

Seattle Chapter News



Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA
March 2018

PREZNOTES



Déjà Vu All Over Again

In last month's PrezNotes, I put out a call for volunteers for our Spring Show. As a result, we started signing people up at the February meeting, and the initial response was good.

However, we are still short in a number of areas, especially with the need to find 65 judges for the Contest judging. We have barely reached half that number so far.

My largest job within the Seattle Chapter is to help organize the various events that the club participates in. Our biggest event, by a long shot, is the Spring Show. This is where we as a modeling club give back to the community by providing a great venue to display the hobby of scale modeling in all its glory. Hopefully as a member, each and every one of us sees the benefit of such an event, and thus can find the time to spare a couple of hours on Saturday, April 21 to help make this year's Show another memorable event. There are plenty of areas to volunteer for, so check out the sign-up sheets at this month's meeting on March 17.

Of equally critical importance for the success of the Spring Show, we need MODEL ENTRIES. While we had just over 200 contest entrants for last year's Show, we had an amazing 575 walk-ins. This total of nearly 800 people came to see MODELS. So, I heartily encourage each and every member to look over what they have built since the last Show they entered and bring your models.

"But Andrew, my models aren't contest caliber" some of you are thinking. To which I respectfully respond: does it have to be about attempting to win ribbons? I can assure you that your models, potentially contest winners or not, are very much appreciated by everyone attending the Show. Perhaps without your Panzer II, there wouldn't have been any early WW2 German armor for folks to admire? Or

without your Spitfire Mk.24 there would be no examples of the last of this fine marque at the event? And before you say "but I only build Panzer IV and Shermans, and there are always tons of those". I say NOT TRUE! I was at an out of town show two years ago, and there were no examples of either on display (who would have thought this possible!).

And if you don't want to enter the contest, put your work on the display only tables!

So please, consider how you can help make this year's event a success by volunteering to help staff it, and help fill the tables with great models for folks to admire.

I look forward to seeing you all at the March 17th meeting!

Cheers,

Andrew

This month's IPMS
Seattle meeting is
March 17, the THIRD
Saturday

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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 2018 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 17 (Third Saturday)	April 14
April 21 (Renton Spring Show)	May 12

IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM

IPMS No. _____ Name: _____
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 Signature (required): _____

Type of Membership: Adult, 1 Year: \$30 Adult, 2 Years: \$58 Adult, 3 Years: \$88
 Junior (under 17) \$17 Family, 1 Year: \$25 (adult - \$5, child 6-16) How Many Cards? _____
 Canada & Mexico: \$35 Other / Foreign: \$38 (surface) (Checks must be drawn on a US bank or international money order)
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Chapter Affiliation, if any: _____
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Nearly 1.7K Models in MoF's Great Gallery!

The weekend of February 16-19 saw the NorthWest Scale Modelers once again doing their yearly display in the Great Gallery of the Museum of Flight in Seattle. **Scott Kruize** reports his 'take', followed with a response from **Tim Nelson**, the NWSM's organizer for this event:

Scott:

NWSM 'Big Picture' : Display this weekend was good and GREAT!

Friday afternoon, I reported for duty to General Savage's Adjutant, Tim Nelson. Along with so many of the rest of you, we set up the yearly NorthWest Scale Modelers exhibit in the Great Gallery.

When I saw him again Saturday morning, Tim seemed concerned that because some of our colleagues with large collections aren't bringing them to the Display anymore, the number of exhibiting models was down.

This concern is not entirely misplaced. All other things being equal, within broad limits, the more models in the Display, the better. But the 'Big Picture' remains: do the Museum visitors get to see a great show? There can be no doubt that this year, as in prior years, they did.

As befits a Museum of Flight, most of the models displayed were of airplanes. There were military planes from Air Forces large and small, from conflicts large and small, including the Great War. That special exhibit, organized by Field Marshall Don Conrard, also showed our visitors and fellow modelers that the Great War saw the advent of armored vehicles. [Our Display is to educate our visitors, not just amuse them...]

