

Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA
March 2006

PREZNOTES



Well, here we are. Decals on four models in the course of three days. I may get the hang of these things some day. Since decals have become the bane of my modeling existence in recent years, maybe the fact that I just put decals on four of the four models on my bench requiring decals will (hopefully) open the floodgates as it were and release this logjam of models that's been sitting there waiting for the finishing steps. Then I can start new stuff. Unfortunately, the list of new projects in the queue continues to grow uncontrollably. The other night I started cutting parts out on my Koster PB4Y-2 kit. And a few days before that I was working on my Aardvark Ju 388 conversion kit. Of course, there are still those models on the bench that haven't been doing anything except collecting dust for the last few years. One of these days I just gotta finish that Bv 141. And my *Tora Tora Tora* Val. And those four hydroplanes. And...

In case you hadn't noticed, Norm Filer, our Keeper of the Exchequer, has stepped down after many (many!) years of dedicated service to IPMS Seattle. Norm has been keeping our books straight for a very long time and his service has been most appreciated. Norm, I believe, is one of the very earliest members of IPMS Seattle, joining up in the mid-1960s as I recall. Unfortunately, we don't give gold watches or any other trinkets (our treasury won't allow it!). All I can say is a very heartfelt **THANKYOU**.

Filling Norm's shoes, as it were, is the newest member of your executive staff, Spencer Tom. Welcome aboard Spencer, and I want to thank you in advance for all your years of dedicated service that will be forthcoming!

Getting back to Norm for a bit. Now that he's got a little more modeling time on his hands, I am a bit concerned. He's actually been working on a 1/32nd scale kit. Off the job for a month and he's already lost it.

If you didn't have a chance to attend the display of models at the Museum of Flight a few weeks ago, you missed an excellent show! Well over 1,200 models were on display. It was another great day for us as well as the Museum of Flight. There are a few photos elsewhere in this issue.

If you choose to miss our meeting Saturday and head down to the contest at the Pearson Air Museum in Vancouver, WA, that's all right. It will be a great show and I urge our members to attend if at all possible.

Another contest coming up in a few weeks is at Galaxy Hobby in Lynnwood on April 8. Try to get there for his contest. It's a lot of fun and Bob gives cash prizes. WooHoo!

Then, of course is the big Spring Show on April 22. You've got a little over a month to get those models finished!

And don't forget, we will be selling, via auction, Ted Holowchuk's gorgeous F-15. Bring your wallets!

See you at the meeting,

Terry

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Public Disclaimers, Information, and Appeals for Help

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

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

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

Upcoming Meeting Dates

The IPMS Seattle 2006 meeting schedule is as follows. All meetings are from **10 AM to 1 PM**, except as indicated. To avoid conflicts with other groups using our meeting facility, we must **NOT** be in the building before our scheduled start times, and **MUST** be finished and have the room restored to its proper layout by our scheduled finish time. We suggest that you keep this information in a readily accessible place.

March 11

April 22 (Spring Show at Renton)

April 8 (Bellevue)

May 13

IPMS/USA NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

IPMS No.: _____ Name: _____
(leave blank) MR. LAST

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Signature (required by PO): _____

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

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

Ted Holowchuk F-15E Auction

At the March IPMS Seattle meeting we will have a one-item auction of this 1/48th scale F-15E Strike Eagle built by Ted Holowchuk. It was on display at our February meeting and at the two-day NorthWest Scale Modelers annual Winter Show February 18 and 19 at the Museum Of Flight. There is no reserve on this item; bid what it is worth to you to own an outstanding model built by Ted. The proceeds will go to Ted's widow, Lori; the club has waived its usual 10% commission.



Accurate Miniatures 1/48th Scale Vought S2BU-1 Vindicator

by Bob LaBouy

I've become an Accurate Miniatures fan over the last several years and have found their kits both entertaining and accurate; though not a car person, I haven't even looked at their auto kits. They are only slightly less in overall quality to the Tamiya kits (which are currently my gold standard). The kit is molded in a slightly softer plastic and the fit in general is a little less accurate. List MSRP for the S2BU-1 appears to be about \$34; I paid approximately \$26 (at the White Elephant in Spokane). This is quite a kit, especially when I quickly recall that I paid several dollars more for that childish little B-26 by an Italian manufacturer.



The box art (both the cover rendering and the side profile inside the box, which is a clever use of the profile to allow for extra protection of the kit's clear parts and decals) is good and lures one into building the Vindicator as one of the last of the Navy's pre-WW II golden age carrier bombers.

Overall the quality of the kit, its moldings and surface detail is quite high though I encountered a few mold "push marks" (mostly in areas which will not show). There have been some persistent "rants" about the slight dimpling or indentations



around the fuselage close behind the gunner's area. I looked at these at some length and decided (correctly for a change) that the fuselage band would cover them. The alternative approach is to very carefully rework these surface areas, probably using body putty and then refinishing it even more carefully. In my humble opinion, this isn't worth the extra

work. Unless you're using your "bionic eyes," I don't think this is a serious hurdle. I have also heard that some of the kits marketed don't have these small defects. The kit provides approximately 110 parts on several sprue trees, one of which contains the clear parts, in this case almost two canopies (one open and in separate sections and the other complete, except for the front wind screen).

Engineering and molding generally ranges from good to pretty good. Surface detail appears to be excellent (without much in the way of real aircraft references to compare it against). It's crisp in detail, engraved panel lines clean and provides for good deal of surface detail. I mentioned engineering and as is normal for me I found there are a few areas where it presents some challenges for me as a builder. The two cowl halves are a bit lopsided and I found the only way to

achieve anywhere close to a presentable finished product was to "tack" them together at one end (carefully to insure good mating of the panels), allow to set overnight and then center the other end. The engine barely fits into the resulting ovoid-shaped cowl and I found that filing down the cylinder ends allowed for a better fit. The wiring harness looks pretty good installed. One needs to carefully follow the instruction sequence or you'll learn that you can't get the engine into the cowl. My primary concern though is about the interior and its fit into the fuselage halves. It could just be my ham-fisted style, but this is my fourth Accurate kit and I have yet to find the completed interior just "falls into" the fuselage. It's a beautifully detailed interior and while time consuming it looks pretty good. If you're capable of highly detailing such areas, I suspect this could be the basis for a real gem of an interior. Again, some of the available photos will be of great importance. My issue is that once completed, I have not yet been able to get the interior seated into its location points and have the two fuselage halves come together as they should (without using my shop vise in the garage) and I wound up removing the instrument panel, narrowing the interior at the front end, inserting it, adhering the halves together and then remounting the dash into the resulting cockpit. It looks O.K., but I suspect it isn't what the manufacturer had in mind. The fit almost everywhere else is either very close or right-on.



