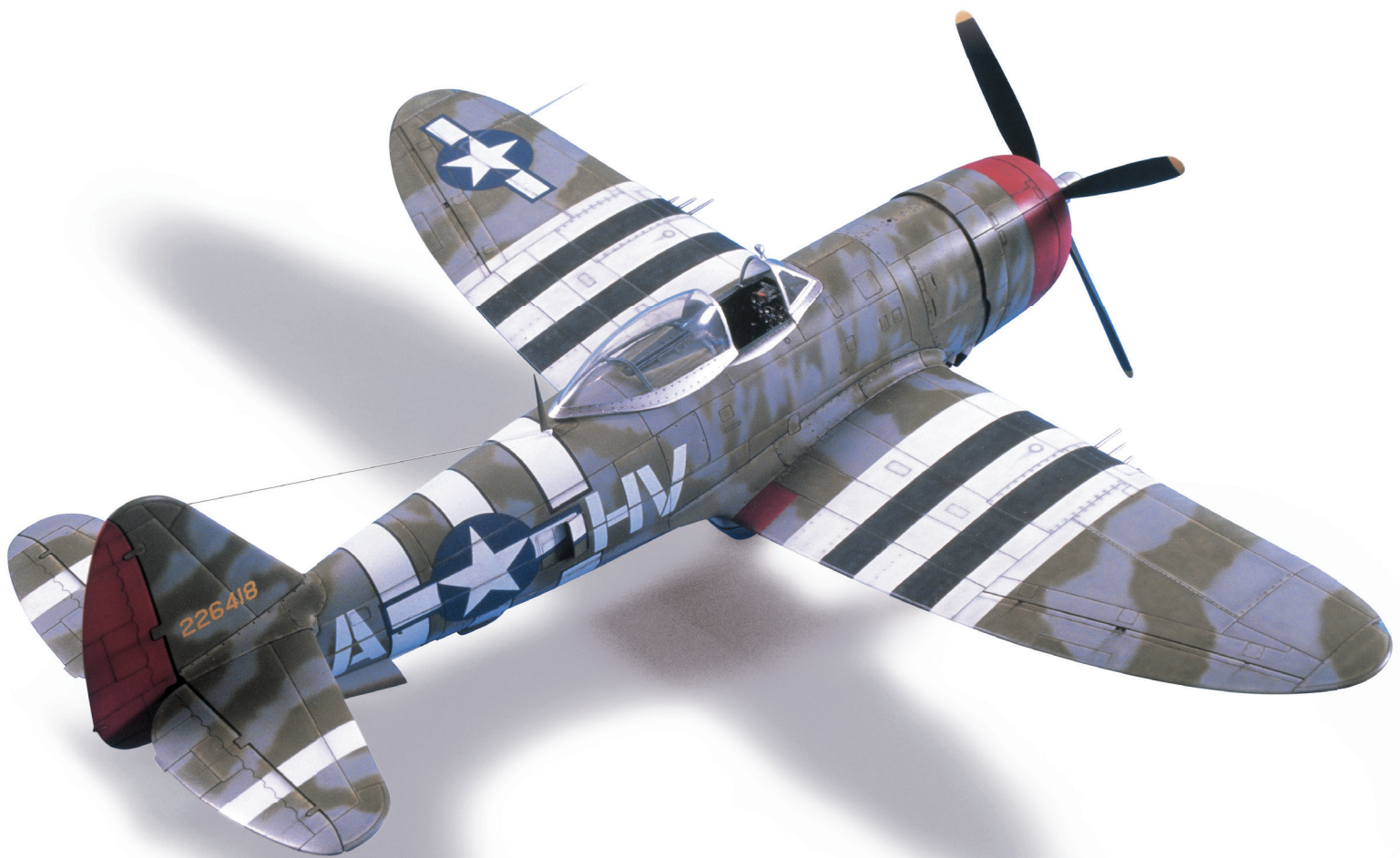
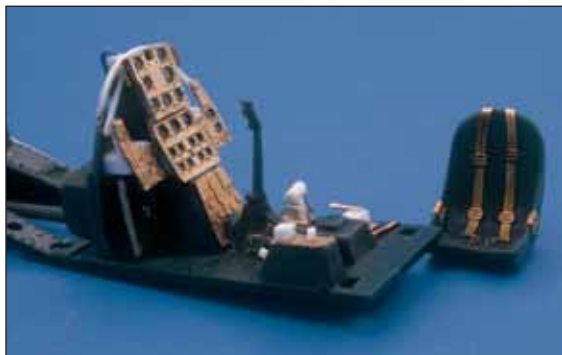


# WWII AIRCRAFT



F S M

# SHOWCASE



Eduard's photoetched set No. 48-175 is great at reproducing fine detail in this scale. The unpainted brass panel, trim wheels, control knobs, and seat harness stand out. The white parts are fashioned from styrene sheet, strip, and rod.



Where most airplanes have an engine, a P-39 has its gun bay. Verlinden machine guns (No. 1267) lie astride the cannon bay. The cannon rounds are sharpened sections of styrene rod. Alfonso used Monogram's cannon, at the bottom of the gun bay.



Super detailed and super decorated:  
Alfonso Martinez Berlana's

# Amazing P-39 Airacobra

*Photos by Aurelio Gimeno Ruiz*

Monogram's 30-year old 1/48 scale kit of the Bell P-39 is a fine model, even by today's standards. Compared with other kits of its era, the interior detail, both in the cockpit and cannon bay, is outstanding. But as good as it is, there's always room for improvement.

In the years since the kit came out, aftermarket details have become available, and Alfonso, of Alicante, Spain, used as many as he could find, including the racy decals from SuperScale. Let's get a closer look at the improvements. **FSM**

Alfonso's 1/48 scale Monogram P-39 was the recipient of many aftermarket parts and patient detailing.



Eduard's photoetched brass sheet also includes detailed surfaces for the main wheel wells. Alfonso opened the under-fuselage vents and walled them in with sheet styrene.



While Monogram's engine is okay, Verlinden's resin Allison engine (No. 1260) is even better. The Monogram exhausts were modified to fit, then a sheet-styrene downdraft carburetor-air intake chute was added.





With the engine cover, cockpit doors, and gun bay covers removed, the model depicts an aircraft under maintenance.



(Above) Here's the new engine installed in the fuselage. The structural members are made from strip styrene with tiny holes drilled to simulate holes for the panel fasteners.



(Above right) The exterior of the model was painted with Tamiya acrylics. A wash of dark gray enamel was applied to all panel lines – all the raised kit panel lines were sanded smooth and rescribed! Kendall P-39 control surfaces (No. 48-5034, out of production) were added.

(Right) The improvements to the cockpit, gun bay, and engine compartment make the model look full scale. True Detail wheels (No. 48-012) help create a candid look to the airplane as it sits partially disassembled. The risqué markings came from SuperScale International sheet No. 48-499.



