The Night Fighting Owl

A truly original model from a fine kit that introduces some noteworthy innovations

This new Frog kit is the first ever to be offered of the Heinkel He 219. It will be eagerly bought by collectors, enthusiasts and common or garden plastic kit builders who will certainly find the unusual and distinctive shape of this aeroplane irresistible! The 'Uhu' ('Owl'), as it was appropriately known to the Luftwaffe, was a radar-equipped night-fighter of considerable merit. A big aeroplane—it measured 61 ft. wingspan—the 'Owl' scored numerous successes against invading bombers, seeking them out with its sensitive radar 'eye' which used those rather clumsy-looking antler-like aerials clustered round the nose. The 'Owl' was very fast for its day and sported a whole armoury of machine guns and cannon beneath its fuselage and in its wings. Some versions also carried two heavy calibre cannon mounted in the fuselage just behind the wing and arranged to fire *upwards* into the vulnerable undersides of their opponents as they flew overhead. Perhaps the most notable advance introduced to the Frog range by this kit is the matt printed transfer sheet. In the past, builders have been forced to devise all manner of makeshift remedies for the unrealistic glossy markings that characterise most kit transfers—they will swoon over the 'Owl's transfers! The matt finish is only one of the unique features of this new style transfer sheet. It also contains *two* sets of markings and these are complete with swastikas for the fins! For many years manufacturers have fought shy of including this emblem in their kits because of the fact that such kits would be banned in Germany. Moreover, since there are two sets of markings in each kit, purchasers will have a pair of spare swastikas for earlier models not so equipped. Full colour details are provided for two alternative schemes for the 'Owl'.

These photographs of our model will help you to produce a replica to be proud of, and by special request, we are including some details of the method we use to achieve the 'Airborne' effect in our Meccano Magazine plastics pictures.

1. The dark grey mottle is achieved with the aid of a spray gun using a card 'mask' made by piercing a number of irregular holes in a piece of thin card. This is held about an inch away from the surface and sprayed 'through'. Use a Humbrol 'Jet Pack' spray gun charged with matt enamel well thinned down and keep the mask as clean as possible, never allowing the holes to become completely clogged.

2. When assembling the nose antennae, allow the four main fuselage stems to dry completely before fixing the aerial rods in place.

3. If the model is intended to be displayed 'on the ground', you will have to add a considerable amount of lead to the nose to prevent the tail from dropping. This can be done by means of a lead block in the nose-wheel bay as shown, or by filling the engine nacelles and forward fuselage with Plasticene charged with lead shot.

4 & 5. Here's how we simulate a flying attitude in our pictures. First of all a back-ground 'sky' is produced by spraying a piece of white card with irregular patches by means of a black aerosol spray can. This card is then placed against a sheet of insulating board and a length of ⅛ in. steel wire is sharpened and pushed into this board, pointing it directly towards the camera. The model is now mounted on the other end of the wire using the slot already provided for the kit stand. The position of the 'Owl' was determined by the necessity to hide the non-retractable main undercarriage legs beneath the wing, but the nosewheel can be retracted. Propellers can be blown round as the exposure is made and lighting must be very 'diffused' in order to prevent a shadow from the supporting wire from being cast on the background. If you can do the photography out of doors and out of the direct rays of the sun, you will achieve the right effect with no extra lighting equipment—the wind will blow your propellers round too!

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