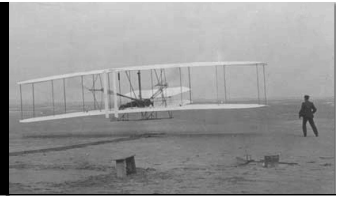


Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA
December 2003

PREZNOTES



A little bit of housecleaning is in order for my final column of the year...

Yay! I actually finished a model! After a drought of five months I actually was able to put a completed model in my display case. I place blame squarely on the beautiful summer we had, my desire to live up to a New Year's resolution, and my attempt to organize the kit collection. My average of a model a month for the last two or three years is going to be down somewhat. Oh well.

Robert, our highly esteemed editor, sent me information about a new kit at Hannant's. A resin kit of the Blackburn Beverly, an aircraft I find very intriguing. It appears to be quite a **healthy** chunk of resin, too. The problem is, I already have a Contrail Beverly vacuform kit, and as bad as that kit is, I think I'll build it instead of trying to assemble what will probably be a very heavy model. Of course, I could go to 24-Hour Fitness and lift weights to build up strength so I can heft the model around. Yeah. Right. That's gonna happen.



As I mentioned before, I was finally able to get my kit collection in order. I've even entered the information into the computer. That took a while. The interesting thing is now I know where everything is. I received a call from a modeler a few days ago asking if I had a spare whatchamacallit for a particular model. I found it straight away. It didn't take days or weeks. Now, all I have to do is get my references, photos, and slides organized!

The 17th of this month is the 100th anniversary of the Wright Brothers' first flight. Since I can't be at Kill Devil Hill to celebrate the occasion I'm doing the next best thing: One of our family traditions is to hang a brand new ornament from the Christmas tree every year. Earlier this year, I found a small replica of the Flyer. It's going on the tree on the 17th. With the better half's blessing.

Some of the 'net forums soundly thrash every Trumpeter release due to actual or perceived problems with each new kit. Some kits may have more problems than others do, and Trumpeter actually **retooled** their F4F Wildcat due to some serious errors, even after it was released in some parts of the world. Personally, I think they deserve a round of applause for what they **are** releasing. I would never have thought we would see a 1/32nd scale F-105, among others, in injection molded plastic in our lifetime. The problem I have with them is their distributor, who has set some rather high prices for the latest releases, as compared to the prices of comparably sized kits just a few years ago.

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Public Disclaimers, Information, and Appeals for Help

This is the official publication of the Seattle Chapter, IPMS-USA. As such, it serves as the voice for our Chapter, and depends largely upon the generous contributions of our members for articles, comments, club news, and anything else involving plastic scale modeling and associated subjects. Our meetings are generally held on the second Saturday of each month, (see below for actual meeting dates), at the **North Bellevue Community/Senior Center, 4063-148th Ave NE**, in Bellevue. See the back page for a map. Our meetings begin at 10:00 AM, except as noted, and usually last for two to three hours. Our meetings are very informal, and are open to any interested plastic modeler, regardless of interests. Modelers are encouraged to bring their models to the meetings. Subscriptions to the newsletter are included with the Chapter dues. Dues are \$24 a year, and may be paid to Norm Filer, our Treasurer. (See address above). We also highly recommend our members join and support IPMS-USA, the national organization. See below for form. Any of the members listed above will gladly assist you with further information about the Chapter or Society.

The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers, and do not constitute the official position of the Chapter or IPMS-USA. You are encouraged to submit any material for this newsletter to the editor. He will gladly work with you and see that your material is put into print and included in the newsletter, no matter your level of writing experience or computer expertise. The newsletter is currently being edited using a PC, and PageMaker 6.5. Any Word or WordPerfect document for the PC would be suitable for publication. Articles can also be submitted via e-mail, to the editor's address above. Deadline for submission of articles is generally twelve days prior to the next meeting - earlier would be appreciated! Please call me at 425-823-4658 if you have any questions.

If you use or reprint the material contained in the newsletter, we would appreciate attribution both to the author and the source document. Our newsletter is prepared with one thing in mind; this is information for our members, and all fellow modelers, and is prepared and printed in the newsletter in order to expand the skills and knowledge of those fellow modelers.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

The IPMS Seattle 2003/04 meeting schedule is as follows. All meetings are from **10 AM to 1 PM**, except as indicated. To avoid conflicts with other groups using our meeting facility, we must **NOT** be in the building before our scheduled start times, and **MUST** be finished and have the room restored to its proper layout by our scheduled finish time. We suggest that you keep this information in a readily accessible place. The 2004 dates are tentative: we hope to have confirmation by next issue.

December 13
February 14

January 10
March 13

IPMS/USA NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

IPMS No.: _____ Name: _____ M. _____ LAST _____
 (leave blank)
 Address: _____

 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Signature (required by PO): _____

Adult: \$21 Junior (17 years old or younger): \$9
 Trade Member: \$21 Canada & Mexico: \$25 Other Foreign: \$28
 Family (Adult dues + \$5, one set magazines, # of membership cards required: _____)
 If recommended by an IPMS member, list his/her name and member number _____ (name) _____ (IPMS#)

IPMS/USA P.O. Box: 2475
 North Canton, OH 44720
 Check out our web page: www.ipmsusa.org

My Trip to the IPMS Nationals – The Italian IPMS Nationals!

article and photos by Stephen Tontoni

This fall, I had the opportunity to take a vacation abroad. I decided to go to Italy, then planned my trip around a model show in Milan at the Hobby Expo (link: <http://www.parcoesposizioninovegro.it/intro-Hobbymodel.htm>) and ending with the Barcolana sailing regatta in Trieste (link: <http://www.barcolana.it/inglese/>). Since there are a couple of weeks between the events, I made a rough plan for sightseeing and shopping in Prague during the interim. I took a similar trip taking in the model show in Milan in 1999, but was there for only 12 days and stayed in Italy. This trip would last three weeks and I'd travel by train through five countries (Italy, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, and Slovenia).

I flew into Linate Airport as the Hobby Expo is in the immediate vicinity at the Parco Esposizione Novegro, which is sort of an exposition complex. The Hobby Expo there is a trade show for all the hobbies, running the gamut from remote control, slot cars, trains, and modeling, to live steam trains, even Mechano. The Expo runs several days, ending on the weekend. There were police on Saturday and Sunday directing traffic as so many people attended then. As a small part of the trade show, IPMS Milano Centro hosts the Campionato Nazionale (national championship) there every year. The IPMS Nationals in the US is totally reversed from this set-up; at our shows, the contest is the center of attention while vendors are an added benefit. I was a spectator at the Campionato Nazionale in 1999 but brought two models to compete this year.

Another difference is that at most of our shows in the US, models are displayed in the open on tables; at the Campionato Nazionale, most of the models were

displayed in glass cabinets with shelves. This helps with security of the models as spectators sometimes can't resist touching models, but it makes picture-taking a real challenge. Also, it makes the show very compact, so at times there were human traffic jams in the model viewing area. It is hard for me to estimate how many models were at the contest with that format, but I'd guess there were 200-300 models present. The quality was excellent and some of the armor, especially, left me with my mouth gaping.



On arriving at that show, I first ran into Rodolfo Mattavelli who I had met at the same show in 1999. As time passed, more and more modelers who I had met before showed up and it was great to reconnect with them. They invited me out to dinner (more of a banquet) with them on the Saturday evening of the show. Dinner was delicious and capped off with gelato, grappa, and something new to me: mandarino (orange grappa-like product, as I understand it). This would be a good time to thank everyone for their hospitality, especially Rodolfo, Luca Beato, Fabio Beato, Richard, Alex, Alfredo, and all the others.

