

Beaufort MkVII / VIII conversion set. To suit 1/72 Airfix kit.

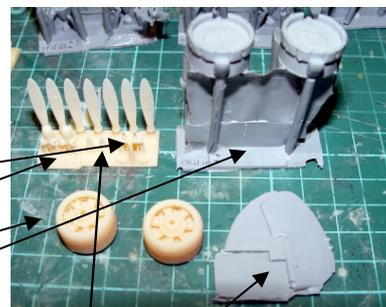
A very welcome addition to Airfix's 1/72 aircraft offerings is the new Beaufort with the first edition being a Mk1 including alternative parts in the box indicating there are more versions on the way. Even though Airfix could possibly do a RAAF version in the future, the breakdown of parts don't indicate a MkVIII is coming anytime soon. So to that end I have whipped up some bits that should assist with a conversion towards a typical RAAF machine. Seen here is the result of an Airfix kit assembled using these resin parts.



IMPORTANT SAFETY REMINDER:

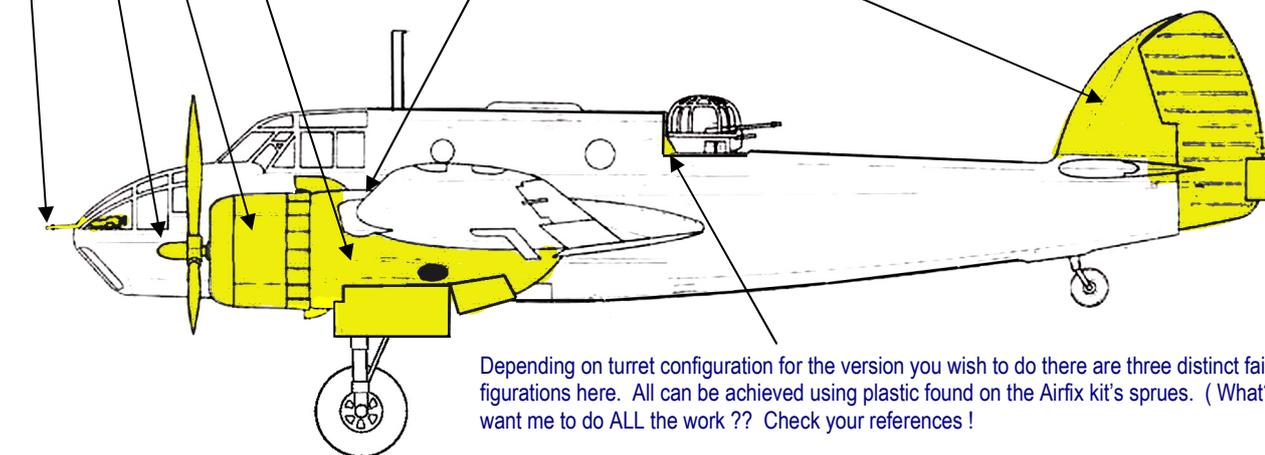
These parts are either polyurethane resin (cast) or plant based monomer (3D printed) and both need to be handled carefully considering that sanding will produce a breathing hazard (dust) so avoid inhalation, don't expose the parts to an open flame and don't eat any of it (keep it all well away from your or your dog/cat's digestive system.

Use a quality Cyanoacrylate adhesive (standard superglue is fine) to cement resin parts to plastic. I use Tamiya putty for any



This kit includes :

- 1 x printed front m/g position with 2 guns in place.
- 2 x printed prop sets including blades and boss components.
- 2 x printed cowls with Twin Wasp engines in place.
- 2 x cast resin nacelle replacement port & starboard with doors integral.
- 2 x printed blanking panels for upper wing intakes.
- 1 x cast resin tail replacement.



Depending on turret configuration for the version you wish to do there are three distinct fairing configurations here. All can be achieved using plastic found on the Airfix kit's sprues. (What? You want me to do ALL the work ?? Check your references !

LET'S GET UNDER WAY !

After you've decided which RAAF aircraft you're going to make (there's plenty of reference out there and this conversion kit doesn't come with a standard option of decals) just build the kit as per Airfix's instructions with the following provisos before the resin goes on.

1. Don't build or attach the engines—build the undercarriage in place as the resin nacelles just fit right over, but not the kit supplied engines.
2. Don't attach the front cockpit glazing until the very end after the front guns are sorted. (whether or not you're putting them in)
3. Don't attach the horizontal stabs until you have the vertical empennage cut as per following instruction.

