



SPRUE CONFESSIONS



IPMS/Republic of Texas

Newsletter of the Austin Scale Modelers Society

October 2002



Hasegawa 1/32nd Bf-109G-6

By

Floyd S. Werner, Jr.
IPMS# 26266

When Hasegawa announced that they were going to release a new 1/32nd scale Me 109 there were a lot of expectations. Would they do the aircraft justice? Would they just upscale their 1/48th scale offering? Would it be expensive? Well I have to tell you that Hasegawa did the 109 a great justice. Instead of taking the easy route by upscaling the quarter scale offering they made a totally new offering, which I have to say is even better than the 1/48th scale version. That is saying a lot, as the small scale model is beautiful. Let me tell you this one is even nicer and really easy to build. Not only did they make a nice kit but it costs just a little more than the 1/48th scale kit. What can I say but, "Absolutely fantastic." Along with the Tamiya Zero (with a price tag nowhere close to zero) the release of the G-6, G-14 from Hasegawa and the anticipated G-4 from Revell/Monogram (cost is literally only a few dollars more than the quarter scale kit, how do they do it?) Hasegawa has revitalized the large scale aircraft market.

There is no need for a history of the Messerschmitt fighter as it is probably the most famous subject out there.

OK, with that out of the way now we can get down to building the kit.

The Kit

Eight light gray sprues are included, as well as one clear sprue. There are polyvinyl caps that seem to be the rage nowadays and decals for two aircraft, one for Erich Hartmann and the other for Gerhard Barkhorn. The detail can be seen upon opening the box. I don't know for sure but I would bet that Hasegawa used "Black 6" as a pattern. I say this because of the set up of the forward scoops. There was a lot of controversy over these scoops, but I have to tell you that the three examples that exist have staggered scoops. It doesn't appear that all aircraft
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- Floyd Werner Hasegawa's new 1/32 Me 109 G6.
- Richard Eaton takes us through the steps of building the Sd Kfz 140/1 from VM.
- Rafael Power takes a look at HobbyCraft's A4-B.
- Skip takes a look at two of Polar Lights' latest four-wheel releases.
- We meet at **6:30, Wednesday, October 30** at the Yarborough Branch Library. Where will we meet for the rest of the year?
- And More...



A very happy Bob King receives a plaque of appreciation from ASMS. Bob and Alice retired at the end of September after operating Kings Hobby Shop for 29 years. Bob was also the founder of ASMS.

About 50 enthusiastic friends treated the Kings to an "all you can eat" BBQ dinner at The County Line restaurant in late September.

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Model Show Schedule

CALMEX 17, Lake Charles LA	Jan. 19, 2003
ModelFiesta XXII, Live Oak Civic Center	March 8, 2003
MetroPlex Car Model Club	March 22, 2003
IPMS/Central Arkansas Scale Modelers, Little Rock AR	May 2-4, 2003
NCT ScaleFest, Mesquite Rodeo Center	May 24, 2003
IPMS National Convention, Oklahoma City OK	July 2-5, 2003
SuperCon, Fort Worth (Arlington)	August 9, 2003
West Central Missouri	Sept. 20, 2003
GASCON IV, Greater Abilene Scale Modelers, Abilene TX	Oct. 11, 2003

From the Editor...

It's time for a change. No, not your clocks. ASMS will meet on Wednesday, October 30, at the Yarborough Library. Meeting time is 6:30. If you want to get together for dinner, I suggest meeting about 5:30 or so at Jorge's Restaurant across the street. Jorge's closes at 9:00. If you don't know where the Yarborough Library is located, it's in the old Americana Theater building on Hancock. Hancock is the next traffic light south of North Loop, or just a block or so south of our old meeting place. **Remember: New Place and New Time!**

Bruce and Tim's suggestion that we forego a show in 2003 met with general approval. The arguments for holding off a year and then coming back in 2004 with a show in April were convincing so we will have a rest for a year. Doing a show in April of 2003 would have been a real strain, not only for our meager resources but in personnel. Putting on a show that soon after our last one would also put a big hurt on our coordinators so 2004 will be our next show year. As a warmup, and to say we did something in our 30th year, perhaps we can have a club contest next year, say a more elaborate "quarterly" just to keep the membership busy and the juices flowing.

The model show schedule at the top of the page is the complete list as of this month. It was forwarded to me from Dick Montgomery and reflects all the sanctioned IPMS shows in the region. There was a meeting of chapter reps at Abilene and most of the kinks were worked out then. Check out the new releases at your favorite shop and build something!

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.

Aires set 4131, for 1/48 Hasegawa AH-64A Apache Cockpit

By Jarrod Cunningham
IPMS # 39291

The AH-64 was born after lessons learned in the Vietnam War about the lack of a dedicated anti-armor helicopter. With its night vision target systems, advanced laser guidance targeting and missile systems it is truly the “top gun” of the western helicopter gunships. Serving with distinction in the “Gulf War” in '91 and most recently in Afghanistan, it has proved its usefulness.

Aires has always had an excellent reputation for casting quality cockpits, and this set is no exception. What you get is 25 finely cast resin pieces along with a fret of nickel photo-etch. The cockpit tub itself is very nicely done with all the components present and correctly placed. Included in the tub detail is the padding behind the seats. It's delicate and accurate. The laser detectors for the helmet directional weapons control are there, and are correct in placement and size. The collective and cyclic sticks are separate, allowing the modeler to position them as desired.

The instrument coamings are separate pieces that attach to the tub. These are also very well done and include the appropriate “blinders” for the instrument panel to reduce glare on the CRT screen used for flight. Also included are the telescopes used for “bore sighting” the reticle used for flight and targeting. The instrument panels themselves are PE affairs (typical for Aires) and have all the correct instruments present for the AH-64A. The faces are represented by a paper insert to be placed behind the instrument openings. When this is done, the look will be very convincing. The CPG (Copilot Gunner) station is captured nicely as well. The target optics all seem to be correct and proportionate for the scale.

