

Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS-USA
October 2001

PREZNOTES



As I sit in the terminal awaiting my next flight, I have plenty of time to reflect on the events of September 11. I am not particularly eager to fly this day and hopefully writing this column will help. The United States was dealt a severe blow a few weeks ago and 6,000 people lost their lives. The images will probably haunt us forever. Some media pundits were quick to paraphrase Admiral Yamamoto: "I fear all we have done is awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve." This may very well be the case, as it has united the country in a way not seen since 1941. Remember however, that patience is important. Retribution will not happen tomorrow or the next day. It may take time but it will happen. Until then it is perfectly fine to maintain that anger you have, but it should not be directed at fellow Americans. Remember who we are: white, yellow, black, red, Christian, Muslim, and Jew. We are all Americans and should be treated with respect and dignity. Instead, direct your anger at those who have twisted their beliefs to suit their own needs.

It is also important to remember those that gave their lives to help save the lives of fellow Americans. Make a contribution in their name to your local blood bank or a cash donation to the Red Cross, or any other local or national relief agency. Every bit helps.

And we move on...

A few weeks ago a good contingent of modelers from IPMS Seattle traveled south to McMinnville, to attend the Oregon Historical Modelers Society contest and show at the museum housing the Hughes Hercules. What a spectacular venue! There were well over 400 models in the contest and on display and when one would tire of looking at models, one could peruse the large vendor space or look at some spectacular 1/1 scale flying machines (and vehicles...I'd still like to model that Cletrac!). Most of the contest took place under the starboard wing of the gigantic

Hughes flying boat. The models were built to the usual high standards of modelers in the Northwest, and there was a good cross section of aircraft, armor, and vehicles. Among the standouts were a beautiful 1/32nd scale Spitfire Mk.I, a 1/48th Dynavector TSR.2 [*Oooh! - ED*], and a 2065 Corvette (hover version) by a modeler who traveled to the show from San Francisco. The model that drew the most attention, however, was a 1/35th scale German tank that was electronically controlled to turn its turret, fire its gun (with appropriate recoil of the tank and smoke from the muzzle), fire the machine gun, and rev its engine. Smoke also came

Continued on page 3

**New
meeting
place - See
back page!**

In This Issue

AeroMaster Is Back	3
Captured Italian Aircraft	3
Matchbox Kits Axed	3
CTAPTEP	4
The Bill Osborn Page	8
Luftwaffe Reisen	9
Is the Hobby Dying?	10
Vancouver Show Photos	12
Mike Grant Decals	14
Vancouver Show Report	15
Upcoming Shows	15
Soviet Pilots in China	15
Are You a Master Modeler?	16

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IPMS Seattle Web Site (Webmasters, Jon Fincher & Tracy White): <http://www.ipms-seattle.org>

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 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 rest of the IPMS/Seattle 2001 meeting schedule is as follows. To avoid conflicts with previously scheduled IPMS events, and other events, 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, except for the December meeting, which starts at 9am.

October 20 (3rd Saturday, and the editor's birthday) **November 10 (2nd Saturday)**
December 15 (3rd Saturday)

IPMS/USA NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

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

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Signature (required by PO): _____

Adult: \$19 Junior (17 years old or younger): \$9
 Trade Member: \$19 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: 6138
 Warner Robins, GA 31095-6138

Check out our web page: www.ipmsusa.org

AeroMaster Is Back! relayed via Walt Fink

After a long pause in operations, AeroMaster Products have joined Eagle Strike/Aries. The acquisition was finalized early in September 2001. The decal lines will continue to be distributed by ESP, throughout their established distributor/importer network. As previously announced, the AMD team had joined the ESP crew back in June.

"It is like being back home again," said ANA, the head artist.

"We will continue offering the model fraternity the best products available at the most competitive prices, with more exciting and steady flow of new products", said Gaston, the product development/production manager of the new emerging company.

The three companies have moved into a new design office/warehouse in South Florida, across from the Tamiami Regional Airport. The new address is:

Eagle Strike/AeroMaster
12982 SW 132nd Avenue
Miami, Florida 33186

"Our service will improve considerably out of our new 3,500 sq. ft. facility", said Karl, the Operations Manager.

The new owners, Gaston and Karl, want to thank their thousands of loyal customers worldwide for their past, present and future support. "But it is time to stop talking and get back to work", they both said.

Regular AMD items will be shipping out to distributors and dealers by the end of September, and new products are scheduled for late October. Stay tuned to the www.eaglestrike.com website for more information.

Until then, Happy Modeling!

Captured Italian Aircraft in Luftwaffe Service

by Mike R. Murphy, IPMS-USA
#39856

I am currently working to compile information about all Italian aircraft that were evaluated and/or operated by the Luftwaffe. I have posted a list of over 60 different types at the Luftwaffe Experten website and have referenced books, magazine articles and websites that provide text or photos documenting Luftwaffe use of each aircraft:

<http://pub73.ezboard.com/luftwaffeexperten71774frm38.show>
Message?topicID=24.topic

[Note: the last part of the URL, "luftwaffe...topic" is continuous- ED.]

I would appreciate it very much if you could advise your members of this list. They are cordially invited to provide corrections, additions or other comments. Soon there will be over 30 photos of captured Italian aircraft in Luftwaffe markings posted at the board (as soon as the webmaster returns from holiday).

Thanks very much for your help. I can be reached at MikeRMurphy@aol.com.

All Matchbox Kits Discontinued

by Todd Englund, IPMS Oregon
Historical Modelers Society

When Revell bought Matchbox, years ago, the agreement was that they could use the Matchbox name until December 31, 2000. Revell can no longer use the Matchbox name, and this is why all Matchbox kits are discontinued. Many will probably appear as Revell kits in the future. Many will probably never be made again.

Preznotes

from page 1

from the exhausts when the engine started. The sound included the tank crew, whose commands were tied in to what the tank was doing at the time! Amazing. There was always a crowd around it and the modeler demonstrated it all day. The hand-made awards were well done and a number of awards came home to Seattle. The crews from Portland and Salem put on an excellent show and I can hardly wait until next year.

Our October meeting and meetings through the end of the year will take place at the **North Bellevue Community/Senior Center, 4063-148th NE**, in Bellevue. It looks like a nice new venue and a good place to meet. A map and driver directions are located elsewhere in this issue. I urge all members to attend, to check out the new digs - we may consider it as a permanent new home. The cost is slightly higher than the cost at the Guard, and we may have to do some sort of fundraiser (auction?), perhaps once a year to maintain our treasury, if we are to remain there.

As somewhat of a theme for our October meeting, I would like to ask that members who won awards with their models at McMinnville, Vancouver BC, or the Galaxy Hobbies Sci-Fi contest bring their award winning models to this next meeting.

Proud to be an American. See you at the meeting,

Jerry

CTAPTEP!

by James D. Gray

A few years ago I became interested in the VVS (the Soviet Air Force, that is) and I started reading everything I could find on that subject. There was surprisingly little. Still, I dug into what I could find, and I began to notice the frequent appearance of what we in the West would call a “Huck’s starter truck.” This vehicle is a GAZ truck, a license-made version of the Ford Model AA truck, modified to have a power takeoff which comes up the back of the cab and then out over the front. This engaged a fitting or “dog” on the propeller boss, and it was used to spin-start aircraft engines. Early Soviet aircraft lacked self-starters, and so the starter truck was a very common feature in the early part of the war. You see them with I-153 and I-16 fighters, and sometimes even with later aircraft like the Il-2 Shturmovik. I started to really want one of these as an accessory to my Soviet aircraft, and it would also be a really different model in-and-of itself.

