

# Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA  
August 2016

## PREZNOTES



The Flying Heritage Collection's Ilyushin Il-2 and Republic P-47 are two of the aircraft that are scheduled to fly at their "Flying Tanks Day", on Saturday, September 17. IPMS Seattle will have a display at the event - if you'd like to volunteer by spending a day working on models and talking about the hobby to the general public, please see me at the August meeting.

*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 2016 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.

**August 13**

**October 15 (Third Saturday)**

**September 10**

**November 12**

**IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM**

IPMS No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Type of Membership:  Adult, 1 Year: \$30  Adult, 2 Years: \$58  Adult, 3 Years: \$86  
 Junior (Under 18 Years) \$17  Family, 1 Year: \$35 (Adult + \$1.00 for 1st Junior) How Many Cards? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Canada & Mexico: \$35  Other / Foreign: \$38 (Surface) (Checks must be drawn on a US bank or international money order)

Payment Method:  Check  Money Order  Credit Card (MC/Visa/Amex)

Credit Card No: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Affiliation, (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

If Recommended by an IPMS Member, Please List His / Her Name and Member Number:  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_ IPMS No.: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Academy 1/35th Scale M1A2 Abrams TUSK II

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 in the 'Reviews' section of the IPMS USA website or on our own IPMS Seattle website.)*

The new Academy armor kits are really something to behold. Their superb engineering and design focus on buildability, resulting in effortless assembly and a perfect fit. The company has somehow accomplished this without compromising on accuracy, and they've done so at an affordable price.

Urban warfare has always been the Achilles heel of the main battle tank; a combat vehicle designed to operate in open country where its heaviest armor and weaponry can be orientated toward enemy threats. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 exposed vulnerability of the third generation Abrams main battle tanks to rocket propelled grenades (RPG) and mines; threats coming from any direction and hitting on the vulnerable sides, rear, top, and underneath the tank. These problems have been partially resolved by fitting the Abrams with the Tank Urban Survivability Kit (TUSK). This field-installed kit was developed to improve survivability and situational awareness when operating in the close confines of a city. Introduced in 2006, the TUSKs (in one form or another) found their way to all tanks fielded in Iraq by 2008.

The TUSK includes add-on explosive reactive armor fitted to the side skirts and turret, and slat armor to the hull rear. These enhancements provide protection against RPG rounds. There is also a full length slab of spaced armor mounted to the hull underneath the tank to better protect the crew from IED threats and mines.

Other improvements include additional defensive grenade/smoke dischargers, armored glass shielding for the vehicle commander and loader when manning their respective machine guns, and a new remotely controlled 12.7-mm machine coaxial gun and accompanying spotlight fitted over the main gun. This machine gun is a counter sniper weapon. It fires single rounds or in full-auto mode and is aimed using the main gun.

A third machine gun station sporting a 7.62-mm gun with armored glass and thermal sights has been added to the turret.

To improve situational awareness, the TUSK provides the commander with a 360 degree camera monitor within the turret, and the driver's station is fitted with a new safety seat and rear vision camera. Nearby infantry can communicate with the tank commander via an infantry phone attached to the rear of the vehicle. Together, all active versions of the Abrams tank (M1A1, M1A2 or M1A2 SEP) equipped with this kit have become even more lethal to the enemy, regardless of where they are encountered.



Academy is not first company to offer the M1A2 Abrams TUSK II in 1/35th scale, but, in my opinion, theirs is by far the easiest to build. Furthermore, Academy has managed to include parts for four different versions of the Abrams in the same box (plain vanilla M1A2, SEP V2, TUSK, and TUSK II). They can do this because they make a real effort to keep the parts count down while still providing stunning detail and engineering. Academy does all of this for a price \$10, \$20, or even \$30 less than their competitors.

### What's in the Box

- 8 sprues of soft, tan-yellow plastic packed relatively tightly into four plastic bags. Even though it is in a large, sturdy box, I worried about warping. In the end, however, all parts were true; even the delicate bustle cages fitted around the back of the turret.
- 1 sprue of hard, clear plastic for the armored glass and lenses.
- 2 lengths of black, one-piece 'rubber-band' track (my sample's runs were folded under and bent but straightened out sufficiently by pinning them to a board before painting).
- 1 black, rubber ammunition 'rope' for the CROWS II Weapon System (SEP V2).
- 1 medium sheet of decals and stencils.
- 1 small sheet of photo-etch containing engine exhaust/intake screens, more.
- 1 small sheet of painting masks for clear parts made of thin, yellow masking tape.
- Four separate instruction manuals, totaling 32 pages with 48 steps, printed in black and white ink. A parts map and color call out chart are included.
- 1 four-page, full-color section used for painting and decal placement.

Paint product callouts include Humbrol Enamel, GSI Creos Acrylic, GSI Mr. Color Lacquer, Lifecolor, Testor/Model Master Acrylic and Enamel, Revell Acrylic and Enamel, and Vallejo Model Color and Model Aire.

### Things to consider before starting:

You will want to decide up front which version you want to build and mark up the instructions accordingly – there are a lot of detours to take depending on the choices you make.

Many of the weapons and hatches come as separate assemblies that can be built, painted, and finished before dropping them on the hull or turret at the end of the build. This is a real advantage since most of these assemblies sport clear parts that would otherwise be affected by the various coats of paint and weathering products you'll use to finish the tank. To their credit, Academy provides a complete set of masks to use for this purpose, but I found that the delicate parts - and especially the limited access to those parts - once attached, preclude my using the masks.

The Abrams has prominent side skirts that, once installed, limit access to the track. This means that the track will have to be attached early in the build, per the instructions.

There is ample room in the turret bustle and the sides of the turret/hull for personalizing your Abrams with various combat accoutrements. Curiously, Academy, who has a solid reputation for including lots of extra gear in their kits, provides just a few items this time around (jerry cans for fuel and water, wheels, etc.). Maybe they just ran out of room in the box for the extra sprue!



Finally, a nit to pick. Academy provides four separate eight-page booklets of instructions, which is a little aggravating when you need to go back and forth during assembly and painting.

