

THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL

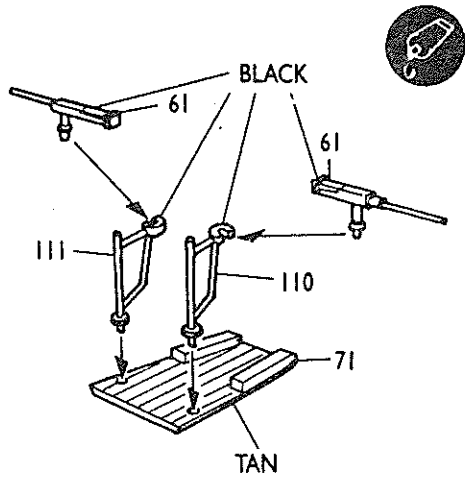
According to legend, the dragon was a mythical monster that could breath fire and represented the forces of evil. However, in the orient, the dragon was revered as a god and appears on many religious objects. Because of the religious symbolism to the Japanese, the dragon figure was chosen to decorate the B-24J flown by Joseph Pagani and his crew from the 43rd Bomb Group, 5th Air Force, USAAF. The use of the sacred dragon symbol was intended to antagonize the Japanese, and to further insult them, the monster was holding a nude female. The implication was obvious!

The dragon design was painted by a line mechanic onto the right side of Pagani's Liberator while it was based at Clark Field, Luzon, Philippine Islands, in June, 1944. It took three days to complete the painting of the dragon, in spite of the fact that the bomber remained operational and flew missions during this time. The unidentified staff sergeant who did the painting was rewarded for his artistic endeavors with cases of booze from Pagani and his crew. On completion of the painting, the crew selected the name "The Dragon and His Tail", which was then added to the airplane. It has become a classic of aviation art and is apparently the only World War II combat plane to bear an unofficial design along the entire length of its fuselage.

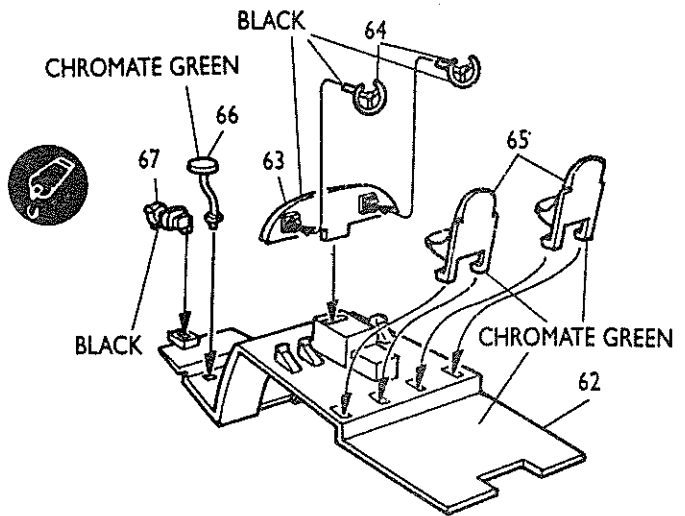
Pagani flew the Dragon on 85 missions, many of these at low level with the intent of drawing ground fire to locate Japanese gun emplacements. Pagani reported that during normal bombing missions the Dragon was always the center of attention from the Japanese pilots.

Artist's illustrations of The Dragon and His Tail have traditionally depicted the dragon in green. Some have even shown the dragon on the right side. However, color photographs show that the marking was in fact painted in shades of gray with red highlights. The decals for this model have been reproduced in the shades shown in the color photos.

