

# Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA  
March 2016

## PREZNOTES



**WANTED:  
Volunteers  
for the Spring  
Show. Please  
sign up at the  
March  
meeting.**

*Andrew*

### In This Issue

Tamiya M4A3E8 Sherman	3
FAA Pilots in the Battle of Britain	6
You Be the Judge	8
Raffle Plea	9
Bronco sWS 60cm Infrared Searchlight Carrier	10
Academy F-4C Phantom	15

**SEATTLE CHAPTER CONTACTS**

<b>President:</b> Andrew Birkbeck P.O. Box 15983 Seattle, WA 98115 Ph: 206-522-3539 acbirkbeck@comcast.net	<b>Vice President:</b> Eric Christianson 18215 NE 95th Way #103 Redmond, WA 98052 Ph: 425-591-7385 ModelerEric@comcast.net	<b>Treasurer:</b> Twyla Birkbeck P.O. Box 15983 Seattle, WA 98115 Ph: 206-276-3855 birkbet@comcast.net	<b>Show Chair:</b> Andrew Birkbeck
---	---	---	---------------------------------------

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.

**March 12**

**April 23 (Show, Renton)**

**April 9 (Meeting, Bellevue)**

**May 14**

**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 (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.: \_\_\_\_\_

**IPMS/USA**  
 Join or Renew Online at: [www.ipmsusa.org](http://www.ipmsusa.org) P.O. Box 2475  
 North Canton, OH 44720-0475

**Newsletter Editor:**

Robert Allen  
 12534 NE 128th Way #E3  
 Kirkland, WA 98034  
 Ph: 425-823-4658  
[baclightning@yahoo.com](mailto:baclightning@yahoo.com)

## Tamiya 1/35th Scale M4A3E8 Sherman

by Andrew Birkbeck

The M4 series of tanks, popularly known as the Sherman tank, was the most important U.S. medium tank of the Second World War. It fought on every front, from the steamy jungles of the Pacific campaigns, to the dusty baking hot desert environs of North Africa, to the freezing snowy conditions of the Russian front winters. The culmination of the design, at least during WW2, was the M4A3E8 variant, known by the troops as the “Easy 8”. This variant first saw combat in Western Europe in December 1944.

Tamiya first issued an M4A3E8 Sherman in 1/35th scale back in the 1970s. It was motorized and I remember it had some of the coolest box art I had ever seen. I purchased the kit, built it, and drove it round and round my living room floor! Fast forward to 2014, and Tamiya decided to do something rather interesting. They took the superb Tasca M4A3E8, and packaged it with Tamiya’s own set of four WW2 U.S. Army soldiers. The kit came with individual link by link T-66 steel track, along with photo etched parts for the headlight guards, and was a real gem of a kit.



For whatever reasons, Tamiya has now decided to issue their own, new tool, M4A3E8 kit. Instead of individual link tracks, it has single piece “rubber band” type tracks, and there are no photo etched parts contained in this new kit. It is thus an easier kit to assemble than the earlier reboxed Tasca kit. It is also less expensive, retailing at \$53 vs the Tasca rebox which came in at \$75 (and currently is listed as “Discontinued” on TamiyaUSA’s website). As we have come to expect from Tamiya, this new kit is beautifully molded, in olive green plastic, and the parts are well detailed, devoid of any sink marks or flash.

Construction of Tamiya’s kit starts with the lower hull, and they have taken a leaf out of Tasca’s book, in that the lower hull “tub” is a multi-piece affair, consisting of a left and right side piece, an underside piece, plus an engine firewall part that connects the right and left side pieces. Annoyingly, Tamiya continue to ignore the fact that hatch grab handles are not molded on lumps, and so on the rear hull engine access door, part L36, I cut off said lump, and replaced it with a handle made of bent copper wire of a suitable diameter. A nice touch is the fact that the idler wheel arm is a positionable separate part, with a series of tabs that allow the modeler to attach the rubber band tracks taught, as they should be. The HVSS suspension units are four-part units, with separate springs, and the road wheels together with the drive sprockets and idler wheels are nicely detailed. The suspension units and road wheels all fit together very well, and the attachment to the hull sides is very positive. The tracks too are nicely detailed for the medium, and can be glued with regular modeling cement. They can also be painted with standard hobby paints, though I advise caution as to the medium used, see later in this review when I discuss the painting of the model.



After the lower hull and road wheels are assembled, the instructions have the modeler moving on to the assembly of the upper hull, and Tamiya molds the main fender parts (L12 and L43) in such a way that the sponsons are not wide open, thus avoiding the “see through” effect. Detail on the large main upper hull part, J1, is VERY nice. Nice weld marks where the front glacis plate meets the rest of the hull, very nice cast effects where appropriate, and foundry casting numbers/letters nicely rendered. Sadly, while the separate driver and co driver hatches have nice cast detail, they suffer once more from the blob grab handle, which on my model I replaced with bent copper wire as was the case with the rear lower hull engine access door mentioned earlier.