It was during dinner that I acquired my most prized possessions of the entire trip; two books (*Regia Aeronautica Caccia & Assalto 1940-1943 Parte 1 and Part 2*, La Bancarella Aeronautica - Torino) were given me by the authors (Paulo Waldis, Marino De Bortoli, Angelo Brioschi). I had them sign the title pages for me right there at dinner. I can't thank them enough for their generosity!

Beginning a trip abroad with a model show like this is really terrific. First of all, it's

great fun and the international community of modelers is a very friendly place. Second, you can acquire valuable information when talking to other modelers; they are likely to know the coolest museums and detours that you can take on your trip that no travel agent would possibly know about. Another benefit is that you will have a chance to use the language of the country you are visiting in a totally non-threatening place. My Italian is weak but I had ample opportunity to practice it in an environment with which I am very familiar.

The next stop on my trip was Trento. This is a beautiful town in its own right but it is

also the home of the Caproni Museum. The Caproni Museum is a fairly compact museum full of various subjects. I tried to take pictures there with mixed results; it's just not lit for photography and my camera has a weak flash. I wish I had some quality photographs to put up from that visit. I think the most interesting aircraft in there include an S.M.79 in Iraqi markings, a Ca.100 on floats, and an Ansaldo SVA.5 in the markings of D'Annunzio. Of course, there are many other aircraft on display, but those are the ones that struck my fancy. Although it's a bit of a challenge to get there without a car, it's worth the effort. (I took the #8 bus near there, then walked in, but I like walking!)

Next stop was Vienna. I had only planned on transiting Vienna before getting to Prague, but ended up staying there for several days. Sightseeing and people watching is a great deal of fun in Vienna and there are **tons** of museums. It was here that I met a wonderful Irish woman drinking Sturm near Stefansplatz. She and I went to one art museum and then the military history museum in the Arsenal near the Sudbahnhof. In the military history museum, they have a lot of WWI artillery and a couple of small armor subjects (I had never seen a Goliath tank-bomb before except for the DML kit!). For airplane guys like me, the hot find there was the Albatros B.II they have. It's beautifully restored but you can only see it from the front. I wish it weren't tucked away like that. They also have a Fieseler Storch hanging from a ceiling in a separate gallery.

On to Prague! When you cross from Austria to the Czech Republic, you are leaving the EU, so you will have your passport checked a couple of times. They use Kc there; these are Czech Crowns (Koruna Ceska - pardon me for not using the correct accent marks but my keyboard doesn't have them). I think there are currently about 27 Kc to the US dollar; it's a good idea to have a calculator handy and just divide to get the equivalent.

On my first day in Prague, after settling in a pension near the river in the Nova Mesto (the new city), I went shopping using a map sent me by Lubos Vinar of Hobbyshop.cz (link: <http://www.hobbyshop.cz/inshop/>) There were four models shops in easy walking distance from my pension. Of those stores, MGD was the most interesting to me. It carried a number of kits for resale, so they sometimes came with extra PE and extra resin included. My big finds, however, were the resin kits there; I'm a big fan of Czech resin! I got some excellent deals there. MPM is a bigger store with a much wider selection (about a five-minute walk from MGD) but most of their kits were ones that I could get fairly easily here in the US. Still the prices were excellent, so I picked up several items. The other store that I really enjoyed wasn't in that area; it was in the south of the city not too far from the Haje (pronounced HAH-yah) metro stop. This was the Legato store, so it carried the most resin kits of any place that I visited, mostly the Legato line. The Legato store opened in the late afternoon, around 4 PM, and it was a bustling little place. Apparently, it's the store where modelers like to hang out and talk about

the hobby and so forth. Also the phone was constantly ringing during the hour or so that I was there. Like the old saying of going to the restaurants on the highway where the truck drivers all seem to be going, you won't go far wrong by visiting the model shop where modelers hang out.

I was in e-mail contact with Lubos; we rendezvoused at the MGD store and then walked around a bit. He took me to what looked like a fantasy bookstore from the outside; it had a wall of modeling and aircraft magazines then another whole area of technical books on various military subjects. I got a great book on Polish WWI aircraft; thanks Lubos!

I picked up a few words of Slovak while in the Czech Republic, but cannot form a real sentence with it. Still, I learned enough to order a coffee or a beer, and to say please and thank you. One of the most important things that I learned while there was ZAPLATIM (ZAH-plah-teem) which means "I'd like to pay." Add "PROSIM" (pronounced PRO-seem) and you are saying "I'd like to pay, please." This is an important sentence to have in Prague because unlike American restaurants that



hurry you out the door when you are finished with your meal, you can stay for **hours** in a Prague restaurant if you feel like it. That much ability with a language will get you a surprisingly long way when abroad. I never felt frustrated for lack of communication while in Prague. I tried to use Slovak, and the people who I talked to met me more than halfway with very basic communication or with English. A lot of people I met had at least some English while many had excellent English. Still, don't be afraid to try the language!

Again, I strongly recommend participating in model shows on the front end of trips to other countries for the reasons that I listed above. The problem of getting the model there is generally simpler than getting it home after the show is over unless you're prepared to carry the model for the remainder of the trip. For myself, I weighed the risk of damage to the models when mailing them home against having to carry them for two more weeks and decided the risk was acceptable. I recognized that damage would probably result, but figured that if I built the model in the first place, I could probably repair any damage. In fact, my Albatros D.III, which took a second place in Milan, lost most of its rigging when mailed home while the rest was totally intact. The Ju 87G-1 that I showed lost one of its wing cannon, which will be a two-minute repair. The damage to the D.III will take more time to repair, but I make take this as an opportunity to correct some inaccuracies in the conversion that I did. I have no regrets about mailing them.

What Is a Modeler?

by Stephen Tontoni

Is a modeler simply one who builds models? I think that this is a question that many of us can ask, since most of us seem to be buying at a rate that is far outstripping our ability to complete the models. My current stash is many times more than I can build in my life, yet I

proceed to purchase more stuff. Why would an otherwise reasonable person do this?

I know how I accumulate so many kits; I get all hopped-up to start a project that will require some model or two, the aftermarket doo-dads etc, and pick all the stuff up. Then I get busy with other models, or work, or just life in general, and the project is tabled. I frequently will work on a model until it gets to a sticky point at which I may opt to take a time-out from that model. Time-outs can stretch into years. Or I may be distracted by the latest and greatest that hit the shelves this week and, again, my current project gets tabled. As I have told many people before, I can buy a kit every week or 52 a year, or even more. I tend to only complete about six to eight a year. Of course the stash will pile up. Does this make me any less a modeler than one who builds more sequentially?

Modelers can be found in modeling organizations such as IPMS USA. While IPMS USA is strictly a modeling organization, national conventions only happen once a year. Therefore, only a minute fraction of the members of IPMS USA know each other personally. The various IPMS chapters, on the other hand, meet regularly with many people who have known each other for years. The chapters, with plastic modeling as a culture, are really social organizations rather than modeling organizations per se. Should the chapters be only about modeling to the exclusion of everything else?

Simply, my point is that modelers don't necessarily build models. Modelers are people who like to shoot the breeze at the model shop, who like to know what the industry gossip is, who look forward to the cool stuff that is now being released, and who enjoy taking their kits out of the boxes to check the fit even if they don't plan to start the kit any time in the near future.

Modelers who come to club meetings but don't build models have as much right to be there as those who may bring several

completed models to every meeting. The chapters are not exclusive clubs, and by and large are not only about modeling; they are social organizations which have an underpinning around plastic modeling.

