

Modelling the Messerschmitt Me 262

Brett Green and Robert Oehler



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Modelling the Messerschmitt Me 262



Brett Green and Robert Oehler

Series editors Marcus Cowper and Nikolai Bogdanovic

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The Messerschmitt Me 262

Background

The Messerschmitt Me 262 was not the first jet fighter to take to the skies. That honour fell to the Heinkel He 280, closely followed by the Gloster E.28/39. Nor was the Me 262 the fastest weapon in the Luftwaffe's arsenal. The rocket-propelled Messerschmitt Me 163 could reach a maximum speed of 960 kilometres per hour during its four-minute powered flight – considerably faster than the jet-powered Stormbird.

Despite its advanced design, the operational life expectancy of the Me 262's powerplant, the Jumo 004B turbojet, was a ludicrously short 10 to 25 hours due to the scarcity of suitable high-temperature alloys. To make matters worse, the Jumo turbojet was plagued with reliability problems right up to the end of the war.

Operationally, the Messerschmitt Me 262 was sparsely deployed and also notoriously vulnerable on its long take-off and landing, requiring dedicated fighter cover – by piston-engine aircraft – over its long runways. The new jet fighter was unforgiving to inexperienced pilots too.

Messerschmitt Me 262A-Ia White I7 in flight. Ironically, the 'S' on the fuselage and fin of this aircraft probably indicates that it was an instructional airframe and was not airworthy at the time!



Yet there can be little argument that the Me 262 was an unmistakable signal of the dawning of the jet age. In less than a year of operational service over the skies of Europe, the Me 262 attained legendary status with its pilots and its adversaries alike.

In design terms, the Me 262 was a relatively conventional all-metal, low-wing, twin-engine airframe. Even so, the Me 262 was strikingly attractive with its swept wings, low-slung nacelles, and shark-like lines of the fuselage emphasized by its big, triangular fin. It *looked* fast, even on the tarmac.

The Me 262 first entered service on 20 June 1944 with a bomber unit – KG 51. KG 51's Me 262s were fitted with racks to carry two 250kg bombs, but they were not fitted with specialized bombsights so accurate targeting was impossible. Me 262 pilots of KG 51 sometimes referred to their unit as the 'Crop Damage Geschwader'!

It was in the fighter/interceptor role that the Me 262 shone. Unencumbered by bombs, the Me 262 outpaced contemporary Allied fighters, and its deadly armament of four 30mm MK108 cannon could quickly despatch the biggest bombers of the day.

Following the end of World War II, the Avia Company completed a small batch of Me 262s in Czechoslovakia. The designation in Czech service was the Avia S-92 for the Me 262A-1a and CS-92 for the Me 262B-1a. A total of nine single-seat fighters and three two-seat trainers were delivered to the Czech Air Force.

Variants

The Messerschmitt Me 262 proved itself to be a versatile platform for a wide variety of missions. In addition to its best-known role as a fighter, the Me 262 was adapted for use as a fighter-bomber, two-seater bomber, trainer, night fighter, reconnaissance aircraft and even a tank buster with a 50mm cannon.

There were also many more designs on the drawing board to supplement and replace these variants.

Table 1: Characteristics of Messerschmitt Me 262 variants

The table below lists some characteristics that will be helpful to identify Me 262 variants. The table does not list prototype designations or variants that did not proceed beyond the drawing board.

Variant	Description	Seats	Characteristics
Me 262A-1a	Day fighter	1	Fitted with four 30mm MK108 cannon in the nose.
Me 262A-1a Jabo	Fighter-bomber	1	Fitted with four 30mm MK108 cannon in the nose and nose-mounted racks for 2×250 kg bombs.
Me 262A-1a/U3	Reconnaissance	1	Fitted with two Rb50/30 cameras in the forward fuselage, requiring two large, bulbous fairings on the sides of the nose.
Me 262A-1a/U4	Tank buster	1	Fitted with 50mm BK 5 anti-tank gun. Two prototypes produced.
Me 262A-2a	Fighter-bomber	1	Fitted with nose-mounted bomb racks. Equipped with either two or four 30mm cannon.
Me 262A-2a/U2	Two-seater bomber	2	Unarmed high-speed bomber with nose glazing for prone bombardier. Two prototypes produced.
Me 262B-1a	Two-seater trainer	2	
Me 262B-1a/U1	Two-seater night fighter	2	Radar-equipped night fighter fitted with either two or four 30mm cannon in the nose, and two 300-litre drop tanks.
Avia S-92	Day fighter	1	Post-war Czech built Me 262A-Ia.
Avia CS-92	Two-seater trainer	2	Post-war Czech built Me 262B-I a.

The Messerschmitt Me 262 in plastic

Overview

The first generation of Me 262 kits included releases from Frog, Airfix and Revell in 1/72 scale, and 1/48-scale models from Lindberg and Monogram. Most of these kits have since been superseded, but Monogram's Me 262 is still widely available today.

Revell and Minicraft both released 1/32-scale Me 262s in the 1960s and 1970s. Revell's 1/32-scale Me 262 displayed some serious shape problems, but Minicraft's model was reasonably accurate. The Minicraft kit was also boxed by Frog and Hasegawa, with Hasegawa later offering a 'High Tech' two-seater Me 262B-1a/U1 night fighter.

The second half of the 1980s saw a major resurgence in the hobby with a large number of high-quality releases. The Me 262 fared well in this period. In early 1989, Trimaster of Japan offered the first in its genus of 1/48-scale Me 262 kits. With the untimely demise of Trimaster, these moulds were taken up by Dragon of Hong Kong and also later released by Revell and Italeri. By 1997, Hasegawa had launched an updated family of 1/72-scale Stormbirds. In the late 1990s, Revell also delivered a series of new-tool 1/72-scale Me 262s, including several versions of the P.1099, a heavily armoured development of the original Me 262 design that never left the drawing board.

Tamiya surprised modellers with the first of its 1/48-scale Me 262 kits in 2002. Tamiya also re-released its old 1/100-scale Messerschmitt Me 262A-1a kit in the same box as a 1/100-scale Me 163 in 2003.

Monogram's 1/48-scale
Messerschmitt Me 262A-1a kit
was released more than 30 years
ago, but it is an accurate and
inexpensive kit still worthy of
consideration today.





Hasegawa's 1/32-scale kit, built by Chris Wauchop and posed in a blast pen made from a cardboard box. This photo was taken in the late 1970s, not too long after the kit was released.

Recommendations

Modellers are well served with Me 262 kit choices, whether their criterion is accuracy, ease of construction or price.

Hasegawa's Me 262 kits have the edge in terms of accuracy in 1/72 scale, but Revell's new-tool kits are crisply rendered and are available for pocket-money prices.

Tamiya's family of 1/48-scale Me 262s are beautifully detailed, cleverly engineered and a joy to build. In these respects, Tamiya offers the best Me 262 kits on the market today in any scale.

Dragon's 1/48-scale Me 262 kits are undoubtedly more challenging to build, but detail is almost to the same standard as Tamiya and more variants are available. The price of the Dragon kits – also available in Revell and Italeri boxes – is usually significantly cheaper than Tamiya's too. Even the old 1/48-scale Monogram kit is still worth considering due to its accuracy and very low price, despite its raised panel lines and poorly fitting nose parts.

Hasegawa's 1/32-scale Me 262A-1a is the only large-scale Stormbird currently in release. Many details are oversimplified but the outline is quite accurate and its size is impressive, making it a good contender for a comprehensive re-fit.

Table 2: Me 262 kits in 1/72, 1/48 and 1/32 scales

This is a selection of the Me 262 kits readily available today.

	Stock No.	Brand	Description	Comment
I/I00 scale		Tamiya	Me 262A-1a and Me 163	Two kits in one box
1/72 scale			V. C. ANDROLLE CO.	
	0124	A+V Models	Me 262 W3	
	0125	A+V Models	Me 262 Interzepter III	

	00627	Hasegawa	Me 262A 'Galland'	
	00727	Hasegawa	Me 262A 'ISSI'	
	7238	High Planes Models	Me 262 VI	
	7242	High Planes Models	Me 262V-2/V-3	
	72114	MPM	Me 262V-9/V-12	
	131	Planet Models	Me 262 HG III	
	4166	Revell	Me 262A-1a	
	4166	Revell	Me 262B-1a/U1	
	0834	Smer Models	Me 262B-1a/U1	
	72006	Special Hobby	Me 262 three seater	
1/48 scale				3
	5519	Dragon	Me 262B-1a/U1	
	5541	Dragon	Me 262 Mistel	
	2613	Italeri	Me 262A-la Schwalbe	Reboxed Dragon kit
	4597	Revell	Me 262A-1a 'Pro Finish'	Pre-painted
	61087	Tamiya	Me 262A-1a	
	61082	Tamiya	Me 262A-2a w/ Kettenkraftrad	
	61091	Tamiya	Me 262A-1a (Clear Edition)	
1/32 scale				
	08123	Hasegawa	Me 262A	

	Item No.	Brand	Description
/72 scale			
	7063	Aires	Me 262A cockpit set
	7004	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262 armament set
	7007	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262 conversion
	7012	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A/B control surfaces
	7017	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A interior
	7018	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262B interior
	7026	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A detail
	7005	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262 engine
		Eduard	Many photo-etched detail sets and masks
	72048	Extratech	Me 262A photo-etched detail set
	72054	Extratech	Me 262B-1a photo-etched detail set
	HED72122	Hawkeye Designs	Me 262B-1a/U1 detail set, including photo-etch parts
	SMAAR022	Scale Model Accessories	Me 262 engine covers
	SQ9183	Squadron	Me 262A vacuform canopy
	SQ9184	Squadron	Me 262B vacuform canopy
	W7201	Wurmcastings (High Planes Models)	Me 262A-1a cockpit and wheel well
	W7202	Wurmcastings (High Planes Models)	Me 262B-1a U1 cockpits and wheel well
	W7203	Wurmcastings (High Planes Models)	Me 262 flaps and slats
	W7204	Wurmcastings (High Planes Models)	Me 262 elevators and rudder
	W7205	Wurmcastings (High Planes Models)	Me 262 gun bay
	W7207	Wurmcastings (High Planes Models)	Junkers Jumo 004B
	W7208	Wurmcastings (High Planes Models)	Me 262 engine and wing mount

1/48 scale			
	EA4116	Aires	Me 262A gun bay
	EA4145	Aires	Me 262A engine set
	EA4146	Aires	Me 262 wheel set
	EA4148	Aires	Me 262A wheel bay and cockpit set
	EA4150	Aires	Me 262A cockpit set
	EA4158	Aires	Junkers JUMO 004B-1 exhaust nozzles
	EA4197	Aires	Me 262 control surfaces
	EA4203	Aires	Me 262 flaps
	EA4206	Aires	Me 262 slots
	AA48048	Arba	Messerschmitt Me 262 'Schnellbomber' conversion
	AA48051	Arba	'Lorin' engine conversion
		Black Magic	Various masks for wheels, canopies and camouflage
	CEC48368	Cutting Edge Modelworks	Me 262A super-detailed cockpit for Tamiya
	CEC48369	Cutting Edge Modelworks	Me 262 slats and slat inserts, flaps and control surfaces for Tamiya
	CEC48370	Cutting Edge Modelworks	Me 262 bulged main wheels
	CEC48371	Cutting Edge Modelworks	Me 262 four-gun access cover for Tamiya
	CEC48375	Cutting Edge Modelworks	Me 262A-1a/U3 Aufklärer (Recce) conversion for Tamiya
	CZ4074	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A/B engine set
	CZ4075	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A/B armament set
	CZ4III	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A-1a/V056 Fu226/216 conversion
	CZ4112	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A-1a/U3 photo conversion
	CZ4113	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262B-1a/B1a/U1 conversion
	CZ4114	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A detail set
	CZ4115	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	Me 262A engine set (Jumo 004)
	CZF48101	Czech Master Kits (CMK)	German Me 262 pilots
		Eduard	Various photo-etched detail sets and masks
	TD48061	True Details from USA	Me 262 wheels
	VE1387	Verlinden from USA	Me 262A/B update set
	VE1846	Verlinden from USA	Me 262 detail set
1/32 scale			
		Black Magic	Various masks for wheels, canopies and camouflage
		Eduard	Various photo-etched detail sets and masks
	ANG3201	Grand Phoenix	Me 262 resin cockpit interior
		JRutman Productions	detail set
		JRutman Productions	centre wheel well section
		JRutman Productions	wheel well set
		JRutman Productions	wing set
		JRutman Productions	wing wheel well set
		JRutman Productions	two-seat cockpit set
			cockpit and wheel well set
		JRutman Productions	landing gear set
		JRutman Productions	Resin cockpit with photo-etch
		JRutman Productions	MK108 cannon bay
		JRutman Productions	Rato units
		JRutman Productions	R4M rocket set
		JRutman Productions	resin wheel set (choice of three styles)
		CONTRACTOR CONTRACTOR (CONTRACTOR)	2021 OS DI

Revell's 1/72-scale Me 262 kits

Pros

- · Generally accurate
- · Simple assembly
- · Good fit
- · High level of detail
- · Crisp and fine surface detail
- · Excellent engineering
- · Pocket-money pricing

Cons

- · Boxed-in main wheel well
- · Poorly shaped, thick and distorted one-piece canopy (particularly in Me 262A-1a
- · Poorly shaped engine nacelles
- · Some fit and panel line issues associated with mid-upper fuselage insert.

Messerschmitt Me 262A-Ia 'White I' as it might have appeared early in 1945. This turbo originally served with Kommando Nowotny, the world's first operational jet fighter unit.

Tiny turbo – building Revell's 1/72-scale Me 262

Subject: Me 262A-1a 'White 1'

Modeller: Construction: Brett Green

Painting and markings: Chris Wauchop

Skill level: Advanced

Revell Me 262B-1a (built as a 262A-1a) Base kit:

Scale:

Additional detailing CMK Me 262A/B update set;

Wurmcastings Me 262A-1a cockpit; sets used:

Wurmcastings Me 262 wheel well set; Wurmcastings Me 262 control surfaces

Paints: Gunze Acrylics

Decals from Kagero book Me 262 in Combat Markings:

Revell's 1/72-scale Me 262s in the box

In the late 1990s, Revell of Germany released two new-tool 1/72-scale Messerschmitt Me 262 kits - an Me 262A-1a single-seat day fighter and the Me 262B-1a two-seater night fighter.

The kits shared the same basic components including fuselage, wings, engine nacelles and undercarriage. The common fuselage was transformed into either the single-seat or twin-tub variant by different inserts for the mid-upper fuselage. Different canopies were supplied with each kit too.





Revell's 1/72-scale Me 262 kit is inexpensive but quite appealing. The \$4.95 price of the kit is dwarfed by the cost of the accessories that will be fitted to the finished product!

These kits are still widely available and may be picked up very cheaply. I bought the model used in this article for less than \$5.00 – a genuine bargain in my opinion.

The plastic is impressive, with crisp, finely engraved panel lines and good detail provided in the cockpit, wheels and undercarriage gear.

The outline of the kits is quite accurate, with only the shape of the engine nacelles being somewhat suspect.

The canopy of the Revell Me 262A-1a kit is disappointing though, as the rake of the windscreen is too steep; and the clear plastic is thick, somewhat distorted and ill fitting. Since it is a single piece, the daring modeller will also have to cautiously slice this thick transparency into three parts to display the canopy open. A vacform replacement, available from Falcon, will be the simplest solution to all these canopy woes.

The other problem worth mentioning is the main gear bay. Although Revell has gone to the trouble of moulding some nice detail on the bottom of the cockpit tub and the inside of the fuselage, they have effectively hidden all this good work behind an inaccurately enclosed wheel well.

Accessories

I decided to build this small-scale Stormbird with everything opened and dropped.

