

Lindberg MOTORIZED Air Force Rescue Boat

By [Thomas Solinski](#)



Introduction

Why is it that as we get older we want to return to the things of our childhood? The Lindberg USAF Rescue Boat is one of the earliest models in my childhood memory. My dad built it for me and I remember playing with it for hours either in the bathtub or my 12' above ground pool. I know it lasted on the shelves of my of built models well into high school.



Several years ago I became interested in all the PT boat-like models that were available in 1/72 scale. This later expanded into all "small" boats in that scale. After buying up and stashing all the available Airfix, Revell and Tamiya kits, I happened to remember the Lindberg Crash Rescue boat and acquired one in very good condition off eBay.

With Airfix producing the RNLI Severn class boat my interest in completing and working on this collection of small boats was invigorated, although I still can't quite swallow the \$75.00 USD or so it's going to cost me to get the Revell Germany "Herman Marwede". Browsing over the stash I came across the Lindberg boat and began to think that the oldest thing in my memory would be the simplest thing to start with.



A Little History

The first question: exactly what IS this boat and how accurate is it? I was suspicious of the 1/72-scale markings on the box top, because I knew that the model stemmed from the late 50's early 60's when it more likely was a box-scale item. The box says the model is 12-3/4 inches long, which would make the prototype a 76'6" long boat. The World Wide Web came to my rescue and came up with two good sites.

The first is the [AAF/USAF Crash Rescue Boat Association](#), the second is a site dedicated to [Kunsan Airbase in the early fifties](#) (scroll down a



bit to find the history of the 22CRBS (Crash Rescue Boat Squadron)).

With an article from the Crash Boat History site and a good look at the bottom of the second site I finally found [this photo](#).



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It appears that in the 1950's Lindberg was trying to get ahead of the game and model the newest and the latest procured 94-foot USAF rescue boat, the design turned out to be the unsuccessful end of the line for the USAF being in the Rescue Boat design and operation business. As indicated in the blurry caption this was a 1953 attempt at a post-Korea all-new rescue boat design. Sadly, the design was altered by Air Force airplane people, who had no idea how to properly design a ship. They started off on the right foot by getting a naval architect to design a boat that met all the mission needs and was powered by the latest in diesel technology, then they turned around and demanded that the boat be

powered by three Packard Merlin 1500HP aircraft engines that had powered all the previous rescue boat designs, only trouble with this was that the Merlin had been out of production since 1947! The six engines in the two test boats came out of USAF scrap yards! Read the fourth part of the Crash Boat History in the first link above for the details of this sad endeavor. If you doubt that the Lindberg kit is the experimental 1953 boat please look closely at this picture, then all of the other boat pictures at the bottom of the second site. The 94-foot boat is the only one of all the designs that has the stepped deck adjacent to the bridge. So since this is a 94-foot boat, then as suspected, the Lindberg kit works out to being roughly 1/88th scale. The other deviation from being an accurate replica is that there is only the single propeller of the powered toy features of the kit. There are no options to install the 3 drive shafts and propellers of the prototype.



There is one great spin off of this research. [It appears](#) that the standard Crash/Rescue boat paint scheme for USAF was a white hull, yellow deck, and red wheelhouse, something colorful and loud to put in the middle of all those drab PT boats.

The Kit

My edition of the kit comes in a two-piece cardboard box measuring 17-1/4 x 9-1/4 inches. The gray plastic parts, clear plastic parts, battery box brass parts and propeller drive shaft, all come in separate either polyethylene or cellophane-like clear plastic bags. The 3-volt electric motor and mounting brackets were floating free in the box.



The instructions indicate a total parts count of 133 pieces. The instructions consist of a large 10-inch by 14-inch 4-page, 17 step photo illustrated layout with a parts index. There was a small piece of paper showing a supplemental installation of that particular motor. Decals came on a single sheet with typical USAF markings, in register. The serial number for this boat on the decal sheet is incorrect; it should be R-21-1251- (1250 or 1252). For its age the kit was nicely molded and relatively flash free.

Conclusion

With Lindberg producing again (and if they redo this kit) it looks like an ideal starter for a young one to start building on then playing with.

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This review courtesy my wallet.



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