



IPMS/Republic of Texas

Newsletter of the Austin Scale Modelers Society

August 2003

SPRUE EXAMINER



Building the Accurate Miniatures F3F-2

By Tim Robb, IPMS 34705

I have started several biplane models over the last few years, but never got past the rigging step to finish one. It's a mental block I think because I always rig antenna wires with stretched sprue and have done that dozens of times for one or two wires, but Holy Moley, the thought of all those wires crossing each other and getting all of them tightened up correctly.... ugh. Bottom line —no biplane models completed. So here comes Accurate Miniatures with a kit of the F3F that has photo etched rigging wires that just pop into place AND it's a U.S. Navy subject (among my favorites) so I'm off again starting another biplane.

The kit looks great when you open the box. Lots of grey parts, a few clear ones, and a few photo etched. The surface detail of the parts is terrific. The decal sheet will do any of the original F3F-2s the Navy took delivery of. The cabane struts are molded integrally with the fuselage halves, eliminating the work of fixing them into the proper position and angle. My example had

some slight warpage of the cabane struts but this proved to be no problem at all because of the way the top of the struts fits into the underside of the upper wing. It all straightened out and lined up when dry-fitted and later when glued together. My example also had some cut marks on several of the wing surfaces that looked like somebody had made a light pass across the parts with an X-Acto knife. That was surprising to me and something I had never seen before on any other kit. I filled them with Mr. Surfacer 500 (the thick one) and then rubbed it down with a cotton swab dipped in denatured alcohol. This got the cut marks filled without damaging any of the surface detail with sandpaper.

I followed the very good, 20 page, 16 step kit directions without major deviations. The cockpit looks great. Step four is installing the landing gear strut support arms. The kit directions warn you:

"The landing gear "A" arms are delicate. So be patient with this assembly. You are about to add the landing gear doors/fuel tank sides. They look like they'll never make it. But they will fit perfectly."

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Show Schedule

IPMS/West Central Missouri, Kansas City, MO	Sept. 20, 2003
GASCON IV, Greater Abilene Scale Modelers, Abilene TX	Oct. 11, 2003
AABS, Camp Mabry, Austin TX (AMPS Show)	Oct. 25, 2003
Great South model Contest IPMS/Flying Tigers, New Orleans, LA	Oct. 25, 2003
IPMS/Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge, LA	Oct 27, 2003
CALMEX 18, IPMS/SWAMP, Lake Charles, LA	Jan. 18, 2004
ModelFiesta XXIII, IPMS/Alamo Sqdn, San Antonio, TX	Feb. 28, 2004
IPMS/Tulsa, OK	March 27, 2004
CASM III, Little Rock, AR	April 2-3, 2004
Austin Scale Model Show, IPMS/ASMS, Austin, TX	April 24, 2004

Editor's Notes...

The first thing I have to do this month is apologize. In last month's newsletter I managed to misspell a member's name and I really hate that. So here it is. Sorry Phil. It should have been Philip Wright. I knew better; just got careless.

Next meeting will be Thursday, August 21, back at the Yarborough Branch Library. Meeting time is 7 PM. Jeff tells me that the program was supposed to be a talk and video by a former B-26 pilot but now he can't locate the speaker. So, the program will be a video on the making of Tuy Hoa Air Force Base in Viet Nam. Jeff says it's about 45 minutes long so keep that in mind during the business meeting.

As you may know, we are losing our meeting site due to the city's budget crunch. All of the libraries will be closing on Thursday and closing early on Friday. Thursday seems to be the favored week night for meetings so if you can think of a new location let Kenny or Jeff know.

David Ranney wants to update the roster and to do that he needs some information. I have bits and pieces but since I lost the latest data I had for the mail list, we have to start almost from scratch. Please take the time to complete the information form on the last page of this newsletter and give it to David Thursday night. Or email it to him ASAP. See you at the meeting!

Milton

ASMS Officers for 2002

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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 Examiner* 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.

Kenny's Kolumn

August is just about done and September is upon us. For those of you who have not heard, Austin Public Libraries will not be open on Thursdays starting next month. This means that we will have to find another place to meet. I was very pleased with the location at the Yarborough Library and I would like to find a similar site. I would like to stay away from food establishments, because of the noise and the obligation (perceived or real) to buy a meal. I will try to have a short list of candidates by the time of the meeting.

I want to thank Skip Perrine for having D'Aun Knighten from the Boy & Girls Clubs of Austin come and talk to us about the opportunity for us to share our hobby with kids in Austin. I have talked to one of his club directors, and we are set to visit one of their clubs on Tuesday, August 26 at 6:00 p.m. I hope to have at least five volunteers show up. The plan is to have models in all stages of construction to show the kids what it takes. If we can drum up any interest, we will try to organize an in-depth make and take so the kids can participate in their arts competitions with their very own models.

Also, Skip has put me in contact with an individual who wants to hold a car model contest in conjunction with his 1:1 car show. I am overdue in getting back with him, but I believe that if I could get four or five people interested in judging, we can broaden our reach into the community and, since he is willing to give us some money, we would have nothing to risk. If anyone else comes up with opportunities like Skip has please share them with me and the other officers.