The seats are good as well. The kit ones suffer from the injector marks from the mold. I was planning on using replacements out of the Monogram kit, but with the arrival of these that won't be necessary. The seat belts are PE as well and come in a series of sections with buckle to complete the assembly. The instructions cover this very well with pictures of the assembly process. The benefit of separate belts allows you to position them as you please. It also allows you to pose the two seats with different belt lays.

Honestly if you haven't guessed it, I like this set. I have wanted to really put together a NICE AH-64 for some time now, and with the introduction of this set I can now do it. On the “Jarrod scale of resin” I'd give this one a 9.5 out of ten. Why not a perfect 10? I personally like a set of instructions with resin sets to give cut and sand areas of the host kit. This set doesn't. It only states: “Warning: thinning of the plastic parts and dry fitting of the assembly required.”

Jarrod

Styrene Six

Jarrod Cunningham

Hey kit builders—it's meeting time again, and this time at the NEW venue and NEW time. Since the Luby's on North Loop has officially closed we have a new meeting place. The new site is the Yarbrough Branch Library. The only hitch is, we have (by vote) moved up the start time to 18:30 (6:30)! The library closes at 21:00 (nine o'clock to you civies), so to maximize the time we've bumped up the start time thirty minutes. This will ensure that we finish on time for the library staff.

(We will have to end the program and begin vacating the library—putting the chairs back, moving the tables, picking up any trash— by 8:45 because the library staff will lock the front door at 9:00 sharp!)

I know this kind of pushes it for some, and that's why we moved the meeting time back to 6:30. There is light at the end of the tunnel though. I recently visited Skip Perrine's suggested alternate location—Sirloin Stockade on North Lamar—and it has the appearance of being able to fill our needs. The space seems sufficient and the lighting adequate. I will contact the manager and work out the details and expectations. They are willing to let us stay an hour after closing, so that is a plus. The manager wasn't there when I visited, but I did talk to her assistant and they have us down “tentatively.”

My major concern with this location is that the area available to us isn't separated in any way from the other dining area, meaning noise could be an issue as well as keeping the meeting separate from the casual diner. Other than that, the food looks good, I would liken it to a Shoney's or a Bonanza as far as quality (or appearance of quality—just looked, didn't eat). I'll put it up for discussion at the next meeting. Majority rules, no presidential decree with this one, I know that for some, food with the meeting is an issue.

I was very pleased with the turn out for Bob and Alice's banquet. If I recall, head count was around 50. I thought it was a fitting tribute to both of them, and believe everyone had a good time. My Lab sure enjoyed the rib bones I brought back with me. My dog offers his thanks to “Bondo” and Brad for assisting me with a hefty pile of bones for him. Thank you to all who showed and those who supported us with this event, especially Kenny and Kathy for their efforts to bring it all together.

I hope all of you aren't too “bummed out” about the club's decision NOT to hold a show in 2003. I know it's a tough pill to swallow, but it's in the best interest of the club that we forgo this one. Financially “we just ain't there yet”. I believe that the April time frame will benefit us in the long run. I think it just makes sense. I hope that you all understand this.

I hope to see you all at the next meeting.

Jarrod

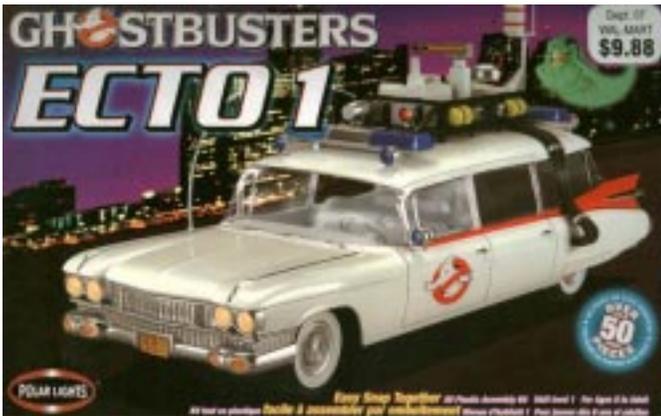


CAR CORNER

by Skip Perrine
IPMS 40167

Well gang it's time for another kit review from the Car Corner guy. This time around we are looking at the Ghostbusters ECTO 1 from Polar Lights and also the newest release from the Vintage NASCAR series.

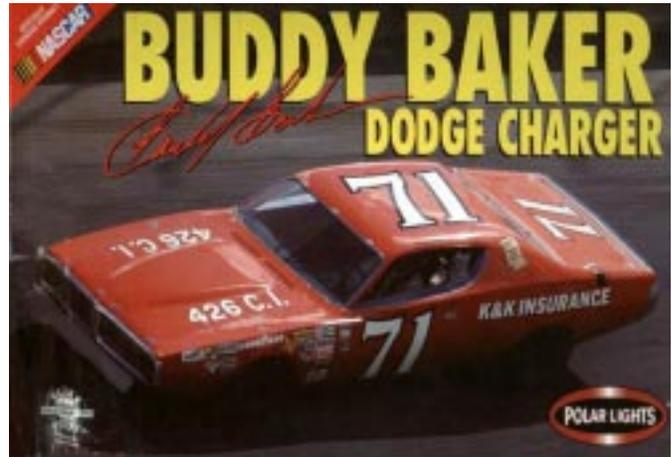
First up is the Ghostbusters ECTO 1 Cadillac hearse. Now before you ask, NO it cannot be built stock without an awful lot of work. It is a easy snap-together kit, so I look for these to show up next year at the make-it-take-it tables at shows around the country.



