

F-4J Phantom II Hasegawa /48th Scale



By Dick Smith

The McDonnell Douglas (now Boeing) F-4J was an advanced version of the United States Navy's earlier fighter-bomber, the F-4B. The "J" model was recognizable by the lack of the "infra-red" scanner under the radome, wider tread on the main wheels and longer afterburner cans.

Virtually all of the Phantom II Navy and Air Force versions have been issued in both 1/72nd and 1/48th scale kits. There are also several marketed in the huge 1/32nd scale; however, our F-4J is the 1/48th scale Hasegawa offering.

Construction starts with the cockpit. Early issues of this kit were produced with the Air Force version of the "back seat." (The manufacturer later corrected the error and provided parts for Navy aircraft.) The cockpit is painted overall semi-gloss gull gray (FS-26440). The F-4's instrument panels were light gray with black instrument case frames.

The Martin Baker Mk.7 ejection seats provided in the kit are poorly represented and lack any seat harness detail found on Phantoms. It is recommended that they be replaced with ones from True Details, #48405. The seat frames are flat black, (FS-37031), cushions dark green (FS-34079) or olive drab (FS-34087) and seat belts brushed with light gray. The ejection seat face curtain pull handles are yellow with black stripes. A few dots of red, yellow and silver finishes the cockpit details.

Insert the completed cockpit assembly into one of the fuselage sides. Be sure to add several ounces of weight into the nose portion of the fuselage before closing

the parts. The jet intakes are assembled next and glued to the fuselage. Cement the wings together and carefully position them into the bottom of the fuselage. The complicated junction of the jet intakes and the wing-to-fuselage joint creates a gap on the underside of the model that will require filling and sanding.



The air-to-air AIM-9D Sidewinder missile launching pylons are assembled and glued to the wing undersides. Assemble and paint gloss white the three underwing tanks, the four Sidewinders and the quartet of AIM-7E Sparrow missiles. The instruction sheet details the decaling and markings for the F-4's armament.

Check over the model's basic construction and apply a coat of a gray primer to highlight any flaws that should be corrected before painting. During the Vietnam War, Navy Phantoms wore very colorful squadron schemes over their base coats of light gull gray on the topside and gloss white on the undersides and control surfaces.

The kit provides two schemes; a Navy aircraft from VF-84's "Jolly Rogers" off the U.S.S. Franklin D. Roosevelt and a Marine aircraft from VMFA-451's "Warlords," from the U.S.S. Forrestal. While these are attractive markings, I selected an aircraft from VF-92's "Silver Kings," that served on the U.S.S. Constellation in the mid-70s. Those markings can be found on AeroMaster decal sheet #48-502.

The Phantom's wide vertical tail provides a particularly appropriate pallet for the squadron's insignia yellow (FS-33538) background, black fin flash and distinctive

“spade” emblem. The 600-gallon centerline tank is also tipped in yellow, the radome is off-white and the cockpit exterior is trimmed in black

When the decaling is complete, set the aircraft aside and paint the inner sections of the horizontal stabilizers and the area around the jet nozzles with “titanium.” Tamiya’s “smoke” can be lightly sprayed around the afterburner cans to replicate the exhaust residue that gave rise to one of the F-4’s nicknames, “smoker.”



On the underside of the fuselage, paint the landing gear legs, doors and speed brakes white. Each door is finished off by trimming the edges in red. The inside of the speed brakes are also painted red. Several tiny door actuators should be painted and attached at this time. An interesting touch can be added to the front of the nose gear door by applying “railroad jewel lenses” from M.V. Products to duplicate the approach lights and the larger, single landing-taxi light.

Mask and paint the exterior of the canopy sections gloss black. The interior of F-4 canopies had rear view mirrors and framing that are not provided in the kit.

The frames and mirrors are produced in etched brass from Airwaves (AC 48-14) and are then painted black and attached with white glue.

To complete the model, spray the tires black and attach the remaining landing gear parts. The Sidewinders and Sparrows are decaled with various color bands and stenciling and attached to their respective launchers. Glue the canopies into the open position and your model of the Navy’s Vietnam War workhorse is ready for display.