Do yourself a favor (like I eventually did) and cut the pages apart so that you can make a single booklet, soup to nuts, before starting. I even made a separate document consisting of copied pages for the parts map, painting and decal work, since these, too, were scattered throughout. Let's move on!

Lower Hull and suspension - Like just about everything on this model, the fit is perfect. The wheels 'chunk' in solidly and don't wiggle once attached. This also means that they are not designed to articulate.

An array of posts and other odd parts extend from the superstructure out to meet the side skirts when they get attached later. This could lead to a fit problem, but solid engineering prevented that from happening – they only fit one way and end up exactly where they are supposed to be later.

A Faster way to paint Road Wheels - Once the wheels were attached and dry, I stopped to paint the lower hull and attach the track since the side skirts coming next would deny me access to do so later.

I employ a novel approach to painting the rubber parts of the wheels, which takes me all of perhaps ten minutes total, and is done without touching a brush. The secret is found in the unusual qualities of using hairspray as a mask.

I start by using rattlecan Krylon Flat Black Lacquer Paint/Primer for a dark, primer/pre-shade coat. Surprisingly, this low-cost solution sprays on easily and dries very thin and level – replacing a 20+ minute task I used to use an airbrush and more expensive paint for. The dark primer coat gives the plastic and photo-etch some grip, and fills the recesses, creating a shadow effect near the flat surface edges, and adding depth for the subsequent coats to come. I allow the strong lacquer paint to sit overnight to de-gas.

Next, instead of painstakingly painting the rubber portions of the wheels by hand, I shake up an aerosol can of TRESemme' and give the wheels a quick coat of hairspray over the primer. I don't think it matters what kind of hairspray you use – I just like the cool little black can it comes in. Once dry, I spray the inner wheels my acrylic camouflage colors (see below) without worrying too much about overspray. Once the paint is dry, I use a Q-tip damp with water to rub off the overspray. The hairspray acts as an acrylic mask over whatever color or type of paint lies underneath it. In five minutes I have 16 perfectly painted sets of wheels (see image). Bang.



The Track - Once satisfied with the wheels, I moved on to the track. The black, rubber-band type vinyl track in this kit incorporates a novel design; four pieces of normal plastic that, when glued together, connect the ends of each of the two runs. The premise is there, but the execution needs some work: the runs end up being too long. I had to remove the tabs for the plastic parts as well as two full links per side to tighten the tension on the each run. Fortunately, the side skirts cover up the three staples I used to connect the ends!

I was able to use distillate products on this track, but they do take some time to dry. I primed the track using Rustoleum (rattlecan) Flat Black enamel paint, followed by a dusting of Rustoleum (rattlecan) Beige enamel. Once these coats dried, I brushed on a thin layer of AK Interactive Track Wash straight from the bottle. When that (finally) dried, I stapled the ends and stretched them on over the wheels. Later, as a final step to the build, I worked several layers of Mig Pigments into the nooks and crannies using Gulf War Sand, Concrete, Light Dust, Dry Mud, European Dust, and Russian Earth. In the end, those floppy, vinyl tracks look, with a little make-up, just fine.

Hull Rear and Main Deck - The design of the busy hull rear is brilliant. Reviewing my margin notes, I have the words 'Snap Tite!' written in several places, meaning many of the parts fit so well that no glue was required. The two clear glass covers to the taillights are prominent and I left them off, to be attached after painting and finishing.

Side Skirts - After attaching the tow bar assembly on the front hull, I moved on to perhaps the most noticeable aspect of the TUSK system; the long rows of reactive side armor. Academy provides each of three layers of side armor as four long, single pieces, sporting excellent detail throughout. The first layer is the standard M1A2 side armor which has given the Abrams tank that classic look all these years. On top of that, goes a second layer of the TUSK reactive armor, which resembles long rows of square, flat sections, also presented in four single pieces. Over that, the TUSK II (curved) reactive armor is applied. Since the modeler can create any one of the versions provided in the kit, I needed to drill some holes each step of the way using the pre-drilled 'soft' pits provided by Academy on the backside of all the appropriate parts.

Once each side was dry, attaching them to the lower hull, and to all those pokey parts that I discussed in the first section, was a breeze. What could go wrong, didn't. Assembling these skirts was a lot of fun: everything came in big pieces and fit perfectly. Nice.

The Turret - The Abrams turret has always been a busy affair, but I've never seen anything like what the U.S. Army has crammed on top of the M1A2 TUSK II turret. As complicated as it looks, however, in the end the task appears like a lot more work than it really is.

Academy has thoughtfully designed the nine-piece main gun in such a way that there are no seams to fill on any part of it. The weapon assembly also fits in the turret opening so that it can be moved up and down, but will not droop down by itself. In other words, even though I glued the gun in place, I didn't need to – the fit was that good.

The turret detail is significantly different for each Abrams version (SEP V2/TUSK/TUSK II) so here is where the modeler is directed to different areas in the instruction booklets. I chose to build the TUSK II, so the sprue holding the SEP V2/CROWS II close-in weapon system went directly into my spare parts box.

Treatment of visor glass, system optics, armored glass panels, etc. - I tried several approaches to achieve a reasonable likeness to the multi-colored hues seen in the various glass and optics within. None were ideal, but it was good practice.

Armored Glass – Alclad makes an excellent lacquer product called 'Armored Glass', which dries to a pale green hue that, I think, resembles the color on (at least some of) the photos I have.

Other photos show these panels as clear. I like the green so that's what I used. I dipped the clear plastic into the lacquer paint and wicked off the excess using a paper towel, setting them aside to dry.



Visor laser-reflective vision blocks – The colors on these vary, depending on what angle they're viewed from. I represented these colors using Mylar (clear, green, red, purple, and blue) found in cheap party whistles (a lifetime supply for a village of modelers can be found at a Party Store for two bucks). I carefully cut out squares of the material and mounted them on the front of the vision blocks using Gator's Grip, a water-based white glue 'on steroids'.

CITV and ICWS optics – I mixed up Tamiya Clear Red and Tamiya Clear Blue for Blue and Purple hues used for these parts. I painted the backs of the glass parts with the paint and glued them on into their brackets.