There were only a few problems. One was that there was no kit in 1/72nd available for a GAZ truck, even of other versions suitable for a conversion. Sure, there were some crude white metal miniatures for wargamers, but my experience with this sort of “model” was that they were too primitive to serve even as a starting point.

The other problem was that there were no plans available. I just had an ill-assorted set of photos from various publications, mostly of the uniquely Soviet “fuzzy photo” variety. Then too, none of them showed the whole starter truck; they were always on the edge of a photo of an airplane, or so distant that no detail was visible. Starter trucks were not apparently of any interest to Soviet wartime photographers unless they were behind an airplane.

I really thought it was unlikely that I would ever be able to satisfy this particular ambition. Then there was a little light at the end of the tunnel; I heard over the Internet

that a new model of a GAZ-AA truck was available from a new Russian company called, of all things, Komintern Models. They said it was a really nice kit. Of course, Komintern Models didn’t suddenly sprout on the shelves of my local K-Mart, but I managed to get several from Earl at NKR Models in Australia. Six, to be exact. Hey, you never know when you’ll need a GAZ truck. They were indeed very nice little kits; no shaking the box here, but with a little use of common modeling skills, the first kit I built turned out very nicely. That was for practice, before I turned to the Main Event.

Once the first, practice, kit was complete, I couldn’t avoid the second problem any more. I knew it was coming, but I kept putting it off. Now there was no longer any excuse; I had to draw my own plans. I made copies of every photo of a starter truck in my various books, no matter how fuzzy or dim or incomplete, and I sat down and studied them. I traced a drawing of the truck from the instructions, and messed with it, and fiddled, and redrew it, until after several different versions I was satisfied. Perhaps I should say, not too dissatisfied. There were a lot of points I still didn’t understand, but I fudged those; I had no expectations of ever getting any better information, so I had to go with what I had. It didn’t help that there seemed to be several different versions of the starter truck in use.

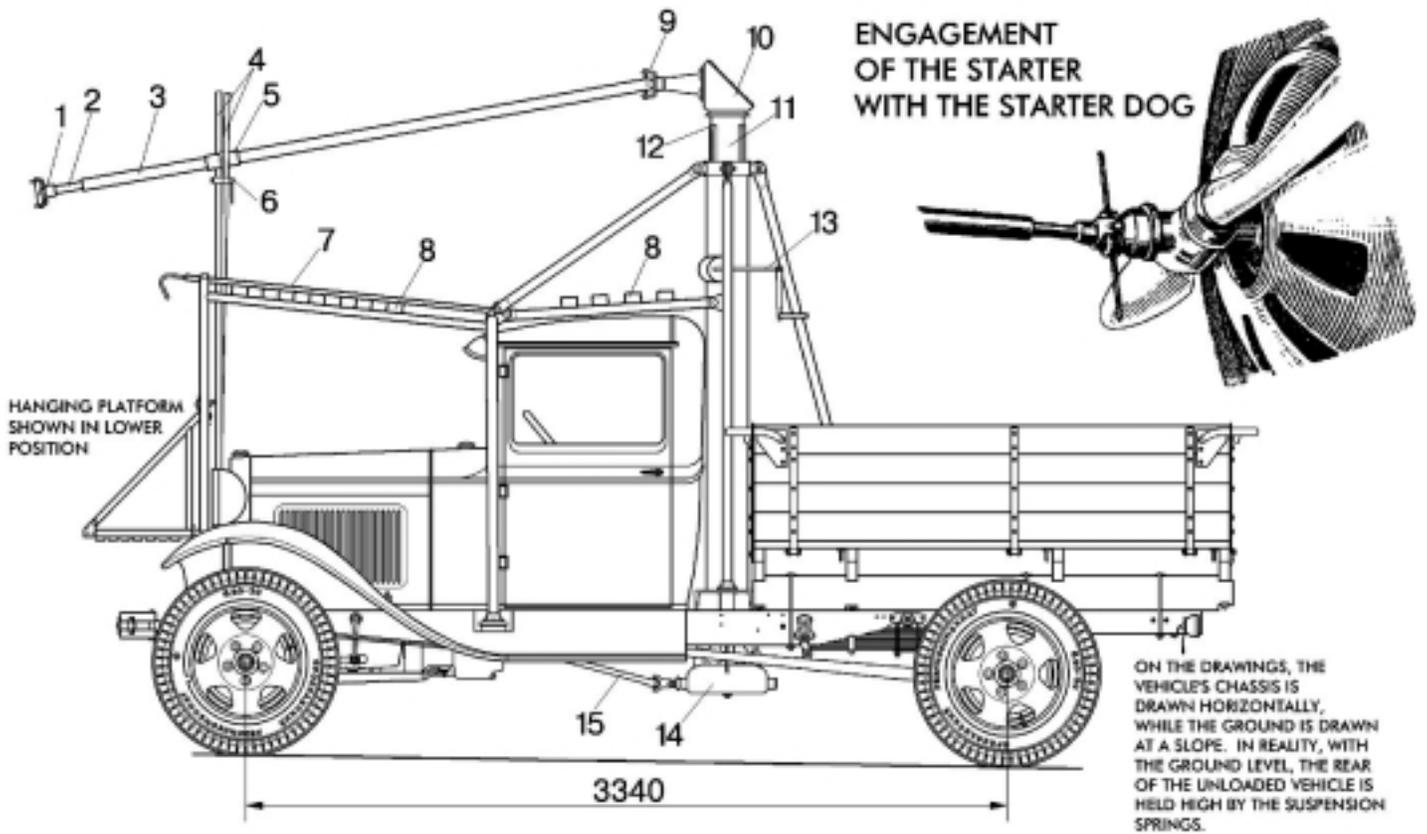
I decided to bring the incomplete model to the next IPMS Seattle meeting, mainly since I’d never show anything if I had to wait to finish it. During show-and-tell, I said a few words about the model, and about making my own plans. I was really shocked to be asked to provide these for the newsletter! I never thought they were that good. Well, anyway, I said I’d do it, but there might be problems about copyright, since I traced the basic truck from the instructions, and this drawing seemed to come in turn from the Russian modeling magazine, *M-Hobby*.

