



IPMS/Republic of Texas

SPRUE EXAMINER



Airfix E-Boat

by Richard Eaton

Introduction

My top passions in modeling lately have included early WWI aeroplanes, small WWII armor and Patrol Torpedo Boats. After looking in vain for several years for the 1980's era Airfix German E-Boat kit, the kit surfaced recently as a reissue. I eagerly snapped one up at Village Hobby and proceeded to fondle plastic.

The Boat

Operating in coastal waters, the Kriegsmarine Schnellboote or S-boats (called E-Boats - Enemy boats - by the Allied), were a very effective WWII weapon. They took over the roles of the torpedo boats after those ships were used for destroyers.

These fast attack boats were used in almost all theaters of war—the Baltic Seas, the Mediterranean or the Black Sea—but their main operational area was the British Channel where they laid mines and attacked coastal convoys, especially at night. S-boats also escorted capital ships giving them anti-aircraft

and anti-submarine support. During the German occupation of Norway two S-boat flotillas escorted the capital ships and transported troops.

Although Allied air and naval power destroyed virtually the entire German High Seas Fleet, the smaller and auxiliary vessels of the Kriegsmarine continued to patrol and serve until the last hours of WWII. Their operational record was quite successful. The S-boats sank over 40 warships (including 12 destroyers) and well over 100 merchant vessels, while damaging 14 other warships (including two cruisers) and 15 merchant ships.

At the outbreak of World War II, only 18 S-boats were in service, but between 1940 and 1945 about 230 of these boats were built. Although there were several classes of those ships, all had the same basic design and most of them were built at one single shipyard, Lurssen in Vegesack, which continued to build successful fast attack crafts after the war. Several boats were used by other navies after the war, with two of them added to the newly formed Bundesmarine in 1957.

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2004 Show Schedule

ModelFiesta XXIII, IPMS/Alamo Squadron, San Antonio, TX	Feb. 28, 2004
IPMS/Metro Car Modelers Association, Dallas. TX	March 20, 2004
IPMS/Tulsa, OK	March 27, 2004
CASM III, Little Rock, AR	April 2-3, 2004
Austin Scale Model Show, IPMS/ASMS, Austin, TX	May 1, 2004
IPMS/NCT Squadron ScaleFest, Mesquite, TX	May 29, 2004
Region VI Convention, IPMS/SWAMP, Lake Charles, LA	June 12-13, 2004
IPMS USA National Convention, Phoenix, AZ	August, 2004
AMPS Centex Regional 2004, Austin, TX	October 2004

Editor's Notes...

Valentine's Days is past—did you get any snow?—so we are on the downhill side of February. Our next meeting is Tuesday, Feb. 17, back at the Yarborough Branch Library. Meeting time is 7 P.M. I've been asked to present a program on decals and markings. As usual, it will be a demo and explanation of the various kinds of markings, both wet and dry. If you have decal concerns, bring them to the meeting.

Are you ready for San Antonio? As noted above, it's coming up on Feb. 28, back at the Live Oak Center. This is a must attend for us in Austin and a great way to start the 2004 model show season. Speaking of shows, the IPMS/USA Convention is coming up in August. I know that's several months away but if you want to stay in the convention hotel—and get a decent room rate—it's not too early to make reservations. Jack Johnston has already found that the lower rate rooms are being taken. If you make reservations, be sure to call the hotel directly. All the information is in your IPMS Journal or on the IPMS/USA website.

And don't forget our own show which is coming up the first weekend of May, just two meetings away! It's about time for Bruce and Tim to be asking for volunteers so don't be shy. Better to volunteer for a job you want than be drafted for one you don't.

My old computer monitor went to sleep and would not awaken. So, I am now working on a new one, a nice NEC 17 inch LED screen that has a considerably smaller footprint than the old CRT monitor. I wish progress wasn't so expensive! See ya'll Tuesday.

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 Tuesday 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 Korner

Just a real quick note this month. Get ready for ModelFiesta in San Antonio on the 28th of this month. I'm way behind the curve for my entry, but I still hope to get it done.

Mike Maloney, the manager of HobbyTown south, has offered to come along side the club and hold seminars in front of his store. Also, the manager of the Hobby Lobby at 183 and 620 says that their classroom would be available for a modeling 101 class. So, be thinking about getting involved and helping put on classes or helping during the classes. Now, get out there and build something!

Kenny



Dave Orloff explains weathering with pastels at the January ASMS meeting.

Jeff's Book Reviews

By
Jeff Forster IPMS# 30833

Squadron/Signal Aircraft No. 63

B-17 In Action

By Larry davis

This is another of Squadron's "In Action" books revised with eight extra pages. I picked this book up from Kings Hobby Shop. Everyone has favorite aircraft and the B-17 Flying Fortress is one of mine so, I'm always on the lookout for new material.

This book is on par with Squadron's other books in the series. It has 57 pages with plenty of photographs on every page. It's set up in the usual Squadron manner with an introduction covering the development of the aircraft and then works its way through the various models and history of each type. There's a good page on the YB-40 gunship, which would make a great kit if someone would produce a model (or modification) of it. On page 44 there's a great photo of a B-17 with its tail just touching the ground, moments before a belly landing. There's another interesting shot of B-17G assigned to the Navy and used as a launch platform for

JB-2 Loon missiles. The Loon was the US version of the German V-1 Buzz Bombs. There are also some interesting shots of an RB-17G painted in an all black scheme used in the mid 1950's to drop agents into North Vietnam.