Tamiya provides their kit with a nicely molded gun travel lock mechanism, but it is a one-piece unit, and you can't mount the main gun into it without careful surgery. The kit headlights come in two parts, one of them being a clear plastic lens. The two-part horn has one of the few visible ejection pin marks on the back of part L15, but this is easily removed without damaging the detail. The fender support brackets, 11 brackets per side, are finely molded, and nicely detailed. Just make sure they are all lined up properly! The rear deck of the kit is festooned with separately molded on board tools such as a track tightening bar, axe, sledge hammer, pick head and shovel. Detail is good, but they are missing their latch down belts, but these can be easily added with pieces of lead foil and some suitable aftermarket PE buckles if you desire. Two nicely detailed multi-part jerry cans are also provided for tossing onto the rear deck stowage ledge.

The turret assembly comes next, and this consists of two main parts, upper and lower, parts K1 and K3. The cast effect detail is excellent, and there is nice representation of the foundry casting numbers/lettering as well. The rotating commander's cupola is well detailed, with the armored vision glass being six separate clear parts. The cupola hatch has a separate periscope part to it, but curiously there is no option on the hatch to show the periscope in the up/deployed position. Tamiya includes a nicely detailed four-part commander's figure, molded from the waist up, to position in the cupola should the modeler wish. The loader's hatch is also a separate part which can be deployed open or closed, and like the commander's hatch, is minus a grab handle other than the dreaded "lump". There is also only one figure in the kit, and there isn't any interior turret detail, so having the driver's hatch open would present the problem of staring into a black void.

The main gun in the kit has a single-piece plastic barrel, so there aren't any issues with lining up two barrel halves as with many kits. The muzzle brake on the end of the gun is a three-part affair. Careful sanding of the barrel and the muzzle brake is necessary to remove the seam line on both. The turret option of a deployed .50 machine gun is also available. The machine gun itself is a two-part affair, with a main body, and a separate rear handle. Detail is acceptable, though there is an ejector pin in an awkward place that needs careful sanding out. The gun also had a solid barrel opening, which needs careful drilling out for the best effect.

The kit comes with only two color and marking options, and both are about as boring as you can get. Scheme A is "5th Armored Division, Germany, April 1945", and consists of five white stars: hull sides, turret sides, front transmission housing. Scheme B is "4th Armored Division, Bastogne, Belgium, January 1945", and this consists of four stars: one on each side of the hull, in white, while the two turret stars are green. That's it. SURELY Tamiya could have found a scheme a little more interesting? Both vehicles are overall Olive Drab.

I painted the model in a series of sub assemblies: Hull, minus road wheels and bogies, turret minus main gun, main gun, separated wheels and drive sprockets, bogies. On board tools and turret machine gun were also kept separate. All the parts were carefully washed with warm water and dish washing liquid, to remove fingerprint oils, mold release agents and sanding dust and debris. Once all these were completely dry, I applied a black primer overall. I utilized Vallejo's acrylic polyurethane black primer, mixed with Vallejo acrylic thinner and a few drops of their airbrush cleaner. This was recommended at a seminar I attended run by a Vallejo rep at an IPMS USA National Convention a couple of years ago. It keeps the airbrush tip from crusting up; in fact I haven't had any clogging at all with Vallejo acrylics since I started including some airbrush cleaner. The black primer takes fully three days to cure fully, but once cured, it really is quite resilient. Once cured, I then applied a base coat of Vallejo's Olive Drab acrylic polyurethane primer. This actually is the best deal going when it comes to olive drab acrylic paint as their 60ml bottle is only 1.5 times the cost of a 17ml bottle. For a color like Olive Drab, which I use by the bucket full due to my love of WW2 US military vehicles, a good deal as I say.

I then added a little sand yellow to the OD, and did a bit of post shading. The decals were then applied over a clear coat of Tamiya X-22 acrylic gloss. The decals are typical Tamiya: a bit thick, but when sealed under a few overcoats of more clear gloss, are just fine. Then I used a technique I have read about numerous times, but never utilized. I picked out a series of yellow and green hues of oil paint, and put little dots here and there on the hull and turret surfaces, and then "blended" them with brushes dipped in odorless mineral spirits. The colored dots of oil paint become translucent, giving a slightly different hue to the surface. It certainly makes for a more interesting surface than simply straight Olive Drab, and for a first attempt, I like the effect it produces. I am encouraged enough to keep experiment-

ing with this technique. Once the oil paints had a chance to dry, I applied a sealing coat of Vallejo matt clear to seal the surface. The on board tools were hand painted with Vallejo wood for the handles, having already been airbrushed Olive Drab along with the rest of the model parts earlier in the painting process. Once dry, a thinned layer of Vallejo "Smoke" was applied over the wood colors, giving a very nice overall look to the tools.

Regarding the single piece rubber band tracks: I have read on a number of forums that the chemical compounds used for such tracks MAY be susceptible to being chemically attacked by the more harsh solvents out there on the market used to thin model paint. In particular enamel and lacquer thinners. Not wishing to risk having my tracks disintegrate on me months or years down the road, I now always prime the rubber band tracks with Vallejo acrylic polyurethane black primer prior to applying enamel washes on them.

Overall then, this is yet another great Tamiya product. "Tamiya" stands for model parts with good detail and that are well molded, and which all fit together with little mess or fuss. The instructions are always easy to understand, and you end up with a great model that you can be proud of. This kit epitomizes what modelers have come to expect from the Tamiya brand name. With a few simple additions like the grab handles I made from copper wire, a great model results. I HIGHLY recommend this model kit for anyone seeking an "Easy 8 Sherman" for their 1/35th collection.



