

A View From The Sprue

monthly newsletter of the northern virginia modelers ipms

Volume 7 Issue 6

June 2011



Udvar-Hazy "Be A Pilot Day" is June 18th. If you wish to display with the Chapter, please get your name, vehicle tag, and make information to Mike Fleckenstein so we can get all participants admitted for the day!



Your newsletter is back! This newsletter, as always, relies on you, the membership, to provide input to share with the Chapter. I, your humble editor, will be seeking inputs from each of you over time to contribute in unique ways to this monthly correspondence.

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Hello, and welcome to your revised newsletter. I am going to use this space this month to introduce you to just what we're going to do in the pages herein. First, I want to take a quick walk through the table of contents on the left column. The general layout of this newsletter is going to be in the areas of EVENTS, FEATURES, and NEWS. Each of these areas is further broken down into specific subject area that will change from month to month.

Under EVENTS we start with the Scale Wrap Up as a review of recent events that have taken place that the chapter participated in. The Scale Wrap Up will be used to identify those who participated and in what capacity, as well as communicate the events to the membership at large who may not have been able to participate. In The Paint Booth is the section for all current events that are going on or about to go on, just like a model that is almost finished and is drying in the paint booth. Finally, Looking Under the Lid is the area where we look ahead to what events are coming with the anticipation of fondling a new model we just brought home from the hobby shop (and begin running through our head all the things we're going to do to make it the perfect model!).

FEATURES contains some old favorites and a couple of new subjects, and this is where you're going to help (I'll explain in a moment). Tips & Techniques is just what it sounds like only we're going to apply a new twist to inputs for this. At the monthly meetings look for a small card next to your model(s) on the table. If one is there it will read something to the affect that "we like what you did to paint the google-flotz, tell us how you did it." The card will contain my contact information and I will help you through putting together something simple and informative to share with the membership concerning a technique we saw as unique or wish to try ourselves. Don't worry about writing War And Peace, or even stuff like spelling, grammar, syntax, or construction, that's MY job as your editor, I just need to know what/how you did what you did and I'll do the rest, you get the credit (how much easier could it be?)!

Builds/Reviews will be the same as Tips & Techniques except that instead of providing us with how you accomplished one aspect of the model we will walk you through how you built the whole thing as a larger article for this newsletter

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The Member Spotlight section will be fun. I am going to be preparing a generic questionnaire which I will hand to a couple of individuals at each meeting. Please fill out the questionnaire and return them to me, either at the meeting, via email, or at the next meeting. I will follow up with you on subjects/topics in order to prepare a small 'biography' on different members of our chapter, what their interests are, what they build (and when was the last model they finished). Part of the Member Spotlight will be the My Workbench segment. We want to see your hobby area, where you store the 'on deck' kits, and where you produce those little award winning miniatures.

The last area is NEWS and it contains all the usual subjects and these are pretty self explanatory. We will gather all the local, regional, national and international hobby news of interest and put the highlights in here while referring you to the source article for the entire story if you wish to learn more. We will include a wrap up on the monthly contest results, raffle winners, and a synopsis on each month's programs will be put in here for those who didn't make the meeting.

Again, look for the little cards placed next to your models, and we will coordinate with you to get your models and modeling skills published. This newsletter is only as good as the information compiled for it, and that is where we need your support. Instead of requesting folks write articles in a broad sense as has been done in the past, we will be putting out focused requests for modeling related input. Your support and response to these requests will be greatly appreciated. I look forward to serving you as newsletter editor, but I cannot be the only one providing input to this effort. I will serve you, you must support me and then this will be a viable, informative, and desired production each month. See you at the June meeting! -Ed.

Okay, so I haven't built a lot of models over the last couple of years, I have been entirely too busy to do so. Having been at home for the last couple of months I have gotten back into building with a passion I haven't had in a long time, and it has been fun. I have really been simply finishing all the half-built models that have been languishing in my "to be finished" pile to clear my workbench, refresh the basic skills, and get ready for new projects.

So, one day I'm looking at my stash and something small, somewhat common, and because I just obtained some really cool decals became somewhat desirable to build, virtually jumped off the shelf at me screaming "Build me! Build me!" The bench still wasn't cleared, but, how can you resist a model BEGGING to be built? Now, as I said, I am (was) really more interested in refreshing BASIC skills before getting into more serious (read: AMS) modeling so this model was going to be built out-of-the-box (AMS-in-remission, or so I thought).

