

Seattle Chapter News

Seattle Chapter IPMS/USA December 2020



Photography on a Budget

2020 has been a challenge for everyone, but we've all made it this far. I hope everyone can join me in welcoming the New Year to come, and can look forward to all the opportunities 2021 brings with it.

Normally we would be having our big Christmas meeting on the 12th, but we have come up with a way for most of you to celebrate as a group this Saturday, safely. I will be sending out a link beforehand (with this newsletter) that ALL members can use to watch (and listen to) the club's Zoom meeting, but from YouTube. You won't need a microphone or camera, or anything – just YouTube. What you will be seeing and hearing is our Zoom session, where we will be looking at pictures of all the models that we have been working on during the pandemic. You will also pick up the audio of the model builders describing their work. Please make some time on Saturday to join in the Christmas festivities. Help us make some righteous lemonade from all of the 2020 lemons we were given!

Photography – let's talk about model photography, on a budget, with some do's and don'ts thrown in for good measure. First and foremost – I am not a photographer; I use one-tenth (1/100th?) of



what my equipment is capable of doing. I glaze over at words like 'aperture' and 'F Stops', but I won't belittle anyone who does. There is a world of photography out there and a thriving industry surrounding it; it's just not my world. My camera takes only one kind of pictures: plastic models, sitting still. I take a lot of pictures of those, and I feel I have something to offer about doing that, to modelers like me at least!

Apart from my camera, what I use can be purchased for under \$50. Two clip cans, two bulbs, a cheap tripod, and a bedsheet - that's it. I use software to adjust my pictures (with one click), but that is optional. My camera is a (relatively) inexpensive Canon Rebel (\$150 used), but a cell phone can serve just as well. It's really all about light, and that tripod. Above is my setup (with results, later in this article).

I picked up the two clip cans and lights at Home Depot, and the tripod at Fred Meyer. The light bulbs must have a high 'K' rating

(5000), and the ones I use are 1100 Lumens. The bulbs will have this information stamped right on them and the box. I use a powder-blue, silky backdrop from a cut-up bedsheet resulting in a color that looks just off-white, fading to blue (see results, below). I roll the fabric down over a cardboard box top laying on my (reversed) PanzerRack, from the back of my airbrush booth. I've used this simple setup for 15 years.

The key is to capture enough light to get a real nice focus from the front of your subject to the back. And to do this you'll need a tripod to keep everything still while your camera does its thing. I know I said that I don't pay attention to photography terms, but my camera shows me the 'F-Stop' on the back, and I know the sweet spot for armor and aircraft is around F29 or F30. I add light until I can get that number. If I am using my phone to take pictures, I simply keep adding light until I get the focus I need.

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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 10:30 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 2020 meeting schedule is as follows. All meetings are from **10:30 AM** to **1:30 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 accessable place.

The meetings have been cancelled through February 2021

IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Building the Mark I Models 1/144th Scale HS.748/Andover CC.2/T.2

by Chris Banyai-Riepl

Back in June. I did an inbox review of this kit and thought it would be a fairly easy build. I had some bench time clear up, so I gave it a shot. Between then and now, Mark I has announced two more boxings of this kit, both with multiple marking options, so there's likely something out there for anyone, and probably then some.

Typical of 1/144th airliner kits, this kit comes with a solid fuselage and decals for the windows, so there is no real interior to worry about. However, there IS a challenge, and that's making sure this sits on its nose gear. The instructions indicate



that you'll need 30 grams of weight, so I broke out the scale and measured out that much weight in the steel balls I have for nose weights. As you can see below, either the 30 grams is not a correct measurement or my scale is WAY off. I scaled back to far fewer balls, taped things up, and did a balance check. Once I got that sorted out, I added a few extra, built up the nose gear bay, and closed up the fuselage.



The next step was to get the stabilizers on securely, and with these being a butt joint I decided to add some pins to give it just a bit of extra strength. I did this by adding a small drop of paint on the stabilizer and pressing it in place. With that I now had two matching marks for the pin and hole. I drilled holes in both the stabilizers and fuselage, then added a piece of styrene rod in the stabilizer pieces. That gave me a nice strong joint and guaranteed everything would line up.

The engines and wings are next, and these are pretty straightforward. The only real challenge area is with the back end of the engine nacelles. I drilled out the exhausts once they were glued in place, and just about the only place I needed filler was on the trailing edge of the nacelle piece. For the most part, though, the fit was pretty solid across the board, and after a coat of primer I turned to choosing the scheme.

