

HISTORY OF P-61

The Northrop P-61 was the result of a specialized design study for the specific role of night fighting. It was the first American aircraft to be designed precisely to fit this category. The P-61 was first proposed when the German Luftwaffe was at its peak of efficiency during night raids over England in 1940. To ward off the German offensive, the RAF was using highly modified Mosquitos, Beaufighters and Havocs as night interceptors. The experience gained through the use of these aircraft was applied to the design of the new American fighter.

The first prototype of the big Northrop fighter flew from Northrop Field on May 26, 1942, but the U. S. Army had already ordered the P-61 into production, and even increased the order, before the design had been flown. Flight testing and development of the distinctive-looking fighter was carried on in complete secrecy. It was not until early in 1944 that the massive fighter was publicly displayed. By this time the first Black Widows were being delivered to the U. S. Army Air Force and in the summer of 1944 they began arriving in Great Britain.

Following a period of training, the first Black Widow squadron became operational on July 5, 1944. Their first sortie was flown over the Normandy beaches. Not long after the Allied invasion of France, Black Widows were flying from bases on the continent.

On the night of August 14, 1944 initial contact with the enemy was made and four German night bombers were destroyed. Within a short time after D-day Black Widows were credited with downing 239 German planes and probably downing an additional 209. They were effectively used against German convoys, troop columns and supply depots as well as aircraft. Belgian-based Black Widows were used to destroy flying bombs during the attacks on Antwerp and on one penetration flight, a squadron of P-61's destroyed five flying bombs, eleven aircraft and sixteen locomotives!

The first Black Widows began to appear in the South Pacific in July, 1944, the first Japanese plane falling to their guns on July 7. P-61's were flown in this area by the U. S. Thirteenth Air Force. The huge fighters were effective in breaking up attempts by the Japanese to bomb B-29 bases on Saipan.

The first production models of the Black Widow carried a four-gun dorsal turret but continued problems with tail buffeting led to the removal of the fixture. As development of the fighter continued this problem was solved and late versions of the P-61B once again were equipped with this extra armament. This turret was fitted with four 0.5 inch machine guns and could be operated by either the front or rear gunner. The P-61 carried a crew of three.

The Black Widow had many unusual and interesting features. Its exceptional size and weight led to the use of full span flaps and reversible pitch propellers to permit its use on combat landing fields. The small ailerons at the wingtips were supplemented by spoilers on the wings to create drag for turning. This arrangement led to surprising maneuverability and the P-61 could turn with even the nimblest enemy fighter. The great weight of the Black Widow made it an excellent platform for its heavy armament when attacking in the slipstream of its target. Continued development of the Black Widow produced a photo-reconnaissance version with a large "bubble" canopy housing both pilot and observer. This version was referred to as the F-15 Reporter.

P-61 SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINES:

Pratt and Whitney R-2800
Double Wasp
2,250 H.P.

PERFORMANCE:

Maximum speed 370 mph
Ceiling 33,100 feet
Range 940 miles,
with external tanks 1,900 miles

DIMENSIONS:

Span 66'
Length 48' 11"

ARMAMENT:

Four 20mm cannon
Four 0.5 inch machine guns
Four 1,000 lb. bombs
carried externally

NORTHROP "BLACK WIDOW"

