

TRAP DOOR IN THE COCKPIT

GENERAL -- In larger planes, I have had problems inside the canopy after the plane is in service, and I can not get into the cockpit without damaging the plane. I now add a trap door to allow access to the cockpit. This was a solution I first saw in John's workbench at Areoprotect.com. I extended the idea and have used it for quite a while.

FIRST -- after the upper hatch is framed, and before the floor is in place, inspect the pilot figure and the cockpit to see what room exists for the trap door.

In the example to the right, I did not build any structure in the cockpit area of the upper hatch. This will give an unobstructed area for us to build the trap door.



SECOND -- construct a frame for the door and the door jamb in the plane. I used rails and glued ears to the inside rails and secured the ears with servo screws. Then, I planked the three areas with balsa and the trap door was in place.





To the left is a shot of the cockpit after the floor was painted and the trap door is removed. The brace is temporary for gluing on the canopy.

To the right is a shot of the pilot mounted to the trap door, and you can see that the access hole is large enough to be of value later. After the canopy is glued on, I cleaned the inside and put the pilot in place.



This is a change that takes only a few minutes to do but will save you from spending time fixing a cockpit problem.

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