As always Squadron puts out a good book, You can't go wrong buying one of their publications. Jeff's rating ★★★★★

First of the Legion

by Kenny Roady



In its December meeting, Austin Armor Builders Society (AABS) held a figure contest. Being a glutton for punishment, I decided to do my first figure and enter the contest. My subject was the 200mm Verlinden Roman Centurion bust. I was interested in the armor mainly, but also because the centurions play an important role in the Gospels of the Bible.

The first thing I needed to do was to clean up the resin. I cut off the pouring blocks, attached the plume to the helmet with super glue and primed the whole figure with Floquil primer. I drilled a hole into the bottom of the torso and into the base. Then I sprayed the base and bottom of the torso with Tamiya gloss black, and added a small brass rod to the torso so I could hold onto it. That's when the fun started.

I tried to mix my own flesh color with some oil paints. The result would have looked good on a Spock model, but it wasn't going to work for this kit. My darling wife helped me mix a good looking flesh tone, and I applied it to the head. To make a long story short, I had to strip the figure twice, apply acrylic flesh tone with an airbrush and hand paint the eye whites with acrylics as well. The shading and highlighting on the flesh were then done with oils. The plume was airbrushed a light gray and then shaded and highlighted with oils. The armor was painted with Testors Metalizers. I then dusted the armor with SNJ's aluminum powder. This got some points shiny, but others were still dull. I got some advice at the contest to use Gunze's Mr. Metal metalizer, and I will when I get some off the net. The cape and neckerchief were airbrushed with Tamiya acrylic red and shaded with green oil paint. I could not figure out what to highlight with so none were added. The leather bits and the pale blue shirt sleeves finish up the centurion. At this point I should have flat coated the cloth bits. They are rather shiny. All in all, I learned a great deal about figure painting on this lovely journey. My hat is off to the guys that make this stuff look easy. They are great craftsmen. Maybe I'll do a samurai next... yeah that's the ticket.



Kenny



Skip's Classic CAR CORNER

by Skip Perrine IPMS 40167

I am not sure how much I can write about this month's kit, but here goes. I got this kit from Milton for Christmas last year. It's a kit that was made available to readers of a bi-monthly publications for ERTL and Racing Champions collectors, a '69 Mercury Cougar Eliminator. This 1/25th scale model kit is one of only 3,500 produced, a limited production item and a collectors item.



The Mercury Cougar was introduced in 1967 and was basically an up-scaled Mustang—sort of a luxury edition Mustang—with different sheet metal, trim, and interior. However, it wasn't a copy-cat car, but it was a cat of a different breed. This cat, particularly the XR-7, was quite popular with the high performance crowd and it delivered.

Since its inception the Cougar was raced in the highly competitive Trans Am Series of sports car racing as well as on drag strips around the country. Many funny cars and pro-stock racers used the Cougar as the basis for their programs.

But in 1969 there was a new concept in the air—THE ALL OUT, FACTORY HOT ROD—hence was born the Cougar Eliminator. Introduced in May of 1969 as a limited edition model, the standard engine was the 351 with a four-barrel carburetor, it also came equipped with a high performance rear axle, power disc brakes, a front air dam, a rear deck wing (spoiler), hood scoop, high-back bucket seats and had a tachometer and rally clock in the instrument panel. F-70 x 14 black wall tires with raised white lettering were mounted on 12-hole styled steel wheels with chrome trim rings. It was available in only four colors and had a body side stripe on each side to further identify it. The engine options were a 351 Cleveland, the Cobra Jet 428, the CJ 428 with the Ram air package, and the new-for-'69, Boss 302.

To qualify for Trans Am racing, a certain number of manufacturers cars had to be produced with a certain cubic inch displacement, and that was

the 302 engine option in the Cougar Eliminator. This engine was a true performer with a forged steel crankshaft, tri-metal main bearings, forged connecting rods, forged aluminum pistons, special tunnel port heads with canted valves, a high-performance camshaft, a 780 cubic inch per minute four-barrel carburetor and dual low-restriction exhaust pipes. Although it was advertised with a 290 horsepower rating, the Boss 302 put out much closer to 350 HP @ 5,800 rpm (revolutions per minute), making the Cougar Eliminator a highly charged package indeed!

The colors this car was available in was White, Competition Orange, Bright Yellow and a bright blue referred to as Grabber Blue.

In 1969, Mercury a division of Ford sunk its claws into the pony-car market literally and figuratively speaking, by introducing the sleek and sexy Cougar Eliminator. The horizontally ribbed grill included hidden headlamps and beneath the hood lurked a 351-cubic-inch Windsor four-barrel V-8, Boss 302 V-8, 428 Cobra Jet or a 390 cubic inch 4-bbl engine.

This AMT 1/25th scale '69 Cougar Eliminator represented the first time the car was available in kit form. It prowled store shelves from '92-'94, with its endangered status being lifted, it was now poised to pounce into any model kit collection.

