

Seattle Chapter News



**Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA
May 2014**

PREZNOTES



That Deep Feeling of Satisfaction That Comes With a Job Well Done

I would like to thank everyone who was involved with this year's very successful IPMS Seattle Spring Show. A ton of work goes into carrying off a show as large as ours successfully, and much of that work goes completely unnoticed by those who attend the show. For months prior to the show, the publicity depart gets into gear, making sure our flyers are in place at all the hobby shops in the area. Utilizing our own members, together with members of other chapters, we blanket the hobby shops from Vancouver BC south to southern Oregon, from Port Angeles to Spokane, Bellingham to Vancouver WA. And in this day of the Internet, we hit the web sites of all the major (and minor) players in the news business: Seattle PI, Bellevue Reporter, the Okanogan Valley Gazette, and NPR's KUOW and KPLU. And then there are the model web sites, etc.

Also prior to the show, and thanks to the continuing generosity of many of the members, we collect raffle donations to seed our extremely successful Show Raffle. Various vendors are also contacted well in advance of show day, as we secure the rental of the Renton Community Center, all the tables and chairs, the ribbons and plaques. Sponsors for the awards are sought out, and model vendors are contacted and invited to attend the show, and the chapter web site is regularly updated with lists of vendors, show sponsors, category listings, entry forms etc. Signage is planned and printed.

Meanwhile volunteers are sought for the main areas of the show. Given it is a show with a contest, over 50 judges are sought from within the chapter, and from outside model clubs in the greater area. Show set up Friday afternoon takes 20 plus people, where all the tables are loaded in and set

up, table dressing is laid out, signage put out, and everything is double checked to catch any last minute hiccups. This year for example we discovered a number of damaged model show tables, and these had to be physically repaired prior to use. On the day of the show itself, large numbers of volunteers are required to staff the registration desks, the raffle area, the hospitality area, the Make'N'Take, and to photograph the event for our web site. Also running in the background are folks making sure the judging progresses smoothly, the entry numbers are tallied and cross checked against entrant names, and that the vendors are kept happy.

An incredible amount of effort, for what is clearly the largest model show in the Pacific Northwest, a show worth coming to from Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City, Boise, Salem, Walla Walla, Vancouver BC, and Bellevue (to name just a few of the cities this year's attendees traveled from). Well done EVERYONE who participated in make this year's event another great success. We have already begun to plan for next year's show!

See you at the May meeting!

Cheers,

Andrew

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IPMS Seattle Web Site (Web Co-Ordinator, John Kaylor): <http://www.ipms-seattle.org>

Public Disclaimers, Information, and Appeals for Help

This is the official publication of the Seattle Chapter, IPMS-USA. As such, it serves as the voice for our Chapter, and depends largely upon the generous contributions of our members for articles, comments, club news, and anything else involving plastic scale modeling and associated subjects. Our meetings are generally held 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.

May 10
July 12

June 14
August 9

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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Revell 1/48th Scale Stearman PT-17, N2S-3, and Others

by Jim Schubert

History:

In the early 1920s Walter Beech, Clyde Cessna, Matty Laird, and Lloyd Stearman began building airplanes in Wichita, Kansas. Stearman left the team in 1926 and moved to Venice, California to start his own company. In 1927, with a \$60,000 investment incentive from local businesses, he moved back to Wichita and resumed production. His three prior partners had, in the meantime, started their own businesses, Beech and Cessna in Wichita and Laird in Chicago. August 15, 1929 Lloyd sold Stearman Aircraft Company to Boeing making it a subsidiary of the United Aircraft and Transport Company (UATC) and moved into a new factory on the west side of Wichita Municipal Airport. The east side of this airport is now McConnell Air Force Base. In 1931 Stearman, tired of big business's remote management, left Boeing and joined Lockheed in California.

Upon dissolution of the UATC holding company by the U S Government in 1934, Stearman became a wholly owned subsidiary of Boeing Airplane Company (BAC). In 1938 its name was changed to Stearman Aircraft Division BAC. In 1941 it was changed again to Wichita Division of BAC (WIBAC). During WWII the Wichita plant was expanded to build B-29s as well as the Stearmans. In 2005 Boeing sold the Wichita Division to Spirit Aero Systems, which now builds airliner components for the Boeing/Airbus duopoly. The 737 fuselage is the largest component currently made there. Wichita has come a long way from Lloyd Stearman's biplanes!

Stearman's best-known product was the PT-13, -17, -18, -27, NS, N2S-1 through -5 "Kaydet and "Yellow Peril" series of military trainers based on the Boeing Models 73 and 75. These were all, save for colors, essentially the same from the firewall aft. Here's a tabulation of the engines and propellers and the model equivalents:

<u>Boeing Model</u>	<u>ARMY</u>	<u>NAVY</u>	<u>ENGINE</u>	<u>PROPELLER</u>
73	-	NS-1	W	H
75	PT-13	-	L	S
A75	PT-13A	-	L	S
A75	PT-13B	-	L	S
A75	PT-13C	-	L	S
E75	PT-13D	N2S-5	L	S or M
A75N1	PT-17	N2S-1	C	M
B75	-	N2S-2	L	S
B75N	-	N2S-3	C	M or S
A75N1	-	N2S-4	C	M
A75J1	PT-18	-	J	M
D-75N1	PT-27	-	C	M

Notes:

W = Wright R-790 Whirlwind, nine cylinder radial, ~200 HP

L = Lycoming R-680-4, -5, -8, -11 & -17, nine cylinder radial, ~ 220 HP with front exhaust collector.

