

# P-39Q Airacobra

eduard

1/48 Scale Plastic Model Kit

**WEEKEND**  
edition



item No. 8470

The Bell P-39 Airacobra was one of the best fighter aircraft the USAAF had at their disposal when entering the war. Although overshadowed by the P-51 or P-47 later, it was remarkable fighter, when used properly.

The P-39 Airacobra was developed by the Bell Aircraft Corporation in Buffalo, New York in the late 30's as an answer to the 1937 specification for a new high-altitude and heavily armed pursuit aircraft. The turbocharged Allison engine was intended to power the aircraft, which was required to reach at least 360 mph (580 km/h) at altitude, climbing to the 20,000 ft (6,100 m) in six minutes. These demands were very challenging, and the Bell design team decided to take innovative approach with the engine mounted in the middle of the fuselage at the centre of gravity. The propeller was driven through an outboard reduction gear by an extension shaft running under the cockpit floor. It also had unusual tricycle undercarriage and car-door entry to the cockpit on both sides.

## Blow to the concept

The first XP-39 prototype conducted its maiden flight on April 6, 1939 in Dayton and reached maximum speed of 390 mph (628 km/h) at 20,000 ft (6100 m). It took only five minutes to reach that height and doing so, the new design surpassed the original demands, but stayed behind the proposal by Bell, stating 400 mph would be achieved. The prototype was powered by the Allison V-1710-17 fitted with turbocharger according to the original specifications, rated at 1150 hp. The XP-39 proved also good manoeuvrability thanks its innovative concept of airframe, with its engine located in the centre of gravity. The concept also allowed a long, slim nose well suited for installation of a powerful weaponry. The USAAF ordered a test series of twelve YP-39s on April 27, but before the series was finished the project had been significantly changed. Because of troubles with proper turbocharger installation, the original engine was replaced by a less powerful Allison V-1710-37 using just one-stage, one-speed mechanical supercharger. The engine thus developed just 1090 hp and, more to it, it was losing its power gradually at the higher levels. This was a major blow to the promising fighter.

The YP-39 had a propeller-axis Oldsmobile T-9 cal. 37 mm cannon, two .50 calibre (12.7 mm) machine guns and two .30 calibre (7.62 mm) machine guns mounted in the nose. The pilot seat got armour and the weight of the aircraft rose to 3160 kg against 2820 kg of the XP-39 prototype. Due to it the maximum speed fell to 366 mph (590 km/h) and climbing to 6100 m took 7.5 min now.

Although the excellent prototype flight performances were decreased, the USAAF kept its interest and ordered 80 production P-39s marked as the C variant. The first 20 aircraft of the order were supplied as standard P-39C, while the remaining 60 were finished as P-39Ds, with the two .30 calibre (7.62 mm) machine guns moved to the wings and two more .30 calibre (7.62 mm) machine guns added to the same location. The USAAF received its first P-39Ds in February 1941, and the next order for 344 P-39Ds was placed subsequently.

## RAF disappointment

The British RAF ordered 675 P-39s in April 1940. British Airacobra Mk.IIs were produced as the P-39D standard, but with the engine-axis cannon replaced with a British Hispano M1 20mm cannon, while the wing machine guns were replaced with 7.7 mm Brownings. The first Airacobra Mk.IIs were delivered in July 1941, but the RAF was disappointed, as it was found they were not suitable for service in the European war theatre due to their less than average performance at high altitude. In October 1941 four Mk.IIs were tested by No. 601 Squadron in the ground attack role over occupied France, but Airacobra did not perform well in this role as well, so P-39s were withdrawn from service with RAF and 212 of them were sent to Soviet Union.

## Evolution of the Airacobra

When the USA entered the war, the USAAF confiscated 179 Airacobras from the British order on the production line. They were re-designated P-400 and served in the Pacific. All P-400s had 12 exhaust pipes on each side of the engine, which was major difference from the P-39D series. The next production block, also with 12 exhaust pipes, were 229 aircraft of the P-39F series, followed by the P-39K series (210 aircraft), P-39L (250 aircraft), P-39M (240 aircraft) and P-39N (2095 aircraft). All these variants were very similar, using various engines, propellers, and other equipment. The final version of the Bell's innovative design was the P-39Q with the Allison V-1710-85 engine, rated at 1420 hp. The installation of two .50 calibre (12.7 mm) machine guns in underwing pods instead of the four .30 calibre (7.62 mm) wing mounted ones was the main difference to the previous marks.

## Eastern success

Most of the 4905 "Q" series aircraft were sent to Soviet Union, where they were used with great success, as the aerial combat took place at lower altitudes, so the absence of turbocharger was not so harmful to the aircraft's performance. Production of P-39Q was ceased in August 1944, after the final Airacobra, number 9558, had been finished. The USAAF employed Airacobras extensively until August 1944, when they were withdrawn from frontline service. The USAAF was using the largest quantity of Airacobras (2105 of all types) during February 1944. They served in the Pacific theatre, as well as in North Africa and Italy.

In total 4758 Airacobras were sent to Russia, where they were very popular also for their solid metal airframe and heavy weapons, gaining the nickname "Groznyaya boyevaya mashina" (frightening combat machine). The French Air Force used 165 Airacobras, and P-39s served also with the Australian RAAF, with the Italian AF and, also with the Portuguese AF. After the war, several Airacobras were employed in civilian service and used for air races.



Carefully read instruction sheet before assembling. When you use glue or paint, do not use near open flame and use in well ventilated room. Keep out of reach of small children. Children must not be allowed to suck any part, or pull vinyl bag over the head.



Před započítím stavby si pečlivě prostudujte stavební návod. Při používání barev a lepidel pracujte v dobře větrané místnosti. Lepidla ani barvy nepoužívejte v blízkosti otevřeného ohně. Model není určen malým dětem, mohlo by dojít k požití drobných dílů.

