

# Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA  
February 2017

## PREZNOTES



### Calling All Members: Spring Show 2017, April 22nd - WE Need YOU to Help

Once a year, IPMS Seattle “gives back” to the modeling community by putting on a huge model show and contest. This obviously benefits our own members by providing an opportunity for us to see a huge number of excellent models in one place, plus allows us to browse table after table of interesting “vendor stuff”. But the largest group of folks at our show are “non-IPMS Seattle”, and thus the Show provides a focal point for like-minded hobbyists to gather and share this wonderful pastime of ours.

The Spring Show is the one time each year that IPMS Seattle asks all its members to actually do a little work to help with the club’s activities. On the second Saturday of every month, all that the club “asks” of its members is that they show up, and hopefully share their latest builds with each other. Once a year at the Spring Show, members are asked to put in a couple of hours helping with the various tasks that allow for a successful show: Contest Registration; Meet and Greet; Raffle; Judging; Make N Take. NONE of these tasks are difficult, and if you come with a positive attitude, ALL are a lot of fun. There will be volunteer signup sheets at this Saturday’s February meeting for each of these important areas.

Another huge area of importance for the Spring Show’s success is to remind everyone that without lots of models on the tables, the Show will be a failure. So as always, I encourage everyone to bring all their models completed since the last Spring Show and put them out on display for all to see. It might be your model that encourages someone to take up the hobby for the first time, or take a renewed interest

after a lull in building activity. So, let’s shoot for another record turnout!

Hopefully everyone remained safe during the recent bout of snowy weather, and if stuck at home took the opportunity to head to the sanctuary of the model room, and get in a little building or painting etc on your latest project! I know I certainly did!

To summarize then: think about where you wish to volunteer for the Spring Show, and start planning to finish up those projects in order to have some entries for the Show to display for folks to admire. I know I’m heading down to the model room immediately I finish this PrezNotes to work on one of my entries.

See you all at the meeting this Saturday. REMEMBER: New location this meeting only, see the details on Page 3!

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 \$15 per annum, and may be paid to Twyla Birkbeck, 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 425-885-3671 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 2017 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.

**February 11 (VFW Post 2295)**  
**April 8**

**March 11**  
**April 22 (Spring Show, Renton)**

**IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM**

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

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

Type of Membership:  Adult, 1 Year: \$10  Adult, 2 Years: \$18  Adult, 3 Years: \$26  
 Junior (Under 18 Years) \$17  Family, 1 Year: \$35 (Adult + \$1.00 for 1st Junior) How Many Cards? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Canada & Mexico: \$15  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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## February IPMS Seattle Meeting Location

Because our usual location at Bellevue Community/Senior Center is unavailable this month, the February 11 IPMS Seattle meeting will be held at the normal time, 10am – 1pm, at:

**VFW Post 2995**

**4330 148th Ave. NE**

**Redmond, WA 98052**

425-883-2995

It is officially Redmond, but the building is only about 200 yards North of where we meet now.

Drive in the main entrance and continue around on the left to the back building (Foley Hall), and park there (there are over 150 parking places). Use the Foley Hall entrance, not the VFW Clubhouse in the front.

In March, we will be back to our usual location.



## **In Our Own Backyard: An Occasional Look at Aircraft In Our Area**

**by Norm Filer**

Tim Nelson's great book *Jet City Rewind* prompted me to revisit some of the profiles I have drawn over the years. Many of them have local connections and I thought seeing other evidence of how lucky we are to have such a rich aviation area to live in might help get a little modeling interest going.

This first installment will look at Sand Point NAS. Sand Point NAS was located on Lake Washington, where Magnusson Park is today. It stayed basic until World War Two. During the war, it was greatly expanded and was a very active facility and a major distributor of aircraft parts in Lake Washington.

Post war it became the home of the Puget Sound Naval Reserve. During the 1950-1960 era, the Naval Reserve organization was a very active part of Naval aviation. WW II and Korean vets made up the bulk of the organization and provided needed additional forces in the event of another conflict. Many of the Army's National Guard and Naval Reserve squadrons were called up during the Korean conflict.

The colorful birds that operated from Sand Point during the 1950s and 1960s are the focus of this series of profiles. As you can see in the profiles, they flew an interesting variety of a/c. Period photos also indicate that there was some variation in the basic colors with the bright fluorescent Red/Orange (FS 28913) applied over whatever basic color scheme was on the a/c. A-1s and S-2s were often seen in both the then standard Gray over White and all White schemes. P-2s were usually in the overall Dark Gray with White upper fuselage and even overall White. This wide range of colors made for a very interesting and bright flight line. I suspect there might have been other types assigned as well, specifically an SNB (C-45) or two. So far, I have not been able to find any documentation.