This kit contains more than 100 pieces. What I like most about this kit is the instruction sheet is very well done, for instance the engine is shown in a step-by-step assembly, each part is shown and it looks much like an assembly drawing in a Chilton's manual for repairing a car. They show how each part is supposed to be painted, so I started with the engine first and painted it Ford engine blue, and followed the instructions to the letter so that my engine can be a "work of art" as it were. Also another plus is the fact that there was absolutely NO FLASH on any part of this kit. And I was especially impressed with the fit and finish of this model, I "test fit" each piece before assembling it and the pieces fit perfectly and I only had to do minimal sanding on the seams on the engine, otherwise this engine is as close to a perfect kit in itself as any I've seen in all my years of building model cars. The interior is very basic consisting of two 2-piece bucket seats, dash board, steering wheel, foot pedals and a 2-piece floor shift and the interior bucket itself.



Another plus in this kit is the chrome tree. It is perfect not a flaw on it, and again NO FLASH! And the chrome itself looks like it is flawless. The chassis is a very basic build, I only had to put the front suspension on and the exhaust system, then the rear end, shocks and springs, and then it was final assembly time, I put the engine in place, and the glass in the body. Oh, and the body was bagged separately from the rest of the model and so the body was flawless. I installed the glass, interior and the chassis, then the front and rear bumper were attached and the hood was put on.

So that's it this month, see y'all at the meeting and have a great day and God Bless you.

Skip

Book Review:

**Service Publications “Canada: Weapons of War” series:
The Land Mattress
in Canadian Service**

by Doug Knight; Service Publications, Ottawa, Canada 2003,
24 pp: price CDN \$9.95; ISBN 1-894581-18-0

Review by Cookie Sewell

Advantages: Very interesting little book on a relatively unknown (outside Canada) weapons system; very good explanation of rocket weapons.

Disadvantages: No plans included

Rating: Highly Recommended

Recommendation: For all Commonwealth and US built halftrack fans

This is another of the excellent Weapons of War series; as I have noted before they are dedicated Canadian views of weapons systems and present an operational view of the vehicle or weapon covered.

For some odd reason, probably the novelty of them during the Second World War, it appears none of the major powers wanted to call “multiple rocket launchers” by that name. The Soviets called them “Katyusha” (Little Katie) and their formations “Guards Mortar units.” The US Army referred to the launchers as “Calliope” (which described the appearance of the Sherman tank mounted versions) and the Navy called their anti-submarine ones “Hedgehogs.” The Germans called theirs ‘Nebelwerfer’ (fog caster). And apparently the Royal Navy referred to their shore bombardment rocket system as ‘Mattress.’ The terms were not effective very long, and essentially wound up as the service nicknames of the weapons.

After a firefight in North Africa was only solved by the use of an anti-aircraft rocket launcher battery interceding on behalf of some British troops, the surviving officer, Lieutenant Colonel Michael Wardell, tried to convince the British Army to adopt land based multiple rocket launchers. As with most instances of bright ideas that work, the School of Artillery turned him down flat as it did not deem it worthy, and their assessment was it would take two years to get prototypes built and tested for evaluation. (Translation: “NIH” – not invented here.)

But a Canadian observer, Lieutenant Colonel Eric Harris, immediately grasped the significance of the weapon and after finding no success with British officers turned to the Canadian Army. With Harris providing the incentive, CMHQ proceeded to have two prototype 40-round launchers built for test and evaluation.

The rocket launchers were made up from stray bits and pieces, but the result was actually quite good. A crude trailer with 40 tubes was built, providing only a single fixed elevation for launch. The rockets were cobbled together from a 29-lb Naval

bombardment warhead, an RAF 3-inch rocket motor, and an Army artillery fuse.

One item many people are not aware of is the fact that rockets come with only one charge for firing—a single motor that cannot be adjusted for time of burn. As a result, rockets are fired using an elevation setting and a special braking ring or spoiler on the nose of the rocket warhead to slow it down. (The Russian BM-21 “Grad” with its 122mm rockets still uses that method today, so it is old and reliable.) The first version of what was dubbed the “Land Mattress” (land for Army, Mattress from its Naval cover term) was tested in June and July 1944. After successful testing, a 10-launcher battery using 32-round launchers was fielded along with 10,000 rockets, all made up from available parts and in spite of protests by the British artillery authorities. Using men from a light AA battery, the force set sail for Europe in October 1944.

The battery received its baptism of fire on 31 October when some three salvoes—about 960 rockets—were fired on German AA gun positions. The battery wound up in action fairly often, and on 10 November the equipment was turned over to a new cadre of artillerymen. They were replaced on 16 December, and another battery took over on 24 January 1945. Finally, “production” rocket launchers were issued in March 1945 with a new 30-round launcher being the “standard” model. By that time the original 32-round ones were pretty much worn out.

The 30-round model, dubbed the “Projector, Rocket, Three Inch, Number 8 Mark 1” or Tillings-Stephens Projector after its makers. It could fire its rockets over a moderately broad series of ranges in three bands (large ring, small ring, no ring) with a maximum range of up to 8,250 yards. Time for a complete salvo was just under 8 seconds.