## INSTRUCTION SIGNS \* INSTR. SYMBOLS \* INSTRUKTION SINNBILDEN \* SYMBOLES \* 記号の説明



OPTIONAL  
VOLBA



BEND  
OHNOU



SAND  
BROUSIT



OPEN HOLE  
VYVRTAT OTVOR



SYMETRICAL ASSEMBLY  
SYMETRICKÁ MONTÁŽ



REMOVE  
ODRÍZNOUT



REVERSE SIDE  
OTOČIT



APPLY EDUARD MASK  
AND PAINT  
POUŽÍT EDUARD MASK  
NABARVIT

## PARTS



## DÍLY



## TEILE

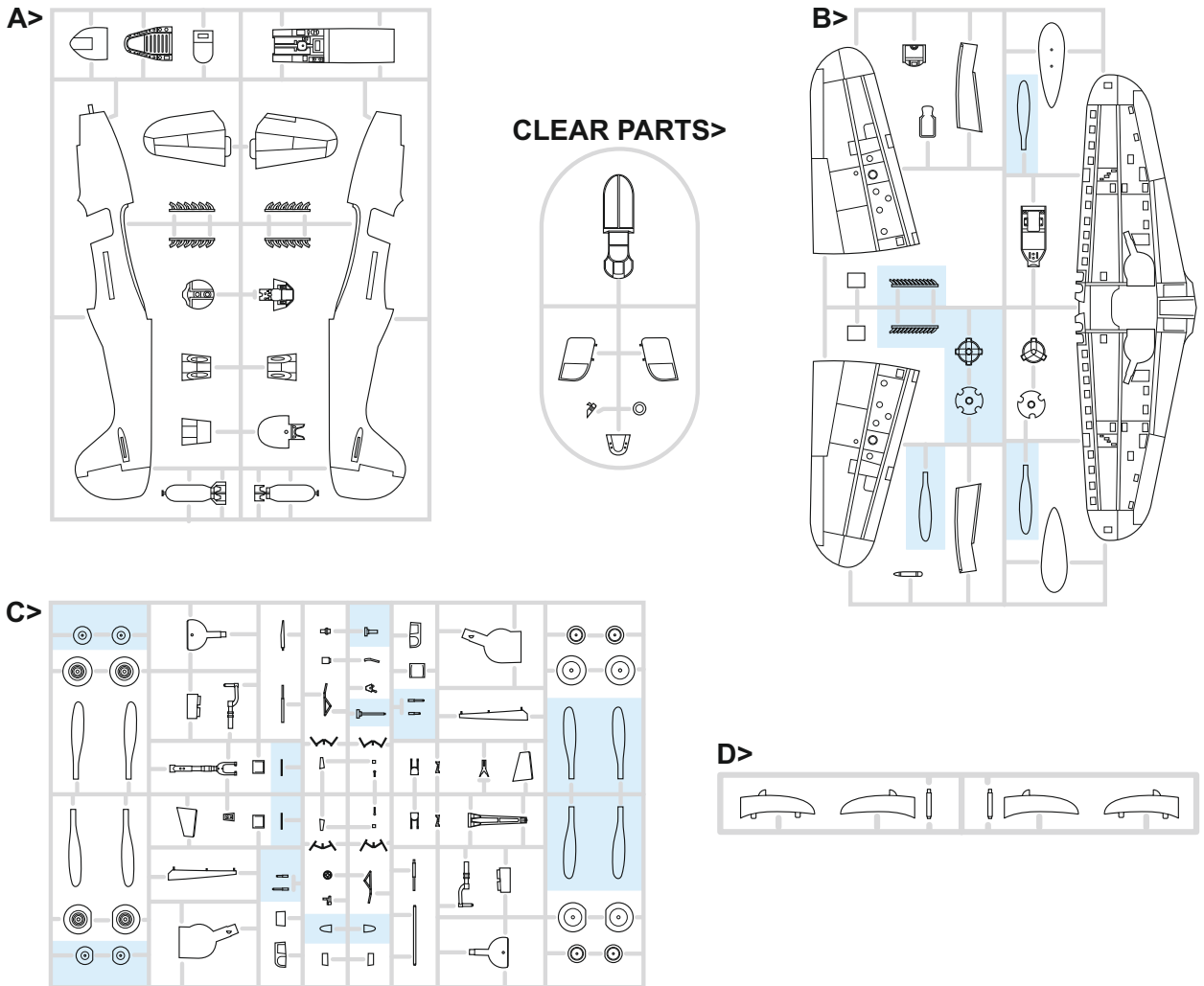


## PIÈCES



## 部品

## PLASTIC PARTS



-Parts not for use. -Teile werden nicht verwendet. -Pièces à ne pas utiliser. -Tyto díly nepoužívejte při stavbě. - 使用しない部品