The box was open on my workbench for a couple of days while I flipped through my various P-47 references. This was simply to get familiar with the type before building the kit, and to identify those areas that I would wish to correct on a future build. The decals I purchased from Liliput Air Force (a Japanese 1/144 scale decal/detail set site) were for a Brazilian P-47D-25 Thunderbolt. They are nicely printed on a solid carrier film so careful trimming would be necessary to use them. My chief problem is that I had no idea what color schemes or camouflage the Brazilian Air Force used on any aircraft, much less their P-47's in World War II, and Liliput simply provides markings...no instructions, no diagrams, no color charts or information, just a sheet with markings on them. I became a Google-Warrior hunting down paint/color information on these aircraft. During this time, thoughts, schemes, details, and scratch-building thoughts danced through my head for this project in such unique colors. I found several b/w photos, but none that stated in the captions or body text of the site/page I was on what the colors on the aircraft were. Finally, I found the header artwork by Clavework Graphics. Now I had my colors and suitably armed I descended upon my workbench ready to build my pint-sized Jug!

It Was To Be Out Of Box

(...and in the end it should have been)

Vince Mankowski





Fig. 1: Revell P-47D + Decals & Cockpit

I obtained this model through an eBay auction years ago and the previous owner had glued the fuselage halves together, but I didn't consider that too egregious a foul and pressed forward with the build. I test fitted the little Matador Models white metal cockpit inside the fuselage halves and noticed that the arc of its fore



Fig. 2: Matador Models wm Cockpit

and aft bulkheads were slightly smaller than the model's contours. This led me to transfer the shape of the Matador piece onto .040 sheet plastic and enlarge the bulkheads a little bit, the result was a better fit, but now I had to add to the remainder of the interior before continuing. I started with an instrument panel (see below), added sidewalls with some representative plastic bits and wire, and finished off with a pilot's seat. Once painted, the whole affair takes on a rather busy appearance; I only hoped it wouldn't be completely invisible through the tiny little opening in the fuselage top!



Fig. 3: .040 P-47D Instrument Panel in 1/144

The first domino had fallen. Since I had a cockpit built up, I couldn't very well allow the rest of the model to suffer from a lack of detail, now could I? So, I decided to drop the flaps, articulate the ailerons, and in a 'wild hare' moment thought I'd open up one of the wing gun bays as well!

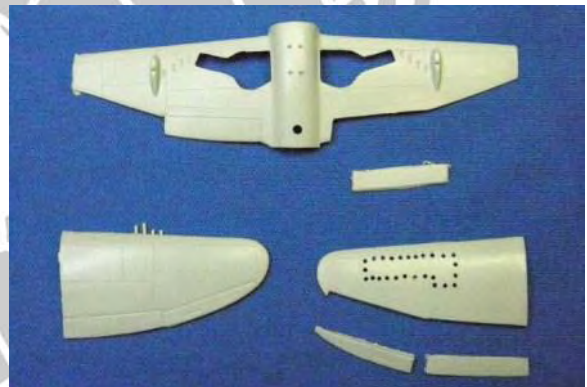


Fig. 4: Wing Modifications Underway

Boxing in the gun bay and wheel wells proved to be a bit of a challenge, and also the point at which I began to wish I stayed with an out-of-box build on this one. The gun bay actually looks good boxed in, only now I had to figure out how I was going to scratch-build four .50 cal. machine guns and four sets of ammo belts feeding them!



Fig. 5: Wing Gunbay Boxed In



Fig. 6: Wheelwells Boxed In

To box in the wheel wells and gun bay I used Evergreen strip (.010 X .040) as it is very flexible and bends around the contours easily. I applied Tenax 7R liquid cement as I went, letting each segment set up before moving on. What I learned however is that while I was applying the cement sparingly some did puddle (I guess?) in the wingtip and leading edge and virtually turned each wingtip and the left wing leading edge to gel (visible at the bottom of Fig. 6). I had no idea that Tenax 7R (my favorite plastic cement by far) would attack the 20 year old Revell plastic like this. After allowing the puddles of plastic to solidify for a couple of days, I smeared Tamiya grey putty on all the affected areas and began sanding out the wrinkles and restoring the contour to the parts.

