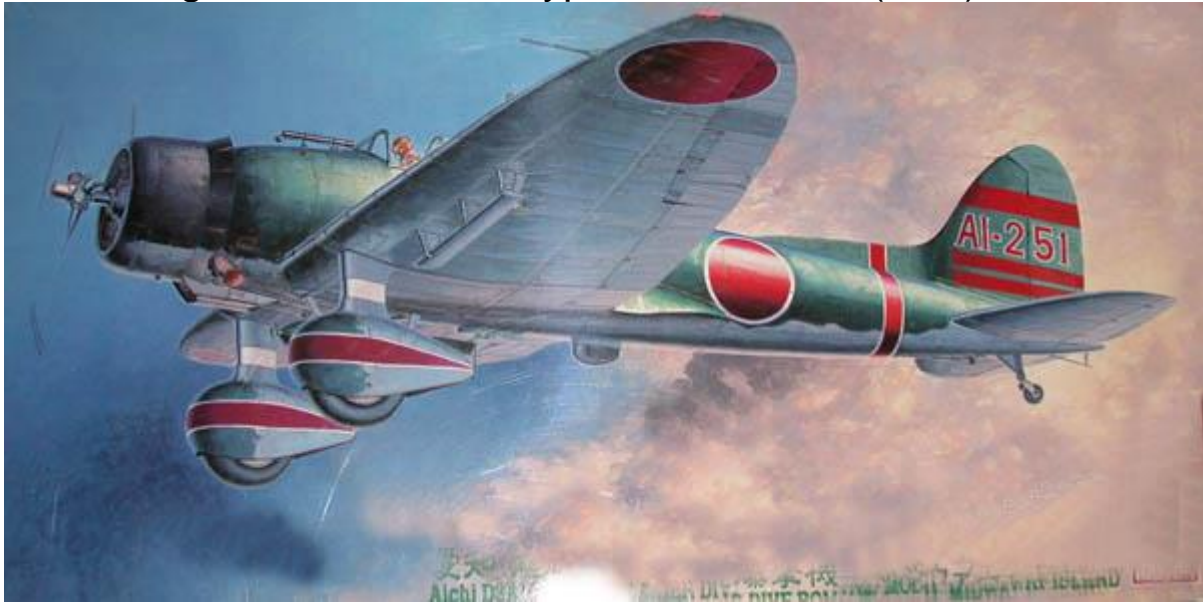


Hasegawa Aichi D3A1 Type 99 Model 11 (VAL) in 1/48



By Mike Hanlon

First flown in 1939, the Type 99 (Val) was the Japanese Navy's dive-bomber throughout World War II. It participated in the China Campaign, the Pearl Harbor attack and ended its career as a Kamikaze in 1945.



Released by Hasegawa in 1998, the kit I built was the second release titled "Midway Bomber". Unusual for me the kit was constructed using the kit decals. Construction

was straightforward and I will go in depth shortly. The main challenge in building the kit was arriving at the proper colors. Japanese colors have always been problematic. Every manufacturer had their own interior and exterior colors and no attempt at standardization was ever attempted by either the Japanese Army Air Force or Navy. Adding to the problem was the fact that Type 99s operating from Japanese carriers in the period immediately following Pearl Harbor had their original overall gray paint scheme over-painted with an unspecified green while at sea. Searches on the Internet and questions posted to several modeling sites ultimately put me in touch with David Aiken, who supplied me with much information on the Val in question. It finally came down to the undersides being the original overall gray scheme and the topsides being a green that was never documented. Translation, I could have followed the kit instructions without worrying about accuracy! The kit was painted with PollyScale Concrete on the undersides and Gunze Sangyo Gloss Green (H6) as specified by the kit instructions.



Construction begins with the interior. Hasegawa provides thirty-four pieces for the interior alone. Detail junkies can get a resin and photo-etched interior set from Aries if they really want to go to town. I stuck with the kit interior, the only pieces I didn't like were the seats, the detail was soft and they were appeared to be undersized. Not wanting to spend \$20 for an interior set just to steal the seats I used the kit parts. As with the exterior colors, the Japanese had no standardized interior color, each manufacturer used their own color. Aichi's interior green was a dark color; the best match for this is RAF Dark Green, approximately FS# 34079. I painted the interior with PollyScale's RAF Dark Green and used a dark wash and dry brushed them with a lightened version of RAF Dark Green. The only problem area was the gunner's seat and gun mount. You basically assemble a four-piece cage around the seat. As all the parts need to be assembled at once, they have a tendency to shift around. It took a couple of tries to get everything lined up and set. I used Eduard's photo-etched colored belts for the seats; these are a truly outstanding product. I also used the kit-supplied decal for the instrument panel and this gives a very acceptable

result. The panel detail is raised so it can be painted if you prefer.

