

# Seattle Chapter News



**Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA**  
**December 2019**

## PREZNOTES



### Painting Hard Edges Using Panzer Putty

Painting a hard-edge camouflage pattern can sometimes be quite a chore if your model surface is covered with bumps and lumps and other annoying protrusions. Using a brush takes a steady hand and a fearless disposition, since brush stroke marks and/or thin spots can ruin an otherwise perfect finish. Masking an uneven surface successfully is next to impossible, and using a half-dozen silly putty eggs can leave behind a residue that can effect some types of paint and/or finishing products.

Luckily, there is another option available to modelers that has been around for some time. Panzer Putty was originally offered by a company called MXpression, which has now been copied by other manufacturers such as Ammo by Mig. I've just finished using it again on a build and I thought I'd bring it to everyone's attention again.

This rigid, stretchable material has some of the properties of Silly Putty, and other properties that are unique. Called an 'intelligent' putty by the manufacturer, Panzer Putty is specifically marketed to assist in airbrushing hard and soft line camouflage over the uneven surfaces typically found on armor kits. There is a cool video on how to use it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0KW2PONqNEQ>.

You can apply the reusable material in a number of ways; rolling it out like pie crust and slicing shapes, or using bits and

pieces, or rolling it into ropes – the options are limited only by your imagination. Enough comes in a can to complete a large model (like the big Revell 155mm Panzerhaubitze SPH) with plenty to spare, so you won't need more than a single can (at about \$15).

Some experimentation was needed, but eventually I got the knack of it. Panzer Putty does not have any tack whatsoever except to itself, which was frustrating at first, but I was able to anchor one end of each piece by wrapping it around something, pushing it into some detail, or touching it to another piece of putty to hold it in place. I then used shaping tools to 'design' the curves I wanted. Tweaking it here and there took some effort but I had everything finished and ready for painting in about ten minutes. I found Panzer Putty no more difficult to use than Silly Putty and/or Blue Tack, etc., but its unique properties distinguish it from those and other mediums. It's all about gravity - the key at this point was to wait about ten

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## SEATTLE CHAPTER CONTACTS

**President:**

Eric Christianson  
10014 124th Ave NE  
Kirkland, WA 98033  
Ph: 425-591-7385

ModelerEric@comcast.net terryandjill@comcast.net

**Vice President:**

Terry Moore  
7014 Lake Grove St. SW  
Lakewood, WA 98499

**Treasurer:**

Twyla Birkbeck  
P.O. Box 15983  
Seattle, WA 98115  
Ph: 425-591-7385  
birkbet@comcast.net

**Show Chair:**

David Dodge  
Ph: 425-825-8529  
ddodge@nwlink.com  
Ph: 206-276-3855

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 \$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 2019 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.

**December 14**

IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM			
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**Newsletter Editor:**

Robert Allen  
7919 133rd Ave. NE  
Redmond, WA, 98052  
425-885-3671  
baclightning@yahoo.com

## HKM Avro Lancaster B.Mk.1 – Part 3 of 3

by Eric Christianson

*(Editor's note – this third and final installment of a three-part series has been abridged 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.)*

Down the home stretch! Last time we had just completed the wings, tail, fuselage, nose and wheel-wells, leaving just the final assembly and finish for the last segment of this three-part review. To recall: I chose to display only the port wing's inboard engine detail, and to cover up the remaining three engines. Otherwise, the aircraft is built up from the box with the exceptions of a set of brass gun barrels, and a set resin control panels and accompanying decals. The brass barrels will be part of a separate IPMS review.

Things to Consider Before You Start - The only real consideration at this point in the build was the sheer size of the different components. The wings and fuselage together could not fit in my airbrush booth, and as a consequence I had to depart from my normal modeling routine in many areas – first and foremost, completely finishing each component separately, right down to the final coat of semi-gloss. Once the nacelles (with the landing gear) were attached to the wings, handling even the separate wings became ungainly. A significant amount of planning was required to identify when and where I needed to depart from the instructions without the entire project going sideways. I kept a lot of lists, many of which changed on a daily basis.

The only other consideration was to make sure I mixed enough paint for the job!

Continuing with Assembly - Before painting commenced, I had some loose ends that needed tying off, starting with...





