

The CAC Boomerang

A Detailed Guide To The RAAF's
Famous WWII Fighter



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AlleyCat 1/32nd CA-12/13/19 Boomerang

by Steve A. Evans



The Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation CA-13 Boomerang has a remarkable place in history that many people either don't know about or have completely forgotten. Built in a state of emergency for the Australian Air Force it had neither the finesse nor the outright ability of its Japanese counterparts but it turned into a real workhorse at a time when the Aussies needed just that. Montex decided that we needed one in 1:32 scale (and why not?) and with Alley Cat later taking over the moulds and doing their own brand of updating and refining we've got a very interesting looking kit indeed. Just one glance in the box tells you it's going to be long and complex build process but it's got a real quality feel to it so, what's the worst that could happen?

Before we begin a note on health and safety. All plastic is toxic but resin is the worst of the lot. If you need to work with it then try to use the knife, scissors and saw as much as possible and only grind and sand as a last resort. Use a mask and get some ventilation around you to take away the tiny particles of resin dust that would otherwise get into your lungs.



The Instruction part of the contents is quite comprehensive with a twelve-page booklet, two sheets of full colour painting guides, two sheets of stencil placements, and two sheets of construction notes and detail painting. You even get a walkaround CD that has over 150 images of the real thing on it



It's a sturdy box with a neat little picture on the top but it's not very big, giving you a hint of the diminutive size of the Boomerang



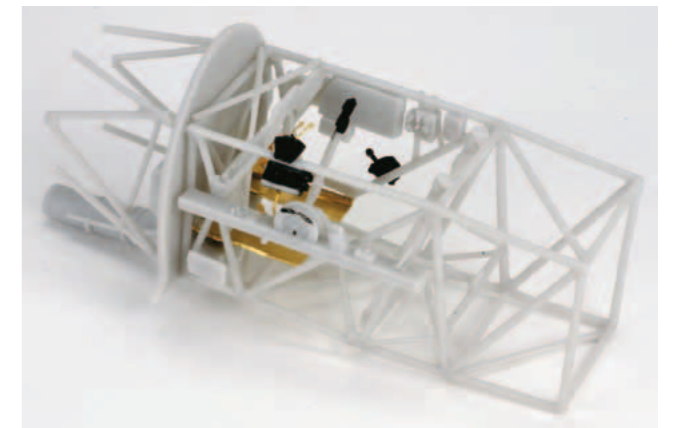
The resin in the box can look a little daunting at first; there are over 170 parts in there!



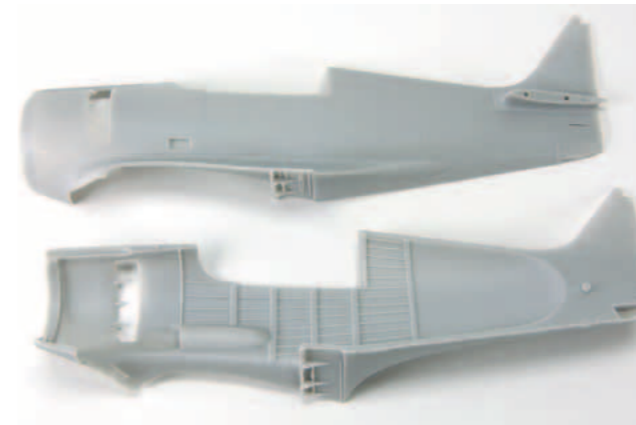
The smaller resin parts are neatly bagged but it's a random bagging, so don't think it's been sorted out for you; where's the fun in that?



