

Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA
January 2016

PREZNOTES



The Coming Year

The election results were delivered this past December, and Eric Christianson and I are slated to man the IPMS Seattle Executive Board for the next two years. We humbly thank you for your continuing support. Heading into 2016, what does this mean for you, the member? Well, for a start, we will remain in the cozy environs of the North Bellevue Community Center into the future, thanks in part to a generous gift from a chapter member (see announcement elsewhere) and your chapter dues will remain at the extremely affordable rate of \$15 per year.

Eric and I will continue to MC the meetings as we have done in previous years, attempting to inject a little humor into the proceedings, and attempting to make IPMS Seattle chapter meetings as friendly and inviting for existing, and potentially new members, as possible. For most this will be fine, for a few, this will be too much chatter. Our response is that with over 100 members, we can't please all of the people, all of the time.

Our modeling philosophy: We like to keep it fun. Both Eric and I tend to build our models "out of the box". In Eric's situation, he views the plastic and PE parts as a canvas, and loves nothing more than to be done with the construction of a model, and into the painting and weather of it. Me, I actually prefer the construction part of a kit, I find nothing more relaxing than assembling the parts as I listen to the radio. I don't dislike painting, decaling and weathering, but I find that it is here that you can really screw things up, and sometimes my "fear of failure" rears its ugly head, and the project grinds to a halt. All this said, we hope to lead by example, and bring in our finished projects on a regular basis to give folks something to look at during "Show and Tell", and hopefully encourage others to do likewise.

Non Chapter meeting events? We have the Spring Show set for Saturday April 23,

and will once again be approaching members over the next few months to sign folks up for the various tasks associated with running a successful large show. Eric and I will also once again be working with the Flying Heritage Collection in Everett to organize model displays at the FHC's big public events: TankFest on Memorial Day, May 30th, along with various "Flying Days" from June through September. As we firm up the dates and themes, we will be asking for volunteers to help staff the IPMS Seattle tables at these events.

ANYTHING ELSE? If you wish to see anything else occurring at the meetings, or you wish to see the meetings move in a different direction, feel free to bring these matters up with your fellow members at the appropriate time during the business part of any particular meeting. In this respect, Eric and I have no agenda whatsoever. We are two among 100+ members, and quite frankly we are usually too busy setting up the room, answering questions, collecting dues, viewing the Show and Tell models, chatting with friends etc. to have much time left over for anything else. But if YOU want to organize something, go for it!

See you at the January chapter meeting, and bring your latest projects in to launch the 2016 Show and Tell season!

Cheers,

Andrew

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Public Disclaimers, Information, and Appeals for Help

This is the official publication of the Seattle Chapter, IPMS-USA. As such, it serves as the voice for our Chapter, and depends largely upon the generous contributions of our members for articles, comments, club news, and anything else involving plastic scale modeling and associated subjects. Our meetings are generally held on the second Saturday of each month, (see below for actual meeting dates), at the **North Bellevue Community/Senior Center, 4063-148th Ave NE**, in Bellevue. See the back page for a map. Our meetings begin at 10:00 AM, except as noted, and usually last for two to three hours. Our meetings are very informal, and are open to any interested modeler, regardless of interests. Modelers are encouraged to bring their models to the meetings. Subscriptions to the newsletter are included with the Chapter dues. Dues are \$25 a year for regular mail delivery of the newsletter, and \$15 for e-mail delivery, and may be paid to Spencer Tom, our Treasurer. (See address above). We also highly recommend our members join and support IPMS-USA, the national organization. See below for form. Any of the members listed above will gladly assist you with further information about the Chapter or Society.

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

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

Upcoming Meeting Dates

The IPMS Seattle 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.

January 9
March 12

February 13
April 9

IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM

IPMS No. _____ Name: _____
(if Renewing) First Middle Last
 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 (airmail) 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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Bronco PanzerKampfwagon II Sd.Kfz.122 (F) w/UE Trailer

by Eric Christianson

(Editor's note – this abridged version has been edited for use in our newsletter, removing most of the construction notes. You can see the full build article posted in the 'Reviews' section of the IPMS USA website or on our own IPMS Seattle website.)

In 1939, the German Army ordered the development of a Flammpanzer (flame-thrower tank) based on the PzKpfw II Ausf D/E's chassis. The new vehicle was armed with two flame-throwers mounted on track guards on each side. Each flame-thrower was mounted in a special turret-like case that allowed them to operate at 180 degrees radius, facing forward. Each weapon had its own fuel tank with 160 liters capacity - enough to fire 80 bursts at a range of 25 meters. The fuel consisted of a mixture of oil and gasoline that was ejected with the help of nitrogen stored in six pressurized tanks. Defensive armament consisted of a single, turret-mounted Mg34, for which 1800 7.92mm rounds were carried inside. The vehicle's crew consisted of three men (driver, radio operator and commander/flame-thrower operator) and its armor protection ranged from 14.5mm to 30mm thickness. The PzKpfw II (F) was powered by a 6-cylinder Maybach HL62 TRM engine, with total power of 140hp.



A fully restored and operational Flammpanzer II can be seen in the "Wehrtechnik Museum" in Koblenz Germany.

