A Tale of Two Typhoons:
A comparative review of two Italeri 2734 builds
by Gilles Pepin

I recently built two Italeri 2734 Hawker Typhoons Mk.Ib (late) commissioned by the family of a WWII pilot. The first, code letters TP-X, is mostly an OOB model; the second, code letters SA-Q, is the "dressed-to-kill" iteration, using many available after-market components. I simply wish to illustrate the vast difference in results between the two builds, and include historical anecdotes provided by the pilot himself, Dr. Peter Roper; a rare privilege indeed.

Historical background

Squadron Leader Peter Roper, a 92 year old Montreal (Canada) doctor who still practices medicine, flew Hawker Typhoons Mk.Ib (late) during WWII. While flying TP-X (serial number MN137) on night patrol, he experienced engine trouble and belly-landed short of the runway at West-Malling on March 06, 1944. TP-X was damaged beyond repair (DBR in RAF lingo) but F/L Roper was relatively unharmed. On June 07, 1944 (D-Day+1), he 'borrowed' the personal aircraft of Group Captain Denys Gillam, code letters SA-Q (serial number MN125); F/L Roper was "itching to get in the fray" as he was not, ex-officio, part of ops; quote: "I was his assistant in charge of all operations for 20 Sector, including 123 and 146 Wings; I flew with
him as his No. 2 on a few occasions and he said I could fly his aircraft if needed; he was away at a conference on D+1, so I assumed his agreement. "Shot down by flak near Villers-Bocage (Calvados, France), picked up by local French and German S.S., hidden and succored by locals until recaptured. Joined up with Patton's 3rd Army on August 04; rejoined 198 Sqdr. as a F/L in Holland in 1945." View the comprehensive CBC interview, conducted on the 70th anniversary of D-Day: http://www.cbc.ca/m/touch/canada/montreal/story/1.2666607

The insouciance of youth in times of peril

A brief note on landing lights and RPs

Both TP-X and SA-Q featured faired-over landing lights. The cockpit landing light switch in TP-X was deleted; when Peter "controlled crash" approach 06, 1944, "I had checked the aircraft on arrival at Manston and noticed -no reason, I was told, 'because rockets, perspex'; forgot about this flying at night, engine cut - remembered after searching for switch. Belly-landed in the dark; hit gun-sight with chin despite straps up tight; not too much damage". As for SA-Q, one must assume the switch was also absent, since the landing lights were definitely faired over. Both TP-X and SA-Q were of the same factory 'vintage', as
their serial numbers attest. Commenting on the photograph above, "I don't remember the patch over the landing lights of TP X being obvious at all", said the good doctor.

As to RPs, "in 1943, preparations for D-Day included the formation of 2nd T.A.F. and 198 Sqdn. was designated for RPs. Much effort was made for 198 and 609 Sqdns. (top-scoring Sqdns. in Fighter Command) to change this and eventually only 2 aircrafts per Sqdn. were designated (they were usually the oldest, a/c, not flown much). We were allowed to carry on fighter ops (escorts, Rhubarbs, Rangers, etc.). That is why TP-X was clean. SA-Q was clean because that's what Gillam wanted." "Gillam, like many, preferred their 'tiffies' clean."

The two Typhoons

No known photographs of either aircraft could be found; W. Mark Roe (MAM) produced these realistic renditions using the builder's models

Kit and components

The kits are Italeri 2734 Typhoon Mk.Ib (late), part of the D-Day Normandy 1944-2014 Series.

TP-X was built strictly OOB, except for the decals. As TP-X was a commissioned model to represent a specific airframe, I used custom CanMilAir decals. TP-X received the full set (including fuselage band, high visibility under-wing stripes). More on the decals later.

SA-Q, on the other hand, was built using the following aftermarket items:
1. Eduard 49 684 Typhoon Mk.Ib Bubbletop S.A. 1/48 scale detail set for ITALERI 2734
2. Quickboost 48468 1/48 Hawker Typhoon Seat w/Safety Belts
3. AMLM 49 015 Hawker Typhoon Mk.Ib/Late Camouflage painting masks
4. Aviaele Decals 1/48 Hawker Typhoon Aircraft Stencil & Data Markings
5. Master 1/48 Air Master Series 48083 Hawker Typhoon Mk.Ib late type cannons
6. CanMilAir custom decals (invasion stripes painted; decals used for proper positioning)

Other after-market items available are numerous; entirely up to you. After-market RPs are a must, as the kit-supplied rockets, just like the cannons, will inevitably fail the "prototypical"
test. As well, resist the temptation to use resin cockpits, as none could replicate the true tubular cockpit structure of the actual Typhoon cockpit, and the kit sub-assembly, when "dressed up" with some of the cockpit components of the Eduard 49 684 detail set, is a real winner. And, best of all, it fits!

