

## Revell F-117 Stealth Fighter. 1/48<sup>th</sup> Scale Kit # 5834



By Mark Murray

I won't go into the history of this aircraft, as it's offered by many other sources, far better than I can expound upon. Suffice it to say, this aircraft opened a whole new dimension in how most future combat aircraft were going to be designed & built. Stealth has been proved and now incorporated in most present designs of military combat airframes.

The kit was originally released under the Monogram name in 1991. It wasn't the first offering of this aircraft. But...it was the first accurate presentation of the subject. Later releases of this kit were offered with a full weapons bay as part of the build. This being an early kit, this area of the real aircraft was not openly seen, as parts of the plane were still classified. Later, when this was cleared for viewing, Pro Modeler/Revell added the bay as part of their kit.

Building the kit was fairly straightforward. Monogram did a good job in engineering their sequence & parts breakdown in what was a pleasant build. To start of course, is the cockpit. It is typical Monogram. Well detailed and needing few if any enhancements. This release offered photo-etch as part of the kit. Some of this is used in the cockpit area, those items include the buckles on the ejection seat belts, and the side frames for the HUD. Once the cockpit is assembled, it is mounted from the underside into the top half of the Main airframe.



The fuselage is engineered into top & bottoms halves. Due to the manner in which the actual aircraft is designed, there is no other practical way in which this kit can be engineered, except for a clamshell design for the fuselage. This however, was to pose the one minor issue later in the building.

After the cockpit tub was installed, other clear parts had to be positioned and carefully glued into place. These included the FLIR window, FLIR bucket in the front of the nose area, and DLIR window underneath. The DLIR is part of the front wheel gear area that is mounted after the window

is in place. A word of caution; be careful there is no lint or other floating debris when closing up these areas. As once they're sealed in, static will have them on the clear lenses. Next, I installed the beacon light and attached the exhaust tray. Adding nose weight negates drilling a hole and using the clear the clear post.



Once all the interior items are glued into place, it's time to mate the two fuselage halves. This is where it gets interesting. It is a rather large airframe, so the two halves can be rather unwieldy. The top and bottom tend to be a bit dodgy in the way they're joined. Nothing insurmountable, just take your time & things will work out fine. In my case, I started from the back, and gradually worked my way forward. I also worked from side to

side as I cemented the two halves together, as I moved forward. This is definitely a case where a second set of hands would come in handy. But, with use of tape & clamps, the two halves went together with few issues.



Once the two halves were joined & a solid unit was obtained, I mounted a hefty lead fishing weight at the front, to keep the plane nose heavy enough, so as to keep the finished model on its front landing gear. This weight is hidden under the nose cap that's glued to the front of the airframe. From

