

HOBBY LOBBY  
**Corsair**

WWII Pacific fighter

by Thayer Syme

**AIRBORNE**

As soon as I launched the Corsair for its first flight, I knew it had been worth the wait. This little warbird accelerated briskly out of my hand, and was soon "on step" and climbing quickly. It almost felt like I was one of Pappy Boyington's charges, taking off on another mission to defend a small Pacific island. After a couple of circuits to calm my excitement, I set up a few passes for the camera, and really started to have some fun. A lot of small models get bounced about easily, making smooth control a challenge: not so with the Hobby Lobby Corsair. It handles very well, and has plenty of power for punching through the inevitable bumps and burbles you'll encounter while flying.

**STOCK POWER**—While many believe that you can't have too many horses in a warbird, the recommended brushed motor and NiMH battery really do provide plenty of power for this model. I was very impressed with the acceleration, speed and large maneuvers that this setup provided. The ailerons are sensitive, but not twitchy. Rolls are smooth and crisp, without being unrealistically fast. Large round loops are as easy as opening up the throttle, and then pulling back on the stick. Despite my satisfaction with the flight characteristics, my curiosity got the best of me. I just had to try a brushless/Li-Poly power upgrade, and so I got back on the phone with Hobby Lobby.

**BRUSHLESS POWER**—Needless to say, the performance increase was impressive. The more powerful MP Jet AC 28/7-30D outrunner and FMA Kokam 3S 1500mAh Li-Poly battery weigh one ounce less than the stock setup, and they really lit the candle on this classic. The smooth, silent power of the MP Jet outrunner nearly pulled the Corsair out of my hand as I throttled up at home for the first time.

At the field, the extra power was a great asset. The extra power now lets me launch underhanded much more confidently. Gripping the Corsair from above for more control, you can hold it right at the CG. With the throttle forward, the Corsair will leap forward when launched and starts to climb immediately. Top speed is perceptively increased, and all the vertical maneuvers can be opened up significantly.

I use the throttle much more judiciously now, going to full power only for launches, high-speed strafing runs, and extended vertical lines. If you need all the performance possible in your warbird, I recommend giving the MP Jet 28/7-30D outrunner and FMA Kokam Li-Polys a try. You won't be disappointed.

**M**ention the venerable Corsair to many modelers today and quite likely they'll think of the 1970's show, Baa Baa Black

Sheep. Like most true modelers, I tuned in week after week for the real stars of the show, those glorious Corsairs, with their distinctive bent wings and growling engines. For 25 years I've wanted to fly one of my very own. Finally Hobby Lobby has given me just that chance.



PHOTOS BY WALTER SIDAS, TINA HORAN AND THAYER SYME

## SPECS

**PLANE:** F4U-1 Corsair

**MANUFACTURER:** Alfa Models

**DISTRIBUTOR:** Hobby Lobby

**TYPE:** WWII Warbird ARF

**FOR:** Intermediate builders

**FLYING WEIGHT:** 14 - 15 oz.

**LENGTH:** 25.75 in.

**WINGSPAN:** 32 in.

**WING AREA:** 188 sq. in.

**WING LOADING:** 10.7 - 11.5 oz./sq. ft.

**RADIO:** 4 channels required; flown with Hitec Eclipse 7 transmitter, Hitec 555 micro receiver, Hitec HS-81 micro servo (ailerons), Hitec HS-55 sub-micro servo (elevator)

### POWER SYSTEM:

#### Brushed power system:

Graupner S-300 motor, MP Jet 5:1 ball bearing gearbox, APC 9x6 Slo-Flyer prop, Jeti JES 012 ESC, 8-cell 1100mAh NiMH

#### Brushless power system:

MPJet AC 28/7-30D Outrunner Brushless Motor, APC 9x6 Slo-Flyer prop, Jeti Advance 18-amp Brushless Controller, FMA-Kokam 2S 1500mAh Li-Poly battery



**FULL THROTTLE POWER:** Brushed: 10.25 amps, 63.3 watts; 4.22 W/oz., 67.5 W/lb.; Brushless: 11.3 amps, 77 watts; 5.5 W/oz., 88 W/lb.

**TOP RPM:** Brushed, 4,230; Brushless, 5,540

**DURATION:** Brushed: 4 minutes full throttle, 10-12 minutes with throttle management; Brushed: 8 minutes full throttle, 20-25 minutes with throttle management

**MINIMAL FLYING AREA:** Ball field

**PRICE:** \$119

### COMPONENTS NEEDED TO COMPLETE:

3-channel transmitter, receiver, two micro servos, motor, prop, 12-amp speed control, battery

## SUMMARY

The Chance-Vought Corsair was a legendary powerhouse in the Pacific during WWII. Perfect for modelers with crowded schedules, this kit lets you fly a very realistic Corsair with a minimal investment of time. Fortunately, it flies every bit as good as it looks, and will no doubt be a favorite for any WWII heavy metal fan.



### TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Preparing the Hobby Lobby Corsair for its first flight seems to take no time at all: The model comes completely assembled. All that is left for the modeler is to apply the decals and install the power system and radio. The waterslide decals offer the option of a few different prototypes. I liked the box art, so I decided to go with the version shown. Before you get out the pan of warm

water, cut up the decal sheet and set out the graphics in the order you want to apply them. A little attention now will prevent trying to cut up the decal sheet or sort through the pieces later with wet hands. I put the markings on with a little extra water, and then carefully wiped them down with a smooth cloth once I had them positioned.