June 07, 2015: 71 years later to the hour:

On behalf of the members of the Canadian Aviation Heritage Centre, the Board of Directors is pleased to invite you and a guest to a special presentation by

Squadron Leader Peter Roper
WW II
RAF Typhoon Pilot

Sunday, 7 June, 2015, 6 PM
Wine and cheese will be served at the
Canadian Aviation Heritage Centre
Art Gallery
McGill University, Macdonald Campus*
Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC

info@cahc-ccpa.com
or by phone 514-398-7948

* Please use the google map on our website for directions
www.cahc-ccpa.com
Your presence will be greatly appreciated
Essentially, the Italeri kit is a rebox of the Hasegawa Typhoon Mk.Ib Bubbletop 9060 (JT60), minus the 4-bladed propeller. An excellent review by Tom Cleaver can be found on MM: 
http://modelingmadness.com/review/allies/gb/cleaverbtyp.htm

Not having the audacity to attempt to improve on Tom's review, I will concentrate on the comparative builds. Photographs of TP-X will be on the left, SA-Q on the right.

**Cannons first**

**SA-Q only:** I prepare the leading edges by simply removing the kit cannon fairings with a fine saw, and following the Air Master instructions. "Drill proper holes (3.70 mm) ...": I used a new 9/64" bit, and enlarged the resulting holes slightly to a snug fit with a rat tail file. Attach cannons with a generous amount of cement, and carefully adjust according to instructions. Any slight imperfection remaining once the cannons are attached can be sanded down, and the supplied flanges will make quick work of finishing the cannon 'task' with most satisfactory results.

Painting: **TP-X:** Tamiya Liquid Surface Primer (a 'best' effort to eliminate the gaps between the wing fairings and the attached cannon extensions), then Tamiya X-1, thinned 50-50 with Tamiya Lacquer Thinner; **SA-Q:** Vitry Ultracolor (France) nail polish, color #19, thinned in the same fashion (Tamiya primer and thinned paint are too thick; the fine details on the cannons would be 'lost'); two very LIGHT applications will provide color almost without detail loss.

Note the hollowed Air Master cannons feature. And those flanges: difficult to improve upon.
No matter how hard one tries, OOB no match for Air Master cannons

The supplied PE cannon flanges were 'painted' in a similar fashion, and attached to the leading edges using generous amounts of, you guessed right, Future floor wax. Et voila!

**Spent shell chutes**

**TP-X: OOB. SA-Q:** I carefully hollowed these out with a fine chisel and fresh X-acto blades. A word of caution: as the cannons are attached after the invasion stripes are painted, make sure that the cement used to attach said cannons does not run inside the lower wing and ooze out through the 8 opened chutes; to play it safe, cover these chutes with Tamiya masking tape (I learnt the messy way!)

**Meanwhile, back in time and in France...**

On D+1, Peter Roper succumbed to his desire to get in on the action. He 'borrowed' Denys Gillam's SA-Q and, on his second sortie of the day, he near Caen. "Just as I saw shoot at them, I was hit [by These were the tanks that Villers-Bocage, a crucial of Caen." Shot through the and his plane on fire, Roper wing. His ankle shattered, the ground in a farmer's tourniquet for his smashed farm-hands found the flask of "rough homemade pain I drank the whole anyone?" towards the end.

Peter Roper, June 08, 1944, at Chateau Haute Fecq near Monts-en-Bessin with Ghislaine D'Huart, daughter of the Baron D'Huart who helped rescue him; Peter Roper later returned the favor in an even more dramatic and unexpected turn of events.
1. The interior set (left) is promoted as 'self-adhesive'. Hmm. The only adhesiveness was the occasional annoyance of any of its components to stick to one's fingers. Future floor wax, and in generous doses. And the levers, well-intentioned conceptually, have an almost negative usefulness/aggravation ratio. I managed to install two red #31 fuel cocks, using CA, before moving on. I did not use any of the seat components, as I installed the excellent Quickboost 48468 1/48 Hawker Typhoon Seat w/Safety Belts (painted appropriately) in lieu of the kit-supplied seat. The compass and its table are a very noticeable touch, as are the throttle controls. Rudder pedals add-ons? Only your hairdresser will know.