That's it for now, hope to see you all and your latest creation on Thursday.

Kenny

Jeff's Quik Book Reviews

by Jeff Forster, IPMS 30833

THE CARS OF THE KING, RICHARD PETTY

By Tim Bongard and Bill Coulter

I borrowed this book from Skip Perrine. This is a really impressive large format book loaded with pictures, usually two or three per page. I've been a Richard Petty fan since I was a kid watching races on TV. So, when I saw this book I had to give it the once over!

It begins with the Lee Petty years, 1949-1964, and finishes with 1972, the year that Chrysler got out of racing and Richard won his fourth Grand National and second Winston Cup. The book chronicles the racing career of the Pettys with highlights of each year that also shows the development of NASCAR over the years. For example, here are some highlights that you will find:

Richard Petty's first race was in a '57 Oldsmobile convertible at Colombia, South Carolina. He drove a steady race and managed to finish 6th and took home \$200.00. After his first racing season he managed to make several top 10 finishes. The records show that the first use of the #43 by Richard was at the 1959 Daytona 500. Richard finished 4th in the convertible division and 15th in the Grand National points. Pretty good for a new driver. The 1960 season saw Richard finishing in 2nd place in the national standings. This was also the year CBS started airing races on television. It was a bad year for Petty Enterprises with Lee's wreck and Richards's wreck. Richard did manage to compete in 41 of 47 races while assuming the role of manager and driver. He finished 8th in the national standings.

During '62 Richard fielded an all-new Plymouth Savoy sedan. It was smaller and lighter than the other vehicles but was also about 50hp shy of the others. Richard came in 2nd in the points standings that year after being beaten out by Joe Weatherly.

The 1963 season had the Pettys racing another Plymouth that was aerodynamically cleaner and sported the 426 cubic inch Wedge engine that was substantially tweaked for more horsepower. Electric fuel pumps were still on the not-permitted list.

Then, 1964 was Richard's season. He won his first major race, the Daytona 500, and won the first of seven Grand National Championships. He drove a '64 Plymouth Belvedere. One of the keys to their success was a new version of the 426 V-8 engine. That car developed speeds of over 185 mph, 20 mph better than everyone else. It had so much power and torque that the crew had to add 100 pounds of lead to the rear bumper to try to keep the wheels from spinning and tearing up rear-ends. Watkins Glenn rejoined the schedule for a second time. Tire technology had not kept up with the higher speeds and several top drivers died in tire tests or in races.

1971 brought a Plymouth roadrunner coupe powered by a 426 hemi. He scored 21 victories in 47 races. This year NASCAR banned all side glass from the cars. Fire suits and extinguishers were now mandated and AMC made its debut with the Matador.

In 1972 Petty joined forever with STP. As negotiations commenced they ran into a sticking point. STP wanted the car STP red, and Petty wasn't going to race in a car that wasn't Petty blue. Fortunately, a compromise was reached which resulted in one of the best known race cars around—the STP red and blue 43. The year would be also be a Petty-Allison season as they traded leads. Richard won his 4th Grand National title and second consecutive Winston Cup Championship with eight wins, 25 top fives, and 28 top tens. Highlights of the season consist of the following: The race season was shortened to 31 events. Chrysler officially backed out of factory-backed racing.

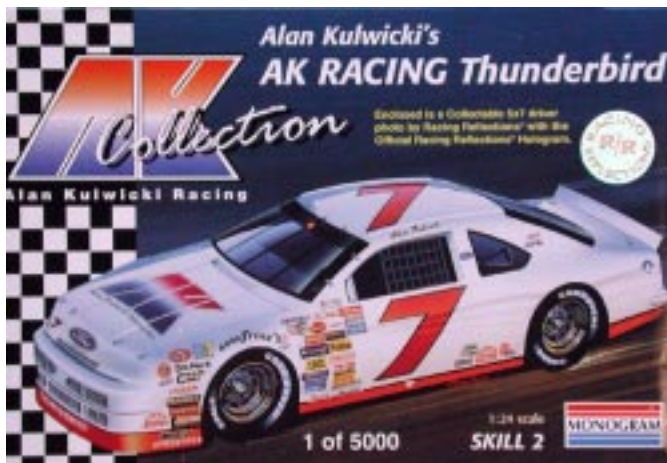
I really loved this book; I'm going to have to find my own copy soon. If you are a racing fan you have got to get this book for your collection. Jeff's rating — ★★★★★