Speaking of which: lots of other AFVs were on display at various tables, including vehicles right up to the present day, that can be seen on the television evening news. But there were also civilian vehicles of all types. Into the mix were conventional cars and cool cars, Weird-Os and superheroes; little boats and big ships; real rockets and science fiction spacecraft; precision replicas and fantastic flights of fantasy. One 'subversive' [*that would be me... -SHK*] even put out a themed display: 'Balsa Modeling is Not Dead'.

The 'Big Picture' was that dozens of tables filling the Great Gallery were themselves filled with hundreds of different models in the widest possible variety. Aging retirees and energetic small fry—and everyone in between—wandered up and down the aisles admiring our miniature marvels. We hope what they saw may induce some to join us.

I hope Adjutant Nelson will continue to carry out General Savage's orders, and run another Display next year, and hereafter into eternity. I know his efforts have been worth it, will continue to be, and that we—the NorthWest Scale Modelers—with our many friends-and- relations, near and far, will continue to support these Displays.

Tim Nelson's Response:

Thanks, Scott. Eternity is a long time, and a day is coming when new blood is needed. Thus saith Gen. Savage.

Despite a couple of bare patches on the tables, this was actually the largest model turnout in the last 5 years, with significant new modeler participation:

2012: 3030 [*All-time greatest number – 'Maximum Effort', per General Savage! --SHK*]

2013: 1740 2014: 1381 2015: 1541 2016: 1658 2017: 1430

and for this year, 2018: 1688

Thanks to all who undertook the hassle and hazard of this unique endeavor of modeling logistics, and who braved the elements to show the flag for our hobby.





What Got Me Started Building Models

by "Ken" Kazuyoshi Gunji

NOTE: In early October of 2017 I asked a number of modelers what got them started in model building; I got eight replies. This one is, in my opinion, the best and most interesting of the lot. I suggested that respondents consider the points of good reporting when drafting their stories; those being: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How. Ken followed that suggestion quite literally and tells a great story. Printed with Ken's permission. - jim

Who: One classmate's plane flew so well, that it excited me to build a better plane. My first model was a rubber powered A-1 plane in 5th grade class at elementary school in Tokyo early in 1942; it didn't fly well.

What: I Built a Bf 109 and a Stuka dive bomber from kits. Precut wood, carving with knife and sanding. The scale was, probably, 1/48. Precut wooden scale kits were sold at hobby shops in Tokyo.

When: 1942: I built B-24 in 6th grade class based on three-view drawing from Boy's Aviation magazine; I used to subscribe. Carving wood with knife, sanding, used putty and painting. My teacher gave me an A on it.

The magazine even carried B-29 three-view drawings. So I knew what B-29s looked like a couple of years ahead of their start of bombing mainland Japan.

Where: Tokyo. April 18, 1942, I watched as a B-25 flew over my house. So low; clearly visible gray and Olive Drab color of fuselage. My impression was the airplane had a long front fuselage. Then many boys my age started building B-25 scale models. B-25 became popular among boys. I don't think many people saw the B-25s fly over Tokyo. I was able to watch the air raid because as soon I heard the roar of an airplane coming I jumped to the back yard, bare footed. There was no air raid warning, no sound of siren before or after the raid.

Why: I started building scale models by carving wood. Because there was so much beauty and variation in the airplane and so much new design imaginable I felt so much romance seeing more and more new planes from Japan, England, Germany, Italy, mostly of war birds. Probably the streamline of airplanes was the secret of the beauty of the airplane. Thus I did not have any interest in building tanks, ships or diorama. I had not much interest in jet age airplanes.

How: Early in 1957 I built my very first Plastic Scale model airplane; a DC-6 passenger plane, I don't remember the maker of the kit. It was given to me by a GI friend who purchased it at his base PX.

I moved to Texas in August 1957 to attend school in September. Ever since then, I have been building all kinds of plastic airplane scale models. The first kit I bought in Corpus Christi was an F6F Hellcat.

A good friend of mine, from Mexico, built a Baka-Bomb MXY-7 from a kit to my surprise.