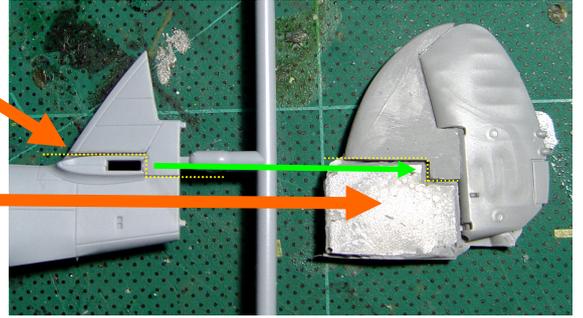
So you'll have a tail-less engine-less aeroplane without the nose glazing ready to receive the resin bits.

TAIL SPIN

OK, this bit is obvious and can be done either by scoring the fuselage halves on the trench, I mean panel lines Airfix conveniently put on the empennage or you can razorsaw the tail after the fuselage halves are together.

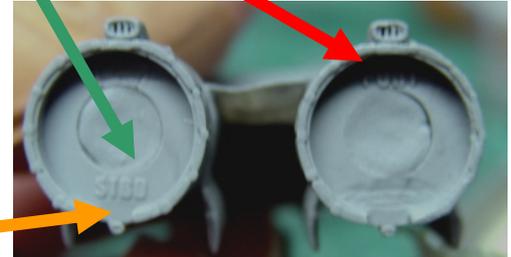
The casting block for the replacement piece is probably best cut with a razorsaw as I also tried scoring and snapping and the razorsaw made for a neater cut.

Either way, the tail can then be cemented in place using CA glue and if you're accurate with your cut you won't need much if any filler.



NASCENT NACELLES

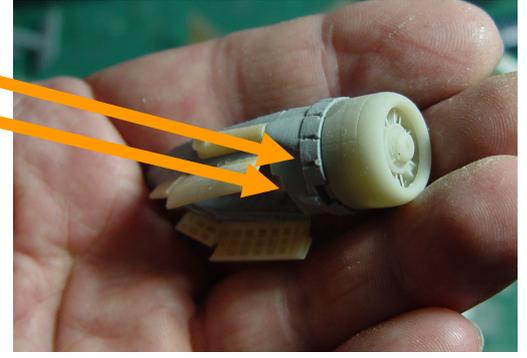
Carefully cut the nacelles from their support structures and trim ready to slide into place. They are labelled "starboard" and "port" and are oriented with the exhausts on the outboard.



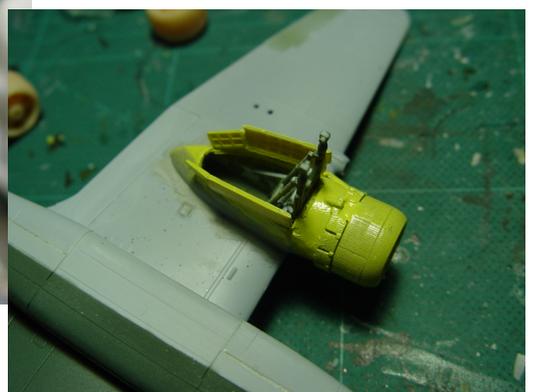
You can attach the cowls at this point or wait until the nacelles are on. I did it both ways to gauge any advantage. (I saw none either way) The cowls are keyed with the tab at the bottom.

Ensure it's all lined up and you'll need a little filler for the gap on the very bottom.

You'll find the nacelles will slip over the undercarriage (that you assembled as per kit instructions earlier) quite neatly and minimal fettling. I used a slither of filler on mine diluted with MEK to effectively paint the join line.

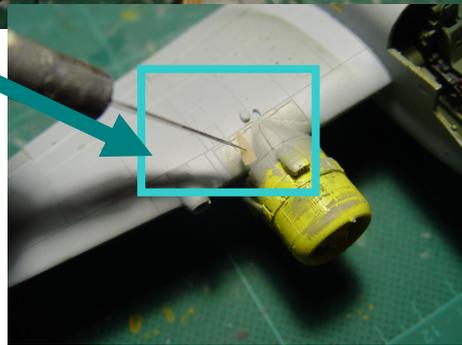
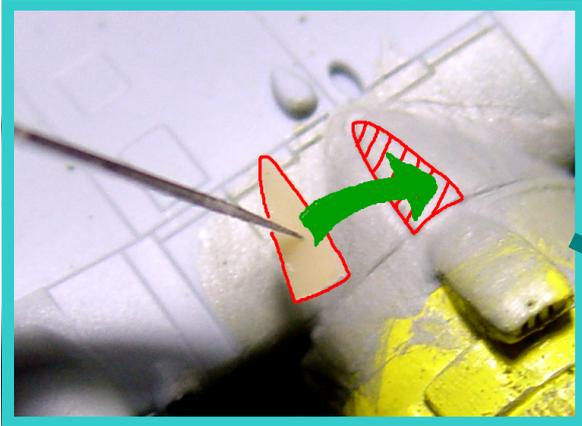


