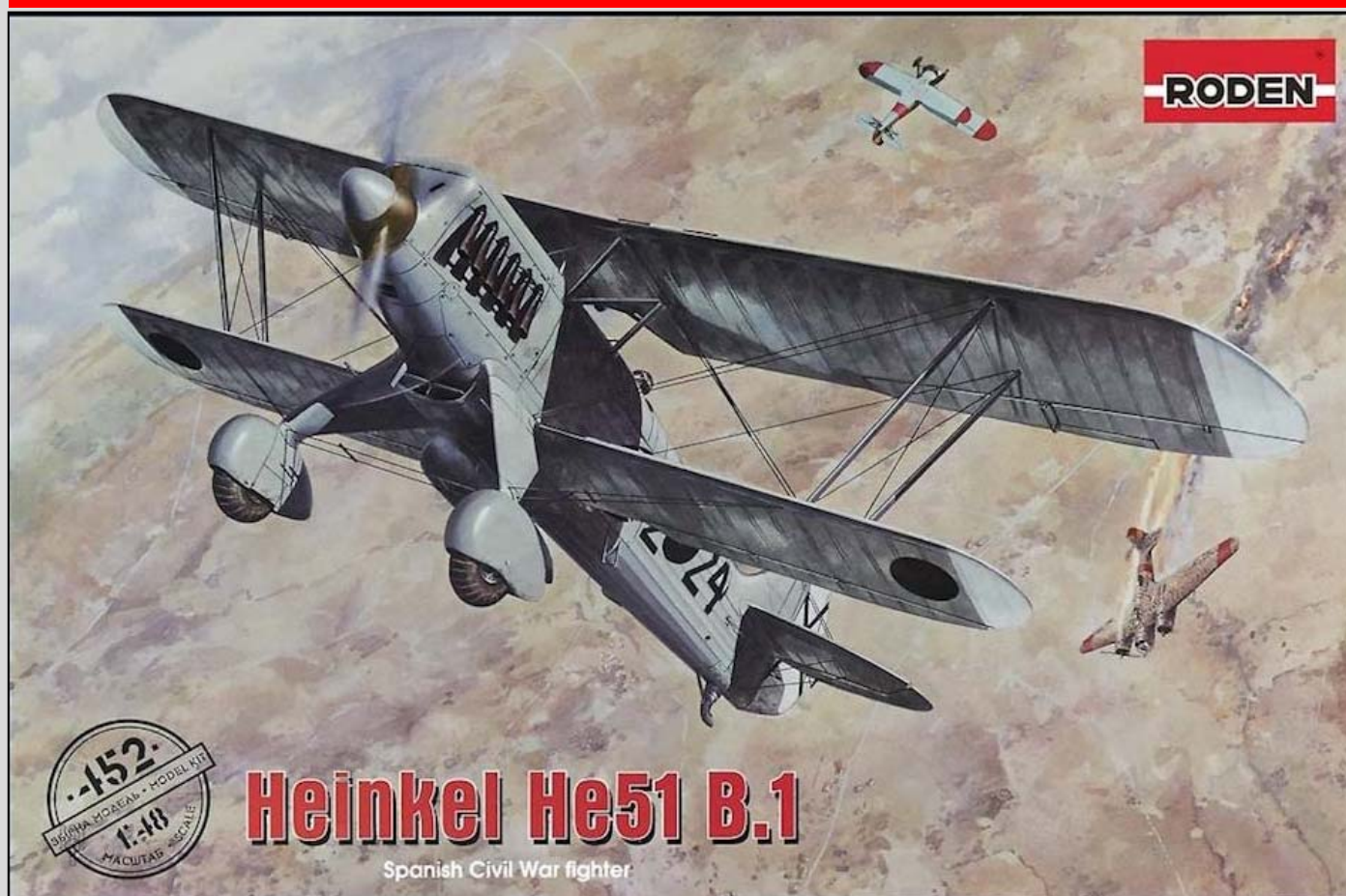
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# Roden 1/48 Heinkel He 51B-1 “Spanish Civil War Fighter”

By Brett Peacock



In Box Kit Review: Kit #452. 83 Grey parts on 5 sprues, 2 clear parts in 1 clear sprue. No PE or resin.

2 Markings, both Spanish Civil War era. A is all over grey and B is camouflaged

- A: 2o24 4.J/88, Legion Condor, Tablada, Spain. Flown by Oberleutnant Herwig Kueppel, Dec, 1936
- B: 2o98 3.J/88 Legion Condor, Location not specified, Flown by Leutnant Kurt Struempell, Feb 1938

Designed as the replacement for the Heinkel He 49, the first He 51 appeared in the summer of 1933. Like its predecessor it was a sturdy, streamlined design (for a Biplane!) but the initial prototypes were seriously underpowered, to the extent that the Air Ministry (ReichsLuftsMinisterium) rejected it out of hand, despite being impressed by its stable, gentle handling characteristics and ease of flying.

Heinkel immediately replaced the engine with an up-rated engine and the RLM, Impressed by its power gain and sleek looks ordered it into serial production in 1935, intending to have it supplement, then replace the Arado Ar 65 in Luftwaffe Service. (It never did – Both were consigned to 2nd line duties by the arrival of the far superior monoplane Messerschmitt Bf 109, beginning in late 1936.) The Heinkel was the first fighter Aircraft sent to aid the Nationalists in Spain on the outbreak of that country's Civil War in early 1936.

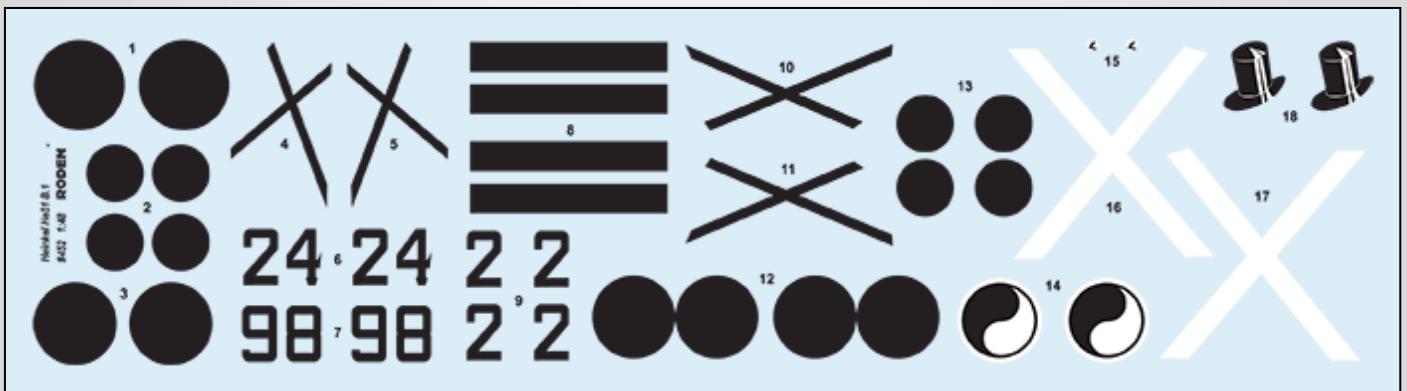
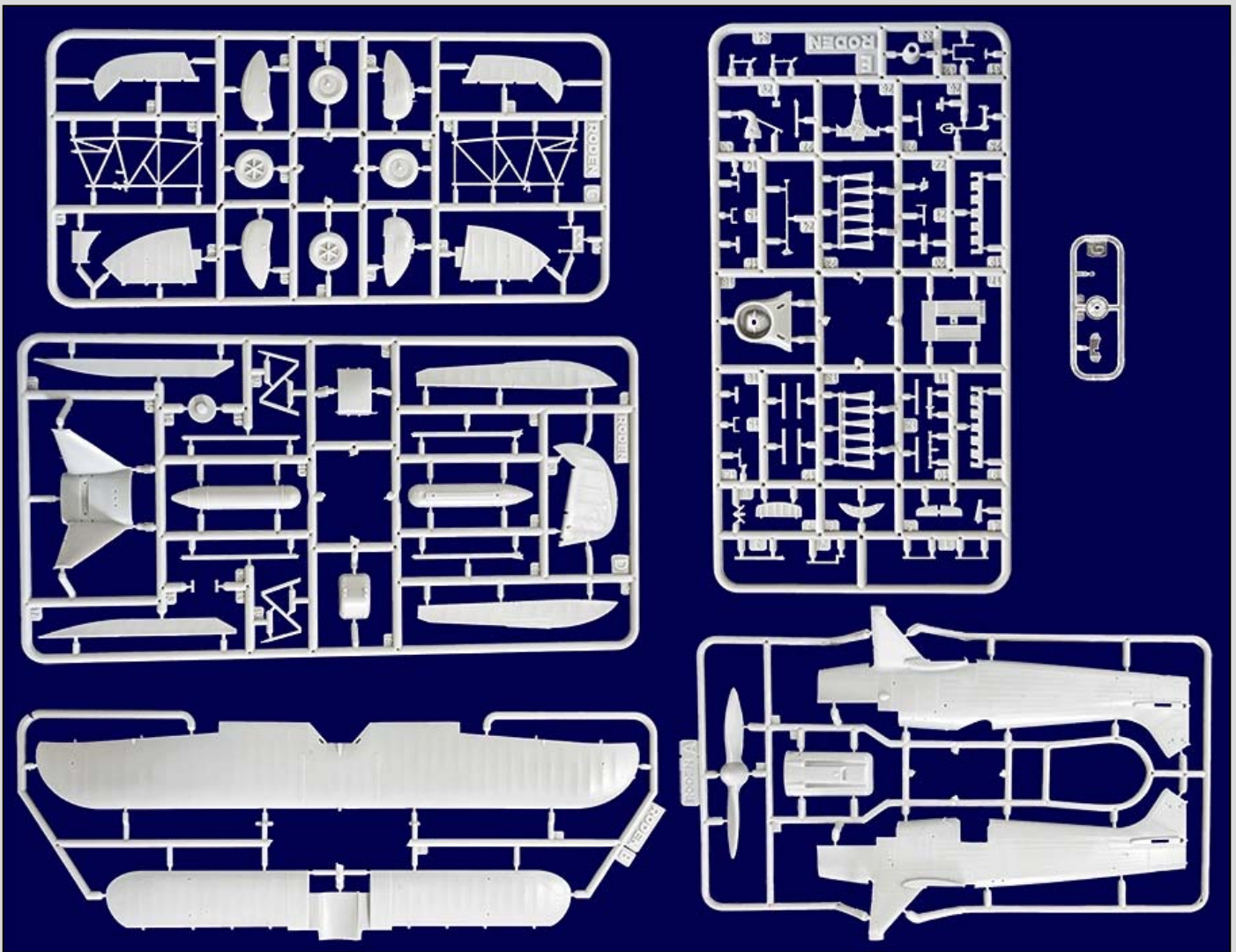
But, in Spain, those stable, easy to fly aircraft were quickly exposed to the realities and problems of a modern Air war. The first problem was that it was outgunned – the twin 7.9mm MGs were going up against aircraft armed with better (in some cases cannon) and more machine guns. The stability meant that its manoeuvrability was compromised and the He 51 was not only outclassed by the new Russian monoplane Polikarpov I-16s supplied to the Republican side, but it was also handily outclassed by the BIPLANE Polikarpov I-15 and 153s, which were also faster than the Heinkel, as was the Tupolev SB2 Bomber – its' primary target. Thus losses were heavy, and the Heinkel was rapidly re-tasked to ground attack, and needing fighter escorts... hence the deployment of the Very early, BRAND NEW Bf109s to Spain.