Tail lights – I painted the backs of the glass parts with Tamiya Gloss Red and glued them in place.

The assembly of the turret bustle is one those tasks that appears daunting at first, with so many plainly visible steps that can go wrong. But once again, the fit and engineering here is superb. The finished assembly literally 'clicks' into place in the next step, and the result is eye-catching.

One more pleasantry to observe before moving on: I found myself attaching and removing the turret to and from the hull over and over to check how things were aligned and such. I can't tell you how many times (on other kits) I've found this process a real chore due to poor design and/or fit. Not so on this kit – the turret literally falls into the hull once the tabs are aligned. Good Job, Academy.

With the main hull and turret together, along with various sticky boards set up for each of the sub-assemblies ready, it was time for paint.

The Abrams could be a challenge to paint and finish depending on just how far you're willing to go; with so much going on up on top it's hard to say 'done'. I could have spent weeks on this, but (luckily!) this build has a deadline. As is usual with armor models, I painted 99% of the model after assembly, and 99% of that was done with an airbrush.

Airbrushing Vallejo Acrylics with a (syphon-feed) Pasche Model H - Except for my primer coats, I now exclusively use Vallejo paints in my continuing transformation over to true acrylics. I went through a bit of experimentation up front, but eventually found them to spray beautifully once I dialed in the right setup and thinning ratio. First, I pushed the pressure up to 20lbs - Vallejo recommends 12-15lbs, but I think I need the higher pressure because I use a siphon-style airbrush (Pasche H) as opposed to a gravity-feed airbrush. Once I did that, the spray pattern evened out and I lost the scatter-shot look of the paint on the surface.

Next, regardless of what line of paint I used (Model Air, Model Color, Panzer Color, or their Primers), I found that adding Liquitex Flow-Aid to an equal ratio of (Vallejo Airbrush Thinner and paint) worked well and (almost) never clogged. Not too much Flow-Aid: one drop to every ten drops of thinner. For example: in a typical half-hour session I would put two of drops flow-aid, 20 drops of thinner, and 20 drops of (any Vallejo) paint into a plastic, disposable cup and swish that around until it is mixed, and then pour it into the Pasche cup.

Also, and this is important: I keep the airbrush and the model moving as I spray, holding the model in such a way that I can see the reflection of the (nearly invisible) paint actually hitting the surface of the plastic. If I simply spray thinned acrylic paint until I see the color change on my dark primer, it will be too late - the paint will run. This is one mistake I made for a long time when trying acrylic paint. The color is built up slowly on the surface of the plastic, with consecutive passes.

One final note: cleaning the airbrush after using acrylics has become a must-do chore afterwards, which is a break from using distillate-based paints when I just blew some thinner through the brush and put it away. On the flip side, Vallejo paints come in a huge variety, are odor-free, and allow me swap my heavy, uncomfortable vapor mask I use with distillate-based paints for a simple painters (particulate) mask. I am sold.

On to the model! I finished the Abrams in a basic, one-color desert camouflage scheme, preferring to highlight and accent the monochrome finish using filters and washes. Unlike most armor kits (that can be completely assembled before painting), I had to break the painting into three phases: The first phase was after Step 9, before attaching the track; the second phase included painting all the assemblies that had colored 'glass'; and the third phase was at the end, once the entire tank (sans the glass assemblies) had come together.

Primer and Pre-Shade - As mentioned previously, I use (rattlecan) Krylon Flat Black Lacquer Paint/Primer for my dark, primer/pre-shade coat. Surprisingly, this low-cost solution sprays on easily and dries very thin and level – replacing a 20+ minute task I normally use an



airbrush and more expensive paint for. My only wish is that I could find it in an off-black shade, like NATO Black. I use a dark primer coat to give the plastic and PE some grip, and to fill in the recesses creating a shadow effect near the flat surface edges, and adding depth for the subsequent coats to come. I always let lacquer paint sit overnight to de-gas.

Camouflage - I followed the dark pre-shade coat with Vallejo Model Air 71.028 Sand Yellow, and then a light coat of Model Air 71.075 Sand Ivory on the upper surfaces. What starts out looking yellow-green ends up as a nice pale yellow. I worked each color from the center of the panels outward to preserve some of each color showing through from underneath. Some parts I left the original darker yellow and some parts were nearly ivory-white, depending on where I thought the sun would hit, achieving sort of a forced-color perspective. I used this same approach for the subassemblies while they were still free of all their glass parts.

Decals - I am not a fan of decals on armor, and in this respect, Academy didn't disappoint. While a relatively large decal sheet is provided, precious few markings are used on the TUSK variants. Once the paint was dry, I airbrushed a coat of Future over the entire model and subassemblies to set everything up for decals and the weathering coats to come. I applied the decals using the Red and Blue Micro Sol/Set system without any problems. Once the decals were dry, I laid down an additional layer of Future to seal them. This makes the decal surfaces and edges literally disappear when the flat coat is added later.

Pin Wash and Detail Painting (Glossy Surface) - Note: I thin all of my distillate-based washes and filters using Mona Lisa Odorless Thinner, which is wonderfully mild and will not affect underlying layers of paint.

Once the second future coat was dry to the touch, I went to work using Old Holland Warm Sepia Extra as a pin wash for the entire vehicle. Old Holland's oil paint, which I first learned about from Tony Greenland's excellent book, *Panzer Modeling* (Osprey), is the perfect hue and pigment for this kind of work, and its pigment is as fine, or finer, than products made specifically for modelers.

I made two relatively thin washes using the Sepia and Mona Lisa Thinner (see image). The thinnest wash is for the detail that not recessed, or very slightly recessed. The slightly thicker wash is for the heavily recessed detail. Using a small red sable brush, I concentrated on the panel lines, recesses, buckles, and other on-board detail, letting the thin wash run itself along using capillary action on the slick, glossy surfaces.