So when I hear that people are saying that those who aren't building aren't really modelers and why should they attend chapter meetings, it bothers me. Everyone who keeps coming to the chapter meetings must be getting something out of it; let him or her enjoy the experience without the guilt trip.

New E-mail Address for Newsletter Editor

Those among you who are extraordinarily observant may have noticed that I (Robert Allen) have a different e-mail address in the information box on page 2 of this issue. For the 99.9% who didn't notice, the new address is editor@ipms-seattle.org. My old address of ba lightning@yahoo.com is still valid, and anyone is still welcome to use it, but since Tracy White has been kind enough to provide me with mega-storage at the new address, and my current box continually overflows, I'd like any articles that have large attachments (photos, etc.), to be sent to the new address. Thank you in advance!

Many thanks are also due for all the contributions I've received from club members this year – I think we're blessed with some excellent writers in this chapter, and it's those contributions that continue to allow me to fill 16 pages month after month.

I had the welcome problem of having a surfeit of articles to use this month, and had to reluctantly drop four articles from this issue. If you were looking forward to the next installments of *Hurricane Bookshelf* or *Diorama Construction*, both will be back in January!

Northwest Scale Modelers Show at the Museum of Flight

article and photos by **Tim Nelson**

Mark February 7, 2004 on your calendar for this big model show at the Museum of Flight (MoF). Northwest Scale Modelers (NWSM) stages this display each year; and I must emphasize that it is a display - not a contest. It is one of the largest assemblages of models in the Northwest. The show runs from 10:00 AM to about 4:30 PM. We anticipate being able to access the MoF at around 8:00 AM for set-up. This event is included with MoF admission, which itself is free if you are a member of the museum, or if you bring models to exhibit.

The theme for the 2004 show is "Wings Around the World", with the models organized by country. All modelers, whether members of NWSM or not, are encouraged to bring aircraft models for display - all scales, all eras. The more nations represented, the better. We only ask that you let us know which countries your models will represent, to ensure we have the appropriate placards prepared. How you assign a country to your model(s) is up to you, but the most sensible method is by markings/livery. We are also creating a special "quiz" table for "small air force" subjects. Your obscure, exotic, and esoteric aircraft are especially sought for display as quiz subjects. Again, please let us know so we can prepare appropriate signage.

Non-aviation models will also be displayed. Bring your autos, armor, figures, sci-fi/fantasy subjects, etc. to show off to a large and varied audience. Heck, bring your entire collection - there's no such thing as too many models at this event!

Something new for 2004 is doing the show in the Great Gallery, around the Blackbird.

This change promises to make the event a central feature, rather than a sideshow. There is plenty of space for both the models and "working" tables; both NWSM and MoF are excited to try it.

We are also excited that the 2004 show will feature a presentation by John Amendola about his aviation art in the William Allen Theater. Details are being worked out, but we expect his talk to begin at 2:00 PM and last about an hour. Some of his paintings



will be displayed in the model show area throughout the day. We will also have a display of his box art for model kits.

MoF has indicated they plan to stage a couple of "Make and Take" workshops for kids. MoF is taking the lead on it, but they welcome our help. Anyone who wishes to volunteer their assistance for this effort would be appreciated.

The winter model show at MoF has always been great fun, without the stress and angst of a major model contest. Bring your collection and spend a great day looking at and talking about models. If you are so inclined, you may also bring a project to work on during the day; tables will be provided especially for this purpose.

For additional information (to receive or provide), contact Tim Nelson (425-823-5227 or nelsontd@ge.net).



Above: It isn't often I get a photo that can illustrate two different articles (see Bill's article on the facing page)!

*This is a very small part of Bill Osborn's collection, taken at the 2003 MoF show. How many Curtiss-Wright CW-21 Demons and Bell XP-77s do **you** have in your display case?*

At left is a general view of one of the other tables at the same show.

Numbers or Age?

by Bill Osborn

It's got to be one or the other. People have been asking me which kit I used to make a model I built a couple of years ago and I get a blank look on my face, (as opposed to my usual weird one), and I have no idea who produced the kit. Heck, I'm lucky to remember what the model is.

I know people who can tell you the name of a model they built back in the 1950s and give the complete history of the model, plus the rundown on the real item from the time it was somebody's pipe dream until it was destroyed or put into a museum half a century later. I think this is a great talent, as I have trouble remembering to zip up.

I would like to think, however, that this lack of knowledge on my part is due to the number of kits that I have churned out over the years since taking up this all-consuming hobby. Some of you know that I tend to bring a couple of hundred models to the Museum of Flight show every year. At last guesstimate there were over 350 models in my collection. There are people out there with more, Brian Mulron for one, but he was building while I was collecting. And as most of you know, he is, I'm sorry to say, out of commission, so I'll probably catch up with him.

This is not to brag about numbers, but to try and explain why there is that look on my face when the "what is it?" question is asked. Most of the time I can at least remember the name of the plane, well sometimes I need to write it down just because I can't pronounce the darn thing.

Now, to the other thing, **age**. As Bill Johnson knows, this is somewhat of a concern. As I very rapidly am on my way to the big seven-o, things start to start to slow down or worse, break down. So maybe that's the reason for the dumb look. However, it could just be my normal appearance...

Making Inkjet Decals with the Testors Custom Decal System

by Greg Reynolds, IPMS Santa Rosa

After reading conflicting articles and RMS postings about the quality of inkjet printed decals, when Testors marketed their Custom Decal System a few months ago, I had to check it out. Frankly, I am impressed.



What you get in the box, for \$6.98 retail, is: one white sheet and one clear sheet of inkjet decal paper (each about 5.5" x 8.5"), a 3 oz. spray can of fixative called "Decal Bonder", a mini CD containing "Decal Maker" software and an instruction sheet. I know most modelers have an innate distain for instruction sheets, but not only are these very helpful, they contain all important re-order numbers for additional decal paper and fixative. Don't lose them!

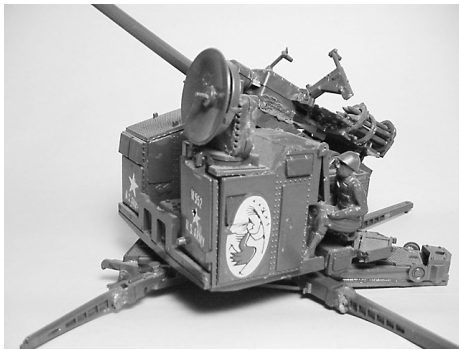
The same cannot be said for the software. Called "Decal Maker: Basic" by Sure Thing, it is little more than a demo disk. It contains a few prepared designs: 17 assorted pinstripes, flames, and dragons for car models, four car license plates, and seven aircraft "badges". (The latter include

some "real" items like the personal marking for Lt. Col. Glenn Eagleston's P-47, but nothing is identified regarding subject or scale.) Creating your own designs with this software will be arduous since the drawing tools are very primitive, similar to Microsoft Draw. There is an image import function in Decal Maker, but every time I attempted to use it I got a message that I could order an "upgrade" for \$9.95. No thanks. If you've got more patience than money, it might be worth learning. I understand Testors' desire to market a complete system so the buyer can print *something* regardless of their graphical expertise, but I think most serious modelers will quickly "pass" on Decal Maker. (The software is Windows 98, 2000 and XP. No Mac.)