Several things led to the Navy's decision to abandon Sand Point;

By the late 1960s the war in Viet Nam had drained the military budget vaults to the point where anything other than a direct conflict organization was almost unfindable.

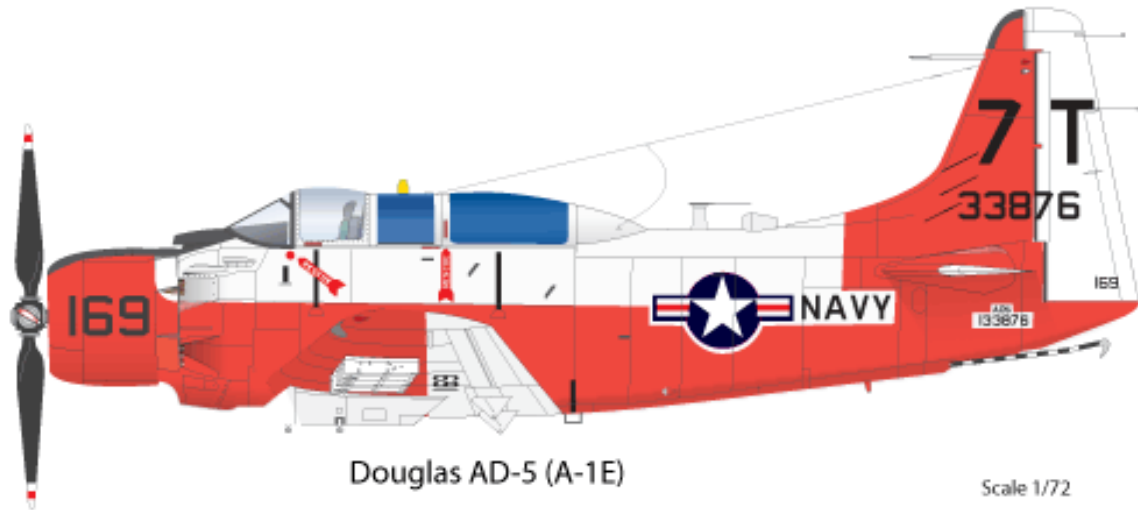
Most the staff of these reserve organizations were WWII/Korea veterans. By the late 1960s they were retiring. The public perception of the military during the Viet Nam conflict made recruitment to fill the voids very difficult.

The urbanization of the surrounding area and the increasing complaints about noise coupled with the fact that the 5,500 ft. runway was too short for later generations of jets and there was no practical way to extend it probably were major considerations as well. The reserve activities were transferred to NAS Whidbey and Sand Point NAS returned to City of Seattle ownership in 1970.

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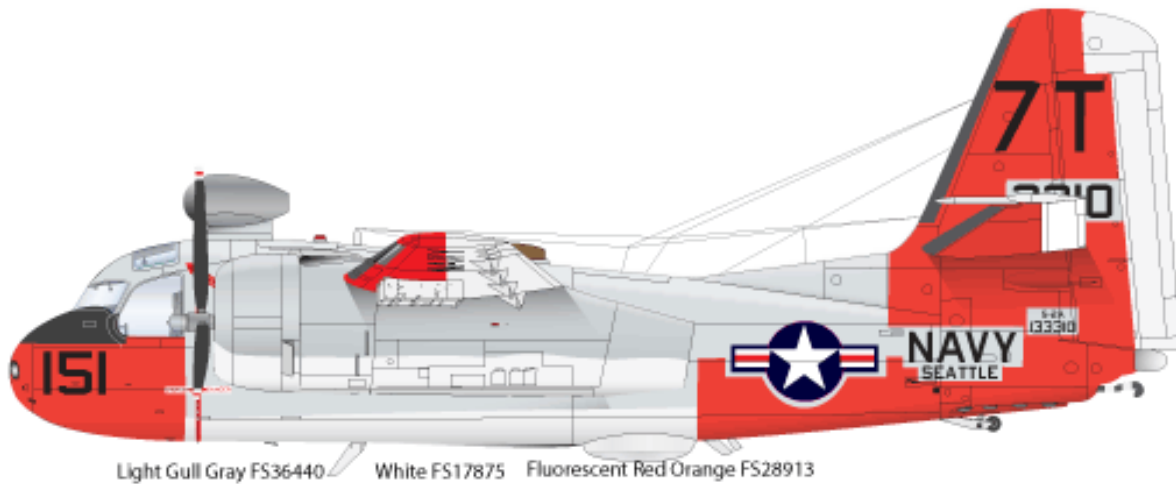
Aircraft of NAS Seattle (Sand Point)



Douglas AD-5 (A-1E)

