



IPMS/Republic of Texas

Newsletter of the Austin Scale Modelers Society

January 2002

SPRUE CONFESSIONS



Bf-109G-8

By
Floyd S. Werner, Jr.

Kit: Fujimi Bf 109G-10/R2 "Photo Recon"
Kit # 48012

Aftermarket stuff: Cooper Detail (now Jaguar) cockpit set, True Detail wheels, Eduard 48 110 Photo etch set, Verlinden Detail Set for the Bf-109E, Fine Molds AC-18 1 German Aircraft Seatbelts Set 1, Cutting Edge CEC48154 Luftwaffe 300 Litre Drop Tank, Cutting Edge CED48068 Luftwaffe Recon A/C Decals, Period Miniatures #2068 1920's Gas Pump.

The History. In 1997 David Wadman and Hikoki Publishing company released a wonderful book entitled "Aufklärer-Luftwaffe Reconnaissance Aircraft & Units- 1935-1945". While searching through the photo-filled pages I was struck by one aircraft in particular—on pages 214 and 215 there was a Bf-109G-8 (maybe G-6) belonging to Hauptmann Emmerstorfer that had a strange zigzag paint scheme. While the zigzag pattern was unique, the aircraft did not seem to me to use RLM 74 and 75. Now I know that Dave has been

answering questions on this aircraft for quite some time. He used the Discussion Boards of Hyperscale and 12 O'clock High. I've been copying every correspondence on this aircraft that I was aware of so that when I wanted to build it I would have an expert's opinion. Dave discovered that the aircraft was painted in Dark Brown—no RLM number, just Dark Brown. The ground crew could not remember if it was different colors of Dark Brown or not. So with this information, or lack thereof, I started my model.

The Model. People have asked, "why use the Fujimi kit when Hasegawa has such a beautiful kit?" Well I'll tell you. I built it because I had already spent the money. I bought the kit while on vacation in Spain. I couldn't speak Spanish and the shop owner couldn't speak English, but I had brought some model photos along and that broke the barrier. He showed me what I was after and the Photo Recon bird came home with me. It beats some seashells or other junk that I won't want. I like to seek out model shops in foreign countries and unfamiliar cities.

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IPMS/SWAMP, CALMEX XVI, Lake Charles LA	January 20, 2002
IPMS/Alamo Squadron, ModelFiesta XXI, San Antonio	February 23, 2002
IPMS/North Central Texas, Squadron ScaleFest '02	May 27-28, 2002
IPMS/USA National Convention, Virginia Beach VA	July 31-Aug. 03, 2002

From the Editor...

Here it is, another January. Seems just a little while ago we were getting all bent out of shape counting ballots. Now we are counting bodies at the WTC and are at war with a network of terrorists. I have heard that there is an old Chinese curse that says "May you live in interesting times." It appears that someone really laid one on us.

It wasn't all bad though. I got a new grandson, Samuel, who will soon be a year old. And the wife and I celebrated 40 years (count'em) of marriage and got away from Austin for a while. I managed to finish some models, plan some new projects, and generally stayed well. Unfortunately, I will have another birthday—still, better than the alternative. Modeling rumors are already flying and I hope you are making plans for the San Antonio ModelFiesta XXI, February 23. I have a few flyers, courtesy of Tom Gaj. Wow, this will be their 21st show—and I believe that I have attended every one of them!

I have to say that this has not been one of my better weeks. Right now I just hope I can get this newsletter out! Instead of bringing me a sack of coal—or a Combat model—Santa brought be a cold! I thought I was well but now it's returned with a vengeance and sometimes I think I'll have to get better to die! And to top it off, I had to reformat my hard drive and in the process lost the ASMS mailing list. And that was the result of installing an *improved* operating system. Well, it's all back together now, except for a few missing names and addresses that I'm sure will work out.

And as a reminder, it's a new modeling year and that means Dues are Due!

Milton

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Austin Scale Modelers Society (ASMS) is affiliated with the International Plastic Modeler's Society (IPMS) as the Republic of Texas Chapter. ASMS meets the third Thursday of each month except December. Dues for full membership are \$20.00 yearly. Subscription to the newsletter *Sprue Confessions* is \$15 yearly. For more information on meeting times and location, call Milton Bell at (512) 454-2395. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. The Austin Scale Modelers Society does not endorse the contents of any article.

December Minutes

In December, we met at the clubhouse at George Lieb’s apartment complex. George arranged for the room and the club supplied the sandwiches and veggies. Members brought an astounding amount of desserts, snacks, chips, dips, etc. There was a “White Elephant” gift exchange with some very desirable items finding new homes. The weather was mild but cool and everyone appeared to have a good time.

Thanks to George for his dedication and good humor—he stayed in the room most of the afternoon—and for his making the arrangements and paying for the room.

The November meeting was a real wash-out. Due to the heavy rains, the meeting was cancelled.



The January meeting will be back at Luby’s Cafeteria on North Loop, just west of Burnet Road. Meeting time is 7 p.m. The program will be a demonstration and discussion on making display stands and display cases. Presenters will be Jeff Forster and Milton Bell.



Styrene Six

Jarrold Cunningham

Well another year is upon us with hopes of projects brewing from kits that appeared in shiny wrapping just a few weeks before. I hope that all of you had a happy holiday season. I also hope that you all got something plastic related as well!

My personal stack contained a BIG 1/35 scale UH-60. That one will be another monster, and I haven’t quite figured out where she will go. But that’s getting ahead of myself. I still get to enjoy the process of paint selection, and look forward to the building. This one will hold a special place for me. When I was in the service, I got to accumulate quite a bit of flight time on one particular bird so this one will have its tail number. It’s funny isn’t it—no matter how attractive the box art is, there are some of us (well, maybe more than some) that can’t wait to build it as something other than what the box shows. Maybe that’s part of the obsession; maybe it’s just the desire to do something other than the norm.