As with all rocket weapons, the Land Mattress suffered from its voracious appetite for ammunition—a single battery salvo of 10 launchers consumed 320 rockets, and if three salvoes were fired, the consumption could reach nearly a thousand rounds a mission. But one salvo could blanket an area roughly 800 x 800 yards, which is excellent for an area fire weapon such as this.

The weapon achieved a high degree of effectiveness when used, and only one launcher was destroyed in action—and that by a Spitfire!

One launcher—or projector—survives today with the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa.

Doug Knight is listed as a retired Canadian Army officer and is obviously very skilled as a “gonner” in his clear and easily understandable explanation of how the weapon works and what it could do in action. This is a handy little book, profusely illustrated but, alas, having no plans of the “beastie” permitting it to be easily modeled. Still, if you are a “Redleg” (US artillery term) or fan of interesting weapons, this is a nice read and worth your effort. *(continued on page 10)*

Bondo's Backdates:

Converting the Otaki 1/144 Super Guppy 201, Part 1



Background

Sacramento...Summer 1966...“...put a flower in your hair.” ...ya just hadda be there! Whistling “California Dreamin,” young nav student Lieutenant Bondo was tooling his new yellow Corvaire Corsair along the Mather AFB flightline when to his eyes appeared a gigantic apparition: taxiing into view was the most grossly distorted aircraft he had ever seen. Then, wonder of wonders, the forward fuselage swung out and away, and a many-wheeled flatbed loaded with a huge Apollo Saturn V rocket stage (from the large Aerojet General testing facility adjoining the base) lumbered into alignment with the aft fuselage. The Super Guppy had arrived!

America's invigorated space program had a serious transportation problem in 1961. That is, Saturn rocket stages were too large to transport by truck, rail or air, and barging them through the Panama Canal was unacceptable timewise. Enter Jack Conroy, an imaginative part-time California Air Guard C-97 pilot. With his own meager funds (\$15,000!) and minimum government help, Conroy singlehandedly translated his novel idea of an efficient way to transport outsize air cargo into reality. His Pentagon pitch to add a gigantically bulbous top section to the fuselage of a relatively inexpensive, surplus C-97 at first drew ridicule, and he returned to LA emptyhanded.

After wind tunnel tests confirmed the aerodynamic viability of the project, Conroy was able to obtain enough private funds to start construction outdoors in the San Fernando Valley. After many months of financial touch-and-go, in September 1962, accompanied by famous air racer, Clay Lacy, Conroy lifted the recip-powered first prototype, the Pregnant Guppy, off the Van Nuys runway. Flight qualities were significantly better than predicted by experts: the drag penalty was only five MPH, the Guppy flew rock steady and flight control efficiency increased about thirty percent!

Conroy took the Guppy to Huntsville, Alabama and put the legendary Werner Von Braun in the right seat for a demo flight. When comfortably airborne, Conroy, without von Braun's knowledge, caged engines One and Two. Nothing seemed to change; the plane continued steadily until one of Dr. Von Braun's assistants came rushing up to the cockpit

to tell his boss that two engines were inoperative. Conroy told the space wiz that they did that all the time to save fuel! Von Braun became an instant believer in the Guppy concept, and over the next seven years Conroy's innovative birds, flying under the Aero Spacelines logo (later NASA), grew in girth, length and power, carrying the great majority of the Saturn Rocket stages as well as many other Apollo components between manufacturing sites and Cape Kennedy. At least two Super Guppy 201 airframes soldier on today, hauling Airbus components in Europe. The subject of this backdate conversion, the “Super Guppy,” is on display in NASA markings at the Pima County Air and Space Museum, Tucson, Arizona.

References

“Stratocruiser,” *Airpower Magazine*, Vol. 29 No.5, September 1999
“World's Great Aircraft”, *Air Progress*, 1972

The Subject

The Super Guppy (377SG) airframe I saw at Mather was Conroy's second prototype, having first flown in 1965. Based on the one-off YC-97J turboprop airframe, the bird was much larger (capable of accepting twenty-five foot diameter components) and much more powerful 5700 horsepower P&W T34s—these also powered Bondo's beloved C-133As—turned huge three-bladed, eighteen-foot Hamilton Standard props, the fuselage was stretched by thirty-one feet, the horizontal tail surface was enlarged; the vertical fin was heightened and squared off; and a new center section added fifteen feet to the wingspan!

The Base Kit

The elderly 1/144 Otaki Super Guppy 201 kit—it's gotta be at least twenty-five years old!—portrays the last Guppy version extant and is (was) used by Airbus Industries to transport Airbus components throughout Europe. The airframe differs from that of the Super Guppy prototype inasmuch as: power is by Allison turboprops swinging four-bladed props in the manner of the C-130; large fillets have been added to the aft wing/fuselage join; and the unique C-97 “double bubble” fuselage cross section is gone, replaced by a cross section where the large upper “bubble” fairs tangentially into what used to be the smaller, lower one.



The Conversion Concept

Our Bondo Industries planning team realized that, if the original Aero Spacelines Super Guppy design could slowly morph into a late model Y 201, would it really be that much of a stretch to put 'er into reverse!