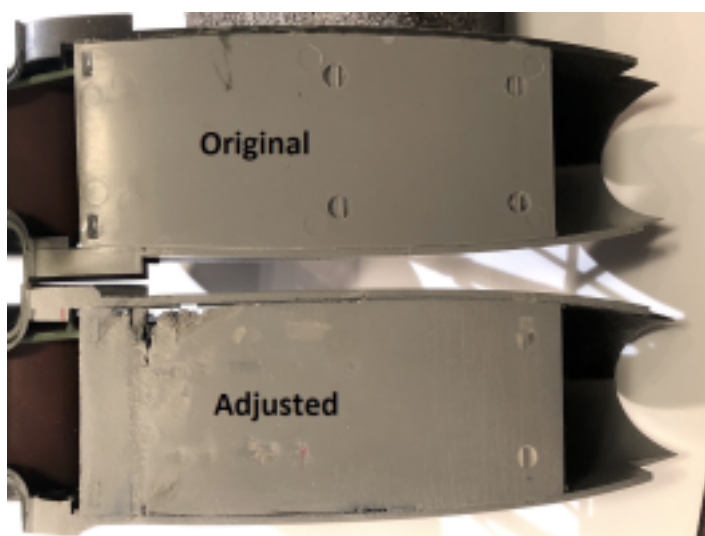
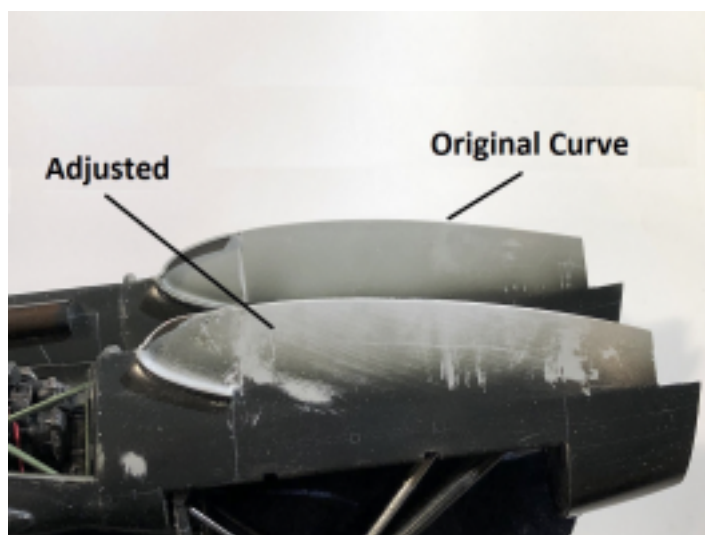
Attaching the Canopy and nose section - All clear plastic parts from the kit had by this time been double-dipped in Future (SC Johnson Pledge Multi-Surface Floor Care Finish) and completely cured. For the most part, HKM tried their best to place the sprue attachment points in places that would not interfere with the smooth lines of each piece. The nose cone fit perfectly, but I had to clamp the main canopy down onto the opening of the cockpit to get a decent seal all the way around. This was not the challenge it could have been if the bomb bay was filled, and the doors in place, which was a departure from the instructions.

Bomb Bay Doors - Attaching the bomb bay doors in Step 33B did not go exactly as planned. The braces at each end did not want to fit into the sides of the bomb bay and still attach to the doors where they were supposed to. I checked to make sure the braces were on the right end (it matters, they are different) – they just didn't want to line up – bowing in/out on one end. I ended up doing some minor surgery to the braces and using long pieces of strong masking tape to align things as well as I could while the Testors 'black bottle' cement did its work.

Needless to say, every small part that had not snapped off by this time, did. And of course, a few more bombs dropped out to keep things humorous. Using hindsight, I think I should have added the doors at the very end of the build – because once they were attached, handling a model of this size became a different kind of challenge.

Poor Fit of the Main Engine/Landing Gear Nacelles - By the far the most significant assembly challenge was attaching the two inboard nacelles to the wings, due to fit issues. The upper convex curves of the nacelles were too severe for the inner curves of the wings – poor 'spooning', if you will. Seated properly aft, each nacelle stood proud of the leading edge of the wing. Seated correctly up front, the aft portion of each nacelle stood proud of the wing's trailing edge. Consequently, I had to take a table sander to the 'hump' in the middle and front portions of each inner nacelle, shaving up to an eighth of an inch down in places, leaving a paper-thin layer of plastic to serve as the inner roof of each landing gear bay (see annotated images). The task was made more difficult by the fact that the nacelles, by this time, had been finished, painted and weathered. Luckily, I did not damage the struts or landing gear in the process. The second wing/nacelle required no less amount of work, although it went quicker since I knew beforehand what needed to be done. I used an old trick I learned years ago – I put a few drops of light machine oil on the top of the nacelle and then slid it into place under the wing, rocking it back and forth before removing it to see where the oil had transferred to the underside of the wing. I then marked each spot with a marker, wiped off the oil, and sanded the areas until I could no longer see any of my marks. I repeated this process a dozen times until I could achieve a decent fit.

It is a mystery – since everything else seemed to fit pretty well. I had carefully marked each nacelle and its matching bay long



before, but even if the nacelles were accidentally mislabeled, the issue remained – I tried switching the nacelles to the opposite wings with the same results.

The two outer engine nacelles, thankfully, went on without any problems, pushing on perfectly.

I stopped here to paint and weather the main fuselage, wings, and subassemblies (flaps, ailerons, tail stabilizers, wheel well doors, etc.) Once assembled I'd have to do everything else away from my airbrush booth and modeling desk.

**Painting and Weathering** - Painting this aircraft is a complex task, and you will need a plan to suit. Fortunately for me, writing this review gave me the opportunity to plan and record each step before I hit the paint booth – and I strongly suggest you do the same. I think I fell asleep each night for a week working through all the steps required.

My first big decision was what type of paint to use. I wanted to employ the 'hairspray technique' for chipping since just about every photograph of a Lancaster that wasn't a restored aircraft showed significant combat wear. Fortunately, Tamiya paint, an acrylic-lacquer, is perfect for the job and Tamiya callouts are provided by HKM in the instructions, including the mixing ratios for the two main camouflage colors.

Next, I went through what was left and broke everything out into separate sticky boards of items that would receive like-treatment. As I moved through the rest of the build, I would apply the same paint and finish steps to what was on the sticky boards so in the end I would be bringing together completely finished subassemblies.

