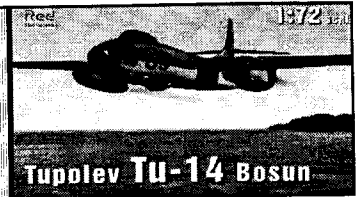


Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS-USA
November 1998

PREZNOTES



The old editorial well is somewhat dry this month, but I have a collection of random thoughts that I haven't been able to fit into a full page or anywhere else. So, I'll dispense with them all at once.

From the humor collective: "Very funny Scotty, now beam down my clothes."

One of my current projects entails the use of four colors of camouflage. Things must've been working really well as I was able to apply all four colors in the span of less than two hours. The thing that surprised me the most (other than the fact that I don't have much respraying to do) is the fact that I used four different types of paint; Testors enamel, Tamiya acrylic, Floquil, and Modelmaster. They all worked. Very well. What happened? I don't know, but the airbrush gods were looking out for me that evening. It brings up the question: Do you use only one type of paint when you are working on one model?

My modeling room used to be half of the main room downstairs, a very cramped space, the other half being our eldest son's bedroom. We decided that we needed the space for a family room and we offered to lower his rent (to \$0.00) if he moved back upstairs. He did, we took out a wall, and we now have a family room, of which I have a corner of for my model workbench. Jill and I have both our bookshelves there now and the computer has also been moved into the room. There is considerably more space in my modeling area of the room - I don't have to turn sideways to get to my books now. I discovered however, that since the room was rearranged, that I still don't have any more room for magazines than I did before and they are piling up on the floor. Several *Preznotes* ago I commented that I may have to start cutting them and keeping only the articles I want. Any suggestions on where to start?

Whilst rearranging the room I found about six or seven projects waiting to be finished, along with references that were

all organized and so on, but a few of these projects I had started in the '70s. Any suggestions on how to remove 25-year old Scotch tape from a Frog Javelin canopy? Ewww.

I also found a large portion of my slide collection. I used to attend a lot of airshows and take a lot of pictures until picture taking became a part of my job. Hundreds of aircraft photographed in the 70's and 80's. Another project to start...

One thing I have discovered as President of this group is that I get a lot of phone calls asking how to solve a certain problem and I really enjoy passing along what knowledge of things I have to fellow modelers. Whether it's a paint problem, an airbrush problem, or how was Fuchida's "Kate" was really painted at Pearl Harbor, it doesn't matter. Any help, no matter how small or insignificant it may be, gives me a feeling of accomplishment, knowing that I may have improved someone's modeling a tiny bit. Just remember though, whoever (whomever?) is the next President of IPMS/Seattle will have assume this great mantle of responsibility to know everything about everything and be prepared to answer for it. So there. Forewarned is forearmed. Thank goodness no one has asked about fixing a leaky faucet or trying to explain the current situation in Washington DC!

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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 each month, (see below for actual meeting dates), at the Washington National Guard Armory, off 15th Ave. NW, just to the west side of Queen Anne Hill in Seattle. See the back page for a map. Our meetings begin at 10:00 AM, 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 \$12 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 the form below for further details. 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. 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 1998 meeting schedule is as follows. To avoid conflicts with previously scheduled IMPS events and National Guard activities at the Armory, please note that some of our meeting days fall on the third Saturday of the month, not the traditional second Saturday. We suggest that you keep this information in a readily accessible place. All meetings begin at 10:00 AM.

NOVEMBER 14, 1998 (2nd Saturday)
JANUARY 16, 1999 (3rd Saturday)

DECEMBER 12, 1998 (2nd Saturday)
FEBRUARY 13, 1999 (2nd Saturday)

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The P-39 in Perspective

by Greg Reynolds

The Bell P-39 Airacobra was not one of the great fighter aircraft of World War Two, but it does deserve a place of honor with the P-40 and F4F. It was one of those aircraft with which the Army Air Force fought courageously against a rising tide of a numerically and technologically superior enemy. The P-39 didn't win the war, but it bought needed time to bring another generation of aircraft into service. The drama of the desperate battles in the South Pacific is captured in the acclaimed, and recently reissued, classic *The Thin Red Line* by James Jones. Another recommendation: *Nanette: Her Pilot's Love Story* by Edwards Park (now out of print), which provides a unique perspective on the P-39 story.

In *Nanette*, Park observes, "There were really only two aircraft that could excite a flyer. One was the P-51 Mustang, lovely to look at, honest, efficient, hardworking and dependable. In those days she was thought of as a wife, and I know men who married her, back then, and are still in love with her. The other was the P-39, the Airacobra. It was slim, with a gently curved tail section, a smoothly faired-in air intake, and a perfectly rounded nose cone with its ugly, protruding cannon. But the Airacobra was lazy and slovenly and given to fits of vicious temper. It was a sexy machine, and rotten. *Nanette* was like that..."

The Airacobra was the product of a young company. Bell was founded in 1935, and the P-39 was only their second aircraft, following the FM-1 Airacuda. This showed in the design's numerous novel features. One advanced proposal was a supplemental rocket engine to improve the climb rate. This was rejected by the Air Corps, but the ideas that were accepted were radical enough: a mid-engine (to improve maneuverability by placing the largest mass at the center of gravity), a 37-mm cannon (a huge aerial weapon then) firing through the propeller hub, tricycle landing gear (which would not be common

for a single-seat fighter until the jet age), a roll cage, armor protection for the pilot, and a car-door type cockpit entry. The first prototype also included a turbo-supercharged Allison engine.

The XP-39 flew on April 6, 1938, only 18 months after the contract was signed. It turned in a remarkable performance for its day: 390 mph at 20,000 ft., and only five minutes to climb there. It maneuvered and handled well. Bell made sure there was lots of publicity. There was little mention of the fact that the prototype lacked a few military essentials: guns and gas.

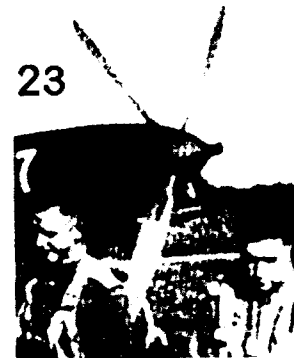
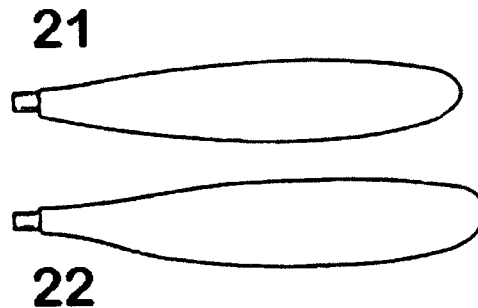
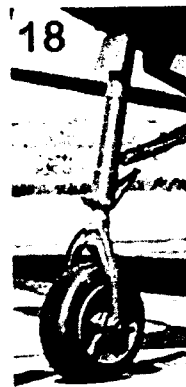
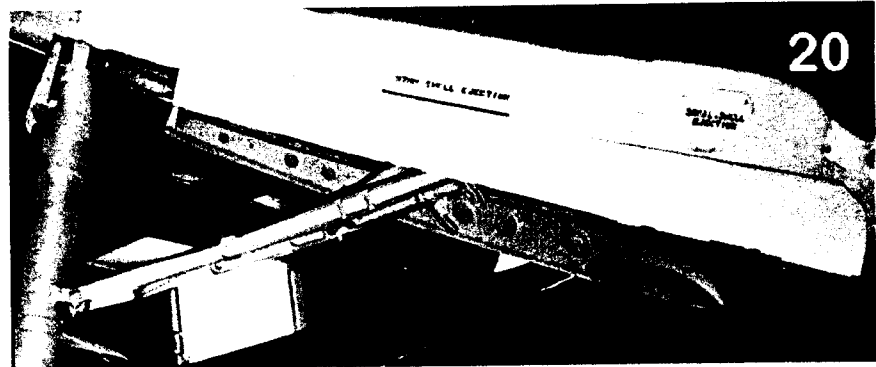
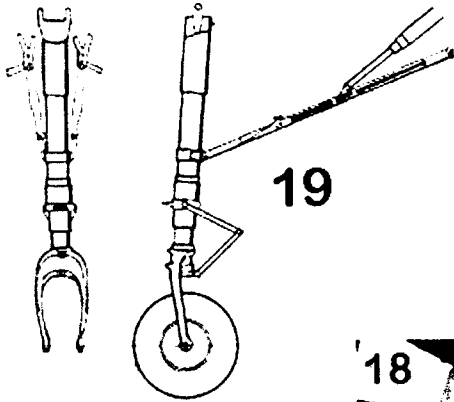
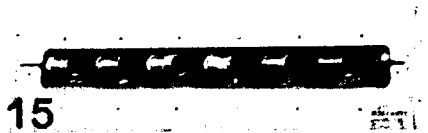
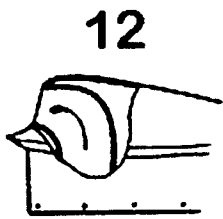
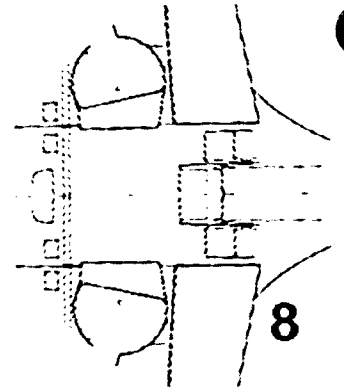
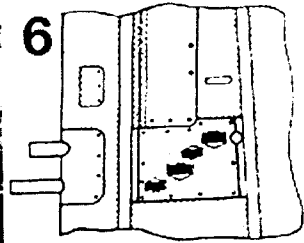
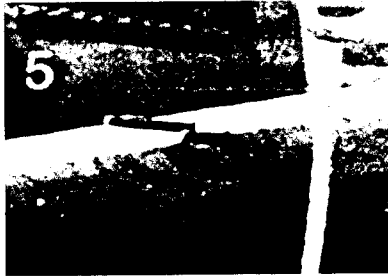
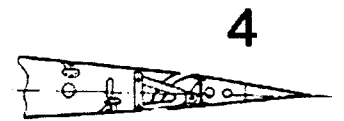
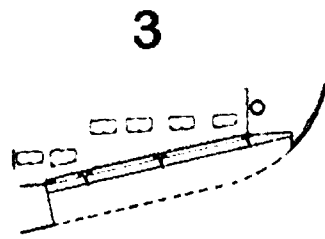
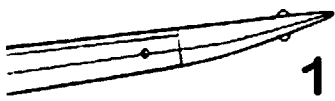
Other factors also tarnished this auspicious beginning. The Army's strategic thinking in pre-war years was influenced by isolationist doctrine. With the continental US geographically out of reach of enemy bombers, the role of the fighter was seen as coastal defense and ground support. The turbo-supercharger was ordered removed, a decision that proved fatal to many pilots. The Air Corps and NACA had other suggestions as well; more armor, more guns, and self-sealing gas tanks. *Nanette* had a weight problem. From the XP-39 to the P-39D she had ballooned up from a fully loaded weight of 6,200 lbs. to 8,200 lbs. This additional weight and the removal of the turbo-supercharger were blows from which the Airacobra would not recover. Various combinations of engine, armament and fuel load would be tinkered with for the rest of her career, but the Airacobra was now a ground support aircraft, only at her best below 15,000 ft.