The cockpit... no, really it is



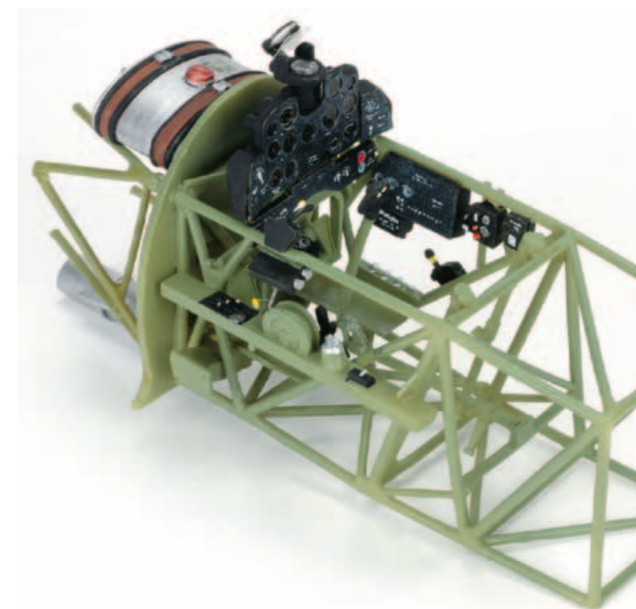
See, I told you that small hay-stack of bits was the cockpit. Most of the resin fits just about where it should but the instructions are a guide only, trial fits and trims are the order of the day



The main fuselage halves are hollow-cast resin of excellent quality, they even include locating pins



The interior structure gets painted with Mr Color 364 BS283 Grey-Green, which is supposedly the right shade. Sorry but that's far too green for my liking, shan't be using that one again



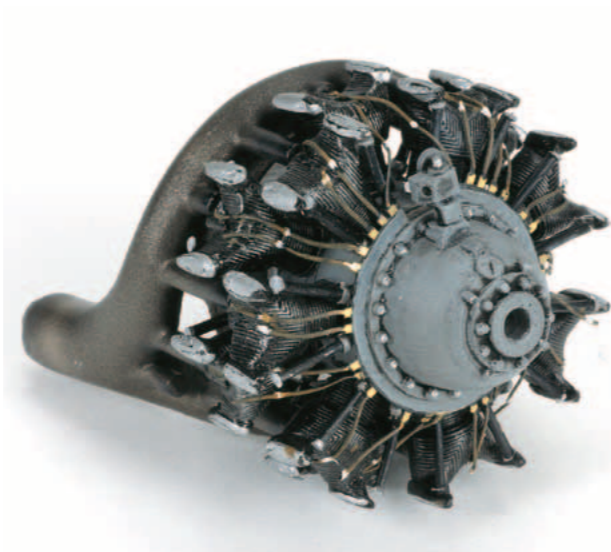
This is the main section of the interior with the details added and painted. This is entirely 'out of the box'



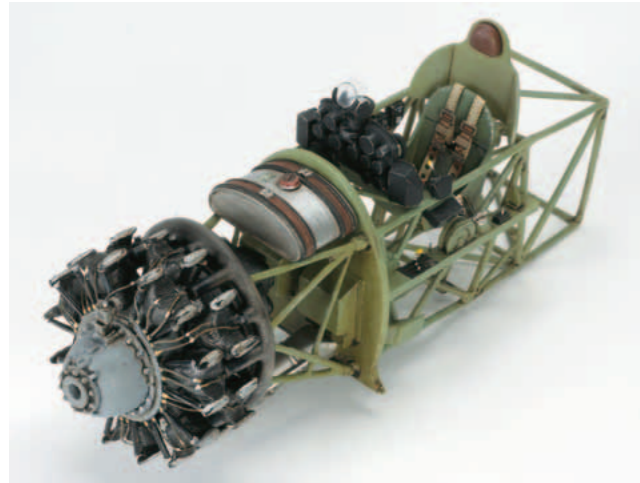
The main instrument panel is lovely. It's made up of the resin back, an acetate printed film for the instrument faces and a photo-etched front panel; perfect



Onto the engine now and this is a delicate resin construction of multiple parts, including a couple of spare cylinder blocks. It takes a lot of careful cleaning up



