

A Tale of 2 Aircraft Curtiss P-40B and Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero



Revell Curtiss P-40B 1/48 No. 5209



Tamiya Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero 1/48 No 61016

Both aircraft were involved in the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. The Zero was from the Akagi Aircraft Carrier Group, flown by Lt. Cmdr. Shigeru Itaya. The P-40B was stationed at Wheeler Field.

P-40B Revell Kit No.5209, 1/48.



The kit consisted of 3 dark olive drab sprues. As usual the sprues were washed with some soapy water, rinsed and let to air dry. I started with the cockpit tub and gave it a coat of Interior green chromate along with the fuselage side walls and the wheel wells. The instrument panel was painted flat black and then dry washed with some silver paint to bring out the edges of the instruments. Two side panels were included to add to the inside of the fuselage halves, these were painted flat black and then highlighted with dabs of reds, yellows and greens. Some photo etch seat belts were added to the plain looking seat. The exhaust pipes were drilled out and cemented to the fuselage halves.

After dry fitting the cockpit tub with the fuselage halves I then glued them together. The remaining seams were knocked down with some sanding sticks. The instructions called for the real wheel assembly to be installed at this time. It was decided to leave this to the end, because the parts were small and it would be easy to add the different colors later. The horizontal stabilizers were to be installed at this time. Again I decided to wait till the wing was attached before adding those parts. The wing assembly had movable landing flaps, so I painted the insides of them with green chromate. I then attached the lower wing assembly and then added the upper wings to reduce the amount of gap that might show up. Since I was not planning to have the prop turn I added the nose section and spinner back to the fuselage.

Now I painted the lower part of the plane light gray. After letting it dry for a day I then masked off the lower part and painted the upper half of the fuselage and wings Olive Drab. After about 20 minutes I removed the masking tape. Setting the plane aside I started with the wheel assemblies, painting the wheels and the landing struts, always a tedious job. Then I added all the little pieces that make up the landing gear doors after applying the appropriate colors. The add on fuel tank was painted light gray and added to the fuselage.



The propeller was painted flat black and the tips were painted bright yellow. The cockpit glass was masked and painted first with Interior Green Chromate and then followed up with Olive Drab. This was another tedious job of masking and painting.

The decals were put on using the method of a pool of Future and then over spraying the entire fuselage with a flat clear coat. Amazing how this gets rid of the bright edges of the decals

The little pieces representing the bead sight and ring sight were added last. For being an old kit it went together nicely. It would be a nice kit for a young modeler to do. Not a lot of pieces, some small parts that wouldn't have to be added. It took about 10 hours to put together. Cons, too many small pieces for around the landing gear wheel. Not a lot of plastic to make a good gluing foundation.

Mitsubishi A6M2 Zero Tamiya 61016 1/48



The kit consisted of 2 sprues of light gray plastic and a clear sprue with cockpit glazing for a one piece or three piece canopies. I started by washing the sprues with a soapy solution, rinsing them and letting them air dry. The cockpit assembly consisted of 6 parts and had to be painted with about four different colors. Also 2 figures (one standing/one sitting) were included but I decided not it took a little time to get it assembled.

The engine assembly was painted with the appropriate colors, gun metal and aluminum plate. The cowling was glued together and painted semi-gloss black, inside and out. Also the drop tank was assembled and put aside for painting later, since it was the same color as the fuselage. The engine assembly was then attached to the cowling. Before cementing the cockpit tub to the fuselage, it was dry fitted several times to make sure the fuselage halves would go together without any problems. The inside of the fuselage was painted Cockpit Green.,

The lower wing was attached to the fuselage and set aside to dry. The upper parts of the wing were added next. The result was a very small gap that I filled with Elmer's glue. It settles fairly well if added in small amounts, which reduces the sanding to smooth out the joints.

The recommended Tamiya paint was XF-76 IJN Grey Green, but alas after trips to 3 hobby shops and zip results. I went with Tamiya XF-14 Grey, no way is this grey; it looks more like a pale green. Once it was on the plastic it lightened up enough to match the pre-painted 1/24 Zero I had on my shelf. I also painted the landing strut covers and other small parts that had to be painted this color.

The wheel wells and inside of the landing gear covers had to be painted metallic blue?? I had some blue metal flake paint in a can, so I decanted it and painted the parts with a brush.



After letting the plane dry for a few days I gave it a coat of Future to lay down the decals. The next day I added the decals, using the method of having a little puddle of Future under the decal to move it around. I picked up the excess Future with a damp cloth. Letting this dry for another day I sprayed the plane with a flat coat of clear, this eliminated the shiny film around and under the decals.

While all this was going on, I decided on using the 3 piece canopy so you could see inside the cockpit. This was the tedious job of masking the canopy, with about 15 different frames. This time I used a mask set for a Hasegawa model. It worked fairly well. But a few issues after painting the inside color first, then the fuselage color, some of the painted frames lifted off.

The propeller wasn't going to turn so I painted it last. I used a spray can of Testors aluminum mealizer and painted the back of the prop flats black after the aluminum dried.

I finished up with the landing gear assemblies, with the wheels and misc pieces. The wheels are slotted so they go on only one way. This makes the wheels sit at the right

angle on the struts. One side fit nicely into its slot. The other side took some fiddling around to get it fit correctly.



Overall not a bad kit, took about 15 hours to build. The cockpit assembly was nice, especially the decal for the instrument panel. The color under the canopy is the same color as the inside fuselage color. But there are no obvious lines to show the separation of the 2 colors. I used a sharp pencil and drew an outline of the canopy and then hand painted the under canopy. I still had to touch up the fuselage color once the canopy was glued down. The next time with a greenhouse canopy I would spend more time on the masking and painting.