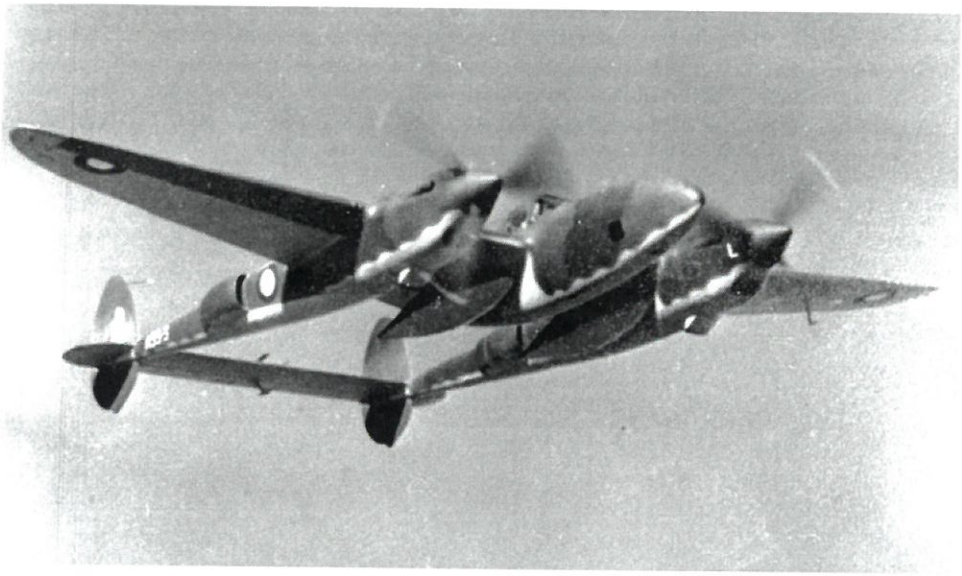
RRR48145

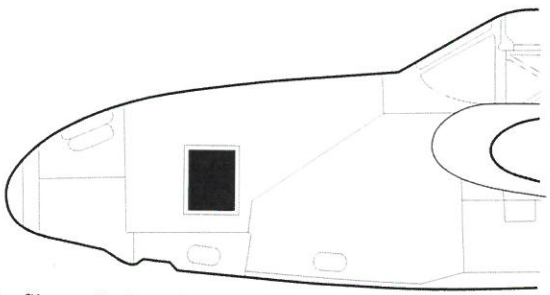
Red Roo Models
RAAF P-38 Lightning (PR) Conversion
1/48 scale



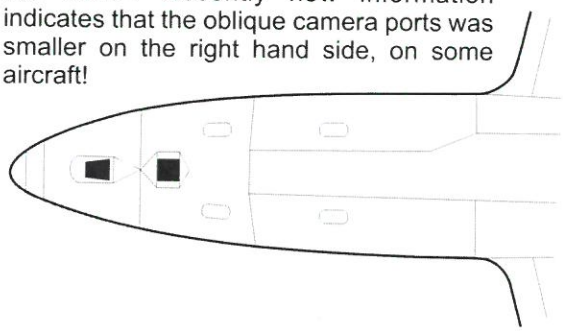
RAAF P-38E (PR) Lockheed Lightning

Some confusion has arisen over the correct designation of the three P-38 Lightnings received and operated by the RAAF. These aircraft are sometimes described as F-4s, however, this is not the case. The three aircraft were standard P-38E models, which were converted by the RAAF to approximately F-4A standard. Careful examination of photographs reveals that there are considerable differences between the Lockheed factory-built F-4A and the RAAF converted aircraft.

The aircraft received by the RAAF were A55-1 (ex USAAF 41-2158), A55-2 (ex USAAF 41-2159) and A55-3 (ex USAAF 41-2122). A further two USAF aircraft, 41-2220 and 41-2156, were loaned to 75 Squadron RAAF during the last quarter of 1943. The three RAAF aircraft had fairly short service lives and were all destroyed or damaged beyond repair as a result of undercarriage failure or engine failure.



Profile and plan view in 1/48 scale, showing details of the PR nose conversion fitted by the RAAF. Recently new information indicates that the oblique camera ports was smaller on the right hand side, on some aircraft!



Template for the optical glass camera apertures. The inner dimensions are exact and the external rectangle is merely a guide. Make sure you cut these out with sufficient plastic to overlap the edges of the resin parts to which they will be glued. Make this item from scrap 5 thou plastic card.

Using this Conversion with the 1/48 Scale Academy P-38F Kit

This conversion is designed to be used with the 1/48 scale Academy P-38F Lightning "Glacier Girl" kit (No 12208). This kit will provide you with the correct engine nacelle profile. Earlier Academy kits, such as that of the P-38E may be used, but you will require to source an engine conversion from elsewhere and as the design of this conversion is kit specific, no guarantee or warranty is implied or given for such a project.

Step 1:

Ensure that the forward, top and rear edges of the two resin nose halves are cleaned up and smooth as this will have a big bearing on the fit of the nose cap. Cement the two nose halves together using CA Glue (Super Glue) and allow to dry. Carefully fill and sand the seam on the top of the nose, taking care not to remove the camera bay access fairing lines. Carefully fill and sand the seam on the bottom of the nose halves. Make sure that the area within the recess that will take the camera lens is cleaned up.