There was no real choice for me when it came to the decals, of course I was going to do the Royal Thai Air Force one with a big horse on the tail. All three options had the same basic paint scheme of white and gray, though, so if something happened in decaling I could easily switch to one of the other schemes. For painting, I used Mission Models white and gull gray, which went down well. A gloss coat later and it was time for some decaling.

For those not used to decaling aircraft with cheatlines, these can be quite a pain, especially when there's no clear marks to line up to. To make this easier, I cut the one-piece stripes into a couple of pieces, just to make things easier. The first step was to apply the decals on the back end, lining up the end points together and making sure that they rolled out parallel to the fuselage line. Once those were in place, I applied the windscreen decal and used that as a marker to apply the forward half of the stripes, lining up the badge with the last window of the windscreen and running it back to match up with the back piece. It was a bit more work this way, but I was able to ensure everything was positioned properly as a result.



The tail decal was a bit challenging as well, mainly due to the size. The decals are thin, so they can fold up on themselves easily and be difficult to unfold. I found this out on one of the 50s on the side, with one side folding up bad enough that I couldn't sort it out. How to fix that? Easy, just don't photograph it closely (or in focus). I might try going back later and see if I can touch it up somehow. It is black over the white, so maybe I could just print a new one on clear film and apply it.

With all the decals on, the only real step left was to hit it with a clear coat, do some detail painting, stick the wheels on, and call it done. Well, mostly done, as I did leave the antennas off. Somewhere I know I have some photo-etch 1/144th antennas and once I find that I'll add the blades and towel rack antennas that this plane has, as that will look far better than the plastic parts. Overall, though, this is a pretty fun one to build, and I'm probably going to pick up another one or two to do a camouflaged one and perhaps a civilian version.

If you're looking for a fun little kit to build up in between bigger projects, definitely check this one out. The construction is straightforward, there's no real surprises, and you have no shortage of interesting color schemes to choose from. My thanks to Mark I Models for the review copy.

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









AFV Club 1/35th Scale Magach 6B GAL

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.)

AFV Club has released yet another version of Israeli's rework of the venerable American M60 Main Battle Tank. This time around we meet the 'Magach 6B GAL' – a version that, as far as I know, has only been reproduced in 1/35th scale with the help of an aftermarket Legend set. 'Magach', Hebrew for 'battering ram', has no less than six origins in Wikipedia, so I'll let the reader decide where this moniker actually came from. Needless to say, these 'rewired' M48 and M60 tanks proved to be equal to the task of filling the gap between earlier, British and WWII armor and the current Merkava armor types – the final conversion occurring in 2006.



Prior to the 1982 invasion of Lebanon (1982 Lebanon War), Magach 6 and 7 tanks were fitted with explosive reactive armor (ERA). Further upgrades included new belly armor, Merkava tracks, new fire controls, a thermal sleeve for the gun and smoke grenades, eventually resulting in the Magach 6b (Bet) and, ultimately, the 6b Gal Batash and equivalent Magach 7c Gimel models.

On a personal note, I've been waiting for this specific version of the Magach 6B Gal to show up in plastic for a long time, after having seen a similar build-up in the Legend Productions booth at the US Orlando Nationals back in 2012. The Legend aftermarket parts were mated with the old ESCI/ERTL Blazer M60A1...and it was just about the coolest AFV I'd ever seen. I had the Blazer in my stash, but Legend wanted too much for their resin set, so I walked away. Looking closely at what AFV Club included in this kit, however, it appears that my wait is over. If this isn't the Legend set in the box, then it is something right up there with it.

The large, sturdy AFV Club kit box is relatively heavy and filled to the brim with parts and extras. The plastic is soft and in places, very thin, but I did not find any warpage or damage in shipping. Unusually for AFV Club, there was minor flash on many of the small parts, but nothing significant. As per usual, the kit is replete with a variety of extras including at least five unused heavy machine guns and a variety of small arms, as well as extra fire extinguishers, grab handles, stretchers, etc., etc. There are also more resin parts than I've ever encountered in any mainline AFV Club kit. Along with replacements for the drive sprockets, there is a solid resin block representing the rear-turret bustle – handy, but not useful for those who would like to show some detail in the bustle, since it is covered with a fitted tarp. There is also a resin shovel and a complete, one-piece 'observation' chair that mounts on top of the turret, if you decide to model that particular version. While there are two turned aluminum parts that fit (on) the main gun barrel, the majority of the shaft itself is comprised of two plastic halves (with the ubiquitous seam-line). The sprues are molded in such a way to minimize shipping damage to very, very fine lengths of plastic that represent the railings along the sides of the turret. All arrived safe, without breakage, in my sample copy.