1 GUN ASSEMBLY

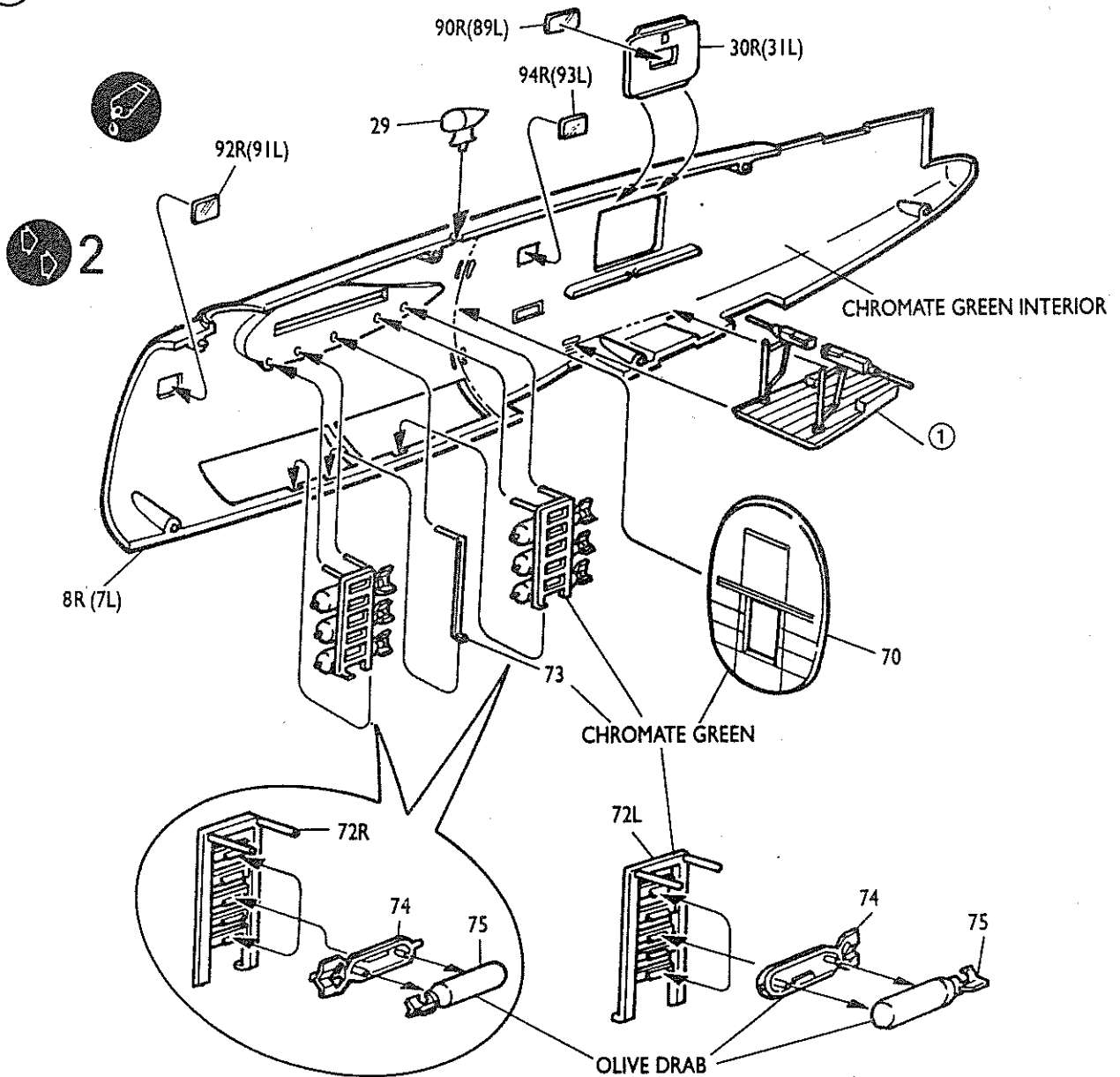


2 COCKPIT

