

# Building and Flying a Zirolu P40E Kittyhawk....

## Instalment 1



My last P40N Kittyhawk went from the picture on the left to the picture on the right at last years [Banjo Patterson Rally](#) run by the [Orange Model Aeroplane Club](#). This was my third P40 and as I thought I needed a change I made a Hawker Hurricane instead of replacing it. The Hurricane is OK but doesn't come up to my all time favourite P40's so on to number 4

**Find an aircraft to model:** I had some paint left over from the Hurricane so it made sense to make a P40 from the Middle Eastern theatre of WWII.





I decided on an aircraft flown by Bobby Gibbes

**Robert Henry Maxwell (Bobby) Gibbes DSO, DFC & Bar, OAM Wing Commander Number 3 Squadron RAAF Middle East.**

The bloke seemed to be a bit of a character and he had some pretty unique nose art on his plane.

I was doing my research on his planes markings when I found a whole lot of pictures on the web of a restored P40 in Gibbes colours.



The plane is based in Scone, NSW and is owned and flown by Ross Pay. Ross is the boss and owner of **Pay's Air Service P/L**.

I emailed Ross and asked if I could drive out to Scone to take some pictures. He was OK with this, so armed with camera and spare batteries off I went. Ross turned out to be a marvellous bloke, had the plane bought out of the hanger and left me to it.

As soon as I was up close and personal with this magnificent restoration I was hooked, so the project is to model Ross Pay's beautiful P40E.



This photo is of Bobby Gibbes and his wife, Jean talking to Col Pay. Col Pay is Ross Pays father, sadly, neither Bobby or Col are with us any more.



A walk around Ross Pay's magnificent restored Kittyhawk P40E and some of the 100 or so pictures taken.





## Research:

I have a drawer full of P40 stuff, books, [Signal Publication](#) walk arounds etc etc and now I had about 100 photos of the real thing...too easy.

## How to get Started:

I had two options here, one was to make a plane the same as my numbers 1, 2, 3 which were [Model Design](#) fibreglass fuselage with [Zirol](#) built up wings or to have a go at an all balsa P40 from the [Zirol](#) plans. I went with the latter for a change.

Nick Zirol makes it as easy as possible to get a successful plane into the air with a lot of accessories available. His web site [www.ziroliplans.com](http://www.ziroliplans.com) is a veritable treasure trove for the scale modeller. I ordered a set of plans, retract strut fairings, belly pan, a canopy set, a spinner and a pair of main wheels. All up about \$250. The cowl is from [Model Design](#) as its pretty close to the [Zirol](#) design and I wont need to mortgage the house to afford the freight from the US.

There are a lot of ribs and formers required to build the P40 and I wasn't too keen to have a go at making them myself on a scroll saw. I have used formers cut by Dave Brown before and know how accurate his stuff is so [Dave Brown](#) at [daveb@ix.net.au](mailto:daveb@ix.net.au) is the man and I ordered a full set from him.



## The Expensive Bits:

The motor is a [DL50](#). I have been pretty impressed with the [DL50](#), I have one in my Hurricane and it hasn't missed a beat despite being run pretty hot and with full throttle most of the time.



The retracts are from [Custom Retracts](http://www.customretracts.com.au), [www.customretracts.com.au](http://www.customretracts.com.au)

Al Zuger's beautiful craftsmanship and IMO far better than the [Robarts](#) as listed on the plans.





### Tail Wheel Retracts:

Extended position

The tail wheel retract is a **Robart** unit that was as dear as poison but there are not many good tail wheel retracts available that would fit. The **Robart** unit is actuated by an over centre arrangement with a pushrod. The pushrod can be either pneumatic or servo powered. Unfortunately it does not look anything like the full size tail wheel leg. I'll try to disguise it as well as possible by extending the pivot shaft and painting the front A frame black.

Retracted position

Now that we have got all the bits together we can start the build. Next instalment will cover the basic fuselage construction.

Cheers  
Stan