

**MIKE ASHEY
PRODUCTIONS
PRESENTS**

**TIPS ON ASSEMBLING
EDUARD'S
PREPAINTED SEATBELTS**



**BY
MIKE ASHEY**

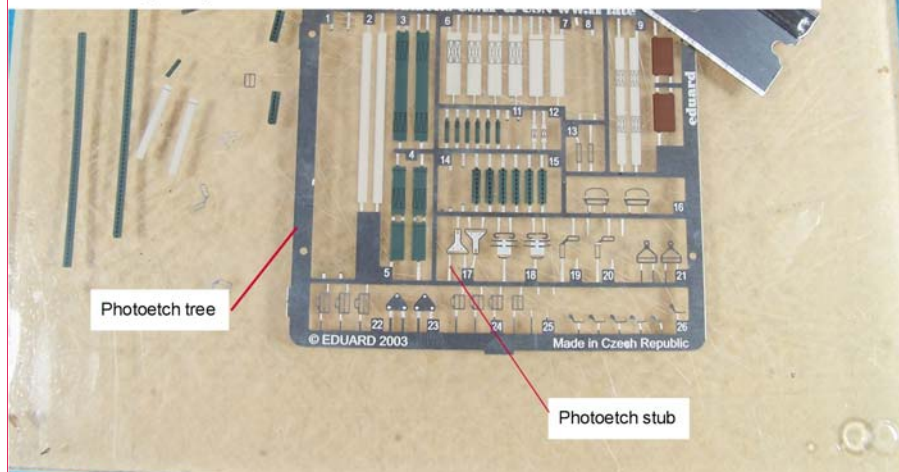
TIPS ON ASSEMBLING EDUARD'S PREPAINTED SEATBELTS

In the last few years Eduard model company has been selling prepainted photoetch cockpit sets. These sets have revolutionized aircraft cockpit detailing and the quality of these prepainted sets is just outstanding. Along with the prepainted interior detail sets and placards, they have also introduced prepainted seatbelts. In the smaller scales the seatbelts and shoulder straps have the buckle hardware as one piece with additional details which glue onto the surfaces of the belts. In the larger scales (1/32 & 1/24) the belts and the buckles are separate. As in all things there are always techniques for assembling just about anything. With large scale prepainted photoetch seatbelts, the trick is to position the buckle hardware without damaging the paint on the belts.

The subject of this article is to present a technique for assembling 1/32 scale seatbelts for a P-38J cockpit seat. The same techniques would apply to 1/24 scale prepainted seatbelts. Several different scales of Eduard prepainted seatbelts are located in the product review section of this web site.

You can also see several cockpit close up shots of this P-38J in the aircraft gallery section of this web site.

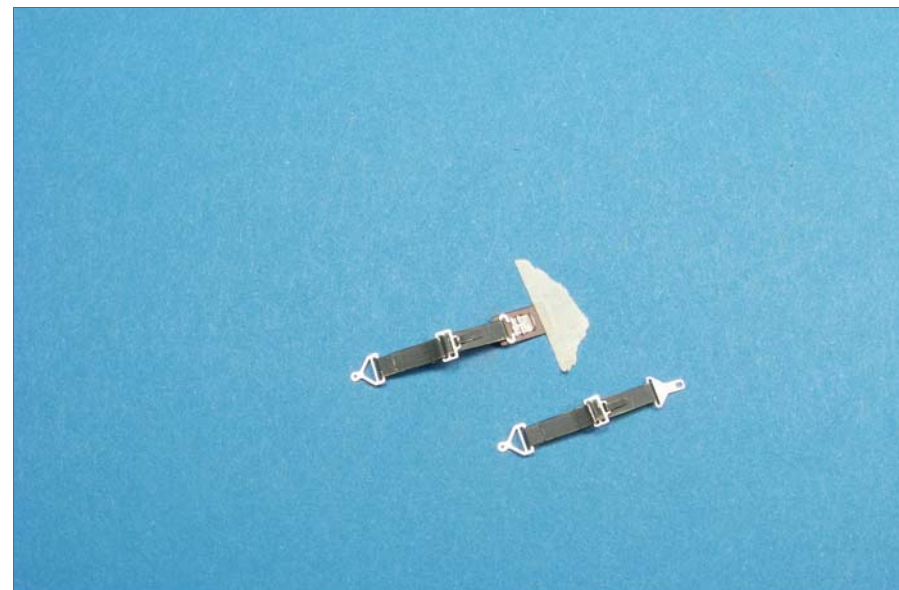
To cut off photoetch parts I use a Plexiglas plate and a sharp single edge razor blade. Eduard incorporates cut indentations where the stubs meet the parts to make cutting easier. Always position the edge of the blade on these indentations so that you will not have to remove any excess stub material after the part is removed. Only cut the parts that you will need for the assembly and be very careful not to damage the painted surfaces when cutting the parts off the trees.