When I opened the box I was greeted by a body that took up the entire length of the box. (Hey, it's a hearse!) It's molded in white and has press on graphics, and as I said to build it stock would require a lot of filling and sanding because it has 12 holes in the roof for all of the GB equipment. Then, on the sides of the car, there are holes where "stuff" plugs in. The interior is a real ambulance type, so I suppose it could be made into an ambulance, but again all those holes would have to be filled.

The graphics are real simple—three GB logos, two stripes for the front I suppose and two for the rear fins, some gauges and two license plates. There are two pieces of glass, clear for the front, and blacked out for the rear—suppose they are trying to hide something? Next there's this big chrome tree with a bumper on it that probably weighs as much as a VW, and the rear taillights housing is just bulky, you gotta love these things. Then there are wide whitewall tires with whitewall inserts. Paint it to match the box. All I can say is have fun with it and give it to a kid.

Now the next one is a bit more adult oriented. It is kit# 6607, the Buddy Baker Dodge Charger and my sample was a little the worse for the wear, but the model inside is ok. So let's go ahead



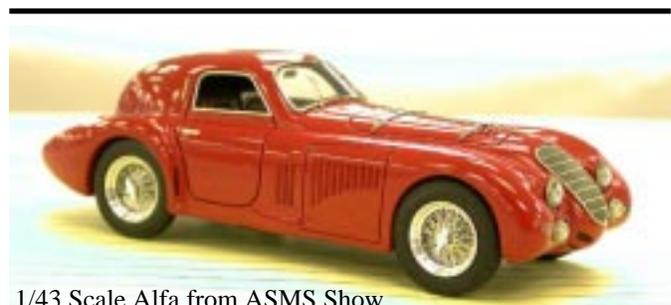
and look at this, the latest in the Vintage NASCAR Series. The body is a one-piece with a detachable hood and is the exact same body as the Richard Petty 1974 Dodge Charger. The decals are Slixx so I know they are top quality. The kit is molded in white, clear and chrome. There is no flash to speak of and it has vinyl tires.

If you've never looked at the instruction sheet of one of these NASCAR kits, it looks like a blow up of a real construction of a car, it is very difficult to follow, but I will do my best to walk you through it. From what I can tell, it looks like they start with the chassis and build everything onto it, so the dashboard assembly goes first, then the roll cage—which has more bars than Carter has liver pills—then...man this thing is really confusing. Shoot, the seat itself is five pieces and that includes the shoulder strap. The skill level for this is 3, and now I know why. Wow, this one is as tough as the Porsche I reviewed last month. Is it me, or does it seem like models are getting more difficult to build?

I guess the easiest thing in here is the engine, and it is pretty basic for an engine. But then there are special instructions to install the 426 Hemi engine because it has to have a special chassis connector to have the engine clear the hood. It also comes with a small block 360 V8 engine.

So there you have it, the two car kits I received from Polar Lights for this month. As a note, Polar Lights will not be doing model cars for awhile in 2003, as they are leaning towards the toy line, sort of like Lindberg who now makes only toys. What's happening to the plastic companies?

Skip



1/43 Scale Alfa from ASMS Show

Building the VM 1/35 Aufklarungspanzer 140/1

by Richard Eaton, IPMS #40101



The History

The Czech built TNHP-S tank built from 1938 onwards was one of the most modern vehicles of its time. Production of the vehicle continued under German aegis after the occupation onward. This extremely robust and reliable type formed a quarter of German tank strength in the 1940-41 period. After replacement by later German designs the excellent chassis was modified and equipped to form a variety of expedient vehicles such as the Panzerjager Marder III, Jagdpanzer Hetzer, and Panzerartillerie Grille. The Hetzer variant soldiered on with the Swiss army until the 70s! A functioning Swiss Hetzer is preserved to this day at the Texas Guard Museum at Camp Mabry here in Austin. Not bad for a 1938 design I'd say.

A further Pz Kw 38(t) variant which came into troop service during 1943 was the Aufklarungspanzer (recon tank) 140/1. These came about initially as a field modification. A new superstructure was fitted to 50 38(t) chassis that were under repair. On that was mounted a 2 cm Haenglafette turret formally used on various armored cars and half tracks. These vehicles (70 produced) were intended as replacements for the four-wheeled armored car Sd Kfz 222 and Sd Kfz 250/9 half track. The open turret was fitted a 2 cm KwK cannon and an MG 34 machine gun designed for both anti-aircraft and ground attack purposes. These recon tanks were equipped with a Fu 5 (2 meter) and Fu 12 (star type aerial) radios.

Building the Sd Kfz 140/1

This 1997 kit, from VM in Russia, is of the standard Sd Kfz 140/1. This was the first Pz Kw 38(T) type variant produced by VM and hopefully not the last. It is molded like the Italeri kit so that the mold may be used to produce other variants in the future.

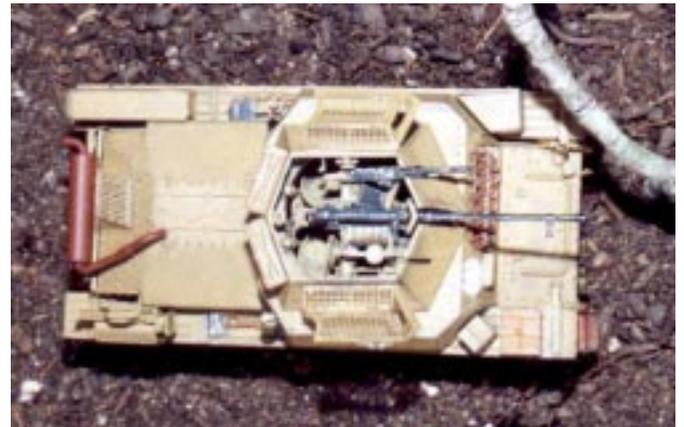
Step one assembles the hull components and interior detail. The hull sides and bottom have interior detail molded in. There are

six parts that make up the transmission. The entire assembly fits snugly onto the tank floor. I then assembled the lower hull, rear bulkhead and engine cover pieces with no problem. It is evident at this point that there will be quite a bit of builder modification to the kit parts. Instruction inserts have you cutting four major parts to allow the distinctive superstructure to fit the Italeri tank hull. Dimensions in mm's and approximate angles are given. I tried these modifications but later had to work the parts and dry fit extensively.

