

Airfix Airspeed AS51 Horsa Mk I/II glider



The desire to launch an attack on enemy held ground (as part of my Operation Diamond campaign or in other games) has led to the construction of a number of landing craft and then to the purchase of this beast.

I am never sure whether Airfix mean 1/72 or 1/76 as they seem to use the terms almost randomly. This glider is described as 1/72 but the figures suggest that 1/76 is more likely. I will update this review when I have researched the real thing and compared it with the model dimensions.

The instructions set out the options available for the builder very clearly and I chose to build the Mk II later version with the smaller forward doors. Again, as with the Ju52 model described elsewhere, you have to be prepared for the sheer size of this model and make sufficient room on your workbench!

The 7 simple steps shown in very good exploded diagrams guide the builder through a straightforward build although I did not include all the internal fittings as these would not be seen. Everything fitted where it should and the build sequence made total sense.

I built the flight-deck as a separate piece (as described in the instructions) and then painted this before fitting it to the body.

Painting took more time than building and this is perhaps inevitable. Having chosen to build a later Mk II version, the painting notes suggest that the Mk I's were used in Normandy whilst the Mk II's were used just for training. Notwithstanding this information, I painted my Mk II in "Overlord" striped livery. The white stripes were painted freehand and rewarded extra care. My lines are about 90% straight and I am happy with the result.

I struggled a bit with the division between the black underbelly colour and the camouflage upper body decoration. There is no definitive guide line other than the tops of the exit doors near the front of the fuselage and so whilst I am happy with the result I got, I cannot say for certain that the line I have used is accurate.

The main issue I have is that having built one of these, a game cries out for 2 or 3. Another one would demand a large game table but would look very impressive so after a suitable break, I feel that I will not be able to resist.

Whether the scale is accurate or not at 1/72, this is a nice kit to build for a wargame and I would give an overall score of **9/10**.