ACADEMY 1/48 F8F-1 1/2 Bearcat

Paul Gasiorowski

The Grumman F-8F Bearcat was developed towards to the end of WWII and it was the most successful piston-engine aircraft to serve with US Navy. It was the last in the line of the single engine aircraft originating with the F-4F Wildcat. I was designed to be an interceptor aircraft to protect aircraft carriers from attack. The first Navy squadron was VF-19 to receive aircraft in May 1945, just 5 months before the end of the war.

Production of the Bearcat ended in May 1949, by this time 24 US navy squadrons were supplied with this airplane. By 1952 all the aircraft were withdrawn from service. But 200 were supplied to The French Armee de Air and the Royal Thai Air Force, which played a part in the conflict in Indo China. After the Indochina war 28 were supplied to the South Vietnam Air Force and taken out of service in 1959.

There are 11 in The United States that flightworthy and 2 on display, one at Udvar-Hazy Smithsonian and one at NAS Pensacola Aviation Museum.

The kit was supplied with 5 light gray sprues and 1 clear sprue. After washing the sprues with a light soapy detergent water and let them air dry it was ready for assembly.

Construction started with the cockpit tub assy. and engine assy. Painted the tub assy. overall interior green. I finished the tub with various colors for the knobs and switches. I

added photo etched seat belts to finish the cockpit. At the same time I finished the engine with a metallic gray and followed up with a black wash followed with a gray wash.

Next up is assembling of the wings. But I missed drilling out all the holes for mounting all the under wing stores. This precluded hanging anything from the wings. The wing assembly also included part of the wheel well area. I painted this wheel well and rear wheel well Chromate Yellow. The wing assembly went together well

After dry fitting cockpit tub a couple of times to make sure the fit were okay, the fuselage halves were glued together. Taped the halves and set it aside to dry.

The assembly of the wings to the fuselage went well with hardly any gaps to be filled. Also the rear tail was attached, along with the ailerons. While this was drying the wheels were painted, with black tires and steel paint for the hubs. Also the remaining parts of the wheel well covers were painted Yellow Chromate. These were left on the sprue to ease the painting process.

To get the canopy ready for painting I dipped it in Future. After waiting a day I used masking tape to get the canopy ready for painting. I trimmed it with a new No.11 blade. I hand painted the frame first with Interior Green. The exterior color will be painted at the same time as the rest of the aircraft. The propeller was painted Flat Black and after letting it dry for a day or two, I taped the tips and painted it Yellow. The appropriate decals were added to the propeller and set aside to dry.

The engine cowling was attached to the plane and some gaps had to be filled and sanded prior to painting. Engine exhausts were them glued in place on each side of the cowling assembly.

The model was painted with Model Master Acryl paints, Dark Sea Blue FS15042, Yellow Chromate FS13622, Interior Green FS34151 and the usual other colors, flat black, olive drab, misc. metallic colors to finish the plane. The Dark Sea Blue was applied with several light coats and one final slightly heavy coat.

After the painting was completed I drilled out the wing tip lenses with a little drill to have a place to put the green and red paint to show the colors for the wingtip lights.

The decals were for the French Air Force as seen in the Indo-China war in the early 1950's. They came off easily and settled nicely onto the surfaces of the plane. The kit was a nice build and took about 15 hours to put together over several weeks


F


F