

Hasegawa's Macchi 202 "Folgore"

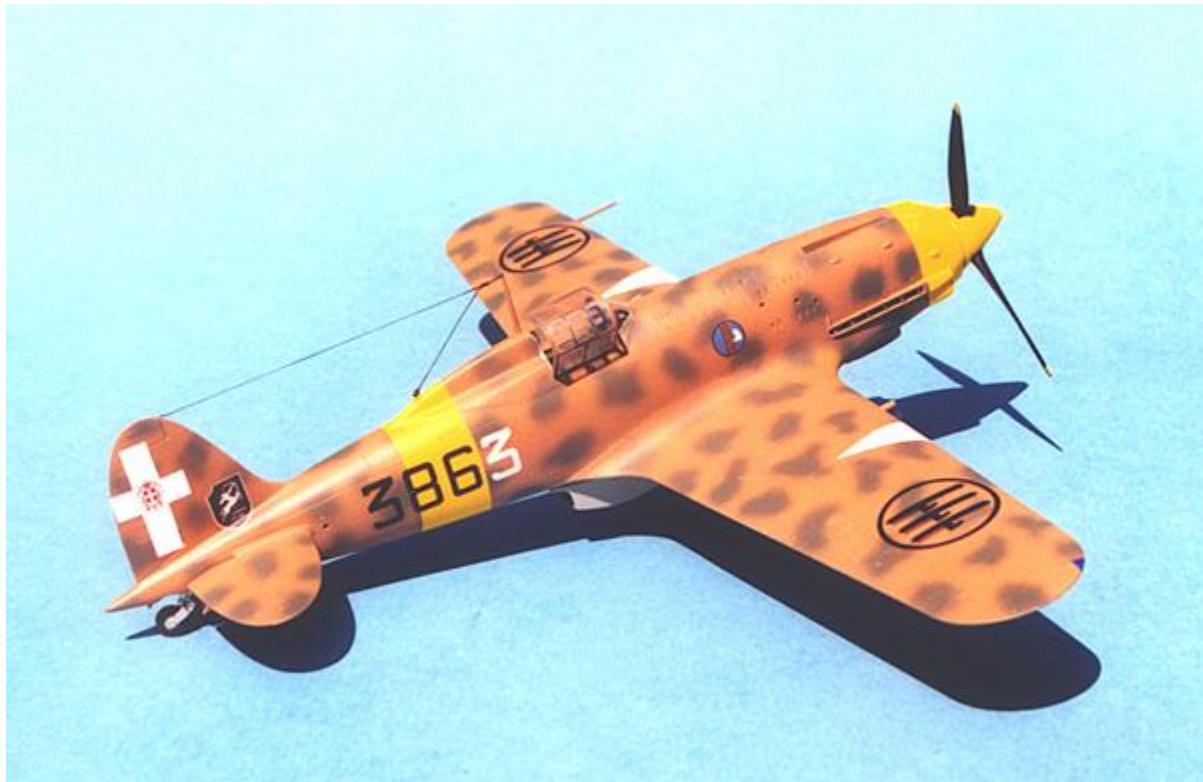


by Dick Smith

There is a common misconception that World War II Italian fighter aircraft were poorly designed and flown by pilots that were inexperienced and ill trained. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In 1936, the Regia Aeronautica (Italian Air Force) asked Italy's aircraft manufacturers to design a single seat fighter. The winner of the competition, the Fiat G-50, was declared winner before all other competitors had been evaluated. The AerMacchi entrant in the competition, the C-200, was never considered as it was still in the final stage of construction. Discouraged, but not beaten, AerMacchi's technical manager, Mario Castoldi, fired off a letter to the Italian Air Ministry. History doesn't record what he said in his letter but shortly thereafter the C-200 "Saetta" went into production. The radial engine chosen for Castoldi's monoplane suffered from a serious lack of power. The C-200 did fairly well in early combat against other fighters with radial engines but was no match for the inline; liquid cooled Spitfires, Hurricanes, and Messerschmidts.