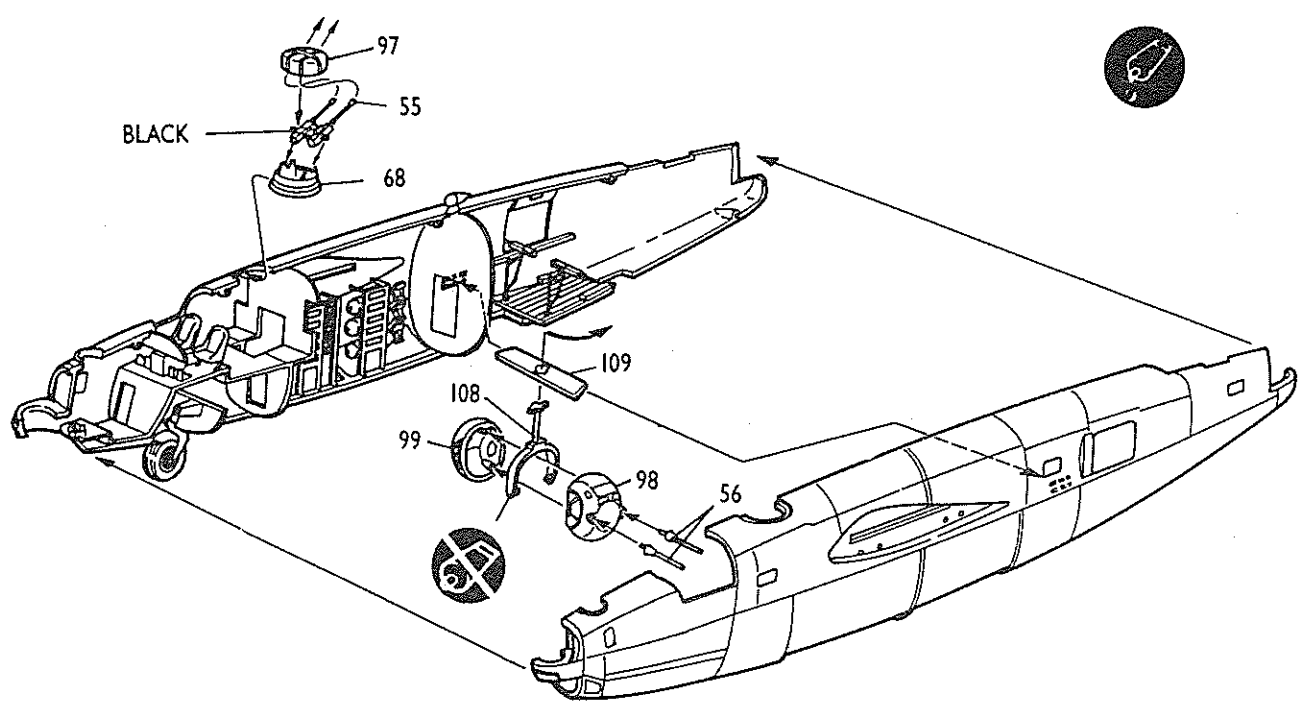


3 FUSELAGE INTERIOR

