

Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA
December 2010

PREZNOTES



Good heavens, this year sure blew by fast. My production rate was up over '09 to my "normal" 12, but six of those were those little Pegasus Flying saucers – not exactly bellringers in the complicated kit department. Unfortunately it also means that my display case is close to reaching capacity. It currently holds nearly everything I've built since I got serious about the hobby (and didn't want to blow everything up!). Everything since 1968 to be exact. My case was designed to hold everything up to and including a Monogram B-29 and B-36. With the announcement that Wings Scale will be releasing a new B-17 kit in 1/32nd scale in the near future (insert audible gasp here), it may need some pruning. I'm not sure whether or not to box some up or even dispose (another gasp here) of some. Your thoughts would be appreciated.

In other news, our twice delayed December Pearl Harbor contest is once again back on the schedule, to take place at our December 2011 meeting, the 70th anniversary of the attack. We'll have additional details at the meeting.

Our Spring Show committee is looking for someone to take on the duties of coordinating our seminar schedule. The position entails coordinating the seminar schedule/speakers, and helping set up the space for each presentation. The pay is minimal, well, nothing to put an exact \$\$ figure on it, but it is an important part of our ever growing Spring Show. And you get a catchy title: Seminar Czar. We will also talk about this at the meeting.

Currently on the bench is a new release from Government Issue, distributed by Squadron, called Thermonuclear Rodeo. It features one of the most iconic movie scenes ever, Major Kong riding a nuclear bomb to the end of the world in the motion picture, *Dr Strangelove, Or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*. The kit is 90mm scale, consists of ten resin and

plastic parts, plus decals for the bomb and Major Kongs uniform. It took a bit of work to remove the pour stubs and once the parts were cleaned up the parts were assembled without difficulty, requiring minimal filling of the seams – I used Elmers glue. I did remove resin pins that were provided in the kit to pin the arms, as they did not fit the molded holes. The only flaw on the figure was a hole in Major Kong's chin, which I filled with putty. The bomb required a bit more work. The major issue on my example was that some of the holes on the forward casing were broken – the molding in the area is very thin. I was able to replace the damaged parts and will proceed to painting shortly. I'm going to paint it in black and white, as the movie was a black and white movie, and I had no idea what the real colors. Thanks to Chris Banyai-Riepl of *Internet Modeler* for the review sample.

Our January meeting will be held on the **third** Saturday of the month, **January 15**, rather than the second, as North Bellevue Community Center will be closed for its annual maintenance on January 8.

Don't forget, this meeting is our annual sugar fest. We'll see you there.

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 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 \$25 a year for regular mail delivery of the newsletter, and \$15 for e-mail delivery, and may be paid to Spencer Tom, 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, WordPerfect, or text 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 2010/2011 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.

December 11

Other meetings have yet to be confirmed

January 15 (Third Saturday)

IPMS/USA NEW MEMBER APPLICATION

IPMS No.: _____ Name: _____
(leave blank) FIRST M LAST
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Signature (required by PO): _____

Adult: \$25 Junior (17 years old or younger): \$12

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#)

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Trumpeter 1/32nd Scale MiG-23MF

by Mike Millette

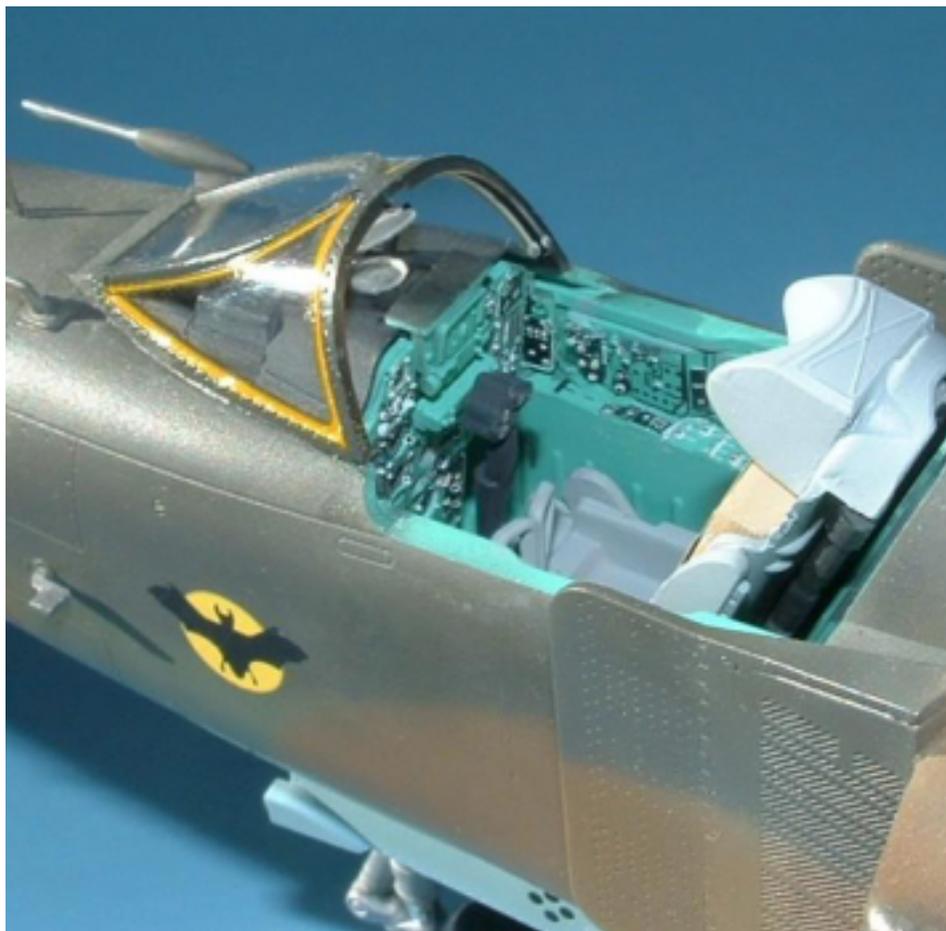
I did an in box review with a short history of the MiG-23 a few months ago [see the July, 2010 issue of *Seattle Chapter News – ED*], so I won't repeat them for this review. Many of my initial impressions of the kit from the preview were confirmed, this is a nice building kit for the most part. There are, however a few things to be aware of though and these came out in the course of the build.

Not surprisingly, the build starts with the cockpit. The cockpit builds up easily, with a nice combination of parts that are appropriate for their application. The raised detail is nice and sharp, with decals providing good visual details. Because of



the realistic depth of the sidewall details, I cut the decals into smaller pieces. This, in

combination with liberal use of Solvaset aided in the decals snuggling down over the detail where they belonged and enhancing the look of the interior. The one thing that needs to be added is the short, white, vertical line painted in many Russian cockpits to help pilots reorient themselves after high G maneuvers. Construction of the interior needs to be done carefully as there are many pieces to the cockpit tub. I would suggest assembling the tub, securing the joints with superglue and letting them dry thoroughly before installing it into the fuselage. Initially I just glued my cockpit together with liquid glue and when I initially installed it several parts moved due to the snug fit. I had to pull it back out and re-glue it before the final installation. In my original in box review, I mentioned that it didn't look like a throttle was present. This is in fact the case. I didn't add one as I intended to build this kit out of the box, but if I build another one, I will add it.