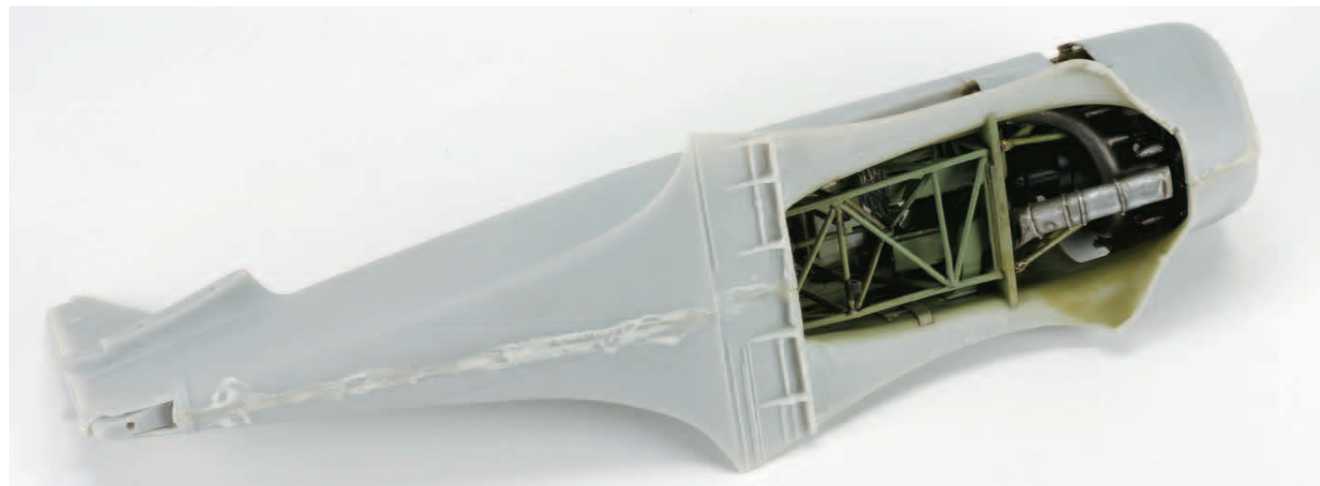
It's helped with a photo-etch wiring harness but that metal stuff is a bit clumsy; to remove the harness from the etched fret you have to cut no fewer than 91 connection points!



Once made up the whole collection of interior parts certainly looks pretty good, it's a pity that half of it is never going to be seen again once the fuselage halves are closed up



Talking of which, you just know that this isn't going to be a simple fit, right?



As if by magic it's all in there but trust me when I say it's not easy, this kit is not for the inexperienced resin modeller



The centre line joint isn't too pretty on the underside but that's a small price to pay for a near perfect joint on the upper surface. Here you can see the superglue and talc mixture for a glue/filler



Vac-form canopies, love them or loath them they are often the only way to get a short-run transparent part. The ones in this kit are reasonably well defined and clear but are never easy to cut out accurately. I didn't need the spare but it's nice to know it was there as back-up



The rear section I reinforced with a few strips of plastic card that give it shape, rigidity and a larger mating surface for attachment



The transparent parts aren't a bad fit but once again plenty of trial fits, trims and filler are going to be needed. The photo-etched cooling gills are a welcome addition with an accurate scale thickness

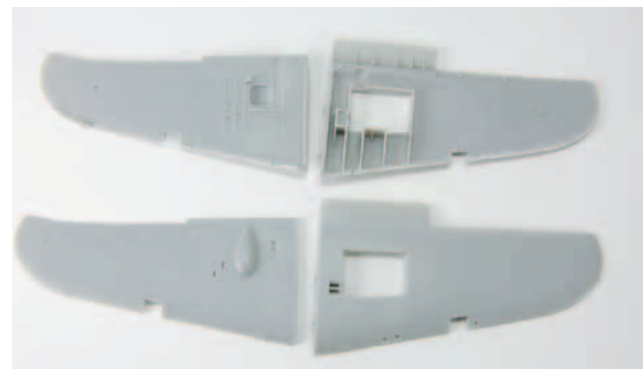




At the other end of things we have the tail, with additional control rods made from stretched sprue and the tip of the fin made into the proper shape with more talc n'glue. Note the welcome addition of locating pegs for the horizontal stabilizers



