

The Belgian Brewster B-339 in 1/48th Scale

by Didier Waelkens (Reprinted from "Kit" magazine, IPMS Belgium)

Historical Summary

IN ORDER to compensate for its inferiority in front of the Luftwaffe, the Belgian Government hurriedly ordered 40 Brewster B-339s. This model was identical to the U.S. Navy F2A-2; the typical navy equipment was removed. The aircraft were to be delivered in May 1940. The Belgian order was actually built between April and July 1940. The aircraft were therefore never used in combat by Belgian pilots (Belgium surrendered on 28 May 1940!). Two B-339s were delivered in Bordeaux-Mérignac (FR) and sources report that they were captured by the Germans in June 1940. One thing is sure: a fuselage wreck bearing Belgian colours was found in Germany near Darmstadt at the end of the war. The 38 remaining B-339s went to Great Britain and were allocated the serials AS410 to AS437 and AX811 to AX820, with the designation Brewster "Buffalo" Mark I.

Building the Tamiya kit in 1/48th scale

This is a superb kit that has recently been re-issued. Our choice will be the "NX56B," the first B-339 to fly in the USA. The construction is fairly easy, just follow the instructions on the plan. In the cockpit some parts can be omitted: the gunsight (part #4), the Navy-type sight mount on Part #8 and the armour behind the pilot (#18). The seat will be part #26. The instrument panels are decals which is a good thing; it will be easier to reproduce the "sandwich" type construction of these

panels. The top plate with drilled instrument locations is to be scratchbuilt.

The fuselage: use tailcone parts #30 and #31. The Belgian B-339s were equipped with the Navy-style tailwheel (#42). The belly window on the fuselage (clear part #2) did not exist on Belgian aircraft; the best way is to glue it, cover it with putty, and get a smooth finish with sandpaper. The engine is very well reproduced. Use your own method to paint it but don't weather it too much! The propeller is the Curtiss Electric (#53). The pitot tube will be the "L"-shaped one (#4).

For the painting, I used acrylics from Tamiya: Dark Green XF-61 and Red Brown XF-64. For the silver colour, avoid the Tamiya acrylic paint. It's not easy to use and I had to redo the brown and green colours as they were covered with hundreds of tiny silver spots! The cockades (type 1-3-5) were painted on the aircraft but they are available on a recent IPMS Belgium decal sheet; for the wings: 20.9mm and 9.1mm for the fuselage. The "NX56B" codes on the wings were found on MicroScale sheets #72-0025 and 72-0026 "U.S. ID" (12mm high). The width of the "B" must be reduced to 4.5mm. For the small serial on the rudder: the figures come from the same MicroScale sheet (heights = 1.5mm). The "B" is an "8" with a "1" on top of it; the letters "NX" were found on the Modeldecal sheet #48 "British Post War 4, 8, & 12 in. White Letters Numerals & Titles." The tiny cockade was painted red (3mm dia.) and yellow (1.8mm) while the black circle (0.6mm) has been found on a dry transfer sheet (Letraset or DecaDry)! **IPMS/T**



The Belgian Model 339B featured a pointed tailcone which lengthened the Buffalo's fuselage slightly. The carrier style tail wheel and cuffed Curtiss Electric propeller of the F2A-2 have been retained, but the pitot tube has been replaced by an 'L' shaped pitot tube.