Handy hint: Less is more. When attaching the cowls to the nacelles and the nacelles to the wings just use a drop of glue to position them. If it's all lined up (and it should be) then capillary in some more glue. Obviously if things aren't straight it's easier to adjust when it's just a dot of glue that needs to shift/

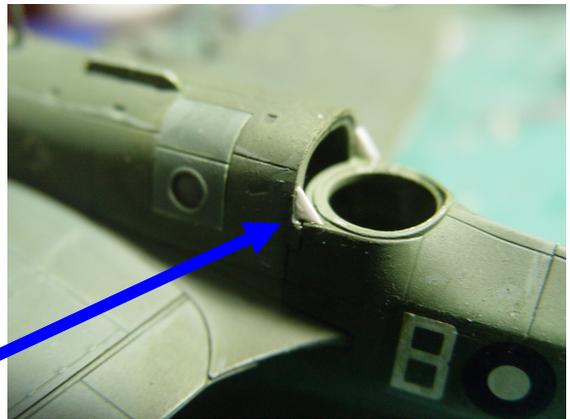


BLANKETY BLANKS

As the later marks have a longer nacelle the upper intake is located further forward and as such there's a gap on the kit where the Mk1 intake was to go. Use the blanking panels as supplied for each wing and fair them in with a little filler.



On my test aircraft I finished one side first and compared expecting errors. I'm happy to report there was nothing outstanding.



ANGLING A FIX

Remember on page 1 where I said you could use the leftover sprues to rectify this angled fairing forward of the turret? Well I did, go check. Anyhow, if you locate the identification tags on the runners you'll find there's enough flat neat plastic to cut a couple of triangles out of just like I did here.

There are three main fairing configurations for the DAP turret that I have found, this one, another larger one that extends from the further towards the top and ... missing altogether! Check your refs to see which you have on your selected subject.

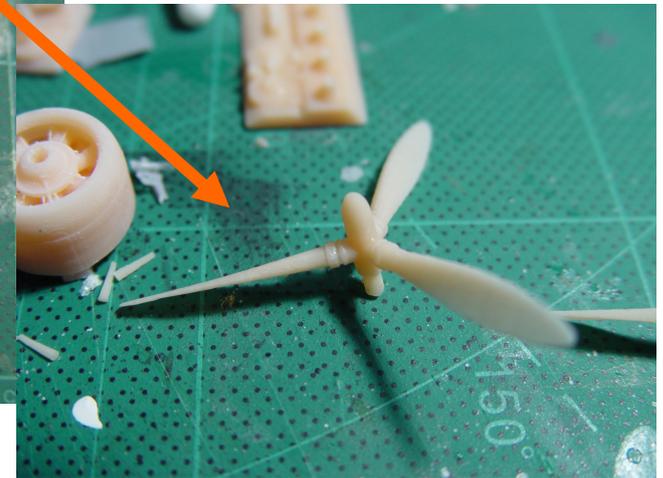
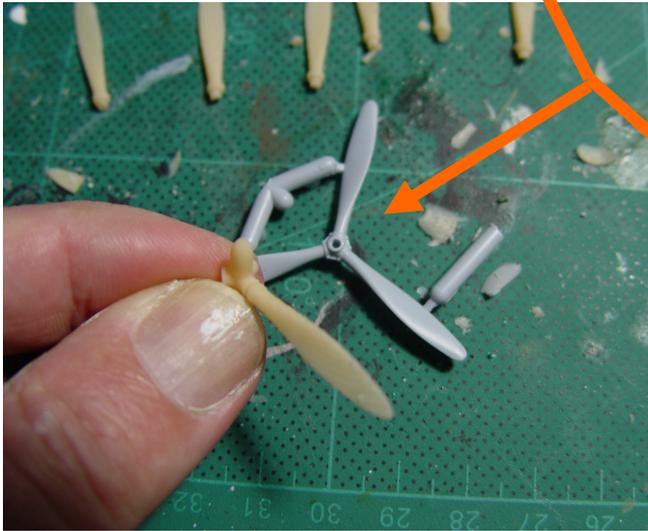
As for the turret, there were a couple of versions on that too but the DAP turret is very close to the optional one in the kit and a reasonable representation can be made from it. To be properly accurate there's two clear panels that need to be added along with the coaming here and here.