2. The 'exterior' set provides nice wheel wells details. Other components used were the canopy slide guide, radiator intake meshing (#s 50 and 56), brake lines, landing gear doors details, and the gun-sight mount (a word of caution: when removing the kit-generated instrument panel hood, leave 1/16" on each side to facilitate its installation from above; do not even try to rig this part from below as suggested by Eduard). And yes, I added a chin pad to the gun-sight but no, I did not add scale teeth and bloodstains as suggested by Peter Roper, whose chin convincingly met said cushion on March 06, 1944.
Off to the paint shed

After smoothing the Tamiya Fine Surface Primer with a soft cotton cloth (airflow direction), both models were painted the same (just as they probably were at the factory):

- Undersides: Tamiya XF-83 Medium Sea Gray 2 (RAF)
- Upper base: Tamiya XF-54 Dark Sea Grey
- Upper camouflage: my own brew of Tamiya XF-58 Olive Green and XF-61 Dark Green

Note: I do not own shares in Tamiya, I just like using these products; primer dries quickly, and paints are consistent, are airbrush-cleaning friendly as they are mostly acrylic-based, and readily available in Canada (the Canadian Government, in its great wisdom, has banned importation of Gunze products because of their alleged toxicity, yet still actively promotes the exportation of asbestos fibers to the rest of the planet; go figure).

Earn your stripes: **Two reasons NOT to use the kit-supplied invasion stripes:**

1) these are 10mm wide; they should be 9mm; does not sound like such a big difference save that, over a full panel of 5 stripes, the accumulated total is 5mm (3/16"); that translates to 9 scale inches! ... and 2) they are DECALS! Earn your stripes the honest old-fashioned way by painting them. There are numerous web sites on how best to accomplish this important task. I used the yellow leading edge stripe decals. These went on beautifully, thanks to the good people at Johnson & Johnson. (read Future floor wax). Seal generously with said wax twice.
Camouflage masks

These AML masks are as prototypical as one could hope. I compared their coverage with drawings contained in 'Camouflage & Markings, RAF Northern Europe 1936-45', Number 4, pages 81, 83, and 85. I suspect this publication was the source document for AML. When applying masks to the 'fish plate' area of the tail, make sure to also cover the fuselage band area, as Sky-colored decals are not sufficiently opaque to remain the correct color when applied over the darker camouflage paint. Highly recommended as is, unless you prefer non-prototypical fuzzy edges to the darker paint outlines. Your call.

As promised, more on the decals

Both TP-X and SA-Q are commissioned models for the June 07, 2015 event. Hence, custom decals were produced by CanMilAir, a London (Ontario) supplier of exquisite renditions for RAF/RCAF models in any scale. I used their invasion stripes for positioning the masking tape. Consult William Burns' extensive and informative web site: www.canmilair.com

I then used Aviaeology Decals 1/48 Hawker Typhoon Aircraft Stencil & Data Markings. One set covers two Typhoons, so you will have extras for another British build. Another Canuck outfit, this one offering superbly detailed 'cherry-on-top-of-the-sundae' finishing touches.
Back to the past

A plaque presented by Dr. Peter Roper to the people of Monts-en-Bessin now offers his eternal thanks to the villagers who risked their lives to help him after he was shot down on June 7, 1944. (Philippe Bauduin)

and the Future

... floor wax, that is. I seal my models with many light coats of airbrushed Future floor wax. I then either leave the finish alone, or I go semi-gloss overcoat or dull coat, depending on the subject being modeled; in this case, the wishes of the recipient was semi-gloss. Purists will not approve, but I was not prepared to go nine rounds with him. Would you argue with this lad, knowing he carries a much larger and more lethal arsenal than most small-town police departments?

Dr. Peter Roper poses next to a 20mm cannon from his crashed Typhoon. The gun was excavated (along with the rest of the aircraft) and is now displayed in his Montreal living-room (CBC)
Gallery
An appreciative crowd gathered for autographed memorabilia after the soirée
"Jamais deux sans trois"
as the French saying goes. Dr. Roper has commissioned the Montreal Aviation Museum to build the Airfix 1/24 Hawker Typhoon Mk.Ib kit in full SA-Q livery, destined for Musée de la bataille de Tilly-sur-Seulles (Normandy, France), where it will join his other Typhoon artifacts.

_Gilles Pepin is a retired investment banker_

Model photography: W. Mark Roe  
Display cases: Mark Whittaker  
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The Montreal Aviation Museum is the only museum located in Québec (Canada) dedicated to the restoration of historical aircrafts, the preservation of aviation artifacts, and the commemoration of those who made significant contributions to Quebec and Canada’s aviation heritage.