

# Seattle Chapter News



**Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA**  
**March 2014**

## PREZNOTES



### Are You a “Rivet Counter”?

One of the bits of fun I have visiting the various scale modeling web sites on the Internet is witnessing the numerous philosophical debates over the “accuracy” of the latest aircraft or military vehicle kit to hit the market. On the one hand, you have modelers who seem obsessed with building THE most accurate model possible. Length, width, height, angles, all have to be spot on or damned close to it. For the extremists in the “rivet counting” camp, to be even a few millimeters out in any major dimension is to render the model under discussion “unbuildable”. By which they mean they wouldn’t soil their hands by walking into the local hobby shop and plunking down their hard earned cash for such a “pig in a poke”.

On the other end of this debate, are those who are quite willing to accept less than perfect shape accuracy, in order to get a model of a subject they really want into their collection. A few millimeters short or too long here and there, an outline not quite right, as long as it “looks like” the subject in question, they seem perfectly happy to build the model and display it in their model case, or even bring it to a contest (where often such models win awards because IPMS rules state that we don’t judge the accuracy of the model so much as the quality of workmanship that went into its creation).

Me, I fall somewhere in the middle on this subject. Ideally, I would love to see every model I purchase be very accurate in outline. In today’s world of CAD, and the model firm’s ability to easily tap “experts” around the world via e-mail, let alone to visit museums and other archives of historical data fairly simply, I don’t see why any model firm should produce an “inaccurate” model barring the fact that they simply “don’t care” or “can’t be

bothered” putting in the effort? If I owned a model firm and wanted to produce accurate military vehicle models, I have a mental rolodex of names I would contact to help me out. You know these folks would be tickled pink with receiving credit for being involved with the production of a first class model kit. Right here within our own IPMS chapter we have many “experts” on various subjects, armed to the teeth with detailed reference libraries. Multiply this by all the chapters around the country, and the world, let alone folks not even connected with IPMS, and you soon realize how MASSIVE is the amount of information out there to be tapped by the model producing firms. And we know there are firms that pride themselves with producing simply breathtakingly accurate models. Wingnut Wings comes to mind in the WW1 aviation sphere.

The reason this topic has come to the forefront in my mind is due to the recent release of the Dragon Models M103 main battle tank. A kerfuffle is brewing on the internet because apparently Dragon has completely blown the accuracy of this kit. The model, while the correct length overall, is too short ahead of the turret, while the engine deck behind the turret is too long.

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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. Please do not embed photos or graphics in the text file. Photos and graphics should be submitted as single, separate files. 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 2014 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 8**

**April 12 (Spring Show)**

**April 5**

**May 10**

**IPMS/USA NEW MEMBER APPLICATION**

IPMS No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(leave blank) Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (required by PO): \_\_\_\_\_

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

☐ Family (Adult dues + \$5, one set magazines, 4 of membership cards required: \_\_\_\_\_)

☐ If recommended by an IPMS member, list his/her name and member number \_\_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_\_ (IPMS#)

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## Dragon 1/35th Scale Pz.Kpfw. III 5cm [T] Ausf. G Smart Kit

by Eric Christianson

Dragon Models offers a complete lineup of the Pz.Kpfw. III family tree in 1/35th scale, including no less than three kits in this last year alone. The subject of this review is the PzKpfw III 5cm [T] Ausf.G from their 1939-45 series. The [T] stands for Tauchpanzer, or 'diving tank'.

A little History: After German forces had swept across Western Europe as undisputed champion in 1940, the lone resistance came from the British Isles. It was planned that Germany would conduct an amphibious invasion of Great Britain under the codename Operation Sea Lion, and to this end a number of Panzer IIIs were especially converted into diving tanks. These were known as the Tauchpanzer III, and they had the ability to drive along the seafloor totally submerged thanks to a breathing apparatus.

During the planned invasion, they would have been lowered from ships onto the seafloor near the coast and they could then drive onto the shore. In the end these tanks were not used to cross the English Channel as it was decided to attempt to bring Britain to its knees via the Luftwaffe instead.

One of Dragon's newest 1/35th kits portrays a Tauchpanzer III Ausf.G, which was the most common version of this customized AFV. It carries a 5cm gun and is based on Dragon's previously released Panzer III G kit, as well as parts from the earlier Ausf. F Tauchpanzer kit. The box contains all the necessary parts to make the diving tank, including waterproofing parts for the gun shield and turret ring.

All of Dragon's Mk IIIs come with enough parts to completely fill the sturdy box and then some. There are extra parts on nearly every sprue for your spares box, including pioneer tools and fire several fire extinguishers.

The contents of the box include:

Lower hull, packaged separately.

26 sprues in soft, light grey plastic, packaged separately.

2 clear plastic sprues

2 photo-etch sheets, including sprocket ring detail



2 runs of yellow-tan DS track

1 6-page blue and white instruction sheet with 19 steps

The kit comes with a single color schemes represented across three vehicles, using blue-and-white ink three-view drawings; and a small (but perfectly registered) sheet of decals from Cartograph of Italy. These units include:

2/Pz.Rgt.35, 4 Pz.Div., 1941 (Dark Gray) (two vehicles)

Pz.Abt.D.35, 1940 (Dark Gray)

This is a 'fortified re-box', so there are sprues from no less than five different Dragon kits included in the box:

PzKpfw III Ausf J Initial Production

PzKpfw III (6)

Pz III (2.7cm) (T) Ausf F (1)

StuG III Ausf G (3)

PzKpfw IV (1)



As a consequence, I found several inaccuracies in the instructions which are documented where appropriate. If you make the mental adjustments, however, things will go pretty well.

Assembly sequence varies by modeler but the general flow of things go pretty much as Dragon intended. The exceptions I made are identified in the text below.

The Mark III is a pretty straight-forward tank. Chassis, fenders, main deck, turret, gun, hatches – it's all there. There are relatively few options (for Dragon) so there are few up-front decisions to be made. The area beneath the fenders is unobstructed so the DS track can be attached at the very end without any problems. I built the entire vehicle before painting, with the only exceptions being the commander's hatch halves, the antenna and the fire extinguisher, which were painted separately.