The seat is made of a combination of plastic parts and PE. There doesn't seem to be a lap belt as part of the MF kit, just the complex shoulder harness. The seatbelt included in the PE set would appear to be for a later version. The few pictures I could find of the seat seemed to confirm this, but it seems an odd absence.



The last addition to the cockpit area was a significant amount of epoxy putty packed into the nose. There is a lot of plastic aft of the kit's center of gravity, especially with the wings in the swept back condition so I didn't want a tail sitter. I filled most of the nose forward of the cockpit with putty.

The nose wheel well is next. Care must be taken during construction to ensure that it lines up correctly. The landing gear strut comes with a metal core for strength. This is an excellent idea because the completed kit is quite heavy. The nose gear also comes with a stone guard that mounts to the axle. I have seen quite a few pictures of aircraft without this mounted, so you may want to check your references before using this part. The PE stiffeners are quite small and take considerable care to bend and apply correctly, but their addition and the use of the PE to depict them is very realistic when completed.

My next step was to assemble the wings and center fuselage, a bit out of sequence. The wings come with several positionable flight surfaces (leading and trailing edge flaps as well as spoilers). Curiously, all the pictures I saw had all three of these surfaces in the neutral positions, except for in flight, so I chose to model them as they typically appear when the aircraft is on the ground. The leading and trailing flaps fit quite snugly. The spoilers are a little loose and I used some thin strip stock underneath them to ensure they sit flush with the upper surface of the wing. The instructions say to add the static wicks (D3 and D5) to the wingtips at this point. Having broken them both off at various points in the build, I would suggest that they be added closer to the end if possible.

Step 4 in the instructions is where the forward portions of the inlet are attached to the forward fuselage assembly. Once again, PE parts are used to good effect. The vent holes in the splitter plate are really nicely depicted by the use of the PE. I superglued them to the plastic splitter plate parts and then used a couple of coats of Mr. Surfacer around the edges to smooth them perfectly into the rest of the splitter plate.

The one issue that needs to be pointed out here is the slight mismatch between the outer inlet parts (L1 and L2) to the mid fuselage assembly. I actually built the mid fuselage assembly and glued it to the forward fuselage assembly before adding the inlets. When I went to add the inlets, it became clear that the inlets were just slightly shallow compared to the completed mid fuselage. The mid fuselage width is set by part B2, so the forward fuselage needs to be assembled so that it matches. The discontinuity is not great, but it is obvious. Since I had already glued the inner inlet parts (G6, G17, G10 and G21) to the forward fuselage, I wasn't able to execute my preferred solution. My actual approach was to heavily putty the joint (most of the putty was used to build up parts L1 and L2) and then sand it flush with the center fuselage. That unfortunately resulted in some loss of detail. If I were to do it again, I would glue very thin plastic to the spade shaped portions of parts A5 and A6 to push the inlets outward slightly and match the exterior line of the inlet as defined by the center section.

The center section has some curiosities about it as well. I've looked at a number of

photos of MiG-23s and while there is some variation, the real wheel wells are a bit more complex than as represented in the kit. Trumpeter's instructions are also a little vague on where some of the details that they do provide are attached. The wings are interlocked so that they can be swept in synchrony. Trumpeter has done a good job with this. The gearing is snug enough so that the wings move evenly but still are easy to move. You need to be very careful when gluing the whole wing glove assembly together though. Carelessness in gluing Part C15 to the rest of the assembly will result in immobility of the whole unit.

Another thing to note is that when assembling the inlet duct, only the separate ducts (up to where they come together) are present. The transition segment of ducting from the duct join to the section formed by the inside of the two main wheel wells is not part of the kit. This isn't really obvious from the outside, but a judge with a flashlight and a lot of curiosity could notice it. I painted all of the exposed area inside this section black. One last thing to keep in mind, there is a slot in part H18 that is flashed over for the ML version. It does however need to be opened for a tab on the forward part of the vertical tail for the MF version. This information is missing from the instructions.

The engine is made up of 21 different parts and looks quite nice when finished. The kit provides a mobile maintenance stand so the whole assembly could look really nice exposed in a diorama setting, but I chose to glue the tail cone to the airplane so all the detail was lost on my kit.

The main landing gear are the next big assembly. Trumpeter have provided a combination of plastic, cast metal, and PE parts that when assembled are quite convincing. The kit provides parts for both the MF and the lighter ML which sits higher, so care is necessary to be sure that the correct parts are utilized for the model you are building. Another thing to note that if assembled as the kit is designed, the outer gear doors, parts C7 and C8, sit much more vertically than they appear in any

photos I have seen. I made small brackets ~ ¼ inch in length to raise the forward attachment point. This looks much closer to the real aircraft. A last thing on this assembly is to note that when attaching the completed landing gear assemblies to the fuselage, some test fitting will be necessary. I waited until the model was almost complete to install the gear on mine. That allowed me to use the wings to set a level model when attaching the gear struts. With the gear installed so close to the centerline, any differences in gear installation will cause a significant tilt from side to side.

Assembly continues with a large number of details. The vertical tail assembly includes a number of nicely detailed parts. As with the wing tip static wicks, I would highly recommend you leave part R2 until right before you paint. I broke this part off twice, and the second time I lost it entirely. I had to recreate it from wire and thin sheet plastic. You get a selection of tail pipes, one with closed afterburner petals or one a wide open version. The gun assembly also contains a mix of plastic and PE parts, some of which you won't see unless you pose them disassembled for maintenance. The PE parts in this case could use some annealing due to the complex shaping that is required to represent the scoops.

Last details include various angle of attack, air data and pitot probes, gear doors, stiffeners, vents, speed brakes and actuators. I actually added many of these parts after main painting had been done so as to be able to paint them more carefully. The pylons were also a bit odd to attach. The installation slots in the wing glove and fuselage needed some tweaking to get the pylons to sit in the proper places. Trumpeter also provides an incredible array of weapons. They seem to have included all the weapons for all six versions Trumpeter has planned. Build a couple versions of the kit and even if you use everything appropriate for that version, you could still have an impressive array of weapons to be used on other models.

Trumpeter provides markings for two different aircraft, black 7183 of the Czech AF and red 564 of the East German AF. Since the kit has been released, decals have been released for a number of additional aircraft from a selection of countries. I chose to paint my model as black 7183, but with some variations in the way it's painted compared to the instructions.



I have a photo of 7183 in one of my references and the paint demarcation lines are a bit different from the instructions, so I followed the photo as much as I could. Trumpeter's instructions are also not exactly consistent as to where the demarcation lines wrap from the top to the sides so some guessing was necessary. From looking at a number of photos of real aircraft it would appear that while the paint schemes were roughly similar, a fair degree of variation occurs. Without clear pictures from every angle of the airplane you're modeling, some guessing is required.