The trick to positioning the length adjustment buckles without scraping off the paint is to pre-shape the belts so that the buckles can easily slide along the belts length. I placed the belt inside flat faced needle nosed pliers about half the belts length and then curled the remaining length over the outside edge. The round bend was the perfect diameter for the buckles two open slots. I then carefully worked the buckle up the length of the folded seatbelt. Once the buckle was positioned where I wanted it, I carefully flattened out the belt. To protect the painted surface of the belt you can place masking tape on the inside edges of the pliers. I found these pliers at a shop that sells jewelry making supplies.



Once the length adjustment buckles are positioned cut out the remaining parts for one seat belt and assemble them. To attach the seatbelt buckle hardware, pre-bend the ends of the seatbelt about 90 degrees using the tip of your flat nosed pliers. Position the part in place and then fold the bend over onto itself. Carefully adjust the part and then apply a tiny drop of super glue to secure the part in place. Once the end pieces are attached you can add the remaining parts with super glue. If the glue seeps onto the paint surface just let it dry. Once the seatbelt is assembled you can apply some Testors clear flat paint to the super glue and the glue will disappear!

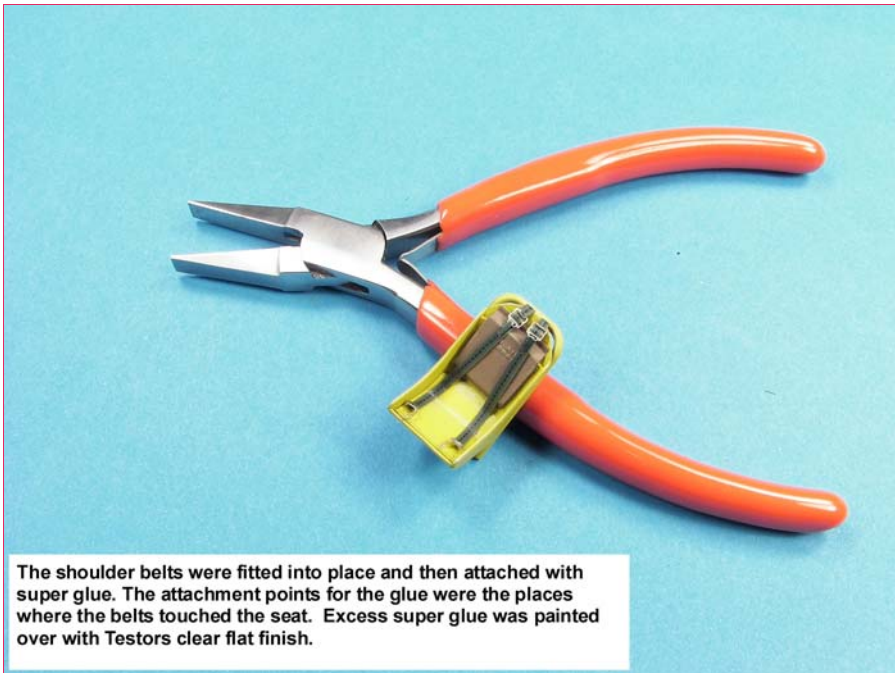


The seat belts are now completed. I used the masking tape to help hold the assembly in place so that I could finish attaching the small parts.

