



RESOURCES FOR MODELERS

MODEL REVIEW

Trumpeter's 1/350 Essex CV-9

By Sean Fallesen

The Trumpeter Essex kit shows definite improvement over their Hornet, which wasn't a bad kit by any means. This time, the sides of the hangar have detail rather than just large ejector pin marks. The 40mm quad AA guns look much better than the 1.1" guns in the Hornet kit. Flight deck detail is fantastic, with in-scale planking and tie-down strips. The hull appears to be well-shaped, though it does not have any plating detail (Most ship kits lack this, so it's nothing out of the ordinary).

The kit represents a "short-hulled" Essex, meaning that the bow rounds out and holds a single quad 40mm mount. ("Long-hulls" stick out further with a squarish flare that holds two quad mounts, side-by-side. Converting the kit to a "long-hull" would be quite difficult. Odds are that a conversion set and/or another Essex-class kit are very likely.) The net result of this is that the hull of this kit is suitable for 10 carriers with WWII service.

The flight deck is in three pieces. I have no idea just how well they'll fit together, but hopefully the seams will disappear among the planking. The forward portion contains one catapult, on the right side. Essex-class ships had 0, 1, or 2 catapults, depending on which ship and which timeframe. Due to the delicate nature of the planking and tie-down detail surrounding it, I believe deleting the existing catapult would be very hard. Likewise, it would be a difficult task to carve a second catapult that would match the fine detail of the existing one. Again, odds are that conversion sets and/or future releases are likely. References are available for which ships had the single catapult and when; I'd recommend looking this up before selecting your deck numbers and paint scheme.

The conning tower has the early-style bridge. Having converted a 1:700 kit to a late-type bridge, I know it's not impossible to make this modification. Again, check references. Likewise, the kit comes with a good selection of AA guns, but references are in order for the exact AA fit of your desired ship. Many variations existed. I highly recommend The Floating Drydock's "Camouflage 2: Fleet Carriers" for these pieces of information.

The kit comes with 4 each of SBD Dauntlesses, TBF Avengers, and F6F Hellcats. These, as well as SB2C Helldivers, are also available in separate packs. Note that SBDs were used on Essexes for only a very short period of time. If you want to model a carrier with a full air group aboard, you'll need to buy a LOT more planes - at least 12 boxes at 6 planes each (10 in the SBD boxes).

Photo etch sets are coming soon. Given what we saw with the Hornet, this will likely mean at least two large PE sets from both White Ensign and Gold Medal models for the ship itself. I believe Tom's Modelworks already has a set available. There will also be PE sets for the aircraft. Given that Trumpeter has raised the bar considerably for 1:350 aircraft, these PE sets will be extensive, likely including flaps and dive brakes - even cockpits! (Don't believe me? Check

WEM's website for TBD, SBD, and F4F cockpits!) In all likelihood, the ultimate Essex could use a mixture of parts from numerous sets. How far am I willing to go? I don't know. I think my Essex will be in the process of launching the last of its air group, if you catch my meaning.

I was asked how much a fully equipped, full air group Essex would cost. At \$110 for the kit, about \$40 for each large PE set, and \$7.50 for extra planes, plus some slush fund for extra PE sets for aircraft and for a display case... it could be upwards of \$400. Mine will probably be finished for about half that... I hope...