



Full Review

Revell

BAe Tornado F.3 ADV

1:48 scale

with

Dave Coward

(September 2021)

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Kit Ref: 03925



Background...



The Panavia Tornado Air Defence Variant (ADV) was a long-range, twin engined interceptor version of the swing-wing Panavia Tornado. The aircraft's first flight was on 27 October 1979, and it entered service with the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1986. It was also previously operated by the Italian Air Force (AMI) and the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF).

The Tornado ADV was originally designed to intercept Soviet bombers as they were traversing across the North Sea with the aim of preventing a successful air-launched nuclear attack against the United Kingdom. In this capacity, it was equipped with a powerful Foxhunter radar and beyond-visual-range missiles (Initially Skyflash and later AMRAAM); however, initial aircraft produced to the F2 standard lacked radars due to development issues and had a concrete block in its place called "blue circle" to maintain the centre of gravity. The F3 standard was the definitive variant used by the RAF, the RSAF and the AMI (which leased RAF aircraft replacing them after a short period with F-16s).

During its service life, the Tornado ADV received several upgrade programmes which enhanced its aerial capabilities and enabled it to perform the Suppression of Enemy Air Defences (SEAD) mission with the ALARM anti-radiation missile in addition to its interceptor duties. Ultimately, both the RAF and RSAF retired their Tornado ADV fleets in 2012 and 2020 respectively; the type has been replaced in both services by the Eurofighter Typhoon.

The Plan...

Video 1

Aftermarket Extras:

- Xtradecal Tornado F3 set X48194
- Eduard PE interior 49880
- Eduard PE Seatbelts FE881
- Eduard Resin wheel set
- Master Pitot tube AM48-032
- Eduard ASRAAM set 648506
- Wolfpack LAU- 8 BOL Launchers
- AMRAAMs from the spares box.



Construction...

Having [made the GR.4 version](#) previously I knew that this kit had its fit issues due to the complex breakdown of parts - especially for the fuselage. With this in mind my plan was to be as careful and accurate as possible with the construction to

minimise any misalignments of the fuselage parts as I knew one small error at the start would cause far larger fit issues further down the assembly process. This meant lots of dry-fitting / sanding / scrapping and repeating this process until I was happy with the fit of every part. This did greatly improve the overall assembly process and minimised the use of filler. The resulting sanding and re-scribing stages were a massive improvement on my experience with the GR4 but it's still not perfect by any means so be prepared for a 'challenging' build with this kit.

My plan as outlined in the video was to build a late F.3 in the overall Medium Sea Grey scheme with AMRAAM and ASRAAM missiles and BOL launchers on the inner wing pylons. Fortunately, a quick search on the internet provided lots of reference pictures of the particular aircraft I wanted to model. One thing to note from these pictures is the rear part of the fuselage around the tailerons must have been a replacement part as it was in a lighter grey (I suspect Barley Grey as it will have come from an aircraft with the earlier scheme).



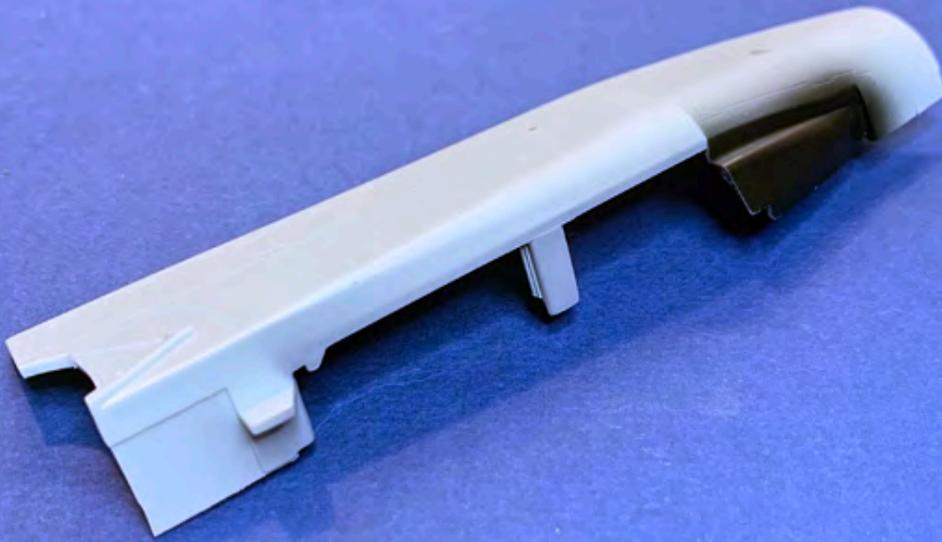


The Fuselage...

So on with the build and it starts with the afore mentioned fuselage and cockpit assembly.

NOTE: THE INSTRUCTION WILL HAVE YOU FIT THE WINGS DURING THE FUSELAGE ASSEMBLY PROCESS - I DID NOT DO THIS AS FITTING THE WINGS LATER MAKES ASSEMBLY AND PAINTING EASIER SO WHAT IS DESCRIBED BELOW IS MY ASSEMBLY SEQUENCE NOT THAT SHOWN IN THE INSTRUCTIONS.

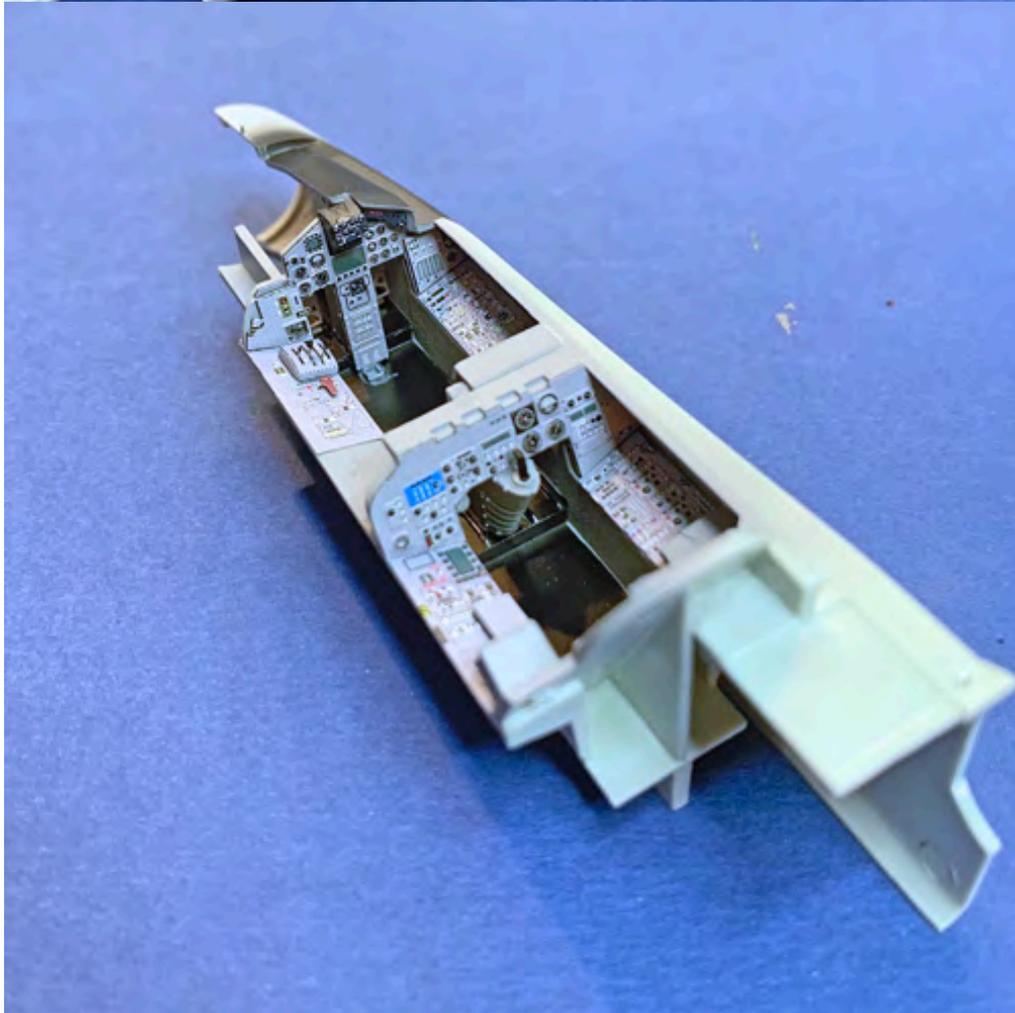
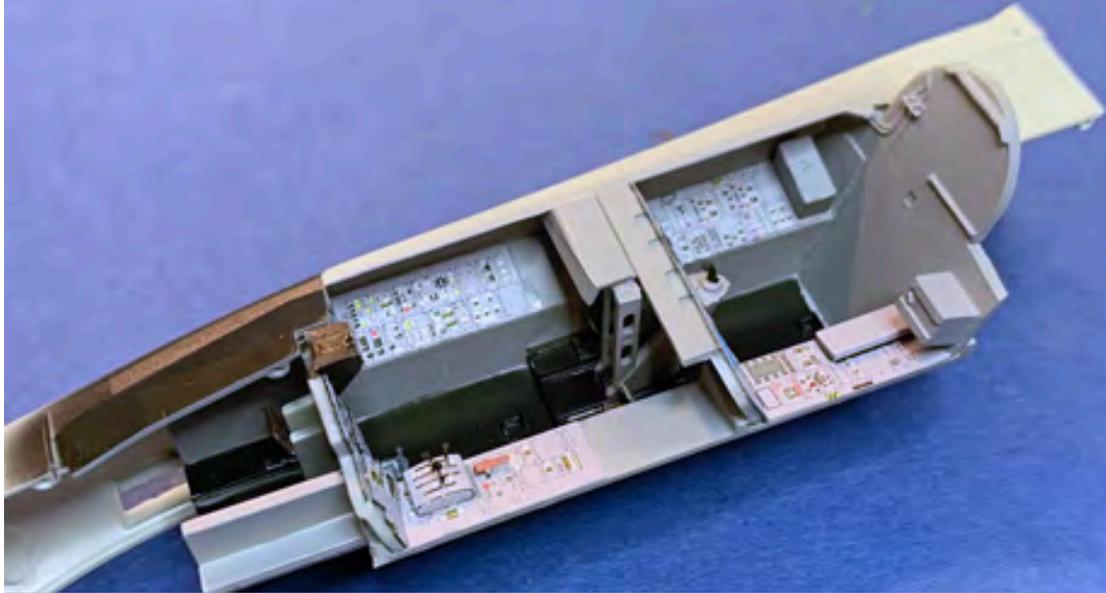
Paint up the coaming and cockpit sides first

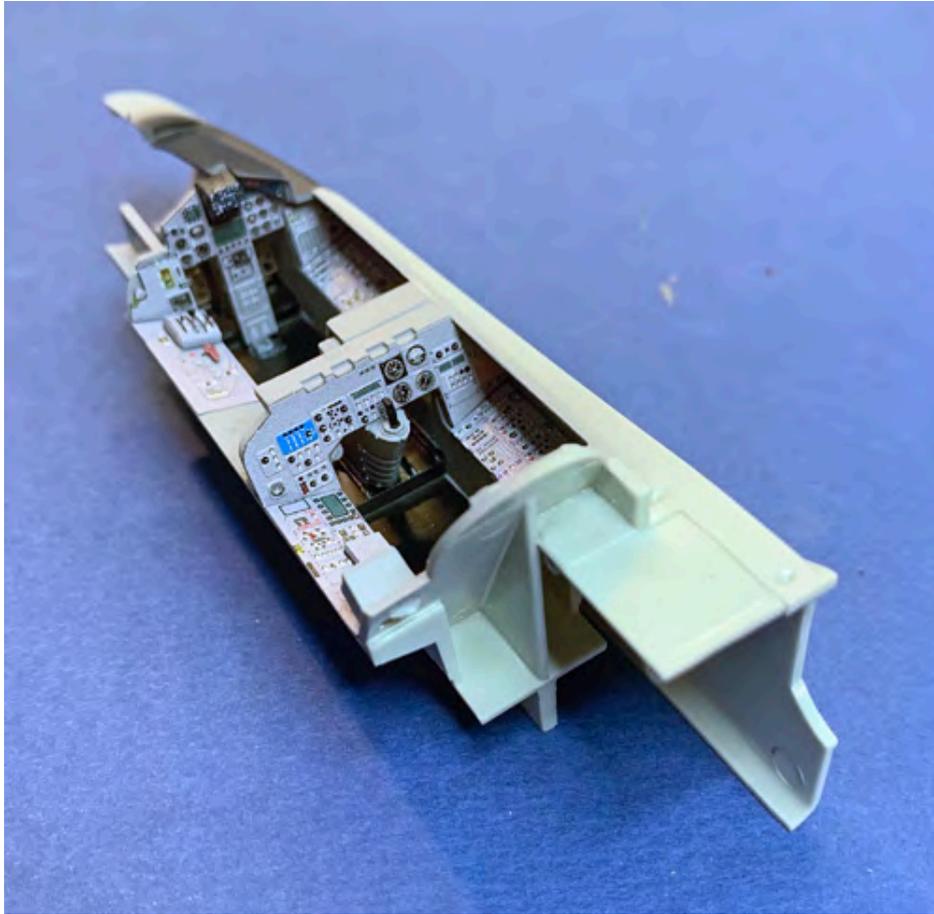


Make sure the cockpit is right up against the fuselage sides.