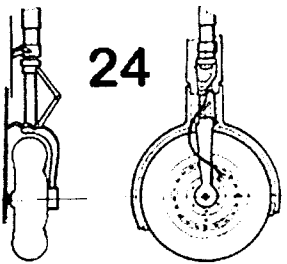
No-one at Bell bothered to mention these developments to the British. Desperate for aircraft, they had placed orders for 675 P-39s (originally naming it the Caribou), taking the prototype's performance at face value. No British pilot would evaluate the P-39 until aircraft were delivered to England in July 1941. When they did evaluate the delivered aircraft, they were justifiably outraged. They produced a

whole laundry list of complaints about their Airacobra Mk.I. Chief among these was the fact that the maximum speed was 33 mph slower than expected, and it was at 13,000 ft., not 20,000 ft. The climb rate had deteriorated to 15 minutes to 20,000 ft. Mock dogfights with a captured Bf 109E below 15,000 ft. revealed that the Airacobra was superior in speed, turning, and diving. Against the Spitfire Mk.V, below 15,000 ft. it was superior in speed, only a little slower in turning, and inferior in climb. Above 15,000 ft., the Airacobra lost to both on all counts. The only RAF squadron equipped with Airacobras, No. 601 Squadron, flew only four missions with them before they were withdrawn from service. Those that had been delivered were sent to Russia, many with crates unopened. One Airacobra did gain a measure of fame with the British; test pilot Eric "Winkle" Brown landed AH574 on an aircraft carrier, the first single-engined, tricycle landing gear fighter ever to land on a carrier. As for those that were still undelivered, it was now December 1941, the Air Corps turn to be desperate for aircraft.

After Pearl Harbor, the AAF shoveled everything they could find into the Pacific. This included 179 undelivered RAF Airacobra Is. These were designated P-400 and rushed, still with RAF camouflage and serial numbers, along with the P-39D, to the South Pacific with little training and no support. For example, the 67th FG was sent to Tontouta, New Caledonia, equipped with 45 P-400s and two P-39Ds. When they arrived on March 15, 1942, the aircraft were in crates, there were no manuals, no spares, few tools, and only three of the 36 pilots had previous P-39 time. The airfield was still under construction and there was only a single truck to bring the crates over the 35-mile dirt road from the harbor. Nevertheless, working around the clock in the open, in the rain and mud, they flew the first P-400 on March 28 and completed one aircraft a day thereafter.

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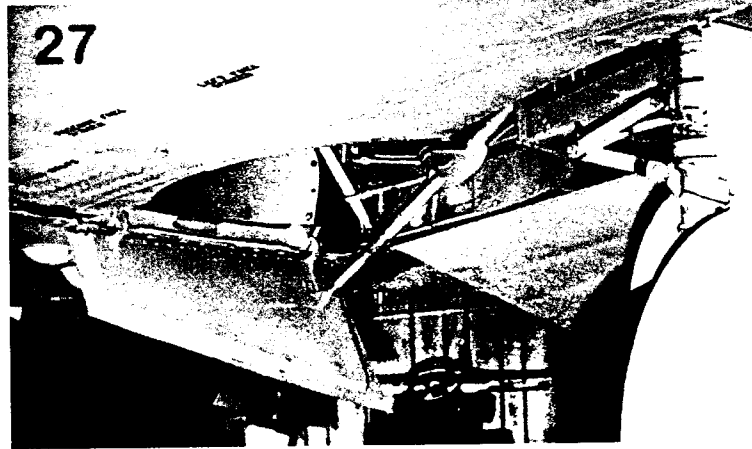




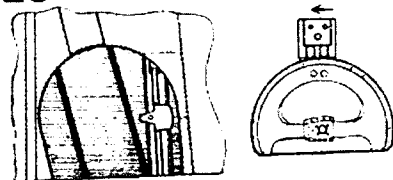
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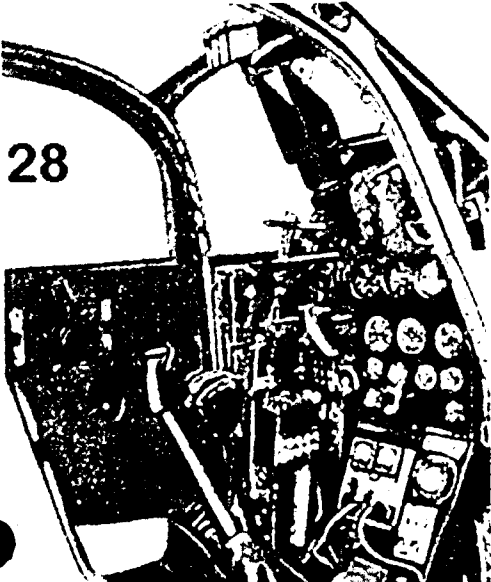
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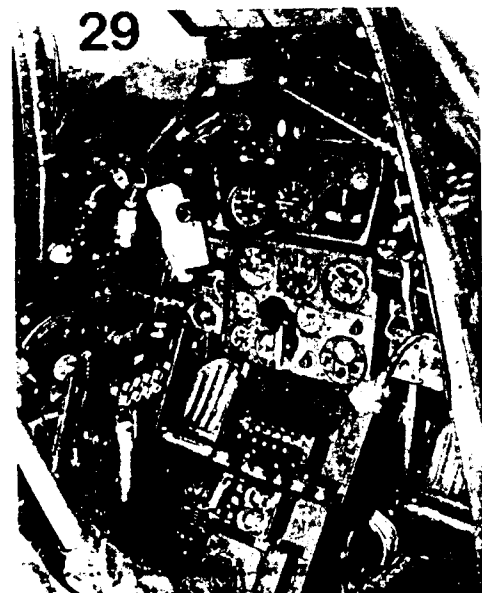
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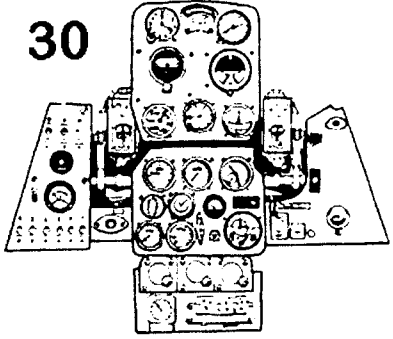
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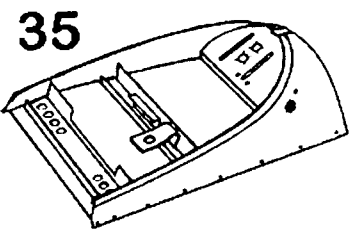
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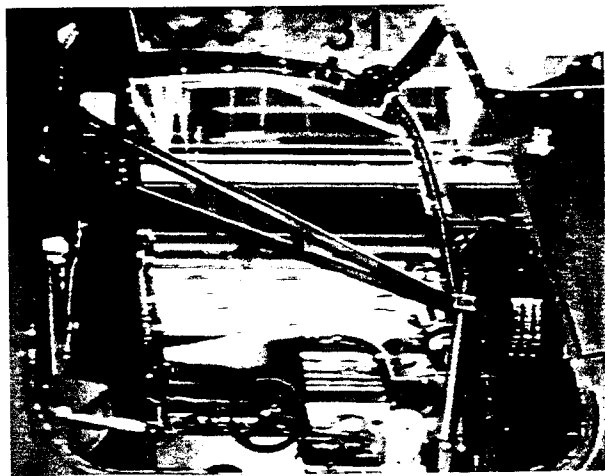
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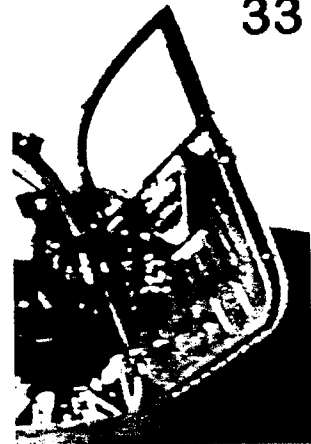
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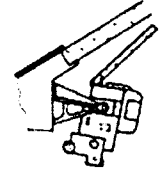


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The P-39 in Perspective

from page 3

The Airacobra could not compete with the Zero, except on the deck where its excellent maneuverability and slight speed advantage could be exploited. The P-39's poor climb rate and low airspeed at altitude meant that most air raids went unopposed and dogfights were avoided. With dark humor, the P-400 was referred to as a "P-39 with a Zero on its tail."*

However, combat experience would validate all other aspects of Bell's innovative design. The location of the engine behind the cockpit initially concerned pilots, who feared that it would be a hazard in a crash. However, an AAF study of crashes showed that the robust fuselage assembly stayed intact during a crash, and survivability was high.

