

Tamiya 1/48 Me-109E-4/7



By Mike Hanlon

Whenever I am building a model, my mind invariably wanders to other, more alluring kits that I'd rather be building. Rarely do these fantasies become reality, but occasionally one does. After wrestling with Hasegawa's P-40 E, I decided to build a model I been thinking about for a long time. Tamiya's 109E kits are relatively simple good fitting kits with few vices. Comparisons between this kit and Hasegawa's 109E are often made. Having previously built both kits I prefer Tamiya's, but if you like Hasegawa's kit better, go for it, each kit has advantages and disadvantages.

The 109 has a cramped cockpit, Tamiya's kit provides all of the basic interior bits. I replaced the seat with a resin seat from Ultracast. In order to get it to fit on the seat frame, I had to file grooves into the bottom of the resin seat. With the advent of Eduard color photo-etched belts, I would go with the kit seat and P/E belts next time. The interior can be painted in RLM 02 or 66. The changeover was made during the -4 production run.

Construction of the kit is quick with only one problem area. There are sink marks on the upper wings near the flaps. Super glue or Mr. Surfacer will take care of

them easily, but it is a surprise on a Tamiya kit. The remaining construction is typically trouble free.

I wanted to be build a bomb-toting -7B from 8.ZG 1 which served in Russia in the summer of 1942. One problem I failed to foresee, the Tamiya kit has the rack for the drop tank but does not have a bomb rack or a bomb. Hasegawa makes a WWII German weapons set that includes the proper rack and a 250-kilogram bomb. There is a word of warning here; while giving you a variety of bombs and racks, but only one of each type. So my bomb and ETC 250 rack cost \$17.00!



One reason I like this aircraft is the unique markings. The plane was camouflaged in RLM 71 and RLM 02 over RLM 76. The Eastern front theater marking was in RLM 04 (yellow). The fuselage sides were solid RLM 02 with RLM 71 mottling. Bomber style codes were used as ZG 1 was a Zerstorer group which also flew the Me-110 and later the ME-410. All the paints were from Gunze Sangyo. The decals come from Aeromaster sheet 48-248 Marauding Emil's Pt. III, which is long out of production. When I applied the decals I found that they took an unusually long time (over five minutes) to release from the backing paper. Unfortunately, I discovered this when trying to apply the side codes and balkenkreuze as a single piece. Disaster struck and the decal broke into many pieces. Fortunately, I was able to find another sheet from an E-Bay seller. (Thanks Juan.) The second sheet was just as stubborn as the first, but I was ready for it this time. I carefully applied each letter individually and had no further problems

The only part of the kit I am not fond of is the propeller. Ultracast makes a replacement and I may yet change it.

Overall the kit is simple, pleasant to construct and has a load of camouflage possibilities ranging from the Battle of Britain to North Africa and Russia.