Skip's Classic CAR CORNER

by Skip Perrine IPMS 40167

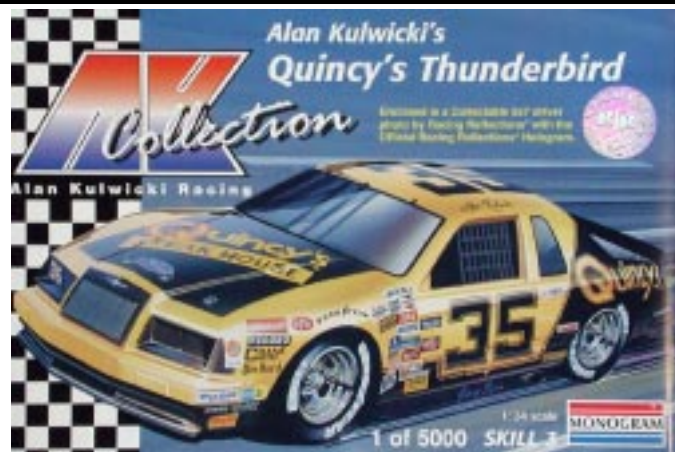
Wasn't that a great meeting last month—they seem to keep getting better and better. I hope we can get something going with the Boys and Girls Clubs. I talked with D'Aun after the meeting and he said it could have a far reaching effect if it takes off, could be something for ASMS to put in their history. Also as Dick Montgomery said it could be a feather in our cap, something to show to other IPMS chapters.



Well, on to the reviews for August. For the NASCAR fan I am reviewing two oldies but goodies—cars of a fallen hero, Alan Kulwicki. Kulwicki was a Winston Cup Champion who didn't get to enjoy his title after winning the 1992 NASCAR Winston Cup championship. Incredible as it may seem, after two wins and twenty top-five finishes, Alan Kulwicki Racing, Inc., had to open the 1991 season without a sponsor. Kulwicki had a top-ten finish in the 1991 Daytona 500, he qualified on the front row at Richmond and got a top-five finish. Then, at Atlanta, he made history. For the first race in twelve years an un-sponsored car won the pole at a major stock car race, The Motorcraft Quality Parts 500. The record went all the way back to 1978, when JD McDuffie qualified fastest at Dover Delaware. Something special was making the AK Racing Team come together and it definitely wasn't money, because Alan started his team with little or no money.

The story was a lot different when Alan got a sponsor. The sponsor? Hooters Restaurants, the new sponsor received a lot of TV exposure and they decided to stay with AK Racing Inc. for the remainder of the season.

The now famous No.7 car captured three more poles and started on the front row an incredible eight times in 1991. That same year, a three year multi-million dollar sponsorship package with Hooters was signed in Dover, Delaware.



Alan was a man of words and his action was shown on the track, and some of his words were very insightful, "Work to BE-COME, not to acquire, and you will find everything you need or want in the process."

The stage was set at Atlanta for the final race of the 1992 season. The Ford Motor Company won the Manufacturer's Championship that year, with Alan's help, even though his car was not the fastest and he didn't win that race. But he did win the 1992 Winston Cup Championship. He was never the "favored" driver to win it all, and he had named his Thunderbird the "Underbird"!

Both my Monogram kits are exact replicas of the AK Racing Thunderbirds—as the first one appeared at Richmond for the 1991 Pontiac Excitement 400, the other kit is the AK Racing Ford Thunderbird sponsored by Hooters Restaurants. Both have colorful decals No. 7. The Thunderbird body has side skirts, right side window and air intake ducts. This aerodynamic body rides on a Banjo Matthews chassis which includes the latest "single shock" front suspension and four Goodyear Eagle tires. The body can be removed to display the highly detailed chassis and interior.

Both kits are molded in white, clear and chrome, the bodies are in four pieces consisting of a front nose piece, rear bumper, and the hood, add to that the chrome rear spoiler. This kit is about the same as any other Monogram NASCAR kit with the possible exception there is not any flash on any part of these kits, and the chrome on both is flawless. The body on the Hooters car seemed to have a little warp to it, but that's expected when this is a very old and collectible kit. They were copyrighted in 1965 and they've been sitting in my closet for over five years.

Before I start a kit I familiarize myself with it by going over the instructions and the parts. Then I see which parts are going to require some pre-assembly painting, I pick out the parts that are going to be the same color, i.e., black pieces are all put together, red pieces are all put together etc.

Now, on to the assembly of the kit. First I assemble the firewall, dashboard and pedals, and attach that to the chassis. Then the
(continued on page 10)

Resin Kit Review

by "Bondo" Phil Brandt IPMS 14091

**Anigrand Craftwork 1/72
A-12A "Avenger II"**

**E-mail: anigrand@email.com
Web: [www..geocities.com/anigrand](http://www.geocities.com/anigrand)**



Price: \$48. Obtained through DCM Models in the U.S. Also carried by NKR Models in Australia (\$50 AUS).

BACKGROUND

The distinctively shaped A-12A "Avenger II", popularly known as the "Dorito," was the Navy's mid-Nineties stealth answer to the Air Force's F-117. Planned to replace the entire A-6 fleet, the joint General Dynamics/McDonnell Douglas venture instead suffered the ignominy in 1991 of being the largest DOD contract ever cancelled. At a cost of approximately \$100 million per airplane, this was a Very Big Deal...620 to the Navy, 283 to the Marines, and even the Air Force considered a buy of 400! The financial repercussions have lasted over a decade, as the builders sued the DOD for axing the program for "convenience of the government", not because of cost overruns and non-performance, as DOD had claimed. The courts ruled in favor of GD/McD in 1998, allowing the contractors to recover almost \$3.9 billion in engineering/construction cost incurred. The DOD appealed, naturally, and the appeal is still under consideration.