The Spanish had largely replaced the Heinkel by 1943 but, in frontline unit Luftwaffe service the He 51B soldiered on until very late 1939. These units, many being re-named/re-numbered to become some of the most famous Jagdgeschwadern, decorated them in some of the most colourful and striking manner, using red, brown, green and blue stripes, flashes Number etc. However, the RLM, meanwhile was gradually replacing the He 51B in frontline and advance trainer units by the Bf 109, and transferring them to primary Single seat trainer units for pilot candidate use, where they remained active as late as 1942. Some actually survived to be logged on captured Luftwaffe bases in 1945.

I already have a couple of the re-tooled Classic Airframes version of the Heinkel 51B, as well as 1 original tooling of the He 51C Floatplane. So I can compare this directly with those, bearing in mind that the original CA tooling of the He51 was "lacking" in many ways, mostly due to its age and provenance. (Note: Roden also have released a Floatplane version).....



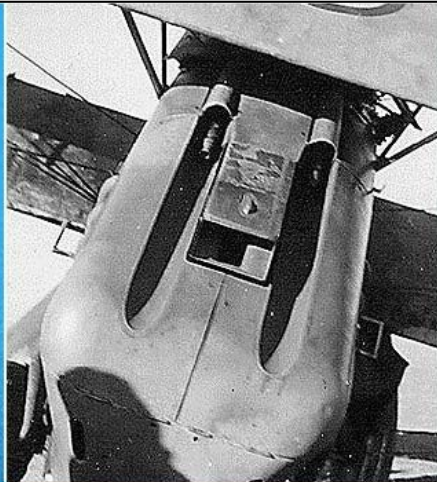
And so to the Kit itself. It comes in a standard top opening box of medium size for 1/48 with the sprues bagged in pairs within. The decal sheet is also bagged but the instructions are loose in the box. As stated in the header there are 5 sprues of a firm pale grey plastic, not unlike the grey in the box art. (However, it seems likely that the original grey schemes were all over RLM02 Grey-green, with the option B camouflage in RLM62 Green. – Per Classic Books Jagdwaffe Vol 1 Pt2: Spanish Civil War by Mombeek, Smith & Creek) A small clear sprue provides a windscreen and a clear landing light cover.



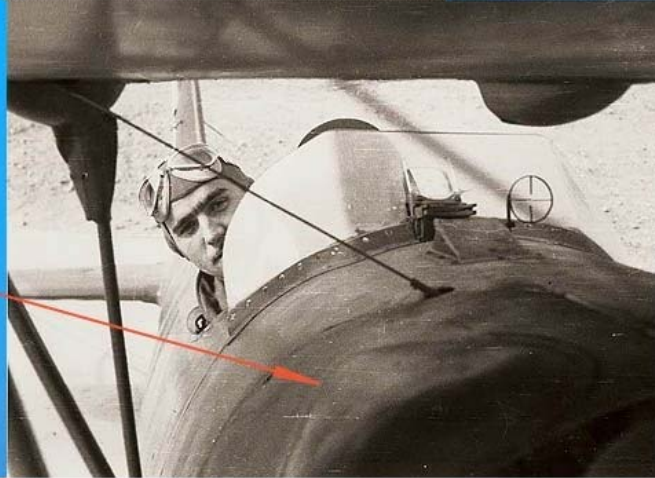
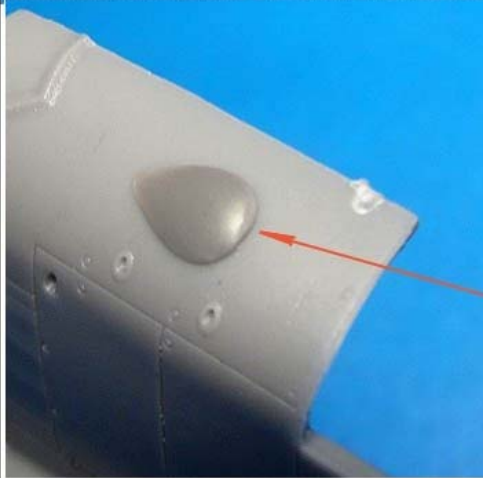
Surface detailing is very nice with subtle fabric sagging quite well represents, although it still appears a little bit “over-scale”. Meal panels are nicely engraved and some larger rivets are present, along with fasteners. All control surfaces are separate, and there is a beautiful framing box to hold the cockpit running boards and seat, along with a nice instrument panel and stick. All struts for the wings are single pieces, which will make assembly “tricky”, especially as no rigging diagram is given, and no reference points molded in. (Roden’s 1/48 Gloster Gladiator was similar in this respect.) Note that the lower wing is one piece with the undercarriage fairing included to match the upper fairings on the Fuselage halves. All wings, upper and lower are provided as single moldings. The decal sheet is clearly printed with just 2 colours – Black and White. The colours look opaque but, as with many Russian/Ukrainian Kits, the proof is in the application. There are 2 known issues with this kit: One is the upper engine deck, which is simplified and the main intake is - fictional, basically The other issue is the wheels, which are equally fictional. Fortunately Vector resins do a set for the kit... Which I will be looking at buying.



**VECTOR**



**RODEN**



**RODEN**



**VECTOR**

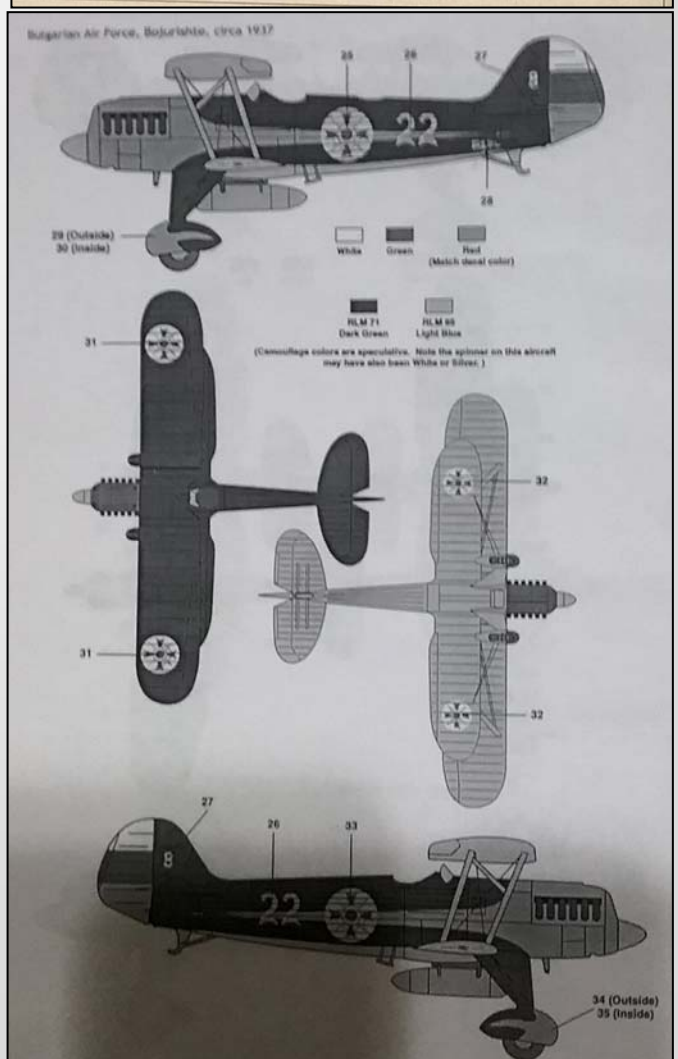
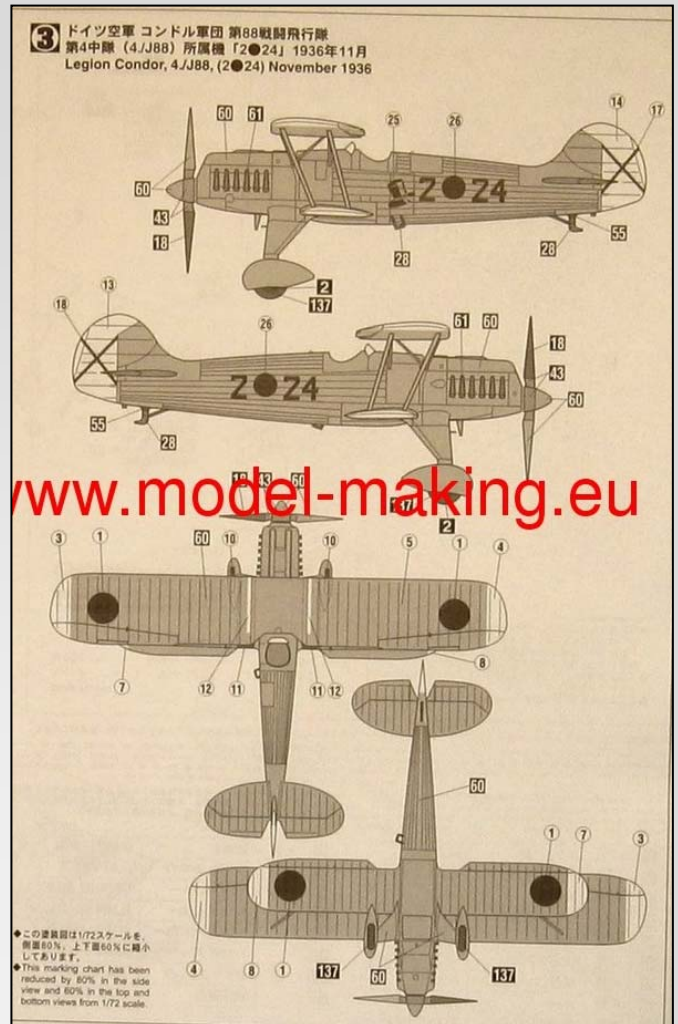


The instruction sheet is an 8 page, unstapled booklet format, with clear line drawings and a good parts map. Colours are Called out at each stage, using a Letter key, which helpfully gives the RLM paint number where appropriate. The last two pages are monotone colour guide. (Image from 1/72 Hasegawa He 51 kit – Roden's similar, but no images found on Google!!)

A few years ago, just after Classic Airframes closed up, Sprue Brothers were selling off a number of CA kits and Decal sheets for this kit on special. I bought 3 kits and about 4 decal sheets. They had one sheet dedicated to the Spanish Civil War, 2 sheets for several Luftwaffe and 1 foreign machine. and 1 sheet of Foreign users including Hungary & Rumania. The most eye catching machine was a Bulgarian one – RLM 71 green over 65 Underside Blue with a red cowling and fuselage flash, a tricolour Rudder and Bulgarian Royal Escutcheon Roundels. The spats also had red trim. I think I shall endeavour to make that scheme with this kit... if I can find a better rigging reference!

And, of course there are all those very colourful Luftwaffe machines to choose from as well.

To Conclude: Despite one or two minor flaws this Roden kit of the Heinkel He 51-B1 is a good kit of an overlooked, and somewhat important aircraft type, despite it being labelled as a relative failure, it did serve and serve well at a time when the nascent Luftwaffe was in need of a reliable frontline fighter. It will not look out of place in any Spanish Civil War or Luftwaffe collection, indeed, it may well add to the kit coverage you have of this pre-war era. If you can find one, I recommend this kit.





