

## R5D U.S. Coast Guard



Minicraft 1/144<sup>th</sup> Scale By Paul Gasiorowski

**This model** was being built for the June meeting, subject matter was US Coast Guard night. The R5D was also known as the C-54 Skymaster, its fame was the Berlin Airlift. The civilian version was known as the DC-4. Its first flight was February of 1942, and introduced by United Airlines. In proving flights it was deemed not profitable to carry that many passengers (52). The partner airlines, Eastern, American, Pan Am. Trans World and United wanted additional changes before they would put the plane into commercial service. With the start of the war Douglas Aircraft company change the designation to the C-54/R5D of which 1163 was built. After the war an additional 79 were built for civilian use. Currently there are 5 still flying in the Northern reaches of Canada by Buffalo Airlines.

The kit consisted of 4 sprues of light gray parts and 1 sprue of 2 clear parts, the windshield and the astrodome for navigation purposes. The first step was to wash the parts in a mild soapy solution to remove any oils left over from the molding process. The sprues were rinsed off and let to air dry. Then I sprayed the parts with Tamiya, s grey primer, which should have been done with white primer. The reason for this was that several parts were going to be painted International Orange and it would have taken to many coats of International Orange to cover the grey properly.

The assembly proceeded in the following manner the fuselage was glued together after adding the proper amount of weight to keep is from being a tail sitter. It took more than the ¾ of an ounce as recommended by the instructions. The wings were assembled next

and temporarily attached to the fuselage to insure it would not be a tail sitter.



The engine cylinders were glued into the nacelles and exhaust stacks added. The instructions were out of sequence if you were planning on doing any painting. The same goes for the engine assemblies, the props were not added till after final construction and all the decals were added. The detail on the prop hubs was very good, along with the detail on the landing gear struts.

After doing some clean up on the fuselage seams. The wing and elevators were added. I used mini Lego blocks to insure the wings and elevator were correctly aligned in reference to the ground.

The next step was to give the plane a light primer coat of Tamiya Grey. The areas where the plane was to be painted International Orange were masked off. This is when I decided to give these areas several light coats of Tamiya White to insure the Int. Orange would go down correctly. It took 3 light coats of Int. Orange to get the correct coverage. I let the plane dry for two days before I proceeded to apply the masking prior to painting Aluminum to the rest of the plane. I used Model Master Acryl

Aluminum. I find that this acryl goes down very nicely if you don't over do the thickness of the coats of paint. Patience is a watch word with this paint. Since it dries very quickly, 15/20 minutes is all that is need between coats. Then it's best to let it sit for a couple days to cure correctly.

Painting the wheels and hubs were not much of a problem. Here I used a Dark Grey for the tires rather than flat black or semi-gloss black. The dark grey resembles more of a true color of the tires being in use for an awhile.

I finally add the engines to the wings. They were almost a force fit, so only a little dab of glue was applied to keep them in place. The landing gear and doors were added next. The doors had enough of a surface, so they could easily be applied to the fuselage.



The next step was to give it a couple of light coats of Future before lying down the decals. I started with the decals on the wings, upper and lower. After the decals dried I gave it a coat of Future to seal them. There were decals for the de-icing boots on the leading edges of the wing. These were hard to apply, since they had to wrap around the leading edges of the wings. I should have painted them black before painting the

fuselage. The fuselage decals ripped in a couple of places, but they pieced together very well. The reason I think they ripped because the decals took forever to release from the paper backing. In some spots they started to release and in other areas they wouldn't release at the same time. On the elevators I painted the de-icing boots. The big Int. Orange band around the fuselage had a decal for it, but the color was off so I painted the band. But I did use the black decal strip between the band and the fuselage. Also there were 2 options for the

windscreen decals, one with silver windows and one with black windows. I choose the black windows. The last thing to do was add the tip decals to the props, 12 tiny, tiny decals about 1 mm by 2mm, what a pain, but probably easier than trying to paint the tips in 1/144 scale. The props were then added to the engine nacelles. The plane was then given another light coat of Future to seal all the decals.

Overall it wasn't a bad kit to build. The time of the build was probably about 20 hours. Overall fit was good