WORLD WAR II SPECIAL

# twin-tailed *dragon*

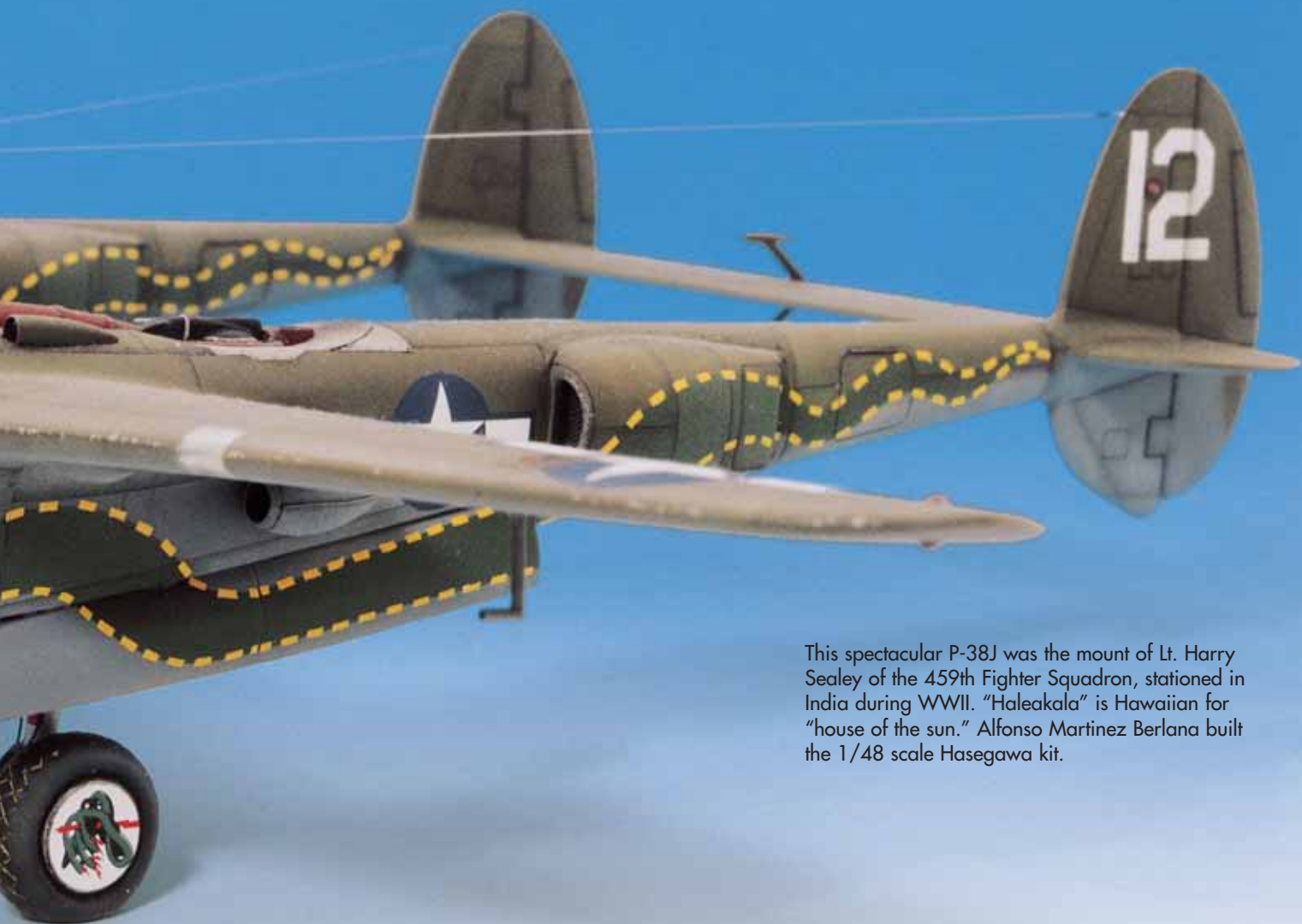


## Super details and a stunning paint job make this P-38 Lightning stand out in any jungle

*Photos by Aurelio Gimeno Ruiz*

**W**hen is nose art not nose art? Is there such a thing as “boom art”? We didn’t need answers to these questions when we spotted another masterpiece from Alicante, Spain’s Alfonso Martinez Berlana (see his magnificent P-39 Airacobra in the February 2001 FSM).

This time, Alfonso has taken Hasegawa’s 1/48 scale P-38J Lightning, added an Eduard photoetched brass detail set (No. 48-104) to improve the cockpit, slipped on True Details resin wheels (No. 48-007), and used his painting skills to create one of the most striking World War II fighters we’ve seen in years.



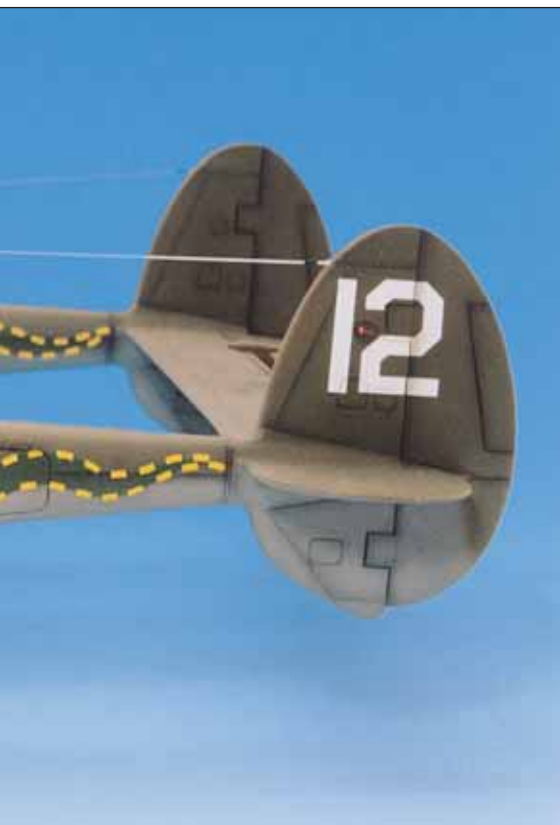
This spectacular P-38J was the mount of Lt. Harry Sealey of the 459th Fighter Squadron, stationed in India during WWII. “Haleakala” is Hawaiian for “house of the sun.” Alfonso Martinez Berlana built the 1/48 scale Hasegawa kit.



**1****2**

**1** Subtle weathering, such as the fine paint chips along the cockpit pod and around access panels, is one of Alfonso's strong points as a modeler. Lightnings of the 459th wore camouflage long after Pacific P-38s were delivered in natural metal.

**2** The dragon motifs applied to several aircraft of the 459th FS comprised perhaps the most elaborate paint job found on any P-38s.



## Dragon's Tale

"Twin-Tailed Dragons" was the nickname of the U.S. Army Air Force's 459th Fighter Squadron at Chittagong, India (now Bangladesh). The unit was unique; it was formed outside of the United States and disbanded after WWII, never to be based stateside.

The squadron was established Sept. 1, 1943 at Kurmitola, India. First flying P-38Hs, the unit was gradually upgraded with P-38Js, which had increased range. The elaborate dragon motif was applied to several of the P-38Js, and each rendering was slightly different. Some planes bore the pilot's personal nose art – often with a name in script.

The Japanese feared the 459th's attacks on their bases. The squadron struck several times when Japanese pilots slowed to land at their bases, low on fuel. It didn't take long for the Japanese to spring a trap, however. On a June 6, 1944 raid at Meiktila, Burma the pilots of the 459th were jumped by dozens of Ki-43-II "Oscars," and two American aces were killed.

The 459th's 82nd and last kill was a Ki-61 "Tony," downed Feb. 11, 1945 by Lt. Hampton Boggs. The pilot of the aircraft depicted by Alfonso's model was Lt. Harry Sealy, who finished with 4.5 victories in the air and an additional 6 aircraft destroyed on the ground. – Paul Boyer

The most eye-catching aspect of this model is the pair of slithery dragons festooning the booms. These decorations are part paint, part decal. AeroMaster's decal sheet No. 48-080 provides templates for painting the green dragon bodies along the Lightning's booms.

Even with the aid of the templates, getting the dashed-yellow outline decals to fit around the edges of the green-painted dragons is tricky, so Alfonso decided to cut the dashes from the decal and apply them one by one around the design. This way, the dashes ended up where they were supposed to be, and there was no clear film to hide.

Alfonso used Tamiya acrylics to paint his model. Besides the standard olive drab and neutral gray camouflage, he applied Tamiya XF-5 for the green dragons.

We love seeing Alfonso's work. After this P-38 and the P-39, what could be next – a P-40? **FSM**

### REFERENCES

- P-38 Lightning Aces of the Pacific and CBI** John Stanaway, Osprey, London, 1997  
**P-38 Lightning in Action** (No. 25) Gene B. Stafford, Squadron/Signal Publications, Carrollton, Texas, 1976  
**P-38 Lightning in Action** (No. 109) Larry Davis, Squadron/Signal Publications, Carrollton, Texas, 1990



**3** Alfonso dressed up the cockpit with an Eduard photoetched brass detail set and many parts made from plastic. The P-38 had a control yoke instead of a stick.

**4** The yellow-dashed dragon design was applied to both sides of both booms. The oval of natural metal was used as a reflector for the pilot to check landing gear status.



