

Hasegawa's 1/72 Beaufighter



by Dick Smith

A few days after the first flight of the Bristol Beaufort in 1938, the company's Chief Designer Leslie Frise and his colleague, Roy Faddon, were asked by the Royal Air Force to see how the bomber's airframe could be adapted into a "stop-gap" fighter.

The Air Staff and Bristol Aircraft concluded that using the Beaufort's wing, tail unit and landing gear would save considerable money and time in the development of a new, twin engine fighter that would be critically needed in the event of war. A new, slim fuselage was added to the Beaufort's components along with a single seat cockpit. A dorsal position for an observer/rear gunner topped out the design that first took to the air on July 17, 1939.

In the time that followed, improvements with Bristol's Hercules VI engine also improved and in late 1941 enough had been produced to start production on the Mk. VI fighter.

Kits of Beaufighters have been produced in various scales over the years but Hasegawa's newest venture in 1/72 scale is a pleasure to build. I built the kit as a magazine project to replicate a fighter flown by Wing Commander Charles Patrick

Green. Green's aircraft was equipped with Airborne Interception radar as indicated by the distinctive "bow and arrow" aerial on the nose and the receiver antennae on the wings. Hasegawa includes all of the parts to depict the AI radar installation.

The cockpit is somewhat sparse with only a pilot's seat, "spectacle-style" control column, and decals for the side consoles and instrument panel. The addition of some side consoles, using some styrene strip, will add a great deal to the interior. An excellent photo of a

Mk IF cockpit is shown on page nine of Squadron/Signal Publication's *"Beaufighter in Action,"* aircraft number 153. As are most British aircraft from World War II, the cockpit is painted "RAF Interior Green." The pilot's seat is flat black. Lap and shoulder belts can be made from thin strips of paper and then painted dark gray.



After constructing and painting the observer's position and cockpit, set the fuselage parts aside to dry. Go out of sequence of the instructions and assemble the wings without the engines. Attach the completed wings by cementing them through the slots on the inside of the fuselage. The fit is excellent and no filler and little sanding will be needed if you are

careful with the cement.

Attach the horizontal stabilizers making sure the correct dihedral is maintained. With the wings and tail surfaces complete, carefully fit the fuselage parts together and cement securely. If all is lined up correctly, you'll have an excellent joint and only a quick swipe with wet-and-dry grit will be required.

The Bristol Hercules engines are built up and painted with Model Master “stainless steel.” A dry brushing of black brings out the details. Assemble the cowlings and paint the inside flat black. Complete the power plant construction by cementing them to the wings.

Wing Commander “Paddy” Green served in Sicily and southern Italy in 1943. His aircraft was painted in the Mediterranean color scheme. The underside is “azure” from AeroMaster, #9116. The topside is a “soft camouflage” pattern of “Midstone” from AeroMaster, #9115, and dark earth, #71, from Gunze Sangyo. The AeroMaster paints are petroleum based and should be used with adequate ventilation. I used a Paasche H-1 airbrush to create the “soft-edge” lines of the camouflage pattern.



Assemble the intricate landing gear and paint it dull silver to simulate weathered bare metal. A dry brushing with black will pop out the details. The tires are Gunze Sangyo’s “tire black.” The propellers are painted Model Master, “aircraft interior black,” FS-37031. It appears from

photos that Green’s aircraft props did not have yellow tips. The large standard spinners had

been removed and smaller hubs had replaced them probably for cooling purposes in the very warm climate. The hubs appear to be a gloss red.



Prepare the model surface for decals by spraying a clear gloss coat overall. Testor’s Glosscoat or Future Acrylic floor wax can be used. The decals from the kit provide the British roundels and fin flash markings for Green’s aircraft. The dark red “F” on the fuselage came from a Sky

Models decal sheet for a Halifax bomber, #72-025. The black serial numbers came from various other sheets. Seal the decals by spraying the model overall with Testor's Dullcoat.

Finish your model by attaching the AI aerials, the cockpit and observer's clear parts, and the landing light and wing marker lights with white glue. Since there is little sanding a filling when building this kit, you should be able to complete the model in a weekend.

