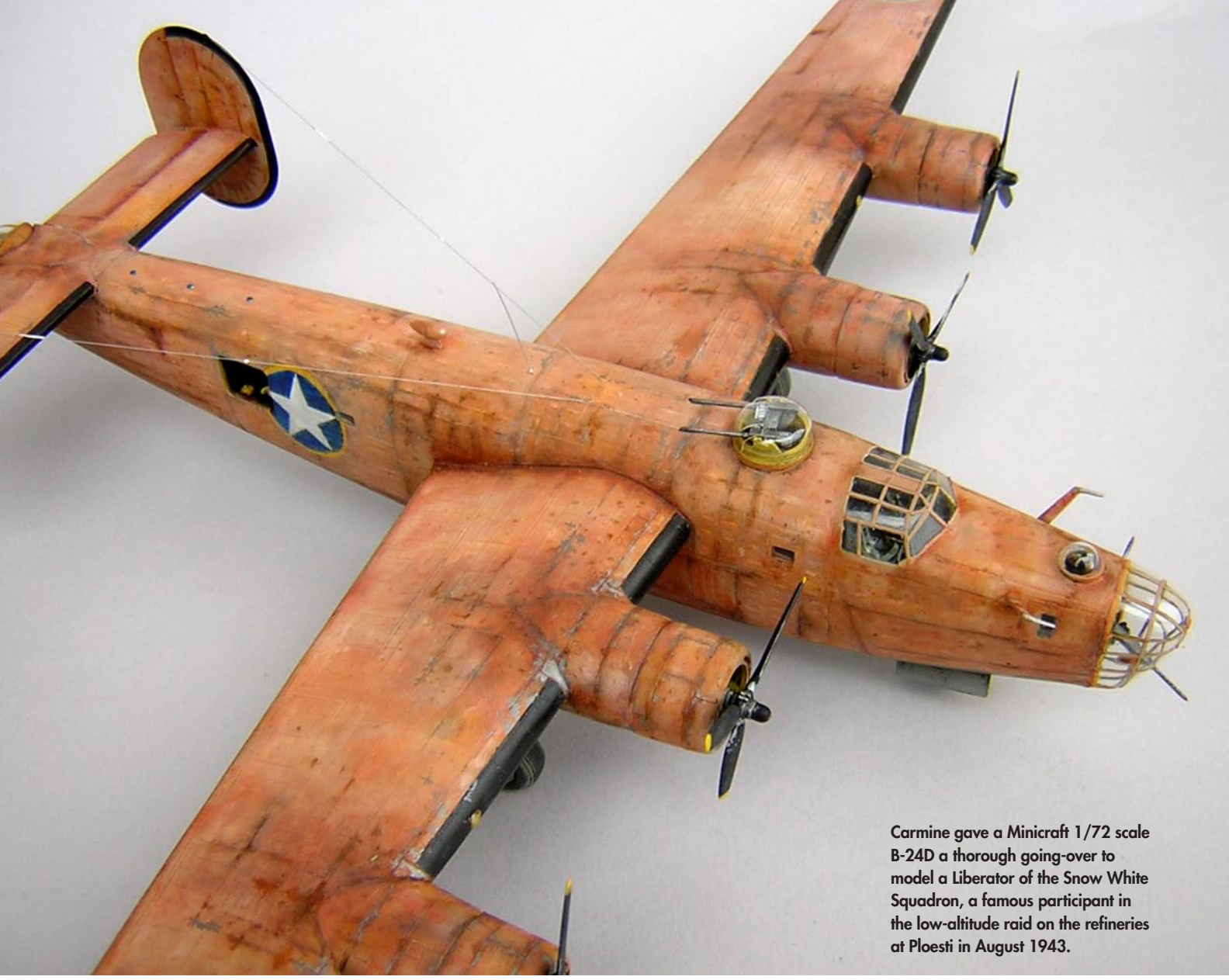


Carmine gave a Minicraft 1/72 scale B-24D a thorough going-over to model a Liberator of the Snow White Squadron, a famous participant in the low-altitude raid on the refineries at Ploesti in August 1943.