Alfa Models recommends using two different servos for the Corsair. I used a Hitec HS-55 for the elevator, and the stronger

Hitec HS-81 to overcome any friction in the aileron pushrods. Both of these servos required just a little extra effort to install them for best performance. The length of the HS-55 is quite a bit shorter than that of the slot in which I



The large fuselage hatch provides great access to the battery and radio gear. Note the revised servo mount and pushrod standoff. (Below) By securely gluing the outer pushrod guide to the new standoff, I was able to straighten its run, and minimize any elevator pushrod drag.



The stock Speed-300 motor, MP Jet gearbox and 8-cell 720mAh NiMH battery provide great performance in an economical package. The gearbox mounts directly to the firewall with three screws. I used small tabs of double-sided tape to hold the cowl in place.



The MP Jet brushless outrunner, FMA Kokam Li-Poly and Jeti ESC weigh one ounce less than the stock power system and provide 22 percent more power. It's a sure recipe for increasing performance. The brushless motor needs an extra <sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>-inch of clearance on the cowl because of its different shape. I used PK Industries foam-safe N1000E CA to glue 4 basswood standoffs on the firewall to mount the cowl slightly further forward.

## HOBBY LOBBY CORSAIR ARF

installed it. I used a couple pieces of 1/8 plywood to "close the gap."

Next, I took a bit of extra care to ensure that the controls operated as smoothly as possible. Music wire pushrods in plastic guide tubes really want to run as straight as possible. I first installed the elevator servo, and then un-taped the pushrod from the side of the fuselage. I used a scrap of 1/8 inch plywood to fashion a new standoff for the pushrod guide tube. Glued to the servo tray, this standoff allowed me to get the elevator pushrod almost perfectly straight for friction-free operation, and provided a nice mounting spot for the ESC switch as well.

I also revised the aileron servo mounting to

reduce control friction. I carefully cut a hole through the wing so that I could mount the servo as low as possible. Taking advantage of the space between the wing and fuselage belly pan, I sanded two pieces of 1/8x1/4 spruce to match the lower curve of the wing, and glued them in place with 5-minute epoxy. These rails hold the aileron servo in near perfect alignment with the pushrods in the wing. The revised installation greatly reduced the pushrod drag.

Nearly a direct drop-in replacement for the brushed gear drive, the MP Jet outrunner is a great motor for this model and very easy to install. The mounting screw spacing is a dead-on match to the MP Jet gearbox, but there is a very



The Hobby Lobby Corsair is a great looking warbird in a compact package. All you need for a lot of flying excitement is the plane, a transmitter and a charged battery. Launching the Corsair was a snap with the TXTray from RCA Models cradling my transmitter.

### TXTray

The recently introduced TXTray™ from RCA models is an elegantly designed lightweight transmitter tray that is both simple and effective to use. Widely popular outside of the US, transmitter trays support and stabilize your transmitter so you can concentrate on flying your model, instead of not dropping your transmitter. They also allow you to use your fingertips to manipulate the sticks, rather than your thumbs. Since most people have more subtle manual control of their fingers, this really helps smooth out their flying. The TXTray supports your hands very comfortably on its molded wings, and it will accommodate all modern transmitters with a carrying handle.

Flying the Hobby Lobby Corsair was noticeably easier when I used this transmitter tray. From the launch on, the entire flight was smoother. I am left-handed, so I needed to use the Corsair's wing tip to advance the throttle when hand launching without the TXTray. The tray supports my Hitec Eclipse 7 transmitter (and all others, as noted above) in a horizontal position. Since I wasn't holding the Eclipse in my hand, I could easily push the throttle forward, and then move my right hand back to the stick. As soon as the Corsair was flying, there was no fumbling to reposition the transmitter for my launch hand; it was already in the right spot. I also found that with the model in the air, my pitch inputs were much smoother, and I could comfortably go to high rates on elevator without it "hunting" up and down as I flew.

Gripping the fuselage from above and launching underhand may seem strange, but with the abundant power available, it works very well. Advance the stick to full throttle, and just push the plane firmly forward as you release it.

Constructed of durable acrylic, it comes complete with a padded neck strap for comfort and is available in many translucent colors, including red, blue, orange, yellow, and bronze. Not only does it work exceptionally well while flying, it also doubles as a stand on the ground, holding your favorite transmitter clear of the dirt while you set up your model. There has never been a better time to try flying a transmitter tray!



By recessing the aileron servo through the center section of the wing I was able to minimize any binding in the pushrods. The basswood servo rails are glued to the bottom of the wing center section. The fuselage belly pan protects the servo from landing damage.

slight increase in apparent overall length. The brushless motor is not longer than the gear drive case, but it is wider at the front, and it rotates. The only trick to installing the outrunner is making sure the radial engine detail in the cowl does not hit the motor face. I glued four small basswood blocks to the firewall and sealed them with thin CA. I then mounted the cowl to these blocks with double-sided tape. With the cowl about 3/16 further forward than before, the interference with the motor was eliminated.

### CONCLUSION

Hobby Lobby has another winner with this favorite. The prototype's distinctive outline is faithfully captured with extensive surface detail, making this a model suitable for close inspection. Once at the field, the Corsair continues to please. It offers sparkling performance, regardless of the power option you choose. At the end of the day, you can even use the original kit box as a handy storage and transport container, keeping this classic warbird well rested until its next mission. I think the Alfa Models Corsair from Hobby Lobby deserves a spot in the hangar of any WWII fan. ☺

### Links

**Hitec RCD USA, Inc.**, [www.hitecrd.com](http://www.hitecrd.com), (858) 748-6948.

**Hobby Lobby International, Inc.**, [www.hobby-lobby.com](http://www.hobby-lobby.com), (615) 373-1444.

**PK Industries**, [www.pkindustries.net](http://www.pkindustries.net), (866) 203-4063.

**RCA Models**, [www.rcamodels.com](http://www.rcamodels.com), (248) 894-1934.



For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 161.