I'm going to skip lightly over the critical and most time consuming part of making your own decals: creating the artwork. An in-depth treatment of this subject is beyond the scope of this review, but I'll make a few general comments. To make decals for your own models, most likely you will be adapting artwork from some other source. This may be a decal sheet in a different scale, an illustration in a magazine, or even a hand-done sketch. In these cases, the steps will be similar. First: get the images into the computer using a scanner or digital camera. Second: manipulate each image so it is the color, size and quality you want. Third: compose all of the individual images onto one page. In this scenario, you will be dealing with "raster" images; ones made up of rows of minute dots. One of the most common and powerful image manipulation software packages is Adobe PhotoShop. Unfortunately, PhotoShop can be very expensive and very hard to learn on your own. If you want to get into it (maybe you also have a digital camera?) and don't know a computer geek to tap, I recommend buying an older version of PhotoShop off eBay and taking an introductory PhotoShop class at your local Community or Technical College.

If you plan to make your artwork from scratch, you will need a different type of software. To construct insignia and lettering with geometrical precision, you need a “vector” based graphics program like Corel Draw, Adobe Illustrator, or AutoCAD. These programs manipulate lines in space rather than dots. They are just as expensive and challenging to learn.

For my test I chose to make a replacement of an old cracked decal found on the side of an equally old and cracked Renwal Skysweep Anti-aircraft gun (figure 1).



Since the original decal was on a relatively flat surface of the model, I decided to scan it into PhotoShop and retouch it. Figure 2, below, shows the original scan.



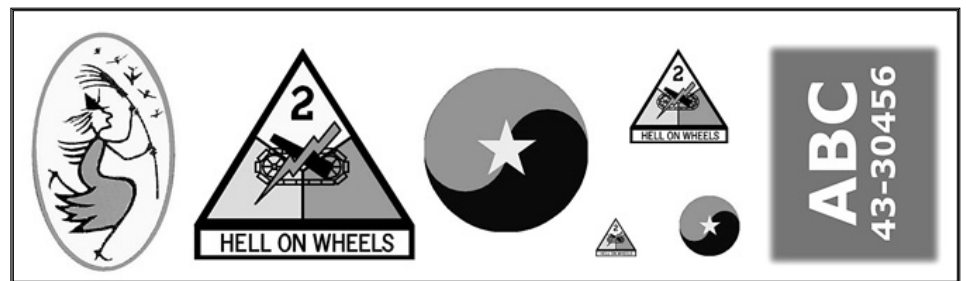
This was done at 600 dpi and is about 1" tall. Notice all the tears and the poor registration. At this resolution, you can also see jagged edges from silk-screening the original decal. At 600 dpi, there is plenty of room to zoom in and retouch with



the digital “airbrush”. Figure 3, left, shows the image after about 20 minutes of cleanup work. There is no reason to get too crazy fixing it up. With it blown up on the screen, it’s easy to

forget that a lot of flaws will vanish when it is printed in its final size.

Figure 4, below, shows my composed sheet. I planned to print this on both the clear and white stock using the top 1" of each sheet. The 2nd Cavalry and Angolan Air Force insignia are from commercial clipart collections. (You’d really be surprised what’s out there!) The dark rectangle with white lettering was created in PhotoShop. More on it later.



The Testors instructions recommend test printing your sheet on plain paper before committing your precious decal stock. Good advice. It took me several tries adjusting the page size and margins to get the images to print exactly where I wanted them to use the least decal stock. You may also want to fiddle with the color balance.

What you see on your screen isn’t exactly what you get from your printer. This is particularly true of light colors like yellow. One final test print using a glossy paper stock and I was *finally* ready.

The instructions recommend simply setting your printer for “plain paper” and “normal quality”. That’s exactly what I did and I was totally impressed with the results. The images looked saturated. There was no beading or smearing. The smallest of the three 2nd Cavalry insignia was a tiny 3/16" wide and the motto “Hell on Wheels” was completely readable - with a magnifying glass! (My printer is an HP DeskJet 5550. It prints up to 1400 dpi. That’s pretty typical by today’s standards.) The instructions don’t mention it, but I assume that getting oil from your fingers on the decal stock can degrade the print quality, so careful handling and protection of the stock is in order.

I let the decals dry overnight and sprayed on a light coat of the fixative in the morning. Inkjet ink is, of course, water-soluble. The fixative provides a waterproof barrier so you can apply the decal without dissolving the ink. In reading about other people’s experiences with inkjet printed decals, one thing I was concerned about was ink bleeding out from under a cut edge of the fixative when the decal is applied. To

test this, I trimmed out some of the decals before spraying and some not. After letting the fixative dry for a good 12 hours, the moment of truth had arrived.

Continued on page 14

Kit Preview – Academy 1/72nd Scale P-47D “Razor-back”

by Jacob Russell

Most airplane modelers are familiar with the Republic P-47D in both its Razorback and Bubbletop variants, so I will dispense with a condensed history here. The P-47 has always been a popular modeling subject. In the last two years, new kits in 1/72nd scale have been issued by Revell of Germany (P-47D and P-47M Bubbletops) and Academy (P-47D Razorback and Bubbletop) respectively. Academy’s P-47D Razorback (specifically, the P-47D-20-RA) is the subject of this kit preview.

The kit comprises 30 molded parts on four sprues. Three of these parts are clear and include the windscreen, canopy, and landing light cover. Panel lines are recessed and well done. The fuselage is molded in two halves with some sidewall detail, which will be visible with careful dry-brushing and detail painting. The fin and rudder are molded as part of the port fuselage half. The cockpit includes five pieces - floor, seat, instrument panel, gunsight, control column, and aft armor. The floor features the correct ribbing of the early P-47 series. The cowl is well done and the flaps are molded in the closed position. The engine is two-piece and the detail is simplified. The twin row Pratt & Whitney R-2800-59 radial lacks the prominent - and very visible - magneto covers.

The wheelwells are boxed in but the detail is generic, rather than specific to P-47s and the ribbed effect is inaccurate. There are separate inner and outer landing gear doors. The wheels are terrible (in my opinion the worst part of the kit) and resemble early spoked Bf 109 wheels rather than P-47 wheels. The wings are molded in two upper and one lower pieces and the eight wing machine guns appear to be molded parallel to the wing, rather than to the ground, which is correct. The

three formation lights under the port wing are depicted as raised *bumps* rather than recessed *lights*. Two propellers are included, the thin-blade “cuffed” Curtiss Electric and the wide-blade cuffless Hamilton Standard Hydromatic. Under wing stores include pylons to carry either bombs or auxiliary fuel tanks. Two centerline fuel tanks are included, an early tank made of impregnated paper and a metal 75-gallon tank. Two bombs (of unknown weight) are included that can be mounted on the pylons, and triple tube launchers for 4.5 inch rockets complete the underwing stores.



There are two aircraft on the decal sheet and both are Olive Drab on the upper surfaces and Neutral Gray on the lower surfaces. Aircraft #1 is “White 17,” of Lt. Cecil O. Dean, 317th Fighter Squadron, Foggia, Italy, 1944. This plane has the famous black and yellow checks on the fin, rudder, and upper tailplane surfaces (from the so-called “Checkertail Clan?”) and the checks are offered as decals on the decal sheet. This plane also has a red forward cowl and propeller boss. The second plane is “White A8 + P,” of Lt. A.H. Rainbow, 391st Fighter Squadron, 366th Fighter Group, France, 1944. This plane has a silver forward cowl, canopy frames, and several of the cowl flaps are also silver. The plane had white bands on the fin/rudder and tailplanes, which are included on the decal sheet. Both planes have nose art. From the looks of the completed model that adorns the sides of the box, the white decals are slightly transparent: one might consider using aftermarket decals. The decal sheet includes one set of stencils and Curtiss

Electric decals for the propeller. The instructions state that the wheelwells should be painted the same color as the interior (the ubiquitous “Interior Green”), but Curtiss-built P-47s had Chromate Yellow wheelwells. S Chromate Green was also applied in the field. In addition, depending on who manufactured the plane, its interior color could be either Dull Dark Green (Republic) or Chromate Green (Curtiss).