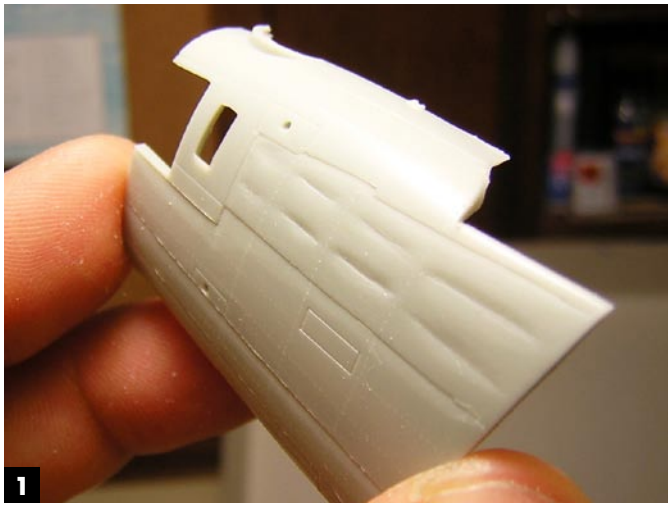
Modeling a Minicraft B-24D

Hand-painting and heavy weathering deliver a Liberator

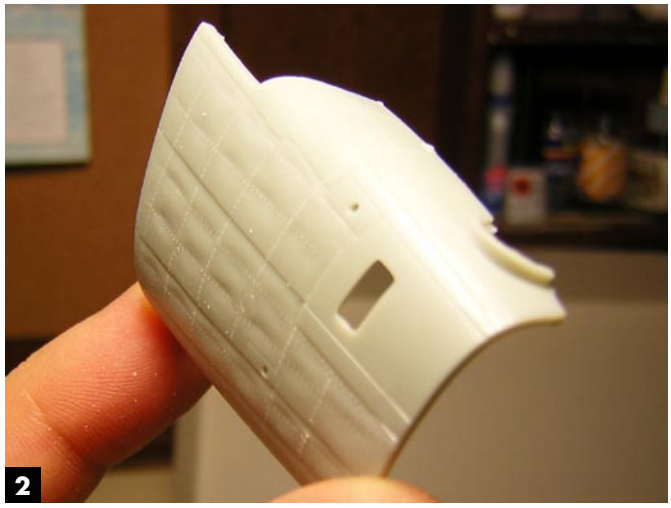
By Carmine Mari

I had wanted to build a B-24 Liberator for a long time – but I didn't have the space for a 1/48 scale bomber, and the only 1/72 scale Liberators I knew were old kits.

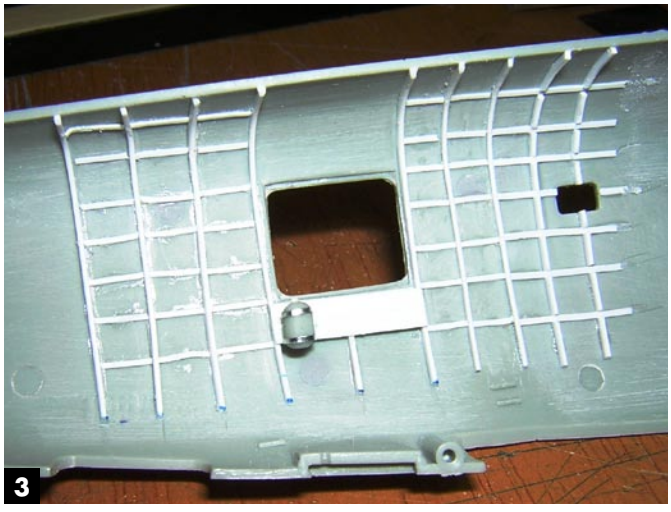
However, my friends talked me into giving Minicraft's B-24D a try. It dates from 1991, but it's not a bad kit. Still, I could see lots of room for improvement.



