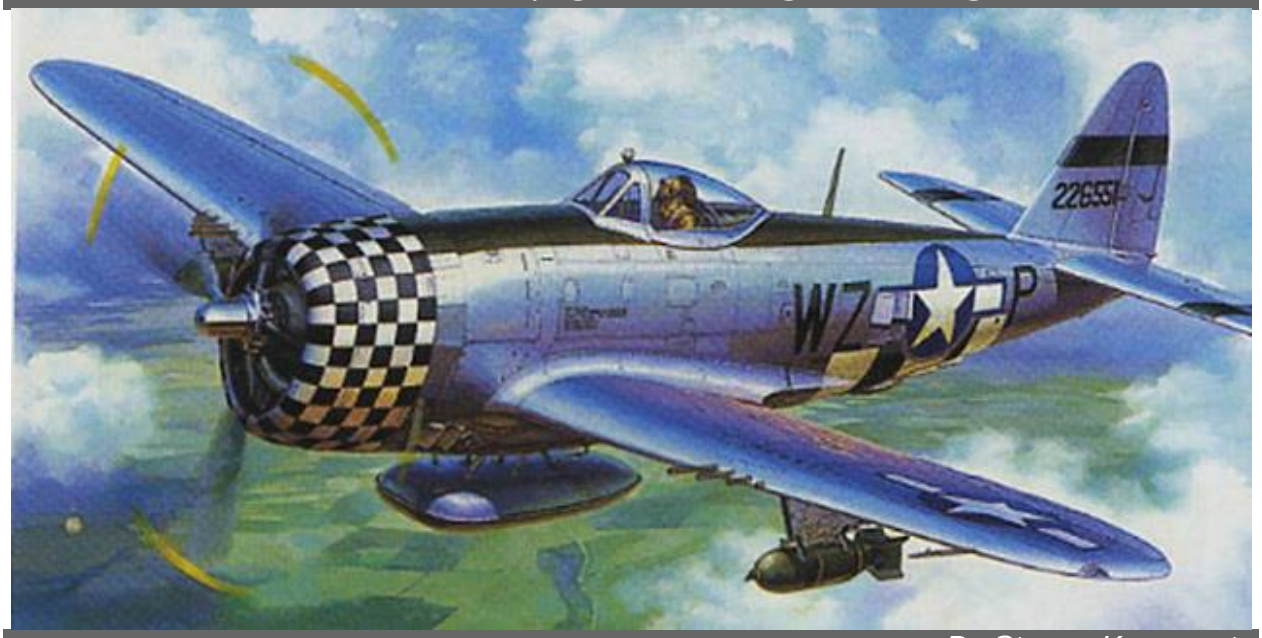
THE TAMIYA 1/48 P-47D "BUBBLE TOP"



By Steven Kumamoto

This kit is a typical **TAMIYA** product in that it goes together without too much trouble, and so can be recommended to anyone who has a modicum of modeling experience. Except for one part, I built mine straight out of the box just to see how things fit, and I can report that they all fit well. Because of this, I won't go step by step on building the kit nor will I list obvious styles of assembly that most of you already know, but will just list things that made this kit notable for me.

Many of the injection trees are common with the "Razorback" version of this kit, but naturally a new tree provides the "Bubbletop" fuselage, and you get the clear parts for the "bubble."

Things I liked about the kit. The main gear wells' assembly break down, are the best thought out in ANY scale for the P-47 because if you dry fit it and do a little cleanup work, no seams will be seen in the wells. The wings are in four pieces--not three as in most P-47 kits, so that you do not have to fight with two belly seams as found in most P-47 models on the market. Two wing spars are provided that give you the correct dihedral for the wings as well as really strengthening the wing/fuselage junction. The main gear struts have molded on their distal, the shrink struts that shortened the main struts 9 inches as they retracted--a detail first in ANY SCALE. The main struts' hydraulics are molded facing the correct way, so unlike the **HASEGAWA** kit, you don't have to correct them. The wing blast tubes are molded vertically on their injection trees and thus need only cleanup where the sprues are located, and are perfectly circular and have a hole cast in them so you don't have to drill them out. The engine/cowling assembly can be attached to the main fuselage without gluing and therefore can be removed to show the oil cooler radiators. **TAMIYA** decals are approaching

SCALE MASTER and **SUPERSCALE** in quality and workability, so the only reason to replace the kit decal is that (Like me) you want to have markings other than those provided in the kit. However, for those of you doing 78th Fighter Group aircraft, DO use the checkerboard provided in the kit, as they fit perfectly and require very little fiddling to get a great looking cowling.

