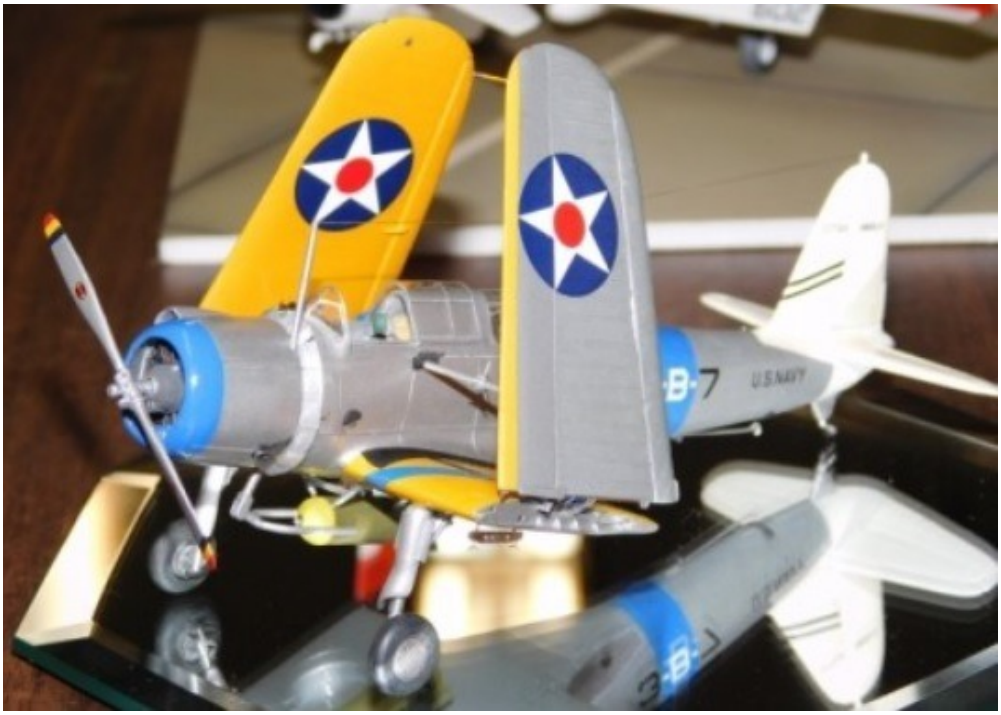
Chapter Contacts

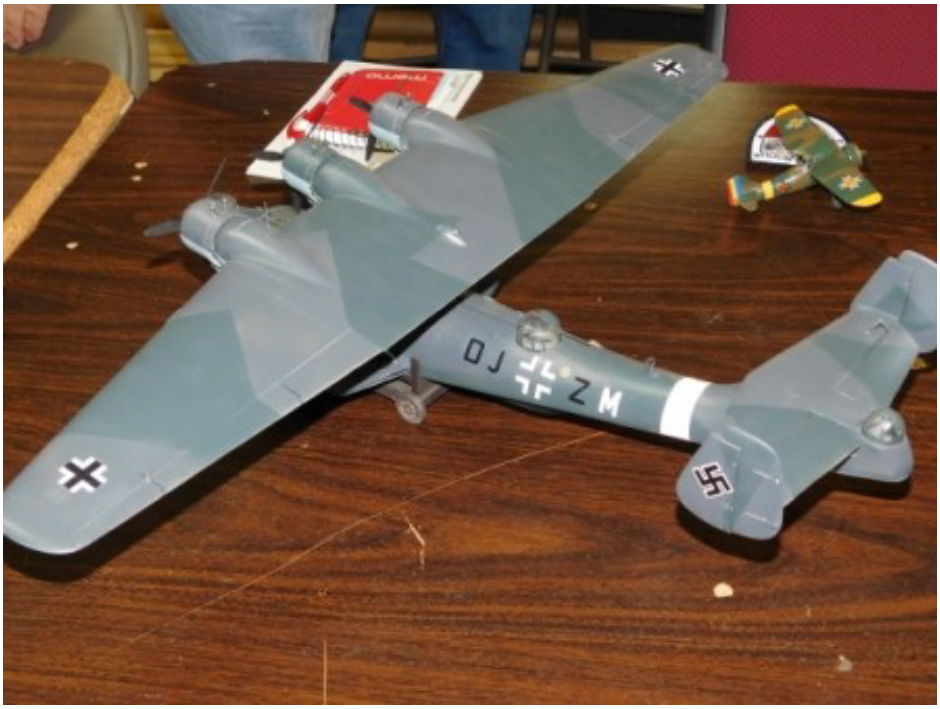
Editor Rob Morales begins his newsle3er with his lament about why he didn't make it to the Chattanooga contest last month. It was the "Icemageddon Weekend" across the south, and even his consolation prize of a nice quiet weekend of building models was shattered by sudden job duties related to the Fort Lauderdale airport tragedy. In sum, "...that weekend sucked".