## Fleet Air Arm Pilots in the Battle of Britain

by Jim Bates

Seventy-five years after the Battle of Britain, a small subset of pilots who fought in the crowded skies above England have almost been forgotten. They are the Fleet Air Arm pilots, who took to the air, along with their Royal Air Force counterparts, to defend the British Isles.

During the Battle, the Fleet Air Arm had one resource that the RAF desperately needed: pilots. While aircraft could be built rather quickly in factories, it took time to train men. In the dark days of 1940, the FAA loaned a small group of pilots to the RAF for attachment to their expanding complement of fighter squadrons. Two of these pilots, Sub Lieutenant Francis Dawson-Paul, who flew Spitfires with 64 Squadron, and Sub Lieutenant Arthur "Admiral" Blake, who flew Spitfires with 19 Squadron, quickly became aces.

As always, Canadian-born pilots were included in the mix. Two Canadian Fleet Air Arm pilots were to earn their Battle of Britain clasp with Fighter Command.

Jack Conway Carpenter was born in Toronto, but as a young boy returned to his ancestral Wales. He joined the Fleet Air Arm in 1939, but was attached to the RAF in June 1940. He joined 229 Squadron flying Hurricanes, but was quickly transferred to 46 Squadron, which also flew Hurricanes. While flying with 46 Squadron, he downed a Bf 110 on September 3, 1940, then shot down a Bf 109 on September 5, 1940. Sadly, his short life ended just a few days later when he was shot down while flying Hurricane P3201. He attempted to bail out of his stricken aircraft, but his parachute failed to open.

Roy Baker-Falkner, was born in England, but grew up in British Columbia. He is better known for leading attacks against the Tirpitz during Operation Tungsten in 1944, but was also involved in the Battle of Britain. Sadly, his contribution to the Battle with Fighter Command is unknown, but he was awarded the Battle of Britain clasp for having flown at least one operational sortie with RAF Fighter Command during the period of July 10, 1940 to October 31, 1940. (There is no question that Baker-Falkner was flying operations with 812 Squadron during the Battle of Britain. This Fleet Air Arm unit, flying Fairey Swordfish, was attached to RAF Coastal Command for laying mines in German-held harbors as well as bombing sorties against German invasion barges. However, only pilots attached to Fighter Command during the Battle are eligible for the Battle of Britain clasp. While one can debate the merit of the decision to leave out bomber and Coast Command aircrew who served during the Battle, it appears possible that Baker-Falkner was not actually eligible to receive the clasp.)



*Dickie Cork of 242 Squadron and Admiral Blake during the Battle of Britain.*

*Source: Fleet Air Arm Museum*

A further Canadian connection to the Battle are the three Fleet Air Arm pilots attached to 242 (Canadian) Squadron. Ostensibly a Canadian squadron, 242 Squadron always had a complement of non-Canadian pilots attached to the unit. After suffering heavy losses in France, Midshipman Peter Patterson, Sub Lieutenant Richard "Dickie" Cork, and Sub/Lt. Jimmy Gardner joined the Squadron in the summer of 1940. While Patterson was killed in September 1940, both Dickie Cork and Jimmy Gardner made ace while flying with the Canadians of 242 Squadron. Dickie Cork flew as the wingman for 242 Squadron's famous CO Douglas Bader, and was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his "exemplary courage and coolness in successful action against enemy bombers." He later commanded 880 Squadron flying Sea Hurricanes, but was killed in a Corsair crash in 1944. Jimmy Gardner survived the Battle and returned to fly with the Fleet Air Arm for the rest of the war. To retain their nautical flavor during their time with the RAF, Cork and Gardner wore naval uniforms and Gardner



*The left side of Jimmy Gardner's 242 Squadron Hurricane was painted with Nelson's "England Expects" signal from the Battle of Trafalger. It is believed that the Hurricane which carried this art was P2884 LE-V. Gardner flew LE-V most often with 242 Squadron. Source: Fleet Air Arm Museum*

painted Nelson's Trafalgar "England Expects" signal on the side of his Hurricane.

**Airfix 1/48th Hawker Hurricane Mk. I**

After almost collapsing about ten years ago, Airfix goes from strength to strength with each release. They've recently issued what is probably the best Hurricane in any scale. While Airfix released a 1/48th Hurricane in 1980 which was a very nice kit for its time, the new kit is thoroughly modern with loads of detail and some nice options.

Consisting of 127 parts in grey and clear plastic, the kit has a beautifully detailed cockpit which includes separate framing for the sidewalls. A pilot is also included. About the only things missing from the cockpit are harnesses for the pilot. The cockpit and wheel wells detail is built around two wing spars that should allow for good fuselage to wing alignment. Gun bays are provided for each wing, but the covers in the top wings will need to be removed by the modeler. (I much prefer this, rather than separate parts, as it

makes it easier for the modeler who wishes to build his wings "all closed up.") Again, gun bay detail is excellent. All flying surfaces are separate and can be positioned by the modeler. Parts are included to model the Hurricane with the gear extended or retracted and both the Rotol and de Havilland propellers and spinners are included. The clear parts are nicely done, though not quite as crystal clear as some industry leaders. Decals are provided for two Battle of Britain aircraft, one of which survives today as a warbird. Overall, this is an excellent kit and I can't wait to dig in and get building.