**Top Side First** – I wanted to provide depth to the finish, so I used NATO Black as a pre-shade color along the major panel lines, and for the long wing-walk rectangles that extended far out from the fuselage. I also took this opportunity to airbrush Tamiya Flat Aluminum along edges of lower fuselage, wing roots, bomb bay doors, sticky boards and the propeller blades. These all encompassed areas that (I might) expose over under hairspray. Once dry, I sprayed everything with TreSemme' and chipped up the wing-walk areas to start.

I used the mixing formulas provided by HKM for the RAF Dark Green and RAF Dark Earth, adding a little Deck Tan and Flat Yellow to both as a post-shade to lighten things up. All other colors were straight from the bottle, thinning everything 50/50 with Gunze Leveling Thinner (a lacquer).

Before laying down the camouflage, I had to figure out how I was going to seal the fuselage up, deciding to use the main canopy, the clear nose cone, and the bomb bay doors for closing off those areas, and masking tape for the remainder. Before seating the clear parts, I made sure to paint the edges with the appropriate color so that light wouldn't reflect off the mating surfaces later. I also painted the area behind the cockpit opening that would be covered by the canopy with the mixed Green, and the outside of the canopy itself with NATO Black so the inner canopy frames would appear black when viewed through from the outside.

Once everything was in place, I followed the three-view drawings in the instructions and lightly drew the outlines of the camouflage pattern with a pencil and painted the appropriate upper portions of the fuselage and wings with the RAF colors. To keep these colors true, I did not lay down one color (the tan) and then paint over that with (the green) – I laid down only a single color on all areas, working carefully as to not build up too much paint where the colors bordered each other, nor over the chipped wing-walks and pre-shaded panel lines that I wanted to peek through.

Before the camouflage coat had a chance to cure, I again went about with a brush and water and chipped things away here and there to show wear.

I knew I would have to mask the upper fuselage off for what came next, and unfortunately, with the (wartime) Lancaster, the tape for the demarcation lines would run directly over the 30 or so fuselage windows which were already covered with a third-party masking set. This meant that when (my) masking tape was pulled



up, the (existing) window masks would come up as well, complicating the layers of finish (gloss and semi-gloss) to come later. As a result, the upper portion of the fuselage had to be finished and weathered – and then completely masked off before the lower portion could be painted.

So, after the camouflage colors had dried, I applied a thin filter of Mig 502 Abteilung Mig Wash Brown oil paint over the entire upper surfaces of the fuselage and wings by hand before spraying everything with Future to set the surfaces up for decals and pin washes.

After applying the decals (see the section, below, for more information), I painstakingly applied a sludge pin wash to all the panel lines using Windsor Newton Raw Umber heavily thinned with Mona Lisa thinner. As you can imagine with an aircraft of this size, that was quite a job!

Once satisfied, I sprayed everything I had painted with three light coats of Mig Ammo Lucky Varnish (Semi-Gloss), a new acrylic product that is airbrushed undiluted from the squeeze bottle, before masking it up.

**Painting it Black** - I wanted to figure out a way to break up the black areas on the Lanc, while still staying true to the night-combat scheme. After masking off the camouflaged fuselage, I started by airbrushing a coat of Tamiya NATO Black as a base. Once dry, I sprayed a very thin layer of Tamiya Medium Grey into the larger panels and other areas, creating a mild patchwork on the surfaces. I followed this with another thin layer of Tamiya Flat Black to bring the two colors together. As with the upper fuselage and wings, before the black coat has a chance to cure, I chipped the heavy-wear areas with a brush and water to show wear. Next, I applied a thin filter of Mig Brown Wash by hand. After the gloss coat and decals were added, I applied a sludge pin-wash using Mig 502 Abteilung German Grey Highlight to 'pop' the panel lines. I thin Tamiya paint 50/50 with Gunze Leveling Thinner and Mig Oils with Mona Lisa White Spirit (10/90).



Once the pin wash was dry, I again finished the job using Mig semi-gloss varnish.

**Decals** - The decals provided by HKM are in perfect register and come on two large, separately-bagged sheets. The colors are vibrant, with the yellows and the reds not too bright. The decals are a little on the thick side, which, in this scale, is a good thing since you'll want to use the extra time to position the large markings, lettering and stencils. No trimming is necessary as the clear portions are very tight around the edges of the images. The huge wing roundels are easy to handle, and the yellow areas completely cover the dark shades underneath with no bleed-through. There is a good amount of stenciling provided, and wing walks are included if you choose not to paint them. Even though the decals are thick, the edges disappear when applied to a glossy surface.

After shooting the surfaces with a healthy coat of Future, I used the Blue and Red Microsol/Microset system without any problems. The decal thickness required repeated applications of the (Red) MicroSet over some of the more prominent detail, but soon relaxed and snuggled down just fine. Once dry, I gave everything a second coat of Future to seal the decals and prepare the surfaces for a pin wash.

One final note: after all of my precautions in regard to sealing up the fuselage before painting, something, and I'm not sure what, crept up into the fuselage and attached itself to places on the interior of the main canopy, probably adhering to the layers of Future and possibly some Goo-Gone applied to shine things up. In some areas it looks like paint, and in others, like sanding dust. As a result, while this model may have great curb-appeal, an up-close examination of the cockpit prevents it from entering competition. I could pop off the canopy and address the problem, but with the bomb bay doors in place, and a dozen other reasons, I wouldn't be able to get it back on with a good seal. Lesson learned: you need to SEAL things up and be mindful of what you're doing throughout the build for anything that could affect the inner surfaces of the model.