I found that the fuselage halves were shallow in depth and short in length when laid on the 1/72nd scale plans in Bert

Kinsey’s *P-47 Detail & Scale* book. The fin and rudder are also too short in height and the rudder is too narrow in chord. The wings are close in width but quite shallow in chord. The same remarks apply to the tailplanes. Interestingly, both propellers match the plans almost perfectly!

Academy’s P-47D Razorback is a good kit that is let down by simplified details and inaccuracies in the size of the wings and fuselage. This may bother you if you’re prone to lay parts over plans and shake your head about those very inaccuracies. It looks like a P-47 to me. I think that a nice model can be built straight from the box, and the kit is also a good value. However, I also think that the best P-47 kits in 1/72nd scale are the pair of bubbletops from Revell of Germany. I discussed these kits with Norm Filer, who feels that their fuselages are too chunky. This may well be true, but the overall accuracy and detail of these kits is superior to the Academy kit. Until Revell decides to model a Razorback the Academy kit is probably the way to go. And no, I haven’t forgotten that Hasegawa makes P-47s in this scale, either. Watch this space for more developments!

Reference: *The P-47 Thunderbolt In Detail & Scale*, by Bert Kinzey, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1998.

Roden 1/48th Scale Fokker D.VII

by Andrew Birkbeck

A few weeks back I had an epiphany. I have been modeling now for 35 years, and in that time I have not once sat down at my modeling space and built a biplane. Not even as a young child, when not having such a model rigged, or even with the wings on straight, would have bothered me. Yet the other day, having not built any airplane models for three years, I awoke with a tick under my skin to build nothing but WW1 aircraft. Perhaps it was all the talk surrounding the 100th Anniversary of Powered Flight that got me going, perhaps it was reading a book lent to me by a friend on the First World War. Whatever it was, I haven't thought about any other modeling subjects since.

Initially, I pulled down from my groaning modeling shelves the only WW1 aircraft model I possessed, the Eduard Roland C.II. Heaven only knows why I had this on my shelf and nothing else, but there it was. But after chopping all the parts off the sprues and cleaning them up, I noticed that there was a rigging diagram that came with the kit, and I remembered the main reason I probably hadn't built a biplane in 35 years!

Following this discovery, I put the kit down. Immediately thereafter a friend gave me another Eduard kit, a Pfalz D.III. This is a lovely kit, so lovely in fact that I didn't want to risk disaster by making it my first ever WW1 project. Then those around me started a little chant. It started off low, but then started to grow (my apologies to Dr. Seuss): Fokker D.VII, Fokker D.VII, Fokker D.VII. And upon hearing this aircraft had next to no rigging, I searched around for an appropriate kit to build.

The D.VII has been well served in the Manly Scale (1/48th), the one chosen by myself to construct my WW1 Collection. Talking to Kevin "all thumbs" Callahan (his description, not mine), he warned me

against trying his preferred scale of 1/72nd, given the minute size of many WW1 aircraft. He even admitted that if he wasn't so stuck on 1/72nd, he too would build WW1 planes in 1/48th scale. This was all the encouragement I needed.

I rejected the Aurora D.VII as too expensive, and those molded on wing markings just didn't do it for me. Monogram "improved" the Aurora molds, but not enough for me. DML did a decent kit in the 1980s, but I couldn't find one anywhere in Seattle. So I decided that the Roden kit, recently having arrived at Emil Minerich's Skyway Model Shop, was the only way to go.



I started the Roden project by looking around on the Internet for anything I could find out about the kit. The educated word was that the kit was a very good model as far as accuracy of outline was concerned. This was good, because when I started the project, being my first biplane ever, I was intent on building the thing right out of the box. The parts before me attached to the sprues certainly looked well detailed. I also liked the fact that Roden had molded the wings in at least two halves, top and bottom (the top wing is actually in six main parts, the lower wing in five). The top wing also has separate ailerons (or is it flaps, what do I know about these aircraft, nothing obviously!). The DML kit had a one-piece top wing, and in almost every example I have seen, there is a nasty, incorrect, warp to the wing.

The Roden kit is very well-detailed, with multiple parts to build an excellent example of the prototype's 160 hp Mercedes engine. This said, you will need good references for this engine, because the Roden instruction sheet leaves a lot to be desired when it comes to the exact location of many parts in this kit. However, a plus for me was the type of plastic used by Roden. Normally I like Tamiya plastic, as its qualities are excellent for providing sharply defined details on kit parts, and it is fairly hard, which for me makes it nice to work with. Roden's plastic is much softer, but it was for me a treat to work with, sanding and filing very easily, and contrary to what I thought might be the

case with soft plastic, the details are well formed on the various parts. However, there is a roughness to the surface detail on many of the larger parts which will need taking care of with some 400 and 600 grit sandpaper.

All of Roden's biplane kits, both WW1 and post-war, and both 1/72nd and 1/48th, share at least one thing in common: an attempt by

Roden to get the maximum number of variants of a given aircraft from the same basic set of molds. Other firms in the past have tried this: Fujimi comes to mind with their many MiG-21, Spitfire, A-6, F-4 Phantom, etc., kits in 1/72nd scale. As with the Fujimi kits, Roden's kits all suffer from being over-engineered, which in turn makes for poorly fitting parts in many instances. The fuselage of Roden's D.VII kit comes in eight parts. This is because the radiator/engine housing part of the fuselage is in six parts. This particular kit is of the early Mercedes-engined variant, and Roden engineered the kit to allow for a release of the later BMW-engined D.VII. Rather than paying the price to tool multiple two-part fuselages, Roden engineered the kits with lots of smaller parts to allow for these many variants. In

my kit, as well as that of my friend Jay Mullins who is also building it, these many fuselage parts simply do not fit well. The engine area parts themselves don't fit well together, nor does this sub-assembly mate at all well to the fuselage halves to the rear of the engine compartment. Nor does the lower wing mate well to the fuselage. Be warned, as much test fitting will be needed, and much chopping and sanding, to get anything close to a good mate.

Most Important: If you buy this kit, check out carefully Instruction Sequence 9 and its subsections, and Sequence 10. These are the sections that deal with the engine bay mounts etc. Having discussed this with a friend of mine, we are convinced that if you are building the model **without** the engine top covers, Parts 3D and 4D, as listed in Section 10a, then you build the kit with Sequence 9a through 9c. If you are building the kit **with** Parts 3D and 4D, then you **skip** 9a through 9c, and just build 10a. If not, and you build all the sections as the instructions appear to indicate (or at least they don't say not to), then there will be so many parts jammed into the engine bay, that the engine won't fit in there. This is perhaps why some reviewers say that they couldn't get the engine into the bay, for they did not realize this was the correct building sequence. Take a look, and see what **you** think.

The wings have a problem, in that the trailing edges of the wings on a Fokker D.VII are scalloped, and when you line up the Roden parts along the leading edge, the scalloped edges don't line up neatly on the trailing. This was solved with some 400 and 600 grit sandpaper, but it was a pain. This said, the wings are very well formed, nicely detailed, and as mentioned earlier, the moving surfaces are separate pieces. However, said moving surfaces need very careful dry fitting and cutting and filing to get them to fit.

The next problem with the kit is that the cabane struts are apparently not long enough. I haven't progressed this far on my own kit, but this is the consensus of those on the Internet who have. This

includes the comments from an actual Roden engineer, who posts frequently on the WW1 newsgroup I frequent. This engineer does however say that the problem for him is intermittent. One kit fits well, the next has the strut problem. Whatever the exact cause, be warned, this area of the kit does need close attention paid to it.