The fact that Mini-Craft had recently released a 1/144 line of Boeing Stratoliner/C-97 kits provided a wealth of conversion parts. The biggest challenge would be the scratchbuilding of the completely different T34 engine nacelles. The team further decided that to add variation and “busy-ness” to the airframe—the Airbus version is a sea of natural metal with just a multicolored stripe along the fuselage—the fuselage would be portrayed in the swung-open, 1966 configuration, with an Apollo rocket stage being loaded.



Construction

Aft Fuselage

The first order of business was to cut off (lengthwise) the lower (small “bubble”) fuselage portions of two—hit the Hobby Lobby 1/2 Off sale!—Mini-Craft kits. Then the lower sections were appropriately cut and then joined in order



to provide the extra length to match the Super Guppy’s upper fuselage. This procedure has two big things going for it: it restores the original “double bubble” cross section while retaining the stock wing mounting cavity. The aft, unused set of wing join cavities were faired in with A&B Epoxy Putty. The flat, top portion of the small “bubble” was sheeted in, loading rails created from channel stock and the forward portion detailed with structural plastic to simulate the crew entry door area. The channel loading “rails” form a convenient rabbet joint at each edge of the small “bubble,” into which the large Otaki upper fuselage was Tenax’ed and CA’ed. Such a strong joint was necessary due to the springiness of the upper section join surface.

Forward Fuselage



The Minicraft forward fuselage with nose-gear well and the multi-paned C-97 windscreen were grafted to the bulbous upper Otaki forward fuselage. The forward cargo area (including the huge bulkhead), flightdeck entry area and small “bubble” interior portions have scratchbuilt interiors. The flightdeck area was left undone, since the much-too-thick windscreen panes will be done in either black or dark tint. The two large fuselage hinge fairings will be scratchbuilt with simulated wiring and tubing added for complexity. Small supporting



struts used during loading operations will be scratchbuilt also.

Wings

The large wing fillets of the Otaki 201 kit were removed, and the resulting long rectangular spaces were filled with Evergreen sheet. The interior of the aft fuselage was detailed with scored plastic sheet to simulate the interior padding.

(continued on page 10)

Can You Find the 13 WWII Planes Hidden in This Picture?

This puzzle originally appeared in the March, 1945 issue of AIR-CRAFT RECOGNITION, an official British wartime publication. It wasn’t too easy 59-years ago. It still isn’t!

Puzzles like this were common in magazines of the period, and were often reprints from Aircraft Recognition. Several children’s magazines had similar puzzles. The answers are at the bottom of the page. Don’t cheat!



- Answers
- Tree: reading left to right;
 - Marauder, Tony, Mustang
 - Rear of Coach: Val
 - Crossing Gate: Fw 190
 - Bush: Dornier Do 17
 - Portress: Typhoon
 - Cyclists Legs: Hurricane
 - Cow: Oscar (pretty vague)
 - Water Pool: Sunderland
 - Luggage Cart: B-29
 - Signal: Corsair
 - Tunnel: Junkers 290
 - Marauder, Tony, Mustang

**Don’t Delay—Pay Your Dues Now
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Kit #: 2165
 Vintage: 1997
 Origin: Molding/Decals: Korea
 Parts: 152 gray/31 clear
 Markings: 44-83575 SB-17G 1st Rescue Sq./Air Rescue Service/USAAF, 1950s.

Conversion Options: anti-submarine warfare, target drone, RB-17 photo reconnaissance version & civilian fire bomber versions

Operators: U.S. Army Air Corps/Air Force, U.S. Coast Guard, Brazilian and Portuguese Air Forces



Introduction

Mention Search and Rescue (SAR) and images of helicopters and flying boats come to mind. Their use has always been linked to air rescue operations saving downed pilots in a combat zone or rescuing passengers from a sinking ship or ditching airliners. But saving a large number of survivors in pitching, rough seas requires something special.

In fierce stormy seas, helicopters are limited by cabin space, being out of range from their base; while flying boats are sometimes unable to touch down without losing an engine, a wing float or worse—the crew. Some of you may remember the futile rescue attempt in Yul Brinner’s film “Flight from Ashiya” where a Grumman HU-16 Albatross was lost in the Sea of Japan. Many PB-5 Catalinas went down while attempting such a maneuver during and after WWII.

The Army’s Aerial 911

During WWII, the Army set up the specifications for a rescue boat to be dropped from a large multi-engine aircraft. In 1944, Higgins Industries developed the A-1 lifeboat, the same company who designed the WWII PT boats and landing craft. The Army Air Corps could not get them fast enough to convert B-17G/Hs into SB-17G/H “Dumbos.” Unlike the shorter range PB-5, the SB-17 could drop the boat and maintain position in a circuit until a ship arrived to pick up survivors. The SB-17 went on

to serve with the USAF and Coast Guard until retired in the late 1950s. Overseas operators of the SB-17 were the Portuguese Air Force flying out of Lajes Field in the Azores and the Brazilian Air Force in Recife. Today, only the Japanese and Russian air forces operate air rescue flying boats while the rest of the world operates SAR helicopters.

Surviving SB-17s

Although retired from military service, four SB-17s are known to survive:

- 44-83575 B-17G-85-DL: now N93012 in the airshow circuits.
- 44-83718 B-17G-95-DL: preserved as 5408 at the Brazilian Air Force Museum in Rio de Janeiro.
- 44-83722 B-17G-95-DL: remains owned by Kermit Weeks for parts or restoration.
- 44-85531 B-17G-95-VE: now N207EV operated as a fire bomber by Evergreen Helicopters in Oregon.