Except for fiddling a little with the wheel well joints, you don't really need to worry about seams on this kit. The seams on the fuselage follow the seams we would find on the real aircraft and so I used no filler on this kit—even around where the windscreen fits to the fuselage.

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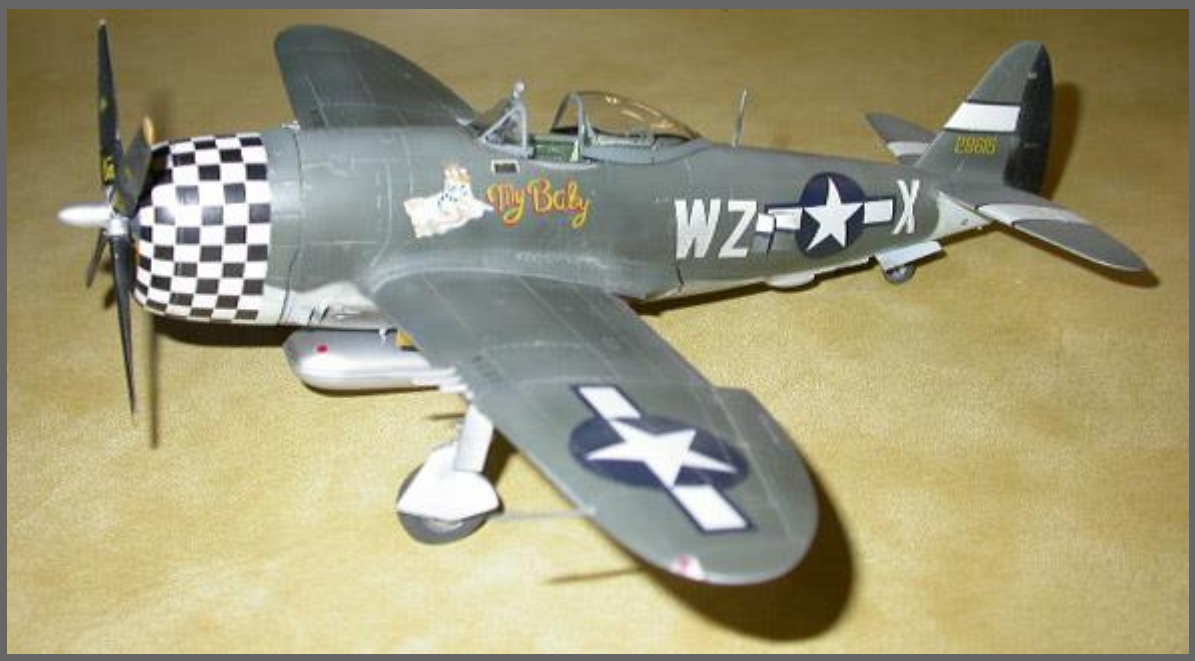


