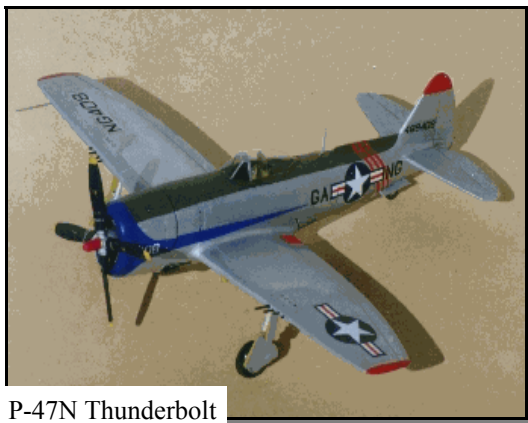


Plastic model making for beginners



P-47N Thunderbolt

You are about to build your first plastic model, whether it be a modern fighter aircraft or an old sailing ship, there are ways you can make a model that will give you more satisfaction, and have your friends and family think you have been doing it for years. Not every model comes out to perfection each time, but the following tips will give you an insight into the skills required.

Choosing a Kit

For your first kit choose a model that is not too complicated. Many manufacturers suggest Skill Levels on their boxes, these will give you a guide to enable you to make your selection. Also ask your Hobby Shop assistant, as he will be able to advise you also. For example a biplane model is a more difficult model than a monoplane.

Other Supplies

When choosing a kit, it is best to get the rest of your supplies at the same time. Items like

Polystyrene Cement (glue), paints and brushes will be needed at all points of construction of your model.

Paint Selection

Many manufacturers provide a list of paint colour numbers on the box to assist you with your selection of colours. Many of these paints are colour coded to match the actual colour on the real thing. Generally there are two types of paint to choose from, enamel and acrylic. Enamel is an oil based paint, whereas acrylic is water based. Each type has its virtues and disadvantages, discuss this with an experienced modeller or your Hobby Shop assistant.

Glue types

Polystyrene Cement comes in various forms and works by melting the plastic to allow the parts to weld together. It is important to ensure you do not use excessive glue as this can lead to "model meltdown" and a disappointing result. The types of cement available includes tube cement and liquid cement.

The liquid cement is available in various forms for application. Discuss this with your Hobby Shop assistant.

Cleanliness

Before starting to build your model, it is a good idea to wash the parts in a bowl (not the sink!!!) of luke warm water with a drop of washing up detergent to remove any oil from the moulding process. This will allow the paint to adhere to the plastic better. After this rinse the parts in clean water then allow to air dry. Touch the parts with your hands after this as little as possible as oil from your hands may get on the model parts.

You will require some tools

To build your model you will find some simple tools handy. You will find as you pursue your new hobby you will accumulate a variety of special tools some of which you will design and make yourself.

I recommend you start with the following:

- 1 - No.1 modelling knife and some spare blades (these are surgically sharpened, treat them with respect).
- 2 - A selection of wet and dry paper - say 360, 800 and 1200 grit (for sanding)
- 3 - an emory board
- 4 - some rubber bands - various sizes
- 5 - some wooden clothes pegs - with springs in them.
- 6 - some dressmaking pins
- 7 - a work board - 19mm MDF is good (It is a good idea to cover this with stick-on vinyl sheet).
- 8 - a container to hold your tools, "Tool Box"
- 9 - a roll of "Magic Tape", this has a low stick glue and is used to mask when painting.
- 10- a pair of tweezers for placing small parts and decals on your model.

**Put "SAFETY FIRST" when modelling!
Just like the real thing, making models
can be dangerous if you do not use
commonsense.**

**DO NOT LEAVE YOUR TOOLS, PAINTS &
GLUES WHERE A YOUNG PERSON CAN
REACH THEM. TOOLS ARE NOT TOYS.**

**BE SURE YOU READ ALL
INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY - AND IF
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ASK YOUR
HOBBY SHOP**

When You Start Building:

Work Bench

It is best to start modelling on a clear area (so you don't lose parts), the kitchen table can be suitable, or a special model bench (an old desk or table).



Always put down newspaper or such, to protect the table from glue and

paint.

Time to open the box

When you open the box for the first time check all the parts are there. If there are any missing call the store immediately, some will replace it straight away, if not, don't despair, all manufacturers have a replacement part policy. You may find some parts have separated from the "tree", that is not unusual, due to bumps when being shipped from the factory to you.

Read the Instructions

Study your assembly instructions carefully, doing a real or imaginary dry run through the assembly stages. If you don't understand the instructions, please bring them to your hobby shop when you ask for assistance.

Removing Parts from Tree

As a general rule, do not remove parts until you are ready to glue and paint the smaller parts while still on the "tree", it's easier. When you do use the box lid as a storage bin. Some parts are very fragile, to

ensure scale appearance, so be careful handling them.

Steady as she goes

Another rule is make sure you allow parts to dry properly, after gluing and painting before handling to add extra parts. Important areas such as aircraft fuselages, ships hulls etc, where long joins are required will need overnight drying to ensure a good bond. Don't rush your modelmaking.

Making use of your Tools

Use rubber bands and clothes pegs as clamps to ensure you have a solid joint also. If glue leaks from joints don't touch it until dry. Excess glue can then be scraped and sanded smooth.

Painting

It is best to paint as you go, especially the smaller parts, where several colours may be required.

DO NOT PAINT WHERE YOU WISH TO GLUE!!

The better model paints will cover in one coat, if you must recoat wait in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Many model kits carry more than one colour scheme for your model, and through research you can probably find many more.

Fiddly bits

Canopies and clear plastic parts do not like polystyrene cement, as any marks from the glue can be seen, unless they have to be painted. An alternative is to use one of the special canopy cements, which dry clear and don't craze the clear plastic. There are many other little hints or tips you will learn as you enjoy this fascinating hobby. Aside from modelling skills you will learn to research history, become an expert painter, a skilled craftsman and collect a colourful array of valuable models.

Good Luck and Happy Modelling.

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P-51 Mustang Racer

Photos courtesy High Planes Models,

Some Handy Hints for the Beginner and the not so Experienced Modeller