C = Continental R-670-4 & -5, seven cylinder radial, ~220 HP with rear exhaust collector as provided in the kit.

J = Jacobs R-755-7, seven cylinder radial, ~225 HP

H = Hamilton-Standard 8' 5" (2.56 M) metal, ground adjustable propeller

S = Sensenich 8' 2" (2.5 M), wooden propeller

M = McCauley 8' 6" (2.62 M), fixed pitch aluminum propeller as provided in the kit.

(McCauleys were sometimes replaced with Hamilton-Standards in the field and Sensenichs and McCauleys were indiscriminately swapped in the field.)

PTs were Army trainers; NS and N2S were Navy trainers.

PT-27 = PT-17 winterized for the RCAF, including some with canopies.

- The Stearman Model E75, PT-13D/N2S-5, was standardized for use by either the Army or Navy and is the first, perhaps only, plane used by both services with no differences between them. Both designations were stenciled on the tails in the factory and the receiving services frequently never bothered to remove whichever of the two was inappropriate. All PT-13D/N2S-5s were, delivered, doped aluminum overall. Beware of restorations in other colors.
- Due to frequent sudden changes in the needs of the two services and foreign buyers Army and Navy types were frequently swapped in the factory making a mess of the logic of model numbering and purchasing contracts. The best advice is to base your model on a specific period photograph – not a restoration photo.
- Boeing-Stearman delivered 8,584 of these biplanes and the equivalent of another 1,762 in spare parts, which is why you will, sometimes, see the figure of 10,346 cited as the total production. It is not, however, customary to count spare parts as equivalent airplanes except in Public Relations departments
- One-off variations for test and post war modifications have not been addressed above nor have agricultural or personal or sport adaptations.

The New Revell 1/48th Kit:

In the attractive, lidded box are ten sprue trees in white Polystyrene containing 52 parts and one clear containing two thin windscreens and a “navigation light” for the fuselage spine; the presence of which light I cannot confirm from any references; it was, possibly, on a restoration examined by the kit designers. Fortunately Revell did not mold a hole for it so ignore it. There’s a 12-page instruction booklet and a sheet of decals with markings for one restored Army PT-17 in trainer blue and yellow and one Navy N2S-3 in overall trainer yellow. The instructions contain something I’ve not seen in a kit before – a Parts List, which is not as useful as the Parts Map usually found in



kits. There are many colorful variations for the Navy planes to be found in the references given below and on Google Images. The kit has a peculiar anomaly in that the parts will make a proper model of either the PT-17 or N2S-3 with the seven-cylinder Continental engine and McCauley propeller but the color scheme and rigging diagrams show both with the Lycoming engine and McCauley propeller. There is one separate sprue, which contains a Sensenich wooden propeller and the decals include wood-grain decals for it. That’s an error and a puzzle unless Revell intends a later release with the Lycoming nine-cylinder engine with front exhaust collector, for which the Sensenich propeller is correct. It wouldn’t be too difficult, however, to substitute Engines & Things’ good Lycoming R-680 and use that Sensenich prop, which will want a PE bolt plate for the hub. I thought the kit’s McCauley prop it looked a bit skinny until I looked at The Museum of Flight’s Kaydet – that prop is skinny! There are many good photos of both engines on Google Images to help AMSers sort out the details.

The engineering of the kit is of special interest to me. I believe it is the way all manufacturers should approach biplanes. The landing gear legs and the cabane struts are molded integrally with the fuselage halves eliminating any grief about alignment. Kudos to Revell! Monogram used this approach in their trio of beautiful biplanes in the 1970s and Hasegawa used it on their 1/32nd scale biplanes. It’s the only way to go if biplanes are to attract a following of other than only dedicated, patient modelers. The kit includes the internal fuselage truss to complete a well-detailed interior. Note that the interior should be sprayed aluminum regardless of which end-user was to receive the airplane.

This is a good kit; it’s reasonably priced at ~\$15, •11/£9 and it is better than Revell’s 1/48th “Spirit of St. Louis” in all regards. Built OOB the kit will make a very acceptable model; see the photos of Gerry Nilles’ N2S-3 and John Eaton’s PT-17 for proof. That said I do, however, have (you knew I would didn’t you?) some 13 additional nits to pick. Fortunately they are so minor that I will not bother to list

them all and will address only the two most egregious examples. The running lights molded onto the wingtips are based on a modern restoration including a white strobe light behind the red/green lights. Cut the strobes off and carve what remains to standard half-teardrop shapes. The second involves the representation of the top of the fuel tank in the upper wing. The depressions between the tank straps are too deep. This is easy to correct. Insert strips of .005" (.127 MM) styrene between the straps. You will have to, first, shave off the fuel filler cap and punch a replacement from .010" (.254 MM) styrene. I think this area may have evolved through several iterations of change and I am continuing to look into it.



Buy, at least, two so you can have a blue and yellow Army trainer and an all yellow Navy trainer; it is a good kit. In addition to the US Army and Navy color schemes there were 19 other nations, which used these simple, rugged, forgiving biplanes, to give you more choices of livery. If you want a pre-war, civil-registered Wings of Peace model you can build the Model X75 prototype in Army Blue and Yellow but with the civil registration NC14407 in black and no national insignia. There's a photo of this plane on page 17 of the first reference below showing the black "C" in the registration over painted with an orange "X". This prototype had the Lycoming engine and a McCauley prop. There are many post war civil restorations.