The nose gear, while spindly-looking, proved to be strong. Being steerable, it also handled better on unimproved dirt strips, snow, and ice than tail draggers. It simplified take off, since under most conditions it could be flown right off the runway without flaps or rotation.

The only comment I've found about the car door is a left-handed compliment, "It was an easy plane to (bail) out of!"

The long extension shaft, a potential maintenance problem, proved to be extremely reliable. Although the vibration it transmitted through the cockpit contributed to pilot fatigue, the engine life for an Allison in a P-39 was twice as long as one in a P-40.

Despite frequent jams and a low firing rate, many pilots preferred the 37-mm cannon over the other armament combinations tried on the P-39, because of the terrific punch. Capt Rice, flying with the 54th FG in the Aleutians, destroyed two A6M2-N Rufes with only four 37-mm rounds. The 40th and 41st FG both reported Zeros completely disintegrating when hit head-on by 37-mm cannon fire, and whole tail assemblies of bombers being blown off by single rounds.

The guns did require frequent attention, and they were hard to get at, but generally the Airacobra needed little maintenance, a real benefit in front-line conditions. It was said that the P-39 would fly with only the airspeed indicator and gearbox pressure gauge working. The Airacobra came to be regarded as a very rugged airplane that could absorb a lot of punishment, provided the engine or cooling system were not hit.

It was a splendid attack plane. It was a very stable gun platform for strafing. In dive bombing, it could release a 500 lb. bomb from a vertical dive at 2,000 ft., and pull out as low as 40 ft. The 67th FS trained with dive speeds reaching 600 mph (indicated). For flammable targets, the 35th FG presaged napalm, and used 75 gallon drop tanks with 50% oil, 50% av-gas, and small incendiaries strapped to the outside.

The Airacobra was largely withdrawn from AAF service during 1943, although it continued in some specialized units supporting ground operations and observation in the Pacific, Africa, and Italy. In March of 1944, William Shomo, later known as "The Flying Undertaker," was still flying a P-39Q known as *Snooks 2nd* with the 82nd TRG in the Pacific. The 350th FG was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation for actions supporting the Italian invasion on April 6, 1944. The P-39 also saw some minor use by other air forces: Australian, Portuguese (who obtained 18 P-39Ds by accident in December 1942, when USAAF pilots ferrying the aircraft to Tunisia got lost), Free French, Polish units in the VVS, and Italian Co-Belligerent, some of these operating well after the war. However, the major foreign use of the P-39 was with the Soviet VVS.

Ironically, the Soviets found themselves in a situation just the opposite of the Air Corps. Pre-war Soviet military planning was influenced by the high-altitude overflights of the Luftwaffe's Ju 86P. Consequently, the fighter then in planning, which became the MiG-3, was designed for altitude. When the German invasion came, it was largely a ground war. The MiG-3 had to be pressed into service for which it was unsuited, and was withdrawn from low-

altitude units as soon as new types were available. Starting with those first hand-me-down P-400s from the RAF, the Russians would ultimately receive about 4,750 P-39s, about half of all production. The VVS also received 2,421 P-63 Kingcobras, the P-39's successor, and was its only WW2 combat operator, though the French later put the type to good use in Indochina. Russia's second highest scoring ace, Aleksandr Pokryshkin, scored his first 12 victories in the MiG-3, and later 20 of his 59 total kills in the P-39. Dmitri Glinka, Russia's fourth highest scoring ace, gained 21 of his 50 kills in a P-39. The Russians appreciated the Airacobra's qualities. It was perfect for the Eastern Front; rugged, low maintenance, armored, agile at low altitude, and a stable gun platform with good firepower. The Russian pilots called it "Britchik," or "Little Shaver," after the Russian term for strafing, but they used it effectively in air-to-air combat, as well, mostly against the Luftwaffe's medium bombers. Another compliment may be found in imitation. The successors to the MiG-3, the LaGG-3, Yak-3, and Yak-9, all had 20-mm cannons firing through their prop hubs [*The I-26 (Yak-1 series) and I-22 (LaGG-1 series) were designed from the outset with a hub-mounted cannon, long before the Soviets received their first P-39 - ED*], the Yak-9T, a 37-mm. Even into the jet age, the MiGs -9, -15, -17, and -19 all packed 37-mm cannons. *Nanette* must have made a good impression.

(* the P-400 designation was adopted from one used in the British contract. It was not unique. Anyone know what a P-322 was?)

The Academy P-39Q/N

The Academy 1/72nd scale P-39 is a welcome updated model of this significant aircraft, but it is not the definitive Airacobra, nor does it obsolete the venerable Heller kit. (Either of which make the ancient Airfix, Revell, or Frog kits obsolete.)

The Academy kit is sharply molded in light gray plastic with finely scribed panel lines. There is a nice level of detail with finely molded separate exhaust stacks, gun

barrels, bomb rack, and landing gear linkages. The cockpit features a very nicely detailed instrument panel and separate roll bar with clear armored glass. Another nice feature is that the whole left door, including the window, is molded as a separate clear piece with some interior detailing. The canopy is commendably thin, though not quite crystal clear. The kit includes several optional parts; six and twelve stub exhausts, 20-mm and 37-mm prop hubs, and guns for the four-gun wing and underwing pods. There is also a choice of a drop tank or 500 lb. bomb. The decals are for (then) Lt. Shomo's P-39Q *Snooks 2nd* and Russian ace Major Sirotin's P-39N. Other than being a little vivid to my eye, the decals look well printed. Shomo's small personal markings are particularly nice, though I believe the small "995" belongs on both cockpit doors, and only one is provided. The OD surround for Shomo's serial number looks awfully dark. I'm not sure it isn't printed black. The only fit problem I've noticed in dry assembly is the mating of the fuselage to the leading edge of the wing. The fuselage drops down too far when it rests on the lower wing half. This creates a bad alignment of the wing roots on the top side. Adding about .010" shim to the inside of the center section of the lower wing should take care of this. Most of the other criticisms I have of the kit are pretty nitpicky. I think most modelers will be happy with it out of the box. But for those with a really sharp eye and sharper X-acto knife, I offer the following observations:

- 1) I find the wing too thin. This is most noticeable at the wing tip. The real wing has a pronounced "slashed" tip. The lower surface tapers upward sharply outboard from the ailerons. See figure 1. This is almost invisible on the Academy kit. Heller did a much better job of capturing this feature. You might be able to restore the proper shape by inserting a .010" or .015" shim between the wing halves where the break begins and pinching the tips together.
- 2) The fabric detailing of the ailerons is pretty sad. The upper surface of the aileron is smooth and the lower surface ribs are very crude. The shape

isn't quite right, either. The ailerons should extend about .080" further toward the tip than molded. The tapered segment of the ailerons outboard of the last hinge is exaggerated. Figure 2 shows this taper to good effect. The ailerons are aerodynamically balanced, so they look bigger from the bottom than the top, as shown in figure 4. Figure 3 shows the underside of the wing with the aileron removed so you can see the location of the upper and lower gaps at the same time. If you have the old Heller kit lying around, you might want to reshape the Academy wing and fit the Heller ailerons.

- 3) The wing guns do not lie on the centerline of the wing as molded. They are not on a horizontal line, either. The outer gun is quite a bit lower than the inner gun, as shown in figure 5. Figure 6 shows the shell ejection slots of the N model.
- 4) The radiator duct does not protrude below the wing surface as molded. The wing should be completely smooth between the wheel wells. The moving part of the radiator and the oil cooler ducts are also too far forward. See figures 2, 7, 8, and 9. Note that in figure 2 that the radiator vent is fully open, and in figure 9 it is fully closed. The kit ducts and vents should be filled from the inside and sanded into oblivion. Build new movable vents about where the kit opening starts.
- 5) I find the carburetor scoop too close to the end of the canopy, its opening face is too vertical, and it is too short. See figures 10, 11, and 12. Sand the opening back a little and extend the fairing aft a little with putty. It should go back nearly to the radio mast. Add the small vane inside the scoop for extra points.
- 6) The kit provides the 12-stub exhaust stacks used on the P-400, P-39F, and P-39G. Unfortunately, the stubs appear as six distinct pairs. Figure 13 shows (poorly), that the gap between number six and number seven is slightly larger. Otherwise, they are

basically equally spaced. You may be able to correct the kit parts with some very careful filing. A wasteful option is to carve them out of a P-63 kit, as the Kingcobra also used this style of exhaust. For comparison, figure 14 shows the Airacobra Mk.Ia flame damper style exhaust, and figure 15 shows the six-stub exhaust used everywhere else.