Machine guns – I first paint these using Tamiya Flat Black, which is a little grittier than the Vallejo blacks. I need that rough surface to hold on to a layer of Uschi's (Chrome) Metal Polishing Powder. I apply this wonderful product using an artist's blender, which looks like a paint brush but has a rubbery end that mimics the soft 'push' of a finger. The blender can get into places that my stubby fingers can't. The result is a dull, metal glint that I think looks right for the effect on guns.



Antenna and Bustle Accoutrement - I went to my spare parts bin and found two Orange Hobby brass antennas that I dipped in Blacken-It before affixing them to the turret with super glue.

Likewise, I was able to find two ration boxes from Tamiya, and some extra water cans, backpacks and a rolled up tent from ValueGear. The ration boxes come in a sheet that you have to carefully cut up and glue (I left them their original color). The rolled-up tent was painted using Vallejo Model Color 71.044 Light Grey Green and Vallejo Panzer Aces 340 Highlight Afrika Korps (for the straps). The backpacks were painted using Vallejo Model Color 70.976 Buff.

Once all the detail painting was done, I gave everything a thorough coat of Vallejo Matt Varnish, thinned just like their other paint products using Flow Aid and their own thinner. This knocked the glossy shine down and prepared the surfaces for final assembly and the remaining weathering steps.

Now that all the airbrush work was complete, I went about attaching the various hand-painted glass, antennas, machine guns, and other subassemblies to the turret. I use Gator's Grip white glue for the clear 'glass' parts. This superior adhesive is tacky once it touches the plastic and dries crystal clear.

Once everything was in place, I touched any shiny glue spots using Vallejo Matt Varnish, applied with a brush.

Filters and Pigments (Flat Surface) - I mixed up another thin batch of the Sepia oil paint and Mona Lisa, and applied a filter to the various panels, armor plates, and storage bins on the turret and upper hull to break up the overall monochromatic surface. I went back and added a second and third filter coat to specific areas to further differentiate them from their surrounding detail. I also used pictures to help me decide what pigments to use, and where to use them. I worked on the track, the exhaust screens, and the upper, sun-bleached surfaces. I like to break this process up into multiple sessions spread over several days, so I can look at the model fresh before I add decide to more. Subtlety is key, and too much weathering is hard to recover from. Once satisfied, this bad boy was off to the photo booth.

The M1A2 Abrams TUSK II was a lot of fun to build. Academy did an excellent job of translating the busy look of a modern U.S. AFV into this scale representation. A perfect kit would have included more stowage gear for the turret bustle, but beyond that it's hard to imagine what could have been improved upon.

The excellent fit, as well as the simple, intuitive design and engineering - focused on buildability - will keep me coming back for more. I enthusiastically recommend this kit to all modelers and all experience levels.

I would like to extend my warm thanks to Academy for providing the kit and to IPMS USA for giving me the opportunity to build it.





## NorthWest Scale Modelers Take Hobby Shop Nostalgia 'Trip'

compiled by Scott Kruize

*Our IPMS Chapter VP, Eric Christianson, started it all. Just after Independence Day, he sent a Link to members of our NorthWest Scale Modelers newsgroup on Yahoo, regarding George Edwards, previously of American Eagles Hobby Shop:*

*"Seeing the picture, this wasn't actually about models....But!"*

<http://www.seattletimes.com/sports/high-school/shorewood-high-boys-basketball-coach-to-team-this-isnt-open-gym/>

*This produced an immediate reply from Russell Bucy: Wow, I remember "Georgie" as his mother called him, when he used to wander around the shop in diapers! I can still hear Mike in that Hungarian accent telling him not to pull stuff off the shelves. I wish him well and hope he's happy in the new job, but miss American Eagles, the Bon Marche hobby shop, and Bob Hale's Hobbies that used to be in the Westlake center - those were my introductions to the hobby. -VR Russ*

*Jim Schubert observed: Dear Russ, You're showing your age! I didn't reckon you were old enough to remember Bon Marche and Bob Hale's shops! Do you remember Buzz & Doug's on Pike, where the convention center is now, or Campus Hobby on the Ave in the University District? All is change. Cheers, old Jim*

*Spencer Tom thanked Eric for the original post, adding: Now that we're into history, where was Bob Hale's shop? I was a student when I walked up the Ave to Campus Hobby, but didn't get into the hobby until around 1988 when I was sent home for trying to work while I was sick... The Bon's shop was still around, but it was a bus ride away - too much for a college student. My first primary contacts were with Mike Edwards at American Eagles, who treated me quite well and was responsible for introducing me to his club that met in the back of the store. That's where I met three fellows named Cahill, Matthews, and Holowchuk. My most frequent business at that time, though was with Rick at Ralph's Hobby in the Northgate Mall. It's good to see that George is doing OK.*

*Jim Schubert: Dear Spencer, Bob Hales was on Olive between 4th and 5th on the south side of the street and up one floor. Hale was then the weather presenter of one of the three local TV outlets. I had forgotten about Ralph's in Northgate. There was also a shop on Roosevelt at about 60th. Many drug stores, dime stores, hardware stores and toy stores had model sections too back then. Ernst had kits and stuff. Mike's club is now the NWSM and became such about 1992. There was also one a few blocks north of Green Lake. And there was North End Hobby, mostly railroad stuff, way up on Roosevelt near 105th. They moved into Mike's basement in Lake City and closed up when his shop closed. Cheers, old Jim*

*'Rocket Man' came into the discussion: There was also Queen Anne Hobby (where was that?) and B&B Hobby in the Kent Valley. Wagner's in Auburn, Triple Alliance in Bellevue, etc., etc. Lest we lament a similar fate for today's surviving hobby shops in town, make a point to do some patronage at those establishments. Yeah, you can save some bucks online, but... Cheers, Tim Nelson*