It can be achieved by butchering parts from the other turret in the kit to fashion this configuration.



APROPOS PROPS

Here's the bit that had me scratching my head as to whether I'd run with the kit props and just supply a new boss, or go the whole hog. See, the thing is the kit props are pitched in the opposite direction to the RAAF examples. So I've produced a set including 7 blades (that's one spare in case there's a whoopsie) and the 2 boss hubs. Carefully cut out the blades separately leaving about 1mm of the base under the butt to slot into the boss. As mentioned the pitch is opposite to that of the kit parts so just turn them around (feather them if you want !) until they're in the desired position.



Of course if this seems like a lot of fuss and you care little about the pitch then you can use the kit props just make sure the boss is pointy (cut the end of the resin conversion hub) and you have some rod to attach it to the engine.

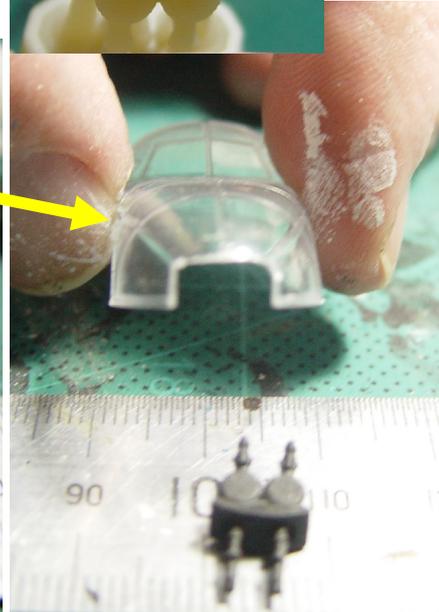
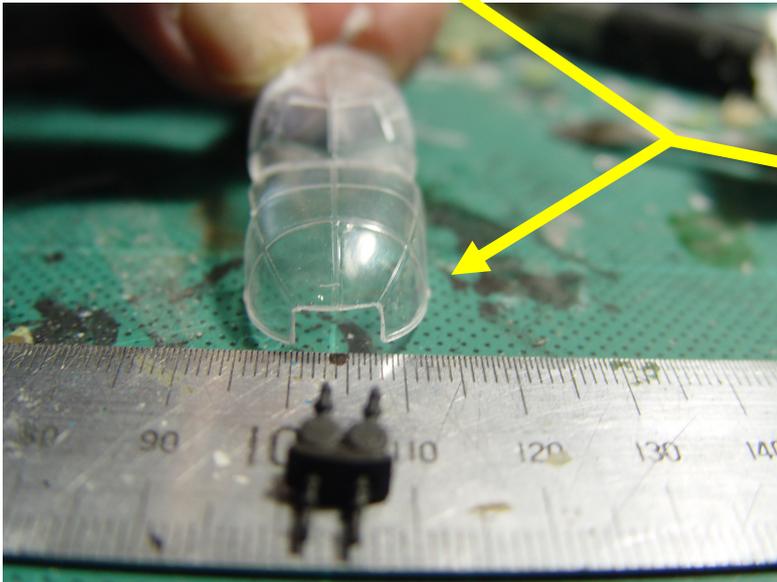
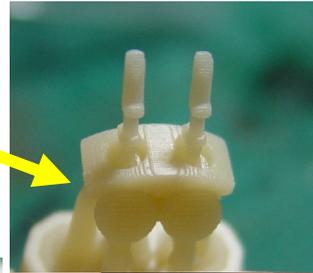
See, they really do work !



AND FOR THE AMATEUR GLAZIERS

Here's the final bit that tops off a MkVIII, the guns at the front. Check your refs to see whether your subject has them, if so, here's how we do it. Locate the twin gun part as seen here and remove all the support structure.

Then, carefully cut a gap in the front of the kit glazing 8mm centrally horizontal and approximately 3mm vertical as seen here



The gun assembly should fit neatly in place—please take care not to break the barrels of the guns in this process.

That about covers the conversion component assembly guide, the rest of the

details will be either as per the kit or whatever else you wish to do to the model. HPM do an excellent antenna set if you wish to get that tricky and of course they're bringing out their own version of this conversion so give that a look too as you can never have enough of this sort of thing! If you're interested in a Beaufreighter the spine has been 3D rendered and a test shot has been trialled so that will come out later.



Remember to check your refs as you go, the ADF-series website is a great resource for this and many other Australian aircraft.

I'll be adding more on this kit to my website at www.uncleles.net along with my usual blog entries on facebook. Thanks to Garth O'Connell at the AWM for giving me access to the real deal and to Max Shaw from Metro Hobbies for securing my stash subjects.

