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## DKM U-Boat Type VIIC U-552

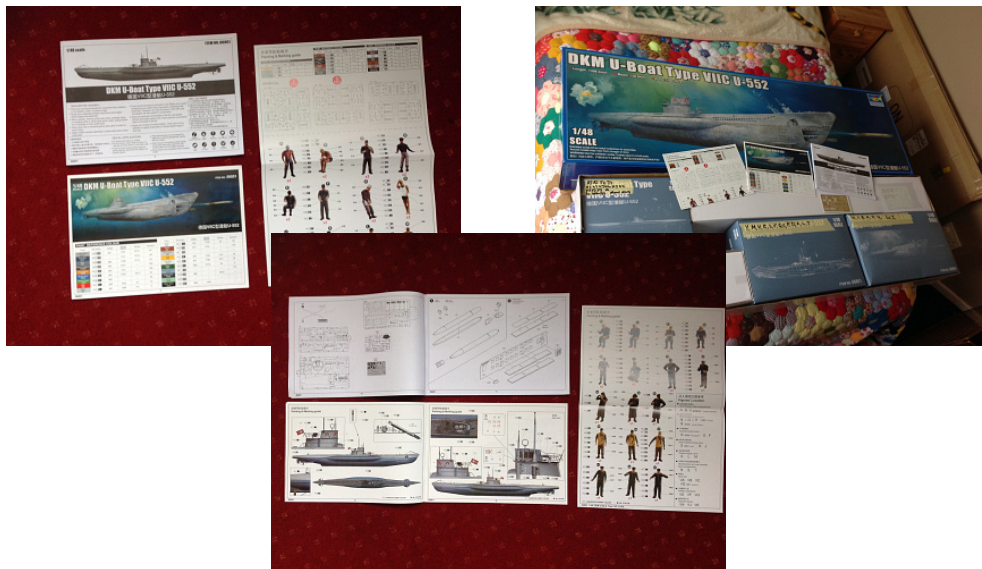
by Martin555



31st Dec 2019

## DKM U-Boat Type VIIC U-552

Hi Guys, To start this assembly log i thought i would tell you a little bit more about this kit. Firstly it is a big kit and very well packed. The detail on the parts are amazing. The dimensions of the finished model are:- Length 1398.3mm Beam 136.9mm. The Scale is 1/48. Made by Trumpeter. The Hull is in three parts, Port side is grey plastic, Starboard side is clear plastic, Aft section is clear plastic. There are 1100+ parts and a small sheet of etched Brass and one sheet of decals. The instruction book has 64 pages. There is a colour guide book containing 20 pages. Also a large colour guide sheet for the 48 crew members that come in the kit. I have been through the kit and marked off everything against the parts list in the instruction book, and it all appears to be there. so i also marked up the individual bags of sprue to make it easier to find. I had to stand on a chair to take a photo of the kit, and promptly got told off by my wife, with the reminder of age and Hospital.LOL!! The Box is too big to stay in my little workshop so i had to put it up stairs in the spare room with all the other junk. So as i work through the kit i should become fitter after all that running up and down the stairs LOL!!!! It has been many years since i assembled a plastic kit, so i am a little out of practice but i am sure i will soon get the hang of it again. If you have any questions then please ask and i will do my best to answer them. Martin555.