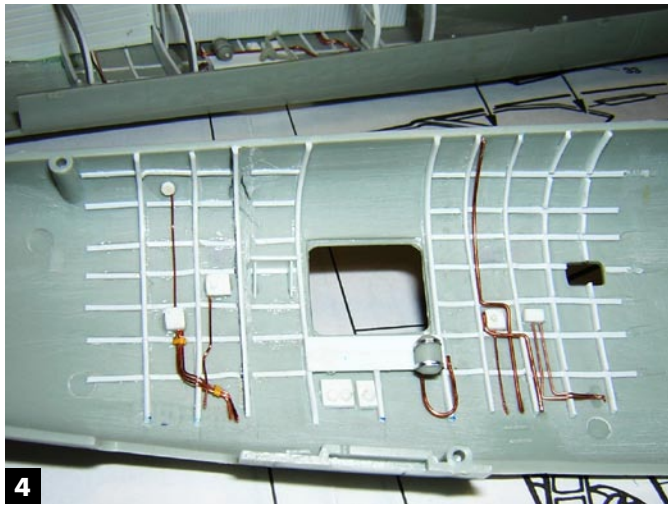
Carmine thought Minicraft's molding made too much of the B-24 panel lines and not enough of the rivets.



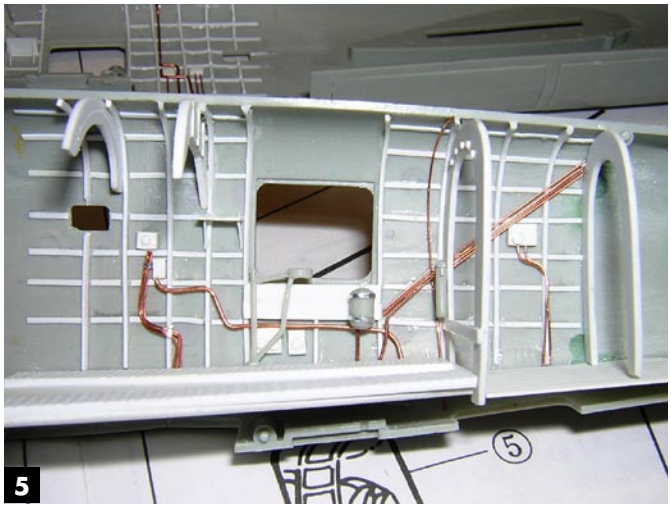
So, carefully following scale plans, he used sandpaper and a hobby knife to smooth out panel lines and engrave new rivets.



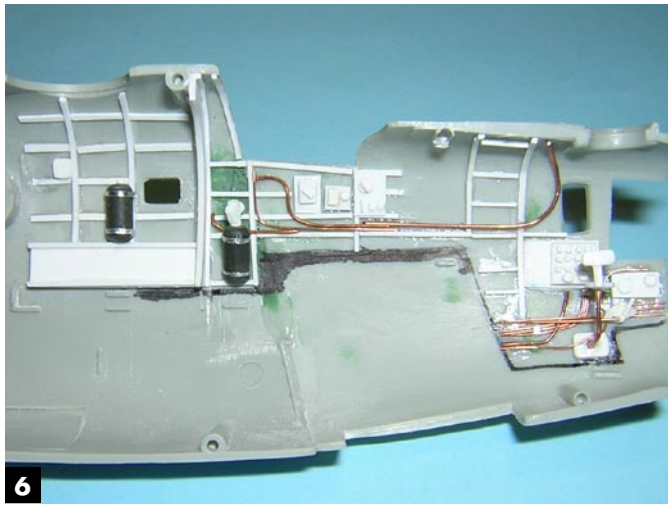
Knowing much of it would be visible, Carmine decorated the interior with scratchbuilt details. Here, strip styrene replicates stringers in the fuselage.