## COLOURS



## BARVY



## FARBEN



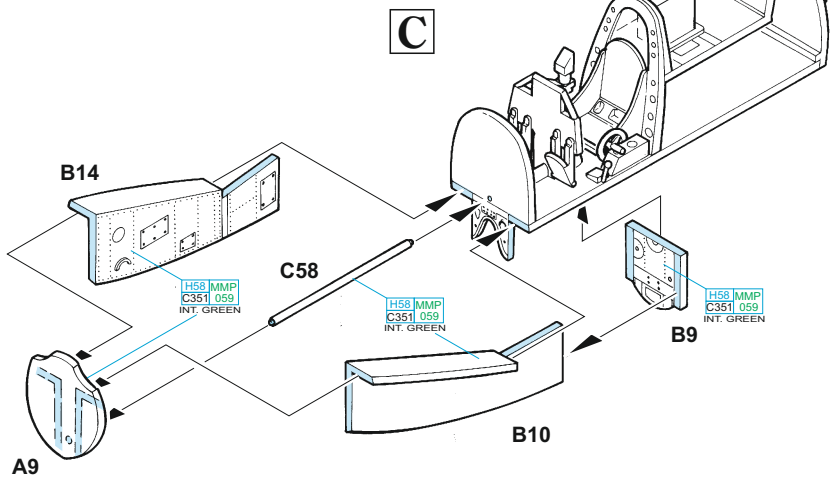
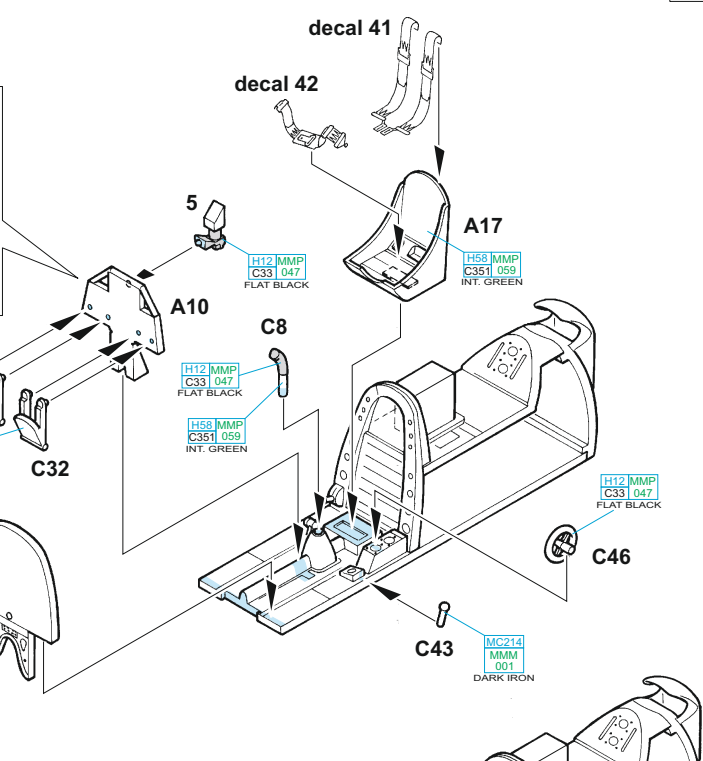
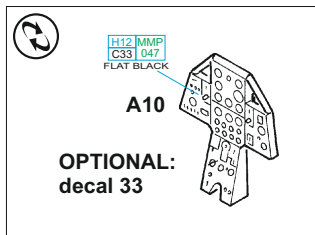
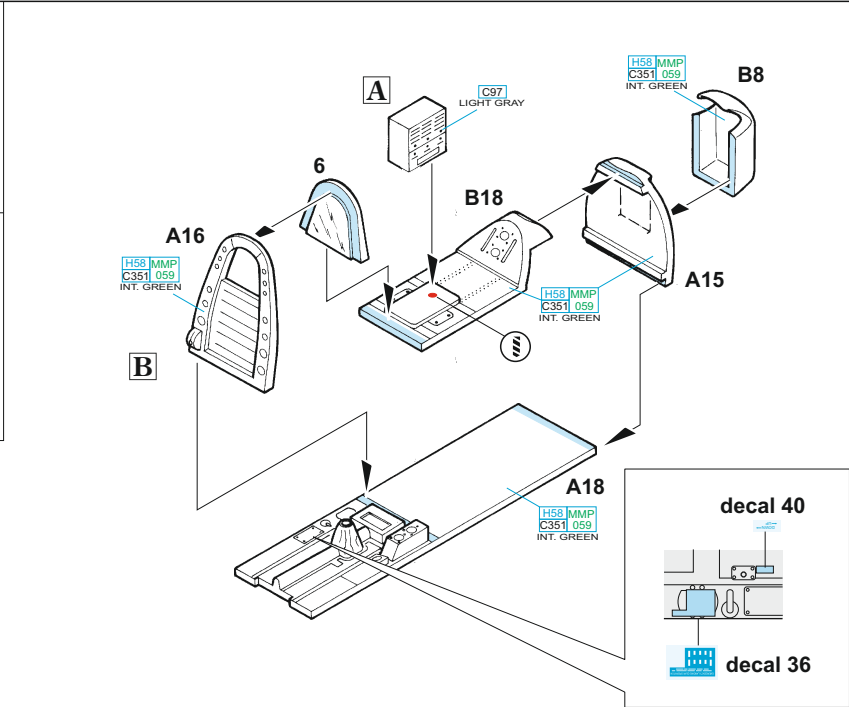
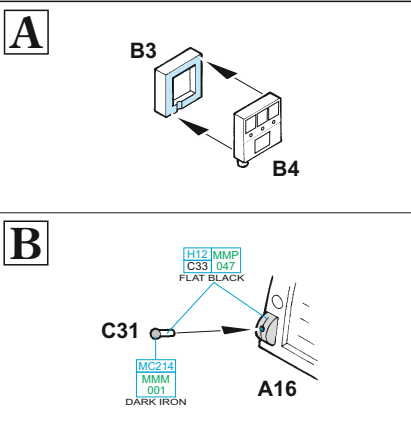
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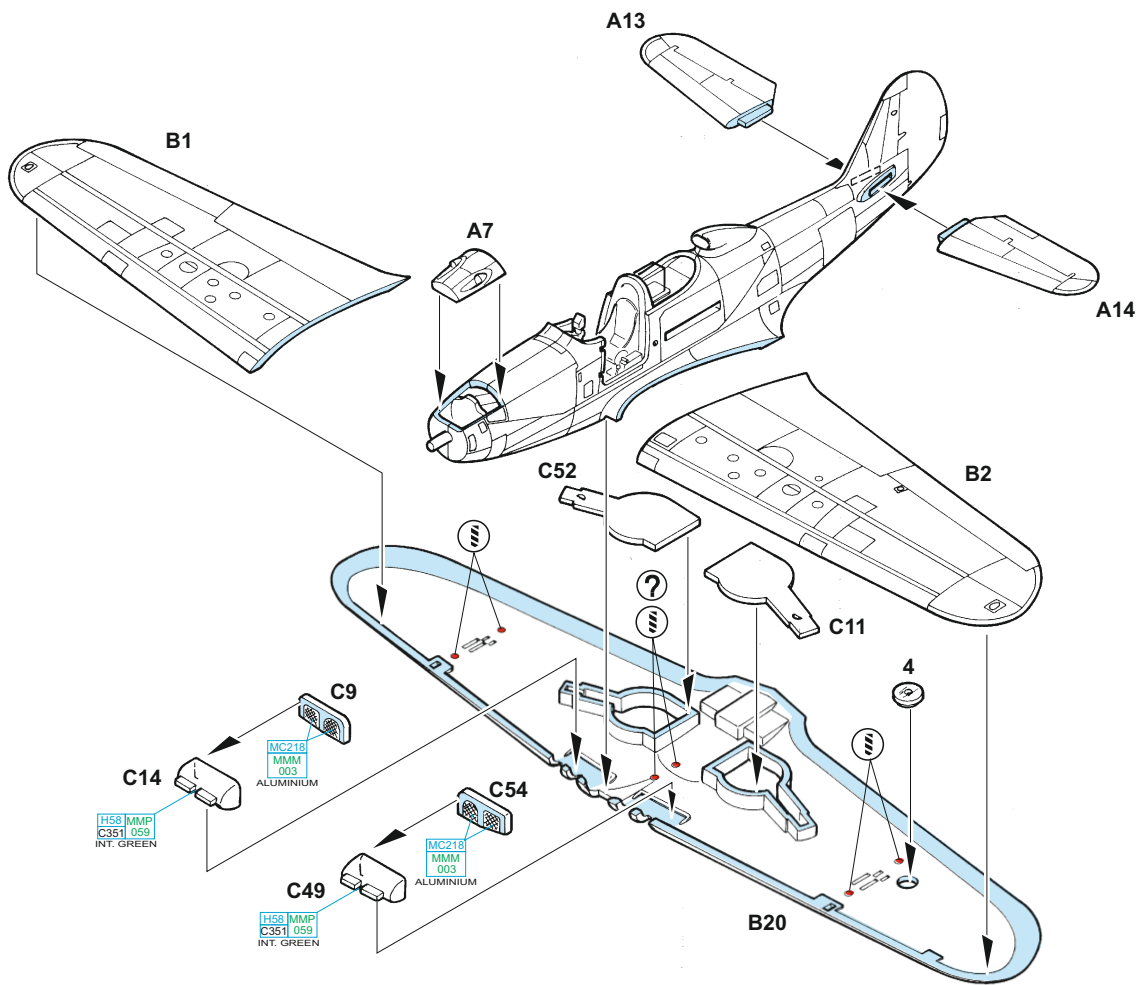
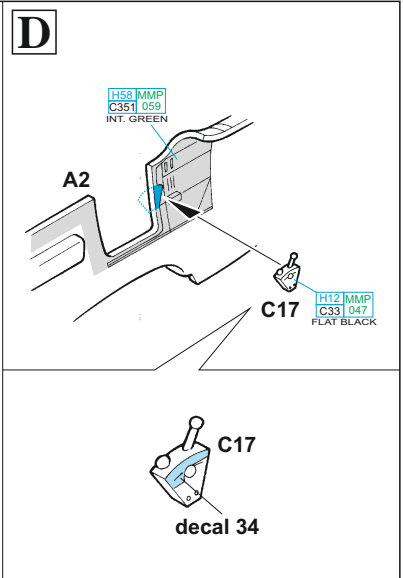
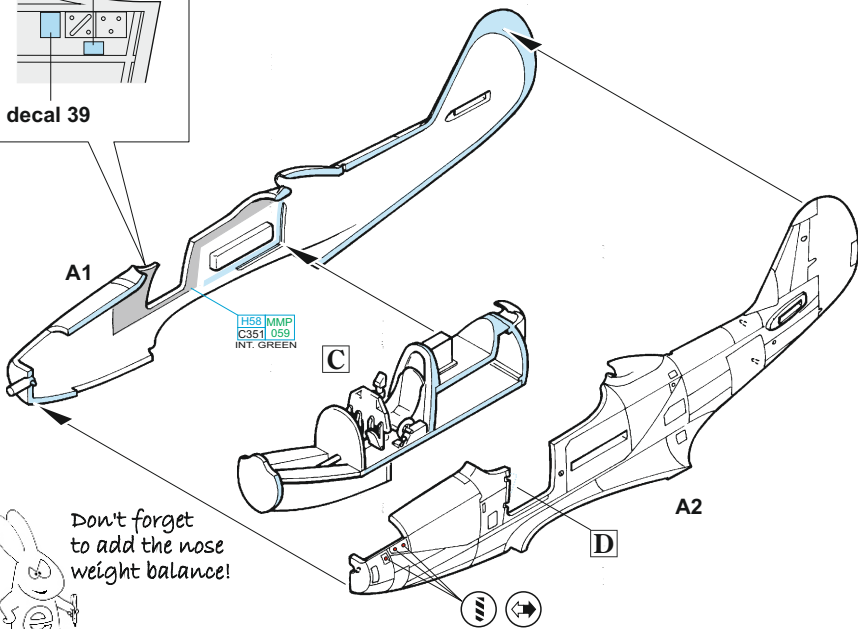
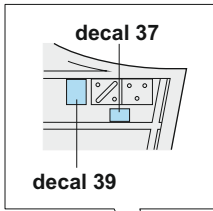