Kits in the market

There were no dedicated SAR B-17 kits anywhere until Academy’s SB-17 hit the market. There was a vacuformed conversion set from 299 Models from Seattle, WA to convert the Airfix and Hasegawa B-17s to a SB-17 including the A-1 lifeboat. As a bonus, the set included a belly radome and parts to convert the B-17 into a U.S. Navy PB-1W anti-sub ship. For those wondering what the 299 Models stood for: named after the Boeing Model 299, better known as the B-17 (most built in Seattle of course!).

First Look

The SB-17 comes in a large box loaded with part trees and lots of clear parts. Out of a total of 182 parts, 50 will end up in the part box instead of on the SB-17. Two large joined part trees alone contain many parts belonging to Academy’s early B-17C/D kits. The engraved panel lines are fine, not overdone and the fuselage and wings line up with out much trouble.

Decals/Markings

The sheet is thin and the colors are correct including enough black stripes to make the different yellow SAR unit titles. But there’s a discrepancy in the markings since the sheet shows the aircraft in USAAF titles rather than USAF ones. The 1st Rescue Sq. was a USAF unit of the 1950s. The U.S. Army Air Corps became the U.S. Air Force as a separate service during the Truman era in 1947. It is easy to make up your own SAR unit marking options depending on the SB-17 photos available and decals. In addition, the markings on the A-1 rescue boat are too large and lack the USAF title.

Instructions

The foldout format instruction sheet follows the usual directions, color/markings information and part tree diagram. The latter includes a numerical listing of all extra part to be discarded.

Fuselage Fit

The fit of the fuselage requires some work since the fit is not quite as good as I expected. Use the section by section liquid cement technique when assembling to avoid a mismatched fuselage. Although the kit has a detailed bomb bay interior, it is not needed in this version.

Clear Parts

The majority of the clear parts are redundant since they pertain to the bomber version. The clear parts have very defined and crisp lines which allow masking the canopy frames easier.

The A-1 Rescue Boat

Most of the problems in this kit are located here. The eight-part Higgins rescue boat is a simple affair. It has built-in stabilizing fins and propellers but no interior detail. Although the cross section of the A-1 is basically correct, the side view shape is incorrect and mostly incomplete:

1. The boat itself is too shallow on the bow.
2. The bow is too square and needs to be sanded down.
3. The keel line has no engraved detail.
4. The shape of the coaming is incorrect since it should be on a slope, rather than flat. Also the rubber seal that joins the boat's coaming to the fuselage is missing
5. As provided in the kit, the twin underside propellers are oversimplified and should be scratch-built since they are covered by protective dome screens.

Engines

Academy did not forget to mold the engine cowling liners on the model on the open position. For a better appearance, cut each one apart with a safety razor to make them more realistic. As I have mentioned before in other piston aircraft reviews, the liners are always deployed open while the aircraft are on the ground but closed while on flight. The engine blocks pistons are fine but still need more detail or replacement with resin ones.

Landing gear

The landing gear legs are very detailed and very thin, meaning: be careful during assembly. Replace the kit's early version main wheels/tires with the late type True Details #TD2020 B-17 resin wheels.

Suggestions/recommendations

- Detail and improve the A-1 lifeboat.
- Only the WWII and Korean theater SB-17s were armed. Between wars, some had the upper turret while others did not.
- Following WWII, the ball turret was also deleted. If modeling another era/theater, delete all armament.

Final Comments

Despite its small problems, this kit provides a splendid link into the usually ignored Search and Rescue model kits. Perhaps this kit will persuade others to convert the Monogram 1/48 B-17 into a SAR version. I do hope that Koster Models will release a 1/48 scale SB-17 conversion kit in the future. All in all, Academy's SB-17 kit fits the Air Rescue & Recovery Service motto: "So Others May Live."

Rafael

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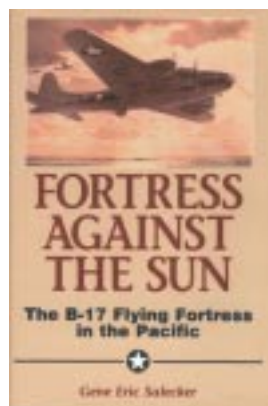
Book Review:

**FORTRESS AGAINST THE SUN
 The B-17 Flying Fortress in the Pacific**

By Gene Eric Salecker

Da Capo Press Hardcover 2001 \$34.95

Reviewed by: Dave Orloff



As a longtime fan of the Fortress I am thrilled to finally have a book devoted to the early-war service of the B-17 in the Pacific theater. As of Pearl Harbor almost the entire responsibility for offensive aerial bombardment fell on the handful of units already in place, with no immediate guarantee of replacements or support from home. Salecker does an impressive job of documenting the units and individual aircraft from before hostilities to the eventual replacement of the B-17 squadrons by longer-ranged B-24s.

