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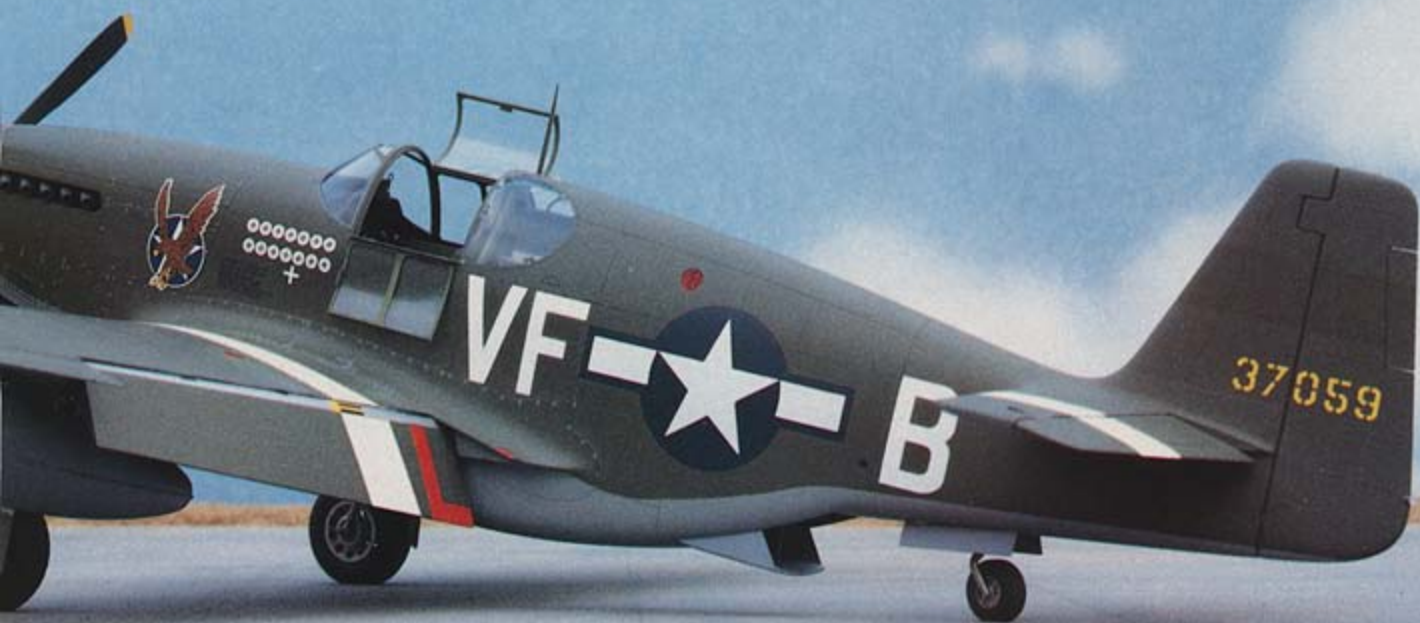
AIR SUPERIORITY IN EUROPE

KING OF THE STRAFERS

James Goodson's first P-51B

Converting and superdetailing Hasegawa's
1/32 scale bubbletop Mustang





Real or model? Master modeler Paul Budzik performed miracles on this "razorback" P-51B Mustang converted from Hasegawa's 1/32 scale bubbletop "D." In addition to the conversion work, Paul added loads of scratchbuilt details, and dropped the flaps and elevators, too.

The business end of Paul's Mustang shows off James Goodson's personal emblem and impressive scoreboard.

BY PAUL BUDZIK

WHEN I STARTED gathering reference material for my next project, I looked for an interesting camouflaged 4th Fighter Group P-51B Mustang. I've always admired James Goodson, and after looking over my references, I figured that Goodson must have flown a camouflaged P-51B between his time in a razorback P-47D and his well-known natural-metal P-51B.

Goodson's son Jamie helped me with more references and a valuable lead: Goodson's crew chief, Bob Gilbert, who might have a

photograph of an earlier B model in camouflage. Sure enough, several weeks later Gilbert sent a photograph of Goodson's first P-51B, serial No. 43-7059. Fantastic!

