

XS-models 1/72 Hughes 1B – Kit review

Anders Bruun



XS-models kit number 07212H1SHQ "**Hughes H-1 Short Wing Racer**". 1/72 kit containing 13 resin parts, 3 white metal parts, 33 etched metal parts, two vacuum-formed canopies, complete decals, an instrument panel film and a canopy mask. XS-models, Neuer Weg 18, D-38302 Wolfenbüttel, Germany (phone +49 53 3197530, fax +49 53 31975353, info@XS-models.com, www.xs-models.com)

The interior comprises around 15 etched parts and a resin seat. The etched parts include complete side panels that should be bent into shape and "wall-papered" to the fuselage mouldings - they reportedly fit well when you have bent them to the right curvature. This should assemble into a complete and good-looking interior, when you have figured out where all the tiny parts should go - I had to look several times at the instructions before I had it figured out and reference to some photos will definitely help. There is no real indication where the rudder pedals should be attached, so for those you have to use your judgement. The instrument panel, with film for the instrument faces, is very nice, and is quite visible even with the canopy closed. When the canopy opens the front part slides forward and the side parts slide down like car windows.

The main airframe parts are a bit unconventionally split. The one-piece fuselage has a big hole in the bottom where the one-piece wing together with its fillets is fitted. This minimises the number of joints and after a bit of fitting and sanding my parts fitted almost without any gaps at all. However, on my kit the fuselage mould halves had not been perfectly aligned, so there was still a top fuselage joint to clean up... The horizontal tail, which is different between the "long-wing" and "short-wing" versions, is combined with the tail cone and is fitted to the rear fuselage before the vertical tail. The parts layout is pretty clever and ensures that most of the joints are in places where they are easy to deal with.

The canopy is perhaps slightly softly shaped, but should look good when the framework is painted on. The engine

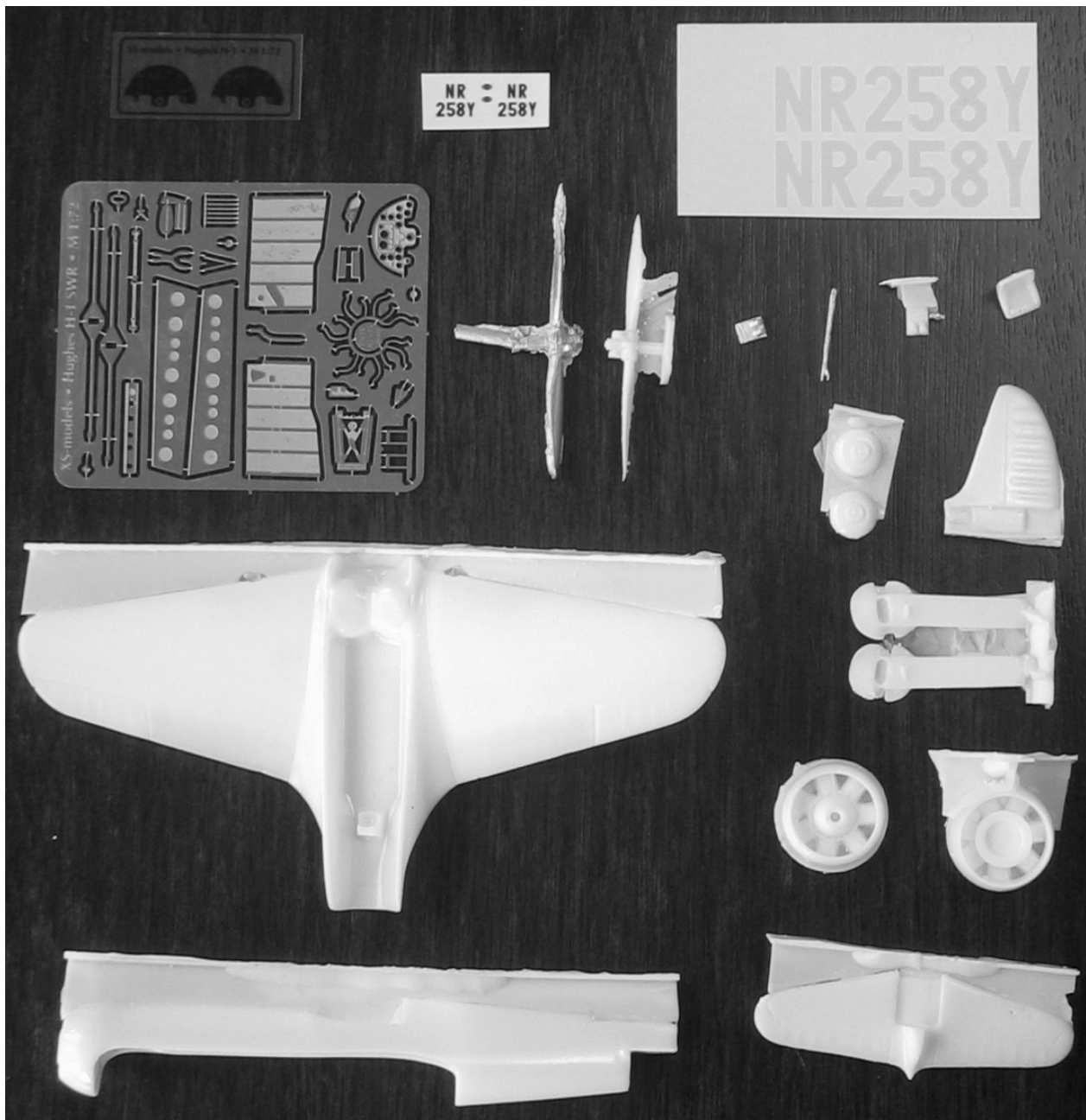
is cast into the cowling, which consists of rear and front halves, again avoiding tricky joints. It comes with an etched ignition harness and eight tiny etched rods that represent the struts that attached the cowling to the engine. There were two propellers in my kit, a very clumsily cast white metal one, which will go into waste bin, and a very thin and nice resin one. There is a similar duplication with the exhaust pipe panel for the right side, but in this case both parts are clean and sharp!

