Bf 108

eduard

1/32 Scale Plastic Model Kit



ProfiPACK edition

The Messerschmitt Bf 108 Taifun was the tourist and courier aircraft setting the trends enduring for decades. Its progressive concept was not surpassed until thirty years later. It reliably served both civilian as well as military users, especially the Luftwaffe.

In 1934, the Challenge International de Tourisme was to be held and Germany wanted to enter a team that would fly a brand new sport aircraft. Its design was assigned to Bayerische Flugzeugweke AG (BFW) company with chief designer and co-owner Willi Messerschmitt. He had already built several successful sports and passenger aircraft, but was also in disfavor with the Erhard Milch, the Reich Minister of Aviation, due to the crash of a prototype ten-seat airliner, the M 20, which killed Milch's close friend and Lufthansa chief pilot Hans Hackmack in 1928. Milch's resentment prevented BFW from accessing any government contracts and the resulting difficulties led to the company's bankruptcy and restructuring in 1933.

Thanks to the activities of BFW director Rakan Kokothaki, Messerschmitt prepared a small transport aircraft, the M 36, for Romanian Airlines in the difficult times shortly after the bankruptcy. The prototype proved successful and Romania purchased the design. The success with a foreign customer eventually helped Messerschmitt to get an order for the construction of a new sports aircraft, designated the M 37. It was a progressive design that was well ahead of its time with its all-metal airframe, retractable landing gear and spacious, comfortable four-seat cabin with ample luggage space. The first prototype was successfully flown on June 13, 1934, and RLM designated it Bf 108 subsequently. For the factory itself, this was an aircraft that helped it not only financially but also technologically. With the Bf 108, Messerschmitt and his colleagues verified the method of construction that they used in the design of the Bf 109 fighter.

On the sports scene

The Bf 108 prototype first flew on June 13, 1934. It was powered by a 224 hp (165 kW) Hirth HM 8U engine coupled to a three-bladed VDM adjustable pitch propeller. It was subsequently redesignated Bf 108V-1 and tests at Rechlin confirmed very good flight characteristics and performance of the new aircraft. The production of a pre-production series of six aircraft for the needs of the competition team was therefore promptly commissioned. One aircraft (D-IBUM) was destroyed in a crash prior to the competition, finally, four Bf 108s took part in the Challenge International de Tourisme. It was a 14,313 km long stage race that took place over several European countries, as well as over the Mediterranean Sea and North Africa. The competition evaluated a number of different and sometimes contradicting flight performance characteristics and Messerschmitt therefore sought to create an aircraft that would be able to compete in all of them. In order to achieve this goal, the wing had unusually large flaps over almost the entire wingspan, while control around the longitudinal axis was provided only by small ailerons and slats on the leading edge. However, this solution gave Bf 108 unusually sensitive controls, even for experienced pilots. In the end, the Bf 108 did not live up to expectations, with the best placed being World War I combat veteran Theo Osterkamp in 4th place.

Even so, it was obvious that an extraordinary aircraft was born and the Bf 108 started to attract interest of customers. In 1935, BFW produced 32 units with a modified wing as it received standard ailerons. In November, a slightly enlarged version, the Bf 108B, was ready for production. After a three pre-production Bf 108B-0s, serial production of the Bf 108B-1 version commenced and the serial aircraft changed the power unit for 231-hp (170-kW) Argus AS 10C-3. The cockpit canopy was also modified and slots were stretched almost all the way along the leading edge of the wing. The propeller was wooden, fixed, or adjustable VDM one. The name Taifun was given to the Bf 108 thanks to the performance of German woman pilot Ella Beinhorn, who flew the distance of 3,568 km from Gleiwitz to Zurich in 13 hours and 25 minutes of flight time in August 1935.

Military service

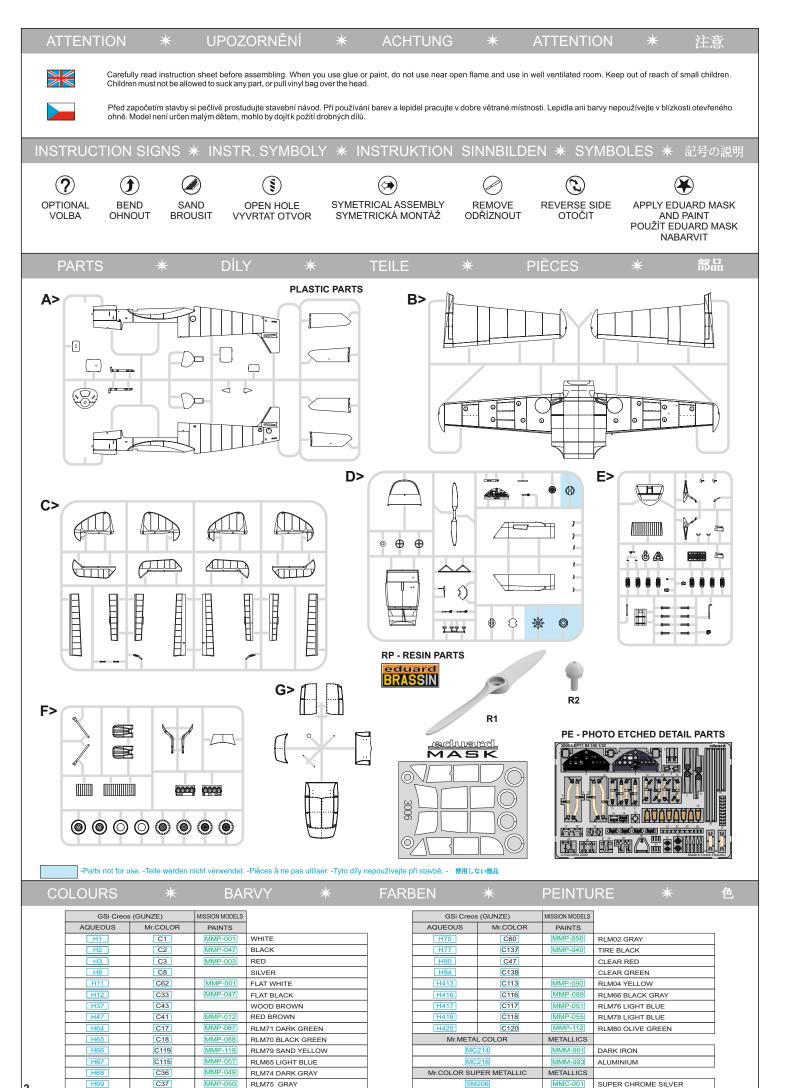
During 1938, 175 Taifuns were produced, including Bf 108B-1S (Schlechtwetter) with better instrument equipment for bad weather conditions flights. Most of these aircraft were taken over by the Luftwaffe, as were all the examples of Bf 108B-2 version. These received the MeP7 variable-pitch propeller.

