

**Lifelike Decals**

32-020

# North American P-51 Mustang Pt.3

*Limited Edition!*

*"Big Beautiful Doll" Special*

Marking #1



Maj. John D. Landers,  
38th FS, 55th FG.

Marking #2



Lt Col. John D. Landers,  
C.O. 357th FG.

Marking #3



Lt Col. John D. Landers,  
C.O. 78th FG.

Marking #4



Lt Col. John D. Landers,  
C.O. 78th FG.

Marking #5



Col. John D. Landers,  
C.O. 78th FG.

Marking #6



Col. John D. Landers,  
C.O. 361st FG.

Recommended kits: Tamiya or Revell P-51D

Lifelike Decals wants to hear from you and your input.

Fax: +81-743-73-5526, e-mail: [lifelike\\_d@kcn.jp](mailto:lifelike_d@kcn.jp)

<http://lifelikedecals.sakura.ne.jp>

# "Big Beautiful Doll" special

This decal features only two P-51s flown by John Dave Landers in 8AF, but shows a total of 6 colorful markings that he applied to his A/C during his service with four FGs.

John D. Landers hailed from Joshua/Texas (not Wilson/Oklahoma), and enlisted in April 1941. He got wings a few days after Pearl Harbor, and in January 1942 he went to Darwin/Australia to serve with 9FS/49FG. He scored 6 victories there, returned to States as flight instructor, and joined 38FS/55FG in April 1944. He became Acting Commander of 357FG for a brief period, and returned to

States again as instructor. He came back to 8AF again in February 1945 as Commander of 78FG till VE day. He then assumed command of 361FG to prepare for combat with Japan, but returned to States after VJ day. He died on September 12, 1989 from complications during surgery. He scored not only 14.5 victories - 6 with P-40 (9FS), 4 with P-38 (38FS) and 4.5 with P-51 (1 with 357FG and 3.5 with 78FG) - and one damaged in the air, but also 20 EA destroyed on the ground.

## P-51D-5-NA 44-13923

w/block treaded main wheels

### Marking #1

Flown by Major John D. Landers, Commander of 38FS/55FG, Wormingford/England, August 5, 1944.

Landers joined 38FS as commander in April 1944, and scored 4 kills with P-38 (probably P-38J, 43-28341, CG-O, "Texas Longhorn"), and then transitioned to this P-51 on July 4, 1944. There is a color photo of this A/C (taken on August 5th) in ref. 1, and three more b/w photos in ref. 2~5. These photos indicate that initially back mirror was installed, and invasion stripes were remaining on lower fuselage and wings (ref. 2), but later photos (ref. 1, 3~5) show back mirror and invasion stripes on wings were removed, while lower fuselage invasion stripes seems to be remaining (ref. 4). This decal depicts the last state with 14 kill marks and no back mirror. "Big Beautiful Doll" is applied on both sides of the nose, and the photo in ref. 5 shows the first quotation mark was applied on a white background in a green square. Upper tail and antenna seems to be painted in OD, and s/n on tail was painted over, as with many other 55FG P-51s.

This A/C is usually claimed as 44-13823, but ref. 4 shows Mr. Ted Damick's analysis of the original color photo (ref. 1)

that its s/n is 44-13923.

He took this A/C to 357FG along with his S/Sgt. Bergman in October 1944 (ref. 2, 4).

### Marking #2

Flown by Lt. Col. John D. Landers, Acting Commander of 357FG, Leiston/England, November to December 1944.

Landers was promoted to Lt. Col., and assumed Acting Commander position of 357FG for a short period (Oct. 11, 1944 ~ December 2, 1944), while Col. Irwin Dregne was on stateside leave. Reference 4 shows one photo of this A/C taken soon after moving to 357FG (note the number of kill mark is the same as Marking #1). OD paint on the tail was removed, but no s/n is visible. Very probably s/n was applied later. Another photo in ref. 2, 6 and 7 shows 17 kill marks. Probably this is the later stage of this marking. "Big Beautiful Doll" on right should have been retained. According to ref. 8, this A/C was lost in a mid-air collision with another P-51, killing its pilot Lt. Wendell Helwig, on December 24, 1944 during an escort mission to Babenhausen/Germany. The name of the A/C was still "Big Beautiful Doll".

