

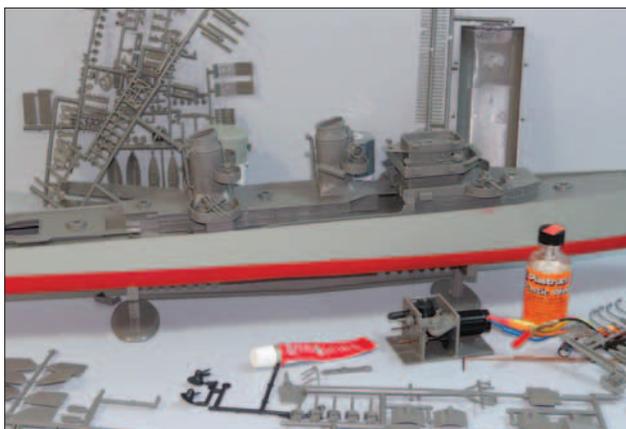
Dennis Andreas

## Lindberg Blue Devil Destroyer

*It was a challenge, but the results are worth the effort.*

Since I was a kid I have built models. Using everything from pie plates during the space race days to wood for boats and planes. When it comes to plastic model kits, one of the long standing names in models is Lindberg. I built a number of these back in the day when we had to wind our own electric motors. We sailed these boats at a local pond with a long fishing line attached as a tether so we wouldn't lose our prized creations.

At the 2013 NRHSA Show, our editor won a Lindberg *Blue Devil* Destroyer model. Having the intentions to convert the model to radio control, he had the desire, but not the time, so I was assigned the task. [Assigned? *There are always two sides to every story* - Ed]



*The Blue Devil is a large model with a lot of parts and requires a fair amount of time to assemble.*

At first glance the *Blue Devil* might appear simple enough, but it is an involved model. Assembly is rated as a skill level-3 which means only experienced modelers should attempt the build. The kit is 1/125th scale which translates to a hull which is 39 inches long. There are over 300 parts involved with basic assembly. Add to this the need to upgrade the motor and add a speed control, install the radio control equipment, paint and details, and construction of this model will take time. Thankfully, with so many parts, Lindberg has taken the effort to group the parts in numerical order on the trees. This makes locating needed pieces quite a bit easier, but without some building experience this kit is in no way a first-time endeavor for the inexperienced modeler.

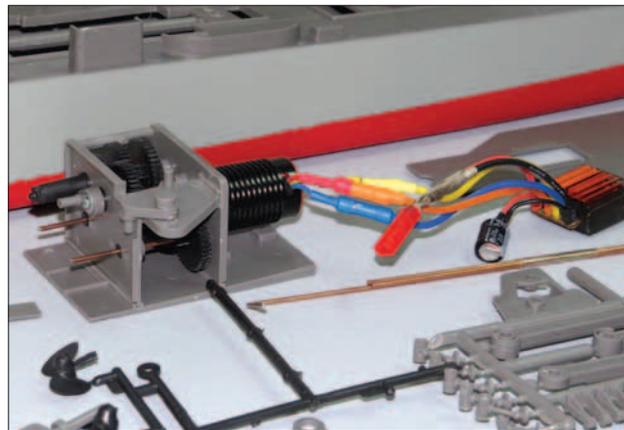
The first order of business was to decide if the conversion to radio control was a realistic option. Oftentimes, especially 50 years ago when this kit was first released,



possibilities such as radio control were listed to generate excitement. There was nothing commonly available which would make the conversion an easy proposition, but it served its purpose and got the potential consumer dreaming. Before any further steps were taken the instructions were reviewed to determine the motor size and radio control requirements. The kit does include an assembled 280 size brushed can motor, but with today's possibilities I wanted to use a low RPM (Rotations per Minute) brushless motor and a lithium battery for power.

To get the power issue sorted, I thumbed through some catalogs and found an inexpensive R/C car motor and speed control that would mount without any modifications. There are many different options available, and it's up to the customer to decide what will work best for him, so always keep plenty of catalogs handy. With propulsion now squared away it was time to tackle the steering requirements.

