

Capital Area Modellers Society

I met Kaitlin a number of years ago when she came to our CAMS show with her parents. She was a smart, personable and very interesting young modeller with a talent that was just coming to form. Her parents were very supportive of not only Kaitlin but a certain show organizer who at that point was a little rattled (but that is another story).

Since then, they have been at our show every year and every year Kaitlin never fails to impress, not only with her modelling skills, but with her personality. She showed her chops as a builder with multiple silver and gold awards over the years as well as the 2013 First Among Equals Award.

After the 2016 show I asked Kaitlin to do a write up for the website about modelling from a Lady's Perspective, and here it is. Hope you enjoy the read and the pictures.

The Scribe

Modelling From A Lady's Perspective

Glancing at the array of models that have been displayed on the table, nothing seems to be out of the ordinary or different from the rest of the tables at the show. Except in this case there is a difference. The models were built, painted and finished by Halifax Military Modeller's Group club member Kaitlin Perks. This builder definitely is NOT your typical modeller.

Kaitlin grew up in Bedford, Nova Scotia, but has recently moved to her own apartment in neighboring Dartmouth. Currently employed at Altus Geomatics, she uses her skills learned in the local college to draft well site and oil pipelines for Western Canada.

After building models for about 14 years, Kaitlin has become accustomed to the surprise and shock that is directed towards her interest in the hobby. She always responds with some words of humble, polite thanks. Though often looked at with surprise by the general public, she has been wholly accepted by fellow members of the modelling clubs that she is part of, sometimes even being the instigator of some light-hearted jokes.

Kaitlin was more than willing to sit down and answer some questions about modelling and her rather unique position.

When did you start modelling, and what was the inspiration behind you getting into, and continuing with this hobby?

I was probably 11 or 12 when I received my first kit from my parents. I can still remember what it was: a Revell Monogram 1/48 scale F-14A Tomcat. I think I can attest some of my initial inspiration to the almost obsessive interest in the movie Top Gun. But I think some of it also comes from my love of building (or deconstructing) things. Ever since an early age, I have loved puzzles and Lego. I am very keen on how things fit together, and am very capable of following instruction precisely. So modelling is just a mix of both of these things.

Did anyone help you learn modelling skills, or were you self-taught?

My dad used to build kits when he was younger, so he got me going with my first kit. As I continued with the hobby, I was forced to learn new skills by myself, and now my dad and I share a lot of tips and pointers. There was lots of trial and error before things started to really work out.

So how did that first kit turn out?

Oh, it was awful. I followed the assembly instructions pretty closely, but that is about as far as the similarity went. I hand painted the plane with varying shades of blues and white, and I put the decals on where I thought it would look cool.

Where do you do most of your modelling?

My dad built a custom work station in my parents' basement complete with cupboards, shelves and a nice work surface. I do all of my building there. All of my started kits are stored there, whereas all of my un-started kits are kept in my apartment closet.

You mentioned started kits; how many of these projects have you begun?

Well, I will admit that this is probably one of the things that is similar with most other modellers. I might have somewhere between 10 or 15 models that I have begun, but not yet completed. Among them being a large 1/400 scale R.M.S. Titanic, and another large 1/350 scale U.S.S. Enterprise.

How about un-started kits. How many of these do you think you have?

I think that number might be somewhere around 150. I currently have them all stashed in my apartment closet, so I don't think I have too many.

What was your most recent build, and did you like how it turned out?

I just recently finished an old Hawk 1/72 scale Spitfire Mk. XXII. I decided to sand off all of the raised paneling and rivets on the wings, and re-scribe them. There was nothing in terms of a cockpit other than an empty spot, so I also decided to scratch-build a rudimentary floor, panel,

and seat. What I like most with how the kit turned out was it's rather unique finish. I did some research and that led to me hand painting the topside and bottom side of the wings in my family tartan colours. I think this is probably the first kit where I am pleased with how everything turned out.

Do you have a best or favorite build?

Hmm, tough question. I don't think I can pick one over any of the others. I like them all.

Do you tend to build certain subjects?

Well, it does seem like most of my stash is 1/72 scale stuff, but I do dabble in a several different subjects. I have done one ship, a couple of helicopters, jets and props, one car, some sci-fi, and one vignette. Armour doesn't really interest me, and I haven't yet done any figures.

Do you have a favorite part of the build?

Probably when I finish a kit. I like being able to sit back and admire my hard work.

Do you have a least favorite part?

Probably building a cockpit. I don't like that you can't really progress on an airplane without the cockpit.

You seem to be very interested and involved with the hobby. Do you think there is anything that can be done to get more people interested in the hobby like you?

I think the biggest problem right now is that 80% of the modellers are in their golden years, and we can't bring in people as quickly as we lose them. I don't think that most young people nowadays are interested in building models. I think right now the appeal for them is Xboxes, iPads, and Smartphones. We are also in the 'here and now' time, and many people just don't have the patience to put in towards modelling. Modelling takes lots of time and dedication; you can't just throw something together and expect it to look good. I think if people could try the hobby and take a model all of the way to completion, we might be able to hook more enthusiasts.

One final question. What do you want to tell people who have never met you, or who don't believe in a female modeller?

I say 'why not?' Why can't a woman build models? I think women can do anything that they put their mind to, and modelling is no exception!