I hunted around, and after a session or two on the computer, I came up with an e-mail

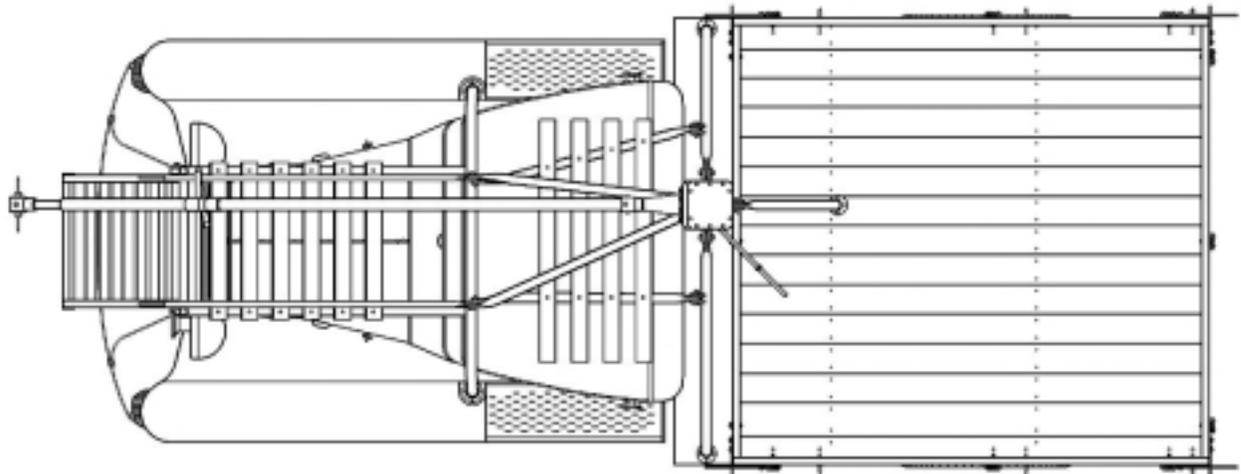
address for *M-Hobby*, and I wrote them a letter and asked them for permission to use their GAZ-AA drawing. I hoped that somebody there spoke English! And I got lucky; I got a reply from the artist himself, Mr. Nikolai Polikarpov. He said, sure, but why didn’t I use his drawings? Well, of course I asked him if he could send me copies over the Internet, and he did. I was curious how they might differ from my own drawings; I thought there might be some fairly minor discrepancies. Of course, I was wrong! My drawings were useless; I had the visible details down fairly well, but I had never realized that the takeoff shaft was not centered behind the cab at all. It comes up well to the right, perhaps by as much as a foot. When I went back to the photographs, I could see this, once I knew what to look for. I guess, if it isn’t obvious, we always assume that things like this are centered. Of course, I had already started my model! I had to tear off all the modifications I had done and start over! Aargh! Aargh! Oh well; I guess it could have been worse; after all, I didn’t actually finish it before I turned up new material.

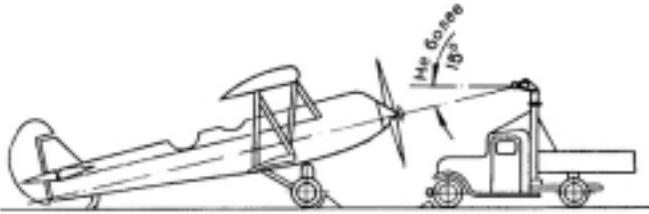
Mr. Polikarpov most generously agreed that I could publish his plans in our newsletter, so long as I gave him a copy. He also requested that I write an article for *M-Hobby*! Well, I’ll give him one, if I ever finish the truck. Perhaps, with luck, this year.

Mr. Boris Megorski, of St. Petersburg, Russia, assisted me in translating the captions. His technical English wasn’t too good, and I have no Russian at all, but together we managed to sort out what the captions meant. Interestingly enough, in Russian the word for starter is...starter! Or in the Cyrillic alphabet, CTAPTEP.



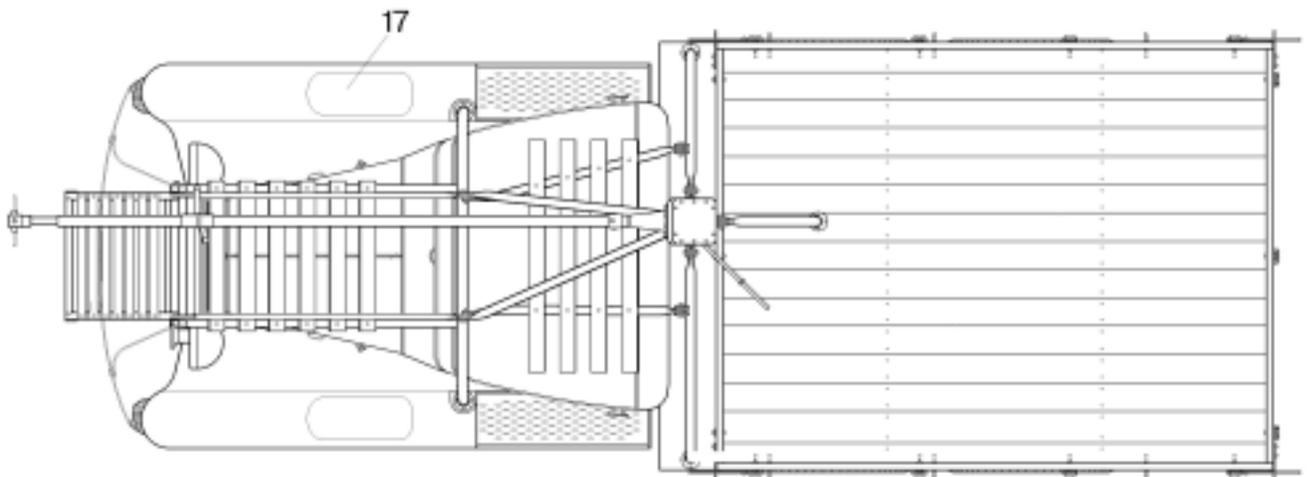
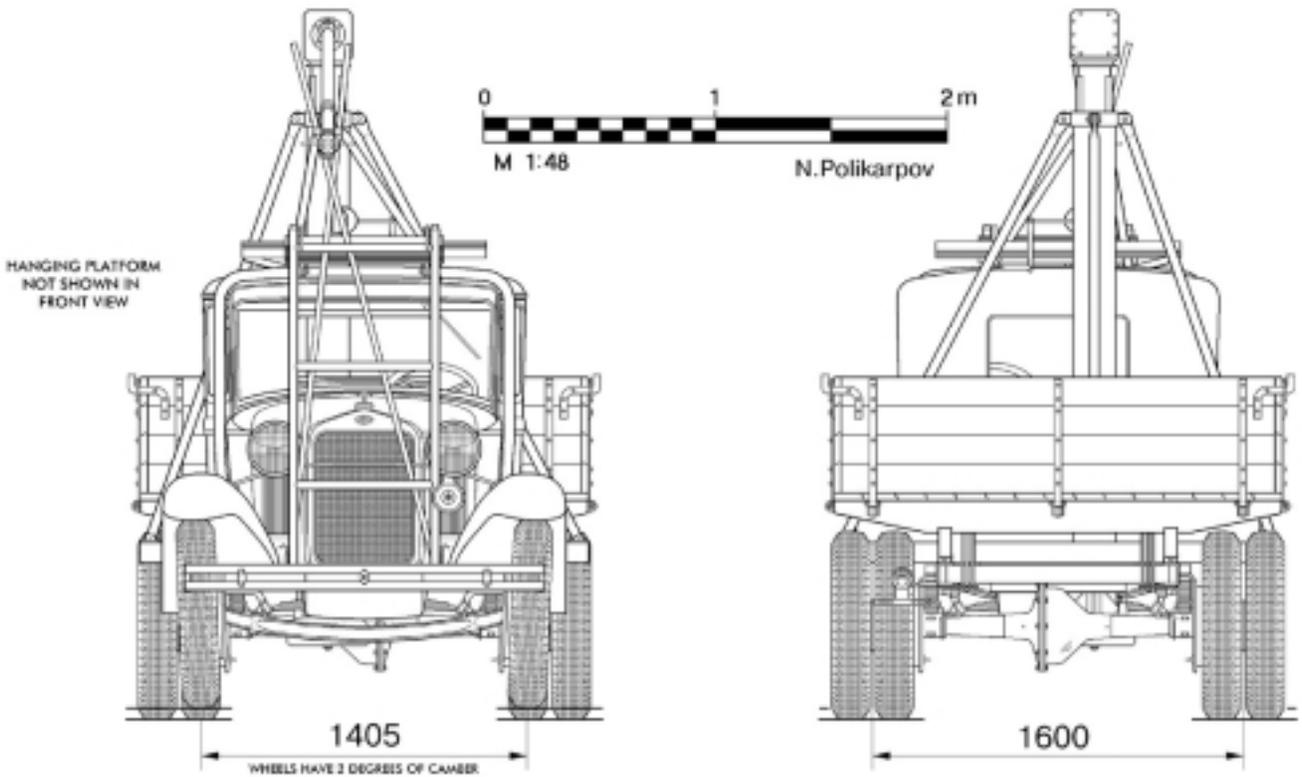
AERODROME STARTER TRUCK AS-1