- 7) The kit's nose wheel is not appropriate for the Q model. Figures 16, 17, and 18 show three different types of nose wheels. The first, with the small hub, was used up through the F and M models. The second, with the large smooth hub, was introduced on the L and Q models. Unfortunately, with overlapping contracts, it's a little murky what was going on with the models in between. The last, with the large open hub, appears to have been introduced with the Q-20. Check your photographs carefully for the aircraft you select. Figures 19 and 20 show additional details of the nose gear struts and doors.
- 8) The propeller provided in the kit doesn't match the advertised variants. It is the three-blade 10'-5" diameter Curtiss Electric used in the Airacobra Mk.I/Ia, P-400, and P-39s C, D, D-1, D-2, L and M-1. This blade profile is shown in figure 21. A three-blade 11'-1" diameter Aeroproducts "Aeroprop," shown in figure 22, was used on P-39s F, G, J, K, and Q's -1, -5, -10, -15, -20, and -30. The three-blade 11'-7" diameter Aeroproducts prop used on the Ns is not shown, but it is probably similar to figure 22. Lastly, a four-blade 11'-7" diameter Aeroproducts propeller, shown in figure 23, was used on the P-39 Qs -21 and -25. Clear? The Heller kit includes a four-blade prop, but it is the diameter and profile of the Curtiss Electric.

More Details

If you are so inclined, the Academy kit would benefit from some additional detailing. Eduard set #72-123 was designed for the Heller kit, but I'm sure that most of

it could be adapted with little trouble. It includes photo-etched parts for the cockpit, wheel wells, gear doors, flaps, and radiator. As new company, Moskit, has also just released a series of hollow, burnt steel exhausts stacks including #72-16 for the P-39. I have not seen these yet, but look forward to them.

The main gear and main wheel wells of the Academy kit are simple but basically correct. Figures 24 through 27 will help you redefine them if desired. You can find photos of both the diamond tread and radial tread in figure 26. Do not be misled by the illustration in Squadron/Signal's *In Action* book. The main gear yoke has a single arm, not two.

Figure 30 shows the main instrument panel for a D. Figures 28 and 29 show the cockpit of unidentified mid-production models, possibly Ns. Notice that although the drive shaft runs through the cockpit between the pilot's legs, very little of it shows. The base of the joystick has a very large flexible boot that pretty much fills up the space between the front edge of the seat pan and the tilted radio panel. Figure 31 is a factory shot (D model?) through the cockpit with the seat removed. There's a brace holding the stick centered, probably while the controls are being rigged. With the controls out you can clearly see the controls to the right and left of the seat pan. Also note the location of the throttle quadrant, just visible behind the stick, protruding from the left door jam. It can also be seen in figure 28. All of these details would be visible if you built the model with the doors open. Figure 32 shows an interesting diorama possibility, illustrating that, just like a car door, the windows could be rolled down as well! Inside details of the right door are shown in figure 33. Figure 34 shows the gun sight, and 35 the radio bay behind the pilot. Despite what you see in Squadron's *In Action* drawings, photos rarely show radio gear under the rear canopy, so this area must have been pretty bare most of the time. The cockpit looks pretty dark. All the instrument and equipment panels are black. The airframe walls and insides of the doors look pretty dark, too. They may be a dark green chromate or even Olive Drab.

If you want a wild conversion, figures 36 and 37 show one of the ugliest P-39 variants ever made. Following Pearl Harbor, Bell modified a P-39D with a mock-up 350-gallon external tank, and then installed a real 370-gallon tank on a P-39J. The experiment was done to find out if P-39s could be flown directly to Hawaii. The modification was never used in service, but Bell test pilot Jack Woolams flew the modified P-39J non-stop from March Field, California, to Bolling Field, Washington, DC, on October 2, 1942.

References

The most useful and accessible are:

P-39 Airacobra in Action by Ernie McDowell. (Squadron Signal #1043, 1980). Excellent photos, drawings and color schemes. A few inaccuracies in the sketches and the text isn't very deep, but otherwise it's the best single source. (Figures 5, 11, 17)

Air International Volume 22 No. 1 and No. 2. (Jan. and Feb. 1982). "The Contentious Cobra"; a two-part *Warbirds* feature with many good photos, cutaway. (Figures 2,5,13)

Used in preparing this article:

Air International Volume 1 No. 3. Focuses on the RAF experience.

American Fighters of World War Two: Volume One by Rene Francillon. (Hylton Lacy, 1968)

Koku Fan Drawing #32-29 by Hashimoto. (Figure 1)

Istrenitel P-39 Airacobra, Russian monograph. (Figures 4, 8, 19, 21, 22, 24, 30)

Krylia Rodiny 8/89. Russian magazine. (Figures 3, 12, 25, 28, 35)

NASM Archival Video Disc Collection (Figures 31, 32, 33, 36, 37)

Plany Modelarskie #79. Polish plan set (Figures 14, 39)

Plastic Kits Review 12/93. Czech magazine.

(Figure 23)

Profile #165; P-39 Airacobra. (Figure 7)

Scale Models Jan. and Feb. 1982. Heller kit review.

WW2 Aircraft Fact Files: US Army Air Force Fighters, Part 1, by William Green and Gordon Swanborough.

Two books I have not seen: *Warbird Tech #17: Airacobra and Kingcobra*, a brand new release, and *Airacobra Advantage* by Rick Mitchell, probably both excellent.

The ultimate book published so far on the P-39 is Birch Matthews' 416-page opus *Cobra: Bell Aircraft Corporation 1934-1946* (Schiffer Military History, 1996). An ex-Bell engineer, Birch's book covers the P-39 and P-63 in detail, and contains over 700 illustrations.

Two useful works on the Airacobra Mk.I are *Royal Air Force Fighters of World War Two: Volume One* by Francis Mason (Hylton Lacy, 1970), and *RAF Northern Europe 1936-45: Tomahawk, Airacobra, & Mohawk*, by R.C. Jones, #12 in the *Ducimus Camouflage and Markings* series. The latter contains official camouflage drawings for the Airacobra Mk.I, along with many photos.

Australian use is covered in Red Roo Models' *The Bell P-39 Airacobra in RAAF Service*.

Decals

AeroMaster 72-037	Stalin's Cobras
AeroMaster 72-110	P-39 Collection
SuperScale 72-134	RAF 601 Sq.; Free French GC III/6; 35th, 54th, 81st FG USAAF
SuperScale 72-267	P39s; 8 th , 35 th , 36 th , 71 st , and 82 nd squadrons
SuperScale 72-381	Soviet Aces; includes one P-39Q
Eduard 72-001	P-39 Airacobra
Eduard 72-002	Russian WW2 Aces; includes a P-39N and a P-39Q
Tally Ho! 7134	Portuguese AF; includes one P-39D
Tauro 72/552	Italian Co-Belligerent AF; includes four P-39s
Three Guys 72008	P-39 Airacobra
Three Guys 72011	Tuskegee Airmen in Italy; includes one 332 nd FG P-39Q
Cutting Edge 72035	P-39s #1

Still More Random Thoughts From a Confused Modeler

by Andrew Birkbeck

Saturday afternoon, somewhere in Seattle: "Hey, how's it going?," I say to the postman as he pulls up in his Jeep. I stand there in my raincoat; a light drizzle has been falling most of the day. "Great weather if you're a duck", he replies with a smile. Or if you're a modeler, I think to myself. "Anything in that pile other than bills or junk mail?" I ask, hopefully. "Some of those model magazines you get so excited over", he replies. My eyes light up at the thought of a leisurely evening reading my favorite literature!

Of course, I can't wait for the evening to roll around. The moment I have my coat off, I am tearing off the mailing envelope of a couple of my favorite modeling magazines, "Military Models in Review" (MMiR), and "Scale Aviation Modeller International" (SAMI). I can't wait to see the latest product information contained within the pages of these two mags, and to read the building reviews. "Wow, look at this" "This is superb" "Man, look at that, how'd they do that" etc, etc.

My wife says something to me about working on cleaning up the basement. She has to say it three times before I realize she is standing above me, lost in thought as I am. "Yeah, yeah, I'll get onto it shortly, but I have to just glance over these two mags I got in the mail today..." Two hours later, her nagging finally begins to grate on my nerves, so I go down and put in an hour and a half to appease "she who must be obeyed". All the while I am down working, I am thinking about some of the new products I have seen in the advertisements in the two magazines awaiting my return upstairs.

After the required basement cleaning, I return to the magazines. Look at that new Ju 87D-5 from Hasegawa, now I MUST have one of those. And that Tamiya Cromwell IV tank, I have been wanting one of those forever in injection plastic. Pity I

paid all that money for that resin Accurate Armour kit three years ago.....oh well. And hey, Aber has come out with a photo etched set for the Cromwell. And on page 22 of MMiR, I see that in the CMD advertisement, Fruilmodellismo has a set of link by link metal tracks. Way cool!!

I call up my pal Fred, to see if he has received his copies of the magazines. "Yeah, I got mine yesterday", says Fred. "Did you see that ad from Aeromaster, with the new decals for the Ju 87D, and those lost wax engine exhaust sets!", exclaims Fred. "Oh, you bet, I was looking at them carefully at the Nationals in Santa Clara", I say. "A MUST if you want to beat out that Holowchuk fellow at the contests, wouldn't you agree?," says Fred. Says I, "They certainly will help, if that's your goal". We chat amiably for half an hour, and after hanging up the phone, I head to the computer, and prepare a list of "Must Have" items from the pages of the two magazines:

Hasegawa 1/48th Ju 87D-5

Aeromaster decal sheet 48-666 Flaming Stukas (Russian Front 1945)

Aeromaster Stuka Exhausts

Aires Stuka resin interior set

Eduard set 48-287 "Stuka Exterior"

Aero Detail book "Ju 87 in Detail"

Tamiya Cromwell IV

Fruilmodellismo Cromwell track set

Aber 35060 Cromwell IV

Aber 35A60 Fender set for Cromwell IV

Ground Power #44 "Cromwell"

Two weeks and \$259.95 later, I have all the items I need. Some I got easily from local hobby shops ("Hey, Emil, you have this Hasegawa Ju 87D in stock yet?"). "You bet Man, is it way cool, or what!?", some of the harder to find items had to be mail ordered. And with all items in hand, I

descend to the modeling work bench. I sit for a couple of hours, pouring over the various items I have purchased, amazed at the detail of today's state of the art injection kits, gasping at the detail that the resin people are capable of, and wondering in awe at how the photo etched folks manage to get such fine detail on a flat piece of brass.

