

## P-51D, 1/48, Airfix

by Mike Hanlon



The last two years have seen the release of two new 1/48 Mustang kits with Eduard planning a series of P-51 kits starting next year. Having previously built the Meng offering, with its strange “glue free” construction I had hoped the Airfix kit would prove to be a better experience. It wasn't.

To be clear, some of the problems I had in building this kit had nothing to do with the kit, for example, I bought a set of Eduard masks for the canopy and clear parts. Upon opening the mask set I found a rectangle of kabuki tape that had no die cuts in it. So I essence I had a 2 inch by two inch piece of tape that cost me \$10.

The kit itself is molded in a very soft plastic that is prone to sink marks, including sink marks in the tips of the propeller blades. I also had sink marks in the tail planes which required filling. When cutting one of the tail planes from the sprue I gouged a chunk out of it. This was corrected with putty and superglue. Finally, I wanted to replace the propeller blades with a resin set from Eduard. The set included a resin two-piece resin spinner. For reasons known only to them, Eduard molded the three attachment points to the front of the spinner. Although I carefully cut the outer two attachment points, the center point broke and took a chunk of the center of the spinner with it.

Assembly of the kit begins with the interior. The details are comparable to the interior of the Meng kit. The seat has a deep quilted pattern that I have never seen in pictures of Mustang seats, but left it alone not wanting any further

aftermarket adventures. The instrument panel is represented by a decal. It doesn't look very good, but as with all Mustang kits, the panel is buried so deeply under the combing that it is all but invisible.



The remainder of the fuselage assembly was uneventful. I misaligned the radiator housing and had a minor seam to fill as a result, no other reviewer has reported this problem so I was most probably the cause.

The wings present several annoying issues. The guns are molded as inserts to the leading edge of the wings. These fit poorly and require filling. The ailerons and flaps are molded separately; the flaps have mounting tabs and are a simple fit. The ailerons are essentially a butt joint and I knocked them off several times. The elevator and rudder lack mounting tabs as well and were also easily knocked off as well. The fit of the wings a tail planes is good and the remaining parts all fit well.

The wheels are molded in halves with tread detail on the outer part of the tire, but not in the center. Part of the wheel hub is molded on the landing gear strut; it is not possible to replace them with resin wheels.

The fit of the canopy and windscreen is very good and unlike the Meng kit, the canopy has no molding seam. Three canopies are included in the kit, but only one is called out in the instructions. A second set of masks from Eduard was used and these were properly cut and worked very well.

The model was primed with Tamiya Gloss Black. I used of Alclad White Aluminum for the wings and straight Aluminum for the fuselage. Stainless Steel was used on the panel around the exhausts. The anti-glare panel was Gunze-Sangyo Olive Drab and the spinner was painted Tamiya Gloss Blue. For markings I used Superscale 48-1128 Charles Nelson's 402 FS/370 FG aircraft, 'Keep Smilin/Hot Shot Charlie'. I used the national insignia's from the kit and they worked well.



As with the Meng kit I found this kit to be a little problematic. It is not the ultimate 1/48 Mustang and I am now pinning my hopes on Eduard. I would really like to see Tamiya retool their kit and kick the other manufacturers in the teeth. Also like the Meng kit final result looks every inch like a Mustang and whatever problem they have can be overcome.