From the early 1960s, I regularly attended IPMS meetings in Houston. I moved to Washington State in 1990.

I started attending NWSM meetings at The Museum of Flight in early 1990s, and joined a group at Ted Holowchuk's. All interested modelers met at his home every Thursday evening at 7:00 PM. I was an early attendee.

My son did build some plastic scale models in his high school days. I took him to many air shows since his early boyhood. We lived in Houston so we were lucky to watch many Confederate Air Force war birds including their Twin Mustang. He was in ROTC at the University of Texas. Then he called me over the phone one day as he was about to graduate and asked me what he can do in the Navy. We discussed it and came to the conclusion he should get into aviation. He ended up flying S-3A Vikings as TACCO from the carriers USS Forrestal and USS John F. Kennedy, during the Gulf War. One family day at Jacksonville, FL, he asked me to see him take off from the carrier JFK. I did not have ear-mufflers, so you can imagine how loud it was.

Now: I still build many 1/144 pre-painted kits, because my hobby friend back in Japan keeps sending me all kinds of new kits as they come on the market. He said he wants his family to put one of the kits he built into his casket when he passes away. He has not told me what kind of model he is talking about, but he wants to take it with him into the next world.

Book Review: T-90 Standard Tank: The First Tank of the New Russia, by Steven J. Zaloga

reviewed by Andrew Birkbeck

The T-90 "Standard Tank" was an evolutionary development of the Soviet T-72 tank, the latter being a prime component of Soviet tank forces during the mid-1970s to the mid 1990s. The T-72 was also exported widely, including to the armed forces of Saddam Hussein's Iraq. During the 1991 Gulf War, the Iraqi T-72 tanks suffered very badly against such tanks as the U.S. M1 Abrams. Whether this was due to the T-72 being notably inferior to the West's main battle tanks or poor training and tactics on the part of the Iraqis is irrelevant: the perception in many nations following the 1991 war was that the Soviet tank was inferior. Thus, there was pressure within the Russian military-industrial complex to get rid of the "T-72" name. Hence naming the first tank out of the newly formed "Russia" the T-90.

Finding good books on Cold War/Modern Soviet/Russian military vehicles is difficult, but thankfully Osprey Publishing has been commissioning well-known writer Steven Zaloga over the past couple of decades to help fill the gaps. All the major Soviet Cold War tanks have been covered by Mr. Zaloga: The T-54/55, T-62, T64, T-72, T-80, and now the T-90. If you have read any of the previously published titles, this new T-90 publication will be familiar to you. Each of these books, like the T-90 book reviewed here, is just shy of 50 pages in length. Like these others, the T-90 book gives a good potted account of the developmental history of the tank, including coverage of its protection systems, both active and passive, the main gun and its various forms of ammunition and its automotive components including the suspension and engine.

Coverage of the failures of the T-72 and other Soviet tanks such as the T-64 and T-80 in the Gulf Wars and the Chechen War are detailed, together with the success of the T-90 at winning major export orders from the Indian Army. There is a good discussion of the various developments of the T-90 program, including the T-90, T-90A and T-90M and the export derivatives T-90S and T-90MS. The book also discusses Russian rivals to the T-90, such as upgraded versions of the T-80U, the eventually canceled T-95, and the T-14 Armata. Coverage is also given to T-90 derivatives such as the BMPT "Terminator" tank support combat vehicle, and the TOS-1 artillery rocket system. The well-written text is supplemented by approximately 40 color photos, 12 color side views plus various production tables. There are two diagrams of the T-90MS, but the full-page color layout is somewhat ruined by being printed across the centerfold. I do wish publishers would stop this practice.

If you have any interest in modern main battle tanks or the history of Soviet/Russian military forces, this book is for you. It is well written and illustrated, and given the paucity of resources devoted to such subjects in the English language, one of the best you are likely to see! My thanks to Osprey Publishing for generously providing IPMS USA with the opportunity to review this excellent publication.