## P-51D-20-NA 44-72218

w/diamond treaded main wheels

### Markings #3 and #4

Flown by Lt. Col. John D. Landers, Commander of 78FG, Duxford/England, March and April 1945.

After stateside leave in December to February 1945, he took command of 78FG from February 22 to June 28, 1945. Initially (Marking #3) 21 kill marks were applied below canopy, and s/n was applied over to the rudder (ref. 2, 9~12). The fuselage national insignia was normal type. Close examination of the photo of ref. 11 shows that WZ is outlined in yellow, the same color as that of the name plate on canopy. Antenna mast was painted in red.

At later stage (Marking #4) s/n was re-applied entirely on the vertical tail (ref. 13), and the fuselage national insignia is gray shaded as with many 78FG P-51s. This photo in ref. 13 clearly shows "Big Beautiful Doll" was also applied on the right side, which should be true with Marking 3. Another photo (once shown on e-bay) clearly shows yellow outline on code letters, and 27.5 kill marks. At this stage there is no red trim on OD anti-glare paint.

### Marking #5

Flown by Col. John D. Landers, Commander of 78FG, Duxford/England, May to June 1945.

When Landers was promoted to Colonel in May 1945, he changed the color of the name plate on canopy frame and outline of fuselage code to red. Fuselage national insignia

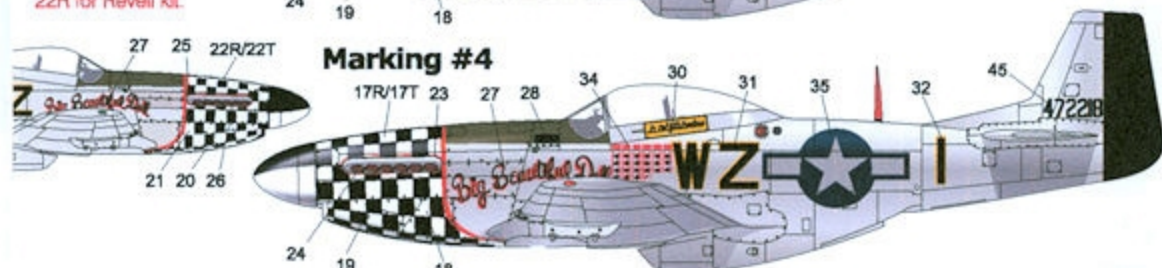
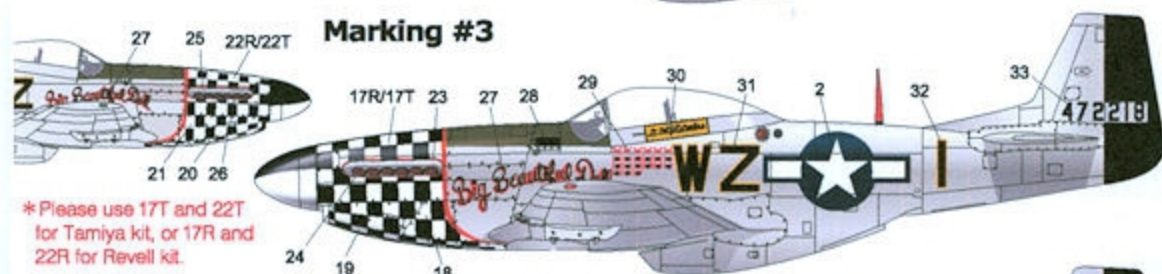
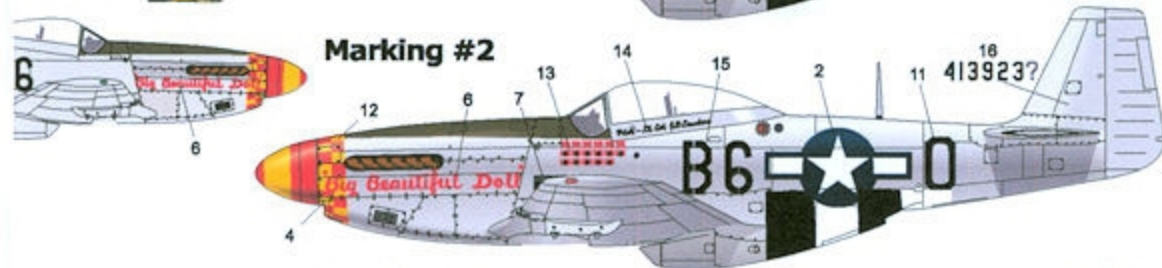
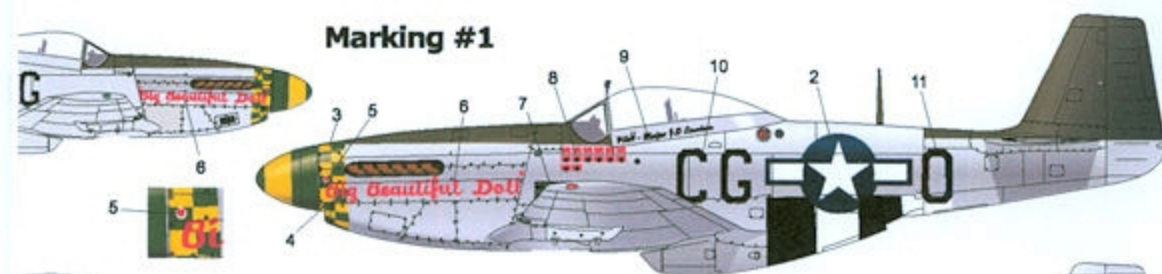
was returned to the normal type. Further decoration applied to this final costume in 78FG are (1) red paint on rear spinner, air intake and OD anti-glare panel, (2) addition of b/w checker on wingtip with red trim, (3) black paint on the tip of vertical and horizontal fin with red trim to these as well as to black rudder, and (4) application of code letter on lower left wing after VE day. (Ref. 3, 6, 7, 10, 13~18)