Another variation that I made from the instructions was in the placement of the 7183 decals on the inlets. The instructions would have you place them parallel to the lines of the inlet. In reality, the Czech AF applied these parallel to the plane of the ground so they actually sit at a nose down angle relative to the shape of the inlet.

The paint scheme itself was done using Model Master paints. I used a lightened version of RAF Dark Earth for the tan color. The lighter green was done using a slightly lightened RLM 71, and I used US Army Dark Drab for the darker green. The bottom colors were RLM 65 for the forward fuselage and under wing/horizontal tail surfaces with Mr. Surfacer being used for the aft fuselage. The gray of the aft fuselage goes much higher on the real

aircraft that the instructions would indicate. The color demarcation starts at the lower aft edge of the wheel well and then rises to the line of the upper stiffener of the lower set of speed brakes. The tail cone was painted with a variety of Alclad and Metalizer colors with the the nose cone and vertical tail antenna cover in Tamiya white. The whole paint scheme was lightly weathered overall and decals applied and that was about it.

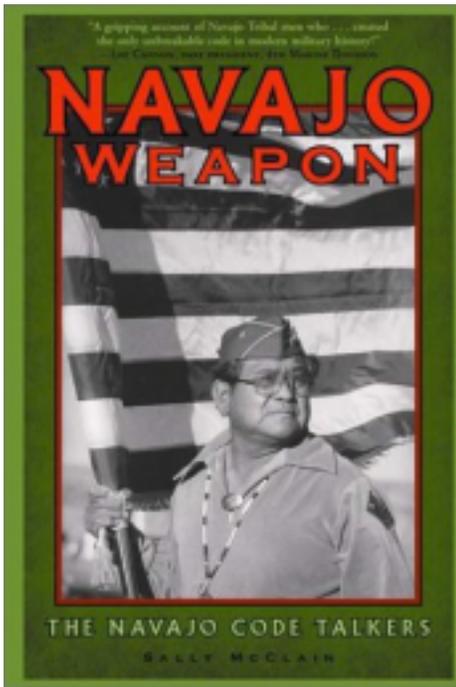
That's about it. With all the various issues that I mentioned above, one might get the impression that I didn't like the kit, and that's just not the case. There were a few odd construction issues to address, and reattaching a variety of probes, antennas, and static wicks got to be annoying but the fit was pretty reasonable for the most part. The large parts count takes time to get everything attached, but aside from a couple of places, like the landing gear and the pylons, pretty much everything fits where and as it should. Trumpeter could use a bit more care with its painting instructions, but again variations in individual aircraft schemes make that a bit tricky. I'm still pretty enthused with the final product and I'm definitely looking forward to building the ML with that awesome Tiger paint scheme. With a little care and modeling skills in mind, I would highly recommend this kit.

Hurricane Bookshelf: Navajo Truth, Not Hollywood Hype

by Scott Kruize

Somewhere along my readings of World War Two history, I became aware that the United States Marine Corps had used Native Americans to communicate by radio in front-line combat zones. This made sense: we have lots of people who speak Japanese, but the Japanese would have nobody to understand any Native American languages.

Then the movie *Windtalkers* came out in 2002, starring Adam Beach as one of the Navajo code talkers, with Nicolas Cage as his guard. This was a pretty good movie: a good action film, with a comparatively modest amount of Hollywood hype.



The actual authoritative book on which this was based is illustrated here. I stumbled across *Navajo Weapon; the Navajo Code Talkers*, by Sally McClean,

at a used book store. It was prepared only after the military and government documents about the Navajo code talkers program were declassified. The Navajo participants had kept the secret for 24 years!

In all, 550 Navajo volunteers were used by the Marines in the Pacific War, from Guadalcanal to Okinawa, becoming more and more valuable right to the end of the fighting. The program grew as the Marines realized how quickly, and with total security, the code talkers could handle critical battlefield messages, often screamingly urgent, such as calling down air strikes or naval artillery fire to units in trouble.

The Japanese finally did figure out that the language they were hearing over front-line enemy radios was Navajo, and it turned out they actually had a single Navajo prisoner, taken early in the war while serving with the U.S. Army. They dragged him out and tried to get him to translate the messages, but this didn't work. The 'talkers' used a specialized code vocabulary of 619 terms, spelled out in Navajo words and phrases, but utterly meaningless to anyone not trained in the code. Even if you understood Navajo perfectly (which only born Navajos could; 'Trader Navajo' was the most that any 'paleface' could ever hope to learn, and that 'language' is not at all the same thing), what would you make of a message which said that a certain 'One Star' wanted 'hummingbirds' to stay over a 'beaver'? Would you ever figure out that a Brigadier-General wanted fighter planes to fly cover over a minesweeper?

The code talkers were always in the thick of the fighting, many were wounded, and a few were killed. They served with patriotism and endured with stoic Navajo courage and equanimity.



One of the injured is illustrated here: Private First Class Carl Gorman. During the fighting on Saipan, he was knocked out and concussed by a nearby mortar round. What with that and malaria, he was evacuated to Hawaii, completely 'out of it' for the whole trip, finally waking up, all in white, in a white bed, covered with white linens, in a white room, which was... Well, let's hear him describe his surroundings, and note his profound theological conclusion:

"There was a pitcher of water by the bed and I thought, people drink water in Heaven. Then I saw a window and thought, there are windows in Heaven. On the opposite wall was a picture of a battleship firing a cannon and I knew this was not Heaven. There are no battleships in Heaven."

Well, he'd know for sure by now. He hadn't died, and instead recovered from his injuries and lived to be 90, dying only in 1998. I hope he and his fellows are divinely rewarded for their efforts and sacrifices. At least, towards the end of *Navajo Weapon*, the reader can see that finally, here on Earth in the U.S.A., they got some much-delayed recognition and respect.

Navajo Weapon; the Navajo Code Talkers, by Sally McClean. Copyright 2001 Rio Nuevo Publishers of Tucson, Arizona; 304 pages

Model Expo Mini Air Compressor and Double Action Airbrush Set

by Chris Banyai-Riepl

For those wanting to move into airbrushing, the choices out there can be daunting and expensive. It can be easy to spend several hundred dollars in getting an airbrushing system together, and for the novice that can be prohibitively expensive. This new bundle from Model Expo is aimed at those modelers looking to move into airbrushing, but don't want to spend a lot of money. This is a bundled set that combines a double-action airbrush with a mini compressor, along with an air hose and an inline water trap, all for only \$89.99. Right out of the box, for less than the price of a large 1/32nd scale model, you can be spraying away.



Let's take a closer look at the components, though, and see just what you get. The compressor is small, basically a box that's roughly five inches square and two inches wide. This small footprint means that there won't be many features, and indeed there aren't. There is no pressure gauge, but there is a knob for adjusting the air pressure. A small plastic holder provides a spot to set the airbrush when not in use. The air hose is a braided one, with solid connectors. The inline water trap is essential, albeit simple. The connectors are aluminum on one end and plastic on the

other, both of which can be problematic when screwing pieces together, so be very careful with that to ensure no damage to the threads occurs.

