

Tamiya 1/48 Mustangs



By Mike Hanlon



A club member, who shall remain nameless, has often accused me of only building Tamiya kits. While this is not true, it is fair to say that I like to build Tamiya kits. They don't bite or put up a fuss when being built so you can actually enjoy building them rather than arm wrestling them into submission.

In addition to these two D models, I have previously built two D's in 2003 and two B models through the years. My earlier review can be found in the McKinstry Kit Review archives in August 2003.



There have been five different releases; these vary by decal and parts options. The original release, has Petie 2nd on the cover, the second released shortly thereafter was for F-51D's in Korea. This release contains two types of propellers, rockets, and drop tanks. Unlike the initial release, the Korean War kit and all subsequent releases include a very nice instrument panel decal. Both of the early releases contained the only flaw in the kit.



Tamiya molded the clear parts with the attachment points on the side of the

canopy and windscreen. It was almost impossible to remove the parts from the sprue without marring the clear areas. To their credit Tamiya corrected this on subsequent versions and the Korean version I built had the corrected canopy parts and much-improved decals over the original release. Tamiya then released Eighth Air Force Aces and Ninth Air Forces Aces kits. The kits include decals from Cartograph and so are very desirable. The most recent release is for the Tuskegee Airmen. This release contains Tamiya sourced decals rather than Cartograph and retails for \$41 rather than the \$30 to \$33 of the earlier releases.



If you can follow the kit instructions and keep the glue off your fingers a very nice model can be built. If the kit options don't appeal to you there have been dozens of aftermarket sheets released. I try to avoid schemes that are commonly done (think Blue-Nose Bastards of Bodney) so for these two aircraft I picked a Mustang from the China-Burma-India theatre "The Blue Pickle" of the 311th Fighter Group. This scheme is located on Superscale 48-1192.



For my second kit I chose Korean War markings for “Buckeye Blitz VI” of the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing, which are included in the Tamiya release; this scheme is also included on Aeromaster 48-100 that covers Korean War aircraft. The US insignia and USAF markings were sourced from the kit and performed very well; the remainder of the decals were from the Aeromaster set.

In building “The Blue Pickle”, I used the kit’s cockpit parts supplemented with Eduard’s P-51 cockpit placard set and USAAF seatbelts. For “Buckeye Blitz VI” I used Eduard’s P-51D cockpit zoom set that includes a multi-piece instrument panel, seatbelts and additional cockpit detail. After using both, I prefer using the placard set. The photo-etched instrument panel consists of three pieces overlaid. The finished panel is a little thick. Once the fuselage halves have been joined, the panel is set so far back that the photo-etched panel is not that noticeable. The kit’s instrument panel decal added over a dark gray painted panel gives a very respectable impression.



“The Blue Pickles” fuselage is unpainted aluminum with an olive drab anti-glare panel; the wings were painted with aluminum-based paint. I used Alclad II Aluminum for the fuselage, to simulate the painted aluminum wings; I used a semi-matte clear coat over the Alclad Aluminum. The vertical tail was painted with Gunze-Sangyo RLM 04 Yellow over a white base coat. The anti-glare panel was painted with Tamiya Olive Drab lightened with Yellow Green.



“Buckeye Blitz VI” was probably stripped of all paint, and then repainted with aluminum-based paint, the anti-glare panel was black, and in all likelihood, the interior was repainted in black from the original dark interior green. I painted the entire model with Alclad II Aluminum and sealed it with a coat of Alclad Semi-Matte Clear. The wing tips, fin tip and tail plane tips were painted with Tamiya Flat Red over base coat of flat white. The anti-glare panel was painted with Tamiya Flat Black lightened (not very much) with dark gray.



If you can handle natural metal schemes, the Tamiya kit is a really nice build. The aftermarket can provide improved resin or photo-etched details if you wish to enhance your model. The Modeling Madness website lists over 100 decal sheets for P-51B, C's and D's, so the choice of markings is extensive. There are

even some OD over gray schemes if natural metal seems too challenging. So if you want build a Mustang, enjoy.



