

## HASEGAWA'S 1/32ND MESSERSCHMITT Bf 109E3/4



Major Helmut Wick Reissue

by Scott Olsen

In the past few years, Hasegawa has been reissuing most of its 1/32nd scale line of kits. This is partially due to a renewed interest in 1/32nd scale model aircraft and a demand for larger models. Most of these kits are basically the original molds but with newer decals and box art. Some modelers may find these Hasegawa reissues dated by today's standards. They are still great kits and build into very impressive models with a little extra work

For Luftwaffe buffs who like "big scale", the Hasegawa Messerschmitt BF 109E is a classic kit and still the best available model of a 1/32nd "Emil". Currently, Hasegawa offers two 1/32nd scale kits of the BF 109E. One is a re-boxing of the original Battle of Britain era BF 109E3/4 issue and a newer issue with markings for 56 victory Luftwaffe ace Major Helmut Wick. The "Wick" reissue offers a new decal sheet and box art that can be used as paint scheme reference for that aircraft.

One may find the "Wick" reissue an interesting kit to build due to the unique "stippling" camouflage scheme used on this particular aircraft as seen on the box art. This "stippling" paint scheme was used

on several Messerschmitt's of JG-2 in the fall of 1940 during the battle of Britain. The cockpit, engine, and gun parts detail for the Hasegawa BF 109E kit is limited but sufficient. However, if more accuracy is your thing, then one could add an exterior and interior photo-etched set from Eduard. For my 1/32nd 'Emil', I used the Eduard exterior photo-etch set and added a SuperScale BF-109E stencil sheet for additional decals. The exterior photo-etched set replaces the kit landing gear doors with more accurate examples and improves the gun detail. Parts are also added for the landing gear struts. The engine gets spruced up and metal screens are added to the intakes on the wings. The cowling also gets a few more odds and ends. It is also highly recommended to use a set of "True Details" bulged resin wheels for the BF 109E series aircraft. The wheels from the kit are somewhat inaccurate and very plain.

Construction starts with the assembly and painting of the interior components; the DB601 engine, MG-17 cowl guns, fuel tank, and cockpit. These components will build into a 27 part sub-assembly. The interior color for this aircraft and many other Luftwaffe planes during that era is RLM-02, "gray". I used Gunze Sangyo RLM-02 for most of the fuselage interior, primary color for the cockpit, pilot seat, and fuel tank. The instrument panel is also RLM-02 with flat black gauges and white highlights. The engine is finished in a basic coat of Gunze Sangyo "burnt iron" with some "gunmetal" and "oil" colors for the highlights. The exhaust stacks are painted with Testors "steel".



During the construction of the engine, small photo-etched components are added to the block and engine mounts. The MG-17 cowl mounted machine guns are painted in Gunze Sangyo "gunmetal" with Testors "steel" highlights. The ammunition magazines, mounted just behind the engine, are painted in RLM-02. The cowl-mounted MFG-17 machineguns and magazines also get several photo-etched parts to increase their level of detail. The kit's oil cooler screen is replaced with a full photo-etched oil-cooler assembly. I painted this with Testors "steel". This assembly will be added later just inside the oil cooler opening under the cowl.

The undercarriage was assembled next with photo-etch parts replacing the kit's scissors link on each strut. I painted the landing gear struts with RLM-70, "black green" and used Humbrol "silver" on the oleos and scissors links. The "True Details" resin wheels are painted flat black with RLM-70 "black-green" hubs and then attached to the struts. The inside of the landing gear covers and wheel wells are RLM-02. Paint the landing gear door exteriors RLM-65, "light blue", to match the rest of the underside of the aircraft. Before installing the main interior assembly, paint the pilot's armor plate RLM-02 and the headrest a flat reddish-brown color to duplicate leather.

The completed interior sub-assembly is glued into one of the fuselage halves. The photo-etched oil cooler unit is attached to the right fuselage half just inside the intake. The fuselage halves can be joined together. Some sanding may be needed on the edges of firewall and cockpit floor of the interior sub assembly to ensure proper fit. Before the wing halves are glued together, there are several photo-etched and plastic parts to be added. Super glue the pair of photo-etched grills inside the wing radiator intakes. Paint the wing mounted MG-17's "gunmetal" and then cement the wing halves together. While the wings are drying, attach the photo-etched wheel well parts.