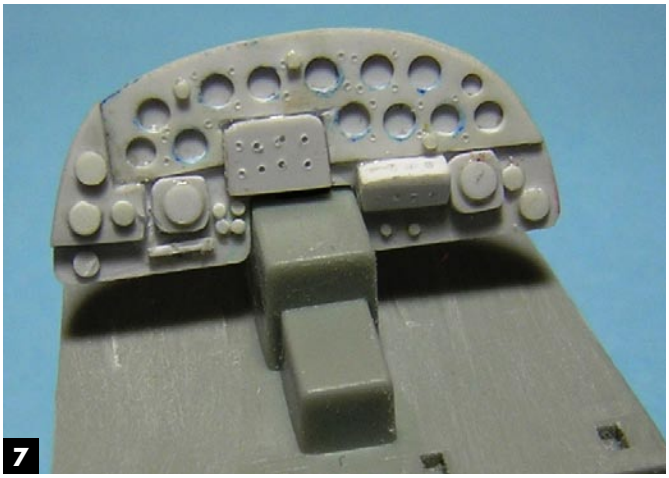
Copper wire, tin foil, and bits of scrap plastic replicate oxygen bottles and electrical conduits for additional detail.



To avoid wasting styrene, Carmine fitted cardboard templates to the walls and used the templates as guides to cut sheet-styrene fuselage framing. Then he filed and sanded the framing to fit.

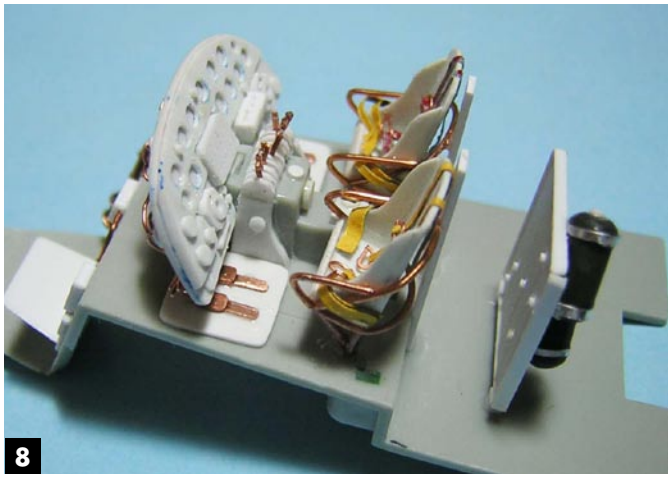


With all the transparent parts in the nose, Carmine wanted to show more detail in areas he knew would be highly visible. He began by dressing up the walls with styrene and sprue strips and scraps.



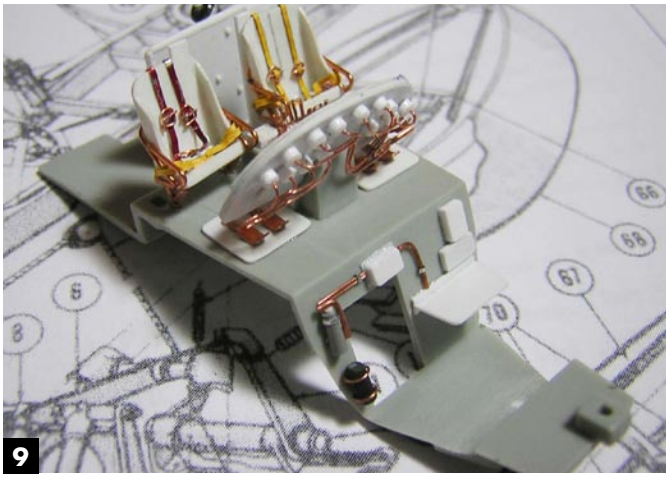
7

Bits of sprue and plastic scraps are added to the main instrument panel, which also has been bored and drilled to help replicate instruments, switches, and lights.



8

Masking-tape seatbelts and various gizmos made of copper wire and sheet begin to fill the cockpit. "Scratchbuilding instead of resorting to the aftermarket is a great satisfaction," Carmine says.



