Short Feature Article

Trumpeter

P-47D Thunderbolt Razorback
“Kansas Tornado II”

1:32 scale

by
Les Venus
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A note from Geoff...
Any of you that have been with us for some time will have seen some of the great contributions Les has made over the years, since we started SMN back in November 2009.

It’s been a while since Les was able to really get back into his modelling and it’s with great joy we can bring you this excellent build of his Trumpeter P-47D Thunderbolt ‘Razorback” in 1:32. In my opinion, one of his very best to date - especially one in his trademark natural metal finish. I love Les's builds for many reasons, not just because he builds great, authentic-looking scale models, but mostly because he just experiments and is prepared to do his thing and not feel compelled to follow the crowd with the latest this-and-that product. It just goes to show, have some faith in your own ability, try new stuff out and if you’re happy with it - happy days!

I see that Les refers to his first build of this model and it appears in your SMN Subscribers’ Gallery - just a couple of pics there and so it’s great to bring you more in-depth coverage from Les of this Trumpeter kit in this special feature article.

References...
I did spot this useful thread on the web that has some great artwork, photos and comment for Kansas Tornado II, depicted around 11 September 1944; Lt H.J. Curran 510th FS support mission near Pont-à-Mousson. Follow that thread here.

Background
I am a big fan of The ‘Jug’ and most especially the “Razorback”. I am boringly many would say, a huge fan of a natural metal finish (NMF), so combining these two loves has always been appealing. This is controversial given that Tamiya have fabulous kits of the Jug available in 1:48 and 1:72 and Hasegawa has a nice 1:32 Bubbletop but I am of the firm opinion that Trumpeter’s effort is their best aircraft kit and is the best P-47 kit in any scale.

Sadly and for reasons beyond my understanding this kit has long been out of production which is a real shame. I got mine through a temporarily available Redux boxing of it with lots of interesting decal options but it is under all the fancy labelling the Trumpeter kit.

Photo: My original build of this kit - around 6 years ago!

I have built one before which staggeringly won a Gold at the Milton Keynes Model show several decades ago! It was before the emergence of SMN

but I do think it’s in the reader’s models part of the mag. It was horrible and the finish makes me want to weep even now, so I always wanted to do better and this build was my chance. I will leave you to judge if I achieved my ambition.
This review
This review is not a blow by blow account of fit part 1 to part 23 but simply an overview of the build with the focus almost entirely on the painting weathering and finish. I hope that you find it helpful.

The Kit
Whilst a fantastic kit, Trumpeter in its wisdom has, like so many of its 1:32 scale kits, packed it full of details that will never be seen again. The entire duct work and the 2-stage superchargers are all included but will never be seen again as it’s all locked inside the fuselage. The only useful purpose the ductwork offers is a support for the cockpit. Many have found that the ductwork is tedious and can impact on the fit and finesse of the fuselage join. It can indeed be a pain, unless one takes great care in trimming of all excess plastic and that it’s fitted precisely; it’s a tough ask!

The easier way is to not use any of it! The cockpit can just as easily be fitted to the side wall and with the bubble top the rear cockpit bulkhead fits beautifully into the fuselage; Job done and no fuss. The results are in the first couple of photographs and all that you see is in the kit.

Wings and fuselage
The kit comes with some wonderful wing spars onto which the wings slide effortlessly and leave no trace of a join at the fuselage. This is a real bonus that means painting and decaling can be done with the wings separate from the fuselage which makes it far easier to handle; it’s a big aircraft.
Painting

I had chosen the Kansas Tornado II as my preferred scheme and I got the superlative decals from Roy Sutherland’s Barracuda Models. They truly are sublime and I just love the scheme. It’s a beautiful natural metal finish with invasion stripes on the underside of the fuselage and wings and a blue cowling ring and canopy. The blue was/is controversial but more on this soon (see thread link above too). The Kansas Tornado II artwork on the fuselage side is fantastic and I just love this scheme.

My first task was to undercoat the entire model and component parts with ALCLAD gloss black. For me it’s the only choice and I have never once had any problem with it. Whilst it is touch dry in only 30 minutes I have always left it at least 24 hours to harden. That way any remaining moisture will have gone which if it hasn’t may cause blooming on the silver when it comes to the final finish.
Once dry though I gave the model its first coat of ALCLAD White Aluminium, then using ALCLAD Magnesium as a very faint overspray over the whole model. This tones-back the aluminium slightly and gives the model a very natural looking finish; Leave to dry thoroughly for 24 hours after which I give the entire model a coat of ALCLAD Aqua Gloss. It’s a great product and is acrylic which will be really essential later. More importantly it ensures that whatever enamel wash you chose to use after doesn’t peel away the ALCLAD. As importantly... it protects the ALCLAD against lifting when masking which on this beast was essential.

**That Cowling Ring**

Before applying the decals, it was time for some masking of the black stripe on the fin, painted with Tamiya NATO Black) the Faded Olive Drab anti-glare panel, invasion stripes and of course the blue cowling ring. I had seen this ring painted a medium blue on a 1:72 build in a paper magazine. The builder is someone I admire and went for it with a similar Tamiya Blue. It came out great and I loved the colour and ploughed on to the decal phase thinking nothing more. The Barracuda decals went on beautifully and lay down smoothly without any trace of carrier film.
It was only then that I felt that the blue of the Kansas Tornado script was probably going to be the same blue as the cowling ring. The dark blue was Insignia Blue which made sense in my head as if it were field applied then that’s what would have been around. I
couldn’t find a colour photo of the aircraft but the B&W I saw suggest to me at least that my theory may be right. So decision time.

I went with my gut feeling and stripped off the decal (I had a spare) and repainted the cowling ring in Insignia blue. I did the canopy at the same time while it was in the airbrush. To me it looks right and is what it is now.
Weathering

Before the wash I gave the fuselage and wings another coat of ALCLAD Aqua Gloss and once again left it 24 hours to dry. I used MiG washes in various dark and light tones until I was satisfied with the look. I also did some extra grubby bits aft of the cowling ring using pastels.
Once done I left the whole thing to dry for 48 hours before going on to assemble all the component parts together. It sure looked like a Jug now but was far too shiny for an operational aircraft. To tone it back I used ALCLAD Light Sheen which to me replicates that semi-matt appearance that aluminium gets over time. It’s spot on.
Finishing...
It was then a matter of sticking on the prop and canopy and that was it job done.
I hope that you liked this short build review and find it of some help. I am going onto build the Kinetic 1:24th P-47D Razorback now also in a NMF and you should see this in SMN sometime later this year.

Les V.