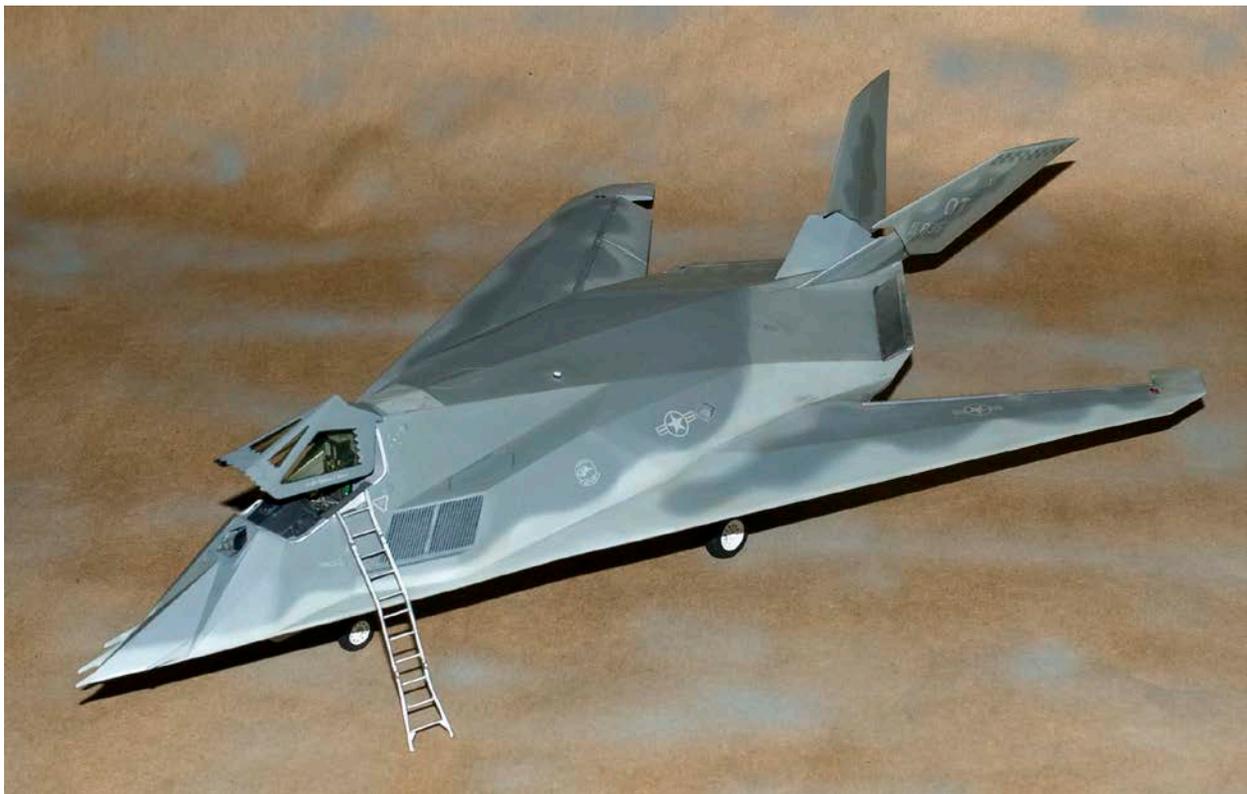
this point on, the build is pretty much the usual assembly procedure. The modeler only has to remember that the outer wing position lights are inserted from the Inside of the wing halves. It helps to paint them with clear green and red, backed by silver before mating the upper & lower wing halves together.

An area of concern is in positioning the rear rudder bases. Since these are assembled from two halves, make sure to sand smooth the base eliminating any seam lines. This allows the base to get a good set to the fuselage top aiding in positioning the rudders which attach on top. Also, make sure your alignment is equal from side to side.



Finally... the last area of concern is the mounting of the various photo-etched screens that come with the kit. With the exception of the intake screens, they all fit in tiny recesses around various depressions in the airframe. To make sure they were mounted flush, I dabbed a tiny amount of super glue gel to the edge in each depression. With a small piece of clay, I picked up the screen and inserted it into the recess. Once in place, I made sure each was seated with a small wood dowel. To make sure the screens on the intake openings, were flush, I lightly bowed each. Using a tiny bit of super glue gel in the middle of the intake edging, then pushing the bowed screen in until seated this area. At this point all the major components were ready for painting.

Painting is straight forward. While most will go with the usual overall flat black, I wanted to do something a bit different. To that end, I was lucky enough to have some pictures of the F-117 in an unusual paint scheme. Comprised of 2 shades of grey, it looked similar to the F-15 Eagle scheme. Later I heard that it was used as a basis for the F-22's camouflage. The colors used were FS36176 (Testors MM2036) & FS36375 (Testors MM1728.) A coat of Floquil Crystal Coat sealed the paint and provided a suitable surface to apply decals.



For markings I used Two Bobs decal, 48-134 Silver Anniversary Bandits. After applying the decals, another coat of Crystal Coat and when dry, a couple of light coats of Testors Dullcoat. I try not to overdo it with Dullcote as I have noticed it has a tendency to yellow a bit with over use.

Last, the rest of the bits and pieces were attached, including the landing gear with associated doors, the canopy (which was a real PITA to mask) and various other parts.

Finally on its landing gear, it comes to mind that the actual aircraft is very large. This was a relatively easy build with no major gaffes. In my opinion, this version is the one to get.



OK, one more image.....