The kit includes etched separate flaps, which can be built either open or closed. The boxy landing gear legs have a rather naked-looking inside and the brake lines and some rivets have to be added to make them look a bit more realistic - it would have been nice to have had the insides as etched parts!. The chunky wheels are well represented in resin, while the retraction struts are made by folding etched parts. There is really no fit between those parts, and the instructions are not too clear, but as shown by the drawings the legs should be vertical when seen from the front. The tail skid and its doors come in the form of five etched parts, which should result in a crisp representation of that surprisingly complex component. The wheel wells are correctly represented and the relevant rib detail is there, although perhaps a little soft.

The off-white resin material is very glossy and I suspect that paint won't stick very well to it unless you sand it lightly. There is a minimum of panel lines, which is just as well, but I think some lines should to be added in order to break up the solid metal of the fuselage. The fabric of the control surfaces is very well done on the wing, but perhaps a bit exaggerated on the tail. The first kits were released with ALPS-printed decals, which were of a rather dull yellow shade. Later decals are screen-printed and bright yellow, and Andreas Krause says that he will send replacement decals to those who have the earlier ones.

Conclusion

This is a very nice little kit and it shows that Andreas Krause has looked closely at Paul Matt's drawings. The dimensions are right and the characteristic shape is very well captured, with the long, slim fuselage and the short, thick, drastically tapering high-dihedral wings with their huge fillets. The all-important thing when building the model is the representation of the metal surfaces. I would have liked to have detailed insides of the landing gear lags, but otherwise you have all the detail you can want. It was released almost at the same time as the Czech Master Resin kit, which was reviewed in BT#38. I haven't seen that kit, so I can't compare them, but Wayne Moyer has built both. Here are his conclusions:



"I've finished the build of both the CMR and XS-Models Hughes Racer kits. In a nutshell, both have excellent castings and both have got all the differences between the two versions right. CMR's kit is all resin while the XS kit has lots of photo-etched parts. CMR's instructions are much better. CMR's parts layout is conventional, which resulted in some fairly large seams; the XS wing/fuselage is less orthodox and took less work. CMR has much superior engine detail and better wheel well detail. That said, much of the engine detail was lost in getting it inside the cowling and more had to be chopped out to mate the cowl to the nose. CMR's interior reminds me of a 1960's Airfix kit while most of the XS p-e parts go into the cockpit. It's vastly superior and if you choose to open the cockpit, it's all visible. Both models 'look right' though the gear on CMR's is longer. CMR provides the parts for both models at a price comparable to a single XS kit, but if you only want to build one version, I'd build the XS kit."

You can read Wayne's complete review of the two kits in the spring issue of "Aerospace Modeler"!

References

The ultimate Hughes 1B reference is **Paul Matt's** article "**Howard Hughes and the Hughes Racer**" in **Historical Aviation Album Volume XVI**. This contains a complete history, superb drawings and dozens of photos, including details of cockpit, landing gear wells and flaps. Matt also explains that the "H-1" designation was an invention by writers and "historians". Hughes himself always referred to the plane as the 1B model, and apparently this is also how it was referred to in official paperwork. There never was a 1A model.

A big thanks to Andreas Krause of XS-Models for the review example!