

Modeling Notes for Eduard 1/48 P51D Mustang by Ed Mate.

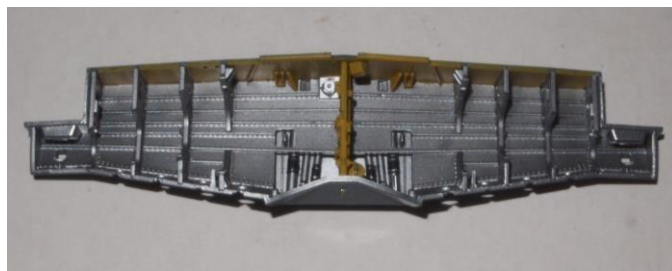


I was interested in building this kit because I wanted to compare it to the Hasegawa and Tamiya P-51Ds. The first thing to notice is that there are a lot more parts to the Eduard kit. In the end there is more detail, but it takes a lot more work - the prime example is building the main gear well from multiple parts vs. the molded in offerings from Tamiya and Hasegawa.

This build was from an overtrees kit so I replaced the instrument panel with an Eduard Look offering. I actually like the Zoom photo-etch parts better, but Eduard has not produced a separate Zoom offering at the time of the build so I decided to give Look a try. (Yahu now produces an instrument panel so I'll use that on my next build.) I decided to attach the internal structure parts to the insides of the fuselage halves before painting and I attached several small parts to the fuel tank as well. All in preparation for spray painting interior green and black. After this major painting, detail work was completed with other colors.

I tackled the main gear well and its multiple parts early to get an idea of how painful this project experience was going to be. The well front part and rear spar part were warped so I gently bent them closer to being straight. The front part was attached to the roof using the molded tabs while making sure the angle was correct by checking the seam inside and out; the molded on end pieces help get the angle correct. I cut the internal structure pieces out one at a time and carefully followed the directions to make sure they were going into the correct spot. At this time, the rear spar was not attached because I wanted to

paint the yellow spar separate from the aluminum in the rest of the bay. Before the glue set completely, I taped the spar to the assembly to make sure the internal structure pieces were aligned properly. I painted the parts and then completed the assembly. All in all, it wasn't too bad and the parts fit well.



Back to the cockpit, I finished the floor and added the seat support and seat. The Look steel seat belts were added to the kit seat. This is the first time I've used the steel belts and I must say they are an improvement over the brass Zoom offerings that were more stiff and had the paint crack away near any sharp folds (like over the back of the seat). The rack over the tank and the radio assemblies completed the cockpit so it was attached to the left fuselage half. The remaining fuselage parts were added. Note that Eduard uses a photo-etch part inside the main under-belly air scoop so if you are building an overtrees or weekend edition there is nothing inside. I had an old Hasegawa kit that had been used for parts so I put the Hasegawa piece inside on this project. The fuselage halves were then joined with liquid cement. Overall fit was good but I still had a fair amount of work to do to get

the top nose joint looking good. I was surprised at how well the fin fillet part fit and I didn't use any filler once it was dry. The worst seam for me was the spot on the bottom in the area that makes up the cooling intake; the two halves had a slight step and the low side was actually a depression in the contour so there was no choice but to use filler to build the low side up.

Wing assembly was next up and it started with attaching the wheel bay assembly to the lower wing. There was a gap between the bay assembly; that space is for the gear doors to slip into during their assembly later. Test fitting the upper wings revealed that they fit very well - only a small amount of filing was needed to reduce the thickness of the top of the gear bay out near the strut attachments. The ID lights were painted and installed as were the parts to depict what is inside the shell ejection openings for the guns. The upper wings were attached using liquid glue and the gun insert pieces were added at the same time. The gun inserts were where the worst fit occurred. I filled some gaps at the ends of the inserts with some 0.005" thick plastic sheet. After letting the glue dry for a day, all of the seams were sanded.

Test fitting the wing assembly to the fuselage revealed another really good fit. The only issue I found was on the left wing the airfoil shape at the wing root didn't really match the fillet molded into the fuselage side. a 0.010" shim of plastic between the top of the gear bay and the inside of the upper wing at the back of the bay fixed the airfoil shape issue so the wings could be attached to the fuselage virtually without filler. The wings and stabilizers were attached with liquid glue and the stabilizer fit was as good as the wings. A small amount of Mr. Surfacer was spread over the joints and wiped down with rubbing alcohol as the final treatment for the seams.

I used one of the kit props and found the blades are nicely thin. I painted the prop in a session with 9 other props for projects starting with white on the tips, then yellow, then masking the yellow for the final coat of black. Then Future was sprayed to prepare the blades for decals.

Preparation for painting included completing the instrument panel installation followed by the windscreen clear part. The clear part of the kit gunsight was cut off and replaced with a small piece of clear plastic sheet. The cockpit was masked by using an alternate canopy covered in tape. The windscreen and canopy were masked using the Eduard mask set offered in a Profipack kit. The shape for the back of the canopy was terrible so I created my own masking tape version. The wheel wells were masked using folds of paper towel. The overall assembly was cleaned by wiping down with rubbing alcohol.