**Final Assembly** - Once all the main structures had been painted and weathered, it was time to bring this beast together.



Attaching the wings and tail – I started with the wings since I felt that if I ran into problems, I wouldn't break everything else trying to fix things. As it turned out, the wings went on OK, but only after I heavily sanded the connection points and applied a little oil to help them slide 'back' into place. As I said in my two previous reviews, HKM has designed the wings to be removable for transit and storage, but with the delicate nature of many of the attached parts, ultimately, I cannot see myself trying to remove them once they were on. Just too risky.

The twin tail stabilizers 'chunked' in perfectly, although in my sample copy the starboard stabilizer appears to drop just a little below the horizontal plane. Too bad; the connection for these heavy assemblies is solid, and for good reason – fixing would require some significant surgery to make things perfect.



Everything left up underneath: Before continuing, I flipped the aircraft upside down and placed it on a pile of beach towels so I could attach the wheel well doors, the dropped wing flaps and the tailwheel. I then rolled my Co2 tank over to the big table so I could touch up areas with my airbrush - this would be the last time I would see the Lanc on its back so it was now or never. Satisfied I put it back on its three wheels and marveled again at my creation. This model IS HUGE.

Machine Gun Turrets - All three machine gun assemblies are different from each other on the Lanc, and the clear plastic portions are as well. HKM did their homework here as the fit of everything was spot-on. The clamshell clear portions of the front and top turrets fit together perfectly, and the rear turret's clear portion slid down to meet the base without any gaps whatsoever. Previously I had installed assembly 19-3 (Page 7) upside down, so when it came time to seal the glass I had to snip off the two gun-'governors' that protrude out the front of the turret lest they sit right in the gunners view! Not my finest moment.

Part P5 over the nose turret – This little part caused me some consternation. On top and up front, it will be seen by all who look at the finished model, and yet it can only be put in place after everything else is done. Every step in the finishing process that was done to the upper fuselage had to be likewise performed on this little piece, and in that process, I managed to snap the little guy in two – several times! It has to fit over a significant 'hump' in the front turret, so the fit is not perfect unless coaxed with some good glue and masking tape.

Wing Navigation lights – There is a small plastic stub representing the light bulb on each of the outer red and green navigation light recesses that interfered with the fit of these triangular, clear plastic parts. I carefully removed the stubs and painted the inside of the plastic parts before seating them perfectly into their reworked receptacles.

Propellers and Hubs – The last step (!) was adding the four propellers. Two types of propeller blades are provided by HKM, (a slightly pointed set and a set of more angular 'paddles'), the former being correct for this kit. The blades are designed to fit only one way, and the hubs push on without a hitch. The completed assemblies also push on to the nacelles so well that no glue is needed.

Looking at my hand-written notes across the 43 pages and 83 steps of instructions, I remember now what a considerable project this was, start to finish. HKM did a great job with the instructions – I never once felt lost or overwhelmed. With a few exceptions, the fit was flawless and the assembly and finish brought forth all the positive energy I look for when I build a model – the big HKM Lancaster was never once a chore.

That said, I had two significant problems; the first was with the fit where the parts came together above each inner engine nacelle of the aircraft. I cannot guarantee that this was a flaw in the design and engineering of the kit, or simply an error on my part. The



second problem was all about working with a model of this size (which was definitely not a flaw in the kit). Working through each of these challenges, however, forced me out of my comfort zone, and therefore helped to improve my skill set, which is always a good thing.

If one was able to get through these two issues, a novice could build the rest of the kit. Assembly is straight forward, the plastic is workable and forgiving, there is very little photo-etch or other quasi-exotic materials used, and as I said, the instructions and images are excellent. What's more, the decals are high-quality, thick, and go on with ease. After-market products have now emerged to assist in some of the more tedious tasks, such as cockpit detailing and canopy masks. After-market landing gear is also available, but I feel the design and parts provided in the kit by HKM themselves are up to the task.

Painting and finishing the Lancaster is another matter, and apart from some unusual examples, all Lancs are finished the same. Fortunately, every modeler is different and can take that part of the project as far as they want to go with it. The sheer size and weight of the model takes some getting used to - properly designed jigs are a must-have. The other key to a nice finish is planning. I suggest you do as I did - write out all the steps required in detail, starting with dipping the canopy in Future though pushing on the four propellers at the end, moving steps around as you go. The extra work will really pay off in the saved time and effort.

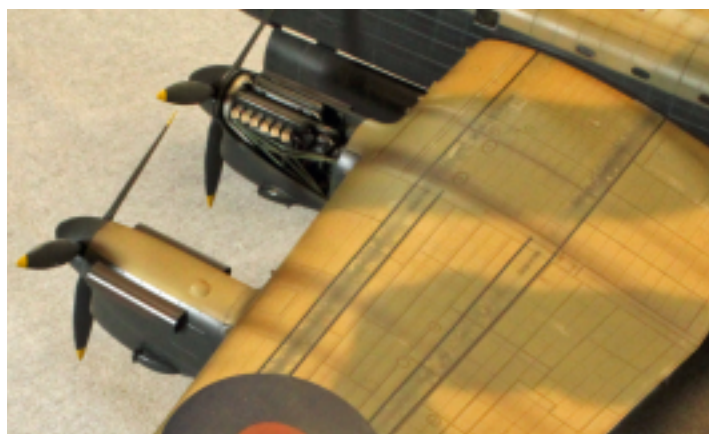
One thing is certain - when you are finished you will have an awesome model of an awesome airplane on your hands, combined with a huge sense of accomplishment.