The tail sections fit very well indeed with only small gaps to be taken care of. The separate control surfaces are also very neatly done although the fabric effect is a little on the 'heavy' side



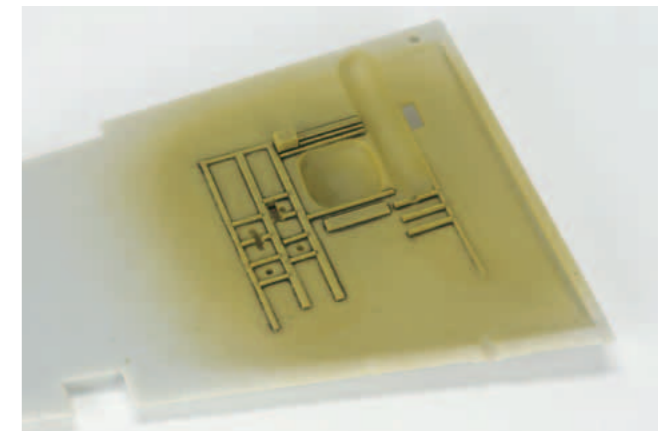
The wings are hollow cast too, with both internal and external detail and even locating pins. Just like an injection moulded item but in cast resin instead



The detail on the lower wing is very neat, with the cannon bulge and ejection slots and plenty of access panels too



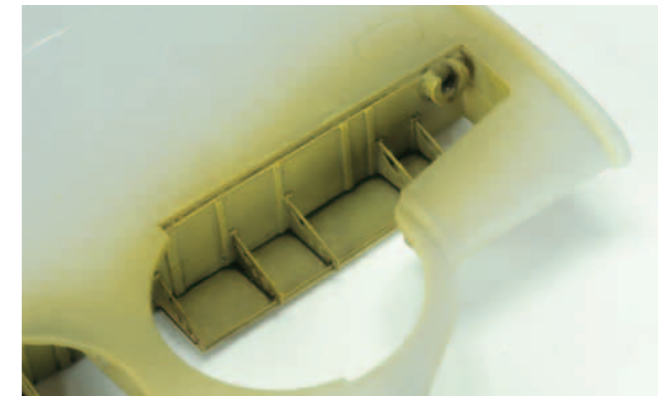
Internal detail is also neatly cast with accurate shapes with very sharp and clean edges



Painting is Zinc Chromate Green for the gun and wheel bays, in this particular case it's the yellow version of that problematic colour



The wheel bays get some very welcome detail with etched ribs, although I did scratch build the internal skin from some plastic card, it's one of the few additions I made to this kit



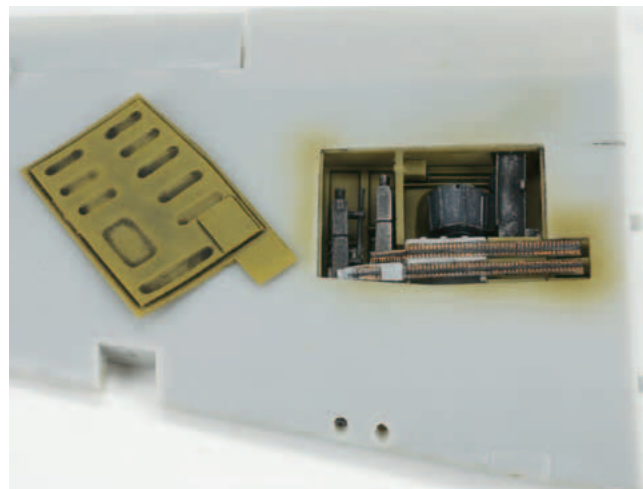
The Zinc chromate looks pretty vivid here but it'll all be toned down in the end after some weathering. Note the large, positive location for the undercarriage leg



The fit and finish of most of the larger parts is really good. Here the inner section of the upper wing sits neatly into place on the lower centre section, minimal filler required



You can't complete the wings without doing the gun bays first and you get all the bits necessary for both bays. The casting on the Brownings is excellent, even down to the correct slotted cooling holes on the barrel shrouds



