

**MAY
2008**

ROCKY MOUNTAIN MODEL CLUB

15th Anniversary



Contest Time is almost here. **By Paul Holmes**

Can you believe it? At the time I write this, there are less than 10 days to go before the RMMC's Western Canadian Regional Contest. Though I don't have anything quite ready to enter, that doesn't make things any less exciting for me. There's something about being in a room full of people who suffer from the same affliction that I do....

First things first... we gotta lotta work to do!!!

Friday, May 16 (*the day before!!!*).... We have a **2 Hour Window, from 8 to 10 pm** to set up the hall, vendors room, and get any early registries taken care of. I know that some of us may be busy getting the 'last minute touches' onto your next masterpiece, but we need everybody to help out. Last year, we had a hell of a good effort by those who were there, but were missing quite a few bodies to help out. Let's see if we can get even more out to lend a hand... **HECK, BRING A FRIEND!!!!!!!!!!**

Prior to the show setup, there will be a little soiree at Invader Hobbies from 5pm to 7:30pm. Bacon Wrapped Filet Mignon and Shrimp/Scallop skewers will be provided to each member, along with the member's choice of either a bottle of 40 year old Dom Perignon or 50 year old Scotch... all on McTavish's account..... *JUST KIDDING, Burgers will be provided....*

Contest Saturday will be a good one, I can feel it. We've done an admirable job in the past years, and seem to be getting better at it every year. We need everybody's help to make this one another for the record books!!!

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On that note, I'd like to thank a couple of people for their efforts. Though everyone deserves a pat on the back, I feel that a few people that warrant a special mention. Firstly, Mr McTavish for co-ordinating the whole thing. Secondly, Mr. Mike Grant for his (always) amazing work on the contest website, special award plaques, and the 'new and improved' entry form (which I've heard several people raving about of late...). Thirdly, Mr. Massimo Santarossa for all the extra legwork with sponsors, magazines, media, advice... you name it, he's most likely done it!!!

And Lastly, my thanks to all of you for making this year of me being the Prez an interesting one. I've learned alot on how the club works, and what makes my fellow modelers tick as far as the hobby goes. Cheers and Good Luck to all of you this coming contest weekend!!!



Spitfire XVIe

By Massimo Santarossa

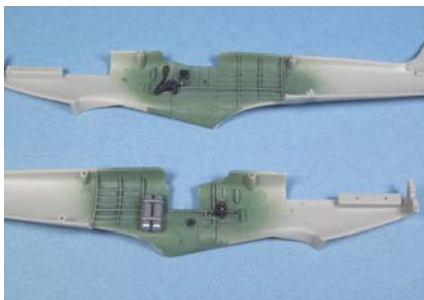
Recently I was asked to build an Airfix Spitfire as an in the box review. The airplane in question was a limited edition Spitfire XVIe that can only be obtained by joining the Airfix Club (www.airfix.com). I was intrigued with this model because I don't build a lot of Airfix kits (except for a shelf full of 737 models), and this particular Spitfire wasn't your run of the mill Mk.V. The bubble canopy and sleek fuselage give the plane a fast look even when sitting at rest. I even had visions of completing it in camouflage colours and Canadian markings, but alas it was to be a simple out-of-the-box build.



The model comes in a sturdy box with some contemporary profiles of the two versions inside on the lid. Opening the box reveals a LOT of grey plastic. All the parts feature nicely engraved panel lines and are flash free. Some of the details are a touch soft or chunky, like the trim tab actuators, and in some cases a razor saw was required to remove the parts from the sprue trees. The clear parts are very well formed and very clear. The decals offer markings for two aircraft, all well printed in register, and having a gloss finish. And to assist with the build, 3 tinlets of Humbrol acrylic paint are included.

This is not a new Mk.XVIe model. It is in fact a collection of sprues from various Spitfire kits. What I think Airfix did was to cast a new fuselage and canopy, then source the remaining parts from the other Spitfire kits it has produced. As such, you get multiples of several parts, including 3 wing tips, 2 props, 2 rudders, and even a tail hook, to name only a few. This is because in some cases only one or two parts might be used from a given sprue. The theory would be that the parts should all be interchangeable and should thus allow for several variants of Spitfire. Theory doesn't always match up with reality. It does at the very least provide a good set of spare parts for future builds.