A month ago, Bondo answered entrepreneur David Cooper's invitation on the HyperScale website to enter an online contest for the builders of resin and vacuform kits. In an unfortunate mixup, my vac XB-51 was declared "Best 1/48 Resin" submission, whereas it was in reality the 1/72 Execuform vac kit! David was very gracious, though, and kindly presented Bondo Industries with this very nice release of the enigmatic navy stealth jet.

THE KIT

After a quick first look, Bondo thought this might be merely a Hong Kong downsized clone of my previously reviewed, bigbuck Collect-Aire offering. Upon further examination, I believe this



is an original effort.

MOLDING

Molding is overall very clean and smooth with just one or two sink marks. Flash is minimal. Engraving is just a tad on the heavy side for this scale; in 1/48 it would be right on the money. A coat or two of Mr. Surfacer should be enough to bring the lines back closer to scale.

FUSELAGE/WINGS

The parts pic layout shows that the "Dorito's" triangular flying wing configuration is done in upper and lower "clamshells", while the outer, foldable tips are one-piece. Intakes are integrated with the upper clamshell half, and delicate triple inlet vanes are cast in one piece to facilitate mounting within the intakes. But, blocking plates will have to be fabricated to prevent seeing the weapons bays through the intakes.

The exhaust outlet is molded into the clamshell halves and has a nice block-off template with turbine faces.



Anigrand has conveniently integrated the outer ribs and structure for the folding tips in one piece and has molded the inner ribs at the fold as one piece with the upper clamshell half. The wingfolds aren't bad, with sufficient complexity for most modelers, and they're significantly easier to work with than the relatively klunky ones in the Collect-Aire release. However, the Anigrand skin surface thickness at the wingfolds is, as in the case of the Collect-Aire, too thick, and will need careful Dremmeling to achieve a realistic appearance.

(continued on page 10)

(F3F-2 continued)

I found this statement to be 100% accurate. The first time I tried to put the parts in, I tried patiently for over an hour and finally gave up. I came back to it again about a week later and eventually got one in. When it was in place it was difficult for me to tell if the part was correctly installed or not just checking with the illustration in the directions. The photo of the completed model on the bottom of the kit box was helpful here. Now with confidence that the part would fit, the other side went in after a relatively short effort. The wheels and tires go on in step 10, before the wings go on. If I had it to do over again, I would leave the wheels off until after the wings are installed. Without the wings to use as a reference point in measuring, I got one wheel installed a little higher than the other.



When the wings were installed the problem became apparent and I tried to gently sand one of the tires a little flatter on the bottom to get the model to sit level. Eventually the wheel broke off at its attachment point and this was good because I was able to level the model up as the wheel was reattached. There is nothing wrong with the kit in this area, but I recommend that slight change in assembly sequence to help build the model square and level.

Although I needed to proceed slowly and carefully, nothing else about assembly was overly difficult until I got to the rigging. When I got to that step, I put the model aside for about a year because I was still intimidated even by photo-etched "snap-in" rigging. Finally one day with nationals coming up and nothing else in my collection that was completed recently being worth entering, I psyched up to finish a biplane. The rigging is just six photo-etch parts. One set of double flying and landing wires for each side, and one set of bracing wires for the cabane struts. You start from the inside out on the cabane strut wires. These must be bent as there is a set of wires that forms an X brace between the struts and another two wires that attach from the top of the struts to a point that is mid-point down the fuselage all formed together into one piece. There are little slots molded into the wings and fuselage for all the rigging wires to fit into, and there is a guide in the instructions for bending the cabane strut bracing wires to the correct angle. This appeared a little difficult, but it worked out fine on my first try. The wires popped into the slots and I touched the attachment points with a little diluted white glue to hold them.

Highly confident now, on to the flying wires! Simple double wires that go from point A to point B without any bending required! Alas they are too long and bowed noticeably when installed. I took them back out and trimmed one end, in the process removing the nice little tab that fit into the premolded slots for the wires. The wires were the right length now but I struggled mightily with getting one end to stay put while I moved to put the other end in place. I wanted a dry fit before using any glue and it was hard to get. Right about here I discovered that Tourette's Syndrome is caused by rigging biplane models. Eventually I turned the model upside down on the workbench and sat cross-legged on the floor so I could see both attachment points simultaneously and tacked one end in with super glue so it would stay put while I placed the other end in place. This eventually got it done.

Now for the double landing wires, which are not spaced quite as widely apart as the double flying wires and need to be installed in between the slightly wider gap between the double flying wires. These proved to be ever so slightly too short. Not so short that they wouldn't glue into place, but short enough that the tabs on the ends of the wires don't pop in and hold the wires in place for a dry fit. All told I spent about three hours installing the six photo etched rigging wire parts. I saw someone else's AMF3F-2 at nationals and it had the flying wires on one side bowed, so I'm pretty sure this problem wasn't just poor assembly on my part.

OK, all the whining done, the completed, YES, COMPLETED BIPLANE model looks great! The only reference I used was Squadron Signal's Grumman Biplanes in Action. I was able to answer all of my questions by studying the photos and text of this book, the kit instruction sheet, and the photo of the finished model on the kit box. I don't know of any other biplane model kits besides this one that come packed with photo etched rigging, so next time I'll have to do it another way, probably stretched sprue or invisible nylon thread, but now I know I can finish a biplane model so there will be a next time.