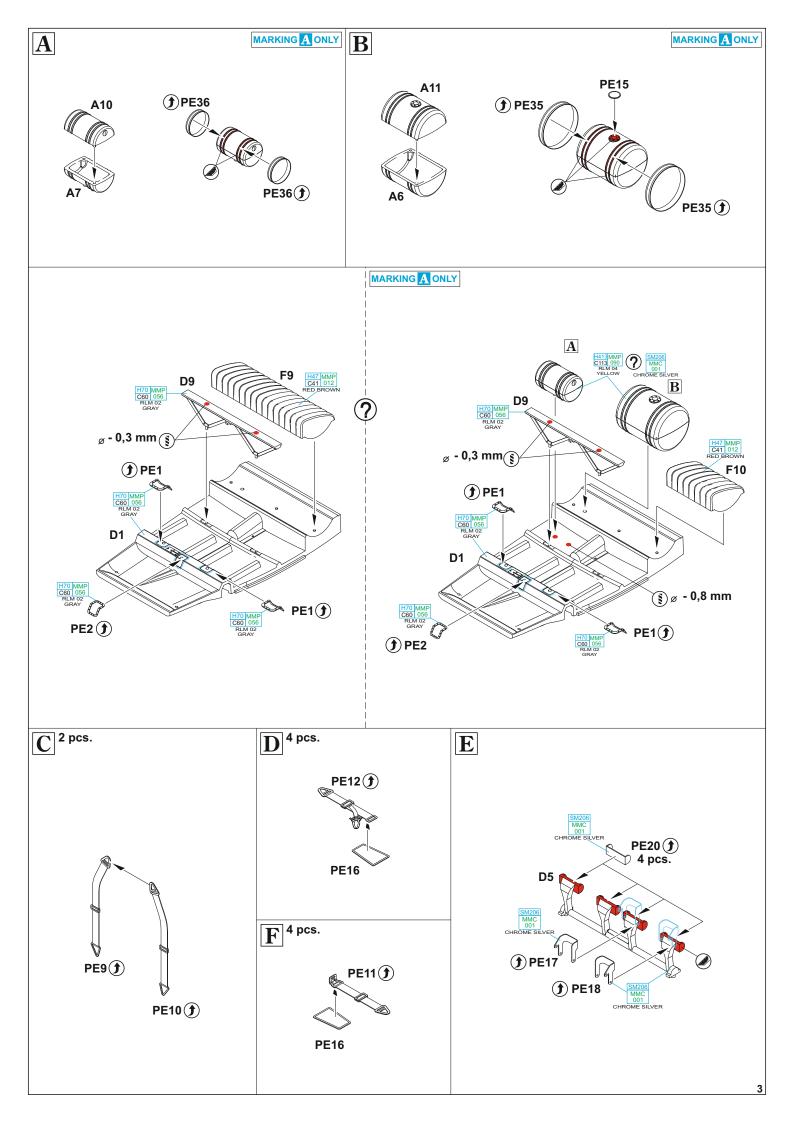
In January 1941, the Bf 108D-1 version with the Argus As 10C or As 10R engine with 177 kW (241 hp) was introduced into production. The wing was enlarged and the fuel system was changed. The BFW produced 131 units, and after the surrender of France, production of Taifuns was transferred to the SNCAN factory to free up the BFW's full capacity to produce Bf 109 fighters. For Afrikakorps needs, some of the machines were converted to the Bf 108B-2 trop and Bf 108D-1 trop versions. At SNACN, Bf 108s were produced not only until the end of the war but also after. The post-war production included an adaptation to a tricycle nosewheel landing gear, which was designated NORD 1101.