Construction of this model, as noted, was basically straight out of the box and started ordinarily enough with the cockpit. I wanted to show off this area so I cut open the pilot's door. RAF interior green was used in this area, with the instrument panel and various other details painted black. A wash and some dry brushing helped to bring out the molded in details. The instruments are very plain so they were detailed with Mike Grant Decals instrument faces. The one substitution I did make was the addition of an Ultracast resin seat instead of the kit seat and pilot figure



With the front office complete, the fuselage was closed up. The locator pins are rather large and proved overly snug, making closing the parts difficult in some places and as such were removed where they proved problematic. With this step completed, attention was shifted to constructing the wings. Several parts needed to be married up for the wings and there are several options for all these parts save the wing bottom. Also the kit is designed to be built with its flaps down, but this did not appeal to me since it would break up the lines of the aircraft, and also Spitfires were seldom seen parked with their flaps down.

I started assembly of the wings by first thinning down the overly thick trailing edges and removing the interior flap detail. The cannon covers should be glued in before closing the wing halves to ensure that they do not sit too low in the wing, as I discovered to my chagrin. Again, some of the locating pins were removed then the wing halves glued. Two choices of wing tip are available depending on which marking scheme you choose, in my case the standard tips were opted for. Once more the locating tabs were cut away to ensure the best fit, but still putty was needed to fair the parts together. The biggest fit issue came when mating the wings with the fuselage as two nasty gaps resulted on either side of the wing roots. I contemplated several ways to address this, including spreading the bottom of the fuselage outwards and even some minor plastic surgery. In the end I felt that these options would create more trouble than they were worth so I simply filled in the gaps with epoxy putty, being careful to preserve the surrounding details.



The rest of the build from that point on was straight forward. Not being a Spitfire expert I continually checked my references to ensure I was doing things right. I discovered that the instructions correctly show the longer cannon barrel going in the outboard position. Errors, however, include installing the horizontal stabilizers upside down, placing the flaps on the opposite wings, and using what I believe is the wrong propeller. I went with part #55 for this latter fix.

The model was cleaned and primed with Tamiya fine grey primer in preparation for the silver finish of Eddie Coventry's aircraft. I wanted to use the included Humbrol acrylic paint (really I did!) but I could not find a thinning medium that worked to my satisfaction. Defeated by this 14ml tin of paint (why the Brits refuse to use jars like the rest of the world is beyond me), I went with Alclad paint instead. To show a bit of contrast, the fabric covered control surfaces were painted with Model Master metalizer, and Humbrol #19 bright red enamel was used on the spinner and canopy frames.





The kit decals went on with little fuss. Because of the silver finish, however, the clear carrier shows up readily so this was trimmed prior to application. The decals reacted well to Micro Set and Sol, though over the cannon blisters stronger measures were needed. These fairings are large and blunt so Solvaset was used. Where the decals still would not settle, they were cut and small sections of spare decal were added, these again getting an application of decal setting solution. As nice as the decals were, if I were to build this kit again I would paint all the stripes, their colour thus matching the spinner and canopy more closely. I also chose not to use all the stencils. First, the carrier film would be too obvious, and second, as this was a restored airshow aircraft I felt it would look better to keep it as clean as possible.

The completed kit renders a nice looking Spitfire, every part the Mk.XVIe. The model measures out precisely with plans in the Aero Details book, and the shapes look bang on. The kit's decals, clear glass, and engraved details are highlights. The faults lie in the poor wing fit and sometimes chunky details. One must also be careful to check the instructions against references, though this is sound advice for any model project. A Mk.XVIe would make a fine addition to any Spitfire collection, but this one only comes with a membership in the Airfix Club. The only other option I'm aware of would be the ICM kit.