Newly offered in injection-molded plastic by Bronco Models out of China, the Sd.Kfz.122(F) Flammpanzer is a real gem of a kit. Bronco had previously released an all-new version of the gun tank, but this is the first Flamm version since the discontinued kit from ICM/Alan in 2006. It comes with a (captured) French tracked trailer and enough jerry cans and oil drums to make any diorama-minded modeler happy. The fuel and water cans and the oil drums are straight from a separate Bronco offering reviewed here:

<http://web.ipmsusa3.org/content/wwii-hungarian-201-jerry-can-2001-fuel-drum-set>

The French UE trailer appears to be a knock off of the one offered by Tamiya in its 'Chenillette' French Armored Carrier kit. Combined, Bronco's new Flammpanzer kit is a solid offering, and a real value.

Keep in mind; Bronco kits are not for the faint of heart, but the parts fit, they are well-engineered, and with a little patience, will build into great models.

What's in the Box:

- 13 sprues of soft, light grey plastic
- 5 sprues of soft, light brown plastic (track links)
- 1 sprue of clear plastic (glass parts)
- 1 trailer hull, packaged separately
- 1 piece of white twisted cotton string
- 1 medium sheet of decals, thin, but in perfect register
- 2 sheets of photo-etch, including jerry can inserts and plenty of other detail
- 1 color print of the box art suitable for framing
- 1 large instruction booklet, totaling 26 pages with 47 steps, printed in color

The box contains some very thin and delicate parts – several were damaged in shipping and others were broken when I separated them from the sprue. Caution is the key word here.

As with many other Bronco kits, the instructions come in a beautifully rendered, fully illustrated, color 8.5x11 booklet. The CAD images are sharp and show the assembly from a variety of different angles to help the modeler throughout the build. That said, this is a

complex kit representing a complex vehicle. It is relatively easy to have things go sideways unless you pay very close attention to what you are doing.

There are basically two display options, based mostly on rear-deck loads, so a little up-front work is in order to figure out what you want to do.

The instructions come with specific paint call-outs for Mr. Hobby, Hobby Color, Humbrol, and Tamiya paints to help with painting. Assembly sequence varies by modeler but the general flow of things go pretty much as Bronco intended. The exceptions I made are identified in the text, below.

Eight and a half pages of color schemes are included – all dark German Grey (!) – and represent the following units:

1. Pz.Abt.(F)100 1940/1941 French/Belgian/Netherlands coast
2. Pz.Kpfw.II(F) 100 Russia, 1941 (4 options)
3. Kompanie of Pz.Abt.(F) 101 East Prussia 1941

Things to consider before starting:

There is a lot of photo-etch without plastic alternatives included in the kit. Some of it is detail that could be left off for those modelers so inclined, but other parts are up front and center on the finished model and need to be used, such as the brackets for the front headlights (Step 12) and the smoke dischargers (Step 23). To make things even more interesting, many of the PE parts attach to plastic along their 'knife-edge'. If you aren't good at PE before you begin, you will be when you are done!

The kit also contains a many parts that have (male) connection tabs, but their (female) counterparts are not as much holes as they are very small indentations in the surface receiving the part - if they exist at all. As a consequence, more often than not the part doesn't seat correctly and/or stands just proud of the surface. To resolve this you can either deepen the indentations or sand down the tabs to fit. Either way, test fit everything before applying glue.

The rear deck can be smothered with jerry cans and a spare wheel, or not, so you'll need to decide up front what you want to do.

Most hatches can be modeled in the open position, and some of them come with impressive detail on the inside of the hatch. Unfortunately, there is no (tank) interior detail provided.

The individual track links come on sprues and have four attachment points each. Even though they are numbered '1' and '2' on the sprue, there are no differences between them, and they are not sided. Bronco says to use between 90 and 93 links per side, I tried 93 on the first side and removed a link, settling on 92 for each side. Once the links have been carefully snipped and cleaned, they easily slip onto each other and have enough mass to stay put while constructing the runs. I used two drops of Testors black bottle cement per link to bring the entire run together as one piece. After drying for 45 minutes on a glue proof surface, the run could easily be lifted up and draped over the wheels and attached with glue. Done and done.



The turret is remarkably small, and, I think, gives the vehicle character. Dominated by a relatively huge hatch, the armament consists of a detailed, nine-piece machine gun that can be seen from the hatch opening, if it is modeled that way. The inside of the hatch is also well-detailed; sporting two 'leather' cushions, a five-piece visor block, and dual hatch handles. All three of the

viewports can be modeled open or closed, and open ports contain a clear 'glass' lens. That's a lot of 'busy' inside a turret only slightly larger than my thumb!

The trailer comes on a sprue that is lighter and made of slightly translucent, grey plastic. That, and the fit problems encountered, tell me that this part of the kit comes from a different source.

What looked like the most complex part of the trailer (the track) actually comes together quite well. The wheels and bogies, however, were another story. Each had a very weak and poorly designed attachment point, and I feared snapping them off for the remainder of the build.

The jerry cans and oil drums, on the other hand, are simply brilliant. These are the same as found in their Hungarian Jerry Can set (link above). The cans come with a PE center strip that acts as a weld seam, and the barrels have separate lids and even have support straps in some cases. All have raised lettering and detailed add-on hardware, including a nice set of pumping nozzles for one of the barrels.

Since all the schemes provided in the instructions used German Grey, I guess my Sd.Kfz.122 would be German Grey. Recently I've moved over to using Vallejo acrylics, but I still have a significant amount of Tamiya paints left around, so I thought I'd use up some of that.

(Note: I thin all Tamiya paints 50/50 with Gunze Leveling Thinner, a lacquer. I swish that around until it is mixed and pour it into the color cup on my Pasche-H Single-Action airbrush, Number #3 tip, set at 20 lbs. pressure.)