It's a tight fit, including ammo runs and wing ribs and don't expect to get that door closed over it anymore



Location for the outer wing section is taken care of with the pegs but they need a little trimming to get them to fit inside the raised reinforcing rib. Once in position it makes for a very sturdy joint



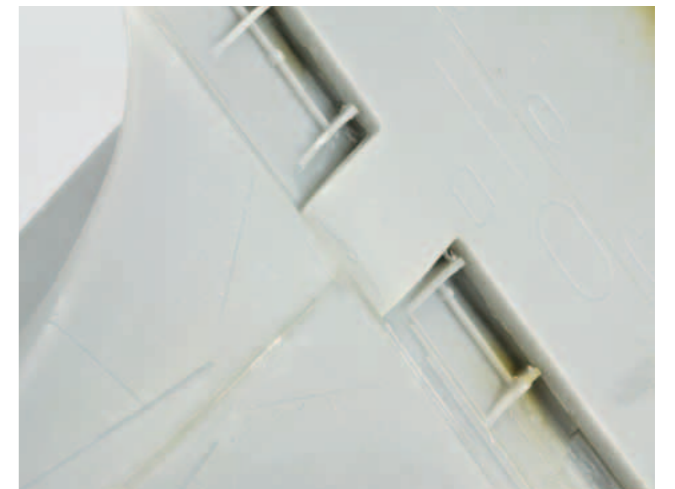
The wing root joint is as good as it gets in this medium, showing that Alley Cat have taken some care over the casting processes



Like I said, the gun panels do not fit with all the gubbins inside, they'll have to remain as separate items



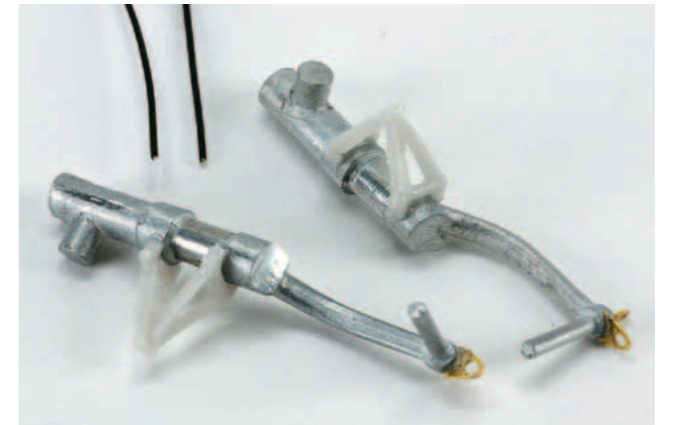
The fit of the wing centre section to the fuselage is reasonable, with a good smear of the talc 'n glue filler along this edge there's nothing to really worry about, just make sure you get everything aligned properly



The rear joint to the fuselage is OK, I've seen worse on main-stream injection mouldings



Aah the wonders of working with resin; pin-holes have the nasty habit of appearing anywhere that you have to start sanding down the resin. Time for the superglue here I think



Undercarriage legs are a true mixed media affair with metal main legs, resin scissor links, etched fret tie-down loops and some insulated wire for the brake lines



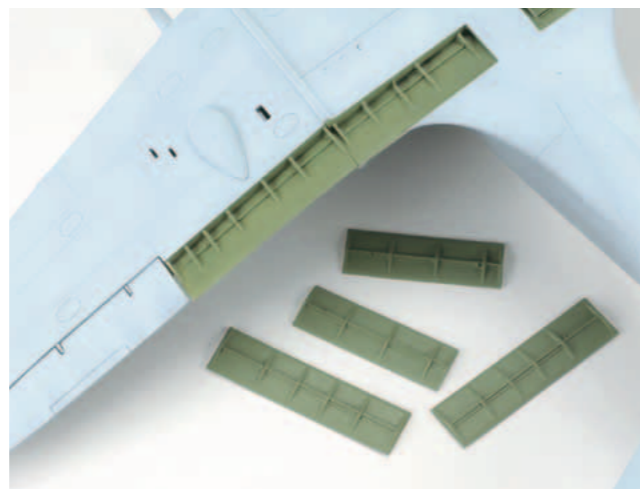
Would you look at that, it looks just like a Boomerang. Cleaned, masked and ready for the first coats of paint