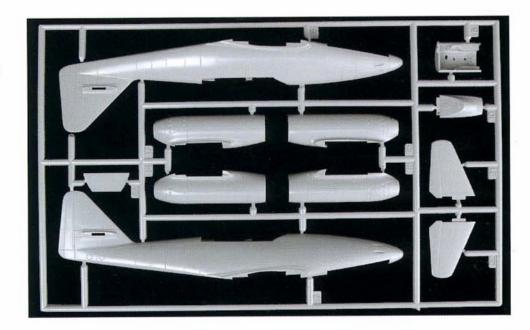
CMK offers a very comprehensive update set comprising two engines including full replacement nacelles, upper and lower engine covers, gear doors, replacement resin nose with gun bay detail, cockpit, flaps, ailerons, elevators and rudder. The set supplies all the parts required for a single-seat Me 262A-1a, an Me 262B-1a night fighter or a two-seat trainer.

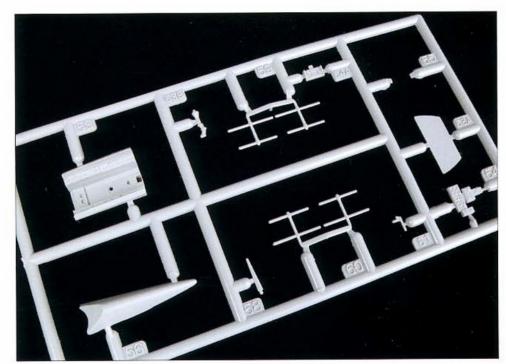
The high level of detail does not imply complex engineering. Indeed, the resin parts are cleverly cast in a minimum of parts. For example, the engines are made up of only two parts each, yet intake detail and cast-on plumbing is remarkable.

Vacform canopies are also supplied for the single-seat and two-seater variants. These canopies are produced to a very high standard – being thin, clear and more accurately shaped than the kit parts. A small fret of photo-etched parts completes the package.

The Messerschmitt Me 262 featured mechanically operated leading edge slats. These slats automatically dropped to provide increased airflow over the

Revell offers two 1/72-scale Stormbird kits – a single-seat Me 262A-1a and an Me 262B-1a night fighter. Basic parts such as the fuselage, engine nacelles and wings are common to both kits.





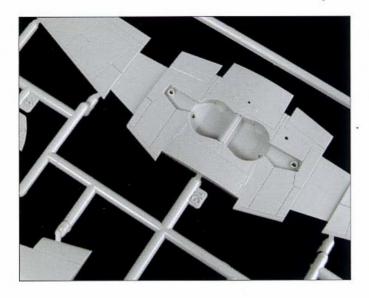
The rear cockpit tub, radar array and rear canopy fillet are unique to the night-fighter kit, but all the parts are also present to build the single-seat day fighter, with the exception of the canopy.

top of the wing when the aircraft was flying at low speeds. The slats were almost always in the dropped position when the aircraft was on the ground. However, CMK does not supply separate slats in their update set. Fortunately, a new accessory company called Wurmcastings has addressed this omission with their own set of resin slats and flaps. Wurmcastings also produces several other sets for the Revell Me 262 kits, including a wheel well and cockpit update. With this fistful of accessories assembled, construction could begin.

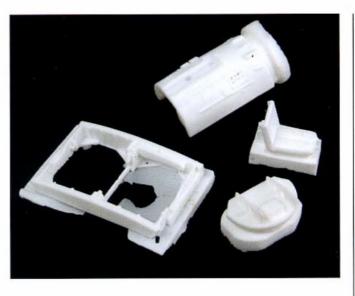
Construction

I did not have a Revell Me 262A-1a kit on hand, but the two-seater Me 262B-1a/U1 kit provides most of the parts required to build the day fighter as well. The only missing component is the day-fighter canopy. A vacform replacement was sourced from the CMK update set.

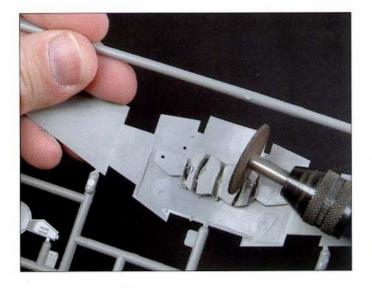
The first task was to prepare the Revell kit parts for installation of the resin wheel well surround. It can be tricky to remove large pieces of plastic without damaging the surrounding area. I decided to adopt a three-stage strategy for the



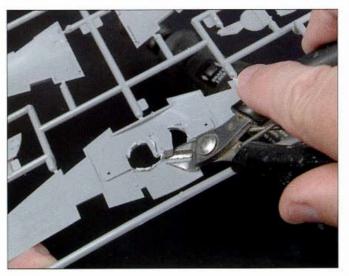
Revell has included some nice detail on the inside of the fuselage sidewalls and the bottom of the cockpit tub, but the inaccurate enclosed wheel bay will hide this.



Australian accessory company Wurmcastings produces a wheel well and cockpit detailing set. This will be used to supplement the kit parts.



The centre section of the wheel well is first cut with parallel passes of the Dremel motor tool fitted with a cutting wheel.

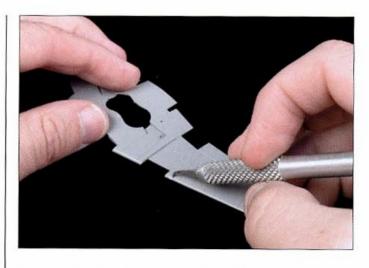


These cuts permit easier access for a sprue cutter to remove the enclosed wheel well. Care is required to avoid damaging the surrounding plastic. The remaining rough edges are cleaned up with a coarse sanding stick.

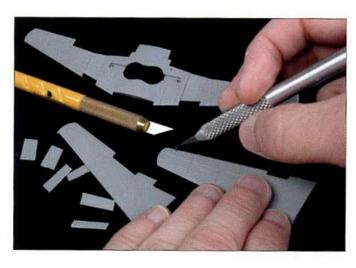
removal of the boxed-in wheel well. First, I made several parallel diagonal cuts to the wheel well with the cutting wheel attachment fitted to my Dremel motor tool. These wide cuts provided access to the sprue cutter, which was used to remove the remaining strips of styrene. The remaining rough edges were carefully cleaned up with a coarse sanding stick.

Next, the slats and flaps moulded onto the Revell kit wings were cut off. Once again, it is important to take care not to damage the surrounding plastic. Fortunately, all of these flying surfaces are clearly indicated by recessed lines. These lines were first deepened with several light passes of a scribing tool. A new hobby blade was then used to finish the job.

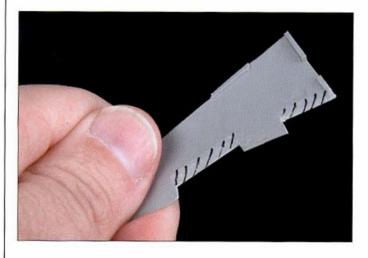
The trailing edges of the upper wing halves needed to be thinned to permit a close fit for the landing flaps. The cutting wheel was once again fitted to the Dremel motor tool. The wheel was lightly grazed along the plastic until the trailing edge was reduced to knife-edge thinness.



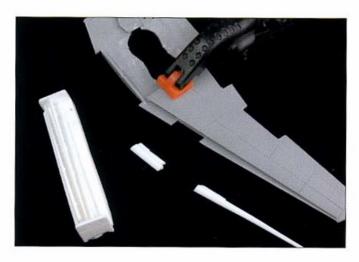
Wurmcastings also offer separate slats and flaps. The Me 262 was almost always seen with slats dropped when parked, so the moulded-on control surfaces were removed from the kit.



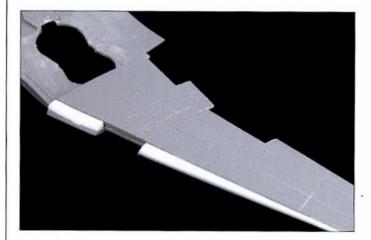
A scriber was used to deepen panel lines before the slats and flaps were cut off with a new hobby blade.



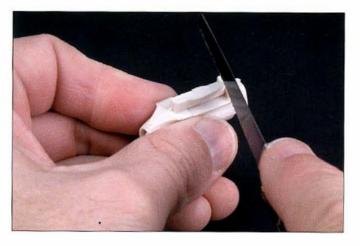
The trailing edges of the top of the wings also needed to be thinned to permit a snug fit for the resin flaps. Once again, the Dremel came to the rescue. The cutting wheel was lightly and repeatedly grazed across the plastic until the desired thinness was achieved.



Upper and lower wing halves were glued and clamped before the mounts for the slats were installed.



The fit of the slat mounts was trouble free.



CMK's detail set includes two complete engine nacelle replacements. The somewhat daunting casting blocks were first sliced with a razor saw.



A sprue cutter was then used to snap the bulk of the chunky blocks off in small sections.



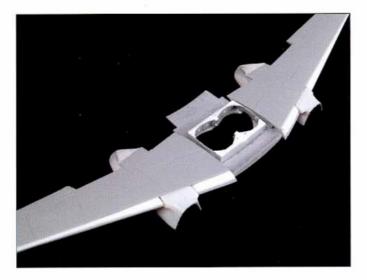
The resulting scar was tidied up with a sharp hobby knife, leaving a nice flat surface to mate with the bottom of the wing.



CMK's resin engine and covers are impressively detailed yet surprisingly simple to install. The entire engine assemblies are made up of only two pieces each. Careful painting delivers a very nice result.



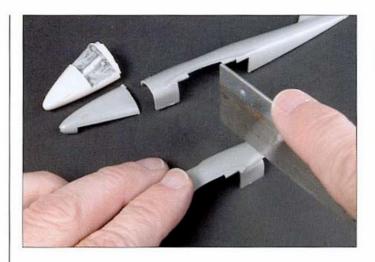
The first stage of painting was to apply a coat of airframe silver to a number of components including the inside of the fuselage, the cockpit tub, gun bay and engine. Smaller parts have been secured to a box using Blu-Tack prior to painting to make handling easier.



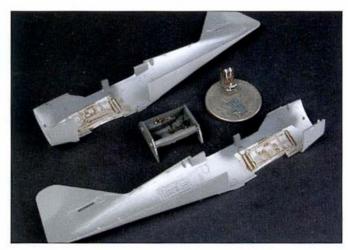
The wheel well insert was installed after painting. The sides of this resin part had to be sanded paper thin to permit the wheel well to fit between the fuselage halves.



The fit of the Revell and the CMK engine parts was very good.



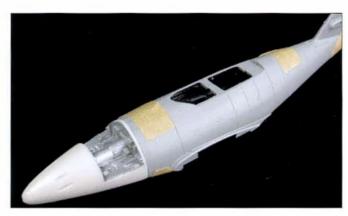
More surgery, this time for the fuselage. The nose was cut off to permit the installation of the detailed resin gun bay.



Welcome to tiny town! The size of the seat and instrument panel can be appreciated when displayed on a US quarter dollar. The CMK seat was installed in the Wurmcastings cockpit tub. Tamiya acrylic paints were used to finish the cockpit components.



Although the resin engine and nose parts are fairly hefty, additional weight was glued to the back of the nose to help avoid the kit sitting on its tail.



Even without glue, the excellent fit of the CMK resin nose is clearly demonstrated here.



CMK also supplies separate control surfaces including elevators, rudder and ailerons. For this project, only the horizontal stabilizers and the elevators were used. The elevators were fixed in a dropped attitude.



Overall fit was excellent, but there was a noticeable gap at the upper port side wing root. This was filled with Milliput. Also, the insert behind the canopy does not fall on a natural panel line so some filling and sanding were required there.

Wurmcastings' resin slat mounts were very delicate and I broke one of the long mounts into several pieces. These were reassembled on the leading edge of the wing. Apart from this self-inflicted issue, the installation of the slats was trouble free – quite impressive considering the delicacy of the components.

CMK's resin parts also required careful preparation. The most daunting task was the removal of large casting blocks from the engine nacelles. I cut the front of the block with a razor saw, then used a sprue cutter to nibble the bulk of the chunky excess resin off in small sections. The resulting scar was scraped off with a sharp hobby knife. It is important to remove all the excess resin, as a flat mating surface is required for a precise nacelle-to-wing fit.

The last remaining challenge was the fit of Wurmcastings' resin wheel well surround. Test-fitting suggested that the sides of the part would be far too thick to fit between the fuselage halves and still permit the wings to sit correctly. I scooped a crescent of plastic from below the wing root on each upper wing half, and also sanded the resin on the side of the wheel well surround until it was wafer thin.

I decided to use Wurmcastings' cockpit tub, but substituted the CMK seat, which, I think, looked better detailed. I also used a spare photo-etched instrument panel supplied in the CMK set for the Me 262 trainer.

The front of the fuselage was cut off with a razor saw. CMK's instructions suggest that the kit nose should be cut off 1mm behind the panel line, but I decided to be cautious. I cut along the panel line and test-fitted. The replacement nose was cast onto a large plug of waste material. Instead of cutting off the entire plug, I simply trimmed off excess material where it looked like it would interfere with the kit fuselage. With this minimal preparation, the fit of the resin nose was perfect.

Despite the solid pieces of resin used for the nose and the engines, I was concerned that this extra weight might not be enough to prevent the completed model from sitting on its tail. I therefore took out some insurance – three lead sinkers glued to the back face of CMK's resin nose.

With preparation complete, it was time to paint the various components prior to assembly. The inside of the fuselage, the cockpit tub, gun bay and engine were all sprayed with a coat of Tamiya AS-12 Airframe Silver. When dry, these parts were dipped in Future floor polish to seal them prior to an oil wash. The coat of Future protected the silver paint from the solvent base of the oil wash. The wash was left to dry overnight. Details on the engine and inside the cockpit were picked out with a fine brush.

With all the sub-assemblies completed and painted, the remainder of construction proceeded very smoothly. Even with the significant modifications, the kit parts fitted extremely well. Some filler was required at the front of the port-side wing root, but this was partly because I had removed too much material trying to accommodate the resin wheel well surrounds. The only other challenge was fitting the mid-upper fuselage insert behind the canopy. Installing the insert results in a horizontal join line that would not be there on the real aircraft. This false 'panel line' was filled with Gunze Mr Surfacer and sanded flat.

The solid cannon troughs were drilled out to represent the end of the cannon muzzles.

Painting and markings

The airframe was painted before the various dangly bits were installed. The painting sequence was planned to avoid damaging or breaking off delicate items such as the undercarriage, flaps, slats and the engine fronts.

This Me 262 wore the day fighter camouflage of RLM 81 Brown Violet, RLM 82 Bright Green and RLM 76 Light Blue on the lower surfaces. The fin and rudder featured a hard-edged dapple of RLM 82 Bright Green over RLM 76 Light Blue. This distinctive pattern was apparently applied using a stencil, and was seen on many Me 262s.

The upper surface camouflage pattern was applied using a Testors' Aztek A470 airbrush. Although demarcation is quite sharp, the camouflage was applied freehand, without the assistance of masks. Gunze acrylic paints were used for the main colours.

The dapple pattern on the tail was first drawn on with a sharp pencil. The outline was then painted with a fine brush. Finally, the inside of each mottle was carefully sprayed. This technique left a very slight overspray, hopefully suggesting the use of a stencil.

The yellow 'Kommando Nowotny' fuselage band was masked and sprayed. Markings were sourced from Kagero Publications' book *Me 262 in Combat* by Marek Murawski. The book includes a decal sheet covering seven subjects in both 1/72 and 1/48 scales. The decals performed flawlessly under MicroSet and MicroSol.

Finishing touches

CMK's vacform canopy was masked, sprayed and installed. The rear section of the canopy did not mate perfectly with the fuselage, leaving a slight step up to the clear part.

A DF loop and FuG 25 aerial were added from fine wire. Wire was also used to add brake lines to the main and front wheels. A canopy restraining wire was cut from nylon monofilament (invisible mending thread) and the triangular mounts for the missing canopy armour were cut from thin styrene sheet.

CMK supplies horizontal braces for the gun bay, but they are too short. New braces were cut from styrene rod. Two supports for the clamshell gun bay doors were fabricated from stretched sprue.

Revell's 1/72-scale Me 262 kits are inexpensive, nicely detailed and quite accurate. They are an appropriate choice for a new modeller who might want to build the kit straight from the box, or the expert who might want to spend a bit more time achieving a more detailed result.