#### Lower Chassis and Running Gear

The assembly of the lower chassis went together relatively well. The only hiccup here was with the two drive sprocket transmission covers (A3), which refused to fit in the spaces provided due to a blockage in the (female) receptacle. I used an Xacto knife to open up the holes which allowed the covers to seat properly.

In Step 4 I had to snip off a chunk of plastic from the end of one of the torsion bar assemblies (Z14) to leave room for the drive sprocket. Examining my work and the instructions I don't see where a mistake was made – a mystery.

There is a little play in the wheels after they are attached and the wheels on the Mk. III really need to line up perfectly. I used a small steel ruler set along the slot between the wheels to do this.

#### Fenders

This step contains several areas that can cause you problems. Some are inherent to all Dragon PzKpfw III kits; others appear to be unique to this kit.

1. Decide what equipment you are going to attach and make sure that you have the proper holes drilled to receive it - the instructions are spotty here. For example, Dragon provides half-drilled holes for the axle, but doesn't mention opening them up in the instructions. On the other hand, you are instructed to open up holes for the headlights but the parts don't have any (male) posts that will use them.
2. There is a nicely molded toolbox top (Part B19) that seems to be missing its sides. The picture shows a full box being attached to the bottom (Part A28). I had to hunt around in my spares box for something to use here to make it a full box.
3. The nicely detailed jack assembly interferes with the back deck if attached at this point in the build. I waited until Step 15 to find the right place for it. Dragon uses a four-part set of brackets to secure the jack to the fender. I find that attaching the lower parts (G54 and G56) to the fender first, then the jack, and then the two upper parts (G55 and G57) is the best way to go here.
4. Dragon provides a nice PE base for the fire extinguisher. I attached the base and painted the extinguisher separately as the base will interfere with painting otherwise.
5. So this is strange. The instructions tell you to use PE inserts with tab extensions for the rear fender drops. The problem is, the advantage of PE (scale thickness) is not used or needed here, and the (hidden) extension tabs that attach the fenders to the chassis need to be strong and are not. Fortunately, there are two other sets of (unused) fender drops in the kit; one set includes stronger plastic inserts, the other set is made up of simple one-piece affairs without inserts (Parts 40/41). Scale thickness is not an issue here so I used the latter set and moved on.



#### Rear Deck and Commander's Cupola

In Step 9 resist the temptation to open up any holes that Dragon provides for the tow cables – they don't line up with anything. I opened them up and then had to re-fill them with putty – doh!



The easiest way to assemble the nicely detailed engine intake vents is to attach Parts A30(A29) to the rear deck first. Next glue Parts R4(R3) and R1(R2) together. Once dry, glue the assembled covers to A30(A29).

The commander's cupola comprises of no less than 20 or 25 parts, depending on whether you want the vision ports to be open or closed. Fortunately, everything fits perfectly and looks really nice when done. I found that gluing (5) Parts Q2 to the bottom of the main cupola instead of the bottom (Part Q9) was an easier approach than what the instructions had me do.

#### Main Weapon

In Step 14, do not glue Parts E2 and E3 as shown in the instructions, unless you want the gun to point at a ridiculous, parade-appropriate up angle. I ended up taping together everything I needed (turret, mantlet, etc.) to find the right angle for the weapon

and then glued these two pieces on. After sawing them off, of course.

Otherwise everything comes together pretty well. I really like the slide-molded main weapon – plastic is so much easier to work with than turned aluminum.

#### Main Deck

Everything comes together in Step 15. I attached the front deck and rear bulkhead first, then the fenders next, then the turret ring portion, and finally the rear deck. The rear bulkhead has two parts (U10 and U11) that you should leave off until it is attached to the back of the vehicle. Once that is done, it is easier to figure out how these are supposed to be oriented – the instructions aren't much help here.

#### Turret

Steps 17 and 18 bring the turret together. There are four vision ports that swivel out on the PzKpfw III, two on the turret and two on the hull sides. Dragon has a slightly fiddly design for showing open ports, but once you get through one, they end up coming together pretty well and they look great.

There are no holes provided for the two grab handles (Parts D4) so I just sort of put them 'there'. The commander's foot-stand that is attached to the turret ring is made up of two parts (D21 and D8) that are on the 'Unused' list. If you want to include a figure in the hatch, you will need these.

Step 19 adds nice-looking cables that extend from the headlights to 'somewhere down there'. I had to experiment around to find the best way to attach them. Dragon gives you two PE parts (MA5 and MA6) that are meant to cover gaps in the lower front hull – I couldn't figure them out so I left them off.

#### The Track

The two runs of DS track in this kit are very thin and beautifully detailed, and assembly was a snap. I connected the ends using Tamiya 'green top' thin cement and installed them without any problems. Unfortunately, Dragon did not leave enough slack in the DS track to adequately reproduce the sag common to the Mk. III, so it looks pretty tight when installed.

#### Painting and Finish

The Mark III can be completely assembled and then painted if you wish, which is the approach I took.

Normally I use Tamiya paints for everything, but I thought I'd try something new for a German Grey finish. I came across a good article that fit the bill - modeler Glenn L. Bartolotti's 'Step-by-Step Finishing German Armor: Tiger I, s.Pz.-Abt. 503' (Bladerunner8u Production, © 2009 [bladerunner8u@netscape.net](mailto:bladerunner8u@netscape.net)). Glenn used Model Master paints, I had them in my paint rack – so with this build I was going to 'paddle down a different creek'. Painting and finishing followed the steps from that article.

(Note: I thin all Model Master paint and 50:50 with Model Master Airbrush Thinner. I use Vallejo's own thinner for all Vallejo paints. I use a Pasche-H Single-Action airbrush, Number #3 tip, at 20 lbs. pressure for everything.)