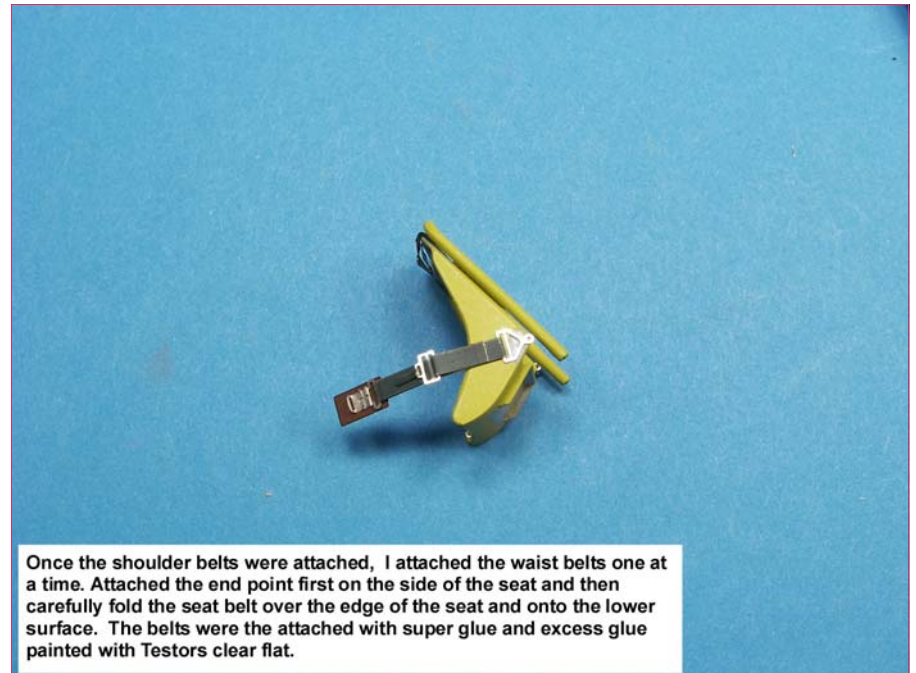
The shoulder belts are pretty much assembled the same way as the waist belts. here I attached the buckles first, then I worked the adjustment buckle into place without folding the belt first. The scrapped off paint on the upper belt is the result of working the buckle into place without folding it first. Notice the folded over section on the buckle attachemnt hardware.



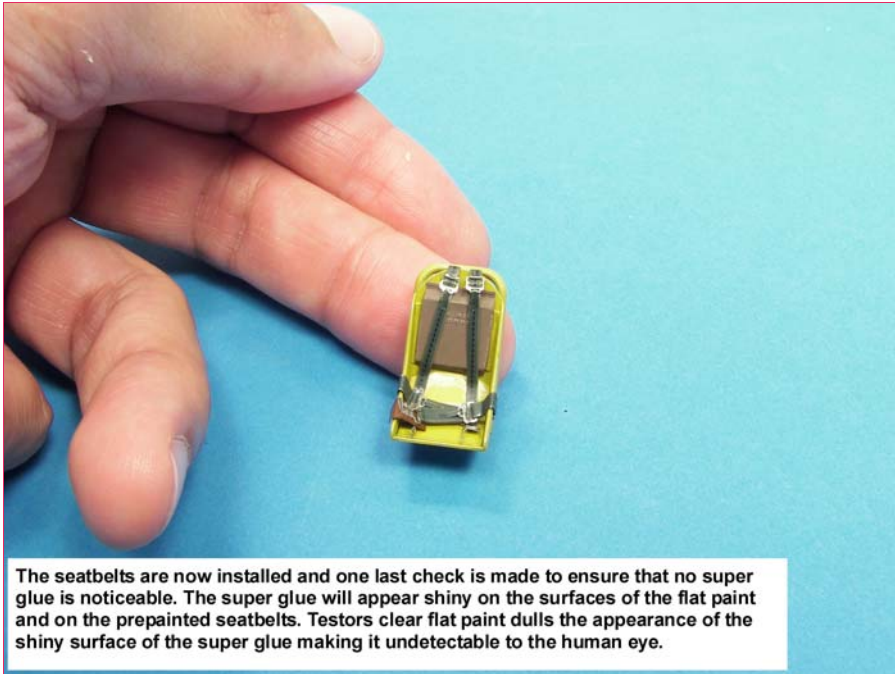
The scrapes on the paint have been covered with the remaining parts on the upper belt. The lower belt adjustment buckle was positioned in place after the belt was folded over. Once these belts are complete they will be ready for installation on the seat.