Xtradecal has recently issued a decal sheet in 1/48 which includes aircraft flown by Gardner and Cork. Sadly, there are some issues with the depiction of Gardner's aircraft as they have included no serial number, the aircraft is incorrectly marked as LE-T, and they've included a spurious flag signal for the right side of the Hurricane. (LE-T was Hurricane V7203 in which Canadian Pilot Officer Joseph Latta went missing on January 1941.) Dickie Cork's P2831 LE-K is more accurate and carries a RN style crown painted under the cockpit.

On October 7th 1940 Pilot Officer Ken W. Woodcock of No. 501 Squadron RAF used the wings of his Hawker Hurricane to knock off the tail plane of a Messerschmitt Bf109E, causing the Bf109 to crash into the sea. Pilot Officer Woodcock made a successful forced landing near Folkestone.

**1:48 HAWKER HURRICANE MK.I**

MODEL KIT • MAQUETTE A MONTER • MODELLBAUSKITZ • MODELLU & SCALA • BOLNINOBEL • MAQUETA PARA MONTAR • PLASTYFIGGSAZS • RAKENNUSKALIA • MODELO PARA CONSTRUIR • NOBELBYGGESAT • DYNAMONDÖYTYMÖD MONTENS

## You Be the Judge

by Scott Kruize

- Not a master modeler.
- Can't put ribbon-winning models down on contest tables.
- Don't know anything about judging. Can't possibly make judgments about this stuff; the quality of builds much better than mine...much less picking out the exact order of winners among them.
- Would be tongue-tied on a team with knowledgeable, experienced judges.
- All in all, what possible value could my opinion have?

Do these thoughts run through your mind, at our meetings, when you hear – once again - that our Contest and Show is coming up soon, and more judges are needed? They're the thoughts that I had. I was wrong about them all.

I wasn't a master builder when I first started hanging around with you guys, a dozen years ago. I'm still not. I may never be.

Such ribbons as I have won have NOT been from having my builds go head-to-head with really good ones.

None of that has anything whatsoever to do with being able to help judge.

Of course I didn't know anything about judging back then. It's just like any other subject: you know nothing at first, then as you do it, you learn. It doesn't take more than a few minutes to learn enough to be useful.

As a matter of fact, though, we actually do make judgments every single time we look at even one model sitting out on display, and certainly wherever two or more were visible. It's automatic: your brain can't help but classify and file information about features that are good, bad, or indifferent.

I'm never tongue-tied for very long. I can't help forming opinions all the time. When (after some reflection) I decide an opinion of mine might have some value, I lay it out.

I went to my first Contest and Show our Chapter hosted, after attending only two prior meetings. Over the course of the next year, I attended several more meetings, and found myself paying attention more closely to the models at the next contest. And by the time the third contest approached, I became more and more aware of the effort to recruit judges. Clearly, more were wanted. It seems even I was wanted.

There aren't many things I'm really good at. But what I do least well is hang around idle, watching other people do things. When I came into our Chapter, it wasn't with the belief or intention to impress everyone with what a master modeler I'd be. But I did promise myself: I will make my presence felt. So I volunteered to judge.

That first time, the head judge put me on Bill Osborn's team. Neither Bill nor his two fellow judges seemed the least bit concerned that I hadn't judged before. They expected me to examine the models with them, voice my observations, and help them reach agreement about which models - on that particular day, at those particular tables, in each particular category, actually there on display - deserved ribbons. As lead, Bill in particular made it clear that we were going to judge on craftsmanship. He insisted this could be done sensibly and objectively. It takes no superhuman powers of discernment to tell the difference between a seam left rough, or cleaned up properly. Landing gear legs that are - or are not - in mirror-image alignment; tail surfaces that are - or are not - set off at equal angles to a fuselage; paint that is blotchy or smooth; decals that are 'silvered' or snug; windscreens and canopies whose frameworks are clearly and cleanly marked or not.

The three of them made sure I understood the basic principle that there would always be flaws to detect and appraise. As Stephen Tontoni would later put it so succinctly: "No model is perfect; some models have fewer flaws than others." Anyone who knows this principle, and is willing to serve, has all the qualifications required to judge.

Shortly into the session, finding voice to opinions within, I pressed Bill into a high-level philosophical exchange: if two models were equally well done, should we favor the more complex one? That is: the one with more parts, more visible fiddly-bits, a more complex color and markings scheme? Or perhaps coming from behind with a somewhat inferior-fitting kit?

---



He didn't shut me down as if I were a clueless novice with no useful thoughts. To the contrary, he patiently thrashed this all out with me and his two fellow judges, finally conceding that IF two builds were similarly well done, preference should go to the more complex. But having yielded that point, he hammered home again that we were going to judge on craftsmanship, craftsmanship, and craftsmanship. He insisted that sufficient attention to craftsmanship details would allow us to judge every entry with accuracy and fairness.

Serving with this first team, under his direction, I did see that there were always differences in craftsmanship. Further, new though I was, I found that I could help even these more experienced judges see things they may have overlooked. Together our team made choices that were proper and easily defensible. At the end of it all, I was glad that I'd volunteered to judge. In a useful and positive way, I made my presence felt!

