



IPMS/Republic of Texas

Newsletter of the Austin Scale Modelers Society

July 2002

SPRUE CONFESSIONS



Hasegawa Bf-109G-3

By Floyd S. Werner, Jr.
IPMS# 26266

History- The history of the Bf-109 is legendary and will not be covered here. What will be covered is a little known, and even lesser photographed variant, the G-3. In January 1943 a small block of 50 aircraft were built by Messerschmitt at Regensburg to be employed in the high altitude Staffeln of JG 2, JG 11 and JG 26. The G-3 was developed alongside the G-4, as a pressurized variant.

Actual construction of the G-3 happened after the G-4 had been in production. The G-3 incorporated all the changes of the G-4, including larger main (660x160) and tail wheel (350x135). The larger wheel size necessitated corresponding bumps on the wings to allow for retraction. The larger wheels retained the early style of wheel spoke setup. It would not be until the later G-5/6 that the flat covered wheels would be introduced. The larger tail wheel forced the wheel to become non-retractable. The silica gel tablets in the windscreen and the pressurization armor plate behind the pilot's head were retained from the G-1, as was the most noticeable feature, an air scoop on the left engine cowling for the pressurization system. The armament was the

same as the G-4, with two MG17s over the engine and a 20mm cannon firing through the spinner. So as a recap:

G-3 Features:

- Larger main wheels
- Larger tail wheel
- Wing bumps
- Pressurized cockpit, including silica gel pellets
- Air scoop on left engine cowling, above the supercharger intake
- Antenna lead-in for the FuG16Z, between stations 7 and 8

Research

This part is normally the best part of building a model, but not in this case. The only book that really covers the G-3 in any kind of detail is the Prien/Rodieke book, "Messerschmitt Bf-109F, G, K" published by Schiffer. See the references at the end of the article. This book offers four photos, two of JG2 and two of NAG3. Hardly the vast amount of information that is normally associated with the 109. The book also has a line drawing that seems to be the best representation of the G-3. There are other sources that claim to be G-3s but they either miss the air scoop or the silica gel pellets. I welcome any further photos. I decided to build one of the aircraft from the book. It is a long distance shot of "Blue 6" from
(continued on page 6)

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2002IPMS/USA National Convention, Virginia Beach VA
SuperCon 2002, Arlington Community Center, Arlington TX
OzCon 2002, Emerald City Modelers, Wichita KS

Austin Scale Model Show, Crockett Center, Austin TX
IPMS/DAMS Fest 2002, Campbell Road Community Center
Gascon III, IPMS Greater Abilene Scale Modelers, Abilene TX
Great South Model Contest X, IPMS/New Orleans, Kenner LA

July 31-Aug. 03, 2002

August 10, 2002

August 10, 2002

August 24, 2002

Sept. 14, 2002

October 12, 2002

October 19, 2002

From the Editor...

If you read the Model Show Schedule, you'll see a new club: DAMS. That's the acronym for Dallas Armor Modelers Society. They got their IPMS charter in June and are off and running. To find out more about the club and their show, check out their website at <http://www.allunderonerooftx.com/show/>. Paul White is heading up this new club and their first show is set for Sept. 14 in Richardson. Please notice that the show is NOT just for armor subjects but for just about any static scale model.

The July meeting will be Thursday the 18th, back at Luby's Cafeteria on North Loop at 7 PM. Since Kenny and Kathy are the new keepers of the Alps Printer, he and I will talk about decals—how to use 'em and how to make 'em.

Well, the main topic of conversation in the local modeling community has been the changes at King's Hobby. I had been out of town, attending the 100th birthday celebration for one of my wife's aunts. She had been one of those women recruited by North American to help build P-51 Mustangs at the Dallas Plant and she really got a kick out of the Rosie the Riveter poster we gave her. After we got home late that evening, Phil Brandt called with the "rumor" he had seen on hyperscale.com, an Australian website. The original post said that King's was closing—no selling to a new owner—just closing on August 31. To quote Obi Wan Kenobi, "...it felt like a shudder in the force." Neither Phil or I believed it but I suggested he call Rudy. A few minutes later he called back with the words "it's TRooo!" Over the next few days, the "true facts" began to emerge and we learned of the massive computer failure that made Bob King feel as though there wasn't much of a business to sell.

*(continued on next page)***ASMS Officers for 2002**

Jarrod Cunningham , president, jhbmccunn@austin.rr.com	292-3639
Kenny Roady , vice president, kar66@swbell.net	260-2907
David Ranney , secretary, dcrtx@aol.com	990-9699
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Austin Model Show Coordinators

Tim Vogt	447-2668
Bruce Burden , webmaster	250-9424
Web Site www.kithobbyist.com/ASMS/	
Ken Laronde (Vendor Liason)	288-2137

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.

(Editor continued)

Over the next few days, after a couple of false starts, all the data stored in the computers was saved and I'm sure there was a great collective sigh of relief King's.

Then there were rumors about who was going to buy the shop until finally, we had an email from Bob saying that Rudy and Janis would be the new owners. You can bet that the transition will be seamless. So, all is well again for Austin modelers.

Many of us take for granted that we have two good independent hobby shops and several other "chain" stores. There are a lot of cities larger than Austin that barely support one shop. That's too bad, for the owner and for the hobby in general. That's where a good model club can help everyone—shop owner, distributors, and the local modeling community alike. Visibility helps and that's where having a show like Austin Scale Model Show at a site like Crockett Center comes in. We have a tough time getting publicity, but each one of us can spread the word—tell a friend, invite a former modeler, and if you have the chance, get the local media involved.

