

# HM Review

Perry Downen

## Trumpeter 1/48 De Havilland Hornet

*Arriving too late for WWII, the Hornet still served admirably.*

Designed and developed by the De Havilland [*The accepted spelling is de Hailland, but for consistency with Trumpeter De Havilland is used - Ed*] Aircraft Company in 1943, the DH103 Hornet was quickly accepted by the British government as a long-range fighter and carrier aircraft for deployment in the Pacific Theater. De Havilland used similar construction techniques and materials used in the very successful DH98 Mosquito, in which the fuselage and empennage were constructed of balsa wood bonded between sheets of plywood. However, the thinner wings used on the Hornet required the use of stressed aluminum on the lower surface of the wing for increased strength when bonded to the wooden upper wing structure. Entering service with the British Royal Air Force in 1946, the Hornet arrived too late to be of any use in WWII. In the early 1950s, however, it replaced the Beaufighter and Spitfire in squadrons serving in Southeast Asia. The Hornet performed admirably, particularly in Malaysia, but became outdated in the new jet age and was eventually retired from service in 1955.

Trumpeter has released a De Havilland Hornet (02893) in the F.1 configuration, the first operational fighter version. This kit has been met with a lot of excitement within the scale modeling community, so let's see how it builds up.

To begin, the artwork on the sturdy box catches the eye immediately, with an illustration of a flying Hornet making a low level pass at high speed. Inside the box are 82 plastic parts molded in gray and clear. The surface details are crisp and clean with engraved panel lines and rivets where appropriate. The cockpit and landing gear bays show nicely molded surface details, which really pop with some detail



painting and weathering techniques.

The kit includes illustrated instructions, with painting and decal placement guides, as well as decals to build one of two aircraft in natural metal finishes. The instructions also highlight the options, with the canopy displayed open or closed and the wing flaps retracted or deployed. The painting guide lists the various paint numbers that would be used from different manufacturers including Mr. Hobby, Vallejo, Model Master, Tamiya and Humbrol.

When building aircraft models, construction usually begins with the cockpit assembly.



*Details abound, and with a bit of wash for shadows they can really be made to pop.*

Most of these parts are painted prior to fitting and gluing them together. Other than the finicky fit of a couple of small parts, the cockpit goes together rather quickly and easily. Once the assembly is completed, it can be glued into the fuselage and it fits quite nicely with no problems. After the glue has cured, the fuselage seams required just a bit of filler and were sanded and primed to reveal any flaws where more filling might be needed.

Next in the build sequence are the two engine nacelles. The landing gear and the internal bays are assembled and painted, then placed between the nacelle halves. Just as with the cockpit, the fit is near perfect, and the nacelle halves are glued together. Where needed, the seams were then filled, sanded, primed and then sanded again.



*Looking into the landing gear bay a person quickly begins to grasp the minute details.*

The left and right wing halves are assembled next. The air intakes for the engines are fitted into the leading edge and glued into place. Once these are secure, the upper and lower wing halves can be assembled and glued. The surface detail is nicely done, with engraved panel lines and access doors that are consistent with those on the fuselage.

The rudder and vertical stabi-

lizer, as well as the horizontal stabilizers, can be assembled and added to the fuselage. The wings are added next and cemented into place. The cockpit canopy is then placed and secured with an acrylic white glue to avoid marring the clear plastic. While the canopy can be positioned open or closed, it was placed in the closed position for this build. Nearing completion, the engine nacelles and landing gear were glued to the wings. The wing flaps were added in the deployed position, and lastly the tail wheel was glued into place.

The model is finally ready for paint. The only option for this model is a natural metal silver finish over the entire surface of the model. Once the paint has been applied and allowed to cure for a few days, the decals are applied. These



All Hornets used natural metal finish, but there are still plenty of individual markings that can be applied. The decals are extremely thin, so a light touch and a bit of caution is recommended to get them properly placed. It took a bit of care, but the decals snuggled down onto the surface details with just a bit of setting solution.

While the complexity of some components, the natural metal paint and the delicate decals might give a novice modeler a bit of trouble, even he could build it to completion with just a bit of assistance. Experienced modelers, and especially those with a fondness for British aircraft, will be thrilled with the possibilities. The result is a beautiful model that will attract attention whether on the display shelf or the contest table. **HM**



With the model assembled the fun part begins, and that's duplicating the finish of the full-scale aircraft.

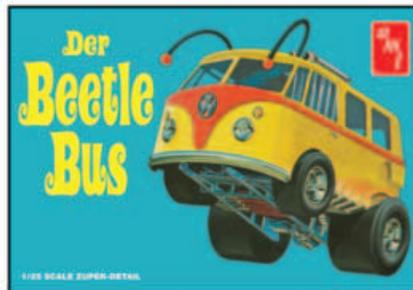


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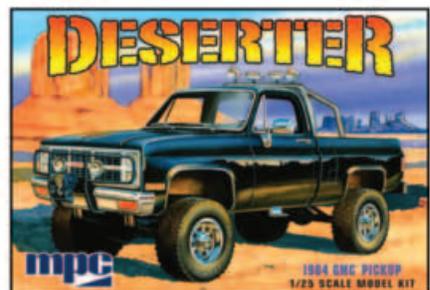
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