There are a number of NEWS items coming up in the next few months that the RMMC membership might want to be involved with:

- May 16-17 Western Canadian Regional Model Contest.
- June 22 Edmonton Aviation Museum Fly-in / Openhouse
- July 26-27 Lethbridge—Alberta International Airshow
- July 26-27—Wetaskwin Airshow—Reynolds Museum
- August 22-23 Nanton Museum Open House—Lanc's in the 50's Theme





Italeri 1/35 Elco PT Boat.

By: Colin Phillips

History:

The Electric boat company or ELCO for short was responsible for building the larger of the two common PT boats built during WW11, Higgins being the other manufacturer. From the start the Elco design, originally a British Vosper designed hull was 80 feet long by just over 20 feet wide weighing in at 51 tons and capable of an impressive 41 knots. PT boats were powered by three Packard 1500 hp engines. Crew consisted of 2 officers and 9 enlisted men. By the end of WW11 a total of 326 boats had been built with the Elco hull and throughout the war these had been upgraded and modified due to combat experience. Tasked at the beginning of the conflict as a torpedo boat, PT's ended the war mostly as heavily armed gunboats engaging troop carrying barges and other lighter enemy craft although they retained their torpedoes until the end of hostilities. History has proven that they made a huge difference in the pacific theatre especially at those times when larger warships were not available in enough numbers.

The Model:

In the past we have been fortunate enough to have two versions of the ELCO PT boat in display model form, Revell's offering in 1/72nd scale and Matchbox in the larger 32nd scale. Of the two, Revell's was the more accurate but the kit dates back to the 1960's and so suffers from all the molding process issues that we commonly see from that era. Molded in details for the most part. That version is an earlier PT and commonly seen released as the famous PT 109, JFK's boat which was destroyed during the war. Rumors abounded that Accurate Miniatures were going to produce a version in 1/48th which we never did see. For those interested in building a good size PT boat it was exciting news to hear that Italeri were going to produce a new tool boat in 1/35th scale.

This release is of the final built version of the Elco design and models PT 596, probably the only weak point in the kit historically since it ties the modeler to one specific boat. That aside, the model would build up to correctly represent the most heavily armed version of this successful design and included in the box for the first time, a new mold 40 mm Bofors which modelers have been asking for years. As in most kits there are problem areas that need to be addressed and we see once again Italeri's trademark push out pin marks and sink marks that I feel in this day and age could be avoided. For the most part though build up is fairly simple and most of the work is devoted to careful cleanup of the over 300 parts.

Getting the model in the first place was somewhat of an adventure since the box is huge. Now I knew the dimensions before I actually got the kit but it still did not prepare me for the first sight of the box. The kind friend who got this for me actually had to struggle with two of these monsters so this ones for you bud. All the parts are nicely laid out on 5 trees with the hull being cast as one piece and separated in the box in a space of it's own. Also included are a PE fret, a clear sheet for the windows and searchlight lens, all the cable and string you need and the inclusion of turned metal gun barrels for the 37mm and the Bofors 40mm. The 37mm is of course the same version used by the Aircobra. It's an impressive bunch of bits to look at.

I decided almost right away to build it although I had no idea of what I was getting myself into.



Assembly:

Right from the start it was obvious that unlike most other builds this one would have to be painted separately in modules. This is not unlike most ship builds but then for the most part, I don't build ships. The hull being in one piece was easy to prepare since only the mold lines needed to be cleaned up. Since the sheer size of the hull presented a problem when painting I decided to go with a rattle can base coat. This caused an unforeseen problem later but more on that as we go on. The colors for the measure 32 scheme are well documented and so it was a surprise to find out that Italeri's color call out for the main colors are wrong. Michael Benolkin's build article on cybermodeller is a good reference for those wanting to stay fairly close to the original but it's your model, paint it whatever color you see fit. For me I wanted to represent a brand new boat and was going for the "museum display" kind of finish so no weathering on this baby. Aside from the main colors there is very little reference made to the colors of individual components i.e. the 40mm Bofors. Seemed to me that most of what was bolted onto the deck would come from sublet manufacturers, Buick and Oldsmobile for some of the weaponry for example. Wartime color matches were approximate at best so this would be the loophole through which I would dodge for the effect that I wanted.