Starting point. There are no perfect kits, but I determined that trying to improve Revell's old 1/32 scale P-51B would be more trouble than converting Hasegawa's P-51D bubbletop. The conversion involved the canopy, razorback, and wings, but I also improved detail overall with plenty of scratchbuilt parts.

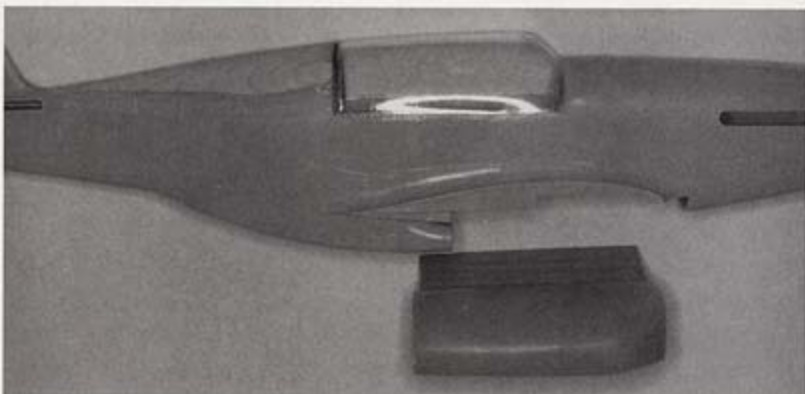
I can't give you a blow-by-blow account of all the improvements to this model, but you may find some of the techniques shown here helpful on your next project.



1. The Hasegawa kit fuselage halves were warped because of the separate cowl panels and the opening for the wing. Paul inserted .032" wire on the nose center line to serve as a sight to align the fuselage with the vertical fin.



2. With the aid of a template made from a 1/32 scale drawing, Paul fashioned a pattern over which he vacuum formed several clear acrylic canopies.



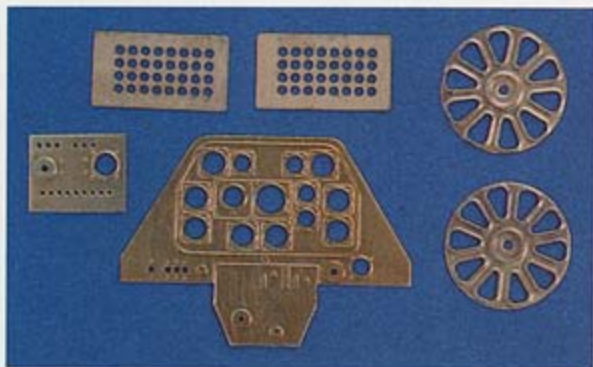
3. After the canopy was cemented in place, the rest of the spine was carved from wood, filled, and faired in. Paul uses a homemade filler of super glue and dental resin powder. The clear canopy was then removed and work started on the cockpit.



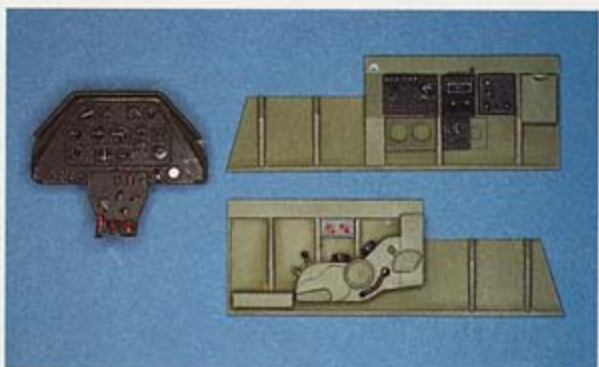
4. The first step in detailing the interior was adding new cockpit formers and stringers made of strip styrene.



5. The radio compartment bulkhead and the radio shelf were made from sheet styrene. Later, a radio was milled from a chunk of acrylic.