In any case, I guess you could view it as “stimulating the economy” that much more. When you think of it, if the desire wasn’t there, neither would be the aftermarket vendor. Gone would be the decal guys and the resin casters. It definitely would be simpler wouldn’t it? But, variety is the spice of life or so I was always told. With that said, my personal view is: BRING IT ON!! It’s a new year...must be positive mustn’t we.

Jarrold

JEFF’S BOOK REVIEW

by
Jeff Forster IPMS 30833

Okay everyone, this month’s book reviews start with a book titled *The Illustrated History of Tanks* by Andy Lightbody and Joe Poyer.

This is a wonderful book with lots of color and b/w photos. It’s very informative with great stories about each tank. It includes a chapter on the history and development. It also has the following chapters on each countries tanks, which includes the United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, Brazil, Israel, Sweden, Italy, Japan, China, and South Korea. I really liked this book; the photos and text are wonderful. This book would be a valuable addition to your reference library. It is listed at \$24.95, but I picked it up at half-price books for \$12.48. Jeff’s rating- ★★★★★

Skyraider- The Douglas A-1 “Flying Dump Truck” by Rosario Rausa.

This is a really, really, great book! I enjoyed it immensely. It was great reading describing the conception of this aircraft as well as its development. This narrative is written in a personal perspective which makes it doubly interesting. There are stories of carrier operations, battles in Korea, the years between Korea and Vietnam, then operations in Vietnam. Then finally, there are some great moments in the Skyraider’s life. This book makes for some highly enjoyable reading. It has plenty of pictures. I picked it up from the military book club. Jeff’s rating-★★★★★

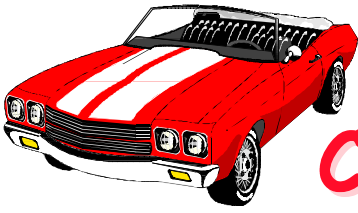
Next up is an oldie but goodie, *PT-109, John F. Kennedy in WW II* by Robert J. Donovan.

This is a reprint of the book I first read in 4th grade many years ago. It was great then and is still great today. This time around it has a foreword by Daniel Schorr, which I found to be very thought provoking. Pick it up and read the foreword if nothing else. Jeff’s rating-★★★★★

Another good book I read over the holidays was *The U.S.S. Arizona* by Joy Waldron Jasper, James P. Delgado, and Jim Adams.

When I try to come up with words for this book I think of “awe inspiring” and “inspirational”. This is a fabulous book! It begins with a history of battleships, the building of the Arizona, her career up to Pearl Harbor, and the events of her final fateful day on 7 Dec. 1941. The authors traveled the country and interviewed the survivors of the Arizona and laid out their tales in this book. Reading this book makes you can feel pain behind each person’s memories, feel their friendships and the pain of losing friends in the attack and then struggling for their own survival. Jeff’s rating-★★★★1/2

Jeff



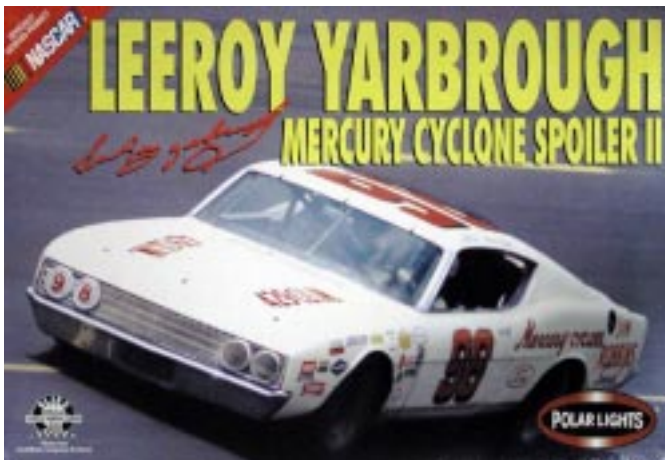
CAR CORNER

by Skip Perrine

Polar Lights' LeeRoy Yarborough's '69 Mercury Cyclone Spoiler II

kit#6604, skill level 3

by Skip Perrine and Chris Pinion



First Impressions:

The first thing we noticed when we opened the box was how well everything was packaged. The parts layout is designed to reduce breakage of some of the more fragile parts in the kit. Of special note is the cardboard sleeve protecting the body from warping. Warping is a common problem with many kits and Polar Lights has done a nice job of preventing it. We hope to see more of this in their future releases.

Building Impressions:

The kit includes two options for engines. Both engines build up nicely. There isn't much texturing on the parts but built with care and some extra detail, either engine makes a nice model in itself. We were pleasantly surprised at how easily the multi-piece roll cage assembly built up. Neither Chris nor I usually build stock cars so anyone who does will have no problems with this assembly.

The front chassis top hoop doesn't fit the frame very well and builders are better off removing the mounting pins for a better fit. It will also require a bit of trimming to get everything to line up just right. We also ran into a similar problem when building the front suspension. Again, builders are advised to test fit the front suspension parts many times since minor trimming will most likely be required.

When installing the engine we noticed it did not want to clear the top frame supports mentioned earlier. This called for a bit of hot water and patience to make everything fit. Now, we are not fond of the two-piece headers but when assembled they look OK. The rest of the chassis assembly is straightforward with no problems to speak of. The tires in this kit are molded with a very soft rubber which leaves them with a nice look and feel but it has its drawbacks, the major one being when the tire is cut from the rubber sprue, the tread wants to pull away from itself, and no matter how we positioned them this blemish was still visible on the finished model.