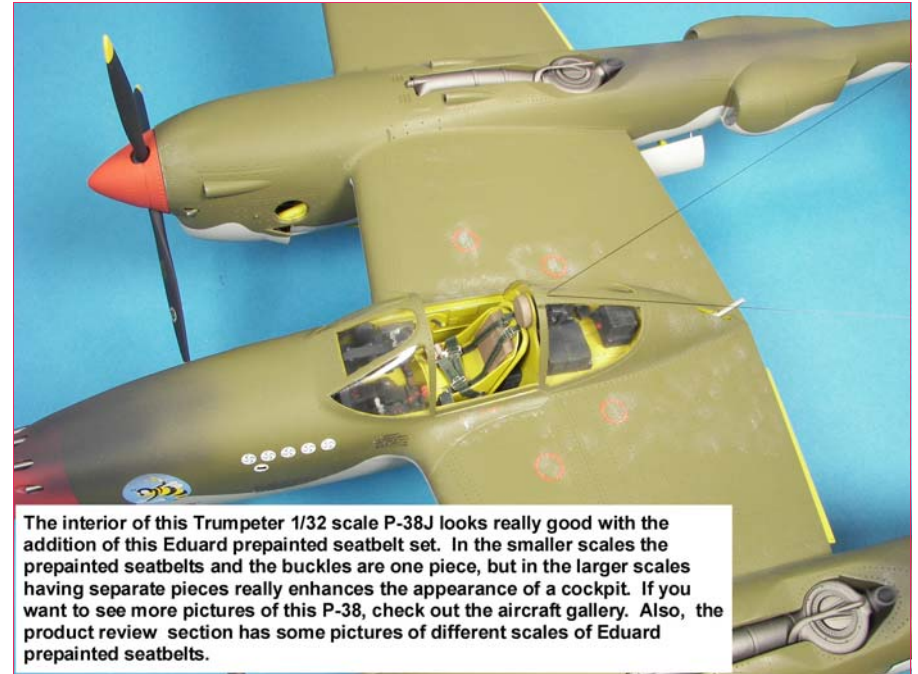
The shoulder belts were fitted into place and then attached with super glue. The attachment points for the glue were the places where the belts touched the seat. Excess super glue was painted over with Testors clear flat finish.



Once the shoulder belts were attached, I attached the waist belts one at a time. Attached the end point first on the side of the seat and then carefully fold the seat belt over the edge of the seat and onto the lower surface. The belts were the attached with super glue and excess glue painted with Testors clear flat.



The seatbelts are now installed and one last check is made to ensure that no super glue is noticeable. The super glue will appear shiny on the surfaces of the flat paint and on the pre-painted seatbelts. Testors clear flat paint dulls the appearance of the shiny surface of the super glue making it undetectable to the human eye.



The interior of this Trumpeter 1/32 scale P-38J looks really good with the addition of this Eduard pre-painted seatbelt set. In the smaller scales the pre-painted seatbelts and the buckles are one piece, but in the larger scales having separate pieces really enhances the appearance of a cockpit. If you want to see more pictures of this P-38, check out the aircraft gallery. Also, the product review section has some pictures of different scales of Eduard pre-painted seatbelts.