

Eduard 1/72 F6F-3 Hellcat



By Mike Hanlon

Recently released by Eduard is a new tool 1/72 F6F-3 Hellcat, the first in new series of 1/72 scale Hellcat kits.

The current ProfiPack release includes color photo-etched detail parts, canopy masks, and decals from Cartograph for five -3 Hellcats in US Navy service. All five aircraft are in the tri-color scheme. Future releases for the -5, -5N Night fighter, Fleet Air Arm Hellcats and stripped down Weekend editions are also planned.

Retail price is \$25. For comparison, the 30 plus year old Hasegawa Hellcat retails for \$18, which makes the Eduard Profipack version a screaming bargain.

The kit plastic parts are provided on three tan sprues and one clear sprue, only the wing sprue and color photo-etch are unique to the -3. The remaining sprues contain parts common to all versions and as well as parts dedicated to specific variants. Specifically you get three different styles of cowling, -3 and -5 windscreens open and closed main canopy parts, window inserts for -3 and early -5 fuselages as well as the later style -5 windowless version. Rockets for use on the -5 and the radar radome and the 20 mm cannons of the -5N Night fighter are also included.

Construction is straightforward and offers no real problems. The instrument panel has nicely raised detail. If you opt for the photo-etched instrument panel and side panels you must first sand the detail off. I used cyanoacrylate glue to attach the panels. The remainder of the interior is painted Gunze Sangyo interior green.

Before attaching the -3 window inserts to the fuselage halves, I gave them two coats of Future acrylic floor wax to protect them from glues fumes and frosting. A photo-etched cross member was also attached with Future. This cross member cuts diagonally across each window.

Once the interior was assembled and the window attached, I joined the fuselage halves. The fit was very good. The wings and tail planes are a press fit into the fuselage. I left them off to simplify painting the tri-color scheme on the fuselage. Once painted the fit was so tight I had to bevel the edges to get the wings on.



The engine includes a photo-etched ignition harness. I always screw them up so I left it off.

The remainder of assemble was straightforward and offered no surprises. I used Tamiya Flat White, Pollyscale Dark Sea Blue and Intermediate Blue for the camouflage scheme. The Cartograph decals worked perfectly. The scheme I chose was for VF-1 operating from the Yorktown during the Marianas Turkey Shoot in June 1944.

Eduard has produced a fine kit of a great aircraft and although I prefer 1/48 scale, I look forward to future releases of the Hellcat.