I moved back to Austin in 1973. I had been a UT student in the mid-fifties and always wanted to live here. Both King's Hobby and the Village Hobby opened in 1973. I had been a builder of flying models for years but a friend gave me a partially built Monogram Mosquito before he moved away and I finished it. I also got hooked.

A stroll by the Village Hobby Shop, at it's old location, really inspired me. There in the windows were a half dozen really well-built models in individual plexiglas cases. I later learned, through my wife, that they were built by graphic artist Jim Curd who was kind enough to invite us to his home to see the rest of his collection and to talk modeling. He was a member of ASMS and invited me to a meeting. Greg Springer was a member as well as Tom Eisenhour and a few other "old timers." Many have drifted away; some have passed away.

If you didn't know, ASMS was begun by Bob King in October of 1973 so this October we'll be 29. Next year we'll hit the big three oh.

All of this just goes to make the point that all that we have exists because we support it. If we don't support the hobby, it suffers. If we don't support our club, it can't be effective. If we don't support the local shops they suffer and may have to close. I would hate to see any shop have to close its doors. That would hurt us all.

A lot of modelers swear that this is the golden age of model kits, if not modeling. There may not be the plethora of new releases that we saw in the past, but most of the new kits are really fine. We have decals and paints to replicate almost any miniature. Sure, they cost more. But the last time I checked, I was making more money than I did in the 60s or 70s and I have more disposable income.

And if you think just 29 years at a job isn't enough to qualify one for retirement, I can tell you different! I retired after 29 plus years and I was very ready to go. I had a good job, worked with fine people, and believed in what I was doing and enjoyed it. I just needed a change and some more time of my own. I suspect Bob and Alice feel the same way.

Milton

Styrene Six

Jarrod Cunningham

"The Times they are a-changing"

The title says it all. The events of the past few weeks really show that the hobby as we know it is slated for a change. With the retirement of Bob and Alice King, we experience another change to what we have become accustomed to and comfortable with. The past weeks have seen their ups and downs, but in the final analysis, the situation righted itself with the help of some computer wizardry and the entry of Rudy and Janis Cline as the new "keepers of the torch" of the shop on North Lamar Blvd. I am pleased that I know who's "taking the reins" and I wish them both success. I would also like to thank Bob and Alice King for the support that they have provided ASMS over the years. I hope they enjoy their much-deserved retirement.

Let me state this for the record, here and now, that I would have been just as distraught over the potential closing of ANY hobby shop in town. To us it's a "hobby" but to the proprietors it is a "business." Let's not forget that. Bob, George, and the other shop owners in town do this for a living, not just for the love of the hobby. When I think of the recent chain of events, it makes me reflect in the changes of the players over the past years. Still, the hobby changes and some changes bring pleasant surprises. Sometimes they are not so pleasant. Look at what we have around us today and think about some of the things that aren't available anymore, and you'll get the picture. Businesses come and go—some are resurrected, and some aren't. It's just the nature of things I'm afraid.

This is our next-to-the-last meeting before the "big show." Ready or not, on August 24th our annual show commences. I implore you all to look over the sign-up sheets that will be at the meeting and do what you can to bolster our efforts. I am sure that not every position has been spoken for and just about as sure that not everyone has committed to a job. Simply stated, if you can do something, sign up. Enough said.

There will be several things that we will be discussing over the next meeting so if you can possibly make the meeting, do so. I wish all who have modeling projects for the show the best of luck. I know that we all put a lot of effort and passion in our projects and it's nice to show them off. I look forward to seeing all that will be there. I hope to see all of you at the next meeting.

Jarrod



CAR CORNER

by Skip Perrine
IPMS 40167

This month I am doing two MOPARs, one is an oldie but a goodie, a blast from the past. This is one of my all-time favorites from AMT/ERTL, kit #6466, '70 Dodge Challenger R/T (which I think stands for Road and Track). The kit comes molded in the ever popular gray that all of the AMT/ERTL kits come in.



I painted mine Tamiya Color Light Green, which, according to one who owns a car of this color, it is real close to the color of the real car. Chrysler calls this color Sublime. My interior matches the “bumble bee” stripe around the rear end of the car, white.

I built my replica box stock and you can see it at the monthly meeting of the ASMS at Luby's Cafeteria at 7:00 PM on Thursday. The fit and finish of my kit was excellent with very little flash to be trimmed, the chrome was very clean, and the body WAS NOT warped.

To prepare the body and body parts for paint I soaked it in a mild detergent and let it all air dry. During the drying time, I familiarized myself with the parts. Then I assembled the 25-piece engine. First though, I painted the engine block, heads, intake manifold, and front cover Chrysler engine orange. The exhaust manifold was painted aluminum since it ties into the exhaust system which is painted aluminum.

Note: on Chrysler products, the undercarriage is painted to match the car itself. So after the body and undercarriage had dried, I applied a “primer” coat to it, drying time for the primer is approximately 24 hours.

So with the body and chassis in the “drying stage of assembly,”

I did the sub-assemblies of the engine, interior, and front end.

When painting your replica whatever color you choose, remember that the engine compartment, firewall, and radiator brace is painted to match the exterior of the car

This kit has the option of being built as a hardtop or convertible.



With a choice of side stripes or, what I used, the “bumble bee” stripe. Or you can leave it minus any stripes of any kind. The decals come in black and white and include four license plates, two Mopar Muscle plates, two registered plates, two R/T fender badges, and two Challenger logos for the trunk and glove box.

All in all this is STILL a great kit.