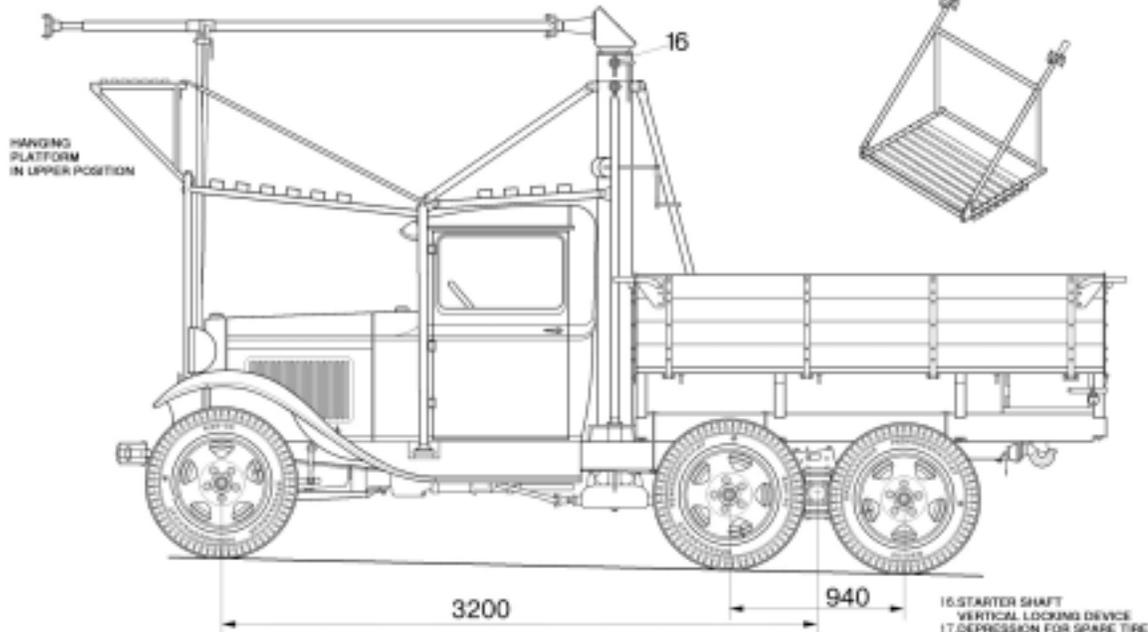
AIRCRAFT AND STARTER TRUCK POSITIONS FOR STARTUP

1. STARTER ATTACHMENT AND U-JOINT
2. TELESCOPING INNER STARTER SHAFT
3. TELESCOPING OUTER STARTER SHAFT
4. SUPPORTING RODS
5. COLLAR
6. COLLAR LOCKING DEVICES
7. HANGING PLATFORM BRACING RODS IN UPPER POSITION
8. SERVICE PLATFORM FLOORING
9. U-JOINT
10. GEARBOX FOR BEVEL GEARS
11. TELESCOPING INNER ELEVATING TUBE
12. TOOTHED RACK OF LIFTING DEVICE
13. CRANK HANDLE OF LIFTING DEVICE
14. REVERSIBLE GEARBOX
15. DRIVESHAFT FROM ENGINE



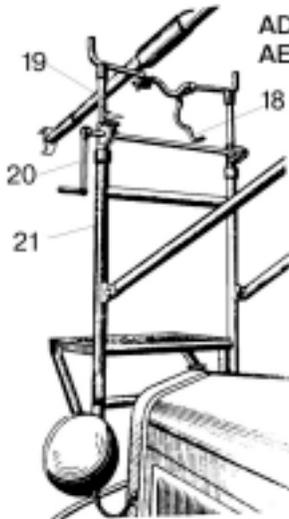
SPARE TIRES ON FRONT FENDERS
AND REARVIEW MIRROR HAVE BEEN REMOVED

HANGING PLATFORM



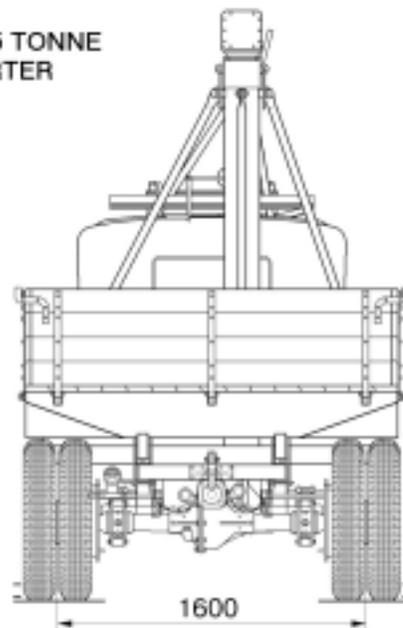
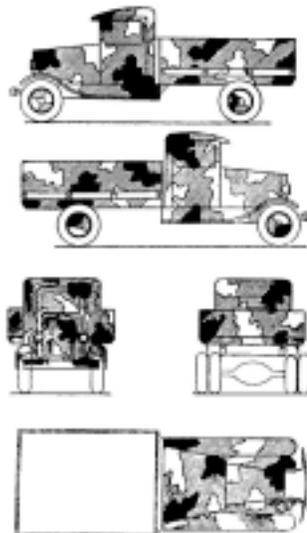
AERODROME STARTER TRUCK AS-2

ADJUSTABLE FRAME FOR AS-3
AERODROME STARTER TRUCK MODIFICATION



CAMOUFLAGE SCHEME FOR 1.5 TONNE
TRUCK AND AERODROME STARTER

-  GREEN (4-80)
-  EARTH-SAND (7K)
-  DARK BROWN (8K)



The Bill Osborn Page - Three Articles by Bill

Grandkids Are Great!

My wife Audrey and I have four grandchildren, one girl age 12, and three boys who are nine, seven, and four years old. The two eldest ones live in Bonny Lake, and we see them about once a month. The two youngest boys live about a mile-and-a-half from us, and Audrey sits with them on a regular basis. Sometimes we have them over to our house when their mother is working, or is otherwise busy.

When we have them over here, they usually want to watch TV, or play with the stock of Hot Wheels we laid in for just that sort of thing. So while they play with small cars, Grandpa escapes to the basement to play with his small models. Now small boys being the way they are, every so often they want to see what Granddad is doing. Down they come and crowd into my cave (it's small and dark) to watch as I put glue or paint to a model.