Showcase Special

# Alfonso Martinez Berlana's maritime



# Ju 188A

## The Spanish master upgrades Dragon's Luftwaffe bomber

*Photos by Aurelio Gimeno Ruiz  
and Alfonso Martinez Berlana*

**H**ere at FSM, we always look forward to model photos from Spain's Alfonso Martinez Berlana, and this spectacular Ju 188 is a real eye-popper! The zebra-striped, bulbous-nosed Junkers stands out among the usual dark colors in a Luftwaffe collection.

Alfonso's models are always spectacular to look at, and often he graces us with in-progress photos to show the work he put into the project.

The subject he chose this time was a Ju 188 bomber based in Norway to attack Allied shipping approaching the Soviet Union. He was intrigued by the striped camouflage; each plane was unique because there was no paint regulation. The over-painted light blue-gray stripes helped blend the bomber into the winter background.

Alfonso told us the 1/48 scale Dragon kit looked impressive in the box, but the fit and finish of the parts needed work. To build the bomber as it was equipped, Alfonso had to cannibalize bombs and bomb racks from the ProModeler Ju 88 (which is another Dragon kit). Dragon's Ju 188 came with torpedoes which Alfonso chose not to use.

To improve the Dragon kit, Alfonso employed an Eduard photoetched brass detail set, True Details wheels, Verlinden aircraft machine guns, and an AeroMaster decal sheet.

The majority of the Eduard set is dedicated to the cockpit. Alfonso painted the interior with Vallejo acrylic RLM 66 Schwarzgrau and RLM 02 Grau. On the outside, Alfonso painted the underside light blue RLM 65 Hellblau, then applied RLM 74 Graugrün topside, with a fin and rudder painted in RLM 81 Braunviolett and 82 Dunkelgrün. The RLM 76 Lichtblau bands on the fuselage, wings, and tailplanes were air-brushed freehand. All the exterior colors were mixed from Tamiya acrylics.

After all the painting was done, Alfonso applied a clear gloss coat using Microgloss, then washed all recesses and panel lines with thinned black enamel. A clear flat coat provided the overall final finish.

The Ju 188, with its huge, bulbous greenhouse, makes an oddly attractive model. The banded winter scheme produces added interest, so the overall effort is irresistible. **FSM**

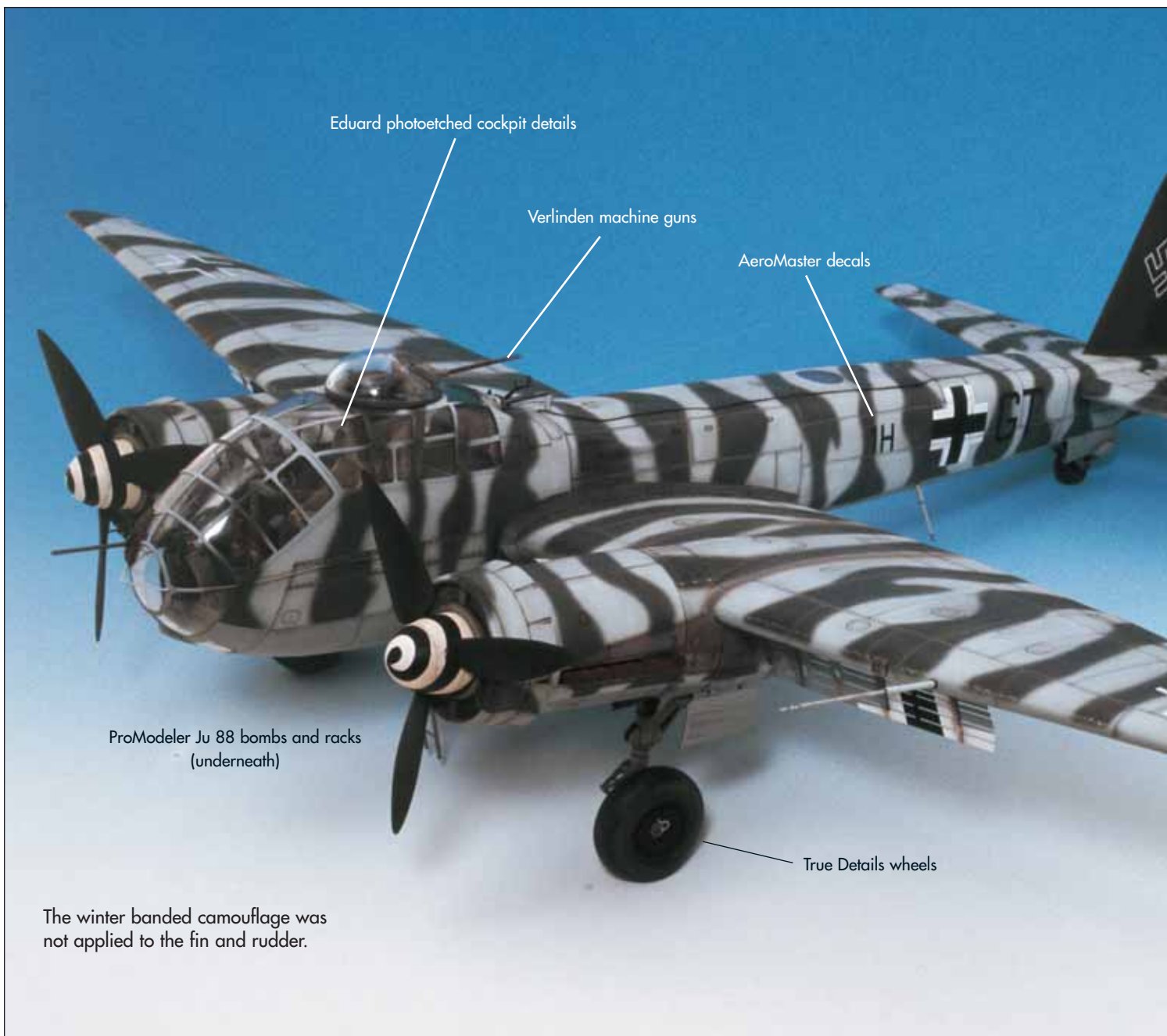
### Project at a glance

Dragon Ju 188 (kit No. 5517)  
ProModeler Ju 88 (No. 5948 for bombs and racks)  
Eduard photoetched-brass detail set (No. 48147)  
True Details wheels (No. 48029)  
Verlinden aircraft machine guns (No. 1261)  
AeroMaster decals (No. 48-145)  
Evergreen styrene sheet, strip, rod, and tube

The combination of the brutally utilitarian look of the Ju 188 and the oddly banded camouflage makes this 1/48 scale model of a German anti-ship aircraft appealing.







The winter banded camouflage was not applied to the fin and rudder.

## Junkers Ju 188

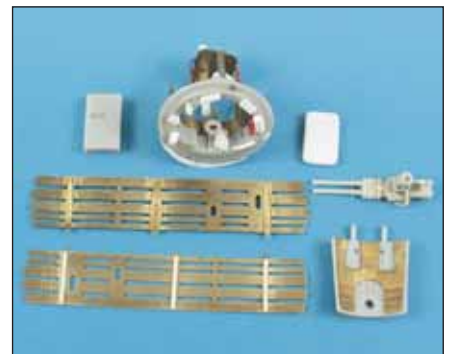
Developed as a private venture from the successful Ju 88, the Ju 188 was rushed into service when the more advanced Ju 288 proved to be a failure. Designed to be powered by either BMW 801 or Junkers Jumo 213 engines, the Ju 188 carried a crew of four and could hoist as much as 6,615 pounds of bombs or torpedoes.

The first Ju 188E (BMW engines) entered service in May 1943. Many

Ju 188A (Jumo engines) were completed as Ju 188D reconnaissance aircraft, and Ju 188F models were also reconnaissance craft with BMW engines. The production run of the Ju 188 was 1,076; a little more than half were D's or F's.

An interesting sidenote: After World War II, the French Aéronavale obtained at least 30 captured Ju 188s to use as land-based bombers!

— Paul Boyer



Alfonso added detail to the dorsal gun turret, and used photoetched brass dive brakes under the wings. The resin machine guns are from Verlinden.





Eduard photoetched brass details are easy to pick out in this view of the unpainted cockpit tub. White parts are styrene stock.



After painting, the cockpit was transformed. Here, the left cockpit wall has been attached to the tub.