As said already, judging does not require superhuman powers of discernment. Any of you who've not yet judged may be sure that your input will be valuable and heeded, and you will help your team form correct decisions.

Beyond being willing to 'do your part', there's a good reason to volunteer. Besides the satisfaction you will get from your participation, be sure also that your own modeling efforts will immediately and substantially improve. Soon into the judging process, you will realize what makes a good workmanlike effort; what elementary mistakes can and should be easily overcome. You'll find yourself putting more and better models out at our Contest and Shows, and your fellow judges - having learned the same lessons - may start giving them ribbons.

---

---

## **Raffle Plea**

**by Eric Christianson**

Hello everyone!

It's that time again – our annual IPMS Spring Show is coming up, and with it is our annual plea for raffle donations. The success of our thriving Seattle club is due to the enthusiastic participation of our members in our various events and meetings, including the raffle that takes place during our annual show and contest. We've been very fortunate in the last few years to be able to offer some really good kits to the people attending the show – and subsequently have sold a pile of raffle tickets in the process. Our hope is that we can achieve similar success this year. Or maybe even surpass it!

But we can't do it without your help. So take another look through your stash for those kits that you are willing to part with – or any thing else that you would like to donate (books, tapes, modeling-related tools or toys, etc).

What we are not able to raffle off we can sell via a Silent Auction, or at the end of the show, so we can use anything you have. Our goal, however, is to spur ticket sales – so the higher quality kits are the real means to this end.

I will be at the next two meetings to receive any and all donations. Please help if you can!

---

## sWS 60cm Infrared Searchlight Carrier "Uhu"

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.)

Newly offered in injection-molded plastic by Bronco Models out of China, is a wide-tracked sWS Utility Halftrack sporting a 60cm infrared searchlight and accompanying night-vision IR equipment.

This "new" kit is actually a reissue of the high-quality Great Wall (Lion Roar) kit from a few years back. Aside from the box art and the color of the plastic, the main difference between the two kits is that Bronco includes a complete engine assembly. At some point GW introduced these parts as an aftermarket set you had to purchase separately for their sWS kits.



The subject of this kit is a fictional design. There were no plans to make an infrared carrying sWS, not even on paper. The name "Uhu" (Eagle Owl) was not a generic name, but was applied to the Sd.Kfz. 251 20 Infrarotscheinwerfe, introduced in late 1944. The 251 mounted a 60cm infrared searchlight with a range of 1.5 km for illuminating targets at night. These specialized vehicles were tasked with guiding IR sight-equipped Panther tanks to targets that were out of range of their own smaller infrared searchlights. The technology was new and problematic, but improving. Who knows what would have come of it had the war continued.

### What's in the Box

- 13 sprues of soft, light grey plastic
- 2 sprues of soft, light brown plastic (track links)
- 2 sprue of clear plastic (glass parts)
- 1 lower hull, packaged separately
- 1 medium sheet of decals, thin, but in perfect register
- 1 sheet of photo-etch
- 1 color print of the box art suitable for framing.
- 1 large instruction booklet, totaling 14 pages with 30 steps, printed in color.

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 due to the fact that it has a lot of interior detail, including a reasonably complete engine. It is relatively easy to have things go sideways unless you pay very close attention to what you are doing.

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.

A single German tri-color scheme is included – unidentified – no actual sWS Uhu existed!

### Things to consider before starting:

There is a lot of photo-etch without plastic alternatives included in the box. 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 IR scopes.

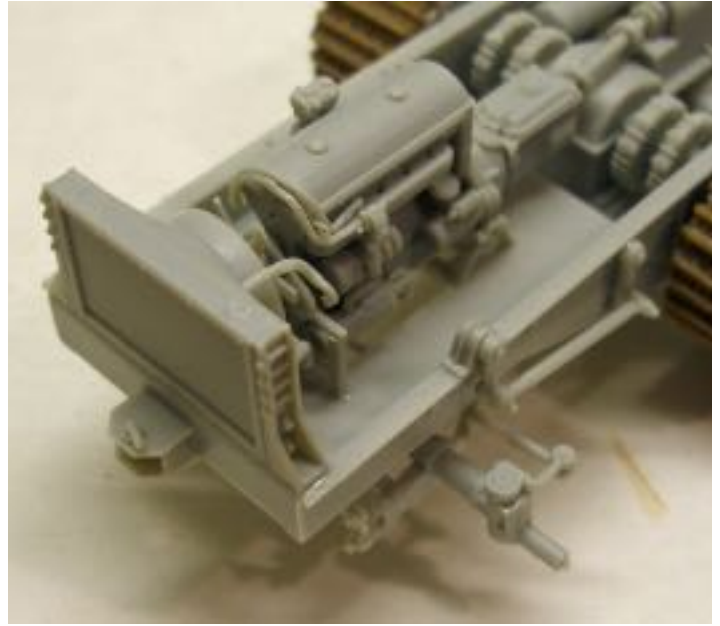
The kit also contains a many parts that have (male) connection tabs, but their (female) counterparts are not as much holes as they are very small indentations in the surface receiving the part - if they exist at all. As a consequence, more often than not the part doesn't

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.

Every single hatch, 18 of them (!) can be modeled open or closed, so some up-front work is in order to figure out what you want to show and what you want to hide. There is significant detail exposed under open hatches, including the engine and driving compartments.