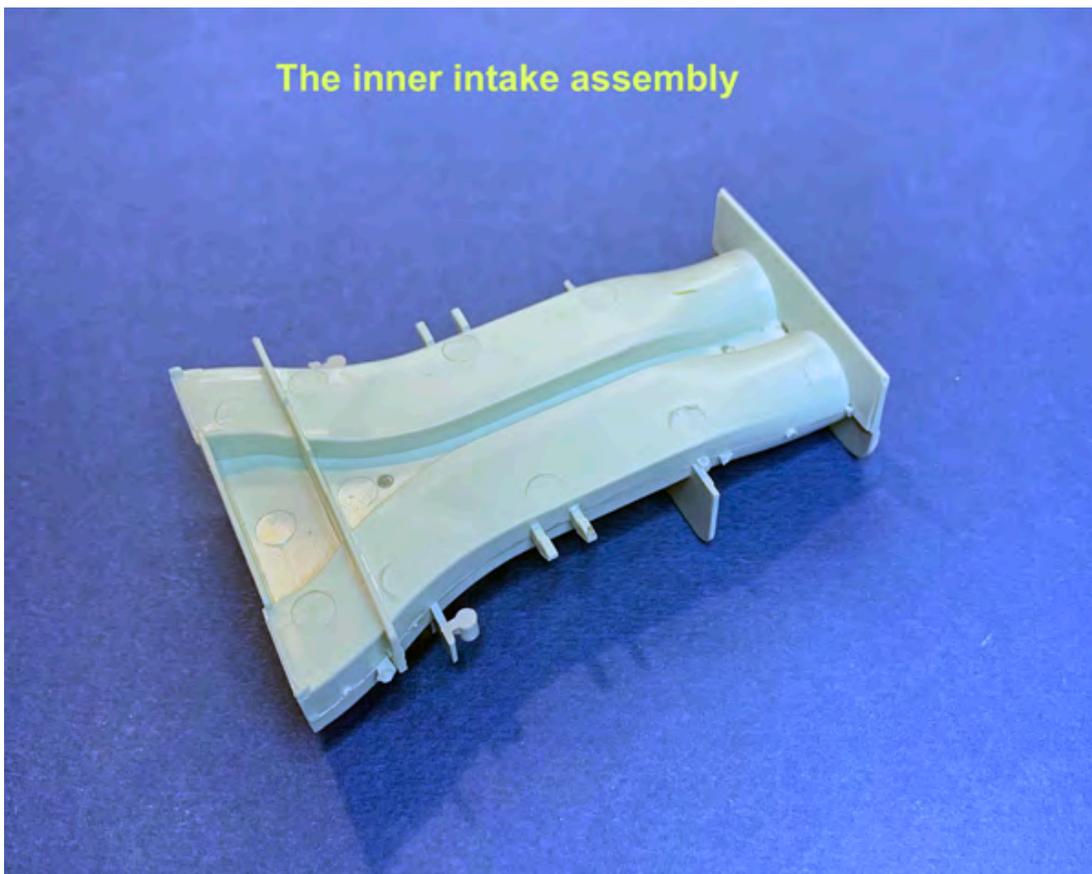


Eduard colour PE interior
looks really good

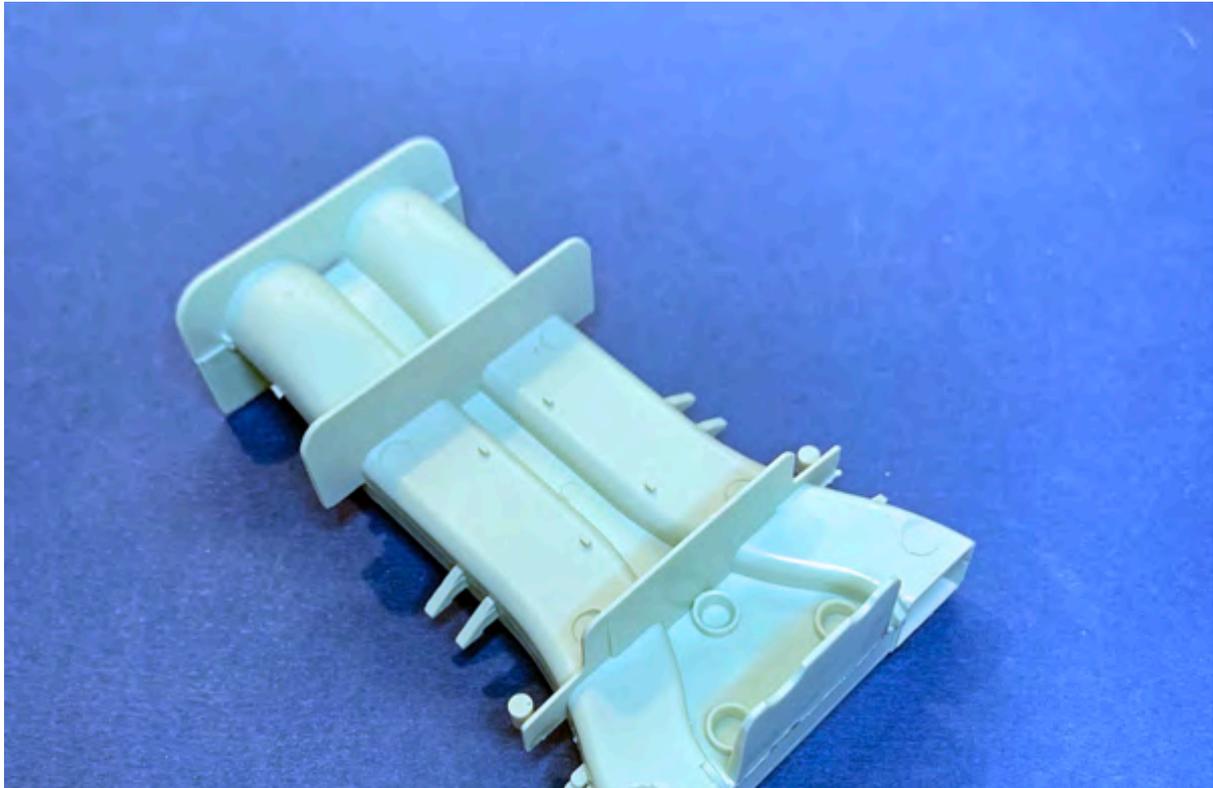




The intakes come next and these I remember being a challenge in the GR.4 build especially with regards to getting rid of the seam lines in them. There is no easy way around this except careful alignment initially and filling/sanding if necessary. If this still fails there is always the option for FOD covers over the intakes!!
One saving



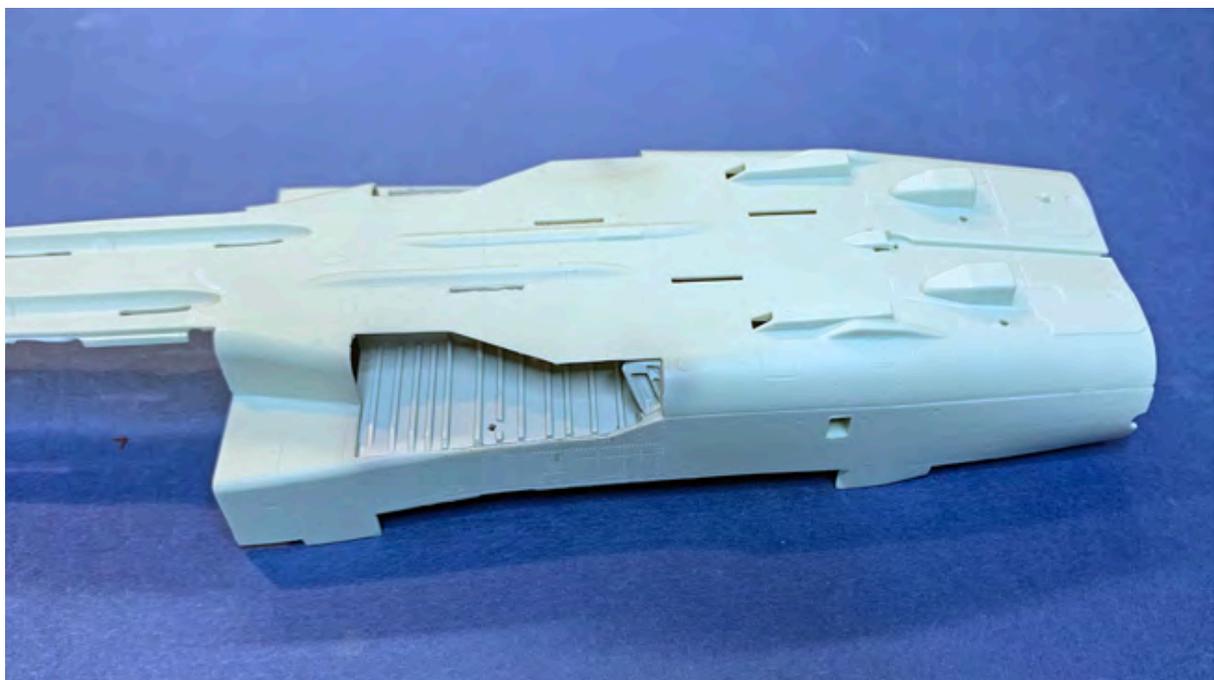
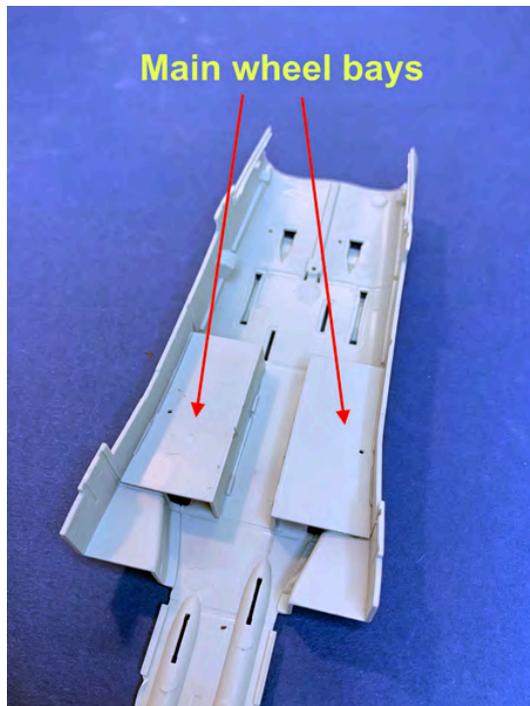
grace is not a lot can be seen of the insides of the intakes so you have just got to be deal with the outer section.