A few months ago, Michael, the youngest, (he of the permanent baseball cap because of his red hair) wanted me to make him a model. OK, I thought, this will be snap. I pulled out a Matchbox Spitfire, and as he cut out the parts, I glued them together. In about an hour, we had a model painted and decaled. Now this was not up to my usual standards (which as you know are not high), but it made him happy and that counts for a lot around here.

Just a few words about Michael. This kid is smart (he takes after his Grandfather) and knows the names of all the dinosaurs by heart. He also likes "Army Guys," and decided that I should have some to guard my model collection. Last Christmas, he gave me a package of 50 green "Army Guys." We had to go down and place them where they would cover all of the approaches to my display cases. So I wouldn't advise anybody to try and invade my models.

Well to make this story longer, and to fill up space for our editor, his older brother, Andrew, thought he should have a model of his own. That seemed fair, so he picked out a helicopter. Well, it was a V-22 Osprey, but it kind of looks like a chopper so what the hey, I'll do what I can. This started the same as I did with Michael, Andrew cutting parts and me gluing. Well, after a few minutes, I thought that Andrew should learn how to glue the parts together. I held, and he slathered liquid cement along the joints. As we went along and parts needed to be set aside to dry, Andrew's interest started to wane, and he went upstairs to play cars with his brother. Grandpa stayed in the cave to finish the model. The kit was from HobbyCraft, and is very basic. That doesn't mean that it's an easy kit. Including the time we both worked on it, I spent about three days to get it built, painted, and decaled. This doesn't include filling seams and sanding down joints. After all, the boys are young, and boys will be boys. Seems to me that sometime in the last Century I was around that age myself, but it's hard to say.

Michael still has Spitfire in one piece, however, so there is a good chance the Osprey will be around for some time too.

Addendum to MiG-31 Update

Well, everything was going swimmingly [see Seattle Chapter News, August 2001 – ED] until it came time to install the canopy. As I said before, the canopy comes in four parts. At least that's the way it's supposed to fit. The one in my kit came in six pieces. The aft canopy and the center section were broken. This should not have been a problem for a competent modeler. Enter Mister Thumbs; I thought it would be best to fit the broken parts together on the

model. I glued one half of the canopy to the body, then the other half. At this point, things were looking good. Next came the center section, with the same procedure as before. Now the forward canopy; it's on, now just the windscreen to go, and the canopy is complete. Yecch! How could I have missed so badly?

I've seen rollover pictures that didn't look this bad. I'm not sure if I can save the canopy or not. Maybe if I cut the whole thing apart and stick it back together (off the model), then vacuform a whole new one the model can be saved. It would be shame to scrap the model for want of a botched part. This is going to take a while, however, so don't look forward to seeing the completed MiG for some time.

A Question

While reading the latest *IPMS-USA Journal*, an article about building a 1/72nd Corsair ["Building a 1/72 F-4U-1D (sic) Corsair" by T. Garth Connelly and Pete L'Heureux, in the July/August 2001 issue – ED] caught my attention. As I read the article, a revelation leaped out and made me ask, "Why?"

The author said that he wasn't getting the flat finish that he wanted. OK, we have all lusted after the right flat finishes once or twice ourselves, haven't we? What got me thinking was that after all that work to get the perfect flat finish he wanted, he sprayed the whole model with gloss to apply the decals. Am I missing something here?

I know I'm not the only one who paints this way, but why? For years you could get only gloss paint. Then a trickle of flat

Continued on page 9

Reisen in Luftwaffe Service

by Ernie Pazmany, via Bob
LaBouy

[While pouring over the "fantasy" category at the IPMS Nationals in Chicago, I ran across a neat little model and description of it by a friend, Ernie Pazmany. Clearly from the follow description, Ernie has not only a fertile imagination but also a good sense of humor. I thought this might perk up the minds of several of our builders as well. - Bob]

In August 1941, the Luftwaffe took charge of four Mitsubishi A6M2 model 21 airframes, along with six spare engines and assorted spares. These were delivered via the *Sanwa-Plamo Maru* to the port of Bilbao, Spain. Two Japanese flight technicians, one Mitsubishi mechanic/representative, and an engineer/interpreter accompanied the aircraft on the ocean voyage, and subsequently traveled by rail [with the shipment] to a coastal airfield in occupied France. Documents indicate this was in the area of Poix. With the aid of the Japanese contingent, the airframes were assembled, ground tested, and were flown for approximately six months. The aircraft were attached to a special section of 6./JG26, a unit that had already converted to the Fw 190A-I in July, and whose ground crew had familiarity with radial engine maintenance.

The Reisen began long-range flight tests in early October, with two machines overflying England at high altitude. There were seven flights, each taking the Reisen to the maximum range possible. It is believed that these sorties were carried out to determine capabilities that would be useful for escort duties. The Luftwaffe was hoping to resume daylight bomber raids, specifically deep penetration attacks by Do 217s and the expected He 177. Oddly, there were no combat engagements with the RAF during these lengthy flights. Pilots were enthusiastic about the Reisen's maximum range,

three times better than the Bf 109E/F. However, there were a number of annoying problems. First, the cabin oxygen system had to be converted to Luftwaffe standards due to malfunctions, and the radio equipment was replaced on all aircraft due to frequency incompatibility. The radio antenna masts were altered as well. Second, the gunsights were switched over to Revi variants, but the factory installed armament was retained; this being done in order to avoid wing and fuselage modifications that could compromise performance. The latter created a unique maintenance problem, as the airfield armorers were forced to set up a local ammunition-manufacturing unit just to supply the proper caliber rounds for the Reisen. Finally the cockpit was simply uncomfortable to all but the shortest of pilots, a problem also encountered by Allied pilots who flew captured Reisen variants.

Luftwaffe test pilots also derided the modest top speed of 317 mph, predicated on a finely tuned engine, made suitable for European operations. Both the Fw 190 and Bf 109 had far better pilot and fuel system protection and both could out dive the Reisen. Only in maneuverability did the Reisen come out on top. The final balance sheet was addressed by technical officer Hans Offreiter's rather pessimistic appraisal, when he commented, "We'll need at least 200 hundred machines to make a difference ... how soon can we expect them?"

Two aircraft were destroyed due to mechanical failure [a crash landing and an engine fire on the ground], with the remaining two airframes suffering mortal damage during a surprise RAF bombing attack on the airfield, in March 1942.

Luftwaffe ground personnel were appalled to find perfectly painted 'meatballs' [factory applied] in all six positions, on all four airframes. One witness wrote that the olive-gray concealment paint was glaringly offset by, "the scarlet cockades begging for interception." RLM 02/74/75/71 was

painted on all airframes, with large areas of RLM 02 used to hide the Hinomarus. With the exception of the technical officer's Reisen [depicted on my model], the other three aircraft carried sequential numbers [1-3] in black with white outlines. Cowling chin numbers that had been painted at the factory were not removed. The only added marking was an octane triangle adjacent to the fueling port.

The inconclusive and somewhat disappointing tests led to the abandonment of Luftwaffe commitment to a Reisen program. Considering the situation in the Far East around December 1941, it's unlikely the Japanese Government would have been able to deliver airframes to a specific schedule. When Japan attacked and invaded Soviet Asia, on December 6, 1941, the notion of Reisen over England became a moot point. But that's another story...