6th Jan 2020

## Torpedoes

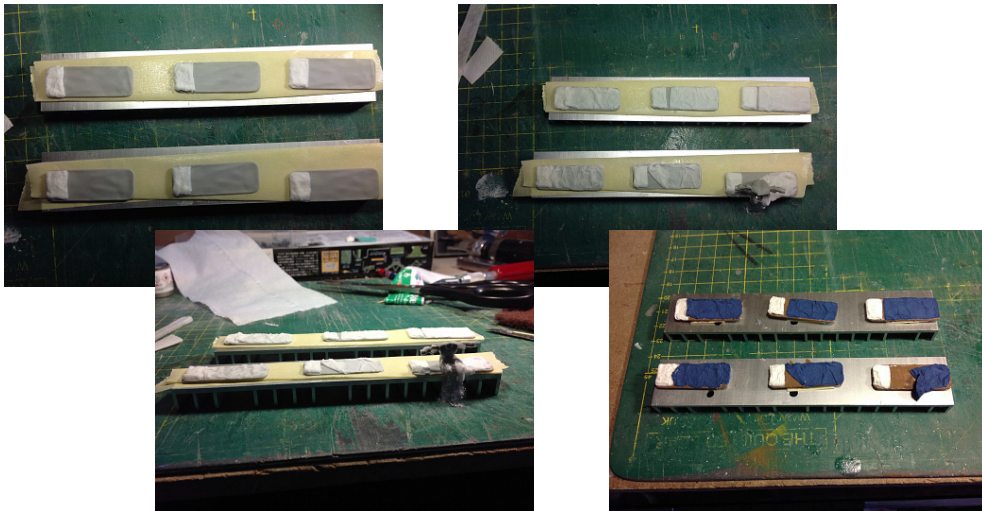
Hi Guys I have made a start on this big kit. The first step in the instructions say make 12 off Torpedoes. 5 of them are assembled into the launch tubes. (seems a bit pointless as you will not see them unless i cut away a bit of the tubes.) 5 are stowed. 1 is fitted to the loading beam in the forward Torpedo room. And 1 is so that you can show it being loaded down into the forward Torpedo room. On the first two Torpedoes i just put liquid glue on one side and stuck them together, clamped them using clothes pegs. When dry they were sanded and i had to add a little filler to the seems and sand again. On the second two i decided to apply the glue to both sides and put them together and again peg them. This proved to be the way to go as the pressure of the pegs squeezed a thin bead of plastic out along the seems. It took a little more sanding but no need for filler. I finished of the sanding with the fingernail blocks that Marky recommend (thank you Marky) The seems are now almost invisible. Now as for the paint job well the colour guide calls for light grey for the main body and engine grey for the head. So i did a bit of research and this Submarine carried the type G7e torpedoes. Some had the paint scheme recommended, and some were just metal finished body and bronze head. So rightly or wrongly and as there is quite a bit of grey on this Submarine i have decided to go with the bronze head and a silver body as i think it looks a bit more interesting. I hand painted them but looking at them now i should of sprayed them. Martin555.



9th Jan 2020

## Forward Torpedo Tube Compartment.

Hi Guy's Unfortunate i do not have the correct colour paints for this Submarine kit due to budget, So as i have lot's of leftover paints from other projects i will try to mix and match and if that don't work i will do my own thing. Hopeful no-one will notice LOL!! The bunk's supplied in the kit just have mattress, so I decided to make pillows and blanket's. They are made from toilet tissue and thinned white wood glue. One blanket is wrapped around a partly assembled crew members leg as he has just got out of his bunk. I wrapped his legs in Clingfilm so that the glue did not stick to him, as i did not want him to stay in bed all day like a teenager LOL!! I will assemble and paint him and put him in place later. The wood effect was done by first painting a base coat of brown then dry brushing a darker brown over the top, changing the colour slightly in places. I am quite pleased with the result as it is my first attempt at doing this wood effect. Most of the interior will be painted in an antique white paint, altho it calls for light grey i decided to change the colour as when it is fully assembled it is quite dark in there, As I plan on using warm white LED's instead of bright white just to add a bit of atmosphere. (also thinking about having a few LED's flickering) I suppose you could say i am doing my own thing. (As usual) At the end of the day as long as it looks reasonable I will be happy. Sorry about the quality of the photos. I will have to figure out a better way to take them. Martin555.





7th May 2020

## Look out

Hi Guys, Spent most of the day tinkering. I just wanted to see if it was possible for me to get this lookout moving without having wire linkage visible. So the first thing i did was to cut his body in half lengthwise then hollowed out as much of his chest area and down one leg as possible. Then made a small linkage that would fit inside the body. Added some small pieces of 1mm off cut plastic to make up for the saw cut. Glued him back together and then added his arms and head. I won't be using him on U552 it was just an experiment. Martin555. Breathe again Marky? We don't want any blue shipbuilders!??