In addition to the nicely printed, colorful decals, a small set of photo etched lap belts is included. A nice touch. Even in quarter scale, this builds into a very presentable model, with wing span of approximately 10.5" and length of 8".

Another "extra" (which may be unique to Accurate Miniatures kits) is the inclusion of a full sheet of precut masks for the Vindicator's canopy – what a great idea! The only fly in the ointment is that of the 29 small pieces, I could only find one or two that came very close to the canopy scribing itself. After putting many of them in place and marveling at the ingenuity of the concept (I know it's been "out there" for a few years now), I removed them and returned to my tried and proven method of using El Mason's Bare-Metal Foil, which allows me to trim exactly along the frames and adheres quite well. So much for another modern "technology" approach: "looks good on final but landed about a mile short of the runway."

There are ten pages of "not-so-easy" to follow instructions; they contain a few errors, some inaccurate drawing details, and in several respects provide only a very vague idea of what goes where. This aspect of the Accurate kits puzzles me, as the manufacturer has clearly gone a long way to research, engineer, and mold an injected kit of a highly desirable and rare subject. There seem to be some serious corners cut in these instructions – both in

detail and descriptions. Without access and careful study of actual photos of the Vindicator, serious errors may result. I am disappointed that Accurate hasn't yet taken the time to provide better instructions. The instructions aren't useless, but I could clearly see "impossible" from

where I sit. While there are what I believe to be wing fold panels included in the kit, I could find not one word about either the parts or what to do with them. It's too bad that with the effort Accurate makes with this kit that a bit more care and effort isn't put into the instruction sheets.

I do enjoy Accurate's presentation of a standard paint color chart which cross references seven major brands of hobby paints.

One of the several aspects I would like to have seen better delineated is that of the cockpit frame painting. As you can see from the box art, the two sections of the canopy immediately behind the two sections over the pilot appear to be painted with the same aluminum dope the rest of the fuselage is painted. Though there don't appear to be a lot of Vindicator photos in print, this area is painted in all photos that I've been able to find. It is also confirmed in the Lynn Ritger photos (and one from the Accurate site's few reference photos) of the Pensacola aircraft on display that this practice was followed even when

the aircraft were camouflaged with the blue gray schemes during early WW II. It's also shown that way in the instructions on the last page (Step 9: Painting and Finishing). Even a single sentence would have given more emphasis to this practice. One definite weakness is that while you'll see comments about the orange yellow wing paint wrapping over the front of the wing leading edge, I could find no definitive statement as to "how far" it wraps. The Step 9 painting guide provides no clue, either in writing or visually in the bottom profile. I found one or two very poor black and white photos providing only a scant glimpse at this detail. I spent a good deal of time pouring through John Elliott's books on Navy markings and could find no answer to this question.

They have cleverly included a very nice color side view profile of the kit's Vindicator and markings. This shows to better advantage the *Ranger Air Group* Commander's aircraft in profile with its Willow Green tail and fuselage chevron and early 1940 neutrality patrol markings. This profile is all that I had from which to judge and model the wrap around orange yellow wing paint. Even though this forces one to use an artist's impression, it is as good a reference as I could find. It seems to match Art Locnte's profile rendering in the February, 1970 *Air Classics*.

The decal sheet appears to be well done, though a bit sparse and contains the



markings for only one aircraft, which is a departure from Accurate's earlier efforts. I didn't use the kit's decals, aside from the national insignia. I chose to spend a few dollars more and use two of the Yellow Wings sheets (of four such sheets they print for the Vindicator) because I wished to finish my SB2U in a bit more colorful scheme from VB-2 Squadron flying from the *USS Lexington*. The color, registration and amount of markings available on the Yellow Wings sheets is great and appears to allow for the painting of virtually every one of the Vindicators the Navy purchased. I did encounter some splitting of these decals while they were drying, especially those wing chevrons over rivet details and the wing access panels. After using setting solvent though these crack lines almost totally disappeared. The fuselage bands do not come together and require some careful trimming in order to fully fit the fuselage circumference.

My "boilerplate" dissertation of paints and finish: Virtually the entire kit has been finished in Model Master enamels, with the fuselage covered with Alclad II Aluminum and a small amount of Humbrol, and Winsor & Newton artist oils used for accent, shading and weathering wash. I used diluted artist oils and odorless mineral spirits (for weathering) and Ditzler automotive acrylic lacquer products (namely Duracryl lacquer thinner (DTL 876), Clear finish (D 468) and Ultra-Fill primer (PZA 43) and Testors Dullcote Lacquer finish (thinned approximately 150% with DTL 876 thinner. I used Devcon 5-Minute Epoxy and the Handibond Thick cyanoacrylate for most attachments and very small parts. I used both the Micro Scale Micro Set (I wet the surface as I slide the decal onto the surface) and Micro Sol solution and Tamiya Mr. Mark Softner to later soften, snuggle and tighten the decals to the surface. Even though I have some slight weathering wash on panel lines and recesses, the aircraft is still left in it's glossy overall finish as these seems to capture the actual finishes used in the pre-war period.

Aside from my memory of the classic 1941 movie *Dive Bomber*, I had very little information to model from. *Dive Bomber* is a notable pre-WW II movie, written by former Navy aviator Frank 'Spig' Wead and filmed largely on and around San Diego's North Island Naval Air Station. This movie involves a typical group of Naval Aviators, starring Errol Flynn, Fred MacMurray, Regis Toomey, and a very young (very pre-Peter Gunn) Craig Stevens, and their antics solving some of the critical issues confronting aviators prior to World War II. More importantly though, are the numerous and very colorful photos of the Vought SB2U Vindicators in their actual pre-war markings. Below are two such photos.