Scale 1/72

White FS17875    Fluorescent Red Orange FS28913

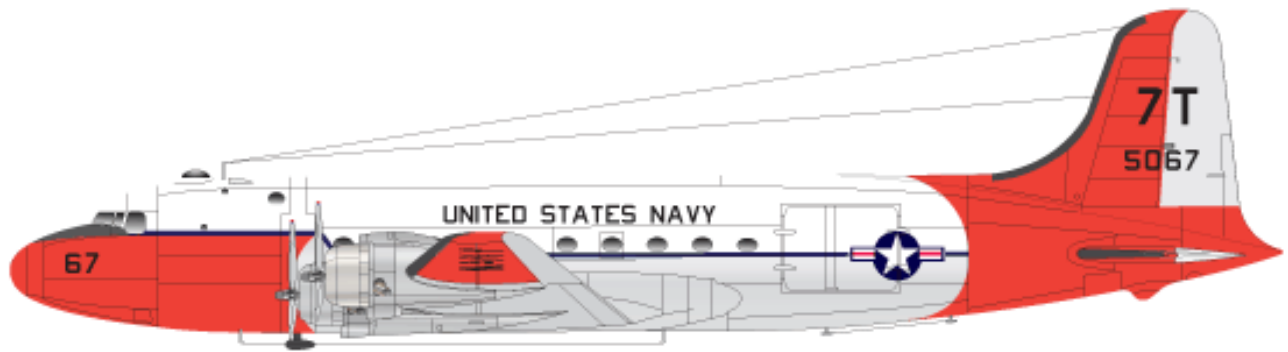


Grumman S-2A

Scale 1/72

Light Gull Gray FS36440    White FS17875    Fluorescent Red Orange FS28913

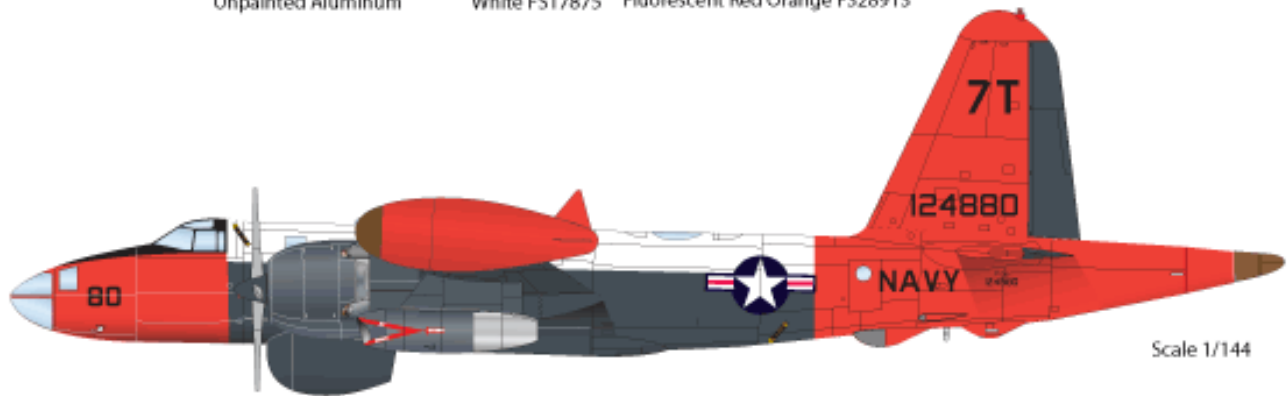




Douglas R5D (C-54)

Scale 1/144

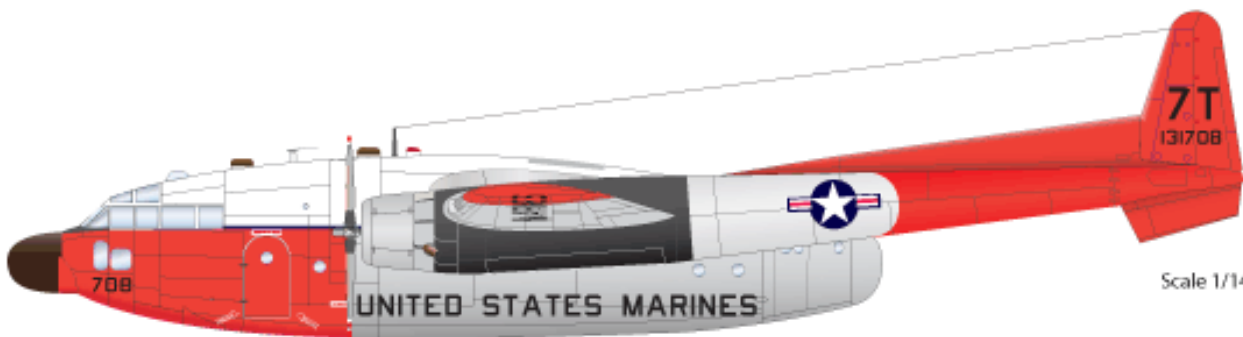
- Unpainted Aluminum
- White FS17875
- Fluorescent Red Orange FS28913