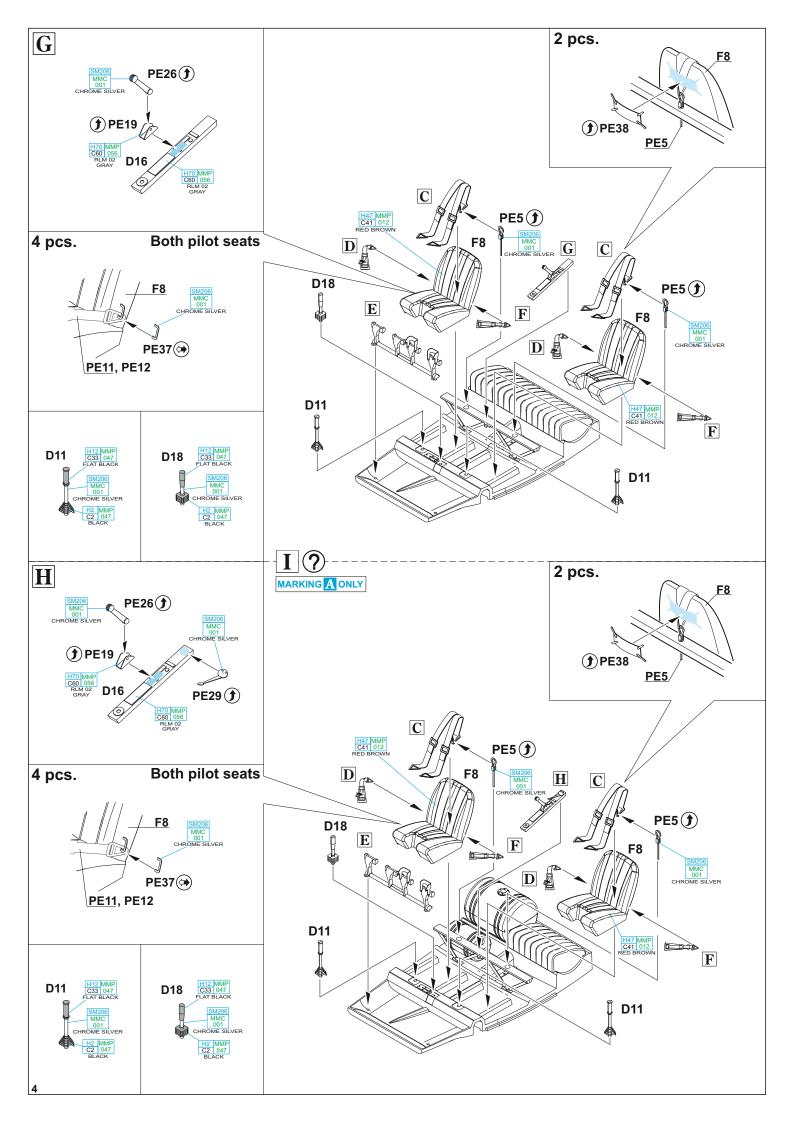
Reliable courier

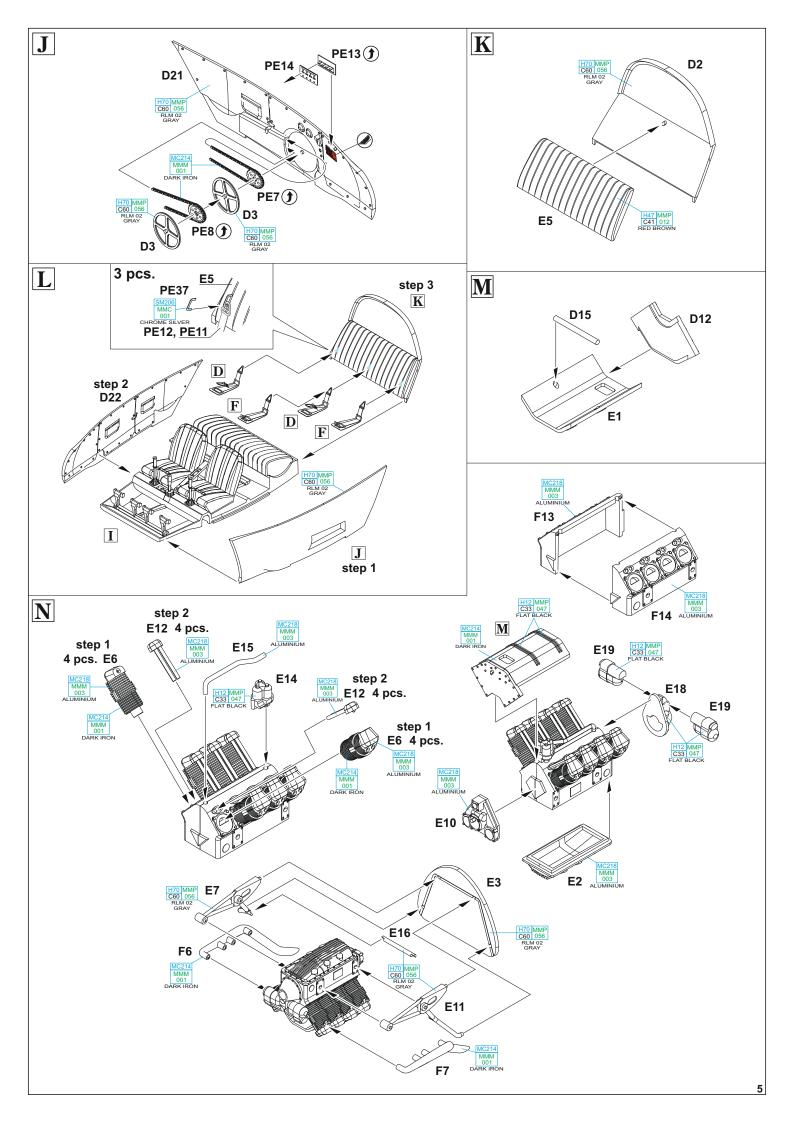
During the war, the Bf 108 was reliable aircraft serving in courier and liaison duties. Only once did this aircraft become a direct participant in an operation of combat significance, when it carried a pair of sabotage group of two pilots who's task was to prepare conditions for interfering with Allied supply routes over North Africa from a forward area. Interestingly, in order to cover the 2,500 km distance to its destination in Great Syrt Bay, the Taifun had to travel more than half of the way in tow behind the He 111 from Greece.

