

Building Revell's Skyraider Kit

EVERY PLASTIC modeller must at some time have the urge to tackle an advanced model on a large and impressive scale with plenty of working features. We chose the Revell Douglas A-1 Skyraider as much for its cost, 18/11d., as its topicality, due to press coverage of the Vietnam war.

Almost everything works on this model in 1/40 scale. It has moving flaps, ailerons, elevator, rudder, arrestor hook, three opening dive brakes, hinged cowlings, revolving propeller, retracting undercarriage, retracting tailwheel, closable undercarriage doors, movable cockpit canopy and folding wings.

This is not a beginner's kit and only those who have built several "one piece" plastic models should attempt construction. Although the illustrated, step by step instructions are quite explicit, we can imagine the frustration of a novice going beyond his scope.

Our kit was impressive for its lack of "flash" and only the delicate engine front housing was damaged (Revell were only too pleased to replace parts, damaged in transit). Construction commences with the wing and retractable undercarriage. True scale retraction of the legs (turning and folding through 90 degrees) is achieved by a pushrod linked to the 500 lb. bomb under fuselage, turning a pinioned pushrod that is geared to each undercarriage leg with a matching bevel. When the bomb is pushed fore and aft, the undercarriage retracts and descends in a scale-like manner. The undercarriage doors are then shut manually.

After the wing construction is completed, involving all door hanging and outer panel hinging, the fuselage construction is commenced. This is somewhat complicated as the three dive brake panels are all interlinked to a horn and pushrod that eventually links to the elevator, so the brakes can be extended on the application of "down elevator." When the dive brakes are painted, lubricated, and open and shut smoothly, one side of the tailplane is added, complete with elevator, an extension of which keys into the dive brake pushrod. The pilot and cockpit details are added to the cockpit floor moulding, including dashboard transfers, and the cockpit unit is cemented into the half fuselage with the dive brake mechanism. The other fuselage half is now added to complete this stage.

We used Slater's MEK PAK fluid cement exclusively on this model and can vouch for the extremely quick drying and neatness of this chemical. Applied with a fine brush, capillary action draws the cement into the joint for a permanent weld, without affecting the surrounding area it's flowed over! No stringing or cement on fingers makes plastic model building a lot easier!

The other tailplane and elevator half are now added and you can start work on the Wright Cyclone 18 cylinder engine. This is one of the most pleasing aspects of this kit, the engine is quite a masterpiece and you almost feel it's the real thing as you add the exhausts, rows of radial cylinders and the crank case. One point did annoy us, the engine's rear bulk head. This was painted exactly as the instructions suggest, but it's completely concealed in the finished model, inner beauty no less. After completion of the engine, cowl ring, gill flaps and cowl panels, the wing is cemented in position and the major constructional work is finished.

For those who want to use the alternative Vietnam Air Force markings, as we did, of the aircraft flown by General Nguyen Cao Ky from Bien Hoa in 1965, Profile Publications No. 60 aircraft booklet gives a little more marking information than the kit's instructions. The painting instructions with the kit are not really good enough for the novice and the box top illustration differs from these in minor details. We pre-painted many parts while they were still on the molding sprues, due to their small size and awkwardness to handle.

We also found it best to add the wing tanks, bombs and rockets, pre-painted, after final model painting and transfer addition.

This kit is excellent value for money at 18/11d., and for those who like an absorbing, up-to-the-minute, in the news model, the Skyraider is ideal. Converters could easily change it to any other mark, especially the AD-5N two seater, all weather aircraft, markings for which are also in Profile No. 60. For further Skyraider information see John W. R. Taylor's "Air News" on page 70 of this issue and the front cover painted by artist Laurie Bagley in the same markings as this plastic kit.