Finishing touches:

The decals have got to be the highlight of this kit. Even the larger number decals laid down nicely with no air bubbles, and without the aid of setting solution. This was our first time to work together on a review and it won't be our last, but the highlight of this kit are the Slix decal and we were very impressed. The chrome parts are blemish free and fit very nicely.

Overall impressions:

This is a kit of a subject matter you don't see often and although there were a few fit problems, they were nothing an experienced modeler can't handle and it doesn't detract from the enjoyment of building this kit.

We look forward to reviewing future offerings from Polar Lights.

*Skip Perrine &
Chris Pinion*

Floyd Settles on Baltimore

Our peripatetic (look it up) modeler, Floyd Werner has landed a job with the Baltimore MD, Police Department as a helicopter pilot. He and 'Vonnie are set to make the move from New Jersey later this month and he is to begin work on the 28th. I understand he passed his tryout and actually got to "see some action." We can expect to hear more when he gets settled. At the moment Floyd is staying in touch by e-mail. If you want to drop him a note his address is floydwerner@hotmail.com.

You may remember that Floyd was looking forward to beginning a career flying with a commuter airline based in Saint Louis. Due to the general lack of business following the WTC attacks, Floyd found himself laid off even before he got started. Now things are looking up for the Werners.

And yes, as a member of the PD he will be a gun-carrying officer. Later on he hopes to fly fixed wing aircraft for the department but at the moment he is going to be one of Baltimore's eye-in-the-sky cops!

Resin Kit Roundup

The Collect-Aire 1/48 Su-24M Fencer

Kit Number 4861 \$169.95

Obtained from: Collect-Aire (www.collectaire.com)
by Phil Brandt**BACKGROUND**

The Sukhoi Su-24 Fencer, or “Suitcase,” was born in the mid-Sixties amid the alarm caused in Soviet planning circles by introduction in the West of the General Dynamics F-111 “Aardvark.” The Soviet Union had no equivalent airframe with the Vark’s unique capabilities: low level speed, terrain following radar, long unrefuelled range and significant weapons carriage ability. The Fencer’s long development was a quantum jump for the Soviet aircraft industry and, as in the case of the F-111, a difficult one. But, the Fencer’s difficult early years eventually led—again, as in the Vark’s case—to a relatively stable maturation phase; the Fencer has soldiered on through the Afghanistan debacle of the Eighties into the New Millennium.

The Fencer has long enjoyed a perennial high spot on the wish lists of fans of 1/48 Soviet birds, especially since DML has long produced excellent 1/72 versions. Hopes ran high over six years ago when Meteor Productions advertised a forthcoming 1/48 release, but the kit was never to be, although Meteor did (still does!) do an accompanying decal sheet.

THE KIT

With many Collect-Aire releases, the good and the not-so-good often battle to a Mexican standoff, and the Fencer is no exception. This one was done by LF in the Czech Republic and, as such, exhibits smooth, bubble-free molding, very little warpage and petite, sharp engraving that rivals the best injected. The first impression one receives when opening the familiar yellow box is that this airplane is easily as big as the Aardvark—and in resin! The central fuselage is done in hollow upper and lower halves with a separate radome, the forward fuselage is done in vertically split halves and the wings and “gloves” (the inner, fixed wing segments into which the outer wings slide as they sweep fore and aft) are solid, leading to the single largest criticism of the kit. More about that later.

The cockpit is a real departure for Collect-Aire inasmuch as PE (either soft steel or tin, not brass) is extensively incorporated into detailing a la Eduard: instrument panel, multifunction display housings, consoles and sidewalls. Compared to jewel-like Eduard frets, the Collect-Aire PE is rather crudely etched and should be scrubbed to insure that all chemical residue is gone. A printed paper instrument sub-panel is included, but its effect is not as realistic as the film ones done by Eduard. The side-by-side crew tub is not bad, with nice bulkhead detailing, as are the decently detailed K-36 seats, with separate PE belts, harnesses and lower ejection handle. The canopy is vacuformed (two are included) with slightly sunken glass panel outlines, but no provision is made for displaying the bird with the unusual, split canopy “petals” in the open configuration. Building the open configuration is not just a question of cutting out the individual canopy panels; it involves creating framing to give the panels the proper thickness, as well as detailing the opening mechanism at the aft end of each panel.

As mentioned above, the wings have caused Bondo the most grief and indecision. The problem centers around the fact that, even with such a high dollar kit, C-A and/or the LF master modelers decided not to create movable wings (as opposed to the design philosophy of the Monogram and Academy F-111s) but to leave it to the kit builder to set the desired wingsweep angle and to cut the outer wings at an appropriate location to mate properly with the solid gloves. This scheme would have been OK but for a strange cross sectional enlargement of the outer wing at the wing/glove interface. This enlarged section makes the outer wing exactly the same thickness as the glove, which ain’t the way these “switchblades” work! They really do slide between finite structural layers of the glove, and there simply isn’t any finite thickness left in the collect-Aire resin gloves. To semi-fix this annoying discrepancy, the builder will have to carefully thin approximately the innermost 1/2 inch of said enlarged outer wing cross section by judicious filing or sanding, and then try to recreate all the erased engraving.