Lockheed P2V-5 (P-2E)

Scale 1/144

- Seaplane Gray FS26081
- White FS17875
- Fluorescent Red Orange FS28913



Fairchild R4Q (C-119F)

Scale 1/144

- Unpainted Aluminum
- White FS17875
- Fluorescent Red Orange FS28913



## Eduard 1/72nd Scale Supermarine Spitfire Mk.IX ProfiPACK

by Jim Bates

I am sometimes considered the Spitfire guy among my modeling friends (even though I would count the Hawker Hurricane as my favorite type). I have purchased innumerable Spitfire kits over the years in 1/72nd. Some were good (CMK resin) and some were horrible (Forces of Valor/Unimax). Probably much to the consternation of those who say "not another Spitfire," I have long lamented the lack of a "perfect" Spitfire Mk. IX. Sure, Airfix's kit from a few years back had good shape, but it lacked detail and had heavy engraved panel lines. AZ's kit was better, but it had some odd engineering choices. Why oh why did they mold the wings with clipped tips? When Eduard issued its excellent 1/48th Spitfire, I felt guilty buying one (it wasn't 1/72nd, after all) and have always hoped that Eduard would scale it down someday. After a few years of teasing, my prayers were answered: the Eduard 1/72nd Spitfire Mk. IX is here!



The breakdown of Eduard's 1/72nd scale kit will come as no surprise, if one has inspected their 1/48th Spitfire family. They are very similar in appearance. The kit consists of three large runners and two small runners of dark grey plastic and one sprue of clear items. There are lots of parts in the box. Many will be used to build a very detailed model, but there are also substantial extras that hint at forthcoming Spitfire versions (the teardrop canopy of the Spitfire XVI for instance).

The parts are, as expected from Eduard, well molded and covered in finely scribed surface detail including rivets. While some might object to the rivet detail as inappropriate for a Spitfire, it is so fine and subtle that it should look excellent under paint. The fasteners on the cowling panels are raised and a tad too prominent, but I wouldn't want to take the chance on destroying the surface detail to sand them down. The complex shape of the Spitfire is captured well and major dimensions coincide with published data. The rudder and ailerons are modeled as separate items, but sadly, the elevators are modeled as part of the horizontal stabilizers.

Options abound with this kit, and as mentioned, some point to other versions coming in the future (the Spitfire XVI and Spitfire VIII). Clipped, standard, and extended wingtips are included, as are round and fishtail exhausts. Both round and pointed rudders are on the sprues and three styles of horizontal stabilizers are provided. Ailerons are included for both the Spitfire IX and the Spitfire VIII. Both smooth and treaded wheels are provided, as are three spoke, four spoke, five spoke, and covered hubs. Multiple sets of landing gear legs are included, but only one set is appropriate for a wartime Spitfire IX. Check the instructions carefully!

To hang under your Spitfire, Eduard provides both styles of slipper drop tanks, as well as the "torpedo" style tank and bombs. Both the wing pylons and the center line rack are included. The cockpit is very well detailed in plastic with separate side walls. The seat is in multiple parts and the included photo etch can be used to enhance the instrument panel, gunsight, and control column. The optional canopies are provided to position open or closed.

As good as this kit is, there are one or two odd choices. Echoing the 1/48th kit, Eduard has molded the cowling parts in two halves, which leaves a difficult seam. Eduard has addressed this with Brassin replacement cowls, but they really should have provided the revised cowl parts in the kit. As is common with Eduard, some of the assemblies appear more complicated than necessary; for example, multi-part wheel wells and radiator housings. Some may quibble with the rivets. All of these items are only small niggles; the only real issue is that the hood on the open canopy option is too large. This is probably necessary to inject it in plastic, but it does look odd on the completed kit.

Decals are provided for two aircraft flown by RCAF pilot Jerry Billings, a RAF bird in natural metal, a standard RAF camouflaged aircraft flown by Pierre Clostermann, and planes flown by Czech and Polish pilots in the RAF. Decals are well printed and include full stenciling. As is the case in Profipak kits, a sheet of masks is included for the canopy.

This is an excellent kit and the best Spitfire IX in the scale. Spitfire fans' prayers have been answered! Not only do we get an excellent kit; our spares boxes will be filled with extra parts to upgrade all the lesser Spitfires. Well done! I would like to thank Eduard for the review sample.