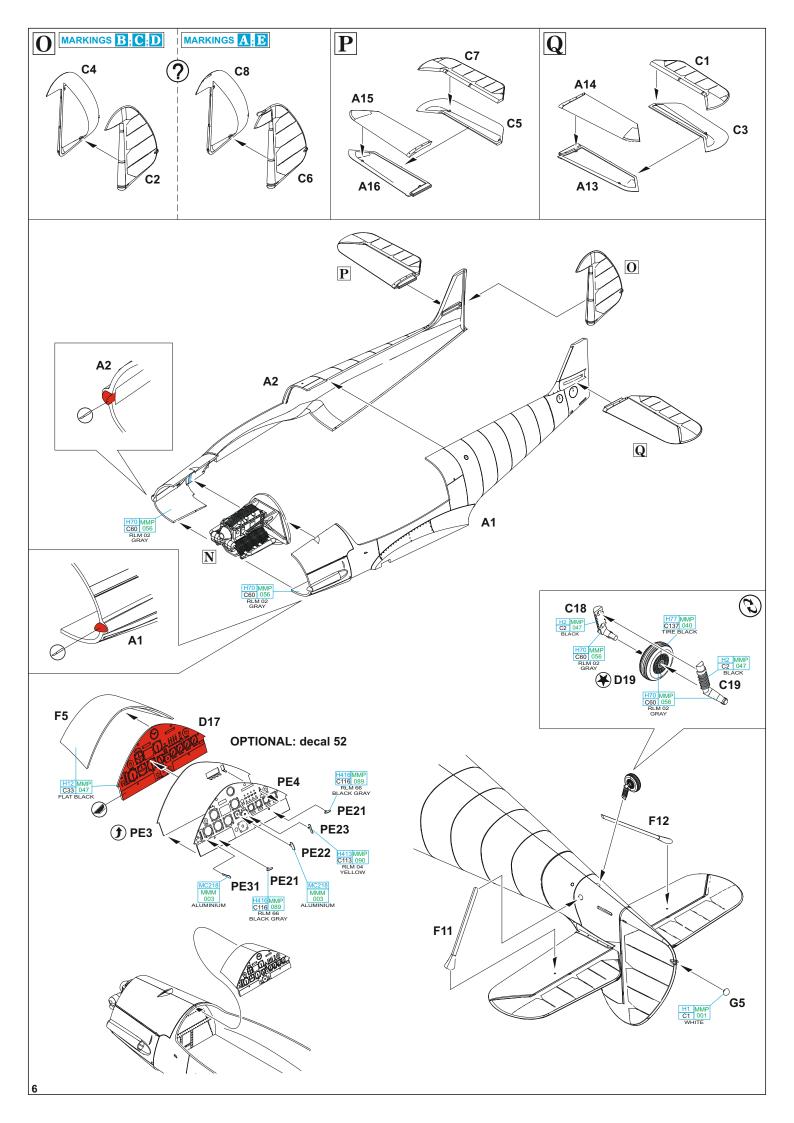
A total of 885 Bf 108s of all versions were produced during the war, with post-war production yielding another 250. The military versions of the Bf 108B-2 and D-1 produced 626 units. Most of them were used by the Luftwaffe, but also by many foreign users. The timelessness of the design is evidenced by the fact that in 1974 Messerschmitt, in cooperation with other partners, attempted to introduce production of an upgraded Taifun 1974. However, the plans eventually fell through.