Operation is next, and this is very simple. Press the button on the front and the compressor is running. Since there was no pressure gauge, I connected it up to one I had on a different compressor, and saw that this mini compressor maxed out at 20psi. Adjusting the knob resulted in a very fast pressure drop, and it was tough to dial in any kind of constant pressure. However, at a max of 20psi, one can spray quite well at that pressure, so I would recommend just leaving this at the maximum setting and adjust your paint accordingly. You will want to have the paint a bit thinner, too, as I noticed a fairly significant pressure drop when I used the airbrush over time. This is a small compressor, and that needs to be taken into account when painting. This means small strokes will yield better results than long stretches of constant spraying.

Moving on to the airbrush, this is a double-action top-feed airbrush, with a large cup complete with lid. The rear handle has an adjustment knob to limit needle travel, which is a nice feature for spraying consistent lines. The tip cone is removable, so if you are drawing particularly fine lines you can get very close to the model and be able to clearly see your work. The needle is a good, general purpose needle that should provide a good balance between solid coverage and fine detail. As this is an introductory airbrush, there are some aspects that are a bit rough,



such as with the threads of the various parts. In disassembling the brush, that roughness could result in stripped threads if one is not careful, so do not rush things in cleaning and reassembly with this one. Knowing this potential weakness will go a very long way to avoiding any problems in operation, and with proper care this brush could give many years of solid service.

Overall, this is a very solid introductory set for the beginner airbrushing modeler. The very low price means that the modeler can get a start in airbrushing with minimal expense, and while there are some limitations to the compressor, it will be more than enough to get some solid airbrushing experience under your belt. If you have been thinking of trying your hand at airbrushing, for less than \$100 this set is hard to beat.



Tamiya 1/48th Scale Jagdtiger

by Andrew Birkbeck

Back in the mid-1970s, the 1/48th scale armor scene was dominated by Bandai Corp., who released a series of WW2 Allied and German military vehicle kits, together with a number of figure and accessory sets. Included among these kits was a late war German Jagdtiger, a true monster of a tank. Despite their “state of the art” nature at the time of release, the Bandai range is now showing its age. Also, Bandai stopped manufacturing these military vehicle kits in the mid-1970s!



To remedy the need for a Bandai replacement, Tamiya has come to the modeler's rescue with a lovely rendition of the Jagdtiger in their own 1/48th Military Vehicle range. As per usual with Tamiya's German military vehicle kits, the model is produced in a tan plastic, which has been the norm over the past year or so in this range. Tamiya has chosen to move away from the relatively poorly detailed metal lower hull unit, and have moved to much better detailed injection plastic lower hull parts.

Anyone who has built one of the 1/48th Tamiya military vehicle kits knows what pleasures await them with this kit, at least in terms of construction. The lower hull assembly is first on the instruction sheet. The road wheels and drive sprockets, together with the idler wheel detail are all very crisp. The tracks are the usual link and length style of parts, and fit very well together. The only issues with these parts



are the ejection pin marks on all the track links, as well as a couple of ejection pin marks on the sides of the lower hull tub. The former were easily scraped away with a hobby knife, and a little sanding. The latter need filling only if you intend to build the model without the armored side skirts.

Following the lower hull construction, the modeler moves on to the upper hull, what a surprise! This consists of one major item, Part B6, along with two smaller items, Parts C10 and C15. To this three-part unit, consisting of the entire upper hull, are added all the smaller bits you would expect to find on an armored vehicle kit: access hatches, spare track links, and on-board tools (axe, shovel, sledgehammer, etc). Tamiya even gives the modeler parts to cover the gap between the lower hull and the upper hull so that you can't see up into the model above the tracks. Once these parts are all together, we move on to the assembly of the main gun barrel, which is in two parts, split lengthwise. Make sure that you carefully assemble these parts and then carefully remove the seam line without distorting the shape of the barrel. Many modelers end up with “flat spots” on such large barrels if they aren't careful.

As one has come to expect from a Tamiya kit, all the parts fit together precisely, without the need for filler. The one big negative for me with this kit, together with many of the other 1/48th kits in this range: Tamiya seems to feel that it is okay to mold the hatch grab handles as blobs of plastic on the main hatch parts, rather than separate hatch handles. In the case of the Jagdtiger, the prominent lifting hooks on the hull roof, and driver hatch area and rear deck area, are again indistinct blobs, and not actual hooks. Whether or not they are separate parts (I believe they should be in this scale), I believe in this day and age, and in this scale, such items should be molded as separately and more detailed parts.

This said, some Modeling Basics 101 skills soon have the lumps removed and sanded flush, holes carefully drilled, and replacement grab handles were fashioned out of thin copper wire. The lifting hooks could be fashioned out of thin scrap plastic card, but I cheated and instead used some photoetched parts scavenged from a Hauler photoetched set produced for Tamiya's earlier 1/48th King Tiger kit. Hauler has produced PE sets for all the Tamiya 1/48th kits, and I expect they will shortly do likewise for the Jagdtiger. This will then provide the other most noticeably

missing items from the kit, the rear deck engine intake screens.

Since this is a Henschel production variant of the Jagdtiger (as opposed to the Porsche version), the paint scheme for all three vehicles covered by the decal sheet are the same: the so called late war "ambush" scheme of Red/Brown and Green over German Yellow.

Per my usual habit, I used the Tamiya range of acrylics, thinned with lacquer thinner. (This was sprayed free hand with a Badger Sotar 20/20 airbrush.) These spray via the airbrush just beautifully, and I highly recommend you trying this method if you haven't already. The decals themselves are very simple, three digit hull codes, together with four small German crosses for the hull sides, and rear upper hull; along with a production serial number in the case of the vehicle I built, 331.

As is normal with Tamiya, the decals are a little thicker than one would like to see, but they are well printed, in register, and lay down nicely. After they were left to dry for 24 hours, I airbrushed on some thin coats of Tamiya clear acrylic mixed with the lacquer thinner, until the decals were "buried". This was allowed to dry for a further 24 hours, before a series of washes and pin washes were applied to pick out the details. Left to dry for a day or two, the whole model was then liberally coated with my favorite matt clear coat from the Vallejo range of acrylic colors.

This was an extremely easy model to build, and provided me with no particular troubles. Building it provided me with a number of very pleasant evenings of modeling entertainment. Highly recommended to anyone who builds in 1/48th scale, or someone who wants a rest from the efforts now required to put together the kits coming out in 1/35th scale with a "million" parts!

My sincere thanks to TamiyaUSA for supplying IPMS/USA with the opportunity to review this excellent kit.