*Russ again: Yep - Just to clarify - I think I told Eric that Bob Hale worked for KOMO - he was actually the first weather broadcaster for KING, and was hired because he was an illustrator - he did the weather by making fabulous drawings (anyone remember Sammy Seagull?) on live TV. His drawings were great, and I think he did illustrations for the Seattle World's Fair and Ivar's, among others. He was not a serious meteorologist by today's standards. I think he owned two shops - one in California, and the one as Jim pointed out, in downtown near the terminus of the Monorail station. I thought it was the triangular shaped building there, but I could be wrong - it was so long ago. Frankly, the only reason I remember any of the old shops is because I went away for 30 years, and feel a little like Rip Van Winkle, so much had changed in Seattle when I got back - Mike Edwards was dead, The Bon was gone (the Southcenter store too) most hobby shops had closed, and the hobby had changed so much. I do remember when Mike had his first store (on 15th?) - which was in the garage of a house which had been turned into a "import hobby store" in Ballard. I think he moved to Greenwood after that, and then down to Market Street? When I came back in 2002, the store was on Lake City Way. I got my first and only traffic ticket while visiting Mike's store in 70 or 71? - it was near a divided roadway with cross streets in residential Ballard with two stop signs on the*

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cross streets - I stopped for one and "California" stopped for the other - SPD was right there. Cost me \$25 as I recall - a princely sum in those days, and I didn't have much left to buy models with. The police gave you an envelope on the spot that you dropped into the nearest mailbox with "police supervision". I came back a year later and the stop signs were gone. I thought about asking Seattle for my money back - oh well - "the good old days"!

*John Newcome came in:* WOW! Your email really brings back the pleasant memories for me. My family moved to Kent from Pittsburgh PA in May, 1966. My dad got a job wiring 727s and later 737s at the Renton Plant as I recall.

I used to enjoy and even look forward to "haircut day" because B&B Hobbies in Kent was next to the barber shop in the Meeker shopping mall.

My dad would frequently indulge me after the haircut by letting me go to the B&B Hobby shop. The owner, a very friendly red headed gent, was willing to take models out of his display and let me look at them closely. As I recall, his shop had a lot of flying gas powered control line models. Unfortunately, my family could not afford those, but it was eye candy. We purchased a few plastic models though. The real treat was going shopping with my mom. It always involved a bus trip to downtown Seattle. (This was before Southcenter Mall.) Now, shopping with my mom was an all day affair. It was worth it though because after following mom around looking at pants, shoes, underwear and other useless items to a 7 year old, I got to go to the Bon Marche Hobby Shop on the 9th floor next to "Toy Tropolis" It was small but an extravaganza. Mom would frequently let me buy a model (she pays, I build.)

Bob Hale's was near or next to the Monorail as I recall. You had to go up a flight of stairs to get to the shop. This is where I was introduced to the magic of electric trains. For the Christmas of 1967, my mom took a bus to Bob Hale's shop and purchased an HO Tyco 4-4-2 Mikado freight set for me for Christmas. My parents always made sure that I had a present under the tree and treats to eat at Christmas. I never realized how poor we were and the sacrifices my parents made for me until later years. While the box and track are long gone, I still have this train which I cherish. It's stored, but my kids do not understand its significance to me.

Hobby Shops and building models are one of my greatest childhood memories. The instructions frequently gave a brief history of the model I was building. It inspired me to go to the library and research more. I learned more history through my modeling than I ever did in high school.

Thanks for the memories. -John N.

*Norm Filer:* In our formative years, 1964/1965, IPMS Seattle had the good fortune to have a small display case in the wall in the downtown Bon Hobby Shop. That display probably played a big part in our early success. My phone number was on the poster and I remember getting a lot of calls about IPMS and our chapter.

I remember one of the guys there was Russ and of course our own Gerry Nilles. Russ was the guy that tracked down what probably was the first air brush ever sold in the Pacific NW for me.

A couple of the hobby shops you guys are talking about probably would have been shut down by the health department today. That one by Green Lake (Lake City?) was unbelievable to say the least.

Fern Danley owned and ran Campus Hobbies. She was another strong supporter of our group. The shop was mostly rail road stuff but she took good care of us. -Norm

*Jim Schubert:* Dear Norm, The thing that made me aware of IPMS was a one-off display in a glass case in the Boeing Field Terminal during a small air show in '64 or '65. Then I found out that my co-worker Sherman Stevens was a member and a modeler when I ran into him one lunch time at Empire Way Hobbies. That was in February of 1966. The next week I went with him and Brent McCulloch to Scalecraft in your garage in Fairwood and joined IPMS the following week.

BTW, I still have both kits, still unbuilt, that I bought from you on that first visit, the Inpact 1/48 Gladiator and the Tamiya 1/50 "Pete". Cheers, old Jim

*Jon Farrelly now leapt in as a 'Fact Checker':* "First air brush ever sold in the PNW?" Highly doubtful as illustrators had been using them since before WWI.

*Russell Bucy:* Airbrushes were rare among modelers at that time, but I got a Badger cheapo for Christmas 1963, then a Binks for my birthday in the summer of 1965. These were powered by short stubby Badger aerosol cans purchased from Uncle Harold's Bike and Hobby in Bellevue. I saved up allowance for a month to get one can, which cost \$1.50 and would get me through two or three 1/72 models. Running out of air meant picking up the hairy stick. My model finishes were quite interesting at that time. When I started mowing lawns and house painting in the summers, I saved enough money to buy a Binks compressor (which I still have) mail order for about \$15 plus \$4 shipping - I thought it was a fortune at the time. Before that I tried painting models with an old "spray tube" I found in Dad's workshop. It was chromed steel, had a bottle with a screw top lid and siphon tube with an oval shaped spray aperture. Opposite the spray aperture was a mouthpiece you blew into. After a lot of blowing and almost passing out, it did a "fair" job (to twelve-year-old eyes anyway) of giving a coat of paint if you didn't mind splatters. It had a manufacturer date of 1920 by Thayer &

Chandler, which made it a year older than my Dad! Talk about "old school"!!