Step two completes the interior detail. I assembled the seat parts, controls, and the like. There are parts aplenty to supply exterior fixtures and equipment. I then added the flooring plates, fire extinguisher and various other details. I sprayed the interior Afrika Mustard and painted the details. I then applied a dark wash and, when dry, dry brushed heavily in white. I could not tell how visible the interior would be at this stage.

Steps four and five assemble the suspension and road wheels. This went by the numbers. Be sure the drive wheel turns freely or you will have a time getting the tracks to look right. I sprayed all parts Afrika Mustard and painted the road wheels.

Things started to get interesting with step six. I assembled the boxy multi-angled superstructure first. The fit was not that great and required filling and shaping. Use care not to damage the molded-in rivets. I set that aside to dry and attached the muffler assembly. Directions have you cut off the exhaust pipe and replace it with two new longer angle pipes. Don't glue these quite yet because mounting the muffler requires quite a bit of dry fitting. I got it to look somewhat acceptable and glued it in place.



I assembled the individual link tracks and put them on the model. Getting a good fit around the drive wheel was challenging but overall the tracks look great. I modified the running boards and attached them.

Now time to add the superstructure. This required repeated rounds of test fitting, and then cutting of the lower hull. You really have to shoehorn this unusual structure onto the Italeri hull. I got a decent fit in the front and sides but the rear was a mess. I puttied it up big time and sanded. I did this again. On the

(continued on page 10)

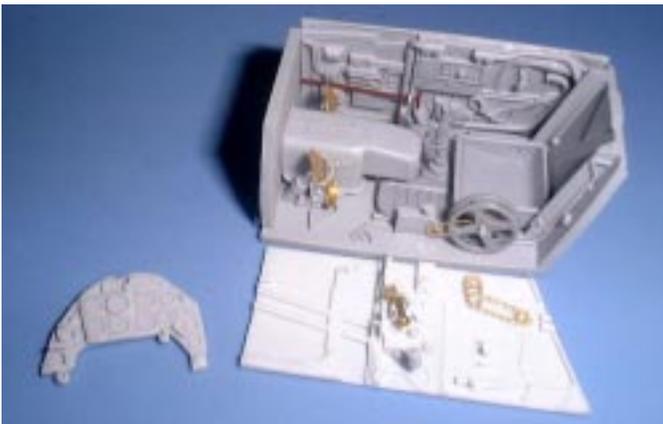
(1/32 Me 109 continued)

are set up this way but the survivors are. The engineering of the kit indicates lots of room for additional models; unlike the Fujimi quarter scale offering it is not over engineered.

Model Design Construction Cockpit

I decided to try Model Design Construction's interior instead of the kit cockpit. The kit offering is not too bad but in this scale you want a beautiful interior and MDC offers up a great cockpit. The resin parts are bubble free and there was no warping. If I had to find fault with the MDC interior it is in the instrument panel. The panel's gauges are flat and offer no relief. The fit was impeccable and construction was very straightforward.

The whole cockpit area, including the cockpit sill, was painted Testor's Model Masters RLM 66 and dry brushed RLM 02. Certain areas were then worn with some silver pencils and silver paint. After the dry brush I moved to the instrument bezels and either painted them black or the appropriate color. Now that I had a nice interior I had to figure out a way to make the instrument faces. I decided to punch out the kit decals with a Waldron Punch and Die set. Using Micro Sol to settle the instruments into the proper spot was all that I needed. After they were dried I simply applied some Kristal Kleer to the faces. It required a few applications to get the look I was after but when I was finished I really liked the results.



I glued the side walls on the fuselage halves and mated the instrument panel where it was suppose to be prior to sealing the area with the floor. I was very happy with the look of the "office". I left the clear gas line part, gunsight and control stick until later in the construction. The gunsight was nicely molded and just required scrap clear styrene to make it a beauty. I painted the one lens Tamiya Clear Green. The gunsight was attached with a small rod that I drilled into the back of the gunsight. The clear tube in the fuel line was a nice addition, but be careful as it will get lost quickly. The MDC cockpit is a gem and adds a lot to this kit. I highly recommend it. I bought mine directly through the MDC website.

The Fuselage

The fit of the fuselage is near perfect. It probably was perfect, except for my gluing. The fuselage consists of four parts, the front halves and the tail halves. The breakdown occurs at a



natural panel line in the tail boom so nothing is lost and if done carefully will require no filler. The tail assembly has a big—no, make that huge—plug that almost snaps into the front halves giving you a strong bond. A note about the spine of the 109; there is a natural seam along the top and most of the bottom of the fuselage so don't fill it in. If you assemble this correctly there isn't any area that should require more than a couple of swipes with a sanding stick to get it right. I took this opportunity to drill a hole in the tail antenna mount.

A word of caution, the top of the engine area is a plug (this will allow early versions to be built) and there are two provided. You have to decide which one to use. Study your photos; I think I used the wrong one. Oh well, the fit is so good and after I glued it I couldn't get it off. You are given a choice in the cowl gun bulges, so a little research will help you out here. My aircraft had the extra "pressurization" bulge on the right side.

