

XS-models 1/32 Airacobra "KF-1" – Conversion kit and decal review ***Chris McMillin***

I ordered the XS-models #11 "KF-1" conversion for the 1/32 Special Hobby P-39D Airacobra kit. It comes in four scales, 1/144, 1/72, 1/48, and my scale, 1/32. There are conversions available for #75 "Cobra I", #84 "Cobra II" and Mike Carroll's "Cobra III" also. The conversion kit comes in a plastic bag and the colour instructions were for "Cobra II", but this was OK as the fitting of the kit's parts are a repeat of that airplane. The kit is comprised of resin and photo etch. Resin parts in gray include a pair of twelve-port exhausts, three wide blade propeller blades, an oil cooler scoop, and a light tan resin intake extension for the carburettor scoop. The photo etch is a fret of longerons added to "Cobra II" at the field in 1946 after the loss of "Cobra I" was thought to possibly be attributed to aft fuselage failure.



All the parts are well cast. With the exception of a sink mark in the prop blades they are mostly clean and have just a little flash for clean up. The scoop, exhausts and intake extension all need to be sawn off of their mould bases, as is the usual for resin parts. The oil cooler scoop has nice deep end recesses. I fitted the prop blades to the Special Hobby kit spinner and they looked awesomely huge, just like the real ones. Some crafting of parts will be necessary to complete the conversion, since the pitot tube and fairing on the spinner are not included. I believe the conversion kit will be a huge boost to the building a model of this racer, and all of the parts capture

the look of the prototype's components. Any modeller will be happy with this kit.

I also ordered the "KF-1" decals at the same time as the conversion kit. They are separate from the conversion kit, and well worth it. They are available in four scales as the conversion kit. At first glance the colourful sheet really looks the part. Well printed and complete, including three little AeroProp logos for the propeller blades, the set includes all of the script and legends including the coat of arms, the checkerboards on all of the control surfaces, and Kendall and Kaiser Frazer logos. The decals come with a full-colour five view showing all of the markings positions.



One unique aspect of the markings is that XS-models provide a self adhesive mask set for the markings on the wings. The model is to be painted overall yellow and then these masks applied. Over the masks the wings are to be painted black and the masks removed to have a true yellow number set without the opacity problems of a yellow decal over black finish. An elegant solution well executed, the masks are very thin.

Along with the KF-1 conversion kit, the decal set will complete the 1948 version of the Bell P-39 Airacobra racer that you have always wanted. These sets make the mission much easier and the finished product should look impressive.