# MiniArt Tiran 4 Late Type

By Andrew Birkbeck



## Background

The most important Soviet tank design of the early post WW2 period was the T-54/T-55 series of tanks, and these tanks were exported in large numbers to Soviet client states including Syria and Egypt. The 1967 and 1973 Arab/Israeli wars were disastrous for the combined Arab armies, and Israeli forces captured hundreds of intact examples of the T-54/55 tanks. Not wishing to look a gift horse in the mouth, the Israeli military developed a procurement program designed to put these captured tanks back into Israeli service. Over the years the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) fielded the Tiran 1, 2, 4 and 5. The Tiran 1 was an unmodified T-54, and the Tiran 2 was an unmodified T-55. The Tiran 4 was a modified T-54 with new jerry can and stowage boxes added to the exterior of the vehicle, as well as a change to the loader's hatch, and the addition of turret mounted exterior machineguns. The Tiran 5 was the same modification program as the Tiran 4, but for the T-55 tank. As the IDF introduced more modern tanks into its arsenal, some "spare" Tirans found their way into the hands of Israel's local allies, such as the "South Lebanese Army" based as the name implies, in southern Lebanon.

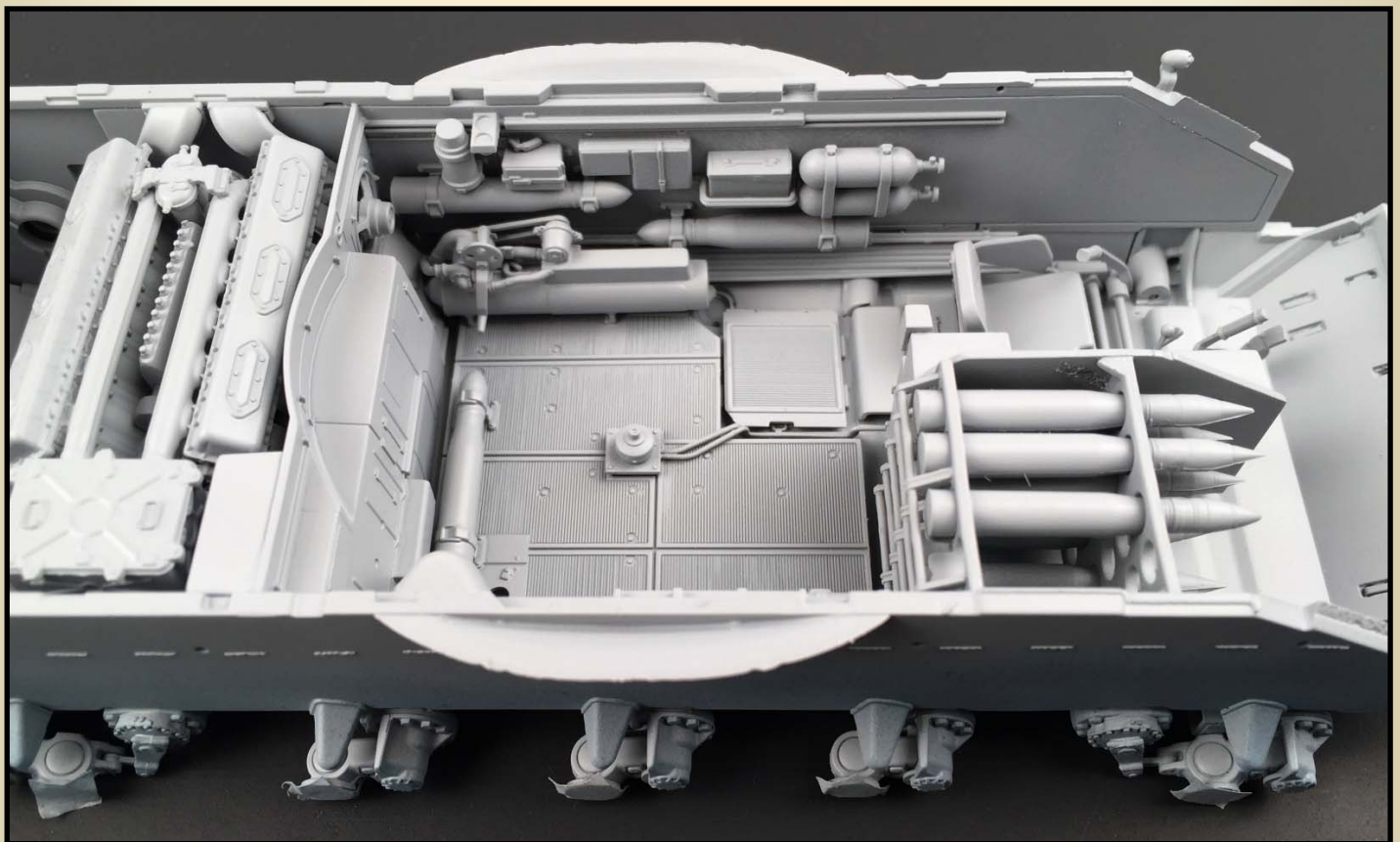
### What's in the MiniArt Box

- 87 sprues of injection molded light gray plastic parts
- 3 sprues of injection clear parts
- 1 sheet of water slide decals with 4 marking options
- 1 sheet of photo etched brass parts
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An instruction manual, with 20 pages of black and white assembly drawings covering 104 assembly steps plus a 4-page set of color and marking instructions, and a two-page sprue layout diagram

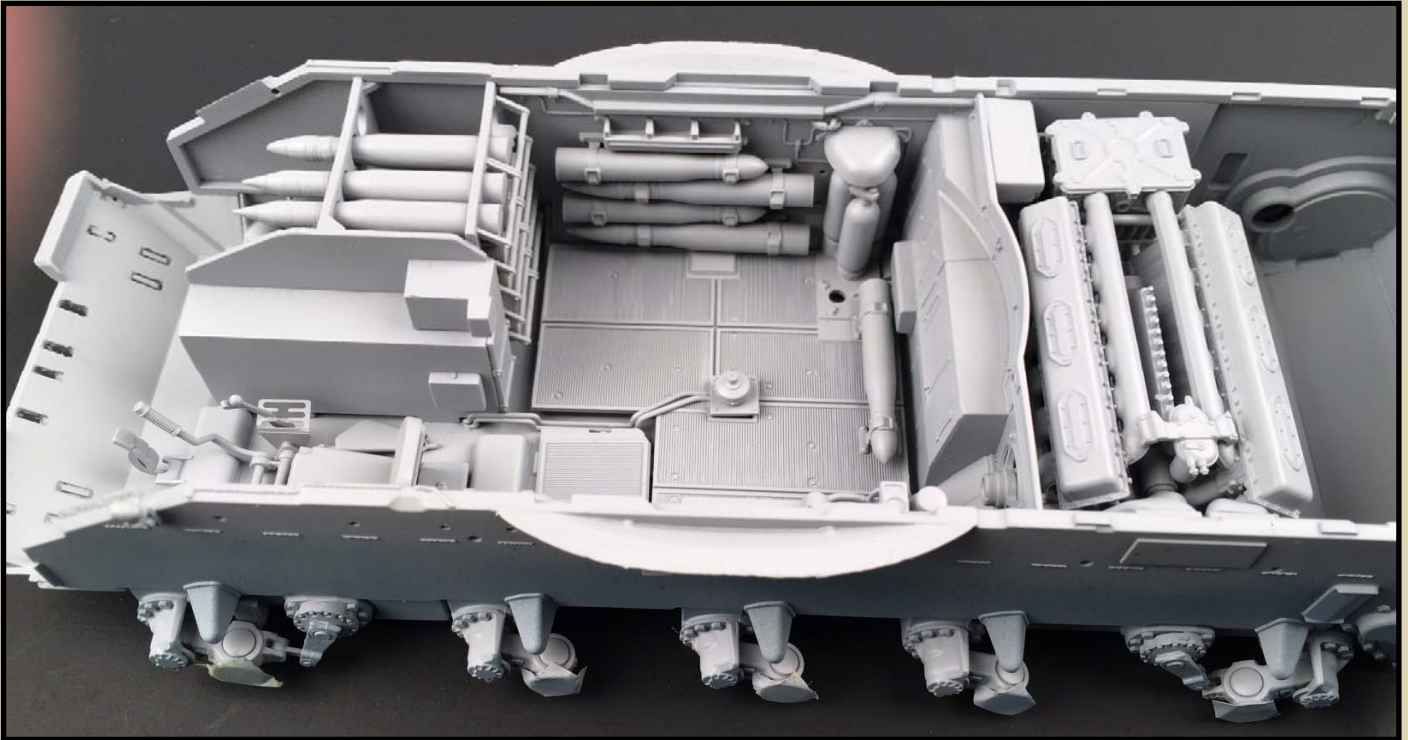
This is the fourth “T-54” kit in MiniArt’s “Interior Kit” range that I have had the great pleasure to review. And I will say up front that these kits aren’t for the faint of heart. The quality of the parts included in each kit is phenomenal, being beautifully detailed and well moulded with little if any flash, few ejection pin marks, and no sink marks. However, there are over a thousand parts, including over 100 photo etched parts, some of them incredibly small, in the Tiran 4 kit under review here. I can state in total honesty that I had a blast building this kit, but I can not in good conscience recommend it to anyone other than a modeler who has a number of 1/35th scale armour models under their belt, and who has no fear of photo etched parts and super glue. You also need to be a meticulous builder of kits, because the 1000+ parts need to be very carefully and accurately assembled into a relatively small space. If you aren’t careful, and glue parts together that aren’t correctly lined up or in the correct spot, you will experience heartache. However, if you are up for a challenge, keep reading!

This kit of the Tiran 4 has a near complete interior, both hull and turret. About the only thing missing in the hull (I’m not sure why) is the transmission and cooling systems. Assembly Steps 1 through 8 consist of the engine’s construction, numbering about 40 parts. About the only thing missing is the ignition harness. Following the construction of the engine, comes the start of the lower hull suspension assembly. Spend some time studying the assembly diagrams, as there are a lot of parts to line up correctly, and if you want the suspension to “work”, you had better get it right!

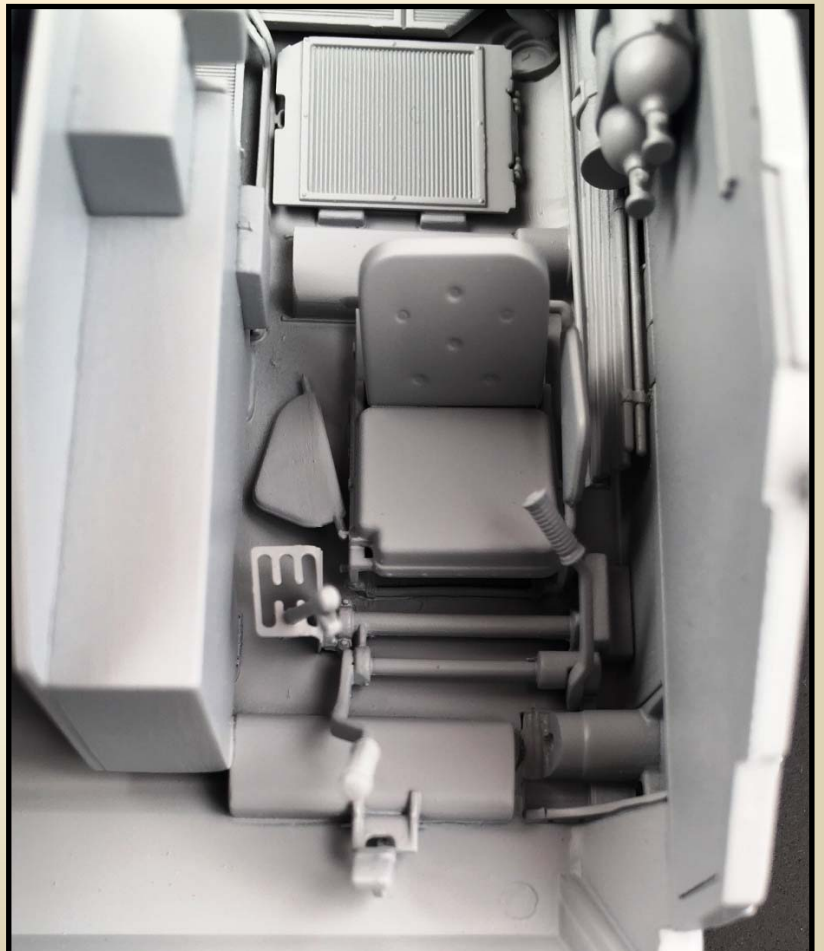


The interior of the hull is quite “busy” with a driver’s seat and brake pedal, gear levers etc. The driver’s seat alone has 6 parts, two of them PE. Make sure as you work your way through the instructions that you keep a sharp eye out for instructions telling you to drill out flashed over holes for the attachment of parts later on in the instruction manual. One small complaint I have with MiniArt’s super detailed kits is that some of the parts have what I consider excessive sprue attachment points, and the parts that do always seem to be super fine/delicate parts where there is a high risk of damage to the parts as you attempt to separate them from the sprue.