Now, Messrs. Revell, how about popping this kit out in 1/72nd as a replacement for your old one? Please include both engines and both props.

The Other Kits:

The first plastic model airplane kit manufactured in the US was Varney's 1/48th Kaydet in spring of 1946. It cost a whopping \$3.75. It had 20 parts, 16 in yellow and four, the engine, propeller and wheels, in black. The fuselage was solid. No windscreens or pilots were provided. I drooled over it in a shop in Evansville, Indiana back then but couldn't afford it. In the late 1940s Lindberg acquired the molds and modified the fuselage to be in hollow halves and added "seats", pilots, and clear windscreens for them. The issue I bought in 1951 was molded in all white. I've included a



photo of it on my college desk for refitment of the broken prop. The Lindberg kit is still widely available at low prices. It isn't a very good kit by today's standards but it does have a decent Lycoming engine. Below are an example of a built Lindberg kit, and the current box in which it is marketed. I know of no other 1/48th Kaydet kits.



I believe the next release of a Kaydet was Revell UK's 1/72nd in 1965 followed by the same kit of parts released by Revell US in 1966, and Revell Germany in the eighties. The only differences between these are the boxes, box art, instruction sheets, and decals. This kit, although representative of a lower tech age, builds up into a nice representation of either a Navy or Army plane but it has one significant shortcoming; the engine is not very good and is best replaced by either an Engines and Things Lycoming R-680 or Continental R-670, which are quite good. If your choice requires a Sensenich prop, you'll have to carve it. Lodela, the date is unknown to me, released the same suite of 1/72nd parts in Mexico; I have never seen a Lodela kit in the flesh so cannot comment further. Most recently, 2010, the same old parts have been reboxed yet again in Germany.



Pavla of the Czech Republic released a very nice 1/72nd Kaydet in 2003. This kit gives you useable resin reproductions of both engines and both propellers.



Silver Wings of Poland recently released a 1/32nd Kaydet. I have not seen the kit or a review. The only thing I know is it costs about \$150 before shipping charges.

So you have your choice of five basic kits of the Boeing-Stearman Model 75 in three scales from nine manufacturers. One of the original Varney kits may, of course, be rather hard to find and dear to buy.

References:

Stearman Guidebook: Mitch Mayburn, Flying Enterprise Press, USA, 1967.

Boeing Aircraft Since 1916: Peter M. Bowers, Putnam, UK, 1966.

Boeing News: Boeing Company Newspaper, January 11/24, 2004.

IPMS-USA Update, 21U5: March/April 1986.

IPMS-USA Quarterly Journal, 2Q5: April 1967.

Aero Modeler: February 1962.

Flight Journal: February 1997.

MAP Plan No. F2757: G.A.G. Cox

Sport Aviation: November 1986.

Warbirds Worldwide, Number Nine: 2008.

Google Images.

Afterword:

Stearman's and Laird's companies have disappeared and recently Cessna's and Beech's were merged into Textron.



Above: Gerry Nilles' N2S-3 and John Eaton's PT-17, both built from the new Revell 1/48th scale kit.

Hurricane Submarine Bookshelf: From Under the Sea: Lots of Print!

by Scott Kruize

The War Below

By James Scott. Simon & Schuster of New York

Copyright 2013; 426 pages

Silent Victory: the U.S. Submarine War Against Japan

By Clay Blair, Jr. J.B. Lippincott Company of Philadelphia and New York

Copyright 1975; 1050 pages in two volumes

Iron Coffins

By Herbert Werner. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston of New York

Copyright 1969; 329 pages

SUBMARINE!

By Edward L. Beach, Captain USN (ret)

Pocket Books, division of Simon & Schuster of New York

Copyright (original) 1946; 354 pages

The Sea Guerillas

By Dean W Ballenger. Signet Book, division of The New American Library, New York

Copyright 1982; 188 pages

Do the rest of you believe in the Greek goddesses, the ‘Fates’? I do, after many demonstrations that things happen to me that have nothing whatever to do with any feeble plans of my own...

Therefore I wasn’t overly taken aback when - on the same day - Will Perry thrust a just-started kit into my hands at a NorthWest Scale Modelers meeting, and my wife brought home from the library *The War Below*, all about the American submarines *Drum*, *Tang*, and *Silversides*, as they fought against the Japanese Empire during WWII.

For reasons never clear, Will gifted me with the ancient Monogram kit, number 3102, ‘Wolfpack U-boat’, supposedly a Type IXc. It's in ‘box’ scale, measuring about 14-½ inches long, which seems to be about 1/200th scale. About the only thing he’d done to it was cut off the wretchedly awful railings from the deck—they looked like ordinary yard fences, made with boards—by each side of the conning tower.

