

----- Original Message -----

From: [Terry Walters](#)

To: [Bob Owsinski](#)

Sent: Saturday, January 20, 2007 10:36 AM

Subject: Spitfire (airplane) model

Bob,
Got this from a buddy today. Thought you, your Spitfire chums and perhaps the DTSC Membership might be interested if it's not an oldie that everyone has already seen...sometimes these things travel far and fast!
Cheers,
Terry

A masterpiece from a very talented man!

Below are pictures of a scratch built 1/5th scale Supermarine Spitfire MK 1 by an English model builder. It's hard to imagine such infinite detail can be accomplished even with super human devotion and dexterity. The pictures and accompanying text are by the model maker, David Glen.



If anyone asked me why I set out to build a Spitfire in one-fifth scale, and detailed to the last rivet and fastener, I would probably be hard-pushed for a practical or even sensible answer. Perhaps the closest I can get is that since a small child I have been awe inspired by R. J. Mitchells elliptical winged masterpiece, and that to build a small replica is the closest I will ever aspire to possession.

The job took me well over eleven years, during which there were times I very nearly came to giving the project up for lost. The sheer amount of work involved, countless hours, proved almost too much, were it not for a serendipitous encounter at my flying club in Cambridge with Dr Michael Fopp, Director General of the Royal Air Force Museum in England.



Seeing the near complete fuselage, he urged me to go on and finish the model, promising that he would put it on display. I was flabbergasted, for when I started I had no inkling that my work would end up in a position of honour in one of the worlds premier aviation museums.

As I write, the case for the model is being prepared, having been specially commissioned by the museum with a case-maker in Sweden. I have not yet seen it, but from what I hear, it is enormous!

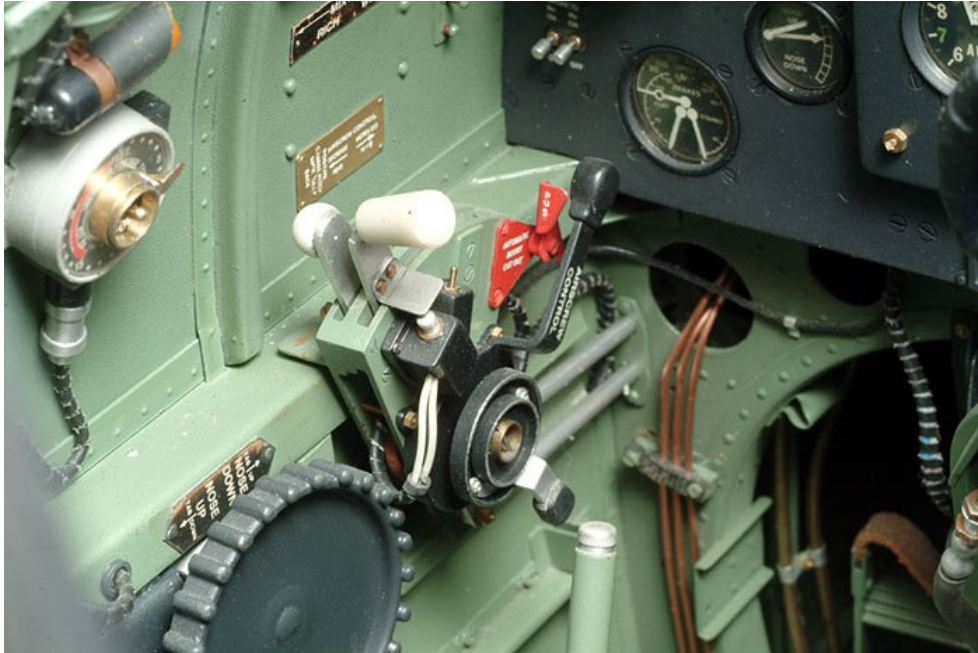
In one respect the story has gone full circle, since it was at Hendon where I started my research in earnest, sourcing Microfilm copies of many original Supermarine drawings, without which such a detailed build would not have been possible.

The model is skinned with litho plate over a balsa core and has been left in bare metal at the suggestion of Michael Fopp, so that the structure is seen to best advantage. The rivets are real and many are pushed into drilled holes in the skin and underlying balsa, but many more are actual mechanical fixings. I have no accurate count, but I suspect that there are at least 19,000!



All interior detail is built from a combination of Supermarine drawings and workshop manuals, plus countless photographs of my own, many of them taken opportunistically when I was a volunteer at the Duxford Aviation Society based at Duxford Airfield, home of the incomparable Imperial War Museum collection in Cambridgeshire, England. Spitfires, in various marks

are, dare I say, a common feature there!



The degree of detail is probably obsessive: The needles of the dials in the cockpit actually stand proud of the instrument faces, but you have to look hard to see it!

Why the flat canopy? Well, the early Mk.IIs had them, and I had no means to blow a bubble hood, so it was convenient.

Similarly the covers over the wheels were another early feature and they saved me a challenging task of replicating the wheel castings.





The model has its mistakes, but I'll leave the experts to spot them, as they most certainly will, plus others I don't even know about. I don't pretend the little Spitfire is perfect, but I do hope it has captured something of the spirit and incomparable beauty of this magnificent fighter perhaps the closest to a union that art and technology have ever come a killing machine with lines that are almost sublime.



So, with the model now in its magnificent new home, what comes next?

Well, I'm planning a book that will have a lot to say about its genesis and perhaps just a little about me and those dear to me, including a long suffering but understanding and supportive wife. And then there's the Mustang. Yes, a 1/5th scale P-51D is already taking shape in my workshop. How long will it take? I've no idea, but what I am sure of is that at my age (58) I can't expect to be building many of them!

David Glen
Whaddon, Cambridge
Dec. 06, 2006

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