



Airfix 1/72nd scale Strikemaster

(The cure for AMS.)

By Dick Smith

If you can find it, I think I've found the cure for AMS (advanced modeler syndrome.) Everyone comes down with it sooner or later. A kit gets started, and then set aside. Another started, then its set aside. Then another, and another, and, well you know the story. But here may be the cure.

I found it on the 30% off shelf at my local hobby store. There it was, a little dusty and shopworn. The box was a little crushed. What I'm describing is the Airfix, 1/72nd scale

Strikemaster. I don't remember when it was issued for the first time. It's been around at swap meets for a long time.

Opening the box you'll find no more than twenty pieces of light gray plastic and one clear windscreen/canopy combination. The cockpit is sparse. It has a floor, two plastic items that pass for ejection seats, and an instrument panel with decal. There is room for a lot of detailing. However, be careful not to do too much as this could lead to early stages of AMS. I didn't even add seat belts to those awful "recliner chair" ejection seats. On second thought, it might be wise to add a pair of paper belts with some brass hardware to dress up a rather bland cockpit.

Photos of Strikemasters show the cockpit in black or very dark gray. I used Model Master "aircraft interior black." I painted the ejection seats flat black. While the cockpit paint is drying, apply the instrument panel decal. Glue the cockpit into one side of the fuselage. Next cement a weight into the nose to prevent "tail sitting." Trap the completed cockpit between the two fuselage sections and hold secure. The wings are single parts as are the horizontal stabilizers. Glue them into position and check for alignment.



The Strikemaster is almost complete. There is a bit of filling and sanding around the wing roots. A quick touch of 400 grit wet and dry paper over the entire model and it's ready for painting. From beginning to this stage of construction

should have taken no more than 90 minutes to complete.

Assemble the auxiliary fuel tanks and the two bombs included in the kit. The aircraft I modeled was found in an old Scale Aircraft Modeller magazine from the 1980's. The underside is light gray. I used Model Master, "light gray," FS-36375. The topside is a "soft-edged" camouflage pattern of Model Master "sand" and "military brown," FS-30117. These are approximate color matches from the magazine color picture.

The aircraft in the photo is a trainer from the Royal Saudi Air Force. There are several areas of the fuselage and wings that are painted Day-Glo orange. These areas must be first masked and painted white to provide a base for the orange. When the white is dry spray the orange to the nose, wings and fuselage areas.

The Day-Glo orange adds a great deal to a somewhat dull scheme. To prepare the model for the decals, I sprayed a coat of Testor's Glosscoat over the entire model. This takes a short time to dry and to be ready for the decals. There are three decal options in the kit. I used the Saudi national markings but I think I should have used an aftermarket offering. The kit decals were somewhat transparent when placed over the Day-Glo color. A Scalemaster sheet provided the numerals needed to complete the markings.



The canopy/windscreen is a solid piece. I've always liked cockpits displayed open. Very carefully I scribed the line between the windscreen and the canopy with a razor saw. Then using plenty of water while cutting, I separated the windscreen from the canopy. Work slowly and do not apply too much pressure in this step or the clear part may shatter.

Since this is a trainer, I painted the noses of the practice bombs "buff." The rest of the bomb is flat aluminum. The landing gear is the same color as the underside. The tires are painted Gunze Sangyo "tire black."

From start to finish this kit took a little more than four hours. The cockpit could have used a lot of detailing which could have added several hours. However, wanted to cure my AMS quickly and this kit did the job. I recommend this remedy to anyone suffering from "advanced modeler syndrome."