NIGHT FIGHTER

1/72 SCALE PLANE KIT

P-61B



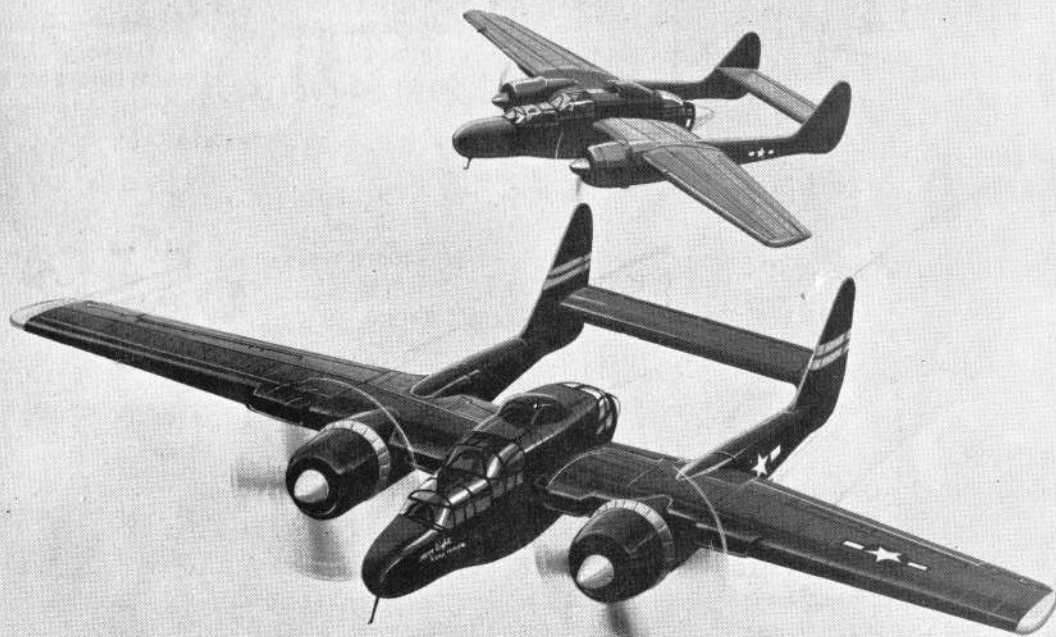
READ THIS BEFORE YOU BEGIN

AMT kits are moulded from the finest high-impact styrene plastic. Use only paint and cement made for styrene. Trim excess plastic from parts before joining. Use just enough cement to join parts, and be careful not to smear cement on exposed surfaces.

Look over this instruction sheet carefully before you begin building. Follow the assemble instructions and "test fit" the parts without cementing. This will familiarize you with the fit and location of the parts.

Built according to the instructions on this sheet, you should have no trouble assembling your model. Just FOLLOW THE NUMBERS. The parts are numbered in the order of assembly.

AMT warrants the parts contained in this kit to be free of defects in material and workmanship. Do not return any kits to the store from which it was purchased. If you have a claim, mail the whole kit, postage prepaid, to: Service Department. AMT CORPORATION, 1225 East Maple Road, Troy, Mich. 48084.



PAINT YOUR MODEL AND APPLY DECALS USING THE COLOR INSTRUCTIONS ON THE BOX.

32

2 ASSEMBLED ENGINE COWLS
(To front of tailbooms)

10 MAIN CABIN ROOF (Clear)
(To main cabin, may be cemented
in open or closed position)

9 MAIN CABIN (Clear)
(To fuselage)
(PAINT FRAMING BLACK)

4 REAR CREWMAN (To seat)
(PAINT GREEN)

SEAT (To hole) 5 (PAINT BROWN)

FRONT CREWMAN
(To hole) 7

REAR CABIN FLOOR
(To tabs) 6

FRONT CABIN FLOOR
(To tabs) 8

30 AIR SPEED INDICATOR (To hole)

2 AIR SCREW SPINNERS (To airscrews)

2 AIRSCREWS (Through engine cowls, front
and rear engine to bushing)

NOTE: Propellers should rotate freely.

(PAINT TIPS YELLOW)

(PAINT FLOORS AND INSIDE OF COCKPIT GREEN)

2 REAR ENGINES (To front engines)

25 2 FRONT ENGINES

2 ENGINE COWLS

NOSE WHEEL (To pin,
DO NOT CEMENT,
heat seal by touching end
of pin with a heated knife)

3

11 REAR CABIN
(Clear) (To fuselage)

(PAINT FRAMING BLACK)

(PAINT SILVER)

FUSELAGE HALVES (Cement together)

NOTE: Be sure leg is moveable.

2

22 2 ASSEMBLED TAIL BOOMS
(To underside of wings)

31 2 AERIAL MASTS
(To holes)

19 2 OUTER RUDDER HALVES
(To tabs, DO NOT CEMENT)

20 2 INNER RUDDER HALVES
(To outer halves)
NOTE: Be sure rudders are moveable.

TAIL PLANE (2 pcs.) (Cement together)

14

2 ASSEMBLED TAILPLANES
(To notches in tail booms)

21

1 NOSE UNDER CARRIAGE LEG
(To hole, DO NOT CEMENT)

2 MAIN WHEELS (2 pcs. each) (Cement together)
(To pins, DO NOT CEMENT, heat seal
by touching end of pin with heated knife)

23

2 MAIN UNDER CARRIAGE LEGS
(To holes, DO NOT CEMENT)

PAINT SILVER

18 2 TAIL BOOMS (2 pcs. each)
(Cement together)
NOTE: Be sure under carriage
legs are moveable.

17

2 WINGS (2 pcs. each) (Cement
together and locate to notches)
NOTE: Be sure ailerons are moveable.

13

12 2AILERONS (To notches,
DO NOT CEMENT)

2 WINGS (2 pcs. each) (Cement
together and locate to notches)
NOTE: Be sure ailerons are moveable.

NOTE: Be sure ailerons are moveable.