I didn't need a drop tank or rack under my aircraft but if you want to mount one don't forget to open up the holes on the belly panel before you put it on. I attached the wing stiffeners and sealed up the belly panel.

The Wings

One thing I was worried about was the way the wings were mounted. They go on to the stiffeners, which are attached to the belly panel and then run up the wing. What was I worried about? This is Hasegawa. The fit of the wings on these stiffeners was perfect. Let me say that again—"perfect." The stiffeners ensure the dihedral of the wings is correct and they also add strength.

The wings themselves are pretty straightforward. Open up the holes for the wing bulges, add the cooler front and backs, put on the top of the wing and you're done. Again there is no need to fill anything; the fit is that good. I say that but you will have to fill in the wing bulges mounting points and these are a little bit of a pain because of the limited space.

The wings just slip onto the stiffeners and if you take your time the fit is perfect on the top and bottom. If for some reason your fit isn't perfect I suggest that you get the bottom perfect and work

the top. I can't see how it wouldn't be but just in case. It would be easier to fix the top wing than the lower.

The flap arrangement is easy and straightforward, except for the mold release marks on the inside of each flap. This was easily filled though and the fit of the flaps was easy with large mounting tabs on them. This ensures that they are straight and at the same angle. I would recommend that you put some .005 plugs in the end of the outboard flaps as this seam is visible and difficult, if not impossible, to fill. Slats are perfect and fit, yes again, perfectly.

You will need to fill the clear part under the wing for the antenna mount for a G-6 but this is very easy and it just snaps together. Are you getting the idea that I liked this kit?

Other Stuff

I'm just going to hit highlights for the rest of the kit. The tail assembly is so slick and tight that I forgot to glue mine until I was done with the kit. Literally the horizontals don't require glue. They interlock and are perfectly straight right out of the box. The supercharger intake is easy and represented the hardest seam I had to fill on the whole kit.

The lower oil cooler and belly insert panel fit, dare I say it again, perfectly. No glue on my belly panel.

The landing gear fits snugly into the mounts and the angle is, well you know. The nice thing about the struts is that they have the brake lines molded on and they look nice. I added the looped lower portion, but these aren't even seen and I won't do it the next time. The angle of the wheels is the only big gripe I have with this kit. The angle is too vertical, but I was able to overlook it as once I test fit the wheel to the leg I couldn't remove it, again no glue. I'm sure that True Details has an offering that will fix this issue.

Eagle Parts Spinner

I decided to use Eagle Parts spinner because it looked more accurate and had better detail than the kit offering. It required some drilling, but Eagle provides a drilling jig to help you get the center of the spinner. When added to the kit the new spinner dramatically changes the look of the airplane. Hasegawa still can't get that elusive shape correct. Their 1/48th scale offering is horribly bulbous. This kit's spinner isn't as bad, but not perfect. If you can, use the Eagle Parts. Highly recommended.

Cutting Edge Exterior

I used some parts from the Cutting Edge exterior set. This set addresses some items that are missing or could be done better in resin. I used the forward scoops, exhausts, cowl guns, and tail wheel assembly. There were a lot of other parts that I opted not to use, but everything was typical Cutting Edge quality and was bubble free. You have to see these sand and dust filters; beautiful job Scott! By far the best improvement that the Cutting Edge offers is the tail wheel. Be careful though as the spokes are very fragile. It is nice too that the tail wheel is slightly flattened.



Painting

As you can tell you get to this point rather rapidly. I decided to try Testor's Model Masters Acrylic paint range. After preshading, I started with the RLM 76, followed that up with RLM 75 Grey Violet and RLM 74 Grey Green. I found out a quick fact about myself. I am "dialed" into 1/48th scale. It was very difficult for me to spray the mottling effect for 1/32nd. My pattern was very small and required me to think about the spray pattern. I'm happy with the results now. One thing unique about the airplane I was doing was that it had the zigzag pattern on the wings and tail. This was going to be a bear, however, Cutting Edge came to the rescue.

Cutting Edge Black Magic Masks

After studying the camo pattern I determined that the Black Magic mask would be too stark. What to do? Then the answer hit me, no wait—that was my wife. Use Silly Putty to raise the masks off the surface slightly. The key is to make sure that it is even at all points and to spray at a 90 degree angle to the mask. The Cutting Edge set definitely made my job quicker and easier than doing myself. I did have to touch up some areas but it was very easy after using the Cutting Edge Masks. Highly recommended.

Decals

I used EagleCals but you will have to wait until the IPMS Journal comes out for the review. I think that you can judge for yourself by the photos if I was happy or not.



(continued on page 10)

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Small Scales A closer Larger Look

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1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200 1/200

by
RAFAEL POWER



A-4B "FALKLANDS" FIGHTER

1/48 Scale by HobbyCraft

Kit: HC1433
Origin: Molding: China / Decals: ?
Parts: Gray 188 / Clear 5
Markings:

- 3-A-308 A-4Q 3ª Escuadra Aeronaval (Comandante Espora NAS)/Argentine Navy in standard U.S. Navy color scheme.
- 3-A-302, -304 & -309 A-4Q Same as above but all in different camouflage schemes.
- C-207 & -239 A-4P Grupo 5 de Caza (Villa Reynolds BAM)/Fuerza Aèrea Argentina in camouflage.
- 915 A-4SU, unknown unit/Republic of Singapore Air Force in current camouflage/insignia.
- NAF 612 Unknown aircraft/operator

Conversion options
(not included): Some cockpit resin and photoetched detail sets available.

