

Messerschmitt Bf 109E-4

by Jacob Russell

Scale: 1/48

Company: Pegasus Hobbies

Price: \$29.99

Product/Stock #: 8412

Website: Pegasus Hobbies

Product Web Page: View

Product Purchased At:

Skyway Model Shop

The Bf 109 E-4 was the third major production model in the E (for "Emil") line of Messerschmitt fighters. It was powered by the Daimler-Benz DB 601A-1, with armament composed of two cowl mounted MG 17 machine guns and two 20mm MG FF/M cannons in the wings. Externally the E-4 was distinguished by a new windscreen and redesigned canopy with heavier framing. The engine mounted cannon of the earlier E-3 was deleted.

The new kit by Pegasus is snap together, so the parts count is low. It consists of 30 parts, including the clear canopy, attached to three sprues. The rest of the parts are molded in a medium gray plastic. My overall impression of this kit is positive. The panel lines are recessed and are well done. There is decent cockpit detail molded to the inner fuselage halves, and also some ejector pin marks that require careful removal. The seat and rudder pedals are molded integrally with the



cockpit floor and I would add either seat belts or a pilot figure for best results.

The control column and instrument panel are separate pieces, but the instrument panel is blank so I would use Mike Grant instrument decals if so inclined. Returning to the fuselage, the supercharger intake, upper and lower cowls, and exhausts are also individual pieces, and are reasonably well done. There are some sink marks on the outside of the fuselage, under which are the sockets for the connecting pins- remember this is a snap together kit- but a little Mr. Surfacer or your filler of choice will sort these out quickly. The upper cowl falls on a non-existent panel line that will need to be filled.

There is also canopy armor to add to the canopy which is a nice touch. The upper wings have adequate wheel well detail molded into their upper surfaces and the lower wings have the cannon barrels molded on, but the inner faces of the wing radiators are blank. I might add a plastic card radiator face to avoid a see-through effect. Given the low parts count, it is nice to see a separate propeller, spinner and back plate. Many 109Es had the spinner back plate painted in a different color than the spinner so this will ease painting. Well done, Pegasus! There are also two sets of landing gear so you can build the model in flight or on the ground. In the case of the latter option the landing gear and doors are molded in one piece.

The wheels are simplified in detail and the tread of the tires is overscale. True Details, CMK, Ultracast, and Aires all have resin 109 wheels for those who feel compelled to upgrade. Minor omissions from the parts list are pitot tube and aileron mass balances. The single decal/sticker option is for the Bf 109E-4 of Major Adolf Galland, Kommodore of JG 26 "Schlageter", France, 1940. This plane - the most familiar 109E of all? - was painted in the standard RLM 70 Black Green/71 Dark Green/65 Light Blue with 70/71 mottling. The rudder, spinner, back plate and entire cowl were painted in RLM 04 Yellow. The decal/sticker sheet includes all national insignia except swastikas, and also the JG 26 shield and the "Mickey Mouse" emblem. The decals are well printed and in register.

I checked the wings and fuselage against 1/48th scale plans in the AJ Press monograph, Me109 Part 5 , and the wings and fuselage matched almost perfectly; the wings in particular are slightly narrow, but very close. The propeller blades are also too narrow. But the kit certainly looks the part. Check your references as to the colors of Galland's plane. By 1940 the Luftwaffe had switched to RLM 71/02/65 on the upper surfaces and at least one of Galland's 109Es was painted in RLM 74/75 upper surface colors. Most of Galland's planes also had a telescopic gun sight. And a cigar lighter, but I digress!

There are plenty of Emil kits out there, but how many of them could you build and paint with your children in one day? This kit is accurate, inexpensive, well detailed,

and the perfect antidote to the "throw everything aftermarket at the kit" school of model building. I like this kit, I recommend it, and I bought mine at the Skyway Model Shop.

References

Messerschmitt Me 109 Part 5 , by Robert Michulec, AJ Press, 1998.

Messerschmitt Bf109 in action Part 1 , by John R. Beaman, Jr. & Jerry Campbell, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1980.

Messerschmitt "O-Nine" Gallery, by Thomas H. Hitchcock, Monogram Aviation Publications, 1973.