Step 2:

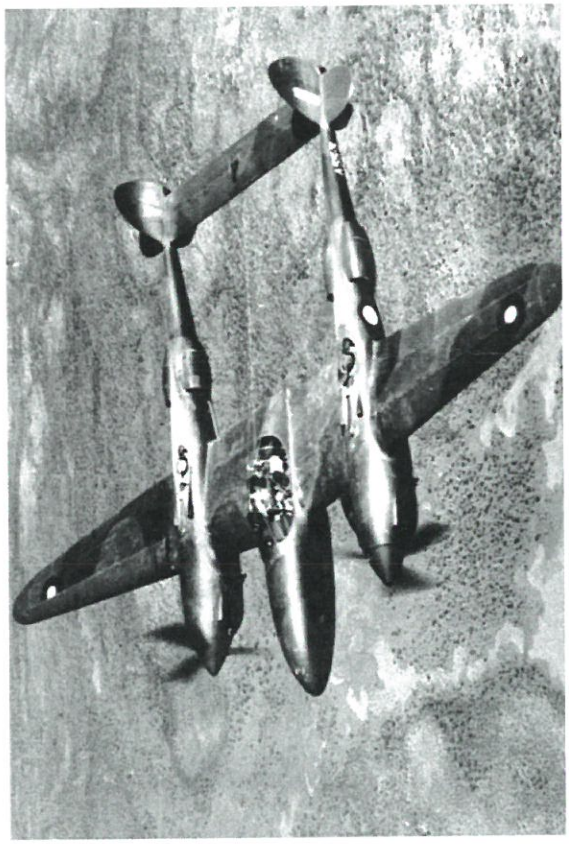
Complete the kit fuselage and cockpit, with detailing to your requirements, as per the kit instructions and be sure to omit parts C9 and C10. Replace these parts with the assembled nose halves, making sure that you use the three support beams to securely locate the resin nose on the kit fuselage. Decide if you wish to fill and sand the forward bulkhead of the nose gear bay or line it with a piece of 5 thou plastic card to hid the seam of the resin parts.

Do not fill and remove the seam between the camera access bay doors and the kit fuselage as this was a prominent feature of the real aircraft. By all means, minimise this seam with correction fluid (or your favourite liquid filler) if it appears excessively heavy.

Step 3:
Fit weight, as recommended by the kit instructions, to the forward compartment of the nose (and beneath the cockpit tub if required). It is recommended that you carry out a trial balance before securing the resin nose cap, which replaces part F18, on the fuselage. Do not fill the seam between the nose cap and the camera bay access doors as this was a prominent feature on the real aircraft.

Step 4:
At this point use the template provided to create the camera aperture surfaces from 5 thou plastic card. Use CA glue to carefully glue the small pieces of plastic card in place on the lower surface of the nose, making sure that the square one is glued in the rear position. Allow to thoroughly dry. Once dry, use a new blade to carefully cut away any excess plastic that overhangs the flat surface. Then use your favourite filler to blend the plastic into the resin parts. Alternatively you may wish to dispense with the plastic frames and simply apply black decal to represent the optical glass panels.

Step 5:
Finish construction of the model according to the kit instructions. Paint and finish the model in your choice of colour scheme and markings. Paint the interior of the camera apertures gloss black and apply a coat of Future or similar product to the painted area once dry.

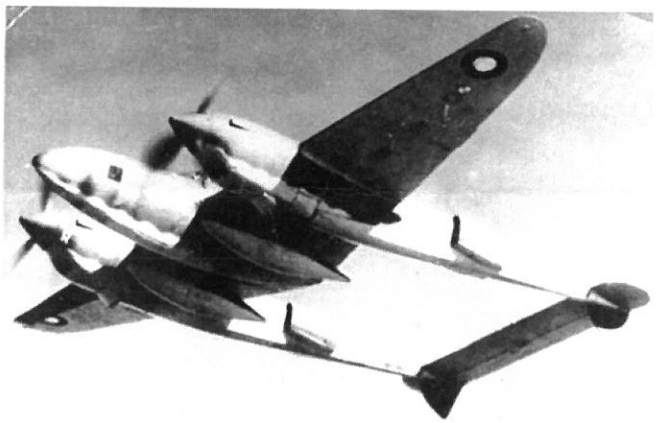


The Academy kit instructions state that 20g of weight in the nose of the model is required to keep it on its wheels. We believe that considerably more weight is required - at least 35g. Because the replacement nose cap is solid we recommend placing lead weights (use split shot sinkers) in the nose section of the fuselage, ahead of the cockpit and in the front of the engine cowls/booms, ahead of the wing leading edge. We recommend a trial fit and balance before securing the booms to the fuselage.

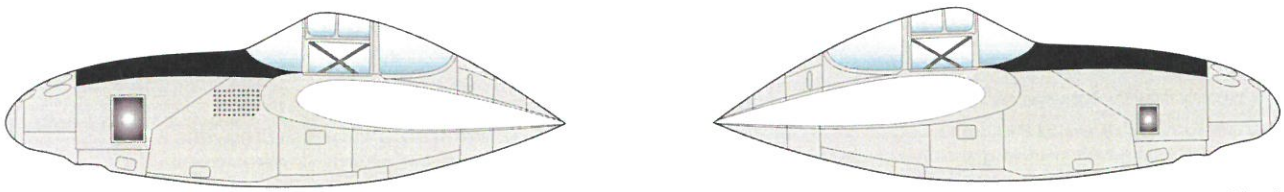
DECAL APPLICATION
Thin Film Decals Please Use Care

1. Ensure model has received a suitable coat of gloss varnish before applying these decals.
2. Carefully cut around the decal required. Trim as close as possible in order to obtain the best results.
3. Apply the white backing decals first, allow them to thoroughly dry before applying the coloured decals.
4. Moisten the application site with your favourite settling solution. Remember, the carrier film on these decals is very thin, test the effect of your settling solution on an unwanted decal if in doubt.
5. Soak the decal in water for a around 60 seconds, then slide the decal from the paper onto the model. Apply decal carefully by sliding off backing paper with a soft, long bristle brush. Position carefully and use tissue paper to absorb excess moisture.
6. Use decal-settling solution to draw the decal down over surface detail. If air bubbles or 'silvering'" form during drying phase wait till decal is thoroughly dry, then pierce affected area with a pin and re-apply settling solution. Do not try to force decals to conform to surface or express air bubbles doing this will tear the decals.
7. Apply a coat of gloss varnish over the decals once they are thoroughly dry and allow to dry thoroughly.
8. Apply a coat of matt varnish over the entire model when the previously applied gloss varnish is thoroughly dry to hide the carrier film.