Academy 1/350th Scale *Graf Spee*

by Tracy White

Graf Spee was the last and most famous of the German *Deutschland*-class cruisers. Although she included many new features, her design was ultimately limited by the Treaty of Versailles, leaving her somewhat in between a battleship and a cruiser in abilities. Sent out as a commerce raider at the start of the war, she was caught by a group of faster Royal Navy cruisers and damaged enough that she had to put into port at Montevideo, Uruguay to escape capture or sinking. Forced out by treaties within 72 hours, her captain elected to destroy her rather than face another battle with a crippled ship. On the evening of December 17, 1939, *Graf Spee* was scuttled in an estuary of the river and sank into the mud, where a large portion of her remains today.



smooth. Unlike other ships there is no easy place to break the two piece and hide the line, but they did choose to put it near one of the 150mm gun mounts, so that the majority of it is hidden behind the turret. One potential problem is averted due to the use of engraved lines for the planking; they can simply be rescribed as opposed to sanded into oblivion. The fit between the two was not the best on my copy due to slightly less than perfect edges. Sanding the two joining edges perpendicular and then using the tip of a knife to slightly bore out the alignment holes made



Academy's 1/350th *Graf Spee* is their second ship release in this scale and a welcome one for many fans of the WWII Kriegsmarine. The kit comprises close to 360 parts and will reward the modeler with a representation of the ship that is roughly 52.6mm (20 & 3/4 Inches) long and 61mm (2 and 3/8th inches) wide (measured from the main deck level). The kit is engineered to be built either full hull or waterline with some modification.

The main deck is two separate pieces that must be joined together and sanded

for a very good fit. There was a slight rounding of the top edges of the decks, leading to a depression that must be filled and the deck planks re-cut, but thankfully the planking matches up perfectly and there won't be cases of half-planks to nowhere.

The railings are a nice touch for those that do not wish to mess around with photo-etch, but for those desiring accuracy and fineness of detail they leave a lot to be desired. They are all straight two-bar railings, when those on the main and aft

deck were chain and should have some droop to them as well as having three instead of two chains. Shots of the superstructure show straight bar railings as they weren't removed for the most part for turret movement, but once again they are three bar and not two.

One caveat for the modeler that chooses not to use the kit-supplied railings is that it leaves shallow alignment holes that will need to be filled (roughly 130 of them); plastic rod of various diameters can be glued in place and either cut or sanded flush fairly easily and quickly with the exception of part B22, which has a raised boilerplate pattern that will have to be eliminated or worked around. I found that the holes were consistent on each tree, but not in the kit; Tree D seemed to accept .025" rod the best, whereas the others would go for .030" or .035".

In addition to the railings, the modeler may wish to fill in the recessed "boiler plate" texture on the fore-peak of the main deck and lower forward area of the superstructure as it is over-done and on the superstructure at least is a detail that did not exist on the actual ship.

Test fitting and light construction have shown good fit. The only place that has needed filler between the two hull halves and four pieces that comprise the main deck, break, and after deck has been the joint between the main deck and the vertical bulkhead that makes the break. This piece is also a little soft on detail, showing only mild depressions where the windows in this section were. There has been no warping in either of the hull or deck parts.

The instructions are well printed, clear, and concise, but do not follow an optimal or useful order. They would have the builder install the railings ahead of the superstructure, for example, where it is much safer to work from the inside out, attaching small, delicate details last so they are less likely to be broken. The Academy assembly order is primarily designed for them to

make a smaller booklet by covering each area as few times as possible and not for the new modeler to learn from. The painting guide is for the pre-war scheme and does not provide any guide for how she appeared during her final action.

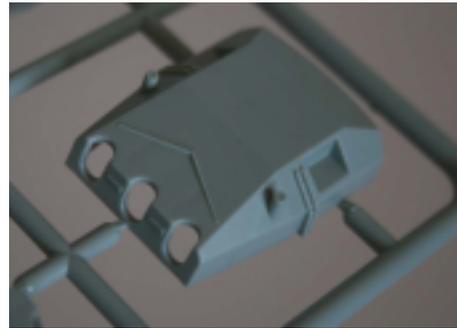
Markings are provided for the ship and aircraft. There is the normal Swastika obfuscation to skirt laws in various countries, but the method of breaking them down will make for a lot of work lining the various pieces up true. A third-party decal or masking off to paint would probably be a better option for the ship deck markings. The decal representation of the stern eagle is a pale substitute for the actual intricately cast piece of bronze artwork.

For the most part the *Graf Spee* is a fun kit to work on; well engineered and with few problems. The forward-most part of the superstructure is one exception to this. D19, the forward-most piece, and the two side pieces, D25 and D26 have an extremely vague joint; the instructions would have you join the three and then add the decks above, but I found it easier to join the two side pieces to the deck above and the the forward piece.

No fit problems needing more than a cursory amount of filler exist on either of the hull or main deck pieces save a "round down" on one of the main deck pieces that required filling and re-scribing of the planking. With the lower levels of the superstructure done the only other filling has been for the alignment holes of the kit-supplied plastic railings and some minor filling done where the decks meet the superstructure.

There is one detail on the main deck that affects fit of the superstructure; two rectangles that look like they are supposed to be mats of some sort for doors on the superstructure; they are too far aft and lay partially under the superstructure so that it has a gap fore or aft unless they are shaved off.

There are a few things that are not represented correctly, and while they don't detract from the appearance of the model for most people, those suffering from Advanced Modelling Syndrome may wish to take notes.



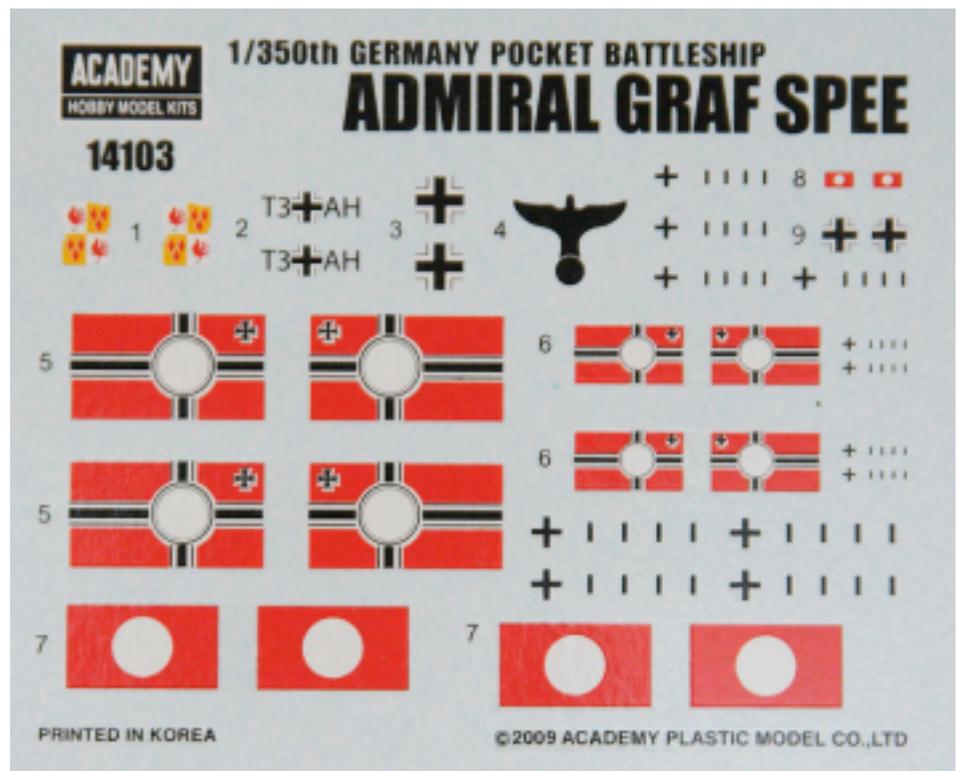
One of the first things that stood out was a wide inverted "V" across the top of the turrets. I'm not sure what it is supposed to represent, however it is most likely based on a thin hand or foot rail visible in a picture of her earlier sister ship *Deutschland*. Photos of *Graf Spee* at