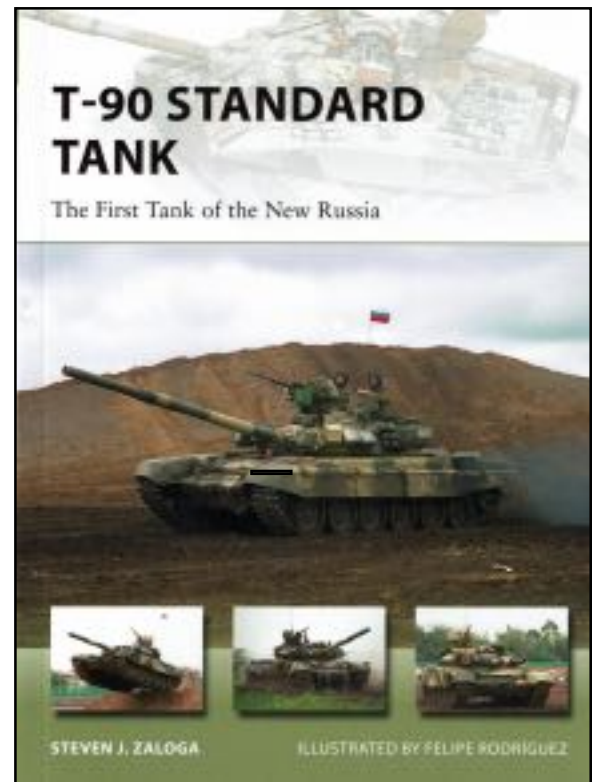
Illustrator: Felipe Rodríguez

Company: Osprey Publishing

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F-Toys 1/72nd Scale D4Y Judy “Full Action”

by Jim Bates

I admit it, I have a Japanese modeling fetish. While I'm known as a hard core Canadian modeler, I am strangely attracted to Japanese kits, modeling supplies, and even - heaven forbid, World War Two Japanese aircraft.

With this in mind, it isn't surprising that I sampled a few of the “Gashapon” kits. Gashapon appears to have two definitions. One means toys sold in capsules from vending machines, which are quite common in Japan. The second is the topic of this review: collectables sold in blind boxes that are apparently for trading. The Gashapon kits of the past were most often in 1/144th or “egg” scales and pre-painted. Some were assembled and some were sold as kits with decals. Several years ago, a Sea Fury and Lancaster, both in 1/144th, somehow found their way into my model collection for future use. However, when I heard that F-Toys had issued a Kugisho [Yokosuka] D4Y Judy in 1/72nd, I just had to acquire one from Japan on eBay.



The Judy has been kitted three times in 1/72nd. First off the bat were two LS kits in the early 1960s which depicted the radial-engined D4Y3 and the inline D4Y2. The kits had recessed panel lines, including the Hinomarus, but otherwise were quite simple and lacked detail. In the early 1980s, Fujimi issued a series of Judys which - while still lacking detail, especially in the interior - were a huge improvement on the LS kit. Finally, a few years ago, AZ Models issued a family of Judys. This family of kits looks quite nice in the box but are typical short run style, and it would not surprise me to hear that the kit is a difficult build.

Arriving in a deceptively small box, the F-Toys inline-engined Judy is packaged with four runners, canopy sections, fuselage, engine, and wings in a clear vacuform tray. All parts are pre-painted on the runners. I know this last statement will immediately cause serious modelers to roll their eyes and stop reading. For those of us who still retain some essence of our inner child (or are just plain lazy), a rather interesting kit is contained within.

The fuselage and wings come snapped together and have to be separated in order to assemble the cockpit and landing gear. The surface detail is all recessed and panel lines are similar to those in recent Airfix kits. Quite a bit of detail is molded inside the fuselage halves and it is all pre-painted. To this a floor, seats, panels, guns, and other assorted items are added. Certain parts would benefit from some additional paint and some weathering would help accentuate the detail. Of course, seatbelts are missing. But out of the box this is the most detailed Judy cockpit in 1/72nd. A well-detailed engine six piece can be mounted on the engine bearers, which can be displayed under the removable cowling piece.

