

Tamiya F-4 J

by Thierry Laurent & Ben Brown

TYPE: Mc Donnell Douglas F-4J Phantom II US NAVY ("NAVY" in the list)
Mc Donnell Douglas F-4J Phantom II US MARINES ("MARINES" in the list)

SCALE: 1/32

COMPANY: Tamiya

KIT Number: 60306 (US NAVY), 60308 (USMC)

MOLD CREATION DATE:

1995 for F-4C/D sprues
1997 for H & J sprues ("NAVY")
2000 for K sprue ("MARINES")

TWEAKS LIST VERSION 1.0 (publication date: April 2005)

Compiled by Thierry Laurent.
Thanks to Ben Brown for his help.

The following list is intended to help modelers in improving scale accuracy of an airplane model replica. In no way is it intended to support or be offensive towards a scale model company.

As such, it is only the result of a progressive process and is in no way intended to be absolute or even comprehensive. Hence, it is intended to focus on commonly admitted discrepancies and will probably not cover some errors. It is up to the modeler to decide whether correcting the listed issues is worth the time and money he will have to invest in the quest for accuracy process.

No aftermarket correction or detail set is mentioned in this document as the availability of such items may be very variable. Hence, refer to other LSP sections to find relevant information. Moreover, aftermarket sets do not necessarily correct all listed issues. Please refer accordingly to relevant documentation.

1. NOTICEABLE FUSELAGE ISSUES (from front to rear)

" Air conditioning intake scoops are 6mm too long. This is easily fixed by cutting down the kit parts.

" Add missing Navy style AOA sensor (under port airco intake scoop).

" The forward underside air conditioning vents are wrong for a J airframe (port vent has a different configuration than the starboard one).

" Intake ducts do not match intake lips. Replace entire intake with aftermarket one or use sheet plastic/two components putty to get a smooth transition. If you do not want to use a resin correction set, the best way to obtain a smooth transition is to cut the intake duct part from the fuselage and to assemble the duct with the other parts (B26-27/42-43), smooth the joints, glue the duct to the engine front and intake parts (B11-12/17-18/A1-2/C-17) and glue the assembly to the fuselage. Another option is to use FODs to hide intake issues!

" Improve vari-ramps (air splitter plates) vents (rear of parts B17/18): thin edges and add two thin internal walls. The outboard panels of the vari-ramps were moveable, and they had a panel that slid over the inboard section on the top and bottom of the ramp. Made them with very thin styrene. Also note how the inboard edge of the ramp is angled down, not straight across like every F-4 kit ever produced has. The one on the underside is straight across.

" A small drain exhaust is missing on each fuselage side (above the root of the leading edge of the wing).

" Take care to position correctly the oblong part J14 on the fuselage spine behind the cockpit (covering the area where is located the refueling point on AF versions) as it is smaller than the opening. Use plastic strip to fill any gap.

" Add a small circular formation light on the fuselage spine.

" Add on the belly the centerline fuel tank sway locks and their hinged doors. The locks are intended to secure the tank. Also add the hoses between the belly and the tank.

" Navy type chaff dispenser doors must be scribed on each side of the J fuselage.

" Blade of "splitter plate" on intake at base of fin is too thick.

" Small bare metal bleed air exhaust located on each fuselage side just above the engine exhaust is wrongly shaped. (very difficult to correct)

" Post that provides mounting point for fin is too tall and interferes with brace inside of fin. Remove a couple of millimeters and fin will fit much better.

" Drill an oblong hole in the indented square located up to the front titanium area on the starboard fuselage (forward of the right stabilator). This is door 62 on the full scale airframe. Add the window and arresting hook gear hydraulic oil servicing gauge and air filler valve with a yellow cap: Some plastic sprue lengths with a spare gauge decal behind an oblong transparent part will mimic this.

" Lower aft fuselage does not fit well. Area is hard to paint after stabilators are installed. It is best to remove stabs from pivot mount and install them during final assembly. Leave the semi-circular tabs attached to the stabs.

" Afterburner nozzles are much too small in diameter. Replace with correct diameter resin ones or some from Revell F-4E/F-RF-4C/E kits.

" Add missing small drain pipe under tail, between the stabilators.

" Add V shaped part behind the arresting hook end (scratchbuilt or photo etched part).

" Add missing pull rod for opening the drag chute door, under the aft fuselage, between the stabs.

" Raised panels all over fuselage are not present on most F-4s. Sand these off and scribe panel lines where edges of raised panels used to be. BTW, these are not Battle Damage Repair panels!

2. NOTICEABLE WING/WEAPONS ISSUES

" Dihedral of outer wing panels is too great: it should be 12.5 degrees.

" Remove structural reinforcement plates on wings for sixties versions as additional wing ribs only appeared during the seventies.

" As upper wing halves have no locations on the fuselage sides and are somewhat flexible, add thick plastic spacers between wing halves to keep the wing solid.

" To avoid as much as possible to use filler between upper wing and fuselage, dry test the fit between them and add a spreader bar between both internal fuselage sides to decrease as much as possible fuselage flexibility. However take care to avoid interfering with other internal elements such as air intake ducts.

