

1/48 Tamiya Brewster Buffalo



By Mike Hanlon

Released in 1974, the Tamiya Buffalo was made available for the astronomical price of \$6.00. 1/48 scale model kits of the time sold for \$1.00 to \$2.00. A 1/32 scale Hasegawa Hellcat sold for \$6.00 and that was also considered a very steep price for its time.



A few years ago I was browsing decal sheets on E-Bay and came across LF Models

Buffalo over Japan sheet depicting two Buffalo B-339D's flown by the Dutch that had been captured when Java fell in 1942. Dutch Buffalos were camouflaged in Khaki and Olive Drab over a painted silver underside. With the Japanese Hinomarus it make a very striking scheme.

Construction of the Tamiya Buffalo is very simple. The interior has very few parts and benefits from Eduard photo-etched instrument panels, seat belts and shoulder harnesses. The cockpit canopy is very clear but cannot be displayed open so any additional detailing may not be visible. Tamiya includes masks for the canopy and bomb aiming window in the belly of the plane. As is their custom, Tamiya does not cut these masks leaving that task up to the modeler. I used a set of

Eduard masks, some of which are very small. In total there are over forty panels that require masking.



The remaining construction was very quick and simple and the kit lacks any detail in the landing gear bay. It is one of the first kits to be scribed and Tamiya appears to have refurbished the molds when the kit was re-released in 2004. The camouflage was masked using Blu-Tak and Tamiya tape. Tamiya paints were used for everything except the painted silver underside which was painted with Alclad White Aluminum.

I had such a nice time building the Japanese Buffalo that I recently built a second one, this time a US Navy aircraft from 1941. The decals for this version as well as parts used exclusively on Navy Buffalos are included in the 2004 re-release. Tamiya decals being on the thick side, I opted to use the Starfighter Decals F2A Navy Buffalo sheet which included markings for the same aircraft. These aircraft were repainted in 1941 in a color then called Neutrality Gray which survives to this day as FS 36640 Light Gull Gray.



Once again, I used Eduard photo-etched parts for the interior and masks for the clear parts. The interior of this aircraft was painted with Tamiya LP-11 Silver Lacquer. Being painted in overall gray also sped up this build. Construction was simple and pain free. For Neutrality Gray I mixed Tamiya Sky Gray and Flat White fifty/fifty. Detail parts were painted with Tamiya paints.



All though nearing the fiftieth anniversary of its release the Tamiya Buffalo is still a very pleasant build and once finished does not look out of place among kits produced in recent years.



F2A-2 Buffalo Starfighter Decals F2A Buffalos
Neutrality Gray Tamiya XF-19 Sky Gray and XF-2 Flat White Mixed 50/50
VS-201 USS Long Island Summer 1941





Tamiya B339 Buffalo LF Model Decals Buffalo Over Japan Tamiya XF-62 and XF-49
Khaki over Alclad White Aluminum Captured Dutch Aircraft Java 1942