Tim



In-The-Box Review**Trumpeter's 1/24th Scale Spitfire MkVb****(Hobbycraft boxing)**

By Dave Orloff



When I heard about the 50% sale at Hobby Lobby, I bundled the family off to the nearest location, and shopping ensued. None of the 48th offerings caught my eye, but I couldn't resist the big Spitfire at half price. I scurried home to check it out...

As a newcomer to the Trumpeter line of big kits, I opened the box with some trepidation. They have a rather hit-or-miss reputation for detail, after all, and the side panel of the box shows the much storied Wildcat that was so bad it had to be retooled before release. The Hobbycraft box seems like the Trumpeter boxes I've read about, a sturdy corrugated container with a compartment for the plastic parts separated from the resin, P.E. and vinyl.

Box art shows three schemes, RCAF, RAF, and USAAF, with multiple views of each in color. Inspection of the decals shows that the RAF set is missing the kill marks and though a serial number for this aircraft is speculated on the box, one is not provided. There is also a fourth scheme on another sheet that appears to be Trumpeter's original decal set, but no diagrams are included. Full stenciling is on both sets of decals for a total of three large sheets, and there is a separate diagram explicitly detailing stencil application. The instructions are typical Hobbycraft, with good parts maps and paint callouts for PollyScale, Humbrol and Testor's Modelmaster paints. One version has clipped wingtips, instructions and templates are provided for this as well.

The actual kit parts were a pleasant surprise (relief?!). Overall injection molded in light gray, the several-hundred parts certainly LOOK like they'll assemble into a Spit. The outline and dimensions look good to me, at least.

Flaps and control surfaces are moveable on steel PE and piano wire hinges, though there is no linkage between the elevators one side to another. Surface detail is fine recessed lines and rivets that are also recessed and MAY be a tad overstated, paint should help the appearance. There is a detailed engine compartment down to vinyl fuel lines and plug wires, and removable cowl panels molded in clear if you want the see-through effect.

The main landing gear is sprung similar to the Tamiya Zero, but not retractable. This area of the model is also fully detailed with main gear actuators and even the shock absorber for the tail wheel, which is completely invisible when installed. Rubber tires are provided for all three wheels.

All armament bays areas are detailed with removable covers, and are somewhat boxed in to avoid that hollow look to the wing. The cockpit looks very good, thirteen pieces for the seat alone, but oddly enough, no harnesses or belt detail of any sort. The instrument panel is molded in clear for no apparent reason, as the instruments are nicely printed onto a film insert visible through the bezel openings much the way a PE set assembles. Sidewalls are also multi-part structures with detail parts and panels added over molded-in framing.

Hobbycraft's boxing includes the resin figures packed with the Trumpeter version, three standing figures, very British-looking gents in various combinations of RAF kit. One is in summer-weight attire with no gear on, one is in the same with helmet, oxygen mask and Mae West, and the third wears no flight gear but a sheepskin jacket and sheepskin boots over standard RAF uniform. All are decently molded and well sculpted, but I must warn you that one is (gasp!) smoking!

For the big question, I won't know how it builds 'till I clear a little workspace!

Dave

Metro Car Modelers Association Contest Set

The First Annual Turbodillo Fun Run Saturday, November 15th 2003 (date change) from 9 AM-5 PM at Senter Park East in Irving, Texas will feature two mini-contests. They are both peoples' choice contests and there are no entry fees. The first will be the Great Pumpkin Classic (Black & Orange Contest) which allows any plastic model car painted black, orange, or both. This contest has become a tradition with the MCMA for our November club meeting and we would like to invite everyone to enter.

The other contest will be a theme contest for "Outer Space" cars. That is, cars named after a planet, star or other things found in space. Examples of this would be Comet, Satellite, and Nova. Use your imagination!

There will also be display tables for anyone who would like to bring their favorite model, a recently finished model or their latest project. Vendor tables will be available at no cost and there will be a raffle with some future projects (kits, etc.) up for grabs.

For those who would like to reserve a vendor table, ask a question about the Fun Run, or just want more information about the MCMA, see us on the web at www.themcma.com and go to the Contact Us page.

Tamiya Panzerkampfwagen III Ausf.L Sd.Kfz.141/1

Kit Number 35215

By Ray S. Katzaman



Well, here I am looking at my second armored vehicle the Panzerkampfwagen III Ausf.L Sd.Kfz.141/1, or PKW III for short. Not a bad kit at all. When I first opened the box and saw all of the tiny parts I thought that this was going to be a bear of a kit to build, but after just over 12 hours of work, it was not that bad.