One area in which simplification is obvious is the bomb and crutch. The bomb is made to extend and retract, so it looks like something out of a 1950s kit. My solution is to leave the bomb doors closed. The landing gear are designed to retract and all flying surfaces are separate, but, if needed, these can easily be glued fixed.

So about the pre-painting... Most of the paint work is well done, outside of the silver/aluminum items which have quite the grain. The Hinomarus on the fuselage will need to be repainted as the transition of the green to grey is obvious. But really, the problem is how well will the fuselage halves go together and how will the modeler will touch up the seams. This remains to be seen. A few flaws exist in the fuselage and wings which many modelers would want to buff out. Maybe a clear flat or semigloss clear coat would help?

The clear parts are a tad thick with some rather large mounting points but have painted frames. While not perfect, they are about equal to what the author can accomplish without a masking set.

The rather pedestrian decal sheet has three options, but not enough Hinomarus to correct the issues with the fuselage insignia.

So what do I think? Well, I'm lazy, so I see some of the pre-painting as a benefit. The detail and surface detail are equal to that of a recent Airfix kit (which is a good thing). If this kit was issued unpainted, modelers would be crowing that this the best Judy in the scale. Even with the painting, I think it can be glossed as such. Now, how do I proceed? Well, I think the cockpit needs some detail painting, some washes and drybrushing, and a flat coat. Time will tell how the fuselage and wing halves fit and how much touch up will be necessary. Either way, I now have a model that will be an easy build on which to experiment with different weathering techniques.



Modelfy 2018 Clarification - Anchors Aweigh 'Me Boys!

by John DeRosia

Here is a clarification to this year's 'Modelfy' category for the April 2018 show. Original article was in the June 2017 newsletter, available on the Seattle IPMS website.

Hopefully this will help you decide what to build and help the judges for what they should look for.

Fun is the first and most important rule for this category!

For 2018 – you may use ANY kit of a ship with a hull, any scale, any model, and color...any base kit you want to use. Submarines are also included in this model kit category. Something about your creation should allow the judges to see evidence of a hull/sub/water-vessel base kit. See the figure of original starter kit examples.

It could be as simple as taking a model 'water vessel' kit and modifying the model boat/ship/sub kit into another boat/ship or sub kit. The end result does not have to float on water. Maybe you would like to make an alien space ship?

Modelfy it to be something other than the kit itself. Of course have loads of fun and use as many parts or other stuff to make it into your 'crazy' new design.

Remember golden rule #1: have fun, have fun, and then have more fun! See you in April at the Modelfy table!



Deep Philosophical Musings and Catharsis at a Local 'Happening'

by Scott Kruize

Suffering—as all Humanity does—from Existential Angst in this 'Vale of Tears' (a phrase drummed into me as a 'cradle Catholic', way too far back to remember exactly when) —and contemplating a world full of problems exacerbated by Alienation from my Fellow Man, I struggled to overcome the inertia of futility and despair, barely managing to get myself to a practical group-therapy session.

The therapeutic exercise took a holistic approach, engaging both Body and Spirit. It started with a bout of physical activity: gathering, lifting and moving large heavy objects. These we arranged into specific geometrical patterns, guided by a plan worked out by the therapist in charge, to demonstrate how conscious willful human endeavor can—at least temporarily and locally—reverse Chaos and impose meaningful Order.

The arranged objects we then covered in dark cloth that symbolized the 'fabric' of the vast and unfathomable Universe...or maybe the deep secret recesses of the human psyche. The gloomy visual expanses thus made were then transformed by placing on them multitudes of small objects, bringing into palpable, immediate 'Reality' otherwise ethereal mental and emotional processes: Aesthetics, Curiosity, and Creativity. Together we said the ultimate Existential 'NO!' to being passive inhabitants/observers, but instead acted through 'performance art'. With a complex array of bright colors and shapes, crafted by our own mortal hands, we pushed back against the despair of conformity, soullessness and futility. Particles and photons of the very kind making up the whole of endless, indistinguishable Space and Time, we ironically contrasted with the composition of our own bright array.