I study carefully the instructions of the two models, and peruse the after market sets' instructions trying to figure out how all this detail will fit into and onto the two models. I read the color and marking instructions, and check out those available within the pages of the two books I have bought, plus the seven others I pulled off my bookshelves on the same subjects. After some debate with myself, I decide on which schemes I will do. Tragically, the Aeromaster sheet I had ordered for the Stuka doesn't cover the example I have chosen. However, I note that their sheet 48-667 "Stukas in Europe Pt. 24" has the exact scheme! I will call Kevin Callahan tomorrow...

Following my two hours of working out which schemes I will build my two new models in, I note that the workbench is currently occupied with a partially built Tamiya P-51D and a DML Sherman. So I pack up the various aftermarket sets into the Ju 87 and Cromwell kit boxes, and refile the books on the shelves. I scoop up the two kit boxes, and head to the storage shelves in the next room. "Hmmm" I think to myself, WHERE am I going to find room for these two new kits? Half an hour later, I manage to find the space to put them away, amongst the other 425 kits laying shoulder to shoulder on my groaning shelves. "Must go to Eagle next week and get myself another shelving unit".... I pull out three kits from the shelves and take them to the workbench for a looksee...



Some Other Yaks of Lidya Litvyak

by Terry Clements

I don't know about you, but I've been waiting for Accurate Miniatures' 1/48th Scale Yak-1s for what now seems like decades. Even though I just finished sculpting a 1/48th scale Yak-1 from a poor resin kit, I've become obsessed with Yaks. And none more so than those of one of the great figures of aviation history, and hands-down winner of my personal "fighter-ace-whose-morale-I-would-most-like-to-have-bolstered" sweepstakes, Lidya (or Lilya) Litvyak. One of her Yak-1s, "Yellow 44," is very well known and will probably be the subject of one of the Accurate Miniatures kits, which may even be available by the time you read this. For those interested in trying their hand at Ted Holowchuk's winter camouflage technique (Seattle Chapter News, July, 1998), however, here is one of Litvyak's OTHER Yak-1s, snow-camouflaged "Red 32." The second part of this article will feature one of her Yak-1bs.

Knight's Cross holder Major Bruno Meyer, commander of IV.(Pz)/SG 9, an Hs 129-equipped ground attack unit during the Battle of Kursk, described the Soviet fighter pilots his unit was encountering as "an elite unit" of "brave daredevils, well trained and excellent fliers with a sure flair for German weaknesses." They "attacked in a superior manner with short bursts of fire from all guns at short distances, directing their fire mainly at the lead aircraft of the German squadron or flight, eight of which were shot down in a week." And he knew what he was talking about: he was himself shot down by one of these "daredevils" and forced to crash-land. But his jettisoned canopy flew directly into the propeller of the antagonist hanging on his tail, and the two planes crashed near each other. He went over to have a look at the enemy plane, a Yak-9, and made the disturbing discovery that the dead pilot who had shot him down was a woman! Thus was Major Meyer introduced to the all-woman 586th Fighter Regiment.

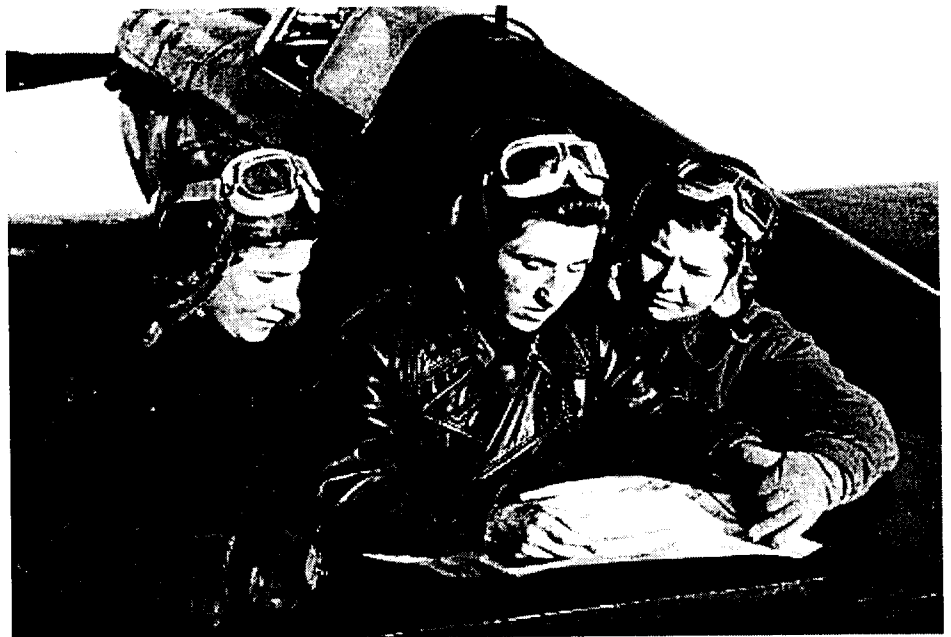
One of the original pilots of the 586th was Lieutenant Lidya [or Lilya] W. Litvyak (1921-1943), who is now generally considered the highest scoring woman fighter pilot in history. She learned to fly in the years preceding the war in sport flying clubs, and when Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941 she was assigned as a Red Air Force flight instructor. In October, 1941, the all-woman 586th Fighter Regiment, along with the 587th Bomber Regiment and 588th Night Bomber Regiment (known by the Germans as the "Night Witches," and ultimately honored and redesignated as the 46th Guards Night Bomber Regiment), was formed by Marina Raskova, famous Soviet woman pilot of the Thirties and holder of many world aviation records and the Gold Star medal. (She would later be killed in action and buried with honors in the Kremlin.) No doubt due to official skepticism about the combat-readiness/worthiness of the unit, however, it was assigned a secondary strategic air defense role near Moscow.

Despite this, Litvyak quickly gained a reputation for her independence, flamboyance and excellent pilot skills. Her first interception sorties were flown in the Summer of 1942, although the strategic

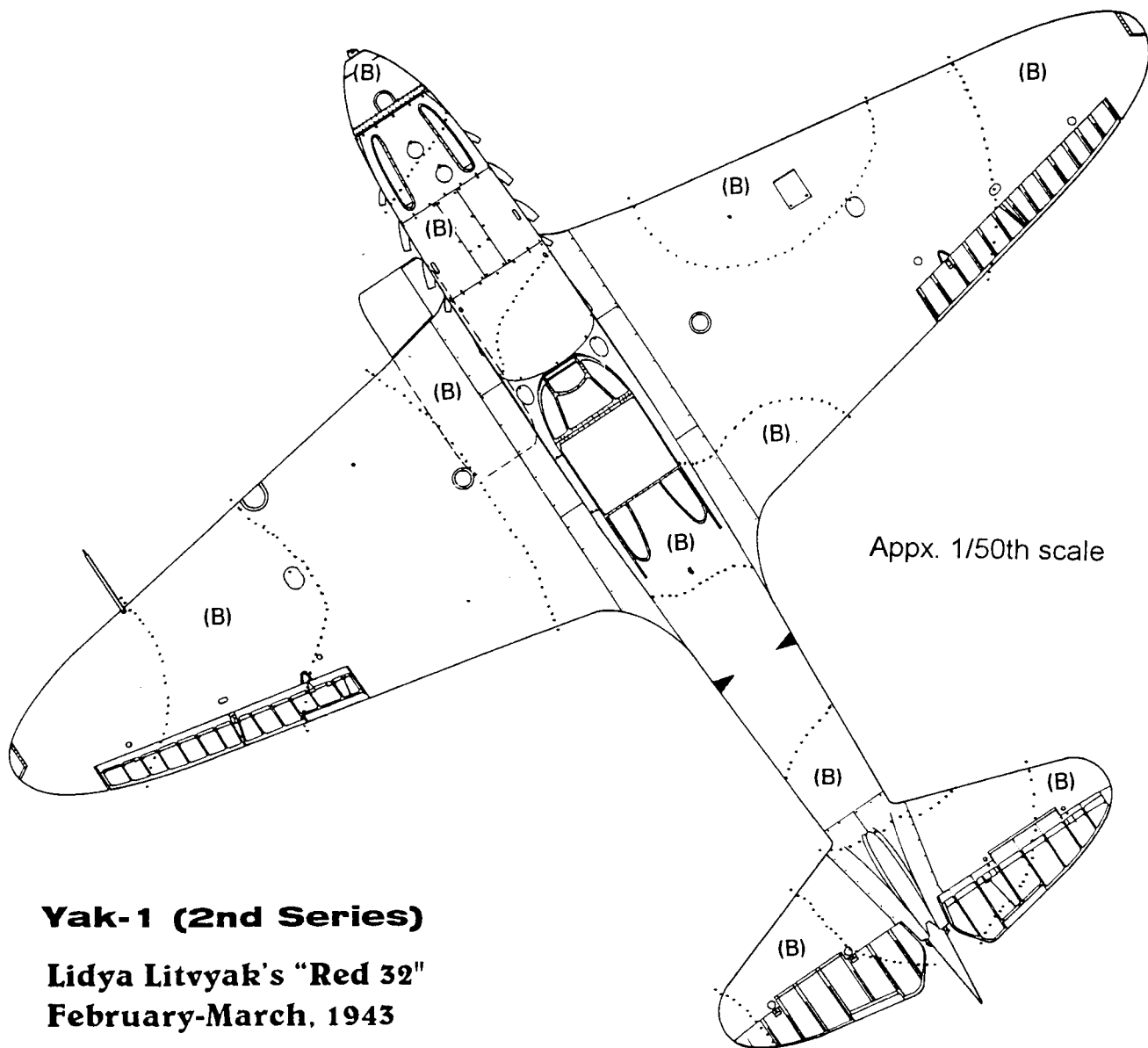
defensive mission of the unit provided only infrequent opportunities for combat at that time. But with the Red Air Force's heavy fighter pilot losses needing to be made good, prejudice against the women fighter pilots softened, and in August, 1942 Litvyak was transferred to the "regular" 268th Fighter Division, then to the 437th Fighter Regiment, where she flew La-5s and scored her first combat victories on September 13, 1942. In November she was then transferred to the 9th Guards Fighter Regiment, where she was confronted with hostility by the male pilots and given few opportunities for combat. Finally, at the end of January, 1943, she was assigned along with seven other women pilots from the 586th to the 296th Fighter Regiment (later redesignated the 73rd Guards Fighter Regiment). Five would survive the war.

