A TRADE WINDS SPECIAL REVIEW:

An Eagle in a Mustang

by Dave Jaggie

Photos by the Author and Gene Fuller

A Fox Eagle .60 in Top Flite's Stand-Off Scale "Mustang". FM's test report on a great kit and potent powerplant.

North American's P-51 "Mustang" was nothing short of a classic in aircraft design, a functional sort of beauty all its own and a deadly combat machine in the air. It is no small wonder it was everyone's favorite WW-II fighting machine, except perhaps the pilots who flew against it.

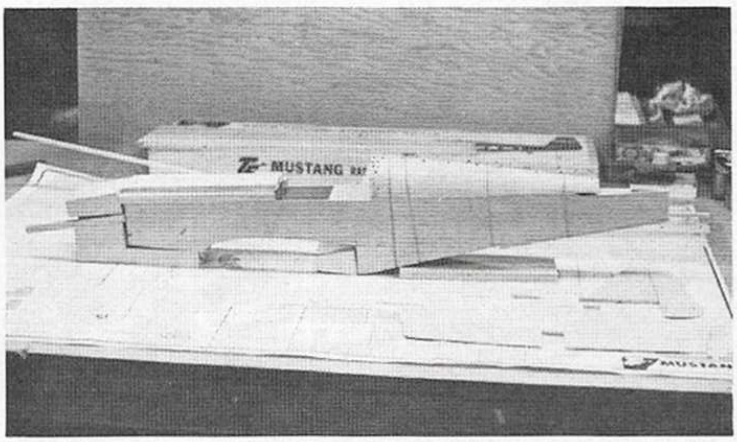
In the past, I've built both Controline and display type P-51 models, but Top Flite's Stand-Off Scale kit design of this fascinating aircraft just turned me on. With radio aboard, it's about the next best thing to the real machine. Incidentally, if you're really detail conscious, a great many modified P-51 "Mustang" fighters now sport civilian colors and a visit to a few nearby airstrips might turn one up.

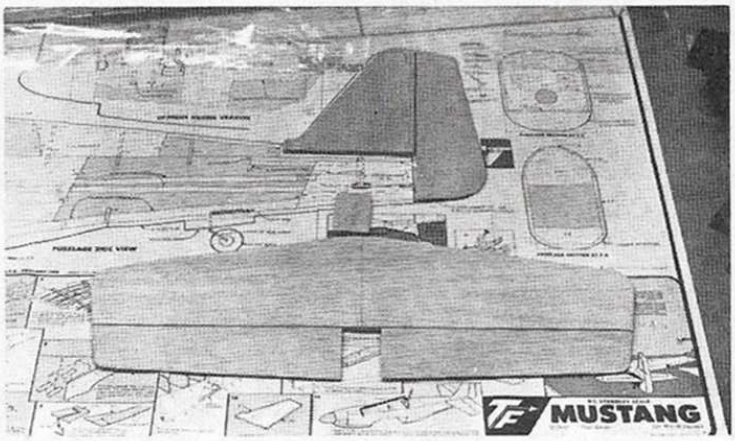
Upon opening the box and checking to see that everything was in order, I was delighted to see from the plans that it was an easy model to construct. With Top Flite's simplified construction, building was quick and easy, and the clean and simple construction diagrams made the assembly a real pleasure. Since I was doing the ship for a kit review, I built it exactly as per the plans, the P-51B version, which Don Gentile flew during World War II. Several variations are shown on the plans which will enable the builder to construct the ship as the first prototype or as Howie Keefe's unlimited racer, Miss America. One of the photos shows both my P-51B and Henry Haffke's *P-51 D "Miss America"* version, also built from this kit.

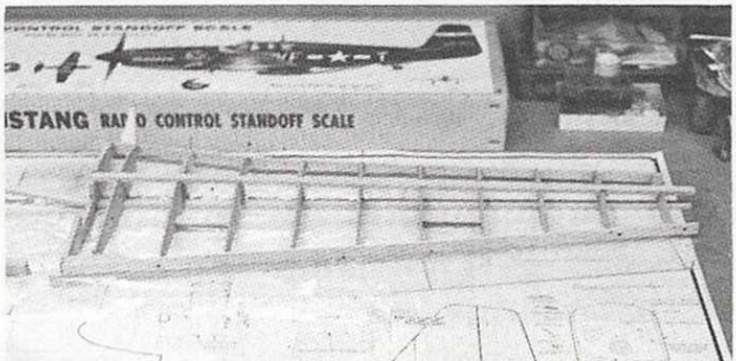
The construction sequences on the plans speak for themselves, and there are only a couple of points I'd like to bring up. The alignment wedge has been modified by Top Flite in current kits.

One point worth mentioning here for the scale buffs: if you're planning to mount

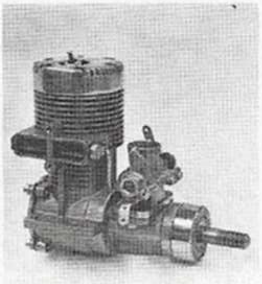
Above, Dave shows the inverted engine installation on his P-51. He plans to build another ship to add retracts for an even finer looking plane.