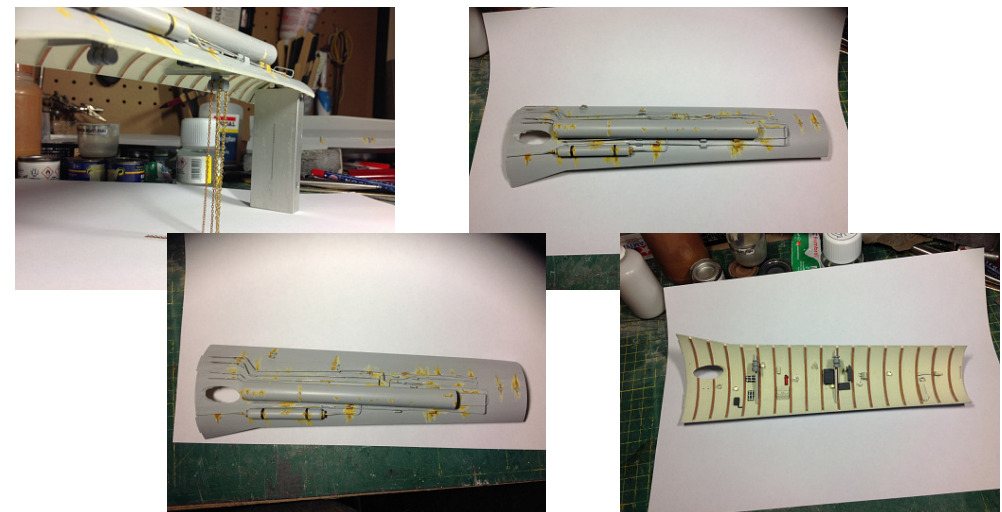


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14th Jan 2020

## Forward Torpedo Tube Compartment.

Hi Guy, The instructions show the torpedo lifting beam glued to the deck head but as i am doing some changes to this model I have decided to change the Torpedo lifting equipment. Made two beams using the plastic from a yogurt pot and glued them to the deck head. The next job was to make two chain hoist's, they were made from plastic sprue. I will cut the chains to length and paint them when it all comes together towards the main assembly. Drilled holes for the LED's then finished the paint work. I have discovered that spraying water based Acrylic paint onto plastic is a bit of a nightmare, (especially white paint) it seems that you have to give it lots of thin layers until you get good results. Maybe i am doing it wrong? Fitted all the bits and pieces and the Red and White LED's. The Red LED's look clear until powered up. I tried to make the wiring of the LED's look like pipework and i will still have to attach the flexible wires to it later when i work out the length's. Done a little rust weathering but not sure at the moment how much of the exterior deck head will show. The next job was to assemble the forward Torpedo stowage. The Torpedoes were held in place with steel strap's so i had to make some using some thin plastic again from yogurt pots. Done a little more weathering. I don't plan on going mad with the weathering on the inside of this U-boat as i am sure that a certain amount of cleaning and maintenance was done whilst on the long patrols. Unfortunately a lot of the detail work that has to be done on this model will not be seen. Martin555.



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20th Jan 2020

## Forward Torpedo Tube Compartment.

Hi Guy, The next job was to tackle the four Torpedo launch tubes. This proved a little tricky, as there are no alignment slots for some of the parts the best way was to glue several parts and assemble them at the same time and tweak it all about to get everything to lineup. To assemble the top and bottom launch tubes together it is best to dry fit them to the forward bulkhead then glue the two tubes together so that the pipework lines up. Then when the glue has dried a little remove them from the bulkhead. Whilst i had the forward bulkhead in my hands i decided to make a domed bulk to glue on to the it to make it look correct as you can see in the black/white photo. This was done by cutting out a 30mm disk from a piece of scrap 1mm plastic then gently heating it so that it was not to soft and then placing it on a flat surface and rubbing a large file handle backwards and forwards all around it until a got the shape i wanted (easer said than done) but i am quite pleased with the results. Again most of it will not be seen. Cut away part of the tube to show a Torpedo in the tube. Made four door's and some linkage for the forward end of the Tubes. Painted and weathered and then toned down the weathering a bit as i went a bit mad. I can tell i am out of practice with plastic kits, but a few more months then i should get the hang of it. ( hopefully ) Martin555.



