

GC II/5 Lafayette Southern France Tamiya 1/48 P-47D Bubbletop



By Mike Hanlon

Tamiya first released the P-47 Razorback in 2002, the kit is one of the best ever produced by any model company. The P-47D Bubbletop was released in 2003, the M model followed in 2005. The M model includes options for two dorsal strakes as well as the original flush back.

To date I have built seven Razorbacks, it was time to build a Bubbletop.

I used the original 2003 release. Most Bubbletops came from the factory in natural metal finish, since I was looking for something a little different I decided to build a Free French Air Force bird finished in Olive Drab over Neutral Gray.



Construction is simple and pain free, the interior is nicely detailed only needing photo-etched seat belts to complete it. Tamiya provides a decal for the instrument panel that, if applied with hot water, looks fantastic. A note for P-47 novices, the interior color was a dark green similar to FS 34092. I used Gunze Sangyo's version of this color, H-302, but has this paint line is no longer imported into the States. Model Master also includes this color in their paint line.



The wheel wells, interior of the landing gear doors and inner cowl are all painted Yellow Chromate. Tamiya's instructions call for the use XF-4 Yellow-Green, which can be used straight from the bottle. If a lighter version of this color is desired a little Tamiya Flat Yellow can be added.

The new kit parts center around the Bubbletop fuselage. Tamiya provides new fuselage halves with inserts to accommodate the optional fuselage strakes included in the M kit. Every review I have read says these inserts fit well, so of course mine needed a little filler. Beyond this everything fit well and the kit goes together very quickly.

Since my model was going to a Free French model I used Aeromaster Decals 48-081 U.S. Aircraft in French Service. This sheet includes a P-47D-28RE from GC II/5 Lafayette based in Southern France in late 1944. The aircraft was Olive Drab over Neutral Gray with Yellow ID bands on the wings and tail planes.

I mixed my own Olive Drab from Tamiya acrylics using Tamiya XF-51 Khaki Drab as a base, I mixed some XF-4 Yellow-Green in to lighten and weather the color. The ID bands were painter with Gunze-Sangyo H413 RLM Yellow, a rich Yellow that is not quite as Orange as Insignia Yellow.

The decals were a little tricky as Aeromaster chose to print the thin (very thin), yellow surrounds for the insignias as separate pieces. I ended up needing two sheets as I destroyed one of the surrounds. The rest of the decals went on with no problems.



In the final assembly, I added two 500-pound bombs from the kit and used 75-gallon drop tank from the spares box.



All in all a very satisfying build and another great Tamiya kit. Highly recommended.