

Republic P-47 Thunderbolt D through M

by Chris Sherland

TYPE: P-47 Thunderbolt (Razorback and Bubbletop kits)

SCALE: 1/32

COMPANY: Revell USA

MOLD CREATION DATE: 1971

TWEAKS LIST VERSION 1.1 (publication date: April 2005)

The following list is intended to help modelers in improving scale accuracy of an airplane model replica. In no way is it intended to support or be offensive towards a scale model company.

As such, it is only the result of a progressive process and is in no way intended to be absolute or even comprehensive. Hence, it is intended to focus on commonly admitted discrepancies and will probably not cover some errors. It is up to the modeler to decide whether correcting the listed issues is worth the time and money he will have to invest in the quest for accuracy process.

No aftermarket correction or detail set is mentioned in this document as the availability of such items may be very variable. Hence, refer to other LSP sections to find relevant information. Moreover, aftermarket sets do not necessarily correct all listed issues. Please refer accordingly to relevant documentation.

NOTICEABLE FUSELAGE/ENGINE ISSUES (from front to rear)

The propeller represents an early Curtiss model but is misshapen and will need to be re-worked or replaced. The Thunderbolt had various propellers over its production run made by both Hamilton and Curtiss so check your resources.

The cowling is misshapen in both profile and the shape of the opening. It also features fictitious inspection panels on each side that need to be closed and filled. Filling the lower cowling opening curve slightly to help soften the angle helps the misshapen opening, but a full replacement cowling solves all the problems completely.

The engine needs the push rods to be replaced and a wiring harness to be made. The very prominent magnetos are misshapen as well and need to be replaced.

The cowling cooling flaps are molded onto the fuselage halves (as is the entire cowling) and should be cut off and replaced. A new firewall will need to be fashioned to complete the fuselage bulk under the flaps and mount the engine.

The waste gates near the cowling on the lower fuselage are misshapen and need to be replaced. There are also some prominent bleeding tubes that should be added on the port side in this area.

The large square turbo exhaust doors that are located center fuselage behind the cockpit are molded into the fuselage halves, bulky, and out of scale. These should be cut away and new doors should be fashioned out of thin card or metal sheet and attached.

The gates and exhaust porting located on the belly aft of the wings all need some attention. From front to back:

- The three small vents should be hollowed out and thinned
- The turbo shroud should be thinned (and some internal representation of the turbo fashioned and attached
- The last squared exit port should be opened and thinned to scale.

The fin and more critically the rudder are too small in chord. The rudder is misshapen. This size and shape problem makes the vertical tail appear to be out of scale completely. Chord area needs to be added to the leading and trailing edges. Consult accurate profiles for the correct amount of chord addition.

NOTICEABLE WING/WEAPONS ISSUES

The gun barrels are aligned with the leading edge of the wing. They should be removed and new barrels should be fashioned from tubing and aligned parallel to the ground.

All flight surface hinges are misshapen and in varying degrees of the wrong positions.

The shell-ejector chute openings in the underside of the wings are too large, and should be reduced in width.

The aileron linkage covers (on the wing undersides) are too small and should be sanded away and re-fashioned.

The ordnance that comes with both kits is lacking. A single centerline droptank is supplied as well as 2 “250lb bombs.” The droptank is inaccurate and needs to be replaced, and the bombs are inaccurate as well. The wing pylons are misshapen and need to be fixed.

NOTICEABLE COCKPIT ISSUES

Detail or replace front instrument panel.

Replace the gunsight.

Correct cockpit side details.

The cockpit floor is corrugated and represents a Razorback as well as early Bubbletops. However later model Bubbletops had a flat floor. Replace as needed in these cases.

Replace throttle quadrant and handles.

The rear bulkhead and armor plate provided in both Razorback and Bubbletop kits is the same and represents a strange combination of inaccurate shape for both. This bulkhead should be replaced for both versions taking care to recreate the appropriate bulkhead for either the Razorback or Bubbletop.

Cut the kit seat away from the bulkhead and replace it. The seat's mounting bars will also need to be added.

NOTICEABLE CANOPY ISSUES

Razorback: The windscreen and canopy are misshapen and should be replaced.

Bubbletop: The canopy frames are slightly misshapen on the sides and should be sanded down, the frames re-scribed, and then polished.

NOTICEABLE LANDING GEAR ISSUES

The tail gear bay is modeled as a flat deck and should either be cut away and the tail gear scratch-built, or a suitable representation of the common canvas "boot" fashioned and attached.

The gear bays are largely fictitious and should be cut away and replaced.

The landing gear legs are modeled with the oleos extended fully (as if no weight was on the gear). These need to be cut, shortened and re-assembled. The scissor links will need to be re-posed as well.

The wheels lack proper detail in both hub and tread and should be replaced.

The tail wheel yoke is modeled as a mirror of the real item and needs to be replaced.

OTHER NOTICEABLE ISSUES & MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

General shape and scale are excellent however the surface detail is incorrect in many places and is all raised. A full sand down and re-scribe should be completed with accurate resources at hand.

As noted the overall kits (Razorback and Bubbletop) have an accurate shape with the exception of the vertical tail and rudder. Both build up into an impressive model simply

due to their size, and make a great canvas for as much detailing as one cares to undertake. Fixing the guns, the landing gear and at least a light sanding pass on the raised detail, should be considered the minimum treatment for a common display piece. While the Revell molds of the Thunderbolt can be used as a base to model variants all the way from the D-1 to the D-28, and even into the M series, changes on these versions are many so again check your references carefully. The N series had a significant wing change and represents a major conversion challenge.

The following sources were used to build this list:

Mustang and Thunderbolt Aces of the Pacific and CBI (Osprey) ISBN 1-85532-780-5

America's Hundred Thousand (Dean) ISBN 0-76430072-5

Aero Detail #14: Republic P-47 Thunderbolt ISBN 4-499-22648-1

Warbird Tech #23: Republic P-47 Thunderbolt ISBN 1-58007-018-3

Squadron/Signal Walk Around #11: P-47 Thunderbolt (Drendel) ISBN 0-89747-375-2

Squadron/Signal In Action #67: P-47 Thunderbolt (Davis) ISBN 0-89747-161-X

Warbird History: P47 Thunderbolt (Hess) ISBN 0-87938-899-4

Pilot's Manual for P-47 Thunderbolt ISBN 0-87994-026-0

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