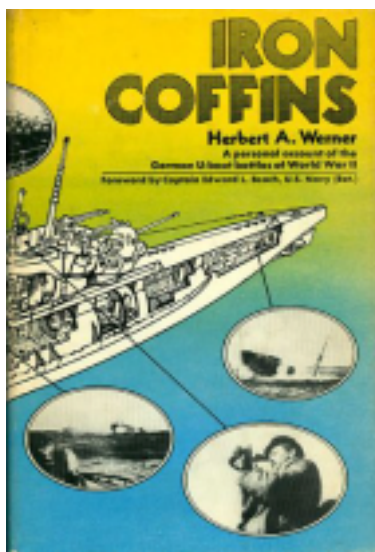
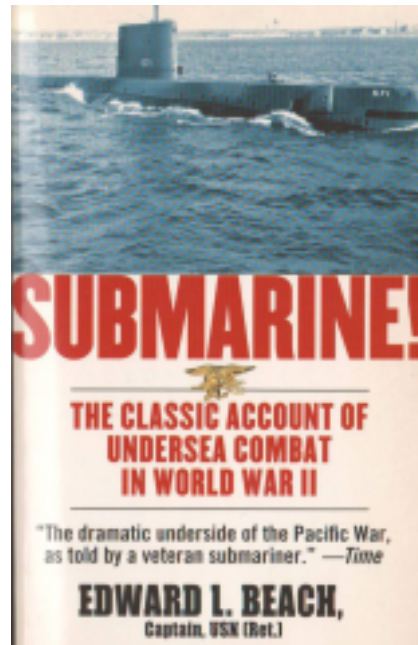
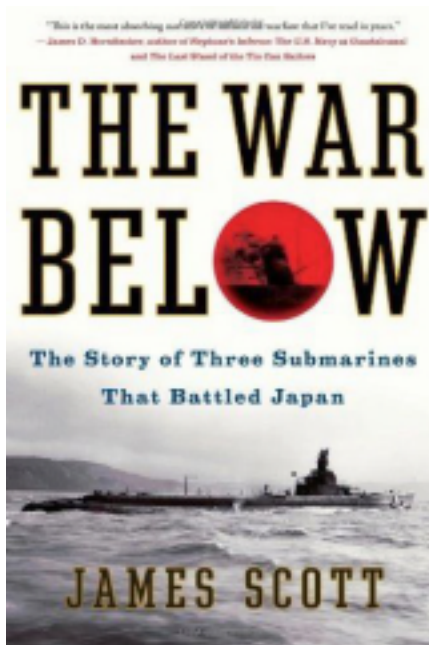


Well, I'm hardly a conversion or scratch-building-type modeler, sticking pretty much to Out-Of-the-Box builds. Nor did Internet searches produce anything like blueprints for U-boat deck railings. However, there were a few ancient grainy black-and-white photographs which showed, more or less, what U-boat Type IXs had. Also, I was able to examine the railings from a different, better, more modern kit. I faked some from wire and stretched sprue. You might recall a ‘standard of accuracy’ measure I sometimes resort to:

If you can PhotoShop a snap of a model into a historic old photograph, and it's DOESN'T appear conspicuously out of place, I say the scale fidelity efforts are close enough!

You can see my railings in the pic, here. I also had to make some propellers, since the kit's were missing. (Hey, Will: did the cat eat them?) Whatever you can make out: they're missile nose cones from my 'spares' box, dressed with scrap sheet blades.

By no means a contest winner, the results...but I had fun.



My reading is a bit broader than my modeling focus, which was pretty much exclusively airplanes way back Then, and almost - but not quite - what I've been modeling since I re-emerged from The Dark Ages. In fact, I have built submarine kits: two tiny WWII Soviet subs from some obscure Russian kitmaker, and Dragon's version of the Soviet 'Alfa'-class nuclear submarine. Back Then, I built no submarine models. But I did read Captain Beach's book *SUBMARINE!*

He was Executive Officer on the Gato-class submarine *Trigger* during World War II, and his book's chapters alternate between his boat's wartime exploits, and those of other subs in the force, such as *Seawolf*, *Cavalla*, and *Albacore*. He also describes the incredible career of submarine *Tang*, under Dick O'Kane, who actually exceeded the example set by his prior commander 'Mush' Morton, when they fought the Japanese from Harder.

I thought the book was great back then, and a re-read in modern times with a new edition only confirmed it. Later, I read Herbert Werner's German U-Boat account, *Iron Coffins*, and the comprehensive history by Mr. Blair. Lastly, the new book by James Scott is well done, covering in great detail (perhaps a bit too much detail) the wartime voyages of three of our submarines. (*Tang*'s exploits were so impressive, they're covered in all three of the American books.)

These are all perfectly good histories: sober and factual. I unreservedly recommend each and every one of them to anybody with interest in the war beneath the waves during World War II. Enhance your intellectual understanding by reading them, to supplement your enjoyment of the movies *Run Silent, Run Deep*, and *Das Boot*!



Then, after all that mental effort, you may find you want some real, blood-and-guts, fire-and-brimstone, pot-boiling, Action!/Adventure!!

You need *The Sea Guerrillas*!

Betcha none of you realized that when the good old U.S. of A. suffered all those horrendous losses to the U-boats when we entered the war, a Secret Plan was put into action... Yankee ingenuity to counter brutal Teutonic militarism. A Higgins 77-foot torpedo boat was fitted with exceptionally heavy armament, including a 3-inch naval gun and a hull-full of exceptionally powerful Torpex-filled depth bombs. Then the whole thing was carefully disguised and camouflaged, so that even from a hundred yards, it looked exactly like a harmless fishing boat. The seven-man volunteer U.S. Navy crew dressed as poor salt-stained fisherman, then sailed across the Atlantic to hide themselves among the Portuguese fishing trawlers in the Bay of Biscay.