I recommend this kit to all modelers, but only if they are up to the small challenges that a kit of this size, with so many parts and options, has. As always, I suggest that you make your big decisions up front. Build some nice jigs, spend the time to carefully clean the parts thoroughly once separated from the sprues, and dry-fit everything. Try to remember to slow down, use your references, and by all means enjoy yourself. This is a great kit, and a great hobby!

I would like to warmly and heartily thank Hong Kong Models for providing this kit for review, and to IPMS USA for giving me the opportunity to review it.







## Build Review, 75 Years Late

by David Hansen

Like IPMS members everywhere, I build kits that are sophisticated, accurate, detailed and complex. I've got the tools that I need to tackle the job, from a basic X-acto knife to a fancy air brush. But it wasn't always like that.

My first model kits were wood. I bought them at Coleman's Shoe Repair at the California and Admiral junction in West Seattle. Walking in, shoe repair was to the left, models to the right, white-haired Mr. Coleman moving from side to side according to customer needs and interests. "Do you have any tank models?", I asked as a boy and he would pull down a few boxes for examination. I remember them being difficult and my results never looked much like the picture on the top cover. I was happy when the first plastic kits began to show up on his shelves.

Still, I liked those wood kits with their clunky assembly and odd sense of scale. Over the years I would pick them up when and where I found them, more out of nostalgia than anything else.

Mostly armored vehicles, the collection eventually grew to include examples from the late 1930s to the early 50s. Not long ago, I was deep into the build of an expensive and exasperating resin kit, and it was not going well. This used to be fun, I grumbled to myself. In that moment, I thought of those wood kits that I had salted away in the garage. Why not take a break and work up one of those old timers? It would be entertaining and rewarding, like modeling should be.

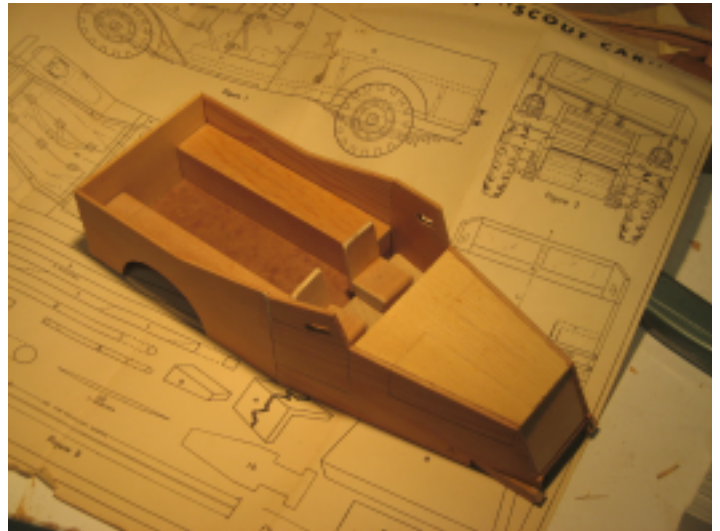
I picked out a kit made by West-Craft. West-Craft was started about 1945 by a man and wife who owned a hobby shop in Chicago. They issued only two models: a jeep and an M3 scout car. I had both but the jeep was a mess and I wasn't sure all the parts were still there. The scout car was in great shape including the box that featured a painting of the vehicle crossing a flaming battlefield. How cool was that! It would be my choice.

They were called "super kits." They included wheels molded from bakelite, a tube of glue, decals, and a bottle of olive drab dope. They were big – the scout car scales out at about 1/20th – and made from thin sheets of pine and cardboard. Plans were detailed and full size.

There would be sawing and sanding, and that meant moving the project from the house to the garage. Work started on the frame, cutting square lengths of pine to size and gluing them to a masonite floor panel. Then I glued the body panels in place, working from the back to the front. What I discovered quickly was that my present modeling skills and tools weren't of much use – what worked well with plastic didn't help at all with wood. And my basic woodworking tools were too heavy duty for the West-Craft kit. Most of the parts were die-cut and it seemed like it would be just a matter of punching them out and sticking them together. But everything was a butt-join: no locating pins or marks, nothing to help ensure that all those pieces would wind up in the right place and be square as well. Good to have those plans close by. To make the fenders, I had to learn how to bend cardboard without cracking it (tricky and only semi-successful) and how to make springs from thread wrapped around toothpicks (oddly convincing).

For a kit that was 75 years old, it was pretty good, or at least it looked like the scout car it purported to be. My workmanship was only so-so, but a lot better than when I was 12. It bothered me that interior detail was scant: two seats, a funny-looking steering wheel and storage bins. The skate rail for three machine guns wasn't provided (nor were the guns), the dash board had no instruments, and there weren't enough seats. I planned to add those missing items but in the end, I decided against it. I would build it out of the box. It would be as the kit was first offered so many years ago. For the same reason I decided not to paint it. I liked the funky look and the hand-lettered part numbers. The only change I made was to highlight the West-Craft name on the wheels.

The two-week project, working an hour or two at a time, was a blast from the past. It was fun, my modeling tension was gone and I was ready to go back to that frustrating resin challenge with renewed enthusiasm. I had acquired some new techniques, albeit they were only useful for kits that had not been made for more than a half-century. But that was okay. I had other wood kits in the garage just waiting.