Introduction

Holy Cow! What's a big dog scale kit doing in this column? Well, before I get stoned in public in front of the nearest hobby shop, I must fess up that I dabble in 1/24 cars as well as 1/48 & 1/32 scale aircraft. I like to bend the rules sometimes so, bring on the guillotine.

Known in the trade as the "scooter," the pint size A-4 Skyhawk served with the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and reserve branches before finally put out to pasture during the 1990s. Only a few are

still in service with VC-8 squadron at Roosevelt Roads Naval Station in Puerto Rico. Some two-seater TA-4J may also be in service in small numbers elsewhere. Skyhawks were also sold to Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Israel, Kuwait, Malaysia, New Zealand and Singapore. Recently, A-4s returned to operate from an aircraft carrier when Brazil purchased and commissioned the ex-French Navy "Foch", now renamed the "Sao Paulo." Ex-Kuwaiti Air Force A-4KU Skyhawks redesignated by Brazil as the AF-1 operate from the "Sao Paulo" with Esçadrao (squadron) VF-1.

The Scale Competition

Let's stay with the big dogs on this one even though there are many (some superb) A-4s in 1/72 scale. The A-4 Skyhawk is a very popular aircraft judging by the number of kits in the market past and present. I must pay homage to Monogram's A-4E and OA-4 kits since they have been the main staple of the 1/48 scale. Other kits in this scale were the ESCI A-4E and the Fujimi TA-4J among others. But, the competition is now fierce. HobbyCraft upped the ante with its new A-4M while Hasegawa released its new A-4B, all in 1/48.

Instructions

Eleven-part sheet. No historical data on the A-4. Very sharp graphics. A good paint guide with available paint/FS. Numbers. Excellent armament guide/instructions. It has no camouflage or decal placement guide since this was moved to the bottom of the box in full color. Still needs more detail and guidance. Maybe a more complete camouflage guide.

First Impressions

I was struck immediately by the number of parts included in this kit. It has a staggering 188 parts plus 5 clear parts. Almost half of the pieces are weapons to be used in all three versions. I was surprised at the amount of detail and the way it was engineered. The key word here is "separate." I also noticed that the weapons and fuel tank trees were apparently molded by someone else. The panel lines and surface on that tree is much better than on the rest of the kit. The fuselage, wings and major components have a rather "soft" detail. Still, it's still superior to what we are accustomed from HobbyCraft kits. What's missing? There's no access crew ladder nor a D-704 Flight Refueling Buddy Pack with a wind-driven generating blades and catch basket on the tail. That of course can be scratch built or may appear as an aftermarket item.

The fit on the fuselage was fine but only one guiding hole on the rudder. A moderate touch of filler and sand paper is required but not much. There's a separate tail hook in case you feel like doing a landing scene.

Cockpit Area

Keeping in mind that Ed Heinemann designed the "scooter" as a very simple aircraft, HobbyCraft followed that principle somewhat. For the pilot's comfort and safety, there's a seven-piece ESCAPAC ejection seat with no seat belts on the back pad. The side panels are done in the quilted mode famous on the A-

4s but there's no decal for the central and lateral control panels. The two-piece early A-4 windshield is pretty accurate but needs a windshield wiper. The panel line/blown bubble is a bit soft but the rest is fine. The canopy can be positioned up or closed. Remember that the windshield design on the A-4B/C is different to that on the A-4E and later versions. It is more oval, almost round so keep that in mind. The control panel is simple, just like on the early A-4s. It's flat and simple as seen in photos of the early ones.

Fuselage and Wings

In order to make the Singapore version, make the nose sharper and work on the dorsal electronic pod since it looks as flat as a cow patty on the kit. The nose is a bit larger than the rest of the fuselage but not by much. Some sanding, etc., will make it fit just fine.

The split trailing-edge flaps can be repositioned in the down position while the leading edge slats can be in the up or down position. There are no separate air brakes and struts. Airbrakes are always slightly cracked open/ajar or in the closed position while on the ground but never extended open unless the aircraft is landing or slowing down. So keep the brakes closed since they look out of place open. The wheel wells are very detailed with wiring and other items.

Landing Gear and Other Items

The landing gear legs are very detailed. The wheel hubs/tire is separate from the nose gear leg. How did Hasegawa miss that one? The gear legs also have hydraulic lines.

Weapons

The weapons tree has some individual petite sway braces. There are two 1000 lb. and 12 500 lb. "iron" bombs, the latter in triple ejection racks. The 500 lb bombs have fuses molded in. The kit also offers two AIM-9B Sidewinder missiles for the Argentine version and two AIM-9M or -9S for the Singapore version. However, add the Mk.82 Snakeye bombs since they are included with the model. There are also two 400 gal. wing fuel drop tanks with separate racks.

Decals and Markings

The decal sheet is extremely well done with every major item to do the Argentine version. There is a moderate amount of stenciling but you might want to add some from an aftermarket sheet. On the Argentine Navy A-4Q in U.S. Navy colors, the decal may not conform correctly to the rudder's external reinforcing ribs. It's best to paint the blue & white and carefully cut out the "golden sun" from the decal and add it on the rudder. The extra markings for the Fuerza Aérea Hondureña-FAH belong to ex-Yugoslav Air force F-86Es sold to the FAH.