A Question

from page 8

paints started to show up in hobby shops. Great day in the morning, we could now get the proper look to our creations. But wait, those thick decals that came with the kits all turned silver when they dried. We discovered that decals need a smooth surface to lie down correctly. So what did we do?

We covered that great flat paint with gloss, applied the decals, and then layered down a coat of flat to get back to the finish we wanted in the first place. Talk about frustration...

Maybe some day, the decal makers will discover how to make decals that will lie down on flat paint without silvering. But until that time, it's back to the same old grind.

Model Building: Is the Hobby Dying? (And What's the Deal With the American Model Manufacturers?)

by Tony Wootson, IPMS Delaware Valley Scale Modelers Club

So, what's happening to the Model building hobby and what's the case with the American model manufacturers? Is the hobby dying and are the American model companies collectively giving up the ghost? I mean, what's the last release that Revell/Monogram or Racing Champions/AMT/Ertl or Testors or Lindberg have come out with? Other than one or two new or re-released automobile kits that have come out here or there, they have all been deathly quiet.

I've heard that Racing Champions will no longer be releasing *Star Trek* or *Star Wars* kits. This, despite the fact that AMT/Ertl previously purchased an exclusive license to do model kits for **all three** of the latest *Star Wars* movies, beginning with *The Phantom Menace*. I also heard a rumor that they are getting rid of their molds for the existing *ST* and *SW* kits that have been released.

Revell/Monogram was (or still is) up for sale by the owners who purchased them only a few years ago. Their kit releases have also trickled down to practically nothing. [Revell-Monogram has recently been purchased by a US-based company, Alpha International, who reportedly intend to keep the manufacturing in the US, and also acquire new tooling – ED]

It seems that Revell/Monogram, Racing Champions, and Lindberg have decided to go more and more with pre-painted and snap-tite kits and toys than with "traditional" model kits. Their idea (I guess) is to try to make modeling easier for the new modeler, by taking away the dreary, burdensome tasks of painting, gluing, and applying traditional decals. (Hey, I thought

that was the whole point to modeling!) Not surprisingly, it appears that they've had very little success with this strategy.

Testors have not released anything other than modeling paint and supplies for some time now. (I don't know what good paint and modeling supplies are if there are hardly any new models being released)? I guess there still are numerous "old-head" modelers like myself who have a healthy stock of unbuilt models that will require paint and glue. I know that Testors partnered up with Italeri a number of years ago, to be their distributor here in the States. However, I have not seen many new Italeri releases this year either.

It appears that Polar Lights is the only shining star in the US kit-manufacturing universe. Although their kit output has gone down a bit, they nevertheless still continue to release model kits. I think P.L. has actually discovered a niche that had been completely missed or ignored by the other long-term US modeling companies. They have been releasing kits tailored both to the younger, new model builder, along with coming out with kits aimed at the older sci-fi, fantasy, and horror modeler. They've had some very good success re-releasing a number of old Aurora kits that many of us have built and loved as kids. In addition, they've hit the mark with the **new** releases that many of us would have loved to see as kids, but never did. Their recent C-57D spacecraft from the *Forbidden Planet* movie is a prime example of this. With the mention of six or seven new releases scheduled within the next year or so, P.L. will most likely continue tapping into this secret to modeling success that they've discovered.

With respect to the Japanese model companies like Hasegawa and Tamiya, they have been equally quiet as well. They've maybe popped out a couple new releases here and there. But, their output has dramatically dropped down from the point where it had been a short two or three years ago.

Bandai seems to be the only Japanese kit manufacturer who is doing a halfway decent job in model sales lately. Gundam kits have been filling up and emptying out of Toys-R-Us store shelves pretty regularly. These kits have even been popping up in specialty shops, like electronic game and video stores. Heck, some of the "better" hobby stores have started stocking them as well.

I'm not really surprised with this, due to several reasons. The first is the fact that Cartoon Network since last year has been airing the *Gundam Wing* and *Endless Waltz* series. Also, they have just started showing two new Gundam series - (to us, at least): *Mobile Suit Gundam* and *Gundam: 08th MS Team*. There's nothing quite like exposure in a modeling subject to help generate interest in the associated kits.

I heard or read somewhere that Toys-R-Us is going to expand the types of Gundams that they will be offering, probably to jive up with the two new Gundam shows that have been airing. My second reason is the fact that kids are really tuning into the Gundam Universe. I've seen this with both of my sons, along with other children as well.

I have a question here: What was the last serious attempt that the American model manufacturers made to first determine what modeling interests kids may have, and then follow it up with actual kit releases? I suspect that they have done very little if anything in this area. Instead, they've probably gone with the (false?) assumption that kids nowadays will continue to be interested in things that kids years ago were interested in, mainly military armor and aircraft, along with automobile models.

In addition to Bandai, it seems that P. L. is the only other kit manufacturer who is trying to reach the younger and new modeler. One can just look at their recent release of Aurora dinosaurs, Crash Bandit kits, Speed Racer's Mach 5, and the Scooby Do Mystery Machine as examples.

Ok, I've gotten a bit off target here with my modeling musings. With respect to one of my originally posed questions of whether or not this model building hobby of ours is dying, I really don't think so! There are still far too many older, experienced model builders (who have jobs and hence have some money to spend), who are still very passionate about this hobby. In addition, there is being established a pretty regular, consistent number of young, new model builders who are being introduced to the joys of model building through numerous Make-It-Take-It programs being conducted by various groups. Unfortunately, this positive is probably being quickly negated by the very limited choices, if any at all, that the young, new modeler has once he or she decides that this is something that they'd like to spend more time on.

We are definitely in a modeling recession or rut. A lot of this probably has to do with the economic recession or slowdown that we are experiencing. I really feel that this is a temporary condition, though, - (both the economic and modeling parts) - and within the next year or two we will start seeing an upturn in the hobby.

When all model kit manufacturers (including the Hasegawas, Tamiyas, and Bandais) start going belly up, then I will start becoming concerned.

This modeling downturn seems to be affecting American model manufacturers more than any others. In addition, I think that most of our modeling companies are in dire straights. I have two reasons why I feel this way. The first has already been touched upon. This is the fact that these companies have not and are not targeting their kits to what kids may be interested in building. It has often been argued that the reason American modeling companies currently are not releasing anything is due to the lack of interest in model building by kids. However, it's my contention that just about no one has released a kit on figures from the *Digimon*, *Poke'mon*, *Rug-Rats*, or *Power Puff Girls* cartoon series. You know, things that kids watch and know (and love)? These programs that children have

been watching (and watching a lot of) have been thoroughly ignored by the American model companies.

I've heard the additional argument of, "Why should a model company go through the expense of obtaining licenses to do kits on a subject that kids might be interested in. They should not spend all that money on the design, tooling, manufacturing and releasing of these types of kits, when kids are just not into building models anymore. Kids are more interested in numerous immediate-gratification 'distractions' that currently exist for them, than in a hobby that takes much longer in comparison (and may require some work)."

I say that the current interest in those MITI programs **do** show that kids will build models when given a chance to do so, and that the flip side of the argument is if you **do not** release kits that are targeted towards children, they **will not** buy your products. Sounds like a vicious circle here.

