

Notes on Building the Hasegawa 1/72 F-14A Tomcat Part 2

By

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Photos by the Author unless noted

Assembly generally is pretty much as per the kit instructions. A few notes: The forward fuselage is best mated tight to the rear fuselage on the underside - then do some filling of the gap on the topside. This makes the right overall fuselage shape. I do not think it's worth making the wings move - I'd recommend picking one position and going for it. Leave the wings off until painting is all done and slide them in near the end of the assembly. Same for the horizontal stabs. There is a gap around the wing slot that is almost impossible to eliminate, in the Hasegawa kit.

I think the underbelly fuel tanks need some shaving of their pylons to get them at the right angle. Check photos. Also, I added a shim at the base of the front landing gear to extend it about 1/8th inch – I think this gives the Tomcat more of a proper “stance”, with a slightly up tilted nose. Similarly, I think the rear ejection seat sits way too low in the cockpit – I put a pretty thick buildup of layers of sheet plastic under this seat to get it up to having a little of the seat cushion showing over the edge of the cockpit. I also think the kit forces the front seat to be a little too far forward, but I do not see anything that can be done about this.

Thinning the intake edges, gear doors, and the fins on missiles makes them look much more in scale.

The wheel wells could use some detailing, as they are fairly basic in this kit.



This photo by Al Glew - May 2011 Meeting

I primed the model with Tamiya grey primer. I'm not sure I'd do that again, as the grey plastic is easy to cover and Testor's Light Gull Gray (Flat) goes over it well. I think maybe next time just a light sanding all over to give the color coat something to grip. Using a primer coat just put more paint in those nice panel lines.

I tried a new trick, for me, to bring out those panel lines - after a coat of Glosscote over the color coat, I went over all the panel lines with an HB 2 artist's drawing pencil. The really soft lead in the pencil leaves a nice line without having to press hard. Any smears can be wiped off with a damp paper towel, and after decals are in place, a cover of Clearcote seals it all up. I like the effect. The all-gray Tomcats seem to vary from sort of glossy to pretty flat color. I chose Testor's Dullcote for this model, and after it dried, I shined up some areas by "polishing" parts like the radar dome with a soft cloth, to get a little variation in tone. I wasn't bold enough to try any weathering this time around. The photos I have of this particular airplane suggest it was kept pretty clean anyway.

The small probes on the fuselage side are difficult to get just right in 1/72 scale, I think. The kit offerings are oversized, and the PE metal ones from Eduard look too thin. Shaping them from sheet plastic is an option.

The kit decals are pretty delicate and easy to tear, but they do accurately represent the VF- 1 striping, and I used them. I'd recommend not using Solvaset with these decals - they can wrinkle so much that they do not smooth out as they dry. They seem to settle into the surface well using just water.



There are many, many parts in this kit, and it would be a really daunting project for a beginner, but Hasegawa's product does build up into a very convincing Tomcat.

Comments/questions? Contact Donn at donnwells@rochester.rr.com

See Donn's Gallery in MEMBERS for additional photos