

ACADEMY

HOBBY MODEL KITS

F4U-4 CORSAIR

HOBBY
CRAFT

Model Created by Rafe Morrissey

FRANKEN-FOUR!

ABOVE: A Marine pilot from VMF-312 poses in front of his bomb and rocket-laden F4U-4 Corsair. It took two kits (Academy, HobbyCraft) and detail pieces from two others (Tamiya, Monogram) to get an accurate representation of the -4 Corsair in 1:48 Scale.

BELOW: Replicating the weathered finishes on Korean War-era F4U-4s in Gloss Sea Blue finish is also a challenge. The fabric surfaces faded differently and rough use imparted significant chips revealing the chromate-yellow primer. Hairspray was used to accomplish the chipping and heavy staining from the guns applied by airbrush.

Building an accurate F4U-4 in 1:48 scale is a challenge. Existing kits are either inaccurate or have raised panel lines. Rather than re-scribing the Hasegawa kit or fixing the Hobby Boss kit, the Academy and HobbyCraft kits can be combined to provide an accurately shaped -4 with crisp recessed detail. Having accomplished the cuts successfully, the next project will be to combine the Academy kit with Tamiya's offering to get a folding wing option!

PLANNING

Before you begin assembly of the model, you need to determine what extra parts are needed. The Academy kit has many nice features and the latest release comes with a wide array of ordnance but it is way too wide at the cockpit. The rear fuselage section of the HobbyCraft kit can be used to fix this and the fit is pretty close. Some plastic card and elbow grease are needed but the hybrid results in a much more accurate F4U-4. The extra canopy in the Tamiya F4U-1A kit and a Monogram prop from their venerable kit add more accurate details in these areas.

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1. The Academy and HobbyCraft kits were cut along a distinctive dog-leg panel line. In retrospect, it would have been easier to simply cut a straight line forward of this area as was done with the Hasegawa F4U-5 kits to do different versions. I will do this next time.
2. Plastic card was used to fill the gaps and extend the fuselage to the correct length. Black superglue and talcum powder make an excellent filler that allows panel lines to be re-scribed across the join.
3. The Academy instrument panel was reshaped to fit the HobbyCraft fuselage by tracing against the HobbyCraft part. A scratch-built panel was added to improve the detail.

4. With wings added, the "Franken-four" comes together.
5. There is a fair size gap where the wing meets the lower fuselage. More plastic card must be used to fill this area.
6. Tamiya XF-4 Yellow Green was applied over Alclad II Aluminum and hairspray to represent the Chromate Yellow primer chipped to bare metal. Another coat of hairspray was applied before the process was repeated with the Gloss Sea Blue finish.

CONSTRUCTION NOTES

The main elements needed for this project are the forward fuselage and wings of the Academy kit and the rear fuselage and tailplanes from the HobbyCraft kit. It should be possible to use the Tamiya kit but further modification and cutting will be needed in the center section of the lower wing to use the Tamiya wings. Other details used were:

- Monogram 1:48 F4U-4 propeller
- Tamiya canopy (an extra frameless canopy is included in their F4U-1A kit)
- Ultracast wheels (reference photos showed mixed block and radial treads, so one of each was used.)
- Academy bomb, drop tank and 5-inch rockets
- Finemolds seatbelts
- The Academy kit seat was cut down
- Scratchbuilt instrument panel over reshaped Academy part patterned from the HobbyCraft panel
- Sheet styrene filler
- Black superglue and talcum powder for filler
- Tamiya and Alclad II paints
- Academy kit decals for VMF-312 (they worked perfectly)



With all the surgery and kit-bashing complete, the "Franken-four" is ready to take off on a mission.