The right side of the painted cockpit shows the radio gear and a small bench seat with seat belts.



The cockpit detail is easily seen through the Ju 188's huge greenhouse canopy. Note how the banded camouflage is applied over the canopy framing. Alfonso applied a black wash to all the recessed panel lines.

# Detailing and painting Hasegawa's "Tony"



## Improving the sleek Ki-61 Hien

*By Alfonso Martinez Berlana*

*Photos by Aurelio Gimeno Ruiz*



Code-named “Tony,” Kawasaki’s Ki-61 Hien (Swallow) was the only Japanese World War II production fighter with an in-line, liquid-cooled engine. This resulted in a graceful aircraft, and I just had to have a model of it in my collection.

Hasegawa’s 1/48 scale kit was easy to build. The pieces fit together well, and it’s not an expensive kit. With such a good start, I decided to add a detailed cockpit and machine guns, and improve the engine exhausts with aftermarket parts. I chose 149th Sentai (group) markings from AeroMaster’s decal sheet.

**Aires interior.** Aires’ detail set includes resin and photoetched parts that fit perfectly into the Hasegawa kit, **1**. It includes cockpit and back-deck parts, and provides detail for the nose-gun bay as well, **2**. To show them off, I had to cut away part of the top deck and right side of the nose behind the engine.

I painted the interior parts with Vallejo acrylics, **3**. The base color for the cockpit and landing gear wells is a 50-50 mixture of 984 matte brown and 981 orange-brown.

While the fuselage halves were open, I cut out the kit engine exhausts and substituted Moskit aftermarket hollow metal exhausts, **4**. After they were installed, I closed the fuselage, **5**.

The only extra detail I added to the landing gear was copper wire for the brake lines, **6**. I had to fix the trailing edge of the wing where I had gotten a bit too zealous sanding the seams. I used thin strips of plastic and super glue to restore the sharp trailing edge, **7**.

I decided not to try cutting the one-piece canopy apart to pose it open, so I carefully attached it with very tiny drops of super glue, polished it with compound, and then masked it with Tamiya tape.

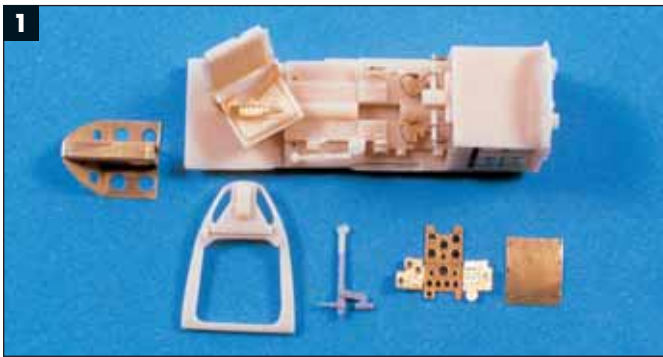
**Airframe preparation.** The color scheme I chose was a field-applied camouflage over natural metal. As with any natural-metal finish, the surface of the model must be flawless. I sanded the entire fuselage and wing assemblies so there would be no bumps in the finish. First, I used 1,000-grit sandpaper, then I polished the surface with Tamiya rubbing compound and a cotton ball. This process eliminated seams and buffed out the tiny scratches left by the sandpaper.

Many Japanese factories left their planes unpainted with only national insignia applied. Camouflage and unit markings were often applied in the field, and the quality of the paint and its application were usually poor. That resulted in scruffy looking aircraft. My Tony would be no exception.

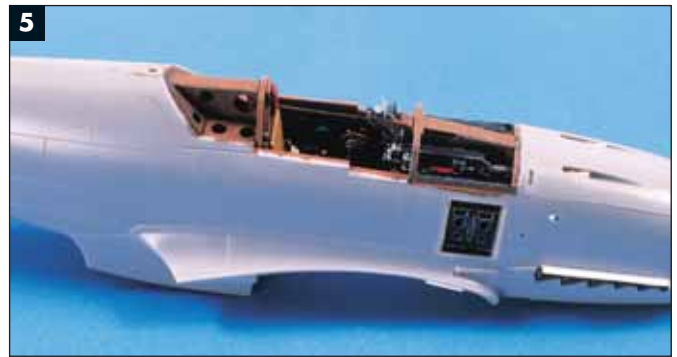
I used a European-brand acrylic paint for the underlying natural-metal finish. Whichever paint you choose, it should be fine-grained to resemble aluminum and should be able to withstand masking tape and enamel washes. I tinted several panels with aluminum mixed with a little white or a little black. After three coats, I buffed the finish with a cotton cloth, **8**.

For the field-applied camouflage, I thinned Tamiya XF13 green and varied the density of the paint as I went along the surface to sim-

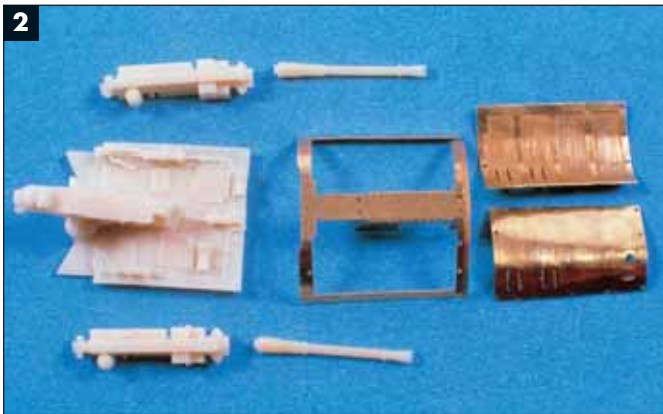




1 The Aires interior set includes resin and photoetched details.



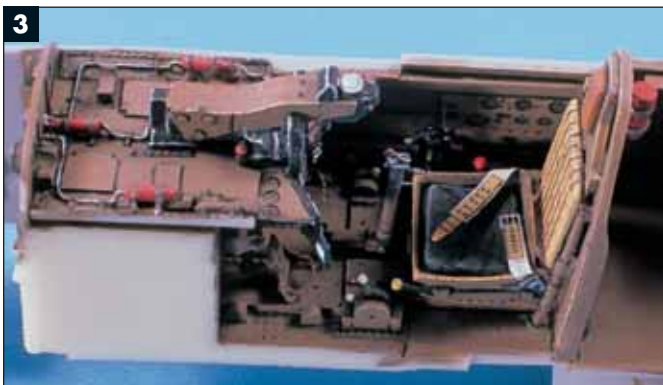
5 The fuselage was assembled and ready for canopy and wings.



2 Aires' set also includes the nose guns, bays, and covers.



6 Other than a terrific paint job, the landing gear needed only copper wire brake lines.



3 The interior details were assembled, painted, and installed.



7 Here's the model ready for paint. Note Alfonso repaired the trailing edge of the left wing with strip styrene and super glue.



4 Alfonso modified the nose halves of the Tony to fit the Moskit metal exhaust pipes.



8 The first coats of paint were shiny aluminum, the look of the real aircraft before camouflage was applied.

ulate the original haphazard paint job. Next, I applied a wash of Tamiya XF55 light gray on the wing spars, then started to “wear” the green off of the airframe. I lightly dabbed a little alcohol with a fine-tipped brush on the areas around the cockpit and wing root. The alcohol dissolved the green paint and revealed the natural metal beneath without affecting it. I continued lightly removing the green paint until I achieved the look I wanted, **9**.

**Painting the details.** I masked and painted the hinomarus (national insignias), fuselage identification stripe, and the yellow wing leading edges, **10**. I painted the bottoms of the flaps and elevators XF14 light gray. When all the paint was dry, I air-brushed a light coat of Micro Gloss in preparation for a detail wash. I thinned black enamel and brushed it into the engraved details and recesses.

I painted the exhaust pipes and stains on the fuselage with a mixture of XF64 dark brown and XF1 black, **11**. Next came decals for the unit emblem on the tail, and markings on the main gear doors.

The last paint step was an overcoat of clear flat over the painted areas, keeping it off the natural-metal areas as much as I could. At that point, I removed the masks from the canopy, then attached the landing gear and made a pitot tube from fine stainless-steel tubing.