It's always important to keep in mind that Bronco kits are not for the faint of heart. That said, the parts fit, they are well-engineered, and with a little patience, will build into a great model.

I first encountered the sandwich-style design of the front tires with a MiniArt kit years ago, and I must say this design sets the bar for ease of assembly while providing the most authentic representation available. I simply love them. They only assemble one way, and the tread is beautifully reproduced and preserved since there is no centerline mold line to remove.



Bronco has included a complete engine and an impressive amount of detail in the lower chassis and interior, most of which can be seen only if you decide to leave some or all of the 18 hatches open. The engine and drive train is made up of no less than 61 parts that fit relatively well. The only hiccup I had was the rear trailer hitch, which when installed, interfered with the stepladder attached right next to it. In the end, I had to cut off the right third of the hitch so the ladder would line up vertically. I'm pretty sure I had things right here.

The upper hull is made up of a number of flat panels that come together along beveled edges. I used Testors (black bottle) liquid cement here since it has a longer drying time. The panels slide around but come together nicely in the end to produce a solid top and rear compartment. There are so many hatches and lockers that can be modeled open or closed, with exposed interior detail, that it was difficult to rationalize closing them up. I left one storage locker open on the right-hand side (couldn't resist!), filling it with items from my spare parts box.

The only criticism I have is model manufacturers' habit of providing photo-etch parts simply for the sake of photo-etch. In Steps 19, 24, and 25, Bronco provides 15 perfectly good (plastic) grab handles, and then has you add six more tri-fold, (PE) versions. Annoyed, I replaced these with plastic parts from my spares box and moved on.

Bronco provides the option to model the main searchlight in combat mode (pointed forward) or travel mode (pointed straight up).

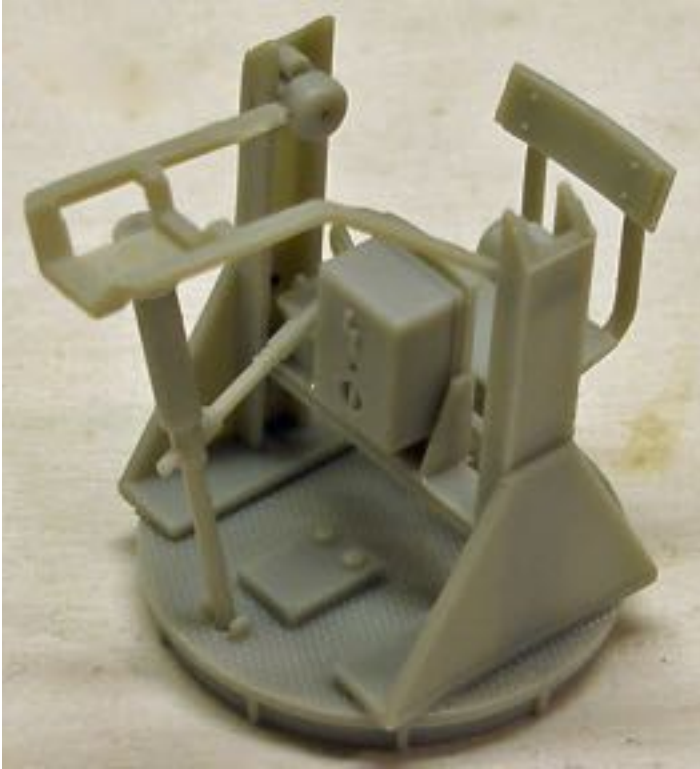
There is a concern of having the two clear plastic lenses so close in proximity to solvent-based adhesive required for everything else. Before masking the outer lens with tape, I dipped both rings in Future hoping that the acrylic layer will thwart any fogging of the clear plastic. I feel this entire assembly could have been designed better.

As far as the other four IR lamps – assembly went fine but they all relied on photo-etch parts to connect to the main hull – parts without plastic alternatives.

I attached the track early, after Step 11, instead of waiting until the end per the instructions. I wasn't going to paint them separately, and waiting until the end risked breaking delicate parts added later in the process.

The individual track links are of two sizes; the larger part that contains the guide posts and the small part that links the larger parts together. Both come on sprues and have four attachment points each, and are not sided. Thanks to very small and easily





accessible attachment points, I did not feel I had to do any clean-up whatsoever after removing them from the sprues. That said, there is a prominent ejection mark on the inside of each of the larger parts, and the small parts contain detail on only one side (the outside).

Purists may want to replace them with aftermarket track, or spend a lot of time cleaning the track up before assembly – certainly more time than I have!

Assembly is tricky; the smaller segments drop into place between two of the larger segments, which would seem simple to accomplish if not for the fact that the larger parts want to move around while you are creating each run.

I solved the problem by using a scrapbooking product called Wonder Tape, which is a slightly tacky, two-sided, spongy tape that has just enough push in it to hold on to the links while you work. You can find Wonder Tape at any well-stocked craft store. I stuck the 1/8th inch-wide strip of tape on a glue-proof surface, about 1/4 inch above and along a 15-inch ruler. After laying out the larger links about 1/8th of an inch apart from each other, I went back and dropped the smaller parts into place. I then added two drops of Model Master slow-drying cement (the black bottled variety) to the connection points between the links and let that sit for about 30 minutes. I then lifted up the run and carefully peeled

off the Wonder Tape, and draped it on to the vehicle. One more session for the other side and I was finished. Nice.