This ephemeral but nevertheless significant action we took not just as useful therapy for ourselves, but more than that: an Answer to Alienation. We hoped to bridge the Existential distance between ourselves and fellow humans, at least to some geographically, temporally, culturally, and sympathetically within our 'sphere of influence'.

Tim Nelson organized and conducted this therapeutic session. To encourage participation by as many people as possible, he took a non-denominational approach: the only 'Supreme Authority' we needed to 'defer' to was based on an imaginary silver-screen persona. The approach seemed effective: many fellow club members and a scattering of other friends-and-relations were in attendance...as I was at least fleetingly observant of 'Others' enough to detect.

In short: we set up the yearly Model Display in the Great Gallery of the Museum of Flight.

As far back as elementary school, not being sound asleep in social studies, literature, and poetry lessons, I became aware of Philosophy and its deep analytically-thinking proponents. Great attempts, throughout human history, have been made by the most subtle and brilliant of minds to grapple with the Purpose of the Universe, the Quest for Aesthetics and Goodness, Man's Alienation from Man, and The Meaning of Life. I thought then—and think now—that most of these musings are pretty silly.

Particularly, I knew before age 10 that it's stupid to sit around and mope, mulling over personal problems. I knew everybody had problems and thought them equally serious and important, but that every last one of them would be solved or would at least fade away over time, to be replaced by new ones. It was pointless to brood about them.

Much better was to get off your butt and do something useful and fun. Particularly, if you feel estranged from your fellow humans, you need to look around a bit and recognize the world is populated with more people than you could ever possibly meet— but also that many within your reach share some of your interests and would be happy for you to join them.

Even back Then, I knew there were other kids, and even some grown-ups, who liked things I did: playing cards or Monopoly or Parcheesi...riding bicycles...playing baseball...reading superhero comic books. Eventually, I found people who liked to build model kits.

Not to say that being with other people cancels all problems, even temporarily...but sharing time at mutually-enjoyable activities does go a long way towards getting 'out of yourself', accomplishing something worthwhile, and enjoying life. And while I learned getting along with other people was often difficult, and never completely successful, the effort expended was always much less than the rewards. My resulting Philosophy of Life, started back Then and honed over an astonishing number of intervening decades, is this:

Get your head out of your rear end and go to an IPMS meeting, anywhere in the world...or join any other group of people you share an interest with. You won't then care to brood about Alienation from your Fellow Men...or any other such nonsense!

Tamiya 1/48th Scale M1A2 Abrams U.S. Main Battle Tank

by Andrew Birkbeck

The M1 Abrams, named for former General Creighton Abrams (commanded US troops in Vietnam following General Westmoreland, and later became US Army Chief of Staff), is the current front line Main Battle Tank of the US Army and US Marine Corps. It also serves in the Armed Forces of nations such as Australia, Egypt, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. It first entered service with US forces in 1980 and has over the years since been upgraded with various enhancements, especially as battle conditions in which it finds itself have changed from a tank vs tank to "urban combat" situations.

What's in the Tamiya Box:

5 sprues of injection molded tan plastic parts

1 bag of black vinyl poly caps

1 metal ingot

1 small sheet of waterslide decals with 2 marking options

1 booklet, with 8 pages of black and white assembly instructions covering 21 assembly steps plus a separate double-sided sheet incorporating a markings and painting guide



Anyone who has built a Tamiya kit in the past two decades or more will be familiar with what comes in the box of this kit: beautifully molded flash free plastic parts, very well detailed, and with no sink marks to be seen. There are however occasional ejection pin marks, most of which are well hidden when construction is completed. There are no photo-etched parts whatsoever, so construction of the model can be accomplished without the use of super glue. Tamiya provides the modeler with a near foolproof set of excellent instructions, and if they are followed to the letter, and studied carefully before beginning construction, a drama free modeling project should ensue!

