

Bell XP-77

The Bell XP-77 was one of several attempts made during World War Two to design light weight fighters to conserve important reserves of light alloys used to make aeroplanes. Like the others, this attempt was unsuccessful.

During World War Two the large numbers of aeroplanes made of lightweight metals caused planners to look at other sources of materials from which to make aeroplanes, including wood, and the idea of a small wooden fighters became popular. In the United States Bell began work on a light weight fighter constructed from wood in October 1941 and six XP-77s were ordered in August 1942. Weight problems and design delays meant that only slow progress was made so, in August 1943, production was limited to two prototypes and the first one flew in 1 April 1944. One of the prototypes crashed in October 1944 and the project was terminated in December that year.

This model represents the first prototype.

Data: Experimental light weight fighter. *Engine* one Ranger XV770-7 piston engine of 388kW (520hp) *Wing span* 8.38m (27ft 6in). *Length* 6.97m (22ft 10½in). *Maximum take-off weight* 1827kg (4028lb). *Maximum speed* 530km/h (330mph). *Range* 890km (550miles). *Armament* and 20mm cannon and two 12.7mm (0.5in) machine guns.

Special Hobby 1/72 kit, completed by Leigh Edmonds in September 1989.



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