In another AMS-like moment, I added a resin engine to the front of the aircraft.



Fig. 7: Resin Engine Added to Nose

Once all of this was completed, it was time to get the model to the painting stage. I began assembly by inserting the cockpit into the fuselage and super gluing it in place



Fig. 8: Assembled P-47D Thunderbolt

The wings were attached next. I had glued in more of the .010 X .040 strip around the wing openings in the fuselage and it made everything a nice, snug fit without any gaps what-so-ever. Until...I used Tamiya tape to bring the wings up to the proper dihedral while I brushed on Tenax 7R. The following morning I discovered that the plastic puddling had happened at the wing to fuselage joints just as had the tips. The urge to utter some rather colorful metaphors was pretty strong at this point!



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

More putty in the wing joints (how do you sand that in 1/144???), frame in and attach the flaps, ailerons and all empennage pieces. Why didn't I move these surfaces when I had cut out the wing pieces? Well, I direct you back to the plastic puddling in the wingtips. I would have had to build in the hinges as the hinge line isn't straight on the P-47 and I had no desire to glue on blocks and prepare corresponding cut outs only to attach the elevators and have the whole empennage puddle on me. That may have put me over the edge as the next event had me pulling out my hair.

I added the cowling to the nose of the aircraft and it fit beautifully around the resin engine. Until I hit it with Tenax 7R and the whole thing melted and the sides took on the appearance of someone with a mouth full of alum. After allowing the severely softened plastic to solidify, I had to slop on more Tamiya putty and sand the cowling to shape. The putty applied is visible in Figures 8 through 11, so too are some views of the pilot's seat and deflected flying surfaces.



Fig. 11

I masked off the canopy and sprayed the entire model with Camouflage Grey. To mask the lower area, I put blue painter's tape along the side of the fuselage and then tore the tape along the demarcation line. It was easy to produce a wavy line and at the leading and trailing edges of the flying surfaces I put a small cut with an X-Acto blade to ensure that the tears started and stopped where I wanted them to. I shot the upper areas in Olive Drab (ANA613).

Once everything was dry, I masked off the gun bays and wheel wells and painted these with Zinc Chromate from the small Testors paint line. I coated the model with Future floor polish, then set out to trimming the decals and applying them. The markings I chose were for the exact scheme covered in the Claveworks art so I

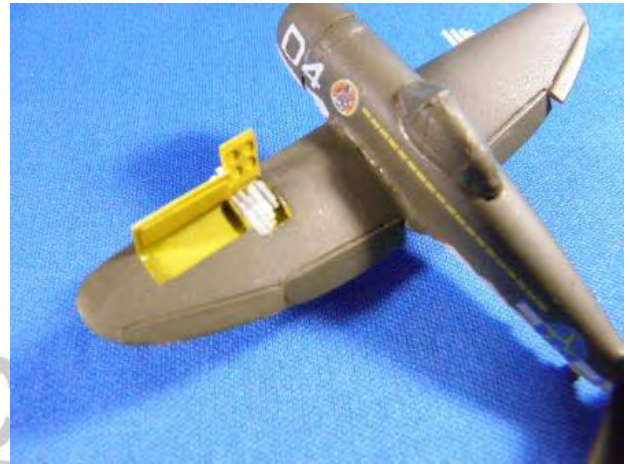


Figure 12: Painted and decalated.

had a great reference photo of at least one side of the aircraft and the mission markers running down the side of the fuselage. The decals take a while to come off the backing paper, and when they hit the model they stick where they land; a bad lesson learned with the "D4" on the left side cowling, they're a little crooked...). I had to put puddles of setting solution where all decals were to go from there forward and when I was able to get them properly placed I soaked up excess solution with cotton swabs to let the decal settle down where I wanted it to rather than where it wanted to!

When the decals had dried, I built gun bay covers from .020 sheet styrene. I measured the openings, transferred the dimensions to the sheet, punched lightening holes in the gun cover lid. I then began adding in the wing guns from bits of resin left over from previous builds. I added the blast tubes to the leading edges of the wing from round Evergreen styrene to match where the guns are in the bays.