This time I followed the build instructions faithfully, not trying to get ahead and cutting some corners as with my M3 Stuart. Well, not really, I did work on subassemblies while I waited for some of the glue to set or the paint to dry. The Tamiya instructions are as usual very clear and easy to follow. The additional color schematics of the different campaigns are a welcome sight for those of us that are not familiar with what happened to a particular type of tank during production runs. I decided to go with a solid color versus camouflage, this time I used Tamiya's T-4, German Gray to paint my tank. Of course there were other colors added to enhance things like the tools, etc. I also used Tamiya's photo etched (PE) kit number 35199. The PE kit consists of three grills for part numbers B-17, 18 and 19, all three air intakes. Reference material for the PKW III is very abundant both on the Internet and at the hobby shop. The local Barnes and Noble also had several books on this tank alone. The possibilities for dioramas on this subject are great, however, I just painted mine gray and placed it in a clear display box. Haven't tackled the diorama scene yet...there's still hope for me.

There are basically three subassemblies, the upper hull, lower hull and the turret. Preparation for all three and their individual parts did not take long since there was very little flash to deal with. The connectors of the parts to the parts trees make taking them off easy and most of the time I didn't even have to clean the excess since there was none to remove. Once removed from the parts trees, I test fitted most of the parts and here again, there was no problem. I used some masking tape and held some parts together to see what the assembled section would look like and this gave me more encouragement to complete this kit.

Lower Hull: I started with the lower hull because that is where it all starts - Step I. After separating the parts from their trees, I cleaned all of them, sanded and test fitted. Then I glued all onto the hull, except the wheels and tracks. These I left for last. Wheels always give me the most trouble. Don't know why, they just do. In retrospect, I think that if I had to build this tank again, I would paint all of the parts first, then glue them on instead of gluing and then painting. After three coats of German Gray, I had to use the liquid paint to touch up some nooks and crannies that the spray paint did not cover well, nevertheless painting of the lower hull came out pretty nicely, if I may say so myself. Additionally, I added a four ounce flattened lead weight to the bottom of the hull to add some weight to the entire finished tank according to comments in the *Modeling Realistic Tanks and Artillery* book by Mike Ashey; this will make the tank settle and not allow the tracks to warp.

Upper Hull: Now here is an interesting subassembly. The upper hull is covered with all kinds of tools, boxes and accessories to make the average tank crew feel right at home in the middle of the cold Russian winter. Since the upper hull is going to be the most visible part of the completed tank, I took my time in test fitting parts, sanding, and then painting the small parts by hand with a 10/0 line tracer brush. Some of the parts like the tools were glued using CA, others were attached with liquid cement and yet others like the PE grill covers for the air intakes were attached with clear flat enamel paint.



Gun Turret. After I finished and set aside the upper hull, I tackled the gun turret. My biggest concern here was alignment of the two 5 cm gun barrel halves. If I messed this up, it meant going back to Grandad's Hobby Shop to buy the milled aluminum one. Well, lucky for me, when I applied the liquid glue to the gun halves they aligned perfectly and I saved myself about \$12 bucks. I let the gun barrel dry for a couple of days before I sanded it and reapplied liquid glue to the seams to smooth out the small sanding scratches. Then came the painting and assembly of the barrel and other turret parts. There are several hatches and heavy metal doors on the turret and these aligned in place perfectly. Most of the turret parts were painted before assembly, this allowed for the moving parts to be thoroughly painted, even that would have been most difficult if assembled and then painted.

Wheels and Tracks. All wheels were carefully removed from the parts tree so I would not have to fill in any holes in them. Then with a new No. 11 blade, I shaved off the mold seam on the surface of the wheels and then a bit of 1500 grit wet dry sandpaper to smooth out the blade scratches. I laid the wheels on a masking tape jig and sprayed them German Gray. And here is where I usually mess things up. I had originally thought of using one of my flat brushes for painting on the flat black on the wheels, but then I remembered one of the tips in Mike Ashy's book where he recommends using permanent black markers instead of paint. I got a couple of fine point black markers (Sharpie) and used them instead of paint. Very nice work, sharp lines and not one of the rims painted. Then I went over the black area with flat clear enamel and that really made them look quite real. One word of caution here, don't delve too much with the enamel on one area, as it will dilute the permanent marker ink and the paint under will bleed through. I had this happen on a couple of the first few wheels and had to redo them. For future projects, I would spray them versus brushing, but that is something I'll do on the next tanks (Tiger I and King Tiger). Learn by your mistakes!!!

The tracks weren't too hard to work with. I aligned the two ends together; made sure that the pins went through the holes and applied some CA to the joint (CA does not adhere too well to rubber). Then went over to the lower hull with all of the wheels in place and gently pulled the tracks over the wheels and all fell in place quite nicely.

Decals. Not too many on this tank. Again I went to Ashy's book and followed his advice to cut the decals' clear film as close as possible the decal. I also cut each individual number by itself and then eyeballed the distance from each other when I applied them. Once finished and applied, the decals did not come out too shabby after all.

Overall this tank was fun to build even though it did have parts up the wazoo. The assembly instructions were particularly helpful, and breaking down the tank by subassembly (upper hull, lower hull and turret) did help quite a lot. On a scale of five Jalapeños, this one gets four hot ones.