Roden's decal options with this kit allow for four aircraft to be constructed, all with lozenged wings: Hermann Goering's Jasta 27 aircraft, Summer 1918; Bruno Loerzer's Jasta 26 aircraft; Rudolph Berthold, Jasta 15; and a lovely blue, red and white aircraft with white serpent marking, flown by Hugo Shaefer, Jasta 15. All well and good, except that Roden kit decals are known to be junk by almost everyone I have talked to and read. Again, the Roden engineer mentioned above stated honestly that initially Roden decals were printed by an outside source, and they were indeed junk. They had a strong tendency to shatter upon placement into water. The engineer claims Roden solved this problem by producing the decals in current releases in-house. However, while they may not shatter in water, apparently they now won't lay down, and no decal solvent known in the West is apparently able to make them. They also have a tendency to stick like limpets the moment they touch the surface of the model, so moving them into place is said to be a tad "difficult". The printing also isn't the best, at least on my example, nor are the colors on the lozenge. To solve this problem, I will be using one of the many aftermarket lozenge sheets currently available (four-color). I am told by those "in the know" that Eagle Strike, Blue Max/Pegasus, and Americal/Gryphon all make very nice decals, the latter more than one variety. All three firms have good mail order services, although local hobby stores should be able to order the Eagle Strike decals for you. I know both Skyway Hobby Shop and Galaxy Hobby Shop intermittently carry this brand.

Jim Schubert, who is helping me with my WW1 quest, has stated privately that there are no "Tamiyagawa" quality WW1

kits. With the exception of DML's four WW1 kits, all those available to the modeler in 1/48th are either very long in the tooth (Aurora/Monogram/Glencoe/others), or have been produced by Eastern European "limited run" firms, where engineering skills are not up to current Asian/Western European standards. Having said this, Eduard's "new mold" kits of the last few years appear vastly improved over the same firm's earlier efforts. And the Rodens of this world are in their own way making available to the modeler kits that wouldn't exist otherwise, except perhaps in the more expensive and/or complex world of limited run resin and vacuform examples. So I commend Roden for taking the plunge into WW1, and hope that in the not too distant future they manage to improve the engineering of their kits, and invest a little more money in getting someone decent to produce their decals (say subcontracting them to AeroMaster or Cartograph, as Eduard does). The argument over how much to invest in kit decals by the manufacturer is an old one. The manufacturers know that many "serious" modelers will replace the kit decals with aftermarket ones no matter what they put in their kits. This may well be true, but if a firm wants "Average Joe Modeler" to build their models more than once, they need to have decals that at least are competently printed, and are easy to apply. Roden for the moment appears to regularly strike out on both counts.

1/72nd Scale Avro Lancaster Nacelles and Props Wanted

Wanted from the spares box: two engine nacelles and props from a 1/72nd scale Avro Lancaster - Inboard or outboard pair doesn't matter. If you have ones to spare, please call Doug Girling, 425-957-9834, or e-mail him at floatplane@comcast.net

It Was The Best of Times; It Was The Worst of Times

by Andrew Birkbeck

No one can deny we are enjoying some of the best of times, a golden age to quote an overused expression, in this great hobby of ours. Superb kits are piling onto the hobby emporium shelves, emanating from China, Japan, Korea, Ukraine, Australia, Czech Republic, etc. Magazines, books, new paint and decal lines, etched brass, cast resin, you name it. I was out looking the other day for a Fokker D.VII kit in 1/48th scale. I discovered the old Aurora kit, which was in turn retooled and improved by Monogram, which was replaced by a very nice kit from DML, which in turn was replaced recently by an extremely well detailed kit from Roden, which in turn is set to be replaced by an even better kit (given their high reputation in the hobby) by Eduard. Another example of this abundance of wealth is P-47s in 1/48th: off the top of my head, kits exist from Monogram, Otaki, Hasegawa, and a recent gem from Tamiya!

Yet judging by what I saw on the “show and tell” tables at the last meeting, I must also say, it was the worst of times. IPMS Seattle has approximately 100 paid up members, 60 at least of who attended the November meeting. The vast majority of the members are airplane modelers. Yet at the meeting, there were four aircraft models, from two members. Interestingly, there were twice as many armored vehicle models as aircraft models, yet armor modelers represent only a tiny fraction of the membership. But I digress. The bottom line is, there were a large number of modelers, but a disproportionately low number of models. This has been happening month after month, some far worse than others.

So we have tons and tons of new kits, and accessories, at the same time as we have very few finished models turning up at the club. Why? To me, this means one of two things. Either people aren't building

models any more, simply buying them to stack on shelves in the hobby room, or it means they are building, but not bringing them into the club to show to their fellow modelers. Here are some thoughts on both of these possibilities.

The “buy but not build” crowd does exist out there. And I don't just mean overbuy, for we all do that. I am talking about people who buy and buy, but never finish a model. Why not? Well, some have told me that today's kits are too damned fantastic to tackle with their current skill level. I recently heard from a fellow who bought the Tamiya 1/48th Swordfish kit. This truly is a gem of a kit, with lots of precision parts, and of course it requires the modeler to build a biplane (to many a four letter word), and then in theory, it needs to be rigged! The gentleman concerned told me his current skills weren't up to the challenge, but that “one day” they will be, and then he will tackle this project. I know this feeling well. In the early 1990s, I began to accumulate a collection of resin, cast metal and etched brass kits in 1/35th scale from a Scottish firm named Accurate Armour. These were mostly modern British armored vehicles, and the kits cost upwards of \$150 each. At that price, and never having worked with resin and cast metal before, I determined that my skills weren't up to the task, and so put these kits aside for “later” when my skills improved. However, my wife rightly pointed out that if I never actually tackled a kit made of resin and cast metal, how could I ever gain proficiency in building such a beast? She told me to go “screw up” one or two of them, and get it out of my system, otherwise, I could stop wasting family funds on kits I would never build for fear of “screwing them up.” So I did, and guess what, with a careful approach to what I was doing, I didn't screw any of them up!

Another reason for not building, and it is equally applicable for those building but not showing their models to others, is “fear of failure”. If you never tackle a project, you can't screw it up. It forever remains in your minds' eye as that perfect project. The model with everything in

alignment, with added details, a superb paint job, expertly applied decals, and a very competent weathering job. Sitting on a lovely base. “Best in Show” at some future IPMS Nationals...

As for actually building, but not showing, this again overcomes a fear of failure. Many people (most?) really do care what others think. And they don't want to risk showing their skills to be potentially “not up to snuff.” As an example, I have been badgering a fellow member who I much admire to bring in something he has built so that I could have a look at his work. After much hemming and hawing, he finally obliged. Yet before I could say word one to him about his model, he began pointing out all the flaws on it, as he at least perceived them, and downplaying the quality of his model. The old “I'll point out all the flaws before you bring them up and toss them in my face” syndrome. And of course, we are always our own fiercest critic, and in this case, I thought the model to be very nice, and I very much appreciated seeing it. Of course, to avoid having to defend his model, and hearing any potential criticism from me, the easiest solution would have been to not bring it in to show me in the first place.