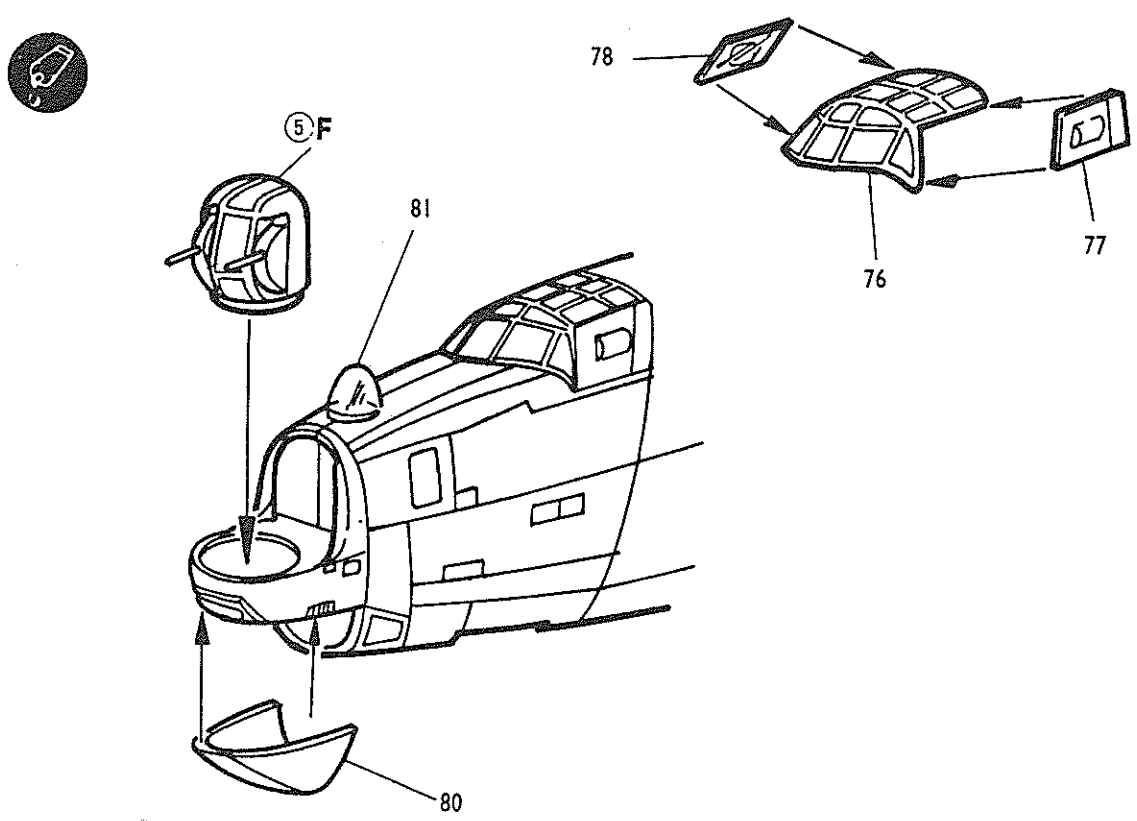
(Repeat for Left side)