Primer, Base Coat and Camouflage Coats: I started by airbrushing a primer/pre-shade coat of Gunze Mr. Finisher 1500 Black to give the plastic and PE some grip for the following coats, and to fill in the recesses and create a shadow effect near the flat surface edges, adding depth for the subsequent coats to come. Once that had a chance to dry and de-gas overnight, I gave everything a base coat of Tamiya Ocean Grey 2, leaving enough black showing through for the effect I wanted. I then applied a post-shading coat using a (50/50 mix) Tamiya Ocean Grey 2 and Tamiya Flat Flesh, 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.

Decals: With painting finished, I air-brushed the surface areas that would be receiving decals with a coat of Future floor polish to give the decals a smooth surface to slide on.



I decided to use Scheme 5: (# 335) in Russia, 1941, since it sported the most markings of the bunch and I felt the unicolor grey finish needed all the help it could get.

Once the Future was dry, I used the Red and Blue MicroSol/MicroSet products to apply the decals without any problems. The unit numbers and Balkan cross on the turret all had to snuggle over prominent viewing ports, so I was relieved that Bronco's decals were very thin and responded well to MicroSet.

Once the decals were dry, I gave the entire vehicle a good coat of Future to seal the decals and prepare the surfaces for washes and streaking.

Washes and Streaking: I used AK Interactive Track Wash for the track, including the spare links in the back, and Windsor & Newton VanDyke Brown Artists Gouache for an overall wash.

I like using gouache for weathering since it mixes with water and remains workable until you cover it with a barrier, such as Future or a finishing coat (flat or semi-gloss). No other product or medium gives me the same working time.

Finishing Up: I used a mix of Vallejo New Wood and Vallejo Sand Ivory for the wooden beam in the back. To achieve the wood-like effect, I let a coat of Mig Wash Brown oil paint soak on the surface of the beam overnight before rubbing off most of it using a Q-Tip. I used Uschi Chrome Pigment for steel detail here and there, including the machine gun.

I added a little additional bling using Gamblin Silver oil paint and an Artists blender, and highlighted edges here and there by dry-brushing Model Master Afrika Dunkelgrau RAL 7027.

Next I airbrushed Vallejo Light Brown along the bottom of the vehicle and trailer to simulate road dust, and shot a little Vallejo Matt Varnish on any remaining shiny spots.

Finally, I added a mix of Mig Black and Brown pigments to the running gear and track, and the rear of the vehicle. Off to the photo-booth for this little guy!

As I said before, this kit is not for the faint of heart. You have to know what you're doing, you have to have a lot of patience, and you need to know how to slow down.

Sometimes there are no easily-defined connection points between parts, or they are absent altogether. I think this is a result of Bronco prioritizing accuracy over build-ability, which is fine, but someone planning to build this kit needs to understand that. Dry fitting and methodical inspection is 'de rigueur' for this project.



In the end, however, extra effort breeds satisfying results. The finished product is unique and I was able to experience a real sense of accomplishment with this challenging and interesting build.

I recommend this kit for experienced modelers only due to the complexity of some of the subassemblies and the challenges that some of the photoetch offers. All things considered, however, the build went relatively smoothly and the result is worth the effort. My hat is off to Bronco for providing yet another ambitious and interesting project.

I would like to thank Bronco Models for providing this kit for review, and to IPMS USA for giving me the opportunity to build it.



A Very Generous Gift

by Andrew Birkbeck

Over the past couple of years, the chapter membership has gone back and forth on the topic of moving our meeting venue from the current location of the North Bellevue Community Center to something “more affordable”.

With monthly fees now approaching \$250 a month (and the likelihood of further rate increases), this is quite an expense for a club like ours. However, the Center itself is a nearly perfect venue for a group such as IPMS Seattle. We are permitted to book the dates and times we want for a full year. We can accommodate vendors. The room is spacious, well lit, warm in winter and yet cool in summer. The tables, chairs, carpeting etc., are all in good condition and other parts of the facility, such as the restrooms, are all extremely clean. The Center staff is very friendly and we don't have outside noise distracting us in any way. The parking is ample, and the Center is centrally located and close to a major freeway on/off ramp. Yet at the same time, your E-Board wants to keep membership dues at their current very affordable \$15 a year.

It is thus with *great appreciation* that I would like to announce a very generous gift from long time Chapter member Everett Quam and his wife Lisa to IPMS Seattle. At the December meeting, Everett presented me with a check for \$6,000, to subsidize our meeting room costs, and thus allow us to keep our dues at \$15 into the future. On behalf of the Executive Board and all the members of IPMS Seattle, thank you so very much Everett and Lisa for your generous gift of support.

Hurricane BUILDS (well... anticipatory...): ‘MINIMALIST’ kit... and its Opposite

by Scott Kruize

It's the New Year. Unlike Lucy Van Pelt, I actually do consider from time to time how I might do things better for my own sake, and for the sake of those who know me. (Lucy, of course, cannot possibly be improved - which is why she was SO insulted when asked what her New Year's resolutions might be...)

I decided to start my contribution to this first newsletter of 2016 not by rambling on about books, criticizing the errors and inadequacies of recently-watched videos, or whining about science fiction movies that start with good intentions but end in ghastly final results on screen. I thought, instead, I'd comment on some models. What a relief, eh what?

Well may you ask why - if I got so excited about Paul Gallico's *The Hurricane Story* when I was in sixth grade - why by now I don't now have a huge hangar-full of built model Hurricanes. When I stop to think about this, and count them, there really haven't been that many. Way back When, I only built the Revell 1/72nd scale Hurricane in plastic, and never Airfix's Mk. IV, with rockets, in their 1/72nd Constant Scale series. (Even though I did their Messerschmitt 109 and 110, as Hurricane adversaries...)