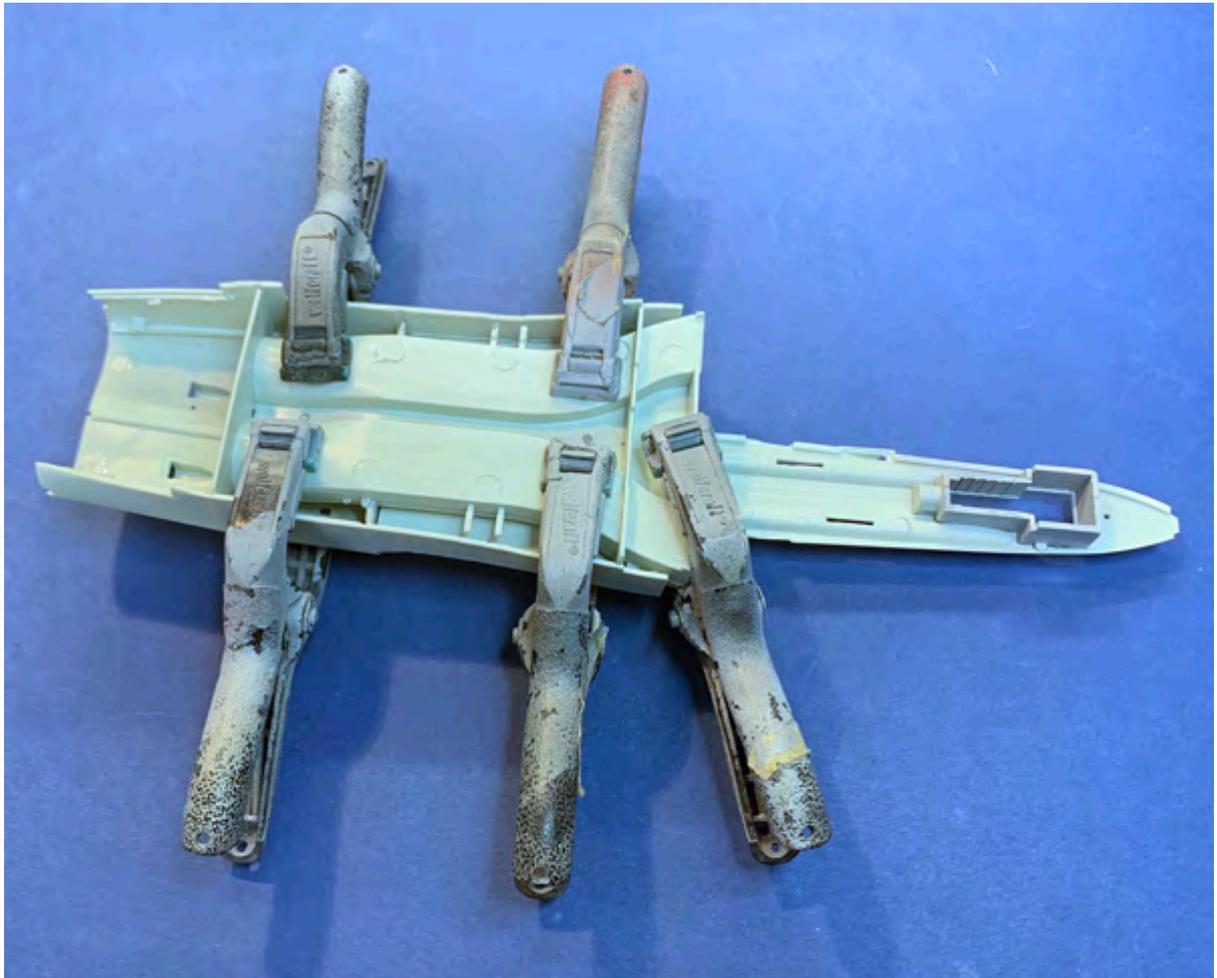
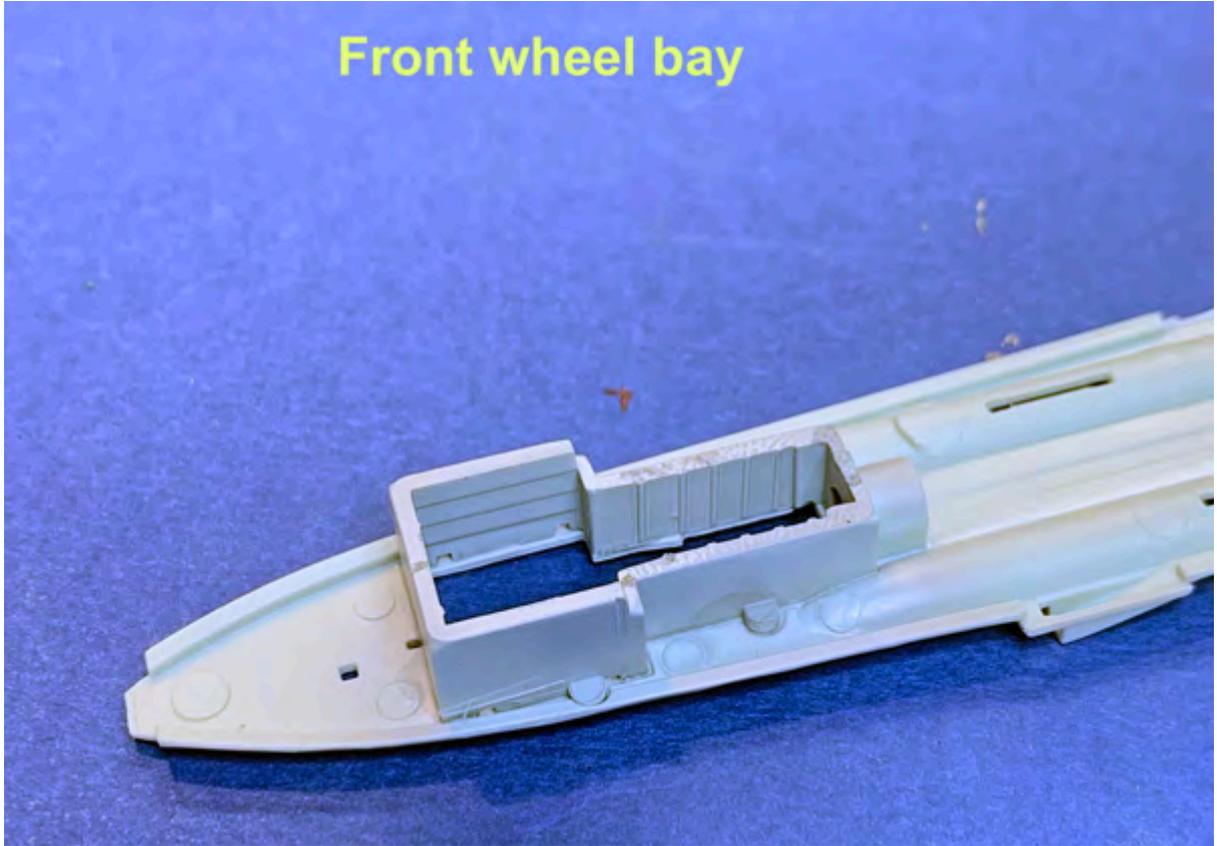
A view down the intakes with those awkward seams - fortunately very little can be seen this far down the intakes on the finished model



Next the wheel bays need to attach to the fuselage lower section. Again, make sure these fit perfectly before committing to glue. The intakes will fit onto the lower fuselage over the wheel bays and then the front fuselage sides can be fitted into place. These need some sanding and 'adjustment' to get a gap-free fit but the care taken earlier on in the assembly definitely pays off now as the amount of work required to get this good fit is greatly reduced. The pictures show not to join the two front fuselage sides behind the cockpit as doing this will cause a misfit of the front upper section of the fuselage.



