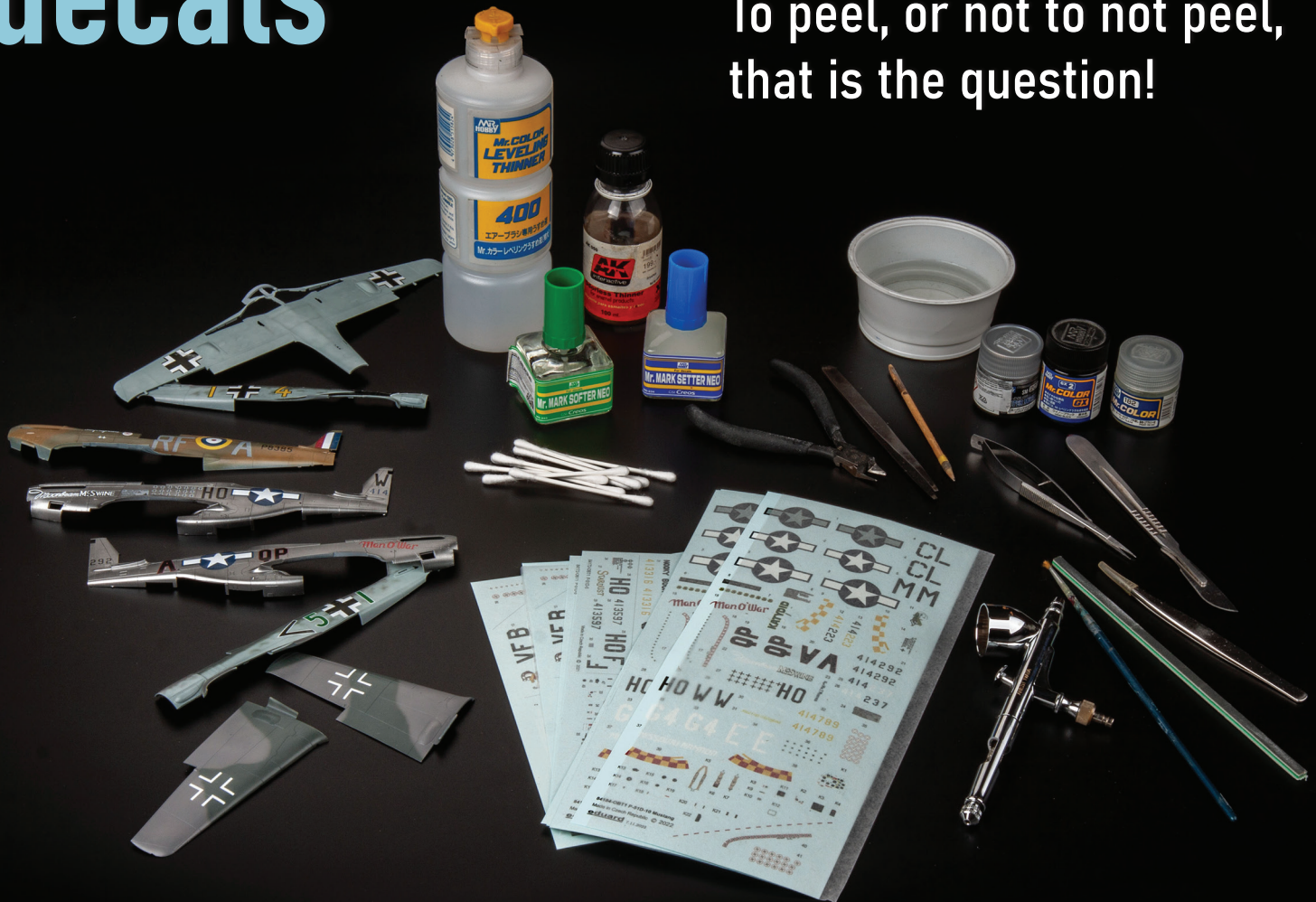


How to apply Eduard decals

To peel, or not to not peel, that is the question!