Construction starts as most tank models do, with the construction of the lower hull. I would advise getting the hull parts together BEFORE gluing on the road wheels. This means completing Assembly Sequences 1 and 5. Then go back to Assembly Sequence 2 and assemble, and paint, the road wheels and drive sprockets, each of which is a two-part assembly. Then paint all the track parts once cut off the sprues and cleaned up. Once all this is completed, take all the painted parts: lower hull tub, road wheels, return rollers, plus the tracks and glue them together carefully. Tamiya molds the road wheel support arms to the two main side hull parts, D4 and D5, thus ensuring there are no issues getting the wheels to sit evenly. I used a simple jig to line up the wheels one behind the other. Once the wheels are glued firmly in place, assemble the tracks strictly according to the Tamiya instructions, Step 4. The drive sprockets are held in place by a poly cap, so you have the ability to adjust the tracks as needed to get a perfect fit. And fit perfectly they did on my model!

Next comes construction of the upper hull. Tamiya has molded very finely reproduced anti-skid texture to the appropriate sections of the hull, a very nice touch. Thanks to the wonders of Tamiya engineering, there are exactly 10 parts to the entire upper hull construction process! I would suggest leaving part B7 off until after the decaling stage of the model. Paint it, but leave it aside until the very end. That way it won't interfere in applying the tiny periscope decals that need to go underneath B7. Paint the upper hull unit, and then attach it to the pre-painted lower hull unit. Everything went together beautifully for me, and by a very careful application of Tamiya Extra Thin Cement, I didn't damage any of the painted surfaces.

Next comes the tank's turret. Like the upper hull, the turret has delicately molded anti-skid texture where appropriate. In Assembly Sequence 10, part B4 has a small ejection pin mark that needs carefully removing. The two large turret parts C1 (upper shell) and C2 (base) fit together very well. The gun shield is a four-part unit: pay careful attention to the assembly diagram so as to get the parts correctly aligned. The main gun tube is ingeniously designed and consists of five parts. With care, I managed to get everything together nicely and the seam and glue lines all removed with careful sanding and steel wool. The gun shield and barrel fit onto a hinge utilizing poly caps so that the barrel can be raised or depressed to the modeler's wishes.

The Abrams has a turret basket that surrounds the sides and rear of the turret. Care is needed when removing the parts from the sprues, and carefully cleaning up the mold lines on the tubular sections. In a perfect world, the photo-etched mesh would have been included with the kit for the turret basket "floor". In Assembly Sequence 17, make sure you mount parts B39 and B40 correctly, and in the correct sequence. The instructions are clear, so study them! I used the kit supplied tow cables, as in this scale the detail was fine. I thought for a moment that Tamiya had the three "Combat Identification Panels", parts A13 x 2, and B36, mounted upside down, as the first photo I studied of an Abrams in my collection showed them mounted differently than Tamiya's depiction. However, careful examination of photos of other Abrams indicates they can be mounted either direction, so Tamiya is spot on (should I have doubted it?).

The commander's turret hatch can be mounted in an open or closed position, and the model comes with a nicely detailed four-piece half-figure of the commander for mounting in the cupola opening.

Painting and Markings

The markings provided in the Tamiya kit are pretty simple, providing the modeler with two alternatives:

Scheme A: overall tan, 2nd Platoon, F Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Iraq, April 2003.

Scheme B: identical in all respects, except covering a vehicle from 4th Platoon.

I first prime my models with Tamiya rattle can Fine Gray lacquer primer. This dries to a very smooth surface texture and sticks solidly to the plastic surface. It provides an even surface for all follow-on applications of paint. Once this had thoroughly cured, I applied a base coat of Mission Models Acrylic paint MMP-038 US Desert Tan Modern 2 - FS33446. This was then followed up with a panel fade application of the base color, mixed with some MMP-019 Dunkelgelb to lighten the base color.

The paint was then allowed to cure for 24 hours before a few thin coats of Tamiya X-22 Clear Gloss was airbrushed over the entire model. The Tamiya decals are what we have come to expect: a bit on the thick side, but perfectly useable. They were applied utilizing the Gunze Sangyo two-part decal setting system, with the green top and blue top bottles. Whichever scheme you chose, care should be taken with the barrel ring decal, Decal #4, and also the multi-part marking for the Combat Identification Panel on the rear of the turret. Following the decal application and 24 hours for them to set, more Tamiya X-22 Clear Gloss was applied to seal them.

