



F/O Richard Rohmer's Mustang I

From "*Plastic*" to "*Pilot*"
A Modeller's Journey

Building an accurate RCAF Mustang I

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A Request from the Air Force...

- ❖ August 2021 - email from the Aide-de-Camp of Honourable Lieutenant-General Richard Rohmer
- ❖ I thought I was in some sort of “*trouble*”! 😊 Thankfully it was the opposite!
- ❖ They heard I built scale models.
- ❖ They were looking for someone to build one of the General’s Mustangs he flew in WW2 as a surprise 98th birthday gift.



Major-General Richard Rohmer

Born in in Hamilton Ontario in 1924, Honorary Lieutenant General Richard Rohmer is currently active as honorary advisor to the Chief of the Defence Staff of the Canadian Armed Forces, among his many other accomplishments (e.g., author, lawyer, historian). He is currently believed to be the senior surviving Canadian Pilot and Veteran of D-Day, the Battle of Normandy and the Liberation of Holland as of 2021.





Now which MUSTANG?

Research found that F/O Rohmer flew several Mustangs during the war:

0700hrs, Juno Beach, June 6, 1944.

430 Sqn in support of Canadian Army landings in Mustang **AG664 "M"**
Full overall D-Day stripes on Dark Earth base with Dark Green camo, and Sky Grey undersides.

1425hrs, July ?, 1944.

430 Sqn providing cover flight in Mustang **AM191 "R"**
Full overall D-Day stripes, Dark Green and Ocean Grey with Medium Sea Grey undersides.

1640hrs, July 17, 1944.

430 Sqn providing reconnaissance flight in Mustang **AP178 "J"**
Full overall D-Day stripes Dark Green and Ocean Grey with Medium Sea Grey undersides.

This Mission is where he spots Rommel's staff car, after which he called in a strafing run subsequently taking Rommel out of the war.

“AP178 – J”

This one was chosen, under the theory that General Rohmer would better remember this mission, due to its significance and his reflection in his memoirs.



Now which KIT and SCALE?

1/72



1/48



1/32



1/32 Hobbycraft Mustang (#HC1713)

- ✓ Large enough to be appreciated by the General
- ✓ Large enough canvass for weathering
- ✓ Only 1/32 kit of early Allison-powered Mustang



BUT...1/32 Hobbycraft Mustangs



- 1) Conundrum: The Hobbycraft RAF Mk.Ia version has the proper camera and corresponding left-side opened window for the camera lens, but has incorrect protruding wing-mounted canons and no nose guns, required on Rohmer's Mustang. The P-51a version has non-protruding wing guns (although missing the middle .50cal), nose guns, but has no camera and camera window.
- 2) Since I only had the RAF version (thank you Tony Whittingham), the mods required to back-date the RAQF Mk.Ia to a Mk,I, based on the Hobbycraft RAF version.

LIST OF REQUIRED MODIFICATIONS!

AP178 serial number puts this aircraft as
an NA-83 sub-variant of the early Allison Mustang Mk. I



To make an accurate Mustang Mk.I

- 1) Dispense w/ Malcolm Hood Canopy (no Mk.Is were fitted w/ Malcolm Hoods). Thankfully, HC kit provides alternate correct canopy.
- 2) The RAF Mustang Mk.I, did not have the triple underwing recognition lights fitted, so fair them over on the HC kit.
- 3) The radio antenna behind the cockpit should be a 'flattened' pole antenna. It starts out as a short circular section closest to the fuselage (about 3" in full scale), and then transitions into a flattened strip.
- 4) By 1944 Mustangs were all using VHF, so the HF wire from the top of the mast to the tip of the tail fin is absent.

- 5) There would also be, under the left wing in basically the same position where the pitot head is mounted under the right wing, a short 'pole' antenna - slightly longer in length than the pitot head. This was an IFF dipole fitted in early 1944 to all RAF Mustangs.