So Tamiya's rattle can in XF 65 was used for the base color on the lower hull and set aside. Next came the deck with the holes needed to be drilled out for almost everything that needed to be mounted to the deck later. I say almost since the ammunition ready lockers came with no holes and there were at least two pre drilled holes that needed to be filled. At this stage you need to decide whether you want the rear post with the convoy light to be mounted since if you mount the 40mm with the barrel to the rear, it will interfere with traverse.

PE deck screens are supplied for the windows to below. Some conversation has been made of the fact that the inside of the hull should be painted black from the start since you may be able to see into the empty space through those windows. I would argue that although I did paint mine, those windows are pretty small. The larger side windows would show more but even then I doubt whether you would see anything. The deck windows were filled with Mr surfacer 500 and sanded smooth. At this time I was building the deck house and bridge and laying that aside to dry and also putting together the large array of weaponry and other equipment.

For the most part this kit is all about sub assembly and careful clean up. I found lots of additional room was needed to store these completed and painted sub assemblies. Some additional work was needed to clean up joints on the sides of the bridge and careful consideration was needed when deciding whether to do the bridge instruments first or later, I decided later to avoid over spray etc. Constant fitting found two holes just behind the left bridge wing that needed to be filled and it was obvious early on the very basic structure would have to go on first with everything else being added later. That sounds easy but with everything painted it becomes a challenge but that's partially what the hobby is all about isn't it. Some custom paint mixes would end up staying around much longer than originally anticipated since touch ups were needed right up until the very end.

When mounting the deck buildings longer clamps than usual are needed to clear the deck and even then I had to fill gaps with white glue and touch up carefully. The deck constantly flexes making keeping everything together much harder and due to the size of the thing and my humble model room; I never did come up with a solution.



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As everything was gradually added the whole project started to take shape and get it's own personality. I had masked the camouflage on the lower hull and much to my surprise and chagrin some of the base color peeled. Here I found the problem with the base color itself. I had intended to use Tamiya XF 65 as the base color for all but found that the rattle can was different from the jar. When viewed together you can see the difference but since the deck separates the two it's not readily noticeable. When it came to carefully blowing in the areas that peeled however it was apparent that this would not work and so some of the paint was de-canned, mixed with Testors thinner and sprayed on those areas that needed it.

The hull was futured where needed by brush and the decals added. Here I was worried but never fear Italeri worked it out, they were fine. Decals were sealed with future.

I had sealed most subassemblies with Testors dull coat before adding them to the deck because of the windows but some would have to be sealed later. Touch ups as well would have to be carefully done since the glass was all in.

The deck windows were filled with crystal clear rather than using the supplied glass and the deck mounted on the hull. There are deck fittings and mounting plates that hide the screws but care should be taken to avoid adding the torpedo racks too early since they will cover the screw holes. I ended up flowing Tamiya thin cement into the joint between the hull and deck just to make sure.

With the boat basically complete it was all very careful moving around since the thing is so big in my room at least I can't easily move around IT. At this point much of the smaller stuff is added such as the exhausts which could not be added before because of the decals on the rear of the hull. The lower hull color was sprayed on the exhausts first and the upper colors brushed on as necessary. Here some fit problems were uncounted with the exhaust silencer actuators which did not fit very well. Patience and some time and they were ok though.

With everything on the hull complete the last parts were added on the deck with detailing for the 50 cal gun turrets and various antennas which need to be added last.

At this point I stood back and within the confines of my model room it was a holy smokes this thing is big. It easily dominates all around it and with the various shades of greens and it's very prominent torpedoes (all that brass) it looks every bit the part of an ELCO 80 ft PT boat.

Michael Benolkin called this kit of the year. If that means it's sheer size and appeal then perhaps. If that's meant to be about the quality of the kit then sorry but I don't agree, There are areas that would be difficult at best to fix and lots of unexpected cleanup, push out pin marks in areas that could have been avoided and sink marks that add to the build time. That aside those who like me just love the look of a PT boat will go through whatever it takes to get this done.

Italeri should be commended for taking on a project of this size and with the news that an S boat is on the horizon, I can't wait. It'll be a full 8 inches longer than the PT and loaded with lots of detail, an entirely different of boat indeed.