

Accurate Miniatures' "Dirty Dora" B-25C/D - 1/48th Scale



by Dick Smith

The C and D models of North American Aviation's B-25 bombers were probably the most modified of all of the glass-nosed Mitchell's flown during World War II. The aircraft left the factories as basic B-25's and were modified by the repair and maintenance facilities spread around the Pacific and North Africa.

The Accurate Miniatures version of the B-25B/C was released some years ago and has been on the shop shelves on a sporadic basis. Their B-25B/C kit is unique in that all of the masking and modifications to produce an accurate model of the famed Air Apaches "Dirty Dora" are contained in one box.

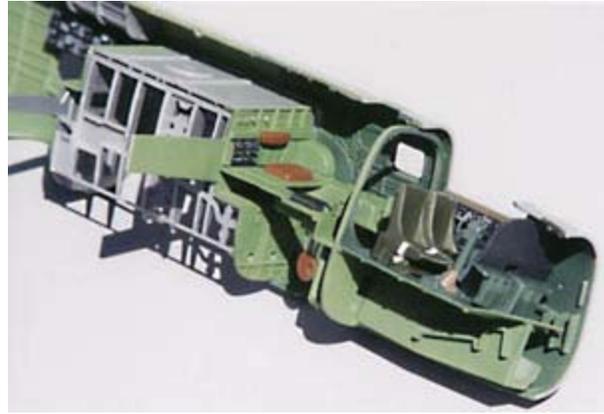


Construction starts with building a fully detailed interior right down to the chemical toilet. The cockpit area is painted a medium green, FS-34092, the bomb bay is flat aluminum, FS-17178, with the rest of the interior chromate green. All of this detail will be hidden when the right and left

fuselage parts are closed. Only the cockpit is readily visible.

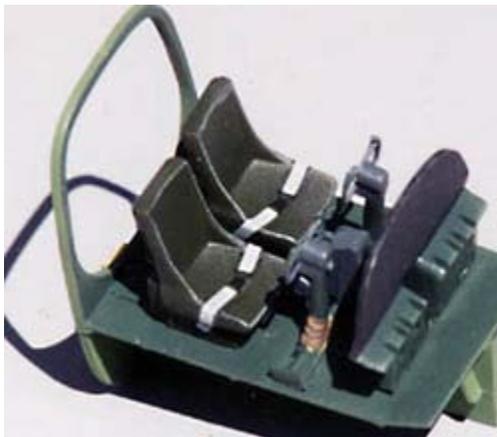
Before closing the fuselage sides, be sure you have painted and secured the top turret and its mount into the fuselage floor. Do not attach the clear turret blister at this point or you will have a difficult time when painting the fuselage. "Dirty Dora" carried a variety of ordinance. I "loaded" two 1000-pound bombs and glued them in the bomb bay before closing the fuselage.

The aircraft in this kit had a standard B-25 "glass nose." This clear nose will be painted over in final construction. After mounting the two sets of twin .50 caliber machine guns in the forward glazing, glue the remaining nose parts together.



The instructions next call for the installation of the nose landing gear leg. I delayed this step until later as the leg is very thin and fragile. The instructions provide paper templates to fabricate the fuselage and top turret gun blast shields from plastic sheet. Attach them to the correct places on the fuselage but hold off on the cementing of the fuselage gun packs until later.

Before cementing the completed clear nose to the fuselage, secure the brass nose weights into the section in front of the cockpit. Carefully align the clear nose to the fuselage and glue it into place. The fit of the nose "greenhouse" is fair but some cutting, sanding and filling will be necessary.



The twin tails, wings, engine nacelles are assembled and glued to the fuselage. The engines are assembled but not placed into the cowlings at this time. I painted the inside of the cowls light gray. The topside of the cowls are painted olive drab, FS-34087, and the underside neutral gray, FS-36270, with a "soft" demarcation line between the colors.

There are a few places that will have to be filled and sanded at this point. Attach the cockpit glazing with white glue to the fuselage and then mask the clear areas with the vinyl masks provided in the kit. When you are satisfied with all of the seams and construction, paint the topside of the entire aircraft olive drab and the underside in neutral gray with a "soft" demarcation line.

Allow a day or two drying time before applying the nose and cowlings masks. These masks are a bit tricky to apply but a little water with a drop of dishwashing liquid will make the job easier. Paint the area on the forward portion of the nose and the cowlings light blue, FS-35190.

As soon as the painting is completed, very carefully remove the masks around the light blue so that a “paint ridge” will not form between the colors. When all of the colors are dry, apply a clear gloss coat to the aircraft to provide a smooth surface for the decals.



Now comes the difficult job. Follow the instructions closely for the decal placement. A few of the markings will require patience especially those that fit around the cowlings. Work slowly and use a damp cotton swab to blot away the water when the decal is properly positioned. The decals on the fuselage are complicated and will take extra care to apply. A little decal setting solution will aid the job. When this job is complete, you may have to touch up the painted areas around the decals since the fit is not exact.

With all of the decals in place, spray a light coat of Dullcoat over the entire aircraft to seal the paint and decals. Remove the cockpit masks. Assemble and paint the main and nose landing gear and cement them into position. The tires are painted Gunze Sangyo “tire black.” The tires have tiny raised “Goodyear” lettering on them that will benefit from a dry brushing of light gray to bring up the lettering.

“Dirty Dora” was unique among the “Air Apaches.” The Accurate Miniatures kit is the only one that provides all of the decals and masks that depicts her in her “full battle dress” in 1944.