CMK supplies horizontal bracing struts for the gun bay, but they are too short. New struts were cut from plastic rod. The vacform canopy, also supplied by CMK, is a more accurate shape and much clearer than the kit part.





ABOVE Lower surfaces were painted RLM 76 Light Blue. Gunze acrylic paints were used for this and the upper surface colours, RLM 81 Brown Violet and RLM 82 Bright Green.

BELOW The cannon muzzles were drilled out with a pin vise. Fine wire was added to the nose gear leg and to the main wheels, representing hydraulic lines.





ABOVE A distinctive hard-edged mottle on the tail was frequently seen on Kommando Nowotny turbos. On the model, this pattern was first drawn on the fin in pencil then the outline was hand painted with a fine brush.

 $\ensuremath{\mathsf{BELOW}}$ Panel lines were subtly highlighted with a thin mix of Tamiya Red Brown and Semi-Gloss Black.





ABOVE The extra work inside the main wheel wells can be appreciated from this angle. Also, note the short rod representing the FuG 25 aerial on the rear fuselage.

BELOW Revell's 1/72-scale Messerschmitt Me 262A-1a is an attractive kit whether built straight from the box, or detailed with aftermarket parts.



Tamiya's 1/48-scale Messerschmitt Me 262

Tamiya's 1/48-scale Me 262 kits

Pros

- Accurate
- Relatively simple assembly sequence
- · Very high level of detail
- Crisp and fine surface detail
- · Excellent engineering
- Cast-metal nose weight included
- Plenty of interesting options in all versions
- Good quality decals

Cons

- Leading edge slats moulded shut
- Ejector pin circles will be visible in the 'Clear Edition' fuselage.

Tamiya's Messerschmitt Me 262 in the box

By the beginning of 2005, Tamiya has so far released three versions of the Messerschmitt Me 262 in 1/48 scale:

- Kit No. 61082 Me 262A-2a including a Kettenkraftrad tow vehicle and three figures
- Kit No. 61087 Me 262A-1a with four-gun nose and alternate ordnance
- Kit No. 61091 Me 262A-1a 'Clear Edition' with internal detail and transparent fuselage and engine nacelle parts.

Tamiya's first release was the Me 262A-2a fighter-bomber version with two 30mm MK108 cannon in the nose. The Me 262A-2a was also observed with four MK108 cannon, but this option is not offered in the kit.

The following analysis applies specifically to this first release, but most of the parts are common with all other Tamiya Me 262 kits.

Tamiya's Me 262A-2a

Tamiya's 1/48-scale Me 262A-2a comprises 116 parts in grey styrene, eight parts in clear plastic and one white-metal piece for the forward landing gear bay that doubles as a hefty nose weight.

Panel lines are crisply engraved, while the interior of the fuselage and engine nacelle halves features raised structural detail. Also, the inside of the forward upper engine access hatches is heavily engraved, making it a simple matter to cut these hatches open for a limited view of the jet powerplants.

The cockpit is well detailed in the usual Tamiya style, with blank instrument faces for decal dials, and a decal harness for the seat. The cockpit tub includes exterior detail for the forward and rear bulkheads plus prominent actuator rods. The cannon bay is simple in breakdown but equally well detailed. Four shell ejector ports are supplied on two separate inserts for the lower nose. The upper and lower joins for these inserts should be filled and sanded as they do not fall on natural panel lines.

The nose gear bay is a white-metal part. This guarantees that no additional weight is required to prevent the model becoming a tail-sitter.

Wings are supplied as a full-span lower section, and separate parts for the upper right and left halves. Flaps and slats are moulded in the closed (up) position, although on the real aircraft the mechanical leading edge slats were almost always observed in the dropped position. The interior of the wings is reinforced with moulded-on spars that run widthwise and lengthwise. These spars have been carefully designed not to intersect with the flaps or slats. This means that, if the modeller chooses to reposition the flying surfaces themselves, the wings will maintain their rigidity and correct chord even after the flaps and slats have been cut off.

Horizontal tail surfaces are keyed, ensuring positive fit. Another nice touch is the inclusion of separate, delicate trim tab actuators on the elevators.

Two 250kg bombs and two styles of bomb racks are also included. An added bonus is the optional Rocket Assisted Take-Off pods for the lower fuselage. The choice of open or closed cannon access hatches is also offered. The open option supplies a single part with both hatches fixed up, and two separate supporting struts.

The windscreen is cleverly moulded with a section of the forward upper deck, making it easier to obtain a glue-free demarcation between the windscreen and fuselage. The vertical and horizontal joins both fall on panel lines. Furthermore, the internal armoured glass is a separate part that is glued to a locating pin under the front deck section. This will also reduce the risk of visible glue marks on the clear parts. The opening centre section of the canopy is similarly thoughtful. Two tabs are attached to the starboard side of the canopy to secure it in the open position. These tabs should be removed if the canopy is to be displayed closed.

Instructions are called out over 16 illustrated steps. Colour suggestions seem to be reasonable; however, the interior of the cannon bay covers was RLM 02 Grey on some Me 262s, not bare-metal silver as noted in the instructions.

Markings are supplied for three Stormbirds of KG 51.

But wait - there's more!

Sd.Kfz. 2 Kleines Kettenkraftrad

In addition to the aircraft, Tamiya's 1/48-scale Me 262A-2a release includes a Sd.Kfz. 2 Kleines Kettenkraftrad. This was a general-purpose tracked motorcycle that was sometimes used to tow aircraft on Luftwaffe airfields. Considering the short life of the Me 262 engines, it is reasonable to expect that the Stormbird would be towed more frequently than propeller-driven aircraft.

The Kettenkraftrad comprises only 29 additional parts in grey styrene.

The parts breakdown is delightfully uncomplicated. The drive sprocket, idler wheel and centre road wheels are cleverly moulded with the tracks as a single part for each side. Two additional road wheels are added to the left and right sides to complete a simple but convincing set of running gear. In a similar feat of simplicity, the front wheel is moulded with the mudguard, number plate and Notek light in place.

This simple engineering has not compromised the crisp surface detail. Even the fabric textures of the rear seat and the folded cover are well communicated.

The towbar can be attached without glue, enabling the Kettenkraftrad to be positioned or removed at the modeller's whim. Two removable engine intake covers for the Me 262 further enhance the diorama potential of this kit.

Three figures complete the package. One is a standard Tamiya-style pilot with headgear, seated in the flying position. The second figure is also a seated pilot. However, this chap is holding the canopy open with one hand, his other arm resting on the canopy sill while he leans his head out of the cockpit. The final figure complements this taxiing pilot as the driver of the Kettenkraftrad, looking back over his shoulder to the towed Stormbird.

Tamiya's Me 262A-1a

Tamiya kit No. 61087 is the Me 262A-1a fighter version. This basic model is identical to the Me 262A-2a kit, but the sprues containing the Kettenkraftkrad, the two-gun cowl and the bombs have been replaced with alternate parts. Sprue G contains the new parts – a four-gun cowl, two sets of W.Gr21 air-to-air rockets, two sets of R4M 55mm air-to-air rockets, two additional MK108 cannon and extra shell ejection chutes.

Tamiya's Me 262A-1a 'Clear Edition'

The 'Clear Edition' kit includes all the contents of the Me 262A-1a kit, plus interior parts for the fuselage and two nicely detailed Jumo 004B turbojet engines. The kit fuselage and engine nacelles have been substituted with clear parts.

Second-hand Stormbird – Tamiya's 1/48-scale Me 262 refinished and put to flight!

Refinishing a model can be a rewarding experience with a minimum of effort. This kit, Tamiya's 1/48-scale Me 262A-2a, has been converted to an Me 262A-1a.

Subject: Me 262A-1a 'White 17'

Modeller: Brett Green
Skill Level: Intermediate

Base Kit: Tamiya Me 262A-2a

Scale: 1/48

Paints: Polly Scale Acrylics

Markings: Aeromaster's decal set 48-107



Sometimes a completed model will deteriorate over time, be damaged, or perhaps the modeller was never satisfied with the paint job in the first place. Whatever the reason, refinishing an old model can be a satisfying experience, achieving a completely new look with a minimum of effort – something like an 'extreme makeover' for plastic!

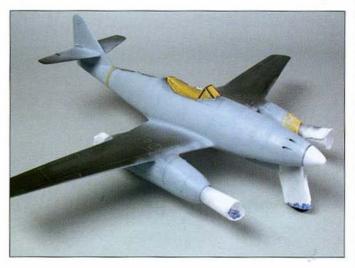
I built this Tamiya 1/48-scale Me 262A-2a in April 2002, shortly after the kit was released. The model was converted to the A-1a variant by adding two extra cannon ports to the upper nose. It originally wore the markings of III./KG(J) 54. In the last few years the canopy was damaged and the aerial wire had broken. I chose to repair and refurbish my model at the same time.

Preparation

In order to avoid damaging protruding and delicate parts I removed the DF loop, canopy mid and rear sections, Morane mast and undercarriage doors. The undercarriage legs and the windscreen stubbornly refused to budge, so rather than risk breaking these parts I left them in place.



Decals were removed and the paint job was lightly sanded and polished in preparation for the new finish. The undercarriage legs, canopy and jet openings were masked prior to painting.



White markings and black outlines were sprayed and masked before the base colour of RLM 76 Light Blue was applied to the fuselage. Polly Scale acrylics were used for this project.

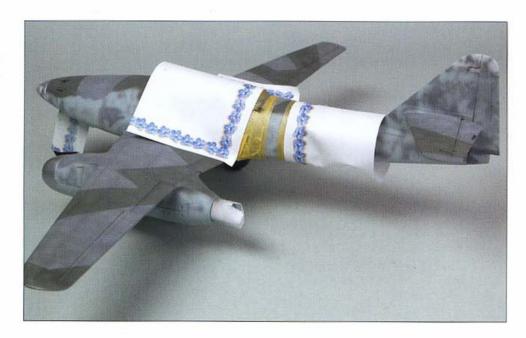


The first upper surface camouflage colour was RLM 75 Grey Violet. Initial weathering involved spraying random streaks and squiggles using a lightened shade of the same colour. This effect looks excessive at this early stage.



Paper masks were cut from Post-It Notes. These small self-adhesive sheets are ideal for masking hard-edged camouflage patterns. Also note the bare metal port side cowl.

The area around the yellow fuselage band was masked with Tamiya masking tape, starting with very thin strips. The surrounding fuselage was protected from overspray with Post-It Notes.



Decals were removed in several stages. First, I pressed packing tape over the markings then ripped the tape off. This effectively removed most of the decals without damaging the underlying paint. The more persistent markings were lightly sanded off with 1,000-grit Tamiya abrasive paper.

Next, the bare paint was smoothed with Micro-Mesh cloths. This surface preparation commenced with wet sanding using 360 grit, followed by polishing with 400- and 600-grade cloths.

I had missed a few obvious seam lines the first time around, so I took the opportunity to fill and sand the joins on top of the engine nacelles.

The canopy and jet intakes, jet pipes, windscreen and the gear legs were now masked in preparation for respraying.

An interesting camouflage case study

There are several excellent photos of White 17, Werknummer 110956, showing a well-used airframe with a weary paint job. It sports a yellow band around the mid-fuselage typical of ex-Kommando Nowotny aircraft, and also shows evidence of white tactical markings on the nose and the tip of the tail. These markings appear to have been subsequently toned down with a mottle of darker paint. Also of interest is an apparent pale, narrow band around the rear fuselage, and a similar horizontal strip on the rudder. These may, in fact, be areas of primer or bare metal exposed when sealing tape was torn off the aircraft. The fuselage and fin are also adorned with the letter 'S'. This may stand for 'Schule', suggesting that this Me 262 might have been an instructional airframe.

As if all these features were not interesting enough, there is controversy about the colours that the aircraft wore. Until recently, conventional wisdom was that White 17 was finished in RLM 74 Grey Green and RLM 75 Grey Violet. However, there is strong evidence to show that other Me 262s in the 110XXX *Werknummer* block were painted RLM 81 Brown Violet and RLM 82 Bright Green. It is impossible to decide with certainty using black and white photos, but the RLM 81/82 scheme did seem to be more likely at this late stage of the war.

Even so, I decided that my model of White 17 would be finished in RLM 74 and 75 Greys to offer a bit of contrast with all those brown and green Stormbirds!

Painting and markings

With the model prepared and masked, painting proceeded conventionally.

First, the white markings on the rear fuselage and the nose were sprayed. These were then masked and a black outline painted on the nose. Medium grey



Here is the first-draft camouflage effect, including fuselage mottling. The camouflage pattern, position and size of the mottling were carefully compared to references at this point. Several corrections were made before weathering was resumed.



The entire airframe received a wash of Winsor & Newton Raw Umber oil paint, heavily diluted in odourless thinners. The wash is still wet in this photograph.

stripes were sprayed on either side of the rear fuselage stripe. The port-side intake was bare metal on the real aircraft, so this area was sprayed with Tamiya AS12 Airframe Silver.

Polly Scale acrylics were used for the camouflage colours – RLM 74 Grey Green, RLM 75 Grey Violet and RLM 76 Light Blue.

RLM 75 was sprayed on the upper surface after the base coat of Light Blue had dried. A paler shade of the grey was mixed and sprayed thinly in streaks and mottles over the RLM 75. This effect looks excessive before further painting and weathering. The camouflage pattern for the wings was cut from self-adhesive Post-It Notes to provide a hard-edged mask for the RLM 74 Grey Green. Pale streaks and mottles were also sprayed on the RLM 74 portion of the camouflage. After the masks were removed, thin lines of RLM 74 were sprayed freehand close



When the wash had dried, the excess was wiped off with a moist fingertip. The markings were applied over a coat of Polly Scale Gloss. Decals were sourced from an old Aeromaster sheet – 48-107 Me 262 Stormbirds Part 1.

to the demarcation between the two upper surface colours. This subtly softened the camouflage pattern.

The irregular mottle on the fuselage was sprayed freehand using both RLM 74 and RLM 75. The yellow fuselage band was masked and sprayed with a mix of Tamiya acrylics. A few spots of XF-7 Flat Red were added to XF-3 Flat Yellow.

Further consultation of photos led to some more work on the camouflage pattern, especially the demarcation between upper and lower colours on the nose, and the shape and density of the mottling. This is not unusual for me. I often make significant revisions to a paint job before I am satisfied.

A thin oil wash was brushed over the entire model. When dry, the excess was removed with a moist fingertip. More stubborn stains can be cleaned up with a cloth or tissue soaked in thinners, but only if you are using acrylic paints for your camouflage finish!

Markings from Aeromaster's decal set 48-107 were applied over a layer of Polly Scale Gloss. However, the Aeromaster swastika was too skinny so a thicker cross was sourced from an EagleCals decal sheet.

The paint job was completed with a coat of Polly Scale Flat.

Finishing touches

The DF loop, Morane mast, pitot tube and gear doors were all glued back into place.

I wanted to depict this model in flight, taking advantage of its closed slats and flaps, so I painted the pilot figure included in the Tamiya kit and placed him in the cockpit. The tabs were sliced off the canopy so that it could be positioned closed. The fit was good so I did not glue the canopy in place.

The final task was to add aerial wire from invisible mending thread.



The oil wash and the final coat of Polly Scale Flat significantly tone down the mottling effect on the camouflage colours. Note the 'chipping' at the wing root walkway, achieved with a silver pencil.

In-flight photography

The composite in-flight images were created in Adobe Photoshop CS using separate digital photos of the model and a sky background.

First, the model was temporarily mounted on a length of aluminium tube inserted in the main wheel well opening and photographed outdoors in direct sunlight from various angles. A sheet of blue cardboard was used behind the model. The digital image was then opened in Adobe Photoshop CS. The outline of the model was masked using the Magic Wand and Lasso tools, and cut from the original image.

The background photos were taken from a light aircraft at 10,000ft over northern Arizona during a recent trip to the United States.

In Photoshop, the model was pasted as a new layer onto the sky background. Extra work was done merging the model photo with the background, especially around the canopy (through which the background was visible) and around the edges of the aircraft.

All photos were taken in RAW format with a Nikon D70 Digital SLR fitted with a Nikon 24-120mm VR lens.