- 6) One correction that needs to be made on the Hobbycraft early Mustang kit (if building anything other than an early NA-73 series Mustang Mk.I, is to remove the radiator air intake deflector from under the wing centre-section just ahead of the radiator intake. This is the radiator intake deflector pop-up panel operated by a control in the cockpit on the early NA-73 series. It was designed to stop the radiator over cooling in very cold weather or during a long power off descent, but was found not to be necessary, and deleted on the later-production batches. So for a NA-83 series Mustang Mk.I (AL, AM & AP serials) or a NA-91 Mustang Mk.IA (cannon armed FD serials) this small rectangular panel must be sanded-off.

- 7) The underneath radiator-intake on the Mustang Mk.I and Mk.IA had a different shape, being a 'squarer' and flatter sided shape. The intake provided by both the 1/48 and Accurate Miniatures and 1/32 Hobbycraft kits on their P-51 and Mk.IA is actually that of the P-51A which had a redesigned fixed radiator intake. Some minor reshaping is required here. Note: To date, no after-market radiator intakes exist in either 1/48 or 1/32 for this variant.
- 8) Cockpit: Just to the left of the canvas boot on the bottom of the control stick on the floor of the cockpit, should be the small Type 35 camera controller box, with a couple of wires extending back from it. This was the switch to operate the camera behind the pilot. Modified radio from Aries 1/48 German WWII Radio Set (ARS4045).
- 9) Camera area: The RAF F24 camera comes with the HC kit but requires a lengthened lens that therefore slightly protrudes from the canopy window on the left-side. Note: There is some research that suggests the right-side was also fitted with an opening so the camera could be fitted on either side. The window opening must also be oval in shape and not circular.

- 10) HC kit propeller blades are slightly 'chunky' in profile being closer to the later blade profile used on the later production A-36 and P-51A. Ultracast make a better set or re-shape them slightly.
- 11) Add small circular rear-view mirror on-top of forward canopy (same as Spitfire/Hurricanes).
- 12) A note on Mustang centre-gear doors! These doors had locks and hydraulics on them which meant that when parked, the doors were always in the “up” position. However, these doors could be left “open” by dis-engaging the lock manually for ground crew maintenance work!
- 13) Other 1/32 after-market specific to the HC kit:
 - replacement resin cockpit (crisper detail) by Vector Models (VDS 32008)
 - replacement resin wheels by “Cross-tread: wheels by Hussar (HSR 32008)
 - replacement fishtail exhausts from Quickboost Spitfire IX (QB 32-192)
 - RAF Late-Seatbelts from Eduard (32878)
 - replacement brass barrels for all guns: Master AM32-098 (.30cal) & AM-32-001 (.50cal)