6. Paul produced his own photoetched brass parts. Here are the instrument panel, radio control panel, breather grilles, and main wheel faces.



7. The Mustang's finished multilayer instrument panel is at left. The right (top) and left cockpit interior panels were made from styrene and milled acrylic shapes.



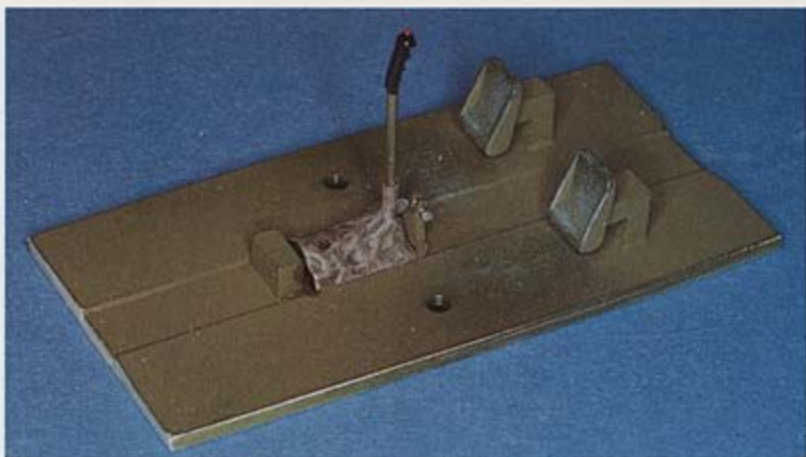
8. The finished panels were inserted into the cockpit through the opening in the bottom of the fuselage. Yet to come are the cockpit floor, seat, and control stick.



9. Next Paul reinstalled the clear canopy, faired it in, and cut away the open portions.



10. The scratchbuilt seat was made from sheet styrene with surgical-tape seat belts and Waldron Products' photoetched hardware.



11. The cockpit floor and rudder pedals were made from sheet styrene, while the blocks that hold the pedals and the control-stick boot were carved from acrylic.



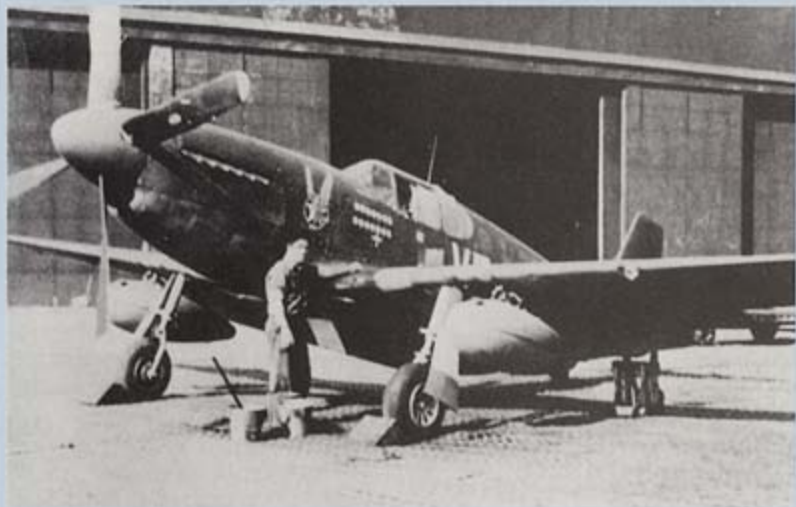
12. Paul replaced the radiator outlet doors with sheet styrene.



13. Modifications to the nose included lining the shallow chin scoop with sheet styrene and replacing the shrouded exhaust stacks with new ones machined from styrene and tipped with turned brass. Paul cut away the kit spinner mount and inserted a new one made of acrylic. A hole drilled in its center holds a brass tube attached to the spinner. Note the photoetched breather grille.



Goodson (right) points out his latest victory symbol to Ralph "Kid" Hofer. This aircraft was Goodson's later P-51B that featured a natural-metal finish and the "Malcolm" hood canopy. Photo courtesy Roger Freeman and Jamie Goodson.