## Hurricane Bookshelf: ‘Buffalo-ed’, then ‘Hula-ed’, then Hellcat Combat

by Scott Kruize

I originally started writing for our newsletter to call attention to books about the Hawker Hurricane, most especially about those that give it credit during the Battle of Britain. This was in reaction to the overblown P.R. of the Supermarine Spitfire. Great and glamorous as it was, during the Battle it was only about two-fifths of the Royal Air Force’s fighter strength. The other three-fifths were Hurricanes, yet in many accounts of the Battle, they’re not even mentioned...

Over time, I’ve written about a bunch of publications that have nothing to do with the Hurricane. I do get a kick out of finding some link when I’m writing a review; here’s a thin one...

Britain’s Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm began the Second World War with three fighters, if you’re willing to stretch that term a bit. There was the Gloster Sea Gladiator, hurriedly adapted from land service and fitted with naval equipment such as catapults pools and arresting gear. There was the Blackburn Skua, which over land would be called a light reconnaissance bomber. It seated two, carried a modest 740-pound bomb load, and had four forward-firing .30-caliber machine guns. The Fairey Fulmar entered service a bit later. This was also a two-seater, but otherwise was optimized for the air-to-air interceptor role, with eight machine guns in its forward-firing battery. These three planes could go about 250 miles per hour; the Skua a bit less, the Fulmar a bit more.



The Fleet Air Arm got a glint of hope from the otherwise disastrous Norwegian expedition: the Hawker Hurricane proved it could land on a carrier. About 600 Sea Hurricanes eventually served their navy, bloodying Axis air forces in the Mediterranean, around Malta, in defense of convoys, and during Torch, the Allied invasion of North Africa.

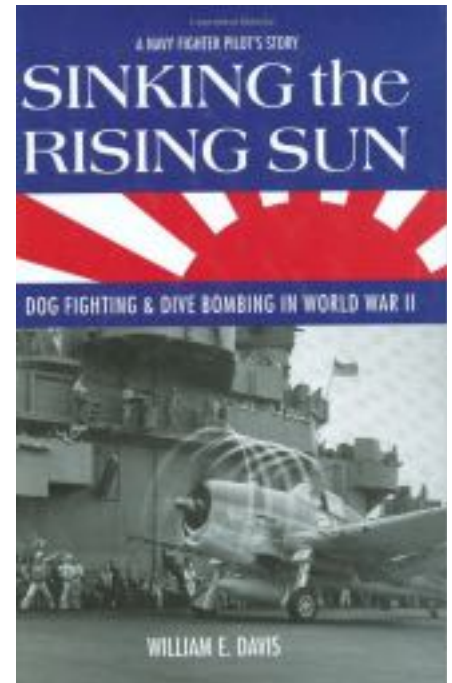
Of course, its glamorous stablemate was also tried as a shipboard fighter. The Spitfire’s high speed was certainly desired, but its structure was too frail: ‘normal’ (!) carrier landings often broke it.

Good ol’ U.S. of A. to the rescue: our naval fighters were Lend-Leased to the Royal Navy: the Grumman F4F Wildcat, its successor, and the Chance Vought Corsair.

The book in this review, *Sinking the Rising Sun*, by William E. Davis, tells of one of our own naval aviators going to war in the F6F Hellcat. I’ve read several such first-hand accounts, pilots describing their peacetime training and wartime experiences. Some accounts are better than others, but I’ve never read a dull one. Of course, I read these blood-and-glory stories sitting comfortably in my easy chair. I’ve never had anything personally to do with military aircraft operations. My minuscule experience flying light planes only makes me want to hide under the bed whenever I try to imagine flying and landing an airplane from the steel deck of a ship. When I want a thrill - still sitting in my easy chair - I play the video *No Easy Days*. This compilation of carrier operations shows how even in peacetime, things often go really badly.

New to me in this particular book: Ensign Davis’s takes on the Hawaiian hula dance’s variations, and flying the Brewster Buffalo.

First, the hula: some of his training was in Hawaii. For young men recently sent far from home, its exotic and unique cultural amenities evidently compensated a bit for the grind of military drill. Off-duty time could be spent at dinner dances in feminine company. Here’s how he describes the end of one such an evening, with his new flame, Lucette:





*In a few minutes she danced in...floated over to the bed, and landed gently beside me. You will never understand the hula until you've been taught by a native, in the bedroom. There's more to the hula than meets the eye.*

Uh...be that as it may...a different form of excitement was his training on the Brewster Buffalo. I read a bunch of stuff about this "most powerful fighter in the Far East" (1940 Brewster advertisement): British and Dutch airmen, and United States Marines, all flew them to disastrous defeat fighting the Japanese, early in the Pacific war. Only the Finnish Air Force did well with it, flying their 40-some Brewsters to many victories over the Soviet air force.