" Kit Sidewinders are hybrid: front part of 1st generation but rear part and general length of 2nd generation sidewinders. Moreover, they do not look like Navy/Marines version. Two possible solutions: use aftermarket missiles or move front wings just in front of their current location (carefully cut the two ones molded on the body and fill holes intended to others; put rear edge of wing where front one was) to obtain correct AIM-9D missiles. Body is a little bit too short (less than 2 mm) but this is not really noticeable and fixing it would be time-consuming to obtain a very marginal improvement.

" Add Sparrows exhaust.

" Add detonator wires and cross-shaped airscrew on Mk 82 bombs body (scratchbuilt or photoetched part) (in the "MARINES" kit).

" Add connector hoses on the rear part of TERs & MERs (in the "MARINES" kit).

3. NOTICEABLE COCKPIT ISSUES

" Add seat belts and change seats in Navy Mk-H7 ones (main differences: NAVY survival pack/seat cushion and no visible oxygen bottle but connectors on the left side of back cushion) or use aftermarket resin seats.

" Add map reading lamp on the starboard side of each cockpit station (a length of sprue with a coiled wire).

" Add circuit breakers, other details and insulated panels on sidewalls if you do not use an aftermarket cockpit (at least necessary for the pilot station).

" Add oxygen hoses, map case as well as landing gear, brakes and other missing levers if you do not use an aftermarket cockpit.

" Add details in front of rear side of upper RIO panel (many conduits and circuits wires are missing between the stations)

" Add similar wires behind the RIO station.

" RIO had no control pedals (C12 part). They had two footrest plates made of embossed iron sheet. Scratchbuild them or use photoetched parts.

" Fill control column hole in F25.

" Rear bulkhead of aft cockpit should be vertical. Add details on the bulkhead if you do not use an aftermarket cockpit.

4. NOTICEABLE CANOPY ISSUES

" Take care removing clear canopy parts from the sprue (the way they are molded makes it very easy to damage them).

" Add Navy style AOA indexer and compass to the left and right front windshield frames.

" There are no canopy hooks. Use photo-etched ones.

" Add canopy knives, data cards and other details on canopy internal sides.

" There are no holes in cockpit sills (corresponding to abovementioned hooks).

" F2 and F3 canopy retraction struts are a little bit too long (1 to 2 mm)

" Add some rear-view mirrors. (Tamiya gives no mirror for the pilot, and give them inside the central section between the two cockpits for the RIO. However, F-4s generally have the mirrors mounted to the underside of each canopy)

" The "Canopy Interdictor Block" (keeps the seat from firing until the canopy has been jettisoned) wire is missing. This is a small coiled wire that goes from the right rear of the ejection seat to the rear of each canopy.

5. NOTICEABLE LANDING GEAR ISSUES

" Nose gear strut: a lot of wiring is missing as well as a rod that is probably part of the nose wheel steering system.

" "Shrink links" (the spur-like tabs) are mounted on centerline of main gear struts. Should be mounted on outboard side of strut, with a bare metal rod connecting the tip of the link with the lower part of the strut where the oleo bolts to the strut.

" Add hydraulic lines, wiring & linkages detail in gear bays.

" Add hydraulic lines on gear legs.

" Possibly replace landing gear tie-down rings with new ones made from brass wire.

6. OTHER NOTICEABLE ISSUES & MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

" Each Kit offers three decals options. However, be aware that both the "NAVY" and "MARINES" kits give Marines & Navy decal options. Difference between the two kits lays in the absence of TER/MER and Mk82 bombs in the "NAVY" kit. Note the "MARINES" kit offers the MER option on external wing stations.

" Wing tips may be folded. However, to depict them in the stowed position, add additional details such as the folding mechanism out of styrene cut to shape (small styrene arm detailed with some bolt heads) and small hydraulic lines.

" When you choose a specific airframe, take care to the antennae, more particularly the ECM/RHAW antennas on air intakes and below them (near the wing root). Such antennae appeared during the J production and were not present on early airframes (J3 & J5 for early airframes, J4, J6 & J10 for post-Vietnam war ones).

" If you want to use aftermarket stores, note that Navy Phantoms examples never carried the 20mm SUU-23A external cannon carried by USAF (C/D) or Marines versions.

" Upper section of front and main landing gear legs (fixing points) is simplified to ensure model rigidity. Fixing this is very difficult but fortunately the discrepancies are not really visible. Moreover, correcting it and keeping model rigidity is far from obvious.

" No landing gear down locking jack is provided.

" Detail inside the auxiliary air intakes on the belly is very simplified. Actually, the undersides of the engines need to have various pumps, pipes, and wiring added. However, this area is far from being really visible on a model.

" Throttles should be put on the full aft ("idle/cut off") position.

" Later releases had Tamiya decals (good but on the thick side: put decals between gloss coats).

" Decals do not include panel numbers. If you want to add them, use aftermarket ones (wet or dry).

The following sources were used to build this list.

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Other references:

" Some magazines articles (more particularly from Tamiya magazine, IPMS USA & Replic)

" Some web pages

" "F4Sforever" newsgroup old posts

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