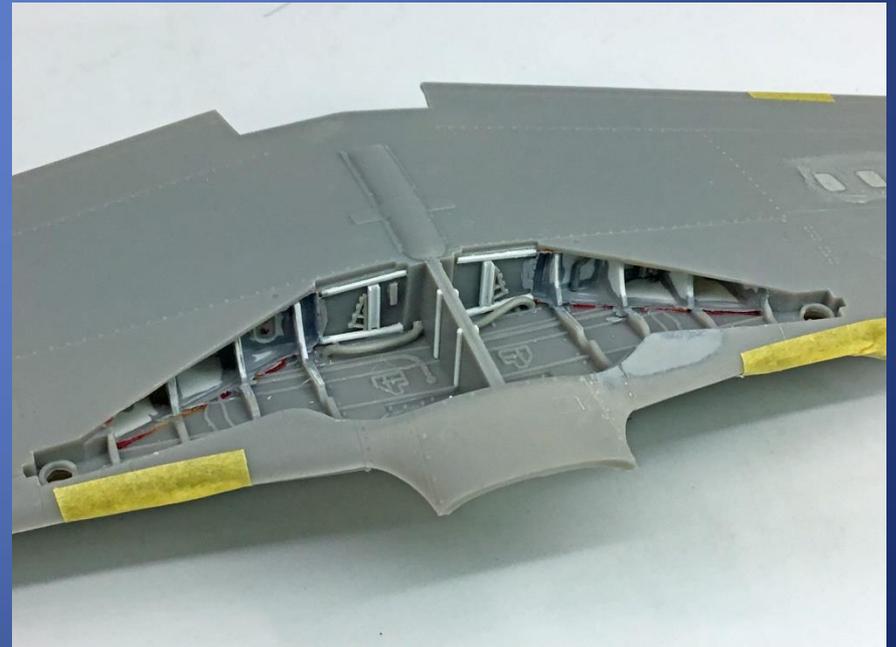
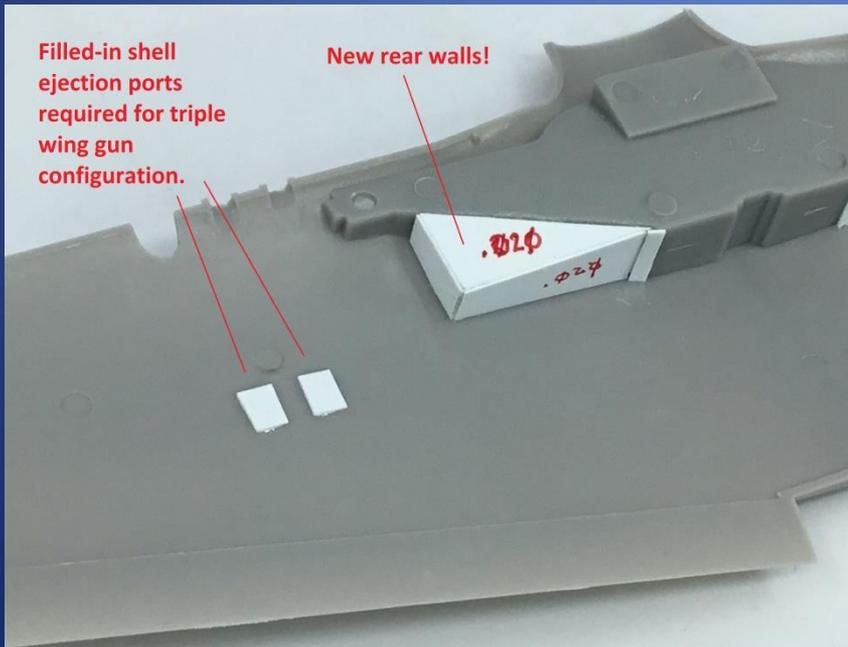
TWO MOST IMPORTANT MODS!

14) Armament mods. The Mk.I had:

- a) 2x0.50 guns under the chin (non-bulged fairings as they exit the cowls)
- b) 2x0.50 guns and 4x0.30 guns in the wings (bulged fairings at exit of the wing .30cal – use epoxy putty)
- c) Note 1: the 2 x .50cal were in between the .30cal slightly underwing and not directly on the leading edge
- d) Note 2: add nose guns with small plated protective blast shield under right side gun only. Also left gun protrudes further out due to location of internal gun magazines



15) Most P-51 Mustang kits regardless of scale, have incorrect wheel-wells! The rear gear-well wall does not follow the shape of the wheel-well itself, but rather follows the inside wing spar. Thus there is a noticeable gap on the rear of the wheel-well. There are after-market sets, but they are also hard to install so mine is scratch-built using styrene.



COLOURS & MARKINGS

- ❖ Standard RAF Day Fighter Scheme camouflage and markings: Upper surfaces RAF Ocean Grey and RAF Dark Green, lower surfaces in RAF Medium Sea Grey.
- ❖ Spinner and fuselage identification band in Sky, aircraft identification letter in Sky, aircraft serial in black.
- ❖ Camouflage was to a standard pattern. This model shows correct pattern.
- ❖ Type B roundels on upper wing, Type C1 on fuselage sides, Type C on lower wing, type C fin flash.
- ❖ Individual aircraft ID letter ahead of the fuselage roundel.
- ❖ Cockpit colours (RAF Interior Green with Dark Green anti-glare)

- ❖ The black/white D-Day ID stripes were generally evenly and painted on including onto undercarriage doors.