My second reason on why the American modeling companies have been having problems and are in trouble is probably more important than the first. These companies, (with the exception of Accurate Miniatures), have not released very good model kits over the past 20 or 30 years. They had been getting much better up to a number of years ago, when the bottom of the industry seemed to drop off. However, it had taken them too long to catch up to their Japanese counterparts. These fitting and accuracy problems tend not to be all that important to the new model builder. However, ultimately most new modelers (if they stick with the hobby long enough) will become more experienced model builders, to whom fit and accuracy are indeed important!

This hit me one evening when I went to my modeling room. I have close to 800 or 900 model kits stashed away in my room. Most of these kits are 1/72nd and 1/48th scale Hasegawa aircraft models, along with some Tamiya aircraft, armor, and automobiles. Traditionally in the past, because of the

superior qualities both in fit and detail that Hasegawa and Tamiya offered over the American model companies, along with the greater variety in subject matter, I started paying more attention to and purchased more of these kits than any other type. From previous conversations I've had with fellow modeling club members, there are many others who feel the same way.

How many bad things have you heard about earlier releases by AMT/Ertl of *Star Trek* kits? I know just a few years ago Revell/Monogram received some flack from model builders about the poor fitting characteristics of their Starfuries along with their thick, non-sticking decals. (I was one who was making them). It was good that they released the kits. However, I could tell that they weren't as concerned with the fit of those kits as Bandai would have been.

My feeling on the American model companies' slant on things is that they never have viewed this hobby as seriously as Tamiya and Hasagawa do. They viewed the hobby as something for kids and hence were not concerned with continuing to try to improve their products.

Accurate Miniatures, when they came on the scene, really seemed to "finally get it." However, they took things too much to the extreme, (in my opinion), spending way too much money and time on trying to release that ultimate B-25, for example. In addition, I really feel that their exclusive emphasis on WWII aircraft [*They did release a few very nice racecars - ED*] and the lack of greater diversification is what helped to do them in as well.

Since model manufacturing companies are still businesses, they must adhere to the general business model: Give the customer a good quality product that they're interested in, at a reasonable price, and you have a very good shot at not only staying in business, but in thriving. The American model manufacturers as a whole never really did this. However, hopefully they will start. One can always hope.

Photos From the IPMS Vancouver BC Model Show

photos by Stephen Tontoni

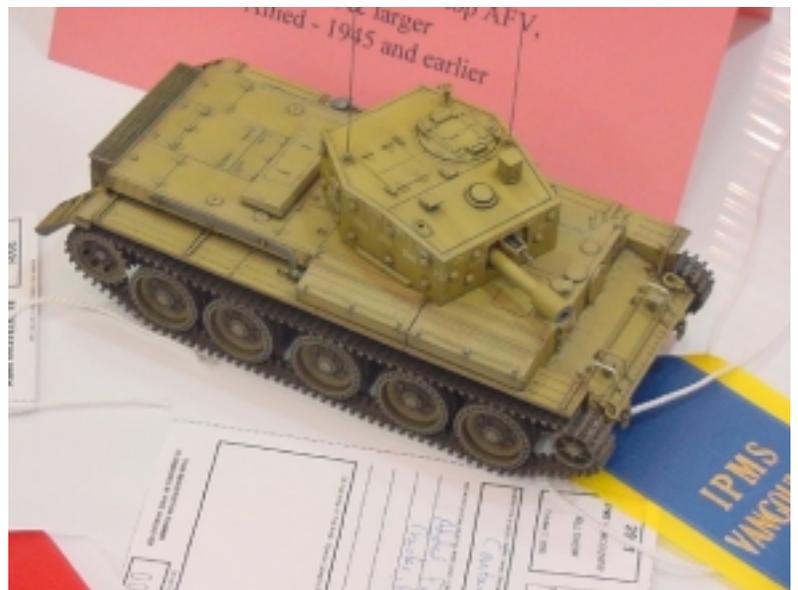


Above: John Frazier's stunning out-of-the-box 1/72nd scale Hasegawa Brewster Buffalo won not only its class, but the award for Best Prop Aircraft. The aircraft is done in the markings of Finnish ace -of-aces Ilmari Juutilainen.



Above: Bill Osborn's Sword Fairchild 91, which was the subject of an article in last month's Seattle Chapter News.

Right: George Stray's Centaur tank. George won awards for best Allied, and best Axis, armor.





Above left: Ted Holowchuk, Glenn Ryder, and Jim Schubert closely study some autos.

Above right: A detail shot of the beautiful 1/48th scale Hawker Hurricane that won Best Canadian Subject. Unfortunately, I don't know the name of the builder.

Above and right: Two of Mike Millette's armor models, a Panzer IV, above, and his SDKFZ 263, right.



Mike Grant Decals

by Bob Hester, IPMS New Jersey

Mike Grant makes decals for unusual aircraft subjects in 1/72nd, 1/48th, and 1/32nd scales. Because he is not in the mass-production market, Mike can offer subjects that might be considered uneconomical (and therefore unavailable to the modeler). Accordingly, the decals are short-run, much like a limited-edition resin set might be.

The decals are individually designed by Mike himself, from computer-generated artwork. Each sheet is printed to order (sometimes requiring 14 separate passes on the printer!) and is simply exquisite! The clarity and color is excellent, and insignia, stencils and other markings are perfectly in register and quite crisp and clear. Each sheet comes with a color instruction guide, which includes application recommendations. Because the decals are not mass-produced, updates and corrections can be made immediately, if needed. For the same reason, scales can be up- or down- sized if needed - even to non-standard scales. Mike strives for accuracy and high quality and at first look, it appears he has succeeded admirably! I give Mike's decals five stars - highly recommended!

Because of the printing method, the carrier film covers the entire sheet - so each decal



must be carefully cut separately. While light-fast, waterproof, and resistant to normal handling, Mike recommends care when cutting them out of the sheets, as they are not as scuff-resistant as the usual screen-printed decals (for instance, when using a steel rule). The decals are applied normally, and while usually compatible with setting solutions such as MicroSol and MicroSet, Mike suggests testing any solution before application as a safeguard.

All of Mike's decals can be seen at:

<http://www.cadvision.com/mikegrant/MikeGrantDecals/>

His website also includes additional information about the decals, including a gallery of models using his decals, ordering and price information, and endorsements from satisfied modelers. Mike is also happy to answer inquiries via E-mail at: decals@mikegrantdesign.com and is always interested in hearing

suggestions from modelers regarding future releases. Mike's decals may also be purchased through FlightDecs at:

<http://www.tbaytel.net/fldecs/>

Some of Mike's decals are reviewed on the Hyperscale website:

1/72 B-24 "Delectable Doris" (also available in 1/48)

1/72 Canadair CF-5A/D (also available in 1/48)

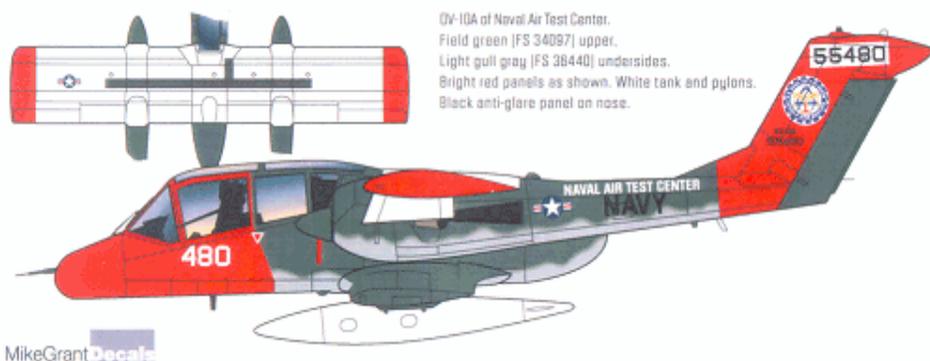
Kits built using Mike's decals, also on Hyperscale:
Albatros D III Oef by Cezary Bartnicki
Republic F-105D Thunderchief by Fred List