As John mentioned, I too didn't realize how good I had it - Dad was a flour miller at Fisher's on Harbor Island and worked the graveyard shift. We didn't have a lot of money, but I did OK for holidays and we built models on a card table in the living room. We would sometimes use Mom's or my older sister's nail polish for red paint! I specifically remember a motorized and programmable 1/12 scale ITC Deussenburg purchased at Bob Hale's and built on that card table. And also like John, I got to play hooky from school one day a year just before Christmas to go shopping with Mom in downtown Seattle. We took the bus from Bellevue Square or Downtown Renton (we lived on Lake Washington Blvd in Hazelwood - now Newcastle, which was only a couple of dilapidated buildings when I was growing up). A neighbor would give us a ride to the bus stop since Mom didn't drive and Dad was sleeping because he worked nights. She'd shop at the Bon and Frederick & Nelson's (my aunt worked there, but they didn't have a hobby shop - just clothing—ugh!). After a day of shopping, like John, I too got to go to the Bon Hobby shop. Mom even left me there alone for an hour while she went to look in the women's department - you could do that in those days without worry. How times have changed. We old timers were not just dependent on the LHS. By 1969 I was an old hand at ordering stuff from Polks Hobby store in NY, Squadron Shop in Chicago (in those days it was in Illinois, not Texas) and the Soldier Shop on 5th Ave in NYC. I'd spend hours poring over catalogs and counting out change to see what I could afford! Then it would take a month or more to get here, so some things have improved anyway!

*Andrew Bertschi:* Have really enjoyed reading these personal insights into the hobby "back in the day". Much appreciated- keep 'em coming everyone...

Gotta also admit a time machine is sounding awfully good right now. —Andrew

*[Yeah! Couldn't we get Mr. Peabody to let us use the Way Back Machine? —SHK]*

*Brian Hennessey:* I have to agree with Andrew, I too have found this highly entertaining.

I'm particularly fascinated by the hobby shops everyone frequented back in the day.

We all have joined the group at various times, but we shared many of the same locations without knowing each other at the time.

When I first started taking up the hobby my parents weren't especially interested in feeding my addiction so I was limited geographically by the range of my bike.

My first memories of the retail experience of modeling was the Fred Meyer store in Lynnwood, they had an entire aisle of models 20 feet long and 5 shelves high. When my parents would shop there they knew exactly where I would be for hours.

In the mid 70s a shop named Chi-Bar Hobbies opened in Lynnwood. They mostly focused on trains, but had a decent plastic model selection, plus they hosted contests.

In junior high a friend introduced me to Webster's Hobby Shop in what is now Shoreline. That was about a 10 mile bike ride but well worth it. At the time they were located immediately across Aurora Avenue from Chuck Olson Chevrolet on a century old stretch of cobblestone street that is still there but the buildings are gone. Later on they moved about a half mile north for several years.

A bit of a side track: Along the way to Webster's my friend gave me a personal tour of one of the out buildings at Sky Nursery in Shoreline. The nursery is owned by Jim Landry who used to race T-6s with Pat Palmer as the 'Gotcha' racing team. It was the era when *Baa Baa Black Sheep* (later *Black Sheep Squadron*) was on TV. In the building, they had begun restoration of an F4U-1D Corsair. I hadn't seen one in the flesh, so I was highly impressed to say the least. Even though it had the wings removed at the folding mechanism and was in bare metal. They later trucked it to Paine Field for completion and I believe it is New Zealand now. I guess I never expected to see a WWII warbird in a building in Shoreline.

I also remember the hobby shop at Northgate, but didn't know the name.

After leaving the hobby and returning in the 90's I discovered American Eagles, but they were already in Lake City by then. North in Everett I found the shops on Broadway: Broadway Hobbies and the one by Tim's bike shop. There was one in downtown Everett on Rockefeller but I don't know the name. I would go there in the mid 90's and they mostly had train stuff.

At that time I started going to a little shop in Edmonds, that is really a house. I think it is called Edmonds Engineering [*Edmonds Hobby – ED*]. It is mostly a train shop, but he probably has around 100 plastic model kits. The owner is about 75 now and quite talkative, and gives you a hand-written receipt. It's about two blocks up from the Kingston Ferry holding area. If you're late going to Jim's functions you can check it out while waiting for the ferry, but he is only open 12-6.

I'm sure there are more I have forgotten, but hopefully some of you have also been to these locations and can share more details than I have about them.

Thanks for reading and sharing. -Brian Hennessey

*Eric, who started this nostalgia trip now returned:* Hi All – I think I started this thread, and I am really enthused that folks have chimed in with their memories! Here's mine:

I moved to Redmond in early 1992, and quickly scouted out the local shops, finding American Eagles in Ballard the first week I was here. AE was one of the best shops I had ever seen, literally, in the entire country.

I worked for myself at the time (as a programmer) and found a small, two-man company running reports for Ballard Computer, across the street. I had lunch with the owner and he hired me on the spot, so I started commuting to Ballard every day, and dropping in on American Eagles all the time - so much so that my friendship with Mike (the owner) grew to daily lunches together at a restaurant around the corner. [He and his wife (Patty?) came to my wedding in 1993.]

After a year or so, Mike wanted to know if I wanted to buy a piece of the shop (I found out later that this was an offer he extended to ANYONE showing interest at the time). After walking the aisles in the 'secret basement Mecca-o-Models', I asked about the inventory, if it was tracked in any way, even on paper. Nope. Mike had no idea what he had, and (as a database programmer) I thought about the Herculean effort required to automate his business, which was just coming in to vogue at the time. I declined.

By that time I had joined the club that met there (once a month?) – I met Brian Cahill, Jack Matthews, Tim Nelson and several others. I wrote a PC-based program to track information for the club, and even a contest judging program we used once at a Show (at the Museum of Flight, I think?). I was being asked to make so many changes to the code that my meeting experience was becoming an extension of work and not of modeling. I soured on the club a little, and my wife and I had our first baby (Reed), so I drifted away until much later (2003?), when I joined IPMS at the Bellevue location. This was just after Ted Holowchuk passed away. The rest be history. That Ballard location of AE was really great. The good old days. Thanks! -Eric

*Gerry Nilles now put in a big addition; a compilation of prior exchanges:* Since Andrew and others thought the modeling nostalgia was fun, I'll share a private exchange between Jim Schubert and I about Triple Alliance in Bellevue - if any of you remember that store and the owner Tom Weinel, I was trying to remember the name of the store - and Jim reminded me - it's where I bought those Series 77' miniatures many of you have asked me about over the years. As Jim Told me, Tom Weinel was a Naval Academy grad, F-8 Crusader driver, and had worked for a while for Mike Edwards at American Eagles before opening Triple Alliance - Jim said he left the hobby business to fly medevacs in the Middle East and Africa - but he hasn't heard form him since:

*Jim Schubert:* A further note about Tom Weinel: He took up figure painting when he was deployed on a carrier because he could keep them and all his paints, &c. in a smallish box in his cabin – he described that cabin as, “A small grey steel closet.” too small for airplane or ship models.

