

Curtiss P-40N Hobby Boss 1:72



Strange but true, this is the first P-40 model I've made since the early Airfix P-40E that must have come out in the early to mid 1960s. It was covered with rivets as I recall, and I plastered it with house paint of dubious shades because it was a lot cheaper than the little Humbrol tinlets that cost too much for my budget at that time. (As I recall, the only shade of green I used was called 'Chinese Green' that came in a nice tin, enough to do ten or fifteen models even if the RAF and Luftwaffe had their own shades of green in real life.)

If one of the reasons we make models is because we like how they look you can guess why I haven't bothered with P-40s. In reality they were a rather ordinary fighter but the best that the United States was making at the beginning of WWII and the production lines just kept on rolling until the end of 1944. They might have been competitive with a Spitfire V or an early Bf109F but after that they were outclassed. However, they did the job when control of the air was not a problem and so they did well in theatres like the South West Pacific Area. I've a nice Hasegawa kit of a P-40N that I picked up at a swap and sell that came with after market interior and RAAF decals. However, I couldn't work up any enthusiasm for all the effort that would be involved so when a Hobby Boss P-40N arrived in the local model shop I decided to take the easy way out. I also happened to have a nice decal sheet

for RAAF, Russian and Finn P-40s decals to make this model at least halfway interesting. (Even if P-40s are not very interesting as aeroplanes they were important for their role in RAAF history.)

There's hardly anything that needs to be said about constructing this model. It goes together with great ease and glue seems to be an optional extra. The only area that needs any filler is around the cockpit canopy, which seems to be an area of continuing weakness in the Hobby Boss kits I've made. The kit comes with a bulky looking underbelly tank that I left off because it did nothing to make the P-40 look like a decent fighter. The Tally Ho decals I used were interesting, they included instructions for the RAAF version, HU-P of 78 Squadron, saying that it was Foliage Green but there is an errata sheet that says it should be USAAF Neutral Grey and Drab Olive. There happens to be a photo of this aeroplane in Stewart Wilson's *The Spitfire, Mustang and Kittyhawk in Australian Service* (on page 162) that shows this P-40N in the USAAF colours, but not quite what appears on the instruction sheet. The photo also shows that HU-P was not particularly weathered except for some paint chipping around the machine guns, which saved my conscience some problems because of my general dislike of weathering.

There's not much else to report. The decals went on nicely and a couple of dustings of Dulcote sealed everything with just that right matt tone. The completed model looks better than I had expected so I don't know that I will ever need to make another P-40.