Also, I got so carried away by Guillow ads in Model Airplane News that I built their 16+ inch-span so-called ‘flying model’ Hurricane. This, I could never get to look anywhere near as good as the glossy ad pics. I couldn't even get the tissue to lie down and shrink neatly and smoothly, much less get any actual flights out of the airplane. I didn't understand, at the time, that the kit balsa was both way too hard yet too weak (there's a combination!) and that its small red plastic propeller, spun by a single loop of rubber, roughly as energetic as an ordinary office rubber band, had no hope of ever getting it to fly properly. After some short backyard nose dives, and too many repairs, it ended up in the fireplace, in heroic Viking funeral fashion!

In the Current Era - namely during my hanging around with you guys - I actually built more, all in 1/48th. Specifically, I built the old Monogram kit twice: once as desert-camouflaged tank-busting Mark IID, and one as political pawn in Portuguese markings. I also built the Airfix 1/48th scale Mk.I, painting it in the early war scheme with that astonishing half white, half black underside. These kits were decent and easy builds.

I've started two of the very fine Hasegawa kits. One is intended for the Continental 'Hurribomber' role, the other for the South East Asia theater of operations, where the Hurricane was the principal British fighter opposing the Japanese until almost the end of the war, when Thunderbolts came available. So far, these builds have gone well, and they will appear on the Show-and-Tell tables someday soon.



But I went to Emil's New Year sale and there picked up two more kits I hadn't examined before. One is the absolute 'minimalist approach' Pegasus model, which can be snapped together without glue, left unpainted in its brown plastic, and decorated with stickers. I would have robbed, cheated, and lied to get my hands on so nice a kit way back When! Now, I intend to finish it properly and see how it looks next to a really, really fine complex kit: namely Airfix's new tooling, in 1/48th, of the Mk.I.

I got this in the form of the Ready For Battle kit, no. A50172. It also contains the hard-working ground crew, several pieces of equipment, and two trucks –WHOOPS! So, sorry, Robert! I tripped over my own fingers on the keyboard! I meant 'lorries'! - as well as the Hurricane itself.

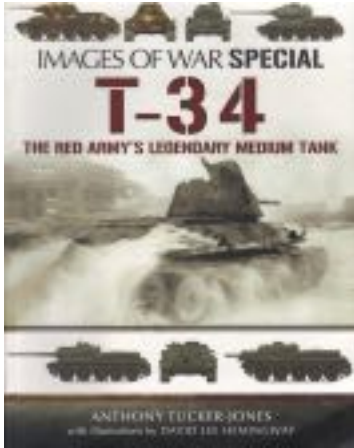
I haven't actually taken the Hurricane out of its bag, the largest of the four in this impressive big red box. The instructions, however, clearly indicate that there are well over hundred pieces in this kit. Quite a contrast to the Pegasus kit, eh what?

What I'd really like to do is build these minimalist and 'maximalist' (if that's the correct term) kits together, and display them together. And most ambitious of all: have both ready by our April 2016 Contest and Show. That's my New Year's resolution. I hope I don't have to fall back on smirking sympathy from you fellow club members, who've seen what happens to so many New Year's resolutions...but we'll see. As Calvin says, before heading out on another adventure with Hobbes: 'Further bulletins as events warrant!'



Images of War Special: T-34 The Red Army's Legendary Medium Tank, **by Anthony Tucker-Jones**

reviewed by Andrew Birkbeck



Was the Soviet T-34 the most important tank of the Second World War? It certainly was produced in the largest numbers, 57,000 between 1941 and 1945, more even than the ubiquitous M4 Sherman series. And it was undoubtedly superior to the Sherman in many areas, including armor protection and main armament. And without doubt the most massive and arguably most important armored battles of WW2 took place on the Eastern Front, where the T-34 dominated Soviet tank strength numbers. Did in fact the T-34 “win the war” for the Allies, responsible as it was for inflicting massive damage to more Axis divisions than any other Allied military vehicle? Whatever your answer to this question it is undoubtedly true that the T-34 was an extremely important cog in the Soviet military machine that crushed the Germans and their allies on the Eastern Front.

There have been many books over the years detailing the T-34 series of tanks, which not only include the T-34/76 and T-34/85 tanks, but also the Su-122 and Su-85/100 assault guns. These range from the thin and inexpensive tomes such as Squadron Signal’s *T-34 in Action*, to the massive, such as Robert Michulec’s *T-34 Mythical Weapon*. So where does this latest T-34 publication, from Pen and Sword Books Ltd, penned by Anthony Tucker-Jones stand, and what does and doesn’t it cover?