## Executive Orders: Cut Sharper!

by Scott Kruize

I comply with Eric's edicts. Specifically:

- Starting with this newsletter essay: I'm closely constrained. Eric says I am not to speak or write about things I can't do for our Club: only what I CAN!
- Long before that epochal election – in which Seattle's Chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society was taken over...by a pair of armor modelers! – Eric Christianson has urged all-and-sundry – but particularly we airplane modelers! – to build AFV kits. It isn't just a matter of expanding our share in modeling historically-significant equipment. Armor has greatly shaped this last turbulent century, starting with the Great War. (Its Centennial remembrance period we've recently finished passing through...in earnest hope there'll never be another such worldwide sordid slaughter.) Even now, it's impossible to tune in the news without seeing armored vehicles deployed in hot spots around the world. But also, models of them are supposed to be fun to build. Especially – as Eric claims – with model airplanes, you futz and fuss with sub-assemblies: shaping, painting, and fitting little parts, gluing the results together... then you glue that set onto larger sub-assemblies...repeating the process, ad infinitum, till the model's finally done. Whereas – again, he claims! – with armor models, you just assemble the whole thing and then you paint it. So I built some tanks. See?



- Everyone who'll listen to him is admonished to quit fussing with and whining about ill-fitting parts, and instead get Perfect Plastic Putty® and be happy forevermore. PPP is very easy to work with, can be smoothed down with a wet finger, paints over easily, and is sturdy enough for our purposes. So I got some and have used it ever since, discarding all other fillers and putties. Most recently, it helped with a quick build of Airfix's ancient 1/144th scale Pan American Airways Boeing Clipper. Not at all a bad model, particularly for its time, but there are a few places that need some modest filling. Wing roots and roots of the stub wings (sponsons), a bit around the engine nacelles, and everything looked like it fits perfectly. PPP really IS perfect plastic putty!

So I comply with his edicts because he turns out to be right...because as a lifelong 'law and order'-type guy I believe in obeying lawful leadership... because he brings Jackie (now Mrs. Christianson) to some of our activities...and when I see her, she gives me a hug and some cookies. [It is left as an exercise to the Reader to rank these factors.]

Eric's most recent edict is also one of his oldest...if not predating his affinity for armor models, it must date from shortly thereafter. Anyway, it's his assertion that we should set aside our classic 'weapon of choice' in favor of something better.

That classic tool is of course the X-Acto® No.1 knife, fitted with a No.11 blade. We all use it all the time. Not just for obvious things like carefully cutting parts free of sprues, or of shaving off edge flash. We reach for it when it's time to scrape a seam or other blemish...or when a decal needs to be closely trimmed from its carrier sheet, and later nudged into its final placement on the model. If I scribbled on a memo pad each step through an hour's modeling session, I could easily add another dozen essential functions to the list.

So what could be better? A different brand of craft knife? Well, Excel® and OLFA® and others make craft knives, and recently we've seen some very elegant semi-custom knives skillfully hand-carved from exotic hardwoods. But it's not all clear that these actually give some measurable functional superiority.

What Eric tells us – and he's not the first – is to buy and use a surgical scalpel. Looking up from his own hand as it holds one, he says a scalpel's blades are thinner, harder, and sharper...and these qualities make modeling easier and better.



If I'd tried to follow his edict a decade or so ago, it would have been in baffled uncertainty. Do I have to go visit a hospital supplier? Would they look at me there suspiciously if I asked to buy a scalpel with blades, without being able to show any medical professional identification? Would the hardware be priced in the stratosphere, as appropriate for everything else used by the medical establishment? Would they be placated by my assertion that I wouldn't take it near human flesh? [Boy, that last would be really awkward...under intense interrogation, I'd be forced to admit that I sometimes poke a No.11 blade, held in a No.1 X-Acto knife, into a fingertip...how could I carry off an assertion I'd never do that with a scalpel?]

But that was Then, this is Now. With Internet online shopping, scalpels are readily available to anyone who wants them, and they're not excessively priced. I bought a Swann-Morten® classic No.3 knife, and a handful of blades, for less than \$20 shipped to my house. Swann-Morten is an English company, and has been producing since 1932: razors first, scalpels a few years later. They uphold the prestige of Sheffield steel, and with good reason: their products are really fine. Mine is deeply embossed for a good grip, bears the trade name proudly on one side, and on the other has a short metrically-engraved ruler. I'm not sure why...do surgeons want a little immediate help measuring out the length of a careful incision, or perhaps the spacing of sutures? Be that as it may, for our modeling work, having a small scale already in our grip is sure to prove helpful.

There are other makes on the market. I've examined two others, one from Pakistan and one from China. They are not as elegantly sculpted as Swann-Morten's, but are perfectly functional, and the blades all neatly interchange.

Note from my minimal, if growing, expertise in this matter: the No.3 handle is what we want. It takes the type blades we need the most. The blade identified No.11 is very much like our X-Acto craft version, with the 10A scalpel blade quite similar, a shade smaller and with a narrower taper: better in confined spaces. There is such a thing as a No.4 scalpel handle, but its blades look to my eye more useful to wood carvers, mostly curves.