1. I started by airbrushing a primer coat of Gunze Mr. Surfacers 1200 to give the plastic and PE some grip for the following coats
2. I followed this with an overall pre-shade coat of DunkelBraun RLM 61 mixed 50/50 with Flat Black – this would fill in the dark recesses and provide the shadows near the flat surface edges, adding depth to the camouflage coats to come. Surprisingly, DunkelBraun ('Dark Brown') comes out looking Grey, not brown. Go figure.
3. Next, a base coat of straight DunkelBraun RLM 61 was applied. I sprayed it carefully, allowing a hint of the black to show along the edges and behind the pioneer tools, etc.
4. Next I applied a post-shading coat of DunkelBraun RLM 61 mixed 50/50 with Flat Insignia White. I layered this on lightly, working from the center of each section outward. This gives the surface a little more depth – German grey can be pretty boring if you don't spice it up a little.
5. Once the paint was dry, I airbrushed just the areas that would receive decals with Future to give them a smooth surface to set up on.
6. While the Future was drying, I painted the wooden portions of the pioneer tools Vallejo Acrylics New Wood and all the steel parts Tamiya Metallic Grey (XF-56). For hand-brushing Vallejo paints I mix a tiny bit of Vallejo Slow Dry and water with each color until it flows smoothly off a red sable brush.
7. To give the wooden parts of the tools more depth, I brushed on a little Mig Wash Brown oil paint straight from the tube and let that set overnight. Don't let this paint leach out its oil beforehand, like you would when you are using oils for dry-brushing. The oil helps it stay workable. In the morning I carefully removed most of the oil paint using a brush dampened with Mona Lisa, leaving the areas near the latches and metal parts darker than the center of the wooden shafts. I then let a little black wash puddle up on the horizontal surfaces of the metal axe and shovel heads. When dry, I think this gives them a convincing look of used steel.
8. I applied the decals using the Red and Blue Micro Sol/Set system without any problems, and then hand-brushed Future over the decals again to seal them.
9. After I was sure the Future was dry, I airbrushed the shiny areas that received decals with Vallejo Flat Varnish to prepare the surfaces for filters which need a flat surface to spread properly. I cut the varnish 50/50 with Vallejo Airbrush Thinner to improve flow.
10. I attached the commander's hatches, fire extinguisher, and track so they would benefit from the weathering to follow.
11. With the flat coat on the model, I applied several filters to enhance the gray. I heavily thin all of my washes and filters with Mona Lisa White Spirit. This odorless paint thinner is very mild and will not react with the enamel paint underneath. I applied a filter of Wash Brown to over the entire vehicle and Black over the jack and machine guns.
12. I then shot the whole vehicle with a coat of Future to create a glossy surface for applying washes. I applied washes made of Mig Oils (Wash Brown, Shadow Brown, Black and Rust) mixed with Mona Lisa with a small, pointed brush. I also used Mig Dark Wash (aka Raw Umber) straight from the bottle, on the buckles, pioneer tools, wheels and tow cables.
13. Next I dry-brushed the vehicle to lighten things up a little, using Mig Abt170 German Grey Highlight oil paint that I let sit for a while on cardboard to leach out as much of the oil as possible before applying it the protruding detail.
14. I followed this with a 'road-dusting' coat of Vallejo Model Air Light Brown and then shot the whole vehicle with Vallejo Flat Varnish to kill any shiny spots still remaining. I cut each of these 50/50 with Vallejo Airbrush Thinner to improve flow.
15. I attached the antenna and this little guy was done!

The PzKpfw III is one of the iconic tanks of World War II, and it is no wonder that Dragon has taken on this family of AFVs to produce some of the very best models on the market. The build is challenging – there are a lot of parts and several areas require a little experience in problem solving. Still – the parts fit and are beautifully detailed; together making these kits a lot of fun to build.

The design of some of the parts such as the commander's cupola and opening hatch hardware is simply brilliant, and in my opinion, the very best available; Dragon sets the bar here.

The thin DS track has evolved into an excellent alternative to the Magic Track, which itself was a wonderful product (and still is). I just wish the DS runs would come in a more 'military' color since they are such a chore to paint.

The slide molding, included in all Dragon kits now, has really improved the detail and build-ability of their kits. This is nowhere more apparent than with their tank barrels which are, in my opinion, a vast improvement over the ill-fitting and hard-to-paint aluminum versions.

And last but not least, Dragon thoughtfully designs their models so that every hatch, door or access panel can be built in the open position, with more than enough interior detail to get you started if you roll that way. One of these days, when I have more time...

On the downside; while Dragon has been improving their instructions as of late, and what you get with this kit appears to be another rework toward that end, there are still enough errors to cause a novice to become frustrated. I breezed through most of the problems simply because I've already made the mistakes in prior Dragon Mk. III builds and learned from them. With such brilliant engineering and design, however, it is a shame that the instructions and related quality control issues detract from what otherwise would be a perfect build experience.

I can recommend this kit to all modelers who are up to the small challenges that a kit with so many parts and options will offer. If you mark up the instructions beforehand as suggested, and go slow, you shouldn't have any problems.

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





## Airfix 1/72nd Scale Avro Lancaster B.II

by Ron Bell, IPMS #12907

Perhaps the best four-engined bomber of WWII, the Avro Lancaster has earned its place in history as well as in the hearts of the English people. It was instantly recognized that this was no normal aircraft and the time between design, prototype and production was minimized. However, the Lancaster was competing with the Spitfire and Mosquito for the Rolls Royce Merlin engines it needed and it was feared that a shortage might develop. Instead of shifting Merlin production to the Lancaster, it was decided to develop another version of the aircraft, the Mark II of this kit, using Bristol Hercules radial engines instead. The adaptation was easily made, but performance slipped. The Mk II climbed faster and the radial Hercules engines could absorb more punishment and still run, but the overall ceiling of the aircraft was reduced and the Hercules consumed more fuel, so range and/or bomb load fell as well. The Mk IIs were given to squadrons that were using Wellingtons and Hampdens since these also being radial-engined, it was thought the maintenance transition would be easier. In the end, with the U.S.'s entrance into the war, Packard started to license produce the Merlin, which ended the shortage and as soon as enough Mk IIIs, which were Lancasters with the Packard Merlin engines, were available, the Mk II was largely phased out of "Ops" and relegated to other duties.



