

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Workbench notes

CONVAIR XB-46 IN 1/144 BY ANIGRAND

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The Convair XB-46 was one of those thought experiments that took place towards the end of World War II and into the early 1950s. All the aerodynamic experiments and developments in jet engines combined with the lessons of the war led to all kinds of experiments into how to make effective warplanes in this new environment.

In order to catch up to the German Ar234 the US ordered a range of medium jet bombers from the XB-45 to the XB-48. Eventually two went into production, the North American B-45 that was the United States' first operational jet bomber, chosen because it could be quickly put into production, and the Boeing B-47 that set a new standard for jet bombers. The two that did not go into production was the Convair XB-46 and the Martin XB-48.

Convair's entry into this competition was an extremely elegant aeroplane but it was doomed to disappear into the oblivion before the first metal was cut. The company was also working on an advanced attack aeroplane and convinced the authorities to spend the money allocated for a second XB-46 prototype to the new attack aeroplane, which did not eventuate either. Consequently the sole



XB-46 was only constructed to an airworthy condition without operational equipment and used to conduct aerodynamic tests.

The strange Hong Kong company of Anigrand make a wide variety of strange kits, in 1/72 and 1/144 and you can get the XB-46 in both scales. If you get the 1/144 version you also get kits for the F-89D, XV-5A and B-45, which is a great advantage if you've been struggling with the Mach2 kit for some time. Their XB-46 is not a complex kit, as you can see from the instructions, but it makes up into a very nice little replica once you get over the little bubble holes and flaws. That's what filler is for.

The colour scheme for this model is painfully simple, all over polished aluminium. For my metallic kits in 1/72 I use a combination of some coats of Humbrol 11 and Alclad II Airframe Aluminium, and that works fairly well. On our annual descent upon Melbourne last year I bought a couple of bottles of Floquil Silver which goes on very nicely and looks almost as good as the result I've been getting with the more complex system, but not quite. So I tempted fate and decided to try a coat of Alclad II over the Floquil. I don't know what was the cause, but the result was tackiness that remained after a week. I shan't try that again.

The result is a reasonably pretty little replica of an obscure but beautiful aeroplane. I'm coming to like Anigrand kits, not for their ease of construction but because of their subjects.



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