About that assertion the blades are thinner: my micrometer says the X-Acto No.11 blade is 20 thousandths of an inch thick, whereas the Swann-Morten blades are just 14. I expect that difference must mean that the scalpel blade is less sturdy, but don't see how that could be a disadvantage for our modeling work. I confirm the scalpel blade's edge really is demonstrably sharper. Durability probably



favors X-Acto, but then, we shouldn't be overusing any of our hobby knife blades, anyway. They should be bought in quantities of 100 and with a low unit price, should be tossed when becoming even slightly dull.

The difference in handle design is obvious. I'm used to the round shaft of my X-Acto knife, and realize that I keep subtly shifting my finger grip on it as I work, to change the angle the blade meets the work. The scalpel handle is essentially flat, and falls securely into a forefingers-and-thumb grip in only one way. If the angle the blade meets the work needs to change, it's a matter of tilting your existing grip. Not a big difference, but takes a bit of getting used to.

I am not a veteran yet of scalpel use. So far, I've used it on that Airfix Clipper assembly, and repairs to my 1/48th scale Roden Albatros D.V, which took a spill inside its box in a moment of my clumsiness. And remember me, the 'balsa butcher'? I'm using it on a small radio/controlled flying model, all balsa: a Dornier Merkur early airliner in 1/24th scale. The scalpel blade's ability to shave neatly through any density of balsa stock is gratifying, and encourages good craftsmanship.

I expect that I will continue to get better at using a scalpel. But I've done enough with it to endorse Eric's edict. I expect that I will continue to comply with those edicts. After all, it's unlikely Jackie would swear off cookie production, now is it? So, as Calvin said to his mother as he slipped his jacket on and headed for the back door,

“I'm going outside to play now. Further bulletins as events warrant!”

## AFV Club 1/35th Scale AAVC-7C1

by Bob LaBouy

The AFV Kit is a reissue of the HobbyBoss kit and was originally reissued as kit number AF 35S70 in 2013.

I am very pleased at the overall quality of this kit, which builds into an excellent and accurate model of the Marine Corps primary amphibious armored assault vehicle. Excellent details...and a lot of them. Because of the add-on armor, there are numerous bolt heads and raised surface details lending themselves to lots of dry brushing.

For the most part, the kit's assembly instruction is very straight forward though there are some challenging points in the assembly - careful dry fitting and more than usual care when handling the assembled kit during painting are needed. Even before beginning this project, it's wise to look at the two basic configurations shown on the box top photograph and starting with step 10 you need to consider which versions you intend to construct (either the RAM/RS or RAM/RS w/EAAK armor). I chose the EAAK version which includes the unique ribbed side skirt design to provide additional armored protection for the amtrac. The remaining two versions are the slab-sided versions. Thirteen sprue trees are provided, the rubber tracks, a decal sheet, a photo etch sheet, one small piece of mylar film and a bag with the resin parts.



There are 11 pages of detailed construction sections including 29 steps; the last several pages of the instructions contains three suggested five-view color drawings; excellent box art containing photographs of the completed amtracs (although I found the color suggestions very difficult to discern, as the drawings are black & white, and relied on my personal photos of the amtracs).

Four paint manufacturers are called out in the instruction color options, with several acrylics. I painted my model using Mission Models paints. The entire tank was initially painted with Black Primer (MMS-001), the outside of the vehicle painted with NATO Brown (MMP-033), NATO Green (MMP-034), NATO Black (MMP-035), road wheels using Worn Black Grey Tires (MMP-105) and for the vision blocks, Crystal Light Blue (A-Mig-098). Prior to painting the model, I shot a thin coat of clear gloss (Duracryl Acrylic Lacquer D468, which I thinned with DTL 876 from Ditzler). I then overcoated the entire model with Testor's Dullcoat. I used 502 Abteilung (#Abl080) as a wash to further accentuate the surface details. I then applied several coats of Naples Yellow Light (Winsor & Newton #426) to further bring out the details.

This instruction booklet includes a series of side and top views illustrating two representative USMC and one RoC (Taiwan) and a very brief history of the ubiquitous AAV7 amphibious vehicle, the detailed instructions and a parts schematic. I have visited the amphibious base at the Marine Corps base Camp Pendleton several times and learned that the USMC fields over 400 of these vehicles. These amphibious assault vehicles are usually referred to as 'amtracs' or by other Marines as 'tuna boats.' This particular version represents the AAVC-7A1 Command Vehicle which is why you see so many antennae on the top surface.

Decal options for at least three vehicles are included including one or two from what I believe were Operation Desert Storm.

I used my favorite Devcon 5 Minute epoxy to fix the resin parts to the kit's main plastic parts. I was able to fix each of the photo etch parts using Mig Ultra Glue.

Problems/Issues observed:

The resin parts are certainly not up to the standards evident throughout this kit. There is a lot of flash on the parts and the modeler has to use the guidance on the instruction sheet to carefully identify the part numbers for the resin parts. I found the various 'clear' parts in the resin set almost totally useless and wound up using several coats of acrylic paint to represent the vision blocks on the kit. I recognize these various resin parts are an add-on to the basic kit, but they have flaws and are a significant challenge to add to the kit



make them fit or place in the proper position. There are several resin small parts included. The worst of these are the ill-fitting small observation port windows for the resin turret top. These small resin pieces are not clear (to match those nicely done for the other two turret tops)

Step 24 just assumes you have attached the forward water deflector and remaining side skirt pieces. It shows them in place without any explanation in earlier steps—they appear magically.

Another glaring error, shown in detail #29 is the inclusion of a full interior. There is no such provision in this kit, though the assault ramp includes interior details as well.

