

## *XS-Models 1/48 Hughes 1B Long Wing – Kit review*

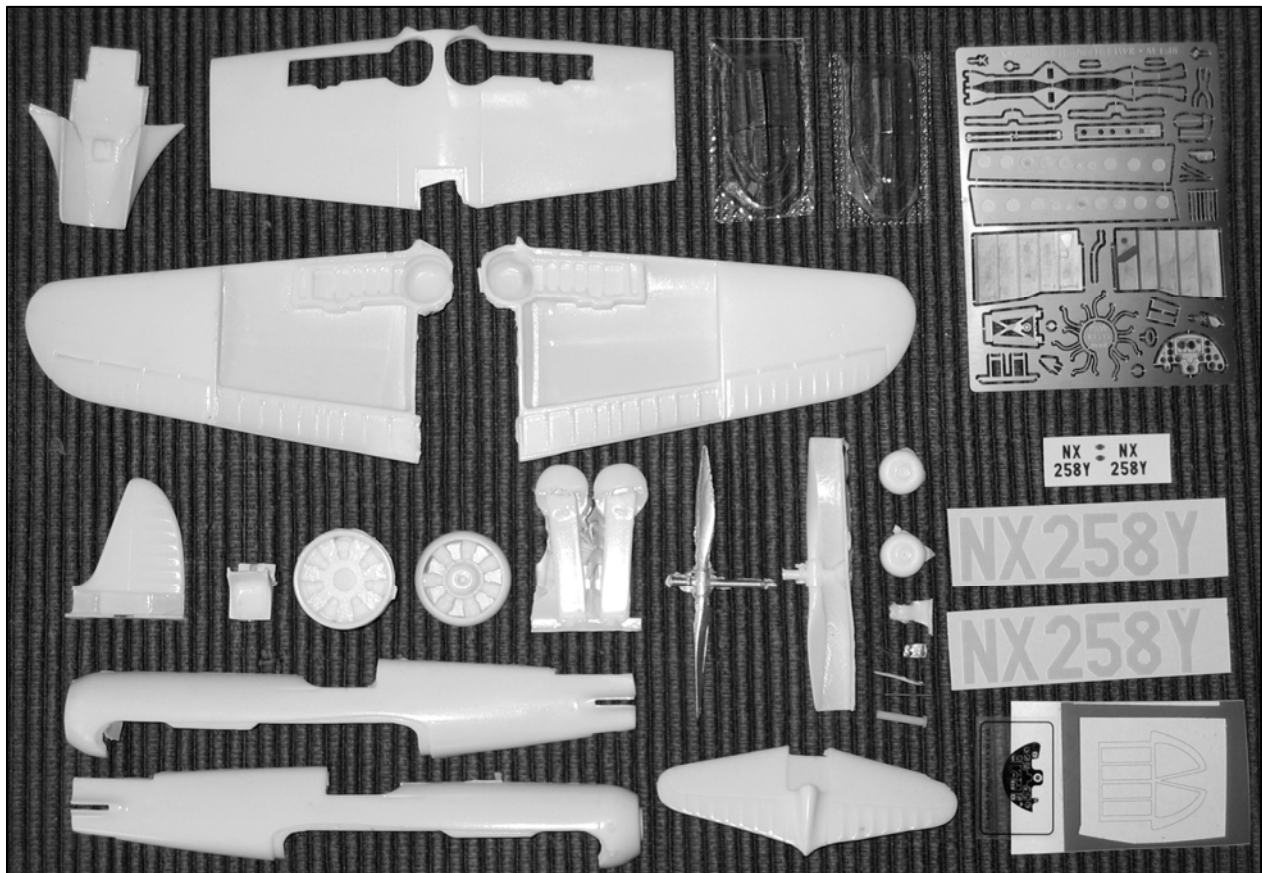
### *Anders Bruun*



**XS-Models "Hughes H-1b Long Wing Racer"** (kit number 04813H1LHQ). 1/48 kit containing 17 resin parts, 3 white metal parts, 38 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 (info@XS-models.com, www.xs-models.com, phone +49 53 3197530, fax +49 53 31975353)

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 inside of the fuselage halves. I haven't tried them myself, but 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. Some of the etched parts will perhaps need to have some thickness added. 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 a printed film for the instrument faces, is very nice, and it 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, something which is probably difficult to depict on a model.

The fuselage is vertically split and has a big hole in the bottom where the wing and with its fillets are fitted. The rear part of the wing fillet is a separate part, to which some cockpit detail is fitted before it is attached to the fuselage. The wing consists of separate top halves and a part-span bottom half. I'm not so pleased with this solution, since it means there will be a long difficult



chord-wise joint in the middle of each lower wing. Furthermore, the wing parts are very thin around the wheel well and flap area, and my example suffered from some waviness and warping. I managed to straighten the parts out pretty well by holding them under the hot-water tap, bending and dipping in cold water. However, it was impossible to straighten them completely, so quite a bit of filling and sanding will be necessary. I guess there might be production reasons for the way the parts are split, but I would have preferred a solid one-piece wing like on the 1/72 kit. The kit includes separate etched flaps, which can be fitted open or close. If you build the plane with raised flaps it might be easier to replace the flaps with plastic card, or perhaps even simply filling the openings with filler...

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, but a bit of fitting will still be necessary. 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. The engine is well done and comes with an etched ignition harness and eight tiny etched rods that represent the struts that attach the cowling to the engine. There were two propellers in my kit, a cast metal one, which will which require a bit of clean-up but can be polished, and a very thin and nice resin one. There is a similar duplication of the exhaust pipe panel for the right side, and in my kit the resin version was cleaner and sharper.

The accurately boxy landing gear legs have a rather naked-looking inside and brake lines and some rivets must to be added to make them look a bit more realistic – it would have been nice to have had the insides of the legs 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 the landing gear and the wing, 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 good representation of that surprisingly complex component. The wheel wells are correctly represented, shallow outboard and deeper inboard, and

the relevant rib detail is there, although perhaps a little softly shaped.

The off-white resin material is very glossy and I suspect that paint or glue 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 vertical panel lines must be added in order to break up the solid metal of the fuselage. The fabric of the control surfaces is pretty well done on the ailerons, but a bit exaggerated on the tail surfaces, in particular the elevators. 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 nice 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 huge wing fillets. Because of the thin and rather flexible fuselage halves and the distorted wing parts I recommend that you take particular care when assembling it. It is especially important to avoid wavy surfaces on a model of a plane that had such immaculate painted and metal surfaces. The edges of some parts are a bit soft, which will also necessitate the use of filler, but nothing extreme. I would have liked to have detailed insides of the landing gear legs, but otherwise I think the kit has all the detail you can want. This kit will build into a good replica, but it is probably not an ideal first resin kit for a beginner.

### ***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!***