Mr. Davis describes how he finished his advanced training in a Buffalo:

*Carrier pilots are the best pilots in the world, but they weren't up to the Brewster Buffalo. The moment the Buffalo arrived with the fleet, they started losing airplanes. The canopy shielded the small rudder from the air stream, making it difficult hold the plane on course, especially at the low speed required for carrier landings.*

*The plane looked a lot like the racing planes of the 1930s: all engine, a barrel fuselage, stubby wings, a large canopy, and almost no tail.*

*Nervously I walked on the flight line to the F2A. The one thousand horsepower engine looked tremendous. I had undergone a one-week training program on the airplane, including a blindfold checkout of the cockpit. I had to memorize the location of all the instruments as well as the controls, emergency and otherwise, then get into the cockpit blindfolded and point out every item to the satisfaction of the instructor. He tried to tell me how it would fly, but with a single-place fighter no one can take you up and check you out on your first flight. I was on my own.*

Spoiler Alert: he managed to get the plane up, and down again, without breaking it or himself. He managed to finish training, get assigned to the carrier Lexington, and fight the rest of the war in the island-hopping campaigns against the Japanese Empire.

Like other personal accounts, this one contains several descriptions of things that went wrong. There's a reason why, in the military, they so often cite the acronym SNAFU. Here are two of Mr. Davis's memories. Dark one first, occurring the first time he took his Hellcat into action. He and his wingman arrive over the enemy-held island:

*Duke and I increased the interval between us so that we could dive without fear of midair collision. We started our dives, and immediately the anti-aircraft fire increased. They were throwing everything they had at us. I glanced at Duke. One moment he was there, the next there was a tremendous explosion, then nothing. There weren't even any pieces visible. He had caught a shell, probably a 5 inch, and there was nothing left...I tore myself away and concentrated on the target and dropped my bomb.*

Lighter note: his squadron mate Hutto seems somehow to have always come out ahead of the game...but before you conjure up an image of a USN super-sailor, fearless, knowing all things nautical, and carrying out impossible missions against the Empire of Japan with total confidence and competence, consider his exchange with the squadron commander after another island raid:

*--Then I saw the battleship!*

*Why didn't you make a contact report immediately?*

*'Cause when I got closer I realized it wasn't a battleship.*

*What DID you see?*

*It was a heavy cruiser, or at least a light cruiser, but one of the ones the Japs built that cheated on the 5-5-3 treaty – almost as big as heavy cruiser.*

*And--? (The squadron leader by this time knew Hutto REALLY WELL...)*

*It was a destroyer...*

*Did you get a picture of it?*



*Well, no. I flew straight for it, but as I got close, it submerged.*

*That was the RESCUE SUBMARINE! One of ours! -They thought you were making an attack on it and they had to submerge to protect themselves. You absolute idiot!*

The book confirms our F6F Hellcat as clearly first class. It operated as an air superiority fighter, destroying over five thousand of Japan's best planes, some by Ensign Davis's guns. It also worked well as a close support strafe and dive bomber, as Mr. Davis used it most. It was our fleet's major air asset over the Pacific, and served the Royal Navy quite well, too. I'm glad I read this pilot's account of what it was like to fly it against the enemy. I'm glad, for our country, that so many were made: over twelve thousand. I'm glad that our British allies got thirteen hundred of this major advance over the Hurricane. I'm glad I've built display models: the ancient (early 60s) Monogram, quite good for its time, and the modern, really excellent Eduard, which I got 'free' for building it as a kit Review. (See our N/L archives.) Build the former as a NABBROKE (Nostalgic Aging Baby Boomer Real Old Kit Experience), a break from your 'serious' modeling...and build the latter if you want a chance to win awards at our IPMS contests.

The closest I'll ever get flying one is my model, almost completed: all-balsa, glow-engined-powered, for radio control. Even at ONLY one-twelfth-scale, it's a pretty big bird. The real ones I'll just have to admire at rare air show appearances. I'll have to take Ensign Davis's word about how well they flew - just as I'll have to take his word about the special late-night 1-on-1 version of the Hawaiian hula!



## Academy 1/35th Scale Merkava Mk.IID

by Eric Christianson

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

Academy has recently offered a nice update to its venerable Merkava main battle tank line; this time the Merkava Mk. IID, with its distinctive flat-bottomed side armor.

In a market flooded with Merkava kits I believe this is the only one containing this feature. Academy makes a real effort to keep the parts count down while still providing stunning detail and engineering. The Merkava IID sports many of the features of the higher-end manufacturers, but offers it at a much lower price – representing one of the best values on the market.



