

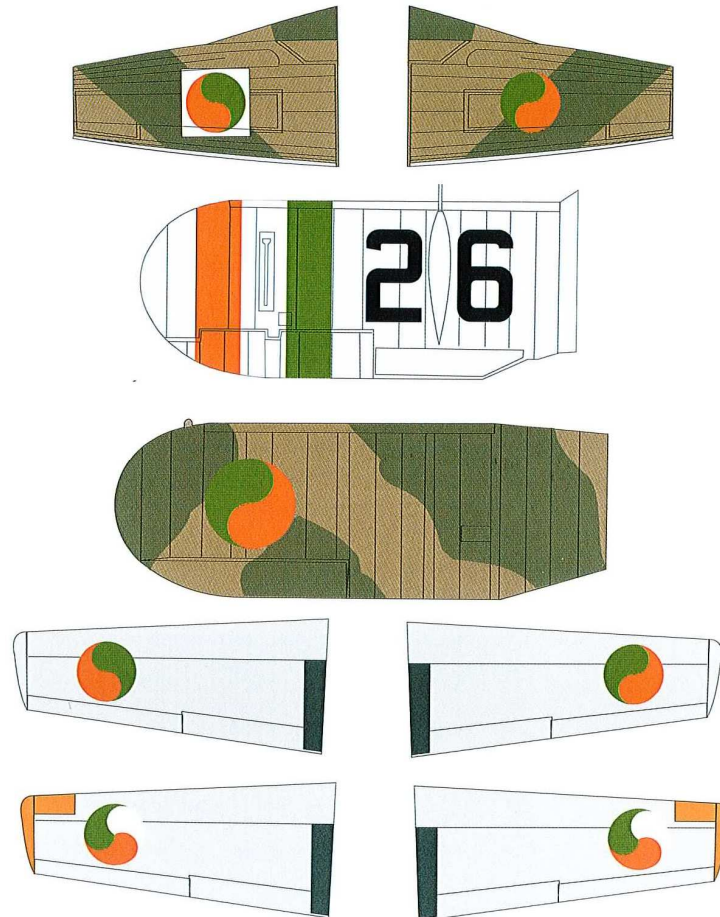
THE IRISH AIR CORPS BOOK REVIEW

Every so often there's a book that is an automatic choice for your needs as a scale modeller, as you may be aware I have recently turned my attention to those wings things... the catalyst for this was a desire to build some of the aircraft of the IAC. I was told about this book by one of our more diligent members... it looked like my prayers (for more reference material) were finally answered. I ordered it direct from the author at www.maxdecals.com/ at a cost of €35.00 and that included post and packing. **Joe Maxwell** is by all accounts very well known and respected for his decals, generally of Irish Air Corps subjects, and together with **Patrick Cummins** they have produced what they describe as "an illustrated guide" to the Irish Air Corps. Once you see the book (hopefully I will have remembered to bring it along to club night) you will realise that this seems a rather modest summary of their subject; as it sets to tell the story of the IAC, aircraft by aircraft, and in a way that shows a considerable regard for the poor modellers' interest, there is also a considerable amount historical content in each chapter... first impressions very good.

The book starts with "**The Big Fella**" (our very first aircraft, purchased before the country existed officially as the peace talks were still being conducted in London and the aircraft, a Martinsyde A1 Mk.II, was purchased and fuelled up ready to make a quick dash to France if the talks stalled, they didn't and the Irish Free State was born and the IAC founded with that first aircraft). The book then runs right through to the recently-delivered Augusta Westland AW.139. It's divided into six chronological chapters, each starting with a historical scene setting for the years in question, this is then followed by a type by type coverage of each aircraft entering service during that period with text illustrated with photos, colour line drawings, frequently with plan views for those where photos are not available. The most recent type shown in this way is Seafire 153, in an interesting shade of pale green; this could give rise to more discussion on which of the forty shades it represents... I'll come to that in just a minute.

Up until the 1960s virtually all of the Air Corps aircraft were British in origin, and with the smallest amount of research (on eBay and under tables at shows) you can find almost all of them around in plastic kit form. The easiest kits to get hold of include such staples as Gladiators, Hurricanes, Lysanders and of course the iconic Spitfire/Seafire's, however there are also the rarer aircraft like the Hinds, Magisters, Vampires, Martinets and DH.9s.

From the 1960's onwards most of the aircraft has come from Europe and the switch from fixed wing to helicopters starting with the Alouette III's, Gazelle's, Dauphin 2' and recently the Eurocopter, again these are readily available in kit form but I have never build a helicopter (yet). There are also one off aircraft like the CASA CN 235-100 and finally V.I.P. transports like the Gulfstream IV-SP and Learjet 45, but these are a lot harder to find in kit form.



Evolution of the Celtic Boss: Green & Orange (Irish Free State) & 3 colour (Irish Republic)

For each type of aircraft there is a brief description of the aircraft's history, and its place within the Air Corps, and also of use is the fate of individual aircraft. Almost all the aircraft have a "Colours and Markings" paragraph adding to this photo/drawing evidence, all of which will be very useful to any modeller considering adding one, or several IAC subjects to their shelves, go on you know you want to.

This is not to say the book does not have any flaws, there are some glaring errors which (despite Cummins usually diligent research) and some of the illustrations are somewhat disappointing, the Hawker Hind, Hector and Hurricanes are not correct also Gladiators and the Seafire colour is definitely off even though the Spitfire Tr9 show the colour green in the photographs. In the Appendix 2, Air Corps fatalities....Capt Jim Liddy was not killed in the crash of his DH Dove 188 (which the book has as serial 189 which was actually a Hunting Provost T.53) and the Marchetti 223 pilot killed was Lt Gavin Foyne not Foyne but this could be attributed to bad proof reading, but it is still a Pity

There are some really nice pictures, some I have never seen before, but some are too small to be of any use to a modeller, and surprisingly the quality of photographs of the newer aircraft is not as good as I would have expected. For example rear cockpit of the PC9 is missing, but there is a picture of the front one. The history of IAC, is both researchable and interesting, but maybe not so easy to squeeze into book of 270 pages when some of them are just empty pages 22, 23 and 88 for example. Also repeating the same information, profiles on 115 and 117 or just filling the book, 93, 97... Although I am glad to see a Donald Duck nose art on the Battle.



So in conclusion I would say that in comparison to other published books on subjects like the RAF or Luftwaffe that books about IAC are quite scarce. Some would say that anything is better than nothing, others that better nothing than anything. I however would say a big Thank You for this book and hopefully there will be another book (or books) which would finally satisfy my hunger to know more about the aircrafts and markings of the Irish Air Corps

Some more sample pages... (I case I did forget to bring up the book)

John