Jakub Nademlejnský

On various modelling forums, in discussions, but also in messages from customers, there are repeated questions about “the new Eduard decals”, how to work with them, how to peel off the covering varnish film and what the decals actually are. In this article I would like to answer these questions and give the modelers a better understanding of how to work with these decals. I'll start a bit broadly. Eduard started to use own decals made by digital printing in their kits from about autumn 2019, after some time my colleagues started to print the date on them, so all decals printed after autumn 2019 are made by this technology. However, we still varnish the decals using screen printing, on the same machine we used for varnishing decals before the introduction of digital printing. The varnish has also remained the same, we have just adjusted the film thickness based on customer feedback to make the application more user-friendly. Of course, digital printing has its advantages and disadvantages, for example it allows us to print smooth colour transitions, which allows us to print nice colours on pin-ups or small cartoons for example, but its weaker side is colour saturation.

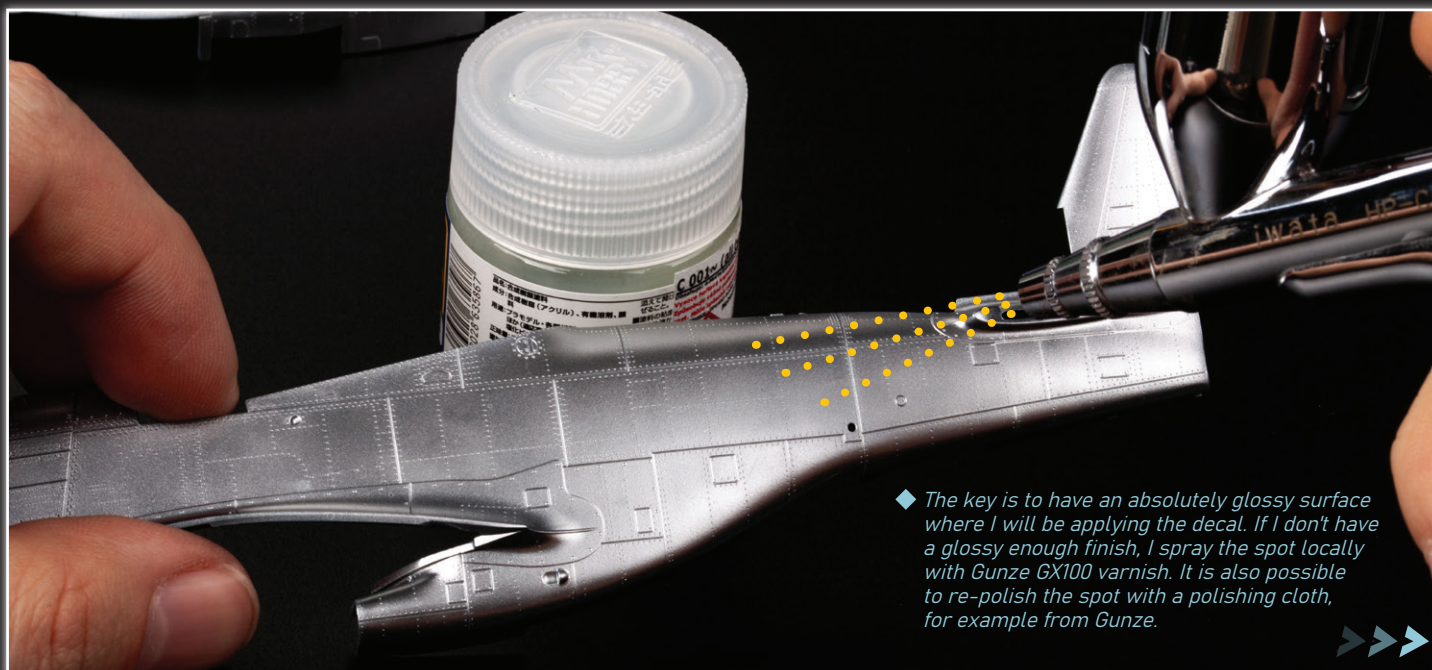
And now back to the initial question - to peel or not to peel? I think that for the vast majority of modellers, the appearance after application is very good when following the basic decal procedure and there is definitely no need to peel the varnish film off the decals. The application of these decals is exactly the same as applying any other decal. The most important thing is to have the substrate under the decal sufficiently glossy, then after applying the decal repaint the area with matt varnish. I understand that there are connoisseurs among us who peel off the varnish film from the decals if they can. But it is definitely not necessary, as you will see in the photos below. Let's do it!