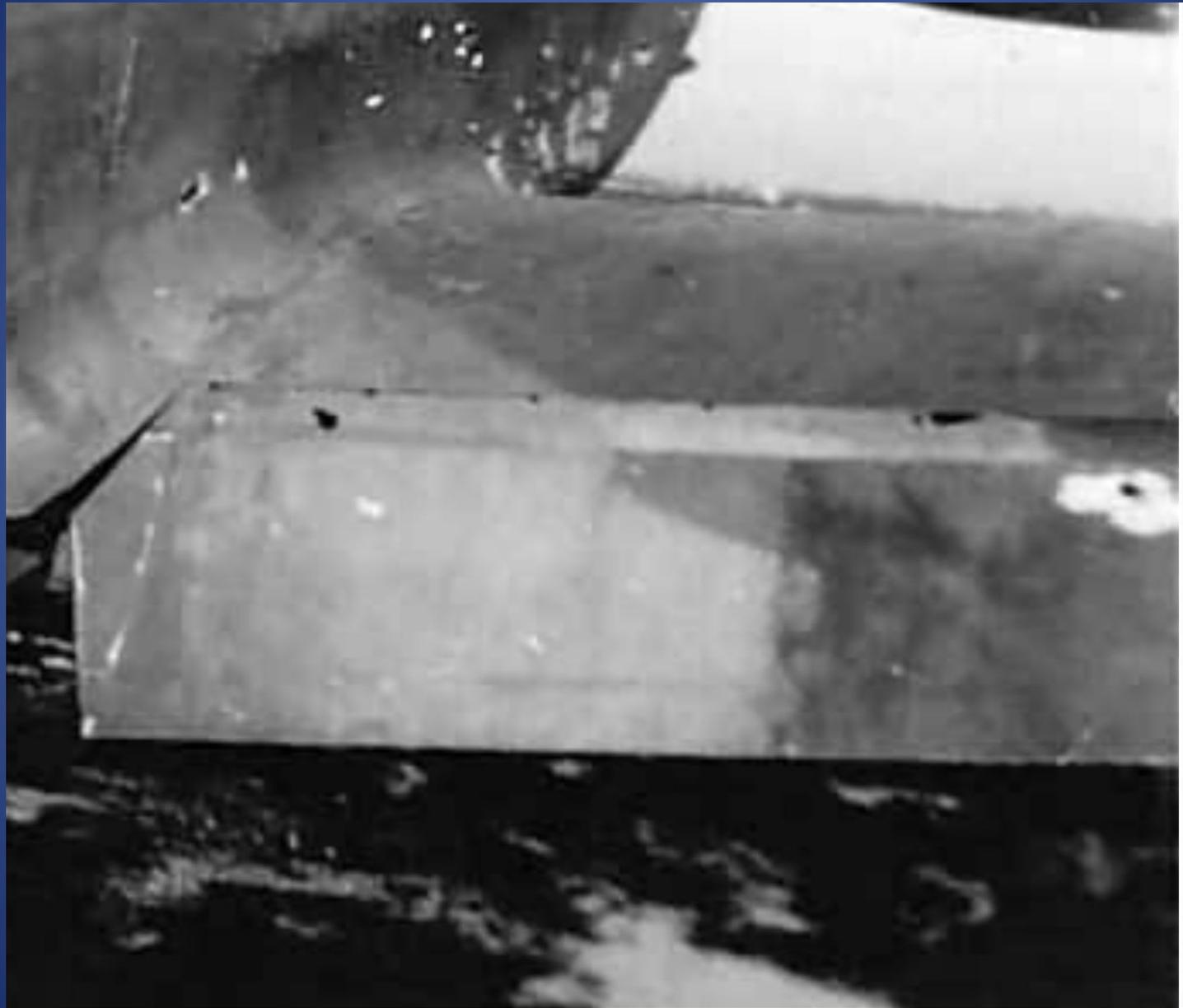
HOWEVER:

While internet sources state that no Mustang Is of 430 Sqn carried full top/bottom D-Day Strips, General Rohmer vividly recalls:

“My Mustang had full D-Day stripes on top and underneath. They were hand-brushed on by my ground-crew.”