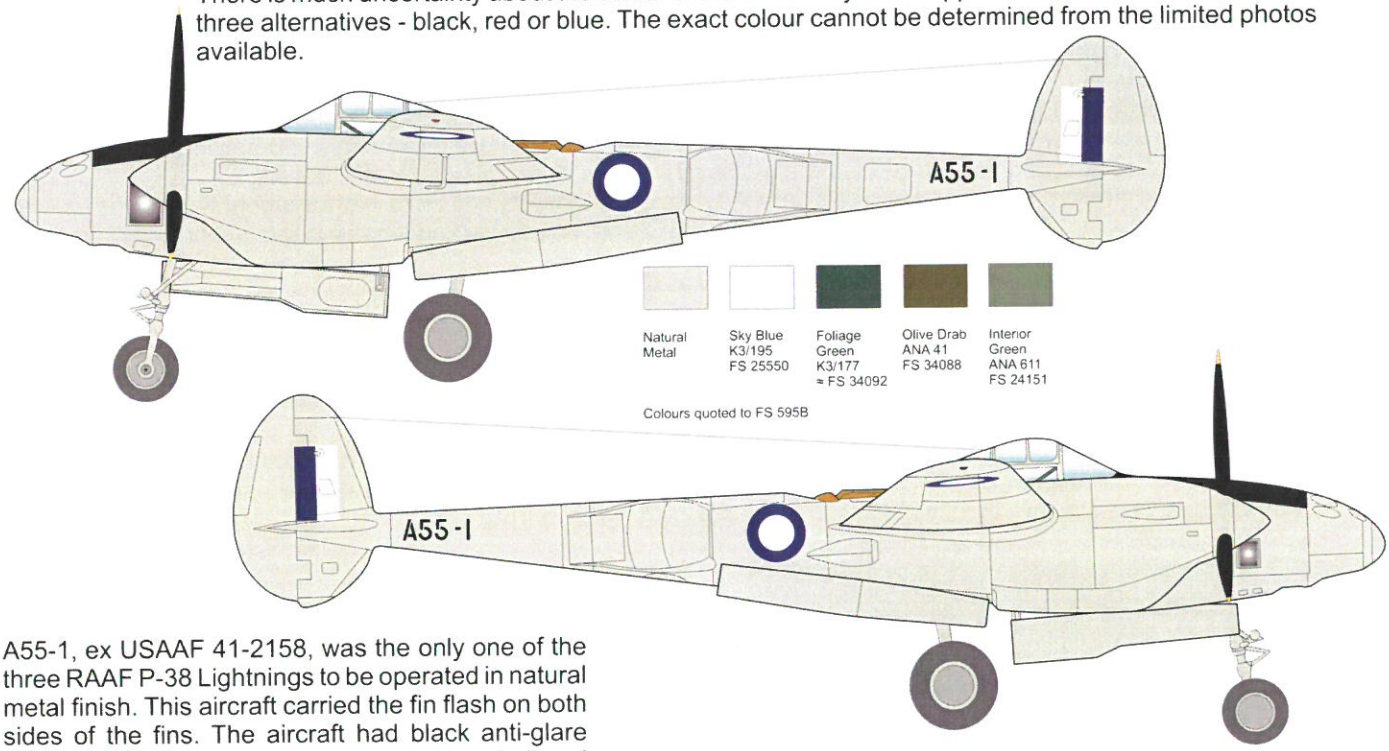
Note:
These decals are printed on extremely thin film, using an Alps printer. They are extremely thin and must be handled gently. The decals have been finished to protect from scratching but there is no final coat of varnish applied. They will work brilliantly as they are, remember to use large amounts of water when sliding the decals onto the model. Make sure you place the backing paper in place against the model, then slowly and gently slide the decal onto the model and into position. You can either allow the excess water to evaporate or mop it up with a tissue. Then apply your settling solution using a soft, long bristled brush. For the best results allow the model to stand for 24 hours in a warm, dry place before checking the decals for 'silvering' or bubbles. These decals require a little extra care but the result is well worth it.



