

Cessna U3-B “Blue Canoe” Part 3 By Jerry Testa



I managed to get quite a bit of work done for this installment. The wings have been framed and sheeted, the nacels mounted, the engines fitted, the fuselage mounted to the wing and the wing tip tanks carved.

Since this is an older kit there were no provisions to make sure the wing would be built straight. To life simple for myself I drew centerlines on all of the ribs and then tack-glued small tabs on each rib so that it would sit perfectly level on the building board.

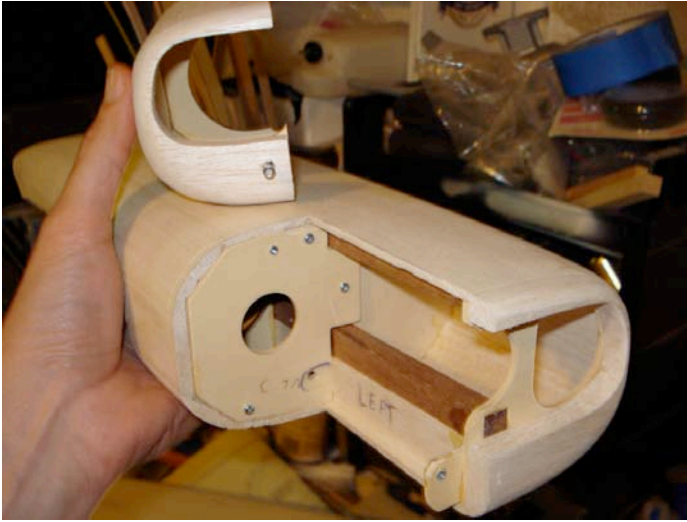
While framing the wing I tack glued the tabs to the glass building board, this ensured that nothing would move while I was adding spars, leading and trailing edges and eventually the top sheeting. In the following pictures you can see how this worked out.



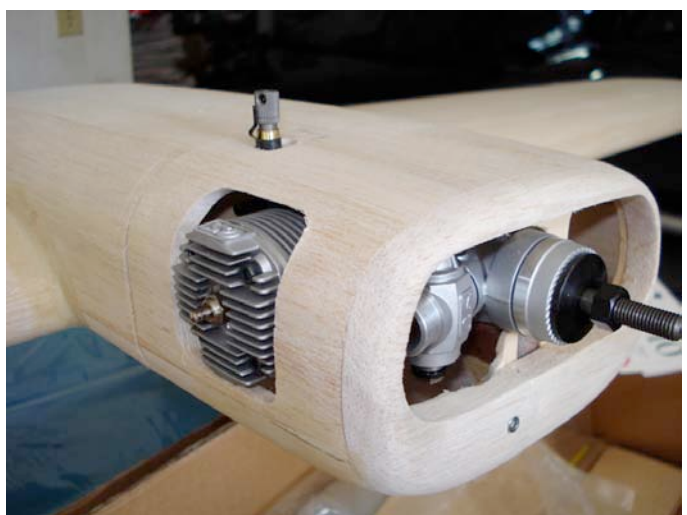
After the top sheeting was installed I carefully broke the ribs free from the glass. With all the spars, leading and trailing edges glued in and the top sheeting secured the wing is now rigid enough that I don't have to worry about it twisting when I sheet the bottom. I also included some webbing between the top and bottom spars to help strengthen the whole structure. Then, I had to do the whole thing over again for the left wing except the plans did not show the rib layout for the left wing and I had to draw my own...



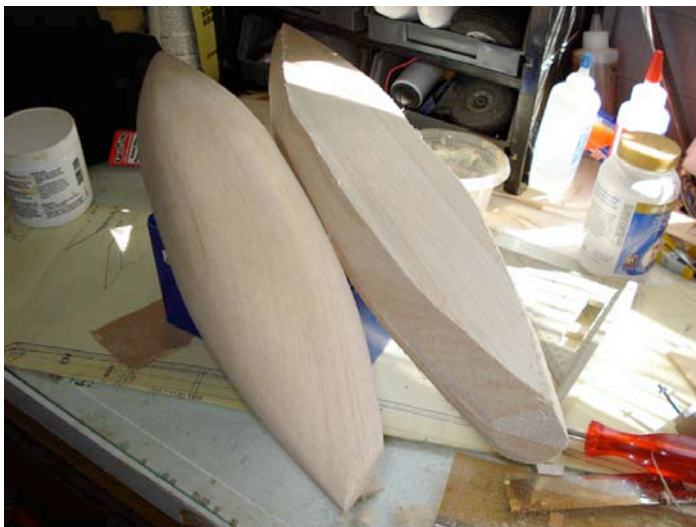
After the wing had been framed and sheeted I went back to the two nacelles. I needed to cut the cowling for the engines to fit. By taking measurements off the plans I used a razor saw to cut open the nacelle and prepared it for mounting to the wing.



Again by taking measurements off the plans and using centerlines on the nacelles I was able to mount them perfectly straight. Now the engines were fitted to the nacelle. I only have one engine at this time because of budget but I should be able to get the second after I sell a few more things on E-bay. Two OS 46 AX's should pull this plane around nicely. The engine is a snug fit.



It was now time to cut out the ailerons from the wing. Again I used my razor saw and cut along lines that I transferred from the plans. Great care needs to be taken when doing this because not only are you cutting the skins but also the ribs that need to stay inside the aileron. After they are cut, the leading and trailing edges are added and shaped. With that out of the way, next is to get the wing tip tanks carved to shaped. They are literally blocks of balsa carved and hollowed to save weight. I did these by eye because this is a departure from the standard kit. The Cessna 310Q had tanks that canted outward from the wingtip. The U3-B had long oblong tanks simply mounted square onto each tip. Shaping the new tip tanks was accomplished by eye. I included some before and after photos of the process, in addition to a picture of the entire plane as it looks at the time of this report.



By the next installment I should have most of the hardware installed and begin work on the finish.