I highly recommend purchasing a pair of the “God Hand” brand sprue cutters from Japan. These aren’t cheap, but they are an extremely well manufactured precision set of snips and give you the most chance of getting small delicate parts off the sprue without damage. As an example of what I am talking about in Step 17 of the hull interior assembly sequences, there is part B3, which has 15 (!!!) sprue attachment points. Each must be carefully cleaned up, all the while trying to avoid shattering the part.



Steps 20 and 21 involve the construction and installation of the hull shell munitions storage lockers: lots of very nice shells, which if you examine their location in the storage locker by dry fitting them, you will note that it is possible to fit them in such a way that only one of the two seam lines that run their length needs removing. By careful placement, you can avoid having to do the other, and it won’t be seen once construction is finished. As you progress through the assembly and installation of the hull interior components, you will notice that it is getting more and more crowded, and you realize why it is so important to check and double check the instructions before gluing parts in place. Making a small mistake in the positioning of a part in Step 10 can lead to issues much later in Step 25, so be vigilant!



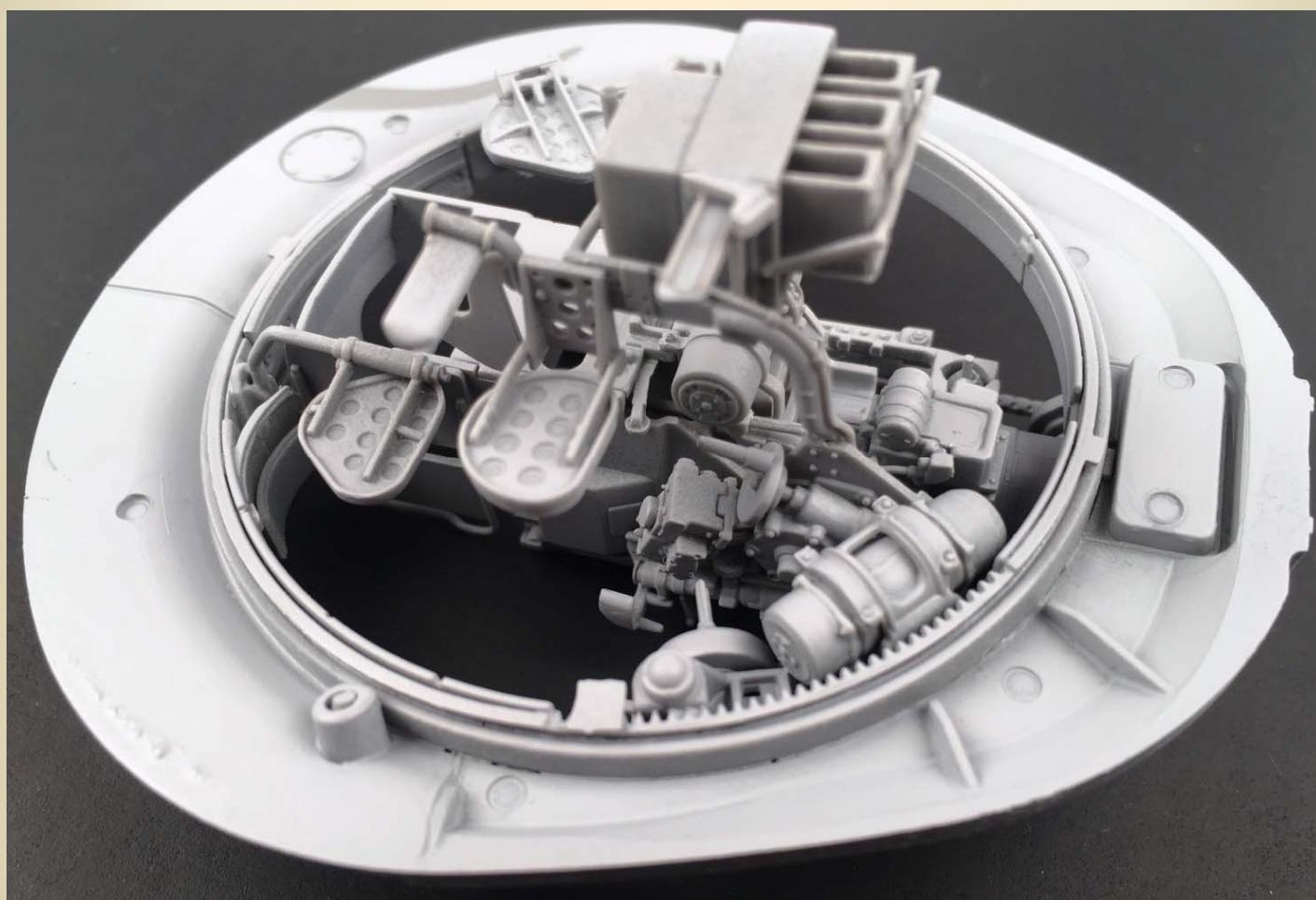
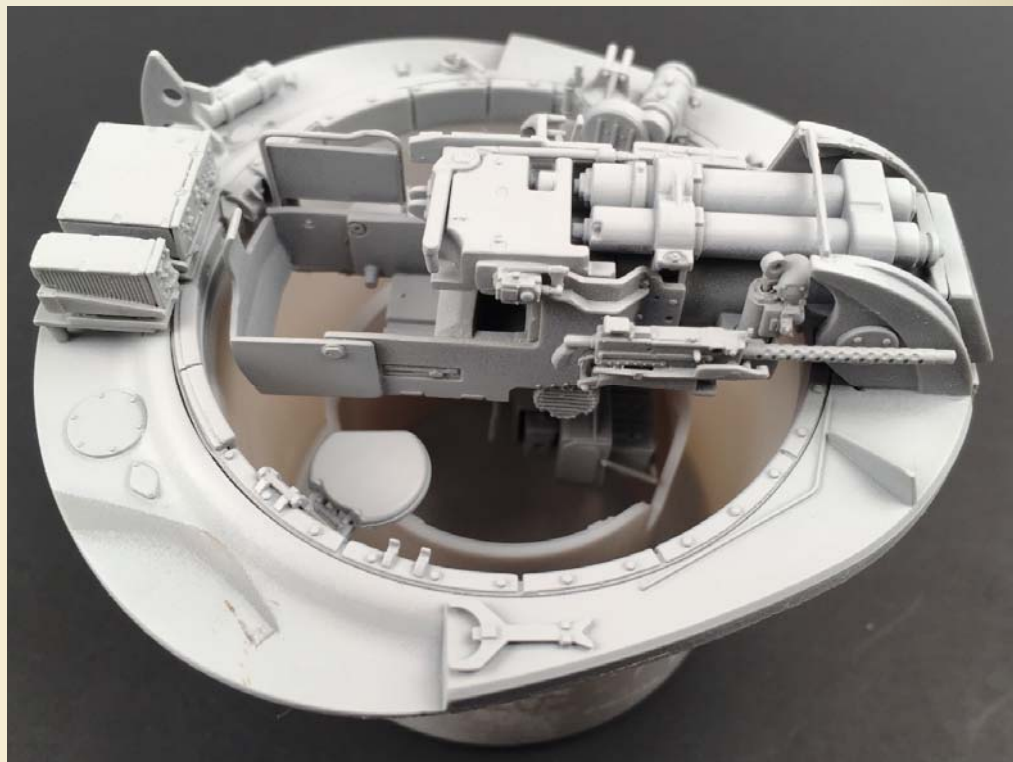
Steps 28 through 33 deals with the installation of the road wheels, drive sprockets and idler wheels. It would be most useful if you could find a set of 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale plans that show the "sit" of the road wheels so that you get the suspension ride height correctly worked out. I would advise gluing the road wheels in positions 1 and 5 first and making sure the hull is level on these four wheels. I used a simple system of rectangular wood blocks to insure the road wheels lined up evenly front to rear, and one side to the other, with some low-tension clamps. Once these first four wheels were installed and the glue fully set, I installed the remaining wheels, three per hull side. Make sure you don't glue part Kd2 in place initially, in Step 31-33. This is the idler mount and allowing it to pivot freely in its mount will assist with getting the tracks to more easily be in alignment. The tracks, assembled in Step 45, are individual link, and are exquisitely well detailed, although with 4 sprue attachment points per link, are a little time consuming to clean up and assemble. But well worth it IMHO.

Step 36: part Te6, engine access plate on the rear deck of the upper hull has some great weld detail on the hinges, just one example of the finesse of the parts in this lovely kit. In Step 38 I had my one disaster with a piece being damaged in my attempt to get it off the sprue, part T2. Thankfully it snapped in a manner that allowed me to carefully and successfully glue it together without any major harm to the project. Also, in Step 38 is PE part PE45, which was so small that I gave up trying to pick it up and successfully glue it in place. There are a small number of the PE parts that had me thinking this way, but none of them were missed when I finished up the project. And speaking of PE, Step 41 – 43 has the modeler installing four PE mesh screens on the rear of the rear hull deck. I would recommend leaving these aside for later. I painted them separately, first applying a coat of Tamiya grey rattle can primer to the exterior surface only. I held the PE parts with self-locking tweezers, and if the primer gummed up the mesh, I had a Q-tip dipped in lacquer thinner ready to wipe the underside of the PE (the side without the primer), and this removed any excess without damaging the primed side. Likewise, when I went to apply the color coat.

Step 45: the assembly of the individual track lines, listed as 90 per side in the MiniArt instructions. The fidelity of detail on these tracks is amazing, down to casting numbers being clearly visible. Each link is attached to the sprue by four points, as mentioned earlier, so it is a bit tedious cleaning these up. Just do say 20 links at a time, over multiple building sessions. I then made a simple assembly jig out of two rectangular but equal lengths of basswood. At each end of the lengths of wood, I put some shims of Evergreen plastic, the width of the track guide horns. I then placed small clamps to hold each end of the wooden blocks together. This left a trench down the middle of the blocks, and I put the track links, guide horn down, onto the trench, and applied glue. Excess Tamiya thin solvent glue on the wood just evaporates. This method allowed for rapid lining up of track links. I glued 45 links together in on long length, using the slower curing Tamiya plastic cement. These were allowed to sit for a short while, before I glued them to the underneath of the front road wheel and then back under the remaining roadwheels, and up and around the rear drive sprocket. The process was repeated on the other side of the kit. The glue was allowed to set overnight. The process of gluing the track links together was repeated, and this time the links were first glued to the tracks already installed, from the front roadwheel, and up and around the idler wheel (whose arm was still not glued in place), and then the upper track sag was created, before the track run was glued to the initial track run at the drive sprocket end. You may need to add a link, or remove a link, from the recommended number of 90. Create the track sag you are after, and when you are happy, glue the idler arm solidly in place. Repeat for the other side.