Montevideo show two vertical lines in between the guns instead of this chevron.

There are a couple of problems with the stack; the mast on top is very oversimplified and incorrect; it was a tripod structure instead of the single cross-shaped pole and yard arm they provide. The kit stack also is perpendicular to the deck where it joins where in actuality there was a steep angled piece that is just visible in a couple of photographs.

The *Graf Spee* had two prop-guards on the stern that are missing from the model; they were poles or booms that swung out from the side of the ship and should be easy to scratch build; pictures of her stern at Montevideo show them to good effect.

Academy's *Graf Spee* is a decent kit for a decent price. In comparison to the Trumpeter kit, it suffers a bit in detail crispness and some detail, but has a more accurate hull shape and some details correct that Trumpeter got wrong.



Trumpeter 1/35th Scale Grille 21

by Eric Christianson

In 1942, Krupp received an order to design a new vehicle using existing Tiger components where possible, such as the engine, transmission, steel wheels and track. This vehicle was destined to be the beginning of a Grille (mortar) series of heavy, self-propelled weapons. Originally the vehicle mounted an 88mm main weapon, but soon larger versions were planned, including a vehicle that would field a huge 210mm Mortar 18/1 L/31, called the Grille 21. Full-scale production was slated to start in mid-1945, but the end of the war cancelled any further development.



Grille 21 had its armament mounted on the rail platform inside the hull allowing it to be dismounted if needed. It would be operated by the crew of eight (driver, commander, gunner, radio operator and four loaders). Powered by a Maybach HL230P30 or HL230P45 engine, Grille would be able to travel at maximum speed of 45 km/h with a range of 250km. Fuel capacity was to be 1,000 liters. This massive vehicle was nearly 40 feet long (with gun), 10 feet wide and nine feet high. Its armor protection ranged from 16mm (side) to 30mm (front). It weighed almost 60 tons loaded, but carried only three rounds of ammunition. One prototype with 170mm gun was almost completed in May of 1945 and was captured by British troops at Haustenbeck near Paderborn.

The Trumpeter Grille 21, as kitted, is massive – nearly 300mm in length. A beautifully detailed engine and transmission are included and, thanks to three removable panels, can be partially exposed to show off the effort put into these assemblies. Apparently, Trumpeter, which has in the past earned a reputation for giving the modeler exquisite detail only to cover it up with superstructure, is listening! Bravo!

The main weapon, which was intended to be removable in the field, can be mounted in the vehicle or on its own separate stand. Step Twenty-Eight of the instructions addresses the assembly of the front part of the stand. The rear part swivels down on the model via two metal springs that are included with the kit.

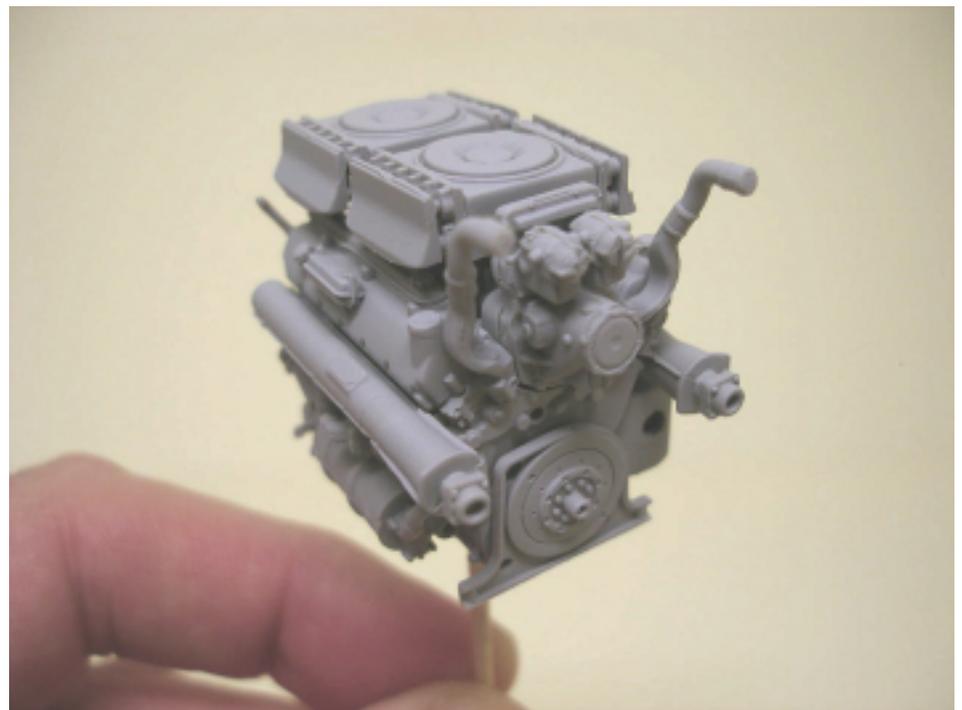
After reviewing the instructions I found that I could paint and weather the hull, superstructure sides, main weapon and tracks separately – very handy. I kept this in mind as I worked through the thirty steps of the project.

The first five steps of the build involve assembly of the chassis. The bogies, and

there are a lot of them, fit perfectly and align on the main hull without a problem. Be sure to follow the sequence provided in the instructions – several parts at the rear of the main chassis are meant to overlap each other.

Step Four would have you attach the tracks – I decided to attach these later after painting and finishing them, and when I am sure the bogies are dry and solid. The two vinyl tracks are very thick. There is excellent detail on both sides of the track and they take adhesive and paint very well, but I have encountered problems with this track before when building the Trumpeter E-50. Having learned from the other build, however, I applied what I learned to this set of tracks and had better luck. More on this later.

There are over 130 parts (!) that make up the engine and transmission. You are given the option to completely cover up these jewels, tease the viewer with two small hatches that can be posed in the open position, or expose a larger portion of them with three removable panels. Trumpeter should be applauded for giving the modeler all of these options. I decided to





go for the gusto and build the kit with removable panels. I haven't worked on such a detailed (in-the-box) engine since building their amazing 1/32nd scale TBF-1C Avenger's Wright Cyclone power plant.