Tamiya's 1/48-scale Me 262A-2a kit is supplied with an excellent Kettenkraftrad tractor and driver – ideal for an instant vignette!



Building the Tamiya Messerschmitt Me 262A-Ia in I/48 scale

Subject: Me

Me 262A-1a 'Schwalbe'

Model by:

Robert Oehler Advanced

Skill level: Kit:

sets used:

Tamiya, 1/48-scale, Me 262A-1a (61087)

Additional detailing

Aires Me 262A cockpit and wheel bay (Set 4150); Cutting Edge Models super-detailed cockpit for Tamiya

(CEC 48368);

Cutting Edge Models Me 262 slats and slat inserts, flaps and flying control surfaces for Tamiya (CEC 48369); Cutting Edge Models bulged main wheels with correct

hexagonal tread pattern (CEC 48370)

Paints:

Tamiya Acrylics (airbrush); Vallejo Acrylics (brush) Alclad

Duralumin, Aluminium, Chrome and Jet Exhaust; Winsor & Newton oil paints; Black Prismacolor Pastel

Markings:

Eagle Strike Productions, Too Little, Too Late Part II-Me

262s (Sheet 48063)

Introduction

When Tamiya's 262A-1a was announced in 2002, modellers were pleased that the definitive version of this venerable war bird had finally arrived. As a follow on to its predecessor, the A-2, the kit features most of the earlier kit elements with some additional sprues appropriate to the A-1. Of course, this frustrated a vocal few who thought that the sprues for both aircraft could have been included in one kit.

Industry decisions aside, most modellers were pleased to finally have an appropriately scaled version of this historic aircraft due to its accurate dimensions, excellent surface features, high level of detail, useful options, ease of construction and intelligent engineering.

Upon opening the box, I was greeted with well-organized, individually packed sprues. Ploughing through the box on the way to finding the kit instructions and decals at the bottom of the box, I discovered the nose weight that was cleverly designed to also be the nose landing gear bay and the mount for the upper cannon chamber. After a brief orientation to all of the parts and a perusal of the instructions, I decided upon a course of action.

Major surgery - construction

Construction began somewhat unconventionally with the wings. In order to avoid any future fit problems at the wing root, it was necessary to spend a little time cutting and carving the wings. The goal was to accommodate the inclusion of aftermarket leading edge slats and flaps represented in a dropped position. I made the decision at this point to not include the other aftermarket control surfaces (ailerons and elevators) provided in the Cutting Edge set due to the fact that the control stick would be placed in a neutral position.



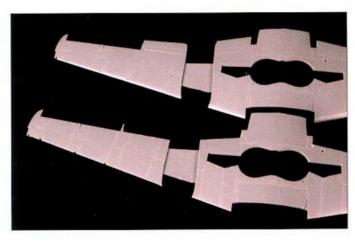
The removal of the moulded-in slats and flaps created somewhat of a tricky alignment situation because the alignment pins were attached to pieces that were removed. As a result, a good measure of patience was required to test-fit each insert element that held the slat in the forward portion, as well as the flap wing inserts intended to accommodate the Fowler flaps at the aft portion of each wing. It was then necessary to shape and test-fit the wheel wells. This process was incredibly fiddly, trying to test-fit and keep the alignment of all of the elements in check. However, once the test-fitting phase was complete, the wings went together without difficulty. It should be noted that each of the slats and flaps were not glued into position until after painting was completed.

Once the wings were finished, construction continued with the Aires aftermarket cockpit. The Aires cockpit and armoured tub in which it is seated are highly detailed and well appointed. After removing some of the surface plastic from the inside of each fuselage half to accommodate the resin aftermarket panels, frequent test-fitting and adjustment were necessary to achieve a snug fit. The instrument panel was assembled after the back of the printed acetate was painted white. The acetate was attached to the rear of the instrument panel as indicated in the instructions. In order to keep the instruments clean during the painting process, I used a toothpick to apply a drop of liquid mask onto to each of the instrument faces. The mask was removed at the completion of the painting process to reveal clean, highly detailed instrumentation. Finally, when I was satisfied with the initial placement of each of the side panels, the instrument panel, the seat and rudder pedals, each sub-assembly was removed for painting.

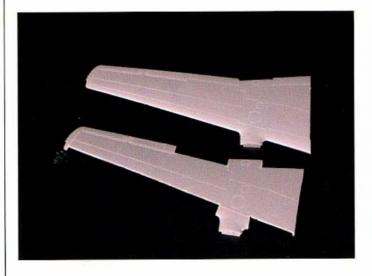
Aircraft W. Nr. 170305 of 9./JG 54 stationed at Munchen-Rein Airfield in May 1945. The kit is the Tamiya 1/48-scale Me 262A-1a.



Assorted pieces from the Aires cockpit and wheel bays replacement detail set for the Tamiya kit. It is a beautifully cast set featuring excellent detail and value.



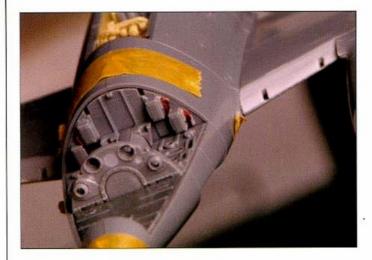
A comparison of the lower wing after the slats and flaps were removed. The upper item is untouched and the lower item is how the wing appears after minor surgery.



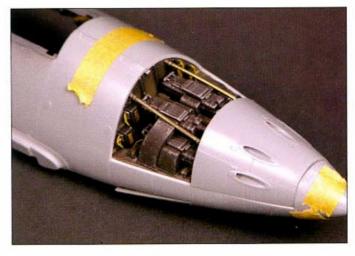
A similar comparison of the upper wing. Once again the top item is unaltered and the lower item is the upper wing with the slats and flaps removed in preparation for the Cutting Edge aftermarket replacements.



A view of the wing with the Cutting Edge slat inserts in place. Each insert fitted well with minimal effort.



The weapons bay of the Tamiya kit is well detailed. Copper wire was added to replicate some of the electrical wiring.



A view of the completed weapons bay reveals a superb level of detail. The Mk 108 cannons, ammo chutes and electrical boxes all add to the purposeful feel of the business end of this aircraft.



A simple view of the unpainted cockpit during a test-fitting. Test-fitting is critical to ensure that all of the parts fit together properly before fixing them in place with cyanoacrylate glue.



To fill the panel lines of the aircraft, Tamiya tape is applied on either side of every panel. Care should be taken to evenly apply the tape as close to the panel line as possible.



Then a mixture of Tamiya putty (basic type) thinned with Tamiya extra-thin cement was applied by brush into each panel line.



When the putty was semi-cured and the tape was removed, the putty was left inside of the panel line. As it cured completely, it shrunk into the panel line similar to the effect on the real aircraft.



A light sanding of the entire aircraft and then a buffing with 0000 steel wool completed the effect.



Since the wheel wells were painted previously, it is necessary to protect these efforts by creating a mask. One easy method is to cover the opening with Tamiya tape. Then using the edge of a pencil, trace around the outer edge of the opening.

Painting and construction of the interior elements

It should be mentioned that my friend and encyclopedic model expert Karl Madcharo formulated the colour mixes for Tamiya Acrylics used on this model. The interior of the cockpit was painted using Tamiya paints mixed to represent RLM 66 (a 1:1 ratio of XF-1 (Flat Black) and XF-63 (German Grey)) applied with the Iwata Custom Micron airbrush. Then, using Vallejo Acrylics, I hand-painted the instrument detail, the Cutting Edge seat and stencilling details. The armoured cockpit tub, cannon chamber, fuselage interior, wheel bays and wing root interiors were all sprayed with Alclad Aluminium, which provided a realistic and durable finish. All of these elements were then treated to a wash of Winsor & Newton Black and Burnt Sienna to bring out the detail. A look at references indicated a slight yellow cast to the finish of the interior of the gun compartment. To achieve this look, Tamiya X-24 (Clear Yellow) was sprayed over the top of the previously applied Alclad Aluminium.

When modelling the A-1a version all four Mk 108 30mm cannons are mounted. Each cannon is placed in a wonderfully detailed cannon chamber. I added copper wire to simulate electrical and compressed gas lines for each gun. While many of each of these details are initially hidden, they are in full view if the casual observer cares to take a further, more extensive look. Each of these details was painted with Vallejo Acrylics. The cannons were painted with a 5:1 mixture of XF-1 (Flat Black) and XF-20 (Medium Grey) by airbrush. I then dry-brushed the guns with SNJ Polishing Powder and buffed each with a small amount of black pastel. Oil washes (Winsor & Newton Black and Burnt Sienna) and pastel staining were applied throughout the weapons bay. Subtle scratches were added with a Prismacolor silver pencil.

After a quick wash with oils and the installation of the cockpit, cannon chamber and nose wheel assemblies, the fuselage halves were mated together in the usual manner and set aside overnight to cure. One of the many great features of the kit is the interior ribbing supplied at each of the bulkhead stations. Their inclusion saves a great deal of work if you are interested in super-detailing the radio access compartment (which I chose not to undertake on this model).

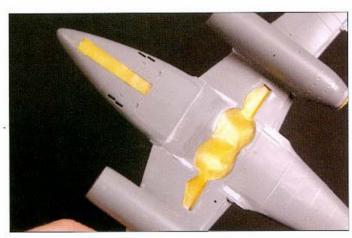
When the glue on the fuselage sub-assemblies was fully cured and the paint dry, I permanently fixed the weapons bay and cockpit tub and then mounted the wing assembly to the fuselage assembly with cyanoacrylate glue. To ensure the proper dihedral of the wings was maintained throughout the drying process, I stretched a piece of Tamiya 10mm tape over the fuselage, secured it from wing tip to wing tip and left it in place until the glue was completely cured. I also added and masked the windscreen assembly at this point.

I strayed from the instructions a bit at this juncture. Due to the symmetrical nature of the aircraft and the position of each engine on each wing, I decided to protect the main landing gear by not mounting the assemblies until the engines were firmly in place. The main gear and wheels were test-fitted, painted and weathered for placement at the last possible moment.

To streamline the aircraft and reduce drag, the panel lines of operational 262s were filled with putty. On close inspection, it is clear that the putty had a tendency to shrink into the panel line as it dried. To simulate this effect, a little creativity was necessary. Using Tamiya tape applied to each side of every panel line a mask was created. Then a mixture of Tamiya putty (basic type) thinned with Tamiya extra-thin cement was applied by brush into each panel line. When the putty was semi-cured and the tape was removed, the putty was left inside of the panel line. As it cured completely, it shrunk into the panel line similar to the effect on the real aircraft. A light sanding of the entire aircraft and then a buffing with 0000 steel wool completed the effect. To clean the model for painting it is recommended that compressed air be used to blow away the bits of steel wool and other debris created during the buffing process.



When the tracing is finished, remove the tape from the model and place the tape onto a cutting mat. Next, using a sharp hobby blade cut along the lines made by the pencil. When the cutting is completed you have a perfect mask for the desired area.



Prior to placing the stencil onto the opening, it is usually necessary to fill the area with cotton to provide a structure for the tape to adhere to. The photo shows the undercarriage bays with the specially made mask in place.



It was also necessary to cut a circular mask for the pre-painted exhaust nozzle. A circle template was used to measure and cut the mask. Once the proper-size circle was determined, a scribing tool was used to cut the tape that was affixed to my cutting board.



When the cutting was finished, a No. 10 hobby blade was used to lift an edge of the mask off of the cutting mat. The mask was then placed over the end of the exhaust nozzle.



A clear view of the exhaust nozzle and the Fowler flaps. Notice the gap between the upper trailing edge of the wing and the flap when the flaps are in a lowered position.



Nose and main landing gear and actuators gathered together prior to assembly. Each was painted with the RLM 02 mixture mentioned in the text and washed with Winsor & Newton oils. Black Vallejo Acrylics were used to 'outline' each of the structural rings. Oleos were painted with Alclad Chrome.

Painting the exterior

Considering my preference for painting colourful aircraft, the scheme for aircraft W. Nr. 170305 of 9/JG 54 stationed at Munchen-Rein Airfield in May 1945 (provided on the Eagle Strike Productions, Too Little, Too Late Part II decal sheet) seemed to fit the bill nicely. Undersurfaces were RLM 76 with RLM 83 upper surfaces and blotch pattern RLM 70 on the rudder and solid RLM 70 just above and below the horizontal stabilizer. An additional unique feature of interest is the curved bar of RLM 22 that runs from the KG 54 badge to the trailing edge of the wing.

To begin the finishing process, cotton was stuffed into all of the wheel wells and sealed with a mask cut from Tamiya tape. The cockpit area was also sealed but, due to the delicate details, it was not stuffed with cotton. Next, Tamiya paints, based on Karl Madcharo's colour recipe, were mixed to represent RLM 76 (XF-19: 6 (Sky Grey), XF-23: 3 (Light Blue), XF-2: 19 (Flat White), X-23: 1 (Clear Blue)). The entire mix was then split and one half remained as mixed and the other mixture received a few drops of black (XF-1) to slightly darken it. I then sprayed the entire underside of the wings and the lower portion of the aircraft with the darkened mixture. Next, I applied the original mixture to the inner portions of each panel forming a highlight. When finished, each panel appears to be outlined in a slightly darker shade as compared to the inside of each panel. Testors' DullCote was then applied to the entire model to 'flatten' the highlight layers.

When satisfied with the look of the RLM 76, my next step was to apply the RLM 83 mix to the model. The closest match for RLM 83 is XF-61 (Dark Green) and required no mixing. Once again, a few drops of black (XF-1) were added to slightly darken the mixture. The darkened mixture was then sprayed on to the entire upper side of the wings and fuselage corresponding with the camouflage pattern printed in the decal painting reference. Next, I applied straight XF-61 to the inner portions of each panel forming a highlight. When finished, each panel appears to be outlined in a slightly darker shade as compared to the inside of each panel. Later, an additional highlight was created by adding a few drops of XF-3 (Yellow) to the mixture. This further highlight was then applied to the inside of the previous highlight. Once the highlights were painted and I was satisfied by the overall presentation of the model. I once again, applied Testors' DullCote to the entire model to 'flatten' the highlight layers.

The engine cowls were painted Alclad Gloss Aluminium and sprayed with Klear acrylic floor wax. A wash was applied to the fans using a mixture of Black and Burnt Sienna Winsor & Newton oil paint.

Decals

When the Testors' DullCote was fully cured it was time to spray the model with Klear acrylic floor wax (Future in the USA). The areas where the decals would be placed received a few coats of the wax. This allows the decal to sink into the wax as the water evaporates, avoiding any silvering problems in the future. Next the water-slide decal was carefully laid in place, and allowed to dry. If assistance is needed a decal softener (such as Micro Sol) can be used. After an hour or two, when the decal is dry, another two coats of wax can be lightly sprayed over the top of the decal. When completed, the model is left to dry overnight.

The build up of wax (when done correctly) is almost invisible to the eye. However, to ensure that it is completely hidden, a light buffing using 0000 steel wool generally does the trick. This is somewhat of a delicate process and one should take care to not apply too much pressure in an effort to keep from exposing bare plastic.

Painting the nose tip

It was about this point that I realized that there were no decals for the fairly prominent stripes on the nose tip. Thinking I was clever, the nose was masked



The details on the underside of the armoured cockpit tub are shown to advantage. The entire underside was sprayed with Alclad Aluminium and then with Tamiya X-24 (Clear Yellow) to simulate the yellow cast to the finish. Recesses and details were then highlighted with Tamiya X-19 (Smoke). Winsor & Newton Black oil paints were applied to bring out the more minute rivet details. Finally, Vallejo Acrylics Yellow was hand painted onto all of the electrical wire details on the bottom of the tub.