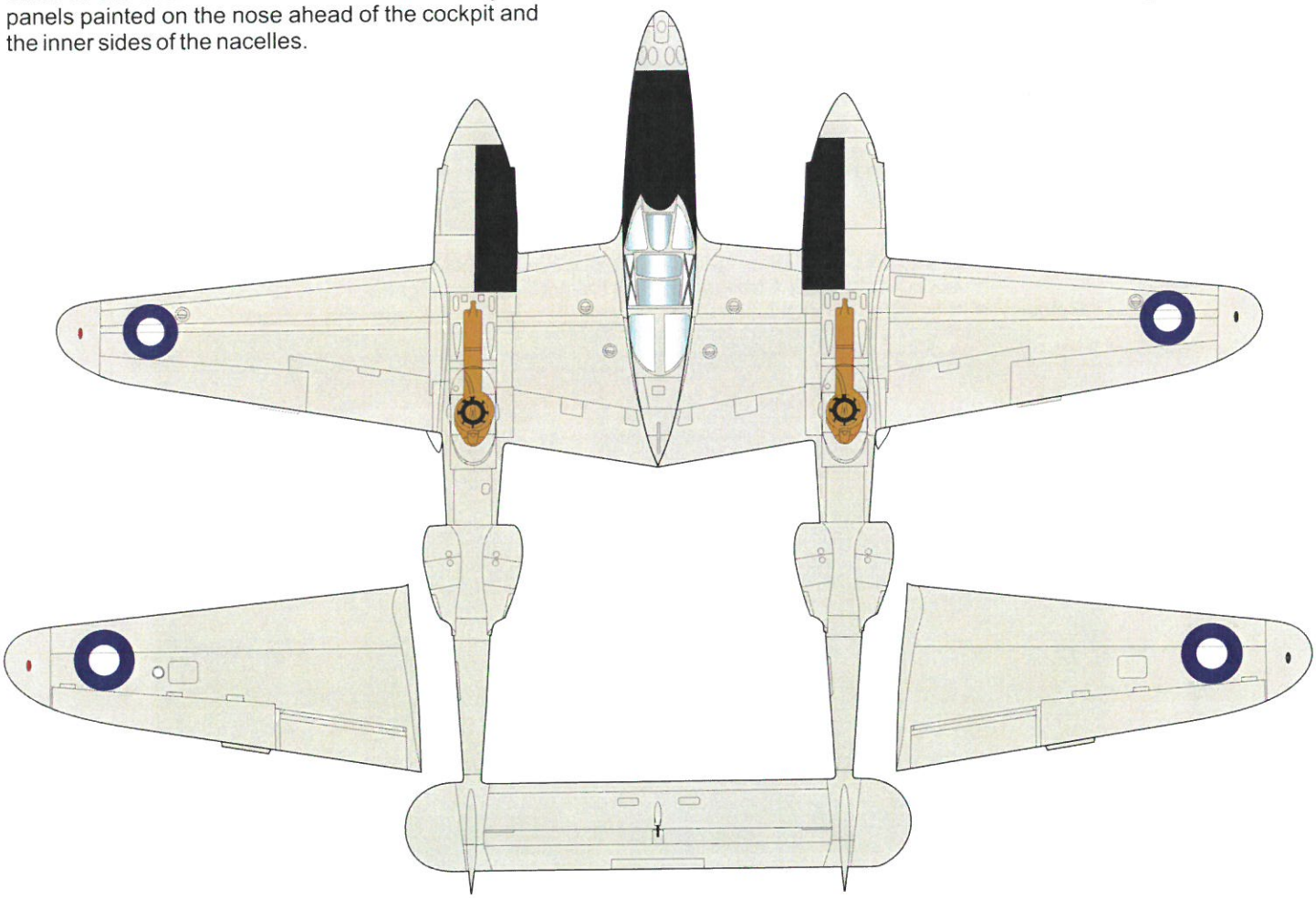
Above left: A55-3, note position of 'R' on engine cowl and wavy demarcation of lower surface colour.
Above right: A55-1 taxies past a 31 Squadron Beaufighter.
Below: A55-1 in natural metal finish with the mission symbols beneath the cockpit.

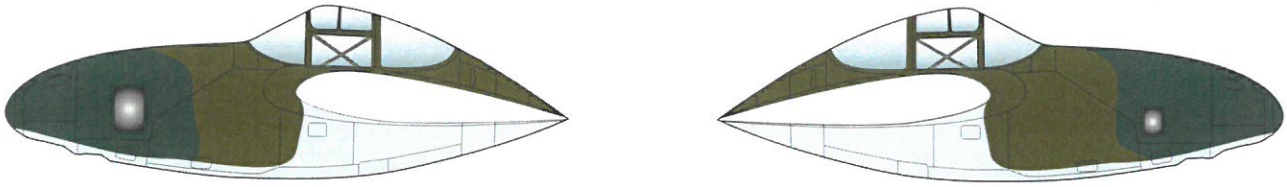


There is much uncertainty about the colour of the mission symbols applied to A55-1; we have provided three alternatives - black, red or blue. The exact colour cannot be determined from the limited photos available.