Since this vehicle did not actually exist, I had some latitude on how to finish it. In the end, I went with a variation of the German tri-color scheme provided in the instructions.

(Note: I thin all Vallejo paints 50/50 with their airbrush thinner and a single drop of Liquitex Flow Aid per 10 drops of Vallejo paint. I mix the paint in a plastic disposable cup, swish that around until it is mixed, and then 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 dark primer/pre-shade coat of (90% Alclad Black Primer + 10% Alclad Grey Primer) 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 three Vallejo Model Air paints, applied in succession, to achieve a highlighted German Yellow. This was comprised of 71.025 Dark Yellow, 71.028 Sand Yellow and 71.075 Sand Ivory, applied in that order. Each paint is used to lighten the color underneath, yet still allow some of what's underneath to show through. I then applied a camouflage coat of 71.040 Burnt Umber, followed by 71.012 Dark Green.

I originally hand-painted the insides of each of the three scopes with Tamiya X-11 Chrome Silver, but I felt that it made the scopes look too much like huge headlights. So I used some artistic license and gave each light a hand-brushed coat of diluted Tamiya X-27 Clear Red before attaching the clear lenses and masking off the fronts.

I used a mix of Vallejo New Wood and Vallejo Sand Ivory for the wooden portions of the pioneer tools. To achieve the wood-like effect, I let a coat of Mig Wash Brown oil paint soak on the surface of the tools 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 and tools over a coat of flat black.

Decals: With painting finished, I airbrushed 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.

Once the Future was dry, I used the Red and Blue MicroSol/MicroSet products to apply the decals. The decals were very thin and fragile – both of the stencils (#9) in my sample disintegrated into a dozen pieces, rendering them unusable. 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 and Dark Wash diluted with Mona Lisa White Spirit for an overall wash. I hand-painted the two front tires using Model Master US Army Helo Drab enamel.

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

Finally, I added a slurry of Mig European Dust pigment and Mona Lisa to the front wheel tread, brushing off most of it off after it dried. I attached the wheels, a fire extinguisher to the rear, and an antenna from my spares box. Off to the photo-booth for this tough 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 anyone planning to build this kit needs to understand that. Dry fitting and methodical inspection is 'de rigueur' for a project like this.

In the end, however, extra effort brings 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 photo-etch 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.





*Above: Main searchlight clamps*

*Below: Interior detail*



## Academy 1/48th Scale F-4C Phantom "Vietnam War"

by Jacob Russell

The McDonnell F-4 Phantom was a useful and versatile aircraft that equipped both the United State Navy and later the Air Force during the 1960s and 70s, and it gave sterling service during the Vietnam War. The Phantom was an excellent performer: it flew faster, further, higher, and it could carry more ordnance than any other USAF fighter. The Air Force originally called it the F-110A but soon settled on the Phantom name; the F-4C was the first Air Force version.

The kit consists of 500 parts on 16 sprues, molded in white, black, blue-gray, gray and clear plastic. My initial impressions of the kit are favorable. Surface detail is by way of recessed panel lines, rivets and raised panel lines, where applicable.

The panel lines are of a consistent depth. There is minimal flash on the parts and very small ejector pin marks; happily most of these are easily removed. The sprue attachment points are located where it's easy to remove the parts without marring them. There are sink marks on parts such as the side of the Martin Baker Mk H7 ejection seats, but they will be invisible due to their location deep in the cockpit.

The cockpit is a multi-piece assembly. It is very well detailed and it will benefit from careful detail painting and dry brushing. The kit includes three figures; a standing pilot and a pair of seated pilot and co-pilot figures. If you're confident in your figure painting skills by all means have a try. If not, I would leave the figures alone and instead purchase a set of photo-etched ejection seat harnesses.

The seats are well done and harnesses will enhance them nicely. As long as you've got your wallet out I would also buy of a set of Mike Grant Jet Era Cockpit decals. The instrument panel faces are blank and they need the enhanced detail (instrument faces, placards, etc.) the decals will provide.

The fuselage is a single molding that faithfully captures the Phantom's complex shape. The lower wing is a single piece to which the upper wing halves attach. Before putting the wings together, assemble the multi-piece wheel wells and glue them to the lower wing.

The wheel wells and landing gear assemblies are very well done and a set of brake lines will add useful detail. The landing gear doors, wheels, air brakes, flaps, etc. are also well depicted. The exhaust nozzles of the General Electric J79 jet engines are well done. They are molded in black, so if Alclad is your preferred paint for depicting natural metal surfaces you might not need to prime the parts beforehand. If you enjoy depicting extensive weathering you'll have a field day painting the exhausts and aft fuselage as the Phantom is famous for the discoloration of this area.

The under wing stores are extensive. They include a pair of 370 gallon wing tanks and a 600 gallon center line tank, AIM-7 Sparrow missiles, AIM-9M missiles and M117 750 pound bombs. The bombs and missiles mount on a pair of underwing pylons. The pylons include optional triple ejector racks (TER) that allow 3 bombs to be carried on each pylon rather than a single bomb.