There are two sets of wheels, including the accurate IDF versions as well as the original standard M60 set in the kit. Unfortunately, only the standard set are molded with separate tires.

The contents of the box include:

- 17 sprues in soft, medium-green plastic, packaged separately
- 18 sprues containing 12 track light brown links each
- 17 resin parts, incl. commander's chair, drive sprockets, turret bustle, track links, more
- 2 turned aluminum barrel parts that mate with plastic parts
- Lower hull, packaged separately
- 1 bag of 14 rubber O-rings to assist with wheel removal (for painting)
- 1 length of string for the tow cable

1 rubber/plastic gun mantlet shroud

4 small photo-etch sheets containing mesh parts and small details

1 sprue of clear parts containing headlights, lenses, and viewports, packaged separately

1 medium-sized sheet of decals with markings for four vehicles

1 24-page black and white instruction booklet with 42 steps, including three color pages showing (four) 5-view decal placement and paint guides

The side-bounded instruction booklet, unfortunately, does not contain a list of unused parts – an omission which is compounded by the fact that the parts map is printed on one-half of one page – far too small to read the numbers. In fact, it is difficult to even make out the shape of many of the parts. I would humbly suggest that AFV Club either use an entire page for a legible parts map, or re-task this half-page space for a more useful purpose. On the plus side, the instructions contain color call-outs for Gunze Sangyo (lacquers and acrylics), Humbrol, Revell, and Lifecolor, and the decal placement instructions are supplied in beautiful, five-view CAD images. Also, AFV Club thoughtfully includes a short history of the Middle-Eastern conflicts and how the M48 and M60 MBTs were employed throughout.

Sprues and parts are color coded in the instructions, so I was able to easily distinguish between like-labeled sprues.

Things to consider before starting:

The plastic used in the kit is soft; softer than what you might find in most other model kits. If you are like me and use a scalpel as your go-to hobby knife, you will want to take extra care in cleaning the parts before assembly. This is especially true with the many parts that are small and delicate - a deft touch is the key here.

Depending on what scheme you want to go with, there are some painting decisions to be made that will alter the flow of assembly – all noted below.

Finally, the covers that appear on the smoke dischargers in all the artwork were not included in the sample kit I received, nor are they found in the instructions.

AFV Club provides individual-link track on 18 sprues of soft, medium-brown plastic. Each link has four sprue connection points, and unless you own a pair of GodHand sprue clippers, a significant amount of clean-up work lies ahead of you. Luckily, I do own a pair of these wonderful shears, and was able to carefully remove each link from the sprue and attach them together with only minor cleanup



here and there. These clippers are worth their weight in gold (which is about what they cost)! There are 216 links in the kit, 108 per side, but I pushed 96 links on each side into a single run using Testors 'Black Bottle' liquid cement. (Note: There are two nice resin links to use on the left-rear fender, so you won't need to save any of these links for that purpose - see Step 20.) I let each track run sit for about an hour before I picked it up and wrapped it around the drive sprocket, wheels and return roller, connecting it just under the real wheel on each side. Love it.

The Main Gun and Turret: The most challenging part of the turret involves the placement of three, long railings along the sides of the turret (parts V35, V40 and V41). Inexplicably, while there are beaucoup placement marks along the sides of the turret for other things, there are none for these three critical pieces - critical since everything else fits under and around them. A simple, scale side-view of exactly where these go would have helped tremendously, along with soft placement marks. In fact, these prominent bars, which appear above all the ERA detail, are not even included on any of the side-view images in the instructions, or decal/paint images. I placed them as well as I could using the three-quarter, oblique images in the instructions. As a result, I had to find places for two of the ERA boxes that would not fit in their intended location, and I had to make extra room for two others by shaving off parts of other, surrounding pieces. Your experience (will) be different, because the exact placement of the bars is so vague.