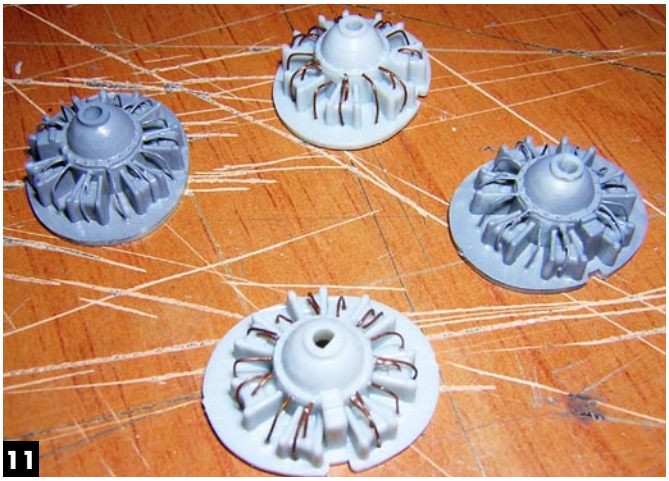
9

Citing an abundance of references, Carmine continued to load the cockpit with details. He even wired the instrument panel!



10

It's amazing what a little paint can do for the place. Upfront features begin to look much more familiar after colors are applied.



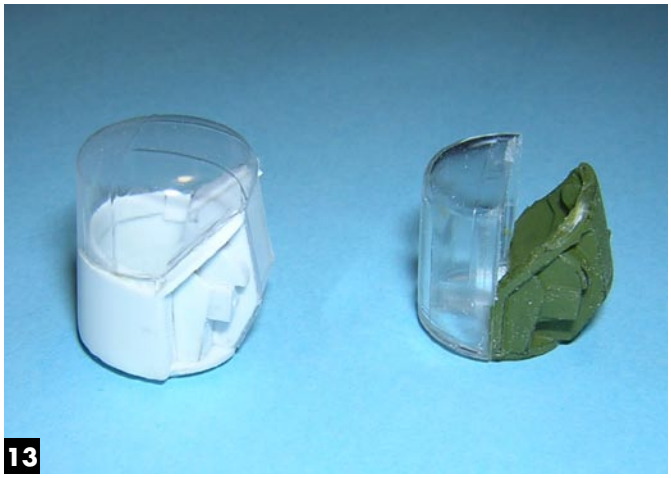
11

Knowing the engines would be all but hidden by their cowls didn't stop Carmine from adding some wiring.



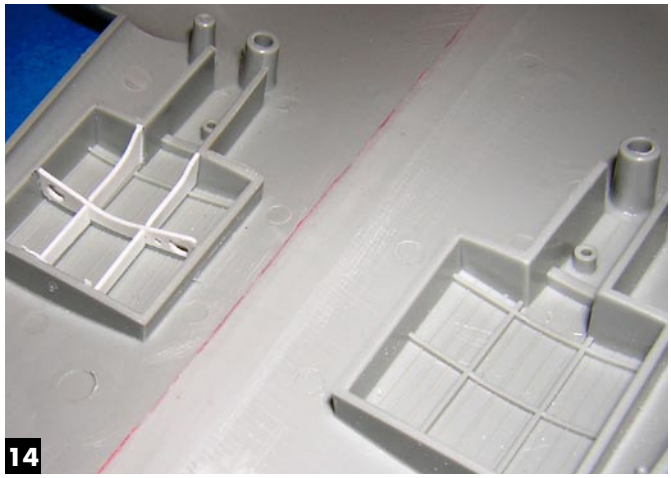
12

Carmine streaked light base coats of blue and gray with flat black and modeled bare metal with matte aluminum, an effect he sometimes moderates with tiny streaks of black or gray artist oils.