Lastly for the hull components, comes the fenders/mudguards. There are lots of storage bins, and fuel cells along each side of the hull, and the fuel lines that link the cells together are also included. Lots of little PE parts are incorporated into the fenders for tool storage tie down etc. Step 49 – 55. Then jump ahead in the assembly diagrams, to Steps 101 – 103, for the installation of more fuel cell plumbing. Make sure these Steps are completed BEFORE you glue the fenders to the hull, otherwise you won't be able to see clearly to install the fuel lines.

Now we are on to the construction of the turret. The interior of the turret is festooned with intricate detail, and once again I must caution that it is imperative to closely study the instructions so that you get the parts glued to their precise location point, to avoid finding out that later parts now won't fit because earlier parts were slightly misaligned. There are big parts, medium sized parts, small parts and teeny tiny parts. All are amazingly detailed, all fit precisely if only you pay careful attention to the instructions. About the only thing missing from all these parts is some electrical cabling, and if you happen to have some good reference photos of the interior of a T-54/Tiran 4 turret, feel free to install these. I won't go into detail about which areas of the turret interior are present/detailed, because simply put: all or most of it. You will have no issues leaving the turret hatches open on this kit with or without a crewman in the opening. Let the IPMS judges shine their little flashlights into the



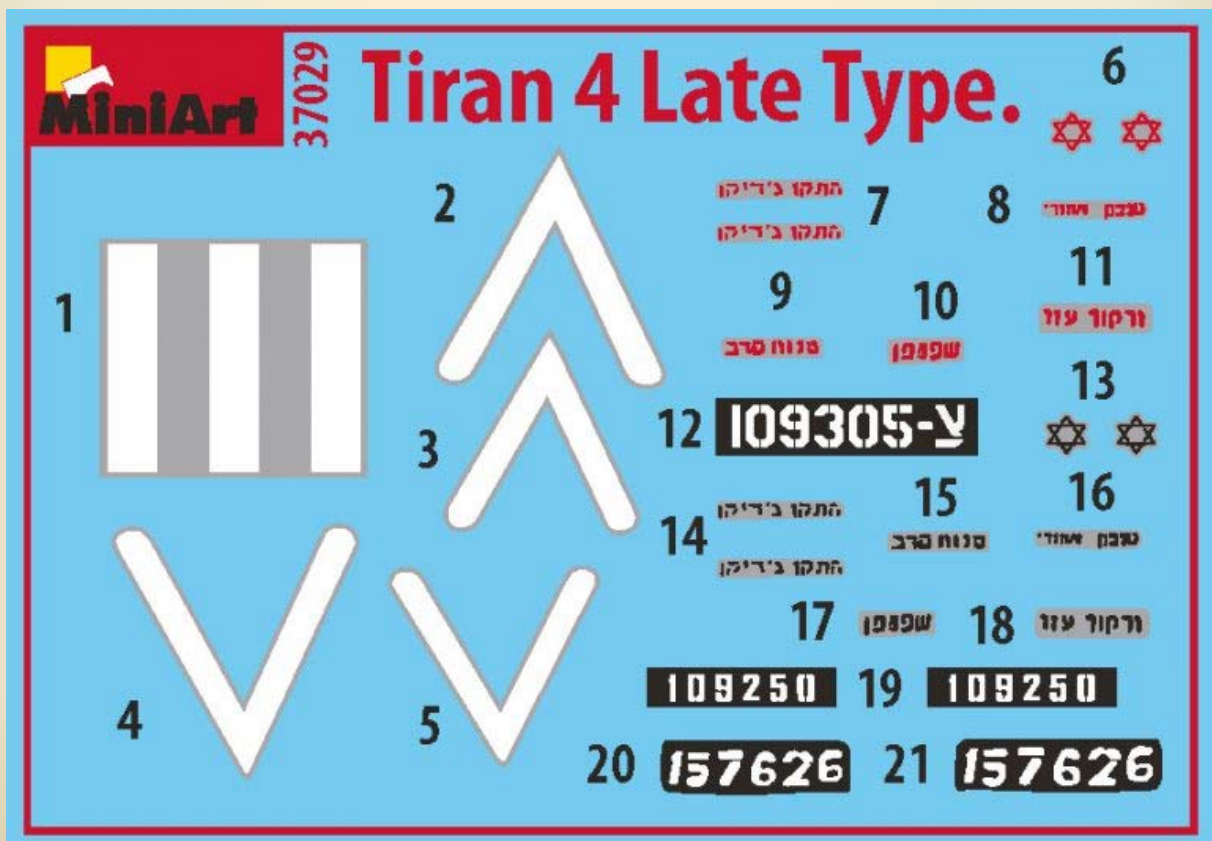
On to the exterior of the turret, and this area too is festooned with well detailed parts such as jer-ry cans with PE holders, spare track links, grab handles etc. Plastic and PE parts, some of the latter extremely tiny, all add up to an amazing assortment of bits and pieces. The Israelis added extra turret top mounted machineguns to the Tiran 4, and MiniArt offers an array to chose from depending on which vehicle you are depicting from the color and marking schemes. So, make sure you check which MGs go with which vehicle, or check your reference material carefully. The machinegun parts themselves are beautifully rendered, utilizing plastic and PE parts. There was a little flash blocking the gun tubes on one of my MG parts, which required a little clean up, and I drilled out the barrel tips with an appropriately sized drill bit. Each MG has an ammunition box with nicely detailed strings of bullets.

Once the turret is assembled, you can attach the fenders to the hull, and then the turret to the hull. The tow cable shackles are separate parts, and I utilized appropriately sized Eureka twisted copper wire cable material for the vehicle tow cables.

MiniArt provides four color and marking options for this kit, though they aren't very descriptive:

- 1/ Israeli Defense Forces, 1970's overall sand color
- 2/ Israeli Defense Forces training unit, early 1980's overall sand color
- 3/ South Lebanon Army, Operation "Peace for Galilee" June – September 1982 two tone blue gray/gray
- 4/ South Lebanon Army, 1980's overall blue gray

MiniArt provides a small decal sheet with the kit, though the markings for each vehicle are very simple, especially those for the SLA vehicles. The decals are well printed and commendably thin. The decals proved rather fragile, so be careful when removing them from their backing sheet. Gently slide them into position. On my first attempt, I slid a small decal to the edge of the backing paper and attempted to pick it off the sheet with a pair of tweezers. The decal snapped into two parts. So, slide them into position!



I chose the overall Blue Gray colored South Lebanese Army 1980's scheme, which has literally only two small number plate decals. If you are in the market for a nice book on the Tiran in Lebanese service, I can recommend "Tiran in Lebanese Wars" by Samer Kassis, published by Ammo by MIG, the model paint manufacturer. Otherwise, go out and look on the internet to find color photos of these vehicles. I used Tamiya's acrylic XF-18 Medium Blue together with Tamiya XF-20 Medium Gray to come up with my "South Lebanese Army Blue Gray" color. Thinned with Tamiya's proprietary thinner. To lighten the base color just add some white.

The model was first primed with my favorite primer, Tamiya's superb lacquer "Fine Surface Primer: Light Grey" item # 87064. I applied a few light coats to the model which provided a uniform surface for the acrylic color coats. This was allowed to cure for three or four days until it was good and hard. The model was painted in three subassemblies: hull, turret, and main gun barrel. This made for easier handling. The Tamiya acrylic blue gray paint mixture was airbrushed over the entire model in a series of two or three light applications, slowly building up the color. After being allowed to dry a few hours, the base color was lightened, and then panel fade was applied. The subassemblies were then left overnight to cure. I then picked out a suitable track color, Vallejo "Track Color", and painted the tracks. Then when this had dried overnight, I took Vallejo "Dark Rubber" and painted the rubber rims of the road wheels. I took this same Dark Rubber paint, and utilizing a small piece of sponge, proceeded to "chip" the paint of the vehicle. I then took the Track Color and used it to add a difference color chipping effect and worked particularly hard around the area of the engine exhaust on the left rear fender.

The model was then airbrushed with Tamiya X-22 Gloss Clear and left to cure overnight. The two decals were applied and left to dry overnight, and then some light coats of X-22 Gloss Clear sprayed over the decals to seal them. Another 24 hours to allow the clear coats to securely cure, then it is time for the "wash" to highlight the detail. A suitable color of dark brown oil paint was put on a piece of cardboard from a thick sided box, to wick off the excess linseed oil, and then the paint was mixed up with some odorless mineral spirits. The mixture was applied with a small tipped brush, and then left to dry overnight. A number of Q-tips were dipped in odorless mineral spirits, and the excess "wash" was removed from the model. Once I was satisfied with the look of the "wash", I left the model alone for three days so that the oil wash dried thoroughly. I then airbrushed all the subassemblies with my favorite matt clear coat, AK Interactive's Ultra Matt Varnish. This was then left to cure for 24 hours. I then got out my set of Lifecolor acrylic Rust "Washes", and added a little rust around the engine exhaust, the tow cables, and a few other random places, just to add a little color to the project. Finally, I mixed up some Tamiya XF-57 Buff, suitably thinned, and applied some heavy road dust around the road wheels, lower hull, and front and rear of the hull, and then a thinner general dusting over the entire model subassemblies.

I then put the turret atop the hull and I was done.

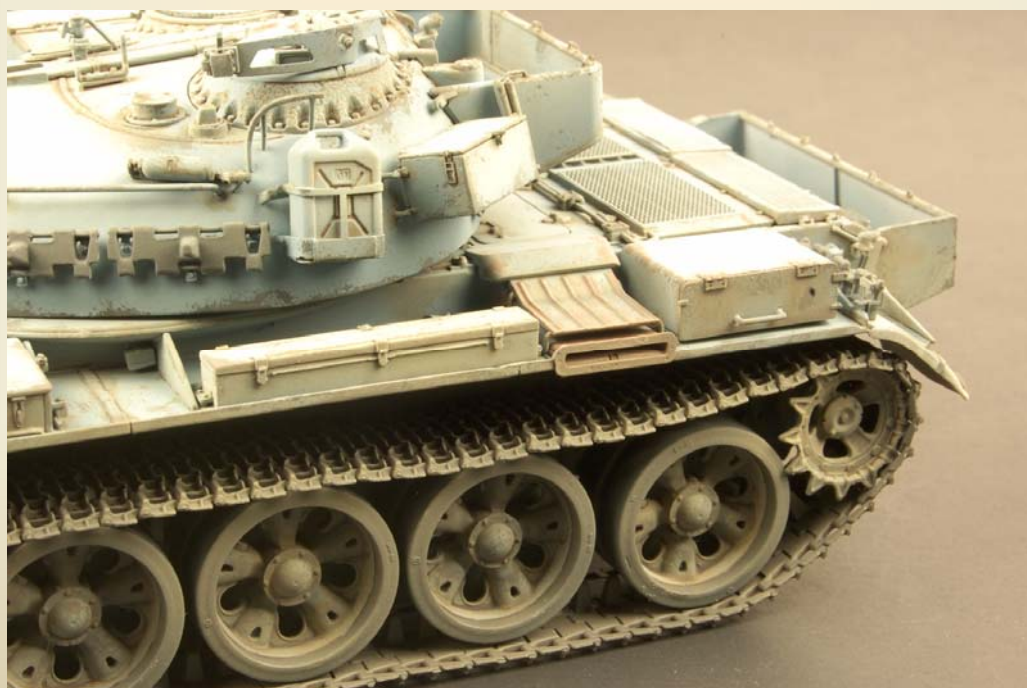
To summarize: this kit is NOT for those with weak backbones

There are literally a thousand parts to this kit, a good number of them being photo etched brass, and some of these extremely small. I would however recommend this kit unreservedly to a modeler who has a number of models under their belt and is fine working with photo etched brass. The journey to completion of this kit was for me a fun, if challenging one, and at the end of the adventure I ended up with a superb model of a Tiran 4 for my Middle East Wars collection. My thanks to MiniArt for providing IPMS USA with the opportunity to review this superb kit.