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9th Apr 2020

## Welder

Hi Guys, I am starting to get the hang of modifying these 1/48 scale figures. This little guy took quite a bit of time to do. This is just setup to see what it will look like. He will appear somewhere on U552 but i am not quite sure where yet. At the moment i have just set it running from my Arduino but thanks to a good friend on this site I have a small AtTiny 85 IC that i will program for the welding flashes. The flashes will need a bit of tweaking. I hope the little video works so that you can see what i am trying to achieve. Martin555. Hmmm! I was afraid of that Martin. That's an old Quick Time MOV format vid, which the site simply interprets as a JPG picture file?? I'll try and convert it. Don't hold your breath! Doug. OK Gents, Ignore the Invalid File label, click on the file, then on the little download arrow top left. Select OPEN, with Windows Media Player, and it should work ? Video fixed ? Cheers, Doug ?



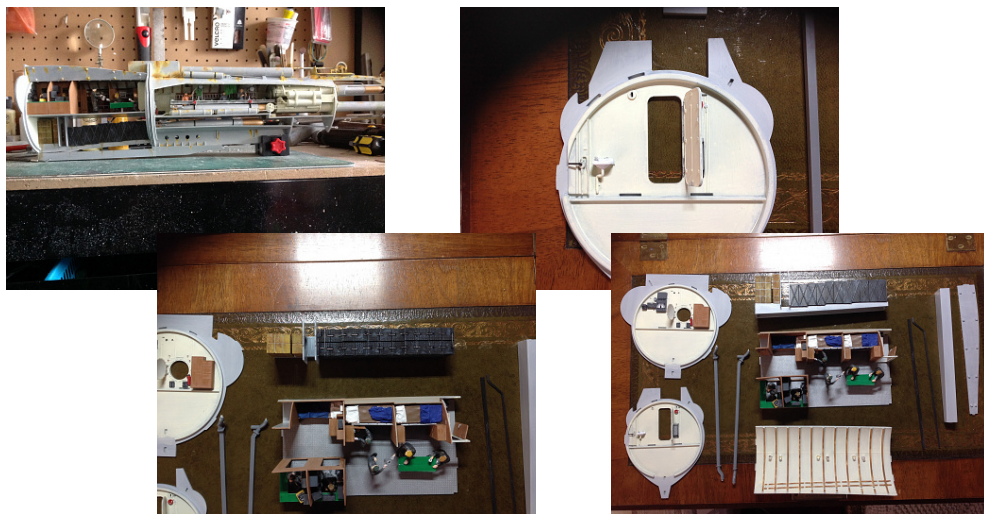
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31st Mar 2020

## Forward Crew Compartment.

Hi Guys, Finished the second compartment. I have found when it came to do the final assembly of this compartment you need three pairs of hands and a lot of patience as there are a lot of bits that have to be lined up at the same time. Admittedly i had to walk away a couple of times as the air started to turn blue. I did not go mad with the modifications or the weathering. Fitted red and white LED's and made the wiring to look like pipe work. Again the final wiring will be done later. As i have said in my last post the figures have been modified. Altho i placed the white LEDs in the suggested positions I am not that happy with the lighting as it dose not light up the radio and sonar rooms. It is to late to try and change it now. (I know it will bug me until i do change it so maybe later.) There are a couple of photos of the two finished compartments together. Only four more compartments left to do then i will resume work on the main hull. The Scene The radio and sonar men are testing their equipment and the other crew members are enjoying a cup of coffee before their watch. One of the crew is looking in his locker for his cup. Martin555.