In addition to the *Air Classics* issue I mentioned earlier, there is a Squadron *Vindicator in Action* book, aircraft booklet no. 122. Unfortunately I was unable to locate my copy and had to rely upon the few magazine photos I could locate as well

as the few reference photos linked to the Accurate website and the wonderful site maintained by fellow modeler Lynn Ritger, who has amassed a large selection of color references and photos, most of them of the Vindicator recovered from Lake Michigan about 15 years ago and now fully restored and displayed at the Pensacola National Museum of Naval Aviation. The numerous photos at this site are worthy of your visit and study:

http://members.tripod.com/sb2u_vindicator/

I really appreciate the color shown in the photos as it represents the only color references I have of the Vindicator.

If you are as interested in Navy aircraft, especially those of the beautiful pre-war, "yellow wing" or golden age era as I am, you have to buy and build this kit. From my very brief visual look at the HI-PM kit of this same aircraft, there's nothing really to compare it against, Accurate's rendition is what you want to get your hands on



right away. It's really light years ahead of the other kit; other than the name, there is little similarity. In spite of the several "issues" I mentioned above, this Vindicator looks and "feels" right to me from almost every aspect. Though my wife will never seem to understand my comments, this is another of those "have to have" kits. Buy it and built it, I think you'll be pleased with your finished efforts and have modeled an important aspect of the Navy's early flight efforts.

Weathering the Model

In my notes this month, I thought I'd share a bit more insight into the weathered finishing technique I use. I have been asked about this technique often...well, O.K., at least by one other modeler. I use a wash for accent, shading and weathering on my almost completed models.

In order to increase my ability to convey this technique, I am using several images

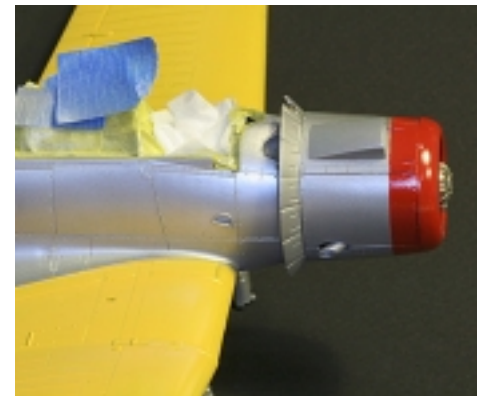
which will hopefully show what I'm trying to say verbally; I hope this helps. While I'll try to describe this process as best as I can, I should also point out this is hardly scientific. I can't describe its quantities with any mathematical descriptions as I only work by using the old Mk I's. While I'm pretty rigid about what materials I use, I suspect there is considerable room for experimentation or substitution as you see fit. I'll stick with "tried and true" for my work and leave the experiments to others.

There is nothing secret about this technique, though I freely admit that it took me over 40 years to finally "get it". It has been described by many other modelers, not the least of which was Ted Holowchuk, whose artistry in modeling finally convinced me to try it several years ago and John Frazier. If there is any error in my process, I assure you that the fault therein lies with me, neither of these two modelers, who most of you can see have displayed more artistry than I can ever hope for. I am equally sure

there are variations of this technique which may be used with even more dramatic results. One of my favorite modelers, Spokane's Gary Meinert, achieves a beautiful finish by detailing panel lines with a sharp pencil line.

I'm attaching several images which I hope will illustrate the few steps involved in this weathering technique. I apologize for the apparent duplicate shots, but am never sure how clear the images illustrate the point I am attempting to illustrate.

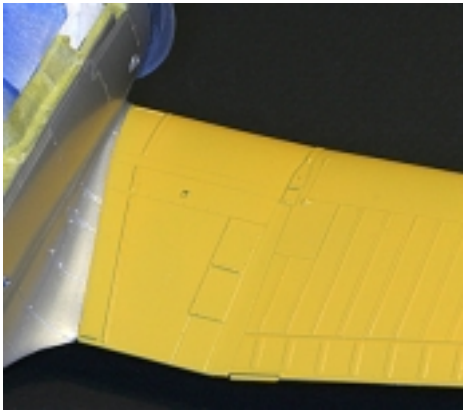
Step 1 - is painting the model as you normally would – or as I referred to them for years – factory fresh for the showroom floor.



Step 2 – when you've finished your painting, overspray the model, in preparation for the weathering treatment(s). I suspect there are more finishes you can use. However, I know that spraying the Duracryl Clear Finish (no. 468) works and provides the necessary working base. I thin this clear automobile acrylic lacquer by eye and estimate the clear is thinned with four parts of thinner. Again, there may be other "acceptable" thinners, but the time tested and proven product I employ is Duracryl Lacquer Thinner no. 876. There isn't much to see in this image, but use it to illustrate the fact that I spray coat the entire aircraft with the clear finish (except for such areas as you can see – the interior – which do not need any further finish work. Sometimes, process is also important: I spray a very light coat on initially, allowing it to sit for a brief time to dry



(maybe 15–20 minutes) and then another heavier coat to insure all the nooks and crannies are clear coated. I then allow this to dry overnight (or at least 4-5 hours) to insure it is a nice dry, hard coating.

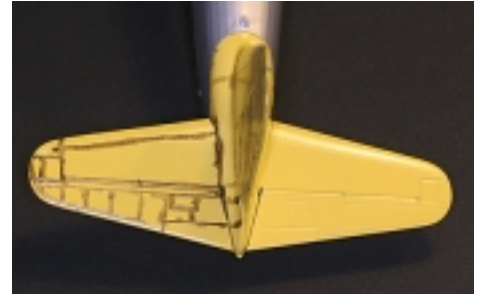
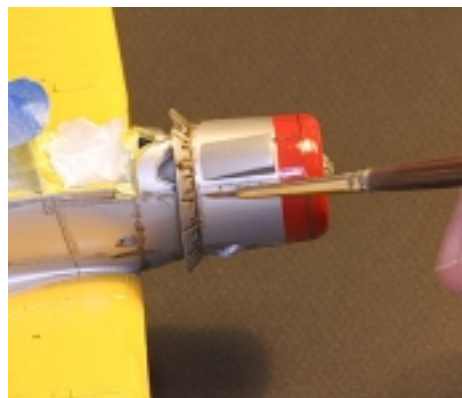


Step 3 – I place a very small amount of Winsor & Newton artist oil color (you know that messy, oily paint in the tubes which never seems to dry) into one of the mixing holes on my little 49-cent paint tray. Then I put about a quarter inch of “artist odorless mineral spirits” into the tray as well. I’ve also experimented with a few other thinners and this seems to be the least intrusive and doesn’t result in the wash attacking the underlying paint surface. The next question you will probably ask is “which color of oil?”