Good plans make construction easy on this P-51, upper left shows fuselage construction as series of balsa blocks carved to shape. The turtledecking is planked. The tail assembly above needs only sanding to shape. The wing construction at left shows the wide end of the alignment wedge goes at the root or center of wing. The Fox Eagle .60 at right has control links on either side of carb making an easy inverted mount.



the tailwheel as on the real one, I'd advise hooking up some sort of steering mechanism or use the bracket supplied with the kit. I mounted mine fixed, as it shows on the plans. However, if there is any crosswind, the plane will not taxi as readily where you want it to go.

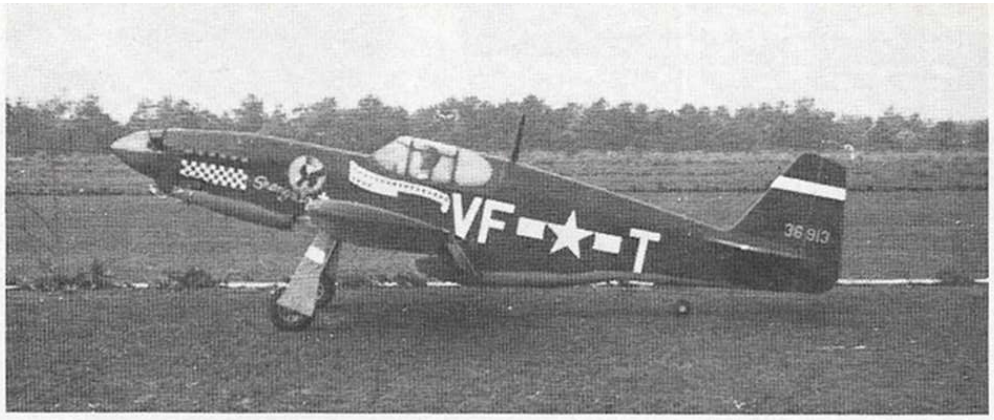
The engine installation was really simple and there was plenty of room everywhere. Naturally I mounted the engine inverted, since the ship would hardly look like a P-51 if I didn't. I've got to hand it to Duke Fox; I don't think any modeler could be more patriotic than he. With an American Flag on the bypass port, an American Eagle on the backplate, and a "Made in America" on the side of the engine, I figured there'd be a "Love it or leave it" somewhere. Seriously, however, the engine is lighter than most .60 engines and the six hole bolt pattern makes this engine adaptable to just about any mount. Also with the carburetor arms on both sides of the engine, the throttle servo can be mounted anywhere desired.

Upon finishing the ship, I was very anxious to get it into the air. Since I only finished it the night before, the test flights would be at the Eastern States R/C Championships, at Lakehurst, New Jersey.

When my turn came to fly, with some apprehension I took the plane out to the flight line, set it down and checked out the controls. Everything checked out fine, including the flaps, a first for me. I proceeded to start up the engine, which had never been run before. A small prime, attachment of the battery, and in only two flips it was running! After setting the high speed mix, I throttled down and the motor purred like a kitten. I taxied out, gave her full throttle, and an instant later was airborne in a nice, steady climb. The only trim adjustment needed was a slight amount of up elevator. The model flew very well, with good response to all controls and was very stable. If I had put retracts in the ship, it would have looked just like the real McCoy.

As always, the time comes when you have to land. Not having any prior experience with flaps, I made a slow fly-by with the flaps down and the model seemed to stop in mid-air. I raised the flaps and came around for the final. As I slowly decreased the throttle, I lowered the flaps at the same time. I have never made a nicer and smoother landing! The model slowed up and I could almost pick any spot on the runway to set it down. I'll say one thing for Top Flite, they've really got an easy building and an excellent flying model here and I intend to build another one with retracts in it. As far as the engine goes, it is as powerful as any .60 on the market today. The low motor to high speed throttle response is excellent and the engine will idle all day long. I tested the *Mustang* with a 12-6 Top Flite prop and it flew fast, with a vertical climb, that would be equal to any hot pattern ship. The engine was an excellent choice for this model. An extra feature of this fine engine is its reasonable price.

The *P-51B Mustang* is produced by Top Flite Models, Inc., 2635 S. Wabash, Chicago, Illinois 60616, and the Eagle .60 powerplant is the pride of Fox Model Airplane Products, 5305 Towson Ave., Fort Smith, Arkansas 72901. Both should be available at your dealer.



Above and below, Dave's P-51 shows its classic lines at Eastern States R/C Championships at Lakehearst. The plane atop opposite page is Henry Oberholtzer's Top Flite kit in competition at Toledo.

Mustangs of two eras above with Henry Haffke's P-51D in front and Dave's P-51B behind against background of Lakehearst blimp hangers. Dave holds his plane below just before flying in pattern events.