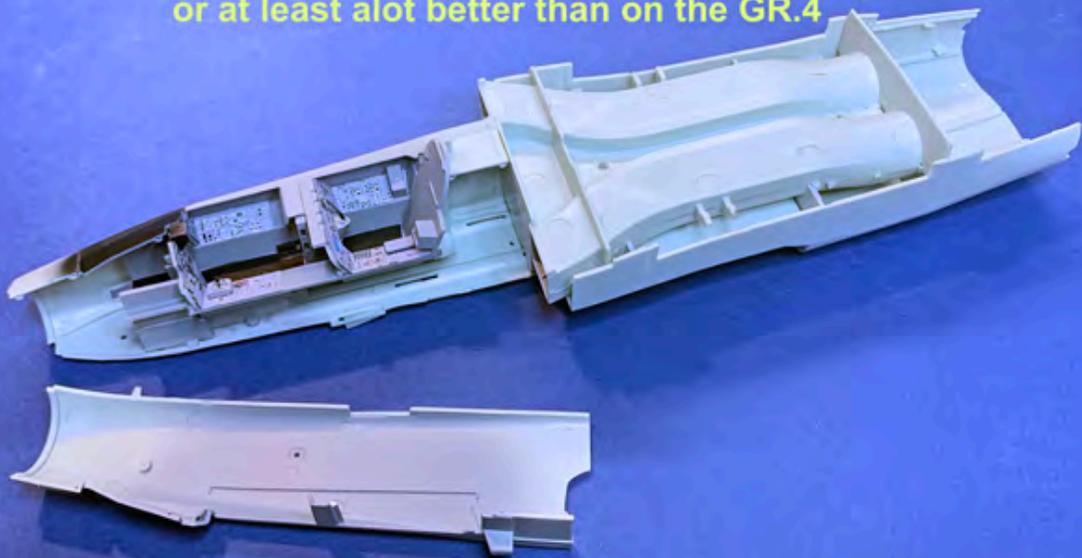
Front wheel bay

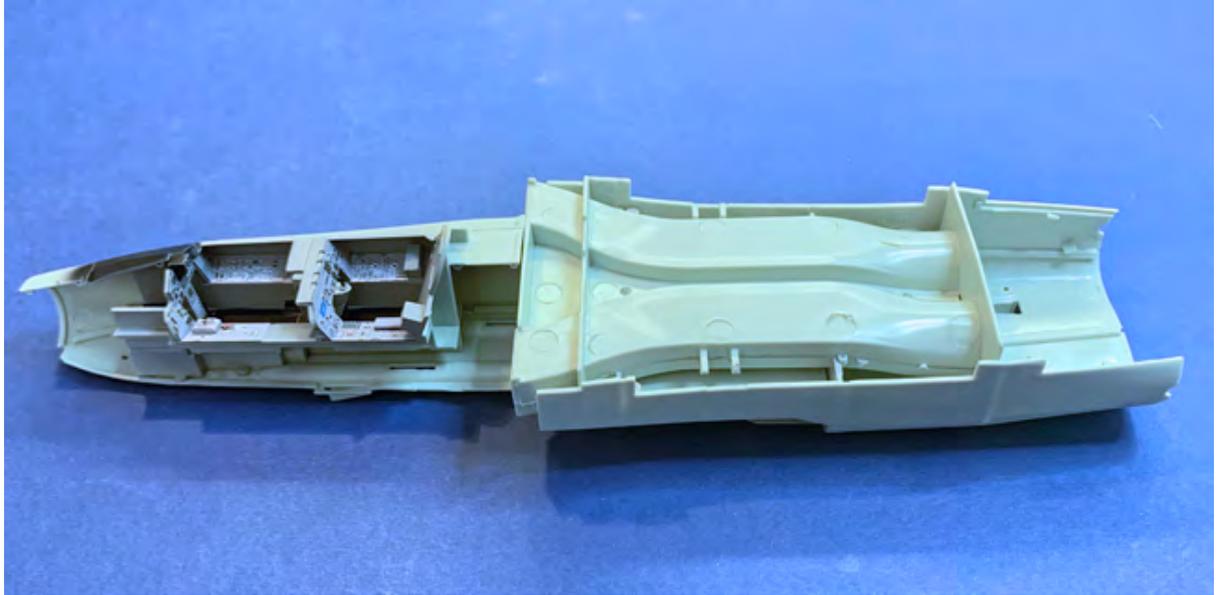


**Intakes on top of the wheel bays
- make sure the fit of this is accurate.**

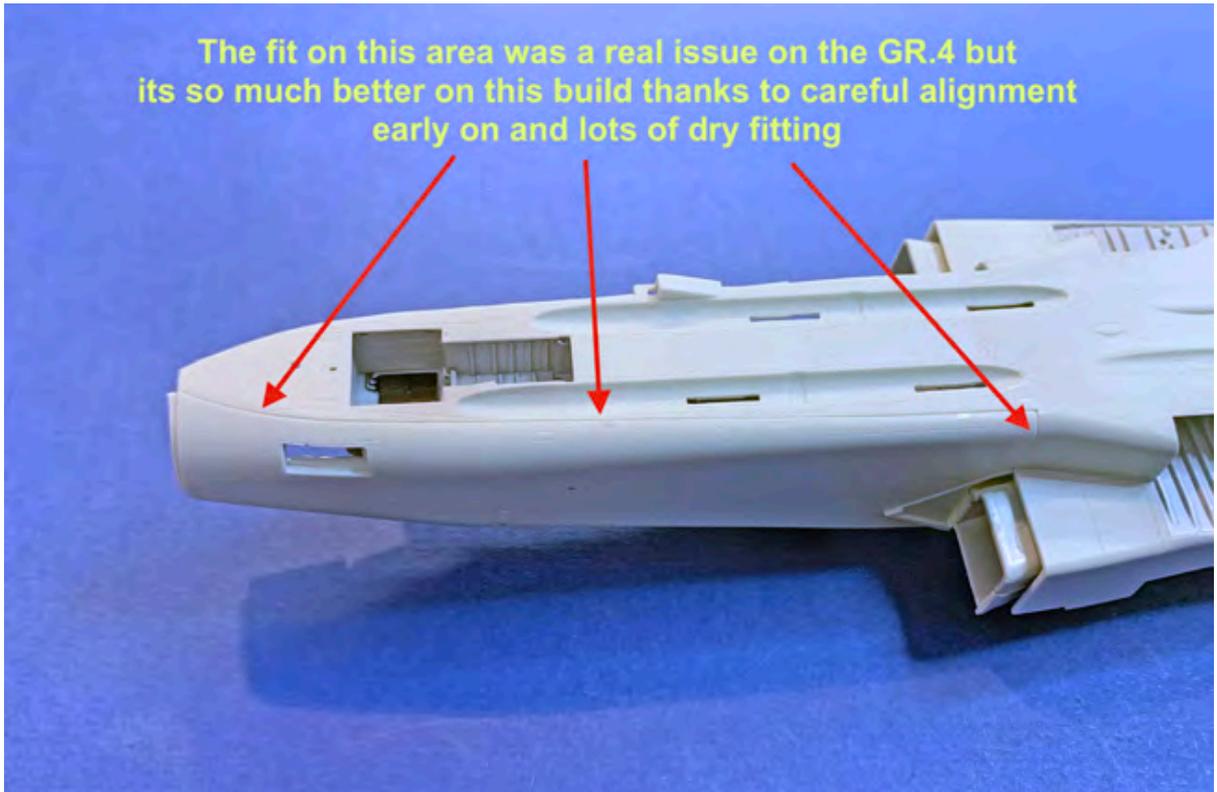


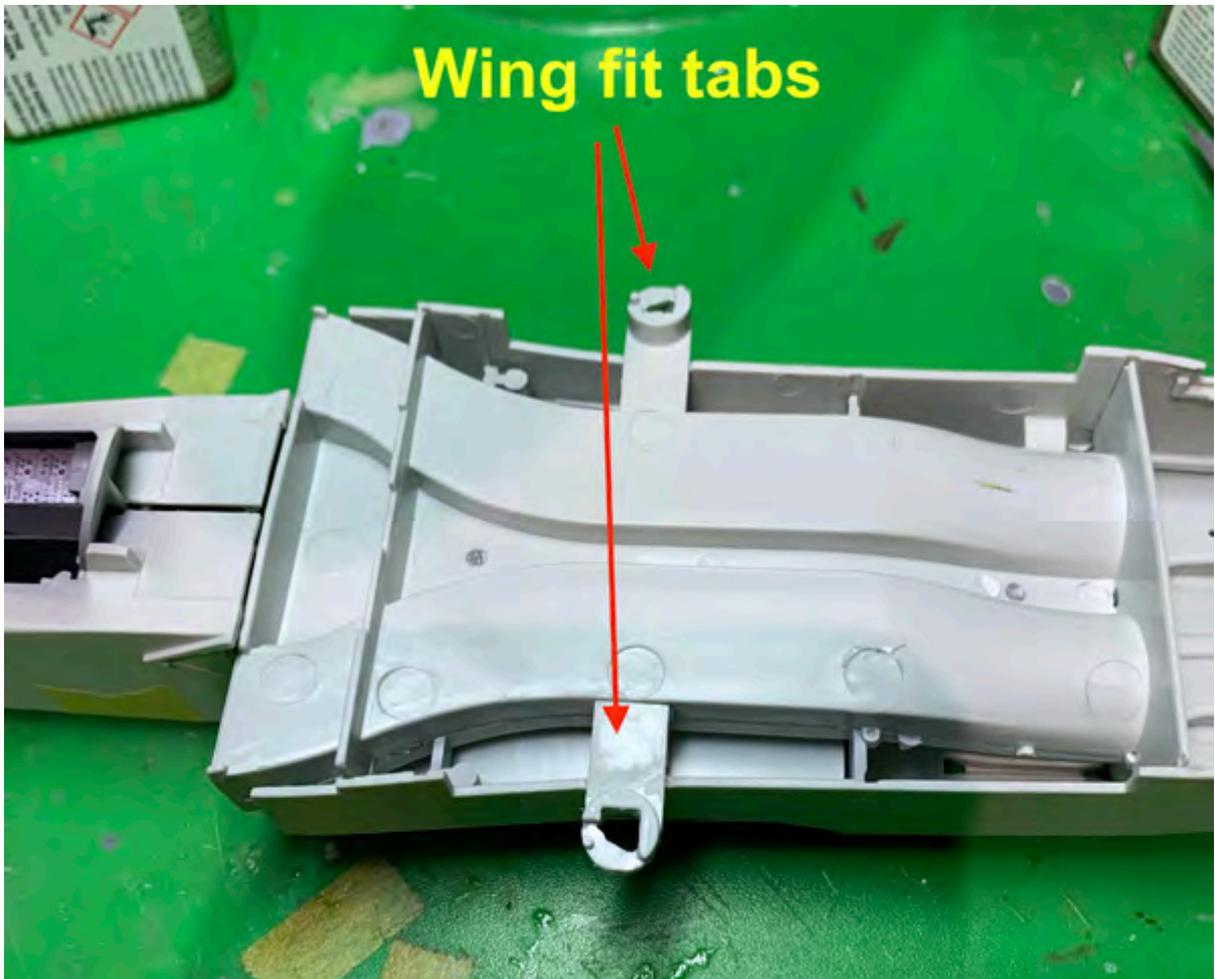
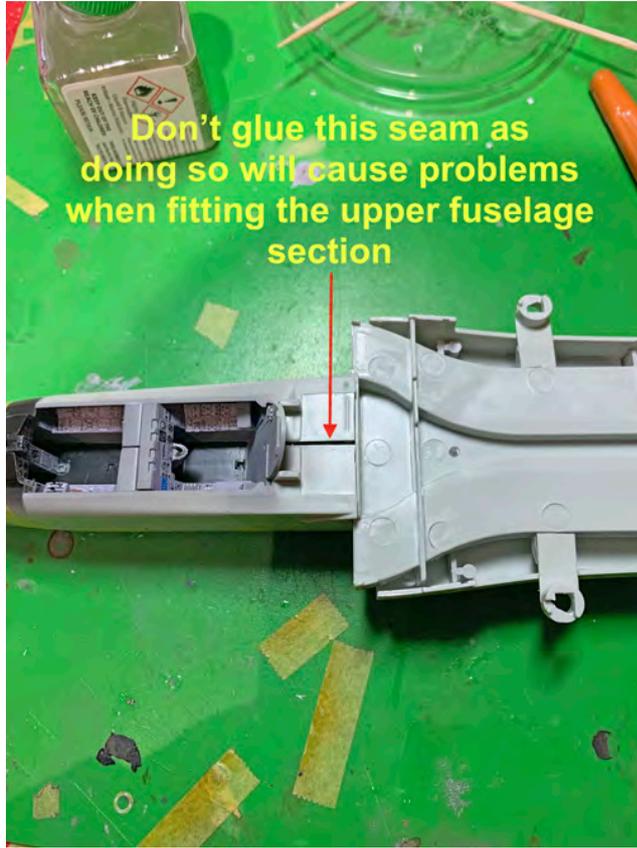
**Now the fun begins - any alignment errors early
on in the construction sequence will start to cause fit issues
around this stage of assembly - fortunately things seem OK
or at least alot better than on the GR.4**