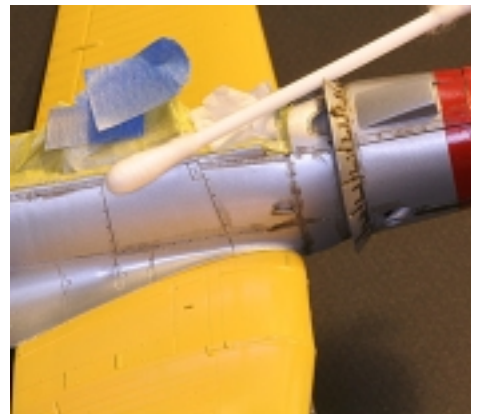
I use the raw umber for about 90% of what I weather. I switch to a gray for wash when working on a navy blue or gray surface only because it often provide a better contrast as the weathering is completed. I also notice that many other modelers merely use a piece of glass on which to mix their wash; again, anything that works for you is great; I just can’t seem to keep the material in place on glass, they dry out faster (I think) and wind up leaking all over my work area. As for my process, I often dip the small brush tip into the thinner, then mix along side of the oil blob to get what I’m going to use on the brush. I find the mixed thinner and oil paint in the main puddle is too thin and doesn’t leave enough oil on the area I’m coating.



Step 4 – Paint the wash over the surface. This works best if there is nice engraved surface detail - either provided for on the basic kit surface or that you’ve scribed yourself. I also realize that both Ted and John rework even the inscribed surface panel lines, etc. on the kit to insure the best surface definition. I am not nearly as anal and rarely go to that extent. Some kits provide you a lot to work with, others almost leave it to the builder; it’s almost as though you’re scratch building. In any case you needn’t put too much of the wash on the model since it’s basically only that wash in the engraved area which will remain when you’ve completed your weathering. I use a brushing motion across the panel lines (against the lines, not with them to avoid wiping the dried wash out of the engraved line).

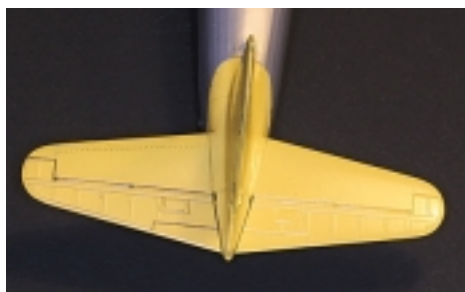


Step 5 – This possibly the easiest step – removing the dried wash. The key to this working well though, is waiting until the wash is nice and dry. I try to wait for an hour or two and in most instances, this allows for the complete drying of the wash. As you can see from both of these images, I usually start the removal with a Q-tip and if necessary use a small piece of soft clean cotton (old t-shirt pieces).



Step 6 – Here’s a couple of shots illustrating what I believe is a slightly subtle effect. It delineates the panel lines, yet doesn’t really leave any residue on the model surface. It gives the model the

appearance of depth and enhances the model significantly (again in my opinion). Should you want or need, you are free to recoat it with wash and wipe it away again. Most often, I recoat it with a light layer of clear lacquer again and then my weathering becomes cumulative in its effect. I also put on more wash and wipe it, leaving a streaking look around engine nacelles and areas where the aircraft has exhaust, leaking fuel, and/or hydraulic fluids. In many aircraft I've photographed, the area below the aircraft and behind the engine areas is especially filthy.



Step 7 – As I finish and find a level of weathering I'm comfortable with, I then put another light layer or two of clear lacquer over the entire aircraft, paying special attention to the areas on the fuselage, wings, etc. where I'll be applying decals.

Let the clear overcoat dry for several hours or overnight. Then apply the decals and begin the task of treating the decals and hiding them. Anyone interested in that process? Should I hear a groundswell of interest (well O.K. again, maybe one or two interested modelers...), I will tackle that task and reduce it to an article as well. Questions anyone? Anyone?

Hurricane Bookshelf: One Hundred Thousand

by Scott Kruize

It must've been tough to be a Zero pilot. Or any Axis fighter pilot. Flying Mitsubishi's, Macchis, or Messerschmitts, it had to be discouraging to realize that even if you destroy an opposing American fighter plane today, that won't help. There'd be more later, and more tomorrow, and more the day after that, until you were beaten down and the war was over.

Numbers matter. The best efforts of Mitsubishi (and Nakajima) to make Zeros all through the war, (excluding prototypes, two-seat trainers, etc.) didn't quite add up to ten thousand. And Zeros were the most numerous of the Japanese fighters. Adding all the others that weren't Zeros only slightly more than doubled that number.

Across the planet, pilots of the other Axis fighters were in a similar fix. Besides having to fight off nearly fifteen thousand Hurricanes, several thousand of their Hawker successors, Typhoons and Tempests, many more thousands of De Havilland Mosquitoes and Bristol Beaufighters, and over twenty thousand Spitfires (there, I've said it!), there were tens of thousands of MiGs, LaGGs, and Yaks...and they still had to face even greater numbers of American fighters!