Halfords Grey Plastic Primer is the first step in getting some colour on the kit. This keys in the surface for the following paints and gives you a good surface to check for any defects before the painting goes any further



The RAAF Sky Blue underside is the first stage, it's LifeColor acrylic, bright and clean but not for long



The internal area of the flaps could be aluminium or Green but as the example on the included CD is painted I followed suit



Top coat first stage is RAAF Foliage Green, LifeColor again, sprayed in an even coat as this will be all post-shaded. The centres of many of the panels were then lightly sprayed with a mix of Foliage Green and about 5% Light Grey. This breaks up the surface a little and gives it a bit more character



The RAAF Earth Brown application follows; this is the second application of the LifeColor paint you're looking at here as the basic colour straight from the pot is much too dark. This has been lightened with about 25% RAF Dark Earth. Panel centres again highlighted with lighter shades of the main colour



Weathering follows and a lot of it. Loads of pastel dust in a multitude of shades and paint chips aplenty courtesy of a soft leaded silver pencil. Note the chipping follows the panel lines and the structures beneath the skin



The overall weathering effect we're going for here is 'tired'. These machines were well used in a harsh environment. Note I've touched in a few of the panels with lighter shades of the main colours giving it a scruffier look



Tamiya Smoke is applied to most of the panel lines and along the rivet tracks in the skin. A heavy application is used around the engine and exhaust to darken the paint in these areas



Humbrol Clear is the initial gloss coat for the decalling process to follow. Notice how the gloss surface has darkened the paint and weathering. To be honest, that Earth Brown still looks too dark



The decals (printed by Fantasy Printshop?) are very well done indeed with sharp images, lovely colour and perfect register. They work really well too, reacting well to Microscale Setting solutions



You get a comprehensive set of decals for this one with 4 options, 3 from the period and one later restored warbird. Any of them would be a fine subject. As you can see, Alley Cat also supply two shades of markings as well as varying roundel sizes. There is even a correction sheet for the code letters; all very well done indeed



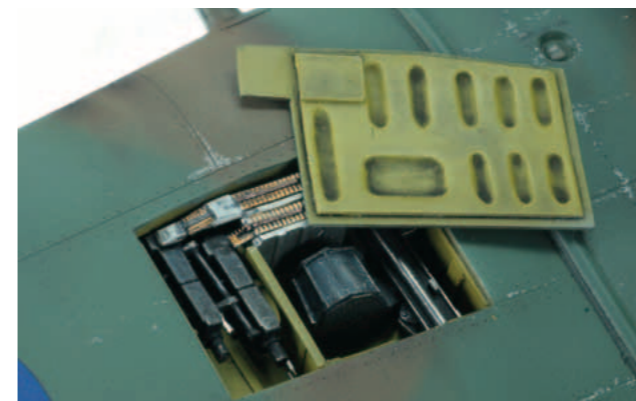
Decal application is pretty straightforward, although the Red Roo stencils are a bit delicate and take time to cut from the continuous film decal sheet, it all comes together to create a very pleasing effect



The final finish is courtesy of my favourite varnish; Xtracolors XDFE Flat Varnish and then it's time to sort out the details. The canopy has to be carefully de-masked and slotted into place and getting the wiring and lights done is all part of the magic of building layers of detail



And there you have it; one complete Boomerang. (The gun bay doors are temporarily fitted in case I decide to re-position them)



Verdict

This is not an easy kit by any stretch of the imagination. At times it's frustrating, there's plenty of additional detail that could be added if you want to and every stage of the complex build requires careful planning and lots of trial fits and trimming. But look at what you get; a very nice model of one of the forgotten heroes of WWII. This aircraft has so much character and even in this scale it's not huge so it won't fill up the shelf too much. As long as you've got some resin experience and have the patience to cope with it then this is a model definitely worth having.



Airframe Album No.3
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