Other reviews of Mike's decals may be found at:

MG Decals

1/32 Scale Modeling

Modeling Madness Review: 1/24 Airfix Bf 109E



Russian Volunteer Pilots in the Chinese Air Force

by George Mellinger, IPMS Twin Cities Aero Historians

If you were looking for materials about Russian aviators, you would not automatically think of checking the Japanese Aircraft Homepage. And so you'd be missing out. For several months now, I have been translating a series of magazine articles about the Russian volunteer pilots who flew with the Chinese Air Force between 1937 and 1940. Since this relates directly to the Japanese war, Dave Pluth has been posting my translations on his site. To my surprise, these articles have given not only information about the Japanese, and the Russians, but also much previously unknown information about the Chinese air force, gathered by Anatolii Demin, an outstanding Russian historian, who seems to have accessed the aviation archives of both Chinese governments, as well as Japanese and Russian sources. I'm really proud to be making Mr. Demin's significant work available to the non-Russian world. I have finished five of the six articles in his series, and will finish the last one, plus a separate article he wrote about the Chinese Air Force 1941-1945 during the coming months. Go to Dave's web site at

<http://www.j-aircraft.com/>

to find them.

IPMS Vancouver Fall Show Report

by Robert Allen

IPMS Vancouver, BC, held their annual Fall Show, "2001: A Model Odyssey," on October 6, at the now traditional Bonsor Recreation Center. Although the mix of swimmers, Seniors, and model builders in the busy recreation center was the same as last year, there was one major change in the model room. Instead of the model displays and the vendors being placed in the same room, all of the models were in one room, and the vendors in another. Total model entry was about 450 models entered in the contest, and a further 70 on the display-only tables, a very good turnout. Activity in the vendor room seemed brisk, with a favorable exchange rate being attractive to American buyers.

About 17 IPMS Seattle members made the trek north, and although there were concerns about the time it might take to cross the border, this didn't seem to be a problem; in my case, it took about 20 minutes to get into Canada, and only about 40 minutes to get back into US, on a busy Saturday night. Local modelers came

away with several of the major awards. Andrew Bertschi won Best Auto; George Stray won both Best Allied and Best Axis armor; Ted Holowchuk took the award for Best Jet Aircraft (in addition to winning four regular aviation categories); and John Frazier won Best Prop Aircraft. John's win was particularly noteworthy; his Finnish Brewster Buffalo was not only a 1/72nd scale aircraft, but was built out-of-the-box!

Other models of note included a very nice 1/48th scale Battle of Britain Hawker Hurricane with many opened panels that won Best Canadian Subject; a 1/2100th scale diorama of the drawing room of the *Titanic*'s designer, complete with blueprints and an exquisite scratchbuilt model of a model of the ship; and a large 1/35th scale diorama built by two modelers depicting the German retreat through France, which won the Contestant's Choice award. I also finally saw a built example of my all-time favorite kit, the Matchbox Supermarine Stranraer!

All in all, this was a very enjoyable show, firmly established as one of the best in the Northwest.

[Stephen Tontoni's photos from the show can be seen on page 12-13.]

Upcoming Shows

Friday-Saturday, October 12-13

Sci-Fan 2001. Science Fiction and Fantasy Model Show. Contest entry and display; 12 noon- 7 pm 10/12; 9 am- 12 noon 10/13. Judging 1:30-2:30 pm 10/13. Awards/Door Prizes 4 pm 10/13. Airbrush demos both days. Fee: \$5 for up to five models, \$1 for each additional model. Galaxy Hobby, 196th and Highway 99, Lynnwood, WA. Phone (425) 670-0454. E-mail: info@galaxyhobby.com

Saturday, October 20

Galaxy Hobby Fall Model Contest and Show. Special category: European Rally/Race Car. Age Groups: Adult; Junior (11-17); Youth (10 and under). Registration: Friday 3-7 pm; Saturday 10 am-12 noon. Entry Fees: \$5 for up to five models; \$1 for each additional model; Ages 10 and under are free! Schedule: Judging: 1:30 - 2:30 pm; Awards: 3:30 pm; Pick Up Models: 4 pm. Galaxy Hobby, 196th and Highway 99, Lynnwood, WA. Phone (425) 670-0454. E-mail: info@galaxyhobby.com

Are You a Master Modeler?

by Joe Porter, Editor of the VLS
Mail Order Catalog

1. Score 100 points if you ever called in sick to finish a model.
2. Score 50 points if you ever needed assistance getting unsuperglued.
3. Deduct 75 points if you own golf clubs.
4. Score 40 points if you ever helped yourself to that cool sand in an upright hotel ashtray.
5. Score 2 points for every bottle of paint on your workbench. Add 50 bonus points if you own your own paint rack.
6. Score 200 points if a hobby tool incident has required stitches.
7. Score 75 points if, on arriving in a strange town, the first thing you look for is hobby shops in the phone book. Score 300 bonus points if you ever planned a family vacation to include a model show.
8. Score 25 points if you have something from the kitchen on your workbench. Score 100 bonus points if your wife doesn't know it's missing.

9. Score 50 points if you shop for hobby supplies, unaccompanied, in a fabric or cosmetics store.
10. Score 50 points for each pack of Grandt Line bolts you ever bought.
11. Score 25 points for every kit you have purchased in the last year. Score 250 bonus points for every project you have completed.
12. Score 50 points if you're left-handed.
13. Deduct 300 points if you ever sold some of your unbuilt kits.
14. Score 30 points for every non-modeler who has seen your models and said, "Oh, I used to do that when I was a kid."
15. Deduct 100 points for every unfinished project you've set aside.
16. Score 500 points if you ever purchased a Mascot figure. Score 800 bonus points if you painted it. Deduct 1000 points if you did anything weird after that.
17. Score 150 points if you ever ordered a kit through the mail, and had it sent to your office so your wife wouldn't find out. Score 500 sympathy points if your hobby has cost you a relationship.

18. Score 600 points if the local library refers inquiries to you.
 19. Deduct 5000 points if you ever used a penlight while judging.
 20. Score 50 points for every part you dropped - and found!
 21. Score 75 points if you own Optivisors.
 22. Score 425 points if someone else smashed their models when you showed up at a contest.
 23. Score 350 points if, lacking reference, you ever "invented" a detail on a model, and passed it off as 100% accurate.
 24. Score 75 points if you use different "mood music" for different modeling projects.
 25. Score 250 points if you ever found someone else's drool on one of your models.
 26. Deduct all your points if you actually scored yourself. You should be in there building models, not using your valuable time taking frivolous quizzes.
- Take life seriously. Take your hobby seriously. Just never take yourself too seriously. Thanks for coming.

Meeting Reminder

Saturday, October 20

10 AM

**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.