The finished Tony looks decidedly unkempt; just what I wanted! **FSM**

#### SOURCES

**Interior detail set** Aires (No. 4017), [www.aires.cz](http://www.aires.cz)

**Metal exhaust pipes** Moskit (No. 48-21), GreatModels Webstore, 801-565-0823, [www.GreatModels.com](http://www.GreatModels.com)

**Decals** AeroMaster (No. 48-116C), 786-293-6859, [www.aeromaster.com](http://www.aeromaster.com)

**Vallejo paints** Brookhurst Hobbies, 714-636-3580, [www.brookhursthobbies.com](http://www.brookhursthobbies.com)

### The Kawasaki Ki-61 Hien (“Tony”)

In April 1940, Kawasaki received blueprints and several examples of the Daimler-Benz DB 601A 12-cylinder, inverted-V, liquid-cooled engine from Germany to begin licensed reproduction of this engine as the Kawasaki Ha-40. Manufacture of this 1,100-horsepower engine began in November 1941, with the official name “Army Type Two engine.”

Meanwhile, Kawasaki developed two fighter designs to use the new Type Two. The Ki-60 heavy fighter did not go into production, but the Ki-61 Hien lightweight fighter did. It is possible that Allied analysts dubbed the aircraft “Tony” because it looked similar to the Italian Macchi Mc. 202.

Prototypes were tested in simulated combat against an imported Messerschmitt Bf 109E-3, a captured Curtiss P-40E, Nakajima Ki-43 (Oscar) and a Ki-44 (Tojo).

The Tony first flew combat missions in April 1943 in New Guinea with the 68th Sentai and 78th Sentai, and was superior to Allied fighters. Maintenance problems resulted in minor redesigns, but the fighter held its own until outclassed by the P-51 Mustang in 1944.

— *Alfonso Martinez Berlana*



After applying the green camouflage, Alfonso removed some of it with an alcohol-dampened brush. This simulated the heavily-worn field applied paint.



The gray-painted ailerons and elevators, the yellow leading edges, and the red hinomarus were masked and painted.



The exhaust pipes were painted and stains were added along the fuselage.



The unusual XF-85 Goblin was designed to be carried inside the bomb bay of the Convair B-36. The bomber could carry one Goblin and its normal bomb load, or it could carry three fighters and no bombs.



# Modelin' the GOBLIN

Improving Special Hobby's XF-85 parasite jet fighter

*Story and photos by Alfonso Martinez Berlana*



Despite its relative obscurity, the odd-looking McDonnell XF-85 Goblin had been produced in a few vacuum-formed and resin kits. Recently, Special Hobby has made an injection-molded kit of this tiny fighter in 1/48 scale, **1**. Its sister company, MPM, has issued a 1/72 scale version.

Special Hobby's kit has only a few plastic and resin pieces and a vacuum-formed canopy, **2**. As with many Special Hobby kits, some of the fine details are

## The McDonnell XF-85 Goblin

In early 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps approved the design of the giant six-engine Convair B-36 bomber project. Since its operational range was extremely long, no fighter had the range to escort it. This prompted several "parasite fighter" experiments. Carrying escorts was not a new concept; the U.S. Navy's giant airships carried Curtiss F9C Sparrowhawks in the early 1930s, and the Soviet Union's Tupolev TB-3 "Zveno" had two Polikarpov I-16s slung under its wings in the early years of World War II.

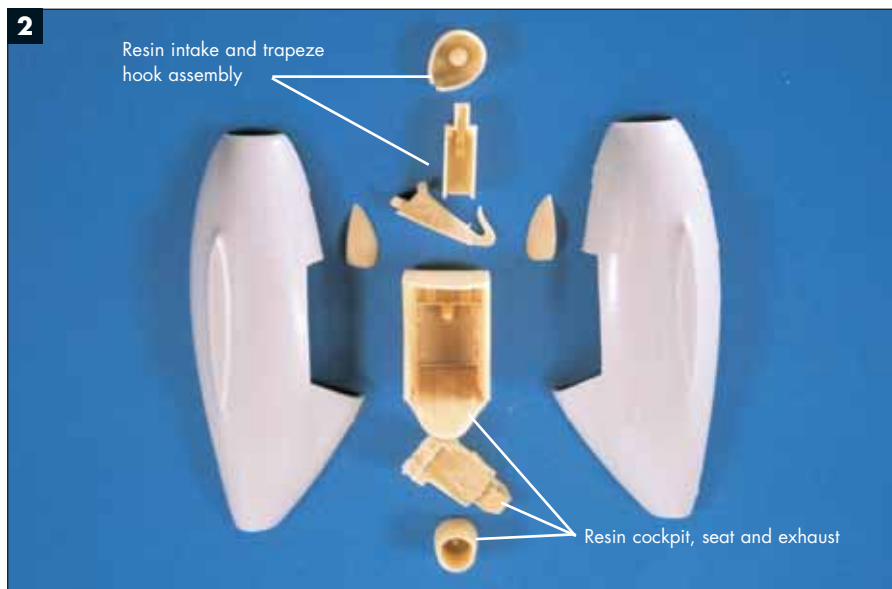
The McDonnell Aircraft Corp. produced its design for a jet-powered escort in March 1945, and the go-ahead was given in October for two test prototypes. Testing was done on a modified B-29, and although the little fighter was found to be pleasant to fly, it was difficult to "land" back aboard the bomber. One flight resulted in a collision between the fighter and the bomber's trapeze, shattering the Goblin's canopy. The pilot had to make an emergency landing on the flimsy skid.

The Goblin was never test-flown from its intended host, the B-36. The parasite-fighter concept was canceled in October 1949. The two Goblins are on display in museums: one at the USAF Museum in Dayton, Ohio, and the other at the Strategic Air Command Museum near Omaha, Neb.

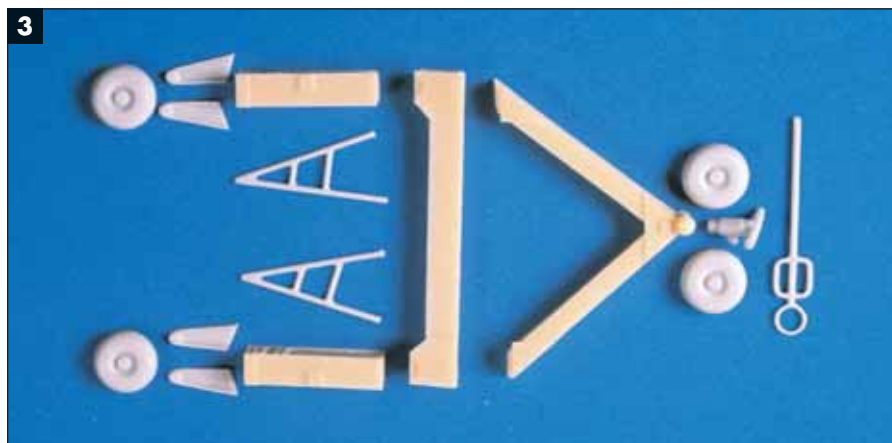
— Paul Boyer



Here's the box to look for on hobby shop shelves: Special Hobby's 1/48 scale plastic and resin kit.

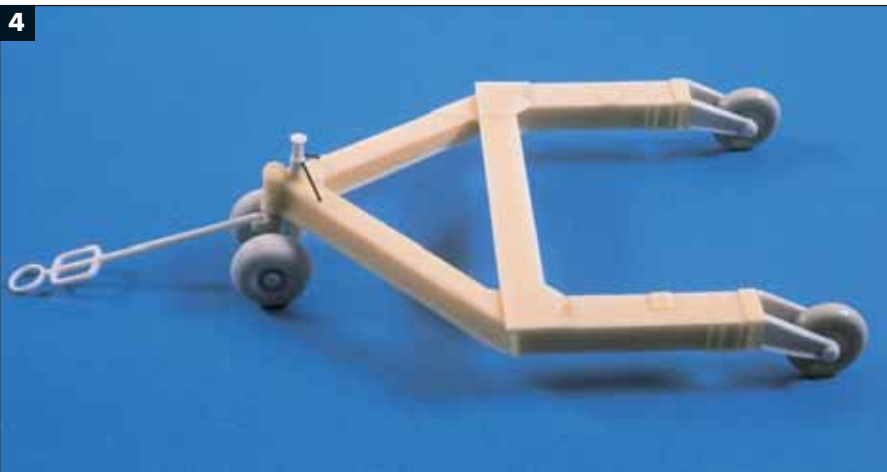


Special Hobby's fuselage is a plastic shell with a resin cockpit interior, trapeze-hook bay, intake, and exhaust.