This book is soft covered, being 144 pages in length, the pages measuring 7.5” by 9.5”. It is divided into 11 chapters, as follows:

1. Birth of a War Winner, which covers briefly the Soviet tank designs in service prior to the introduction of the T-34, such as the BT series of Christie tanks, plus other contemporary “Medium” tanks such as the T-35 and the KV-1.
2. A Winning Upgrade – T-34/85
3. T-34 Variants - A brief written introduction to various T-34 sub types such as the Su-122, Su85, Su-100, OT-34 Flamethrower.
4. Too Few Too Late - This covers initial T-34 production prior to the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, and how the Germans were able to overcome the large numbers of mostly inferior Soviet tank designs encountered during the initial months of the invasion.
5. Moscow Miracle - covering Soviet tank strength during the Battle for Moscow, the transfer of Soviet tank production from the western regions of the Soviet Union to the eastern areas far from the reach of the Germans. This chapter includes 12 pages of color plates showing the T-34/76, T-34/85, Su-122, Su-85. However, this is NOT a colors and markings section, but simply a series of (scale not listed) color drawings showing the layout of each vehicle type. Included in this chapter are also three pages of color photos of an immediate post-war T-34/85 from a private collection, detailing mainly the engine compartment.
6. T-34s in Ukraine - details T-34 production in 1943, and the tank battles in this theater, outlining the need for better armor and fire-power for the T-34 as the Germans up gunned and up armored their tank forces.
7. T-34s in White Russia - details the introduction of the T-34/85 as an attempt to upgrade Soviet tank forces in the face of the German introduction of the Panther and upgunned Panzer IVs.
8. T-34s on the Seelow Heights - Soviet forces move in for the kill on Berlin in the last year of the war.
9. T-34 Tank Aces - brief coverage of a number of high scoring T-34 tank commanders.
10. T-34 Killers - details briefly the various German weapon systems that did battle with the T-34, from tanks (Panther, Panzer IV, Tiger 1) to aircraft (Ju 87, Hs 129).
11. Cold War T-34s - the T-34 in Korea, Hungary 1956, the Arab-Israeli Six Day War etc.

From a modeler’s perspective, what this book does NOT contain are any scale plans, and no particularly useful color and markings drawings. The quality of the black and white photos varies widely, from good to mediocre. The written text is informative, well written, though this is a general history, not a detailed history. If you are looking for a breakdown of the various improvements/changes made to the T-34/76 and T-34/85 during their production runs, you won’t find it in this book, neither in the written text, nor in the form of any scale drawings etc.

Overall, I would recommend this book to someone who wants a basic primer on the T-34 in Soviet WW2 service. If you already have a number of books covering this important Soviet tank, you probably wouldn’t improve your photo coverage or knowledge by incorporating it into your collection. I would like to thank Casemate Publishing for providing this book to IPMS USA to review for its members.

Academy 1/35th Scale T-34/85 No.183 Factory "Berlin 1945"

by Eric Christianson

The T-34/76 tank was designed in 1940 as a multi-purpose vehicle intended to take advantage of breakthroughs in enemy lines. After reports about the new Russian tank reached the OKH, German engineers were sent back to the drawing board under the pressure of many generals and the full support of Hitler himself. Two new tank models, the Panzer V "Panther" and the Panzer VI "Tiger" emerged from their work.

The Soviet Union's State Defense Committee met on August 25, 1943, after the battle of Kursk, and decided to upgrade the T-34 with a bigger gun to combat the new German tanks. This was a real challenge for the engineers. They had to conceive a new turret capable of housing the long barreled 52K model 39, the standard anti-aircraft gun of the Red Army at the time, without making any changes to the lower part of the tank, chassis, transmission, suspension or engine.

It was a bold move to choose this gun. The choice was clearly influenced by the heavy toll imposed by the German 88 mm (3.46 in) gun on every Front since the beginning of the War. In the race between firepower and protection it became apparent that no available engine could meet the Red Army's minimal mobility requirements AND provide sufficient protection from Germany's 88 mm gun.

The T-34/76 initially appeared to have the perfect balance of speed, armor and firepower, but events proved that firepower was lacking. The crew's protection was compromised, therefore something had to be changed. But confining changes to a new turret could provide a quick transition, almost uninterrupted, between the two types (the T-34/76 and its successor, the T-34/85), which was just what the Stavka required to maintain numerical superiority. The hull was almost unchanged except for the turret ring and the new turret itself. The turret ring had to be enlarged to give a more stable and sturdy base for the new gun.

Zavod #112 delivered the first T-34/85s to the elite Red Guards battalions, the best units. It is uncertain whether they saw action before January or February 1944, having been in training during December 1943. 400 had already been delivered to front-line units in early 1944 and they instantly became popular with the crews. They gradually replaced the T-34/76, and in mid-1944 the T-34/85 outnumbered the older versions.

By then T-34/85s formed the bulk of the tank units on the eve of Operation Bagration, the Soviet response to the Allied landings in Normandy, and the Red Army's biggest offensive to date. This was the final push, aimed at Berlin. The T-34/85 Model 1943s were usually given to chosen crews, usually of the Guard units, before production ramped up.

By late 1944 T-34/85 tank crews on the Eastern Front faced a new threat. This threat wasn't German tanks (although the Königstiger and many late tank hunters were quite impressive, if few in numbers), but rather the average infantryman, even from citizen militias (Volkssturm) armed with the Panzerfaust, the first shaped-charge launcher. The Russian crews took the matter in their own hands to counter this sneaky and effective weapon. They mounted makeshift protection made of bed frames welded on the turret and hull sides. They projected enough from the hull itself to make the charge detonate sooner and spew its high pressure metal jet harmlessly on the surface. This improvisation was commonplace during the battle of Berlin.

Academy's latest 1/35th scale kit is this newly-tooled, limited edition T-34/85. It features details that were unique to the Factory 183 (UTZ) facility at Nizhny Tagil, the largest producer of T-34 tanks.



The features and options include:

Slide molded one-piece barrel

Link-and-length track for ease of assembly/painting

Hull details that include a multitude of grab handles, spare track links, fuel cells, and stowage options

Improvised bedspring armor provided as photo-etched parts

Casting detail captured on turret surface

Simplified construction without sacrificing detail

The slightly oversized box is a little difficult to open, but its contents are well protected. The plastic is crisp and flash free and packaged to ship safely. The kit includes:

16 sprues in soft, light grey plastic, most packaged separately. Five of these sprues are for the myriad of rails and grab handles, and four sprues sport the twenty wheels.