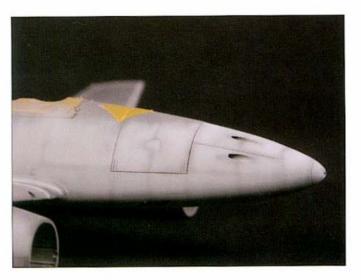


The inside of the cockpit tub was initially painted using RLM 66 applied with the Iwata Custom Micron airbrush. Then, using Vallejo Acrylics, I hand-painted the electrical and instrumentation detail, the Cutting Edge seat, and harness and stencilling details.

and painted RLM 04 (XF-3: 10 (Yellow), X-6: 1 (Orange), XF-2: 1 (Flat White)) and then white and black decal stripes of the appropriate width were procured. I did not foresee that straight stripes (and not arched) might be difficult to fit onto a conical shape, and so I applied the decals. After waiting an appropriate time for them to set, it was clear they needed some assistance. I applied Solvaset decal setting solution several times to no avail; they were still wrinkled and unattractive. Uttering a few choice expletives at the model (which seemed appropriate at the time), it became clear that they had to be removed. Once the decal hardened again, the nose of the model was dipped in water to re-activate the decal. Then the softened decal was carefully removed (bit by bit). Two hours later the bits of decal were gone and I set the model aside in disgust.



ABOVE AND RIGHT As noted in the text, the RLM 76 colour mix was split into two portions. One half remained as mixed and the other mixture received a few drops of Tamiya Black to slightly darken the mixture. The darkened mixture was then sprayed or the entire underside of the wings and the lower



portion of the aircraft. Next, the original mixture was applied to the inner portions of each panel forming a highlight. When finished, each panel appears to be outlined in a slightly darker shade as compared to the inside of each panel.

The next session at the modelling table started with the realization that the decal had sunken into the floor wax and upon its removal had left a nice little groove. Ultimately, the stripes were hand-painted using this groove as a guide to maintain a uniform width for each of the hand-painted stripes.

Final DullCote

To provide the appropriate semi-gloss finish to the model, I applied Testors' DullCote lacquer using an airbrush. Clear and gloss items (such as the engine nacelle cowls) were masked or left off of the model until this step was complete.

Undercarriage

When the painting was finished, I added copper wire to the undercarriage to simulate the brake lines and each was painted RLM 02 (using a 1:1 mix of XF-22 (RLM Grey) and XF-49 (Khaki)). The gear struts were highlighted with a slightly lightened version of RLM 02 and the brake lines were painted using Vallejo Acrylics Black. The oleos were painted with Alclad Chrome. Overall, the main gear is finely detailed and proper alignment was no problem due to the exact fit of the gear to the aligning lugs.

Installing the clear parts

The last step on the aircraft model was the fixing of the clear parts. These portions were masked and painted along with the exterior of the model. I found the design of the windscreen to be very clever. The internal armoured glass behind the windscreen is a separate part that is glued to a locating pin under the front deck section. This little extra lessened the possibility of messing the windscreen with glue spots. The centre section of the canopy was positioned in the open position and I fashioned a wire catch to hold it in position.

Final weathering

The weathering on the model was kept purposefully subtle. Streaks were applied using both pastel and the airbrush. Most of this effort was confined to the wheels and gear doors in consideration of operational conditions. Also, chipping and scratches were applied with Prismacolor silver pencil to the upper surfaces around access hatches as well as the portions of the wing and cockpit where the crew and pilot would have damaged the paint.



LEFT The painting of RLM 83 was highlighted in a similar fashion to the application of the RLM 76 mix. Here you can see an additional highlight applied just prior to the final application of DullCote lacquer.

BELOW A final layout display prior to adding all of the detail elements to the kit. As you can see, planning is very important when there are so many intricate elements and details.





Another view of the highlighted paint on the upper surface of the fuselage. Since most of the panel lines were filled with putty, I used strips of Tamiya tape to paint in panel lines. Each panel highlight represents an area where the metal was slightly pushed in by the rivets during construction. This effect is so subtle that it is barely visible unless it is viewed in very bright light.



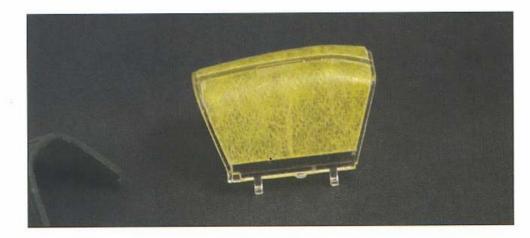
The pilot's 'office'. The instrumentation is clearly visible upon the slightest glance into the cockpit due to the highly detailed acetate supplied in the Aires cockpit replacement set. Another Aires Item in clear view is the Revi 16 B gun sight



The Cutting Edge main gear wheels are among my favourite aftermarket details. They are superbly made, providing a very realistic result. The wheels were painted Tamiya X-I (Semi-Gloss Black) and the tyres were painted with a mixture of Tamiya XF-I: 4 (Flat Black) and XF-I0: I (Flat Brown). Earth-coloured pastels were then generously applied using an old brush. Finally, using my finger as an applicator, I rubbed black pastel around the wheel, leaving the earth pastel in all the right places.



The kit nose wheel was painted and weathered in the same fashion as the main landing gear wheels. The bar at the centre hub was created by carefully inserting a small piece of brass rod.



Tamiya tape was employed to mask the canopy and windscreen during the painting process. The tape was carefully trimmed with a new scalpel blade.



ABOVE The finished aircraft in the markings of 9./JG 54.

BELOW The overhead view of Me262A-Ia displays the sleek and purposeful lines of this venerable aircraft.





ABOVE The underside view of the model reveals all of the painted-in panel lines and surface details.

 $\ensuremath{\mathsf{BELOW}}$ Coming in for a landing \dots the underside of the model as viewed from the ground.



Under new management – converting Tamiya's 1/48-scale Me 262 to a reconnaissance version

Subject:

Me 262A-1a/U3

Modeller:

Construction: Brett Green

Painting and markings: Chris Wauchop

Maste

Skill level: Base kit:

Tamiya Me 262A-1a

Scale:

1/48

Additional detailing

CMK Me 262A-1a/U3 conversion;

sets used:

Cutting Edge Me 262A-1a/U3 conversion;

Cutting Edge control surfaces;

Cutting Edge cockpit

Paints:

Gunze Acrylics

Markings:

Ventura decal set No. 4859

The high speed and the relatively large fuselage capacity of the Me 262 made it an ideal platform for aerial photography.

The Messerschmitt Me 262A-1a/U3 was the specialized reconnaissance variant used in the closing months of the war when intelligence on Allied movements was critical for the hard-pressed German forces. This version was fitted with two Rb50/30 cameras. Large, bulged fairings were required on the nose to accommodate the big film cartridges. Some of these Me 262s featured a tube protruding from the centre of the nose. Sources are at odds about this tube, with some claiming it is a single 30mm cannon, and others stating that it is an air vent.

The Messerschmitt Me 262A-Ia/U3 was a reconnaissance variant with two cameras installed in the nose. This example was captured and tested by 'Watson's Whizzers'.



Three options are available for modellers who wish to build a reconnaissance Me 262.

Dragon released a specific 1/48-scale kit of the Me 262A-1a/U3, although it is incomplete as supplied and requires additional work to accurately depict this version.

Cutting Edge has a resin conversion for the Tamiya 1/48-scale kit. This is an uncomplicated conversion, with bulges that are simply glued to the kit nose. The set also includes a new forward gun cowl with the cannon ports blanked off and clear resin panels for the lower nose that incorporate the camera windows – a very nice touch.

More recently, CMK has released an Me 262A-1a/U3 conversion that supplies camera bay detail and replacement camera cowls with interior structural features. This multimedia set includes resin and photo-etched parts, clear acetate and stencils for markings.

I decided to use parts from both the CMK and Cutting Edge conversion to obtain my Me 262A-1a/U3.

Enhancements

Before working on the camera nose I wanted to address the slats. Three aftermarket companies have recognized the shortcomings of Tamiya's closed slats by offering resin replacements – Aires, Eagle Parts and Cutting Edge. Engineering of the slats is similar in all three sets, but the Cutting Edge parts also include flaps, ailerons and elevators. I also had this set in my stash of accessories, so the choice was easy.

The installation of the slats and flaps requires significant surgery to the wings. Tamiya's panel lines are crisp but quite fine, so the cutting lines were first deepened with a scriber before using a knife to separate the moulded-on flaps and slats. Starting with the scriber reduces the risk of a sharp knife blade slipping out of a shallow panel line and damaging the wing – or the modeller!

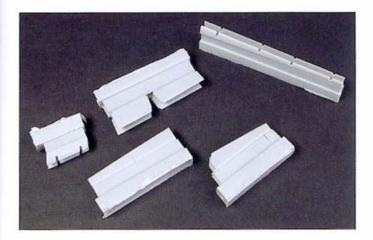
Tamiya has reinforced the kit wings with built-in spars. This thoughtful engineering means that, even with so much plastic removed from the leading and trailing edges, the wings are still structurally sound. The wheel well parts were installed and painted, and then the kit wing parts were assembled and clamped.

Cutting Edge supplies resin inserts for mounting the slats and flaps. The inserts were installed after a great deal of thinning and trimming of the kit wings and the resin parts. The slat mounts were fairly straightforward, but the flap mount inserts were probably more trouble than they were worth. In retrospect it might have been easier to make up some curved mounts from styrene tube or even drinking straws.

Tamiya's cockpit is very good, but I thought it could use a little help. Once again, Cutting Edge parts were used. The Cutting Edge cockpit set does not replace all the Tamiya parts – only those that can noticeably be improved upon. Substituted parts include the seat, instrument panel, side panels, switch panel, control column, rudder pedal assembly, gunsight (including a new mount) and various handles.

Before the cockpit components were painted, the outside of the kit cockpit tub was sprayed with Tamiya AS-12 Airframe Silver. This colour is only available in a spray can, but I usually decant the contents from the can into a glass bottle. Decanting into a bottle permits me to use the paint in my Aztek A470 airbrush, retaining more control over the width of the spray, thickness of the coat and air pressure. Two other problems with spraying directly from the can are the waste of the paint through atomization, and the slight 'orange peel' texture left on the surface of the model. While the airbrush was loaded with the silver paint, the fuselage bulkheads and interior sidewalls were also sprayed.

The interior of the cockpit tub and the remainder of the front office elements were painted Tamiya XF-63 German Grey before receiving a wash of Winsor & Newton Raw Umber oil paint heavily diluted with odourless thinners. The



The Me 262 was equipped with mechanically deployed leading edge flaps. Cutting Edge offers a set of resin slats and control surfaces for Tamiya's kit.



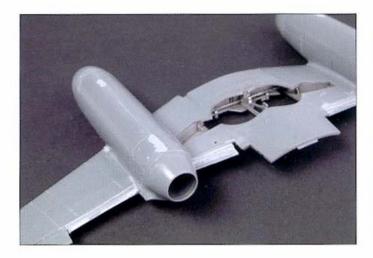
The parts are well cast and stoutly packaged. These slats and their mounts are fairly easy to remove from their long casting blocks.



The installation of slats and flaps requires significant surgery to the wings. Cutting lines were deepened with a scriber before sections of plastic were removed with a sharp hobby knife.



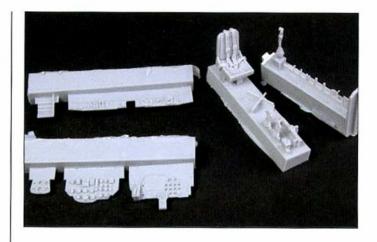
Tamiya's excellent kit engineering means that, even with so much material removed from the leading and trailing edges, the wings are still quite structurally solid. Clamps were used to hold the wing parts while the glue dried.



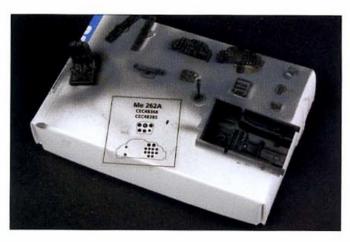
Resin inserts are supplied for the flap housings. Much trimming, adjusting, filling and sanding were needed. In retrospect, it might have been easier to make these myself.



Test-fitting is always important, but even more so with a major conversion. No alarm bells at this stage.



Cutting Edge also makes a cockpit enhancement set. This does not replace the entire cockpit. Rather, it supplements the very good Tamiya cockpit with selected resin parts including a seat, instrument panels and control column.



The Tamiya and Cutting Edge cockpit parts have been painted Tamiya XF-63 German Grey and are still wet from an oil wash. The clear acetate sheet for the instrument dials may be seen in this view.



Careful painting brings out the details.

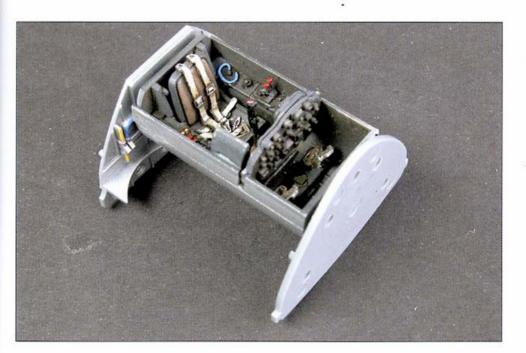
purpose of this wash is to create the illusion of depth and dimension. When dry, the wash should resemble shadows and grime.

The next step was to pick out different coloured details, including the seat cushion, harness, buckles, switches, dials, hoses and quadrants, with a fine brush.

With the cockpit painted and assembled it was time to turn attention to the nose. CMK's resin conversion includes some substantial casting blocks. Thorough preparation is half the battle with resin parts, and there is no substitute for patience and advance planning. A razor saw was used to remove the casting blocks as required. Fortunately, it is not necessary to completely remove the biggest casting block, which is on the rear of the camera mount. The edges of the block were simply nibbled away with a pair of pliers.

Tamiya's handy cast-metal weight still fits inside the nose even with the CMK resin conversion parts in place. The lower interior of the nose weight forms the front wheel well. This was painted with Xtracrylics RLM 02 Grey and fitted with the nose wheel retraction strut before installation. The resin camera bay and new forward cowl were also secured with super glue. Fit was very impressive, with virtually no gaps or steps.

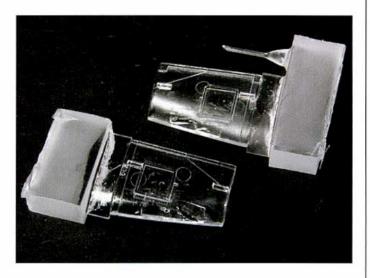
CMK includes rudimentary radio and fuse box detail with their reconnaissance conversion. This basic detail is really all that is required, as not much can be seen through the small radio hatch. The radio hatch was cut out of the kit fuselage and the photo-etched frame installed before the resin panel was painted, weathered and glued in place.



The Me 262 cockpit is a genuine tub. Much of the detail will be visible through the bubble top canopy.



CMK's resin Me 262A-1a/U3 conversion was employed to convert Tamiya's kit to the distinctive reconnaissance version. This set includes positionable cowl doors and camera detail.



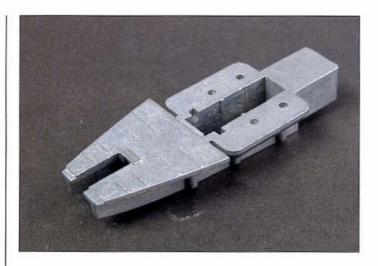
I decided to use the clear resin lower nose panels from the Cutting Edge Me 262A-1a/U3 conversion.



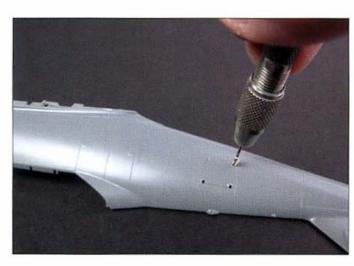
The large casting block at the rear of CMK's camera mount does not have to be completely removed. As can be seen here, I have nibbled the edges with a pair of pliers.



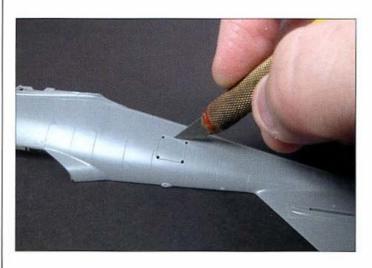
This is enough to achieve a good fit. The parts are not glued in place, but no serious gaps or steps are evident.