References:

There's no shortage of books on the A-4. However, some have a good coverage on the A-4B in Argentine service. I have listed those in bold:

• *Aircam Aviation Series N° 27: McDonnell-Douglas A-4A/L*

Skyhawk (1971), Richard Ward/Ernest R. McDowell (AIRCAM)

- *C&M Vol.18: Colors & Markings of Colorful U.S. Navy A-4 Skyhawks* (1990), Bert Kinzey/Ray Leader (Detail & Scale)
- ***Combat Aircraft Series: A-4 Skyhawk*** (1987), Lindsay Peacock (Osprey)
- *Famous Airplanes of the World N°3: Douglas A-4 Skyhawk* (1987), Author unknown (Bunrin-Do, Japan)
- *McDonnell-Douglas A-4 Skyhawk*, Brad Elward (Crowood)
- *Naval Fighters #49: Douglas A-4A/B Skyhawk in Navy Service*, Steve Ginter (Ginter Publishing)
- *Wings of Fame Vol.4: Variant Briefing – Douglas A-4 Skyhawk Pt.1* (1996), Harry S. Gann (AIRtime)
- *Wings of Fame Vol.5: Variant Briefing – Douglas A-4 Skyhawk Pt.2* (1996), Harry S. Gann (AIRtime)
- ***Wings of Fame Vol.12: A-4 Skyhawk in the Falklands*** (1998), Salvador Mafé Huertas/David Donald (AIRtime)

Articles:

- ***Quick Build: Douglas A-4B "Falklands Fighter,"*** David Francis (Scale Modeller International, Sep. 2001)

Last Words

We may be seeing a rebirth of HobbyCraft as a very competitive model manufacturer. The detail on this A-4 is much better than before. It's just a few steps away from achieving Hasegawa or Tamiya quality but HobbyCraft is on the right track. I for one am very impressed and, keeping in mind the lower cost, the decal sheet and the weapons alone were certainly worth the price. Watch your six Tamigawa, HobbyCraft is right behind you!

Rafael

ASMS Wins Lottery!

You read that right. ASMS has won the Roll Models Lottery. A few weeks ago, I noticed a post on rec.models.scale newsgroup from Brent Theobold saying Roll Models was starting a lottery whereby participating clubs might be chosen at random to receive a "care package" to be used as the clubs saw fit. I entered on behalf of ASMS. On Monday October 7, I received an email from Brent as follows:

Hi Milton,

I drew your club's name from the electronic hat this morning. Ya'll win!

Please give me an idea of what your group builds as well as how large of a group it is. When is your meeting?

Let me know and we'll get a care package together for your club. All we ask in return is that you email us with a picture of the recipients with the loot.

The "Loot" will be at the meeting Wednesday and we can decide what to do with it.

Milton

(1/32 Me 109 continued)

Finishing

Barkhorn's machine was kept very clean so weathering was kept to a minimum. I start out weathering with silver pencil followed with a wash of burnt umber. On top of the umber I used pastels for the exhaust stains, gun powder residue, and dirt on the landing gear. I was quite happy with the results.



MDC offers you the option of using the brass belts they have or for you to thread your own belts on a spare set of buckles that they provide. I like the look of masking tape belts so I took this route. I think they can be posed more realistically. I draped mine along the back of the cockpit sill out of the way of the cockpit area. It would be a shame to cover all that beautiful interior. Now I added the gunsight and control stick. Attaching the cockpit glazing showed a slight fit problem, the first for the kit. Nothing drastic but I did have to sand the clear parts a little to get them to fit correctly. Next time I will attach the canopy prior to painting.

That is about it. Is this kit perfect? No, but it is well worth the money. I highly recommend the Eagle Parts, Cutting Edge exterior and masks, and the MDC cockpit. They all add something nice to the kit, but even without these parts the Hasegawa Bf-109G-6 is the standard by which other reasonably priced 1/32nd scale kits should be judged. I highly recommend it.

Floyd

Accessories:

EagleCals

Bf-109G-6s, EC#42

Model Design Construction (MDC)

Bf-109G-6 Cockpit Detail Set, CV32003

Cutting Edge

Bf-109F/G/K Detailing Exterior Set, CEC32084

Cutting Edge/Black Magic

Bf-109G-6 Camouflage Masks, CEBM32073

Model Car Garage

Throttle Return Springs, MCG-706

(Sd Kfz 140/I continued)

third round, things began to look up. It still looked terrible but a coat of paint and I was happy.

Steps seven and eight festooned the hull with boxes and assorted details. Most of the boxes were one piece parts that the instructions said to file and bend into place. Yeah right, this is heavy plastic not PE! I discarded most of them as the fit was poor and I did not feel like putting in the effort to make them presentable.

Steps nine and ten assembled the guns and their mount in the turret. I painted and detailed prior to assembly. The weapons are very nice and assembly went without a hitch. The gun mounts were detailed and the lower turret finished up nicely with a pair of gunner's seats. Then I noticed the dreaded knife symbol yet again. There were vague references of trimming parts of the gun mount and control assemblies. Not really knowing what to do, I proceeded.

Step 11 details the turret armor and affixes it to the base. Well, it does not fit very well. I wound up chopping the gun mounts and controls mercilessly before the thing settled down snugly. The sharp turret armor angle covers up my "modification" nicely.

In step 12 I assembled the two grenade shields. The kit PE screening was a really nice touch. This provides six parts of netting material for these shields. Nice fits made CA'ing them into place a breeze. I painted them and then placed them in the open position on the turret. I then assembled the two turret ammo boxes and glued them in place. Just one more step now! I placed the turret into the hull and gave a twist. It did not fit. There was a substantial gap between the turret and base. Out came the cutters again!

Finishing

I finished the model in Testors Afrika Mustard. I then applied a mix of black and brown acrylic wash. I then sprayed the model with gloss coat to aid in dark washes and decals. I painted the road wheels rubber scale black. I then applied a fairly thick wash of Testors rust on the tracks. Once dry I added a wash of a mix of acrylic scale black and brown to the entire tank. Then I washed the tracks again with scale black.

And now my favorite part of armor modeling, dry brushing! I used lightened Africa Mustard to highlight detail all over the tank. I followed that up by lightly dry brushing the treads and hull with Testors Steel. I finished up the weathering by applying ground pastel black with a brush to the gun muzzle, breach, and pretty much anywhere I felt like it.