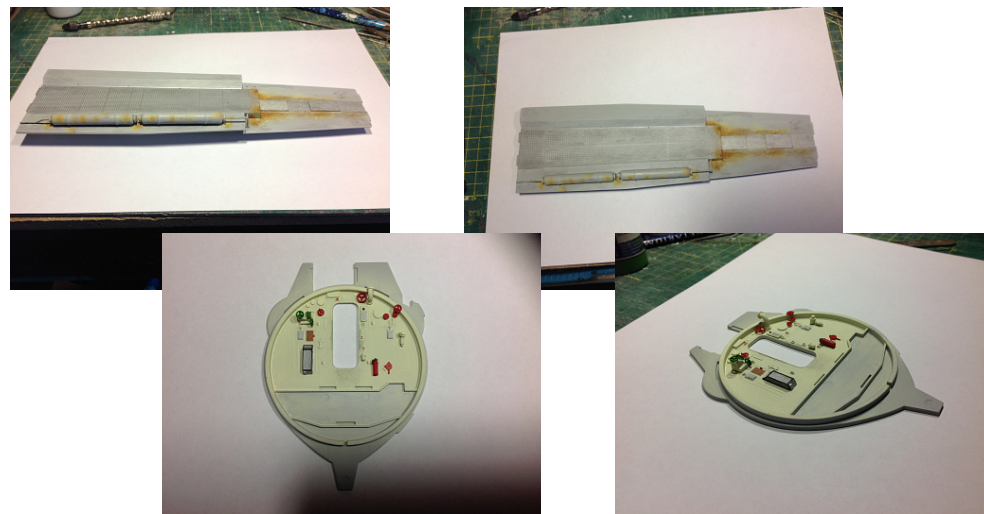


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28th Jan 2020

## Forward Torpedo Tube Compartment.

Hi Guy, Well the first compartment is finished. I have spent more time adding and changing things than actually assembling. Worked on the forward bulk head and the deck. Vary subtle weathering on the bulk head but a bit more on the deck. The rusting on the deck is were water spills out of the torpedo tubes when reloading. Added some pipe work to the two tanks on the deck. Heated and stretched a piece of sprue to make the curtain rail for the top bunk's.( ended up cutting most of it away again as it clashed with the deck head) Made the bunk curtains the same way as the blankets and pillows using toilet tissue and thinned white wood glue. Continued with the modifications to the Torpedo winch system. Modified the figures to make them look as if they are actually doing something. The hardest bit i have found is trying to get the skin colour so that it looks right. I also found that it is easier to paint some of the detail work with the tip of a cocktail stick it is more controllable than using a fine tipped paintbrush. There is less rust on the forward Torpedo tubes outside the pressure hull as they are normally below the water level. The torpedo's would normally be smothered with grease but as these guys are only practising and don't want to clean it all off again i have not done the grease on the Torpedos. Tested white and red LED's. THE SCENE One of the crew has been woken up and is struggling to get out of his bunk (after a heavy night ashore) while the other crew members are practising torpedo loading in an attempt to improve their times. Martin555.