His newsletter features all sorts of good stuff: the boys of Marietta have been busy! Rob goes far beyond just pictures of the models on the tables at meetings: in nearly all cases brief histories of the real hardware is provided, the model builder credited, the kits and materials used mentioned, and aftermarket or scratch-built parts described. In other words, a brief but full report, not just a picture. Thanks, Rob!

One of them was this 1/72nd Vought SB2U "Vindicator". (And where did I get the memory, that the Navy nickname for this obsolescent * "scout bomber" had been "Wind Indicator"?) It was displayed by member Buz Pezold after it had won "Best Aircraft" at Chattanooga.



But what blew me away was that Buz built it from the ancient Rareplane VACUFORM kit! Rob records much of his scratch-building efforts to detail the model.



We all find something in these newsletters that catches the eye, and each of us will likely pick something different from the next. For me, it was Mark Nickelson's Luftwaffe Dornier Do 24, above, in 1/48th scale.

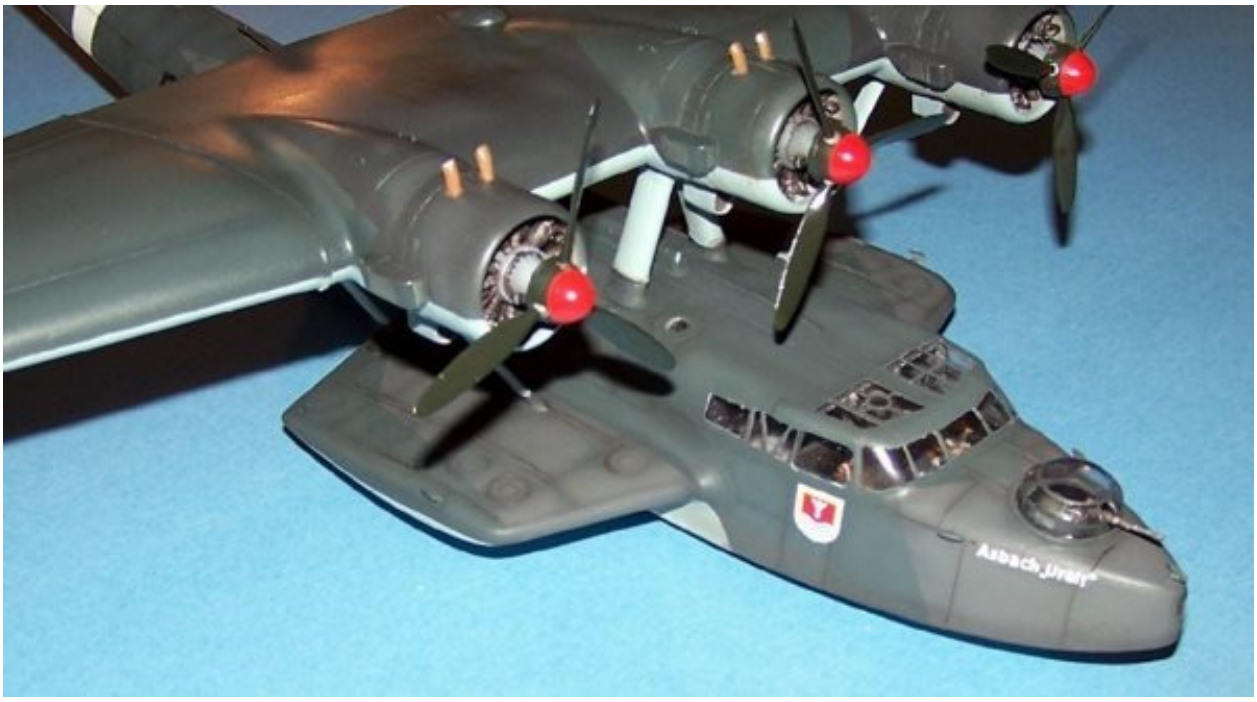
I've always been interested in flying boats, probably because a favorite uncle had a Navy career in them. Otto even attended the opening day performance of what became the biggest event of the twentieth century for Americans, with the added excitement of watching "his" PBY Catalina burn when the Japanese bombed it at Kaneohe NAS on December 7th, 1941. (He was a "Plane Captain" crew chief, and good crew chiefs are always VERY possessive about "their " airplanes, considering them only "loaned" to pilots, on the blood promise of returning them safely....)