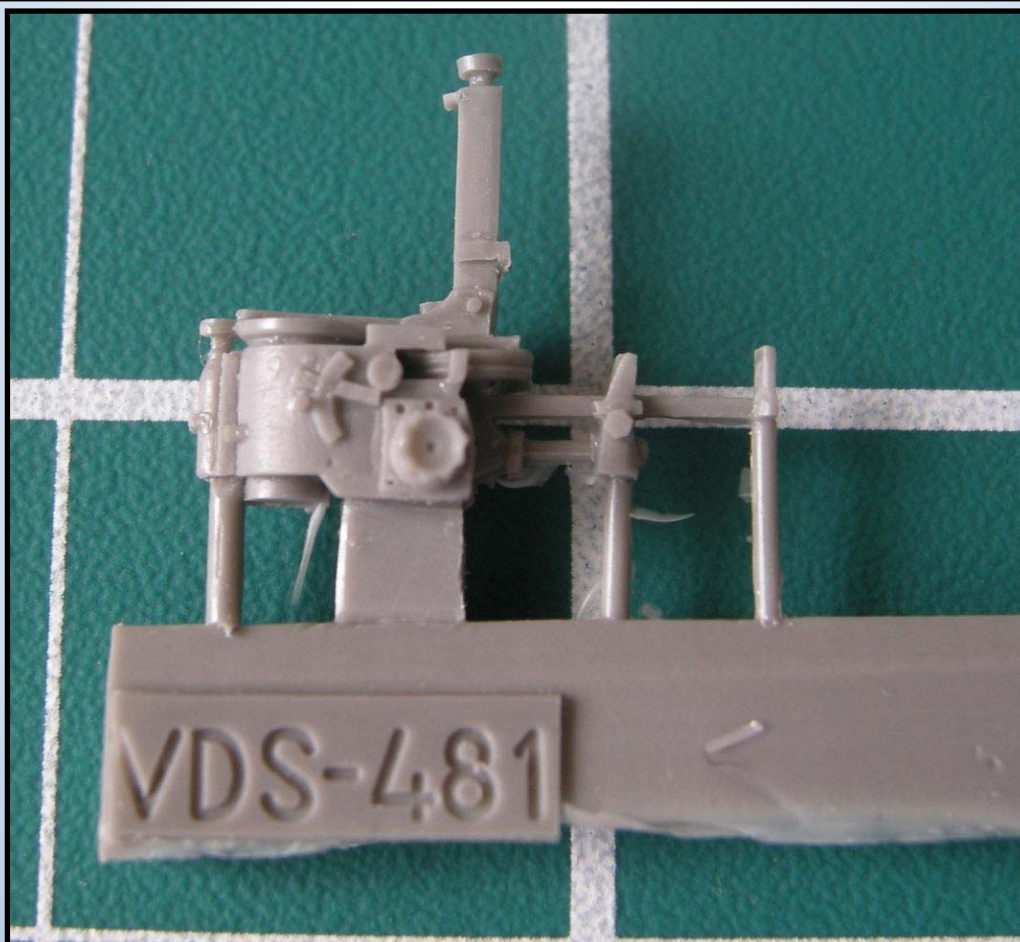
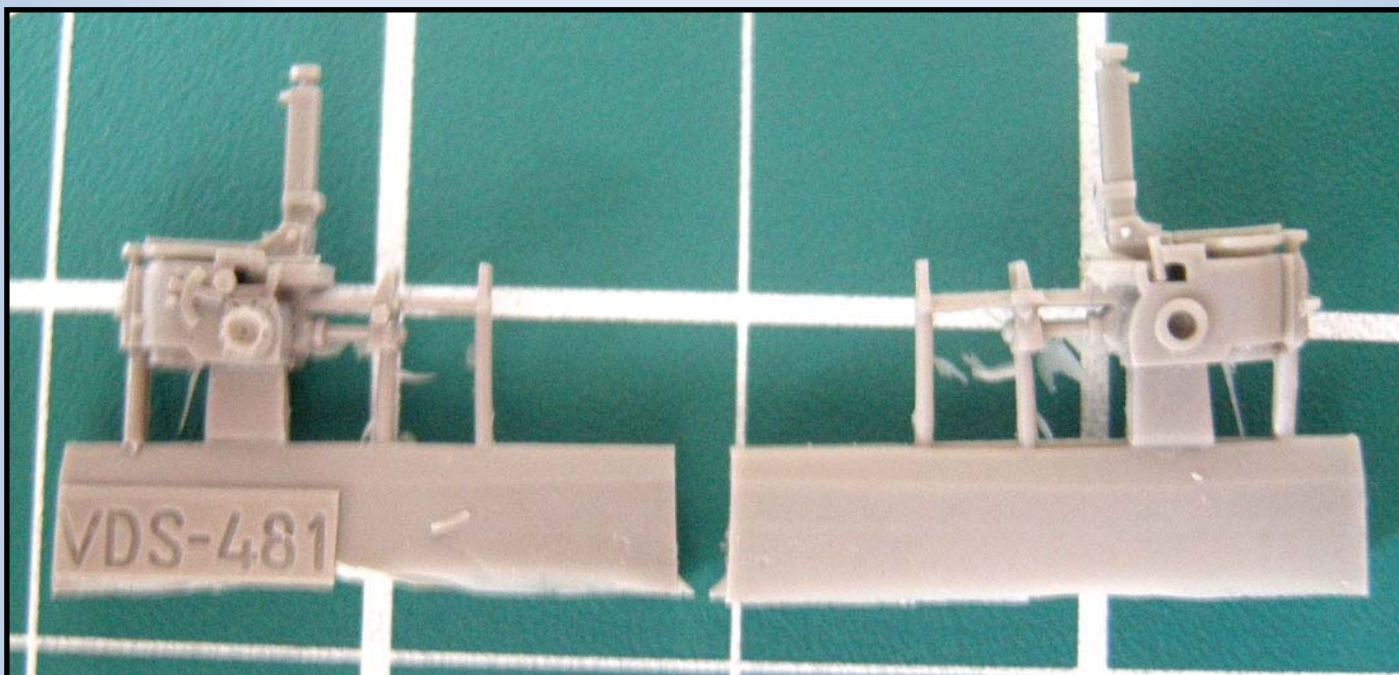
# VECTOR'S RAF Mk.IX BOMBSIGHT IN 1:48 SCALE

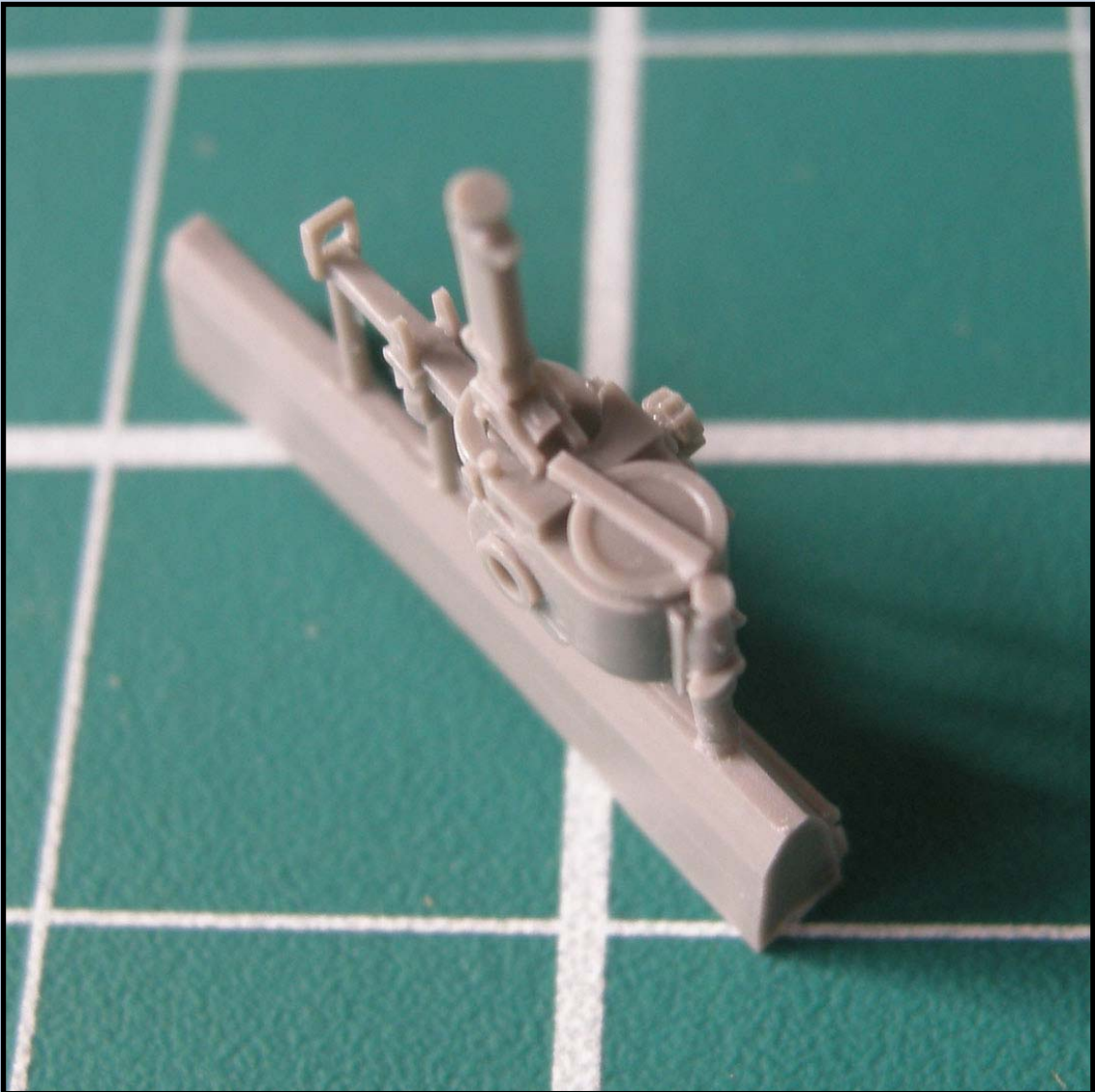
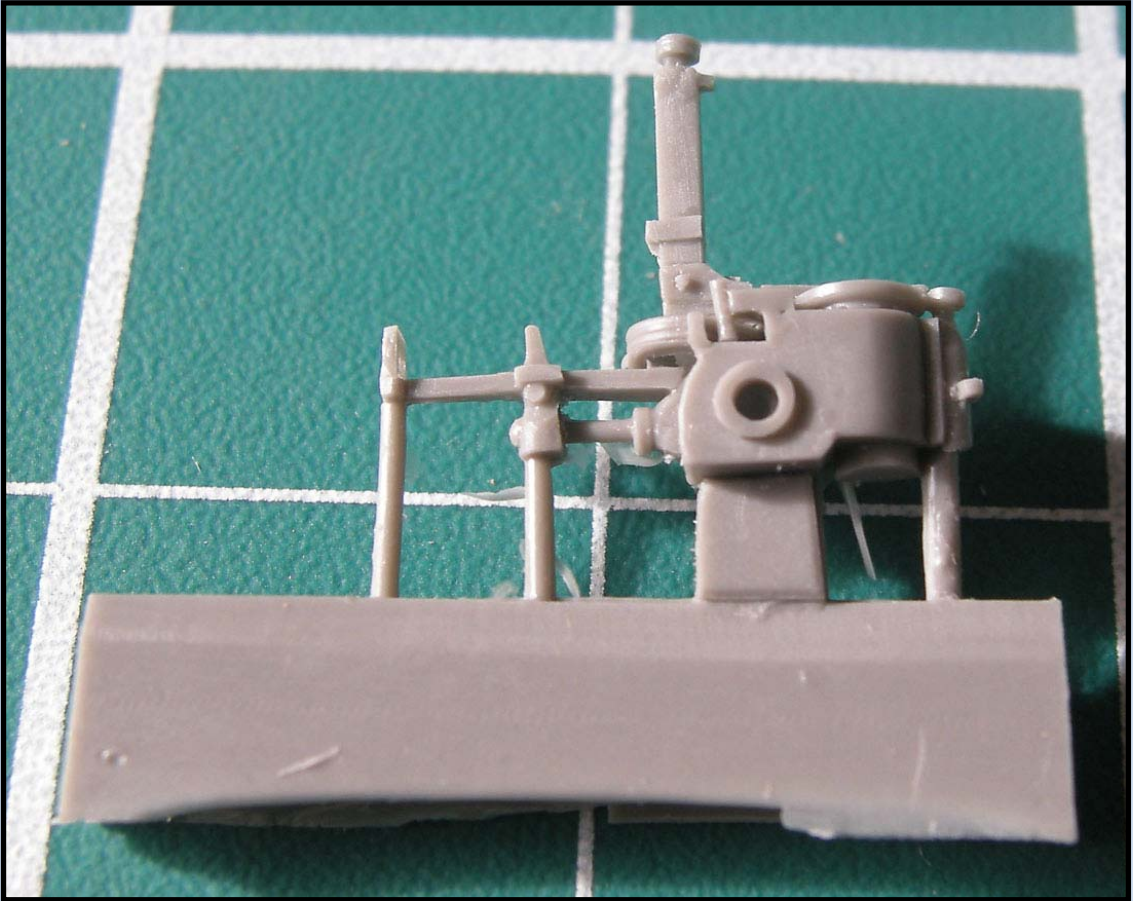
By Pete M.