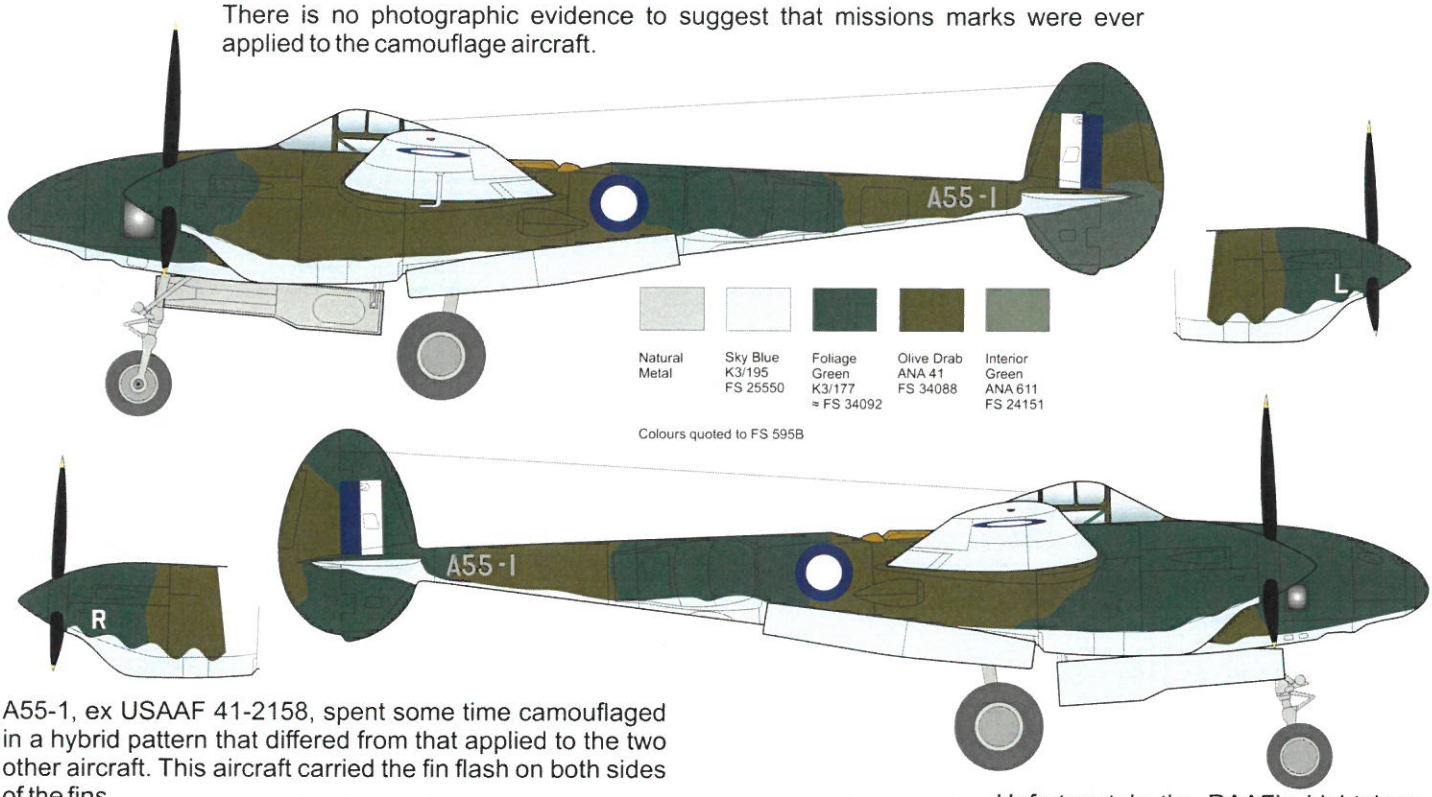


A55-1, ex USAAF 41-2158, was the only one of the three RAAF P-38 Lightnings to be operated in natural metal finish. This aircraft carried the fin flash on both sides of the fins. The aircraft had black anti-glare panels painted on the nose ahead of the cockpit and the inner sides of the nacelles.





There is no photographic evidence to suggest that missions marks were ever applied to the camouflage aircraft.

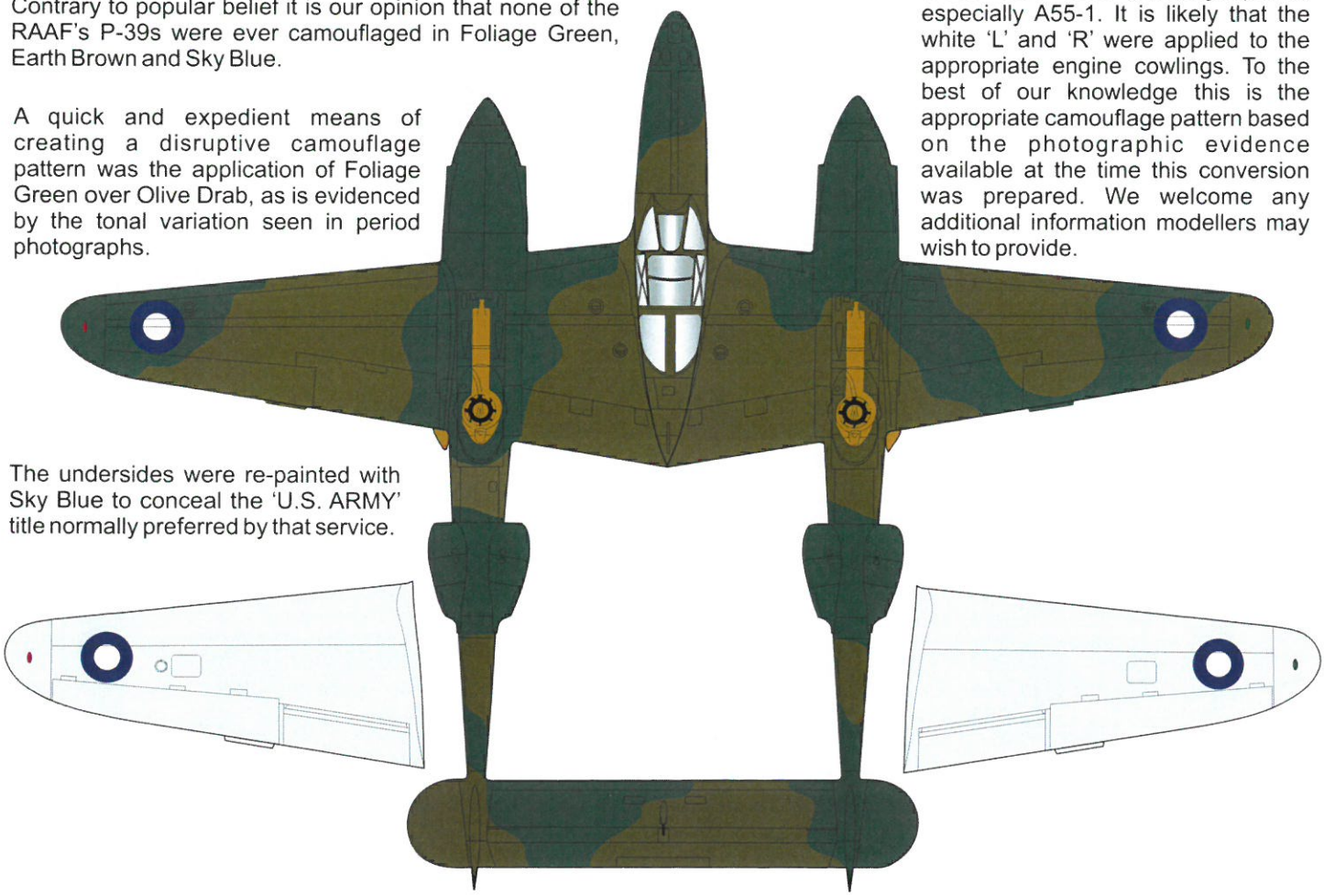


A55-1, ex USAAF 41-2158, spent some time camouflaged in a hybrid pattern that differed from that applied to the two other aircraft. This aircraft carried the fin flash on both sides of the fins.