The horizontal stabilizers, their support struts, the completed wing assembly, and the upper cowl nose can all be glued to the fuselage. Paint the prop hub "gunmetal" and the prop blades flat black. ( Be sure to use the earlier style spinner because the later BF 109-E7 style spinner is also included in the kit.) Paint the spinner with Gunze Sangyo RLM-04, "gelb". When dry, glue the spinner and prop together. Paint the tail wheel assembly flat black and detail the tire fittings with dull silver.

At this point there are some areas along the fuselage seams, and underside of the cowl where some filler and sanding will be needed for a cleaner look. The removable cowl hood-engine cover does not fit very well to the fuselage. the front and back edges may have to be extended slightly with putty to eliminate any gap. Once you are satisfied with the seams and cowl hood fit, carefully mask off the cockpit opening, wheel wells, and engine compartment.

Most BF109E's sent to France in 1940 were delivered with a standard factory applied paint scheme. This consisted of RLM-65, "light blue", applied to the entire underside of the aircraft, along with the fuselage sides, and under the horizontal stabilizers, A "splinter" camouflage scheme consisting of RLM-02, "gray" and RLM-71 "dark green," was used on the topsides of the wing, horizontal stabilizers, and the upper spine of the fuselage from behind the cowl to the tail. Once aircraft were delivered to their front line units, ground crews added additional camouflage and markings.

Several aircraft serving with JG-2 in October 1940, including Hauptman Wick's, had an RLM-71, dark green "stippling" camouflage scheme painted over the RLM-65, "light blue" along the sides of the fuselage and on the tail.



Start by painting the aircraft undersides and fuselage RLM-65. Next paint the wing and horizontal stabilizer topsides RLM-02 using a mask against the fuselage to create a hard edge. Using the paint guide as a reference, mask off a line along the upper fuselage on both

sides from the cowl to the tail and then also apply RLM-02. Once dry, mask off the splinter pattern on the wings and fuselage spine and apply RLM-71, "dark green", over the RLM-02 base coat. The RLM-71 dark green, "stippling" can now be applied to the fuselage



Tear the corner off an old dishwashing sponge. Dip it in water and squeeze the water out so it 's just slightly damp. Dip the sponge in RLM-71 and remove any excess on the bottle edge or paper towel. Using the sponge, lightly dab the paint in a "stippling" pattern along the fuselage sides over the RLM-65 from the cowl all the back to under the horizontal stabilizers, (It might be a good idea to practice your "stippling" technique on a scrap of plastic sheet before you apply the paint to your model! Ed.) Make sure the stippling" is applied just below the splinter

camouflage line on the fuselage spine.

The next painting step is to apply any tactical markings. White or yellow markings were applied to many Luftwaffe fighter aircraft during the Battle of Britain period for recognition purposes. Hauptmann Wick's aircraft had its entire nose section, including the underside, painted in RLM-04 yellow along with the lower section of the tail. To duplicate this, mask off the nose section using the edge of the cowl hood where it meets the fuselage as a line of reference. Then mask the lower portion of the tail on both sides. Paint all applicable areas RLM-04. Next paint the inside of the cowl hood RLM-02 and the outside RLM-04 yellow.

The spinner back-plate is painted white creating what will be a band between the spinner and cowl nose once its assembled. As a final painting step, apply RLM-02 gray to the canopy frames. Once dry; glue the pilot armor in the enter canopy section, following the instructions for proper placement. After all the painting steps are completed; surface preparation for decal placement may be needed.

A light coat of Future can be applied to the whole model for better decal adhesion and finish. Be careful to use markings specifically for Major Wick's aircraft, as several different decal configurations are offered with the kit. After the decals are applied, clear flat or satin may be applied to the model. On my model a second coat of Future was applied to protect the decals. Once this dried, a very light coat of Micro flat mixed with Micro satin was applied to the model.