When I first started building models way back in the 1960s, models themselves were relatively crude, and the way my friends and I built them was even cruder! Starting in the 1970s, and accelerating in the 1980s, a change started to occur in the hobby. Firstly, the kits themselves improved, allowing a modeler to improve the look of his finished model, without actually improving any of his skills. Better engineered kits, with more detailed parts, higher quality decals, and lines of paint of better quality, all allowed the average modeler to improve the finished look of their models. And at the same time, new products began to be introduced that allowed those interested to start super-detailing their models, without having to be expert scratch builders. New “aftermarket” products in resin, etched metal, etc. began to hit the market. New tools as well, such as the airbrush, allowed those who

wished to utilize all these tools and products to raise themselves to another level of modeling. Finally, new “techniques” were introduced, by modelers such as Belgian Francois Verlinden, such as the use of “washes” to accent panel lines, dry brushing, pre and post shading, etc. A “class system” in effect started to form. The smaller numbers who wanted to actively exploit all these new products, tools and techniques, and the larger number of modelers (in my opinion anyway) who were quite content to build out of the box, or pretty close to it. The former were spurred on by the numerous modeling shows that started to spring up, wherein those wishing to take things to the limit could walk away with ribbons and public glory. Many others didn’t want the competition, so to speak, and kept their projects out of the spotlight. Why be seen to be building “lesser” models than this new breed of modeler? It’s a very strong willed person indeed who can come to a party driving a rusty Hyundai and wearing a rented tux, when everyone else who shows up is driving a Cadillac and wearing Armani.

I have named a syndrome for this change in the way modelers view the world, and why some, if not many modelers might no longer wish to show off their models “in public.” I will label it the Ted Holowchuk Syndrome, after my good friend of many years who is no longer with us. There are two parts to the Ted Effect. Firstly, there is the fear that if your model isn’t up to the standards of the best modelers in the club, then it isn’t worth seeing. Not only not worth seeing in and of itself, but worse, having to put the “inferior” model **right next** to the masterpiece, and have everyone pass the “inferior” one completely, to crowd around and admire the masterpiece. This to some extent returns us to the fear of failure, in that many seem to think that if it “isn’t as good as Ted’s”, it isn’t any good. And why build a model, if it isn’t going to be any good. And if you do build such a creature, for goodness sake don’t bring it into the public spotlight!

The other half of the syndrome is that every model has to be built and finished perfectly, “just like Ted’s”. And even if you do build it OOTB (out of the box), you at least have to build a state-of-the-art Tamiyagawa kit, not the ancient Monogram or Frog. You can’t possibly build an old Monogram kit out of the box! Horror of horrors, finished in the kit decals no less! No, you either have to cut said kit up and remove all the “inaccurate bits”, and replace them with scratch-built marvels that Faberge would have been proud of. Or you need to add a million and one aftermarket etched metal and resin bits. The same even goes for a new, state of the art Tamiya kit. Forget putting it together competently from the box, kit decals, and all. No, it must have a cockpit by Aires, new exhausts from Moskit, new decals from Eagle Strike, all based on thorough research using the latest *Aero Details* book at \$40 from Japan. As Ted used to say, “Good enough never is”, which for many people means never finishing a project, as there is always “something” that can be improved upon. Or for many others, it means never tackling a project in the first place.

Another reason for buying, and not building, or for building very few models, is that perhaps this hobby has outgrown the social conditions we now find ourselves in today. Even OOTB, models take **time** to build. In many families, both husband and wife work, meaning that the evenings and weekends are used for “catching up” on household chores. If a family has children, the parents spend huge quantities of time ferrying them hither and yon to music lessons, dance recitals, soccer practice and games, etc. Those Americans blessed with a job are working longer and longer hours, while spending more and more time on the roads as part of the daily commute. The stresses of life are mounting, and many return home in the evenings simply wishing to “collapse” into a chair and put their feet up. Perhaps they read a magazine or a book to partake in our “hobby”, but seldom do they summon the strength to visit their hobby room for a couple of hours. Yet they

wish to be part of the hobby, and continue to buy kits for “the future”, when they hope to have more time.

Another reason for not showing your model at the club: fear of public speaking. I have discovered a number of members are terrified of getting up in front of the group, and talking about anything they might bring in for Show and Tell. I can relate. I am often very nervous when I get up to speak in front of the group, afraid that I will stumble over my words, or perhaps be asked a question that I can’t answer, and risk looking ignorant. Or suffer the fate of Brian Mulron, and have some wisecrack try to make the room laugh at my expense while I stand up in the spotlight, tongue tied, unable to adequately defend myself. Perhaps we should introduce a “display only” table, wherein a member can plunk down their models, with a card next to each one, stating name, subject matter, scale etc. Terry and Keith will know that these models won’t be talked about during show and tell. Those interested can approach the builder before Show and Tell and discuss the models at their leisure one on one, a much less threatening situation for many.

When I joined IPMS Seattle back in 1985, I did so for one main reason. For years, I had modeled alone, and had been quite happy to live that way. However, the more I got into the hobby, the more I wanted to see **all** the models being produced, built! I knew I certainly didn’t have the time or the inclination to build them all. So I looked around for a way out of this dilemma. The obvious answer was to join a club with lots of other modelers, many with different tastes than myself, and together we could build all the kits being produced, and show them off to one another. Yet I keep running into guys who tell me their models “won’t inspire anyone”, so why bother bringing them in to show to others? To which I respond, why do they have to inspire anyone other than the person building them? What is wrong with just bringing in your work, and letting those who want to look them over have the pleasure of doing so, and perhaps discussing your work with

you? After all, why else do people come to the club, if not to look at the models of others? Think about it, if it was announced that models were no longer allowed to be shown at IPMS Seattle meetings, would there be much point in showing up? For what purpose? A short chat perhaps, the picking over of some second hand kits (our larger vendors Supply Depot and Skyway are no longer in attendance), and then home again? And if you come to see the models of others, how about making sure the others can have something, by bringing in your own work?

We all of us spend too much time worrying about the "other guy." In fact, we are bombarded with daily reminders that what the other guy thinks is important. It keeps the gigantic wheels of commerce oiled, worrying if we are wearing the latest fashions, that we smell okay, that our face is Gillette smooth. We drive fancy cars, not because we think they are what is needed to get us from A to B, but because we want others to see us in a better light. Surely you are no better off as a human being driving a Lincoln Navigator than a Toyota Corolla, but that's not what the advertisers from Madison Avenue want you to think.

The same goes for modeling. We worry too much about what the other guy is doing, or what we fear he might say, or even think. If I had a dime for every time I heard it mentioned about what "the judges" might think of a given model, I would be a billionaire by now. Or what the "color police" might say, or the local Luftwaffe "expert" might think about a given Bf 109 someone is building. Build the damned thing for yourself, to whatever standards you feel comfortable with, not what you hope others want to see in your models. And when you are done, be proud of what you have done, and bring the finished results in to the club, and share it with the rest of us.

I am becoming a great fan of OOTB, Out of the Box Modeling. Why? Because if I don't spend a ton of time researching a project to death, and taking an excellent kit

and trying to make it perfect, why then I can build many more of the models I find catch my fancy. I actually **do** want to build all the models I have stacked to the ceiling in my basement. Why else would I have bought them in the first place, if I didn't intend to build them? Sort of like buying a 20-year-old Malt Scotch, and just looking at it on the shelf. The stuff is meant to be drunk, to be savored as it goes down the throat. As models are meant to be built. So build them, and bring them in for the rest of us to enjoy as well. If I got up in front of the club, and started spouting on about how all guns should be banned, that you should all vote Communist at the next election, and that Americans as a group deserve to be blown up by terrorists, you would completely ignore my comments, and think me nuts. So why pay attention to other negative comments you **think** I or anyone else might have about your models? Don't worry about what the next guy says or thinks. Be true only to yourself. And enjoy this hobby to its fullest, which means regularly building models. And do a guy like me a favor, and bring in your models so I can enjoy seeing them as well.

