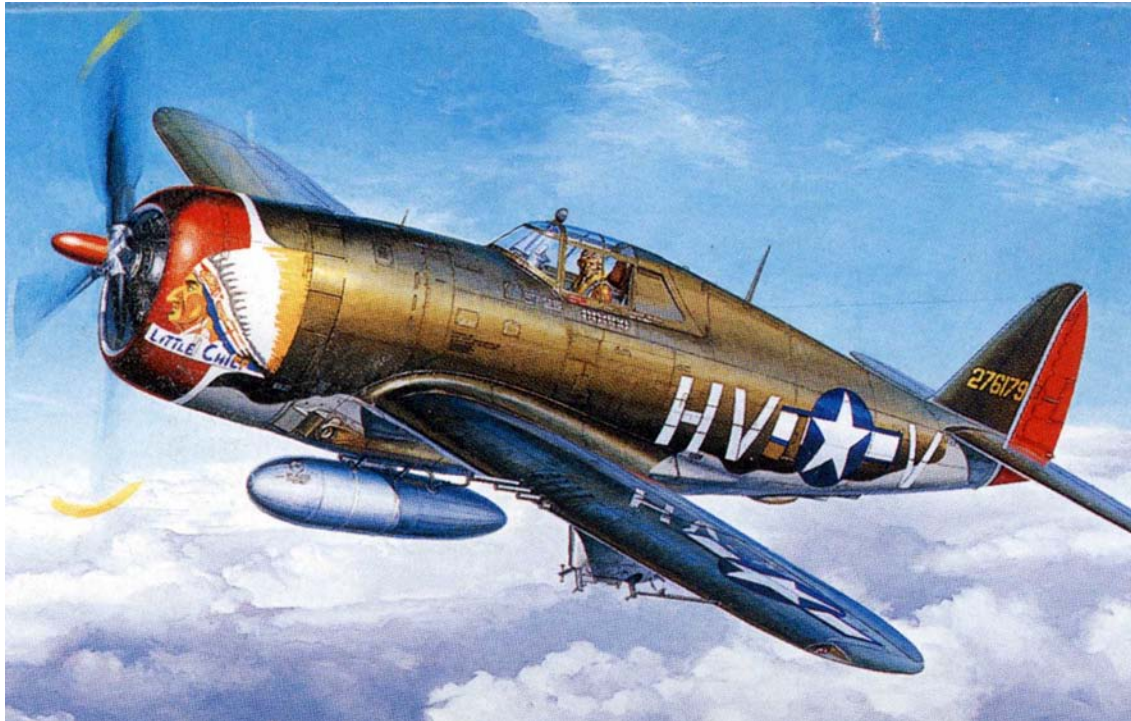


Tamiya P-47D Razorback in 1/48 scale



By Mike Hanlon

When Tamiya first announced the release of a 1/48 scale P-47 in 2002, there was a collective roar from the modeling community on the waste of resources. They asked why couldn't Tamiya do some other subject? Hasegawa and Academy had perfectly serviceable kits, they weren't perfect but they were both very adequate recently tooled kits. When Tamiya's Jug hit the market the critics were silenced. The Tamiya P-47 Thunderbolts in both Razorback and Bubbletop forms is now cited as being the state of the art for WWII aircraft models. With the release of the P-47M, Tamiya has completed their series of standard P-47 models. Now if only they produce a P-47N, sigh.

As soon as the kit was released, I got one (well more than one) and immediately began work. P-47 interiors were painted Dull Dark Green, which is approximately FS# 34092, many paint manufacturers produce this color, I chose PollyScale acrylic. The interior is comprised of ten parts, a resin replacement really isn't necessary as it is one of the best detailed interiors I have ever seen on a 1/48 scale model. Tamiya includes seatbelts on the decal sheet, but I went with a set of Eduard color photo-etched belts. The instrument panel features raised detail which is quite nice and Tamiya provides a very multicolored instrument panel decal if want to avoid painting the instrument panel. All the parts click together with Tamiya precision.

Once the interior is assembled work begins on the fuselage halves. One bugaboo of P-47 kits is how to mold the wings and not have seam line run through the wheel wells. To answer this problem, Tamiya went with separate wings mounted to two spars. The

spars have molded detail and the molding of the wheel well roof conceals the seam line. The oil cooler doors and turbocharger exhausts are molded as separate pieces and are attached before the fuselage is assembled. In a first for P-47 kits the molding of the turbocharger waste gate covers the fuselage seam. The fit of the fuselage is precise and seams are quickly cleaned up with light sanding. In another first, Tamiya provides separate parts for the turbocharger exhausts on the side of the fuselage. They can be shown open or closed.



The engine is a small masterpiece that includes separate magneto covers to allow the choice of different variants of the Pratt and Whitney R-2800. The engine and the intake fit precisely. Tamiya provides both open and closed cowl flaps, a first for any P-47 model.

Assembly of the wings is straightforward. Tamiya molded the underside of the starboard wing with inserts to accommodate the later dash 30 Bubbletop with compressibility flaps. The location of these flaps caused the landing light to be moved outboard towards the wing tip. Flashed over holes in the lower wings need to be opened if you wish to include the underling pylons. A separate strake is provided if you chose an early Razorback without the pylons. Once the wings have been assembled, the leading edge gun inserts need to be added. Unlike Hasegawa's use of similar inserts on their P-40 kits, these pieces fit very well. Once they have dried, the wings can be attached to the fuselage by sliding them on to the spars. The tail planes can be added now or after painting.

At this point the model is ready for painting, but I am going to finish describing construction. The kit provides the option of being assembled with the flaps lowered or

raised, another first for a P-47 kit. The flaps on a P-47 were electrically operated and the aircraft could be parked with the flaps raised or lowered. The landing gear is detailed and fits very well. Under wing sores include two 500 lb. bombs, a 150-gallon flat centerline tank, and two 108-gallon paper tanks. One of my pet peeves concerns P-47 drop tanks. Every kit has included the paper tanks and the 150-gallon flat tank. The paper tanks were manufactured in England and so never made it the Mediterranean or Pacific Theaters. Very often I have seen Pacific Jugs with the 108's fitted. The most commonly used tank, the 75 gallon aluminum tank common to P-51's is only included, in Academy's P-47D and N kits. Since I was planning on doing a Pacific bird I stole an Academy 75 gallon tank and modified it to fit the Tamiya kit's centerline. The fit of the remaining parts equaled the fit of the rest of the kit. Three propellers are included. Mine plane had the later Curtiss-Electric 13 foot symmetrical model.



The plane I chose to model was a P-47D-15RA assigned to the 311th Fighter Squadron, 58th Fighter Group in the Philippines in 1944. Named "Tot's Terror" it was Olive Drab over Neutral Gray. It had an all blue cowling, white leading edges and an all white tail. These markings are quite different from 8th and 9th Air Force birds in Europe. The model was painted with Gunze Sangyo paints for the OD and gray. The white tail and leading edges were Tamiya Flat White and the cowling was painted Sky Blue. The decals came from SuperScale sheet 48-665 and went on flawlessly.

If you are in the market for a P-47, grab the Tamiya and you will discover just how well a kit can be designed and engineered.