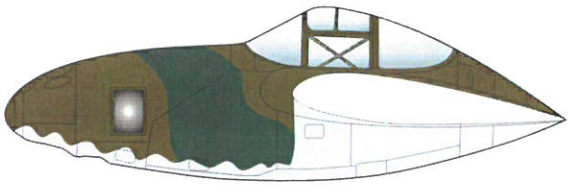
Contrary to popular belief it is our opinion that none of the RAAF's P-39s were ever camouflaged in Foliage Green, Earth Brown and Sky Blue.

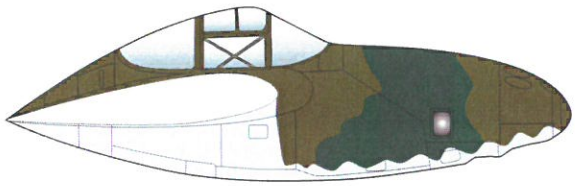
A quick and expedient means of creating a disruptive camouflage pattern was the application of Foliage Green over Olive Drab, as is evidenced by the tonal variation seen in period photographs.

Unfortunately the RAAF's Lightnings were not well photographed, especially A55-1. It is likely that the white 'L' and 'R' were applied to the appropriate engine cowlings. To the best of our knowledge this is the appropriate camouflage pattern based on the photographic evidence available at the time this conversion was prepared. We welcome any additional information modellers may wish to provide.

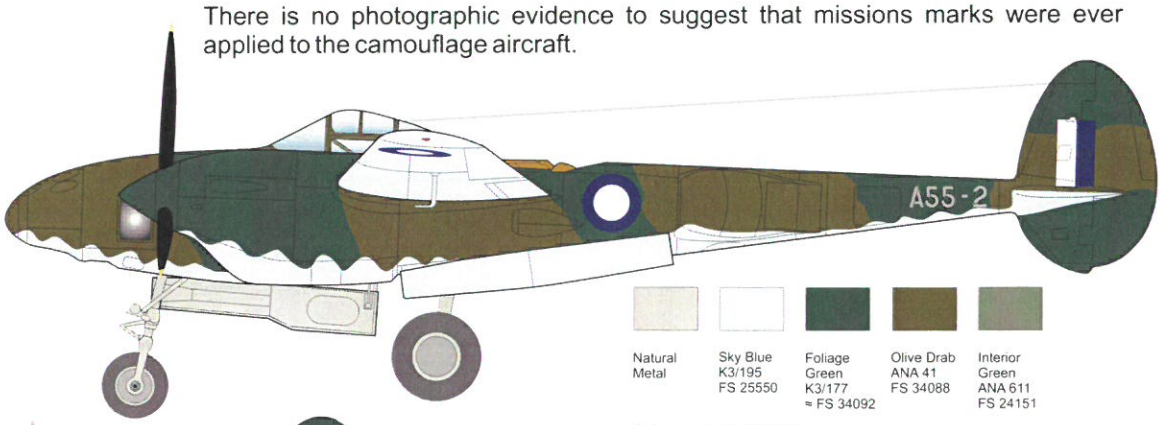


The undersides were re-painted with Sky Blue to conceal the 'U.S. ARMY' title normally preferred by that service.



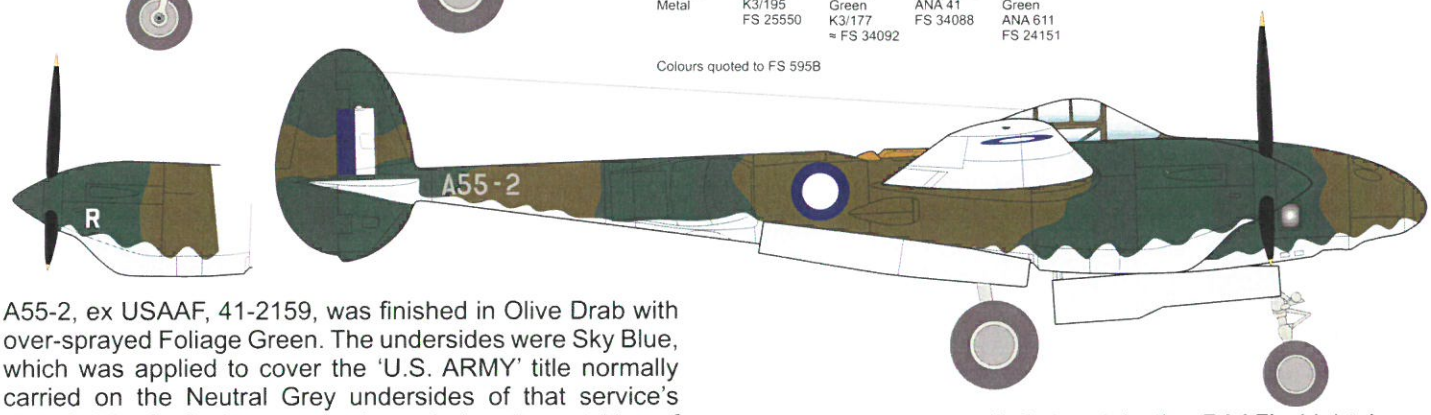


There is no photographic evidence to suggest that missions marks were ever applied to the camouflage aircraft.



