

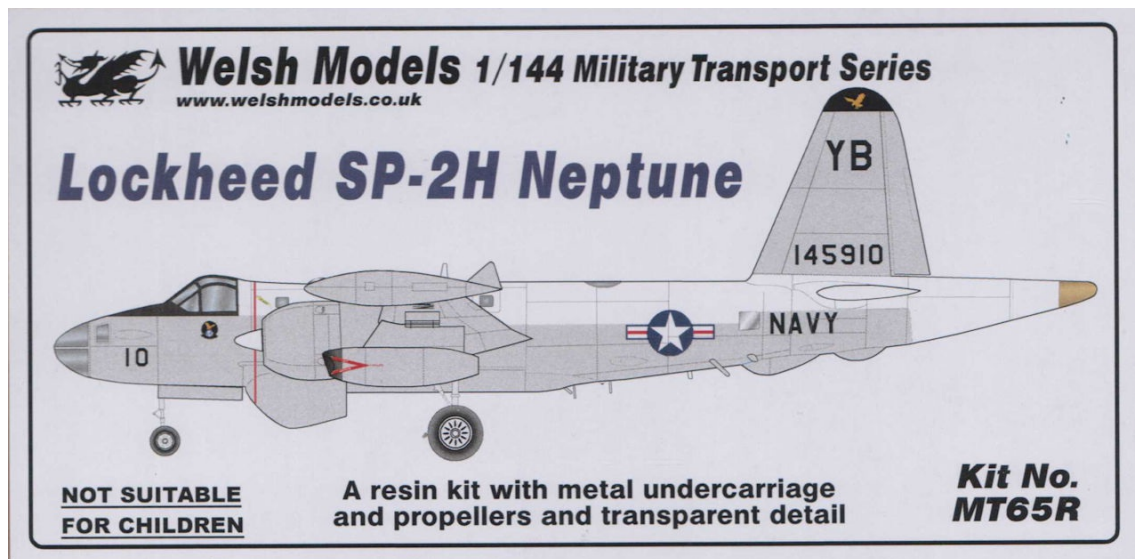
The Little Aviation Museum

Workbench notes

Lockheed SP-2H in 1/144 by Welsh Models

I like the kits that Welsh Models are making these days. They are relatively simple but accurate and honest resin kits of 1/144 aircraft that you won't find in the catalogues of other kit makers. They are not cheap but they fill niches that nobody else is filling. And for good reason too, they are aircraft that would be unprofitable for injection moulded kit companies to produce. If you are not experienced in making resin kits they might be a little challenging but, to an old hand, they almost make themselves.

A year or two back Welsh Models released kits of three sub-hunters in rapid succession, the Breguet Atlantique, the Lockheed SP-2H and the Boeing P-8. Nowadays there are kits of all these aircraft in 1/72 which would be most people's preferred scale - though the Hasegawa 1/72 SP-2H is not exactly new and the Revell 1/72 Atlantique is more likely to be found at swap-n-sells than in shops. However, all three build up into mighty large models which can be a significant disadvantage in many ways. So, these new Welsh Models kits which are in the much more acceptable (to me anyhow) 1/144 scale got me interested. At the same time as these three kits Welsh Models also published a 1/144 Avro Lincoln that had optional parts and decals for the RAAF long nosed maritime reconnaissance version, but you wouldn't really call it a sub-hunter. So I bought all four. My bank account was not happy but I sure was.



The Atlantique went together with no great difficulty. I would have liked a little bit more specificity about the colour schemes but perhaps Welsh Models likes to encourage us to do our own research. Anyhow, when it came to any points I was not sure on I got out my Revell 1/72 kit and used it as a guide. The finished model looks very nice and doesn't take up much room.

Next I started on the Neptune. This kit is the late version with the bubble canopy which I



think gives it a modern look, obviously. To replicate this Welsh Models included a vacform canopy along with the nose blister but there is no cockpit interior. This might have presented a problem had I been a dedicated detailer, but I'm not so I just painted the area under the canopy matt black and it looks okay.

The major stumbling block with this model is that the starboard wing tip tank on the real thing is transparent at the front with what I assume to be a spotlight in it, whereas the kit just gives you a solid resin tank. I can't see why Welsh Models didn't do something about that with a nice little vacformed piece for the front of the tank, but they don't so that was the problem. Actually it was not a difficult problem to fix but it took my poor old brain about six months to figure out what the solution was, and about half an hour to do it when my brain finally clicked into gear. It involved cutting of the tip of the drop tank, using it to mould a new tip in clear two part resin, a bit of sanding and polishing and six months of indecision was behind me.

The kit comes with decals for two US Navy aircraft but I could not resist the temptation to increase the degree of difficulty by making this model as a RAAF aircraft. The colour scheme on the RAAF aircraft was the same as for the US Navy aircraft, Light Gull Grey and Insignia White, which came from the excellent SMS lacquer range. The national decals came out of the spares box (the fuselage side ones are about 1mm wider than they should be, but let's pretend we didn't notice.) Fortunately all the other letters and numbers were black so I generated them on my computer using the Hawkeye 1/72 decal sheet for a RAAF Neptune as a guide.

I was worried that this model was going to be a tail sitter, and it certainly was during the whole construction process up until the point when I attached the white metal wheels and propellers.

Even so, the balance is a bit precarious and it might have been an idea if I had drilled a hole in the nose and put some additional weight in there, as I had done with the Atlantique.



I may be biased but I think this is one of the nicest looking models I've made in a while. That is, I think, partly because it took me a long while to complete it and partly because the late model Neptune is such a good looking aircraft.



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