Of course all this trouble for the Axis came from the quality of American pilots: well-trained, determined, skillful and brave. But

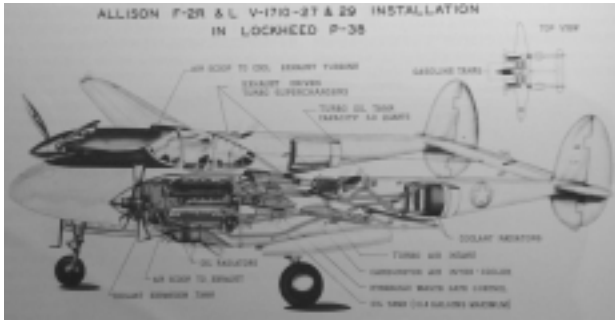
their equipment mattered: it got better and better as the war went on, until it was at least equal to the enemy's very best. And the numbers American production was able to make swamped any efforts of the Axis to cope. There were enough for the U.S. Army Air Force, Navy, and Marines to fight all over the world, and even enough to help supply all our allies.

This book is entitled *America's Hundred Thousand - U.S. Production Fighters of World War II*, by Frances H. Dean, copyright 1997 and published by Schiffer Military Aviation History of Atglen, Pennsylvania.



Right in the Introduction, Mr. Dean states his case with a chart that repeats the book's title main title. The 11 major types add up: just over 10,000 P-38 Lightnings, over 9,500 P-39 Airacobras, over 13,000 P-40 Hawk-series, more than fifteen-and-a-half thousand P-47 Thunderbolts, just slightly fewer P-51 Mustangs, just over 700 P-61 Black Widow night fighters, 3,300 P-63 King Cobras, just over 500 Brewster Buffaloes, nearly 8,000 Wildcats, eleven-and-a-half thousand Corsairs, and more than 12,000 Hellcats. Dean does the numbers: total production 100,090!

(Whaddya mean, “What’s this book review doing in ‘Hurricane Bookshelf’?”) American fighters had a lot to do with Hurricanes: Hawks augmented Hurricanes over the Western Desert, various types helped carry on Hurribomber ground-attacks into Occupied Europe, and Thunderbolts gradually relieved war-weary Hurricanes fighting the Japanese in Southeast Asia. Besides, here’s an exact quote from page 230: “The Merlin installation in two of the P-40 versions was not the same Merlin fitted into the late P-51 fighters. It had a single stage two speed supercharger as in the Hawker Hurricane...”)



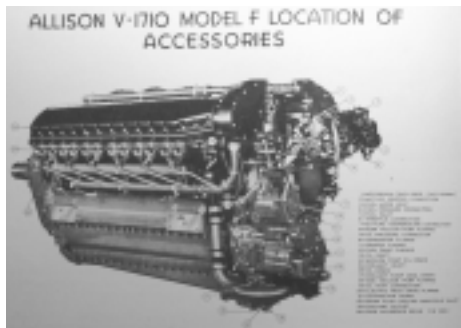
Chapter 4 is the core of the book and occupies by far most of its bulk. It considers in turn each of the eleven

- March 1945: night-fighter P-38Ms enter production

I wonder if the author was questioned, as he compiled his research: “Which fighter was best?” That would explain not just Chapter 5, but his inclusion of the strangest things in his vast compendium of cold hard facts: sets of comments for each

- March 1943: the 80th Squadron of the 8th FG in the Pacific changes from P-39s to P-38s (wonder what Edwards Park,

airplane here. The remarks are neither cited by source, nor commented on by the author...they're just there. Different people have wildly different opinions and impressions of the very same airplane. Here's a sampling, once again from the section about the P-38:



- Some pilots considered P-38 a complete failure in Europe, mainly because of the power plant troubles.
- Single-engine landings were not uncommon with the P-38.
- Galland's opinion of the P-38 was like that for the Me 110: twin-engine fighters were no match for the single-engined variety.
- For a large two-engined machine, the P-38 was very aerobatic and could make a believer out of a pilot.



- There were pilots who felt the P-38 was the most versatile fighter of all, but the turbosupercharged twin engines made it too complicated.
- Germans felt the P-38 could out-turn an Me 109...they also thought it was suicide to go head-on against the very heavy firepower of the P-38.

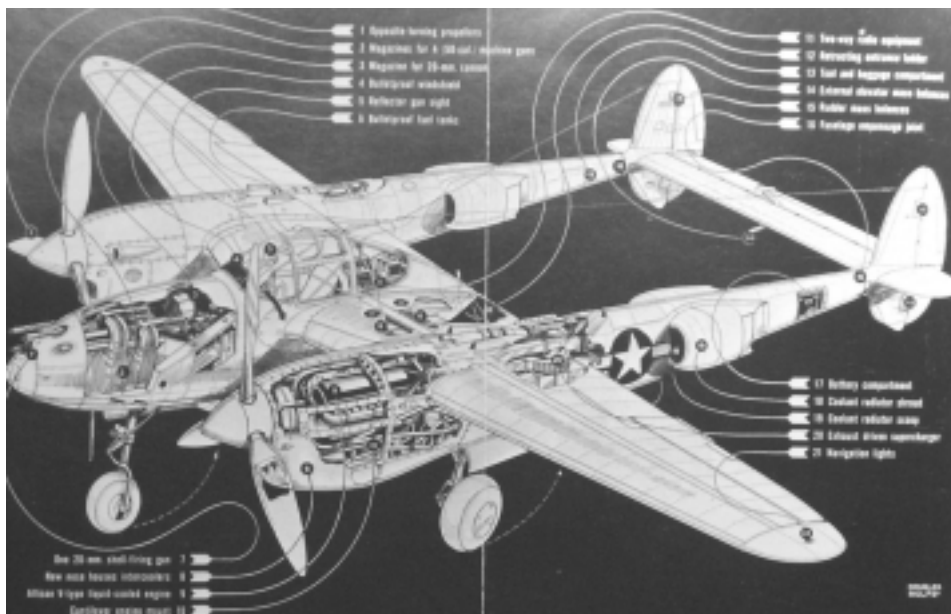
- At low altitudes it was hard to beat the P-38; it could perform fairly tight maneuvers.
- Introduction of the P-38 into the Pacific really changed the air combat situation.
- Pilots felt the P-38 could not match the Zero in low-altitude maneuvers, but at high altitude the Lightnings could always dive away to evade.
- It was a fine airplane, long-range, steady gun platform, and no propeller torque problem.
- The P-38 was the Pacific favorite. One happy pilot felt it was the best fighter of all, even after flying the P-51.
- The attitude in some circles was they would rather have a plane that went like hell and had a few things wrong with it, than one that didn't and still had a few things wrong.