The ground-handling trailer is mostly resin with plastic details.

4



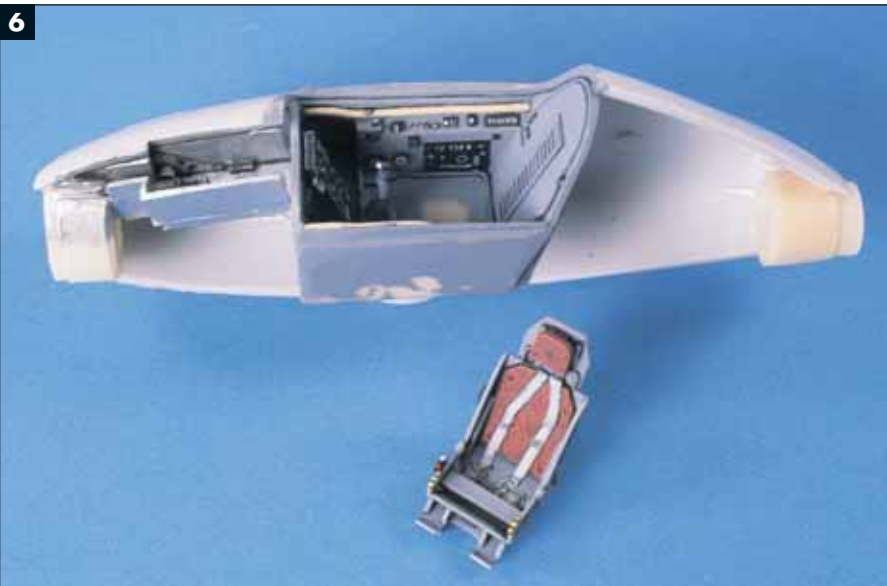
Some of the resin parts were warped. A quick soak in hot water allowed Alfonso to straighten them. The rear wheels of the trailer came from the spare-parts box.

5



Mixed-media kits benefit from a thorough dry-fitting before assembling the parts with super glue.

6



Here is the painted cockpit interior and seat ready to be cemented to the fuselage. Note the resin intake and exhaust are installed.

not included, but detailed drawings and measurements are given for these items in the instructions.

**Ground-handling trailer.** Parts are included for the trailer used for moving the Goblin on the ground, **3**. Some of the trailer's resin frame pieces were warped, so I dunked them in hot water for a few seconds and straightened the pieces while the resin was soft.

I replaced two of the trailer's wheels with narrower ones from my spare parts box, **4**. The wheels that come with the kit were too wide and wouldn't fit. I had to dry-fit the partially assembled airplane to the trailer to assure proper alignment of the supports.

I airbrushed the trailer with Tamiya flat black and touched up the wheel hubs and fasteners with silver.

**Dry-fitting is important.** Before committing the parts to glue, I dry-fitted all the interior parts into the fuselage halves, **5**. I adjusted the fit with files and sandpaper. The same goes for fitting the wings and stabilizers. Limited-run injection-molded kits generally require careful adjustment of the fit to reduce gaps and get proper alignment.

I painted the interior with Tamiya and Vallejo acrylics, **6**, then closed the fuselage. Super glue was used to fill all of the joints. It was sanded with 400-grit, followed by 1200-grit sandpaper. The model was polished with Tamiya rubbing compound and a clean rag. I wanted the surface to be free of even the smallest scratches since the model would wear a natural-metal finish.

The kit doesn't include the spring-steel landing skid, but gives directions and measurements to make one. I fashioned mine from strip styrene, and used other bits of styrene and wire to make the skid mounts, **7**.

After adding the wings, I started working on the vacuum-formed canopy. It must be carefully trimmed with straight manicure scissors until it fits the fuselage. The scissors must be very sharp to avoid producing cracks in the thin plastic. Since there was no spare canopy, I didn't take risky shortcuts.

The trickiest part of the project was attaching the canopy. I had to make sure that no super glue got inside; curing super glue sometimes fogs canopies with white deposits. I sanded the edges of the canopy and repeatedly test-fitted it to the fuselage. Then when I got it as tight as possible, I carefully applied tiny drops of gap-filling super glue from the outside.

When it was set, I sanded and polished the joint, then masked the canopy with strips of Tamiya masking tape and liquid masking agent, **8**. The model was ready to be painted.

For natural-metal finishes, I start with a fine-grain silver primer, producing as smooth a coat as possible.

Over the primer came Testor Metalizer colors. I used five shades: aluminum plate, magnesium, titanium, stainless steel, and burnt metal. Metalizer must be airbrushed but doesn't need to be thinned. It makes a fragile finish that must be handled carefully, so I wore cotton gloves. The nice thing about Metalizer is that it can be buffed with a soft cloth to a bright metallic sheen.

To differentiate panels, I carefully masked with Tamiya tape and airbrushed the other Metalizer shades over the aluminum plate finish. Any marks from the tape were buffed out with the cloth.

**Dark wash.** I made a dark wash by diluting Vallejo black acrylic in water and flowing it into the recessed panel lines. Be careful, though, as once Vallejo acrylics dry, they are difficult to remove. I made sure I wiped off excess wash within one minute with a damp cotton swab.

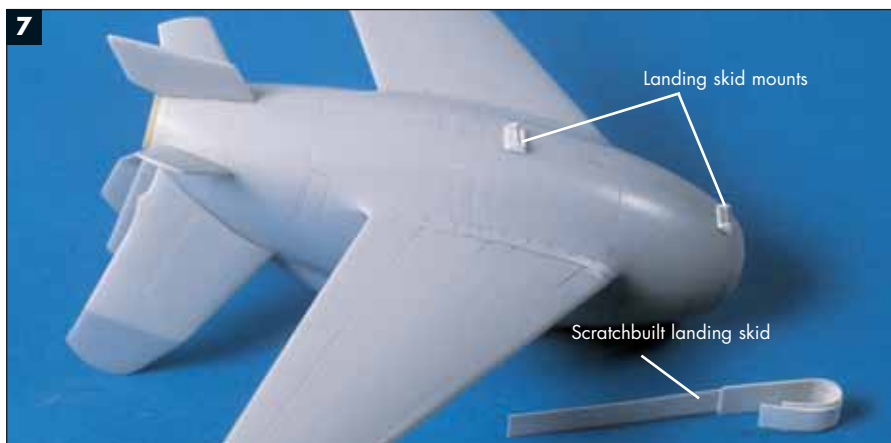
The final paint details were the red and yellow stabilizer tips. The kit decals went on without trouble, and I didn't even need a decal solvent. After adding the pitot boom and trapeze hook, I placed the model on its trailer, **9**.

