

# COVERING THAT ROUND FUSELAGE

by George White

For those who've never done it, you don't know what you've missed. Those who've done it will quickly recognize that putting tissue on a round fuselage is a tedious thing to do. Having had my past attempts to do this result in something as attractive as a frog's ass stitched up with a logging chain, I was particularly frustrated while building a P47 to find that some of my previous failures had returned. To make matters worse, the bottom of the model is painted with an aluminum finish, which makes any blemish scream at you

On this job I used strips of Esaki to cover each bay between stringers, attaching it with UHU glue stick. One side of the strip is anchored over the edge of one stringer, so that edge will give no problems. However, the other edge has to lay on top of the tissue covering the next bay. Therein lies the heartburn. Once I got the fuselage covered, I went back over and eyeballed everything — if there were edges not glued down, I ran more UHU under that edge and gently pressed it down. Thinking everything looked just peachy keen, I wet shrunk the tissue. Just as I suspected, there were suddenly all sorts of edges curling up which weren't there before shrinking. More UHU was applied, rubbing the edges down some more until it appeared that everything was fixed. Then came the color coat of floquil/non-taughtening dope/lots of thinner mixture. Much to my disgust, some of the edges of tissue which seemed to be happily glued down prior to painting, suddenly rolled right back up.

I decided I'd check with some "older boys" to see what I'm missing. Since I knew Tom Hallman was a fan of using UHU to adhere tissue, I checked with him first. His brief response to the problem was to rub a tad more UHU over the edge, then float alcohol (91% isopropyl, I assume) over the seam again and rub it gently down with his finger. He admits that a silver round fuselage is a bugger. He also uses Micro-X True Olde World Japanese tissue (no longer available insofar as I know) which he feels is a bit more porous and allows the tissue to lay flatter. He doesn't use dope, only UHU, and he also finishes his models with Krylon. After experiencing several instances in which tissue came loose, I realized that in nearly every instance, it was after spraying with Floral Spray. I have to take a down on headwork there, because Floral Spray is alcohol based, and it will reactivate the UHU. Too soon old, too late smart.

Gene Smith says he's had the same frustration with visible seams. He comments that Bob Schlosberg's models never have visible seams, even after a repair. Bob uses thinned white glue to attach his tissue. Gene uses glue stick and has started going over the first edges with thinned nitrate after the glue stick dries before adding the next strip of tissue. That prevents the glue stick/alcohol he uses on the second strip from loosening the adhesive on the first strip. He says that's a bit more time consuming, but he believes it helps. He then goes back over any possible bad seams with glue stick and then brushing rubbing alcohol and "burnishing" the edge with his finger.

Another one of the "older boys" I checked with was Rich Adams. He had tried UHU a couple of times and wasn't happy with the result and now uses only dope for adhering tissue. He prepares the wood with two coats of 50% nitrate dope, sands lightly to knock off the fuzz and then follows up with two more coats at 100%. He considers it important to have a good base. Incidentally, I don't recommend that you dope the fuselage if you're going to use UHU to attach tissue — it doesn't seem to adhere as well. Rich applies the tissue dry, one strip between each stringer. He only covers wet under circumstances such as weird compound shapes and wing tips.

After the fuselage is covered, he takes a brush and slips dope under any edges that stand up, then goes over that edge with a damp cotton ball folded over so that he is using an edge to apply the moisture, not the whole cotton ball. Afterwards, he runs his finger down the seam to press the edges flat once again. If it still sticks up after this dries, he repeats until the rascal stays down.

After painting, when edges lift, even after all the above effort, he goes back over the edge with 50% Titebond glue, and rubs his finger on the edge until the glue takes a set. The moisture in the glue softens the tissue and the tack in the glue will hold the painted edges down. Where the glue has been applied, it will leave a dull finish after it is dried, so he applies a final coat of Krylon to set the shine, or lack of on the model. Going back over the seam with a damp cotton ball after the Titebond has set will reduce the amount of dulling. He only works a couple of inches at a time. He also uses the Titebond technique for tissue applied markings, etc.