For the most part, the fit is workable and is reminiscent of those overly-complex Lego kits; parts and parts building into bigger parts and parts. Both the engine and transmission come in layers, so if you wanted to pull either one or both out of the vehicle to place on a workbench in a diorama, for example, you can really show off some detail. That said, I wouldn't take painting too seriously here – there are a lot of little parts that are covered up by bigger parts. Likewise with minor fit issues and gaps – there is a very good chance that any flaws encountered will simply be covered by another layer, and another. And another.

On page 9 you have what looks like a completed engine. When you turn the page you find out that another 55 parts remain to be added! (Yes I counted). I left parts K7 and K8 off until I fitted the engine into the vehicle so I could orient them to

where they would attach to the interior firewall.

Having completed the engine and transmission I skipped a few steps and temporarily installed various bulkheads and firewalls to see just how much of these components would be visible through the removable panels. Unfortunately, even with the panels removed, very little of the engine is visible, and most of that consists of the two big blowers at the top.

Alas, if I had more time I might have painted and detailed these components, but I felt that since so little would be showing I would be better off saving these beauties for a future diorama or King Tiger build. In the end I sealed up the interior and moved on. Sigh...

In Steps Twelve and Thirteen you put together seven crew seats which are a little fiddly. There are several ways you can put these together, all of which, I felt, would work better than what the instructions called for. The instructions would have you glue the seats together then add them to part of the superstructure. I didn't feel

that I would be able to line things up very well once each seat assembly had dried, and to attach them when they were still wet might have resulted in a gluey mess if something went awry. I ended up poking all seven seats into the superstructure and gluing those. When that had dried overnight, I set the supporting legs up underneath each one and touched them with thin Tamiya liquid glue.

Most likely you will hit a dead stop on Step Fourteen. This is where you realize that there is just no way to avoid filling in some visible ejector pin holes in the sides of the superstructure. If I did not have to finish this build for an article, my Grille 21 would probably have ended up on my 'someday - when I get around to it' shelf! Open-topped armored vehicles have one annoying characteristic that complicates assembly. There is no easy way for the manufacturer to hide mold ejection pin marks – they will be one on side of the plastic or the other, and on these vehicles both sides are visible. This means that the holes (should) be filled and sanded in order to more resemble the real thing (and have any chance of placing in a contest!). The Grille 21 has 26 marks on the two main side panels and another dozen or so on the back of the front-facing plates (of different sizes and depths). I have tried several ways to do this but a friend of mine provided me with the most efficient method that I think produces the best results. It requires a micro punch set, and, if you do not already own one of these handy tools, you should.

Before you assemble any piece that contain ejection pin marks:

Identify which holes will be visible after assembly, painting, and weathering. There is no need to fill holes that no one can see. Estimate out how deep the holes are and find a suitably thick piece of white styrene sheet. I've found that Evergreen five-thousandths seems to fit most applications. Make sure the disks will sit just proud of the ejection pin hole when in place, so figure out how thick the styrene needs to be with this in mind.

Figure out the diameter of the holes and match the proper punch with what you need using a punch that is just slightly smaller than the ejection pin mark.

Start punching out disks, and glue them into the ejection pin marks with thin liquid glue such as Tamiya 'green top' Extra Thin Cement.

Once dry, mix a little Mr. Surfacer 500 with thinner (I use Gunze Mr. Color Self Leveling Thinner) and apply this over the top of each hole to fill in any gaps. Let this dry for a good few days to look for shrinkage, and sand smooth. You may want to air-brush a coat of Gunze Mr. Surfacer 1200 to even out the surface and uncover any remaining flaws.

In Step Sixteen I installed the six supports for the superstructure sides but not the sides themselves. I also left off the front panel. These would wait until after painting and weathering to be added.

There were several minor annoyances with building this kit, but they were easily overcome with a little work. The tracks supplied with the kit, however, were a disappointment. The detail is excellent, but the thickness of the track and the design of the attachment points proved to be difficult to work with.

First, the tracks are attached with a tab that extends and connects to the other side of the run, but the width of the tab only covers about a half of the width of the track. This means that both inner and outer edges of the track have no means of being attached to one another except by using staples (which I didn't want to use with an open-chassis design like this). I glued the tabs with super-glue and touched them with accelerator. The tabs seemed sturdy enough to hold so I moved on.

After fitting the track loop onto the vehicle, the thickness of the track created a outward bow that was reminiscent of the old rubber-band tracks from the mid-70s Lindberg kits. I ended up using copious amounts of Testors black-bottle cement



and dowels to attach the track to the wheels on each side of the tank. This effort managed to make everything line up, sort of.

In summary, if you want to enter this model in any kind of competition I would strongly recommend using an aftermarket set of link and length track or white-metal track to replace what is provided by Trumpeter. I am told that the King Tiger uses the same-width track, so possibly three of those tracks would suffice for this kit.

Step Twenty-Five – Make sure to test fit these parts before gluing. I looked at the third part of this step about five times, and then still assembled it wrong. Or the number call-outs are wrong. Whatever the case, I suggest you assemble it and once you are sure it fits in the base, glue it in place. If you intend to mount the main weapon in the vehicle and not on its own stand, the whole affair, thankfully, is hidden from view.

Trumpeter included a small sheet of photo-etch that contains grill covers and louvers for the exhaust blowers on each side of the

engine. The instructions call for installing the blades with the smallest one the farthest away from the fan. Looking at the finished assembly, however, this looks backwards. The smallest one looks like it should be the closest to the fan. Without any reference material handy I decided to follow the instructions.

The 'Painting and Marking Guide' shows a factory-raw 'Red Brown' and contains call-outs for Gunze Mr. Hobby Aqueous acrylics, Gunze Mr. Color Lacquers, Vallejo acrylics, Model Master Enamels, Tamiya acrylics and Humbrol enamels.

I decided to use these same colors but paint the main weapon late-war German Yellow as shown in photos of the assembled model on the side of the box.

Because of the open design of self-propelled guns I decided to paint and weather the main chassis, two large superstructure sides and front panel, and the main weapon rack separately before final assembly.

I worked with these same tracks on the Trumpeter E-50, so I decided to paint and



weather the tracks prior to attaching them as well.

I started with a primer coat of XF-69 NATO Black over the entire model, including the wheels. The tracks are already jet-black from the box. This primer coat will give the tank a 'dark' look that (in my opinion) is appropriate for armor. I concentrated on the nooks and crannies – complete coverage. I let everything dry for at least 24 hours. I sprayed the tracks with a mixture of Tamiya XF-68 NATO Brown and XF-9 Hull Red, making sure to leave some of the original black color showing through. I followed this with a random coat of Tamiya NATO Black and Tamiya NATO Brown, leaning toward the black. For the superstructure, I followed the black primer coat with a base coat of XF-9 Hull Red. Over that I sprayed a post-shading coat of 40/60 ratio Model Master Enamel Raw Umber and Model Master Enamel Rust. For the main gun assembly and rear breech platform I followed the black primer coat with a base coat of Tamiya XF-60 Dark Yellow. Over that I sprayed a post-shading coat of 50/50 ratio Tamiya XF-60 Dark Yellow and Tamiya XF-55 Deck Tan.