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20th Feb 2020

## First Part of the Main Hull outer casing.

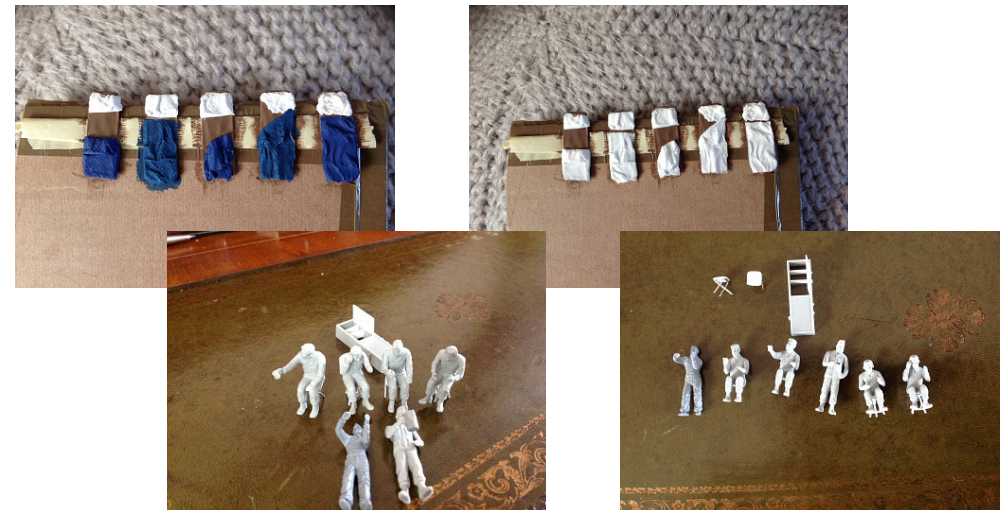
Hi Guys you'r resident nut case here again, Well there is not a lot to show you or tell you about this part of the build except to say i must be back on the medication again or i have gone completely mad. But as there is a lot to do on the hull i decided to make a start on it. The plan is when i get fed up with drilling and filing i will drop back on to the second compartment (The Forward crew compartment) The Main Hull is made in three parts. Port side that has most of the Deck attached. Starboard side that is made from see through plastic, And the tail section that is also made from see through plastic. I started drilling and filing out the Limber holes on the Port side section. Then i made the crazy decision to give the Deck the same treatment. All slots were chain drilled then cut with a scalpel and then filed. I had to grind one side of a needle file down to reduce the thickness to suit the deck slots. I then quickly discovered that a masking tape thimble needed to be made as the blisters started to arrive. Then i applied liquid poly plastic glue to each hole and slot with a small brush to smooth all the surfaces. The holes had to be drilled slowly as plastic seems to just melt around the drill bit if drilled fast. The plastic is approximately 3mm-4mm thick just to make it that little bit more difficult. If you are as crazy as me then this is certainly a time consuming job but definitely looks better (well that is what i kept telling myself). I also put some dents to simulate being depth charged and some heavy pitting to the under side of the casing. I am happy with the results but I now see why most people that make this model just paint the holes and slots black. There are brass etched kits that can be purchased from eBay to super detail this model including the deck. But i will continue in my usual way.



25th Mar 2020

## Forward Crew Compartment.

Hi Guys, I noticed that the figures provided for this compartment were mainly seated the only problem was the kit only supplied two stools, one for the radio room and one for the sonar room. So some extra fold up stools had to be made for the crew sat drinking coffee at the fold down table. Blankets and pillows made from toilet tissue and thinned white wood glue. Made the coffee pot from a bit of sprue and wire. Again modified the crew figures to look as if they are doing something. Martin555.

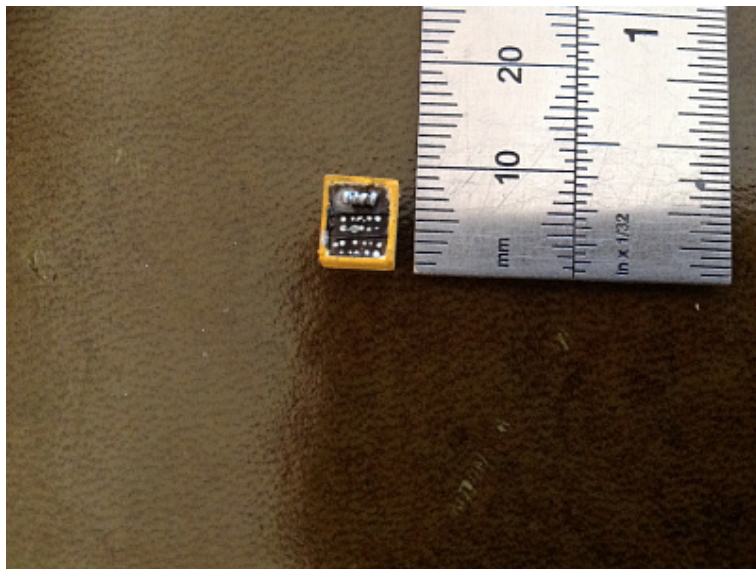




24th Mar 2020

## Enigma Machine

Hi Guys, Doug This is one of my cockup's. I have attempted to make an enigma machine for U552. Unfortunately i suffer badly with the shakes. It is my forth attempt so this will have to do. Not much of it will be seen. Martin555.