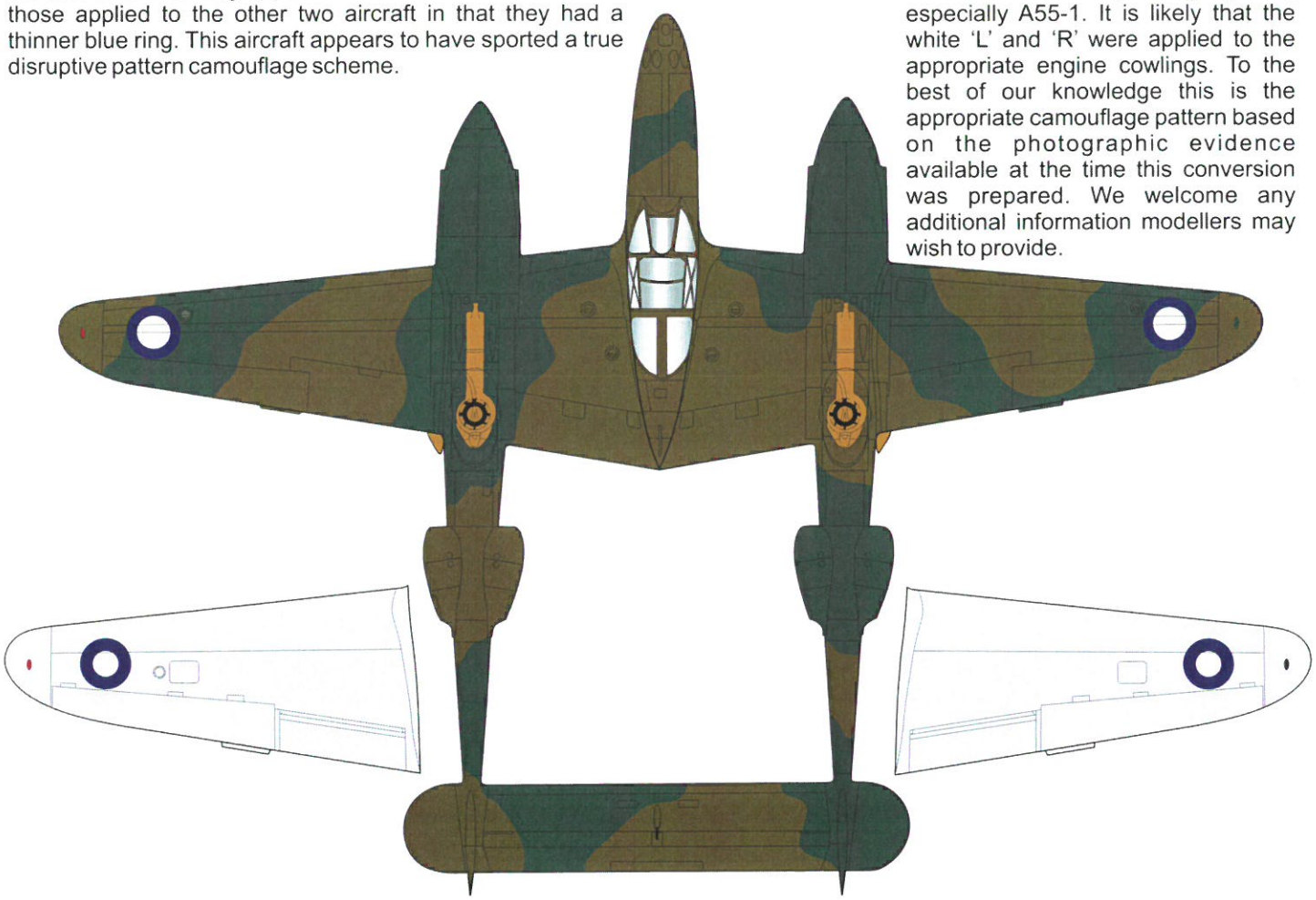
Natural Metal	Sky Blue K3/195 FS 25550	Foliage Green K3/177 ≈ FS 34092	Olive Drab ANA 41 FS 34088	Interior Green ANA 611 FS 24151

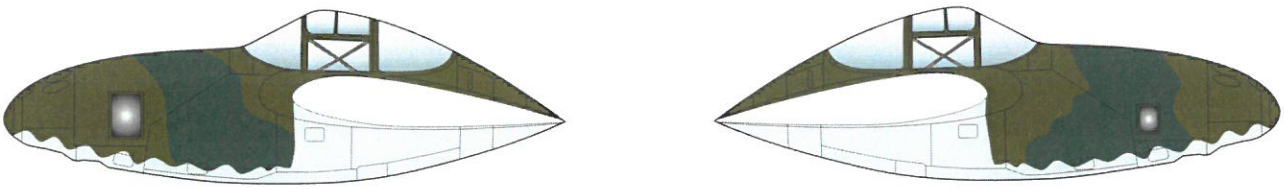
Colours quoted to FS 595B



A55-2, ex USAAF, 41-2159, was finished in Olive Drab with over-sprayed Foliage Green. The undersides were Sky Blue, which was applied to cover the 'U.S. ARMY' title normally carried on the Neutral Grey undersides of that service's aircraft. The fin flashes were only carried on the outsides of the twin fins. The wing upper surface roundels differed from those applied to the other two aircraft in that they had a thinner blue ring. This aircraft appears to have sported a true disruptive pattern camouflage scheme.

Unfortunately the RAAF's Lightnings were not well photographed, especially A55-1. It is likely that the white 'L' and 'R' were applied to the appropriate engine cowlings. To the best of our knowledge this is the appropriate camouflage pattern based on the photographic evidence available at the time this conversion was prepared. We welcome any additional information modellers may wish to provide.