Next we have the AMT/ERTL 1971 Dodge Charger R/T, kit #31522.

This is what is termed a Pro-Shop kit and is available ONLY at Walmart, it comes pre-painted in Sassy Grass Green—hood, body, front and rear valence panels—the undercarriage actually looks like it has overspray on it. The engine which is the 440 variety is painted Chrysler Engine Orange. Everything is pre-painted, which is kind of nice. There was NO FLASH to trim off so, I was able to get right to it and begin building. Say what you will about pre-painted kits, but for me they sure work. Sometimes our weather is too hot and humid to paint so, it's nice to every once in a while get something to build “RIGHT NOW!”

This is a RIGHT NOW kit, I recommend it to anyone who wants to just have fun building a classic muscle car from an era gone by, the '71 Dodge Charger R/T is a fun kit to build, even though it is painted already, it requires some skill to get it together correctly.

The engine is a 25-piece assembly. Be aware that the front end assembly is tricky because it has separate front spindles which can be flipped for a “lowered” stance in the front, or “jacked up” stance, so you have to get them properly aligned to have them look right. In fact the upper K frame is an assembly in itself (six pieces including the assembled engine and radiator). The interior is also pre-painted and detailed. It's white with color coordinated door panels and the floorboards are painted black like the carpet in the 1:1 car.

(continued on page 10)

BOX REVIEW:

**Dragon PzKpff V 'Panther' Ausf A,
Early Type**

by Bruce Burden IPMS #30968

When Tamiya released their Panther G kit many years ago, the modeling world rejoiced. "Finally! A Panther G kit worthy of the name!" they cried. Not, mind you, that the Nichimo Panther G was all that bad, nor was the Gunze Sangyo "Hi Tech" kit, but an all plastic, accurate Panther G was what the modeling world had been waiting for. Sage minds predicted that models of the earlier Panther D and Panther A would soon follow.

May, 2002. Ten years after the much heralded release of their Panther G, Tamiya has not seen fit to bless modelers with models of the earlier Panther types. In the meantime, Italeri has produced a Panther A kit. While heralded as "a good value", this kit has significant problems, and was never really accepted by "Real Modelers" (tm). Finally, the Dragon kit of the Panther A "Early Type" makes its way to the US modeling public. Did they deliver? Is it finally a good kit? Read on...

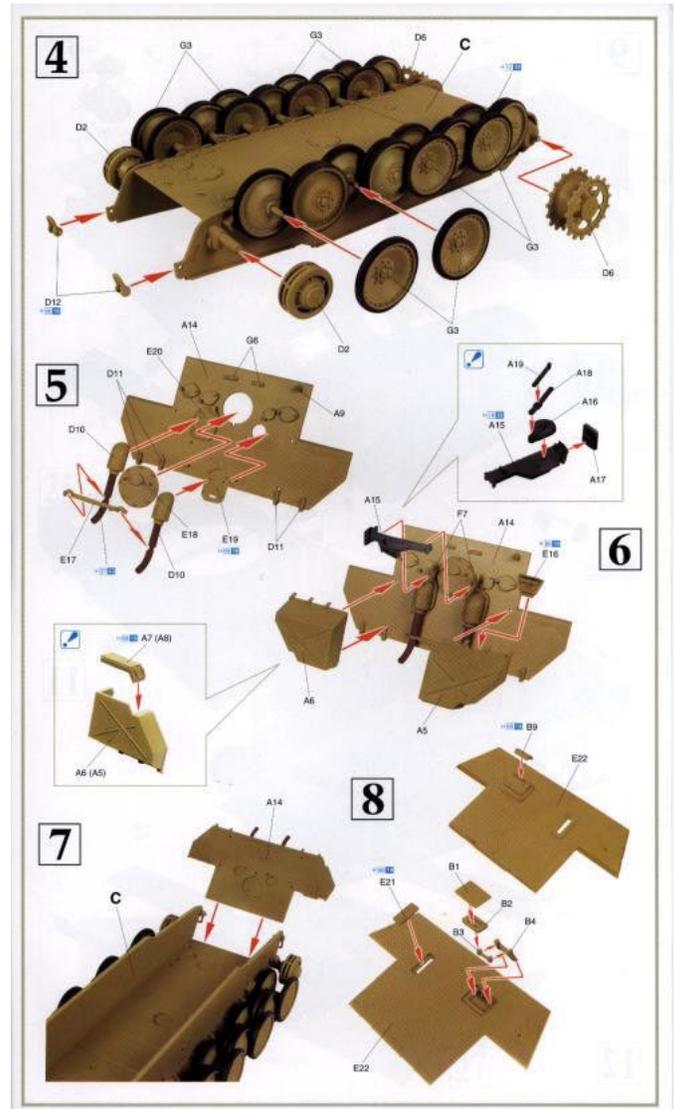
Dragon kit #6160, "Sd. Kfz. 171 Panther A Early Type [Italy 1943/1944]" is the subject of this review. Upon opening the box, the first sprue was "A", holding the upper hull, turret and some other parts. The upper hull is beautifully engraved, with the upper hull plate interlocked into the side hull plates. The turret is likewise beautifully engraved, showing the weld seams where the turret top was welded to the side plates. The turret side plates depict a simple square cut where they meet the turret face plate, rather than the dovetail that is characteristic of the Panther "D". So far, so very good.