Next came my standard panel wash: Burnt Siena oil paint mixed with Mona Lisa brand odorless thinner. This was applied to help pick out all the raised details. A second wash was then mixed, much darker, utilizing mainly Lamp Black oil paint, and some Burnt Siena. This was then flooded into the "screen" areas on the rear of the hull. The oil paints were then allowed to set up for about 24 hours, whereupon I took some Q-tips dipped in Mona Lisa thinner, and removed any excess "wash". The model was then left alone for three days to make sure the "wash" had thoroughly dried. I then airbrushed some coats of Matt Clear onto the entire model. My favorite is AK Interactive's "Ultra Matt Varnish AK 183", the "matt-est" matt on the market. I airbrush this without thinning it, straight from the bottle. All my paints are airbrushed utilizing an Iwata HP-C and the paint is sprayed at between 12 and 15PSI depending on the consistency of the paint (if thin for post shading, then 12PSI, but otherwise 15PSI for most applications).

I then applied some subtle paint chipping, just to give the overall tan vehicle some added visual appeal. This was kept to the minimum. I also looked at color photos and noticed that the rear hull engine exhaust areas get rusty and sooty, so added some "color" there with suitable rust colored paints both acrylic and oil. Finally, the model was given one additional light coat of Matt Clear.

Tamiya's range of 1/48th scale military vehicles are well molded, and compared to their 1/35th scale brethren, quite simple to assemble due to a lower parts count. This, however, does NOT mean they are "simplistic" kits, far from it. This M1A2 Abrams is very well detailed and produces a lovely scale miniature when completed. It was an extremely fun project, stress-free as Tamiya kits often are, and you end up with a very cool model of this important modern Main Battle Tank. My sincere thanks to TamiyaUSA for providing IPMS USA with the review sample. I unreservedly recommend this kit to modelers of all ages and levels of modeling experience.



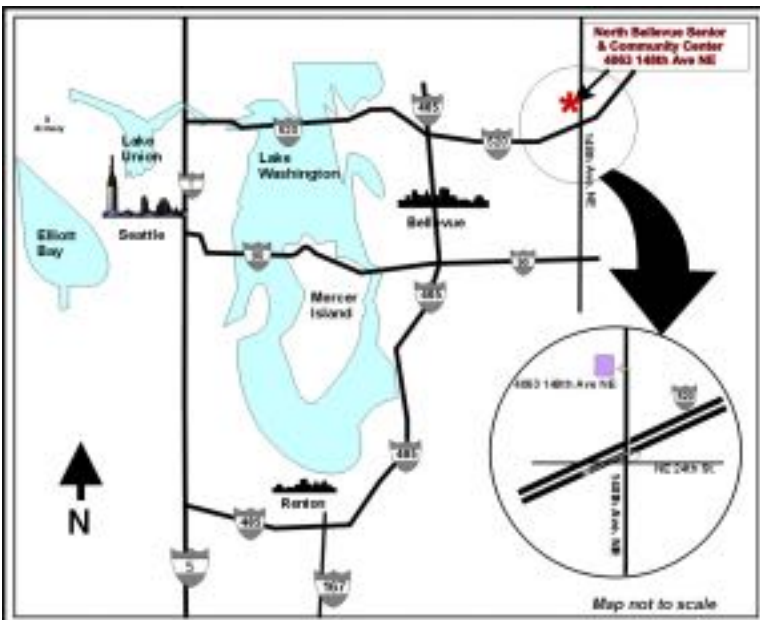




IWM caption: "Photographic staff transfer the film magazine of an Type F.24 aerial camera, mounted in the oblique position in a North American Mustang of No. 2 Squadron RAF, to its carrying case for rapid development by the Photographic Section, following a tactical reconnaissance training sortie, at Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire." Source: IWM (CH 17415)

Meeting Reminder

Meeting: March 17 (THIRD SATURDAY)



**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.