

by Tyler Renkert

You have seen them in movies, at air shows and possibly at your local airport. The T-6 Texan is one of the most recognizable warbirds in aviation. Used primarily as a trainer, this powerful and forgiving aircraft has earned great success and notoriety. Graupner has re-created this bird in the Aeroshell aerobatic team colors: a true scale creation that even has the sponsor's decals from the full-size T-6. The attention to detail is truly impressive on this balsa and lite-ply ARF from Hobby Lobby.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Originally designed for a .40- to .60-size glow engine, this ship is built strong.

Many times when a ship is designed to withstand the balsa-battering vibration of a glow engine it is very heavy; that is not the case here. Hobby Lobby took their time to find a great electric powerplant/battery combination that provides outstanding power for scale-like performance sans smoke and noise.



POWERPLANT

I am a big fan of the AXI motors, so I was happy to see that Hobby Lobby specified an AXI outrunner and Jeti controller for the T-6; it's a rock-solid combination. They even provided the mounting hardware to mount the AXI on the firewall with a reverse mount kit. The electronics are provided by Kokam: a pair of 3S 3200mAh packs. This setup was able to produce 890 watts at full throttle

drawing 39 amps—clearly a robust package capable of flying this six-pound bird with ease. 890 watts is almost 1.2 hp!



HOBBY LOBBY

T-6 Texan

Warbird excitement in an aerobatic ARF

SPECS

PLANE: T-6 Texan

MANUFACTURER: Graupner

DISTRIBUTOR: Hobby Lobby

TYPE: Electric scale ARF warbird

FOR: Intermediate to advanced pilots

WINGSPAN: 52.25 in.

WING AREA: 600 sq. in.

FLYING WEIGHT: 131 oz.

WING LOADING: 31.44 oz./sq. ft.

LENGTH: 47.25 in.

RADIO: 6 channels required; flown with a Hitec Eclipse 7 transmitter, Hitec Electron 6 receiver, two Hitec HS-325HB servos (ailerons), one Hitec HS-322HD servo (rudder), two Hitec HS-422 servos (elevator), one Hitec HS-75 BB for retracts

POWER SYSTEM: AXI 4130/16 motor, APC 14x10e, Jeti 770Opto brushless controller, Kokam 6S 3200mAh Li-Poly battery

FULL THROTTLE POWER: 39 amps, 890 watts; 6.79 W/oz., 108.7 W/lb.

TOP RPM: 7,400

DURATION: 10-12 minutes mixed flying

MINIMAL FLYING AREA: RC club field

PRICE: \$189

COMPONENTS NEEDED TO COMPLETE: Radio, servos, motor, speed control, batteries

SUMMARY

The T-6 Texan from Hobby Lobby is a great scale model with exceptional performance. It is not for the faint of heart, but if your thumbs are up to it, this aerobatic warbird will excite all who see it in the air. For the ultimate thrill, talk three of your buddies into joining the fun, and recreate the Aeroshell Aerobatic Team's dramatic air show at your club field!



HOBBY LOBBY
T-6 TEXAN



AIRBORNE

After initial testing, the first public outing for my T-6 took place at the NEAT Fair, probably not my first choice for a maiden public flight. The huge grass runway was probably long enough to land a full-scale T-6, so we had no issue there. The AXI has plenty of power, and I had the bird up on its mains in about 20 feet, with a rollout at 50 feet and a solid climb into the wind over the hills of Peaceful Valley, NY.

The T-6 proved to be fast and is definitely not a floater due to the wing loading. Once the gear is up this bird is very clean and it really moves out. It will stall if you get too slow. I forced a stall in slow flight at altitude and found it to be straight ahead, with no obvious tendency to drop either wingtip. Recovery took a little time though, as it accelerated back to flying speed. I recommend that you keep the bird

moving until you've made the field. Chop the power, keep the nose down, and let gravity bring her in for a nice wheel landing. This is definitely not a short-field airplane until you know the characteristics of its flight envelope.

The real thrill for me is to make a high-speed pass, then roll to one side and pull back on the elevator to make a really tight, hard turn. At about 100 yards she looks very scale with a nice background.

I was able to fly stable inverted passes at half throttle around the field, nice axial rolls and huge loops inside and out. The T-6 is a real pleasure to fly.



The fuselage has plenty of space for installing the radio, but you will need to tuck the batteries as far forward as possible to establish the proper balance point. I used a split pack installation.

THE BUILD

Any time I begin a project I go through the steps and trial fit everything, looking for a good, clean build. I usually find some mismatched parts or things I believe will need to be reinforced (e.g., the wheel collars are incorrect, the horns don't fit, etc.). I am happy to report that this ARF is ready to go: I found nothing to change or "fix."

This ship has retracts onboard, so it was my first experience with non-fixed gear. I had always thought retracts would be tough to deal with due to their complexity. The T-6 could not have been easier; I had them installed and functional within 15 minutes—no fear! The wing halves need to be glued together with epoxy, and I found the fit to be perfect without any sanding required.

The control surfaces came from Graupner pre-hinged and pinned—you gotta like that. The toughest part of the build was attaching all those sponsor decals because there are so many and you have to duplicate each side of the fuselage to match (although it isn't too tough).

Hobby Lobby provides everything you need to outfit this bird. The spinner from

Graupner is a nice plastic two-piece unit that would have worked sufficiently; however, I decided to call Tru-Turn to see what they had to augment this great-looking ship. It turns out they have the perfect spinner to mate up with the AXI motor. It gives the model the appearance of a radial engine because the spinner is big and round like a big Cadillac hubcap rather than conical. It even has a lightened back plate to save on weight for the electric conversion. It turned some heads at the NEAT Fair for sure.

The cowl is pre-painted in classic checkerboard black and white, and it mounts securely to the firewall with small wood screws.

CG

As with any glow ship conversion to electric, there are concerns about CG. You are faced with the "Where will I put all those batteries?" dilemma each time you see that fuel tank that you are not going to use sitting in the box your ship came in. I admit I cheated on this one. When I was at the NEAT fair, I peeked inside the T-6 that Hobby Lobby brought to the show. I wish I could take credit for the install, but David and Mike from Hobby Lobby did the legwork here.

The two Kokam 3S cells fit wonderfully behind the firewall, tucked in on either side of the fuselage and wedged in between the lite-ply bulkhead and the fuselage wall. They were then secured with some Velco and wired in series with my Sermos connectors.

The CG was right on the money thanks to the Hobby Lobby crew; now all I had to worry about was flying this bird in front of the huge crowd at the NEAT fair and not choking.

CONCLUSION

The T-6 is really a fun plane with plenty of power. It is a quick build, and one that is noticed at the field. There are not many models out there like this. The powerplant from AXI/Kokam/Jeti really rocks with a



Retracts come with the T-6 kit from Hobby Lobby, and are easy to install and operate.

great power curve and flight times upwards of 15 minutes.

This is a great first electric conversion for you glow guys needing a reason to fly quietly without resorting to something small and foam. The T-6 gives the pilot a great-looking ship that is built well and flies well. Keep them coming, Hobby Lobby. This is a great ship! 🌟

Links

AXI Motors, distributed exclusively by Hobby Lobby International, Inc., www.hobby-lobby.com, (615) 373-1444

Hitec RCD USA, Inc., www.hitecrad.com, (858) 748-6948

Hobby Lobby International, Inc., www.hobby-lobby.com, (615) 373-1444

Kokam Batteries, distributed by FMA Direct, www.fmadirect.com, (800) 343-2934

Tru-Turn, www.tru-turn.com, (281) 479-9600
For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 177.