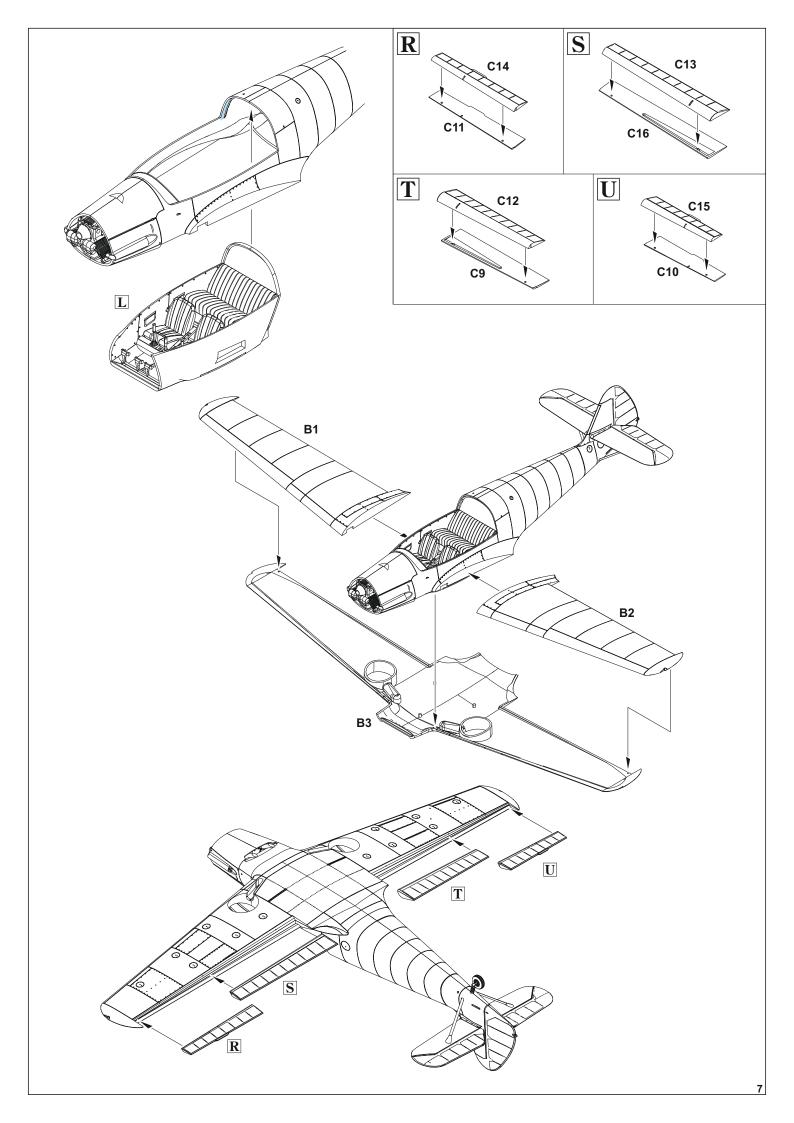


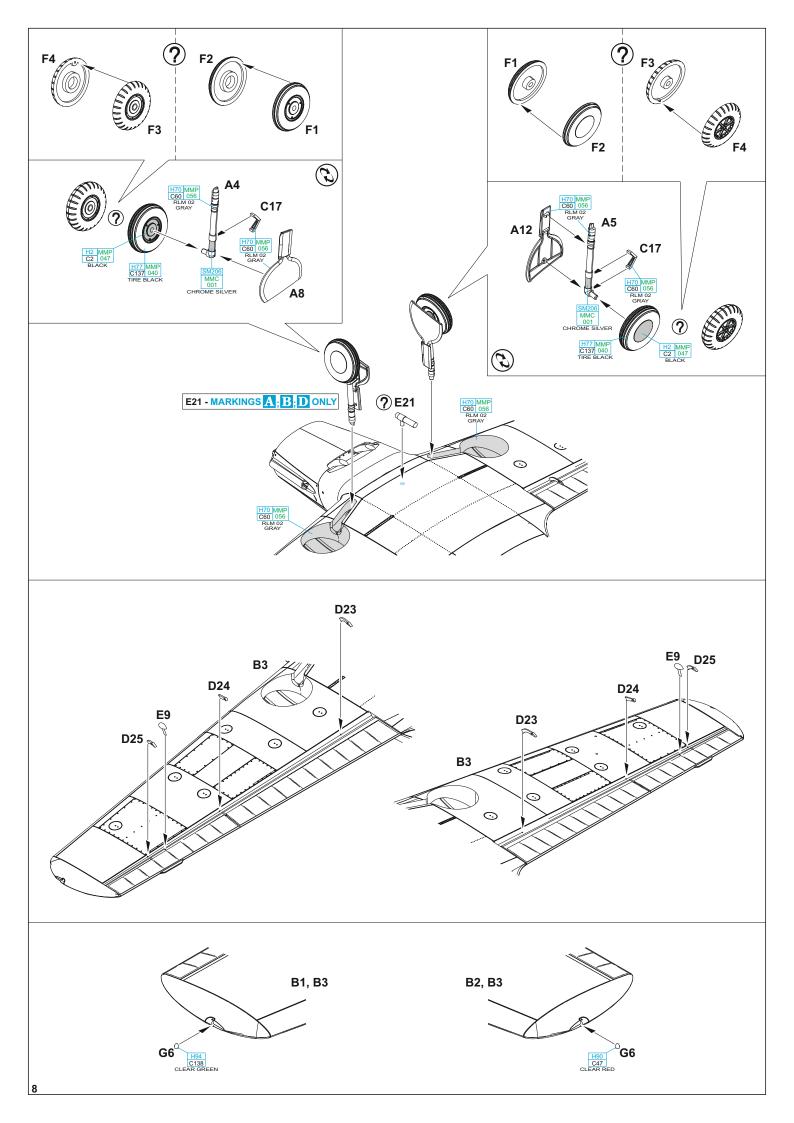


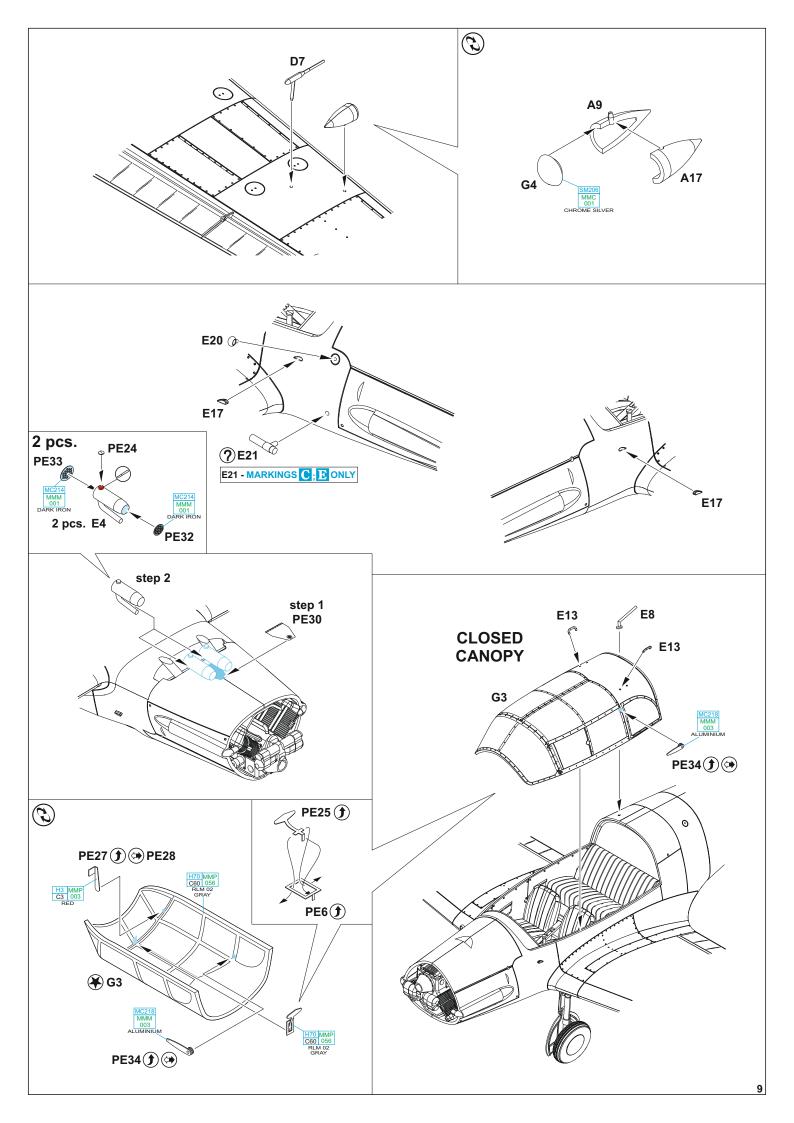


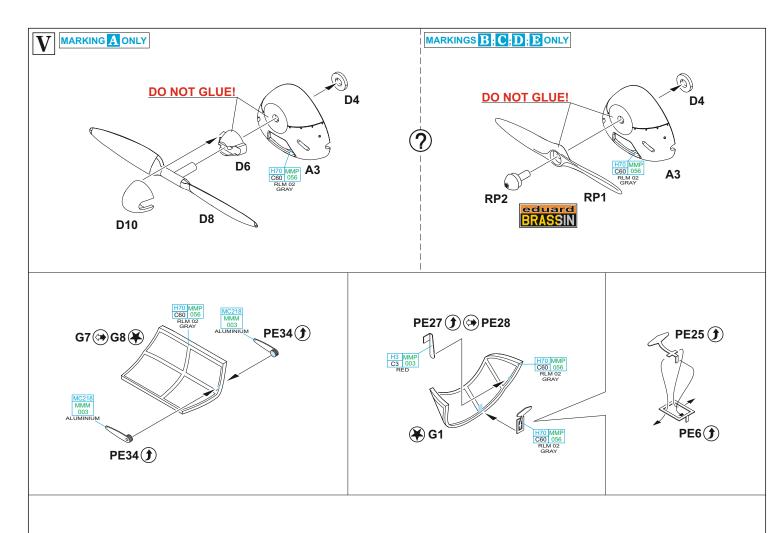


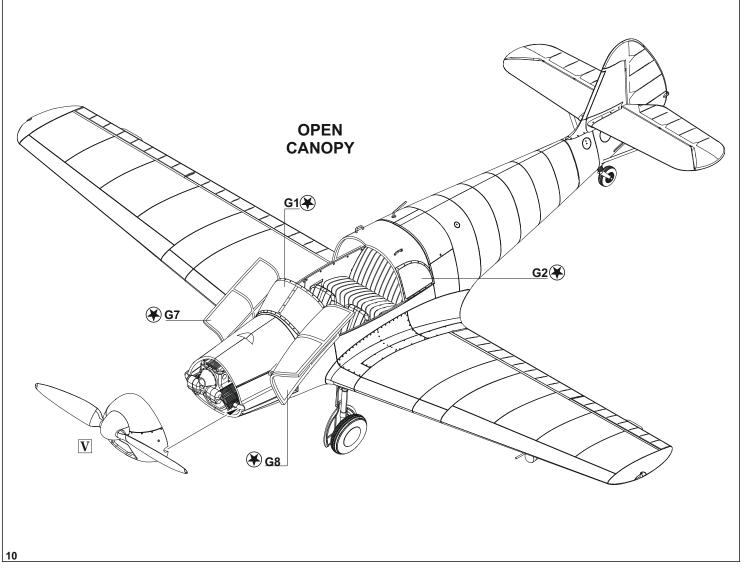


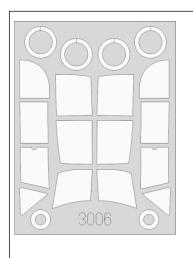


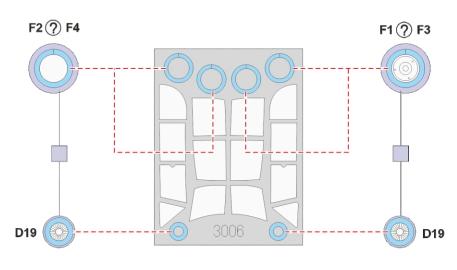




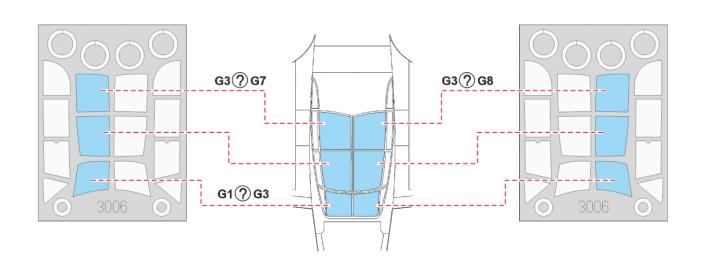


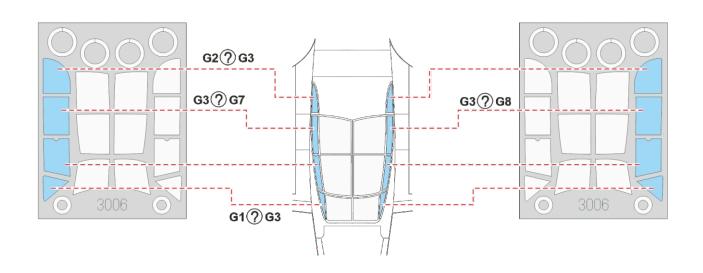