The kit has 239 pieces on five light grey and one clear sprue. This is a very detailed kit, so many of the parts are quite small and delicate. There is no flash, only very light mold seams and no punch out marks in highly visible places. The panel lines are engraved, perhaps a tiny bit too heavily, but with several coats of finish, they look fine. There is molded-in detail in the wheel and flap wells as well as the interior of the fuselage and the model can be built with normal or bulged bomb bay doors. An H2S bombing radar dome is provided, but there is no mention of this in the instructions. As there are several other clear parts that are not used, this is probably because the clear sprue is common to all Airfix Lancaster models. A twenty-two page instruction booklet guides you through assembly with clear illustrations and international symbols and there is a glossy two-sided full color painting guide for the two sets of markings provided on the decal sheet, which includes stenciling, instrument faces for the cockpit, radio operator's and engineer's areas as well as a set of maps for the navigator's table. The plastic is what has become typical for the new Airfix kits being light bluish grey, somewhat soft and easy to cut and sand.

First off let me say that this is very well engineered kit and the overall fit is excellent. This holds true for small parts and large, which means you must be careful in what you cut/sand off a part when cleaning things up. Check the fit of all parts before you trim or sand them to make sure the fit stays tight. As a corollary to this, make sure all the interior parts are in correct alignment and fit snugly against the fuselage wall. If not, you will have problems getting the two halves to join properly as tolerances are very close. If you can't get the fuselage halves together without a gap, you either did something wrong or didn't do something you should have.

### Interior

There is quite a bit in here and quite a bit is visible under the greenhouse type canopy. Everything fits well, but assemble it in the order directed so it all goes together correctly. Make note of painting instructions so you do not have to paint around parts. You make your first choice of aircraft at this stage by either including or not including the ventral turret mount, so make sure you know what aircraft you're doing. Also you'll need to open up holes/slots for a stand, if you're going to do that (See Landing Gear below). I needed a little putty on the bottom to align the halves with no 'step', but that might have been as much operator error as anything else.

### Landing Gear Bays

This is a pretty elaborate set up. It all attaches to the wing spars, as it did in real life, and is quite detailed. Again, make sure of your alignment so when you add the top and bottom wing halves it all goes together.

### Wings

A somewhat unique assembly sequence has you attach the top wing half to the spars/landing gear bays and then you add the bottom half. Fit on mine was so fine that no putty was needed at the wing root at all.



### Tail planes

These have a half lap joint that makes alignment almost guaranteed. However, on mine the fit was so tight that I needed to file down the tabs so that the elevators would completely fit into the slots in the fuselage. Also, care is needed so you get the right part on the right side. There is a small "dent" in the left part into which fits the tail wheel. That should face down. If you get it reversed, you'll need to modify the tail wheel part for it to fit and it will not be as sturdy.

### Engine nacelles

As these are in right/left halves, some clean up is necessary, as it is with the upper and lower air intakes. The fit to the wing is very good, but needed a tiny bit of putty here and there.

### Landing Gear

These are done just as they are in the real aircraft, mounted to the spar via an access panel on the top of the wing behind the engine. These panels were the worst fitting parts in the kit. They took some putty to close gaps around them and fair them into the nacelles. But even at this, they still fit pretty well. You can do the model gear down, gear up, or either way with a stand. If you choose to go with the stand, you'll need to buy one, as it's not supplied. Airfix now sells stands separately.

### Flaps

You have a choice of up or down. The interior of the flaps and upper wing are nicely detailed, so having them open looks good. There is a separate part for the rear of the engine nacelle as it folded into the forward part when the flaps were down.



### Bomb Bay

You have your choice of regular or 'bulged' bomb bay doors, depending on the aircraft you are modeling and doors posed open or closed. Unlike other kits, there are not separate parts for closed or open doors. As I did mine open, I can't speak to the fit if they are done closed. The only advanced planning needed is that if you use the bulged doors, you need to add the fairing and retainer for the ventral turret way back when you're assembling the fuselage. The bomb bay is very detailed, but can't be finished because you do not get a bomb load so you don't know what bomb shackles to put where. You can add them later, so that's not a complete tragedy, but you need to buy Airfix's Bomber Resupply set (Cat. # A05330) to arm this kite. (Hmmm, separate buy for a stand, separate buy for the armament. I sense a trend.)

### Gun Turrets

Unfortunately, the dorsal and rear turrets are split vertically, which means a seam on clear plastic, so much care is called for in assembly. In addition, the nose and rear turrets have cowlings

around them that have to either be assembled literally at the same time in the case of the rear turret or after as in the nose. You can't do them in advance to ease painting; the turrets won't go in with them in place.

### Canopy

This is a large, greenhouse type thing. The side panels are separate as you can do it with or without the teardrop bulges on the sides. However, none of the aircraft in this kit have them, so they must be used on the B.I or Dambusters release. But, again, it's clear on clear, so be careful while assembling it

### Engines

The weakest parts of the kit, detail-wise, are the engines. They are not much better than ones out of old Airfix kits. This is somewhat ameliorated by the fact that they are buried under the cowlings, which are quite well done. They are left and right halves, so will need some cleaning up, but have nice cowl flap detail on them.

### Decals

These are thin, pretty tough and responded well to setting solutions. Care is needed, however, with all the lines on the wings as the raised panel lines can cause silvering if you don't get them to snuggle down completely. Location of some can be a bit dicey as the full color guide makes it difficult to see panel lines to use as guides.

### Painting

This is a big plane in 1/72nd scale and you use a lot of black paint. In around all the nooks and crannies, it took me a full hour to lay it all down. The full color guides are excellent. One tiny nit is that they show a circular clear part just behind the bomber's nose position on the bottom. This would be the searchlight that was installed in front of the bomb bay to focus with one at the rear at 60 feet altitude. This was for the Dambusters Type 464 Lancaster and would not have appeared on the Mk IIs. On the kit part, it's a raised circular panel line, so it can just be painted over. One major suggestion here is to get Eduard's flexible masks for this kit (product code CX372). They make masking all the turrets, cockpit greenhouse and all those little windows on the sides so much easier. Heck, in my case, possible. I would not have been able to do it without them. They are well worth the money.