Ray



Mushroom Model Magazine Special Bell P-39 Airacobra, No 6106

by Milton Bell IPMS 16702

Don't ask me why it's called Mushroom Model Magazine. I don't know. What I do know is that I wasn't impressed by the magazine, but these new specials—I have three of them—are very nice indeed. The latest one I've picked up is on the Bell P-39, one of my favorite airplanes from WWII. This little book, 6.5 x 9.5 inches, has 128 pages between its soft covers and lots of very good detail information for modelers. All the detail photos are in good color and there are plenty of line drawings, well done and labeled. In addition, and what is common to the series, are several pages of colorful profiles for just about every country that operated the Airacobra.



The price on these publications is \$19.95 and in today's market, I think that's reasonable for the quality you get. Mushroom Model Publications come from Poland but unlike some other European publications, these are all in English.

The authors, Artur Juszczak and Robert Peczkowski, have provided a brief but concise history of the P-39 and have even included a "development map" or chart showing how all the types are related and their development sequence. Line drawings in 1/72 are provided for all the various types, from the XP-39 and C to Q.

Since the Soviet air force flew the aircraft as a tank buster and low level interceptor with considerable success, there is naturally a lot of attention paid the Russian pilots, including a list of Russian aces. Color photos are of restored K, N, and Q models, many of them in Russian markings. Unfortunately, the location of these aircraft are not given. (I couldn't identify the one flown by the CenTex Wing of CAF at San Marcos.)

Also available in this series is a very nice book on the Mitsubishi A5M Claude. Again it's filled with profiles but no color photos. There are however, plenty of B&W photos and line drawings. Also available is a the most detailed reference I've seen on the PZL P.11c.

Not yet available but soon to be released is a book on the Spitfire Mk. V. That's one I'll definitely want to pick up. I don't hesitate in recommending any of the series but I especially like the P-39 book. Check 'em out!

The three books I have are in the "yellow series" but an ad for Mushroom shows a "red series" for a title on German Air Projects, 1935-1945, and a "blue series" on Adolf Galland and GC 1/145 in France 1940.

Milton

(Car Corner continued)

water jug and fire extinguisher. Next goes the steering shaft, the passenger side roll cage and roll bar is positioned behind the driver's area. The stiffener bar goes from the middle of the rollbar to a hole in the firewall on the passenger side of the vehicle. The seat, which I've painted matt black, gets the seatbelt (which is a decal and rather hard to handle) and is installed along with the chrome floor shift. The shifter ball and boot I paint black, leaving the shift lever chrome. Next I put in the driver's side of the rollcage and the steering wheel in the dashboard. Then the cross brace is fed through the back of the rollbar and around to the front and attached at the front of the roll cage, after which the fuel cell is attached to the back of the chassis. The "kicker bar" attaches to the rear top of the rollbar and runs back to either side of the fuel cell to give the rollbar stability. Then the rear shelf goes in.

To prep the body for paint, I get a pan of warm, soapy water and put all the body pieces in it and leave them for about five minutes. Then I set them all aside on paper towels to air dry. While they are soaking, I can get back to the rest of the car, in this case the engine. The engine consists of a left and right half, two heads, two valve covers, a chrome intake manifold and carb, distributor, two breathers, fan belt and alternator and a two-piece air cleaner. When this is all assembled I can add the exhaust headers. Now I can go back to the rear end and "carefully" position the rear end assembly in the rear of the chassis, making sure to fit the pins of the springs in the holes in the axle brace. This warning should be added: **Do not touch the rear axle assembly. It's very fragile and will break!**

Very carefully spread the shock absorbers apart and ease them around the rear axle until the two pegs are positioned in the shock supports on the axle brace. This has to be done twice, fun huh?

OK, I am better than halfway done now so it's back to the body to make sure it's dry and mask it off for the paint job to match the box. Another fun part is coming up—it's the front end which is equally as much a pain as the rear end.

But first I am going to prepare the tires and wheels to be mounted, so I take all four tires, and all four wheels and wheel backs, I letter the tires and then carefully insert the wheels and wheel backs in place and set them off to the side to dry.

Now it's time to find the driveshaft and attach it to the rear of the completed engine and "ease" it into the differential on the rear end. Now for the front end—which consists of a very fragile piece held together by a couple of strips of plastic (which have to be removed). I very carefully attach the two coil springs and attach two wheels to it too, as this may be the only time I can do it without causing a lot of damage to this piece. Now I must put the front end on the car, I will have to get my magnifier and my high-intensity light to see what I am doing here. I put a dab of Super Glue in the holes where the springs go, put the front end in place and hold my breath.

Back to the car itself to let this assembly dry, I paint the entire car pure white, and let it dry.

Back to the chassis and now for the "acid test". I flip it to see if it is going to hold and voila! It holds, so now I put the wheels on the rear and it is now sitting on all four wheels. I assemble the radiator and radiator shroud and place it on the frame in the two holes provided, and then attach a shock brace to the front of the chassis on the passengers side, and a radiator hose to the top of the radiator and one to the rear. Now I can attach the front frame and drivers side shock brace, nose brace and dash plate, then the front shocks and windshield braces and upper "A-arms". Finally the only thing remaining is the body, so all I need to do now is get it painted and decaled and I will have another car for my stable. I rate both these kits high, because of their "buildability" and their collector value. I give it a 9.5 rating.