The cap'n kept watch, from deep within the wheelhouse, with a set of 'nonreflecting optics'. He'd pick out a U-boat, cruising past the fishing fleet in what the crew thought was perfect safety. Suddenly, the *Wasp* would blast a big hole through its conning tower with the very first shot of its 3-inch rifle, while sweeping Kriegsmarine sailors off the decks with the 20mm cannon and twin-mounted Browning .50-calibers. The throttles would be jammed forwards and the *Wasp* leaped into high speed—far faster than any U-boat could track with guns or torpedoes - zipping up to plaster it

with all those Torpex bombs.

Those nasty, arrogant Nazi 'supermen' had been used to machine-gunning in the water any Allied seamen that survived their sinkings - except of course any women on board. Those, they brutalized till they were worn out, then threw them overboard tied to weights. Each every last one of those bad dudes DESERVED to die the shocking and horrendous deaths that the *Wasp* dished out to them!

The details of this little gunboat and its mission had to be kept secret all through the war, but this is what kept the U-boats in a state of impotent panic until the end of March 1943. Just as *Wasp* finished its stunning career - as it ambushed and destroyed a whole 'wolf pack' - the Allied escort vessels were finally able to be fitted with the new and improved radar and sonar sets, developed while the *Wasp* 'held the line'. The rest, as they say, is history! [Or pulp fiction! - ED]

HobbyBoss 1/48th Scale Focke-Wulf Fw 190D-11

by Hal Marshman, Sr

I received this kit yesterday, from Squadron Mail Order. These are my impressions on opening the box, and checking the contents against the chapter in *The Focke Wulf Fw 190 Dora*, Volume II, by Jerry Crandall, pertaining to the 190D-11.

First off, a proper D-11 cannot be built direct from this box. HobbyBoss provides you with the basic D-9 kit, but with new propeller, new upper cowling cover, and new Supercharger intake. The cowling cover needs to have the side bumps sanded down, as they do not appear on the D-11. A very tiny amount must be clipped from the ends of the propeller blades of the VS-9 prop, otherwise it's pretty nice. The Supercharger intake is well done. Probably the most glaring error, for which there's no in-box fix, is the lack of upper wing fairings to cover the outer cannon breeches. These are a prominent feature of the D-11, so one takes a look into the spares box to see if maybe he has a pair left over from a Tamiya/Hasegawa/Eduard/Falcon kit. Perhaps an aftermarket company might provide such as resin castings, but I have spares. Speaking of the outer wing cannons, on the underside of the wing, HobbyBoss provides decals for the spent shell chutes, but retained the better representation of the inner cannon chutes, as they did the single chute for the original cowling machine guns. According to the material in the above mentioned reference, the retention of that chute is correct. Also missing,



but easy to scratch build, is an elongated bump on the outer cannon access hatches. As in the D-9 kit, you still need to cut away the plastic filling in between the cooling gills, if you chose the open flap option. Also for the open flap option, you need to fold back the flap at the 9-O'clock position, as opened it would block air to the supercharger intake, thus was kept closed on the real bird. These airplanes all featured the MW 50 boost, and carried the stencil peculiar to that accessory. This would appear as a bottomless vee, with MW 50 enclosed in the arms of the vee. This stencil should be yellow, but HobbyBoss chose to not provide it. They do erroneously suggest a regular octane triangle for that location, the filler lid aft of the cockpit on the upper port side.

The written instruction diagram is still calling for red starboard and green port navigation lights, which we all know is contrary to actual usage. HobbyBoss provides wing flaps that can be posed either closed, or deployed. Problem here is that the D-11s were

equipped with plywood flaps, while the kit's flaps are nicely detailed with ribs that were seen on the regular metal flaps. As I've done on other D-9 kits, I plan to sand down the ribs (on the flap portion only; leave those on the undersurface of the wing flap area intact). Photographic evidence reveals that the inner portion of the plywood flaps were unpainted but varnished, revealing the wood grain when deployed. There is a decal available from Pegasus that depicts varnished plywood quite nicely, and that's what I use.

Decals and painting information is provided for two D-11s, one from the "Verbandsfuhrerschule" and one from an un-named Geschwader, found at Munchen-Riem at war's end, this being a Staff machine with chevron and two vertical bars markings. The Schule airplane has decals for white <18 on the fuselage side, but a white rectangle with black 16 inset for the wing leading edge. According to Crandall, it appears that this fighter may have been originally be <18, but was renumbered to <16. Not too difficult to change the 8 into a 6. HobbyBoss includes a large bomb for under the fuselage, and two small bombs for the underside of each wing. They also include the standard late war style drop tank. In photos of really late Doras, I've noticed a different style drop tank resembling the late bomb, but without the fins. I'm still open to info on that very late tank, as I've not run across much written about it. On their color callout sheet, HB shows a natural metal extension plug, and that is correct for the Schule plane, but they show the wing bottoms as RLM 76, with RLM 75 for the front half. This appears to be in error, as Vol II of *Dora* shows the rear half in natural metal. The ailerons and flaps would still be in RLM 76. I'm very surprised that HobbyBoss fails to mention that Red 2 and Red 4, of JV 44, the Papagei Staffel, were D-11s, and these Fws are very attractive to modelers due to the red undersides with white longitudinal stripes. Some of the Schule aircraft had the rear of the fuselage/wing fillet left in natural metal. As in all Doras, when the cockpit is in the open position, the antenna cable goes slack, due to lack of the automatic tensioner.

