

## Tamiya Do335 "Pfeil"

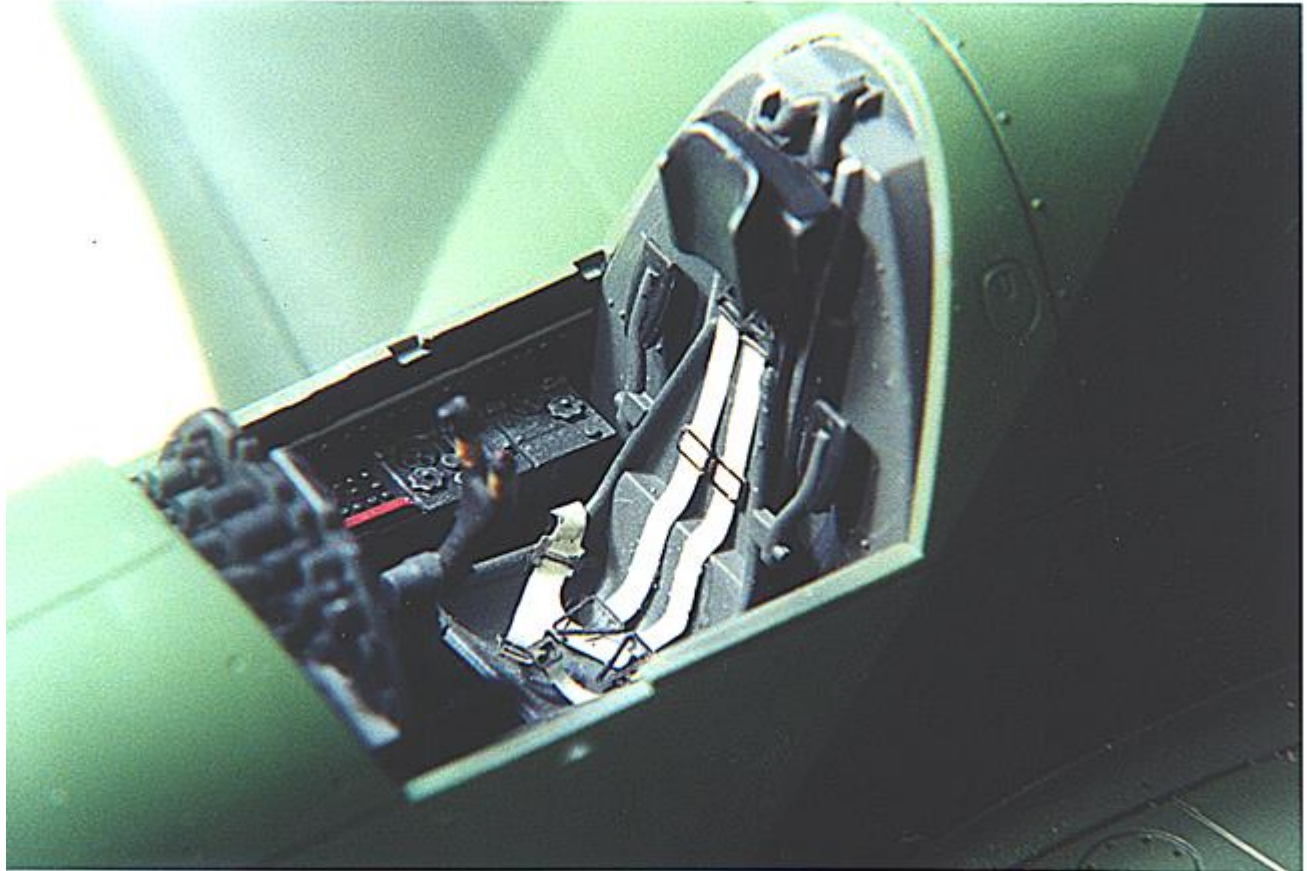


By Bryant Dunbar

I've always had an appreciation for unusual aircraft designs and more recently have enjoyed building German WWII aircraft. With that in mind, the new Tamiya, 1/48<sup>th</sup> scale, Dornier Do335A "Pfeil" was a logical choice for my latest project. Prior to making my purchase, I had read a review of the kit in Fine Scale Modeler. Despite what one might think about FSM's reviews, I found this one to be accurate when the magazine gave the kit very high marks.

Upon first examination and dry fitting of parts, I found the kit to be to Tamiya's typically high standard for fit and attention to detail. There are extra parts for an option to either pose the bomb bay open or closed. The instructions are the typical fan fold type with an added sheet with 1:1 drawings of the aircraft for the purpose of providing camouflage masks to assist in painting. As with all Tamiya instructions, they only refer to their paint line and recommend mixing colors when necessary. I prefer to use the Model Master enamels. They produce a full line of German RLM colors.

Tamiya provides decals with options for three different Do335's. I chose to purchase Cutting Edge sheet, Do335 Arrow, Part 3, for my kit. Tamiya's decals are accurate and good quality but I've noticed they tend to be a bit thick. Because there aren't that many markings for the Do335, I felt any significant issues with the decals would compromise the overall look of the finished model.



