

Belcher Bits No. 9: 2,000 / 4,000 lb HC Bombs 1/48

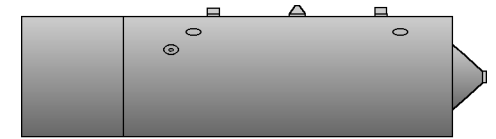
Background

At the start of WWII, high explosive bombs used by the RAF were mostly GP series; streamlined cast cases with a charge/weight ratio of around 23%. The damage caused by German mines dropped on England by the Luftwaffe during the Blitz, prompted the RAF to develop something similar. The intention was to develop a weapon which was not intended to penetrate structures, but due to its large size and high charge/weight ratio (around 70%), would cause considerable damage especially in combination with incendiary bombs. These weapons were classed as HC (high capacity) and were developed in 2,000 lb, 4,000 lb, 8,000 lb and even 12,000 lb sizes.

The smallest was the 2,000 lb HC. It was basically a thin walled steel cylinder (18-1/2" dia) with an internal beam to distribute the hoisting load. The shape was determined by the long narrow bomb cells of early aircraft such as the Stirling. The Mk I had a conical nose with the fuze at the tip and two additional time delay fuzes on the after sides of the body. The Mk II used a simpler dished nose and dropped the after fuzes but the Mk III re-instated them. All variants used a cylindrical nose ring to improve the aerodynamics when dropped. Early Mk Is used a parachute to slow and stabilize the bomb; trials indicated that a simple cylindrical tail was sufficient and all later marks used the. These bombs came into service in 1941 and over 28,600 were dropped by the end of the war.

The 4,000 lb HC (the 'Cookie') was similar; differences being mainly dimensional (30" body diameter). Mk Is used the conical nose, while later marks used dished heads. All used a simple sheet metal drum tail to stabilize the bomb. This weapon was carried

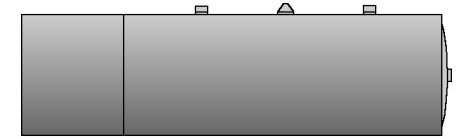
by many aircraft including the Mosquito but was most often seen on Lancasters and Halifaxes in combination with a full load of incendiaries. The Cookie was first used on 1 April 1941 over Emden. Four years later, 68,000 had been dropped.



Bomb HC 4,000 lb Mk I

Assembly

This set includes bodies for a 2,000 lb HC Mk I and Mk III, as well as a parachute pack and slotted tail. It also includes bodies for a 4,000 lb HC Mk I and Mk III and drum tail.



Bomb HC 4,000 lb Mk III

All parts are cast using a thin standoff, so they can be cut off the bases using a thin razor saw. Sand the bases flat and attach using cyanoacrylate glue or five minute epoxy.

Painting

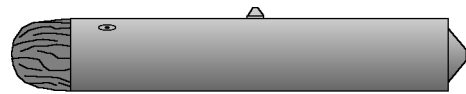
Pretty easy, actually: overall Dark Green. Typical markings comprised a light green band (~2" width) about halfway between the nose and the suspension lug and a thinner red band (~1" width) just behind the nose.

Stencilling in 1" white letters on the top (suspension lug side) was as follows. Just aft of the green band was the Amatol mix ratio (i.e. 60/40). Aft of the suspension lug was the bomb designation (i.e. HC 2000 LB), next line the mark number (i.e. III), next line the lot number (varied, some references give 5 digit numbers), next line the date of filling (11/7)

These bombs were stored in open dumps, rolled in the mud and generally treated with less respect than one would normally give tons of high explosive. Therefore, heavy weathering is in order ... often the suspension lugs were touched up with fresh paint to reduce rusting.

References

1. Bombs Gone by J. MacBean and A. Hogben, 1990 (excellent reference on RAF bombs of all sorts)
2. Scale Aircraft Modelling Vol 16 No.7, article by J. Goulding (2000 LB HC Bombs)
2. RAF Pocket Book 1937 (info on bomb marking scheme)



Bomb HC 2,000 lb Mk I
c/w parachute pack

two



Bomb HC 2,000 lb Mk I
c/w slotted drum tail



Bomb HC 2,000 lb Mk III