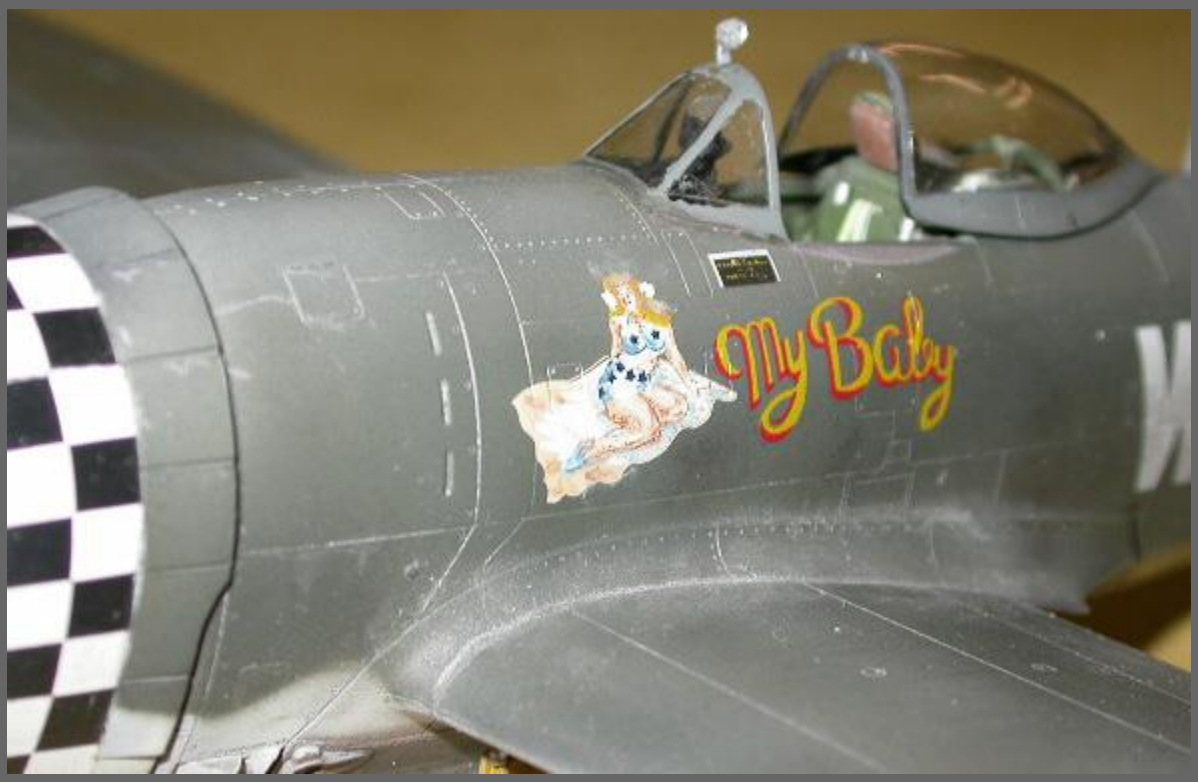
The cockpit detail is just fine as it is—there is no reason to go out and buy an after market interior detail set unless you are building the kit for a contest or have a terminal case of AMS (Or you are Norris!). If you want to dress up the cockpit, just get the **EDUARD** pre-painted seatbelts; that is all you need.

Things I didn't like about the kit. Of course, first, the price. The main landing light is just a depression in the lower wing which you must paint silver and add an injected clear circle over it. The recognition lights under the port wing are just moldings in the main wing casting, and must be painted silver; then painted with the appropriate clear color after the silver has dried. On both of the above, I recommend buying the appropriate size and color model railroad gems, drill out these areas, and glue the appropriate gems in place. Although the bubble canopy support/slide glue points are

indicated on the canopy itself, the area is hard to find after painting the canopy (And you SHOULD paint the canopy completely prior to adding the support). Therefore it is difficult to place this part easily; also the resultant joint is very weak. The tail wheel assembly has a hole at its rear (most probably where the real tail wheel would retract into), but since you can look into the plane and see the tabs that attach the stabilizers to the fuselage, I recommend filling this area in with some khaki colored Kleenex. This will then resemble a protective covering many aircraft had in this area.

Superdetail freaks should like the dropped flaps feature, but you will have to be real careful in how you pick up the finished model after these are placed. The plans would have you glue the flaps in place prior to gluing the upper and lower wings together. However, they will get in your way while you are working on the kit and chances are excellent that you will break them off, so I advise you to narrow the hinges' tabs where they attach to the wing. By doing this, you can leave off the flaps until the final stage of assembly.

