

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Random Modelling Notes

LITTLE FRENCH BEAUTIES (fun making little French aircraft)

(February 2012)

I don't care what you say, French aeroplanes are amongst the most gorgeous looking flying machines ever made. (Some of their bombers might have lacked something in the aesthetic stakes, but I never said that if the case goes to court.) To prove my point, I submit as evidence three little French aeroplane models I've been working on over the holiday period.

The first is an ANF Les Mureaux 190. This is what we would call a 'light fighter' and apparently the French sometimes called a 'jockey fighter'. It never went into production, preference being given to the Caudron 714, and probably a good thing too. The kit is the work of that genius, Jean-Pierre Dujin, but you are lucky if you can find his kits around today.

I must have become a hardened modeller because I have little trouble with Dujin kits these days. There is, of course, all the tidying up, drilling out little holes for dowels to hold things together, and lots of little things I just take for granted, and once you've done all that Dujin kits are remarkably accurate for the medium they are cast in and go together with little fuss.

The trouble with this kit came with the cockpit canopy. Dujin kit canopies are always vacuformed but that is usually no trouble. However, on this occasion the plastic on one side of the



canopy was too thin to be of any use so I fossicked around in my spares box looking for something that might fit the bill. The most likely was a canopy from an old A6M kit which worked out rather nicely, the bulge in the cockpit top is a little too far back, but I'm not complaining. There is a bit of a problem with the cockpit interior that I'd rather not dwell on, but otherwise, very pretty.



I have a box of almost one hundred Dujin kits and I select which one to be made next by closing my eyes and plunging in my hand, the same way one would draw a raffle ticket. What came out next was a kit of the Druine 31 ultralight, a nice little kit and easy enough to put together, apart from the undercarriage because of my big fat fingers.

While doing the research for this I came across a couple of Australian ones with a registration system new to me but, I find, apparently a system run by the Sports Aviation Association under which Druine 31s carry the registration prefix 19-. I suppose this is fine because none of these aeroplanes have the range to fly overseas where the more common registration, VH- would be required. Doing a bit more research on this I found a couple of photos of the first Druine 31 to be



made in Australia and the second ultralight to be registered in Australia. It had the registration VH-ULI (which seems appropriate) and it was too much for me to resist.

Finally, a Payen 222, a strange little aeronautical idea that came to nothing. There is a Dujin kit of this too but I never managed to get one (although one is currently +6available on eBay for a large but not unreasonable amount). Instead, RS Models have kitted this and Earl (NKR, look him up on the interweb) was selling them for a mere \$20. My resistance is very low for this sort of thing so I got one. I can't say that it is much less difficult to make than a Dujin kit (and the canopy is vacformed, which adds to the excitement, and a bit of a blemish on my model) but it has the advantage of including the French colours and markings that the aeroplane wore before it was repainted in that hideous German scheme.

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