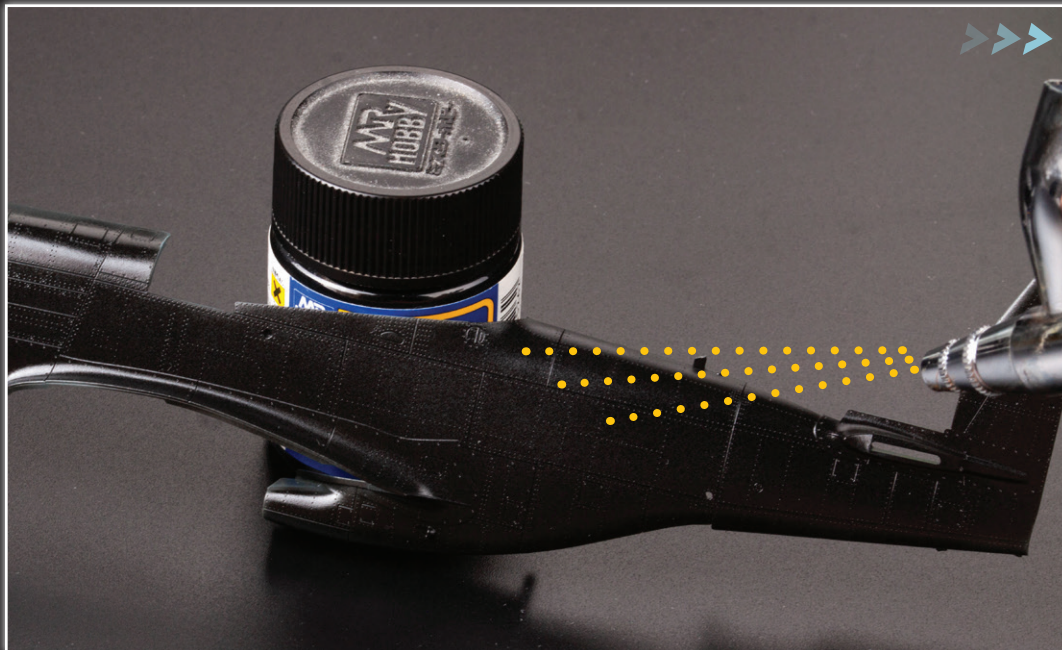
◆ Lets start with the spraying of the paint. I spray the degreased model with a few fine coats of metallic paint from the Super Metallic series by Gunze, in this case SM201.



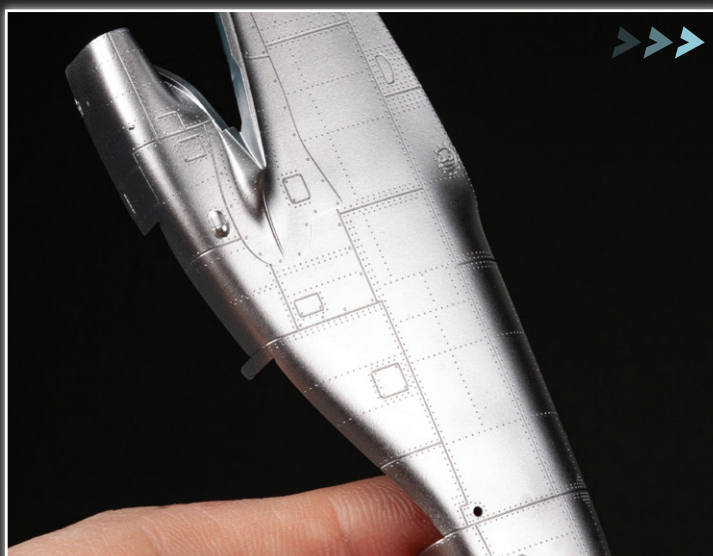
◆ Sprayed fuselage halves. I always try to spray the paint in several coats, for thinning Gunze paints I recommend Mr. Color Leveling Thinner to help prevent the paint from drying on the nozzle.