In this review, I've cited only a few samples, only a bit of the material on just one fighter, and there are eleven altogether that get this in-depth treatment. The book is large because it covers a large topic. Its



600 pages may not make for the most exciting bedtime reading, but as a reference into the important details of the planes that helped to win the Second World War for America and its allies, it's impressive!



NorthWest Scale Modelers' Winter Show

by Jim Schubert

photos by Tim Nelson

The theme for this year's two-day model show at Seattle's Museum Of Flight (MOF) on Saturday and Sunday, February 18 and 19 was "Manufactured By" with the aircraft and car models being grouped by manufacturer. Again Jon Carr Farrelly did all the computer art work for the signage. We had two large blocks of tables, ten each, for the UK consortium and for Boeing; these gathered all of the previously independent companies that disappeared into these two giants. Perhaps displaying a bit of Northwest bias, Northrop-Grumman and Lockheed-Martin were not so grouped; the products of their constituent companies being separately labeled and displayed. These sortings become very subjective and it is difficult to be fair and consistent as the representation provided by the models tendered by our exhibitors is spotty and unpredictable. There were the usual Schwarms of 109s, 190s and Mustangs. We do the best we can but we can only display what the modelers build and bring. Last year's "official" model count was 1,194; this year we had 1,229. For the past year, as in previous years, we have been exhorting the locals to, "Bring All Your Models" and it worked – again. The 1,229 exceeded our previous all time high of 1,200 for the Centennial show in 2000.

The presentation in the William M. Allen Theatre in conjunction with the model show was by well-known local aviation artist Jim Dietz. He told us how he became interested in av-art as a kid and how his big goal for many years was to do box art for kits. He spent a great deal of time showing step-by-step progress photos of how he develops an idea from its origin to a finished painting. Many of his preliminary sketches are fine pieces of art in their

own right; I wonder if he ever sells any of these. The presentation was well attended with a spirited Q & A session following.

As last year, Bob Jacobsen, owner of Galaxy Hobby organized and conducted a Make-and-Take for the kids using some 200 snap together kits; members of NWSM and IPMS helped the future modelers with their work.

Again we had a good contingent of modelers visiting from IPMS-Vancouver who came bearing lots of superb models. Modelers from elsewhere around the area also helped us a lot in bulking up the numbers of models displayed.

Something new this year was the establishment on February 2 of two display cases containing 42 1/72nd scale models in the lobby of the MOF; Norm Filer, Bill Osborn and I each placed a dozen models supported by others from Will Perry and Stephen Tontoni. We hope the public's very favorable reaction to this model display will allow us to maintain a continuing rotating, themed display tied in with MOF events. This display would provide both the NorthWest Scale Modelers and IPMS-Seattle with an attractive platform to spread the word about our hobby.

The MOF staff, especially Harold Rubin - Manager of Public Events, were terrific in their pro-active support and cooperation in putting on this year's show. The new President and CEO of the MOF, NASA astronaut, Dr. Bonnie Dunbar visited to see the models and to chat with exhibitors and visitors.

As always we had several tables set up for modelers to actually work on their current projects. This year we set up more chairs and space so that



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Italeri 1/72nd Scale Douglas B-26K Counter Invader

by Bob LaBouy

The temptation to just put this kit back in the box, tape it shut and forget it (I probably can't) is my initial inclination. While I've become somewhat of a Italeri fan over the last few years and found their recent armor and military kits both entertaining and accurate, this kit has returned me to think of Italeri as a third-rate kit manufacturer. I am convinced it is only slightly better than the old Frog, Airfix, and Matchbox kits of the late '60s and early '70s (before their quality ruined their reputations and left them in the dust as the Japanese manufacturers surpassed them in almost every effort). I am sorely disappointed and highly recommend against buying this kit, if you haven't already done so. I laid out approximately \$30 for this kit and don't feel any compunction

country's efforts to determine the future of the Vietnamese.

It also appears that the company intends to release the earlier World War II B-26 (or A-26 as they were designated in WWII) kits as well. The dead giveaway is the inclusion of a bombardier station in the nose area, while the kit only includes the solid gun nose fairing. The clear tree alone points to this conclusion as there is a missing numbered piece and several vacant areas for other later moldings.

There are six pages of reasonably easy to follow instructions and three pages of painting and marking illustrations (though a bit small). Again, I found the instructions to be adequate and even clear enough for those of us "geezer" in the group to follow.

Overall the quality of the kit and its moldings is reasonably poor. As I mentioned previously, it resembles what we were once used to in such kits in the late-'50s and early-'60s. It can't even be

shoulders above the old Airfix (even though that box featured an aircraft with markings flown by an IPMS member's father). I encountered a few mold "push marks" (on both the fuselage top and bottom). The kit provides approximately 119 parts on five sprue trees. The basic dimensions appear to be "close," though while the actual measurements are normally given as from 51' 3" to 51' 7" in length, the kit comes out as about 50' 6"; the span at 71' 6" and the kit's dead-on; the height should be 18' 6" to 19', while the kit measures at 18'. On my scale ruler, the kit appears to be slightly short in length and height and gives me the appearance of being slightly underscaled, when sitting next to other contemporary aircraft models.

I mentioned the poor kit surface details and even worse fit of parts. Several examples to clearly illustrate my observation: there is no tail rotating beacon on the kit (which stands out in any photo on this aircraft), the gun ports for the eight very prominent machine guns are "tear drop" shaped on the kit's nose (which also doesn't fit in shape to the fuselage, requiring considerable sanding) while those on the aircraft are clearly more rectangular in opening shape. Italeri has included two saucer shaped items on each side of the nose. These are intended to represent the inspection plates on the real aircraft though those on the kit would be three to five inches deep and clearly misrepresented in the kit's details. The canopy also doesn't really fit in either cross section or length and I decided to just glue it in place as best I could, rather than sanding it down, polishing, and rescribing the canopy panel lines. Interestingly, the instruction drawings and profiles show the flight deck canopy comprised of two equal-sized panels (both of which may be opened up and to the outside in real life), while most good detailed drawings show the pilot's overhead canopy is not as long as that over the copilot's station. The canopy provided appears to be correct in its shape.