At first, I was concerned that Dragon had taken the easy way out, and simply reused the tracks and roadwheels from their JagdPanther model kit. However, it turns out that the roadwheels, which depict the production 24 rim bolts, are correct for this type of model. Even the Kgs 64/660/160 track links are correct. The change to the roadwheels to use 24 bolts in the rim was ordered in August, 1943, the Kgs 64/660/160 tracks September 1943. My only complaint with the tracks is that each link has two ejector pin marks in the sides of the inner face, and the solid guide teeth. I know individual track links are all the rage, but I wonder if Dragon would do better to provide flexible, single length tracks like Tamiya does. I wonder how many younger modelers will purchase this kit and be turned off by the individual track links.

If you are wondering why this kit is called "Early Type", it is due to the bow machine gun flap, which the Germans nicknamed the "mailbox flap", This feature is a salient feature on all Panther D models as well as the "early" Panther A models. It was finally deleted in favor of the "kugelblende" ball machine gun mount in mid-late November 1943. (Why is the Panther Ausf D the first production model, when A precedes D in most any alphabet? I have no clue.) So, what we have is a very, very, nice looking

model of a Panther Ausf A that was manufactured from August 1943 to late November 1943. Congratulations, Dragon!

One other notable item is the use of a color instruction manual. Those of you who get the newsletter mailed won't be able to see it, but the scan below will demonstrate the color to those who receive the newsletter via e-mail. I don't know if this is the start of a trend, but it is interesting. Of course, it may turn out to be a gimmick, but it certainly doesn't detract from the kit!



Retail price for this kit is around \$30.00. For your money you get two marking options, one for Italy, one for the Eastern Front, die-cut schurtzen (good move, Dragon! Molded schurtzen are simply too thick, even for Tamiya to do well!), individual track links and a web site to Dragon Models.

Hmm, a web site? Okay, I'll bite. It looks like Dragon has decided to be proactive regarding customer service, and of course, there is plenty of propaganda. Given the complaints of slow service regarding the importer, Marco Polo, this seems to be a great idea, as long as they follow through.

(continued on page 10)

(Me 109G3 continued)

11/JG2 in January 1943. It also came to my attention that not much is written about JG2 on the Channel Front.

Model: I had the special edition from Hasegawa for “Hartmann G-4”, Kit number 09303. This included a resin forward cowling plug and the larger wheel with the basic G-6 kit offering. This sounded good, knowing the quality of the Hasegawa’s G-6, but it was not everything it could have been. The decals for Hartmann’s “White 2” machine and a JG53 G-4 were included.

Building the G-3: Many have written about the G-6 kit, including myself, so I will refrain from laboring over the basic construction, instead I will focus on the other things that made this kit unique.

As for most kits I started with a cockpit, but which one? MDC/Adeco’s is the best, Jaguar/Cooper Detail is a very close second, then there are countless others. I have never used the True Details interior but seeing they offered a G-1/G-4 interior, I thought I would try it. I’m always open to new ideas and products. The cockpit is a little gem, especially when you consider the price of under \$4.00 U.S. There are drawbacks however. The construction of the set is beautiful and when you build it up outside the aircraft it looks great. I thought the instruments were a little too deep but they were easy to paint and look convincing when done. I did use some Eduard trim wheels and mount but other than that it was built as True Details intended, with the exception of repositioning the stick forward.



The drawback comes when you install the cockpit into the fuselage. The seatbelts are molded on the seatback, and while this is nicely done, it isn’t correct. The attachment points for the shoulder harness should be on the back deck area of the cockpit but with the True Details set they sit too low. If you are a 109 nut, such as myself, it will drive you crazy, but in the interest of reviewing the set I learned to live with it. For the average builder the set is fine and at the price it is a good investment. The interior is also nice for an inexperienced modeler to get his hands on resin and practice techniques. I painted mine with Polly-S RLM 66, and then washed the area with black artist oils. I then dry brushed

with RLM 02, then some Testor’s Metalizer Titanium and Aluminum. Finally I used some titanium white artist oils. The cockpit looked really good.



Now, before I could put this cockpit in the fuselage I had to assemble it. No problems were encountered with the fuselage halves, but the resin plug was not the same story. The plug was way too much trouble for such an easy part. The plug was .050 too short front to back and .040 too tall top to bottom. It sounded so easy to just plug the back with styrene and sand down the bottom, but let me tell you it was no such easy matter. First off the sanding down made the insert too shallow and I had to fill in a lot on the side of the cowlings, of course all the detail was lost. The front to back seemed easy too with some plastic filling the gap in the back (.040) and a small one in the front (.010). Oh no, that would have been too easy. The superglue I used as filler chipped when I had to rescribe the panel lines and I eventually had to take it all out and replace it with epoxy putty. This scribed better finally after a week of working on the cowling alone I was happy with the results. Because I was making the G-3 I needed to add the air scoop to the left cowling. I drilled a hole through and bent a piece of metal tubing for this. I tried this method on my Hobbycraft G-1 and was very happy with it. The G-3 didn’t come out as good but it is passable.

Some other modifications that had to be made involved filling some panel lines. These included the square air vents on both sides of the cockpit and the oval panel on the left side by the tail wheel. The vents for the canopy had to be removed also.

The wings were pretty straightforward except that in the wheel well there are holes for the kidney shaped bumps. I glued these on the top wing and then I used my Dremel tool and started to hollow out the bumps very carefully. This is not for the faint of heart. I built up the internal structure with some styrene. Once I was happy with the shape of the bumps I very lightly added some liquid glue to the opening to smooth out any sanding imperfections. I also added Bare Metal Foil wheel well liners (wouldn’t the new Cutting Edge material make such great liners..HINT, HINT) after I added some styrene to the wheel well openings on the bottom wing to bring the well closer in filling the gap. I used a Part photo etch part) to add the holes in

the wheel well. Once they were glued in I hollowed out the holes. It looks good and I will do it again in the future. Some extra parts were added to make the up locks. I use parts from an Eduard K model set for the radiator and intakes. Some weighted fishing line and some True Detail Wheels rounded out (no pun intended) the landing gear and wings.