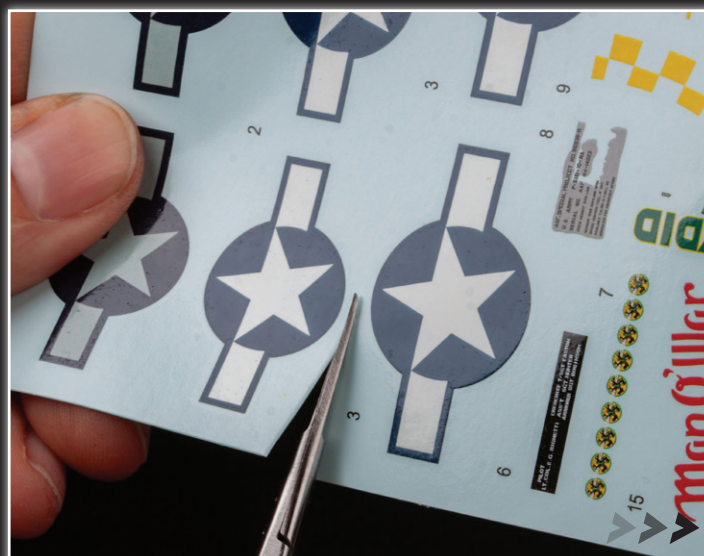
◆ The key is to have an absolutely glossy surface where I will be applying the decal. If I don't have a glossy enough finish, I spray the spot locally with Gunze GX100 varnish. It is also possible to re-polish the spot with a polishing cloth, for example from Gunze.



◆ Another way to achieve a high gloss metallic paint finish is to prime the surface with black gloss paint before applying the metallic paint, in this case black gloss GX2 was used.



◆ Once the paint and varnish have dried, we have the area ready for decal application.



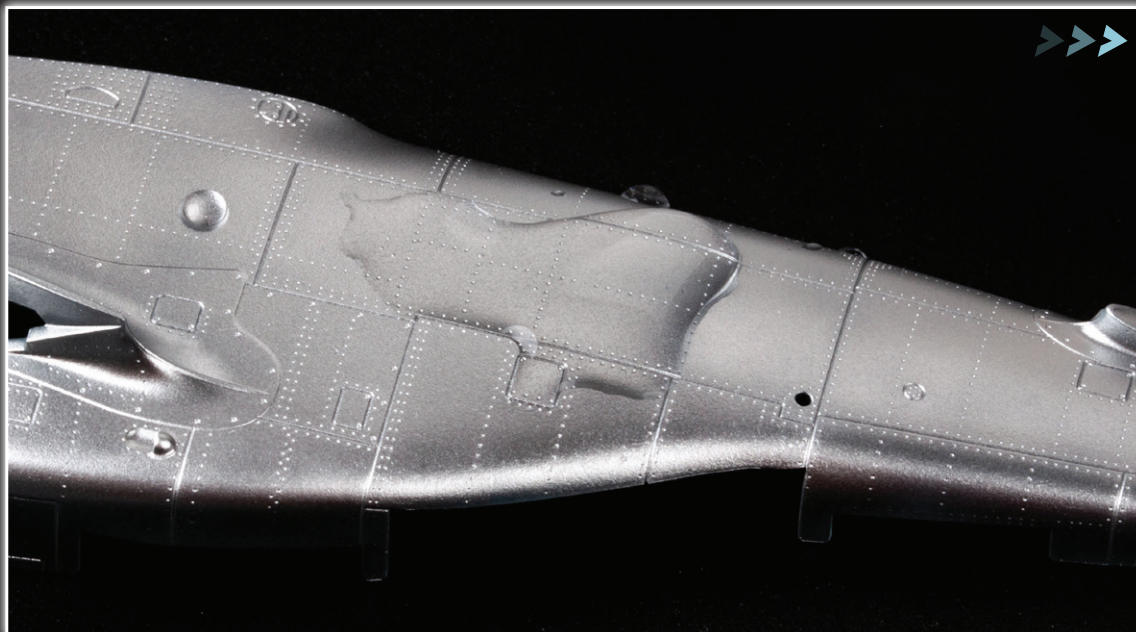
◆ First I cut the decal with scissors with enough overlap to make it easier to handle.