Rob indicates that Mark built his Dornier from the Fonderie Miniature kit .....another source I'd never heard of before. So naturally, I had to go surfing.

I quickly learned was that Fonderie Miniature is a French company that has been around for quite a while. The name translates roughly to "Model Foundry" in English, and the company does limited run, injected plastic kits that have been ignored by mainstream companies in the quarter-scale favored by so many modelers. Of course, many are of interesting French subjects, as might be expected one being a quarter-scale Fouga Magister ....the French "T-bird". But there is also a quarter-scale Halifax, and many other non-French subjects.

For a list of F.M. kits, go to h3ps://www.scalemates.com/search.php?lSECTION[]=Kits&lCOMPNAME[]=%22Fonderie%20Miniature%22&q=*

For the Dornier flying boat, I found a neat build-article by Matt Swan on his "Swannys Models" web site. At h3p://www.swannysmodels.com/Do24T.html, he begins with an outline of the Do 24's development, and then goes into considerable detail of his build of the big boat ....it's longer than a PBY Catalina ...from the F.M. kit. The review is copyrighted 2006, so this limited run kit may no longer be available. Check it out!

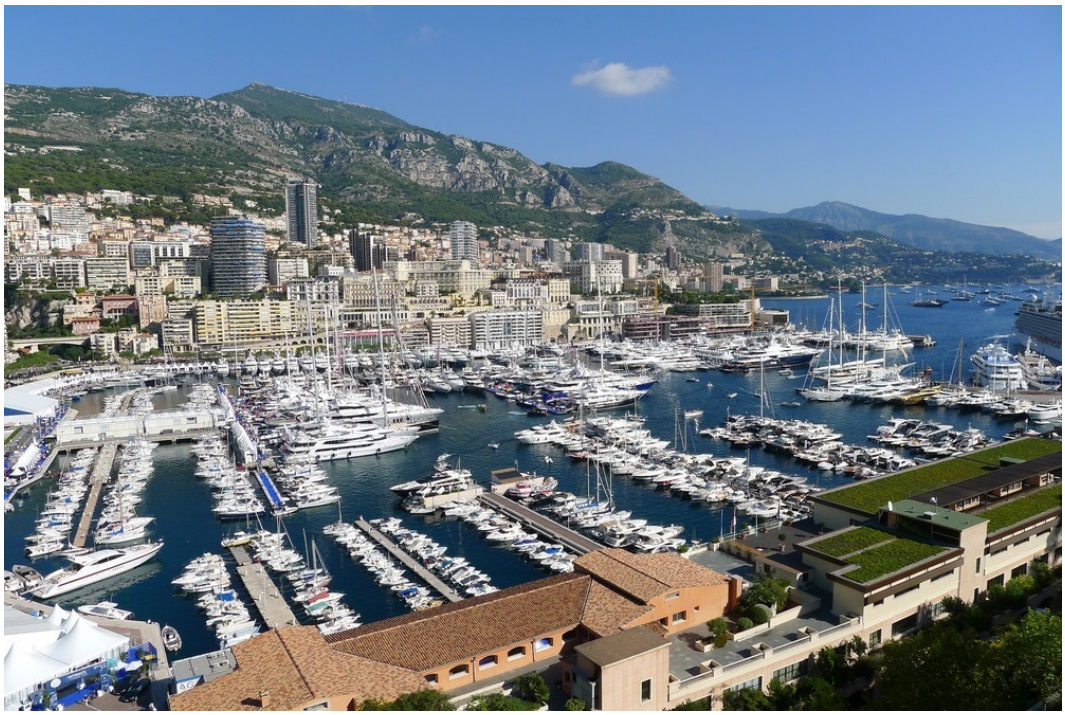


"Swanny's" Dornier....

When we hear the name "Dornier" (h3ps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dornier_Flugzeugwerke**)most of us probably think of either the Do 335 "push-pull" fighter which appeared so late in WWII that it was likely one of the LEAST produced Dornier aircraft, or the Do 17 "Flying Pencil" bomber, which flew in many roles and missions during WWII. But over its long life the company built many, widely varying airplanes. A search of my personal photos found only one of a Dornier, the Do 27 "STOL" camera plane which circled around inside the tight bowl that is the harbor at Monaco, capturing the 1962 Monaco Grand Prix race!**