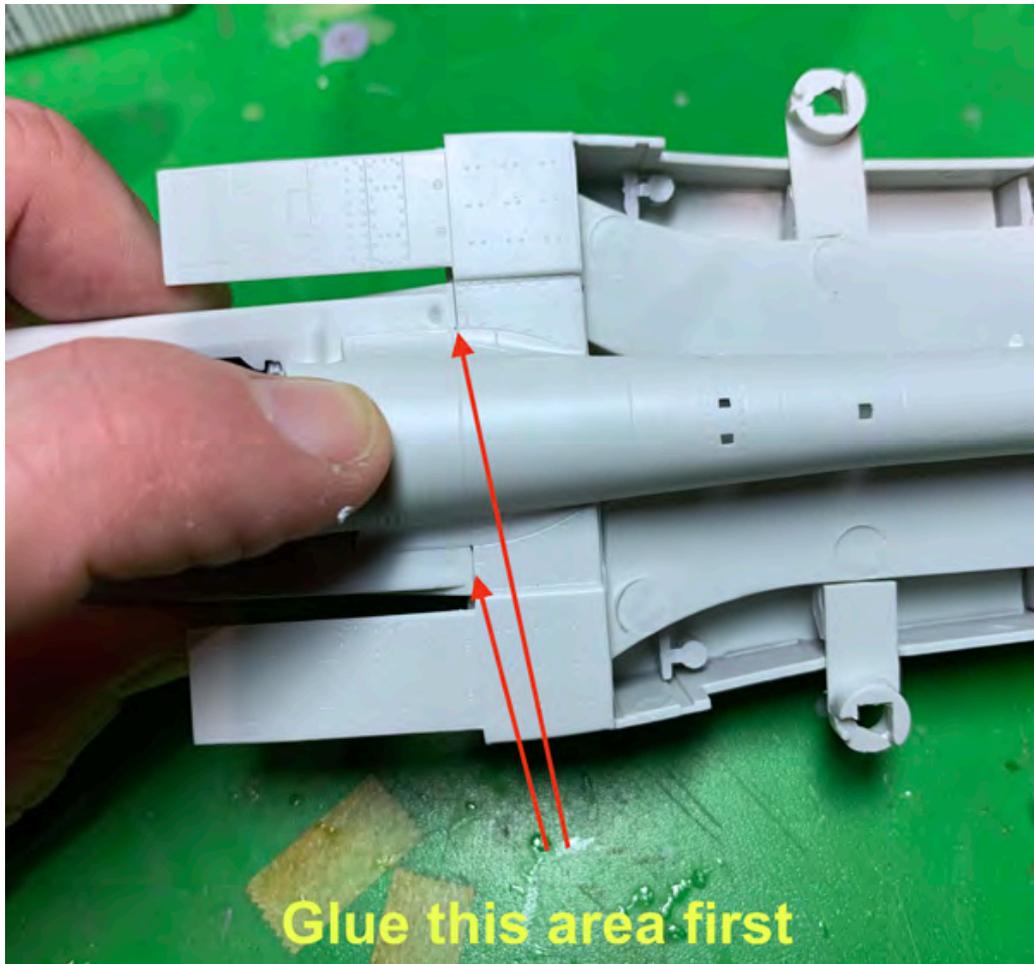




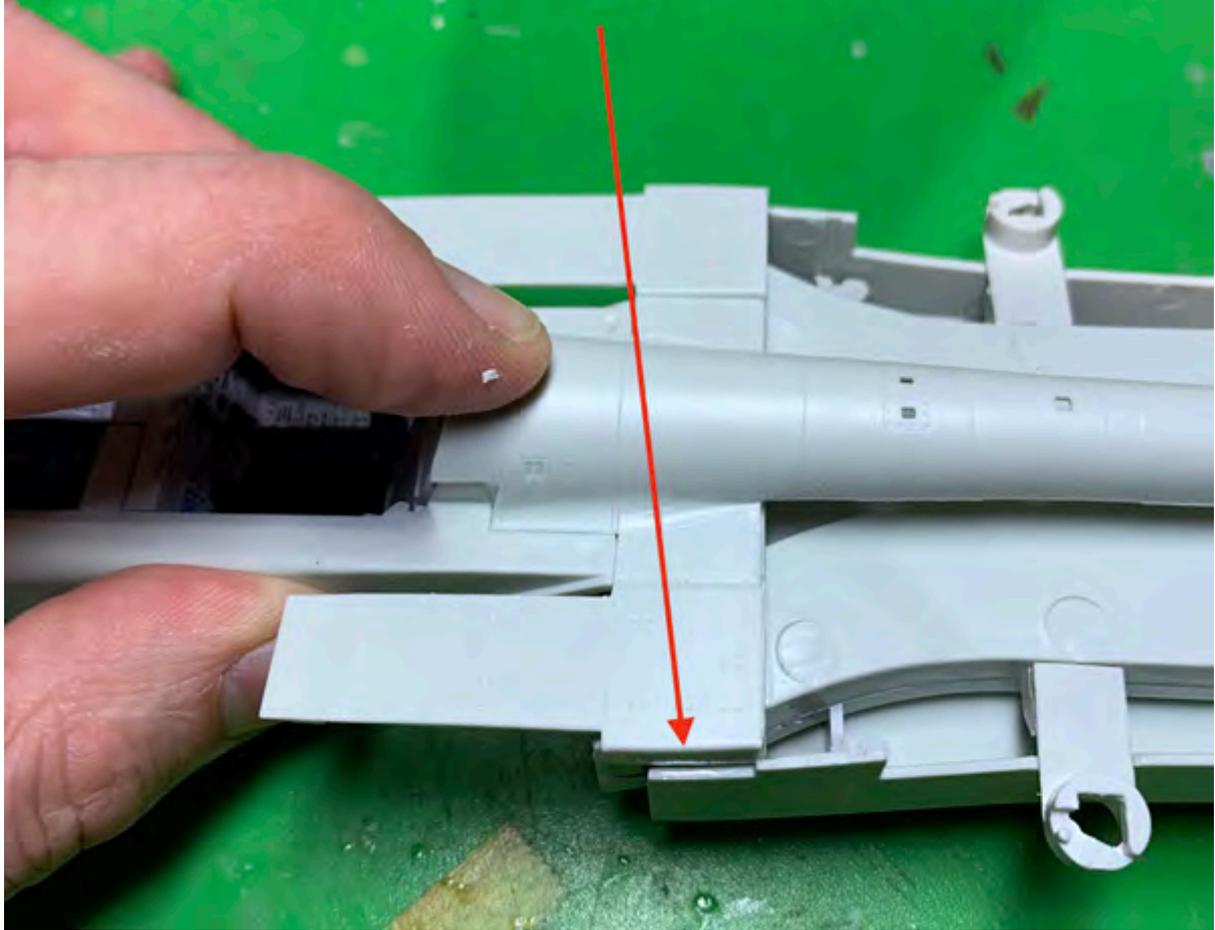
The fit on this area was a real issue on the GR.4 but its so much better on this build thanks to careful alignment early on and lots of dry fitting



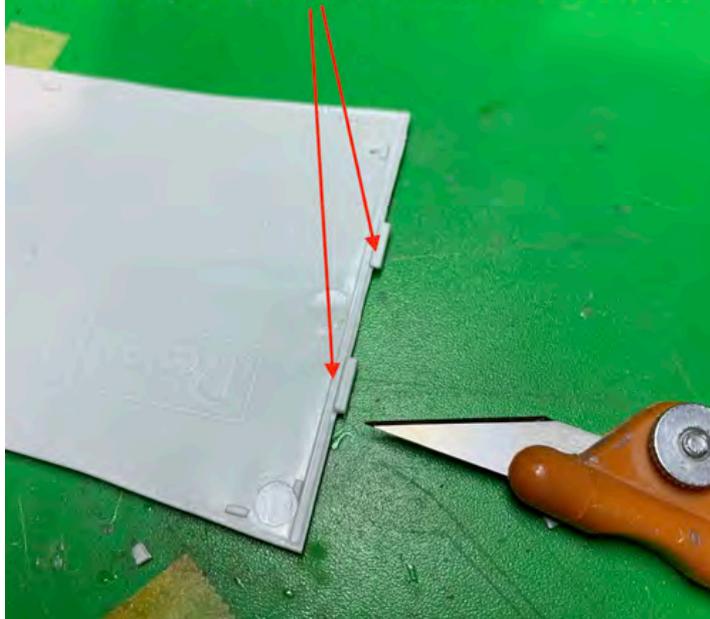




Secondly push the sides in to get a good gap / step free join



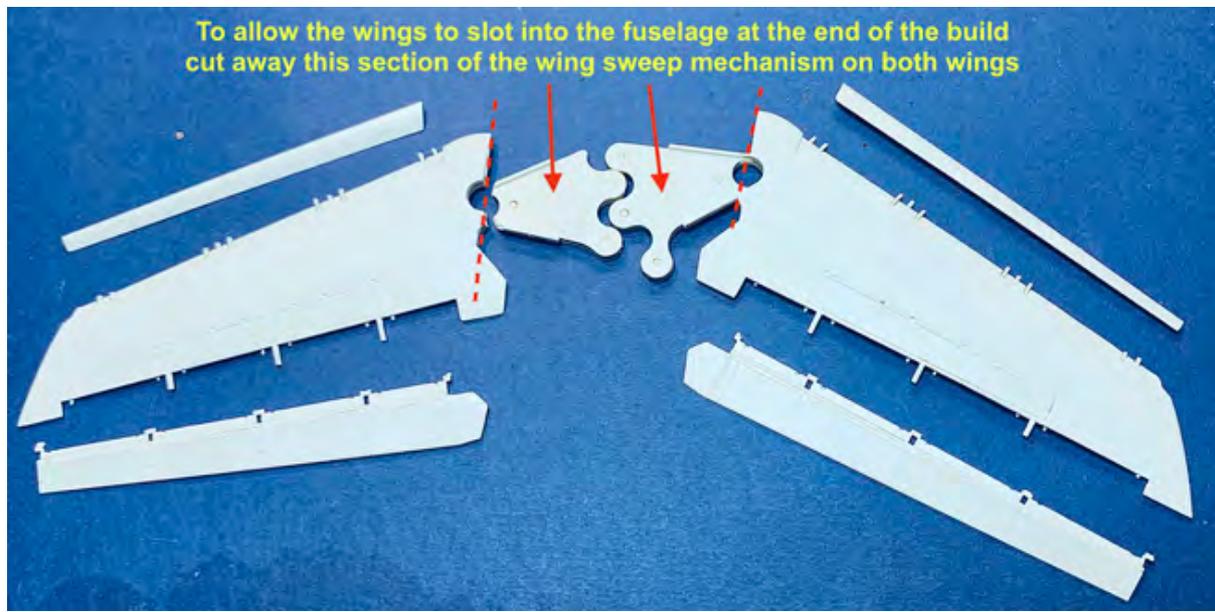
I removed these tabs to get a gap free fit when it was up against the front section of the upper fuselage



The Wings

If you build the kit as dictated in the instructions you will need to fit the wings in place as I stated at the start of the build. The wings will be adapted in the next part of the build to allow them to slot into place later on in the build.

Video 2



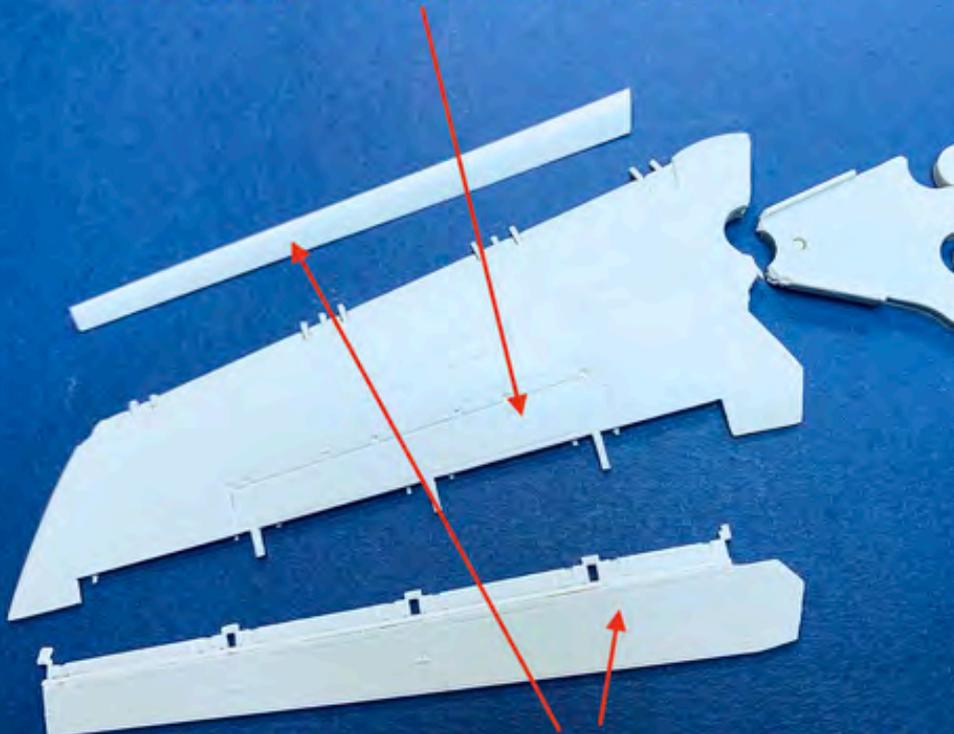
The kit gives you lots of wing options and the easiest option is to have the flaps/slots/spoilers deployed. I opted to have the spoilers retracted but the flaps and slots down.

The tail fits relatively well but I advise gluing the front section first, letting it dry and then pushing down the rear section to get a gap free joint and then capillary glue along the joint - this will give a good (almost) gap free joint.