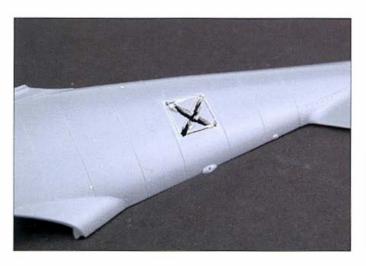
Tamiya's metal nose weight is an innovative and very welcome component of the kit.



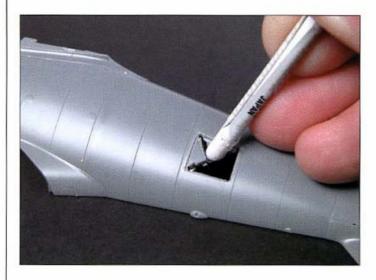
CMK includes radio and fuse box detail for the fuselage interior. The radio hatch has to be removed to see this detail. The first step was to drill fine holes at each corner of the hatch with a pin vise.



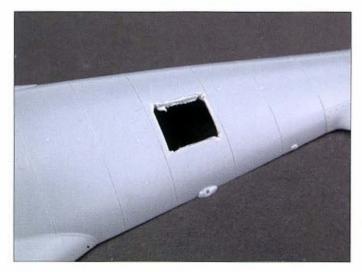
Join the dots – the panel lines between the holes are repeatedly scribed with a sharp knife.



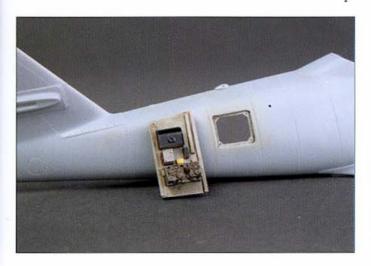
'X' marks the spot – a Dremel motor tool fitted with a grinding wheel was used to cut diagonal lines between the corners of the hatch. In the absence of a motor tool, a knife or scriber could be used to perform this task.



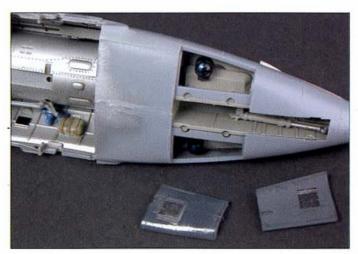
I used the handle of a thin paintbrush to push the plastic in, effectively opening the hatch.



Now the rough opening just needs to be tidied up with a knife and sandpaper.



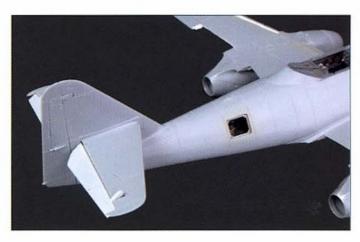
CMK supplies a photo-etched frame for the inside of the hatch. Here, the resin radio panel has been painted and an oil wash has just been applied.



CMK's resin lenses have been painted black, with a spot of light grey in the corner. A finishing coat of Tamiya Clear Blue completes the impression of glass. The interior of Cutting Edge's clear lower covers have been masked and painted.



The elevators have been cut off Tamiya's tail in preparation for the resin parts. The slot for the mass balance was sliced out with a razor saw.



Dropped elevators add character to the rear of the model. Internal detail is visible through the open radio hatch.



A final check revealed some gaps and seams. Liquid Paper was brushed on to these areas as filler.



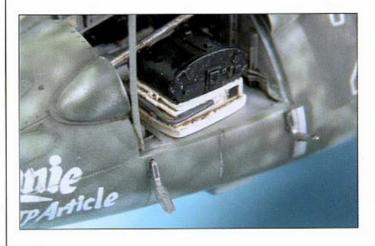
Mounts for the flaps are cast to the recessed housings, but I found it more effective to cut these off and add small tabs of plastic to the flaps themselves.



The fit of all the conversion parts was excellent.



Ready for paint. The model has been sanded and polished with Micro-Mesh cloths. The slats and cameras will not be installed until after painting.



The tiny cowl latches are supplied by CMK as photo-etched parts.



The right tool can make a difficult or delicate job less stressful. This is the 8in. Hold and Fold tool for making simple folds or forming complex shapes from photo-etched parts.



Although the parts are tiny, the folds are quite simple. The photo-etched latch is clamped into the tool and the edge of a knife blade is used to make the fold.



Small triangles of plastic were added to represent mounts for the absent canopy armour. Nylon monofilament has been used for the canopy restraining cable and the aerial wire.

With the camera bay, cockpit and radio gear safely tucked away, the fuselage halves were secured with Tamiya extra-thin cement applied with a fine brush along join lines.

Final assembly tasks before painting included the engine nacelles, resin elevators and fitting the wings to the fuselage. No problems were encountered.

Painting and markings

Prior to the camouflage colours, the engine cowls were sprayed silver, representing bare metal, using Tamiya AS-12 Airframe Silver.

When dry, the cowls were masked and the model received a base coat of Gunze Acrylic RLM 76 Light Blue. The heavy, irregular squiggle was sprayed carefully in two stages. First, Gunze RLM 82 Bright Green was applied, followed by a snaking overspray of RLM 83 Dark Green. Reference photos indicated that a section of the forward fuselage had been overpainted with a solid colour. This area was masked and sprayed RLM 83.

The subject aircraft had been captured and evaluated by a USAAF unit, 'Watson's Whizzers'. Although US markings were simply applied over most of the original German markings, the fin *Hakenkreuz* was painted out. Presumably, US paint stocks would have been used for this task, so a square of Tamiya XF-62 Olive Drab was sprayed in the appropriate area.

Ventura decal set No. 4859 was used for the markings of 'Connie the Sharp Article' in US service. The decals were thin and very delicate, but look good on the surface of the model. The markings were sealed with a final coat of Gunze Flat Clear.

All paints were sprayed with a Testor Aztek A470 airbrush fitted with the tan-coloured 'Fine' tip.

Decals were sourced from Ventura's sheet number V4859. This aircraft was a member of 'Watson's Whizzers', a band of German aircraft captured and tested by the USAAF.





ABOVE The attitude of the slats may be appreciated from this angle. Note the gap between the leading edge of the wing and the top of the slats.

BELOW White glue was used to represent the isolators on the aerial wire. The trailing IFF antenna was stretched from scrap sprue.





LEFT Subtle lines of rivets were added to the engine cowlings with a pin.

BELOW Gunze-Sangyo acrylic paints were employed for the complex finish.



Final assembly

With the paint job completed, the delicate final details were added. CMK's two resin Rb50/30 cameras were fitted to the camera bay, the camera bay doors were positioned open and propped up with painted styrene rods, the open canopy was glued into place and the tiny photo-etched fasteners were folded and secured below the open camera bay doors. A tiny hook was also fashioned for the antenna line from fine wire. This was carefully glued to the fin. The aerial wire and canopy restraining wire were both cut from smoke-coloured nylon monofilament (invisible mending thread).



ABOVE A 40 x 40cm sheet of HEKI decorative wild grass matting was glued to a base of architectural foam board. HEKI wild grass matting is designed for use with model railway layouts but is also ideal for large-scale aircraft models.

BELOW The model and base were placed in front of an enlarged photo of German forest. The image was converted to black and white, and aged in Adobe Photoshop with subtle blurring, adding 'noise', some fine vertical lines and simulated damage to the print.



Dragon's 1/48-scale Me 262 family

Dragon's 1/48-scale Me 262 family genealogy

In early 1989, Trimaster of Japan released their 1/48-scale Me 262A-1a – the first in their Stormbird family. Subsequent releases over the following year included the Me 262A-1a V 056 single-seat night fighter, the Me 262A-2a/U2 two-seat bomber and Me 262A-1a/U4 tank buster. All of these kits included photo-etched, white metal and soft vinyl parts supplementing superb styrene for the major components.

Trimaster was out of business within a few short years, but Dragon of Hong Kong picked up their range of plastic models. Dragon re-released all of Trimaster's Me 262 kits and even added some variants of their own, including the two-seat Me 262A-2a/U1 night fighter. Apart from different box art, the main differences between the Dragon and Trimaster kits were the replacement of white-metal parts with plastic, and the use of a softer grade of polystyrene.

In recent years, several Dragon Me 262s have been released by both Revell and Italeri. In these releases, the etched-metal parts have also been replaced with plastic.

Dragon's Me 262s in the box

Dragon supplies a common set of sprues for all of its Me 262 kits, with different fuselage and/or detail sprues containing parts for specific variants.

The plastic parts on all of Dragon's Me 262 kits feature fine detail and crisply recessed panel lines.

Clear parts are thin and free of distortion.

Soft vinyl tyres are included in all the Trimaster and Dragon/DML Me 262 kits. These are both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, they simplify painting, but they are not particularly accurate and they also have a reputation for 'eating' the styrene wheel hubs after they have been in place for some time!

Photo-etched parts are supplied to add detail to the cockpit, wheel well and also for radar dipoles where applicable. Photo-etched material is not the soft brass that we might usually expect. This is hard steel or nickel, requiring serious effort to cut and to bend.

There is no doubt that Dragon's 1/48-scale Me 262s require more time, effort and patience than Tamiya's kits, but the level of detail is almost on a par and Dragon's Stormbirds can often be picked up for bargain prices.

Dragon's 1/48-scale Me 262 family

Pros

- Accurate
- · Very high level of detail
- · Crisp and fine surface detail
- Wide selections of variants available
- · Good quality decals
- Generally available for a low price

Cons

- Leading edge slats moulded shut
- Some sink marks and minor mould imperfections
- Difficult fit, especially wing to fuselage; engine nacelles to wings; and undercarriage
- Challenging photo-etched parts (except Revell boxings)
- · Soft vinyl tyres.

Night-fighting turbo Dragon's 1/48-scale Me 262B-Ia/UI night fighter

Subject:

Me 262B-1a/U1

Modeller:

Brett Green

Skill level:

Master

Base kit:

Dragon Me 262B-1a/U1

Scale:

1/48

Additional detailing CMK Jumo 004 jet engine;

sets used:

Cutting Edge control surfaces;

Ultracast Seat;

Cutting Edge resin wheels

Paints:

Gunze Acrylics

Markings:

Various

Perhaps surprisingly, there is still only one option for building an Me 262 night fighter straight from the box in 1/48 scale. Dragon's 1/48-scale Messerschmitt Me 262B-1a/U1 night fighter was first released in 1993. Trimaster did not originally release this variant.

CMK released a two-seater conversion for Tamiya's Me 262 during 2004, and there is also an ancient resin Me 262B conversion from War Eagle for Monogram's 1/48-scale offering, but I decided to gird my loins and tackle the Dragon kit.

Dragon's Me 262B-1a/U1 night fighter box is adorned with an evocative painting by Koike Shigeo. The kit comprises 122 parts in pale grey injection-

It is April 1945 and dusk approaches. An Me 262B-1a/U1 night fighter is readied for another mission while its pilot stands by.



moulded plastic, seven parts in clear, three soft vinyl tyres and two photo-etched frets. Markings are supplied for three night fighters from $10./NJG\ 11$ – Red 8, Red 10 and Red 12.

Dragon's plastic parts feature fine detail and crisply recessed panel lines, but the ambitious moulding of structural features on the interior of the fuselage parts has led to some large sink marks on the outside of the fuselage.

Enhancements

My night fighter was to be depicted on the tarmac being prepared for a mission, so a few enhancements to Dragon's basic kit were required including leading edge slats.

It should be noted that the leading edge slats are slightly different sizes on the 1/48-scale Tamiya and Dragon Me 262 kits. This means that recently released resin slats for the Tamiya kit will not fit the Dragon Me 262. Fortunately, several sets were specifically designed with Dragon in mind. Verlinden offers slats in their comprehensive detail set, and Cutting Edge has a separate set of resin slats available.

The moulded-shut kit slats were cut from the kit wing halves with a sharp hobby knife after the panel lines had been emphasized with a scriber. The resin slats and mounts were removed from their casting blocks using the same method. I decided to but the mounts directly to the front of the wing leading edge, so all the excess resin was removed.

The resin slat mounts were glued to the leading edge of the top wing halves before the wings were assembled. Following test-fitting, I also drastically thinned the leading edge of the upper wing and the resin mounts for the inner slats. In retrospect, this was not required, leaving a long, large gap at each leading edge. These gaps were later filled and sanded.

The wings were then assembled and put to one side.

CMK's 1/48-scale Jumo 004B turbojet engine was the second major enhancement. This set comprises 11 parts in beautifully cast resin and a small photoetched fret. Detail is excellent notwithstanding the small parts count. Wiring, plumbing and boxes are cast onto the resin engine body. These look terrific after careful painting. In addition to the basic jet engine, CMK supplies two sets of intakes, jet pipes and exhaust details. These represent a noticeable improvement over the kit parts

Construction

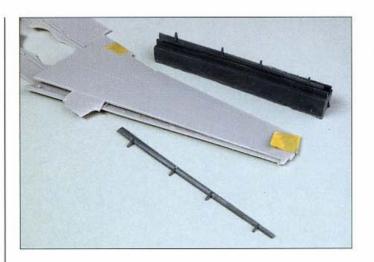
Dragon's Me 262 wheel well is very well detailed, but extreme care must be taken to avoid serious fit problems. The greatest potential for error lies with the photo-etched parts.

First, a word about removing the photo-etched parts. I usually use a sharp blade on a hard surface to free PE parts, but Dragon's material is so hard that the usual result is a broken knife tip. Instead, for Dragon photo-etch, I use a small pair of electrical pliers or sprue cutters to remove the metal parts from the fret, followed by a swipe with a nail file to clean up any leftover metal spurs.

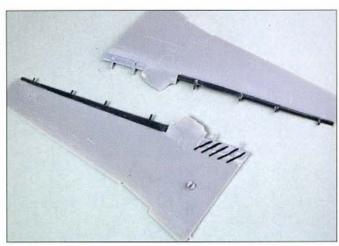
Folding the parts cleanly is also critically important. A pair of flat-nose pliers or a specialized photo-etch bending tool will be helpful. Note that excessive folding will actually snap the part along the fold line, so try to get it right the first time!

Photo-etched and plastic parts are combined to form the gear bay. The PE parts must be folded exactly in accordance with the instructions otherwise the gear bay will not fit properly and might interfere with the fuselage interior. With due care, however, the result is very impressive and most of the detail will be visible even when the model is finished through the big wheel well opening.

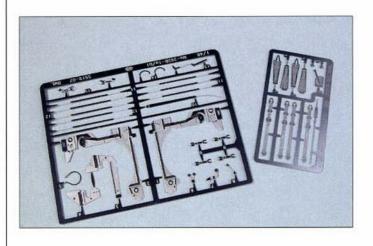
The fuselage interior and wheel well parts were painted with Tamiya AS-12 Airframe Silver prior to receiving a thin wash of Winsor & Newton Raw Umber oil paint.



Construction commences with surgery to the wings. The leading edges of the top and bottom wing halves have been removed to accommodate resin mounts for Cutting Edge's slats.



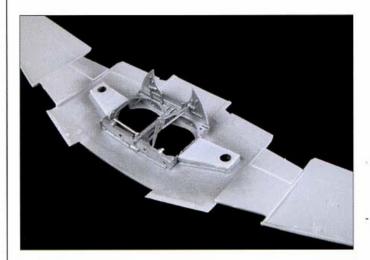
The resin slat mounts were glued to the front of the top wing halves. The hatched area was also severely thinned but, in retrospect, this was not required and the area was later filled.



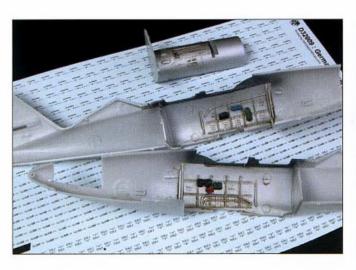
Trimaster and Dragon releases of the Me 262 included photoetched stainless steel parts. These are impressively detailed and robust, but can be tricky to work with. The photo-etched frets were substituted with plastic parts in versions offered by Revell and Italeri.



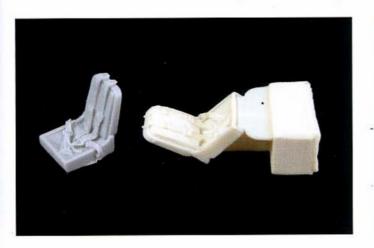
Photo-etched parts are folded to form the wheel well interior. Patience and time is required to align and assemble the parts.