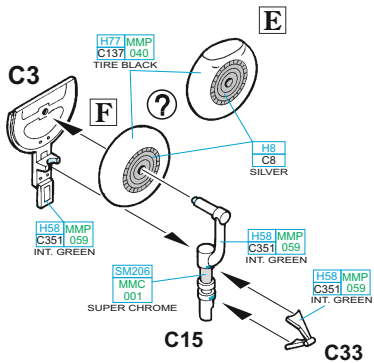
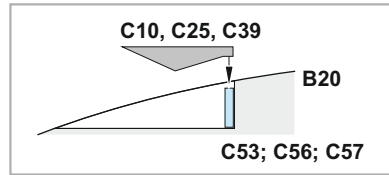
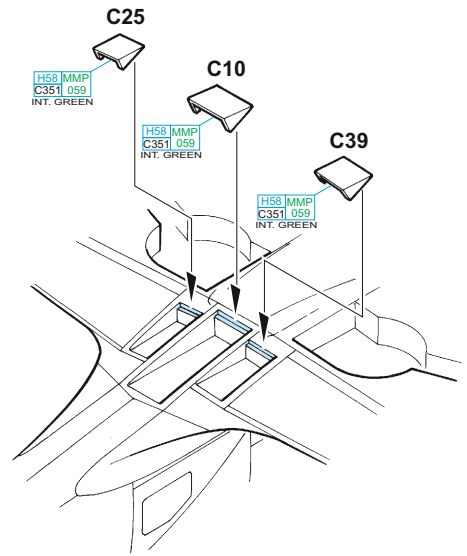
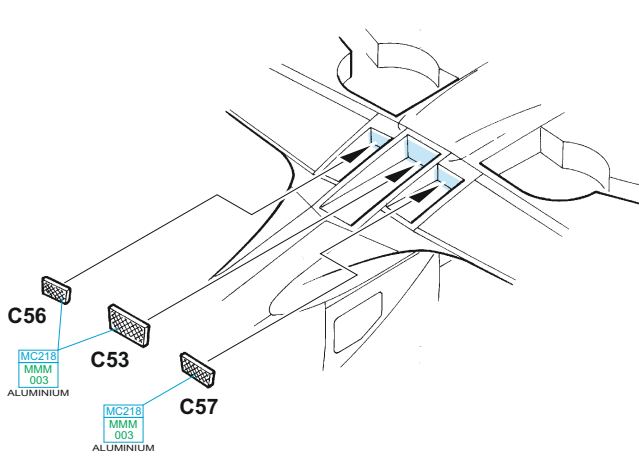
## 色

GSI Creos (GUNZE)		MISSION MODELS	
AQUEOUS	Mr.COLOR	PAINTS	
H8	C8	SILVER	
H12	C33	MMP-047	FLAT BLACK
H44	C51	FLESH	
H52	C12	MMP-091	OLIVE DRAB
H53	C13	NEUTRAL GRAY	
H58	C351	MMP-059	INTERIOR GREEN
H77	C137	MMP-040	TIRE BLACK
H316	C316	MMP-104	WHITE
H323	C323	MMP-092	LIGHT BLUE

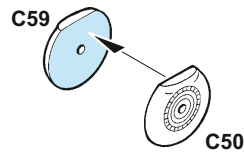
GSI Creos (GUNZE)		MISSION MODELS	
AQUEOUS	Mr.COLOR	PAINTS	
H327	C327	MMP-101	RED
H329	C329	MMP-041	YELLOW
	C97	LIGHT GRAY	
Mr.METAL COLOR		METALLICS	
MC214	MMM-001		DARK IRON
MC218	MMM-003		ALUMINIUM
Mr.COLOR SUPER METALLIC		METALLICS	
SM206	MMC-001		SUPER CHROME SILVER2



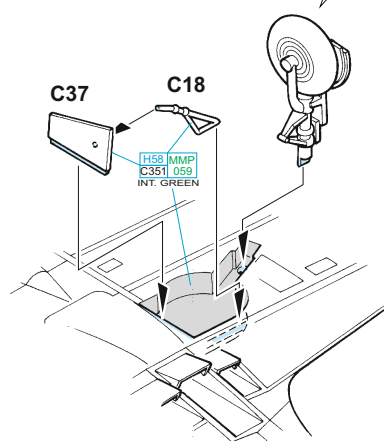
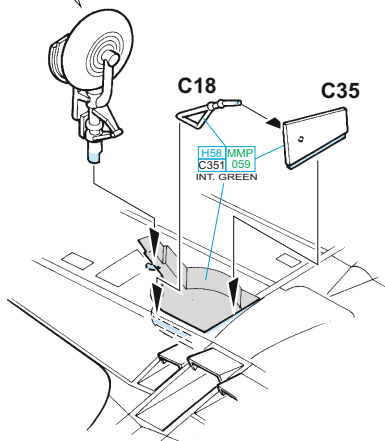
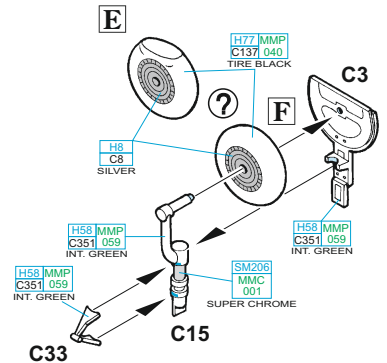
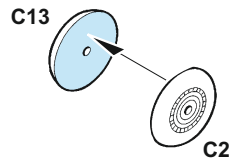




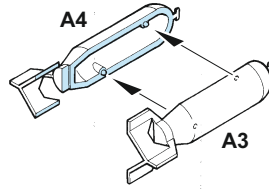
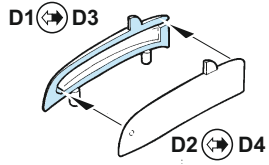
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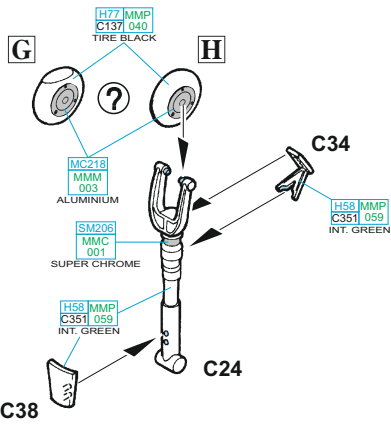
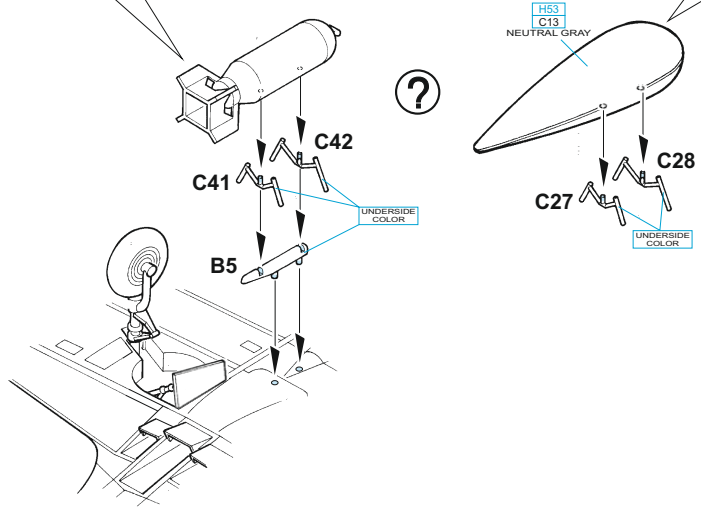
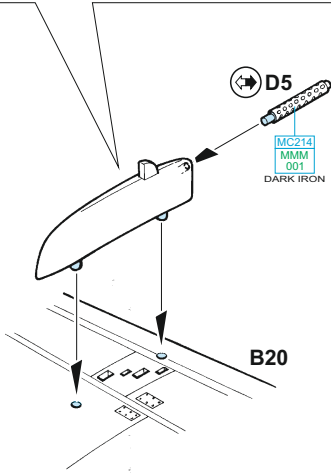
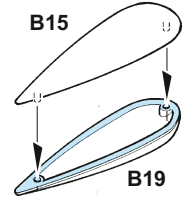
**F** 2 pcs.