27th Feb 2020

## Aft Section of the Hull outer Casing.

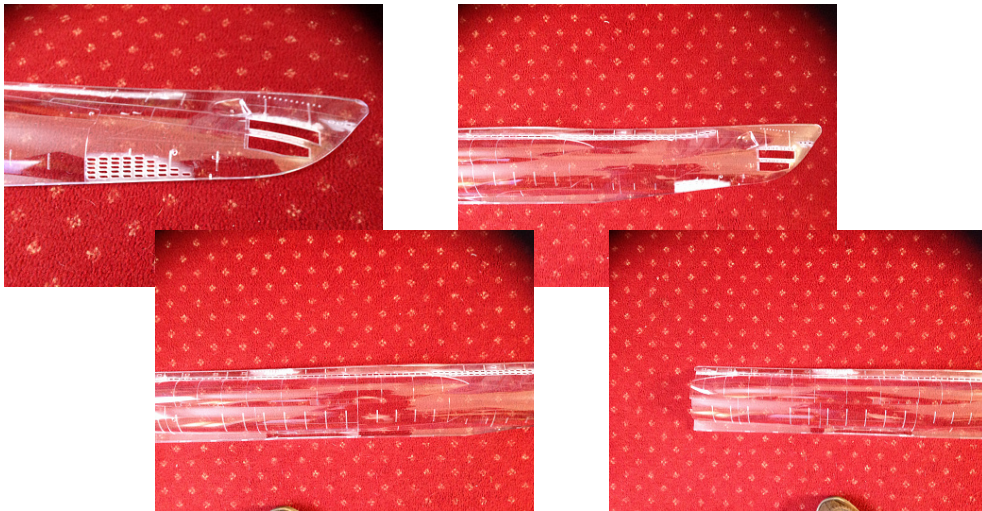
Hi Guys, A word of warning to anyone who is planning on making this kit. and has decided on cutting out all of the slots. The two clear sections of the hull is made from a very brittle plastic. Extreme care must be taken when drilling and filing. That said i have been working on the Aft section of this hull and it has not been easy. The brittle plastic has to be drilled very slowly as it melts to the drill bit and when filing it you cannot put much pressure on it as it will snap easily. It also tends to chip out. Drilling by hand seemed to be the best way to do it. Being see through makes it difficult to work on, magnification and good lighting will help, also if you put a dark piece of cloth inside it dose make it a little easier to see what you are doing. I did however manage to break a small piece off of the deck but this was easily fixed with a 1mm off cut of black plastic. Care must also be taken to protect the starboard side from getting scratched. Working on this piece has made me think that i should of painted the holes and slots instead of cutting them out. (like normal people would do). After working on these clear parts i would not recommend doing this unless you are prepared to put in a lot of time on a very very boring job. Sorry about the photos as it is a little difficult to take photos of something that is mostly see-through. Martin555.



3rd Mar 2020

## Starboard Section of the Hull outer Casing.

Hi Guys, SLOTS, SLOTS AND MORE SLOTS. I apologise for this boring part of the assembly log. But finally i have finished the most tedious and brain numbing part, (admit-ably totally my own fault. ) You can only imagine how i feel now LOL!!! I have seen discussions and photos in the internet about the three limber holes on the bow of this piece. Some say there should only be the two limber holes, other say there should be three. But i have decided to go with the three just because i think it looks a little bit more interesting. I am not worried about the haze around the slots as this area will be painted eventually. Now i can start to enjoy myself again. I will take a break for a few days and then make a start on the second compartment. Martin555.



21st Mar 2020

## Forward Crew Compartment.

Forward Crew Compartment. Hi Guys, I decided to post this now instead of when this compartment is finished. As when it is complete you will not be able to see a lot of it. It is still a work in progress, so this is as far as i have got. The first job was to work out how many parts had to be given the painted wood effect. After a bit of forward planning i have made some more modifications. Modified a crew stowage by cutting out the door and adding some shelves then made a new door and glued it in the open position. On this submarine i have found the best way to make it look weathered is to be a little less fussy with the painting, otherwise it looks brand new and that is not the look i am going for. If you want me to post updates as i go along instead of waiting until each compartment is finished then please let me know. Martin555.