Last night I remembered another hobby shop owned by IPMS-er Bill Hawkins in Wallingford across the street from the old Wallingford school on 45th St, which is now the Wallingford Center.

I came close to buying a 280Z in '79 after my Jag was totaled but as I was planning to get divorced decided to save my money and buy a used Mercury Zephyr from Hertz.

The gofer for the VP of my division of Boeing in 1980 came into my office one day and put a plain white 1/200 747 on my desk and told me to paint for the VP as a gift for a friend of his and asked me to paint and mark it for delivery to the VP the next afternoon and told me the Boeing model shop was prepared to give me the decals and colors and markings drawings to paint one side as Trans America and the other as World Airways. I managed to do it by taking the next day off and getting Razon, who I was dating at the time, to also take the day off to help me. I had to use a hair dryer on it to cure the paint in a hurry.

Modeling has been fun – and still is.

Cheers, Jim

*Russell Bucy:* Jim, Now I remember Triple Alliance. I only went in there once - not because I didn't want to go back, but I was only home on leave for a month in 1980 before heading out to Fort McClellan and Redstone Arsenal Alabama for a year at my "Chemical Advanced Course" training. I think I cleaned him out of his 'Series 77' miniatures which were done by Pat Bird. At the time, I remember buying six of them, two of which were mounted figures for \$100 package deal. I'd told him I was in the Army between assignments. The figures went for \$17.95 for an on-foot figure and \$25.95 for a mounted figure, which was a lot of money back then. Lynne and I had been married about three years at that time, and I had to convince her I needed these figures "to keep me out of trouble" for the first three months of my schooling since she was not going to be joining me right away (she was staying with her parents in Lakewood for a couple of months with our newborn daughter). I owned a Datsun 280Z (a really fun car) and drove down to Alabama in July 1980 - it was hot and humid, and I lived in guest quarters without A/C within walking distance of the Officers Club, but I stayed true to my word - and sat on the veranda painting miniatures until it cooled down enough to go to sleep. Later, during the nuclear physics/reactor course, I was so burned out I would retreat to a small room in our apartment and paint for a few hours, so those six figures really did keep me out of a lot of trouble and kept me sane. Later, as an Army Captain doing work for the Navy at Dugway Proving Ground, I would go TDY to San Diego. While others were partying on the weekends, I'd seek out all the hobby shops - I found two that carried 'Series 77' and cleaned them out too over several TDYs. I took three of those miniatures to Korea with me on a year-long unaccompanied tour in 1987. It was interesting getting them through the Korean customs in my carry-on baggage when I came back to the States in 1988. In many ways, those first six miniatures from Triple Alliance helped me in my military career because whoever saw them thought they were great - we even used them as a centerpiece for a 3-star General officer attending a formal dinner event in 1987, and when I was at the Naval War

College in 1990, I entered them in the Art and Artists of Newport show hosted at the NWC museum (surprisingly, there was a Navy Commander there that also painted only 'Series 77' - we both won Honorable Mentions and Brown University wanted to buy everything we had on display, since Brown had one the largest collections of military miniatures in the US. - I didn't sell mine). Later, while working for the Air Force at Cheyenne Mountain, my Air Force boss saw one of my figures and asked me to paint several for him - he paid for the kits and I happily painted away! So modeling can have a significant part in one's career. In those days, I didn't do much plastic modeling, it was just too hard to move the stuff around the world - so figure painting was what I did - I had two footlockers packed with shredded classified documents to cushion my models (unpacking was a mess). I credit Mike Edwards and now that I know his name - Tom Weinel - with getting me my start at serious figure painting. Thanks for the info on him. -VR Russ

*Gerry Nilles:* As has been mentioned I work at the downtown Bon Marche hobby shop back when our fledging modeling group was forming around Norm, Sherm Stevens, along with others. However, I was very fortunate to also open and managed the Northgate Bon hobby shop for the owner prior to going back to college. I don't know if many of you knew this but the Bon hobby shops were privately owned and operated and only leased the sale floor space from the Bon. Great memories! -Ger

*Russell Bucy:* Gerry, thanks for that info on Tom Weinel - we can only hope he's out there somewhere still painting away. I only met him once, at Triple Alliance, but he gave me a great deal on those Series 77' figures that I've treasured for over 30 years now. I still have three unpainted, one, a US Navy Sailor with a talker helmet I got in clearance from Mike Edwards, a Spanish American War Private from Tom Weinel at Triple Alliance, and one of an 82nd Airborne Paratrooper from a Shop in San Diego. One of these days I'll finish them. As I told Jim earlier, I often feel like Rip Van Winkle, having been gone for so long, then coming back - and still remembering the old days since I was not here to see all old LHS' go out of business. -VR Russ

*The last entry in this series was on July 12. Gerry Nilles wrote:*For what it's worth, a few months back, maybe as long as six months ago, I had posted something on Hyperscale and one of the subsequent replies/comments I believe came from Tom Weinel. Although, the posted reply was not identified by name, it was obvious from what and how it was said that it was someone who knew me personally, and I am pretty sure it was Tom. I did ask the sender "Is that you Tom" but never got a reply.