EagleCals makes a sheet with markings for one or two Schule examples, and I've sent for those, as the fighter I wish to do is marked with white <<-.

So, there it is, HobbyBoss's attempt at giving us a Fw 190D-11. Not a waste by any measure, as just about all the detractions can be dealt with fairly easily. I am most anxious to get started on mine.

IPMS Seattle Spring Show Results and Photos - Next Month!

There will be a full listing of the winners at the recent IPMS Seattle Spring Show in next month's issue. Our apologies for the delay.

Dragon (Black Label) 1/35th Scale M103A1

by Eric Christianson



(Editor's note – this abridged version has been edited for use in our newsletter. You can see the full build article posted on *Internet Modeler* or in the 'Reviews' section of our club website.)

Dragon has released their first Black Label line of models, starting with the M103A1 Main Battle Tank (Heavy), the first-ever styrene rendition in 1/35th scale. The kit is a mixture of state-of-the-art slide molding and cast texture on the hull reminiscent of Dragon's top of the line Smart kits, and ease-of-building and lower part counts of their Cyber Hobby line. DS tracks and separate tires and wheels help with painting, and a significant number of unused parts point to alternate versions to come.

The M103 series of tanks started with the T-43 prototype, developed in the early 1950s to combat the JS-3 and other Soviet heavy tanks. The tank carries a rifled 120mm M58 cannon for long-distance engagements, firing a separate-loading round,

which required two loaders, thus giving it a five-man crew. After several modifications were made to the base T43, the first M103s reached service in 1956. The US Army fielded a single heavy tank battalion in Germany, while the USMC assigned the M103s to a heavy tank company in each of their three tank battalions. The M103 tank suffered from a weak drive train (shared with the M48-M48A1), high fuel consumption and a suspect fire control system. The US Army withdrew the M103 in 1963 with the fielding of the M60 Main Battle tank. The M103 saw several more improvements over its time in service, resulting in the M103A1 (1959) with an improved fire control system and later, the M103A2 (1964) which replaced the gasoline engine with the same diesel engine and transmission used by the M60 series of tanks, to include the distinctive humped engine deck. The M103A2 continued to serve with the Marines until 1974, when they were replaced with M60A1s.

The M103A1 comes shipped in a large, sturdy box whose cover depicts a very nice painting of the tank on a winter road, probably somewhere in Germany. Unfortunately, some of the details in the artwork are not included in the kit, such as the canvas gun mantle cover and the distinctive slanted angles of the upper main track and running gear, fore and aft. That said, the coolness of this big American tank with its huge gun and giant white stars is enough to get you past that and excited about the build to come.

The contents of this box include:

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

Two runs of yellow/tan DS track.

1 small photo-etch sheet, including machine gun parts and tool storage box sides.

1 small length of twisted steel wire for use as a tow cable (120mm)

1 8-page blue and white instruction sheet with 17 steps, plus a single addendum sheet replacing portions of Steps 1, 8, and 17.

The instructions come with three finishing schemes, all US Army Olive Drab, represented using the ubiquitous Dragon blue-and-white three-view drawings, and a small (but perfectly registered) sheet of decals from Cartograph of Italy. These include:

- E Company, 34th Armor, 24th Infantry Division, Germany 1959
- (2) Unidentified Units, Germany 1959

All hopes for a fresh new direction with Dragon instructions with this new line of kits can be dashed, unfortunately. Several parts are mislabeled, some 'unused' parts are actually used (and visa-versa), and there are still some confusing 'put it here' arrows. All things considered, however, the instructions are no worse than what we've seen before, so if you go slowly and test-fit the parts, 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.

There are a lot of round pieces on this kit – wheels, tires, return rollers – 80 total. One reason for this is that Dragon has molded the rubber tire portions of the wheels separately to help with painting. The wheel wells are so deep, however, that the demarcation between wheel and tire is all but hidden in shadow. If you want to show a clean demarcation between tire and wheel after painting, you will need to adjust your assembly sequence accordingly so that you can slip the tires over the wheels after painting.

There is also a seam line that you can remove from the outer surface of each tire (I didn't), but be forewarned - you will have to do it 56 times.

Upper Deck and Rear Hull

The upper deck and rear hull contain a lot of molded-on detail that in other kits by Dragon would have been assembled via dozens of parts or more. The molding is relatively detailed so, or many modelers, this might be seen as an improvement.

You will need to assemble a photo-etch tool enclosure as there is no plastic alternative provided in the kit. It isn't difficult to do, and it looks nice when completed, but I found it odd that Dragon chose to render this and several other details in PE yet mold so much other detail directly into the plastic.

The twisted steel cable fit nicely into the two cable-ends after they were opened up a bit with a drill. Dragon's 113mm length requirement in the instructions is accurate – the cable drapes just off the vehicle side, around the tool box and other details.

Turret Detail and Fit

The 50cal Browning M2 machine gun is nicely done, and the mount they use on the M103A1 is also nice and sturdy. This is probably the first turret-top machine gun I've seen that drops into its mount and swivels around with just enough friction to pose it where you want it without glue. A perfect fit. The fit of the railings is also spot-on, and there are tiny raised marks on the turret to assist in placement.