A wealth of detail important to the modeler is included, with an almost obsessive tendency to include tail numbers on almost a mission-by-mission basis, as well as linking aircraft names to the correct serial number. Many of the unusual camouflage schemes produced by the Hawaiian Air Depot are well described. Add to that the truly amazing range of missions the crews flew, from conventional high level bombardment to skip bombing, ground attack in support of troops, the strafing of enemy airfields and ships, and the book becomes practically a must-have! My only quibble, at the risk of sounding compulsive, is that Mr. Salecker does occasionally show a layman's ignorance of common aviation terms, but this is forgivable in light of his obvious command of the subject otherwise. An extensive bibliography reflects years of collecting individual stories, logs and after action reports, all presented in a very readable style.

Dave

(Mattress continued)

Thanks to Clive Law of Service Publications for the review copy. <http://www.servicepub.com>

Cookie Sewell
AMPS

(Super Guppy continued)

The fuselage join portions of the Mini-Craft wings, complete with interleaving tabs, were cut off and grafted to the slightly shortened inner portion of the Otaki wings; thus retaining the Minicraft "factory" fuselage/wing joint for minimum puttying. A slight variance in airfoil cross sections at the Mini-Craft/Otaki wing joint will, however, require some minor putty; but that's just another day at the office here at Bondo Industries!

Engines

Scratchbuilding gets serious here! The portions of the Allison engine nacelles forward of the Otaki wing leading edge were cut off. One forward Otaki nacelle portion was then modified with plastic tubing to simulate the long, thin T34 engines. The distinctive cooling scoop below the engine was created by slightly "squished" brass tubing CA-glued to the bottom of the plastic "engine" tube. The plastic tube and brass scoop were then blended together with A&B putty to make a master for casting all four in resin. A master of the distinctive needle-nose profile of the C-133-style spinner was scratchbuilt by sanding down the front of a 1/72 scale Mk 82 bomb turning on a lathe; these will be cast in resin also. Props will be scratchbuilt from appropriate plastic strip; the Allison's are too wide chorded and too short, the C-97 blade chords too short and don't have cuffs. Brass exhaust tubes rest in semi-circular depressions Dremeled into each wing.

Load

The upper rocket stage for an Apollo mission was cannibalized from an old Airfix 1/144 Saturn V kit. The loading dolly will be scratchbuilt. The black and white paint combined with red letters further helps to visually break up the large expanses of grey airframe.

Bondo

(E-Boat continued)

The History (Sorry I can't help throwing in a little WWI stuff) During WW I the Italian and British Navy developed small and fast crafts equipped with torpedoes and machine guns for escort purposes in coastal areas. The main target of the Italian ships were the Austro-Hungarian submarines in the Aegian Sea but they were also used to attack capital ships. Their greatest success were the sinkings of the battleships Szent István (June 1918) and Wien (November 1917). The Imperial German Navy started to operate small boats in shallow waters in 1916. The first experiments with modified civil sport boats were unsuccessful so they ordered six experimental crafts (LM 1 - LM 6) at Fr. Lurssen (Vegesack), Naglo shipyard (Zweuthen/Berlin) and Max Oertz (Hamburg) equipped with Maybach airship petrol engines. These trials were canceled at the end of the war.

The new German Reichsmarine continued these trials in the early twenties. In 1926 they ordered three more experimental crafts at different shipyards. Based on these trials a batch of six boats was ordered at Fr. Lurssen in 1929. The basic design of these boats was improved with the following generation of the German S-Boats.

1929 Type S1-S6
1932 Type S7-S9
1933 Type S10-S13 (this model)
1936 Type S14-S25
1939 Type S30-33
Gusto Type S151- S158

The Model

This 1/72 scale Airfix kit has an impressive number of detailed parts (290). Most parts had a small amount of flash which is to be expected on a reissue. The real problem was those time-honored Airfix ejector marks! They were pervasive. I wore out three sanding sticks on this one. I built OOB, though several assemblies would have benefited greatly from scratching up thinner parts

I spray painted the major colors while the parts were on the sprue. I used Testors German Gray for decks, camouflage gray for hull and bulkheads, and flat black for the keel. I went with dark base colors because I knew I was going to do a ton of drybrushing and wanted depth.



Assembly was pretty straight forward. I took things in sections so that detailing would be easier and so that I would not throw the thing against the wall before completion. Each section included cleanup, assembly,

applying a wash of Tamiya acrylic brown, and drybrushing with Testors flat light gray and white. I used Testors Metalizer burnt metal and brass on the spare torpedoes.



Once the assemblies were done it was largely a simple matter of fitting and alignment. The only real fit problem encountered was the two hull pieces to the deck. This required clamping and CA as the hull parts were slightly warped.

From there, final touch-up, decals, and rigging (black sewing thread) and it was done. The kit comes with a passable paper Kriegsmarine Flag that adds a tad of color to the gray beast.

Conclusion

Despite the cleanup problems, I recommend this kit to PT boat and ship lovers. Due to the cleanup, and the large number of small parts, I recommend this kit for experienced modelers. It really does build up to an impressive boat. . . Errrr E-boat . . . no S-boat!

Richard

Sources

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*Gerhard Hummelchen: "Die deutschen Schnellboote im zweiten Weltkrieg", Verlag E.S. Mittler 1996



Old Rumors & New Kits

Another month gone by and not too many new items to talk about. Things are bound to pick up however, because this first quarter is drawing close to its end.