This is an excellently engineered kit that fits very well. However, it is a big kit and has many parts that need to go in "just so". It's not a kit for beginners, but the normal IPMS member shouldn't have any problem with it. It builds up into an impressive representation of the real thing and in the hands of a really good aircraft modeler (Which I'm not. As evidence, you'll see schmutzes, decal wrinkles, etc. in the photos. Those are operator error, not the fault of the kit.), it could be spectacular.

Many thanks to IPMS/USA and Airfix American for providing me the opportunity to build and review this kit.



## Eduard 1/48th Scale Me 262A-1/U2 Photo Etch

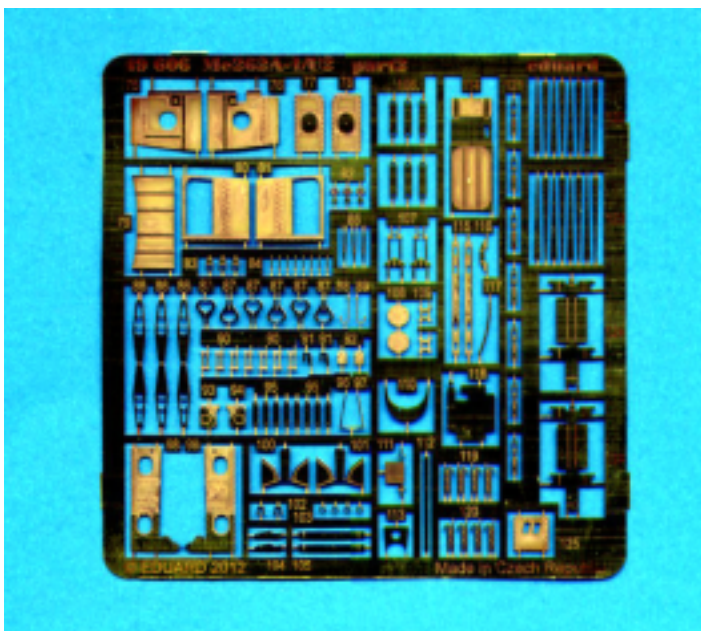
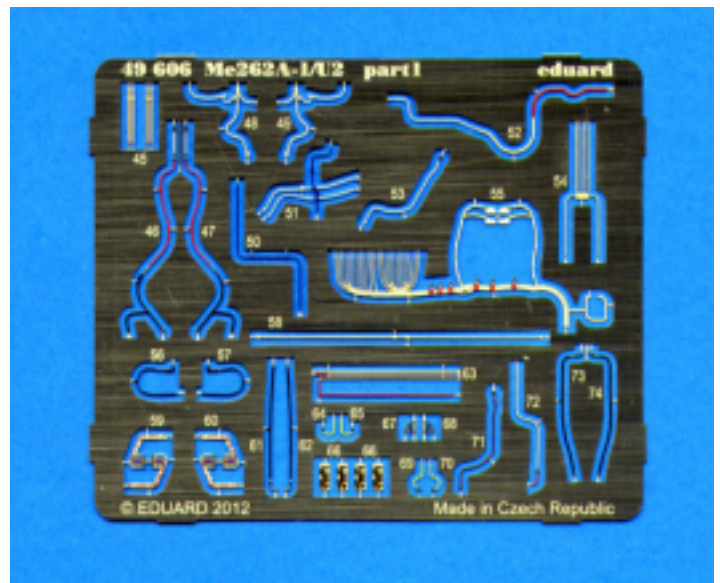
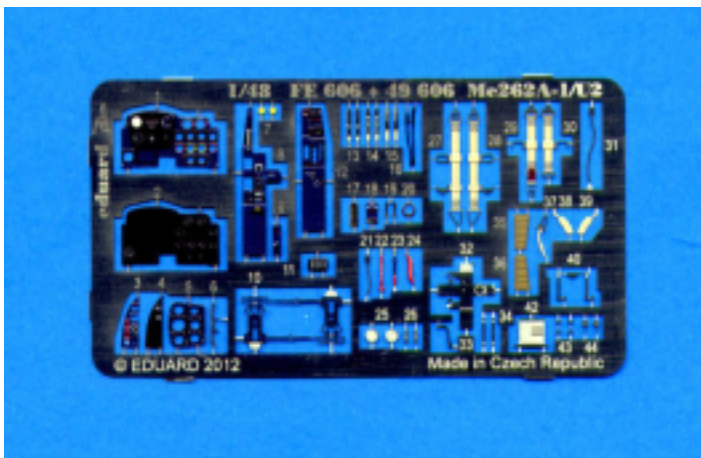
by Jacob Russell

This new set (item number 49606) is for Hobby Boss's recent Me 262-A1/U2 night fighter. It consists of 125 pieces on three photo-etched frets. Two of them are pre-painted and one of these is self adhesive.

The self adhesive fret contains 44 pieces, the majority of which are dedicated to the cockpit. It includes items such as a seat harness, gun sight, instrument panel, cockpit tub side consoles, throttle quadrant, data panels for the electric circuit breaker panel, and rudder pedals.

The second fret and third frets are devoted to the gun bays, lower cockpit tub, wheel wells, landing gear and the dipoles for the night fighter radar array mounted to the aircraft's nose. They include landing gear oleo scissors, new hinges for the front landing gear door, detail parts for the gun bay, d/f loop, and brake lines for the main wheels. Additional items include wiring harnesses and other detail parts for the underside of the cockpit tub, wheel well details, and canopy latches.

Hobby Boss has come a long way from their early 1/72nd scale "Easy Kit" origins. Their Messerschmitt Me 262 kits are accurate and well detailed. They slot neatly between the Dragon and Tamiya 262 kits in price, accuracy and quality. I recommend this set and I would like to thank Eduard for the review sample.





