

## REVELL / MONOGRAM SU-25 FROGFOOT 1/48<sup>th</sup> SCALE



By Norris Graser

This SU-25 really isn't a SU-25! It is actually a T-8, which was the prototype designation. That's not bad, as prototype is misleading in this case: these were fully functional, somewhat successful aircraft. Modifications made from experience gained with the T-8 would lead to what would become the SU-25. But even that fact is a little misleading because Frogfoot aircraft continually changed throughout production with various odds & mods being added. So, the bottom line here is that anyone building a particular Frogfoot will have to do his research to have the aircraft in its correct configuration. I found three books that will get you an accurate jet & they are:

SU-25 All Variants, Basny, Brazda, Ovcacik, Susa, 4 + Publishing, 1996  
SU-25 Frogfoot In Action, Stapfer, Squadron Signal Publications, 1992  
Sukhoi SU-25 Frogfoot, Skrynnikov, Concord Publications, 1994

This model first appeared in 1990 and was a little unusual for Monogram in that it had recessed panel lines overall. For several years after, their aircraft models still featured raised panel lines

Here's a quick rundown that should get you through the build.

The cockpit is just ok with about as much detail as was common for kits manufactured in the late '80's. Although I built it pretty much out of the box, I did swap the kit seat for a Kendall representation of the K-36. The other item required a little surgery as the cockpit turns out to be off in length needing to be shortened. It's a matter of approximately 3/16" too much leg room. This is easy enough as the aft bulkhead of the tub cuts easily and with minor sanding fits perfectly

The fuselage is in 3 pieces. 2 halves fit just fine but the large underside piece requires putty & sanding.

The intakes and wings fit very nicely- especially the wings. They just snap into place!

Pay attention when adding the 10 wing pylons (5 per wing) though. Make sure they are perpendicular to the surface your model is sitting on. Minor spaces are found under several of the pylons, where they meet the wing. I filled these gaps with white glue, wiping the excess off a few hours later with a damp tissue.



Besides the cockpit, there are a few other trouble spots:

The large underside fuselage piece requires a lot more care and does not fit as well as the rest of the kit... I used putty here and a lot of sanding.

The main landing gear linkage did not attach as indicated by the instructions. These pieces may be too short or too long, but they do not line up as per the instructions! Checking a 4 + publication, SU-25-All Variants, I found several photographs of the main gear area which helped to clear up my confusion. I added the parts, adjusting them for best fit, painted the assembly gray, and went on to another step, not concerning myself any further that they might not be right.

Leave off the two nose probes and the dorsal spine antenna until the model is completely finished. They are just flush mount items and difficult to attach requiring a LOT of patience. They will definitely break off if you attach them & continue working on the model.



The canopy is shown in the wrong position on the box top, opening instead, to the starboard side as portrayed in the instructions.

This is where I thought the kit was most interesting; there are several add on scoops and antennae and it is at this point that you have to decide which aircraft you want to build, a T-8 or one of several SU-25 derivatives. The aircraft I decided on was in my mind from the start, as a decal had appeared several years ago, which had caught my eye. The aircraft type, a SU-25K delivered to Czechoslovakia. On the port side nacelle of this shark mouthed aircraft was a large, colorful squadron insignia. Artwork on the starboard fuselage side comprised of a girl sitting on a bed of flowers. Not being officially condoned, the artwork (named ANCA) and the shark mouth were removed after only a few hours.



Knowing the aircraft type and finding pictures of the exact aircraft I wanted to replicate, I began adding, deleting and modifying various scoops and antennae which seem to crop up, move, change shape or disappear altogether depending on which block of aircraft you are looking at. A few of these mods require plastic card, carving, sanding or reshaping of parts or parts from another source Here are the changes and additions I made to the kit:

- 1 I didn't use part(s) 49, which can be added to both sides of the aft fuselage, as they were not present on ANCA. These two pieces are, in fact, misidentified on the instructions as nacelle fences. They really are chaff and flare dispensers, fairly well done so save them for another kit.
- 2 I assembled and modified the two aft fuselage air intakes (part43 and 44) and repositioned them forward of where the instructions tell you to place them, even with the inboard flaps but on the aft nacelle.

- 3 Air scoops #30, 45 and 76 are placed as indicated by the instructions.
- 4 As far as I can see, there are no underside scoops on the aft fuselage so I did not use them though they are supplied in the kit (parts 71).
- 5 The HF antenna (part 68) was added to the aft underside fuselage.