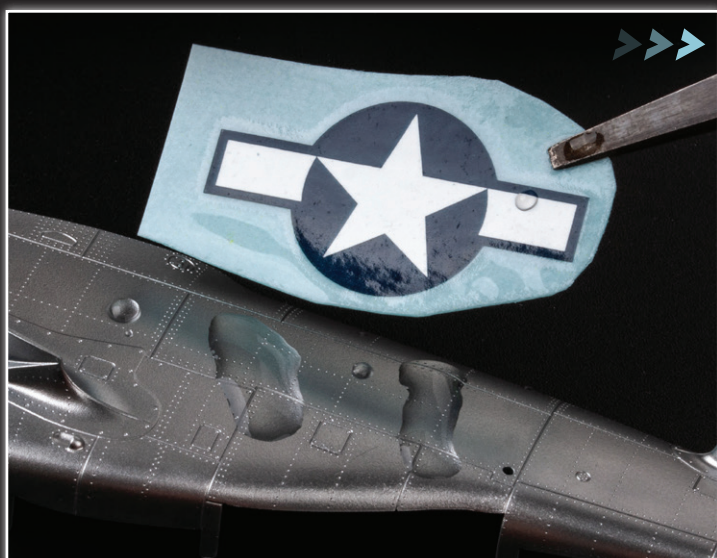
◆ I grab the decal by the backing paper and soak it in ambient temperature water for 1-2 seconds. Using room temperature water has worked well for me, I don't recommend hot water as with other decals.



◆ Then I let the decal stand aside, it will loosen from the paper in about a minute. I recommend checking this with a little wooden stick or your finger. I do not move the decal over the backing paper until it is completely loose.



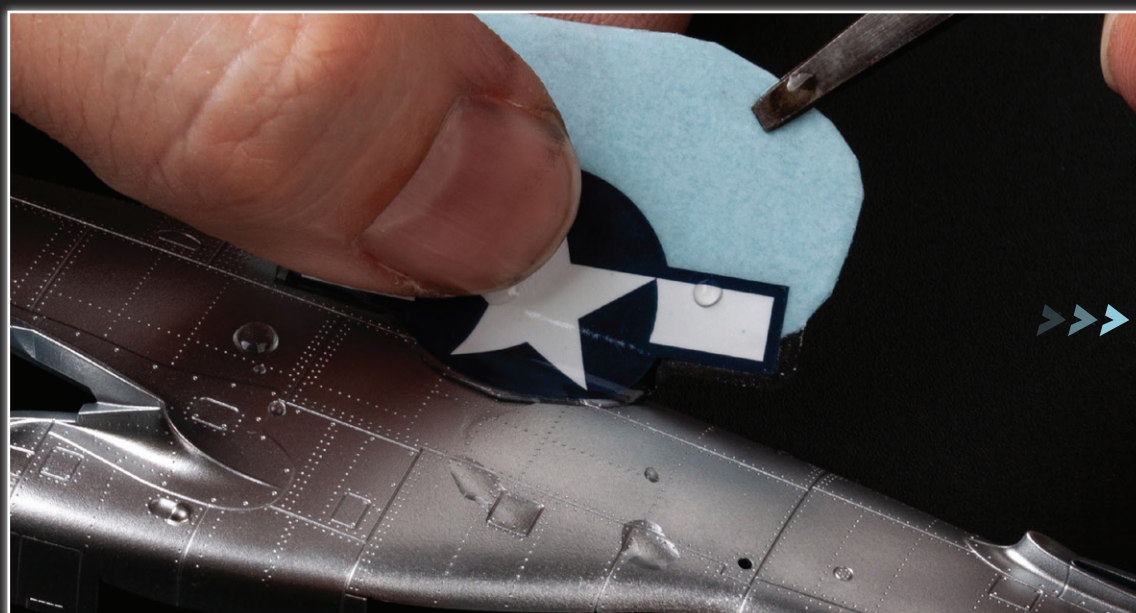
◆ In the meantime, I use an eyedropper to transfer a few drops of the water I have soaked the decal in to the place on the model where I will apply the decal. It is important to keep the place very wet, because so the decal will literally ride on the surface and be easier to manipulate.