The main weapon comes together well, but a word of caution. If you intend to glue the gun in place, make sure to account for the forward slope of the turret when it is seated on the top of the vehicle.

It was during this 'wet-glue on the mantlet' stage that I first discovered that the turret doesn't fit on the tank! You can slip it on but it only turns part way around, blocked by Part B10, glued fast, way back in Step 6. Without some major surgery, the M103A1's turret, as rendered in this kit, won't point forward. It is even a very tight fit pointed sideways, so don't make the mistake of cutting off the two tabs that keep it connected to the top of the tank – if you do I don't know how you will be able to keep the turret seated correctly without a LOT of glue and clamps.



The Photo-Etch (PE)

Dragon likes to include a lot of photo-etch with their models, and I like that about their kits. I usually have a choice between using the PE or using a plastic alternative. Not so with this kit, unfortunately. Most of it cannot be left off, like the M2 machine gun bracket and the aforementioned tool box. Luckily, even if you are averse to using PE, the folds and such with what's in this kit are very basic and will provide you with good practice. Now if only I could get that glue to attach only the parts I want it to and not everything else!

The Track

The two runs of DS track in this kit are beautifully detailed, and assembly was a snap. I connected the ends using Tamiya 'green top' thin cement and installed them without any problems.

Fortunately, Dragon left enough slack in them to stretch over the drive sprocket and wheels and still look tight when in place. While I love the fact that the DS track takes glue and holds paint very well, they are only molded in bright yellow-tan, as usual. I wish they came in a different color, like something, anything, military. It would help immensely when painting.

The Finish

The M103A1 is going to be green, U.S. Army green. The three schemes provided in the instructions are distinguished only by markings. Still, with pre- and post- shading you can get a little depth in all that green.

(Note: I thin Model Master Paints using their own airbrush thinner. For hand-brushing I use Vallejo's own thinner for their paints. I thin all filters, washes and wet pigments using odorless Mona Lisa Paint Thinner. I use a Pasche-H Single-Action airbrush, Number #3 tip, at 20 lbs. pressure for everything.)

Track: I painted the bright yellow/tan DS tracks with rattle-can Rustoleum Flat Black Primer, followed by a dusting of rattle-can Krylon Light Brown. Krylon/Rustoleum is just about the only paint that will cover DS track initially, in my opinion. I could have used model paint and my airbrush but that just takes too much paint and too much time. I really wish these DS tracks came in, well, some version of track color? What, what?

Once the Krylon paint was dry and did not exhibit any more 'tack', I gave the track a heavy wash using Mig Dark Wash (aka Raw Umber) straight from the bottle.

M2 50cal 'Ma Deuce' Machine Gun: I started by hand brushing the metallic portions of the guns and the ammo belts with Testors Flat Black – the only time I ever use flat black model paint. I then painted the wooden handles with Vallejo New Wood. Once the paint was dry, I coated the brown parts with Mig Wash Brown oil paint straight from the tube and let that sit overnight. In the morning I moistened (and then wiped 'dry') a small brush with Mona Lisa White Spirit and brushed off most of the oil paint, leaving the stock darker near the edges where it met the metal parts and lighter in the middle. I painted the ammunition case Model Master Faded Olive Drab. I then used a silver Prismacolor Artist Pencil to liberally highlight the flat black metal parts and the ammunition cases. I finished by giving everything a filter using Mig Wash Brown thinned with Mona Lisa Paint Thinner.

The rest of the vehicle

1. I spray-painted a pre-shade coat on the lower chassis using rattle-can Rustoleum Flat Black Primer and the upper chassis and turret using Rustoleum Satin Leather – this is a cheaper alternative to hobby paint and doesn't seem to have any adverse effect on the plastic or detail. Plus, you can do the whole tank and track runs in about 1.6 seconds. Keep the can moving and spray in short bursts to keep from flooding the paint on. The dark paint fills in the recesses and creates a shadow effect near the flat surface edges, adding depth for the subsequent coats to come. Once the paint was dry and had a chance to de-tack and de-gass, I brought the model in and touched up areas missed by the rattle-cans with Tamiya (XF-89) NATO Black.



2. Next came the first camouflage coat using Model Master Olive Drab. I airbrushed it carefully, allowing some of the black to show along the edges, behind the wheels, underneath the protruding detail.

3. Next I applied the second post-shading camouflage coat using Model Master Faded Olive Drab, lightening up all the panels moving from the center outwards, paying special attention to the upper surfaces exposed to sunlight, and leaving what was in shadow, darker.

4. On-Board Tools: I painted the wooden portions of the on-board tools Vallejo Acrylics New Wood and all the steel parts Tamiya (XF-56) Metallic Grey. For the hand painting I mix a tiny bit of Vallejo Slow Dry and water with each color until it flows

smoothly off a 00 Liner Red Sable brush. To give the wooden parts of the tools more depth, I brushed on a little Mig Wash Brown Oil and let that set overnight. I then carefully removed most of the brown oil paint using a brush dampened with Mona Lisa, leaving the areas near the buckles and metal parts darker than the wooden shafts.