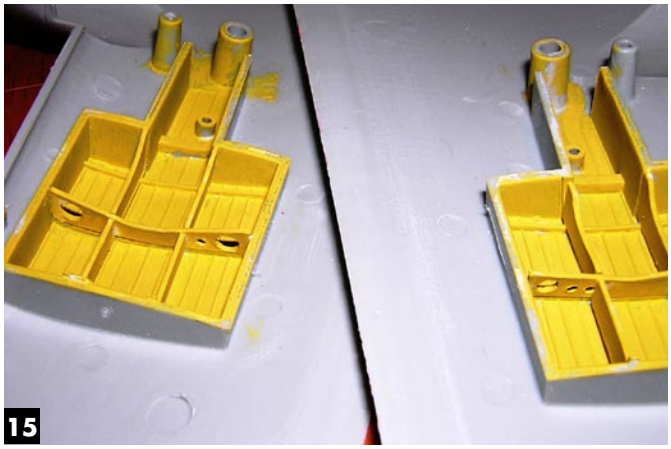
13

The kit's clear parts were replaced with vacuum-formed parts from Squadron, which Carmine deemed superior. He scratchbuilt a rear turret (left) for a better fit than the kit turret (right).



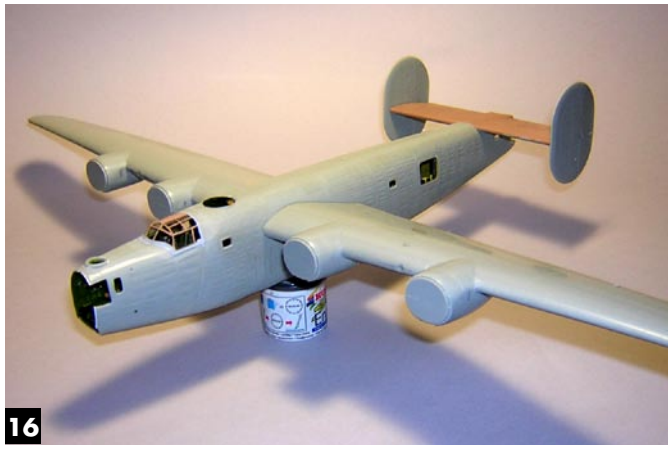
14

The landing-gear bays are shored up with sheet-styrene framing. Carmine cut lightening holes in the framing (left).



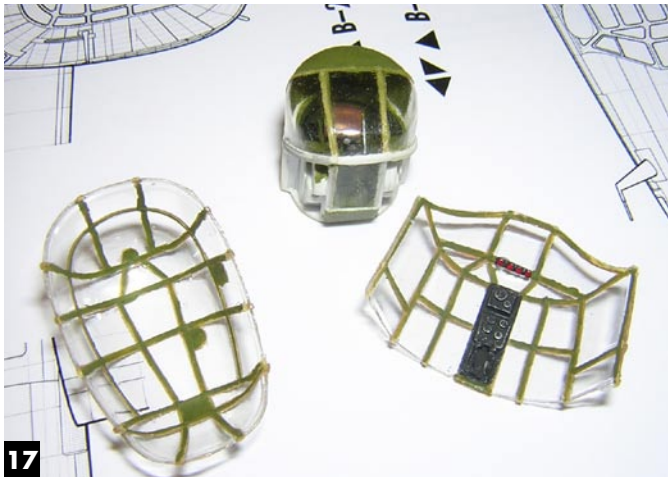
15

As he did elsewhere inside the plane, Carmine used a yellow base coat to tinge the interior green top coat. He thinned the trailing edges of the wing halves before joining them.



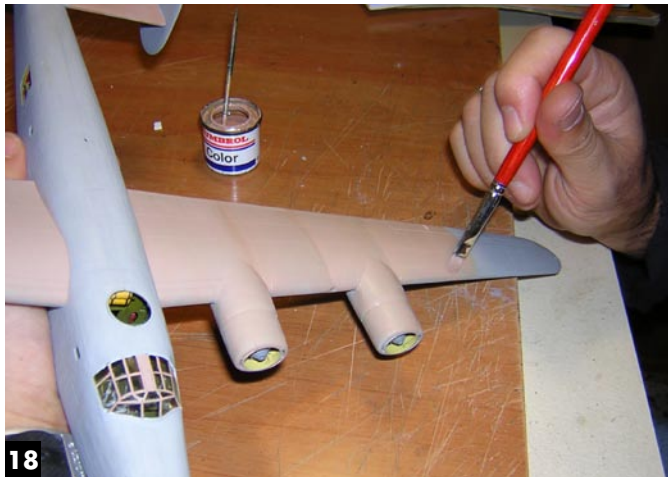
16

After weighting the nose with fishing sinkers, Carmine assembled the plane. With loads of filler putty in the balance, he says, "Go heavy with the counterweights if you want to keep the nose on the ground."