## Movie Review – *The Wind Rises*

by Robert Allen

That Hayao Miyazaki is the greatest and most popular of anime directors is beyond dispute. There are other great ones (Makoto Shinkai and the late Satoshi Kon come to mind), but none have attained the worldwide popularity and influence that Miyazaki has. The 72-year-old Miyazaki has announced that *The Wind Rises* will be his final feature film, and it's the perfect sendoff. It's a labor of love, a story that combines the biography of aircraft designer Jiro Horikoshi with plot elements taken from Tatsuo Hori's story *The Wind Has Risen*. People get that this project is very personal to Miyazaki, but I don't think many people realize just how personal it is.



Miyazaki's great love, besides anime, is aviation; the theme of the wonder of flight runs through virtually every film he's ever made. And he came by that love by being born into an airplane family (I'm familiar with the concept). Miyazaki's father owned a company that built parts during WW2 for the Mitsubishi A6M Zero, the most famous aircraft designed by Horikoshi, the main character of the film. So Horikoshi isn't just a random character in a film – his design had a huge effect on Miyazaki's life.

The movie follows Horikoshi's career, during which the character is often seen in dream sequences talking with his idol, Gianni Caproni. I don't know if the real Horikoshi idolized Caproni. I do know, from his own comments, that he's Miyazaki's favorite aircraft designer. So Miyazaki is projecting his own feelings onto the character of Horikoshi by having him do so.

Caproni's company later produced the Caproni C.309 Ghibli, a 1930s transport aircraft designed for use on Italy's colonial routes in North Africa. It's one of Miyazaki's favorite airplanes; in fact he named his film studio after it. If you've wondered what the name Studio Ghibli means, there's your answer. The airplane is named the Ghibli because it was designed for use in North Africa, so it was given a name from that region. What's a Ghibli? "The Ghibli is a hot, dry, usually south to southeasterly dust-bearing desert wind, that occurs in Libya..." It's a hot dry desert wind. What do hot winds do? They rise. What's the film called? *The Wind Rises*.

The name of the movie is adapted from Hori's story, but it is also a direct reference to the name of the studio that made it, which was named after an aircraft designed by a character in the movie, who inspires another character in the movie, who designed an airplane which was built by Miyazaki's father's company, triggering his lifelong love affair with aviation.

That's a brilliant set of connections. Really...

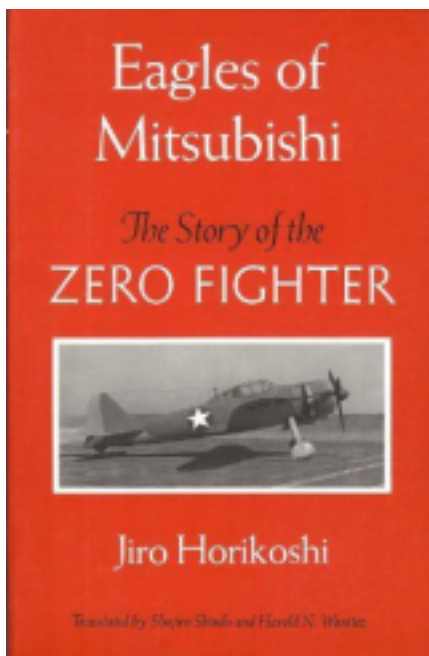
So is the film any good, either as a movie or from an aviation perspective? Yes, on both counts. To tackle the latter subject first, the movie is extremely faithful to the events of Horikoshi's work. The aircraft seen are meticulously accurate, with markings and colors carefully portrayed. And the incidents you see really happened. I doubt you'll ever see a movie, animated or live-action, that takes this much care getting the aviation details right. The aircraft are not exactly household names; the Mitsubishi B1M Carrier Attack Aircraft, for example. We get to see two early fighter designs that Horikoshi worked on that were not successful, the parasol 1MF2, and the monoplane 1MF10. The depictions of the crashes of these aircraft are historically accurate; the pilot of the 1MF2 is seen descending by parachute, the first such escape for a pilot in Japan. Much of the film is spent showing the development of the Experimental 9-Shi Single-Seat Fighter, which was developed into Horikoshi's first big success, the A5M, the world's first operational monoplane carrier-based fighter. A clue to Miyazaki's attention to detail is that the prototype is shown with a cranked wing, a feature that was changed on the production model.

Japanese aircraft are not the only ones seen in the movie. The dream sequences feature many of Caproni's designs, including the C.30 bomber, and the massive, nine-winged C.60 flying boat (which I'm convinced that many movie goers will assume is fictional). During a sequence showing Horikoshi taking a trip to Germany, we see several Junkers designs, including the huge G.38 (which was license-built by Mitsubishi as a bomber) and the W.34.