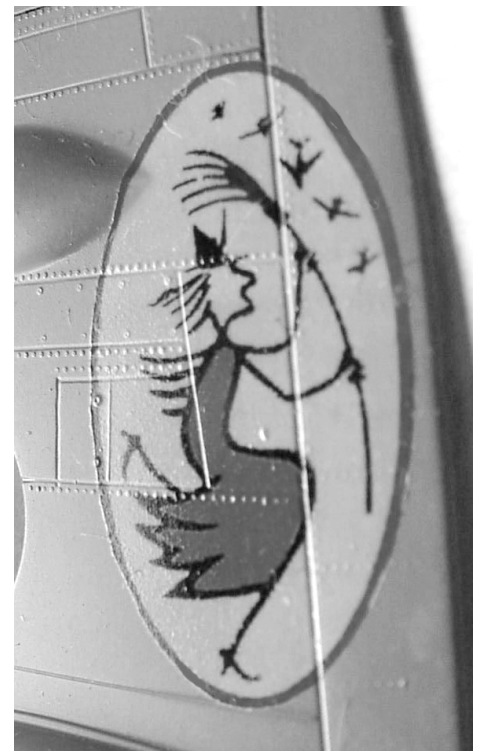
Testors Custom Decal System

from page 8

My test "hack" was a 1/48th scale Fujimi Spitfire wing with a combination of fine engraved and raised details. It was painted with a medium gray and dark green camouflage overcoated with Future. The first thing I noticed when applying the decals is that they are very thin and fragile. It doesn't take a lot of poking around to tear them. The next thing I noticed is that there is not much glue on the backside. Floating them around on a big puddle until they are in position and then draining the lake leaves them without any adhesive and lots of silvering. Floating them around on a big puddle of Micro Set makes them even *more* fragile. I didn't even go near the Micro Sol. They also have a tendency to curl under. Several destroyed decals later, here's what worked:

- 1) Wet the paper side of the cut out decal and set aside until the adhesive has loosened.
- 2) Place a small drop of Micro Set on the model where the decal will go.
- 3) Slide one edge of the decal off the paper and position it on the model. Slip out the rest of the paper.
- 4) Gently work out the excess setting solution and air from under the decal. I pressed firmly with the side of a wetted cotton swab in the center of the decal and *rolled* it outward toward the edge. If you use a wiping motion, the decal will tear.

Pretty standard stuff. They just aren't forgiving, so be prepared and print extras. But, it's worth the trouble. They settled down easily and the surface detail shows through very nicely as you can see in figure 5.



While I am pleasantly surprised that the results are as good as they are, there are some problems and limitations inherent in the process.

First, and most important, you can't print white with an inkjet printer.

Second, inkjet inks aren't very opaque. On my samples printed on the clear stock, the yellow nearly disappeared on any background color but white. The red and blue looked fine on medium gray, but not dark green. Only the black was opaque enough for all background colors. All the decals printed on the white stock looked *great* regardless of the background color they were applied to.

Third, edge bleed can be a problem. Some of my samples bled and some didn't. Trimming before fixing didn't always seem to be prevent the edge bleed. But, I may not have put on enough fixative in these cases. So don't trim the decal right to a printed edge if you can help it. If you must, trim first, then fix and be extra careful pressing these decals down around the edges.

Working around these limitations requires some finesse. Here are some suggestions for various situations.

1) If your decal is just black and your model is painted any color, you'll have no problems. Just print on the clear stock. Don't trim near the printed edges.

2) If your decal is any color and your model is painted white, print on the clear stock. Don't trim near the printed edges.

3) If your decal is going to have some colors other than black, your model is going to be some color other than white, and the decal is a simple shape that you can easily trim around, print it on white stock. Trim the decal out before coating it with the fixative. It can be tricky to trim *exactly* on the printed edge, so there's a good chance of leaving little unwanted slivers of white showing. One solution is to draw your decal a hair wider than needed then trim a hair *inside* the printed edge. There's some risk of edge bleed, so be extra careful applying the decal.

4) In the same situation as 3, an alternative solution is to paint white on your model where the decal will go. Print your decal on clear stock. You will not have to trim near the printing and worry about edge bleed. You can use your artwork to create a paint mask (with Fisket paper, for example) that is slightly narrower than your decal. This will avoid having the white peeking out from under the decal if it isn't positioned exactly. This technique will be particularly effective where the edge of the decal is dark.

5) White or light colored lettering going on a dark painted model is the worst situation. The shapes are too complex to trim around, so 3 and 4 aren't practical. The only solution I can come up with is illustrated by that dark rectangle with the white lettering in seen in figure 4. Design your decal with a wide border or background in matching your model's intended color (i.e. Olive Drab or Dark Sea Blue). Either print on white stock or use clear stock and paint a white patch on the model. Apply the decal first, border and all, and airbrush your matching model color *over* the edge of the decal's border. Obviously there'll be some trial and error getting a good color match between your decal and your model paint. In a perfect world, you could spray some model paint on a card and scan it to get a digitized sample of your model's color into PhotoShop. Unfortunately, consumer grade scanners, monitors and printers are not color calibrated consistently, but it might get you close enough for a first try. Fine tuning the paint to match the decal is probably going to be easier than the other way around.

In summary, there are no shortcuts to making your own decals, no matter how you do it (including traditional silk-screening). Creating the artwork is the biggest hurdle for the average modeler. If you can get passed that one, and don't have an ALPS dry film printer, then the Testors Custom Decal System is definitely worth a try. It's inexpensive, and what it does, it does well.

PrezNotes

from page 1

Anybody know of an imminent release of a 1/48th BT-13 in **any** form? My *Tora, Tora, Tora* Val is going nowhere fast with the "kit" I'm using as a conversion.

This just in: On the Hyperscale discussion forum this morning, the question was asked: How many modelers does it take to screw in a light bulb? This answer was the best in my opinion, because it had me rolling on the floor with laughter. It was provided by David Walker.

Fifteen: one to screw in the bulb, three to say he did it wrong, one to disagree and say he did it right after all and he has the photos to prove it, two to say the whole procedure was covered over on ARC a week ago so it's "old news", one to say the light looks toy-like, three who feel the toy-like comment was unnecessary, one who wants to know what Future is called in Nepal, two who actually know, and one guy who just wants to make derogatory statements about France.

And in the immortal words of Steven Wright: "You can't have everything - where would you put it?"

Lastly - season's greetings and best wishes for the New Year from your executive board, Norm, Keith, and myself!

We'll see you at the meeting,

Terry

IPMS Seattle 2004 Membership Renewal

2004 is fast approaching, and it is dues time again. As is our usual practice, a renewal form is included with this, the December newsletter and then we will do it again in the January newsletter.

Everyone on the current (2003) mailing list will receive the January newsletter, but those who have not renewed will have a "Last Issue" note on the mailing envelope. If you do not renew prior to the mailing of the February newsletter, you will not receive that or subsequent issues.

Dues are **\$24.00**, make checks payable to: **IPMS Seattle** and either bring it to the December or January meetings, or mail it to

IPMS Seattle
16510 NE 99th St.
Redmond, WA 98052

IPMS SEATTLE MEMBERSHIP 2004 RENEWAL FORM

Full Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone No. Area Code (_____) _____

E-mail address (optional) _____

Meeting Reminder

December 13

10 AM - 1 PM

Bring goodies to eat and drink!

North Bellevue Community/Senior Center
4063-148th Ave NE, Bellevue

Directions: From Seattle or from I-405, take 520 East to the 148th Ave NE exit. Take the 148th Ave North exit (the second of the two 148th Ave. exits) and continue north on 148th until you reach the Senior Center. The Senior Center will be on your left. The Center itself is not easily visible from the road, but there is a signpost in the median.