Our view was looking DOWN at the Dornier, from high on the Rock of Monaco, not far from then-Princess Grace's palace. Below, the same view with a different lens.

(Note: this was not John Frankenheimer's camera plane for his classic racing movie "Grand Prix", starring James Garner,among others: that happened four years later in 1966.)



Racing fans will note that while the Monaco Grand Prix race COURSE is still much the same street course it was at the first GP nearly ninety years ago in 1929, the ambiance, facilities, and prices have changed considerably over the last fifty years!

More Trivia ....mostly about the SB2U....

* **The SB2U** *"...was a good plane in its time–1936 to 1940–but it was obsolete by the time Vought built 57 of them for the Marine Corps in 1940. It had been designed in 1934, but it didn't go into production until 1936"*

The type will always be remembered as the airplane that VMSB-131 took into combat at Midway. That combat was not with the stupidity of Lord Cardigan's "Charge of the Light Brigade", the horsemen that charged Russian artillery at the Battle of Balaclava during the Crimean War. Rather the Marines combat with the SB2U was more a case of "have to". But the results for the Marines and their Vindicators were much the same as with Cardigan's light cavalry. In other words, they were about wiped out. For more, see h3p://www.vought.org/special/html/ssb2u2.html

Seldom (almost never) mentioned in the histories is the feat that VMSB-131 had accomplished in just getting their single-engine bombers the 1,137 miles TO Midway from Hawaii: a nine hour, forty-five minute formation flight led by a PBY!

We modelers often place great emphasis in applying correct markings to our models: for example, the "stripes" seen on these Marine SB2U's taking off for their hazardous mission against about the then-formidable Japanese Navy. This same airplane is seen on Accurate Miniatures 1/48th SB2U box art.

In that light, read the following interesting interchange between a magazine writer and a surviving, then-very young Marine pilot who was there:

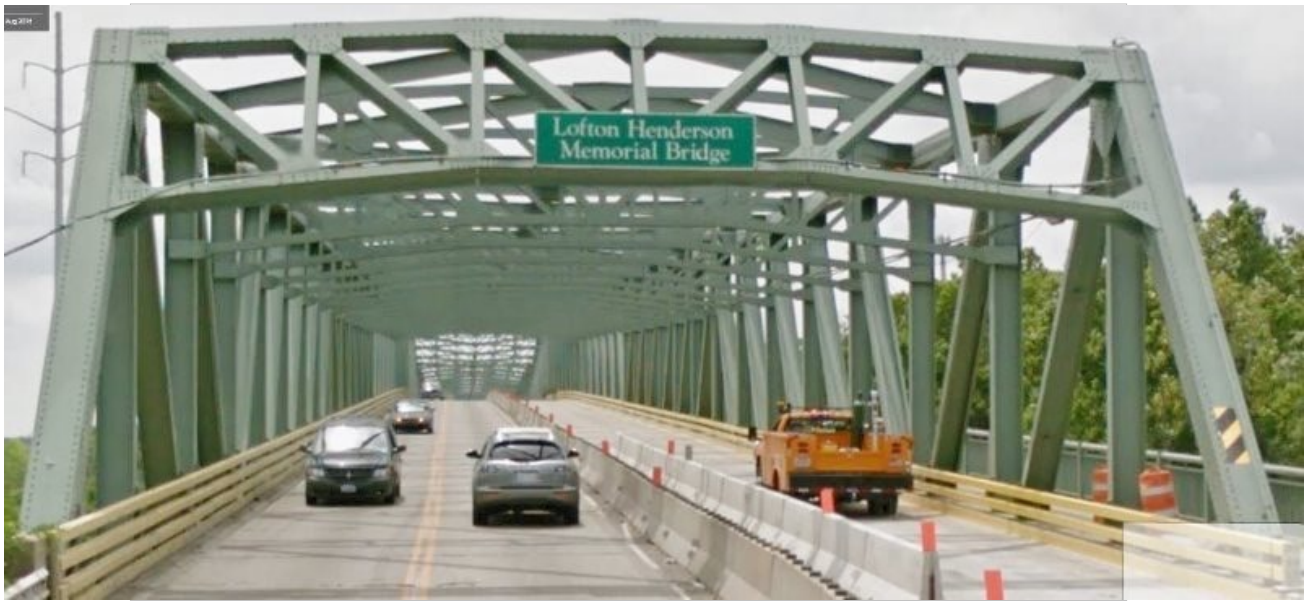
WWII magazine: *In photographs from that time, VMSB-231's SB2U-3s display white bands on their fuselages. Was that a unit practice?*

Whitten: *Yes, but not as a marking practice. The vertical and horizontal stripes were actually* ***4-inch medical tape used to hold the fabric to the fuselage****! These SB2U-3s were due for overhaul prior to being flown to Midway from MCAS Ewa. This overhaul would have included, of course, new fabric for the aft fuselage. Thus, to counteract the effects of heat, sunlight, salt air, etc., to hold the decaying fabric to the fuselage structure, medical tape, 4 inches wide, was wrapped around the fuselage and also along the fuselage longerons to keep it in place, and was then doped over. This was necessary because we had no facilities or fabric to properly replace the old fabric. Thus, you see, each SB2U-3 could have had slightly different stripes, depending on the condition of the aft fuselage fabric.*

For the rest of this VERY interesBng interview, click on h3p://www.historynet.com/interview-with-world-war-ii-sb2u-3-pilot-sumner-h-whi3en.htm . His final comment about Midway is pithy: *"We did what we could, with what we had."*

Many military enthusiasts and historians will recognize the name of that pilot's commander at Midway: Major Lofton R Henderson lost his life leading the attack from the island. A few months later Henderson's name was memorialized at famous Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. That airfield was so fought over in months of brutal, intense fighting, that the airfield now has its own special place in Marine history. Those that were there, mostly remembered Guadalcanal as "....that fking island....".**

While I expect the sailors aboard the Gearing-class destroyer USS Henderson (DD-785) knew where the name of their ship came from, how many northern Ohio citizens will know that how "Lofton Henderson Memorial Bridge" got its name? It and "Henderson Drive" cross the Black River ship channel, in his Lake Erie home town of Lorain, Ohio.



(Photo captured from Google Street View)

Having mentioned the Accurate Miniatures kit: it seems to have received very high marks, for anyone interested in 1/48th scale...

Image result for accurate miniatures sb2u-3 vindicator

For very interesBng related further reading:
hTp://hsfeatures.com/features04/marinesatmidwaypart2jl_1.htm
hTp://www.navalavia2onmuseum.org/aTrac2ons/aircraY-exhibits/item/?item=sb2u_vindicator
hTp://www.militaryfactory.com/aircraY/detail.asp?aircraY_id=731

h3ps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charge_of_the_Light_Brigade
h3ps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Henderson_(DD-785)

h3p://historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=ohio/lorainhendersonmemorialbridge/