Decals

Decals for the kit include two types of crosses and three group markings. I chose the Nederland division because it looked cool. Once everything was dry, I gave the whole vehicle a few healthy puffs of Dullcote to finish things up.

Conclusion

I took the completed model and set it in the dust-dry soil of my garden for the completed shots. This kit builds up to a nice representation of this vehicle. I recommend it to the experienced armor builder. This is due to the amount of parts modification, dry fitting, and the individual track links. Overall I am pleased with the model and am glad to have such an interesting variant of one of my favorite tank families.

Richard

Old Rumors & New Kits

A number of ASMS'ers got up early on Oct. 12. Bondo and I met at 0'dark thirty at the Y in Oakhill before heading north on SH 79. No, we weren't celebrating Columbus Day nor were we heading for the Cotton Bowl. We were heading to Abilene to support that club's third annual show. By the time the sun came up and we could discern the horizon in the overcast, we were well on our way.

With just under 200 models, it was a good show and I think a success. There wasn't a room full of vendors and there was still some room on the tables but all in all, it was apparently a smooth affair and everyone seemed to have a good time. The guys in Abilene were happy. Several of us homed in on some pretty good BBQ for lunch. Funny how that happens.

Everyone from ASMS who entered seemed to have his name called at least once during the awards ceremony. Russ Holm made out like a bandit, as usual, sweeping two categories and getting Best Ship. That's right—Ship.

And for the first time, I got to go forward to get some important trophies. But first I have to explain that I had some proxy entries from Marc Hobbs and his friend Ken Guntin from Marietta, Georgia. Well, Marc took a third but Ken got a first for his immaculate M981 FISTV "based on" a Rocco Kit. I thought it was pretty good. Then they called out Ken for best armor. Better look at that model again, I thought. Then to cap off the afternoon, the little model was named Best of Show! Very good indeed.

Besides myself and Bondo, Kenny and Kathy Roady, Bob Keiras, Marc Hobbs, and Russ Holm entered and brought home a total of 23 awards. That's not counting Ken Guntin's three trophies.

Oh yeah, and on the way home, Bondo and I stopped off in Llano at Cooper's BBQ. Can't have too much BBQ.

So what's new with kits and accessories? One of the newest things on the shelves is the Panda Models F-35A and B (Air Force and Marines). This 1/48 scale kit is basically a scaled up version of the earlier Italeri kit in 1/72 so what you get is basically a prototype version. Since this is still a pretty hush-hush aircraft, it will probably be a while before an accurate kit of it is available. And I doubt it will come from China!

There have been some interesting announcements from the Tokyo Hobby Show. Of course the 1/48 Tamiya P-47D Razorback is still hot news and a lot of people are looking forward to it. At the moment there are pictures of the finished kit and the sprues. Apparently you get a choice of props (3) and two cowlings. Flaps can be displayed down.

Roden, the Ukraine company that used to be known as Toko,—sounds like a rock star—has released their first models in 1/48.

These two kits of the Sopwith 1 1/2 Strutter biplane fighter or bomber are unique in that all the airframe parts are molded in clear. The reason for this is so the builder can detail the interior framing in black or dark brown and then apply a light exterior coat so that the details can show through, as on an aircraft actually covered in linen. The only problem I have with this is that the clear parts are brittle, so care has to be taken when working with them. I plan to do all my filling, and yes, I expect to have some, with CA so I can keep the parts "transparent."

The best part about the kits, and they are basically identical but for the cockpits, is all the small parts which are done in styrene. There are three machine guns that are among the best detailed I've ever seen. There is a small fret of PE which includes turnbuckles for the rigging and parts for the cockpit. This is an impressive kit and I really look forward to the 1/48 Gloster Gladiator series which is due in December. I just hope they don't use clear for the airframe!

For the armor guys, this will be a good year. The Italeri DUKW amphibious truck, the "DUCK", is out. I've not seen any reports on this one yet but I suspect to see some built-up models soon. This is a big kit—the DUCK was big—and there will probably be some extra market materials coming as well, maybe even a load of combat troops.

Tamiya is finally giving us a good Russian T-55A, due in November. Cookie says this one will be worth the wait. Hard to believe that this important piece of modern armor has not been done in the current state-of-the-art technology. Other new armor kits, either just out or coming soon, include Tamiya's Marder IIM, the DML Sd Kfz 17 Panther D, Fine Molds little IJA Type 97 TK tankette, and Dragon's Panther A.

Here is a new trend I just spotted. Not only can you do a simple one or two color car model (or WWI biplane) and then cover it with decals, you can do the same with some new aircraft kits. For example, Fine Molds is releasing a 1/72 Ki 61 Hein (Tony) which is in the overall silver scheme with lots of dark green squiggles done as many large decals. These decals include the national insignia as well as numbers and other markings and cover the wings, fuselage, and tail surfaces. The finished model as shown in photographs was impressive. Fine Molds is also re-releasing their 1/48 Kikka experimental jet fighter. No word on price or dates of release.

And before I forget, I had a note from Masahiko in Okinawa wanting to let everyone know that he has his own website now. Check it out at <http://gtlm2000.hoops.ne.jp>. He has lots of photos of his models and some that were sent to him. He has asked for digital photos of 1/72 jets but I'm sure he would like to have anything you want to send.

That's about all for this month. Next month's newsletter deadline will roll around a little sooner. If you want to contribute, try to get it in by Nov. 15. Now go build a model!

Milton

Air Show Schedule

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

San Marcos, CENTEX Wing CAF, Nov. 9, 2002

**Next Meeting:
Wednesday, October 30**