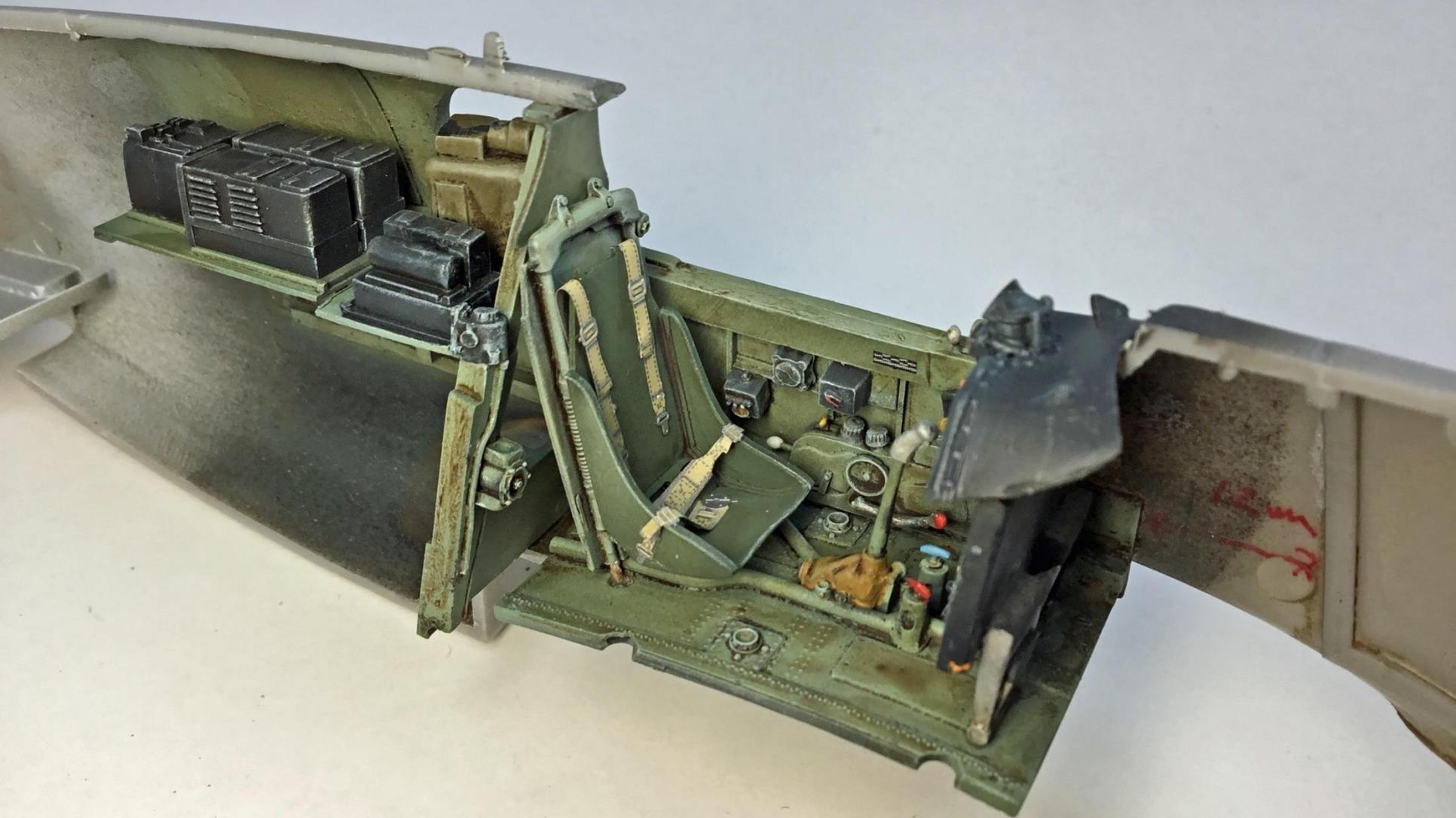


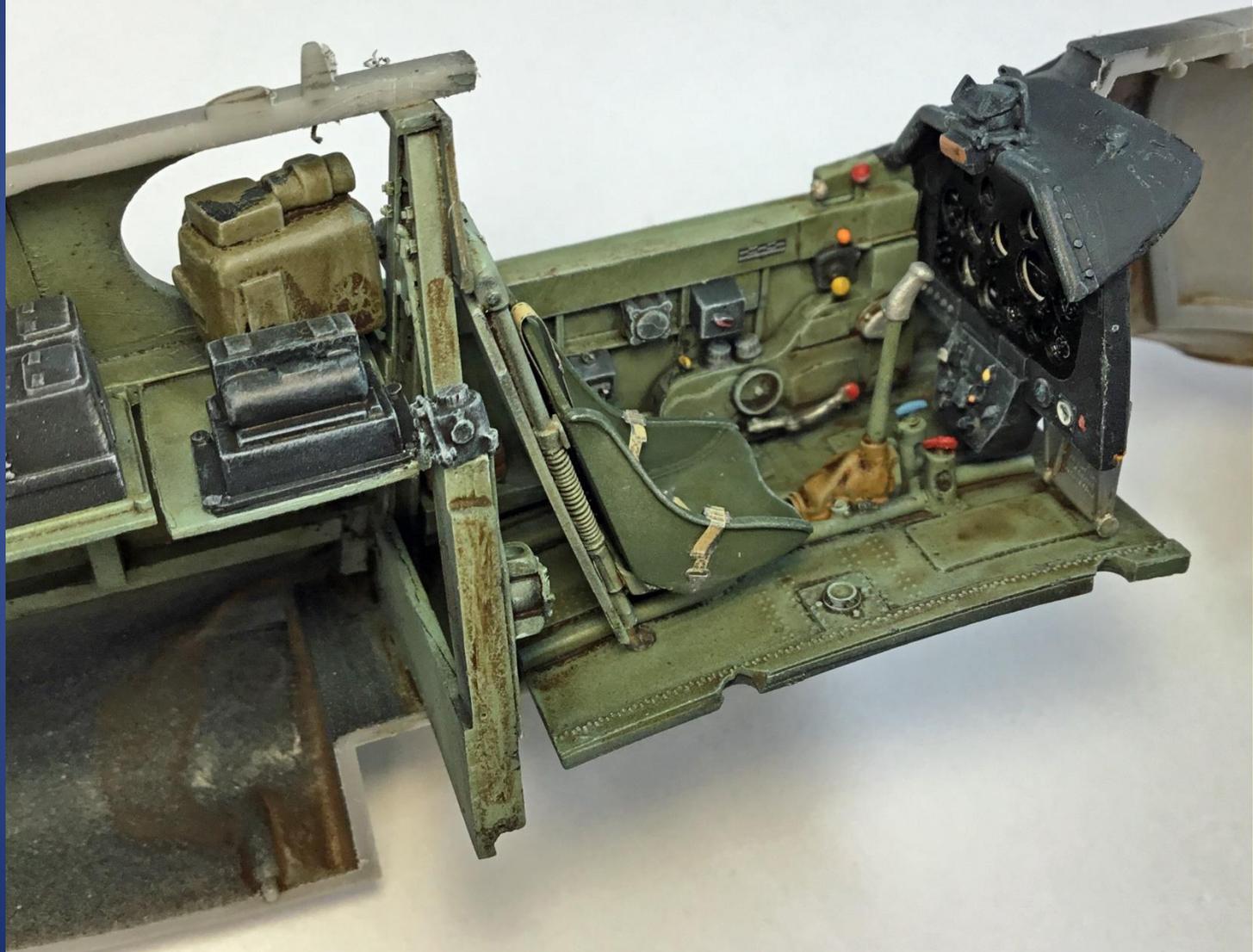
AUSTRALIAN
WAR MEMORIAL



**1/32 RCAF
MUSTANG I - AP178 / J
430 FIGHTER RECCON SQN – July 17 1944**



























AP178



THE PRESENTATION TO THE GENERAL CANADIAN FORCES BASE BORDEN NOVEMBER 11, 2021





SOME OF THE GENERAL'S REMARKS ON THE MODEL

“These aircraft were dirty because we operated from forward bases off mud fields. We landed, then went straight back up. There was little to no time to clean them. The only thing they kept clean was the windscreen which they wiped to clean off any dirt and oil.”

“This is exactly how I remembered it. I am 20 years old again!”













Acknowledgements

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2Lt Harvey Low

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PlasticAddic | Harvey Low's
Scale Model Collection

THANKS FOR WATCHING!