

## RAAF 737-X00 WEDGETAIL



By Paul Gasiorowski

While perusing an issue of International Air Power I saw an aircraft that would be an interesting one of type to build. So I proceeded to see if I could find a 1/144 model of a 737. Of course I found one at Squadron, made by Revell (737-800 Air Berlin) #XXXX and ordered it. The next step would be on how to fabricate the AEW&C Radome of the top of the fuselage. So I started to search the web to see if I could find some measurements or better pictures of this radome. I found an article by Gary Wickham @ <http://www.scalespot.com> detailing the entire process for building this aircraft. There are 63 pages to this conversion process and the pictures are in color. Credit has to be given to Steve Evans who built the model and detailed every step. I used this document as reference as I built the model. I'd like to thank Clayton Flander of Hawkeye Models for producing this resin kit.

The Revell kit came with 2 white sprues, which contained all the parts. It was a standard kit in plastic bags. The decal sheet was for the Air Berlin version. Right off I lost the windshield, which reminds me to put all the small pieces in a small container, labeled of course.

The conversion kit was ordered from Hawkeye ([www.hawkeyemodels.com.au](http://www.hawkeyemodels.com.au)). After several emails with Clayton on availability and how to pay for it, we decide to use a CC instead of an International Money order. It took a couple of months to get the kit because

he had to produce more copies. It was well worth the wait. The conversion kit contained 10 pieces and 2 sprues for a total of 16 parts.

Starting the project was to cut about an inch (6 windows) out of the forward fuselage and an inch (5 windows) out of the fuselage aft of the wing. I cut the pieces out separately from each fuselage half. The cuts should have been done with the halves taped together. I spent a lot of extra time squaring up the halves. The guide indicated a better process to do this and should have been followed. I then glued a 10 Thou card stock behind the windows which would have to be filled in with pieces of 10 thou stock. Part of the leading edge of the tail had to be removed to accept a resin conversion piece.



At this time it was time to glue the aft part of the fuselage pieces together and inserting the new resin part for the tail. Then a piece of 40 thou stock was glued to the top of the fuselage to help support the radome which would be applied later. I also applied 3ea 40 thou stock pieces to the front of the fuselage, top and sides, to help when joining the all fuselage pieces together. Before I glued the fuselage parts together I assemble the radome. This was necessary to see where I need to drill the holes which would support the radome. Just mating the radome to the fuselage would have not worked because of the weight.

Now came the time to fill in the 60 windows with 30 x 60 x thick thou evergreen strip. This was done by using the trusty Northwest Chopper. This was a pain and then gluing in all the pieces to fill the windows. Filling in all the gaps and a sanding smooth out took some time. Also sanding and filling at the seams where all the pieces came together took some extra time. I painted all the seams and window positions with a light grey to show all the imperfections. This was done several times to achieve the results of having a

smooth body. The vertical lines where the fuselage pieces came together did not have the expected results even after several bouts of filling and sanding. So I moved on with lessons learned. The hardest part was learning how to rescribe the panel lines. This was another lesson on how not to fill in the panel lines, if not necessary when putting everything together. This required more primer coats and sanding and filling. At this time I added the rest of the resin parts. The bottom antenna body directly behind the wheel wells. There were 2 resin pieces for the rear strakes but these were too thin to handle. I made duplicates out of 5 thou stock. This was tricky because they were set about a 45 degree angle off the body. There were 3 additional resin pieces to be added, 1 nose RWR (Radar Warning Receiver), 2 RWR's added to the rear.



I worked on the wings, which had to have 2 resin pieces added to the wing tips. Without the instructions it would have been hard to figure out what needed to be cut and sanded before adding the resin tips. Before attaching the wings to the fuselage, it was time to work on the radome. It would be easier to handle the radome matching to the fuselage without the wings being in the way. I drilled 2 1/8 inch holes in the bottom of the radome and added some brass tubing to give it support. I then made a stencil of where the holes were drilled so I could get the exact location on where to drill on the top of the fuselage. This worked out well because it was a tight fit and almost flush between the radome and the fuselage. I added some gap filling super glue at this point and sanded the area to make it seamless. More primer was added to pick out the flaws and make the necessary corrections.

Attaching the wings went okay. A little putty was added at the wing root and fuselage, but not much. It was a good fit. The engine nacelles/exhausts needed a little metallic paint added along with the ring around the engine intakes. The engine nacelles had 2 pieces of resin added to the sides, called engine bumps.



I added to landing gear at this time and ended up being wing high on one side. These were really tiny parts to handle and I could see why Steve Evans built it wheels up and on a pylon. Before attaching a replacement windshield I added about .1 ounce of lead weight, to keep it nose down. Another lesson learned about adding the weight before joining the fuselage halves. I attached the windshield without any masking as there was a decal for the windows.

This aircraft has at least 20/25 blade type antennas all over it. Since this is 144<sup>th</sup> I added the 7 antennas on the top and about 6/7 on the bottom. The other antennas were very small and in 144<sup>th</sup> scale would be really be tiny. Most of the antennas were made from 10thou sheet stock, some PE antennas out of spares box, and some PE missile fins for the rest of them.

I painted the model using Model Master Acryl FS-36375 Light Ghost Grey and applying several light coats. Since I wasn't sure on how the decal sheet would work, I gave the model several coats of Future to insure a nice base for the decals. The decal sheet was

one big decal, so I took care in cutting as close to the lines as I could to eliminate any edges. The only decal I was worried about was the lightning bolt on the tail and the long decal on the side of the fuselage. The long decal left an edge on the upper side which could be seen. Another shot of Future took care of this problem because it seemed to smooth out the edge. At this time I added the wheels and flattened out one set of bogies to try and bring the wings level, got it close.