17

Carmine scratchbuilt overhead lights and a control panel for the canopy (right), then cut thin strips of Tamiya masking tape to replicate framing on the nose (left) and rear turret (center).



18

Carmine chose desert pink (Humbrol No. 250, FS30279) for the top surfaces and a neutral gray underneath. He hand-brushed the enamels, thinning them with mineral spirits for a smoother, unhurried application. He recommends waiting five hours between coats.



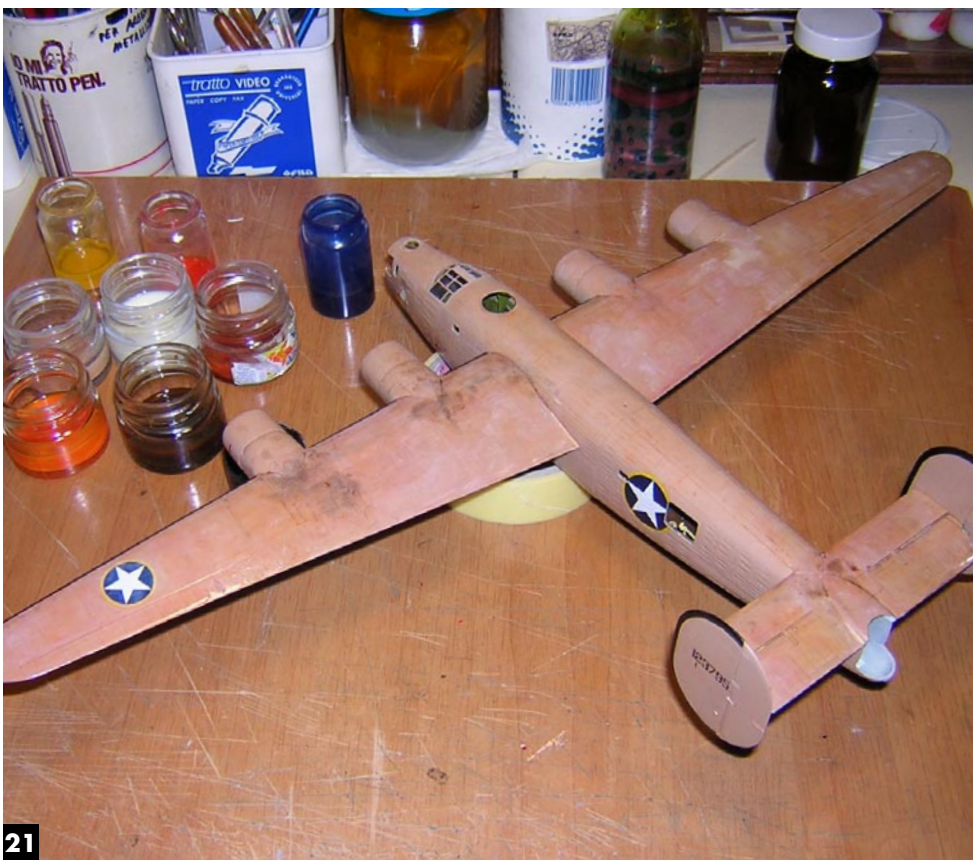
19

After prepping decal areas with Microscale acrylic gloss, Carmine used markings from a Superscale "Snow White" sheet (currently out of production) to dub his B-24 *Sneezy*.



20

Carmine selectively shaded undersides with a mix of raw umber and burnt sienna artist oils precisely applied with a fine-point brush and feathered with a flat brush.



