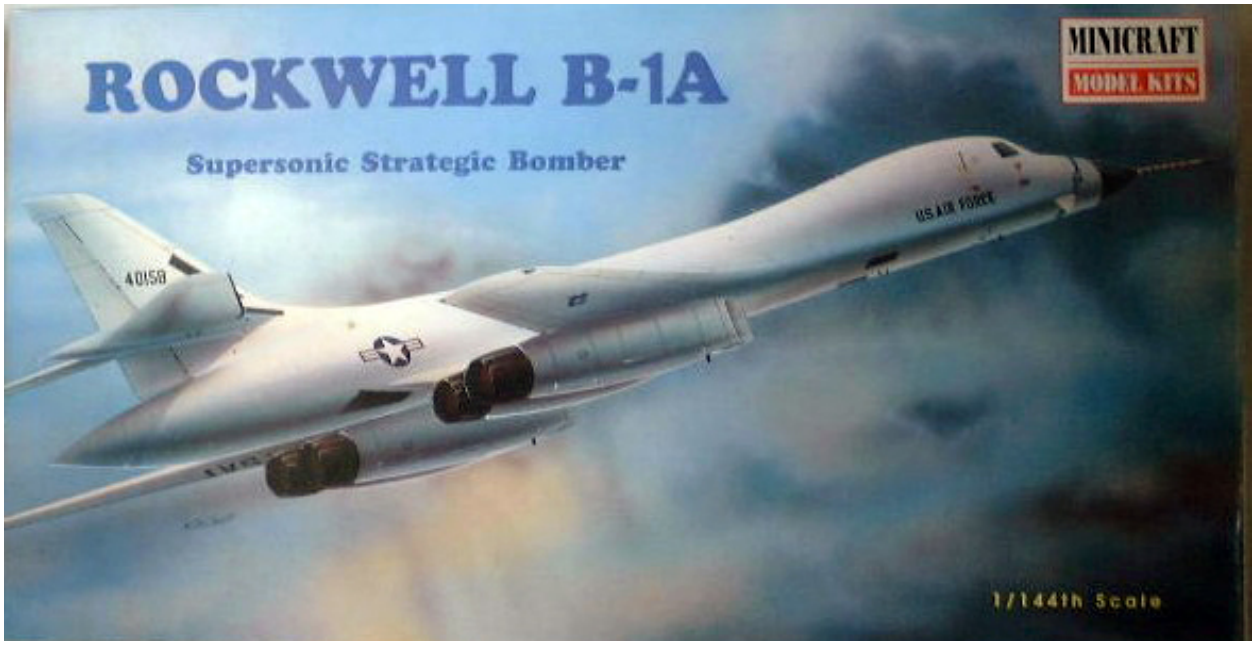
Rockwell B-1A Strategic Bomber Minicraft 1/144 #11606



By Paul Gasiorowski.

The Rockwell (now part of (Boeing)B-1 Lancer is a four-engine supersonic variable sweep wing strategic bomber (USAF). It was first envisioned in the 1960s as a supersonic bomber with Mach 2 speed, and sufficient range and payload to replace the Boeing B-52 Stratofortress. It was developed into the B-1B, primarily a low-level penetrator with long-range and Mach 1.25 speed capability at high altitude. The initial B-1A version was developed in the early 1970s, but its production was canceled, and only four prototypes were built. The need for a new platform once again surfaced in the early 1980s, and the aircraft resurfaced as the B-1B version with the focus on low-level penetration bombing. The B-1B entered service in 1986 with the USAF Strategic Air Command (SAC) as a nuclear bomber.

In the early 1990s, following the Gulf War and concurrent with the disestablishment of SAC and its reassignment to the newly formed Air Combat Command (ACC), the B-1B was converted to conventional bombing use. It first served in combat during Operation Desert Fox in 1998 and again during the NATO action in Kosovo the following year. The B-1B has supported U.S. and NATO military forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I picked this kit out of my stash because it was small and might be a quick build. The kit consisted of 2 white sprues and 1 clear sprue. I washed the white sprues in a soapy solution, rinsed and let air dry.

The build started with assembling the wings and the engine nacelles. I painted the interior of the engine nacelles white along with the engine fan blades. I assembled the

nacelles and placed them in the bottom fuselage piece along with the bulkheads. The tail assembly was built and set aside.

Weight was added behind the cockpit position, cemented and put aside for a day to dry. This was to insure it wouldn't come loose once the upper fuselage was attached. I assembled the cockpit and painted the seats and headrests. But once the cockpit was put in the fuselage and windscreen attached the only thing visible were the RED headrests.

The upper fuselage assembly was attached, along with putting the wing assemblies in place. Next the cockpit module was inserted in the fuselage assembly and the nose was attached. Some filling and sanding was necessary where the cockpit module and the fuselage met.

I then spent quite a while putting together the main and nose gear assemblies together. A nose gear assembly consisted 5 tin e pieces and each main gear assembly consisted of 9 pieces. In 144 scales they are really small and the chances of them disappearing in the assembly process was pretty good. So I hunched over the modeling table to make sure they didn't go flying off somewhere. The assemblies were then sprayed with white paint out of a can. These were going to be the last thing attached to the model. Even though the instructions indicated they were to put in place prior to painting. There was an option of putting the model on a stand that was supplied with the kit.

Prior to painting I tried to get rid of as many seams as I could. Then I wiped down the model with Testors Plastic-Prep and let it dry overnight under a cover.

I did not use a base coat, but used Model Master Acryl Gunship Grey 4752/36118. I applied several light coats to insure I had good coverage and eliminated the chance for any runs. Even though the B-1A was painted in white, I decided to paint in the color of a B-2B Bomber. I then painted the exhausts Titanium from a spray can after it was decanted, with a brush. After letting the paint dry for a few days, I covered it with a few light coats of Future.

There weren't a lot of decals to put on. This was done before finally attaching the gear assemblies. One error was made as the vertical tail sits of to one side slightly causing the left horizontal elevator to droop slightly. Surprisingly the gear assemblies went on okay, the model has to be handled gently because there was not a lot of plastic at the attachment points.

Since it was a quick build and the review didn't have to be long and drawn out. There could have been a little more work done on the seams, but the idea is to build for fun and enjoyment.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