The latest kit I've seen hit the shelves is Hasegawa's AV-8B plus Harrier. In case you bought the resin update parts to "fix" the old Revell-Monogram kit, maybe you can sell the parts on Ebay or swap them off to someone who has a stash of the Revelogram kits. It doesn't appear that you'll need anything to pretty up this kit except perhaps some belts. It's obvious that Hasegawa plans to produce a line of Harriers since the way this one is engineered there are at least three in the works. Naturally, there's no word when any future kits may appear.

If you want to get into a nice modern Marine Corps jet, this looks like just the ticket. Priced at under \$30 is good too, considering the amount of plastic.

Hasegawa has re-released a number of kits, some—1/48 scale—are just new boxes and new markings. They have however brought back the F6F-5 Hellcat in 1/32 with some new markings. Just so happens that there is an impressive set of .50 cal rounds with PE links that really work that would look great in an opened gun bay. So what if they're 1/35—close enough I'd say!

One of the noteworthy kits back for a second look is the Me 109F. I understand this is a "limited" release so don't look for it to be around forever.

I've heard very little about what went on at the big European hobby show at Nuremberg. The best thing for me has to be that Tamiya will be doing a 1/72 P-47 Razorback. I figured it was just a matter of time since their panned-down versions of great 1/48 kits appear to be doing well and they are very nice kits. (I'm just finishing up their 1/72 Spitfire Vb.) I'd bet that a bubble-top will be announced next.

Tamiya is doing another version of their very nice 1/48 Gekko (Irving) but there's no release date indicated.

One of the most impressive new kits comes from Eduard. It's the Nakajima Ki 115 Tsurugi (Sabre) in 1/48. This little model is very well done and probably will be the only good kit in 1/48 you'll ever see. This was a dedicated Kamikaze aircraft that was designed for one one-way flight. The kit comes with a small fret of PE parts, including seat belts. Yes, the pilot had to be sure to not lose control so he had to be belted in. There are two bombs; a 500kg and an 800kg weapon that were carried on the centerline. This airplane was small, or about the size of an Me 109, and had a fuselage made of very thin steel, not the usual aluminum. I suppose it would be appropriate to show a little "rust."

Here's an interesting tool for those of us who are "vision challenged." Its a light for the ever necessary Optivisor! Sounds like a good idea to me. If it weren't for the Optivisor, this modeler would have to work on 1:1 subjects. Now I can get the light where I need it. Two lengths of cord are available.

Classic Airframes has announced two new models that are on many want lists; the F-5A and F-5B. The A version shows a Feb. '04 date and the B, a March release. You will probably see a bunch more decals too since this aircraft was operated by lots of folks.

For small scale fans, check out RoG's 1/144 scale Hawker Hunter FGA.9 and B-52H, in post 9-11 markings. Speaking of little models, you should take a look at the Eduard Spad XIII Profi-Pak. This is a small model in 1/48 but Eduard has kept the details and made it in 1/72.

The Italeri Sm.79, and excellent kit as is, now has the advantage of a detail set from Eduard for the interior and another set for the exterior. This should be a killer combination. The quality of the kit is first class so you have good material to work with.

There are some nice new and almost new pieces of armor as well. Check out the Dragon King Tiger with Porsche turret. Dragon also has a very nice set of German paras, their Fallschirmjager set for Sicily 1943. Nicely done for that diorama you've been thinking about.

Tamiya has a new kit of the M1A2 Abrams. This is a new kit of the latest version of our main battle tank and not a rebox. There has been a restock of the AFV Club's Pak 43/41 88mm gun and for you detailers, take a look at the Pak 43/41 brass shield bolts.

As I mentioned earlier, you can now get beautiful turned .50 cal rounds and a fret of PE to make individual links that hold the rounds in a belt that works just like the original...well, almost. These come from Mission Models and you can get spent casings for the .50 cal as well as spent rounds for 20 mm. I know someone will get a long belt with multiple sets eventually but it will take better eyes and fingers than I now have. Each set goes for \$15 or so but they are the most realistic bits of model ammo I've ever seen.

You Sci-Fi modelers will have to wait a day or so for the Polar Lights' Star Trek Klingon Cruiser D7. This will be a match for the snap Enterprise kit. Should be very nice. Polar Lights' Batmobile and Batplane from the 1960s show is already out. Bandai's Star Wars Tie Interceptor as used in the Battle of Endor—angled wings with diamond chord—was set to arrive last week. You need to check it out. The Bandai Star Wars kits are the best I've seen.

There are lots of new books on the shelves. Some of the best are from Kagero. One on the Fw 190D is in a new, for Kagero, format. It's regular sized! Their new book on the AVG Flying Tigers is a really nice one that comes with a fret of PE in two scales for the P-40B. There are some very good color profiles and foldouts as well as many fine B&W photos of the era throughout the book. Kagero also has a new book for WWI fans on the Fokker D.7 which I can recommend as well.

Osprey has a new title; B-52 Units 1955-1973. It's the usual Osprey quality, i.e. "Very Good." And Squadron Signal has a new "In Action" book for the F4F Wildcat. And Yes, it is new. As usual, it's packed with pics. That's all for this month. See you next time. Now, go build something!