Once the interior was painted and assembled, I joined the fuselage halves together. The fit was very good and required only minor sanding to clean up the seams. The wings were added next and again the fit was excellent. One piece that



caused some concern was the pitot tube. Rather than mold a hole in the leading edge of the wing, Hasegawa molded a rectangular opening the corresponded to a rectangular shape molded to the end of the pitot tube. This piece had to be installed and sanded prior to painting. I was

sure that I was going to knock it off at some point but fortunately this never occurred. I left the tail planes off until after they were painted and decaled, test fitting indicated that the fit was good and no filling would be required.

Since basic construction was done, I moved on to the engine and landing gear. The engine was painted with Tamiya Flat Aluminum, as were the interiors of the cowling and the insides of the wheel pants. The engine was washed with black and brown washes to bring out the detail. The cowling is a three-piece assembly that fits together well but still requires minor filling of the seams to smooth things out. The inside of the cowling and the wheel pants were painted in Aotake, a clear blue-green varnish used as a corrosion inhibitor by the Japanese. There are many brands of paint that feature this color, but I always thought they looked very bright and heavy. I chose to mix Gunze Sangyo Clear Blue and Clear Green mixed with Future floor wax. This gave a more translucent finish over the base of flat aluminum that I quite liked. As it turns out, the interiors of the wheel pants are completely blocked by the tires, so it really is not necessary to paint them.

The cowl on the real was painted with a blue-black color. I mixed Tamiya Flat Black and Flat Blue. When the paint had dried the cowl looked flat black but had a faint blue

tinge so I left it. Switching to the wheels I painted the tires Tire Black with flat aluminum hubs. Once dry these were trapped between the wheel spats and the spats were glued together.

The mounting pins are very small so care must be taken here. The completed spats required more filling and sanding than the rest of the model, but again it really wasn't a problem.

The bomb and bomb trapeze were next. The instructions call for the bomb to be painted flat black, research on the Internet indicated that bombs in this period were painted medium gray with a dark green nose and a blue stripe around the center. The trapeze was painted flat aluminum. I did not add these pieces until after painting and decaling.

The last thing that needed to be done prior to painting was masking the canopy and a clear internal panel in the cockpit. Over thirty individual panels need to



masked. Fortunately E-Z Mask came to my rescue and greatly simplified this process. One minor problem with the masks was an error by E-Z Mask; two panels had masks divided into two panels per side when in fact there was only a single unbroken panel. Horror of horrors, I actually had to use Tamiya masking tape and mask these two panels individually! It really wasn't a problem and it beat the heck out of masking all thirty panels individually. Two canopies are provided in a single piece closed canopy and five pieces used for an open canopy. I went with the open canopy.

It was now time to paint the Type 99. As I have stated previously the choice of color took a bit of research and help before I determined that the best choice of colors were PollyScale Concrete for the lower surfaces and Gunze Sangyo Gloss Green for the upper surfaces. I pre-shaded the lower surface panel lines with Flat Black and then over sprayed with the Concrete. The underside of the cowling was also painted Concrete. The upper green was painted and once dry I randomly sprayed a lightened

shade of green over various panels to represent sun fading. Once the paint had dried I applied a coat of Future Floor Wax and applied the kit decals. While thicker than aftermarket decals they were not as difficult to work with as I had feared. The secret is to dip the decals in hot water. This causes them to release from the backing paper much more quickly and softens the decal for application.

Several applications of Microsol and Microset helped snuggle the decals down.

Final assembly included adding the landing gear, dive brakes, bomb trapeze and bomb. The open canopy consists of windscreen and four nested canopy sections. Having built a Accurate Miniatures Dauntless with a similar canopy set up, I was not looking forward to this. The fit turned out to be excellent! All told it took about five minutes to install all of the canopy sections with Kristal Klear.



The finished kit is much larger than I had expected. This turned out to be once of the best fitting Hasegawa kits I have ever built. I highly recommend it to anyone seeking an early war Type 99.