

A-1H Skyraider Mig Killer – Tamiya 1/48th Scale



Dick Smith

The 1/48th scale Douglas Skyraider by Tamiya is the only kit of the “Able Dog 6” that includes the reported markings for both of the A-1H “MiG killers” from the early days of the Vietnam War.

Construction starts with the painting of the cockpit dark gull gray, FS-36231, and then applying the decals to the side consoles and instrument panel. Cement the completed cockpit into one side of the fuselage, slip the tail wheel well into position and glue the sides of the airframe together.

Paint the cylinders of Wright R-3350 radial engine “steel.” A dry brushing with black will bring out the cylinder cooling fin details. Push the engine into the forward portion of the cowling and attach either the open or closed cowl flaps.

Spray the exhaust pipes “rust” and set them aside until the model is completely painted. The main gear doors are attached to pieces that make up the boxing of the main wheel wells. These parts are snapped into the bottom of the lower wing and maneuvered into place from the inside. The well parts are then cemented into position along with the top sections of the wings.

Attach the wings to the underside of the fuselage and horizontal stabilizers into their respective slots at the tail. A-1H and A-1J (AD-6 and AD-7) versions of the Skyraider had three large airbrakes that opened on the sides and bottom of the fuselage. These are molded as separate parts but were seldom used on the real aircraft. I cemented mine in the closed position.

Skyraiders were looked upon as “dump trucks” when it came to carrying an impressive array of bombs, rockets and gun pods. At this point that you must decide what amount of ordnance your model will be armed and then attach the underwing racks.



The basic construction of the model is now complete and ready for a light coating of primer which will highlight any open seams or flaws in your work. Vietnam era U.S. Navy Skyraiders had white, FS-17925, undersides, elevators and ailerons. The rest of the aircraft was painted light gull gray, FS-36440. A flat black anti-glare panel in front of the cockpit finished off the color scheme.

This model is a replica of an A-1H from the USS Intrepid on patrol off the coast Vietnam in the fall of 1966. Intrepid's Skyraider that “bagged the MiG” was flown by Lieut. Commander H.G. Zimmerman on September 10, 1966 and had the serial number, 37496. However, the markings in the kit depict an aircraft from VA-176 with the serial number, 37543. That aircraft was flown by Lieut. j.g. W. T. Patton and depicts an A-1H as it appeared a month later. Curiously, it carries the MiG-17 “kill” marking just below the cockpit on the port side. Whether it is the same aircraft that was flown by Commander Zimmerman is questionable.

A color drawing of the aircraft shown with the kit markings is found on page 25 of the Squadron Signal publication *USN Aircraft Carrier Air Units, Volume. 3* by Duane Kasulka.

With the painting complete, spray a coat of Testor's glosscoat or Johnson's Future acrylic floor polish over the model to give the decals a smooth bed to adhere. The kit decals are a bit thick and will take extra time to release in water. Once free from their backing sheet, they must be handled carefully and positioned with a small paint brush. The "Thunderbolts" distinctive "angry bee," sweeping down off the vertical stabilizer, is particularly difficult to place.



After all of the markings are applied, finish the model by cementing the landing gear, wheels and the 300-gallon fuel tank into place on the underside. The propeller blades are painted flat black, FS-37038, with white, red, white stripes on the front and yellow tips, FS-13538, on the backside.

Paint and attach the canopy and the Skyraider "MiG killer" is ready for display.