- 6 The wingtip pods containing speed brakes are different between T-8 and SU-25 aircraft. The fix is easy enough- don't model them in the opened position; close them up & they will pass for the later version.
- 7 On the underside of each wing tip pod, there is a retractable landing light. These lights were found to pose a problem to the pilot when deployed in low light situations. The solution was to weld a thin metal anti glare panel to the inside edge, between the light and the pilot thus solving the problem. To modify the kit, all you need is a good photo of the anti glare panel (and there are several in my references,) and some thin plastic card. Just cut two pieces to closely approximate the shape and attach to the inside edge with liquid glue.
- 8 Although Soviet SU-25 aircraft have a blade antenna on the forward nose and under the tail, just behind the HF antenna, export aircraft are fitted with antenna known as "odd rods". So, I cut the two blade antennas off,

smoothed the area and then used a pin vice and small diameter drill bit to create a hole for each set of three odd rods. I used thin wire to replicate these antennae.

- 9 There is a very prominent intake scoop located at the base of the leading edge of the vertical tail; something lacking on the T-8. This is an item you will have to fabricate or find in your "spare parts " box. I sacrificed a side scoop from a Monogram F-105 model finding it to be of approximate shape and size for what was needed. After reshaping it slightly, to match photos of the real item, I cut a notch out of the vertical and installed the piece using liquid glue. When dry I filled in around the scoop with Squadron Green Putty and then set it aside to cure overnight. I used fine wet or dry paper and shaped the area to smooth out the surgery.
- 10 The last change I made to the model was the outline of the trailing edge of the flaps on the main wing to more accurately replicate the real aircraft. Perhaps not entirely correct, the changes will pass at a glance. Again, there are several good photos available to study showing the entire topside of the aircraft. The wing trailing edge modifications were easily accomplished using a sharp knife and fine wet or dry paper.



Colors listed in the kit and also on the decal reference are incorrect and, for that matter, so is the camouflage scheme. Using pictures and colors listed from three books, I chose my colors and applied them starting with the underside of the aircraft. I exchanged the lower color for another, lighter color. I used two other

colors right out of the bottle, mixed two colors for a closer match to complete the project.

The two colors I mixed were: Medium Green - equal parts of ModelMaster Interior Green FS 34151 and Russian Topside Green. I also mixed the light tan with equal parts of ModelMaster Dark Tan FS 30219 and U.S Army/Marines Gulf Armour Sand. Both of these mixes simulate a more weathered appearance.



Aircraft markings came from a SuperScale sheet 48-407, which surfaced during the Desert Storm War. Since that time, color photos have cropped up showing ANCA, the aircraft I was replicating, but back then, only a few black and whites were published. So, some colors have suffered. Even so, the blue in the national insignia is a bit light in shade and over all, too bright. It is obvious that the flowers surrounding ANCA, the pin up girl on the starboard fuselage side, should be something other than flesh tone!! SuperScale left them pink! I think this was mistake, no? A color photo is featured in one of my references so knowing that the flowers were red with white and a touch of green, I painted most of the pink petals with red acrylic. This is an easy thing to do and, actually, I touch up & highlight many pieces of artwork on my models giving them a more "painted" effect. The shark mouth went on without problem, except that it shattered and splintered into several pieces! With little patience, I got all of them to match up again & after drying, I applied MicroSol to help shrink the shark mouth to fit the contours of the forward fuselage. This is especially necessary around the recessed gun vent.

The kit contains several weapons to hang under the wings. I used the fuel tanks, which are ok, except that the fins are a little thick. I wanted to add the rocket pods but found them to be inaccurate. Better replacements came from an Academy Mig 21. Two Ch 25ML (AS 10) Karen, and two R-60M (AA-8) Aphid missiles are included, but I chose only the fuel tanks and rocket pods leaving several pylons empty. There are no sway braces for the pylons so if you choose to add them; they also have to come from somewhere else.



This kit is a mixed bag; it is a little uneven excelling in fit in some places, wanting in others. The cockpit could definitely use some help, and an etched metal set for the interior of the canopy would be welcome, too. Detail is pretty good for a T-8 or early SU-25's, but you must check references for any specific aircraft you are building. Over all, not a difficult build and in spite of everything I did to modify this one, I spent under 20 hours to completion. It builds into an impressive model and an average builder can easily put this one together.