As for Tom's career path after leaving Triple Alliance, it is my understanding that he initially became a personal pilot flying an exec jet that was based in Montana. After that he has continued to do the same thing but is now based/living somewhere in Western Europe. Ger

*[That's all the messages that exchanged in our newsgroup, up till now. But I'll bet our Newsletter Editor would gladly publish any memories we other club members would share. I'm from Lakewood, in Tacoma, and my modeling source Way Back Then was the Thunderbird Drug Store. I'm glad to have been taken on this Nostalgia Trip! -SHK]*

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## ***US Combat Aircraft Fly-Off Competitions: Winners, Losers, and What Might Have Been, by Erik Simonsen***

**reviewed by Chris Banyai-Riepl**

Publisher: Specialty Press  
ISBN: 978-1-5800722-7-4  
Binding: Hardcover  
Pages: 228

In the interest of getting the best aircraft for the taxpayer's dollars, the US military employed fly-off competitions throughout much of the Cold War era. With aircraft designs and performance changing almost daily, these competitions helped spur on innovation and push aircraft manufacturers to try new concepts. This book examines these fly-off competitions, showing how the aircraft changed throughout the competition and also throwing in a bit of a what-if by illustrating how the losers might have looked had they won.

The book covers both fighters and bombers with ten different competitions documented. The first competition is the immediate post-war search for a jet-powered medium bomber. This competition included the North American XB-45, Convair XB-46, Boeing XB-47, and Martin XB-48. Next up comes another medium competition, this time with the North American AJ-1 Savage, the B-45 (again), the Avro

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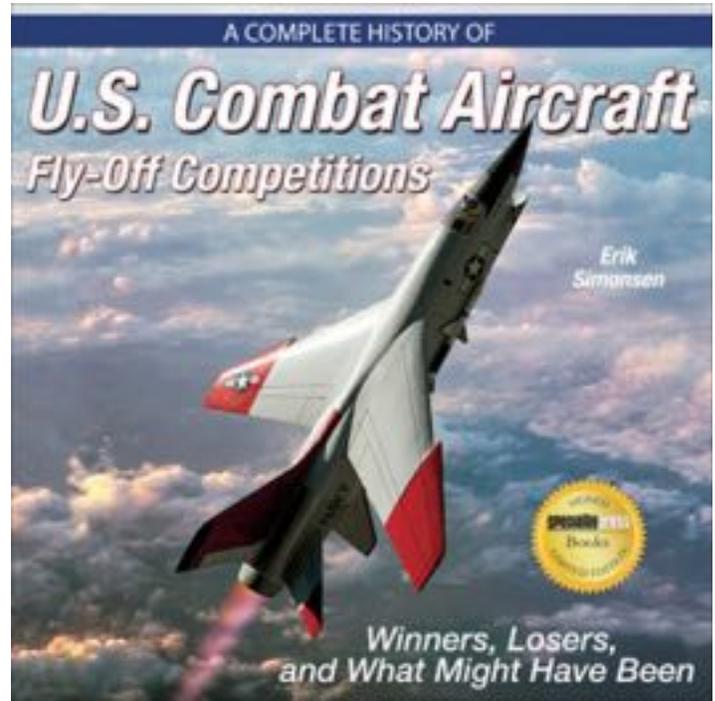
CF-100, the Martin XB-51, and the English Electric Canberra. The first fighter competition covered is the search for a penetration fighter, with the McDonnell XF-88, Lockheed XF-90, North American YF-93A, and the McDonnell F-101. Heavy bombers are next with the competition between the Boeing YB-52 and the Convair YB-60.

Moving into the supersonic era, the first pairing there is the Republic YF-105A and the North American F-107A. The US Navy followed suit with a competition between the McDonnell F4H-1 Phantom and the Chance-Vought F8U-3 Crusader III. Entering into the 1970s, the next competition is between the Northrop YA-9A and the Fairchild YA-10A. The classic light-weight fighter competition is next, pitting the General Dynamics YF-16 against the Northrop YF-17. The last two competitions covered are the Lockheed Martin YF-22 against the Northrop YF-23 and the Boeing X-32 against the Lockheed Martin X-35.

Each competition chapter provides a solid written text that outlines the design and performance of the aircraft. This is then

complemented with lots of photographs and illustrations showing the aircraft in both their testing phases as well as those interesting what-if concepts had the losers actually won and entered service. In some cases, that is not much of a stretch. For example, the YF-17 ended up evolving into the F-18 Hornet, and the AJ-1, B-45, and CF-100 all saw service alongside the Canberra.

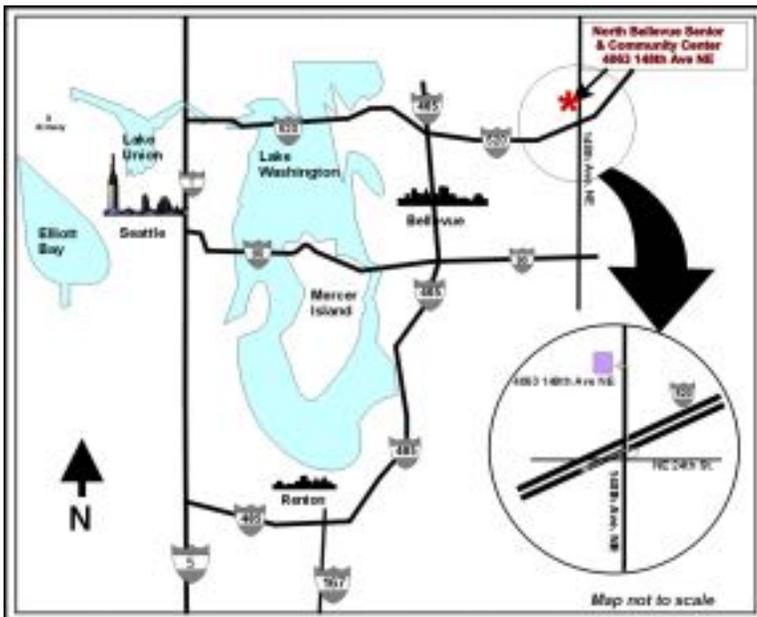
This is an interesting look into the competition process as well as a useful history of aviation evolution during the Cold War era. My thanks to Specialty Press for the review copy.



[Thanks to Chris Banyai-Riepl and [www.internetmodeler.com](http://www.internetmodeler.com) for permission to use his article. - ED]

## Meeting Reminder

## Meeting: August 13



**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.