Skipster

(A-12 Avenger continued)

COCKPIT

The tandem-seated cockpit is fairly plain, with some simulated raised modules on the consoles; aftermarket consoles could be trimmed and substituted for the cast-in ones. ACES II seats with belts molded in are included, but I think aftermarket ones such as TrueDetails will be "busier" and sharper. The nice vacuformed canopy is thin and clear; no "orange peel."

LANDING GEAR

Finely cast, with nice detail for 1/72. Wheels are acceptable, with some flash. Gear bays have minimal structural detail, but for 1/72 it's probably fine.

WEAPONS AND WEAPON BAYS

The bays are very similar to the Collect-Aire ones and have decent structural details. They're easily "good enough for government work." Bay doors are thin and well-cast. Two LGBs and two HARMS are included.

DECALS

A small sheet provides the same minimum dark gray markings that are on the fullscale mockup at Fort Worth. If the modeler chooses to use some imagined future operational markings, remember that you'll be moved to the "Hypothetical" category in IPMS contests.

INSTRUCTIONS

A single sheet gives a historical background, an exploded parts diagram and, on the back, a three-view with paint and markings placement.

WRAP-UP

This is a quite decent all-resin effort to replicate a great shoulda-been bird. It combines the advantages of a quick build with acceptable detail, and it should look great on an aftermarket modern carrier resin deck section. Bondo's thumbs are both pointed up!

Bondo

Old Rumors & New Kits

If you didn't make it to the Fort Worth Show, and that's most of you, it was a fun time. Bondo and I headed out at just past "0 Dark-thirty" and got to Arlington just as it began to rain. Rain? What's that? It doesn't rain in August. Anyway, it was a smallish show but there were some very good models there. And there were vendors. And a few bargains. And we found a pretty good Vietnamese restaurant.

Besides Bondo and me, there was Greg Springer, Russ Holm, Carl Leidy, Terry Loman, and Keith Johnson. And again, everyone who entered, won a trophy. Can't do much better, cause we all had fun.

So what's new? I saw the box for the new Trumpeter F-105. Someone had pre-ordered. I understand it's a very impressive bunch of plastic. I can tell you that the box is BIG! It should be available very soon.

Hasegawa's new 1/72 scale B-25J/Gunship model is out in Japan so it should be on the shelves here soon. From the photos I've seen, this will be the best B-25 yet in this scale. There's a fully detailed interior, finely engraved exterior details, and markings for three aircraft. Also from Hasegawa is a new version of their Skyhawk, this time it's the A4-L. And soon we should see the Mitsubishi F-2A which looks like an overgrown F-16. In fact, it was the result of a joint development program between Japan and the U.S.

Speaking of B-25s, the G version from Accurate Miniatures should be making its way to the shelves this week. This is a complete boxing of the cannon armed version that was originally offered as a "modification" by AM. The Accurate Miniature's website has illustrations and notes on three other new kits, which include a reworked Allison engine powered F-6B. I expect to see

something of two re-released I12-M3 kits and an RAF Mk. IA Mustang. That F-6B with Malcolm hood and camera looks really nice.

The highlight of the AM new kit page is a color profile of the new SB2U Vindicator which is set for release possible in the late fourth quarter of this year. The series will include the -1, -2, and -3 versions of the Vindicator. No word on which will be released first.

One of the best pieces of news for me is from Czech Model. They are doing a 1/48 Curtiss A-8 Shrike. It may not be high on everyone's list but any of the USAAC aircraft from the thirties is welcome to me. This was a fixed-gear, two open-cockpit attack aircraft and was built when the U.S. Army believed in high vis aircraft—chrome yellow wings and tail on an O.D. fuselage. Nice!

Jules Bringer at Classic Airframes says that work is proceeding on the family of 1/48 Meteor kits. The first ones to see their way to production will be the F.8 in early and late configurations. In the pipeline are the F.4, T.7, and NF.11/13. I'm looking forward to doing a Korean War vintage Meteor. Should be nice.

And don't forget, the Tamiya P-47D Bubble Top is available and it's a super kit. (duh!) Well, after the razorback, what else would you expect? Not a shake and bake kit but it's a joy to build from what I've heard.

New from Sword is the 1/48 T-38 Talon, that USAF trainer that every air force pilot trained in, that all the NASA crews fly, that aircraft largely ignored by kit manufacturers until now. This is a nice little kit with a good portion of very nice resin for the cockpits, exhausts, wheel-wells, etc. It's engraved and has an injected clear canopy. The only fault I could find with my copy is that the clear parts are a tad thick. But, I can live with it. That's all for now. Now go build a model! See you Thursday.

Milton

In conversations with Dave Orloff and Milton Bell, it seems that the membership roster is in need of updating. To make it easier to do this I need your feedback and participation. While there is sufficient information for general mailing and calling, this additional information will help us know you better and confirm what is in the old partial data base. Either fill out this form or send the information directly to: ranney@bmcwest.com or call 512 990-9699

David Ranney, ASMS Secretary

Name _____ Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____ email _____

Phone (home) _____ Phone (wk) _____ Phone (cell) _____ IPMS No. _____

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Main Modeling Interests _____