The standard kit markings are nice but I started with the overtrees boxing so I went to the decal stash for this project. I chose the Mille G flown by Major Edward B. Giller, C.O. of the 343rd Fighter Squadron of the 55FG. The decals came from Barracudacals.

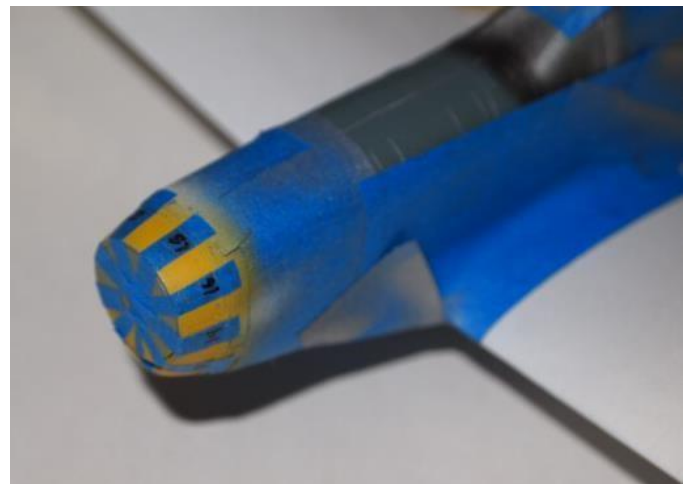
Painting started with Alclad Aluminum sprayed directly on the plastic in areas that would still be NMF. Masking with Parafilm and painter's tape (blue) was completed so the silver

painted wings could be completed. Alclad dull aluminum was used replicate the painted areas. Various other panels on the nose were masked and painted in dark aluminum or light aluminum to create some variation and visual interest. The flaps on Mustangs look shiny in photos so I painted the parts with Alclad gloss black primer followed by airframe aluminum - the effect was great, but perhaps a bit too shiny. The masked canopy & windscreen were painted flat black followed by Model Master Aluminum.

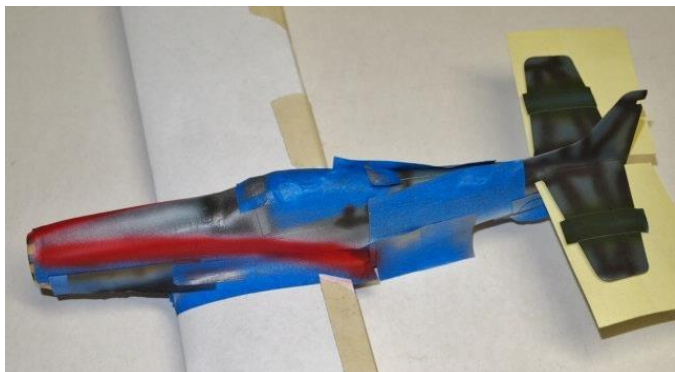
Time for color. The color areas started with dark grey preshade for the areas that would be white. White was sprayed not only in the white spots, but also in places that would be red and yellow later. This included the spinner parts. The white areas were masked and then black was sprayed for the wing tail and invasion stripes. Those areas were masked and yellow was sprayed on the nose, spinner, and rudder. The nose and spinner were masked for the green color to complete the squadron markings. I used some gauge blocks to cut the spinner mask to size.



The nose checks were done in two steps where the back rows were painted and then the masking was changed so the front row could be masked.



With the nose done, the red stripe area was masked and painted. I tried using the Barracudacal decal as a template, but it is too short to properly span the Eduard kit so I turned to a draftsman's French curve and cut a curve that fit properly. Finally, after the red stripes were masked, the camouflage green was painted on the rear of the model.



With the masks removed, the model was sprayed with a coat of Future. The Barracudacal decals that I used worked great. The decals were sealed and the model was given a dark brown oil wash. Final finish is Alclad semi-matt on the silver areas and Testors dull coat on the camouflage areas.

I added the flaps after painting everything but next time I think I'll glue them to the wing before painting. Note that Eduard does not provide an option for displaying the flaps retracted.

To me, the landing gear attachment looks very flimsy, however the parts fit tight and I think some extra strength comes after the gear doors are attached. I did not glue the door braces to the landing gear when assembling the gear, but rather waited until this step when adding the gear doors to the model. Pay close attention to the brace part numbers and to the direction the parts are installed because they are not symmetric.

I used the kit drop tanks but subjected them to the Frankentanken treatment - the front and rear parts were replaced with resin parts from a Brassin set.

I enjoyed building the kit and now think Eduard will be my "go-to" for Mustang projects. My one disappointment is the lack of options for the flaps. How the landing gear will hold up over time is still a bit of a worry. 8.5 On the Mate Meter!

