Revell F-89C Scorpion
1/48th Scale, Kit # 4825

By Norris Graser

This model was originally tooled in 1989 along with the F-89D/J, which was released by Revell in 1990. This version has never been released, but since the kit does date back to 1989, it should be no surprise that it features raised panel lines.

I did much of the original photography for Revell on this project in 1988 at the Pima Air Museum in Tucson, Arizona. As I sat on a forklift sitting over the real aircraft I remember thinking how big the Scorpion was. After finishing the model, you will agree!

F-89Bs' and the first 40 or so F-89Cs' had an external counter balance system on the horizontals. These are easily seen as they form several horn shaped loops on the top and bottom those surfaces. After an internal fix was implemented for the F-89C, many F-89Bs' were also retrofitted. As this was the only major external difference, you can build most F-89B or C options that may crop up on after market decals, just check your references!

The cockpit consists of some 13 pieces including 2 different ejection seats. When assembling it, you will note the aft seat is set a little off to the starboard side, which is, in fact, correct. I left the two ejection seats and the rear main instrument panel off until I had completed the painting, as they would just gather overspray.

The fuselage is not in halves; more like thirds would be a better way of describing them with two side pieces and one large underside piece. As this same arrangement was popular with the A-6E and SU-25 designed during the same time frame, I was a little apprehensive as those two kits suffer from fit problems on the underside. Happy to report that this is not the case with the F-89C as the piece fits well and only needs a little sanding to blend in. I didn't care much for the cannon barrels molded on the nose of the aircraft. You may want to drill them out and replace them with brass tubing.

As my kit was for Revell box art, I used the rockets supplied for use under either wing. If I were building the kit for myself though, I probably would have eliminated the launch rails and tossed the rockets. Doug Barbier had mentioned to me that operational use was suspect. So I went looking……. sure enough, I could not find a single photo of an F-89C with rockets or even the launch rails attached except on test aircraft. I found the rockets a little on the thick side and if you do use them, you will have to thin the fins some.

Care should be taken around the wing roots. The port wing fits perfectly to the wing root on the topside but underneath you will find the root is a little too fat and needs to be

sanded down to blend with the wing. I did this before attaching the wing. The starboard wing fit is a little less accurate topside. I suspect that the edge that butts against the wing root is not a perfect straight edge as the leading edge and aft edge touch but there is a small quarter inch section at mid point that does not quite touch. Carefully sand the edges for better fit. Underneath you will find a slight gap at the root that will require filling. Fortunately there are no real serious problems with the wings and those that are apparent are easily corrected. The worst being out of view, underneath the aircraft.

Wing tip pods are of an earlier type and are therefore finless. If you use the kit markings for the 74th FIS, you will have to scratch them from plastic card. The wing tanks pose the biggest problem with this model, as the fit is not very good. I sanded the wing edges and the tanks for best fit where they join, but I still had to fill the resulting gap on both the top and underside. Super glue made the job go quickly and after test painting, I was satisfied & moved along to the landing gear. If you do have problems smoothing the tank to wing joint, I suggest that you select an aircraft scheme which includes a color and not a natural metal finish. Most colorful schemes feature that part of the wing painted with black or Arctic Red, so you probably won't have to be overly careful about how well the parts blend.

The main landing gear posses no major problems other then the inner gear doors, which have hinges molded on them for posing in the open position. I was able to find just two photos' showing them in the down position when the aircraft was at rest. They belong up and though cutting the hinges off is not a problem, you will find the doors are slightly undersized. To fix this, center them with even spacing all around and glue to place. A little white glue will even out the width enough to be barely noticeable.

Instructions indicate putting the two side walls (with open doors attached) in place into the nose wheel well before adding the multi piece gear. This cannot be done, add the assembled gear first, then the side walls. Use slow set glue like MEK and you will have no problem with this step. By the way, it is a shame that the really busy and intricate looking detail on the nose gear assembly is completely hidden in the wheel well as not much more then the wheels are exposed when placed properly.

The windscreen requires minimal attention to seat properly and if you choose to show the canopy in the closed position, the fit against the windscreen is very good.

I painted most of the aircraft after it was assembled taking care to put tissue in the cockpit and masking the windscreen from overspray. I used SNJ spray aluminum and after sanding with 6000 and 12000 sanding cloth, I selected a few panels & hit them up with Gunze Aluminum and Stainless. The exhaust section was sprayed with Model Master Burnt Metal and Exhaust.

I used Future Floor acrylic over panels that would be decaled. After decaling, I brushed another coat then lightly airbrushed metallic paint over much of the Future covered areas to eliminate the monotone effect created by using a clear coat.

At this point all that was left to do was to add a few odds & ends, attach the ejection seats and rear instrument panel and canopy. Last item on my agenda was to attach the vertical tail tip and horizontal stabilizers as I left them off for easier painting and decaling on the tail unit. The tail tip has a tab that sandwiches the horizontal plane and the fit is perfect.

Markings in the kit are for two aircraft, one a 57FIS machine (which is the scheme I was requested to use by Revell) and another from then 74th FIS complete with Arctic Red wing and tail, by far the more attractive of the two schemes. There will be at least two aftemarket decals from AeroMaster as I am researching them at this time.

This model builds quickly, the worst fit found where the wingtips and wing tip tanks meet. If you are careful around the wing roots, you will have it made. If you are not afraid to try using a little metal paint, go for it! I enjoyed building it and if I can ever get past the dozen or so Thunderbolts I am working on, I will do another

References:
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