21

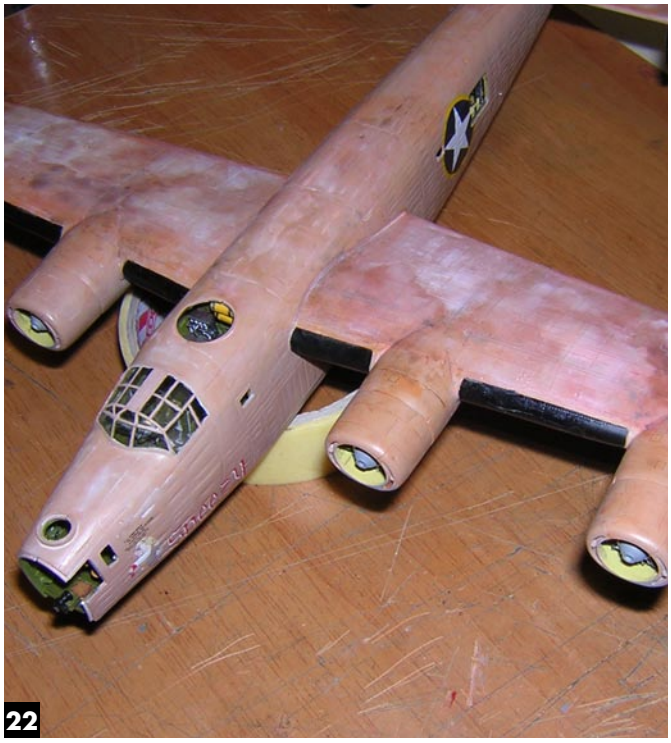
To weather upper surfaces, Carmine applied watery thin coats of acrylic glazing paint (a 1:10 mix of water and paint), starting with dark stains and faded paint …

REFERENCES

Consolidated B-24 Liberator, Vol. I, II, III, K. Janowicz and A. Jarski, AJ Press
B-24 Liberator, B. Holder, Squadron/Signal
Combat Legend: B-24 Liberator, M. Bowman, Airlife
Planes, Names & Dames, Vol. I, L. Davis, Squadron/Signal
Detail & Scale: B-24 Liberator, B. Kinzey, Squadron/Signal

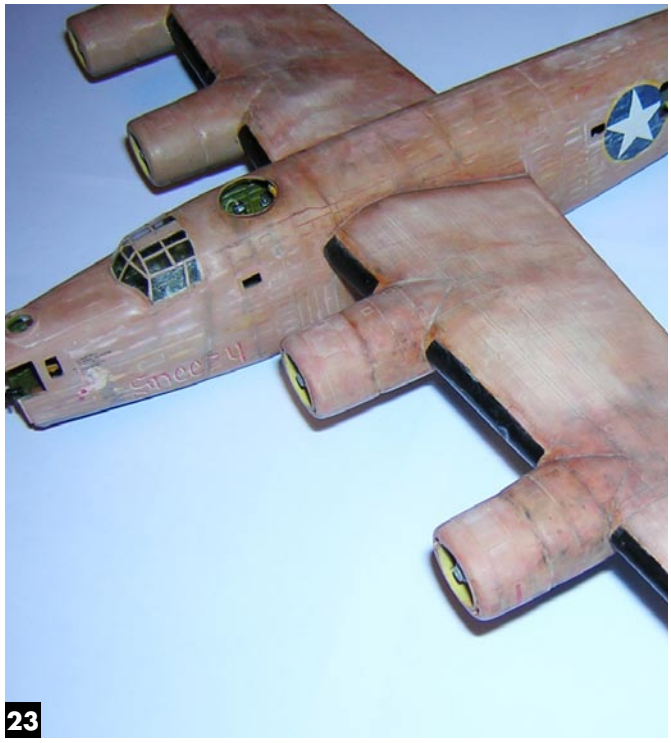
SOURCES

Vacuum-formed canopies and turrets, Squadron, 972-242-8663, www.squadron.com



22

… adding assorted tints and shades to model stains and worn spots …



23

… for a heavily weathered finish that evokes wartime photographs …



… and helps tell just a small part of *Sneezy*'s tale.