The Merkava ("Chariot") is a main battle tank used by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). The tank began development in 1973 and entered official service in 1978. Four main variants of the tank have been deployed to date and it was first used extensively in the 1982 Lebanon War. The name "Merkava" was derived from the IDF's initial development program name.

Design criteria include rapid repair of battle damage, survivability, cost-effectiveness, and off-road performance. Following the model of contemporary self-propelled howitzers, the turret assembly is located closer to the rear than in most main battle tanks. With the engine in front, this layout is intended to grant additional protection against a frontal attack, especially for the personnel in the main hull, such as the driver. It also creates more space in the rear of the tank that allows increased storage capacity and a rear entrance to the main crew compartment allowing easy access under enemy fire. This allows the tank to be used as a platform for medical disembarkation, a forward command and control station, and an infantry fighting vehicle. The rear entrance's clamshell-style doors provide overhead protection when off-and-on-loading cargo and personnel.

While originally slated to be retired in 2010, production soon resumed on the Merkava line in 2013 with continually improved variants.

The Merkava Mark I and II were armed with a 105 mm M68 gun. The Mark III and Mark IIID (Dor Dalet BAZ kassag) are armed with an IMI 120 mm smooth-bore gun which can fire all versions of western 120 mm smooth bore tank ammunition.

Each model of the Merkava has two roof mounted 7.62 mm machine guns for use by the commander and loader and another mounted co-axially with the main gun. A 60 mm mortar is also fitted for firing smoke rounds or suppressing dug-in infantry anti-tank teams.

The Mark IID departs from earlier models sporting modular composite armor on the chassis and turret, allowing rapid replacement of damaged armor.

The contents of the box include:

Main upper and lower hulls, packaged separately

8 sprues in soft, light-tan plastic, packaged separately

1 sprue of poly-caps for the wheels

2 runs of flexible rubber track

1 piece of twisted thread for use as tow cables.

1 small sheet of decals with markings for two vehicles

1 12-page black and white instruction sheet with 16 steps, including a 2-tone color, 4-view decal placement and paint guide sheet

The kit comes with two schemes represented using black and white four-view drawings; and a small (but perfectly registered) sheet of decals printed in Korea. Both color schemes represent unidentified vehicles.

The Instructions and things to consider before starting:

The instructions are separated into two sections; section 1 contains steps 1-14, and section 2 contains the last two steps, parts map and paint/decal tips. I did not find any errors or omissions in the instructions.

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

The –IID is a pretty straight-forward build. Academy has thoughtfully broken assembly into just three parts; the upper-hull/side armor, the turret, and finally the lower chassis – nearly opposite from how most armor kits are assembled. The upper deck and side armor is built as one piece to be dropped down on to the lower chassis as the last step, thereby allowing full access to the track and wheels all the way to the end of the build. Smart.

Upper hull and Side Armor: The upper hull comes as a single piece, with the side armor attached on each side. The driver's hatch can be modeled open or closed (although no interior detail is provided), as can the armor plating over the directional lights in front. Academy provides two options for the side armor; the classic Merkava clamshell-style armor that is distinctive of the type, and the new flat-bottomed armor that is new in this kit. Both options connect to the upper hull via five pieces of solid-fitting hardware on each side. When finished the hull and side armor are a single, solid assembly that can be painted and weathered by itself.

The Turret: The turret on the Merkava has always been a busy affair. The main gun mantlet is trapped between the upper and lower halves of the turret, which come together in the first step. While the two hatches can be left open, there is no turret interior provided. The prominent rear bustle comes together in three sturdy parts and literally 'clicks' on to the rear of the turret. Several optional parts are provided so a little up-front research is in order to decide what specific version you want to represent.

The main gun barrel comes in six parts, with the main tube separated into two side-by-side halves, requiring some seam cleanup. The hollowed, open end of the barrel is a separate part.

Later Merkava models featured hanging weights across the rear shot-trap of the turret to defeat incoming projectiles such as rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). Academy (thankfully!) chose to represent these as solid moldings, seven in all. They are very delicate and break easily so I suggest you do (what I didn't) and wait to attach them just before painting.

All Merkavas sport three separate machine guns, and these are represented well in the kit.

Tow Cables: The only significant problem I had was with the tow cables. Academy continues to use twisted thread for tow cables which need to fit into relatively small cable ends – a design decision which continues to elude me. Invariably, the thread frays and even if coated with super glue is simply too thick to fit where it is supposed to go. I chose to replace the cables with twisted wire, secured to the turret using six hooks that are among the unused parts in the kit.