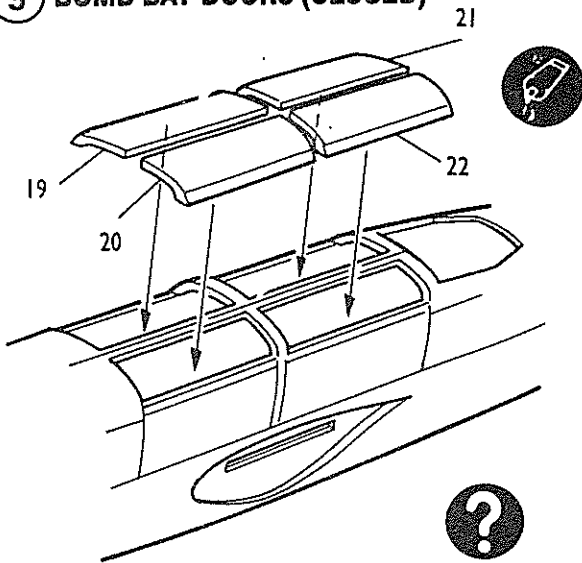
7 MAIN FUSELAGE ASSEMBLY



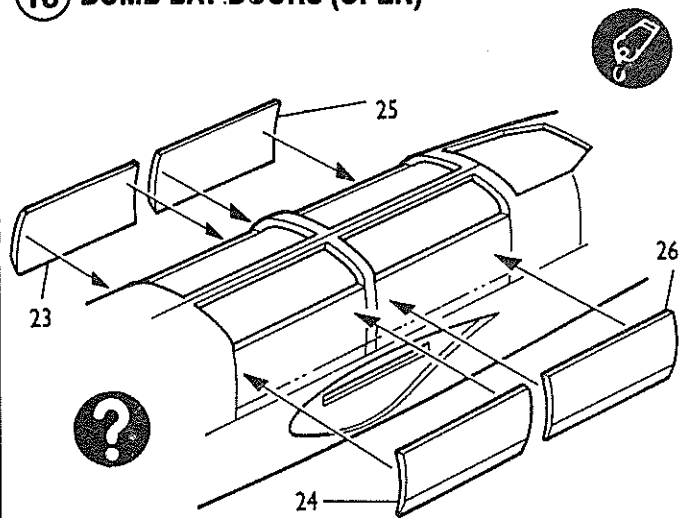
8 FORWARD FUSELAGE ASSEMBLY



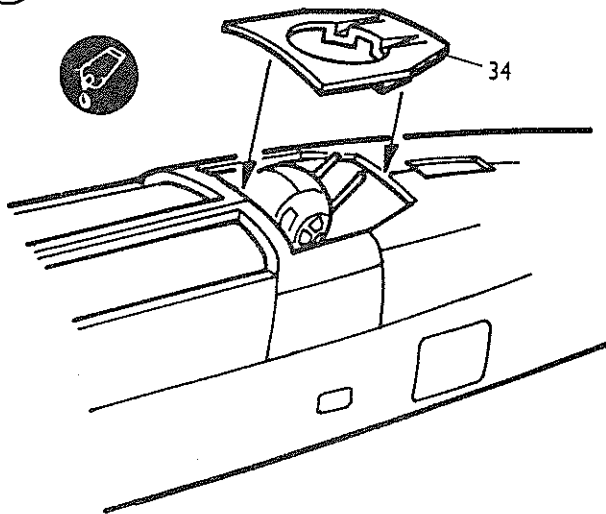
9 BOMB BAY DOORS (CLOSED)



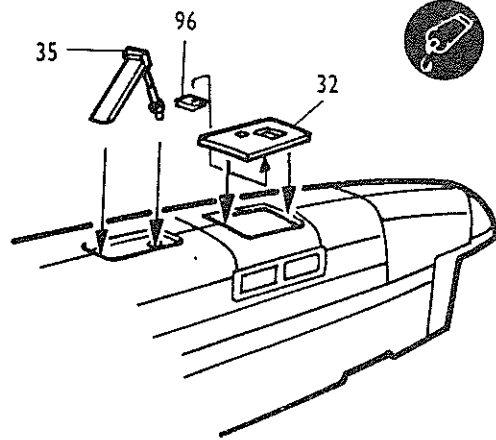
10 BOMB BAY DOORS (OPEN)