## KIT VDS48-114

Following on from their US Norden bombsight kit, Vector have now released the most common RAF sight used from 1938 to the mid-war period.

Two sights are provided in the kit, moulded in a light grey resin, and as is usual with Vector, are crisp and pin hole free. There is some flash that will need to be cleaned off, but a couple of passes with a sharp knife blade will see to this. Note: There are no instructions or colour notes provided, but the colour details can be readily obtained with a 'Google' search on the web.

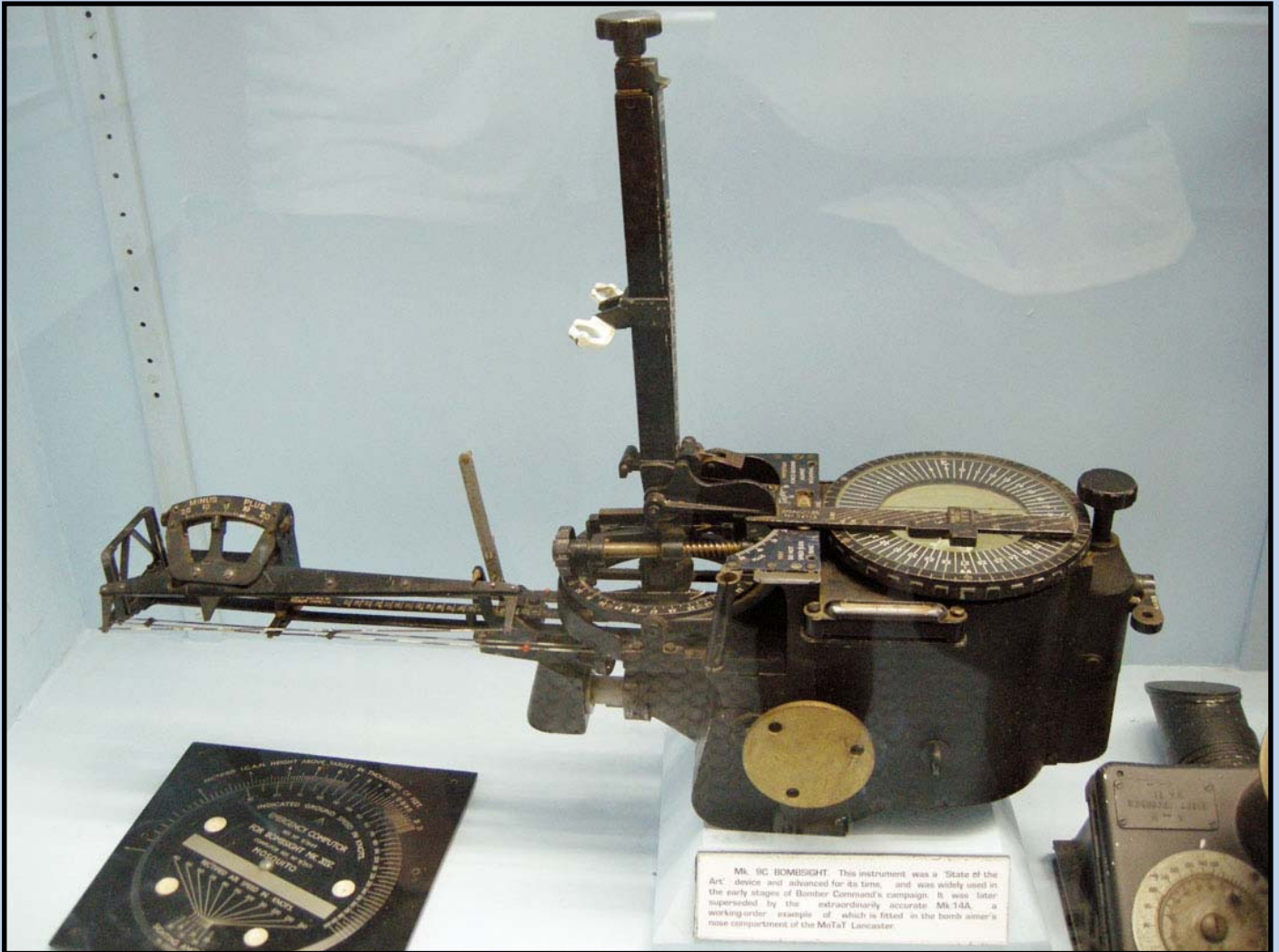


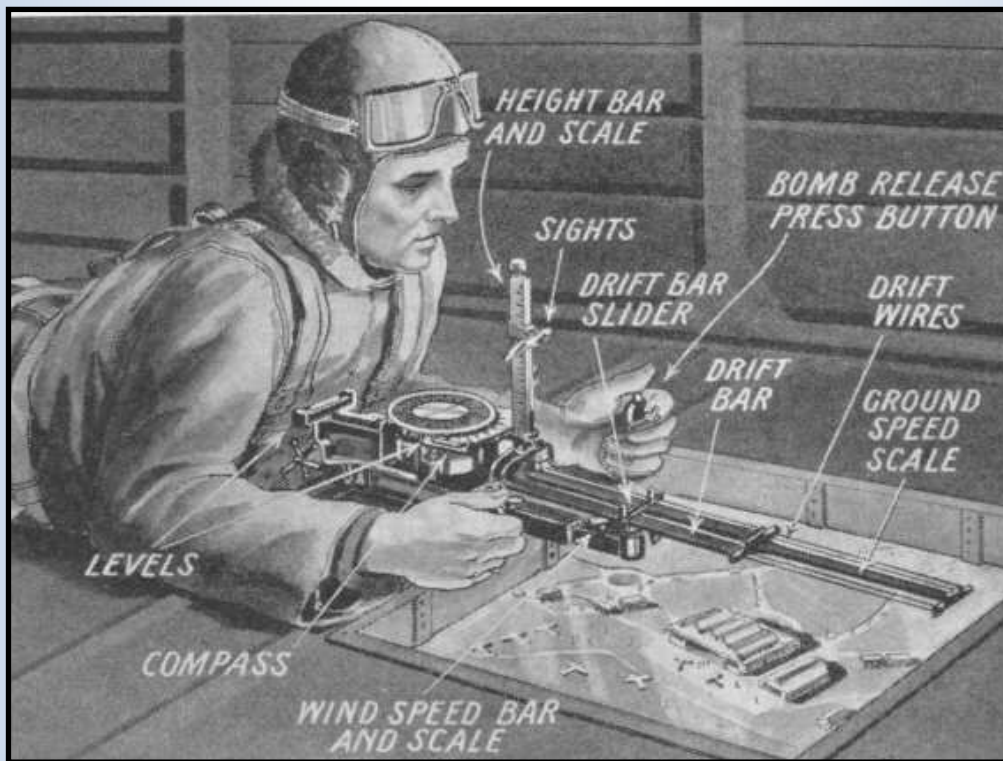


The sights are presented with the upper height and scale bar in it's extended position, but the lower ground speed bar is not fully extended as per the real thing when in it's operational setting.

This is probably due to moulding limitations, as it is a very fine and spindly affair!

They appear to match the real thing very closely, and I can only see a couple of differences when compared to the prototypes. These sights were produced in both the UK and Canada, and there were some slight variations between them.





These sights are a welcome detailing addition for RAF bombers that are not included in any kits to my knowledge.

I do hope Vector will now follow these up with some of the later RAF sights, and of course, the common German bombsights.

# Airbrush Review



In recent years I have built up a collection of Chinese airbrushes in various shapes and sizes mainly ordering online directly from China. Recently I saw what appeared, at least to me, to be a new type of modestly priced airbrush sporting a number of features usually found on more expensive models. Out of curiosity I thought I'd try one and see how this one compares to similar priced units I had to hand.

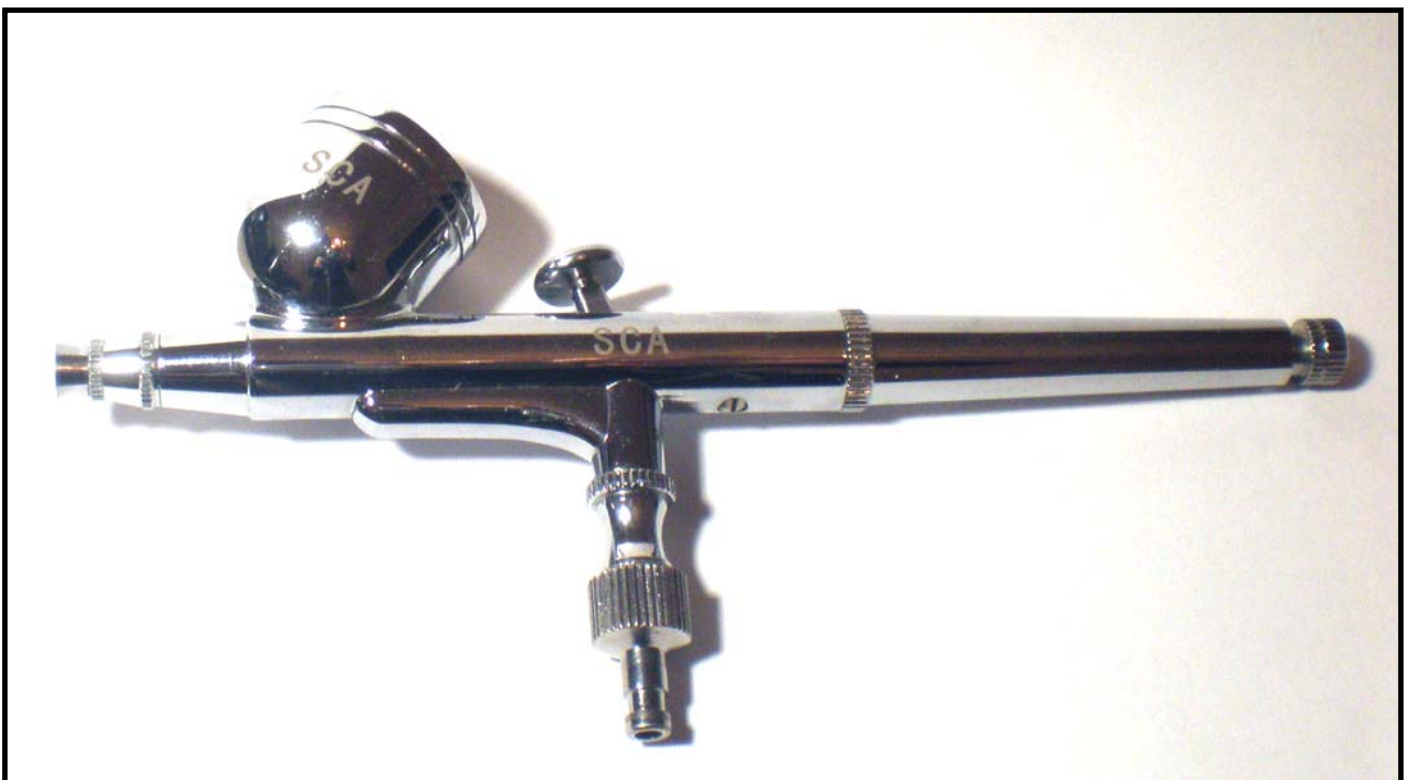
Pricewise this design sells in the same entry level bracket as what I have come to know as a 'model 130' which is a solid, reliable, generic design that can be fitted with a range of needle sizes from 0.2mm to 0.5mm. Looking at the instruction sheet that comes with the reviewed brush it is clear that can be fitted with the same range of generic needles and nozzles as the model 130 which are almost universal across Chinese designs.