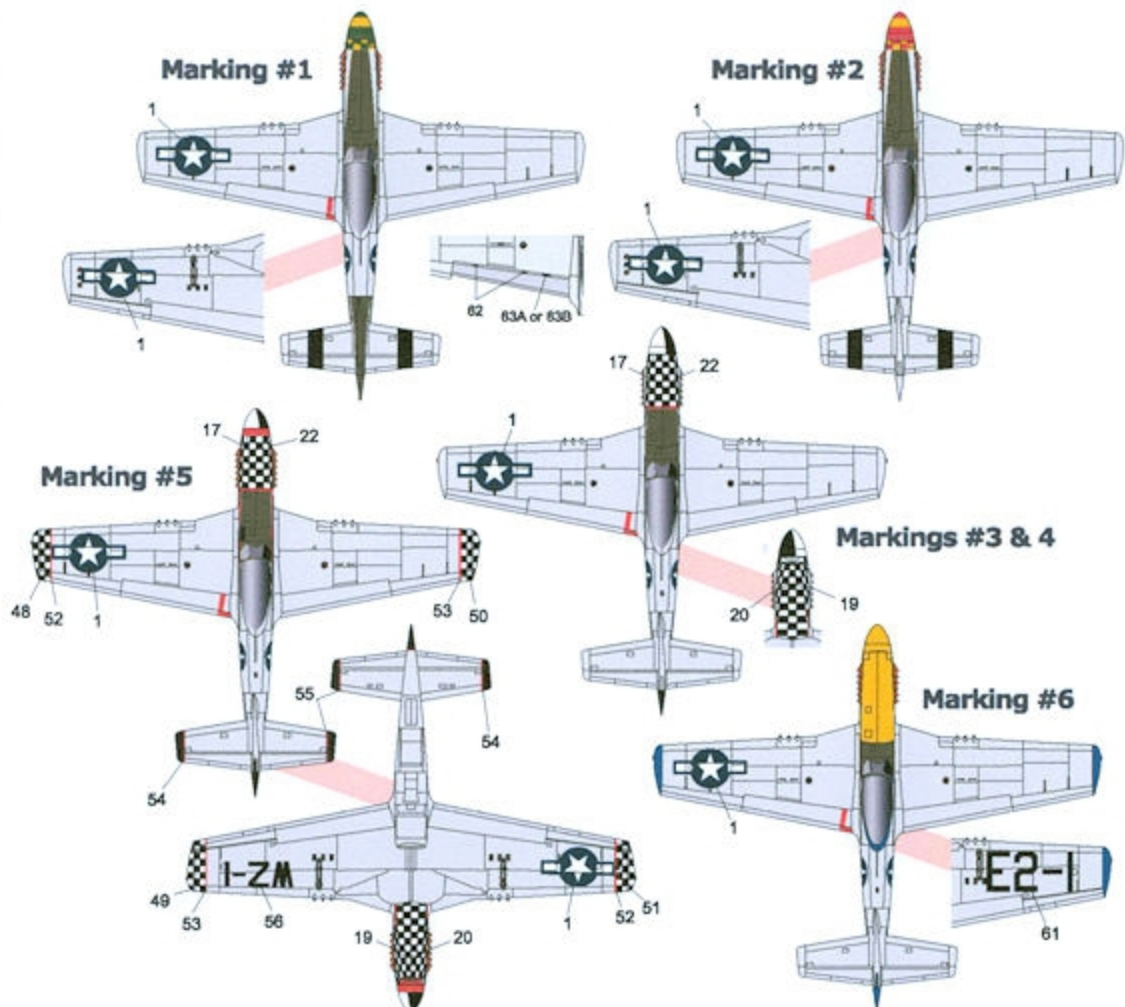
### Marking #6

Flown by Col. John D. Landers, Commander of 361FG, Little Walden/England, July 1945.

Col. Landers was assigned to Commander of 361FG on June 29, 1945, while Lt. Col. Roy Caviness was assigned to Commander of 78FG from 361FG.

The only photo of this marking is shown in ref. 4, and its marking is established by Mr. Craig Quattlebaum and Mr. Jack Johnson (contributor of the photo) as yellow nose (of 361FG) and medium blue canopy, rudder and wingtip. There is some possibility that tip of vertical stabilizer (black in Marking #5) was also changed to blue. Apparently "Big Beautiful Doll", name plate on canopy and 36.5 kill marks remain intact, so the s/n should be as in Marking #5. It seems no outline on fuselage code. As with other 361FG P-51 in the post war period, there should be a relatively large code letters on lower left wing.





\*Please use stencil marks of the kit decals and paint black bands on tail.

## References

1. The Mighty Eighth, The Color Record (R. Freeman, Cassell & Co. 2001)
2. Aces & Wingmen II, vol. 2 (Bill Hess, Aviation USK, 1999)
3. Aces & Wingmen II, vol. 1 (D. Morris, Aviation USK, 1989)
4. Little Friends website (<http://www.littlefriends.co.uk/>)