The large instructor's chair is provided as a single piece of resin, with an additional resin turnbuckle attached to the back, to anchor it to the hull. The bottom of the chair is made of two plates that are supposed to sandwich around the hull rim of the open loader's hatch. The connection between the two plates comprises of (two) scale-size bolts – meaning, by the time you separate the chair from the resin block, and then work the two plates around to point the chair forward, the bottom plate has long since sheared off and is rattling around inside the turret. In other words, not a great design here. Thankfully, the chair looks pretty good without the lower plate, so keep all this in mind when you are oh-so-carefully removing that resin block trying to preserve those two, tiny, bolts.

One other thing – with the instructor's chair in place you can see right down into the wide opening of the loader's hatch, and there is no internal turret detail provided here - and you can't exactly fill the void with a figure (which would appear right between the instructor's legs!

Except for priming and pre-shade coats, I used Tamiya and AKI Real Color paints throughout, thinned 50/50 with Gunze Leveling Thinner. I've come to really like airbrushing these paint mixes and although not as healthy as the new acrylics, I can depend on the consistent results I achieve every time I pick up the airbrush.

I started by applying a coat of (rattlecan) Krylon Flat Black 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, resin 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.

I followed this with a quick coat of Tamiya NATO Black on the wheels, and where the Krylon missed. I then sprayed a coat of hairspray on the wheels so overspray can be easily cleaned later, after the camouflage coats have been applied.

I painted the mantlet and bustle Tamiya XF-57 Buff, and then laid down a base coat of AKI RC094 IDF Sinai Grey 1990 for everything else, including the three unit ID patches and what I had put on the sticky board.

I then applied post shading coats of (first) AKI RC061 IDF WW2 Dunkelgelb Ausgebe 44, (then) AKI RC096 IDF Sinai Grey 1973, including the sticky board.

Once the paint was dry, I hand-brushed (Pledge/Future) just where the decals would go. While the gloss patches were drying, I hand-painted some of the on-board detail.



I applied the decals using the Red and Blue MicroSol and MicroSet products. The decals were very thin and surprisingly stubborn once on the surface. Patience prevailed, however, and I was able to coax them into place. After the decals were set and dried, I applied overall filters while most of the surface areas were still flat, using Mig Wash Brown and Dark Brown heavily thinned with Mona Lisa thinner. I let the filters dry before spraying an overall coat of (Pledge/Future) to seal the decals and prepare the surfaces for washes.

The machine guns were painted Tamiya XF-84 Dark Iron, and then detailed with Vallejo Saddle Brown and Uschi Chrome metallic powder. I painted the ammunition boxes AKI Real Color RC094 IDF Sinai Grey 1990, a somewhat faded version of my go-to-and-out-of-production Pactra Artillery Olive, the color I've always used for this application. Both parts then received a brown wash.

When the Future was dry to the touch, I went to work adding a

pin wash using Mig Dark Wash mixed (1:10) with Mona Lisa thinner. Once satisfied, I knocked down the shiny areas using Vallejo 70.520 Flat Varnish, followed by a coat of 'road dust' along the wheels and lower superstructure using Vallejo Model Air 71.027 Light Brown. I also used this color to 'tone down' the decals a little.

Finally, I carefully added the three machine guns - Done, done, and done!

This kit was a challenge to build, and to finish. AFV Club has a solid reputation for offering unusual, highly accurate injection-molded kits. Their kits have a lot of parts, and sometimes dealing with that level of detail can be maddening. I have often said that AFV kits are not for the faint of heart, and I mean it. You have to know what you're doing, you have to have a lot of patience, and you need to know how to slow down.

I have been building AFV Club kits for years, and I have often complained about the lack of positive locator pins or holes or other (common) assists found in other kits, such as interior ridges and/or insets that may not have existed on the real thing, but could be included, out of sight, and would really help modelers. Well, I'd like to think that AFV Club has finally heard the message, but more likely has simply decided to add more design features that assist in buildability. Whatever the case, the complex, multipart front-end of the running gear literally fell together; each piece inserted into the other along inner edges and corners. Complex pieces could only fit a single way, etc., etc. I would like to heartedly commend the company for adding these features to their design process, vastly increasing the buildability of their high-end kits.

I am more than satisfied with the end result, and all that busy detail looks great on the finished model.

The number of small parts, the complicated assemblies and use of photo-etch and resin leads me to recommend this kit to experienced modelers only. Go slow, pre-fit everything, and above all, have fun!

I would like to sincerely thank AFV Club for providing this kit for review, and to IPMS USA for giving me the opportunity to review it.

















