

# Hobbycraft's B-47E



by Dick Smith

As a youngster, I remember standing outside our home in Tucson, Arizona, and seeing overhead the first of many Boeing B-47's that would soon be stationed at the nearby Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. The B-47 Stratojet was the jet bomber that took the Strategic Air Command into the Cold War of the fifties and paved the way for Boeing's B-52 a few years later.

The first of SAC's B-47's reported for duty at McDill Air Force Base, Florida, in October 1951. These were "B" versions that featured updated General Electric J-47 engines. These models also introduced long-range drop-tanks, a pair of 50-calibre guns in a tail stinger, and a shortened bomb bay.

The definitive B-47 was the "E" model. There are two kits of the B-47E generally available; one from Hobbycraft in 1/144 scale, and a second, from Hasegawa in 1/72 scale. Aside from size, the two kits are virtually identical. I built the smaller of the two kits since the finished model fits very well on an average bookshelf.

The cockpit consists of two tandem seats and floor which is painted Model Master interior green, FS-34151. Don't spend too much time on this area since when the fuselage is

cemented together, it is virtually hidden. After gluing the cockpit into place, locate and cement the landing gear bays into position. Next cement the fuselage parts together and set aside to dry.

Cement the wings together and attach them to the fuselage. Be sure the wings are located correctly into the slots in the fuselage or you will have problems later with the "sit" of the aircraft on the main landing gear. Use non-quick setting liquid cement for this step. Dry fit the main gear parts into the fuselage bays and then check that the wing tips are equal in height when placed on a flat surface.



Finish the fuselage sub-assembly by attaching the horizontal stabilizers, tail stinger without the guns, and the nose cap. It is important to glue all of these assemblies as neatly as possible since all B-47's appeared in natural metal or silver lacquer paint. The jet engine pods and drop tanks are constructed next and set aside for painting with the rest of the aircraft.

When you have finished sanding, filling, and polishing the plastic surface, undercoat the model with gloss insignia white, FS-17875. This will show up any flaws in construction. Silver "metallic" finishes show every flaw and scratch in the plastic and must be carefully polished out using progressively finer wet and dry sandpaper and plastic polish.

There are many "metalizer" products available that attempt to duplicate the appearance of natural metal finishes. Most cannot be masked and rub off when touched. However, I have found using three Floquil brand model railroad colors, I can duplicate natural metal surfaces quite convincingly. The colors, all lacquer based, are Old Silver, Bright Silver, and Platinum Mist. They must be sprayed with adequate ventilation.

Here's the technique to use. Spray the entire assembled model with Old Silver. This duplicates the general aluminum color of the B-47's skin. Allow this to dry for several hours. Then mask off panels and other areas of the aircraft with low-tack drafting tape. Spray these areas with Bright Silver. This color duplicates areas that receive considerable wear. The large vertical tail and various wing panels can be sprayed with Platinum Mist, a dull silver color.

I referred to photos in *B-47 Stratojet* by Alwin T. Lloyd from the In Detail series and "*B-47 Stratojet in Action*" from Squadron-Signal Publications to pick out panels of differing shades of aluminum. These sources also showed where the white anti-flash underside fuselage, wing, and tail panels were painted. B-47's appeared in varying amounts of anti-flash paint, so check your references.



With the basic aircraft painted, mask off the wheel bays and spray them interior green. The landing gear and outrigger struts are painted with Platinum Mist, the wheels with Gunze Sangyo "tire black," and then attached to the model. The outrigger landing gear assembly will take some adjustments to get the aircraft to sit properly on the tandem main gear. (This is why making sure the wings were level was important earlier in construction.)

Decals are provided for three different B-47's. I chose the red-stripped tail aircraft from the 320th BW, 441<sup>st</sup> BS. The blue in the SAC band of stars is a bit off shade but when placed on the nose, with the SAC shield, adds a needed splash of color to the model.

With all of the decals in place, spray a coat of Johnson's Future acrylic floor finish or Testor's Glosscoat to give a glossy finish to the model and to seal the aluminum finish from handling.