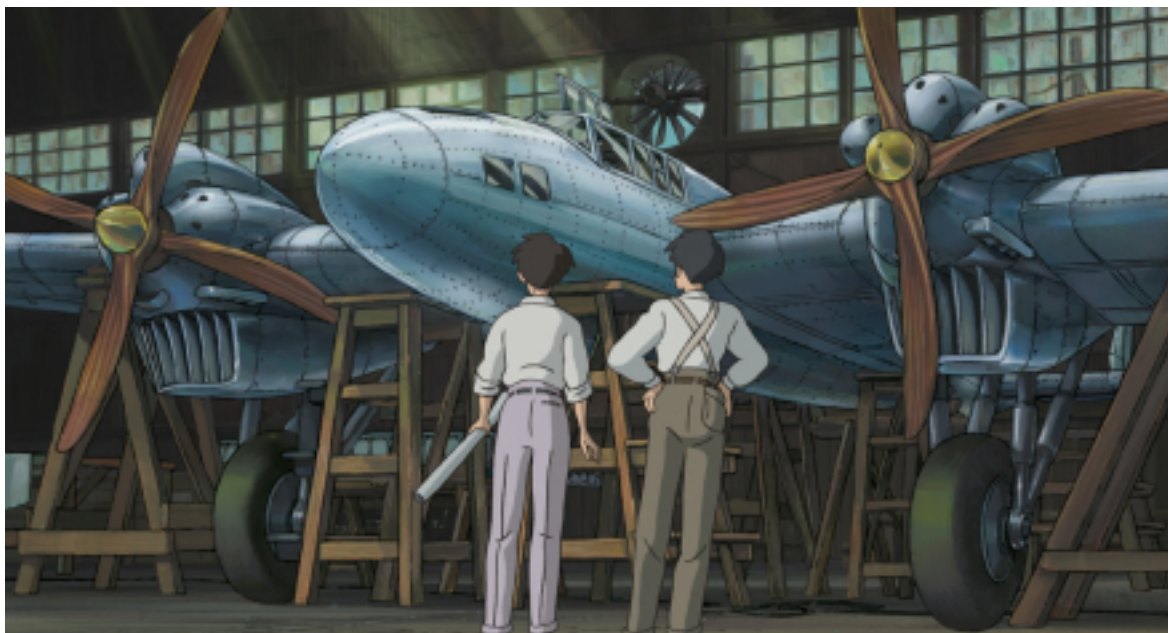


One aircraft that is not seen much in the movie is the A6M Zero. Aside from a short sequence at the end, almost an epilogue, it is conspicuously absent. My hunch is that Miyazaki was much more interested in showing Horikoshi the designer, rather than setting himself up for criticism by “glorifying” one of Japan’s major weapons in the Second World War (for which some have criticized him anyway).

In a broader sense, *The Wind Rises* works as a movie, although I wouldn’t put it in the masterwork category, as I would his earlier films *Spirited Away* or *Princess Mononoke*. Being grounded in reality, the animation is not as imaginative as some of the fantasy sequences in those films, although the depiction of the 1923 Tokyo earthquake is spectacular. I do have some reservations with the historical liberties taken by Miyazaki in relation to Horikoshi’s personal life; the other main plot point, the relationship between the designer and his tuberculosis-stricken wife, is taken from Hori’s story, and never happened to Horikoshi. This is a film that takes up a lot of screen time discussing the finer points of engineering. It’s a measure of Miyazaki’s ability as a director that he can make this interesting to a general audience. It does drag a bit at times, although the slow pacing is deliberate and in keeping with the more mature subject matter, and because of that subject matter, the whimsical touch often seen in Miyazaki’s films is toned down. There’s no catbus. But on the whole, it’s a wonderful film, and a fitting coda to Miyazaki’s career.



For those interested in learning more about Horikoshi’s career, and especially the design of the Zero, he wrote an excellent book, *Eagles of Mitsubishi: The Story of the Zero Fighter*, published in an English language edition by the University of Washington Press. Unfortunately, it’s out of print, and copies are going for \$350 on Amazon.com. My father is an aeronautical engineer. I lent him my copy of this book, and he said that it is the best book he has ever read in describing the challenges that an engineer has to meet when developing an aircraft, and the thinking that goes into meeting those challenges. Every aircraft is a compromise; you have to give up something to get something, and the Zero was a classic example of that. I don’t have my Dad’s expertise, but I also think this is a great book, one of my ten favorite aviation books. It boggles my mind that there are those in the West (although fortunately a dwindling few) who still assert that the Zero was a copy of a Western design, notably the Hughes H-1 racer. That’s an absurd notion, totally lacking in any credibility whatsoever, and this book explains why. I hope that the book is reissued; the tie-in with Miyazaki’s movie makes it seem like it would be a commercially viable idea.



## MiniArt 1/35th Scale European Tram

by Eric Christianson

MiniArt is well known for producing off-mainstream kits, wonderfully detailed figures, and excellent diorama bases and accessories. 'And now for something completely different'...this dynamic company has produced the first (as far as I know) complete injection molded electric European Tram car in 1/35th scale. This kit boasts over 600 parts and looks to be accurate right down to the hanging lights and door knobs. The kit comes with a nicely rendered cobblestone base as well as overhead electric posts. There is just enough room on the base to add a second vehicle and figures if that's the direction you want to go with this.



Reminiscent of some of MiniArt's other kits, the European Tram comes in a large, overstuffed box that, once opened, is tough to get closed again. Along with the parts needed for the tram and posts, you get all the other extra parts that MiniArt always includes in their kits – parts that work great for dioramas and small vignettes.

The contents of the box include:

18 sprues in soft, flash-free light grey plastic, packaged separately.

6 clear plastic sprues, packaged separately.

1 twelve-page instruction booklet with 52 steps

1 small sheet of decals, perfectly registered, from Begemot, a six year-old company that looks to be based out of Russia or Eastern Europe.

The kit comes with a single color scheme represented (white over red exterior with a light tan/yellow interior), but there are

beaucoup other color combinations to be found on the Internet.

The instruction booklet is made up of nicely rendered CAD drawings that are useful and well thought out – and they need to be. This is not a weekend build. There is a lot of detail inside the car and callouts are made throughout for Vallejo, Testors, Humbrol, Revell, Mr. Color, and LifeColor paints. There is a single two-view drawing in black and white on the last page showing exterior paint callouts, but a quick check on the Internet will bring up a half-dozen or so really nice color pictures of the finished model for you to use as a go-by.

The top half of the European Tram car is nearly all clear plastic, save the roof. What this means is that you can't just call in the paint job. Painting will have to be integral with the assembly (unusual for an armor guy like me), and unless you want to do a ton of masking, airbrush work will be very limited unless you paint everything before assembly. A thorough analysis of the instructions will help in understanding how the parts will be displayed on the finished product. I like to clip, clean and bag all parts by separate assemblies before starting a build. I think this approach would help here as well in weeding out the parts that are not used and understanding how the remaining parts fit together.

### Lower chassis

The first few steps of assembly involve the base of the tram. The images have the bottom of the tram inverted for a clearer view of things; once you are through with this section, the whole thing will be flipped over so you can attach what comes next.

This portion includes everything 'down there' except building and attaching the main trucks, which, curiously, are saved to the very end of the build. I sure would not like to set the nearly completed tram on its roof to add the truck assemblies, but it looks like all the delicate roof hardware is added after that those steps. Still - it's worth some investigation.

