

Le Gloan's D.520 ~ Tamiya 1/48th scale



By Dick Smith

One of those French pilots that took full advantage of the power and agility of the Dewoitine D.520 was Sous Lieutenant Pierre Le Gloan of GC III/6. Le Gloan not only fought on the side of the Vichy government but also later in the war on the side of the Allies racking up a total of 18 confirmed victories and three probables.

In the hands of an experienced pilot, the D.520 was more than a match for the Luftwaffe's Me-109's. Some historians even ventured the possibility that had there been more of these aircraft available to the Armee de l' Air in 1940; the outcome of the German invasion of France may have ended somewhat different.

A model of Lieutenant Le Gloan's D.520 is available from Tamiya in 1/48th scale. The instructions call for construction to begin with assembly and painting of the well-detailed cockpit dark gray. This may be accurate but the dark color will hide many of the details. I used several shades of gray to set off the sidewalls, floor and rear cockpit armor plate. The seat is khaki green with seat belts taken from an etched set from Eduard, 48-282. A few dots of red and yellow on the instrument panel will also add interest to the "front office."

While the cockpit paint is drying, glue the horizontal stabilizers to the fuselage sides from the inside. Careful application of the cement from the inside will all but eliminate any adhesive residue from the joint on the outside. Trap the cockpit into the fuselage slots and glue the sides together.

The exhaust stubs should be painted “burnt iron” and saved for attachment later. Assemble the wings and glue them to the fuselage. This kit is well engineered and the fit here should require only a small amount of filler on the fuselage underside. Glue the flaps together and set them aside. They can be posed in the up or down position after painting.



After painting the inside of the radiator silver, decide if you want to show it open or closed. Attach the completed radiator under the wing and the air intake to the front of the lower fuselage. The main construction of the aircraft is now complete. Check over the seams and fill and sand any gaps. A primer coat of light gray will help show up any flaws in construction.

During Le Gloan’s assignment in Syria in May 1941, the aft portion of the fuselage was painted bright yellow. A color drawing of his aircraft is shown at the bottom of page 53 in “French Aces of World War 2” by Barry Ketley from Osprey Aircraft of the Aces, No. 28.

The camouflage colors for the aircraft have no Federal Standard equivalents but are available from Model Master. The underside is French light blue gray. The topside is an irregular pattern of French dark blue gray, khaki and chestnut. A full scale drawing of the camouflage pattern is included in the kit. Le Gloan’s D.520 carried his country’s tri-colors on the rudder. The kit supplies these stripes as decals but they are difficult to apply.

I painted them using insignia red, insignia white and navy blue gray. The spinner of the propeller is painted the same yellow as the aft portion of the fuselage. After the paint has dried, spray the entire model with Testors glosscoat or Future acrylic floor polish to provide a smooth surface for the decals.



A complete set of markings for Lieutenant Le Gloan's aircraft is provided in the kit, however these decals are very thin and take great care to apply. I recommend that you use Micro Scale's Super Set decal setting solution to "float" the markings into place using a small paintbrush. The "arrow stripe" on the fuselage side is particularly difficult to apply. I snipped off the point of the arrow and substituted the rest of the stripe with some white decal from Scale Master sheet, SM-10.

With the decal work complete, spray on a coat of Testors dullcoat to seal the markings from handling. Spray blades of the propeller flat black and the tips yellow. The landing gear legs, gear doors and wheels are painted according to the instructions and attached to the model.

The last job is to paint the frames of the windscreen and canopy and attach them to the fuselage with white glue. Lieutenant Le Gloan's D.520, as it appeared in Syria in 1941, is now ready for display.