5. Decals: Once the camouflage coats were dry, I sprayed a heavy coat of Future acrylic over the areas that would receive decals to provide a smooth gloss coat for the decals to adhere to. Once the Future was dry, I applied the decals using the Red and Blue Micro Sol/Set system without any problems, followed by another coat of Future over the decals to seal them. Even with the thick coat of Future there was some silvering, especially on the large, mostly clear Number 24, which couldn't be trimmed since it has a surrounding yellow frame. The decals are extremely thin and are prone to stretch so some care should be taken to make sure they are symmetrical when set. Also, study the placement of the large white stars on the sides of the turret. The directions show the stars being slid down from above the railings, but they won't fit that way. You will need to slide them up from below the railings. They are so big and thin that the extra handling is something you want to try and avoid.

6. Once the sealing Future coat was dry, I airbrushed a quick spot coat of Vallejo Matt Varnish on the shiny areas to bring everything back down to a nice, even flat finish.

7. With a flat coat on the model, I applied several filters to enhance the basic green color. I first gave the whole vehicle a few filter coats of MIG Wash Brown. I gave the two exhaust pipe assemblies, one on each side; several filter coats of Mig Dark Rust.

8. For years I used to give the surface of my model a glossy coat of Future acrylic at this point in the weathering process to prepare it for an oil-based pin wash and possibly some streaking. With experimentation, however, I found that the filters I applied gave the surfaces a slightly satin finish that assisted in spreading a pin wash like it should, using capillary action. Furthermore, using the very mild Mona Lisa thinner with MIG Oils did not disturb the underlying paint and/or finishes, no matter how thick I slathered stuff on. So - I gave the vehicle a pin wash using Mig Dark Wash (aka Raw Umber) straight from the bottle, paying special attention to the wheels, rear engine deck, fender supports and various panel lines.

9. I followed this with a heavy road-dusting coat of Vallejo Model Air Light Brown and then shot the whole vehicle with Vallejo Satin Varnish to give the model a slight sheen – I didn't think a dead-flat finish would look right on this big American tank. I cut each of these 50/50 with Vallejo Airbrush Thinner to improve flow.



Finally, I attached the two antennas and the machine gun and sent this big boy to the photo booth.

I have waited for the M103 to come out in kit form ever since playing with ROCO Minitanks back in the 70s and then, more recently, climbing all over the real thing down at Fort Lewis, here in Washington State. The tank is big, bad and beautiful and has taken too long to arrive in our hands. I was thrilled to have received one to build.

I'm not sure what to make of the new Black Label company – there are some aspects of this kit (their first) that I like and some that seem rushed and unfinished. The upper deck, rear, and lower hull axles have a lot of detail that is molded on – definitely not classic Dragon, which has built a solid reputation of producing highly accurate and detailed kits with lots (and lots) of parts. Black Label looks more like CyberHobby, with fewer parts, but still including slide-mold technology and interesting subjects. I look forward to seeing their future releases.

This M103A1 kit has a number of inaccuracies that have been well documented on the Internet, so I won't go into those here except to say that if you are looking to build an accurate kit out of this offering, you will need to do some work to bring it up to snuff. On the other hand, if accuracy takes a back seat in your approach to modeling, the M103A1 is a lot of fun to build and the result is a one-of-a-kind addition to the show table and your model case (as long as you don't need the turret to point forward!) My hat is off to Dragon for making the effort at any rate; this is a pretty cool tank.

I recommend this kit to anyone who likes to build and finish big armor. All things considered, the build went very smoothly and the result is a real head-turner.

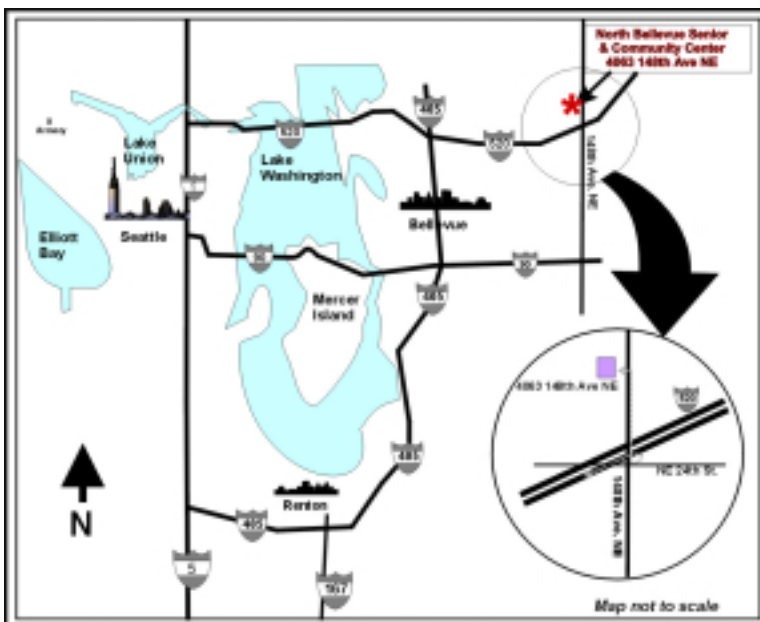
I would like to thank Dragon Models USA and Stevens International for providing this kit for review, and to *Internet Modeler* for giving me the opportunity to build it.



*[Thanks to Chris Banyai-Riepl and
www.internetmodeler.com for permission
to use Eric's article. - ED]*

Meeting Reminder

May 10



North Bellevue Community/Senior Center 4063-148th Ave NE, Bellevue

Directions to NBCSC: 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.