

Hawker Hurricane Mk IId HV663/U



No.6 Sqn, RAF, Gabes, Tunisia, 1943

The Hawker Hurricane Mk IId was a dedicated anti-tank aircraft, armed with two Vickers 40 mm 'S' guns, mounted *under* the wings- each gun having 15 rounds of ammunition; additionally, a 0.303 machine gun was mounted in each wing, for aiming purposes, with 332 rounds per gun. This armament arrangement was also employed in some of the Hurricane Mk IVs which succeeded the Mk IId in production- these later airframes having a "universal" wing which could be equipped with a variety of armaments. This Hurricane version was employed- with very considerable success in the North African, Sicilian, Italian, and Burma campaigns. No.184 Squadron, RAF, was the sole unit to use this variant operationally in Northern Europe; they undertook anti-shipping strikes during 1943 from RAF Middle Wallop, Hampshire. In addition, No.1 Specialised Low Attack Instructors School, based at RAF Millfield in Northumberland, also used this variant during 1943.

The heavy Vickers 40 mm 'S' guns seriously degraded the Hurricane IId's performance:- maximum speed at 19,000 ft – 316 mph; at 12,000 ft – 290 mph; at 2,000 ft – 176 mph; its range was 480 miles, and the service ceiling was 33,500 ft. When the 40 mm guns were fired, the recoil effect dramatically slowed the aircraft.

The kit used is the (relatively) recent Airfix Hurricane Mk IId. This kit is *not* up to the standards of the latest kits from Airfix, and is certainly not up to 21st century standards. It has very poor cockpit detail, lacks accurate detail in the undercarriage bays and on the undercarriage legs, the very poor wheel-hub detail lacks depth; the kit does not even include the pitot, which ought to be present below the port wing. There is, at the base of the rudder a hint of something being not *quite* right- a slight lack of depth to the rudder? The panel lines are somewhat heavy, but are visually much improved under a coat of paint- particularly if one is hand-painting the airframe. The armoured windscreen and the canopy are quite cleanly moulded- but the ones in my kit had a distinctly "frosted" look to them, which was quite unacceptable; dipping the transparencies in Johnson's Klear goes a long way to curing this irritating problem. When one considers that this model is a near contemporary of the same manufacturer's excellent Spitfire Mk Ia kit in the same scale, it is a major disappointment.

Converting the Airfix kit is easy- I used the 3-D Conversions kit: this provides the useful option of having the 'S' guns either un-enclosed, or enclosed within the more commonly seen cowlings; two 40 mm ammunition boxes are also supplied for use by the diorama enthusiast. Serial numbers and codes for three aircraft are provided on the small decal sheet- national markings and stencilling will have to come from the donor kit. The parts that comprise the 3-D kit are very crisply moulded.

The pairs of blisters over the 20 mm cannon-breeches, on top of the wings, must be removed, and various panel lines filled (all is clearly shown in the brief instructions). The holes for the 20 mm cannon- inserting the kit's cannon and then cutting them off is the easiest way to do this. The inboard cartridge ejector chutes also need to be filled.

It must also be noted that the Hurricane MK IId did not have leading edge landing lights fitted (the blast from the 40 mm guns would have shattered them), so I fitted the kit lenses, and then used Vallejo acrylic filler to blend them smoothly with the leading edge, before sanding the whole leading edge area, including where the 20 mm cannon would have been installed. This was done initially with a 400 grit sanding stick, working up to finishing off with a 12,000 grit polishing pad to get the ultra-smooth finish which I wanted, though, in retrospect, this caused me a small problem later during this build. I also scratch-built the missing pitot: simple!

The two 0.303 machine gun ports need to be drilled out. I had, however, obtained such a highly polished finish to the leading edges that my tiny drill kept skidding off the places where I wanted the gun ports (and into my fingers), and scarring the ultra-smooth finish that I had created- and I had to restore the leading edge finish and later I used Dull Red decal patches to simulate the red doped fabric patches that covered the two .303 machine guns.

The airframe was painted with Aeromaster Middle Stone and Light Mediterranean Blue, the shadow shading on the upper surfaces was painted with Xtracolour Dark Earth.



(I am of the firm opinion that the loss of the Aeromaster acrylic paint range was a major tragedy, insofar as our hobby is concerned: hand-brushed finishes with this paint are superb.) By the way, it should be noted that the under-surfaces of Desert Air Force Hurricanes could be Azure Blue, or Sky Blue, or Light Mediterranean Blue: records of what airframe wore which blue are, to say the least, vague; airframes within the same unit could carry *any* of these blues. After decaling, a coat of semi-matt varnish was airbrushed over the model.

All in all, I am fairly happy with the resulting model, although it was really not a great pleasure to build. I just wish that Airfix had done a more thorough job with the base kit. If one compares it with their current standard, it is crude; though the parts fit very well, particularly the wing/fuselage joint, it is nowhere nearly as good as Airfix's recent fabric-winged Hurricane Mk I in the same scale- how things have improved! However, with a modicum of care, it *can* be made into a passable model, which, at the very least, does look like a Hurricane...

I can, however, wholeheartedly recommend the 3-D Models conversion set; it is designed to convert *any* Hurricane Mk IIc kit in this scale.

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