2 sprues of black plastic containing link & length track sections

1 large photo-etch sheet containing ten screens, brackets, and an engine intake grille.

1 length of cotton string for use as tow cables.

1 8-page black and white instruction folding sheet with 19 steps.

The kit comes with two color schemes. These are reproduced as black and white ink drawings of the tank's left sides. There is a four view drawing of the turret included, however. A small, double-white inked decal sheet includes the following units:

11th Tank Corps, k235, Berlin Germany (May 1945). Green with white stripe.

11th Tank Corps, k238, Berlin Germany (May 1945). Green with white stripe.

A separate insert includes a parts map on one side and painting instructions and decal placement on the other. Paint callouts are included for Humbrol, Gunze Creos, Testors Model Master, LifeColor, Revell, and Vallejo brands.

Things to consider before building:

The texture on the turret representing rolled steel is very rough; too rough frankly, for the scale. You may want to use sandpaper to even it out a little, or perhaps even add a thin layer of putty to fill in some of the deeper abrasions.

The stars of this kit are the photo etched 'bedspring' screens. You'll need a folding or bending tool to get these right; I don't think a simple pair of flat-surfaced needle nose pliers will suffice. Some of the delicate screens are over two inches in length and with photo-etch like this you don't get any 'do-overs'.

The area beneath the fenders is unobstructed. One can therefore add the link & length tracks at any time, which helps with the painting and finishing tasks.

In the first four Steps you assemble the 10 sets of wheels, drive sprockets, return rollers, and suspension. Each wheel set includes an inner and outer facing piece; these are nicely molded with perforations along the outer rims. You have to drill a number of holes in the two hull sides to receive various items, so make sure you do this before attaching the sides to the hull bottom, as access will be limited. A solid wall superstructure is inserted at the center wheel position for strength.

Academy suggests that you assemble and attach the tracks in Step 4, although I think you can wait until the end of the build to do so since access is un-obstructed.

In Step 5 you attach the various on-board accoutrements, including a rear hull engine hatch that unfortunately does not contain any interior detail. Some photo-etch that is used on the front hull that does not have any plastic alternative included in the kit.

In Step 6 you bend a photo-etch screen over the end of a plastic frame. This represents the engine intake, not all the way across, front to back, but just down the back half. You also have to bend six photo-etch brackets in the same way. That won't be easy. Fortunately, the plastic hatch contains much of the same detail and can be used as is in a pinch. Steps 7 and 8 continue with upper deck detail, including the numerous hand rails prevalent on Soviet armor, which are finely molded and contain no flash.

The turret comes next. I thought the rough texture of the turret was a little heavy handed, and could use a little toning down with sand paper or putty before assembly. The 15-piece cupola and hatch looks a little fiddly but contains good detail inside and out.

Academy includes a single, slide-molded barrel. It is hollowed out at the end, a beautiful piece of work that eliminates the need for filling any seams. Step 13 adds one more poseable hatch (without interior detail) before you join the upper and lower hulls .

The stars of the kit are the bed spring screens, as I mentioned earlier. Their assembly is pretty straightforward, but care must be taken not only in bending the screens and their brackets, but also in keeping track of the parts so that the correct springs attach to the turret and the hull. I suggest that you bend each element and stick the screen and its brackets to a labeled sticky note for safe keeping, until they are ready to be assembled and attached to the model. All four edges of each screen are bent twice along a long axis. I think you'll need some kind of bending tool for the job.

Academy recommends that you attach the brackets to the screens first, and then the resulting assemblies to the turret and hull. But Academy makes no mention of the order to attach them. For the turret I suggest that you attach the rear and front screens first, next the two front side screens, and then the two rear side screens, since you will know how much spacing to leave between the screens by centering them up against what is already in place.

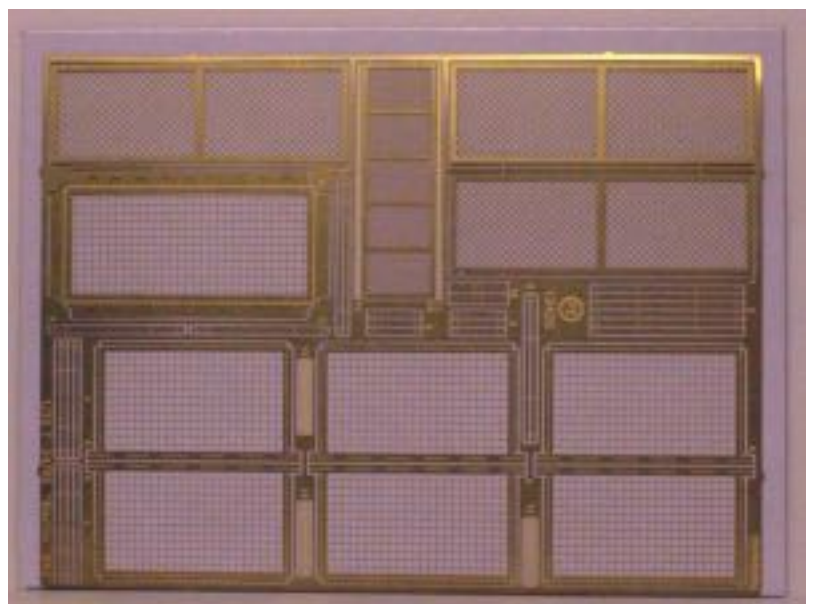
The T-34/85 is one of the iconic tanks of World War II, and this late-war 'bed spring' variant has always been a favorite for modelers. Academy has done a good job of bringing this interesting kit to market.