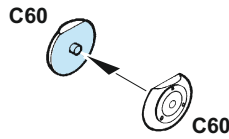
**MARKING D**



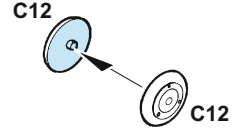
**MARKINGS A, B, C**



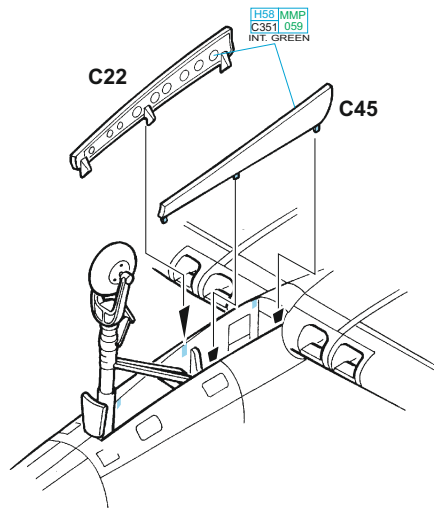
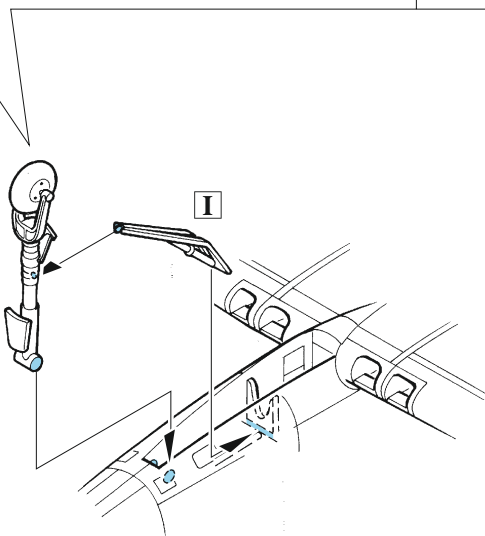
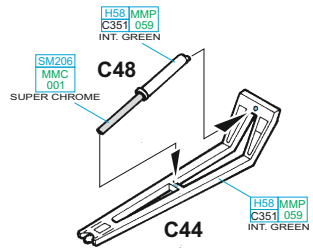
**G**

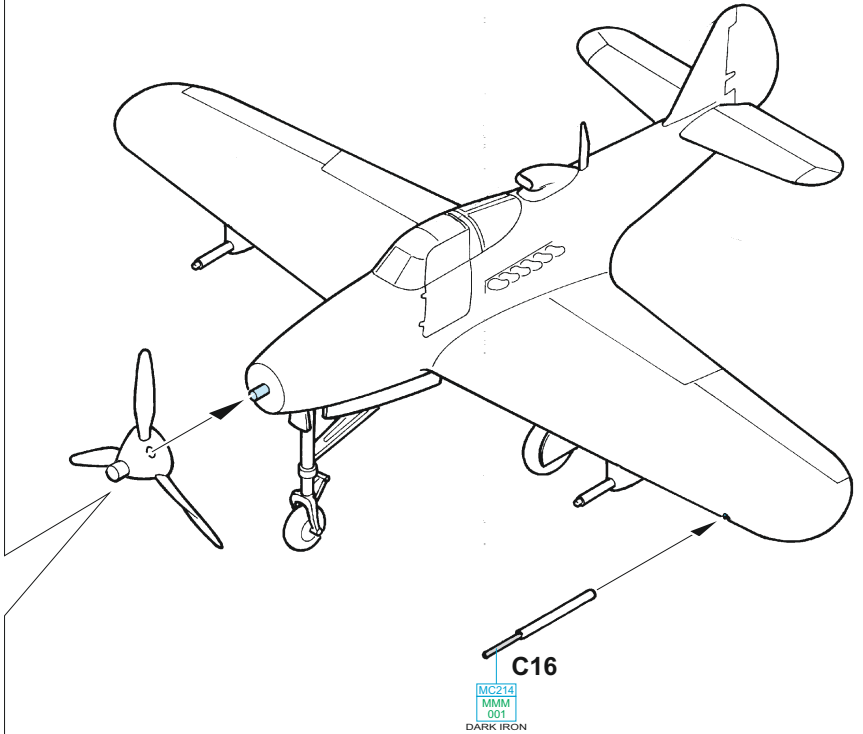
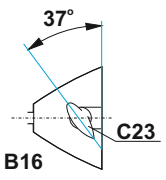
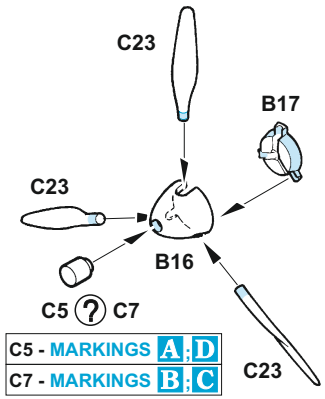
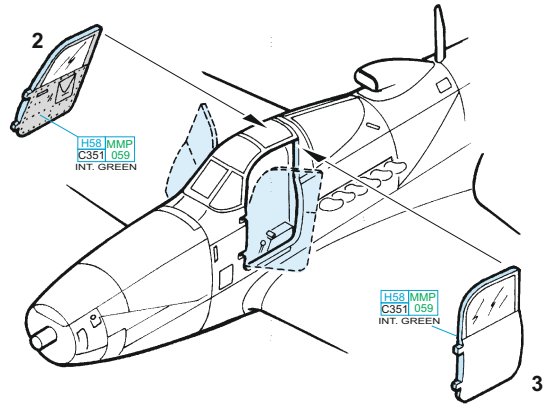
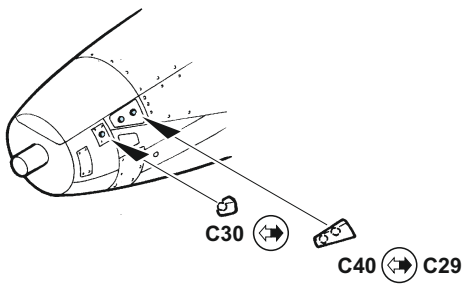
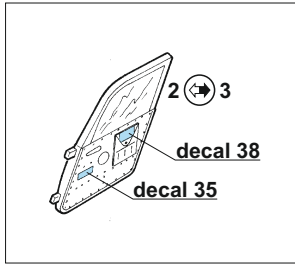
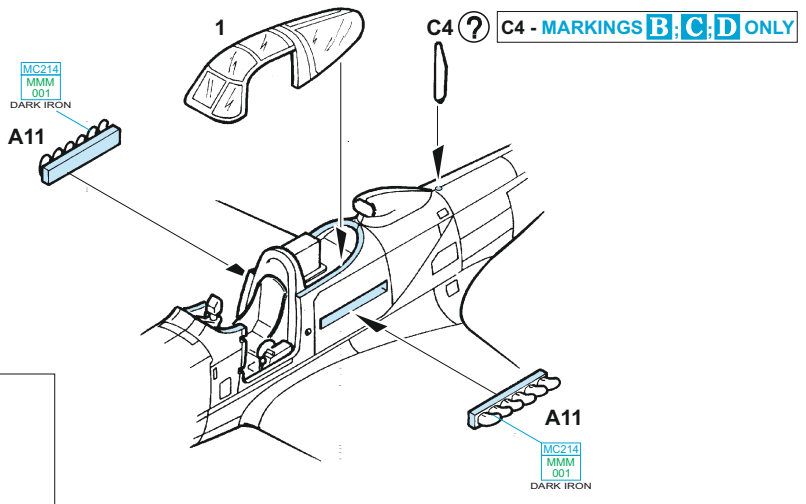