I recommend fixing these road wheels with liquid cement. One of the rear idler wheels bent under the pressure of the tracks and I was unable to correct the angle, though I tried three times.

Several small PE details were omitted in the model (or were not intended for inclusion in this kit).



While I am on a roll with my complaints, I strongly dislike the rubber band tracks provided (and recommend any third-party metal or plastic tracks over those provided in the kit).

The kit has absolutely the worst decals I have encountered. They remind me of the ancient waterslide decals that were commonplace in the late 50s, allowing for little or no 'sliding' off the paper backing. I tried to float them off using a variety of liquids to move them off and succeeded with only four of the indicated decals being moved. Very disappointing in this day and age of great decals and many manufacturers.

#### Helpful References:

An excellent Wikipedia article on the AAV7 family of amphibious vehicles is located at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assault\\_Amphibious\\_Vehicle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assault_Amphibious_Vehicle)

Other references include: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/systems/ground/aavc7a1.htm>  
[http://www.deagel.com/Armored-Vehicles/AAVC7A1\\_a000546002.aspx](http://www.deagel.com/Armored-Vehicles/AAVC7A1_a000546002.aspx)

Prime Portal sites: [http://www.primeportal.net/apc/jeff\\_derosa/aav-7/](http://www.primeportal.net/apc/jeff_derosa/aav-7/)  
and: [http://www.primeportal.net/apc/chiou\\_cheng\\_wen/aav7/](http://www.primeportal.net/apc/chiou_cheng_wen/aav7/)

This model is highly recommended. Both in the Marine Corps and RoC, these are the critical amphibious assault vehicles which permit both services to get much of their Marines and equipment to the beach safely. I wish to thank Mr. Tserng for the opportunity to build and review this kit.







**Please remember to bring goodies to eat and non-alcoholic beverages to drink to our December Meeting.**

SugarFest photo by Scott Kruize

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## *PrezNotes*

*from page 1*

minutes for the 'intelligence' to take over, meaning to let the putty settle down over the myriad of bumps and crevasses on the surface of the model. I wanted a sharp edge so I used a tool to flatten any twists or rope-like sections, getting the top edge of the putty as close to the surface of the model as possible. After settling, it ends up looking like a black, soupy goo, but is still almost rigid when touched. And as I said, it has zero tack – you can actually turn the model over and it will fall off on its own if not secured in some way. It leaves no residue and you don't need to clean the surfaces after use.

Over at the paint booth I found I could carefully paint on one side of a 1/4 inch piece of putty without any problem. A minute later, I easily lifted the putty to reveal a perfect demarcation line between the colors. Thirty minutes after putting the used putty back in the tin it had re-settled into its original blob form and become rigid once again. By the next morning the paint from the airbrush had disappeared altogether, leaving the same shiny, black 'putty puck' that came in the mail, which seems to me as pretty magical! I can honestly say after my first experience I was sold. Using it again on this second model convinced me that this stuff is the real deal. So long masking tape, Panzer Putty is here to stay!

*Eric*

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## IPMS Seattle Dues for Calendar Year 2020

Your 2020 IPMS Seattle renewal form is included below. If you have not renewed by the release of the February newsletter you will get a final reminder with that issue. If you do not renew then, you will not get any more newsletters. Dues will be **\$15**, 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 December meeting, where Club Treasurer Twyla Birkbeck will be happy to assist you.

***IPMS Seattle Dues for Calendar Year 2020*** **Remit \$15 to:**  
**IPMS Seattle**  
**c/o Twyla Birkbeck**  
**P.O. Box 15983**  
**Seattle, WA 98115-0983**

**Full Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**City** \_\_\_\_\_ **State** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code** \_\_\_\_\_

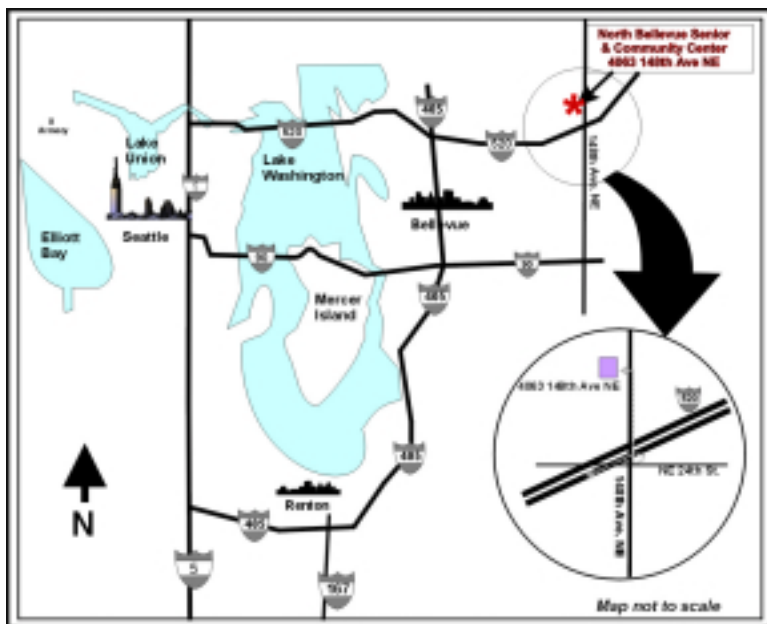
**Telephone (Area Code) ( \_\_\_\_\_ )** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address** \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Meeting Reminder

## December 14



**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.