I started construction by first building the cockpit. This was a fun experience with the aircraft having an unusual cockpit. The Do335 had an ejection seat and the control stick was built as a "Y" configuration with two handles. Because there seems to be very little side clearance between the stick and the seat foot stirrups, the pilot must have had lateral control by rotating the "Y" stick over a pivot point just under the handles. The kit provides a decal for the instrument panel, which actually looks like an instrument panel. Whenever this is the case, I like to paint the panel the correct dark or black color and then apply the decal. With a liberal application of solvent, the decal conforms to the contours of the plastic panel. The result is very effective. I have since received many compliments on my instrument painting abilities. When I explain that it's a decal, they are even more impressed.

I painted the overall cockpit a dark gray (RLM 66) and used a detail brush to highlight the specific dials or switches per Tamiya's instructions. I dry brushed a couple of lighter gray colors to weather the cockpit and give it a used look. Tamiya supplies a decal for the seat belt for the ejection seat. This is my only complaint with the whole kit. To replace the decal, I used a set of Aires photo etch seat belts from a Fw190 kit. I was very pleased with the overall look of the cockpit and would later decide to pose the canopy open.

My next step was to paint the internal wheel well and landing gear with a blue gray (RLM 76) in the appropriate areas. Once this was completed, it was time to assemble the fuselage and wings. At this point you must determine whether to pose the bomb bay open or closed. I chose to pose it closed for a clean look. Another choice to be made is to pose the cowl flaps on the nose either open or closed. I researched the few photos I could find in aircraft books and the Internet and found it was common to see them both ways while the Do335 sat on the ground idle. I liked the look of them opened and chose to go that route. Many aircraft kits do not have this option. So when this option is given its nice to see something a bit different.



Once these choices have been made its time to assemble the fuselage. Keep in mind the counter weight that comes with the kit needs to be part of the fuselage assembly. If it's left out it becomes difficult to slide it in from the front without spreading the two fuselage halves at the seam line. The wings go together easily and have a unique "snap in" design when attaching them to the fuselage. The fuselage has a strong spar that the wing slides on to with a burr on the end to lock the wing into place. I found I could dry fit

the wings to the fuselage and they would stay in place. The good thing about this is only a little cement is needed at the final fitting. Keep in mind the wings will have a tendency to twist a bit around the spar that holds them in place. Despite the great fit, make sure there is some glue anchoring the wings to the fuselage.

When the fuselage, wings and horizontal stabilizers were in place I was ready to do the camouflage scheme. The Do335's camouflage scheme is very straightforward with angular shapes using two tones of green on the top and side surfaces with RLM 76 blue gray for the underside. I went over all the panel lines of the model with gloss black prior to the actual painting to give the model a subtle weathered look. Once that was completed, I began the camouflage scheme by first painting the underside RLM 76. I masked off the wheel wells to protect the RML 66 color inside.



I used Tamiya's masking tape to protect the lower surfaces of the model from overspray from the topside colors. I then shot the model with the lighter of the two greens (RLM 83). Once the RLM 83 was dry, I masked off the appropriate areas before shooting the darker green (RLM 81). To get the tight angular shapes of the scheme, I had to mask one edge, wait for the paint to dry, then mask the opposite side of the angle to create a point. This was required in two places, one on each side of the aft fuselage.

To complete the model, I assembled and painted the landing gear and propellers. Then landing gear assembly was straightforward. The only detail added was to paint the "oleo struts" chrome silver. One of the features of this kit are the "weighted wheels" which give a realistic appearance. The propellers are easy to attach with a nylon grommet on which the shafts slides.

The canopy seemed to present a challenge considering its "birdcage" design. Purchasing a set of E-Z Masks for the Tamiya Do335 easily solved task. I had never used pre-made masks before and was somewhat skeptical at first. The mask comes with a very simple diagram showing where the masks are placed. (There are two sets of the vinyl material in case you make a mistake.) The masks are very accurate and worked very well. It saved me a ton of time and the cutting of lots of microscopic pieces of tape. I highly recommend this product on difficult canopies.



Once the paint scheme was completed, I shot the entire model with Future Floor Acrylic to provide a smooth surface for decaling. The Cutting Edge decals worked great and went on well. The one area to watch out for was the underside of the wings where the aircraft designation was painted across the landing gear doors. If you stay with the kit decals this isn't a problem, they are clear of the landing gear. This posed a potential problem with the Cutting Edge decals but due to their high quality and easy workability I was able to first lay the decals across the corresponding gear door and shave off the

excess decal materials. Once I had the excess decal free I was able to place it in the correct spot on the under side of the wing. It's a bit of a challenge but with a little patience it can be done.

After decaling was complete, I weathered the aircraft with pastel chalks. Generally this consisted of creating charred streaks aft of each of the exhaust stacks for the two engines. I also applied some chalk around the cannon ports mounted in the cowling forward of the cockpit. After weathering was complete, I shot the entire aircraft with Future Acrylic again to seal the decals and pastels.



The final step in my Do335's assembly was to spray a "flat" coat over the entire model down using Polyscale Flat thinned with distilled water. The last step is to glue the canopy on using white or Elmer's glue. The PolyScale finish gives the aircraft a realistic, flat military look.

I'm very pleased with the end result and was surprised how quickly I completed this project. As they say, "most Tamiya kits just fall together." I don't generally monitor the amount of hours I spend on a model but I can say that it took about a week working evenings to complete the project. I would highly recommend this kit to anyone interested in German WWII aircraft. It's a relatively easy build with a simple camouflage scheme.