Painting: I used EZ Masks for the canopy as these make the task so much easier. I decided to try Model Master Acryl paints. I was happy with the colors themselves. I did have a problem of a sheet of paint pulling up on one wing. I fixed it by sanding it back to the panel line and then repainting. You can't even tell with this technique but it could have been a pain if it wasn't easy to get to. I painted the model with RLM74/75/76, which was typical of mid war 109s. I must admit at first I was leery of the RLM 74 Grey-Green in the bottle, as it didn't look anything like a green, but when applied and dried it looked accurate. There were also yellow tail and lower cowlings. A quick coat of Future and it was off to decal.

Decals: I wanted to represent an aircraft from 11./JG 2, which happen to be the only aircraft that I had a complete photo of. 11./JG 2 utilized the 11/JG 2 emblem of the Bonzo dog when they were formed in March of 1943. This little emblem would add character to an otherwise "normal" mid war paint scheme.

I have a lot of decals and I went through most of them with this aircraft. The Bonzo dog emblem came from a Hasegawa E-3 kit, the Blue 6 and the "scale color" crosses came from Cutting Edge, the detail stencils came from Kommanduer, Eagle Editions and Aeromaster. They all reacted well with Mr. Mark Softener.



There are a lot of stencils on this aircraft as it looks to be in a factory paint scheme, except for the yellow areas, with no field-applied markings other than the dog and aircraft number.

What caused me great debate was whether or not the wing crosses should be filled in. I had some photos of some G-2s at the factory with simplified wing crosses and normal (black and white) fuselage crosses. Then I also had photos of G-4s with normal wing crosses and some simplified, most showed normal fuselage crosses. The only photo I had of a G-3 wing was a NAG machine with black centers. I thought it would be interesting to show the transition of the markings so I settled on normal fuselage markings as per the photo of my machine and the wings carried simplified. Prove me wrong, there I said it and I feel better. Besides it will be easier to fill in with black than to cover it if I'm wrong.

Conclusions: The Hasegawa G-4 is not for the beginner because of the resin's poor fit, however, the kit itself is superb. The casting of the parts, other than the undersized everything, was great. I would like to see the aftermarket companies, such as MDC/Adeco, Verlinden or Squadron, do a resin insert allowing other G-3/4 aircraft to be built. There were lots of G-4s and there are plenty of paint schemes, including the wing drop tank versions that you can do with Verlinden's underwing set. I would like to have a quality casting of this insert. The kit was fun and looks real nice in the collection. The Moskit exhausts look great but should have been installed early in the construction as opposed to the end like I did. The decals from Cutting Edge were great and looked very convincing. I especially like the blue colored numbers. As for the "scale" color crosses, I'm neither hot nor cold on them. They look nice but I won't go out of my way to use them again. The True Details cockpit set is a good value for the money but I would use either Adeco or Jaguar/Cooper Details interior next time. The True Detail wheels are typical quality and add to the look. Modelers often overlook the pressurized aircraft, but they fit an essential part of the 109 mystique. It would be nice to see aftermarket conversions for these versions.

My advice to you is, buy a Hasegawa Bf-109 (any version) and build it, you won't be sorry. Remember modeling is fun!

References:

Messerschmitt Bf-109 F, G, & K, Prien & Rodeike, Schiffer Publications, ISBN 0-88740-424-3, Copyright 1993 (The best book ever written on the 109, IMHO)

Model Art No 290, *Messerschmitt Bf-109G/K Augsburg Eagle*

Lock on No 28 Messerschmitt Bf-109G-2, Verlinden, Copyright 1997

Monographie Lotnicze 43 Messerschmitt Me-109 cz.2 (now available in English), Robert Michulec, AJ Press, ISBN 83-86209-66-X

Aftermarket Items used:

- True Details Interior and Wheels
- Moskit Exhausts
- Eduard Photo-etch
- Evergreen Styrene

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Small Scales A closer look

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by
Rafael Power

BELL RP-63G KINGCOBRA “PIN BALL” 1/72 scale by TOKO



Kit #: 114
Vintage: c.1998-99
Origin: Molding: Ukraine/Decals:
Parts: 7 clear/50 light gray
Markings: • 42-69654 RP-63A-11 “Pin Ball, Do Not Tilt”
• 43-10959 RP-63C-2 FM36
• 43-11724 RP-63G-1

Conversion options: Parts for French and Russian versions included. Post war civilian racers.

Flying Penny Arcade

Answering the need to better train bomber gunners during World War II, the U.S. Army Air Corps removed all guns and drop tanks and converted P-63 Kingcobras into manned flying targets. Unofficially named the RP-63 “Pin Ball”, the orange-painted Kingcobra had an armored cockpit and a fuselage wired with sensors in over 100 points to record each hit of the special soft rounds. Each hit was indicated by a red flashing light in the prop spinner and the rear fuselage. Like an aerial fracas, the Pin Ball pilots had to run the gauntlet like a slippery pig running loose in a hillbilly hoedown—plenty of B-17/B-29 artillery but no BBQ sauce. Known gunnery airfields were Harlingen AAF and Laredo AAF (Central School for Flexible Gunnery) in Texas, Las Vegas AAF in Nevada and Yuma AAF in Arizona.