The only known photo of Goodson's camouflaged P-51B. Photo courtesy Bob Gilbert.

JAMES GOODSON, KING OF THE STRAFERS

Combining his skill at low-level flying with a penchant for destroying enemy aircraft, James Goodson earned the title "King of the Strafers." He was tough in dogfighting as well, ending the war with 15 victories in the air and 15 destroyed strafing.

Although an American, "Goody" first enlisted with Royal Canadian Air Force and was posted to an RAF squadron flying Hurricanes and Spitfires from England. He was transferred to 133 Squadron, one of the Eagle squadrons of American volunteers. The American fliers were absorbed into the USAAF as the 336th Fighter Squadron, 4th Fighter Group, in September 1942.

Goody proved to be an excellent leader and rose to the rank of major, commanding the 336th Squadron. At war's end his decorations included a Presidential Unit Citation, the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross with eight clusters, the Air Medal with 20 clusters, and the Purple Heart.

After the war, Goodson received his MBA from Harvard University. Fluent in four languages, he rose to head both Goodyear and Hoover in Europe. Later he accepted a position as vice president and group executive at ITT.

Born in New York City, James Goodson resides in Duxbury, Massachusetts.

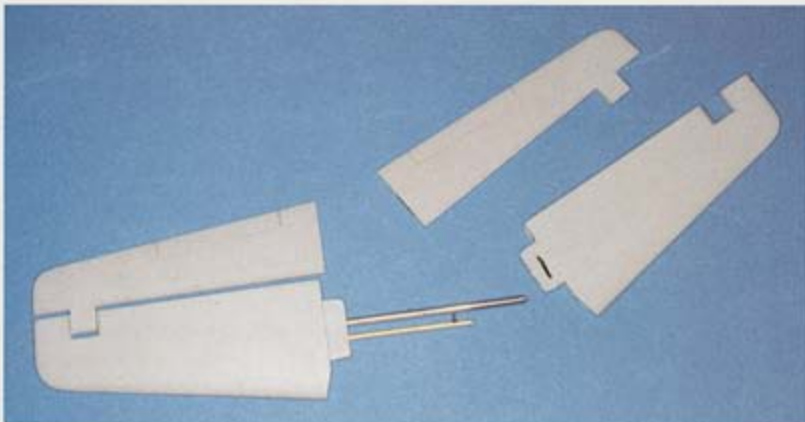
AIR SUPERIORITY IN EUROPE – THE FAMOUS 4TH FIGHTER GROUP

The 4th Fighter Group was formed from the three Eagle Squadrons of the Royal Air Force. As such, it automatically became the oldest unit in the new Eighth Air Force and the only group to be activated in a combat zone. The 4th had the highest score of combined air and ground victories of any Eighth Air Force unit, was the first unit over Paris, the first to penetrate German air space, and the first over Berlin.

As P-47s arrived in England the 4th traded its beloved

Spitfires. Then, in February 1944, the 4th was one of the first groups to receive P-51s.

Under the leadership of Col. Don Blakeslee, the 4th enjoyed its greatest successes. Such pilots as Beeson, Gentile, Glover, Godfrey, Goodson, Hively, Hofer, McKennon, Millikan, Norley, and many more became high-scoring aces. Between March 5 and April 24, 1944, the 4th Fighter Group destroyed 189 German planes in the air and 134 on the ground.



14. Paul separated the elevators from the horizontal stabilizers, refined the hinge lines, and reinserted them with a slight nose-down deflection. To align the stabilizers, he inserted wire pins in the mounts.



15. Paul had to reduce the leading edge fillets to represent the B model's wing. You can see the stubs of the D model molded on the kit fuselage. These were also cut back and smoothed out.



16. Dropping the flaps on the model meant rebuilding the exposed surfaces of the wings, flaps, and fuselage.



17. A silicone rubber mold was made to cast clear polyester-resin copies of a scratchbuilt acrylic main gear tire.



18. After milling out the center of the tire castings, Paul inserted scratchbuilt wheels made of brass castings and photoetched spokes.