5. P-51 Mustang Nose Art Gallery (J. M. & D. Campbell, Motorbooks International, 1994)
6. Fighters of the Mighty Eighth (W. Hess, T. Ivie, Motorbooks International, 1990)
7. Mustang International magazine, 2014 summer issue.
8. Loss of 8th and 9th AF, vol. 5 (Stan Bishop, John Hey, Gerri Franken, Marco Cillessen, Bishop Book Productions, 2016)
9. US Strategic Airpower, Europe 1942-1945 (R.A. Freeman, Arms and Armour Press, 1989)
10. American Eagles – P-51 Mustang Units of the Eighth Air Force (R. Freeman, Classics Publications, 2003)
11. Fighting Colors – The Creation of Military Aircraft Nose Art (Cary Velasco, Turner Publishing, 2004)
12. Osprey Aircraft of the Aces #1, Mustang Aces of the Eighth Air Force (J. Scutts, Osprey Publishing, 1994)
13. Eagles of Duxford (Gary Fry, Phalanx Publishing Co., 1991)
14. P-51 Mustang in Action (1045) (Larry Davis, Squadron/Signal publications, 1981)
15. Osprey Aircraft of the Aces #51, Down to Earth Strafing Aces of the Eighth Air Force (W.N. Hess, Osprey Publishing, 2003)
16. Osprey Aircraft of the Aces #115, Aces of the 78th Fighter Group (T.M. Cleaver, Osprey Publishing, 2013)
17. P-51 Mustang Aces (W. N. Hess, T. G. Ivie, Motorbooks International, 1992)
18. War Paint – Fighter Nose Art from WWII & Korea (J. M. and Donna Campbell, Motorbooks International, 1990)