The trim tab for the rudder is not even shown in the correct location on the kit's



about glossing over its shortcomings. The box art may be the highpoint of this kit – providing no inkling of what lurks inside the box, nor what you will confront when attempting to build a passable representation of this important part of our

compared with the Tamiya kits of today or Hasegawa kits of the '70s. One possible clue as to the "why" may be that as IPMS Stockholm had reported, this kit is a joint effort by the Special Hobby/MPM folks and Italeri. It is certainly heads and

surface. There are at least seven or eight inspection openings on the tail represented as four on the kit's tail. It appears, to me at least, that the surface detail in most respects based on my photo observations is at best guessed at by the Italeri engineers. There is no excuse for these types of errors especially when you're paying \$30 for the kit. Thankfully, the kit's engineers missed putting in the scalloped fabric rudder details – again, not on the actual A-26 though shown in the box art. As I mentioned previously, at best this is, in far too many respects, a crude representation of the actual aircraft and only approximate in most aspects. Examples of this include the inside of the gear and bomb bay doors, none of which contain anything even remotely resembling the actual aircraft doors.

indicate the large Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engines are almost at the cowl rings). As an alternate approach, I glued the engine faces into the cowls themselves, which still leaves a bit of mess on the finished model, but better than the kit provides for. The inner lips of the cowls are recessed too far back into the engine area as the kit provides them. This kit reminds me of my last encounter with Monogram and its fit issues at almost every turn of their kits.

You need to know that you'll need to have a variety of sandpaper to complete this model – and a lot of it. We're not talking about fine grade stuff for finishing. We are talking heavy duty stuff here, like 100 grit or even heavy duty files. The surface details and joint areas between parts of this kit require major filing, sanding, filling,

The decal sheet appears to be well done and provides the basic decals/combinations for five different Invaders covered in profile on the instruction sheet (and two very small color profile drawings on the box side). Most of these decals are single color, eliminating the next issue – registration. Of the thirteen multiple color markings, on the eight providing CIA national markings for the Congolese Federation aircraft, the registration is off and I suspect they would have to be replaced from aftermarket decals or accept the registration error evident on my examples. I have yet to apply these flat finished decals and am not sure how they will adhere, but will be able to demonstrate those (hopefully) at the March meeting. To their credit, I suspect Italeri's provision for the somewhat colorful Congolese operations aircraft will increase the kit's interest for builders.



The fit of the nacelles into the underwing surfaces are almost "O.K." on the port wing, while the other wing leaves a large area to be filled on each side of the nacelle (both of which are also only open bays with no details whatsoever). I attempted to fit the engine fronts against the engine nacelles, but this left them far back from the cowls themselves (while photos clearly

sanding, filling, and more sanding. I had to do a moderate amount of filling, using my old standby 3M Brand Acryl-Blue filler and small amounts of Apoxie Clay (which is much easier to work with around the very small openings and where surface details need to be carefully preserved). Along with the body filler, there was far more sanding and rescribing than I enjoy.

I still enjoy that Italeri (probably because of its corporate connection with the Testors Corporation) clearly calls out its color references in Model Master references. Virtually the entire kit has been finished in Model Master enamels, with a very small amount of Humbrol and Winsor & Newton artist oils used for accent, shading and weathering wash. I used diluted artist oils and odorless mineral spirits (for weathering) and Ditzler automotive acrylic lacquer products (namely Duracryl lacquer thinner (DTL 876), Clear finish (D 468) and Ultra-Fill primer (PZA 43) and Testors Dullcote Lacquer finish (thinned approximately 150% with DTL 876 thinner. I used Devcon 5-Minute Epoxy and the Handibond Thick cyanoacrylate for most attachments and very small parts. I used both the Micro Scale Micro Set (I wet the surface as I slide the decal onto the surface) and Micro Sol solution and Tamiya Mr. Mark Softener to later soften, snuggle and tighten the decals to the surface prior to my final overcoat of Dullcote. The upper wing decals were the easiest to hide with subsequent glossing and sanding and glossing. Since these aircraft often flew with few markings and no national insignia (remembering "we

were really there”), decal work is kept to a minimum.

A bit of history – I long ago gained my initial interest in the Counter Invader during an early ‘70s visit to Davis-Monthan AFB, which at that time had almost all of the surviving A-26s used over SEA. This aircraft, with its then “stealthy” finish and markings and mysterious missions intrigued me. One of these aircraft is still displayed at the Pima County Air Museum in Tucson and many of who trekked into the desert in 2004 as part of our IPMS Convention pilgrimage, saw this same aircraft.



I discovered a very interesting and thorough summary of the B-26/A-26 Counter Invader, as usual, on the Internet. Written and “published” by Joe Baugher, it provides a wealth of information about these aircraft. I recommend you take a swing by his website at: http://www.csd.uwo.ca/~pettypi/elevon/baugher_us/a26-10.html

I believe you’ll find much there to interest you in the ‘26. There is also a very compelling and interesting series of notes about a former A-26 pilot, lost in action over Laos, Maj James Sizemore and his crew, along with some good photos and interesting history about the “Nimrods” of the 609th SOS, starting at URL: <http://www.virtualwall.org/ds/SizemoreJE01a.htm>

Squadron’s *A-26 Invader in Action* book (no. 134) published back in 1993 seems to be readily available and contains some good photographs of the Invader throughout its approximately 30 years of military service. Noticeably, their cover art work is of a 609th SOS shown in its night time “air commando” markings as flown from the home base for most such A-26 aircraft, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base or “Naked Phanny” as it was commonly called in polite circles. The other major resource I highly recommend is the WarbirdTech Series, *Douglas A-26 Invader*, Volume 22, by former local aircraft enthusiast, photographer and Air Force

Historian, Frederick Johnsen. This single paperback book is at 100 pages just about the most thorough and useful aid in building this kit I’ve found.

