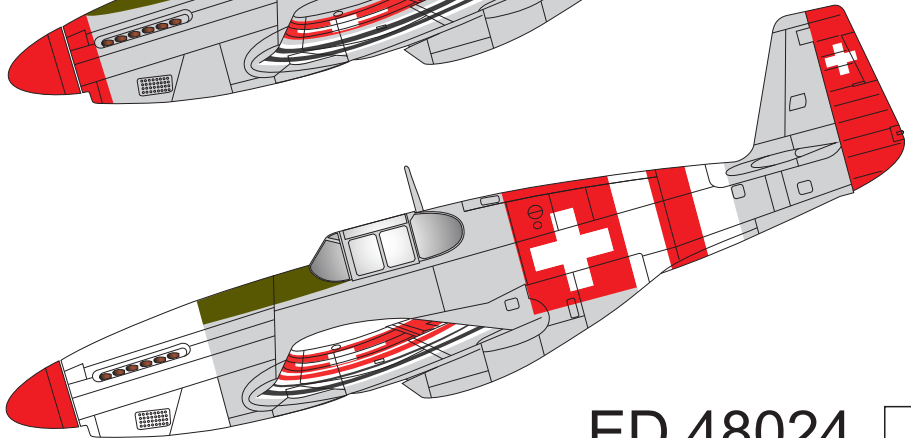
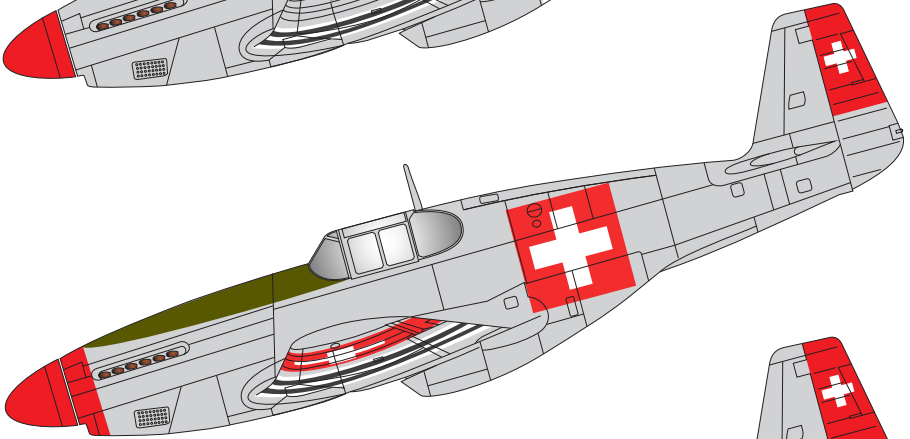
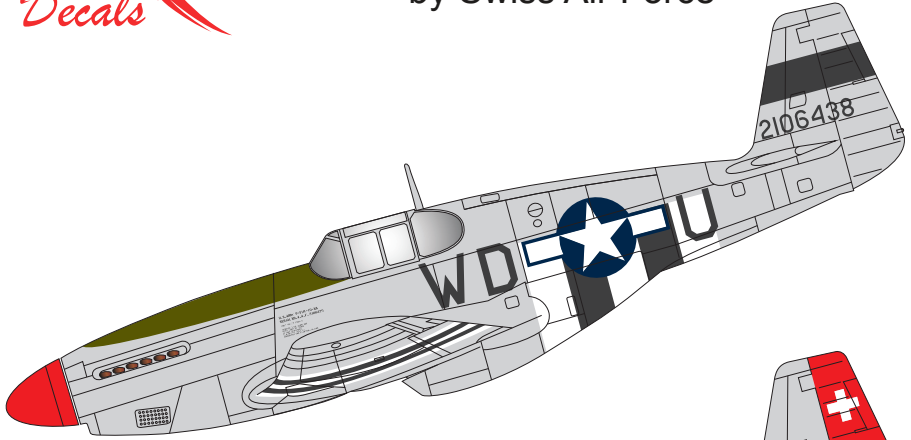




Mustang in the Alps

P-51B-10-NA (42-106438) tested
by Swiss Air Force



ED 48024

ED 72024

P-51B-10-NA (42-106438) tested by Swiss Air Force

On 19 July 1944, the 8th and 15th Air Force launched a combined attack against industrial targets in southern and southwestern Germany. As a result, aircraft from both forces sought refuge in Switzerland. Two aircraft crashed, while three made safe landing. One of them was a P-51B-10-NA (42-106438) fighter which was on an escort mission for the Augsburg bomber force. The Mustang had been assigned to the 4th Fighter Group at Debden and was piloted by 1Lt. Curtis Simpson. The pilot recalls the mission:

This particular escort flight was the sixth straight flight that we made to Munich in six days. We were jumped by a group of Messerschmitt Bf 109s and fought all the way into Austria. I had the aircraft on full throttle for too long time and my electrical system on the coolant shutters went out. They closed and the engine overheated. I lost all my coolant and if I had not been so close to Switzerland I would have ended up as a POW or dead. God must have been riding with me. I was looking for a place to land the airplane, since I did not want to jump. I found this very short meadow that had some white signs on it so I thought I should try it. I had no other choice. I used full flaps with no power from the engine and I landed but as soon as I stopped the plane - here they came. The Swiss have helmets similar to the Germans and I was not sure were I was. I stood up in the cockpit with my hands raised and asked if they were Swiss; luckily they said yes.

The Mustang was welcome addition to the Swiss Air Force inventory. Mechanics dismantled the Mustang at the Ems-Plarenga airfield where the fighter landed. It was taken by trucks to railroad station and then by train to Dübendorf. The reassembled aircraft flew again for first time with Swiss markings on 1 August 1944. Curtis Simpson escaped from Switzerland and returned to Debden on 15 October 1944. The fighter was flown to the Test and Research center at Emmen where several test flights were made by various experienced Swiss pilots. The positive experience the Swiss Air Force had with the Mustang led to the purchase of 130 ex-USAAF P-51Ds after the war. The Mustang became the last piston engined fighter purchased by the Swiss Air Force.

info based on Hans-Henri Stapfer and Gino Kunzle Georg Hoch book „Strangers in a Strange Land vol.II“



all photos from Internet sources



Exotic Decals are distributed by ToRo Model - Tomasz Mańkowski
1/28 Sobieskiego Str. 05-510 Konstancin Jeziorna, Poland
www.toro-model.com.pl