Now I have something really different to add to my 1/48 scale fighter collection – a fighter that never fought, and a parasite that never met its host! **FSM**

*Alfonso Martinez Berlana lives in Alicante, Spain, and is a frequent contributor to FSM.*

English translation provided by Jeff Reich

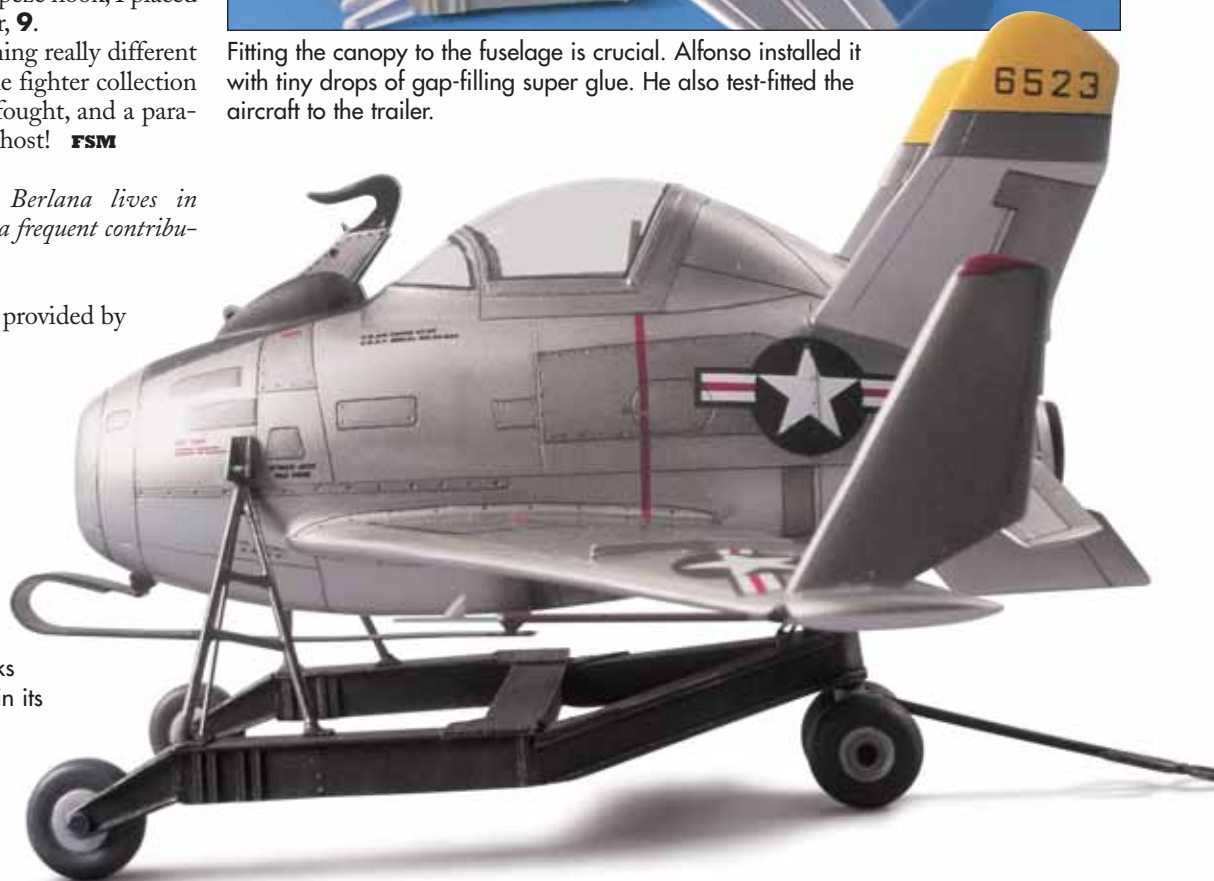
The finished model looks great with black wash in its recessed panel lines.



The spring landing skid is not included in the kit, but the instructions show how to make it from styrene stock.



Fitting the canopy to the fuselage is crucial. Alfonso installed it with tiny drops of gap-filling super glue. He also test-fitted the aircraft to the trailer.

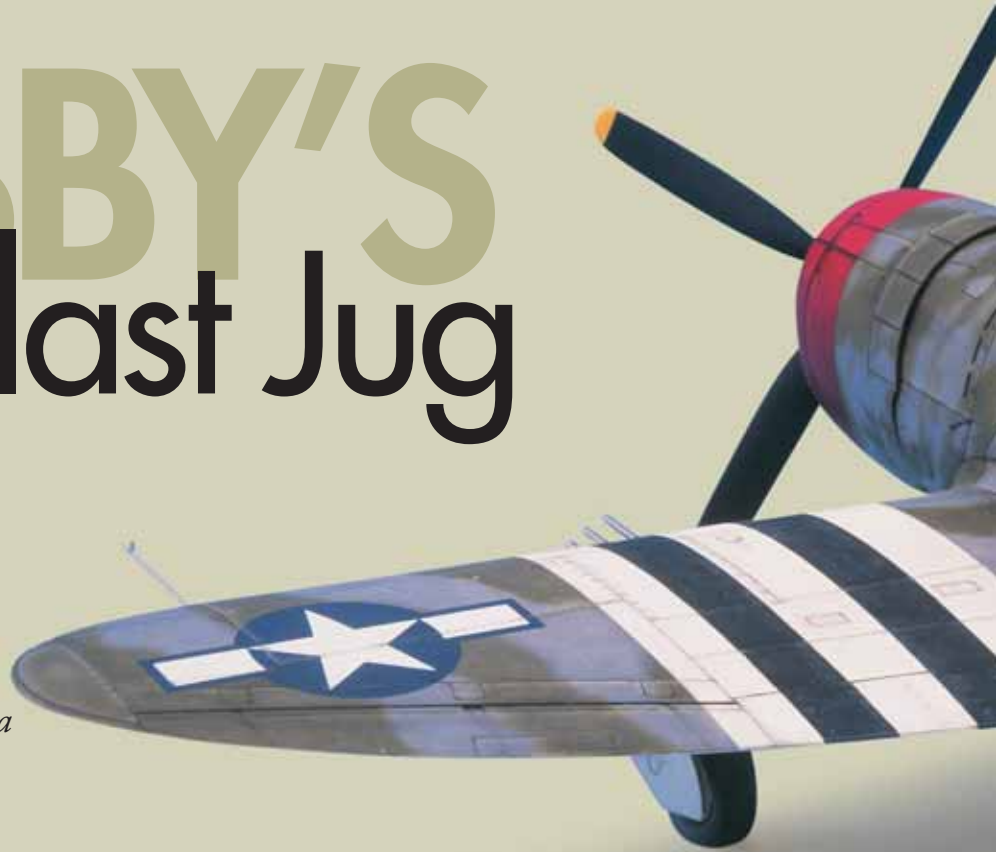




# GABBY'S last Jug

Detailing and  
painting  
Hasegawa's  
P-47D bubbletop

*By Alfonso Martinez Berlana  
Photos by Alfonso Martinez Berlana  
and Aurelio Gimeno Ruiz*



The passing of Francis "Gabby" Gabreski in January 2002 brought Hasegawa's bubbletop Thunderbolt to the top of my "to do" list. I just had to model Gabreski's famous field-camouflaged P-47D.

I chose Hasegawa's kit because it was well-detailed, fit nearly perfectly, and was easy to build. I found only one error that had to be corrected: The supports for the belly tank were too long. If they were placed as intended, the tank would have touched the ground. I cut them down so the tank would sit properly.

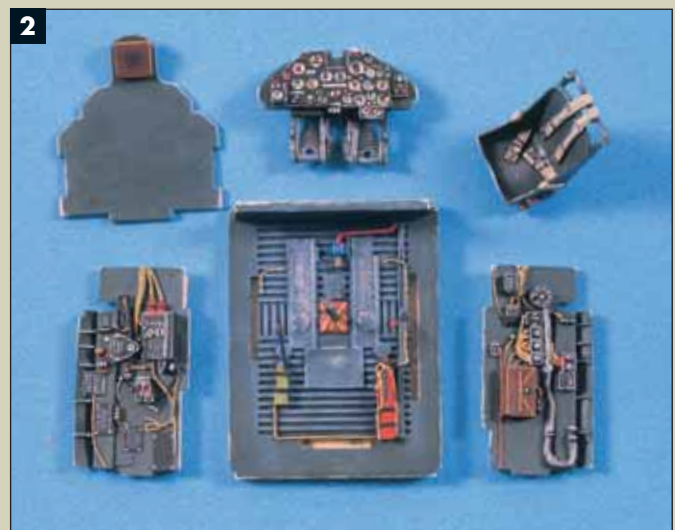
As good as Hasegawa's kit was, I just couldn't leave well enough alone. I added a True Details resin cockpit (No. 48483) and wheels (48009), and installed more detail on the engine and landing gear.

To this day, it is uncertain whether the bottom of Gabreski's P-47 was camouflaged, but the fuselage and upper surfaces appear to have been painted in RAF medium sea gray and dark green. I decided to go with the unpainted natural-metal bottom.

Let me show you how I detailed and painted Gabby's Jug.



