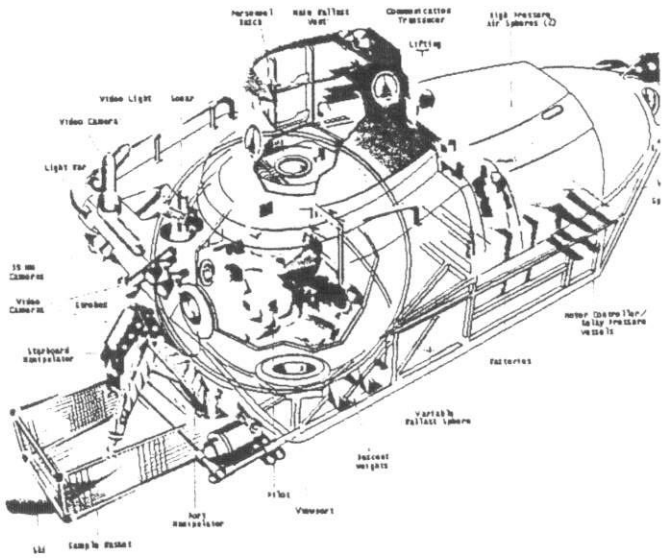
WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTE'S "ALVIN"

This is a 1/35th scale model of the deep submersible owned and operated by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. The kit is manufactured by Viking Models of Cisco, Texas.

This is my first experience with one of Viking's kits and I have mixed feelings about their quality. First of all this is a mixed medium kit consisting of resin, metal, and photo-etched brass. On the plus side the main hull is hollow with a separate conning tower cast with nice detail and minimal pin holes. On the down side, while the kit does not contain many parts, most of them are cast in metal of poor quality with slag, flash, and parting lines in tight areas where it is difficult to remove them without damaging other details. In some cases it appears that the two halves of the mold were not aligned properly. All of these metal parts require a lot of attention. My experience with photo-etched brass is limited but this has good detail and is easy to bend. One of the two manipulator arms is composed of sections of brass to which cast parts are attached. This makes it heavy and difficult to attach.

The instructions leave a lot to be desired. There are two exploded drawings showing all the parts around the hull. Unfortunately the exact placement is not pinpointed. I had to do some on-line research at the Woods Hole web page to find drawings and photos that more accurately show component placement.

This model continues to be a work in progress. The going is slow. Viking offers several other kits of unusual subjects that could be of considerable interest were they not quite so expensive. This kit was on sale for $45.00. Unless you like a bit of a challenge or are experienced with this sort of model, I would not recommend it. I plan to keep an open mind and see how the finished product turns out before passing final judgement.

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