### Interior

The tram's interior comes together starting with Step 11, and right off the bat you've got some 'glass' to add to some interior doors. Three panes of glass are actually one piece of clear plastic separated into three sections by small bits of plastic framing – meaning this

is probably not a candidate for masking of any kind. Several more doors with windows are added along with interior bulkheads before bringing the sides together, closing everything off. Steps 20 and 21 bring the beautifully detailed front and rear conductor's stations together – I think these will need some wood grain on the paneling to make these very visible sections 'pop'.

The next few Steps bring still more doors with windows and the front and back exterior surfaces together with the tram sides.

#### Roof

Steps 29-31 assemble and attach the roof to the nearly complete lower portion of the car. Two narrow window sills, one on each side, contain a final 10 windows, and then you're done with windows (!). The delicate ceiling lights and leather passenger grab loops are added and the two roof sections, fore and aft, are plopped down on the car.

#### Wheel Trucks

This step might be better taken back when the initial chassis was being assembled. Except for attaching four very small window corner braces (Parts E33), I can't see why you would want to risk putting the tram on its roof to work on and attach the two main wheel trucks at this point. The wheels are imbedded in a robust-looking housing that looks like it has some heft. I don't doubt that it could have served as a sturdy base for the rest of the build, but perhaps MiniArt knows something that I don't, based on the instructions. I guess it's best to give them the benefit of the doubt!

The trucks themselves are beautifully detailed and will, unfortunately, remain mostly out of sight when the tram is turned back over again and put on its base.

#### Upper Electric Rail Detail

The detail on the top of the tram and the street poles (where many eyes will focus) is superb. The delicate parts will add a nice final touch to a really nice looking car and base. The single electric connector is (thankfully) molded as one piece with some small parts added.

#### Base

The relatively large, beautiful cobblestone display base comes directly from MiniArt's experience with their excellent diorama kits. The base is made of sturdy vacuformed plastic that needs very little preparation for use. You may want to scrape or sand off the many small nubs that are left over from the manufacturing process, but they can also just be left on if you wish.

I usually support these bases with what's called Gator Board, which is sold in thicknesses that exactly matches the gap under the vacuformed base.

The base has tracks imbedded in it to take the tram car, leaving enough room for another vehicle, possibly a small AFV, and figures.

I really like MiniArt and have reviewed a lot of their products. I had trouble at first with their diorama kits, but after discovering Gator Board, those troubles went away. I've always like the craftsmanship and fine detail they include in their kits, and by far this European Tram serves as a tribute to all of that hard work and effort.

An unusual subject for sure, and one that will undoubtedly turn heads at shows or in your model case; either by itself or as part of a larger diorama or vignette.

I recommend this kit to all modelers who are up to the small challenges that a kit with so many parts and painting requirements will offer. If you study the instructions beforehand as suggested, and go slow, you shouldn't have any problems.

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

[Thanks to Chris Banyai-Riepl and [www.internetmodeler.com](http://www.internetmodeler.com) for permission to use Jacob's and Eric's articles. - ED]

## Golden Age Stars of IPMS #32

The passing of **Joan Fontaine** has robbed us of one of the last remaining stars of Golden Age Hollywood. Best known for her Oscar-winning role in *Suspicion* and her lifelong feud with sister Olivia De Havilland, Fontaine was a cousin of

aviation pioneer Geoffrey De Havilland. So it was natural that Fontaine should be paired with one of her cousin's aircraft during a War Bond Drive.

This picture was taken on May 11, 1944, at the De Havilland Canada factory in Downsview, Ontario, where the Mosquito was being built. She christened a Mos-

quito B.XX named "Joan", KB273. The aircraft later saw service with No. 608 Squadron, RAF, and was lost on a mission to Berlin on February 28, 1945. Both crewmembers survived.



## PrezNotes

from page 1

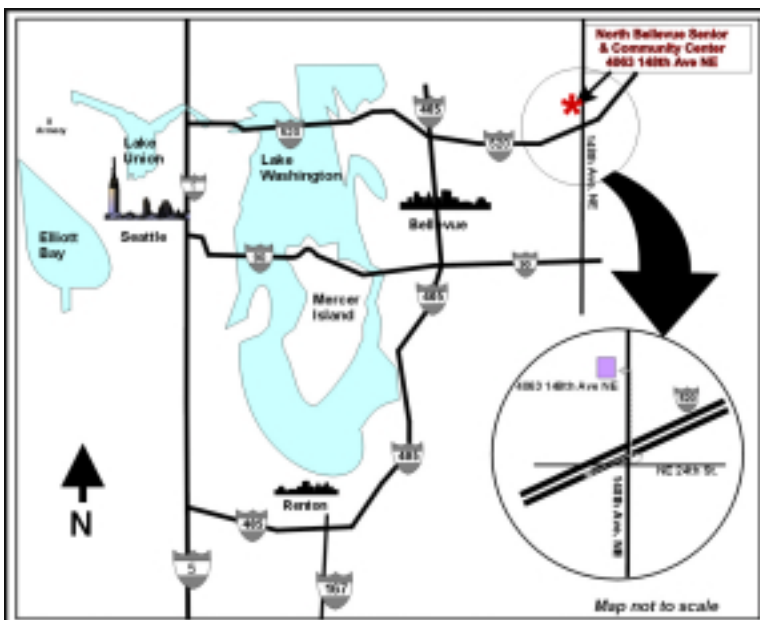
The turret is misshapen in various areas, while the main gun is clearly too short. The track also slopes at the wrong angle in one spot, due to the track drive sprocket being in the wrong place. The engine deck also slopes at the wrong angle. And according to VP Eric Christianson, who is building the kit for an Internet Modeler review, the parts, inaccurate or not, simply don't go together very well! Yet at the end of the day, with a little trimming and "persuading", they DO go together, and the end result is a model that LOOKS like an M103. Is simply "looking the part" enough for you?

Cheers,

*Andrew*

## Meeting Reminder

## March 8



### 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.