Modeling Skills Apply to Holiday Decorations

by Scott H. Kruize

I need hardly remind you fellow modelers – because you're worldly, having seen it all, done it all, learned it all – that you have special powers and abilities. Like Superman's, they are far beyond those of mortal craftsman.

We are masters of paint, epoxy- and super-glue, of solvents that remove strange, stubborn, often unidentifiable globs and stains. Our ability to bring incredibly sharp, fine-edged tools to bear on vanishingly small items is a skill shared only by brain surgeons and the like.

Unable as we are to conceal these powers, knowledge of them spreads quickly and thoroughly among all our friends-and-relations...most especially to our Significant Others.

Take my S.O. for example. At this time of year, Sandy takes from carefully-packed storage her unique collection of Christmas decorations. She spurns currently-available gewgaws and trinkets, particularly of the kind aggressively marketed with the most crass and tasteless of Madison Avenue magazine and television ads.

[Speaking of which: I wish to assert here that I've never seen an obviously CGI-animated fuzzy whatizit unchain itself from the grill of a large semi-truck, and laboriously crawl its way toward me through nighttime snow flurries. I DO mean never; I'm certain I'd have remembered such an event, had anything like it ever occurred...if necessary, I'll sign an Affidavit to this effect, and have it Notarized. But even if it HAD, I fail to understand why that should somehow compel me to run out and buy a Mercedes-Benz SUV. If any of you cultural/marketing sophisticates can shed light on this bizarre message – tossed constantly at me while I'm trying to catch up on local television news – I would be ever so grateful.]

Back to Sandy's ornament collection: she picks things up at garage sales and thrift stores. She's of the belief that whatever condition one of her finds should happen to be in, she has only to turn to her Significant Other and say, "Can you fix this?" – And I make every effort never to disappoint her.

Consider the items pictured here. The little house had some cosmetic damage, sat on a seriously sunken and bowed base...and much worse, its light socket had come loose, cattywampus and disconnected. The helicopter is a children's toy made of painted and bentand-folded light sheet steel, from the era after the Second World War, but before plastics overtook and conquered the toy market. Of course there were scratches in the paint, and the metal panels were bent askew. The rotor was semi-detached, its blades bent with – as best as I can determine – feline tooth punctures. The standalone bottlebrush tree was in more-or-less decent condition, but had no stand. The Hallmark® Keepsake® '57 Chevy Corvette sports car was in even better condition – except it was missing both back wheels. And the tiny red wooden biplane overhead was literally in pieces, in a plastic bag mixed in with a lot of miscellaneous other knickknacks and stationery items.

Well, of course I have a soldering iron and a tube of Perfect Plastic Putty® (purchased in obedience to the relevant edict handed down by our Prez), to restore the house. I'm able to bend sheet steel in my bare hands, and reduce scratches to near-invisibility (beyond two feet) with my handy-dandy #00 brush and rack of little acrylic paint bottles. My box of leftover plastic components happened to have a pair of aircraft landing gear wheels which only nitpickers like you fanatical car modelers would ever recognize as non-authentic on Chevys. The biplane went together with newly-machined strutwork, landing gear, and an impressive display of surplus insignia decals. If you could somehow sneak in and turn over Sandy's collection of bottlebrush Christmas trees, one by one, you'll come to one whose stand is stamped underneath with (Guillow's) KIT 401 MES.

The last decoration was not a Sandra-esque acquisition, but she's semi-responsible for it, all the same. She picked up a Christmasthemed puzzle: 'Santa's Hangar'. We had great fun putting it together...and as I wrote in the article (you might want to read, or re-read) in the January 2018 newsletter, I was astounded to recognize – all the way at the back of the hangar – that Santa owns a demilitarized S.P.A.D. 13. I had to build it! Of course, I have several S.P.A.D. kits in the Great War section of my 500 (or thereabouts) kit stash. But just assembling one, and painting it red and green, would've been cheating. Santa does, after all, represent old-fashioned craftsmanship. So I pretended I was modeling back in the days before the Second World War, when our forebears laboriously carved so-called 'solid' models from balsa and bass and pine. As to cheating...well, I confess to some. The wheels and prop are from my spares; the exhaust manifolds are only slightly modified from kit-sprue cuttings; the 'SC-1' designation on the tail (which is conjectured, not documented) is made from decal leftovers. Flying surfaces are sheet styrene; the engine radiator grill is a scrap of ornate gift-wrap ribbon. Lastly, I must admit that I'm no old-fashioned master of wood carving, so I turned the fuselage in my little craft lathe, just flattening out the sides with a bit of planing and sanding-stick work.