LIQUID MASK

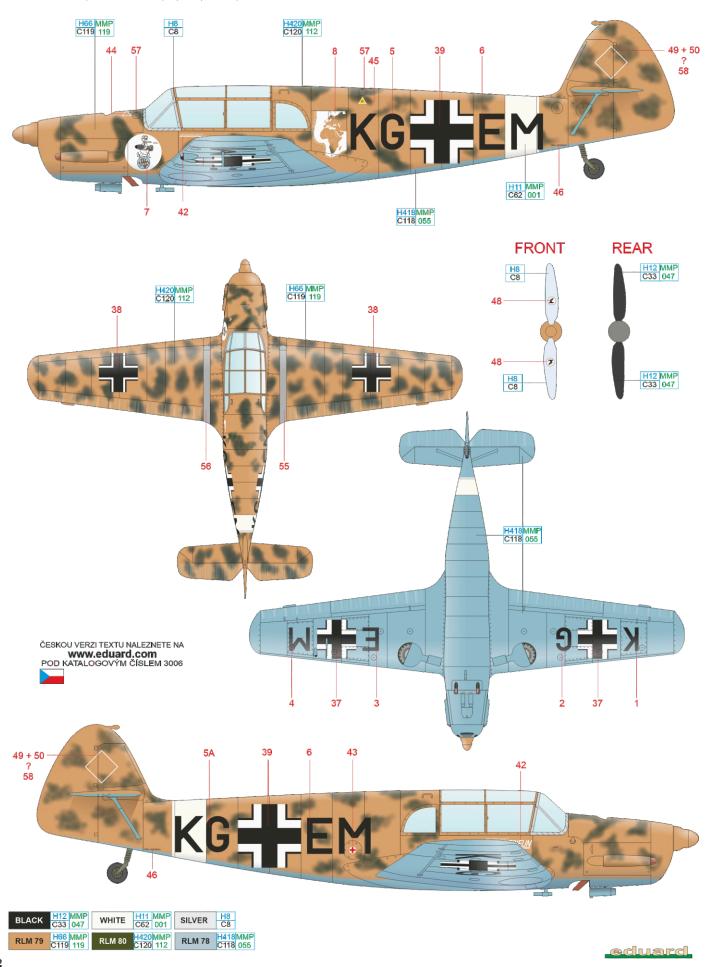




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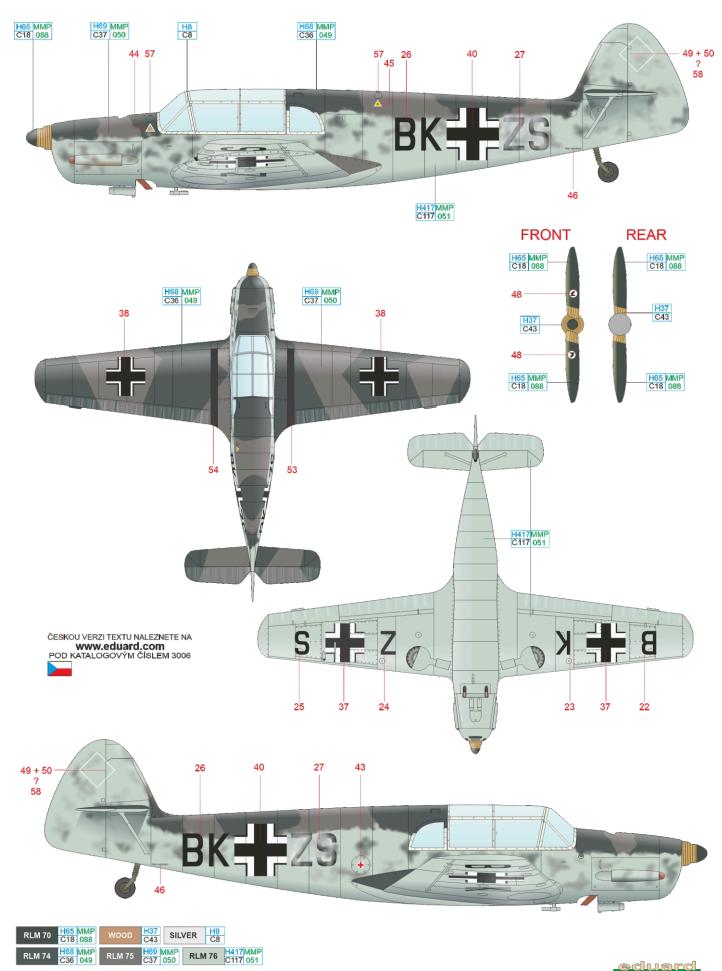
Sonderkommando Blaich, Tripoli, Libya, January 1942

Sonderkommando Blaich, named for its Commander, Hptm. Theo Blaich, utilised the He 111 in Libya during 1942. This liaison aircraft was part of their fleet as well. Taifun KG+EM was modified for service in a tropical climate and also received a desert camouflage scheme comprised of sand with green spots on the upper surfaces. The most interesting operation undertaken by this unit was a successful bombing raid on an Allied fuel storage facility on January 22, 1942, in which a partial role also played by the depicted aircraft.