For information about the Invader’s service in other air forces, *Foreign Invaders: The Douglas Invader in Foreign Military and US Clandestine Service*, by Dan Hagedorn and Leif Hellstrom, is invaluable.

The Air Force Museum also has a nice site on the Counter Invader, along with several useful photographs at: <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/annex/an21a.htm>.

By far, the most honest review of this kit I’ve seen to date, is offered in Phil Pagnataro’s review on the IPMS-USA site. He has only the first two parts done as I compile these notes, but should have it concluded soon. Phil is both a respected modeler and an accomplished military and commercial pilot. Check out his observations at: http://www.ipmsusa.org/Reviews/Kits/Aircraft/Kits_Air.htm.

Two other reviews available on the net are by Michael Benolkin on the Cybermodeler site (URL: http://cybermodeler.com/hobby/kits/it/kit_it_1249.shtml) and Brett Green’s review on the HyperScale site (URL: http://kits.kitreview.com/italeri1249reviewwb_1.htm). Both of these reviewers see it as “recommended” and “one of their nicest 1/72 scale efforts to date.” While I respect both of these modelers and have found most of their reviews reasonably accurate to date, I wonder if they have actually attempted to construct this kit?

If you are as interested in WW II aircraft as I am, you may still have to buy and build this kit. While I applaud Italeri’s efforts in modeling the kit in the “godly scale” I am disappointed that a few more dollars (or lire) weren’t spent on the engineering and fit of the resulting kit. It has the potential to be so much more. While I would like to await the WW II versions I suspect will follow, I can’t image the work required to cover up all of the fit issues in order to finish this model in bare metal versions. When I mentioned the concept of caveat emptor last month’s review of a Trumpeter kit, I had no idea of what was awaiting in this kit by Italeri. It’s too bad that has the warts it does; I guess I’d rather spend another \$10-15 and buy a great kit the next time. I have also relearned a lesson I should have carried over from my experiences of 35-40 years ago: don’t take a look at the pieces and parts in the box and assume it will be a great kit. The proof is truly in the assembly and building. I hope you will find this an easier build than I did.

Upcoming Model Shows

Saturday, March 11

IPMS Lieutenant Alexander Pearson Modeleers 2006 Invitational "The Joy of Modeling". Pearson Air Museum, 1115 E 5th, Vancouver, WA. See last issue for more details.

Saturday, April 8

Galaxy Hobby Annual Contest and Show. Age Groups: Adult, Junior (12-16), Youth (11 and under. Registration: Friday 3:00-7:00; Saturday - 10:00-12:00. Entry Fee: \$5 for up to five models; \$1 for each additional model. Schedule: Judging: 1:30-2:30; Awards: 3:30; Pick Up Models: 4:00. Galaxy Hobby, 19332 60th Ave W, Lynnwood, WA. Phone: 425-670-0454. Web site: <http://www.galaxyhobby.com/Contest/contest.htm>

Saturday, April 22

IPMS Seattle Spring Show. Renton Community Center. More info than you can shake a stick at in next month's issue. Updated list of Special Awards:

Best of Show Award Balloting by entrants (popular vote) sponsored by IPMS Seattle

Best British Subject sponsored by Robert Allen, Keith Laird, & Andrew Birkbeck

Best Canadian Subject sponsored by IPMS Vancouver BC

Best Civil Auto/Motorcycle sponsored by Jon Fincher

Best Finish/Ted Holowchuk Award sponsored by IPMS Seattle

Best Post-WW II U. S. Aircraft sponsored by Norm Filer

Best Fire Service Land Based sponsored by Emerald City II Buffcon

Best Small Air Forces sponsored by Jim Schubert & John Alcorn

Best WWII Pacific Theatre sponsored by Tracy White

Best Fire Fighting Aircraft sponsored by Dan Farnham Scale Firebombers

Best Aircraft from the First Twenty Years (1903-1923) sponsored by Pearson Modeleers

Best French Subject sponsored by Stephen Tontoni and Will Perry

Best NATO Aircraft sponsored by Internet Modeler

Best Fire Service Sea Based sponsored by Seaside Fire Service

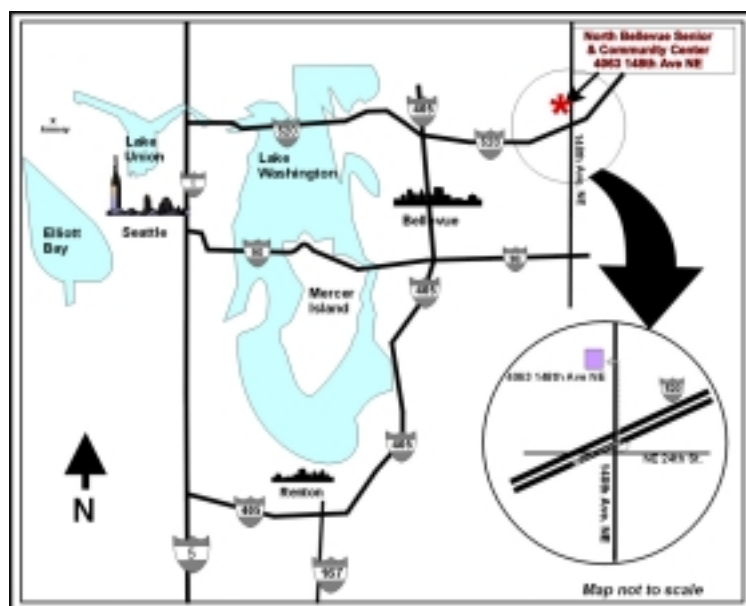
NWSM Show

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visitors could sit and watch and chat with the builders; this provides a good interface with the public as people will stop, sit, watch and talk. Initially, of course, this space was used to repair models damaged in packing and in transit. Damage is the bete noir of this kind of activity and cannot be avoided. There is, though, very little damage actually caused by visitors; we inflict most of it ourselves in packing, unpacking and in the transits to and from home. Several modelers refuse to participate in this show because of the exposure to damage but I personally believe that participating, and risking damage, is the price that we should all be willing to pay for our membership in this terrific worldwide community of modelers.



Meeting Reminder



March 11

10 AM - 1 PM

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.