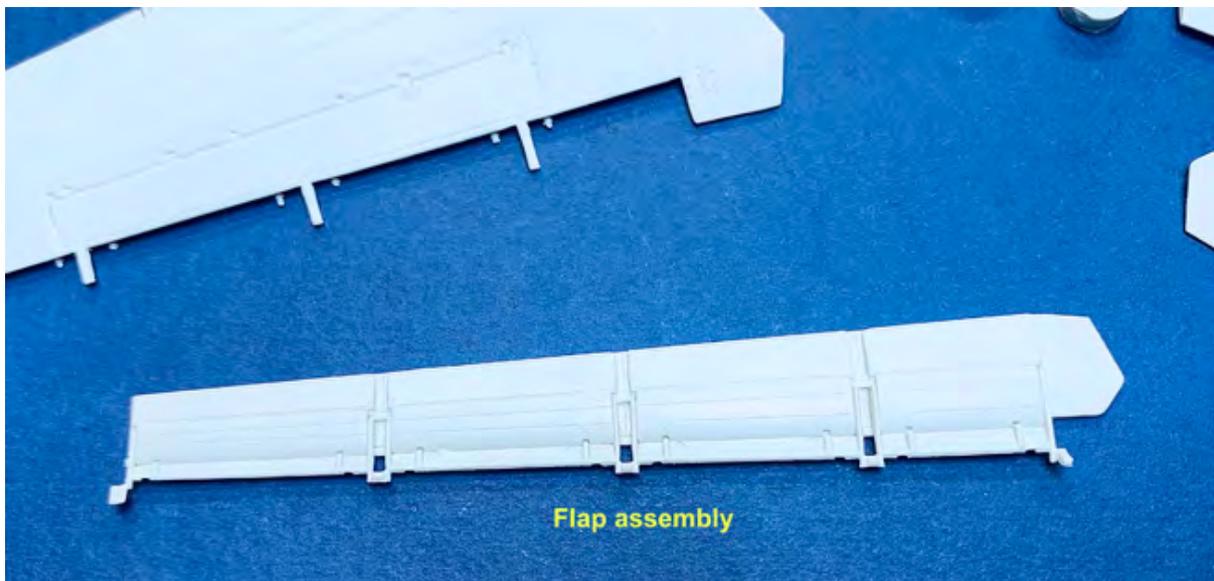
The airbrakes were a poor fit in the closed position on the GR.4 and unfortunately, it's no different on this kit. The easy answer is to have them in the extended position but I wanted to keep the clean lines of the airframe so I put them in the closed configuration. This resulted in quite a bit of filling/sanding/re-scribing - be warned!!

The only other issue I had which unfortunately I forgot to photograph was the attachment of the front intake sections. These were a poor fit on the GR.4 and they are not much better with this kit although careful assembly early on did reduce this misalignment considerably.

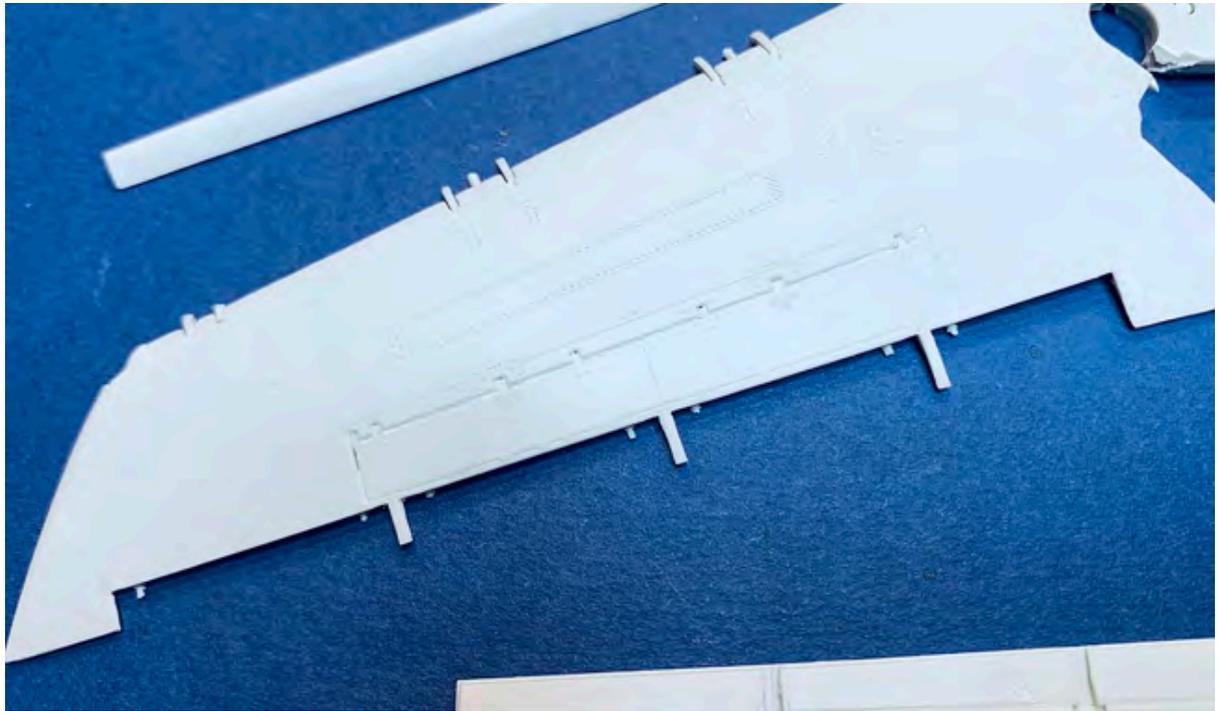
The wing spoilers can be extended or retracted flush with the upper wing surface as seen here



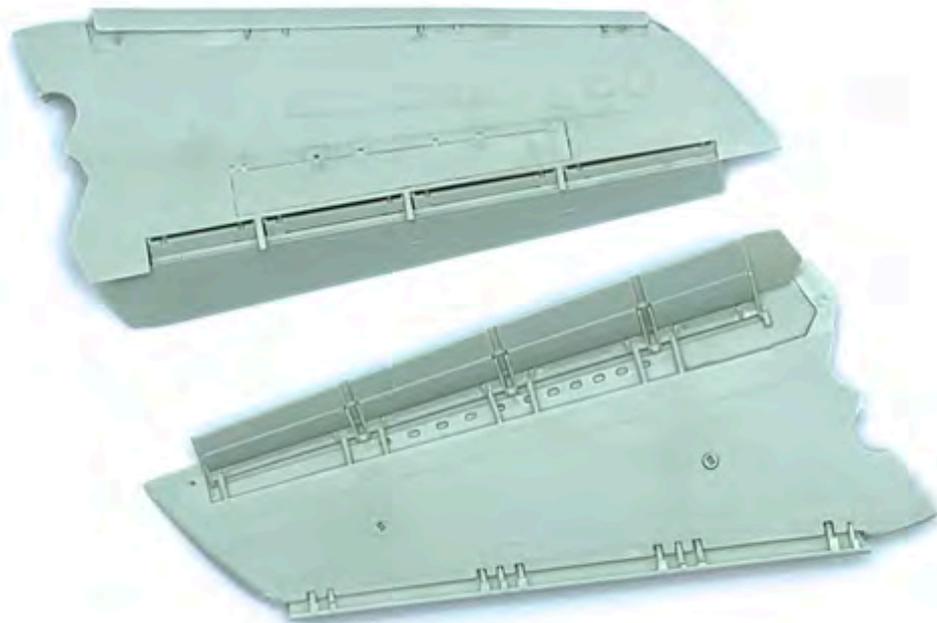
Flaps and slats can be extended or retracted