What to do....what to do....? Bondo ambled out to the “plastic kit junkyard” and examined the Zhengdefu ripoff of the Academy F-111 kit. Wonder of wonders; the Vark gloves and wings were essentially the SAME shape and size (just have to trim 1/4 inch of wingtip) as the Fencer’s! The only changes needed to adapt the injected gloves and wings to the C-A resin fuselage were to thin the wings and glove cross sections by about 1/16 inch on the ol’ sanding plate—don’t forget to trim the pivot pin/boss also—and to saw off a small aft portion of the Vark glove to match that of the Fencer. I’m even planning to adapt the interlocking Academy “gears” so that the wingsweep will be synchronized. To pull off this synchronizing trick has required some delicate-but-yet-industrial-strength Dremmeling of the top half of the fuselage—we Vark troops call it the “over-the-wing fairing”—to clear the meshing gears. And we haven’t even mentioned the rescribing of all the F-111 parts to match zee Russkiy panels or adding the irregularly shaped pivot pin covers which stand proud

(continued on page 10)

Enough has been written about the shortcomings of the Fujimi kit, but let me refresh you a little bit. When the kit came out I was awed, until I started to build one. There was the over engineering to deal with. I hate to fill seams and holes. The flaps couldn't have been based on anything real. They were supposed to be the same size to articulate up and down but the Fujimi kit has the top one smaller than the bottom. The other thing that I remembered—as I was finishing the kit—was that the canopy doesn't fit. The middle section is too short.



I decided to use the photo recon kit because it had a section of clear parts that would be surgically implanted in the tail section for the G-10/R2 and I wanted to see if it would fit. Because I wanted to build a G-8 it was the same thing as the G-10 except for the nose section and tail. I brought this kit with me while moving from Texas to Missouri (I thought, thank you Sept. 11). Anyway, after settling down temporarily in NJ, I started the kit. I had planned the conversion before leaving, but I made a mistake by bringing the wrong forward cowlings. Milton Bell and Morris Duet both came to my rescue. Milton sent the cowlings and Morris sent another entire kit. Thank God they did, I needed both. I screwed up the wheel well on the first kit.

Let me tell you that I love Cooper Details (now Jaguar) interiors. The fit is perfect and they look very convincing. I added the additional boxes, wiring, and the lower panel on the instrument panel for the photo recon bird. This is enough to make a G-8, but I wanted something that would make this aircraft a G-8 without having to lift it up to see the photo recon windows.

A quick review of the Cutting Edge drop tank would be in order. I like the set a lot but it is not perfect. There were some sink marks and there is some work required in the area of the pour gate. These are relatively easy repairs though, just a little filler, sanding and rescribing. What I did like was that the sway braces for the tank looked very realistic. The Eduard set provided the band for the tank. The only modification needed for this was that the hole in the rack had to be opened up, very simple and effective. I added the two feed and vent lines for the tank but they are hardly noticeable. I would recommend the ETC rack and tank, as it is very nice. I would like to see the other types of tanks available and capable of fitting this rack.

The Scratchbuild. The thing that I thought would set the G-8 apart from the other G-6 aircraft in my collection would be the camera equipment. So I decided to open the rear access and scratchbuild the cameras. This all proved rather easy after raiding the Verlinden set. The Verlinden set donated the access hatch, the radio sets, the formers and longerons. The fit of the set was perfect for the Fujimi kit.

The thing that needed to be built was the cameras themselves. A quick trip to the model railroad section and hours of searching the detail sets revealed that 1920 gas pumps actually look like the camera lens area for a Rb32/7x9 camera. The body of the camera was built with styrene. The mounts for the lenses were actually easy. I drilled straight through the fuselage halves to ensure the camera supports were straight and aligned. The wires for the cameras were added and the whole area was painted RLM 02 with a dry brush of White artist oil. I was careful to make sure that the cameras actually pointed out of the windows on the bottom of the airplane—it is so cool.

Construction of the aircraft was straightforward with little to mention except the fit of the wings to fuselage was not the greatest. I did have to use a tail assembly from a G-6 kit. One thing that I did do was to burnish the bulges in the wheel well from the Eduard set. This provides vertical relief, which is more realistic. Even if you don't burnish the wheel well inserts they don't fit real well. Like I said I ruined one set of wings before getting it right.

The Paint Scheme. First off, prove me wrong. OK, with that out of my system, I looked at the photos that I had and determined that there were in fact two shades of brown and a gray even lighter than RLM 76. Now this contradicts Dave Wadman's conclusions and totally differs from Cutting Edge's conclusions. (Aren't Luftwaffe colors a blast?) There was a model in "Replic" a while back that was wonderful with RLM 79, but I thought it was incorrect. So I started looking for my appropriate colors. At first I thought that the Germans might have used paint supplies from the Italians or Vichy French but didn't like the hues of any of those colors. I use hues and tonal qualities to determine my



colors and finally I decided what I thought looked good. I based my colors on a color photo from Prien's book "Messerschmitt Bf109 F, G, & K" on page 207 to determine my shades of brown. This showed a crashed airplane from 6./JG51 that is definitely dark browns. The aircraft was from the same theater of operations.



The paint scheme started out normally with pre-shading and the application of Model Master Acrylic RLM 76 to the bottom. Now came the out-of-the-normal part of the model. After looking at the photos and the instructions from Cutting Edge I realized that the Cutting Edge instructions were just wrong. The fuselage camouflage (one side only) is fairly accurate. The wings were nothing like the instructions, so I blew up some plans and drew the correct camo (IMHO). I started the camouflage with Model Master Acrylic RLM 77 overall. I drew the camouflage scheme very lightly with a pencil so I had something to follow. A quick word about Model Master Acrylic, they are opaque, have a very fine grain and spray nicely. These contrast with my normal Polly-S which dries transparent (which can be nice if that is what you are looking for) and grainy, but dries too quick. Both paints seem to catch the Luftwaffe colors correctly, if there is a "correct". I will continue to use both as necessary. I prefer the Polly-S, but like the Model Master Acrylic paint range and availability.