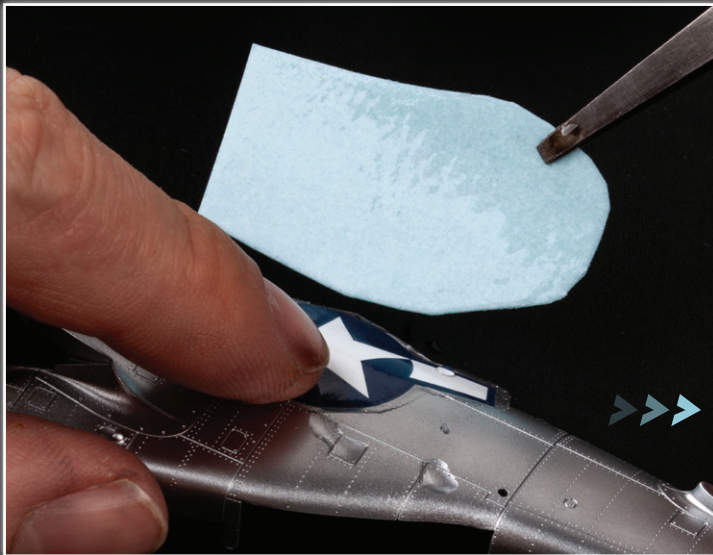
◆ Once the decal is completely loose, I use tweezers to move it to the spot.



◆ I attach the decal to a drop of water.



◆ I slowly pull the decal into the water drops with one hand, still holding the backing paper in the other. If the decal is small, for example a stencil, I would not pull it off with my hand, it would risk sticking to my fingertip, but I would pull it off with a small piece of wood.



◆ I can now move the decal around the surface of the model with my finger.



◆ I set the decal in place.



◆ I dry off the surrounding water with a cotton swab.



◆ I wrap my fingertip in a clean piece of cloth. Then, using only pressure perpendicular to the decal, I press the decal onto the surface while sucking out excess water with the cloth.



◆ Finished, set decal. This is how I apply all decals, whether I want to peel the film off or not.



◆ After the decal has dried, I cut into the panel lines with a sharp scalpel.



◆ And I'll finish the rivets with a phonograph needle.



◆ I didn't use any decal lotions to apply the decals, I don't think they are needed. However, their use does not, in my observation, impair the characteristics of the Eduard decals.

The procedure to be followed now concerns the peeling of the varnish film. I really recommend it only to skilled modellers, I also recommend to try it on a test piece of plastic. Peeling film requires skill, but also training and courage. You may end up ruining part of your decal. If you don't want to peel the film, skip this part and continue on [page 96](#).



◆ It is best to start peeling off after the decal topcoat has completely dried, at least 48 hours after application. Several methods can be used to peel the film from decals. The first is to peel by rubbing with a cotton swab dipped in wash thinner. I use AK Interactive's Odourless Thinner.

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◆ I run a cotton swab dipped in the thinner with a little pressure over the decal until the film starts to stick and pack onto the swab.



◆ After some time, the first film lint starts to form, then I run the swab over it and pack in more of it.



◆ I wrap the whole film in this way from one side through the whole surface of the decal.



◆ I remove the remaining film with a re-dipped swab.