The slide molded barrel, the simplified design and the link & length tracks will appeal to beginners and folks who are looking for a quick way to 'the paint and finish stage' (like me!) The detail photo-etch screens will appeal to the more advanced modelers. It is unfortunate that Academy chose to provide poseable hatches but failed to include even the most basic detail on the inside of the hatches. But this kit is a solid effort and will result in a fine looking model.

I can recommend this kit to all modelers who are up to the challenges posed by assembling and attaching the ten photo-etch screens, since these parts are the star of the kit, the rest being a relatively straightforward build. If you mark up the instructions beforehand as suggested, and go slow, you shouldn't have any problems, and you will have a fine (and unusual) looking model to show for it.

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

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



FineMolds 1/72nd Scale Imperial Tie Fighter

by Paul Adams, IPMS Romsey

In the summer of 1977 a 'sleeper' movie called *Star Wars*, which was expected to only be a minor hit, changed the movie world's perception of Sci-Fi. George Lucas's epic galactic adventure unleashed a fictional world which today almost seems real. Over the years the characters have become household names and today, the entire SW road-show continues its appeal, as it has done for 40 years for a new generation of fan.

Sci-Fi models have largely been overlooked by the mainstream manufacturers and have therefore been limited in quality, accuracy, availability and appeal only to those with healthy bank accounts. The Japanese company FineMolds has released several high quality 1/72nd scale kits, most notably and arguably the finest Sci-fi kit ever produced, their *Millenium Falcon*. My interest in *Star Wars* and Sci-fi modelling has gathered pace since the FM kits were released, being as they are reasonably priced, accurate (FM were permitted access to the film miniatures) and as good as an injection-molded kit as you are likely to find. As a welcome distraction from automotive subjects, I chose the relatively simple Imperial Tie Fighter as my first Sci-fi model.



Construction begins in a similar way to an aircraft kit, cockpit first, fuselage and wings or in this case, solar panels. The cockpit consists of a floor, side and rear walls, a seat and flight controls. It's all a bit simplified but as most of it is hidden it's not an issue. The instructions call for all parts aside from the side walls to be painted neutral grey, followed with washes and flat varnish. The side walls were treated to a dose of satin black from the can onto which the Aztec style graphics were applied. The kit contains two figures; a Stormtrooper in white armor and a black clad pilot. I chose to have a go at doing a pilot, as I wanted the craft to be displayed in-flight. FM have received some criticism for their figures, which isn't hard to see why. A short clean up session was followed by a coat of Halfords grey primer. A dark grey was used by airbrush to provide a base coat. Shading and the distinctive black helmet was done with oils – a brief and interesting experience!

With the cockpit complete the fuselage halves were mated around it and the seams cleaned up. Though simple to look at, the Tie Fighter paint scheme has several grey panels, which need to be carefully masked off and so the fuselage hatches were left off to help with this later in the build. Two of these hatches are clear plastic and so the clear parts need to be masked off too. FM provides masks for these which need cutting from the backing sheet before use. Each solar panel is made from three parts, an outer and inner wing and the black solar panel, which is sandwiched between. With clean up done I sprayed on Halfords grey plastic primer once more and allowed this to dry overnight. The overall Tie Fighter color causes much conjecture, but by scouting around the Internet I found a couple of modellers who had used a similar idea which to me look fairly close to the studio miniatures. This color was simply white with a touch of silver or aluminum. I chose Tamiya XF2 and added three drops of XF32 Titanium silver to 10ml of white. Even this small amount was probably too much. Sprayed on in steps, I covered the model in about three coats, angling the airbrush to achieve some shading on the centre of the inner and outer wings.

After allowing the paint to dry I then began masking off various panels, which appear grey on the 'real' machine. In order to achieve a very fine line, essential in this scale, I used Bare Metal foil. This was burnished down over the target panel with a toothpick and carefully trimmed with a fresh blade. To avoid overspray the other masking was done with Tamiya tape as each panel was completed. This avoided masking the entire (not that it's that big though!) fuselage off and therefore wasting tape. Several panels were sprayed Tamiya Neutral Grey and some small parts along with the cockpit windscreen, German Grey.

While the fuselage and wings dried I set about painting the solar panels. I masked off a thin line along the joint, where it would attach to the inner and outer wings, so I would not have to clean away the paint when gluing it all together. So, 72 thin strips of tape later I was ready to go! I primed once more with Halfords grey plastic primer and applied two coats of Halfords satin black ensuring even



coverage. This paint imparts a slight sheen, which would contrast nicely with the surrounding parts.