If not impressive or expensive, Sandy's collection is at least unique. It makes her happy to put them out, and for me to see them and recall what I did to get them presentable. And I bask in her good graces and my certain entry on Santa's 'NICE' list. It is left as an Exercise to the Reader which is more important.

The Pandemic isn't ready yet to let go of us...but it will. We can and shall nevertheless enjoy the holidays. We can't get together physically, like we used to, and wish we could now. We'll have to nibble on our own little snacks while attending only a virtual meeting this month, rather than O.D. on our regular annual collective potluck SugarFest feast. But we have a wide array of nearly miraculous electronic devices now – quite unimaginable to us all in times not-too-distant in our Christmas Pasts – that can keep us in contact with each other and with all our friends-and-relations. All things considered, well worth wishing each other Happy Holidays!



The Road Not Taken (Apologies to Mr. Frost)

by Ken Murphy

Two kits converged on my bench, and I, I took the kit less modeled by And that has made all the difference

One great saving grace of this era of COVID is Zoom meetings, and being able to attend from the comfort of your own Man Cave with all your tools and supplies readily at hand and all the kits in your stash to work on while conversing with your Zoom companions.

Just one problem: finding things to work on. At these meetings, whether they were in person or on Zoom, I was always at a loss for what to actually work on. I found trying to work on my usual aircraft subjects was unproductive. There's only so much you can do with an airplane model before you have to paint something, and you have to paint something before you glue just about anything. You really can't do any airbrushing and still converse so really all you can do is cut parts off sprues and clean them up and hope you can recall which part goes where when the time comes to assemble.

I have had to plan ahead and have a model I can work on under these circumstances, which usually means opening a new kit and start clipping and sanding. A few weeks of this and soon you have several half-started kits and nothing more. What to do? I couldn't help but notice that the armor guys at these sessions were merrily clipping, sanding and gluing away, assembling their kits without a single thought of painting anything. I was reminded of the old saw for aircraft modelers; its "paint, build, paint, build, paint, build, paint," but for armor guys its "build, build, build, build, paint." Suddenly the light came on. Hey, I could do that! Then after a session I would have something more to show than a baggy of parts! So, I turned to the dark side. I grabbed a 1/48th Tamiya Cromwell that had been staring at me for months from the top of my pile of kits which I purchased from Andrew Birkbeck's "Going to New Zealand and can't take 'em with me" sale and took it to the next meeting. I cleaned up parts and began to assemble them. Still, I felt uncomfortable gluing unpainted parts, so I asked armor modeler extraordinaire, Eric Christianson, who patiently encouraged me:

"Build the whole model."

"So, I just glue everything, even the little parts?"

"Build the whole model."

"You mean just assemble the whole kit without painting anything?"

"Build the whole model."

"The whole thing – sans paint?"

"Build the whole model."

So, I did. Twice. Once with the Cromwell and then with a Matilda. And I have been getting things done at Zoom meetings! They seem to be when I get the most of my modeling done. You can cut off parts, sand and glue and glue and glue to your heart's content building the entire model without a drop of paint, allowing you to freely converse with your fellow Zoomers and still make substantial progress. They end up looking toy-like unpainted, but here again, Eric comes to the rescue. He has developed a set of instruction for finishing titled "15 Steps to Done" that walks you through the whole finishing process. Contact Eric for a copy at:

ModelerEric@Comcast.Net. To wrap this up, tanks and armored vehicles are a good subjects for your Zoom time and following Eric's steps makes it easy to get a good result. I enjoyed building these and who knows? Maybe I'll do another. Boy, as an aircraft guy that was hard to say, but hey, I actually finished something!



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Review: The Paint Case

by Jon Fincher

Since moving to the Midwest, I've struggled to set up a permanent workshop. Until recently, my model shed has not been properly insulated, so my modeling time has been limited in the heat of summer and chill of winter. To solve this problem, I moved some of my activities into my home office.

However, space there is limited, taken up by my desk, computer, and sleeping areas for Belle and Shadow. Therefore, most of my activities there are restricted to painting figures. I've tried numerous home-spun storage solutions for my modeling tools and paints, but was always dissatisfied. Finally, I bit the bullet and treated myself to a birthday present this year, The Paint Case from Frontier Wargaming (https://frontierwargaming.com/product/ paint-case/).