Litvyak was wounded in action three times in the next seven months. On one occasion she was shot down, belly-landed behind German lines, and was rescued under fire by another pilot. She flew 168 combat missions and was ultimately officially credited with 12 personal air victories (including one heavily-defended observa-

continued on page 14

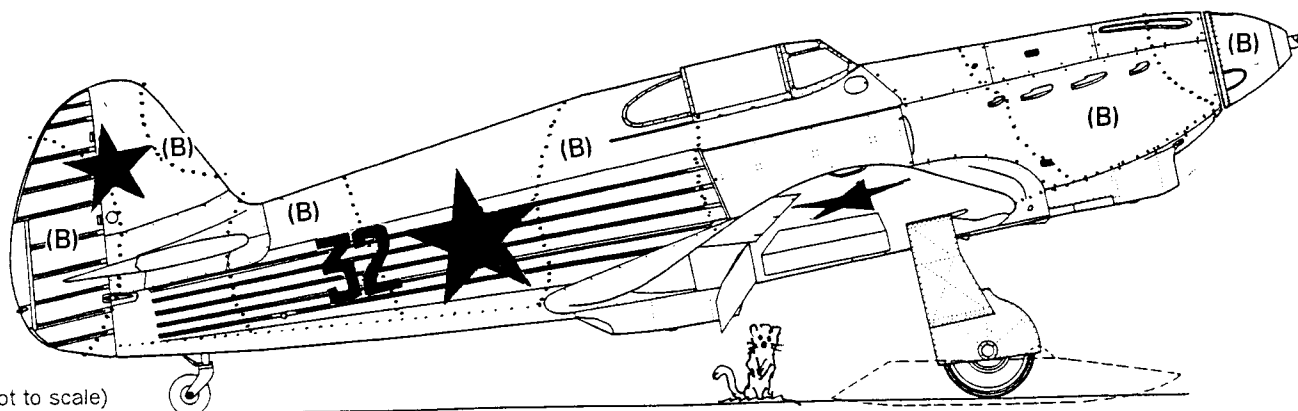
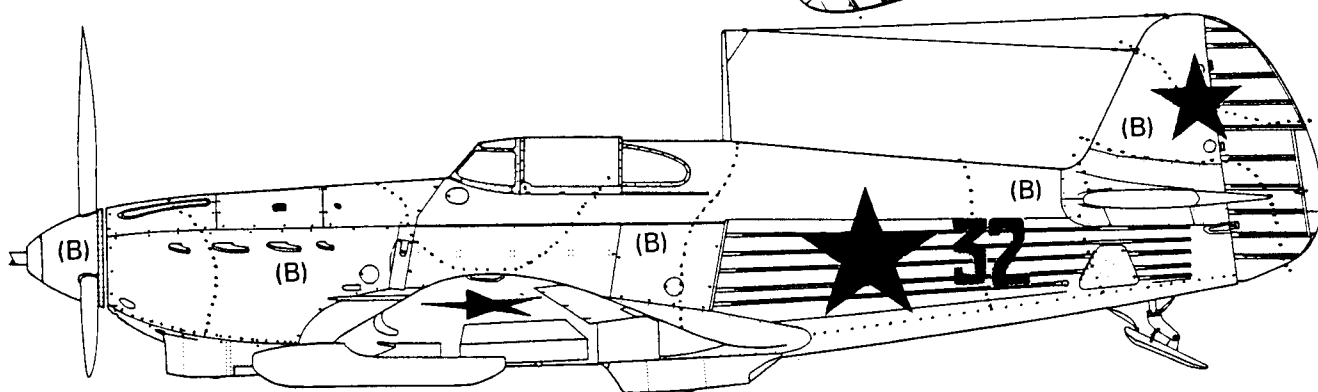


Left to right: Litvyak, Yekaterina Budanova, and Marya Khetsova checking their map on the stabilizer of Budanova's Yak-1 (2nd series) serial no. 4492. One caption states that this photo was taken at Kotelnikovo airfield on the Stalingrad Front in 1942 while all three were still in the 586th Fighter Regiment. If that is so, it would have been taken just before Litvyak was transferred out.



Yak-1 (2nd Series)

**Lidya Litvyak's "Red 32"
February-March, 1943**



(Weasel not to scale)

How Not to Fix a Bowed Truck Frame

by Paul Youman

There it sits, on the work bench mocking me. Tauntingly inviting me to come over and finish this model of a fuel truck. Do I dare try again or should I save what sanity I might have left and proceed to another unfinished project that I have lying around? Just what brought this situation about, you may be wondering? Let me spin my tale.

I started building a 1/72nd model of a GMC fuel truck by Hasegawa and everything was flowing smoothly. I'd identified and assembled the wheels, painted them tire black, then set them aside until they would be needed. I assembled the two differentials and labeled them front and rear. Now to attach them (the differentials) to the frame. Trouble This Way Comes.

The frame had only been glanced at until this time. Everything seemed and was correct...except for one slight problem. The frame had a slight bow in it. Horror of horrors, what should I do? The first reaction was to throw all the parts in the box and find a dark corner to store it in. The second reaction was to press on and straighten the frame. Yea, right.

Where were those references that I had coveted so much? What tips were available on the Internet? What about help from IPMS members? All of these questions were answered one at a time. I still haven't found anything of a cure in my reference library, the Internet was of some help but fell short of all the information needed to correct my problem. A couple of members were contacted but no return response...?

So, taking what information I had at hand, I proceeded to the first attempt to straighten the truck frame. The information suggested the use of a microwave oven and a safe container to heat water, to soften the part for straightening. Hey! I can operate that without a degree. So I pulled out a cleaned TV dinner tub, placed the offending part inside and covered the

part with water. Ready for the heat, right? Wrong! I realized that I hadn't noticed any time frame with the suggested microwave use. How much time? That would become the elusive number in this problem.

I decided to start out at 30 seconds and work up from there until the part became pliable for the straightening press I cobbled up from a "C" clamp and a flat piece of bar stock. It didn't work at the first try. I decided to increase the time to 45 seconds. This didn't work as well as I wanted it to, but the part became pliable. I next tried one minute for the time and that seemed to be the magic number. The frame softened and was put into several different weighted attempts to straighten. None were satisfactory.

Not only is the frame still bowed but I found to my chagrin that the frame had shrunk both in length and width at the back end. So now I am in the throes of fixing MY mess of a good kit. My advice to anyone that finds themselves in this same situation is to live with a slight bowed condition. If you can't and you're successful, please feel free to share your technical findings with the rest of us poor saps. Now if any of you members have any methods for straightening bowed or warped parts share them now, or let me know what they are and I'll write an article for this newsletter. Contact Paul Youman, home phone (425) 821-9590 or E-mail at Idonnay@gte.net.

Web Sites of the Month

Space limitations have affected this month's Web Sites of the Month, so I'll give a few links to museums that didn't get included in the first roundup of museums a couple of issues ago. Not every museum has the resources and collections of the USAF Museum or Imperial War Museum, but they can be interesting nevertheless.

Museum of Berkshire Aviation
www.prole.demon.co.uk/mba/mba.htm

A perfect example of what I mean. This small museum in Woodley, near Reading, England, is not going to make anyone

forget the RAF Museum. But its web site is worth visiting, for its interesting look at the history of aviation in Berkshire, and pictures of the exhibits. Does your local museum have a Fairey Jet Gyrodyne? Or a Broburn Wanderlust?

Polish Aviation Museum, Krakow
www.muz-lotnictwa.krakow.pl/e_muzeum_home.html

Wow! This link will get you to the English language version of the home page of Krakow's Polish Aviation Museum. This museum has an outstanding collection, from WW1 treasures such as an Albatros B.II and Halberstadt CL.II, to one of Ernst Udet's Curtiss Export Hawks, to rare WW2 Polish planes such as the PWS-26, and the pride of the collection, the sole PZL P.11c. Not to mention a sharkmouthed Cessna UC-78. All are seen in excellent color photos, just ready for you to download.