Academy's instructions are well illustrated, with a clear and logical build sequence. Color callouts are for Humbrol, Gunze, Lifecolor, Testors, Revell, and Vallejo paints. I hope you enjoy decal application, because there are over 240 stencil decals to apply. There is a single decal option, that of Col. Robin Olds' two-MiG kill "Scat XXVII", in the familiar SEAC (South East Asia Command) green/brown camouflage

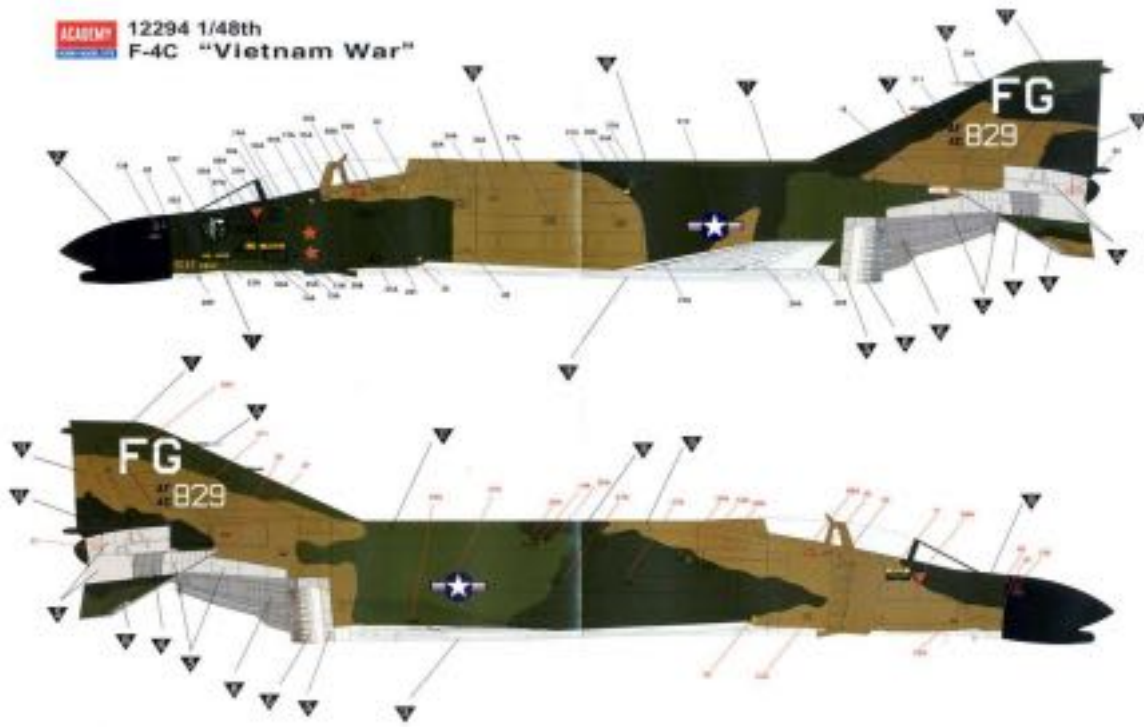
I'm not an expert on the Phantom, but I think that this Academy F-4C kit is a good depiction of the real thing. It has very good detail, it appears to be accurate, and it features a full complement of under wing stores. I think the kit needs a little aftermarket help (Mike Grant instrument panel decals and a pair of etched seat harnesses) to obtain the best results. I recommend this kit and I would like to thank Model Rectifier Corporation for providing the sample.



References

*F-4 Phantom II in Action*, Aircraft Number 65, By Larry Davis, Squadron/Signal Publications, 1984

*F-4 Phantom II In Detail & Scale, Part I*, by Bert Kinzey, Aero Publishers, Inc., 1981

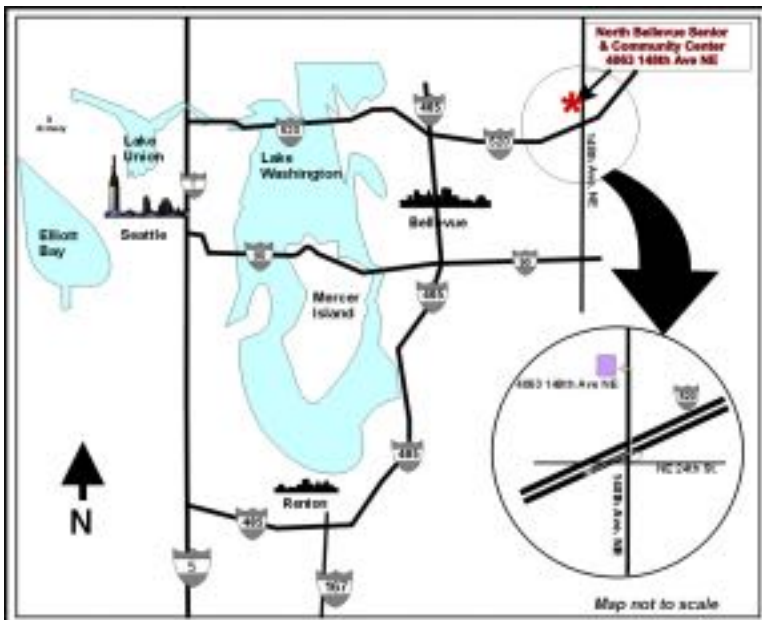


---

---

## Meeting Reminder

## March 12



### **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.