Once these colors were dry I sprayed on a liberal coat of Future Floor Polish (an acrylic) on both the superstructure and the weapon assembly and let that dry for two days before applying washes. I applied a generous coat of Future floor polish to the entire vehicle to prepare it for an oil wash (no markings are included in the Trumpeter kit or present in any of the drawings). After the Future had dried for 48 hours, I mixed a filter of Mig Abt110 Black and Mig Abt080 Wash Brown oils with Mona Lisa Paint Thinner and gave the entire model a light coat, concentrating on the wheels and the various hull detail and protrusions. Once the oil filter was dry I followed it with a wash of the same oil mix, only with less thinner, and used a small brush to apply the wash to just the areas that needed it. Next I sprayed random vertical streaks of NATO Black and Model Master Rust to the superstructure. I finally gave the entire vehicle a coat of thinned Testor's Dullcoat. This dulled up the surface and prepped it for dry Mig powders.

I highlighted the tracks with a dry 'loose' mix of MIG PO25 Standard Rust and MIG PO23 Black Smoke pigment powders using an old trashed set of brushes I keep

specifically for this kind of work. I didn't combine the colors too much; I want black on parts of the track and black-rust on other parts - nothing consistent, like real grime and filth. Once the powder was on and set, I used my finger to apply MIG P231 Gun Metal to all the areas that needed it including the surfaces of the tracks that actually touch the ground and the main drive sprockets. Finally I used a silver pencil here and there, along the inside of the tracks and teeth where the wheels have rubbed against the track.

When everything looked the way I wanted, I carefully assembled the hull parts and attached the infra-red sighting system to the top of the turret.

Working on this kit, I could not help but wonder where Trumpeter came up with the source material for so many pieces they included in the box. This vehicle is not a variant of some other late war German machine, like a Panther or a Mk IV or a Tiger. It is a completely new design, literally one of a kind. Unlike several other prototype armor kits, this offer by Trumpeter is absolutely superb in its detail and engineering.

I wish I had been able to put in more time to focus on the exquisitely rendered engine and transmission, and possibly even give the finish a combat scheme.

I recommend this kit to anyone who likes to build and finish big-time self-propelled guns. The size of this vehicle sitting on a table demands attention!

I would like to thank Stevens International for providing this sample for review, and to *Internet Modeler* for giving me the opportunity to build this kit.

[Thanks to Chris Banyai-Riepl and www.internetmodeler.com for permission to use his, Mike's, Tracy's and Eric's articles. - ED]

IPMS Vancouver Winners

Here are the IPMS Seattle members who placed in the recent IPMS Vancouver show. Thanks to Peter Hickey for providing the information. My apologies if anyone was left out!

Aircraft

Bill Osborn - 2nd PE-8 - 72nd multi prop

Mike Millette - 2nd - T-33 - 32nd single engine jet
 Mike Millette - 3rd - MiG-23ML - as above
 Steve Gallacci - Me 262 Honourable in above

Djordje Nikolic - He 162 1st - 48th - Single Engine jet

Steve Gallacci - 3rd - Me 262 - 1/32nd - Jet

Tim Nelson - 1st - Sopwith Tabloid - Civilian Sports racing
 Ken Murphy - Corben Super Sport - Honourable - as above

Steve Gallacci - Me 262 - 1st - What if
 Mike Millette - F-16B - 2nd - as above
 Terry Moore - NASA Pogo - 3rd - as above

Tim Nelson - Douglas D-558 Sky Rocket - 1st - Multijet

Djordje Nikolic - Kawasaki Mk.1 Rex - 2nd - 48th - Single prop
 Ken Murphy - Junkers D.1 - 3rd - as above

Djordje Nikolic - Brewster Buffalo - 3rd - 72nd - Single prop

Stephen Tontoni - Spanish Fury - 1st - A/C conversions

Stephen Tontoni - PKZ-2 - 1st - Helicopters /Rotary Wing

Ed Pinnell - A6M3 Zero - 2nd - Out of Box
 Ed Pinnell - Bf 109E-3 - 3rd - Out of Box

Tim Nelson - Curtiss Racer - 2nd - Biplanes
 Ken Murphy - Hanriot HD-24 - Honourable - as above
 Terry Moore - Junkers J.1 - as above

Armour

George Stray - " The Peddler" - 1st armour diorama
 George Stray - Jeep Ambulance - 1st - Softskins
 George Stray - L6-40 - 1st - Closed top AFV
 George Stray - King Tiger - 2nd - as above
 George Stray - M4 HST & 8 inch howitzer - 1st - Open Top or towed
 George Stray - Flakpanzer 1A - 1st - Open Top Sp guns
 George Stray - M12 GMC 2nd - as above

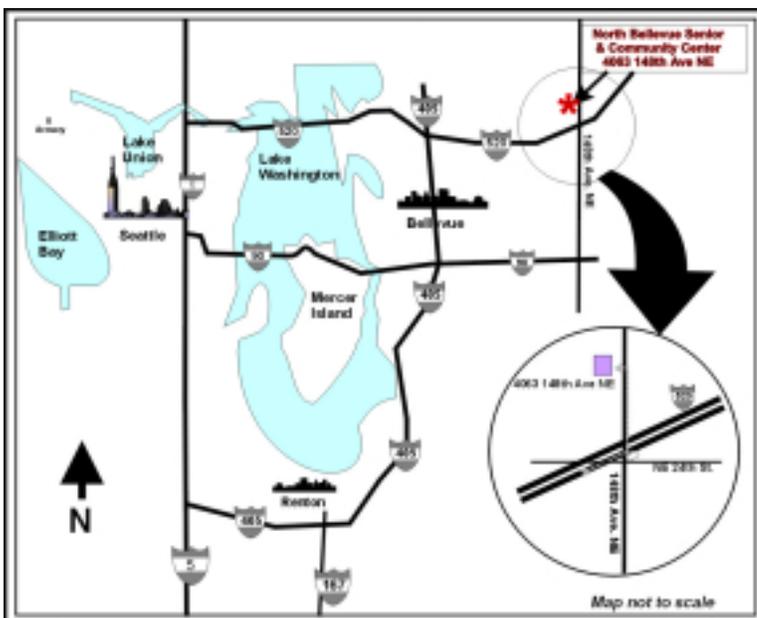
Naval

Ed Pinnell - Japanese Navy Midget sub - 1st - Out of the box

Space/Sci-Fi

Mike Millette - MAK Falke - 1st - Space/Sci Fi
 Terry Moore - Dead/Duct Tape - 2nd - as above
 Terry Moore - Iron Can - 3rd - as above

Meeting Reminder



December 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.