**H**



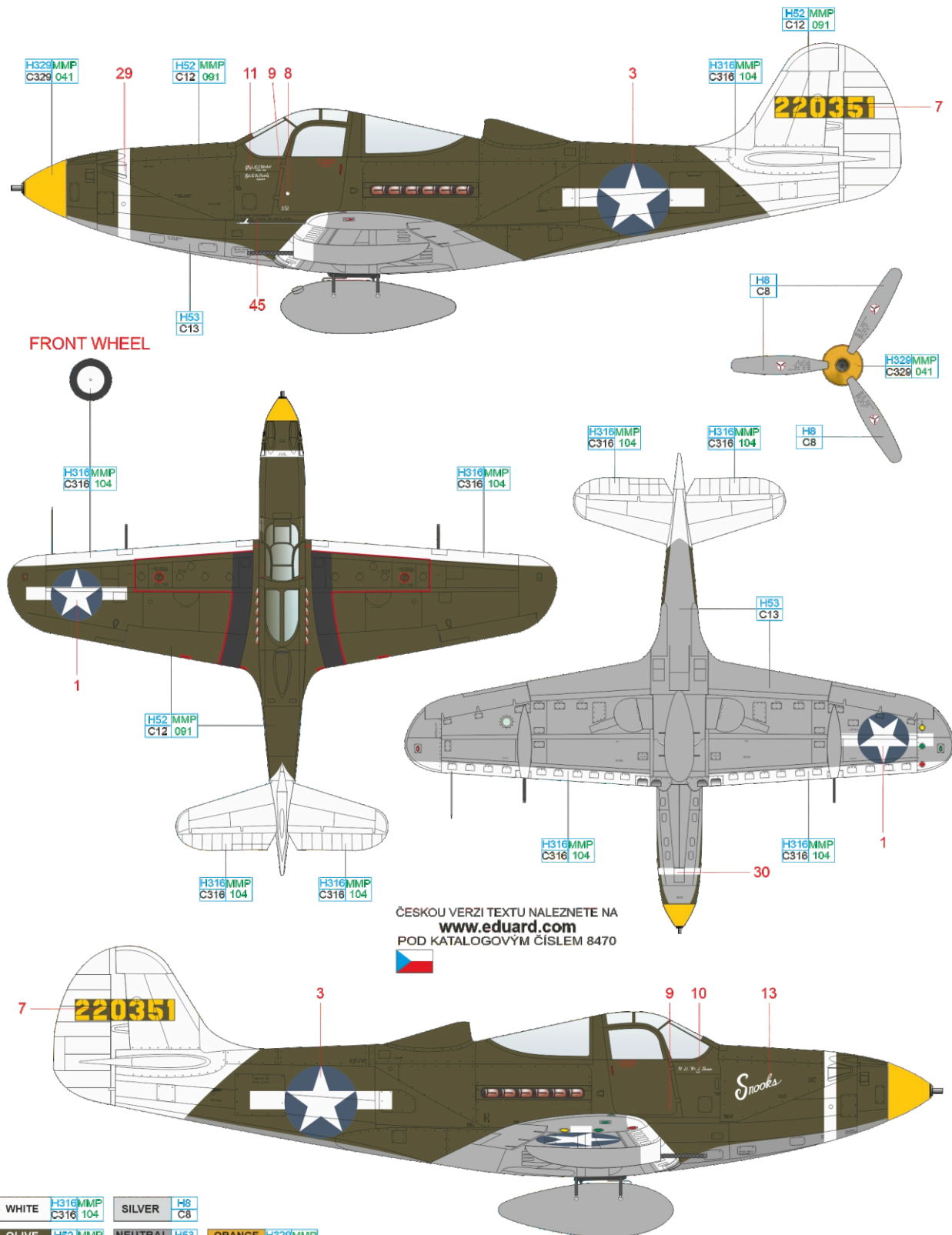
**I**





# A P-39Q-5, 42-20351, flown by Lt. William A. Shomo, 82<sup>nd</sup> TRS, 71<sup>st</sup> TRG, 5<sup>th</sup> AF, Dobodura, New Guinea, March 1944

William Arthur Shomo was born on May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1918, in Jeanette, Pennsylvania and joined USAAC (US Army Air Force) in August 1941. Having completed the training, he was assigned to 82<sup>nd</sup> TRS belonging to 71<sup>st</sup> TRG. In the fall 1943 the unit equipped with Airacobras was deployed to Port Moresby airbase in New Guinea. Crew chief of all aircraft Shomo flew with this unit was S/Sgt. Ralph Winkel who named all airplanes assigned to him Snooks according to his future wife. William Shomo became famous thanks to the mission flown on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1945, when at the controls of his reconnaissance Mustang he single-handedly shot down seven enemy aircraft, a feat for which he was awarded Medal of Honor. Shomo's total score was eight enemy aircraft shot down within 24 hours. In addition to a number of ground targets Shomo also claimed ten airplanes destroyed on the ground. At least three of them while flying the Airacobra. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1944, together with Lt. Weber they destroyed Ki-61 Tony fighter and a Betty bomber. On March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1944, during the raid on Madang airbase he destroyed an A6M fighter. Airacobra 42-20531 was lost during the ground attack mission in the Hansa Bay area and pilot, Lt. Harrison perished.