I started the camouflage with the lighter color of brown, Humbrol 29. This was applied VERY carefully with a Tamiya airbrush, but the airbrush wasn't the reason for fine lines (it didn't hurt). Tamiya's Bob Ohler passed down the secret to fine lines to me, so don't tell anybody. He told me to remove the end of the airbrush—the tip, not the whole assembly. This allows you to get extremely close and get a really tight line. The reason this works is the air doesn't cause any burbles, it dissipates the airflow evenly with no blow-back into the tip. It works on the same principle as the crown tip. You can get really close to the aircraft but you have to be careful not to hit the tip on the kit, I did and ruined one needle. You have to lower your air pressure when using this method, but not too low as to cause splatter. The key is to practice, practice, and practice some more. Using the same method apply the Dark Brown, Humbrol 98 (maybe 86?).

Multiple coats of Future prepped the model for the decals. The Cutting Edge decals are great. The best thing about Emmerstorfer's machine is that the camouflage was field applied and it covered all the stenciling. So decalling is done quickly. The decals are covered with Future and then with Polly-S Flat.

Weathering was completed with an overspray of Polly-S Dust, Dark Tan and Black exhaust streaks, pastels, silver pencils, and Burnt Umber artist oils. The streaks were done with black and burnt sienna artist oils.

Conclusions. The Hasegawa kit would have been easier, but for someone who already spent the money, this exercise in scratchbuilding and painting was very challenging and rewarding. I now have a colorful G-8 for my collection. I don't know if I would do it again, I do know I won't use the Fujimi kit if I do. I may have to sell my remaining Fujimi kits now, any takers? Didn't think so. It is time to bring on the Bf-109G-4/R3 with its underwing drop tanks.

Floyd

References

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Messerschmitt Bf109 F, G & K Series, Jochen Prien and Peter Rodeike, ISBN 0-88740-424-3

Messerschmitt Bf-109 G Mushroom Model Magazine Vol 1, Robert Peczkowski, ISBN 83-88006-84-3

Aero Detail 5 Messerschmitt Bf109G, Shigeru Nohara, ISBN 4-499-20589-1

Model Art #290-Messerschmitt Bf-109G/K Augsburg Eagle, (ISBN unknown.)

Militaria in Detail #5-Messerschmitt Bf 109 G in Detail, ISBN 83-7219-091-7

1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72 1/72	1/144 1/144 1/144 1/144 1/144 1/144 1/144 1/144 1/144 1/144
Small Scales A closer look	
1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200	by Rafael Power

Kit number RG04032
 Origin Molding: Germany / Decals: Italy
 Parts 76 sand, 10 clear
 Markings • HH-53C 68-10360
 37 ARRS (Da Nang AB, South
 Vietnam) July 1971.
 • HH-53C 69-5785
 67 ARRS (RAF Woodbridge, UK) July 1986.

Conversion options: not supplied in the kit.

- USAF Pave Low III MH-53J
- Navy CH-53D minesweeper
- USMC assault transport



Introduction

First ordered by the U.S. Navy in 1962, the Air Force-USAF followed with orders for the HH-53B in 1966. That was followed by C/HH-53C, HH-53H and now the MH-53J Pave Low III. It is also in service as the CH-53D, RH-53D Sea Stallion with the USN and the U.S. Marine Corps-USMC as a cargo, assault, minesweeper and casualty evacuation transport. Besides the U.S., the H-53 is also in service with the armed forces of Austria (S-65), Germany and Israel

Scale Jolly Green Giants everywhere

The 1/144 scale Revell-Germany HH-53C Jolly Green Giant is also available as a CH-53G in German Army markings and additional parts. A good selection of HH/CH-53 are available from a number of manufacturers. In the 1/72 arena, Airfix: AX06003 HH-53C/S-65C-3, Italeri: IT0030 MH-53J Pave Low III, IT0035 HH-53C Jolly Green Giant as well as Revell-

Germany RG4435 HH-53E Super Stallion are still in the market. Fujimi and Italeri also offer the HH-53E Sea Dragon heavyweight. Two out-of-production 1/48 scale Revell Jolly Green Giant kits (4542 and 4511) were available with USAF and German Army-Heer markings. Unless reissued by Revell, searching the sale tables at the model shows for this kit is the only option.

First Look

For a 1/144 scale model, the HH-53 is full of detail on the outside. The fuselage, fuel tanks pods and engine intakes are finely engraved showing panel lines, access panels and sunk rivets. The single piece "dutch door" crew hatch is engraved to allow you to split it, showing it as fully closed, partially open or the bottom part detailed with steps and support cable. Except for the floor and cockpit, the interior of the fuselage is devoid of detail. No troop folding strap benches, control cables, etc. Zero! However, the cockpit section has the two crew seats, instrument panels, control sticks but no cyclic stick. The rotor mechanisms are very detailed and the blades fairly thin and engraved. Two pole-mounted Gatling machine guns, full landing gear and refueling boom are included. The landing gear wheel wells have no details, just the holes to guide the parts in.

The Instructions

The instructions are like those in the Chinook kits reviewed last month: multilingual. They are easy to follow and include a very detailed paint/markings guide. As in the Chinooks, they have the usual part tree diagrams indicating which extra parts have to be discarded.

Decals and Markings/Liveries

Both HH-53Cs depicted in the decal sheet include just minimum markings such as STEP/NO STEP servicing area panels. The Da Nang-based HH-53C 68-10360 uses the full color star and bar, and the warning red or yellow markings in a South East Asia camouflage scheme. The UK-based 69-5785 SAR helo uses the all-black outline markings on an overall European camouflage scheme. No unit/command markings nor instrument panel decals provided. Add assorted stenciling from one of Microscale 1/144 decal sheets.