The P-63 also served with distinction with the Russians as a superb tank killer. The French Armée de l’Air flew the Kingcobras in Indochina during the 1950s before being replaced by other

American-supplied aircraft. A single surviving RP-63 “Pin Ball” is now on permanent display at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas.

Cobras on the loose!

The following P-63 Kingcobras are in the market place:

1/72: Aoshima #310 P-63, MPM #72021 P-63A, #72076 P-63C and TOKO #0112 P-63A, #0113 P-63C. Wings #VW7244 P-63A/D, VW7253 P-63A and VW7254 P-63D, all three vacuformed with metal parts. There was also a very good French resin/photoetched kit no longer available with Armée de l’Air markings.

1/48: Fonderie Miniature-F.M. #6008 P-63C, #6009 P-63A; Hi-Tech #1001 P-63C and MPM #48022 P-63C, #48024 P-63A, #48033 P-63F, #48037 P-63A, #48038 RP-63A “Pin Ball” Although the 1/48 kits are very well represented, in computer terms, the 1/72 Aoshima and MPM P-63s should be deleted!

First Impressions

Very nice box art. The color, detail and fit of TOKO’s P-63 has the look and feel of a KP kit from the Czech Republic. Although nicely engraved, the panel lines and rivets are a bit rough. The molding has some flash and I noticed areas that look like someone gave them liberal amounts of Krazy Glue or generous brush strokes of Future Wax. Really needs a face-lift job. This kit is identical to TOKO’s other P-63 kits with different decals, box art and instructions. It has all the extra parts to build the Russian and Armée de l’Air versions.

Instructions

The instructions are printed in Russian and English and are quite clear. Only one (“Pin Ball”) of the three P-63s is illustrated in the sheet. The other two are missing but can be seen in photos published in the listed reference books. Part trees indicate which parts should be discarded.

Decals

It’s a small sheet with markings for the USAAF prototype “Pin Ball” in distinctive overall weathered FS.32473 orange color scheme and two other RP-63s; all assigned to unknown units. The decals include some stenciling and prop manufacturer’s markings. The latter should be replaced with yellow or white service stenciling on all four blades. The bars on the star and bar insignia are too short and have to be replaced.

Fuselage

No guide slots or pins, just slick surfaces. Some work needed in the rudder to achieve a good fit. Sand and polish the rudder and elevator control surfaces since they should be smooth but still show the ribs. Also sand down the fuselage and wings with very fine Flexi-I-Grit or Micro-Mesh abrasives followed with a good application of Model Wax scratch removal or similar product of your choice. That way you may preserve all the panels and rivets with a minimum loss of detail.

To add the bullet strike indicator lights remove the nose cannon
(continued on page 10)

OOTB Review:

Kazan Su-11 "Fishpot C"

Conversion/Detail Set

by "Bondo" Phil Brandt IPMS #14091

Kazan Model Dynamics # EK004 \$39.95

Obtained from: Linden Hill Imports



Until relatively recently, the 1/48 modern Soviet jet modeler, having been left with few really good kit choices, could well identify with Rodney Dangerfield's, "I don't get no respect." While the "big dogs" continue their unending love affair with WWII and particularly the Axis Air Order of Battle, firstclass releases of 1/48 Soviet jets have been essentially limited to Tamiya's MiG-15, and Academy's MiG-21s, Fulcrums and Flankers. "Second tier" kits such as the Hobbycraft Mig-17s and OEZ's Su-7/25 and MiG-21 releases need moderate work to bring them up to show standards. But, until newcomers such as Trumpeter can create and release their ambitious schedule of kits (such as the Flagon series), we can be thankful for the efforts of small aftermarket firms such as Canada's Kazan Model Dynamics that have gambled their resources to help us significantly convert/upgrade the more pedestrian kits.

Our subject set converts the conventional sweptwing OEZ Su-7 into a whole new aircraft, the much more powerful, delta-winged Fishpot C interceptor, of which some 300+ were still in use as of 1982.

OEZ's venerable Su-7, or "Fitter A," release has been around for quite a while and shows its age: overall "soft" molding, somewhat heavy engraving, relatively plain cockpit, fairly thick canopy; somewhat "klunky" landing gear. In other words, badly in need of a makeover. The price of the Kazan set should be your first clue that this is a serious project; a bag jampacked with large gray resin castings is your second, and a nice PE fret and decal sheet is your third!

The largest resin components are the new delta wing halves with cast-in wheel wells. And, BTW, all castings are exceedingly smooth, with engraving that rivals that of the very best injected

kits. Next comes a new vertical fin and rudder, followed by significantly enlarged forward fuselage intake section and radar nosecone. Smaller resin components include active radar and IR missiles, side consoles, detailed KS-3 seat, pylons, detailed cockpit sidewalls, gear struts/doors, radarscope and miscellaneous air intake fairings, etc.

The PE fret includes large wing/fuselage join templates, seat belts/harness, instrument panel and many small parts. An Eduard-style instrument film underlay tops off the cockpit detailing.

Fishpot color schemes were non-existent, with unadorned aluminum from wingtip to wingtip. The included decal sheet provides "Bort," or numbers, for two aircraft, along with national insignia and a fair amount of stencils and maintenance markings. The decals are very thin and in excellent register.

An eight-page instruction booklet is very thorough, with excellent drawings and color information.