A feature of the stock *Blue Devil* model is the preprogrammed running gear and moving turrets. To accomplish this, the kit uses a system of cams which are driven by a



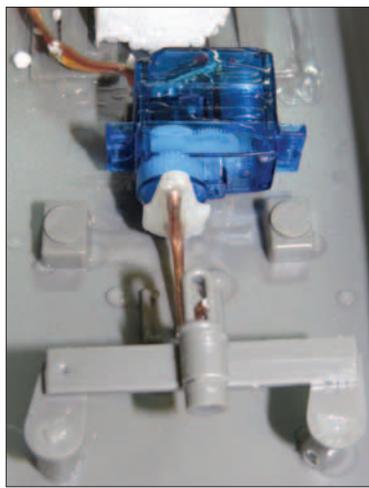
*To begin the conversion a brushless motor that fit the kit's gearbox without modification was located.* High-tech for the 60s, it's a pretty simple design where the rudder can be set to do various patterns like figure eights, or rectangles and triangles all the time moving the turrets while the boat is under way.

This was another area where problem solving was necessary. I wanted to maintain the turret movement from the kit's gearbox, yet install an independent steering servo. To accomplish this task a small servo was located in the box of spares. Prior to installation the servo was water-

proofed with clear Shoe-Goo on all of its seams and the wire entrance. After everything had dried and was tested, the servo was glued to the location of the kit's stock wire pivot. This assembly was in-turn reinforced with some spare plastic from one of the sprues. At this point, after a bit of bending I was actually able to use the piece of wire included in the kit for moving the rudder. The result is positive control of the boat's rudder and moving turrets.

The problems of propulsion and steering were resolved, so there was no question the conversion was completely feasible. It was now time to tackle the bulk of the work; the deck and armament. There is a great deal of this for sure. Following the instructions, the builder starts with the super structures and turrets. Make certain to let the purchaser know he needs to give himself a few evenings to accomplish this task. All of the structures were painted prior to final assembly, but there are three super structures, five turrets, two torpedo launchers and 11 20mm cannons. Putting this all together will keep the most dedicated modeler busy.

Even though I consider myself an experienced modeler, the way plastic model kits are assembled has changed over



*A servo replaced the cam-driven rudder mechanism.*



*The Blue Devil got its name because of the blue-gray paint used on the deck and super structures.*

the years, and because of this I found myself referring back to the directions multiple times to be sure the correct parts were being used.

Quickly becoming familiar with the procedure, I was gaining momentum with the build, but the editor demands photos so I had stop many times before committing any glue. Instead of complaining about lost progress I began to realize these breaks were also a good time to review each step and make certain I did not commit the modelers' mortal sin and get ahead of myself.

As I'm sure the editor was aware when assigning this to me – I'm really smiling – there are a large number of parts to assemble, but the end was in sight. All that was left were the railings and rigging. [My ears weren't burning, they were on fire - Ed]

The railing came with its own challenge. It is composed of about 50 tiny posts cemented to the deck. Once the support posts have been set the modeler needs to string three

rows of line to simulate the cables which were used to keep the sailors from falling off the deck. After contemplating how to do this it dawned on me. Folks who like to tie their own fishing fly's use a tiny pen with a bobbin and guide tube to feed the thread. Not having the dedicated tool, but locating a bobbin and some small brass tubing I was able to fabricate my own. Applying a drop of glue to the posts and then wrapping the string was now easy.

Knowing how clumsy I can be, I left off the mast rigging. Even though it's a pretty obvious detail, I knew it would only be a matter of time before I would snag something and break it.

The last step before the deck was snapped onto the hull was to bag all of the electronics in waterproof pouches and as a precaution place some Styrofoam floatation blocks in the empty, unused hull areas. Using a plastic tube, the 2.4GHz receiver antenna was routed up the forward stack. It took a bit of time, but the *Blue Devil* was now finished.

Converting the Lindbergh *Blue Devil* Destroyer to radio control is not a short term project. The kit arrived on my doorstep in early May and was not completed until mid November. But once started there was no turning back, and after such a long build it was quite satisfying when she was placed in the water.

The *Blue Devil* has a great presence. She handles well with very minimal sway in turns. This is helped by the 2S 4000mAh battery which fits the kit's battery box, and is centered in the bottom of the hull. No leaks have been experienced, but I'll only run her in calm water.

Although I missed having the *Blue Devil* ready for Veterans' Day this year, she will sail with my buddies next year. A group of us have military boats and we do this each year for our Vets. [The truth is out. Dennis and I are very good friends and he needed a new boat, so he was asked if



*The conversion to R/C results in a scale WW II era ship with a lot of presence when placed in the water. he was interested, but there was indeed some good natured bantering during the build - Ed].* The Lindberg kits are a challenge and adding R/C raises the bar, but the results are more than worth the effort. Recommend the challenge to your customers, they won't be disappointed.

Lindberg kits are available through Round 2. **HM**