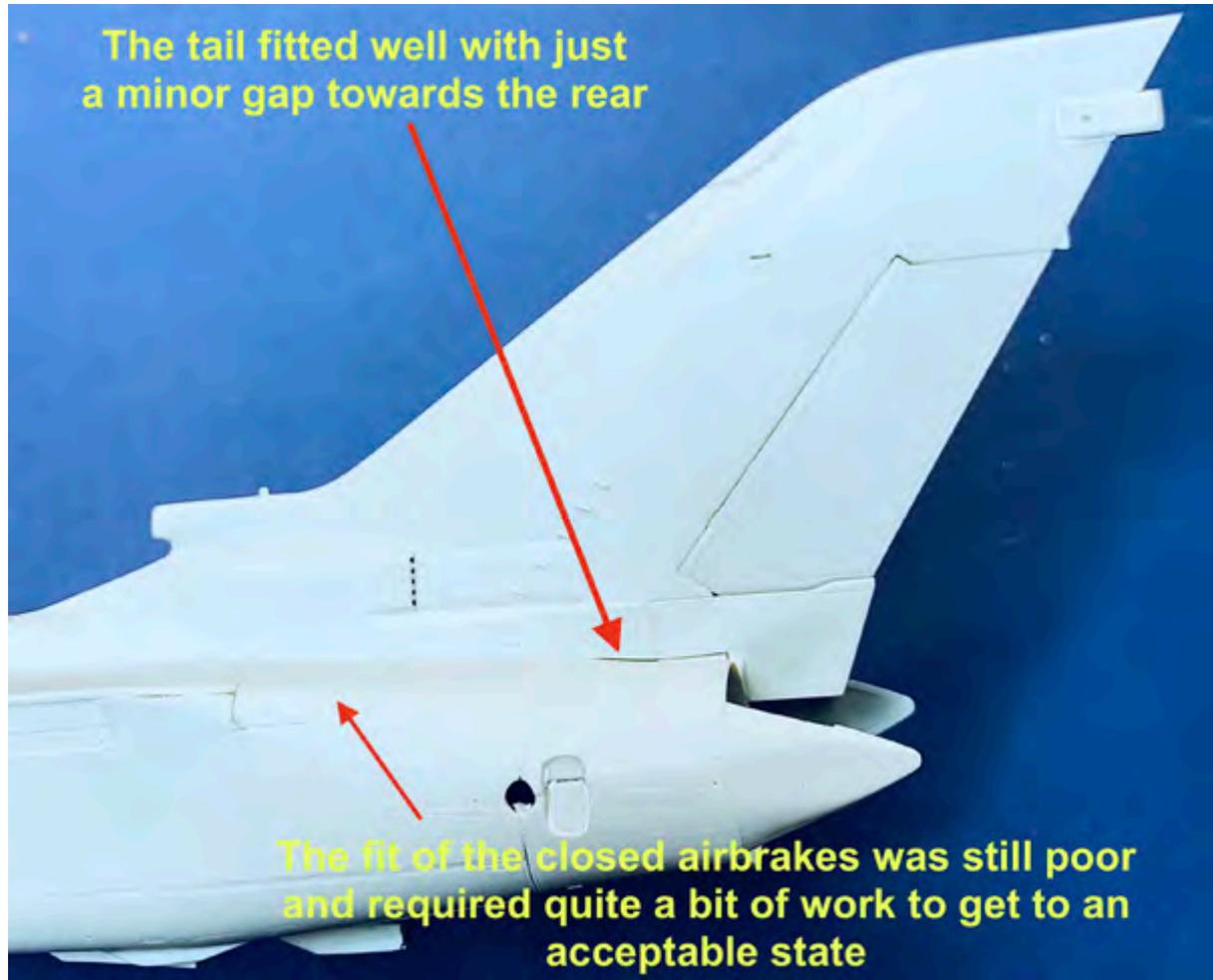


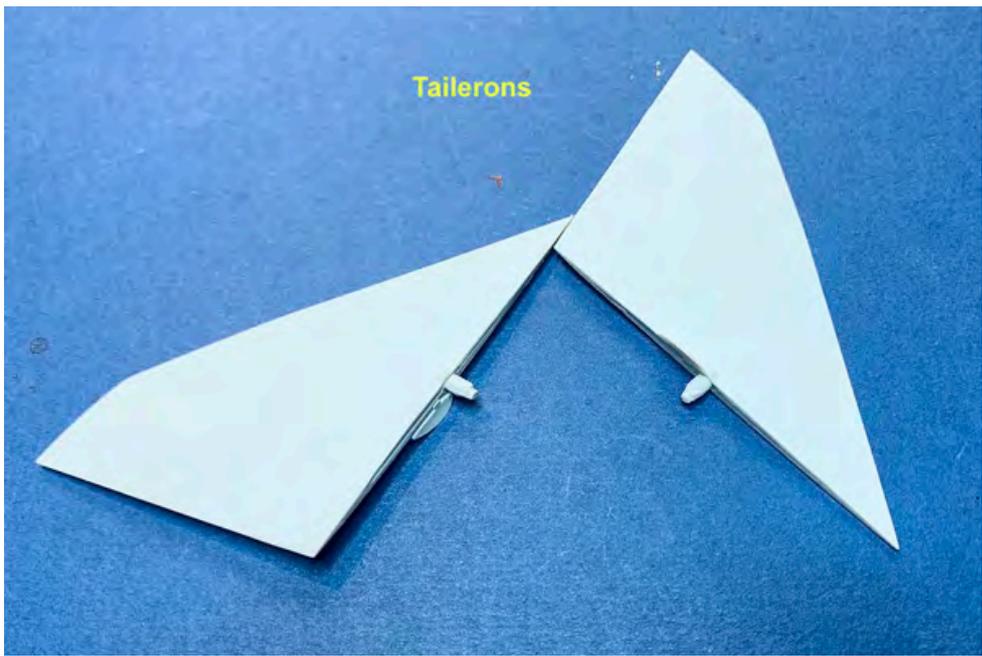
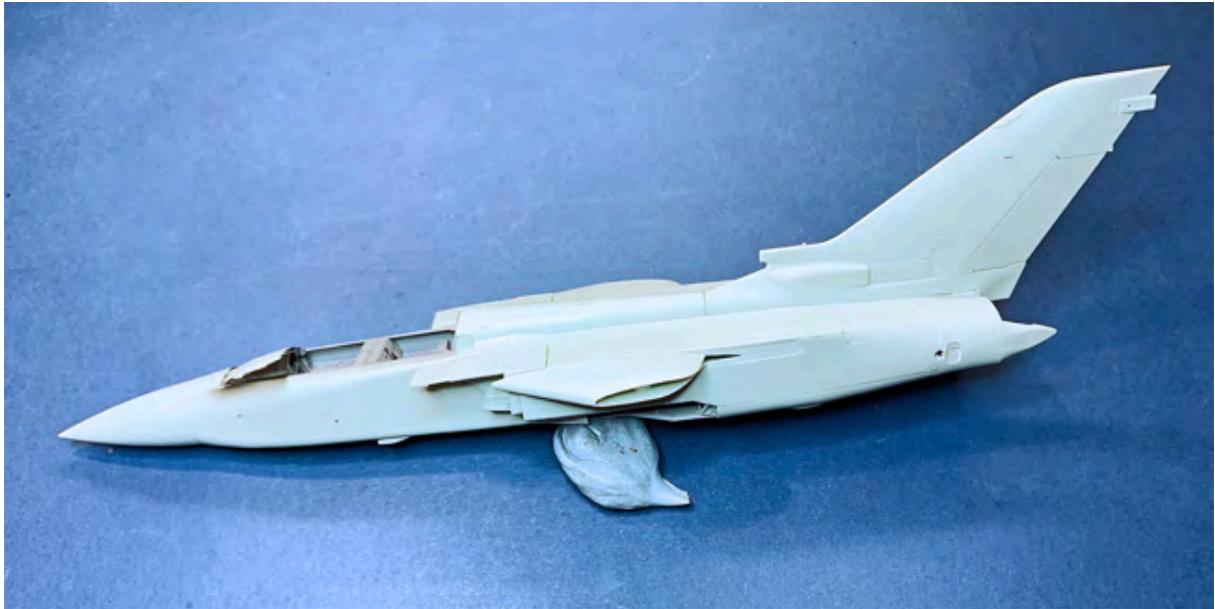
Flap assembly



Wings with the flaps and slats deployed





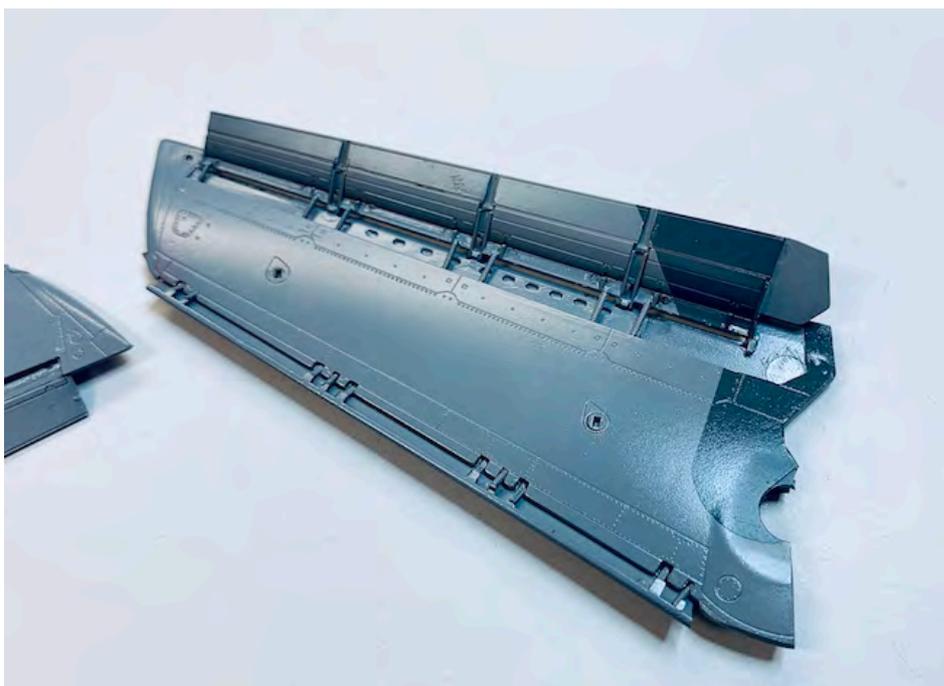


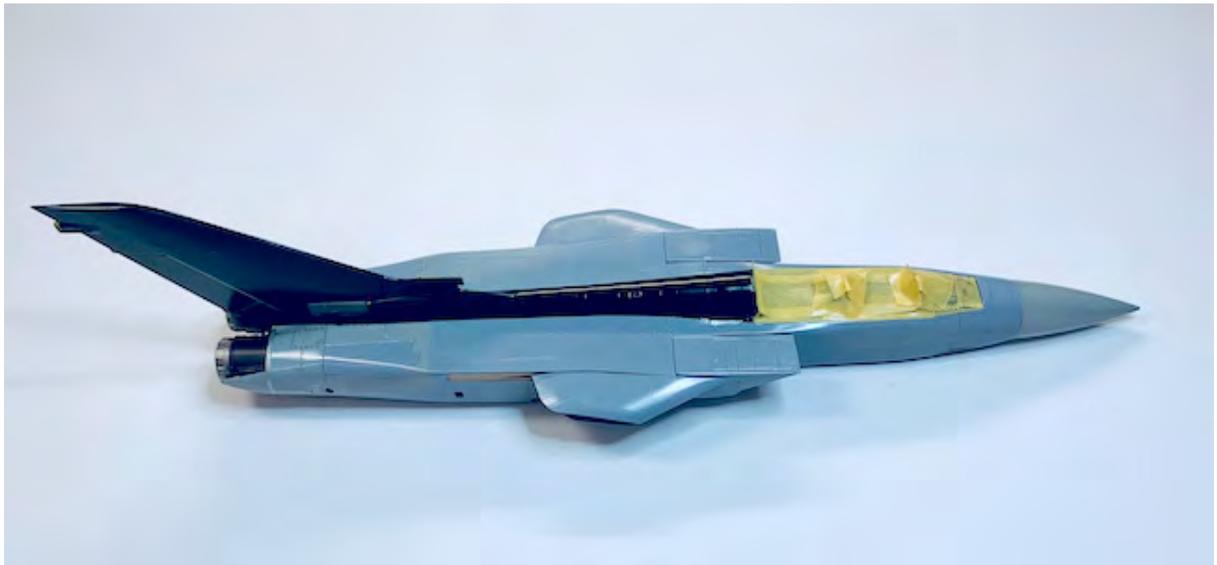
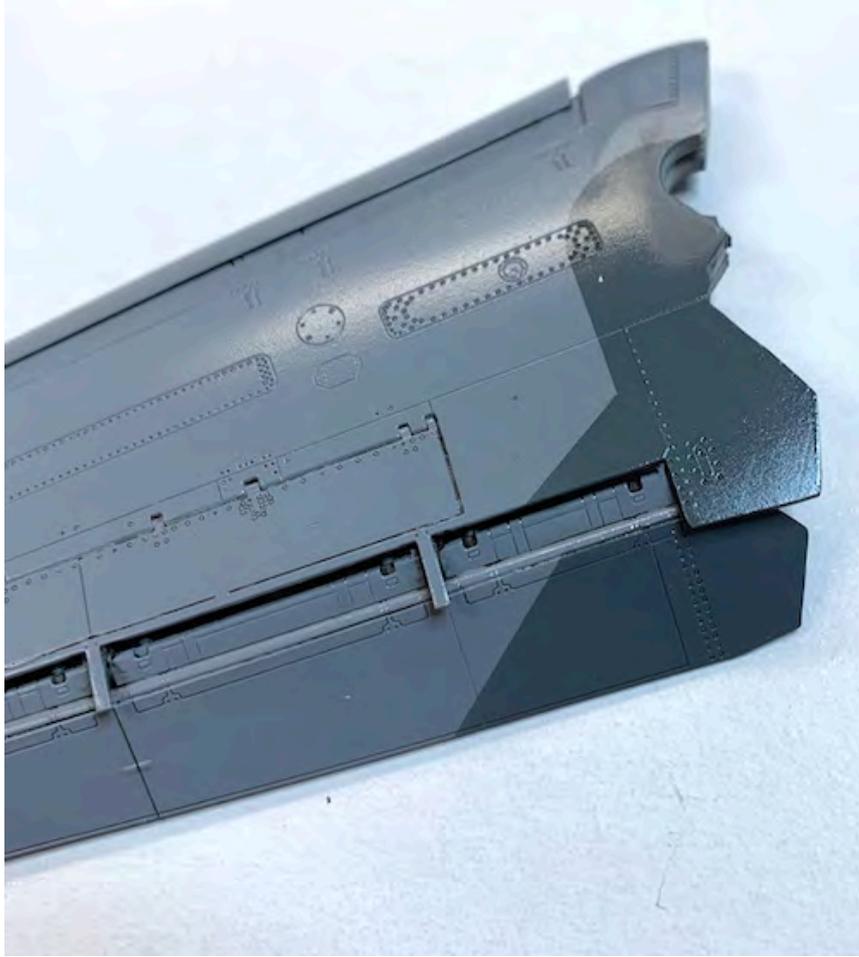
With this done the main assembly was complete and it's on with the paint job in the next part.

Painting...