27 2 NOSE UNDERCARRIAGE DOORS
(To tabs, SEE DETAIL)

28

2 NOSE UNDERCARRIAGE DOORS
(To tabs, SEE DETAIL)

2 MAIN UNDERCARRIAGE DOORS
(3 pcs. each) (To tabs, SEE DETAIL)

16 UPPER ELEVATOR HALF (To lower elevator half)
NOTE: Be sure elevator is moveable.

15 LOWER ELEVATOR HALF
(To tabs, DO NOT CEMENT)

19

20

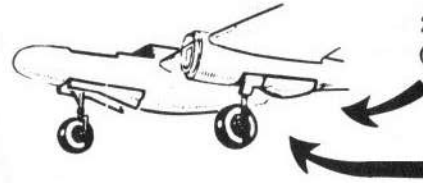
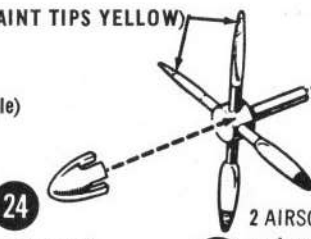
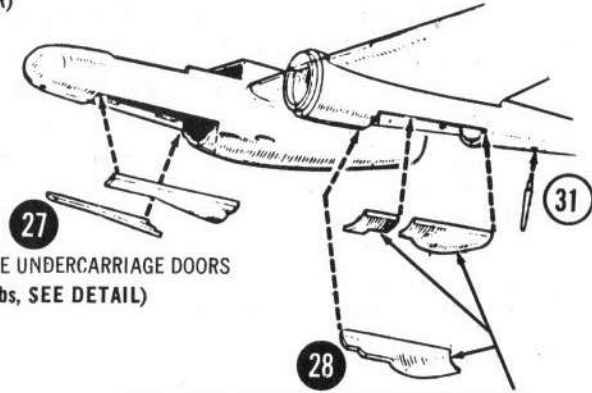
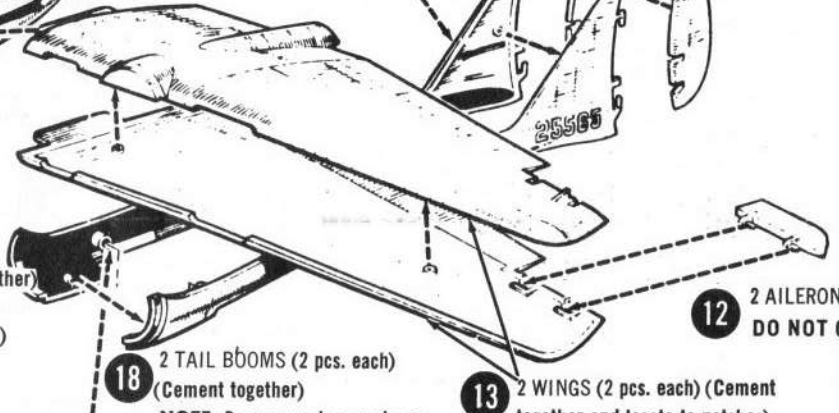
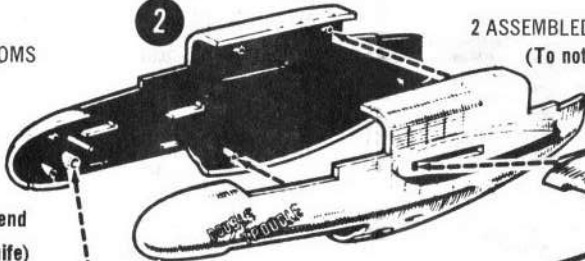
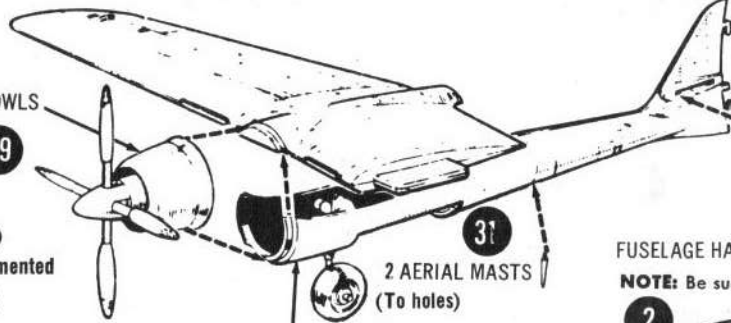
20