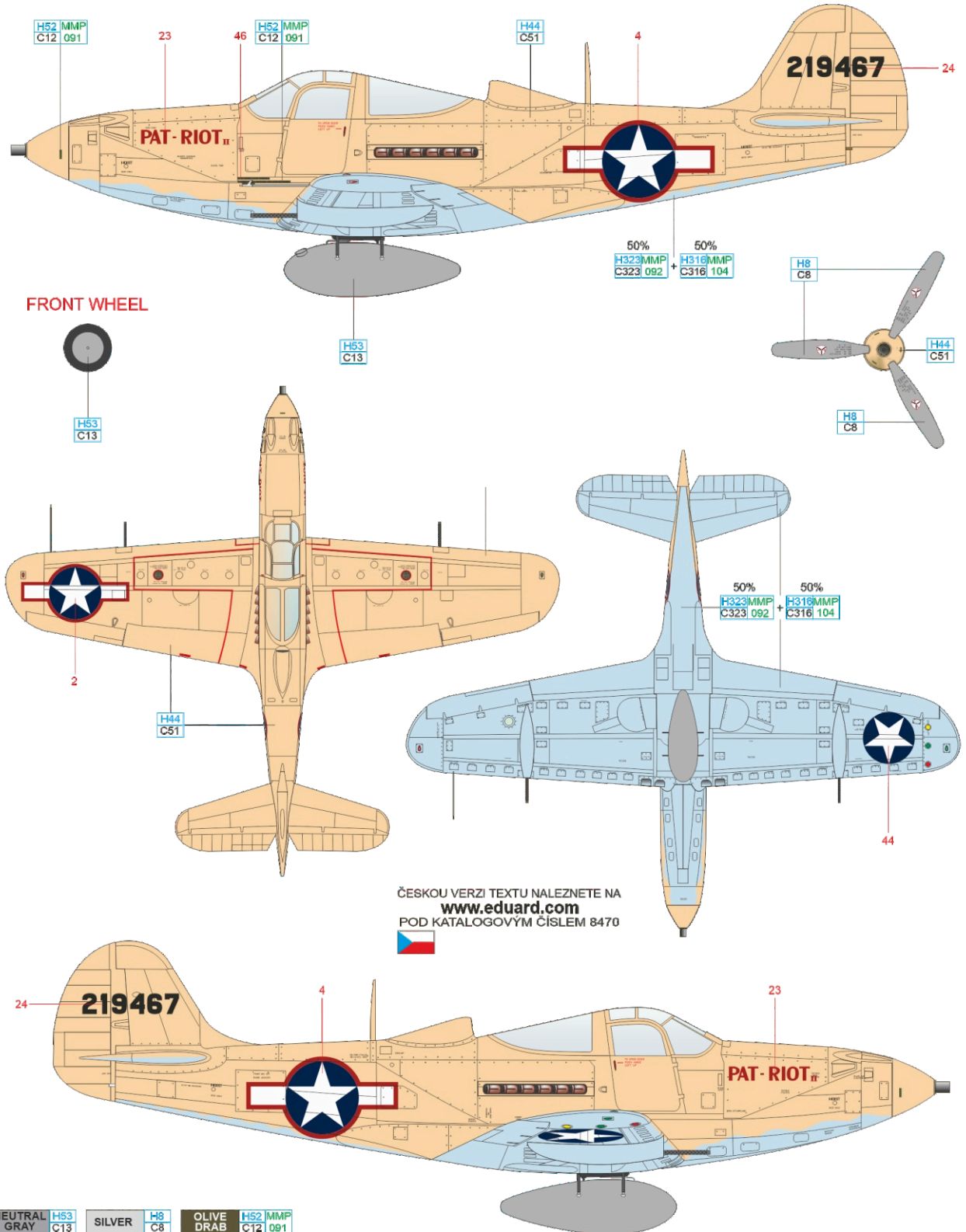
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WHITE	H316 MMP C316 104	SILVER	H8 C8
OLIVE DRAB	H52 MMP C12 091	NEUTRAL GRAY	H53 C13
		ORANGE YELLOW	H329 MMP C329 041

# B P-39Q-1, 42-19467, 46<sup>th</sup> FS, 15<sup>th</sup> FG, 7<sup>th</sup> AF, Kanton atoll, Phoenix archipelago, August 1943

46<sup>th</sup> FS (originally 46<sup>th</sup> PS) was formed on Hawaiian Islands on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1940, as a part of 15<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Group equipped, at that time, with Curtiss P-36 Hawk fighters. It opened its combat score right on the first day of the War in Pacific, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, defending the Pearl Harbor naval base against the Japanese attack. In 1942 the squadron was re-equipped with Airacobras and in the spring of 1943 deployed to Kanton atoll in the Phoenix archipelago. Due to the conditions on the island, almost completely lacking the vegetation, new Airacobras were repainted in the combination of the sand color on the upper and side surfaces while the lower surfaces of the fighters were sprayed in light blue colors. Camouflage change was an idea of Lt. Benjamin C. Warren, a pilot and unit's technical officer, who also supervised its application. In December 1943 46<sup>th</sup> FS left Kanton and after the over-water flight to atoll Makin carried on with the operations until mid December 1944. At that time its Airacobras carried the Olive Drab coat on the upper surfaces again.



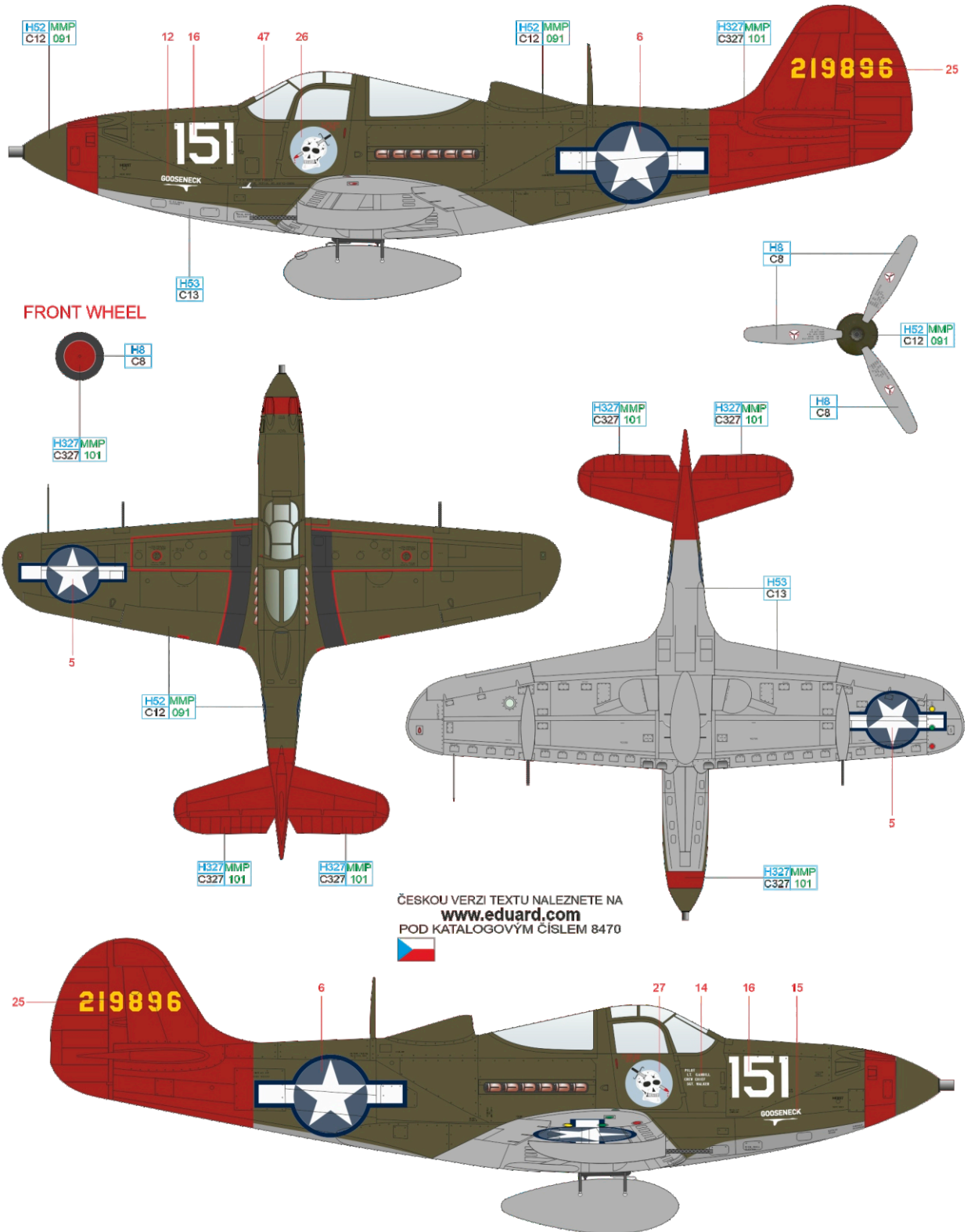
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NEUTRAL GRAY	H53 C13	SILVER	H8 C8	OLIVE DRAB	H52 MMP C12 091
FLESH	H44 C51	LIGHT BLUE	H323 MMP C323 092	WHITE	H316 MMP C316 104