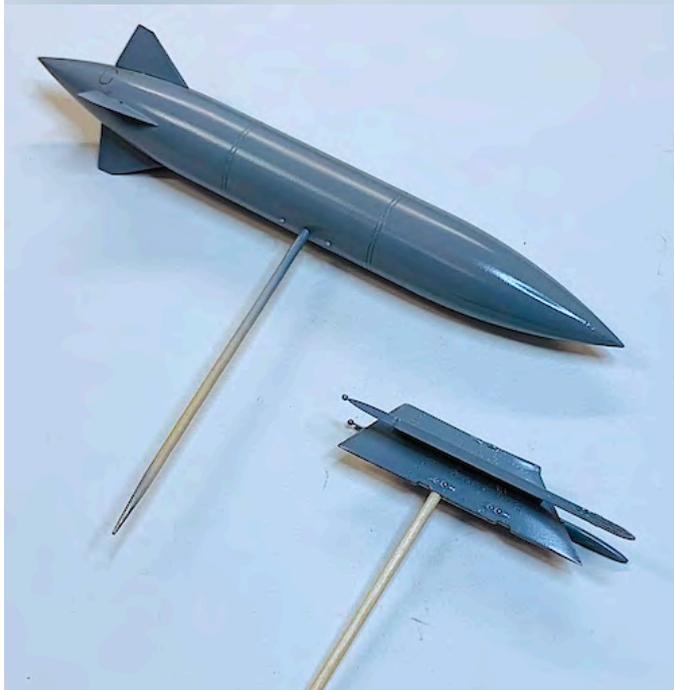
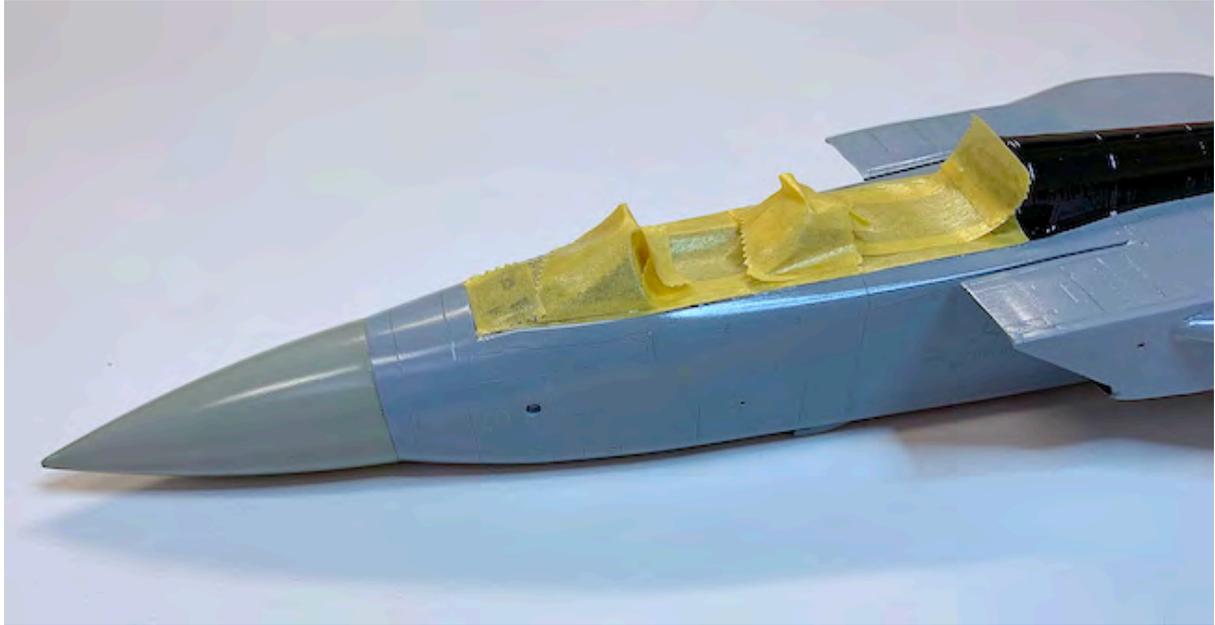
Video 3

As I said at the start of this build I was going to do an F3 late on in its service life with the overall Medium Sea Grey scheme. The painting was done with Mr Paints and once done everything was given a gloss coat of 50/50 Tamiya X-22 a Gunze Self Levelling Thinner in preparation for the decals.









The engines were given a metallic finish using a combination of Alclad2 paints and AK Metallics.





Decaling and Weapons...

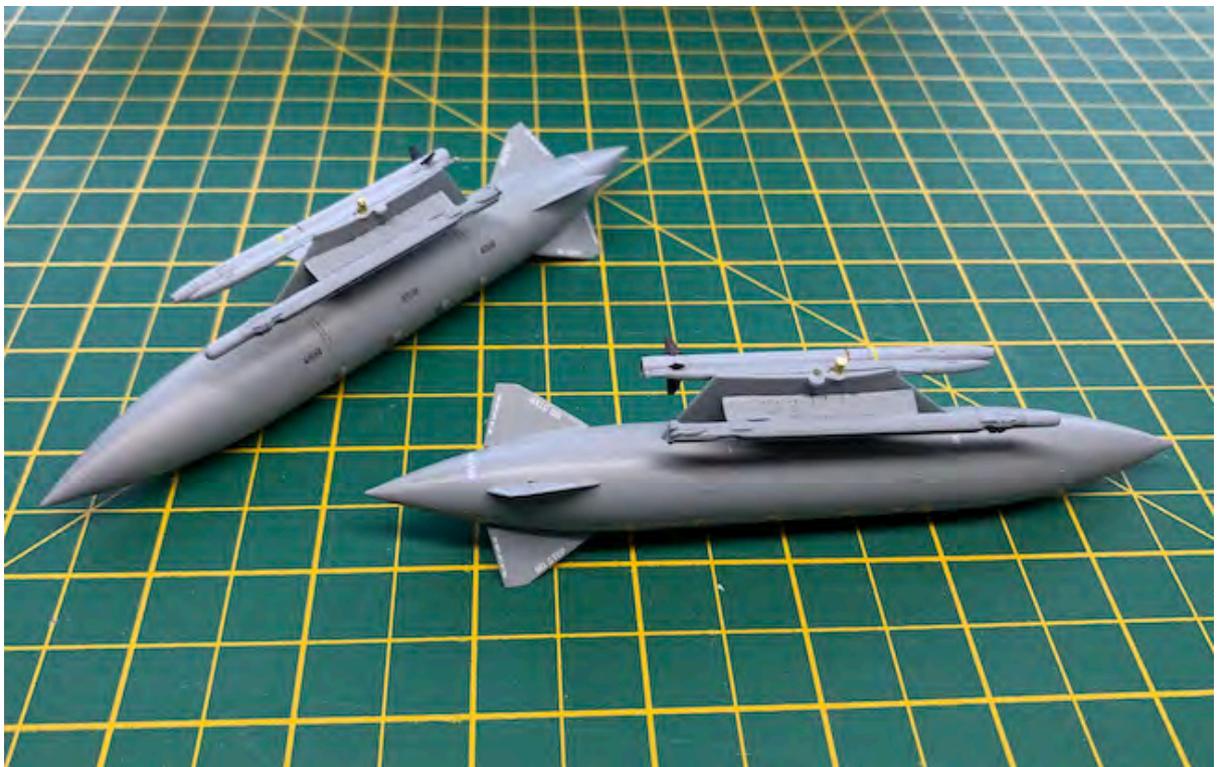
Video 4

This is the stage when the kit really started to come to life with the black tail and Yellow lightning bolts. I used a combination of the Xtradecal kits and kit decals, both of which performed very well with the addition of some Micro Sol to soften them into the surface detail.





For the weapons I used AMRAAMs from my spares box, a set of eduard ASRAAMs and BOL launch rails from Wolfpack. This is a typical loadout for an F3 later on in its service life.



The undercarriage struts are quite nicely detailed from the box but I did opt to use some resin wheels as I had them laying around from a previous build and they were quite a bit better than the box offerings.



The tailplanes could now be added. I did cut off the plastic locating tabs and replace them with brass rod as they were just not robust enough in my opinion. The engines slot into the rear recesses and you have the choice of retracted or extended thrust reverser buckets; I went for the retracted option.

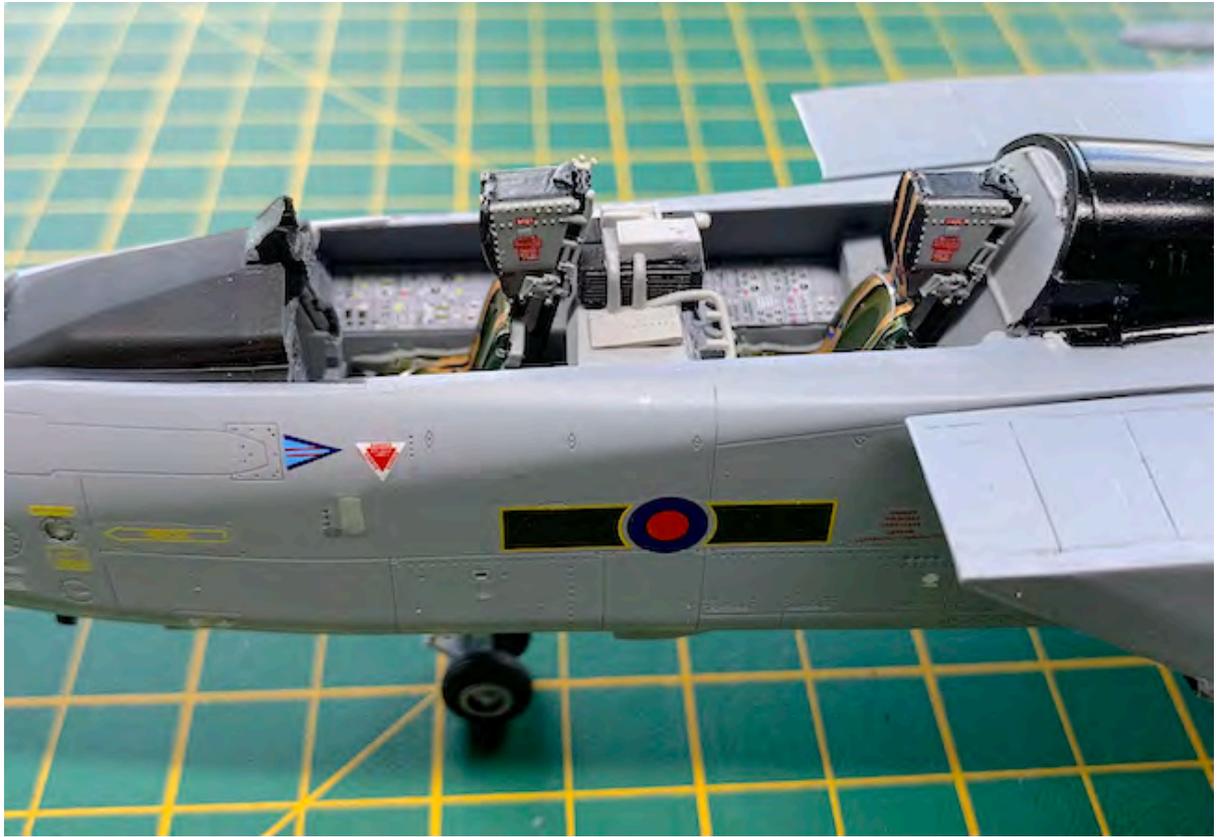






Now to finish off the cockpit. The navigator display screens were added and the kit ejection seats were detailed up with eduard colour PE for the seat detail and belts. For the canopy I used some PE rear view mirrors to add extra detail as these are very visible.









Now for the final phase of the build. The wings were slotted into place and the wing tanks glued into position. These were initially held in place with superglue on the brass rod tab but reinforced with epoxy glue along the pylon / wing join. The canopy and metal nose pitot could be added and that was the build complete.



Summary...

This kit remains as challenging a build as the GR versions but this said it still remains the best Tornado out there in 1:48th. I did manage to reduce the known fit

issues with careful preparation and lots of dry-fitting but even with this it remains a challenging build due to its complex parts break down. When finished though it does look the part but to make a late F3 you will need to look at the weapons as I did and replace them.

Overall, it's a challenging kit but if you are prepared to put the work into it you will be happy with the results but it's not a kit for the beginner, be warned!!!

Dave C.

Quick summary	Star rating out of 5
Quality of moulding	***
Accuracy	***
Instructions	**
Decals	****
Subject choice	****
Build enjoyment	**
Overall	***