Hellenic Air Force Museum
www.cexi.gr/spa/hafmuseum/museum.htm

This Greek museum features a few interesting aircraft, including a Curtiss SB2C Helldiver in RHAf markings. Some fine photos, even if the site is mainly in Greek.

Captain Michael King Smith Evergreen Aviation Educational Center
www.sprucegoose.org

Hey! One we can actually visit! This is the fancy name for the new museum being built in McMinnville, Oregon, to house the Evergreen collection, and specifically the Hughes HK-1 flying boat. Though still some way from completion, this will be an impressive place once it's done. The site features all sorts of information on the Spruce Goose, and also has sections (some with very nice downloadable wallpaper) on their WW2 aircraft collection, including a B-17G and Bf 109G. They lose points from a purely personal perspective, though; the section on their P-51D states, "Aviation historians will long argue which was the finest fighter aircraft to emerge from World War II; most votes go to the P-51." And to think they own a Spitfire...

Expand Your Horizons!

by Jacob Russell

Myopia *n.* 1. A visual defect in which distant objects become blurred because their images are focused in front of the retina rather than on it; nearsightedness. 2. A lack of foresight or discernment; narrowness of focus or interest.

I began this article with the *American Heritage Dictionary's* definition of myopia because I have come to the unwelcome conclusion that I suffer from it in my choices of modeling subjects. I have written about my passion for the Bf 109 in previous articles, and my model purchases reflect that passion. More than half of my kit stockpile consists of 109s in either 1/72nd or 1/48th scale, and I also have at least ten decal sheets in each size. Too much of a good thing? I have become increasingly aware that my modeling abilities have not progressed as rapidly as I expected. It is easy to discover why; I always build the same thing - another 109. I assured myself that I was merely being practical. If I stayed away from Thunderbolts, Mustangs, and jets, I'd never have to become proficient at natural metal finishes or invasion stripes. By avoiding cars the only gloss finishes I'd have to use would be for sealing decals. Passing on armor meant that I'd never have to learn the meaning of words like *mantlet* or *glacis plate*. By not building ships I wouldn't have to learn how to use acrylics and casting resins to simulate water.

But what finally convinced me of the need to expand my modeling horizons - besides pointed comments from my fiancée, Jenni - was admiring the handiwork of my fellow IPMS members. In the year since I joined the Seattle chapter I have learned from **everyone** and the quality of my present modeling directly reflects the information I have absorbed. There are three IPMS Seattle members who have been especially influential in my recognizing the need to expand my modeling choices, Brian Mulron, Les Knerr, and Ted Holowchuk.

If you arrive at the monthly meeting after 11 a.m., you may never meet Brian or see

his models. He's so modest and self-effacing that he'd rather not talk about his models, so when it's time to talk he simply packs them up and goes home. I mustered enough nerve to ask him questions about his work methods, and have had the privilege of being invited to his home to help develop my skills. Brian builds mostly planes, works strictly in 1/72 scale and builds a tank or two when either bored or frustrated. Did I mention that although Brian build mostly planes he'll build any aircraft kit regardless of media if he's interested in the full size plane? Resin, vacuform, injection-molded, World War One, World War Two, but only a handful of postwar jets. Like me, Brian prefers planes with propellers. If Brian develops an interest in a plane, he finds the kit and builds it. Which means that he can and does build any kind of plane you can imagine; I can vouch for this because I have seen his collection, which numbers into the *hundreds*. No, not stockpiled kits waiting to be built. *Finished* models. Only a true master builder could build such a variety of planes with the same high level of craftsmanship and finish.

I don't know Les Knerr very well, though I have asked him many questions about his detailing techniques. I admire the diversity of his subjects. To the October meeting he bought a spectacular Fw 190D-9, to the September meeting a Grand Prix motorcycle, and to the August meeting an Army truck. Each was finished to the same standard. I have yet to see him repeat himself thematically, with the possible exception of a couple of Mustangs he built last year.

The same can be said of Ted Holowchuk, who certainly needs no introduction here. The quality of his workmanship is simply astounding, and would be more galling to those of us considerably less talented were he not so damn modest and matter-of-fact about it. Modest, builds anything, and builds it better than you, too. And will patiently explain how he did it. While complimenting **you on your work**.

What these three modelers have in common is a wide-ranging curiosity combined with years of practice. After many years of modeling they are still open

to new, unusual, and difficult subjects. Such an attitude is something to strive for. Please don't confuse my admiration of these modeler's talents with either slavish devotion, or ass-kissing of the highest order. I admire their abilities, learn from each of them, and sincerely hope to beat them in IPMS contests some day!

Observing the work of these master modelers helped me arrive at a satisfactory compromise that allows me to continue my 109 obsession while simultaneously expanding my horizons and talents. I'm going to alternate projects; build a 109, build a car. Build a 109, build a tank, and so on. This decision not only increases my knowledge of modeling in general, but also further enriches Emil Minerich, Kevin Callahan, and anyone else who cheerfully separates me from my hard-earned cash. It allows me to appreciate subjects that I'd earlier either dismissed or ignored.

My **new** obsession is World War Two Japanese fighters. I'm fascinated by the simplicity and elegant restraint of their camouflage and markings, the more spectacular natural metal finishes on certain Ki-43s, Ki-61s, and Ki-84s not withstanding. Equally interesting is the fact that most Japanese fighters were powered by radial, rather than inline, engines, which was the exact opposite of Luftwaffe fighters. Then there's that Aotake transparent blue lacquer used on certain interiors and wheel wells - *cool!*

Learning about these planes and their pilots has proved just as fascinating and intellectually rewarding as discovering the 109. Recently I've completely fallen for the Mitsubishi J2M Raiden, a plane I previously found ugly in the extreme. I've added five issues of *Famous Aircraft of the World* to my collection in the past nine weeks. I plan to build most of the Otaki/Arii kits of Japanese fighters while rounding up every English language reference I can find - and afford. I've sent to AeroMaster for Japanese acrylics and decals. Seven new kits of Japanese fighters have joined the collection, excuse me, stockpile, along with two sets of resin wheels, two sets of photo-etch, two resin

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Red Hurricane 1/72nd Yakovlev Yak-25 and Tupelov Tu-14

by Bill Osborn

You'd think by now, with all that I've said about Eastern European kits, I would have learned my lesson. Well, I haven't.

I've just received two new kits from Russian manufacturer Red Hurricane. The first is the Tu-14 "Bosun," the twin-jet the Soviet Navy got because the Army didn't want it. The other is the Yak-25 "Flashlight," a small twin-jet, all-weather interceptor.

The kits come in a dirty white plastic. Not the color, the plastic is dirty. The molding is rough with lots of flash. The Yak-25 shows that the two halves of the molds didn't mate too well, leaving one to sand the hell out of them to bring the body and nacelles together on the centerline. The wings and horizontal surfaces also suffer from the same problem, but since they are each a one-piece molding, it's a little different problem.

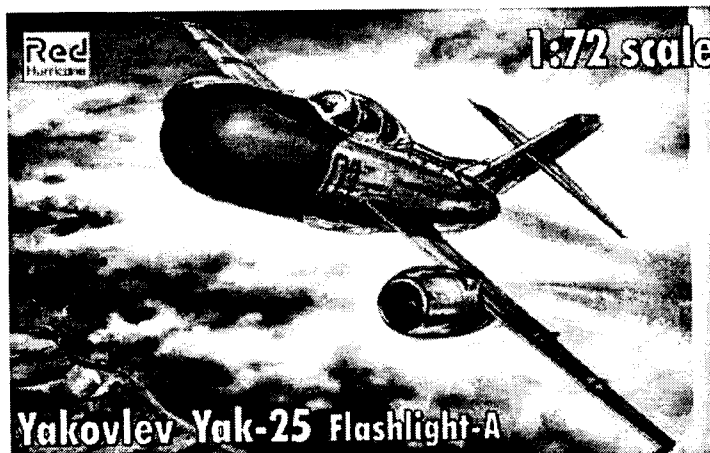
The Yak-25 contains 21 injection-molded parts, a somewhat decent vacuformed canopy, one sheet of instructions, and a nice three-plane decal sheet. At least it looks good; I haven't got far enough to try them.

There are no locator pins or index tabs. A solid chunk of plastic *may* be a floor and side consoles. Seats are two-piece, and may even look like the real thing. Instrument panels are OK, but are just flat shapes. Two of the nacelle halves are malformed and need to be reworked. The landing gear is the centerline outrigger type. The two outrigger wheels and struts

are somewhat vague. At least that's what I think those funny looking things with somewhat rounded things on the end are.

To my surprise, the surface detail is recessed and not overdone. Control surfaces look good. On the other hand, most of the cutouts in the body, cockpits, and wheel wells don't match. Come to think of it, I don't know how the wheel struts mate to the body. Oh well, I guess this will come in time. OK, so I went and looked. There are two crude boxes that are used as wheel wells. The body is round, and the boxes are flat on the mating surface. The Lord only knows how the model will sit if I can get these two things into the model.

As long as I'm bitching, I might as well say that most of the small parts that are double-sided (wheels, struts, etc.) are mismatched side-to-side. This means scratch building of parts that I have no idea of what they look like. Try to find information on a Yak-25.



The Yak-25 was only seen in natural metal. Oh, happy day! The Tu-14 is done in a four-tone camouflage.

Both of these kits will require lots of work and patience, but after a month or two you could come up with a decent model.

Have I learned my lesson? I guess not. I just ordered their Tu-16 "Badger".