The Lower Hull: The final five steps of the instructions bring the lower hull and running gear together. Everything assembled perfectly save one area, the two large bustles surrounding the hatch in the back. These are fiddly affairs that took some coaxing to stay together and mount on the vehicle symmetrically – I'm not sure my attempt will win any awards. I suggest you use slow-drying cement and go slowly, with lots of references.

Other than that, the fit of the parts, and especially the running gear, was superb. Academy provides two options for the twelve main wheels, ostensibly to assist with painting, since one option has separate tires. Since you have to paint a thin outside line on each wheel anyway, I'm not sure this option is as useful as it sounds. Still, with poly cap inserts and complete access, Academy thoughtfully provides all the running gear options any modeler will need, depending on their own preferences.

**The Track:** The black, rubber-band type vinyl track in this kit is still pretty old-school considering the state of the market today. While you can following the directions and melt the tabs on one side into the holes on the other with a hot screwdriver, I've never found the results from using this procedure strong enough to hold together when the track is stretched over the wheels. Fortunately, the side skirts cover up the three staples I used to connect the ends!

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



**Painting and Finish:** I already have a completed Merkava (in a light, greenish desert scheme), so I thought I'd go full Desert Yellow with this build. Except for priming and pre-shade coats, I used Vallejo Model Air paints throughout. I've come to really like airbrushing this paint from a health standpoint, and I appreciate the amazing variety of ready-made colors available locally.

**Primer and Pre-shade:** I started by applying a coat of (rattlecan) Krylon Flat Black Lacquer Paint/Primer for my dark, primer/pre-shade coat. Surprisingly, this low-cost solution sprays on easily and dries very thin and level – replacing a time-intensive task I normally use an airbrush and more expensive paint for. I use a dark primer coat to give the plastic and PE some grip, and to fill in the recesses - creating a shadow effect near the flat surface edges, and adding depth for the subsequent coats to come. After the primer had degassed, I taped off the lower skirt areas and fenders to retain the full black color.

**Camouflage:** I followed the pre-shade coat with Vallejo's 73.614 IDF Israeli Sand Grey Surface Primer. Once that was set for a few minutes I laid down a light post-shade coat of Vallejo 73.613 Desert Tan Surface Primer. These primers work just like paint and they are a heck of a deal in the size they come in, considering the cost of the standard size paint bottles.

**Baggage:** For the baggage around the turret I used 50/50 mix of Vallejo's 73.614 IDF Israeli Sand Grey Surface Primer and Vallejo 71.027 Model Air Light Brown. I wanted this detail to pop just a little from the monochrome Sand-Grey background. Curiously, Academy did not provide any kind of 'miscellaneous accoutrement' in the kit – something that they have a good reputation for doing in many of their other armor kits. Everything extra on this build is from my spare parts bin.

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

Once the Future was dry I went about applying the decals using the Red and Blue MicroSol and MicroSet products without any problems. Once the decals were dry, I airbrushed the same areas with Future to seal the decals then knocked down the shiny areas using Vallejo 70.520 Flat Varnish to bring everything back to flat for applying filters and pigments.

Academy included a thick PE sheet made up of what feels like thin steel – very difficult to cut and sand. I managed to use the engine grille mesh but discarded the rest.

**Finish:** After removing the masking tape, I added an overspray of the Desert Tan color to calm down the stark black portions of the side skirts and fenders. I followed with several filter applications using Old Holland Warm Sepia Oil, thinned with Mona Lisa thinner, and Mig Black Filter on the engine exhausts.

Once everything was dry, I went about applying pigments to lighten up the areas affected by the intense desert sun using Mig Light Dust and Concrete pigments.

This Merkava was a lot of fun to build. The low parts count, the design of the parts representing the hanging weights around the turret rear, the very small PE sheet, the design and fit of the lower chassis and wheels all added up to a truly pleasurable experience. Choosing to drop the upper hull/side skirts down over the lower hull at the very end of the build allowed completed access to an area that rarely offers that in a model kit.

A perfect kit would have included stowage gear for the turret bustle and a better track medium, but that kit might have cost more as well. I think what you get in the box is a good compromise, and a great value.

I can recommend this kit to all levels of model builders. If you go slow and follow the suggestions above, you should be able to have a lot of fun building kit.

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 build it.





### IPMS Seattle Dues for Calendar Year 2017

Your 2017 IPMS Seattle renewal form is included below. If you have not renewed by the release of the February newsletter, you will not get any more newsletters. Dues will be **\$15**, which includes monthly e-mail delivery of the newsletter. 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 February meeting.

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Please do NOT release my e-mail and phone information for distributed club rosters.

## Meeting Reminder

## Meeting: February 11

**Location for February meeting:**

**VFW Post 2995**

**4330 148th Ave. NE**

**Redmond, WA 98052**

**See page 3 of the newsletter for directions and map.**