Together with the OEZ kit, we've now dropped at least 55 righteous bucks on this project. Since Bondo doesn't believe we're going to see an injected Su-11 in our lifetimes, if ya wanna Fishpot C, you're gonna have to bite the bullet. No guts, no glory! Kazan's releases have so far shown an unerring instinct of what modelers of esoteric Evil Empire aircraft want and need, and I thank them for seizing the modelling moment. Highly recommended.

Bondo

Box Review:

New Ware 1/48 scale

NOTS - 1958 Satellite Launch Vehicle

by Bruce Burden IPMS 30968



While looking at the New Ware web site for the Revell 1/96 Saturn V acuracizing kit that has drawn excellent reviews, I found a reference to a "NOTS-1958 Satellite Launch Vehicle." What, I wondered, was that? Well, it was, apparently, a "black" program run by the Navy to launch satellites using the Douglas F4D Skyray. Finally acknowledged in 1994, the Navy's Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS), at China Lake, California, was working on a (very small) satellite launch system that comprised the aforementioned Douglas F4D Skyray and a rocket. According to the instructions, it is believed that two of the six launch attempts were successful.

(continued on page 10)

(Car Corner continued)

I personally liked this kit enough to try to get another one, I hope AMT/ERTL brings out more of these Pro-Shop kits, I had a lot of fun with this one as well as several others of this type.

Well, that's it from the desk of the Skipster. Happy Modeling.

Skip

(Panther continued)

Dragon's next tank release, I have read, will be a Panther Ausf D. That model should come with new road wheels, tracks, and turret. However, if Dragon does as good a job on that one, that will be two winners for them this year. Unfortunately, Dragon can't really use the upper hull for a Panther Ausf A late model kit, since the Germans stopped interlocking the upper hull plate in December 1943, and the kugelblende feature also made redundant the bow gunners forward periscope. The turret should also be modified to feature the 3 pilze for the Behelfskran 2t that was introduced June 1944.

Bruce

(Pin Ball P-63 continued)

and insert an M.V. model railroad red or orange lens. Drill four holes between the cockpit and rear tail section: one under the belly, one behind the canopy and one each on the sides of the fuselage and insert similar red lenses. If not available, you can make your own lenses by using clear resin, epoxy or other material suitably tinted with thinned kitchen coloring, dyes or artist inks. Another good source of suitable equivalents is the custom jewelry department at art & craft stores such as Michael's.

Wings and Landing Gear

The wings are a one-piece underside and two top pieces with correct dihedral. Wheel wells are detailed but need some work. Wing to fuselage fit is another area where some filler and plastic is needed. The wing trailing edges need to be reduced since they are a bit thick.

The landing gear mount has the usual hole with no extension mechanism detail, just the usual round peg. Although TOKO's detail work is very good for such a small scale, you may consider replacing the landing gear assemblies with those from Heller or Academy P-39s. The nose gear wheel should be blanked on both sides with no detail showing. Gear doors should be sanded/reduced to fit the wheel well openings.

Clear Parts

Although the side entry doors are nicely molded in clear plastic, the windshield and canopy are thick and somewhat rough. Replace with the Squadron vacuform P-39 replacements if they fit. You can do the doors open or closed. The instrument panel has raised details but needs replacing. On RP-63s, the rear canopy (included with kit) was removed and replaced with a metal one. Some of the early aircraft had the top of the canopy also replaced with a metal one with only the windshield and side windows clear just like an X-15. Talk about claustrophobic!

My Recommendations:

1. Add bullet strike indicator lights.
2. Scratch build wing leading edge engine intake screen protectors from plastic and photoetched mesh screens.
3. Scratch build distinctive protector bars over the engine exhaust pipes.

Final Comments

Not quite up to the quality of molding of Japanese and Korean kits but certainly a good base line kit to work from. I do recommend it since it's still the best 1/72 P-63 in the market. Any information on the units, codes or bases would be quite helpful.

References:

- *Bell P-39 Airacobra* – Robert F. Dorr & J. Scutts (Crowood)
- *In Action #43: P-39 Airacobra* (1980) – Ernie McDowell (Squadron/Signal)
- *P-39 Airacobra/P-63 Kingcobra* – Warbird Tech Series (Specialty Press)
- *Wings of Fame Vol.10: Bell P-39/P-63 Variants* (1998) – Robert F. Dorr (AIRtime)

Articles:

- Flashback: Pinball – Air Force Magazine/March 1996 (Air Force Association)
- Shoot The Attacker–But Don't Shoot Him Down! – Frederick A. Johnsen (FlyPast)

Rafael

(NOTS continued)

What you get, nicely packed in a box is a 1/48 scale satellite launch system. The satellite launch system comprises ten beautifully cast resin parts (one nose cone/payload section, one casting for the four rocket motors, four fins and four engine bells), a sheet of decals for the Tamiya F4D Skyray, with the appropriate (I hope!) serial numbers and "China Lake" markings, and an A4 sized sheet of instructions. One side of the instructions gives the history I summarized above, plus drawings of the launch vehicle, the other side gives you the marking information for both the Skyray and the launch vehicle.

The nose cone/payload section will be a simple butt joint to the four rocket motors, while the fins are glued to the sides of the rocket motors. The engine bells are attached to the back of the rocket motor casting. There were roll markings on the rocket motors/fins, which is the only tricky area that will need paint. The F4D paint scheme is fairly straight forward, gloss sea blue for the most part, although the underside of the wings is fluorescent red-orange.

Price is approximately \$24.00. I purchased my copy from John F. Green, Inc. You can also order from the manufacturer, New Ware, but they are located in the Czech Republic, and Western Union transaction fees can double the price of the kit.