The effort is worthwhile. Even when the model is finished, most of this detail will be visible through the large opening in the bottom of the fuselage.



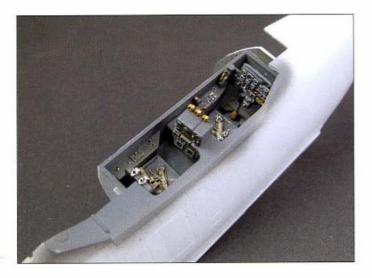
The fuselage sidewalls are also admirably detailed, with ribbing and structural features represented. Factory stencil decals from MDC were applied for further authenticity.



One seat each from Ultracast and Cutting Edge were used in the cockpit. This ensured that the drape of the harnesses was different on the front and rear seats.



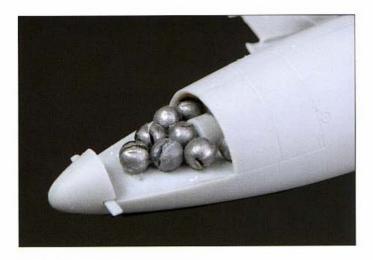
Dragon's cockpit components are nicely detailed straight from the box, including photo-etched throttles and handles. The parts have just received a wash of thinned oil paint to create the impression of depth and shadows.



The cockpit is test-fitted to the fuselage.



The effect of the completed wheel well and the bottom of the cockpit tub is very convincing. An oil wash adds some grime and shade to this area.



Dragon's Me 262 kits need plenty of nose weight to avoid tail-sitting. Here, lead sinkers have been secured inside the nose using super glue.



The inside of the front gun cowl has been thinned to avoid fouling with the lead weights. An unmodified cowl may be seen at the left of the photo.



Just in case the nose weight was insufficient, a few small sinkers were also glued inside the two drop tanks.



Trimming and adjustment were necessary to achieve a good fit for the forward gun cowl.



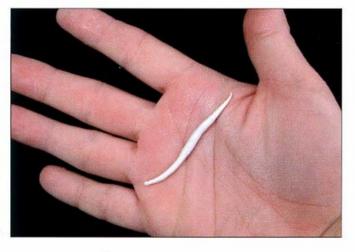
Milliput is a fine-grain two-part epoxy putty that is ideal for filling gaps and making structural repairs. First, slice equal quantities from each of the two sticks.



When preparing Milliput, my rule of thumb is to estimate the smallest amount of putty that you will need, and halve it! A little Milliput goes a long way.



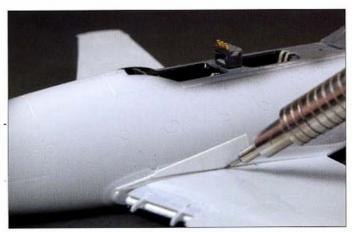
Roll and knead the two halves. I find the best way to start is to squeeze the two balls of putty together, then roll them between thumb and forefinger to create a sausage shape.



This sausage can be vigorously rolled between the palms, and then kneaded back into a ball. This process should be repeated a few times. The heat caused by the friction of rolling also softens the putty.



The resulting putty will remain pliable for an hour or more, permitting plenty of time to fill gaps and mould shapes. Here, Milliput is being used to fill the troughs between the lower join lines of the wing and fuselage.



Test-fitting suggested that a long gap would be present at the port-side wing root. A thin scrap of styrene sheet was measured and cut to fill this gap.



Alignment and dihedral of the wings were erratic. Tamiya masking tape was used to encourage the correct dihedral while the glue was drying. Also note the large gap at the leading edge of the inner wing. A scrap of plastic is propping up the top of the wing at the wing root.



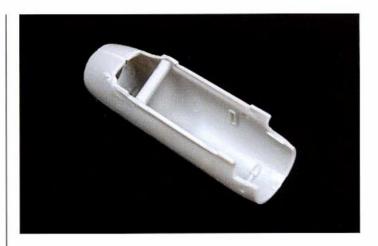
CMK's resin Jumo 004 jet engine is quite simply broken down but very nicely detailed.



Careful painting highlights the cast-on detail.



The port-side kit engine nacelle needs to be modified to fit the new resin engine. The front and bottom of the nacelle have been carefully removed with a razor saw, and the edges bevelled with a hobby knife.



The fit of Dragon's Me 262 engine nacelles to the wings is notoriously bad, but measures can be taken to improve the situation. Here, a length of sprue is being used as a spreader bar at the top of the nacelle. This addresses most of the fit problems.



Milliput has been used to fill several large sink marks in the fuselage sides, and to smooth a step between the wing and engine nacelle.



Dymo tape is a helpful guide to scribing. It is self-adhesive and quite rigid – ideal as an edge for straight lines.



The model filled, sanded and ready for paint. Two strips of styrene on top of the gun cowl represent the hinge lines missing on the kit.



Although it would eventually wear distinctive night-fighter camouflage, I initially finished the model in standard day-fighter colours of RLM 81 Brown Violet and RLM 82 Bright Green. Xtracrylics paints were used.



A tight squiggle of a pale, late-war Sky shade was painted over the day-fighter camouflage. I was trying to create the illusion of a mottle that was actually the result of a light coloured overspray.



I was not satisfied with the result.



Around this same time I further consulted my references and noticed that this aircraft was armed with four 30mm cannon, not two as supplied in the kit. The upper gun positions were marked and drilled with a pin vise.



The gun cowl hinges were too prominent, so these were sanded for a more restrained appearance. The entire fuselage was then lightly sanded and polished with Micro-Mesh cloths before Round Two of painting.



A similar overpainting method was employed, but the squiggle was thicker and the mottles better defined. Selected mottles were also later touched up with RLM 81 or RLM 82.



A thin mix of Tamiya Black and Red Brown was sprayed along control surface hinge lines, panels and in random streaks. Additional streaks were also sprayed using a paler shade of RLM 82.



Prior to adding decals, the entire airframe was sprayed with Future floor polish. This delivered a high-gloss finish to the surface of the plastic.

Despite thorough preparation, the decals proved to be a bit of a shambles. Some were the wrong size, others the wrong shape and larger markings actually disintegrated before reaching the surface of the model. The spares box came to the rescue.



Dragon's night-fighter cockpit is well detailed straight from the box, but I did not want to cope with the rigid photo-etched harnesses. Instead, I used one seat each from Ultracast's and Cutting Edge's resin sets. Although these sets offer two seats each, I wanted the harnesses to have a different 'drape' in the front and rear cockpits.

With the cockpits painted, the tub was glued to the forward and rear bulkheads, which were, in turn, trapped between the fuselage halves. The forward undercarriage bay was also installed at this time. After some jiggling and minor trimming of the bottom of the rear bulkhead, the fit of the cockpit and the fuselage halves was very good.

Weight must be added to the nose to prevent the model sitting on its tail. Eight small lead sinkers were secured on top of the front gear bay using super glue. The sinkers interfered with the fit of the forward gun cowl, so the interior of that part was thinned significantly with a Dremel motor tool. The fit of this part was poor even after thinning, but further trimming and test-fitting improved the situation. I was still concerned that the nose weight might be insufficient, so I added two more sinkers to each nose-mounted drop tank.

The fuselage and wings were assembled separately with minimal drama, but the remaining stages presented greater challenges. Test-fitting showed that there would be a long gap at the starboard upper wing root, noticeable sinking at the bottom fuselage to wing joins (front and rear) and uneven dihedral.

Measuring and cutting a thin piece of styrene to fill the space avoided the gap at the wing root. The pre-formed styrene strip was glued to the wing root before the wing was fixed to the fuselage.

The wing was secured to the fuselage using Tamiya extra-thin cement applied with a thin brush along the join lines. Dihedral was set before the cement had dried using a length of Tamiya masking tape, spanning wingtip to wingtip.

Milliput was used to address the sunken areas at the bottom of the wing to fuselage joins. Milliput is a slow-drying, two-part epoxy putty that is ideal for filling large gaps and making structural repairs. The troughs were filled with the putty then smoothed with a trowel (actually a staple remover – one of my favourite tools). When the putty was dry, the surface was sanded and polished; then surface detail was restored with a scriber.

Cutting Edge supplies separate ailerons, elevators and a rudder with its resin slats. I thought that dropped elevators would add some character to the model, so the kit elevators were cut off and substituted with the resin items.



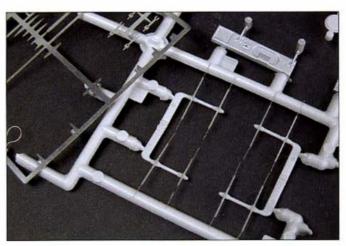
Fitting the main undercarriage parts is a challenge. To ease this task, cut off the top bar of each main gear door, then glue each door directly to the wing before inserting the main gear legs into the wheel well.



Tamiya tape was used to mask the various canopy parts.



Dragon supplies soft vinyl tyres. These are not especially accurate, and they also have a reputation for splitting, or even 'eating' the plastic kit wheels over time. I replaced the rubber tyres with resin wheels from Cutting Edge.



It is much easier to install the fine radar dipoles before the mounts are cut from the sprue. In fact, the surrounding sprues act as a very effective jig to set the correct angle for the dipoles.

The fit of Dragon's Me 262 engine nacelles to the wings is notoriously bad. Preparation is necessary before the parts are assembled. Test-fitting of the starboard nacelle suggested that it would be too narrow, leaving difficult gaps between tops of the nacelle halves and the bottom of the wing. A length of sprue was used as a spreader to widen the top of the nacelle, thus avoiding these gaps. A step between the upper wing and the top of the nacelle was levelled with Milliput.

The port-side nacelle needed surgery to accept the resin CMK engine. The lower and upper inspection panels were carefully cut off with a razor saw. The nacelle halves were glued together and the shell was secured to the bottom of the port wing with no real difficulty.

Minor gaps and other imperfections were addressed at this stage, including the sink marks on the fuselage sides. Milliput was once again employed for these problems.

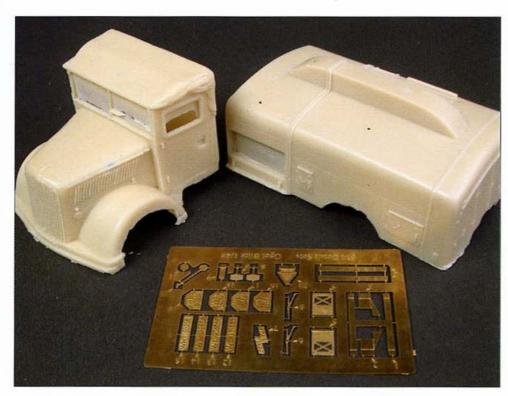
Painting and markings

Photos clearly show that the finish of Me 262 night fighters was distinctly different from day-fighter camouflage. Even so, I theorized that at least some



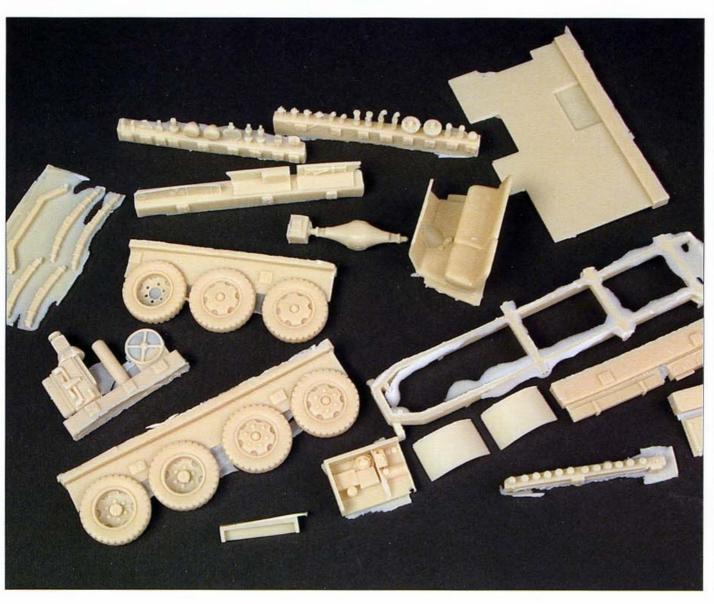
ABOVE AND BELOW Radar dipoles are appropriately fine when fitted to the model.





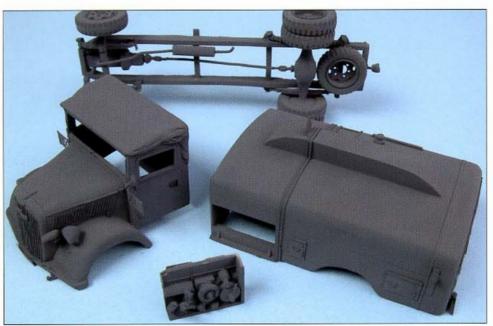
LEFT FM from Hungary produces a resin Opel Blitz fuel truck in 1/48 scale. The large resin castings are impressive, but do need careful cleaning up.

BELOW Detail is good for this scale.



Once the parts have been prepared, construction proceeds rapidly. The model can be built in sub-assemblies to simplify painting.





The truck received a base coat of Tamiya XF-63 German Grey.

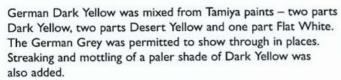
of these night fighters might have originally worn day-fighter colours. After all, the two-seat trainers certainly did.

I therefore initially painted the model in standard day-fighter colours – RLM 81 Brown Violet and RLM 82 Bright Green. A tight squiggle of a pale, late-war Sky shade followed this. Gunze H74 Sky was used for this colour. However, on comparison with wartime photos, I was not happy with the result. Even worse, I noticed that this aircraft was actually fitted with four 30mm cannon, not two as offered in the kit. I decided to add the new cannon ports and improve the paint job.

Two additional cannon ports were located and drilled out with a pin vise. The entire fuselage was then lightly polished with Micro-Mesh cloths – 400 and 600 grits. The new camouflage was applied using a similar method to the first attempt, but this time the squiggles were thicker and better defined. Selected areas were touched up with RLM 81 Brown Violet and RLM 82 Bright Green and I was much happier with this effect.

Panel lines and control surfaces were subtly highlighted with a thin mix of Tamiya Flat Black and Red Brown. This dirty mix was also sprayed in random streaks along the wing. Further weathering was achieved with a wash of Winsor







Kristal Klear was used to form the window in the back of the cab. Here, the window can be seen drying. Soon the entire window will be transparent.

& Newton Raw Umber, heavily thinned with mineral turpentine, applied to the surface of the painted model.

A coat of Future floor polish delivered a mirror sheen to the surface of the model, ideal for decals.

Final construction

The soft vinyl tyres in the Dragon kit were replaced with Cutting Edge resin main wheels. Cutting Edge's set does not include a front wheel, so a spare from the Tamiya kit was used. Hydraulic lines were also added to the front and main gear legs using fine electrical wire.

The radar dipoles are tricky to handle due to their delicacy and diminutive proportions. Great care must be exercised to avoid damaging or losing these parts. The easiest way to assemble the radar is to glue the dipoles to their mounts before the mounts are cut from the sprues. The surrounding sprues act as a very effective jig for setting the correct angle for the dipoles.

The clear canopy parts have tabs moulded onto one edge, presumably meant as an aid to positioning the hoods open. Unfortunately, they are moulded at right angles to the vertical, rendering them useless for this purpose. I cut the clear tabs off and replaced them with small tabs of styrene on the bottom of the canopy parts.

One of the last challenges is the fit of the main undercarriage. The mounting points for the main gear legs are quite shallow, resulting in a fragile connection. To make matters worse, the upper gear leg covers interfere with the installation of the undercarriage legs. For the best possible fit, glue the gear legs into their wing locating points before adding the gear leg covers. I recommend using super glue for a stronger bond. Also, cut off the top bar moulded onto each gear leg cover before gluing them to the undercarriage legs. The retraction struts also demand test-fitting and a delicate touch.