The Fuselage: detail/fit/assembly assessment

The fuselage fits fine and just need a bit of coaxing in places to fit right without the use of putty. If anything, #600 sandpaper and Mr. Surfacer will do the trick. The joint between the fuselage and the canopy also fits well with just a minimum effort. For those who insist on super detailing, a fake scribed grill located on the base of the tail rotor pylon can be replaced with some sort of fine nylon or photo-etched grill. The main rotor/blade assembly is very well done but needs some care during assembly. The 10-part assembly is very delicate and putting the six blades may need the use of super glue. Remember that all blades droop down so you may have to use a bit of hot water to bend them.

Recommendation

1. I cannot overemphasize the need to examine photos/transparencies of actual aircraft you are modeling. Weathering

subtle shades between panels, stenciling, wear and tear of components and areas, minute details, etc. will make your creation stand out from the rest.

2. Always examine the underside of the helicopter as there are items such as winch cables, hooks, lights, sensors, etc. You may have to add them or scratchbuild them. And yes, they get real dirty down there.
3. You want interior detail? Unless you are ready to tackle a major undertaking detailing the cargo hold, close the tail loading ramp and just do the cockpit.
4. Although included in the kit, items like the pitot tubes and communications arc antennas, consider scratchbuilding them from fine wire, etc. Scratch build the control cyclic sticks, two revolving Gatling guns, sensors, blade antennas and other add-ons.
5. If you don't relish the thought of having to sand and polish the window panes provided, carefully remove the window support tabs and fill the opening with Micro Kristal Klear.
6. Add two countersunk landing lights on the underside of the fuselage on each side of the nose landing gear leg and one red flashing navigational beacon on top of the tail.

If space is at a premium in your model collection, this kit will fit in nicely without pushing out its larger siblings. A very good combination of quality and detail in a small package.

Rafael

References:

Military Aircraft Markings and Profiles (1990)—Barry C. Wheeler (Gallery Books)
Vietnam: The War in the Air (1987)—René Francillon (Arch Cape Press)
VNAF South Vietnamese Air Force 1945-1975 (1987)—Jim Meske (Squadron/Signal Publications)

Open Box Review:

**POLAR LIGHTS –
 GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS #5046**

by Jeff Forster IPMS 30833

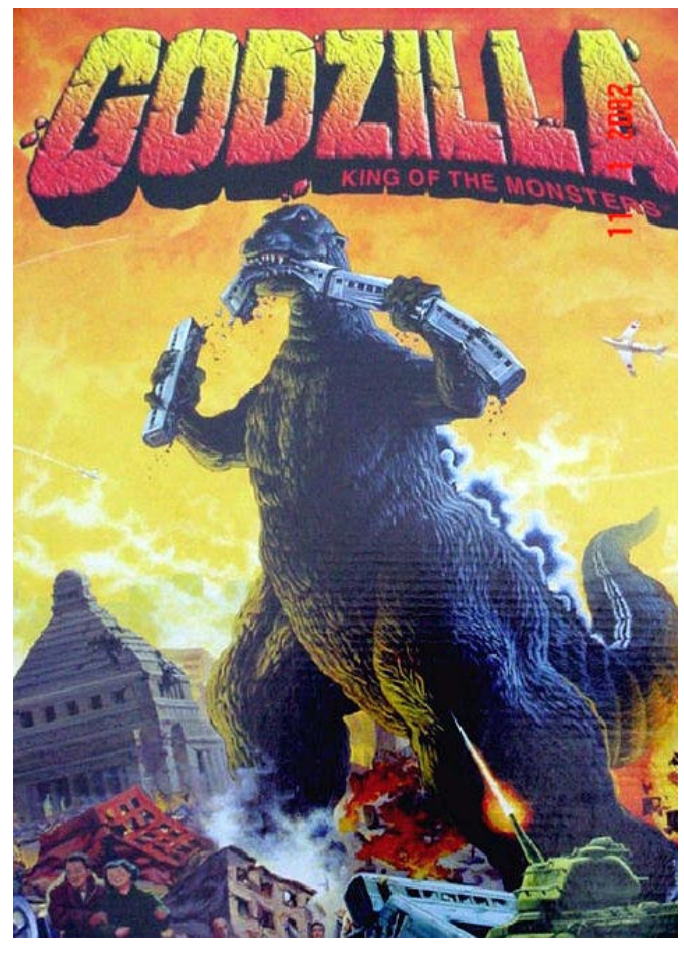
I have been eagerly waiting to get my hands on this kit since the day I heard it was in the works! As the title says, this is a totally new Godzilla kit, which the kind folks from Polar Lights provided. As most sci fi modelers know, the old Aurora kit was about the only game in town, now we have a new fearsome looking, bad altitude lizard! He stands 16 inches tall and is molded in bright green styrene plastic. The kit consists of 76 molded parts and the box which may be used as a diorama.

The kit is assembled from four sub assemblies, Godzilla, the diorama, the tank, and the train. This is really a big kit! The body is about the size of a football. The pieces fit reasonably well with large alignment pins provided. You will need to do some filling on the seam lines, which will be a challenge due to the scaly, rough texture of Godzilla's hide. Because of the large size of this kit it will be best to build, fill, and sand each section separately, i.e. arm, leg, body, and head, being careful not to wipe out the

detail. After building each section you can assemble Godzilla except for the lower jaw. Now's the time to do the final filling and sanding. Next, you can but together the train cars, yes, you actually get two train cars for Godzilla to munch and mangle, each consists of two parts. After filling and sanding you can paint both cars. After putting together the five parts for the tank—a Godzilla kit just wouldn't look right without a tank ready to blast away at him—you can fill, sand, and paint it. Finally the diorama base is ready to be assembled. It consists of seven pieces and a sign. After you fill and paint the base you will have a great stand for your Godzilla.