Here is the True Details resin Thunderbolt cockpit set unpainted (left), and how it looks after painting. I hand-brushed the interior with Vallejo acrylics. Gabreski's aircraft was a P-47D-25RE, built



at Farmingdale, N.Y. The cockpits of this production batch were painted in dull dark green, rather than the typical "interior green." Photos 1-10 by Alfonso Martinez Berlana



The unusual camouflage of Gabreski's P-47D bubbletop Thunderbolt never looked better than on Alfonso Martinez Berlana's Hasegawa model. Aurelio Gimeno Ruiz photo



I used thin copper wire and fine red plastic insulation stripped from thin-gauge electrical wire to form hydraulic brake lines on the landing gear struts. Short pieces of the tubing also form the connectors to the engine's ignition harness.



Here's the finished landing gear ready to install. The interior of the Thunderbolt's wheel wells was painted in yellow zinc chromate.

I used a No. 76 bit to drill depressions inside the clear wingtip navigation-light lenses. The depressions represent the place where the colored bulbs under clear lenses would be, so the right hole was painted with clear green, the left with clear red.



5



Going back to the engine, I wired the ignition system with fine copper wire and painted it while it was attached to the kit firewall.

6



Left: Before painting the camouflage, I polished, attached, and masked the wind-screen on the fuselage, then sealed the cockpit and wheel wells with tape and liquid masking agent. A wipe-down with alcohol removed oily fingerprints.

I painted the bottom surfaces and the belly tank first with aluminum. I painted the upper surface camouflage with Tamiya acrylics, mixed roughly to the RAF medium sea gray and dark green that were probably used on the real aircraft. I lightened both colors with white for "scale effect."

I couldn't find pictures of the right side of the plane, so made up a likely pattern. To prevent paint buildup, I avoided the areas that would receive the black and white invasion stripes.

## Francis "Gabby" Gabreski

Most modelers know the name of the USAAF's highest-scoring ace in the European theater, but not so many know about the rest of this legend's flying career. The son of Polish immigrants, Francis Gabreski grew up in Oil City, Penn.

He entered the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., in 1938. After nearly flunking out his freshman year, he developed an interest in flying, and when an Army recruiter visited the campus, Gabreski signed up.

He entered flight training and nearly washed out several times, eventually getting his wings in March 1941. He miraculously landed his first-choice assignment, flying fighters in Hawaii! Gabreski got into the air on the morning of Dec. 7, but did not encounter any Japanese aircraft.

The pilot wanted to see

action, and, capitalizing on his ability to speak Polish, he wrangled a transfer to one of the RAF Polish squadrons and flew Spitfire Mk.IXs. He didn't get his first Europe combat mission until January 1943. He had no aerial victories with the RAF.

In February 1943, Gabreski was assigned to Hub Zemke's 56th Fighter Group flying P-47s, and that spring he was promoted to Captain and flight commander. Then in the summer, he was promoted to major and squadron commander – all this without

downing a single enemy aircraft.

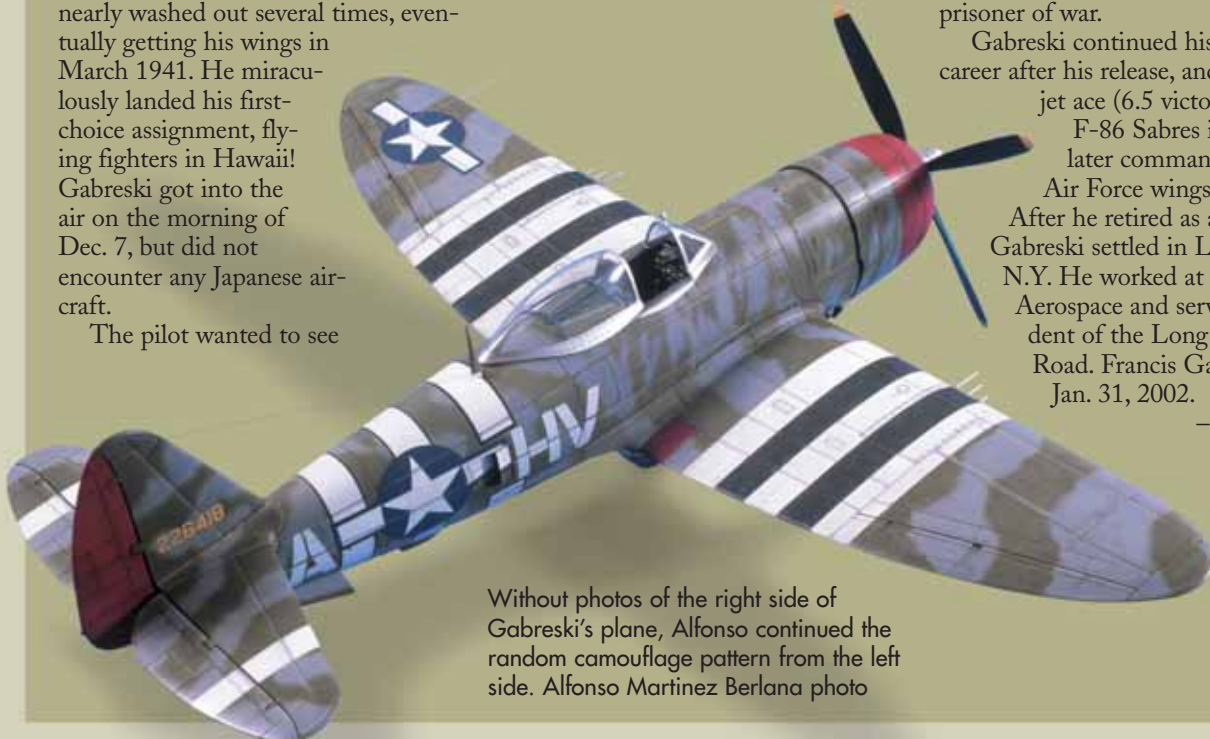
Gabreski shot down his first aircraft, an Fw 190, Aug. 24, 1943. The ice broken, victories came rapidly. He flew fighter sweeps over the beaches of Normandy, and on July 5, 1944, Gabreski scored his 28th victory.

Due for a leave, he decided to sneak in one more mission before departure. While strafing a German airfield, his P-47's propeller tips struck the ground and he crash-landed. He was captured after five days of evading, and lived out the rest of the war as a prisoner of war.

Gabreski continued his Air Force career after his release, and became a jet ace (6.5 victories) flying F-86 Sabres in Korea. He later commanded several Air Force wings.

After he retired as a Colonel, Gabreski settled in Long Island, N.Y. He worked at Grumman Aerospace and served as president of the Long Island Rail Road. Francis Gabreski died Jan. 31, 2002.

– Paul Boyer



Without photos of the right side of Gabreski's plane, Alfonso continued the random camouflage pattern from the left side. Alfonso Martinez Berlana photo





I allowed the camouflage to dry for a couple of days, then masked and painted the wing and lower fuselage invasion-stripe areas white. After the white was dry, I masked and airbrushed the black stripes. For more painting techniques, see Larry Schramm's article on page 42.



The next chore was painting the ID bands on the horizontal stabilizers (white on top, black underneath), then the red cowl front and rudder.



Half of achieving a great finish is applying a realistically weathered look. I like to airbrush panel and hinge lines with a darker color, much like applying a dark wash.

Thinned Tamiya smoke (X-19) went over all the lines on the camouflaged portions. Tamiya medium gray (XF-20) was used over the aluminum and white areas. I airbrushed the exhaust ducts and stains behind the machine-gun shell ejector chutes with a mix of red-brown (XF-64) and flat black.

The next step was the application of a gloss coating. I used an acrylic to seal the paint beneath and protect it from a black oil wash that came afterwards. The wash further enhanced the panel and hinge lines.

When the gloss was dry, I applied Gabreski's markings from AeroMaster's U.S. Top Guns sheet No. SP48-03.



To seal the decals, I applied a light coating of acrylic clear flat, just enough to produce a nice satin sheen. The aluminum undersurfaces and belly tank were spared the flat coat.

The last steps were unmasking the cockpit and canopy, and attaching the landing gear, propeller, machine-gun blast tubes (cut from stainless-steel tubing), pitot tube, and antennas.

I think any collection of World War II aircraft must include the plane of America's top European-theater ace. Now I've got mine! **FSM**

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