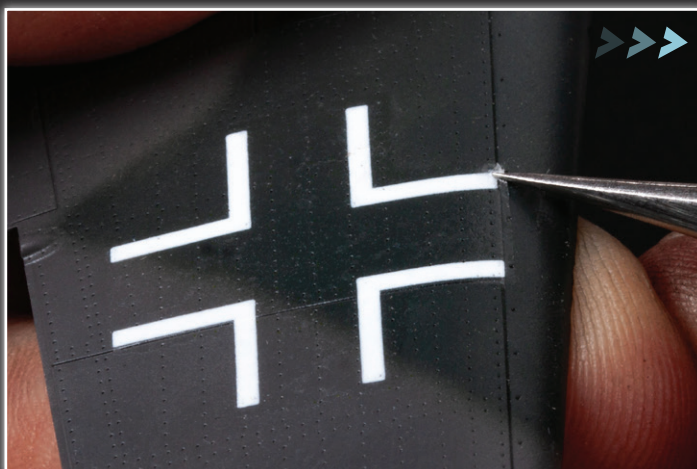
◆ Since I also picked up the film on the letters HO with the swab, I pulled it off with sharp tweezers. This procedure is also possible. I gradually pull the film off along the direction.



◆ Views of all applied decals on the fuselage. Can you tell which ones have been peeled off and which ones have not? It is peeled off on the star, the letters HO and part of the small German crosses.



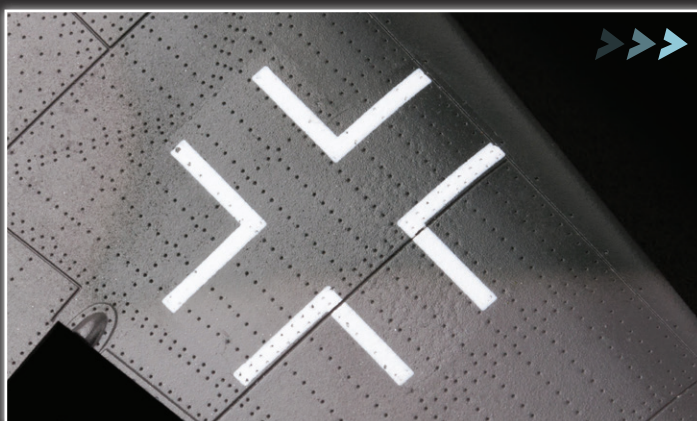
◆ The second possibility is to peel off the film with a scalpel and tweezers. I first peel off the film in the corner with the tip of a sharp scalpel.



◆ I then catch the film in the tweezers and gently pull in the direction of the peeling.