Figure 13: Blast Tubes Added

A View from the Sprue

To model the ammunition belts I had a keen idea. I used Evergreen channel styrene cut to size. I trimmed off the channel bends at one end and split the channel into four sections, cut them staggered to meet the guns and installed it. I took a #11 blade and scored the top of the channel repeatedly vertically and then put in four lateral scribes to represent the individual belts. I painted the whole area in bright brass for the casings, then added four stripes of copper to represent the bullet tips. This was followed with thin stripes of black paint for the links. When finished I added a diluted wash to the whole area and a reasonable representation of 1/144 scale ammo belts was in the wing!

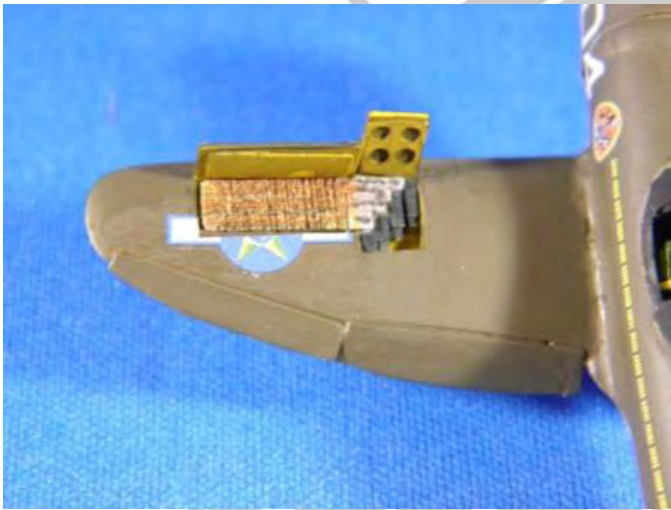


Figure 14: Ammunition Belts and Feed Trays

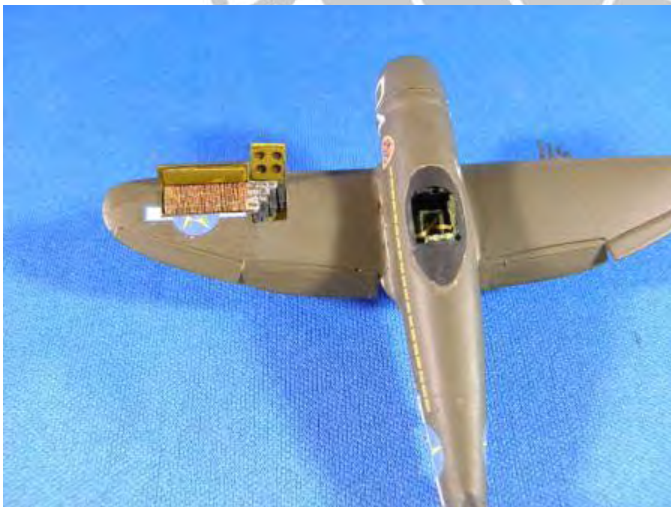


Figure 15: Overall View of Gunbays w/ Roundels

I popped the canopy off the top of the model and stuffed it with Milliput epoxy putty to prepare for making a smash mold replacement canopy. I added

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Tamiya tape seatbelts to the seats (below), and built a 1/144 scale gun sight with reflector glass to go at the top of the instrument panel cut out (yes, I am now more vision impaired than I was before doing this...).

While I waited for the epoxy to dry, I painted the propeller, drop tanks and built an antenna for final assembly.

I did a heat-n-smash over the canopy with plastic from an F-Toys® 1/144 pre-painted model blister package. I masked the canopy while on the male mold and painted the frames black for the interior, then bright silver for the exterior. I trimmed the canopy from the molding, cut it into two pieces, and installed it using jeweler's watch crystal cement.

The propeller was unmasked, and new small diameter shaft was added from brass wire and it was installed in the front of the engine. I added the antenna mast, and then used invisible thread for the antenna wire. When all was installed the model was finished.

This was a challenge from start to finish, but I am happy enough with it that I am going to make a small display base for it soon. It's not a 'contest model' as it is covered with warts. I also discovered (after it was installed) that the cover for the ammunition tray is hinged backwards! I went back to the photo I used when building this and now realize that the publisher put the negative in backwards when the picture was presented for publication. The same photo is used, correctly, in the Bert Kinzey "In Detail & Scale" (number 8254) so I won't make the same mistake again. However, I learned enough about the model to really do this again and do it well using a Revell kit. I am looking forward to that!



Figure 16: Finished cockpit area
Next month, the finished model!

Northern Virginia Modelers



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