**C 39Q-5, 42-19896, flown by Lt. William W. Gambill, 363<sup>rd</sup> FS, 357<sup>th</sup> FG, 8<sup>th</sup> AF, Oroville CA, USA, autumn 1943**

363<sup>rd</sup> FS was formed in December 1942 at Hamilton Field airbase in California. The aircraft used for the unit's pilot training were factory-fresh P-39Q Airacobras. In the fall of 1943 357<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, which 363<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron was part of, was deployed to the Great Britain where it was, as a first Fighter Group, re-equipped with the outstanding P-51B and C Mustangs. Within 8<sup>th</sup> AF it flew bomber escort sorties over occupied Europe. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944, Gambill's Mustang was shot down by Messerschmitts Bf 109 near Mehringen. Lt. Gambill was killed during the British night bomber raid on Frankfurt during the night of March 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, 1944, when Dulag Luft (Durchgangslager der Luftwaffe, Transit Camp of the Air force) was hit as well. The standard Airacobra camouflage of Olive Drab/Neutral Gray was during the training at 363<sup>rd</sup> FS complemented by the red coat of the tail surfaces and red stripe on the nose. The cockpit doors sported the unit's emblem.



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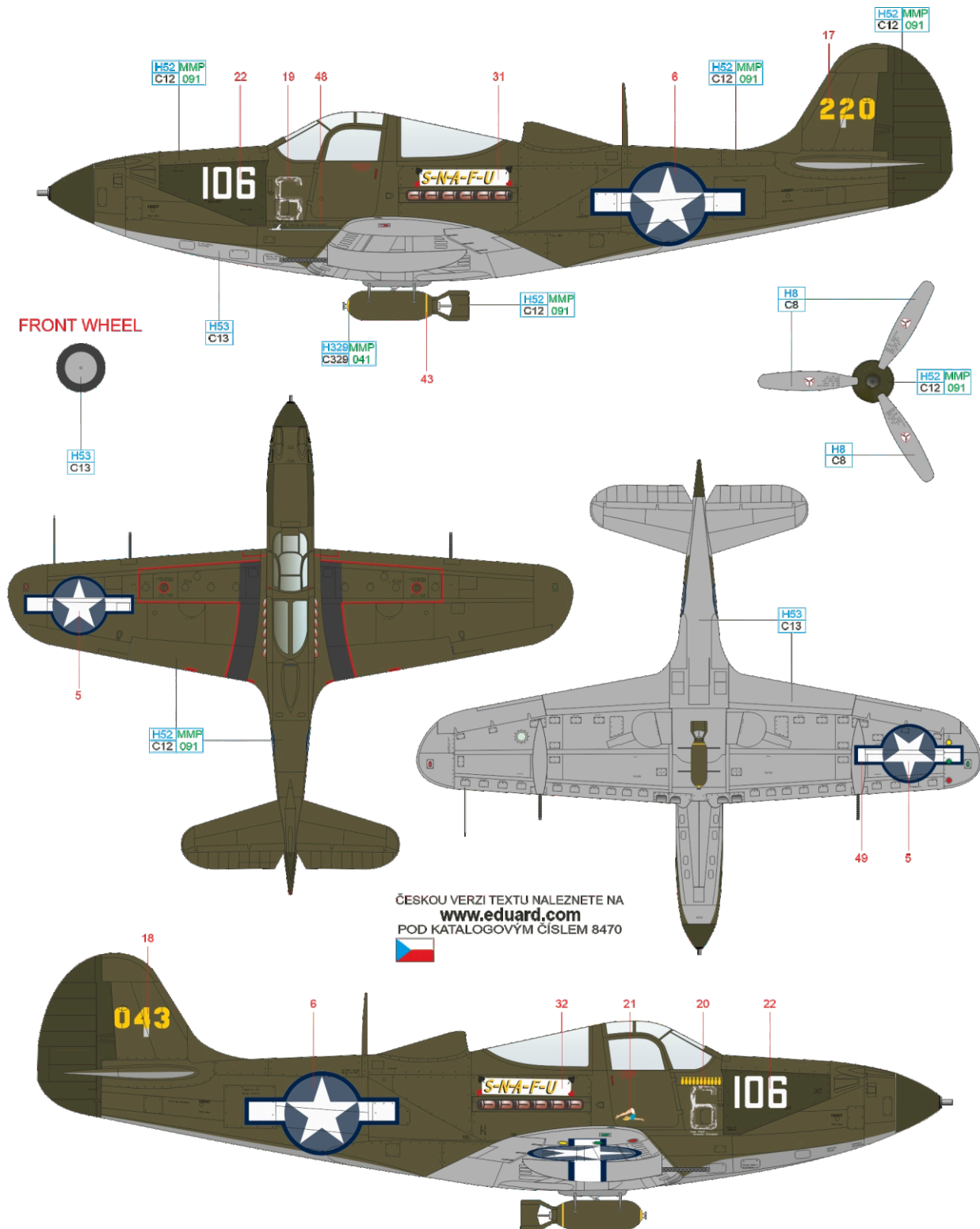


OLIVE DRAB H52 MMP C12 091 NEUTRAL GRAY H53 C13 RED H327 MMP C327 101 SILVER H8 C8

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# D P-39Q-5, 42-20043, 70<sup>th</sup> FS, 347<sup>th</sup> FG, 13<sup>th</sup> AF, Torokina airfield, Bougainville, Solomon Islands, autumn 1943

70<sup>th</sup> FS was formed on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1940, and on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1941, it was ordered to Philippines. Due to the fall of Philippines the unit deployment did not take place and the unit got shortly stuck in Hawaii. Another stopover before the combat deployment was Fiji where the unit transferred in the end of January 1942 equipped with Bell P-39 Airacobra. Since November 1942 until the spring of 1944 when the combat activities ceased, 70<sup>th</sup> FS operated in Solomon Islands area within 347<sup>th</sup> FG and was credited with over 50 enemy aircraft destroyed in the air-to-air combat. The unit's equipment changed, from flying the most popular P-38 Lightning in the first half of 1943 to P-39 and P-40 for the rest of the deployment period. Since the end of 1943 70<sup>th</sup> FS operated from Torokina airfield and kept Bell P-39 in its inventory until April 1944. The missions flown were bomber escorts, defense of the home base and most frequently the ground attacks. Airacobra "SNAFU" was delivered to the combat zone in the end of summer 1943. The original marking was in the form of the large numeral 6 on both fuselage sides in front of the cockpit door. Later the marking was relocated to the aircraft nose and changed to numeral 106.



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OLIVE DRAB	H52 MMP C12 091	NEUTRAL GRAY	H53 C13	ORANGE YELLOW	H329 MMP C329 041	SILVER	H8 C8
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# P-39Q Airacobra

# STENCILING POSITIONS

S60 - S63 - MARKING **B** ONLY