Even though I have the Aurora version, this is a much better, larger and more fearsome looking kit of our favorite green scaly friend. As soon as I spotted one in the store I was forced (yeah, right), to buy two so that my son and I could spend some quality time and build them together. Besides, when he saw it I could tell he really wanted one. If you're into a good science fiction kit then this would be a good kit to try and I know I'm looking forward to building it in the very near future.

Jeff



A Groaner

This guy goes to a costume party with a woman on his back. Asked what he is supposed to be he replies "a snail." "What about the woman?" he's asked. "Oh, that's Michelle."

(Fencer continued)

of the upper and lower glove surface! Although all the milling of the fuselage top has made it very thin for such a large section, there's a relatively thick, wide resin spine that laminates right over the thinned area. Mebbe it's a lotta practice bleeding, but since Bondo's an old Vark "crew dog," he really cares that the wingsweep appears realistic. An added advantage of this project is the lightness and increased rigidity of the injected wing/glove halves.

The nose and maingear struts are multi-piece cast metal and, while lacking some detail, are quite adequate, as are the resin wheels. The characteristic Sukhoi nosegear mudguard is also of cast metal, with a PE louver section. Maingear wells are enhanced by PE structural overlays, but otherwise unadorned.

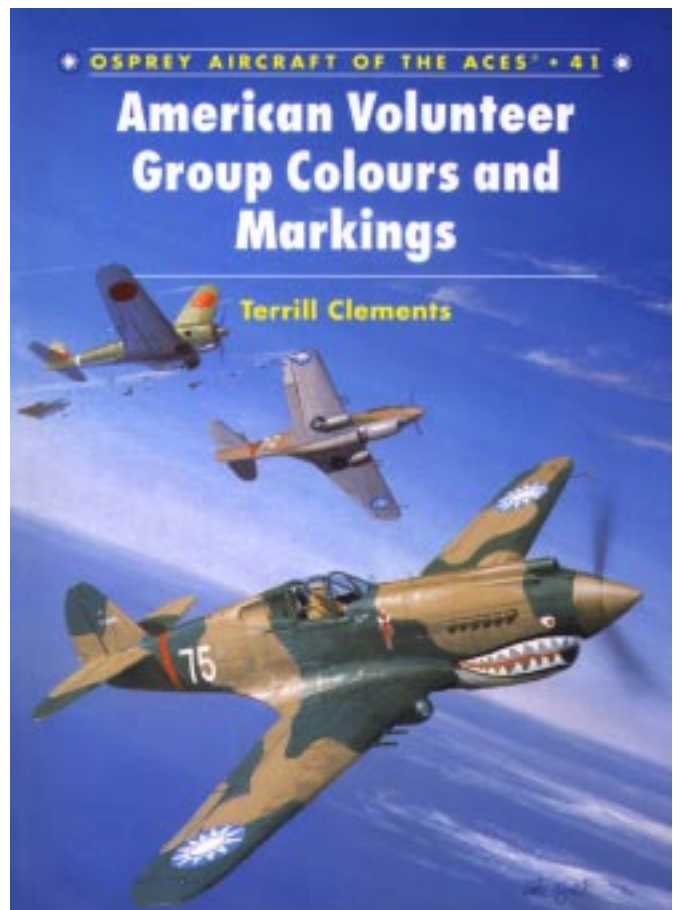
Tailpipes consist of resin tubes (too short) with added PE flame holders. I'd replace the tubes with sheet plastic ones that are deeper.

There are many, many tiny resin and metal detail blisters, cooling air intakes, ECM antennas, pylon components, etc., all in small unmarked plastic baggies, with no numerical references in the exploded parts diagrams. To really make things worse, my kit was missing a significant number of 'em, as was the kit obtained by a Brit friend! Lou Maglio, the Collect-Aire honcho, apparently has a vendor QC problem and is hard at work to remedy the situation. And, BTW, it's been my experience that Lou is always true to his word.

A variety of weapons are offered: the AS-11 "Kilter," AS-14 "Kedge," and a large "dumb" bomb. PE fins and pylon tensioners add to the detail, but it's my opinion that the PE weapon fins are actually too thin. I may use thicker plastic sheet instead. One last weapons carriage comment. Fencer versions have two very large wing fences that double as pylons. The "squared corner" version offered by Collect-Aire not only act as pylons, but also contain chaff/flare dispenser arrays in the upper portion. Unfortunately these squared tip fences were removed from Soviet Fencers long ago, used only on the Su-24MK export version. Today's Soviet Fencers have greatly rounded corners on the top wing fence portions and do not incorporate the chaff/flare dispensers. Instead, separate, redesigned chaff/flare dispensers (rarely seen, and not included by Collect-Aire) have been moved aft, on top of the empennage. I understand that Collect-Aire is retooling these pylons.

The Collect-Aire decal sheet is extensive and, BTW, practically an exact duplicate of the Cutting Edge sheet mentioned above: Soviet, Ukraine, Syrian and Iraqi markings, plus lotsa placards and those unusual Soviet color dots which help farmboy maintenance troops just in from the steppes to replace panels where they're supposed to be!

Instructions come in the usual Collect-Aire yellow booklet, in this case a twenty page document which gives component blowups, markings three-views and ten pages (!) of extremely



**Osprey Aircraft of the Aces • 41
American Volunteer
Group Colors and
Markings**

Terrill Clements

reviewed by Milton Bell

In the early days of WWII, no group became such a symbol of hope and pride for the American public as did the AVG, the Flying Tigers! Their exploits were just what was needed in those dark days and Hollywood picked up on it with the Flying Tigers movie starring John Wayne. I was about eight years old when I saw it and I loved it!