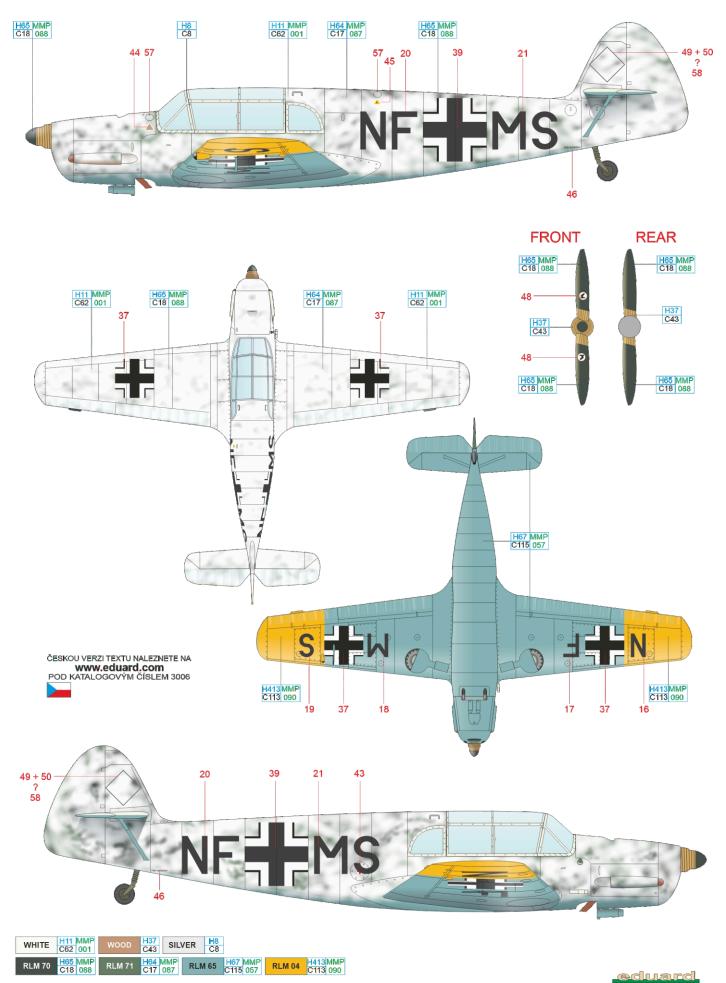
B Hungary, 1942 - 1944

This aircraft carried a very unusual camouflage scheme, made up of RLM 74, 75 and 76 colors reserved for fighters. This aircraft probably served in Hungary on the Eastern front. The code letters ZS were either oversprayed or scraped off.



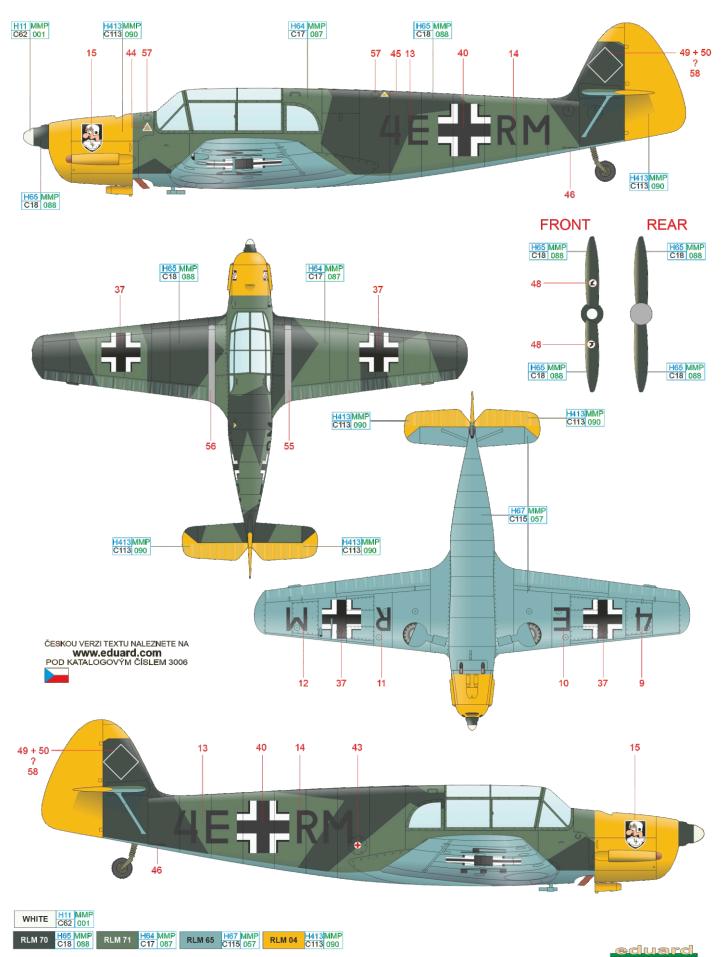
Stab I./JG51, Soviet Union, Winter 1942 - 1943

The camouflage scheme here consisted of RLM 70 and 71 on the upper and RLM 65 on the lower surfaces. The upper surfaces were overpainted with white splotches and the white was sprayed over the outer sections of the national insignia.



4.(H)/Aufkl. Gr. 13, Romania, April 1940

A liaison plane belonging to 4.(H)/Aufkl. Gr. 13, shown as it appeared at one of the Luftwaffe's air fields in Romania in the fall of 1940. The plane carried, besides a standard camouflage scheme consisting of fields of RLM 70/71 on the upper surfaces and RLM 65 on the undersides of the wings, fresh theatre markings designated for the Balkan campaign – a yellow nose and tail control surfaces. The 4.(H)/Aufkl. Gr. 13 marking was painted on the nose of the plane and it also had a somewhat non-standard shape to the letters in the codes.



I./JG 54, France, June/July 1940

This Taifun, flown by I. Gruppe JG 54 in the summer of 1940 from occupied France, was sprayed RLM 02 on all surfaces. The unit marking was carried below the windscreen, and was a derivative of the Nuremburg Coat of Arms, the city near to which the fighter Gruppe was based before the war.