With the exterior finish of the model complete the final assembly of the aircraft can take place. Attach the undercarriage strut assemblies to the wings inside the wheel wells. Once dry; glue the photo-etch landing gear door covers to the wheel wells and undercarriage struts. Attach the tail wheel, spinner assembly, and canopy frames to the

fuselage. Under the wings, glue the aileron mass balances in place and attach the water cooler doors to the vent outlets. as a final step, add the intake screen to the supercharger opening on the cowl.



**A Short History of Major Helmut Wick with JG-2** Major Helmut Wick had a meteoric career with JG-2. Wick was assigned to JG-2 in August 1939 and participated in the invasion of Poland but scored no victories. Following this period, JG-2 then participated in the invasion of France. It was during this campaign that Wick's career as top scoring Luftwaffe ace really took off. On May 17th, 1940 he claimed three LeO 451's shot down but was only credited with one. . Again on May 20th he scored two LeO-451's shot and was awarded both claims. Between June 5th and 8th 1940, he shot down six Bloch-151's and two Morane-Saulnier 406's. On June 9th he scored his twelfth victory, a Blenheim over Soissons making him the leading ace in JG-2 Wick scored his thirteenth victory, a Fairey Battle near Montdidier-Provins, his last official victory in the French campaign.

The summer of 1940 saw the Battle of Britain underway. On June 23, 1940, Wick was appointed commander of 3 Staffel./JG-2. Major Wick immediately racked up many



victories during this time. His first battle of Britain kills were on July 11, 1940 in which he claimed a Hawk 75 and two Spitfires. Again on July 17th, he downed another Spitfire, which crash landed near Hailsham. On July 21, 1940 he was promoted to Oberleutnant and by August 21, 1940 his score had risen to 21 confirmed kills. On the 27th of August he was awarded the Ritterkreuze (Knights Cross). By September 7th, 1940 Wick added two more Hurricanes to his tally and claiming five more aircraft by the 17th. He was then promoted to Hauptmann and was made Gruppen Kommandeur of 1st Gruppe./JG-2. By the end of September he added another nine kills and on Oct. 5, 1940 he was awarded five more victories.

On October 6th, 1940 he was ordered to travel to Germany and meet Reichsmarschall Goring himself at a dinner with Goring and his generals. He was told to take a special train to Berchtesgarden. Once there the Fuhrer greeted Wick and presented him with Oak Leaves to his Knights Cross. Hitler then promoted him to major, making Helmut Wick the youngest man of that rank in the Wehrmacht.

Back with his Gruppe, Wick shot down a Spitfire on Oct. 15th and on Oct 20th, he was promoted to Geschwader Commander of JG-2. As Commander of JG-2 Major Wick continued to fly missions and lead his unit. By the 28th of November 1940 he had racked up 54 victories. On this day he led a fighter sweep northeast of the Isle of Wight over Southern England and shot down his 55th aircraft, a Spitfire. After returning to base for a rest, he returned to combat with JG-2's second mission of the day. At 16:30 his 'staff' flight took off for another sweep of the Isle of Wight area. Once back in this area, his unit became involved in a large air battle with Spitfires. Within 40 minutes, a formation of Spitfires was spotted with Wick immediately diving on them, downing a Spitfire from 406 Squadron and killing its pilot. This was major Wick's 56th final victory and last flight. Their formation turned into the sun and was attacked by 20 to 30 Spitfires from superior altitude unnoticed by Wick. Three of the Messerschmitts in the 'staff' flight out maneuvered their attackers by diving away but became separated. Apparently Wick's aircraft was hit. Wick's wingman Oblt. Pflanz lost sight of his commander and the other aircraft in the formation. Circling around, Pflanz attacked, shooting down one Spitfire, which crashed into the channel. The pilot of the aircraft. F/Lt John Dundas of 609 Sqn. was killed. Lt. Dundas had just shot down Major Wick and within seconds he was then killed by Pflanz. Oblt. Pflanz claims to have seen a parachute floating down in the area and assumed it was Major Wick. Other members of the JG-2 claim to have seen Major Wick slumped over in his cockpit. A large search in the channel by the German air sea rescue service found nothing.