The Paint Case measures 310mm tall, 460mm wide, and 115mm deep (that's roughly a foot tall, 16 inches wide, and 4-1/2 inches deep for you Imperial measurement folks), or the size of a thick



briefcase. Constructed from rigid Baltic birch plywood, it is finished in a medium stain with a quality urethane top-coat. The front of the Paint Case snaps firmly closed, and hinges at the bottom, opening to a wide working surface for painting and building, and protecting the underlying table or desk. The sturdy handle on top, or a shoulder strap attached to plastic D-rings on the sides, provides a way to easily carry it between locations.

Of course, it's more than just another expensive finished wooden box. Within the spacious interior, the Paint Case provides several well laid out storage options, including:

- Five small covered drawers, suitable for cotton swabs, toothpicks, fillers, putties, and other small items.
- One long covered drawer, which I find great for cutting tools, files, sanding sticks, and other long implements.
- Three long open drawers which can store a ton of paint in most popular container sizes, like dropper bottles and jars.
- A short square tray with a set of figure holders and space for six miniatures up to 15cm tall.

The basic Paint Case is great as it is, but there are some optional features which I found very useful:

• A fourth long tray with a metal bottom, designed to hold miniatures with magnetic bases. I use it instead to hold my acrylic paint brushes and a micro-fiber cloth.

• An LED light fixture which stores in the case and attaches to the top edge when in use.

These extra options cost more, but are reasonably priced and worth the extra cost.

How I Use It

I find the long drawers to be the most useful for me. My jeweler's files, sanding sticks, cutting implements, tweezers, pin vise, paint brushes, and other materials fit in them nicely. I use the contents of that drawer almost every time I work on something. The small drawers are less useful, so they hold items I don't use as often, such as epoxy putties and gloves. I would love to see a redesign here, combining two of side-by-side shorter drawers into another long drawer in which I could store my oil paints and brushes.

When I ordered my Paint Case, I also ran into a small problem which Frontier has since rectified. The Paint Case is built in and shipped from Latvia, which means the LED strip is powered using a European plug. That was the only option when I ordered it, so I had to get an adapter on my own. Since that time, Frontier provides an optional North American plug adapter, so you don't need to order a separate one.

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One other available option is a custom logo laser-etched onto the front panel. This is great for personalizing the Paint Case, adding a club or company logo, or engraving something special for a gift or award. I opted to keep the standard Paint Case logo, customizing my case with various stickers.

Frontier also has numerous other storage solutions available, including desktop racks for storing paint, brushes, and tools. Made from similar materials as the Paint Case, the racks connect together with magnets to help customize your workspace. They are also less expensive than other magnetically connected storage racks from other manufacturers.

I find the Paint Case to be an invaluable addition to my modeling and working space and well worth the price. It securely and simply holds a variety of tools I use for figure modeling, and can be packed for storage and later deployed for work within minutes. It keeps my office area clutter free, and keeps my tools in one place for future visits to other modeler homes.

Most importantly, it makes Belle happy, as I can now clear off space next to my office desk for her to sleep while I work.





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The CF-104 Starfighter in Royal Canadian Airforce Colors

by Nathan Cockerham

I thought it would be interesting for my friends South of the border to be given a snapshot of the F-104 in Canadian service. I will be focusing on the stuff of most interest to modelers, that is to say, markings and colors. However, a bit of background history might also be interesting.

The origin of the CF-104 (C obviously meaning 'Canadian') is in the late '50s. When the CF-105 Arrow was cancelled, the Premiership of John Diefenbaker was without a replacement for the CF-100 interceptor for NORAD duty, and the Canadair Sabre for NATO European duty. The CF-105 was supposed to replace both, but we all know that it was cancelled at the eleventh hour.

The Department of National Defence (DND) opted for two aircraft. For the NORAD interceptor role, the F-101 Voodoo was chosen, and became the CF-101. For the NATO role, the DND needed an aircraft capable of nuclear strike and photo reconnaissance. In late 1959, the F-104 Starfighter was chosen.

200 aircraft were ordered, to be built in Montreal. It may strike you – as it struck me – as an odd choice for a strike aircraft. It had a limited payload and was not easy to fly at low altitude. Like most Canadian defence procurements, much of it comes down to cost (even in those days of comparatively high defence budgets). The first aircraft was delivered in August 1961, and the final in November 1964.