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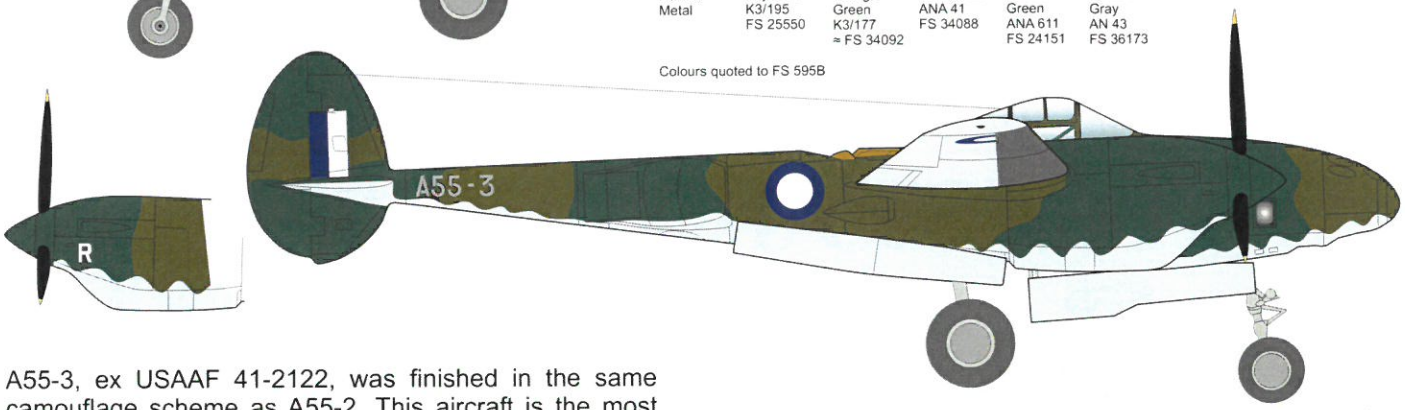
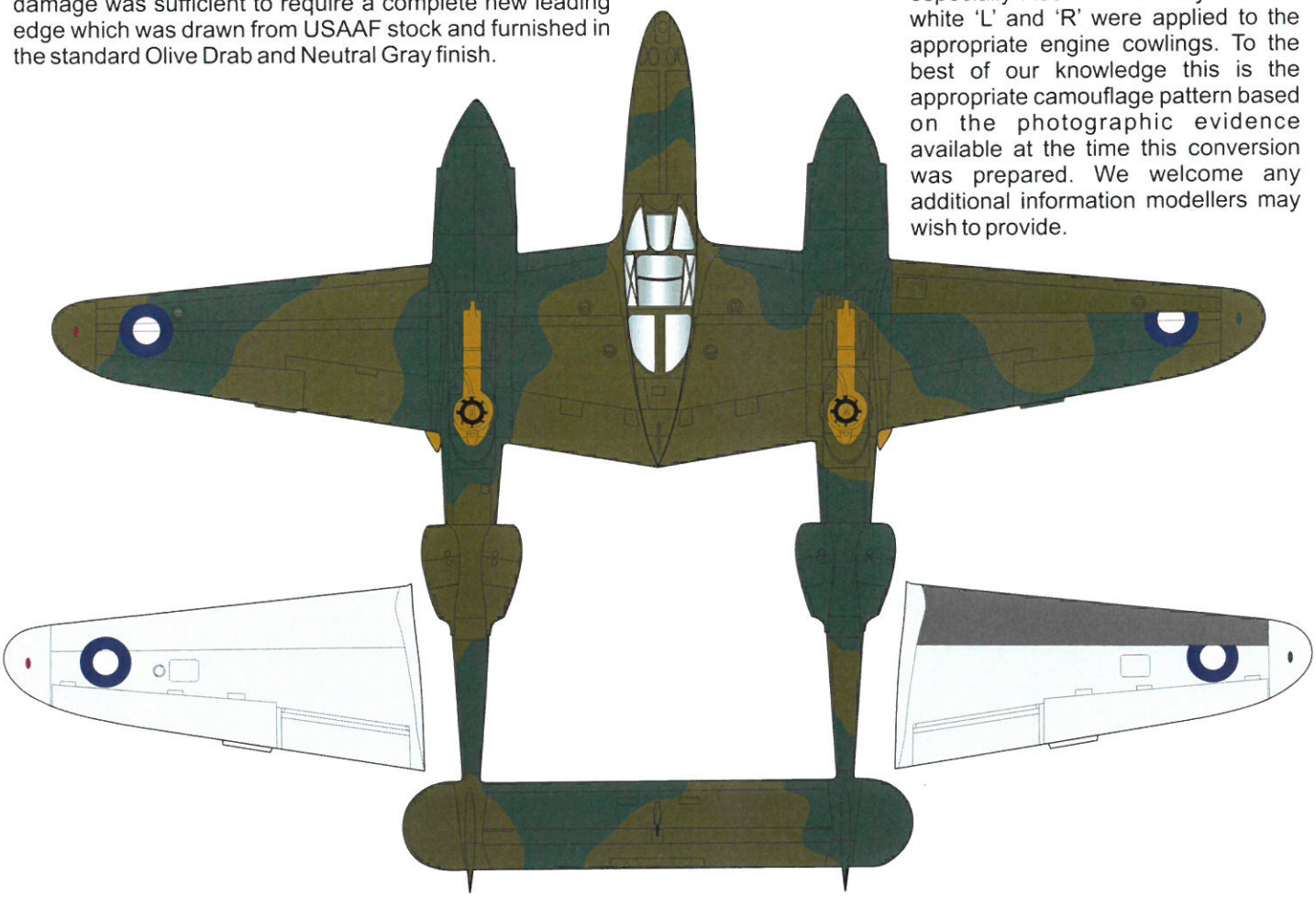
Natural Metal	Sky Blue K3/195 FS 25550	Foliage Green K3/177 ≈ FS 34092	Olive Drab ANA 41 FS 34088	Interior Green ANA 611 FS 24151	Neutral Gray AN 43 FS 36173

Colours quoted to FS 595B



A55-3, ex USAAF 41-2122, was finished in the same camouflage scheme as A55-2. This aircraft is the most photographed on the three and in all images it displays the repaired starboard leading edge. It is our belief that the damage was sufficient to require a complete new leading edge which was drawn from USAAF stock and furnished in the standard Olive Drab and Neutral Gray finish.

Unfortunately the RAAF's Lightnings were not well photographed, especially A55-1. It is likely that the white 'L' and 'R' were applied to the appropriate engine cowlings. To the best of our knowledge this is the appropriate camouflage pattern based on the photographic evidence available at the time this conversion was prepared. We welcome any additional information modellers may wish to provide.



Note:
At the risk of annoyance by our repetition please note that recently new information has come to light to indicate that the starboard side oblique camera window was smaller than that on the port side. We have modified the resin parts to reflect this.

CAST AND CREW

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Technical Advice C & M.....Peter Malone

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MADE IN AUSTRALIA