12

17

27

28



P-61B

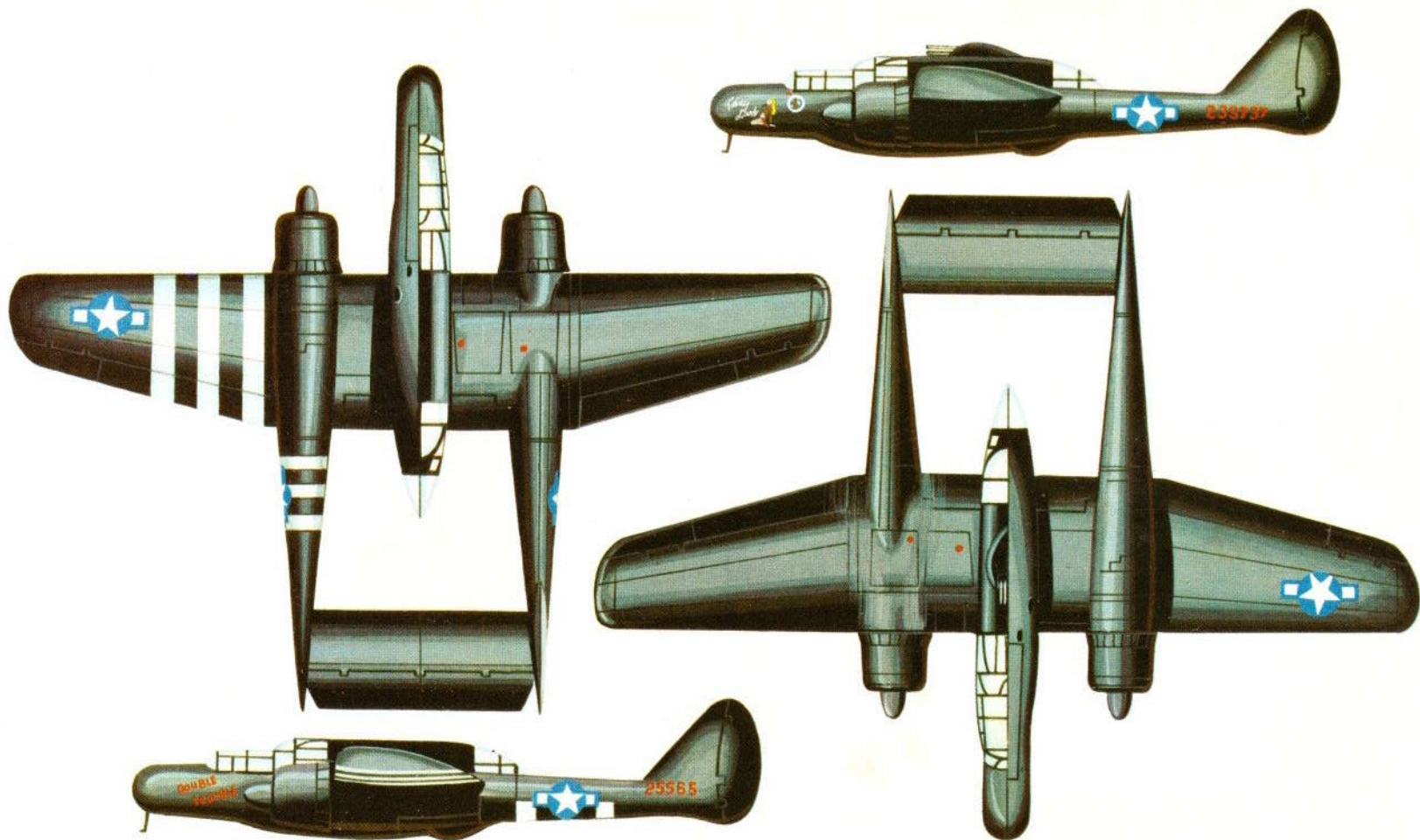
NORTHROP
"BLACK WIDOW"

1/72 SCALE

FEATURING:

- MOVABLE PROPELLERS, WHEELS,AILERONS, ELEVATORS AND RUDDERS
- OPTIONAL POSITION LANDING GEAR
- EASY-TO-FOLLOW INSTRUCTION SHEET
- OPTIONAL TOP TURRET
- 11" WING SPAN 8" LONG
- MULTIPLE MATTE DECAL
- AMT-FROG AUTHENTICITY

3801-8A



AMT CORPORATION • 1225 E. Maple Rd., Troy, Mich. 48084