Section Five: Preparing and painting the kit version.

This section is written to cover painting and detailing of fiberglass components using in Century's scale helicopter kits. Some included references may describe components of different kits, not exclusive to this instruction supplement.

Introduction to Fiberglass
When considering the strength compared to the space age canopies that are common on most pod and boom helicopters there is no contest. This plastic material is virtually indestructible at the penalty of being virtually unpaintable without specialized and expensive automotive primers and paints, there is also a very limited range of color available. The reason you are reading this page is that you have come to your senses and wanted to fly a model that looks and holds all the prestige of a real helicopter.

Flexibility
A wonderful attribute of fiberglass is in its flexibility. Century and Funkey take care and pride in craftsmanship that goes into every fuselage. However, fiberglass parts will migrate while inside the shipping box. When two mating components are brought together and they do not align or mate, the culprit is a warped part. Many become upset and wish to lay blame but dealing with this is very simple when explained a simple procedure. Using a heat gun set at the high setting at a distance of 1-2 feet away, evenly heat the warped part until the outside surface is hot to the touch and the part has become pliable (flexible). Using adhesive tape, mate the two fiberglass parts together and let both parts sit until both parts have reached room temperature. Remove the tape and now both parts are stable and match one another. In some instances, depending on the location of the warp, the part may need to be held in an overextended position to achieve the proper shape when the part is finished.

Working with Fiberglass
Difficult to work with, We disagree. Fiberglass is easier to repair than you think. Using today's CA type of adhesives, a severe crack in a fuselage can be simply fixed and the repaired section is much stronger than in its original state. Add touchup paint and no one would ever know it had been damaged. There is a limit to this type of thinking where purchasing the replacement fiberglass part is simply cheaper and less work than performing major reconstructive surgery.

The Paint Job.
There is no magic to a good paint job, the true secret is time, patience and common sense. A beginner who thinks that they can throw paint onto a fuselage Friday night before flying on Sunday is dreaming, the helicopter would be flyable but even that is a stretch. The average beginner will spend the better part of a month to apply a good clean paint job.

Preparing the fuselage for painting.
After opening the kit version of the fuselage, examine all the fiberglass components to see where work needs to be done to allow a simple "bring up" of the fuselage. "Bring up" describes the necessary steps to complete all the jobs in order to start priming the fiberglass parts. Typical work that is done at this stage is rough sanding on seams and jointed components, filling of surface imperfections, adding panel lines and rivets, cutting required holes and preparation for priming.

1. Start by thoroughly washing all fiberglass parts in mild detergent and warm water, this will remove any residue remaining from the molding process. Next wipe down all the parts with Acetone (from the hardware store). The Acetone will remove all traces of oil or grease that will affect the adhesion of two fiberglass parts or between the paint and the fiberglass. Now using fine steel wool or an abrasive pad commonly used for scrubbing dishes, scuff all surfaces that will be joined or receiving paint. What is important to note here is that we are breaking through the topmost resin surface and creating the best surface for adhesive or primer to adhere to.