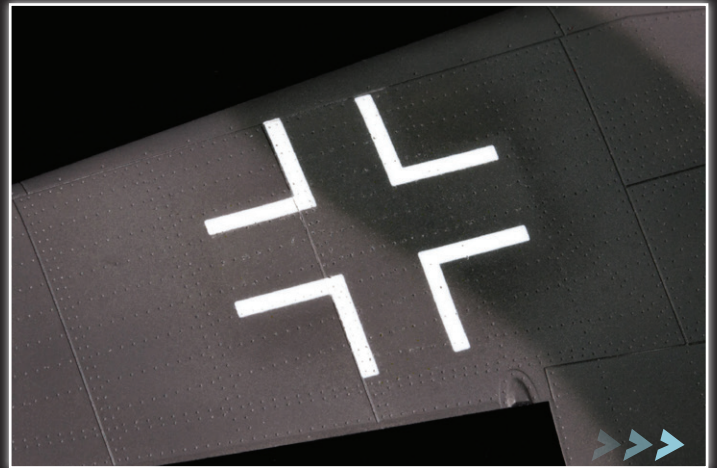
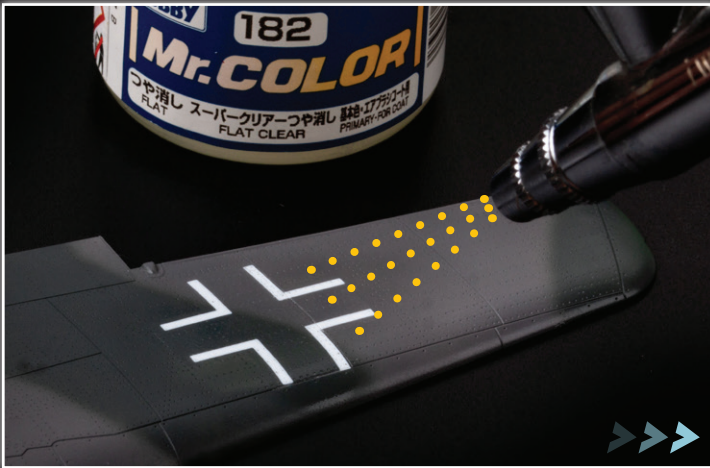
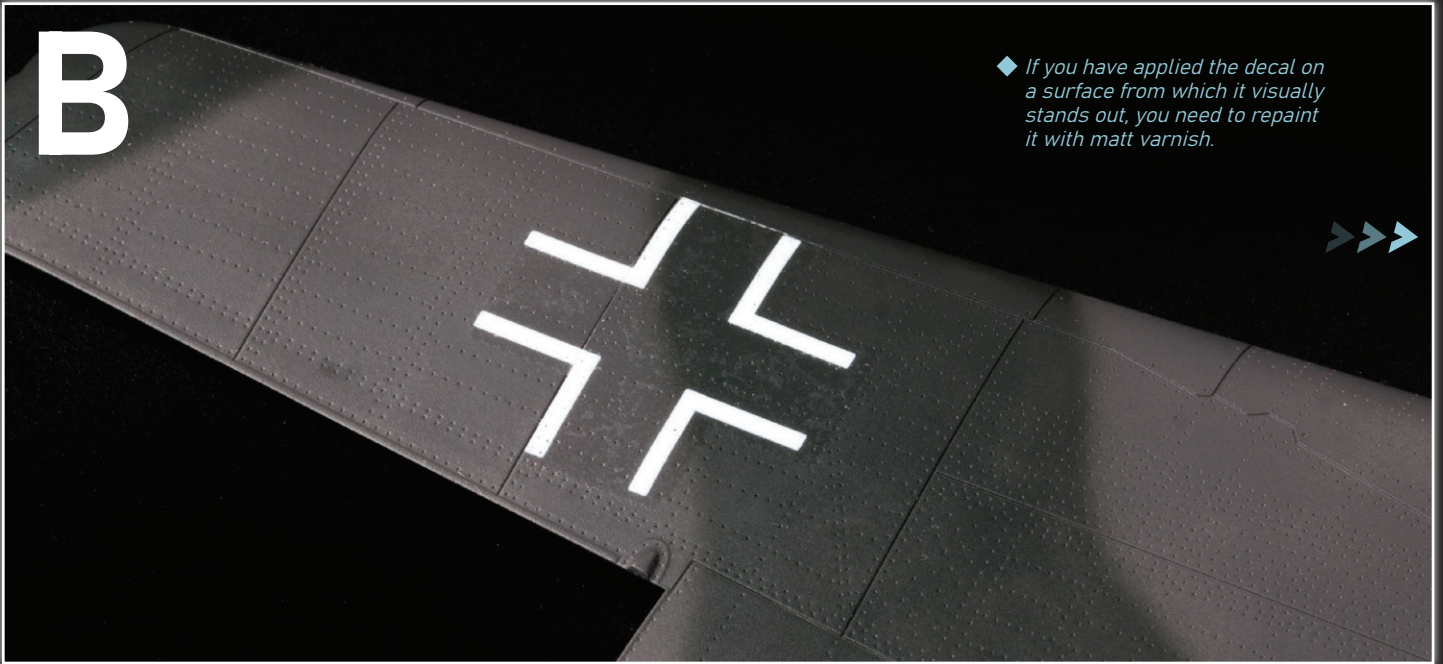
◆ In this way, I gradually pull off the film piece by piece.



◆ This is how the decal looks after peeling off the film. I recommend repainting it with matt varnish before the final weathering.

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◆ If you have applied the decal on a surface from which it visually stands out, you need to repaint it with matt varnish.



◆ For repainting I use C182 varnish from Gunze. I apply several thin coats. Be careful not to overcoat the surface, but to let the layers dry properly.

◆ This is how the decal looks after varnishing.



◆ Comparison of the decal with the film removed (top) and the decal from which the film has not been removed (bottom).