By 1940, with Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini now Axis partners, AerMacchi was able to import from Germany the Daimler-Benz 601 liquid cooled, inline engine for its new fighter, the Macchi 202 "Folgore." A year later, Castoldi's "Folgore" finally realized its potential as a first class fighter. A total of 1,150 were built in seven different versions, using the Daimler Benz and the license built Alfa Romeo RA100RC41 engines.



Several years ago, Hasegawa released the Macchi 202 in 1/48th scale that clearly beat all of the other available kits out of competition. The kit features a fully detailed cockpit with more than a dozen parts. If you're not satisfied with the detail from Hasegawa, True Details resin interior #48454 is available at a reasonable price.

I started construction by painting the cockpit Model Master "light green" (FS-34227). Photos show the seat in an unpainted aluminum. I made seat belts from strips of typing paper and Waldron buckles. There is a convincing instrument panel decal that comes in four sections.

The completed cockpit fits well into the fuselage sides. Two parts, which cover the top and bottom portion of the fuselage at the engine, will need some careful fitting. These parts contain engraved detail around the 12.7mm cannon troughs on the top and the oil cooler intake on the bottom. I drilled out the cannon positions and used tubing to replicate the barrels of the guns. The landing gear bays are painted the same green color as the cockpit. The wells are nicely detailed with all of the gear and door actuators provided in the kit. The propeller assembly follows with a coat of Model Master "interior black" for the blades. The tips are Gunze Sangyo gloss yellow. Macchi 202's flew in a number of different color schemes depending on where they were stationed. The kit

provided decals are quite good but I chose to use AeroMaster's sheet 48-189. I picked a Folgore that served on the Russian front in 1942. The upper surface is painted overall Nocciola Chiaro 4 from Polly Scale (FS-30266). When that color is dry, I painted splotches of Oliva Scuro 2, also from Polly Scale, (FS-34052) in an irregular spray pattern. The underside Grigio Azzurro Chairo(FS-36307). Poly Scale features a full line of colors for all of the Macchi 202 schemes.



The camouflage pattern wraps around the fuselage, forward portion of the wings and horizontal tail surfaces. The "Russian theater" yellow nose, spinner, wing tips, and fuselage markings are masked off and sprayed with Gunze Sangyo yellow (FS-13538). I found this color a little too "intense." If I were to paint these markings again, I would use Model Master RLM 04 "gelb." This is a slightly lighter yellow and appears somewhat faded. There are two-mid span white triangles painted on the top and bottom of the wing. These were masked and painted with Gunze Sangyo gloss white. While the colors were drying, I masked the windscreen and canopy with EZ Mask set #33. With the colors dry, I sprayed on a couple of light coats of Testors Glosscoat to give the decals a smooth surface to adhere. The decal sheet is complete with all of the markings needed for aircraft 3 of the 356 Squadriglia, 21 Gruppo, 51 Stormo. These decals are very thin and conform to the surfaces with just a small amount of decal setting liquid. The white crosses on the tail are slightly transparent when placed over the dark green and tan scheme.



While the decals were drying, I painted the wheels with Gunze Sangyo "tire black."

The final step was to stretch a section of plastic sprue and attach it to the tip of the vertical tail with a drop of white glue. When was dry, I loosely attached the other end to the radio mast just behind the cockpit. This "thread" does not have to be stretched tight at this point. When both points are completely dry, take a smoldering match and hold it close to the sprue until it snaps into place. coat of Testors Dullcoat finishes construction.

Hasegawa's "Folgore" (Lightning) is a great improvement over the earlier 1/48th scale Tauro kit. The Tauro offering has more detailing parts but the overall fit is poor and requires a lot of filling and sanding.

At this point, I have built three Macchi 202's, and one Macchi 205 "Veltro" (Greyhound) all in different camouflage schemes using various AeroMaster sheets. Both kits are recommended highly and will provide many hours of enjoyable modeling.