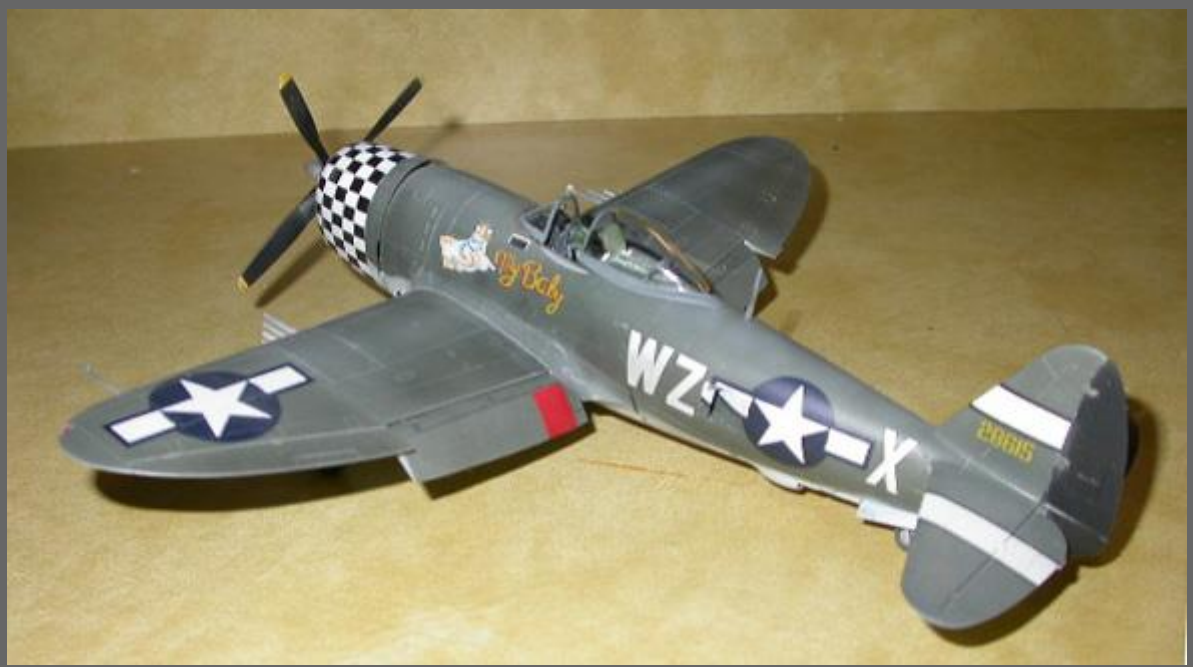
The wingtip clear moldings have a dimple on their inner surfaces. Drill these a little deeper, add the appropriate color (either red or blue); then paint the inner flat surfaces silver. When dry, epoxy them to their correct wings, sand/polish for a seamless joint; then place Elmer's glue over the clear areas as a paint protective coating and leave it there until all painting is done.



I think the Curtiss-Electric 13' and Hamilton-Standard 13' props are well done, but perhaps the C-E prop blades should have a little more twist in them near their tips. Norris also thinks that the hub of the H-S is too large, but I think it is all right.

One caveat, read the instructions! I didn't, and therefore I had to guess where to punch out the locating holes for the wing shackle assemblies.

The scale length, from the front of the cowling to the rear edge of the rudder was 32 ½ scale feet. With the H-S prop, total overall length was a little under 35 scale feet. With the C-E prop, total length was 34 ½ scale feet. Wingspan is 38 ¼ scale feet. According to Brodie's book, the P-47D-25-RE had a length of 35 feet 10 inches, and a wingspan of 40 feet 9 inches! Therefore, the **TAMIYA** may be a little small, but to the eye, the model looks proportionately correct.



*Some info about other kits I have been trying to finish. The **MAC** 1/72 Roland D. VIb has very fragile decals. I discovered the best way to work these were to soak them in water, allowing then to almost float off their paper backing. Place some water or diluted decal solvent on the model where you are to place the decal so that you can maneuver the decal to final position. The **REVELL (GERMANY)** decals rank among the WORST that I have ever worked with. Not only do they have that flat finish which is almost impossible to hide, but the decals don't stick very well. Also, DON'T put any decal solvent on them while they are wet. Let them dry first. If you use solvent immediately after placing, they have a tendency to curl up from the edges into a nice tube or ball. It is nice and frustrating to try to tease open a decal that has rolled into a tube (Of course, when the decal rolls into a tube, all of a sudden it will decide to soften and stick to the other side of the tube too!). The ideal way to decal a **REVELL(GERMANY)** model is to use aftermarket decals or get **REVELL (US)** decals.*