Bruce

Old Rumors & New Kits

The best of the lot this month is the new Academy 1/35 M3 Stuart "Honey." We have been treated (and often mistreated) by some of Tamiya's armor that did not quite hit the mark. Good detail but sometimes not accurate, sometimes missing.

Enter the new "Honey." This has always been one of my favorites—yes, an aircraft modeler can have favorite pieces of armor—but the lack of a good kit left me without a Stuart. I remember a picture in Life magazine back in the early '40s (yes, I can remember that far back!) that showed a night firing, all guns blazing, in a time exposure. I was an impressed five year old...and I remember.

OK, I'm not an armor builder as a rule. I can't look at an armor kit and tell you that it's good or not. I can say that I trust Cookie Sewell's judgment in these matters and he likes the new kit. It's not perfect and some of the parts included don't really belong on the "Honey," the version of the Stuart used by the Brits in the Libyan desert. But even considering that, this is the best Stuart on the market and it's just a matter of time before some enterprising after market resin entrepreneur brings out the corrections and a complete engine!

This new kit can be found for just over \$22 to near \$30. It comes with either a rubber track or individual links and either one is accurate. I hear they called it "Honey" because it didn't throw its tracks in desert field trials. I hope to have a full review next time. This kit is a real "Honey."

Next up has to be the three Su 15 "Flagon" kits from Trumpeter. No longer do you have to struggle with a multimedia kit to get a model of this big Soviet fighter. In 1/48 (Yes!) you have a choice of the A model with "normal" delta configuration or a cranked wing Flagon F (Su-15TM) or a two seater Flagon C (Su-15UM). About the only thing I can see that the kits need is a better seat and some improvements to the cockpit. What comes in the kit is acceptable but you know how the detail freaks are about the need for more resin and PE. (Did I say that?)

These folks from China aren't giving their kits away. Their earlier 1/32 scale kits weren't cheap and neither are these new Flagons. Expect to pay in the upper \$30s to the mid \$40s for one of these unless you can find a good sale. If you want to build one and need some reference photos, I really recommend checking out lindenhillimports.com/Su-15.html. Ken Duffey has some very good photos posted there and you can get a good idea of the colors and the kind of natural metal or lacquer finish these aircraft carried. Although these aircraft are in an outdoor museum setting, I wouldn't get carried away with highly polished surfaces!

Black Box has some new resin out and two of the subjects are really welcome. First there's the new interior for the Revell-Monogram F9F Panther. Pricey but nice. Then there is a new resin interior for the old Monogram T-28A. The old Trojan isn't

a really bad kit, just needs a good interior and some detailing. I'm looking forward to this one.

Recent releases include another version of the B5N2 Kate from Hasegawa. This time it's the torpedo/radar equipped version. This is the one captured on Saipan that's pictured so often.

I've noticed that Academy has also released some smaller scale armor, although I've not seen any of it. I have no idea as to the source of the tools but the subjects are interesting. They include a Merkava, T-72, Challenger, and a Leopard 2A5. I have a Merkava from Zhengdfu but... Nah, they wouldn't do that.

If you bought a P-40E from AMTech and found unacceptable mold mismatches on the aft fuselage, you can get replacement parts directly from AMTech.

Speaking of AMTech, the latest newsletter from Great Models says they will release a P-40B in late 2002 or in 2003. Now that's one I'll definitely be waiting for. I haven't heard anything lately about the Accurate Miniatures/Hobbies (?) new P-40 kit. Last I heard, there was some discussion as to which version it would be, an E or B/C.

An interesting note regarding Classic Airframes says they will have a Hornet, Beaufort, Barracuda, and late model Meteor. I would like to see the Hornet and the Meteor.

The same Great Models list includes the Hobby Craft F9F Panther and Cougar and the P-59 Airacomet. I had all but given up ever seeing these and there's no guarantee that we will in 2003 for that matter. But at least someone is thinking about them.

Koster will do a 1/48 Neptune and a G3M Nell while Occidental will do a Harpoon. I was hoping that Revell-Monogram would take the Neptune and turn it into an injected kit. That would make a really nice small twin kit but I know Koster will do it right as a vac/multimedia kit.

There is even a mention in the list that DML/Dragon will release their version of the Accurate Miniatures TBM Avenger. I had heard that Italeri had gotten rights to those tools. Perhaps they passed them on. It's possible too that it's all a misprint.

In case you have too much vacant space in your collections cabinet, perhaps you can fill it with Trumpeter's Tu-95 Bear in 1/72. This will certainly raise some eyebrows if it does come to pass. With their 1/32 F-105s waiting in the wings with no MSRP posted, there's no telling how many bills the Bear will bring. I can say that it will be an impressive kit and certainly an eye catcher built up. (I have the kit in 1/144 and I think that's big enough for me.)

That about wraps it up for this month. Don't forget to support your local hobby shop, volunteer to work at our August show, and get that entry finished! And good luck. See you Thursday.

Milton

Air Show Schedule

Lubbock, Tx Sept. 7-8 (Thunderbirds)

Enid, OK. Sept. 21 Vance AFB air show 2002

Midland, Tx. Oct.11-13 Gathering of Memories

San Marcos Tx Oct 11-13 Gathering of Memories

Ft. Worth, Tx Oct. 11-13 Ft Worth International Air Show (Thunderbirds)

New Orleans Oct. 25-27 N'awlins Air Show (Blue Angels)

Houston, Tx Oct 26-27 Wings Over Houston (Thunderbirds)

Lackland AFB, San Antonio Nov. 1-2 (Thunderbirds)

Next Meeting:
Thursday, July 18