It should be noted that Chinese airbrushes often have brands associated with the seller rather than the manufacturer. This one is no different, I have no idea who the manufacturer is. I first came across this when buying a house branded model 130 airbrush from a local automotive supplier who had badge-engineered it and increased the selling price exponentially to boot. One of these serves as a performance benchmark in this review. By and large I have found that the model 130 type brushes have performed very well. The brush being reviewed is a bit different to other Chinese brushes in that it abandons the chromed metal norm and features a coloured body and paint cup. There are choices of metallic red or gold finish. Looking at photos online it appeared that the design featured a fully removable head unit which housed the nozzle. This attracted me as I prefer this from a nozzle cleaning perspective. I ordered one with a 0.3mm nozzle in the red finish in preference to the gold option and waited for delivery.

The unit came packed in a plain cardboard box in which the airbrush and accessories were secured in a clear vac-formed insert which did a good job of protecting the contents. The set comes with the obligatory nozzle wrench, pipette and a bayonet type airline adapter common to most Chinese airbrush offerings. The first impression I got on picking up the new brush was how light it was. I got out my micro scale and found the basic brush weighed in at around 49gm while one of my work horse model 130's weighed in at 95gm – nearly twice the weight.

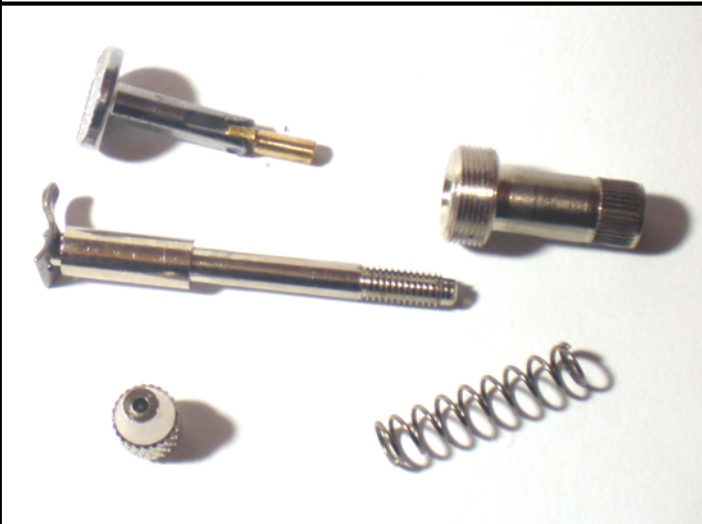
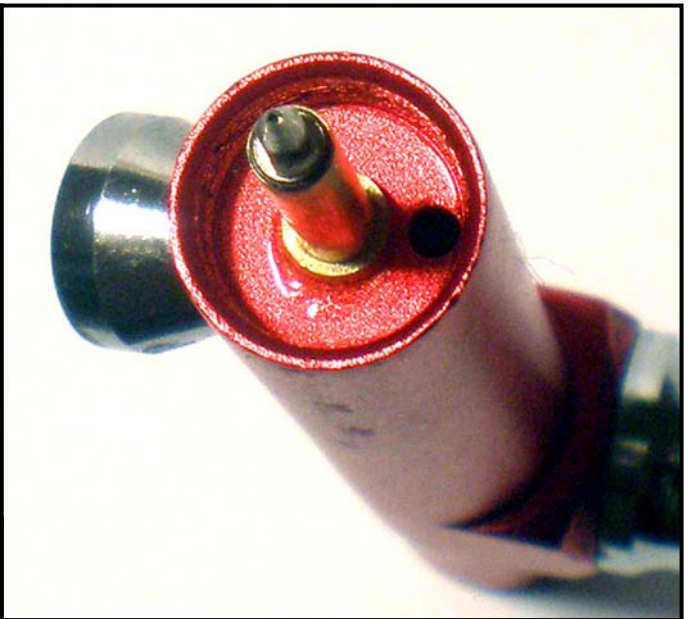
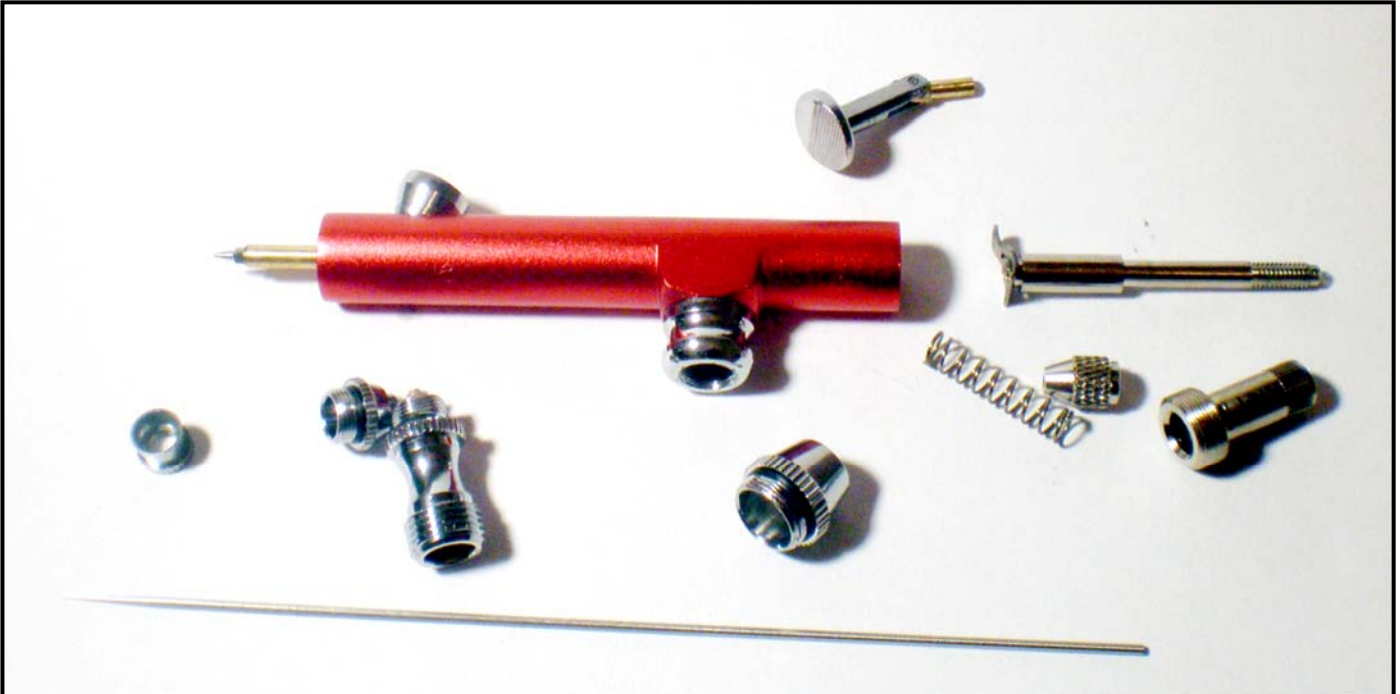


The benchmark 'model 130' used in comparative trials is shown below.





The first order of business was to strip the brush down and see what makes it tick. It was clear that the main body and tail cone are made of a light weight alloy rather than the traditional machined brass with chrome plated exterior. The finish of the removable paint cup is finer than the body work but this too appears to be made of some light alloy. The contents of the back half of the brush are fairly standard. The same needle/nozzle design used on most Chinese brushes is evident here. The tail cone features cutouts to help with unsticking a stuck needle and there is an adjustment screw in the rear that limits the travel of the needle if required for precise lines. The trigger and air inlet valve appear to be generic parts, interchangeable with many other designs.



Once I looked inside the front end I was a bit disappointed. There was no complete head unit, just a 3-piece assembly that covered the nozzle. The nozzle mounting is like nothing I've seen before. It is actually a long brass tube protruding from a recessed area at the front of the main body. The nozzle itself is fairly standard but the whole thing left me with an impression that the aim was for cheapness of production rather than value for money.

I could forgive a lot of things if the brush performed well but alas that did not happen when I did comparative trials with one of my basic model-130's. Both brushes were fitted with 0.3mm needles which I favour for general purpose use and the same paint and thinner was used, tailoring the mix in each case with some preliminary trial and error. I started with fine lines and the new brush was the worst performer I've seen in a long time. The finest line I could get was more than twice the thickness of what the model-130 achieved. To make things worse, paint flow stopped and started when trying to spray fine lines leaving big gaps. Spray was more consistent when going for wider coverage but the finish was again inferior to my stock brush. The paint cup was coloured on the inside and it did not take me long to conclude that this is not a good thing as it affected perception of the paint colour inside. This is a disadvantage when mixing up small amounts of paint directly in the paint cup as I prefer to do. The trigger is a little stiff and the spring could do with trimming off a turn or 2. The boxy protrusion that the air inlet screws into proved to be a little uncomfortable and could be a pain when in prolonged use. The colour finish on the body is pretty fragile and scratches easily, as I found out, revealing the silvery the alloy beneath.



In summary, what started as a review has unfortunately ended up becoming a cautionary tale. Overall, this airbrush turned out to be a really disappointing purchase. The hope of a separate head unit evaporated on dismantling the airbrush and it proved to be all down hill from there. I'm glad I did not fork out much money on this one and doubt I'll find any real use for it. Many of the parts are generic and will probably end up in my spares box. Beware, there are also other variations on this design out there, some with MAC valves, others with plastic paint cups and all looking very attractive and business like. I would not expect any of these to perform any better than my example.

# GALLERY

CLUB NIGHT MODELS

Check out our Website gallery for photos taken of models at our monthly meetings

<http://ipmsauckland.hobbyvista.com>



And as usual -check out the IPMS Auckland website as we're trying to keep the content a bit more dynamic. We won't be regurgitating content found on other websites but will provide links to sites we think are of interest to members.

