

# THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

## *Workbench notes*

### LOCKHEED C-5A IN 1/144 BY ENTEX

(July 2002)

The Lockheed C-5 was designed to meet a USAF requirement for a very large strategic transport to compliment its smaller transports such as the C-130 and C-141. Lockheed's design proposal was selected, construction of the prototype began in August 1966 and it flew for the first time on 30 June 1968. Although initial plans were for construction of 115 C-5As cost overruns and other problems saw production reduced to 81, sufficient to equip four squadrons.

The C-5 is anything but an ordinary aeroplane but the work it does is hardly extraordinary, it carries things. It carries the biggest mobile items in the United States military inventory including Main Battle Tanks and, with in-flight refuelling, it can carry loads to anywhere in the world at short notice. While it is now overshadowed by several Russian Antonovs, it is probably the most important military logistics aeroplane in service more than 30 years after the first ones were delivered. It has proved invaluable to the United States, beginning with flying supplies to Israel during the Yom Kippur war of 1973 to more recent conflicts including Desert Shield and Desert Storm and the United States most recent excursions.

The most contentious thing about the C-5 is its cost and its wings. The original specifications asked for payload and range that were beyond the technical capabilities of the times and the haste of the design meant the wings were under-engineered. After much angst and argument the United States government decided to refit the entire C-5A fleet with new and stronger wings, using better engineering practices and aluminium alloys that were unavailable when the wings had first been produced and all C-5As were fitted with these new wings between 1983 and 1987. While all this was going on the United States armed forces were also agonising over a shortfall in projected heavy airlift requirements and the failure of its plans for the next generation of heavy lift aeroplanes to



come to fruition. In October 1982 Lockheed was authorised to proceed with production of 50 C-5Bs that were essentially C-5As with the stronger wings, slightly more powerful engines and state-of-the-art avionics. The first C-5B flew in September 1985, deliveries began in January 1986 and the final one was delivered in April 1989.

With no plans for replacing the C-5 who knows how long they will remain in service. We might all have gone to the great model shop in the sky before the C-5 makes its last flight.

This kit was released by Otaki in the late 1960s and made available locally by Entex. I would be surprised if you can find it around these days at any place except a swap-and-sell and I guess it would be quite expensive there if you did find one. I bought my kit in the late 1970s in a little shop where it had been long forgotten and it was quite rare then.

There were a few reasons why I never got around to making it. One was that I didn't expect to find another one so I was hesitant to have a go in case I made a mess of it. Another was that it makes up into a rather large model that would be difficult to take with you when you moved. Yet another was that while the decal sheet in the kit looks fairly good, it was for the original white and light grey colour scheme which I found absolutely uninspiring. In 1983 C-5s began appearing in a much more interesting 'Euro One' scheme but, because the kit isn't commonplace, I never found any decals or paint scheme information for that version.

What convinced me to finally have a go at this kit was the success I'd had with using my computer and laser printer to make some decals for my Bloch MB200 and the thought that since all the 'Euro One' markings are in black I could make them for myself. Since I don't expect to be moving in the coming decade or two that took care of another consideration so I thought it might be time to apply glue to the parts.

Really, there's nothing difficult about this kit. I was not impressed with the joins between the two halves of the engine pods which were rather ragged so I spent some time trimming them out, putting in some plastic card and then trimming it down so the intakes have nice even edges. I used a tiny bit of filler on the wing joints with the fuselage and also went to a bit of effort to thin down

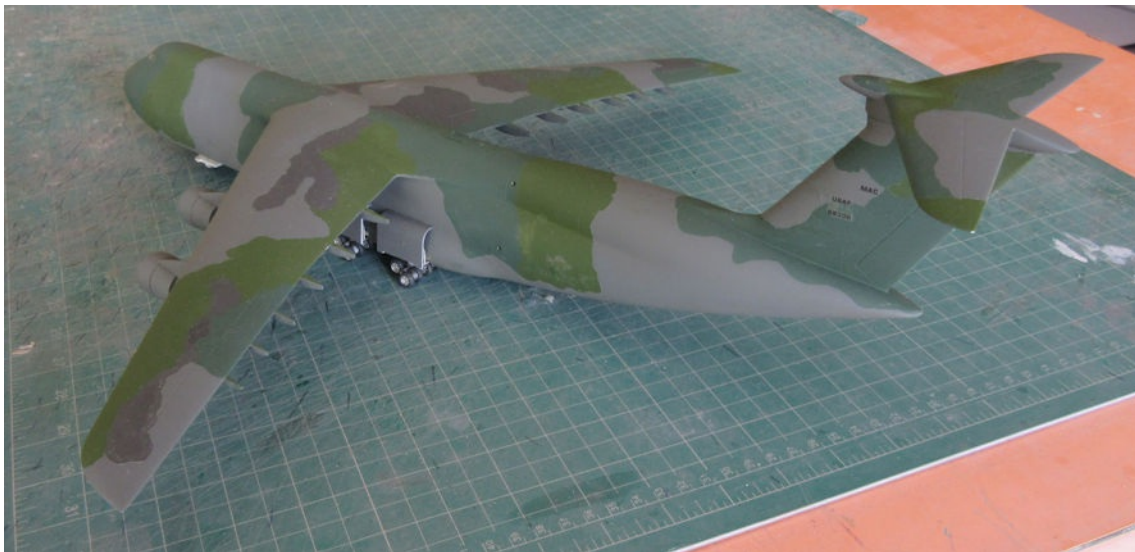


the trailing edges. It was all fairly routine stuff, the kind of thing that I do to just about every kit, and the construction was more or less complete.

The point about 1/144 aeroplanes is not really the detailing that you'd put into a 1/48 or even a 1/72 one, it is the finishing. This brought me to the more challenging parts of the job. The first was to spend hours peering at photographs of C-5s in the 'Euro One' scheme and drawing up a plan showing where the colours go on it. It appears that there are some differences between individual aeroplanes but that they all follow a similar pattern so I was able to come up with sort of generic plan that looks like just about all C-5s in the scheme, but doesn't represent a particular one. This turned out to be not such a bad thing because, when it came to drawing up the decal sheet on the computer, I could not find a photograph clear enough to identify the serial number, so I made one up that is in the general range of the C-5As.

The most difficult part of drawing up the decal sheet was getting the insignias right so I scanned a standard star-and-bar decal and redrew it into the form that was used on the C-5s. I also drew up some lines to go around the engine nacelles and the tail codes using a suitable font from the range available on the computer. None of this was difficult but it ate up an evening or two.

After all that the really tedious part of completing the model was the wheels - 28 of them. Now I remember why I gave up making tanks. The end result is an edifying looking model.



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