Lidya Litvyak

from page 1

tion balloon), three shared air victories, and a number of German aircraft destroyed on the ground, the highest officially-recognized victory total of any woman pilot. She also had a number of unconfirmed claims. One of her comrades in the 296/73rd G FR, Yekaterina Budanova, KIA July 8, 1943, is officially credited with destroying 11 German aircraft, and is believed to have "given away" credit for up to 10 others.

Meanwhile, the 586th Fighter Regiment itself was kept in a largely secondary air defense role until November, 1942, when it was ordered to the Stalingrad front where opportunities for combat were, to say the least, significantly greater. There the Regiment performed admirably against some of the Luftwaffe's best units while suffering what had to have been terrific losses. In the Fall of 1943, following the battle of Kursk and the Soviet Orel offensive, the 586th was posted to a second-line strategic air defense mission, undoubtedly for much-needed rest and refitting. In 1944 the unit was re-equipped with new Yak-9s and put into operation on the Hungarian front. When the war ended it was conducting operations from a base in Austria. During the war the women of the 586th flew 4,419 sorties, engaged in 129 aerial battles, and were credited with 38 aerial victories. Thousands of women also served with other "regular" Soviet aviation units as gunners and in air and ground crews. Altogether, women flew some 24,000 combat sorties with the Red Air Force, and 86 of them won the Gold Star medal. Their total losses during the war are so far unknown.

The Yak-1 series 2 illustrated here, "Red 32," was one of the aircraft Litvyak flew when she was transferred to the 296th Fighter Regiment in January, 1943. By Spring the unit began to receive Yak-1bs, and by the time of the battle of Kursk that Summer it had many Yak-9s on its inventory. Part 2 of this article will include a drawing of a Yak-1b Litvyak flew during the Summer of 1943, a complete list of her victories, and sources.

Mach-2 1/125th Ariane V

by A. Julius de Roo, Ninfinger Productions Scale Models

Mach-2 has released a 1/125 scale Ariane 5 kit. The scale is a little odd, but I think it is to match the 1/125 Heller/Bobcat Ariane 44LP. When I unpacked this kit upon receipt the colorful box art immediately drew my attention. On the box is painted an Ariane 5 which just has lifted-off. Opening the box revealed all parts packed in one big plastic bag. The kit consists of two identical plastic frames with the base removed from one of them. The 23 plastic parts are rather soft, but flash free. Instructions are in four languages: French, English, German and Italian.

Construction is very straight-forward with only minor problems. The assembly sequence starts with the assembly of the propulsion bay, but I think it is better to start with the central core and boosters and not to glue the bottom part to the central core until the first stage has been painted. All halves fit quite well but some sanding is required which destroys some of the recessed panel lines. These were rescribed later. The holes in the boosters in which the pegs of the base are supposed to fit in need to be enlarged, do this before the boosters are glued to the main core. The hold down posts of the propulsion bay didn't quite match the recessed area on the boosters, so I slightly rotated the boosters, which hides the small gap.

The painting instructions are very clear, but only Humbrol colours are mentioned. The boosters and central core main colour is gloss white: for this I used an acrylic spray can. The lower half of the central core is shown as a brick pattern, the bricks being matt pale stone and the spacings a lighter color. As I haven't seen any pictures of a real Ariane 5 yet, just the battle stage and the mock-up at Le Bourget '95, I painted this all matt pale stone. After this dried the propulsion bay was glued to the central core and paint blemishes were touched up with a brush. I covered the bands on the boosters with chrome foil two millimeters wide. It's not in the

instructions, but I liked the look of it and the mockup at Le Bourget had them.

The built model looks nice and gives a fair representation of the Ariane 5 as it has appeared so far. Construction took five hours, not counting the time to let the paint dry. The price is a little on the high side for an injection molded plastic kit in the rather odd scale of 1/125. I ordered it



directly from the manufacturer, but Squadron Mail Order also sells the kit for a whopping \$59.95.

Ode to a Resin Conversion Set

There once was a modeler named Ted
Who got an idea in his head
"I can't spend dollar notes
For a good Spit on floats,
So I'll just have to make one, instead."

The Money Guy Talks

by Norm Filer

Those of you who attended the October meeting can skip the rest of this, as it will pretty much be a recap of the financial discussion we had at that meeting. Since not everyone attends the meeting every month, it seems only appropriate that we pass on the information to those who were smart enough to stay home and miss my boring money talk.

The discussion we had at the July meeting centered on our newsletter costs. As a result of that, we sent a survey out with the August newsletter. We had a very satisfying 40% response that basically said "raise the dues," but did not want to start charging vendors for space during our monthly meetings. That prompted me to offer up more information and seek final approval for doing just that, starting next year.

These are the facts:

The newsletter costs us about \$175 per month to print and mail. Printing costs about \$110 and mailing is about \$65. Currently the newsletter is a standard 16 pages, so both costs are fixed until either Uncle raises the postage rates, which could happen yesterday, or

the printer does the same. Some other minor costs are in there as well, like envelopes and labels, but that is it.

That buys us about 125 newsletters each month. Currently we have a mailing list of about 116. That does include about 6-8 exchanges with other IPMS groups who also send us their newsletters. You have seen a lot of their articles in the past newsletters. The small difference is usually used up by replacements and samples to potential new members.

continued on page 16

The Money Guy Talks*from page 15*

Simple math says that 175 bucks per month times 12 months spends \$2,100. With a pretty constant base of about 100 paying members that is \$21 per member.

The only other "expense" that we must pay is our room rental. That currently is a bit under \$600 per year, and includes the big room for our annual spring show. The spring show, while it requires us to spend money ahead of time, usually pays for itself, and if we really promote it could actually make us a few bucks. We will revisit that part a bit later.

To summarize, we currently are spending \$2100 on newsletter and \$600 on rent. Total is \$2700 (I still find simple addition amazing!). With our aforementioned base of 100 members that's \$27 per member per year.

After this explanation at the October meeting, we voted to raise the annual dues to \$24 a year.

A couple of the smarter young guys, who know what a computer is, suggested that perhaps we could make the newsletter available via the Internet. For those who wanted to access it that way, we will offer lower dues, since they would not require a paper copy. Tracy White and Jon Fincher not only looked into that option, but are

hard at work making it happen. I think the dues for those who are willing to commit to net access only newsletters will be \$18, but that's still open.

Twenty-four dollars a year will still leave us dipping into the savings a bit...remember the \$27? If we work hard on promoting the spring show, and perhaps adjust the costs there a bit, we should do just fine.

The new renewal form should be in the December newsletter, and will be repeated a couple of times after the first of the year. I will also have the forms and be taking renewals at the November meeting. The last mailing using the 1998 mailing list will be the January 1999 newsletter. If you don't renew before late January, you will not get a February newsletter.

Sorry to take up so much bandwidth with this financial stuff, but I think it is important that you know exactly why we are going to ask you to dig a bit deeper next year.

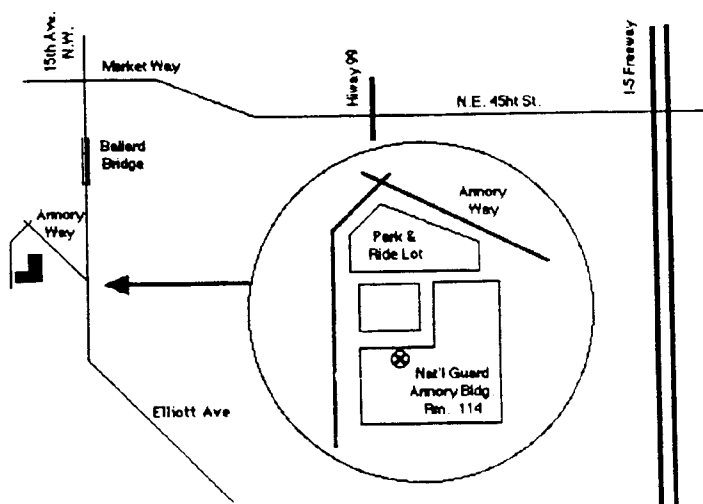
Expand Your Horizons!*from page 13*

engines, and several more sets of decals. Hasegawa's series of Ki-61 and Ki-100 Tonys patiently wait to be purchased at Skyway. Once again, too much of a good thing?

Preznotes*from page 1*

Finally, I reached another goal in life: to hit a home run. I know this has nothing to do with modeling but I just had to tell someone outside of baseball. I accomplished this feat on July 31, 1998, a three-run shot to straight-away left, approximately 350 feet. A degree of luck perhaps, or maybe the ball was in the right place at the right time and I hit it just right. In any event it was a most memorable event (to me) and I just had to pass it on. Oh yes, two days later I got to pitch. I faced two batters - walked the first on four pitches, and the second singled (didn't hit my knuckleball, though). I didn't get credit for the save as we were up by eleven runs. Another dream fulfilled (Big Mac, Sammy Sosa, and the Big Unit have nothing to fear). Now if I could only build a model as good as John Alcorn's DH.9. Maybe someday...

See you at the meeting

*Terry***Meeting Reminder:****Saturday, November 14, 1998****10:00 am**

National Guard Armory, Room 114
1601 West Armory Way, Seattle

Directions: From North or Southbound I-5, take the 45th St. exit. Drive west on 45th, crossing under Highway 99 (or Aurora Ave. North) toward N.W. Market Street in Ballard. Continue west on Market St. toward 15th Ave N.W. Turn left (south) onto 15th Ave N.W. and drive across the Ballard Bridge until you reach Armory Way (just as you see the Animal Shelter.) Watch for signs. Park in the Metro Park & Ride lot.

If coming from the South, take Highway 99 onto the Alaskan Way viaduct to Western Avenue. Follow Western Ave. north to Elliot Ave. until it turns into 15th Ave N.W., then to Armory Way itself.