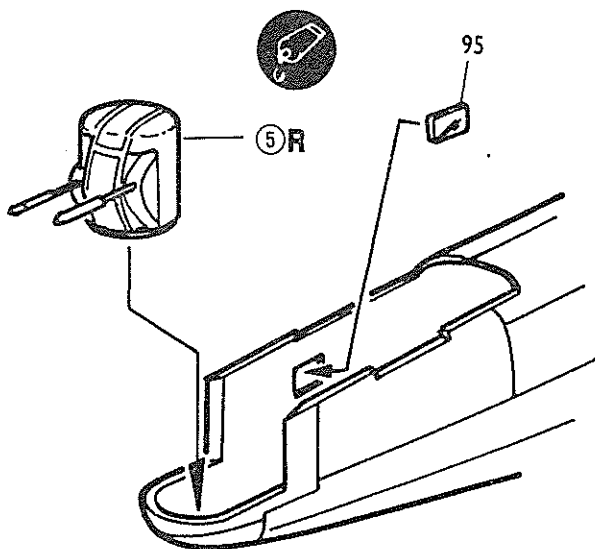
11 LOWER PANEL



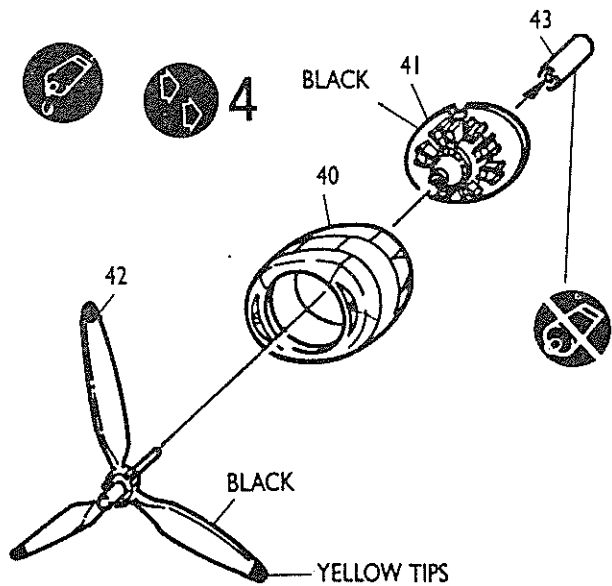
12 LOWER REAR FUSELAGE



13 REAR TURRET INSTALLATION



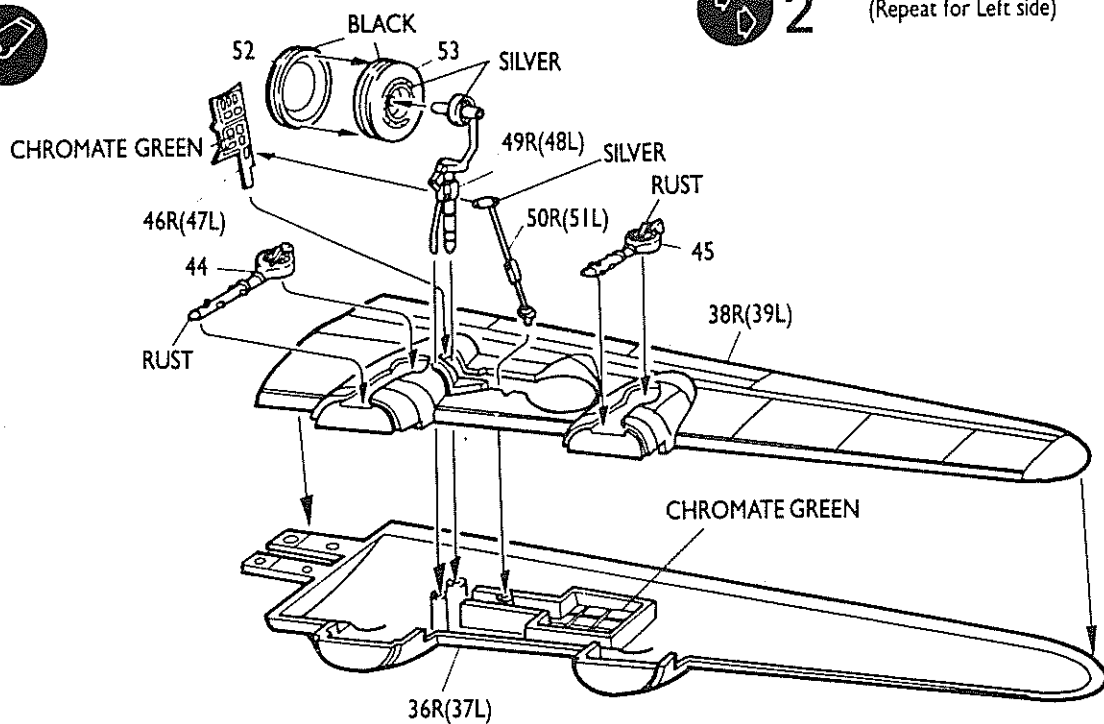
14 ENGINE ASSEMBLY



15 WING ASSEMBLY



(Repeat for Left side)



16 TAIL AND FINAL ASSEMBLY