Terry Clements has produced what is surely the most complete account of the AVG and thankfully, Osprey has published it. Whether you are a fan of the Flying Tigers or not, this is an important book and I think you should have it. It contains more color photos, more black and white photos, and more color profiles of the aircraft than any other publication on the subject.

This is a good history of the AVG, good bios of the pilots and key personnel, and good details on markings that you won't find anywhere else. Osprey has consistently published winners in this series and this one is at the top of the heap. Get it.

MB

Old Rumors & New Kits

Just in time for the newsletter came a note from Masahiko Nakasone. Tamiya will be doing an Me 262 in 1/48. Release time in Japan is expected to be in March or April, according to Masahiko. I still haven't seen a confirmation from Tamiya but it has long been a rumor that a 262 was in the pipeline. Local rumors have it that a Kettenkrad will be included in the kit.

ICM, that Ukraine based kit producer, is rumored to be going under by some but its US and UK offices deny the rumor and insist that those kits previously announced will be produced. Apparently, only the production facilities are in Ukraine with the business offices in the UK and in the US.

In what promises to be a controversial release, the ICM P-51B kits appear to be slightly more than similar to the Tamiya kits. Brett Green, on his Hyperscale page, made part-to-part comparisons, fitting left and right fuselage halves and upper and lower wing parts. Everything lined up—perfectly. The ICM kit even has the incorrect curved cockpit floor. The price of the ICM kits at under \$20 are certainly cheaper than Tamiya.

Unlike ICM, Trumpeter, a Chinese concern, is producing some very good model kits in the resurgent 1/32 scale. To date, they have two versions of the A-10 and three of the Mig 21. Very soon they will have the very first top quality kit of a MiG 19. Actually there will be two versions of the Farmer. And they aren't limiting the list to 1/32 either. Look for kits from 1/24 to 1/144!

Here is a partial list of new kits from Trumpeter in 1/32 scale. An F-105D, G-105G Wild Weasel; A-5 Fantan, A-5 Fantan III; Yak 18/CJ-5; F4U-1D Corsair, F4U-4 Corsair; Grumman F4F-4 Wildcat; and the two MiG 19s. That's an impressive list, especially in a scale that has been largely ignored.

Now if 1/32 still isn't big enough for you, here is a list of kits in 1/24. Two P-51D Mustangs, one a two-seater; Spitfire Vb and a Spitfire Vb on floats; an A6M2B Model 21 Zero; and three Me 109s, a G-2-6, G-2-2, and G-2-10. I hope the hobby shops lay in a good supply of paint!

The Trumpeter 1/144 scale Il-76, Il-78 Midas (Russian AWACs), and Il-50 Mainstay transports are already on the shelves and are very nice kits indeed, probably the only good kits we are likely to see of these aircraft. These are very large aircraft so it's not likely they'll be done in 1/72.

I have heard that either ICM or Trumpeter is doing a 1/72 Tu-95 Bear but I have no idea when it will be released. The list given out by Trumpeter is for 2002 and 2003.

Airfix is even getting back into making announcements of "new kit" releases. Most of these are based on older kits with new markings but the Spitfire Vc/Seafire III may be worth a good

look. It may well be based on their earlier Vb that was released many years ago. Included in the releases for 2002 are a 1/24 Sea Harrier FRS including markings for Indian navy. In 1/48, the list includes a BAe Jaguar w/54sqn/Indian AF and Ecuadorian markings, the earlier mentioned Spitfire Vc, a Sea Harrier FRS 1 in Falkland campaign markings, and a Super Etendard with Aeronavale and Argentinian markings.

The Italeri list includes an Sm 79 Sparviero in 1/72, an F-8E and F6F-5 Hellcat and an EH-101. For 1/48 fans there is a mirage F-1C, Agusta AB-205, F-15C, SH-60B and S-3A.

HiPM has released a very nice MiG 19 "Farmer C." For some reason this one hasn't been seen locally, but it's out there as is the Special Hobbies X-15 which I'm told is the best effort this company has produced to date.

Peregrine Publishing produced a number of very helpful photo essays on some important aircraft, including a nice piece on the XF-85 Goblin and the P-59B, two types with very little data readily available. Now they are expanding to a set of photo essays devoted to cockpits which include the P-16A, P-35, P-36, F3F-2, Kittyhawk, Hurricane IIa, CR-42, Me 109E, Mc-200, and others. MSRP for these is about \$10. They should be helpful if you are doing some of these early WWII types.

For armor builders, Italeri has a couple of real winners. The Achilles and the M-10 Hellcat, basically the same kit, are two of the best looking armor kits I've seen in a while. There is some good engineering here and the finished articles should be real winners. Tamiya has the M4A3 Sherman with figures and 105 mm gun. The M4A3 with 75 mm gun was released earlier. It has the same figures—GIs in winter gear, overcoats, etc.—as the later release.

HiPM doesn't just do aircraft. In addition to the Farmer, they are also doing a 1/35 SdKfz.232 6-rad Armored Radio Car. Sorry, no date at this time. The AFV Club SdKfz 11 has been announced but the DML Panther Aust. A has been delayed.

Revell of Germany has released a number of products aimed at the Space modeler. These include a 1/96 Saturn V Rocket with Apollo, a 1/144 Soviet Space Station "Mir", International Space Station "Alpha". Revell-Monogram has re-released the 1/400 USS Enterprise Nuclear Carrier. This big carrier kit includes 42 aircraft, moveable elevators, and lots of details.

R-M has released a second version of the "Tante Ju". This time it's the Ju-52/3M. It features a canopy mounted machine gun not present on the original release and optional late style engine cowling. Four paratrooper figures are included as are decals for two Ju-52/3Ms; one from North Africa and one from Russia.

That's it for January. Hope to see you all Thursday. Now go build a model!

Milton