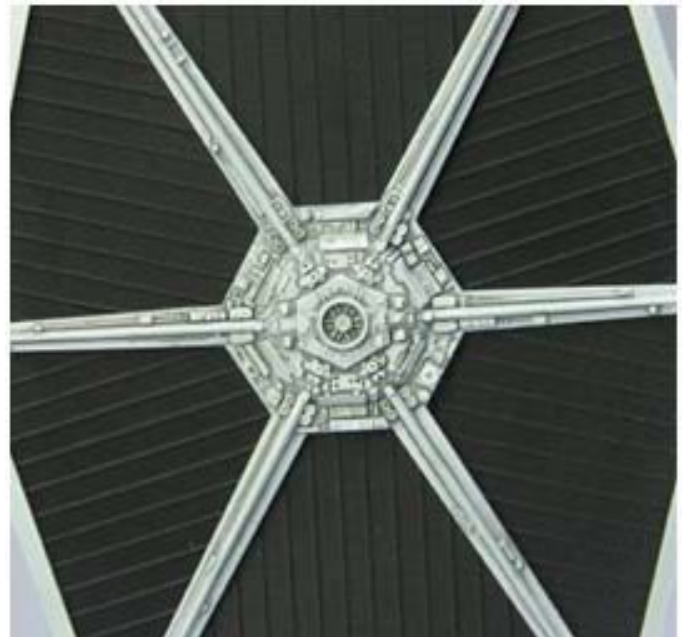
With the inner wings, hatches and minor parts glued to the fuselage, that and the outer wings received two coats of Johnson's Klear in preparation for the essential wash and decals. The few decals that are evident on the model are indeed very small and I gave myself a challenge by applying them at the Romsey Model show.

Sprayed in light grey the model looked distinctly bland and uninteresting and needed a prominent wash to avoid the model looking toy-like. Once again drawing knowledge from those more experienced in Sci-Fi, I decided to go all 'old school' and do a wash using pastels. I have one pastel in my collection – a black chalk type, which would prove ideal. I ground this down to a fine

powder by rubbing it against some coarse sandpaper, added water and several drops of washing up liquid and stirred until I had a black watery mix. The washing up liquid breaks the surface tension of the water and enables the wash to flow around the details. I began with the outer parts, applying heavier amounts as my confidence grew. After a short drying time, 10 minutes or so, the wash can be manipulated by wetting it again and removing unwanted areas or, as I did, using a moistened Q-tip. After removal, the edges can be blended and softened to a pleasing finish. At first I thought the black would be too harsh, but in fact it looks almost dark grey. I am pleased with the results. The rest of the wings and fuselage were done in the same manner, aside from some panel lines being drawn in with a sharpened pencil.

The model was then coated with three very light coats of Xtracylix flat varnish. This was misted on via airbrush at a distance of about one foot. If the varnish is applied too wet you risk disturbing the fragile pastel wash. I allowed 24 hours for drying and then removed the masks from the windows. I had some slight bleed along some edges, which was cleaned away with 4000 and 6000 grit Micromesh cut into tiny pieces. The last task was to attach the solar panels and outer wings. This proved straight forward, benefiting from the earlier masking. I did a little dry brushing and hand painted in the laser guns at the front of the craft using Gunze fluorescent orange, just to add a tiny splash of color.

The model now was complete and looked distinctly different with the restricted view offered by the large solar panel wings. At the time of writing, I have yet to complete a display base for it. I plan to mount the model onto a brass tube and small wooden plinth for that 'in flight' look. Despite some small mistakes, this was a most enjoyable three week build. FineMolds have produced some superb kits and I look forward to completing more in the future.



IPMS Seattle Dues for Calendar Year 2016

Your 2016 IPMS Seattle renewal form is included below. If you have not renewed by the release of the February newsletter you will get a final reminder with that issue. If you do not renew then, you will not get any more newsletters. Dues will be **\$15** for those who wish to receive e-mail delivery of the newsletter, and **\$40** for those who wish to receive regular mail delivery of the newsletter. Please note that the club's annual dues have been reduced from the base level of \$40 for members receiving the IPMS-Seattle newsletter via e-mail. We will review this on an annual basis. You can renew by writing a check to IPMS-Seattle and mailing it to the address below. Or you can bring the form and payment to the January meeting. Please be very careful when filling out the form. Many of our returned newsletters are the result of poor interpretation of handwritten address information. Our e-mail distribution of the newsletter has been working very well. You get the newsletter the day it goes to the printer, and it is in full color. It also saves us a considerable amount of printing and postage costs and we would really like to encourage you to consider this method of distribution.

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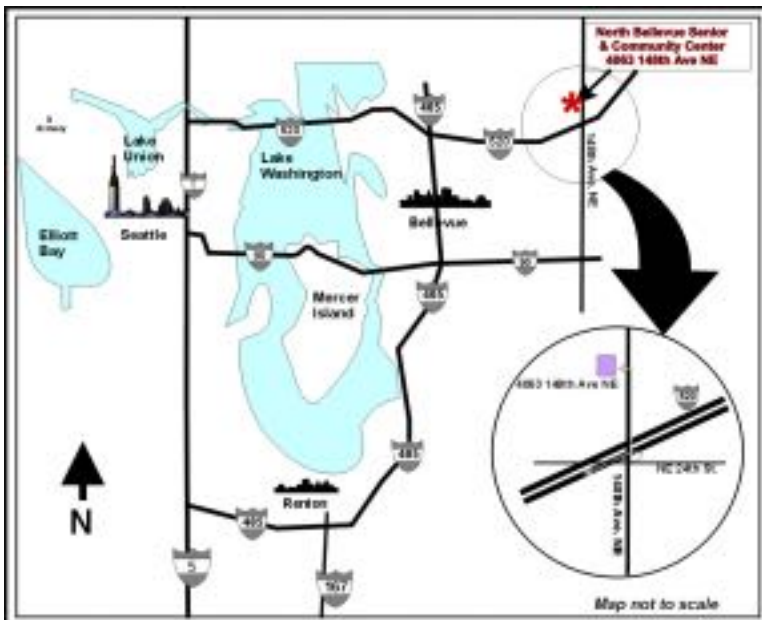
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Meeting Reminder

January 9



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.