19. Each scratchbuilt main gear strut fits into a brass tube embedded in the wing. Note that the tube had projected through the top of the wing and has been filled and sanded smooth. You can see the refined machine gun ports; the B model had only four guns. Paul filled the outboard opening on each wing along with its associated shell ejection port underneath the wing.

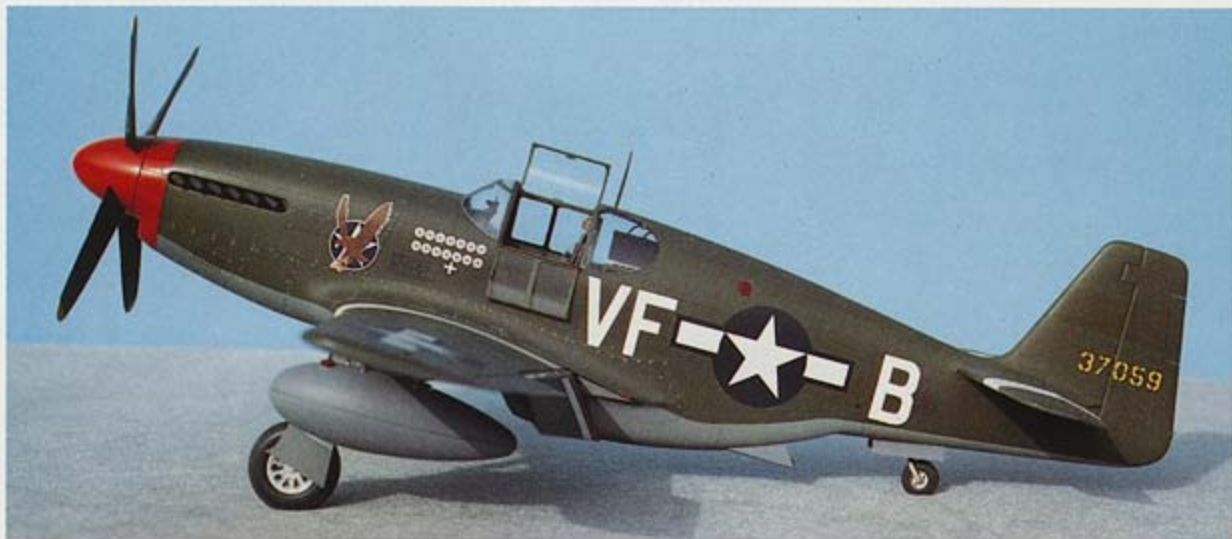


20. Here's the finished strut and wheel; each strut was machined from brass rod. Note the drop tank plumbing made from solder and wire.



21. A peek into the finished cockpit makes you feel that you're looking at the real thing. Most of the markings were painted on, but Goodson's diving eagle emblem came from an old IPMS/USA decal sheet – it was meant for a 1/48 scale P-47D razorback, but it fits the 1/32 scale Mustang, too.

22. Paul primed his model with lacquer, adding a second coat on certain panels to produce a slightly raised effect. He used Floquil paints for the color coats, starting with white for the ID bands, red for the spinner, and homebrew mixes for Neutral Gray and Olive Drab. Note the freshly overpainted ID band on the fin.



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Postscript

While not nearly as involved as a scratch built effort, this model proved to be one of the most personally rewarding and satisfying projects to date. In the process of construction, I was able to bring to light a small bit of history that had not yet been published. Also, the model has been used on the cover of the latest reprint of Colonel Goodson's book "Tumult in the Clouds." The photo below also appears on the [4th Fighter Group](#) site on [James Goodson's page](#) under "Pictures Donated by James Goodson". It is simply labeled as "A brand new P-51B fresh out of the paint shop." In both cases the photos have not been labeled as a model and I am quite happy that my small representation has been used to illustrate history.

I have had the privilege of meeting Colonel Goodson and I believe that his book, "Tumult in the Clouds," is one of the best depictions of the events and personal emotions of that time in which men bound together in a brotherhood for a common cause.

