

Col. Yakimenko's Yak-3



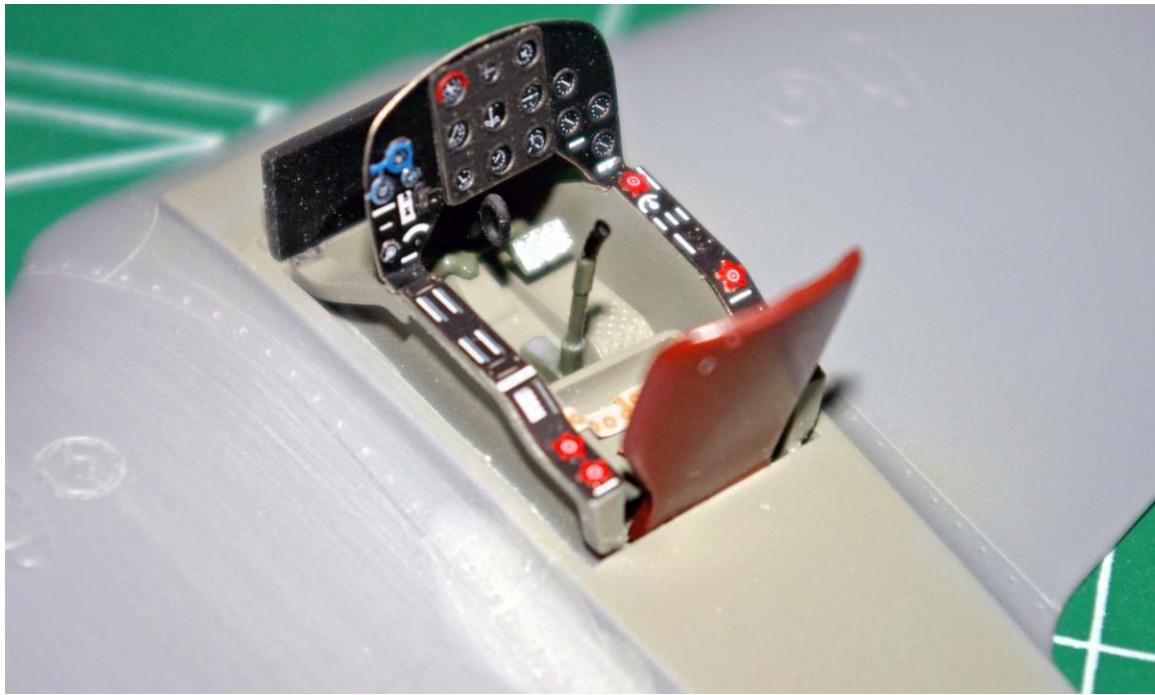
By Dick Smith

Eduard's 1/48th scale kit (#1119) of the Yakovlev-3 builds into a realistic model of the tough and agile fighter that dominated the skies over the Eastern Front during the last days of World War II.

Construction begins with the highly detailed cockpit. After painting the plastic pilot's "tub" and fuselage sidewalls "field gray," follow the instructions and carefully apply the many pre-painted etched metal parts that bring significant detail to the "front office." These metal parts are very fragile and bend easily. Handle them with fine tweezers and attach with dabs of white glue. The instrument panel is a combination of three parts sandwiched together to duplicate the cluster of dials and switches.

The final step in cockpit construction is to paint the pilot's seat back "leather" and attach the pre-painted seat belts. The assembled cockpit is glued securely to the floor area molded into the center section of the top wing. Close the right and left

fuselage halves, carefully position it over the finished cockpit and glue it into place. Be careful not to damage any of the cockpit work since the fit is very tight. Align and cement the bottom and top wing sections together. Attach the elevators to the airframe, check over the construction and fill any gaps. (It might be necessary to use a little putty on the elevator-to-fuselage joints.)



With the airframe complete, place a small amount of wet tissue into the cockpit opening to keep out overspray during painting. The kit contains full color views and decal markings for six Yak-3s in service from 1945 to 1947. The basic camouflage is a soft-edged pattern of dark sea gray (BS381C/638) and a lighter gray (FS-36231.) The underside is light blue, a bit darker than German WWII "hellblau," RLM-78.

I painted my Yak-3 in the colors of Colonel Anton D. Yakimenko, commander of the 151st Guards Fighter Air Regiment (GIAP) on the Eastern Front in 1945 which had a bright red cowling and spinner. To duplicate this distinctive scheme, mask the front of the fuselage according to the diagrams included in the kit and then undercoat the area with gloss white. When dry, spray an overcoat of bright red over the nose. The white undercoat provides a base that allows the red to show all its brilliant color.

Paint the landing gear, wheel wells, inside of the gear doors and wheel hubs field gray. When the hubs are dry, apply the yellow tape masks provided in the kit to the rims and spray the tires dark gray.



After the paint on the airframe dries completely, spray a gloss coat of Future acrylic floor wax or Testors Glosscoat over the entire model. This provides a smooth bed for the decals.

Colonel Yakimenko was a pre-war ace with a reported seven victories gained during the Soviet-Japanese War in 1939. His aircraft carried a unique red banner that covered almost the entire vertical stabilizer and a "Hero of the Soviet Union" badge just behind the cockpit.

Painting the cockpit frames on this kit is made simple with the provided tape masks. Apply the masks, dampened with a little water and a drop of dishwashing detergent, to the clear parts using a pair of tweezers. This technique will allow the masks to slide into position. Finish the model by attaching the landing gear and cementing the cockpit clear parts into place with white glue.

Eduard's kits are a bit more complicated than most and a little more expensive. However, with the etched metal details and the multiple decal selections, they build into remarkable models for the price.