Left: two CF-104s in early '60s colours. Source: SDASM

Rather than being a multi-mission aircraft, the CF-104 was equipped with specialized avionics for its dual role. It was given a R-24A NASARR (North American Search and Range Radar) optimized for ground strike only. It also had larger wheels and heavier undercarriage than the USAF F-104G on the grounds that it would be required to carry a heavier payload.

Initially, the Starfighter equipped six nuclear strike squadrons in Germany, and two photo-reconnaissance squadrons in France. In 1967-1968, this was reduced to four strike and two recce squadrons in Germany. In 1970, fairly severe budget cuts across the entire Canadian military required a further reduction to three conventional strike squadrons (in 1968, the government of Pierre Trudeau decided to remove nuclear weapons from Canadian usage). Twin payload racks were installed on the wings, allowing the CF-104 to deliver a variety of conventional munitions (unguided bombs, rockets, cluster bombs, etc).

In the '70s surplus CF-104s were sold to Norway and Denmark, where they served into the late '80s. In 1979, Canada began looking for a replacement. In 1982, the F/A-18 was selected, and these began to replace the Starfighter and the Voodoo. By 1986, the last Starfighter had been taken out of Canadian service. Despite its bad reputation for being

a pilot killer, the Starfighter was popular in Canadian service, and was a fixture at NATO 'Tiger Meet' competitions throughout its service life.

Colors and markings

Since this is a modelling newsletter, I'd better talk about the important stuff! Initially, all Canadian CF-104s, like their USAF counterparts, were given a natural metal finish with large, full colored roundel and markings. Note: prior to 1965, this would include the previous Canadian flag – the Red Ensign – on the tail:



Here is a picture of a typical look for a mid-'60s CF-104:



Image from Wings Palette. http://wp.scn.ru.

In the mid-'60s, things changed. First, the Maple Leaf flag was introduced in 1965. Second, in 1968, the Army, Navy and Air Force were amalgamated into the 'Canadian Forces' (The designation RCAF returned in 2011). From this point on, 'RCAF' would not appear on the Starfighters. Rather, the roundel would appear with 'Armed Forces'/'Forces Armees' to its side:



Image from Wings Palette. http://wp.scn.ru.

The next big change came in the early '70s. Sometime around 1972-1973, Starfighters stationed in Germany were painted in a low-visibility dark green scheme:



Image from Wings Palette. http://wp.scn.ru.



Now, the difficult thing for modelers is that the Canadian military used their own paint line for their aircraft, and there is no paint that exactly matches the color. According to IPMS Canada, however, FS 34127 Flat Forest Green is a fairly good match. So is Gunze C309.

Above: 439 Squadron CF-104 sometime in the '70s. Credit: Mike Freer, Touchdown Aviation

The final change came sometime in the late '70s (I have been unable to track down the exact date). The overall green made way for a three-tone tactical camouflage, as well as low-visibility insignia.

According to several sources, the paints which best correspond to this scheme are Humbrol 166 light aircraft grey for the under surfaces, Humbrol 27 Sea Grey, and Humbrol 116 US dark green.



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Below: CF-104, Germany, early '80s. Credit: Mike Freer, Touchdown Aviation



As you can see in the above photo, the camo faded quickly under the rigor of low-level tactical operations. In addition to the 'humdrum' everyday camo, Canadian Starfighters were often given rather outlandish temporary paint schemes for NATO Tiger Meet competitions. Here's an example, which takes the 'tiger' element rather literally. Image courtesy of **http://www.vmas.it**.



Photography on a Budget

The final thought I want to pass on is composition. Pictures taken from 500 feet scale feet up don't look as good as pictures taken down in the dirt. Lower that tripod and experiment – you'll be surprised how cool your stuff can look!

Merry Christmas, Everybody. Stay healthy, keep each other safe, and Model On!

Eríc

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Meeting/Show Information

The IPMS Seattle meetings have been cancelled through February 2021. It is impossible to know at this time for certain when our meetings will resume. Please check the web site at **http://www.ipms-seattle.org** for updates.

The Oregon Modelers' Society, IPMS Boise, and IPMS Vancouver shows for this year have also been cancelled.

Eric will be sending out an e-mail blast to all members inviting everyone to a Saturday (online) Zoom meeting during the hours of our normal IPMS meeting (10:30am - 01:30). If we can't meet in person, at least we can meet online and work on models together. It is a lot of fun. You can join the meeting via your smartphone or from your camera/micro-phone-equipped laptop or PC. Look for the e-mail on Friday.