Conclusion

Dragon's 1/48-scale Me 262s are not the easiest of kits to build. Patience, time, effort and putty are required to achieve a good result. However, they do offer some compensation for the extra work. There is a wide selection of variants available, they offer excellent detail and they are often on offer for a much lower price than Tamiya's Me 262s.

The windscreen was cut from clear acetate, with thin strips of styrene used for window frames. FM's Opel Blitz fuel truck is a useful accessory for any Luftwaffe airfield scene.



Tamiya's excellent 1/48-scale Kubelwagen is being used too. Tamiya now also offers a Desert version of the Kubelwagen kit.



BELOW These two figures are included with the 1/48-scale Tamiya Kubelwagen kit.





was then slipped through the large opening in the bottom of the assembled fuselage and secured with super glue.

The balance of basic assembly proceeded quickly. Fit was a little tricky in places, especially aligning the wing and fuselage sub-assemblies. A small wedge of styrene was glued inside the join on the port-side upper wing root in order to set the correct dihedral for the wings.

After the wings and fuselage were assembled, raised panel lines and rivets were sanded off. Faint lines were scored onto the surface of the plastic. These would later act as a guide for the painted putty lines, and a few very subtle lines of rivets.

Selected panels and hatches were also replaced with metal cut from a Coke can.

Kit wheels were replaced with resin items from JRutman Productions. These are nicely detailed and far more accurate than the kit parts. The wheel hubs are cast separately, making painting easier.

Painting and markings

With basic construction completed, the plastic was carefully polished, ensuring that all scratches and imperfections were eliminated prior to painting. The surface of the model must be perfectly smooth before the application of the Alclad Aluminium finish.

Metal panels and hatches were masked with Tamiya masking tape. Alclad Grey Primer was sprayed over the entire model, followed by another round of polishing with Micro-Mesh abrasive fabric.

The model was painted with two coats of Alclad 'Aluminium Shade 1'. Following more polishing, lines of Alclad were sprayed chordwise along the wings to represent the wavy scalloping of the aircraft skin.

After much deliberation, and some abortive experiments with masking tape, the lines of putty were sprayed freehand. This required patience and a steady hand but it did result in an authentic portrayal of the ragged grey grid. By chance, this method also bestowed subtle 'ghosting' around the borders of the putty lines as seen in photos of these aircraft.

The first Me 262 to be captured intact by US forces was Werknummer 111711 at Rhein-Main on 18 March 1945. Grey putty was used extensively to seal panels on this otherwise largely unpainted airframe.

Ghost fighter – Hasegawa's 1/32-scale Me 262 in an unpainted and puttied finish

Subject: Me 262A-1a

Modeller: Steve Palffy Skill level: Advanced

Base kit: Tamiya Me 262A-1a

Scale: 1/32

Additional detailing Grand Phoenix cockpit; Contact Resin wheels

sets used:

Paints: Alclad 'Alumimium Shade 1' and Tamiya Acrylics

Markings: None (masked)

Have you ever had trouble finishing a model kit? Why not try modelling an unfinished aircraft!

A number of late-war Me 262s were delivered for service without the usual camouflage paint. In fact, this may have been a fairly common practice by the final months of the war, with examples being photographed from the 711XXX and the 500XXX production blocks.

These airframes were largely unpainted, with grey putty used extensively to seal panels. This smooth finish was essential to maximize performance. The appearance of these aircraft could vary widely depending on the angle from which they were viewed and how the light hit them. From some angles, the skeletal putty lines seemed to have a pale, ghost-like outline; from others the putty was almost indiscernible.

Further peculiarities of the finish included differing shades of metal – most notably the steel on the nose – and some pre-painted sub-assemblies such as engine nacelles and portion of the fin.

Construction

The kit cockpit was replaced with a multimedia offering from Grand Phoenix. This set supplies an accurate resin cockpit tub with exterior detail. This detail can easily be viewed through the open wheel well once the model is complete. Front and rear bulkheads, once again with interior structural details, are also provided. The resin parts also include new side consoles, a seat and control column. The instrument panel, rudder pedals and harness hardware are supplied on a small photo-etched fret, while the dials are printed onto a clear acetate sheet.

The fuselage halves were joined and some strip styrene added to the sidewalls. The Grand Phoenix cockpit was assembled and painted, but weathering was kept to a minimum bearing in mind that the real aircraft was captured immediately after delivery. The interior of the fuselage and the exterior of the cockpit tub were painted with Tamiya X-11 Chrome Silver. This acrylic colour is grainy, but the metallic flecks are not especially obvious inside the fuselage. The painted cockpit



was then slipped through the large opening in the bottom of the assembled fuselage and secured with super glue.

The balance of basic assembly proceeded quickly. Fit was a little tricky in places, especially aligning the wing and fuselage sub-assemblies. A small wedge of styrene was glued inside the join on the port-side upper wing root in order to set the correct dihedral for the wings.

After the wings and fuselage were assembled, raised panel lines and rivets were sanded off. Faint lines were scored onto the surface of the plastic. These would later act as a guide for the painted putty lines, and a few very subtle lines of rivets.

Selected panels and hatches were also replaced with metal cut from a Coke can.

Kit wheels were replaced with resin items from JRutman Productions. These are nicely detailed and far more accurate than the kit parts. The wheel hubs are cast separately, making painting easier.

Painting and markings

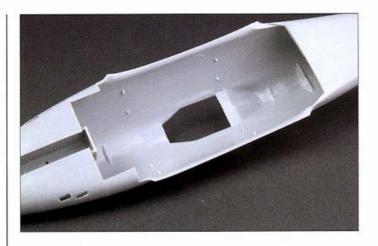
With basic construction completed, the plastic was carefully polished, ensuring that all scratches and imperfections were eliminated prior to painting. The surface of the model must be perfectly smooth before the application of the Alclad Aluminium finish.

Metal panels and hatches were masked with Tamiya masking tape. Alclad Grey Primer was sprayed over the entire model, followed by another round of polishing with Micro-Mesh abrasive fabric.

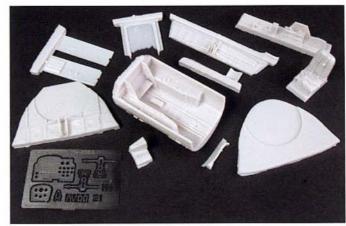
The model was painted with two coats of Alclad 'Aluminium Shade 1'. Following more polishing, lines of Alclad were sprayed chordwise along the wings to represent the wavy scalloping of the aircraft skin.

After much deliberation, and some abortive experiments with masking tape, the lines of putty were sprayed freehand. This required patience and a steady hand but it did result in an authentic portrayal of the ragged grey grid. By chance, this method also bestowed subtle 'ghosting' around the borders of the putty lines as seen in photos of these aircraft.

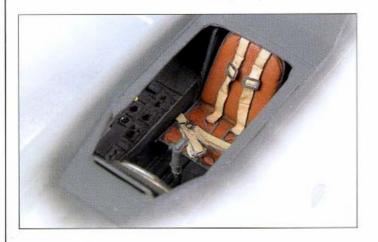
The first Me 262 to be captured intact by US forces was Werknummer 111711 at Rhein-Main on 18 March 1945. Grey putty was used extensively to seal panels on this otherwise largely unpainted airframe.



Hasegawa's 1/32-scale Me 262 kit is quite accurate in outline but detail is very basic. The interior of the fuselage is completely featureless.



Several aftermarket accessories are currently available to help fill this void. This is the Grand Phoenix 1/32-scale Me 262 cockpit set, which includes forward and rear bulkheads.



Harness straps are cast onto the Grand Phoenix resin seat. Photo-etched buckles and attachment hardware are an authentic touch.



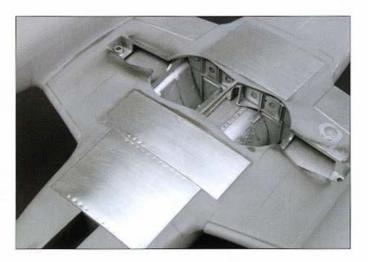
The instrument panel is a sandwich comprising a sheet of printed acetate instruments installed between a photo-etched face and a resin rear panel.



Prior to basic assembly, raised panel lines and rivets were sanded off the kit parts. The fuselage and wings were scored with faint lines. These would act as a guide for later detailing and painting. Here, with the wings and fuselage assembled, a tiny plastic shim may be seen between the wing and fuselage. This helped set the correct dihedral.



Modelling materials can sometimes come from unexpected sources. The thin aluminium of a humble soft drink can is fairly workable and very thin – helpful for a scale appearance when used with a 1/32-scale model.



Various panels and hatches were carefully removed from the kit using a razor saw and a hobby knife. These were replaced with shapes cut from the Coke can. Additional detail on the fuselage interior sidewalls may also be appreciated in this view.



Replacement panels and hatches were faired in with Tamiya putty and Gunze Mr Surfacer, followed by sanding and polishing to restore the smooth surface.



JRutman Productions offer three different styles of replacement wheels for Hasegawa's 1/32-scale Me 262. The plain and cross-hatched tyres are on display here.



An impromptu handle can be very helpful when painting smaller parts. Here, cocktail sticks are held in place with masking tape as an aid to painting canopy parts.



The canopy parts are yet to receive a final bath of Future floor polish.



The assembled airframe was sprayed with a base coat of Alclad Grey primer followed by several layers of Alclad Aluminium lacquer.



The Coke can panels were masked during initial painting. The real metal parts offer a subtle contrast to the Alclad-covered surfaces.



Tamiya XF-53 Neutral Grey sprayed freehand represented putty lines. This demanding operation left subtle 'ghosting' around the borders of the putty lines as observed in photos of the real aircraft.



Individual panels were carefully polished, while other areas including the engine nacelles and much of the tail section were selectively sprayed with a thin coat of RLM 76 Light Blue.



The airframe was composed from several different metals. Steel sections such as the lower nose were tinted with a darker metallic shade.



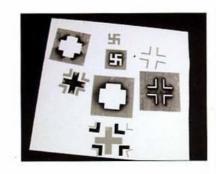
Note the white strip on the bottom half of the fuselage. This represents tape that was applied to the full-sized Stormbird.

Individual panels inside the putty framework were polished to restore their sheen, to tidy up any renegade overspray and to emphasize the ghosting effect. Selected panels were also chosen to receive a darker metallic shade, especially around the nose and lower forward fuselage where steel was used in construction. A mix of Tamiya Flat Black and Red Brown was diluted with around 90 per cent thinners and used as an overspray to achieve this effect. This thin, dirty mix was also sprayed along hinge lines of control surfaces, wing roots and other areas where subtle shading was considered necessary.

Some components of the real aircraft wore a thin coat of paint. These were most likely pre-fabricated elements that had been painted before delivery. Areas of the tail, engine nacelles and wing tips received a fine overspray of Polly Scale RLM 76 Light Blue. For additional variety, small spots of dull red paint were applied to the leading edges of the tail surfaces and wing tips, representing patches of primer on pinking tape.

The canopy was masked, polished with Micro-Mesh cloths then masked inside and out for the painting of panel lines. Interior panel lines were first painted black. This dark outline remains visible from certain angles when the model is finished. After the exterior panel lines had been sprayed, the entire canopy was dipped in a small container of Future that had been slightly thinned with water.

In order to avoid the risk of spoiling the metallic sheen, markings were applied using self-adhesive masks from Montex Plastic Model Club. The masks were designed for a 1/32-scale Fw 190, but they were easily adapted for use on the Me 262. The 'last three' digits of the *Werknummer* were applied with a fine felt-tipped black pen.



Self-adhesive masks were used for the markings. Here, the masks can be seen after they have been used on the model, resulting in some unfamiliar patterns!

Conclusion

Despite its roots in the 1970s, Hasegawa's 1/32-scale Me 262A-1a can still be made into an impressive kit.

With its raised panels and rivets sanded off, some extra attention lavished on the cockpit, undercarriage bays and wheels, and a careful paint job, this model would stand large and proud next to the current generation of 1/32-scale Luftwaffe kits.

One of the advantages of using masks for markings is that there is no possibility of visible decal film. Also, no sealing coat is required – an important consideration for maintaining a convincing natural metal finish.





ABOVE Despite its age, Hasegawa's 1/32-scale offering certainly looks like an Me 262. With planning, care and some extra detail, this model can be a real head-turner.

BELOW 1/35-scale military vehicles are close enough in size to be useful airfield companions to 1/32-scale aircraft models.



Further reading

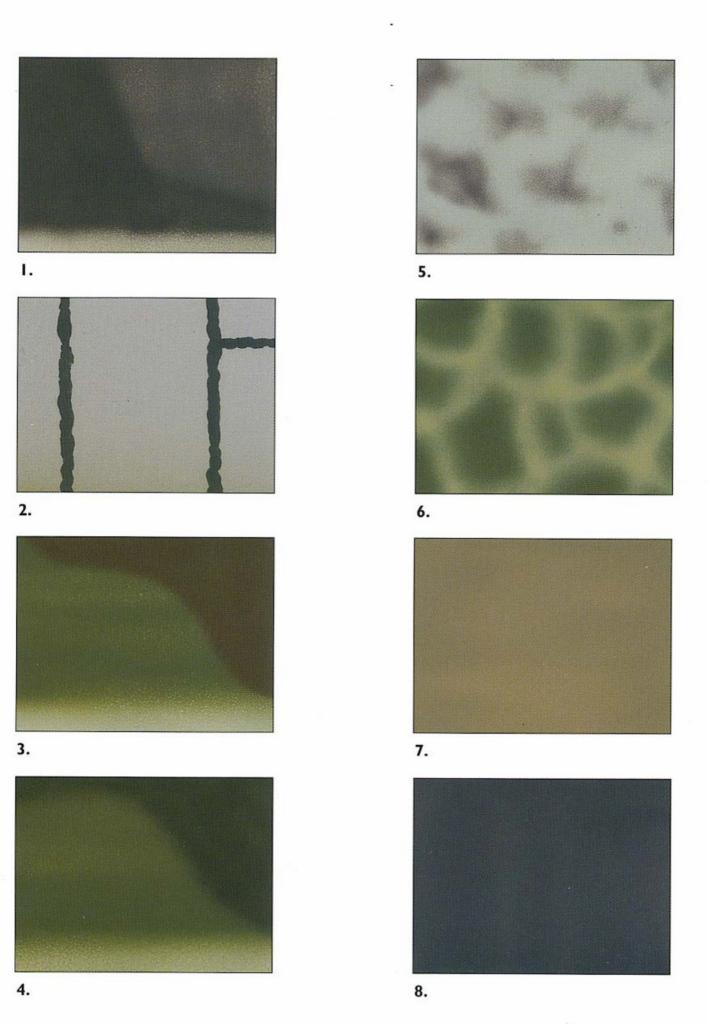
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5.

Me 262 night-fighter camouflage is a controversial subject. It would appear that some Me 262B-1a/U3s wore standard night-fighter camouflage of RLM 75 Grey Violet mottles over RLM 76 Light Blue.

6.

It also seems possible that the day-fighter camouflage that was probably applied at the factory was overpainted with a lighter colour – either RLM 76 Light Blue or one of the late-war 'sky' shades. This sample illustrates the latter option.

7.

Much of the interior of the Me 262 was left unpainted, but RLM 02 Grey was still used on selected components.

8.

The Me 262 cockpit interior was painted RLM 66 Black Grey.

1.

A combination of RLM 75 Grey Violet and RLM 74 Grey Green was the typical mid-war upper surface camouflage scheme for Luftwaffe fighters. These greys were worn by a number of Me 262 early prototypes, and possibly by some operational machines.

2.

By the final months of the war, Me 262s were being delivered in unfinished metal with panels sealed using lines of grey putty

3.

Late-war browns and greens were the most common colours worn by operational Me 262s. This sample shows RLM 82 Bright Green and RLM 81 Brown Violet. RLM 81 was a very unstable colour that often faded to a very pale shade.

4.

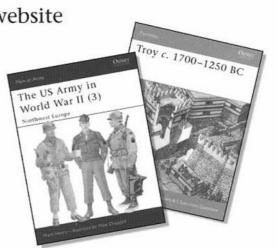
The second late-war fighter scheme was RLM 82 Bright Green and RLM 83 Dark Green.

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