



IPMS/Republic of Texas

Newsletter of the Austin Scale Modelers Society

November 2006

SPRUE EXAMINER



Tamiya 1/48 Soviet T-34/76 Tank

by
Milton Bell, IPMS #16702

Ok, so it has no wings and way too many wheels. It's a 1/48 model and is made of styrene, and that's good enough for this old modeler.

Back when I returned to modeling—must have been the late '70s—there were lots of Bandai kits on the shelves along with special items for those doing dioramas in the "proper scale." There were some good and varied subjects, and they were moderately popular. Unfortunately, Bandai decided to quit the series, and before long there were none to be had except for collectors and occasionally from vendors.

But now Tamiya has started the ball rolling again with several releases of very popular subjects. Other manufacturers have chimed in with their own kits, particularly Skybow, AFV Club, and now Hobby Boss.

I had built a few pieces of armor years ago. The old Bandai Ferdinand is still on the shelf along with a Bandai Jeep. The last armor model I started was the Bandai T-34, not a bad kit but I

lost interest. I tried 1/72, but it was just too small for my old fingers and eyes.

Several months back, this newsletter ran a story by John Seaman on two of Tamiya's earlier releases. It really whetted my appetite to build another piece of 1/48 armor. I began to buy the Tamiya kits knowing that soon, I would have to start gluing styrene. Then I saw the Skybow's German Tiger I kits, early and late versions. So I decided to do one. At the time I was working on the Yak-3 kit, but I built the late version of the Tiger I at the same time.

In about a week I was done. It's not a "winner", but I really did enjoy it and like I say, it didn't take long to finish. So now it was time to try Tamiya's T-34/76.

First of all, I had to find out something about the subject. Being an aircraft modeler, I'm surrounded by volumes of armor references. No, not really. But I did have one book given to me from a relative for Christmas years ago for my "modeling hobby". It's called *The World's Great Tanks*. It has some nice pictures but is short on text. Being a real novice on things armored, I had no idea what the suffix 76 meant. Now I know it denotes the gun as a 76mm.

(continued on page 4)

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2007 Show Schedule

SWAMP, CALMEX 21, Westlake, LA	January 11, 2007
IPMS/Alamo Squadron, ModelFiesta XXVI, Live Oak, TX	February 17, 2007
IPMS/MCMA, Showdown 2007, Irving, TX	March 17, 2007
IPMS/Houston, Modelmania, Stafford, TX	March 24, 2007
IPMS/Tulsa Modelers Forum, 20th Open Contest, Tulsa, OK	March 24, 2007

Editor's Notes...

Welcome to another blowout issue of *Sprue Examiner*. This is the last newsletter of 2006, and I believe I've outdone myself with 17 pages full of goodies! Space is such a premium that the scheduled puzzle will have to wait till January. Sorry, folks.

Of note in this issue is my report on the IPMS/Vancouver Fall Show and Swap Meet I attended last month. It was my first Canadian model event, and I must say I'm impressed. I hope you enjoy the pictures as much as I enjoyed being there.

The 1/48 armor contest held last week at King's Hobby was a huge success. Milton's T-34/76 on the front page was in fact one of the twenty some entries spotted in the contest. Job well done to everyone who participated, especially Pat Rourke for winning both Axis and Allied categories with his German King Tiger and Polish Resistance Panther G (see pictures on Page 7).

In case you missed the last meeting, our Christmas party this year will be on **December 9th 4:00pm** at the **Kachoris'** house in Mountain City. Once again thanks to the generosity of Mike and Sally, we'll have good food, excellent company, and yet another chance to fight for that "perfect" Christmas gift from our shameless peers. As usual, I'll send you all a reminder later on with map and rules on the "white elephant" gift exchange.

This month we meet on **Tuesday the 14th** at 7:00pm at the usual Yarborough Branch Library. We'll have our final quarterly contest of 2006 with special category in limited edition vacuform/resin kits.

Eric

ASMS Officers for 2006

Jeff Forster, president, jrforster2@aol.com	331-4644
Tim Robb, vice president, TimRobb209@msn.com	(512) 392-0611
Bill Delk, secretary, falconfyre@austin.rr.com	282-6832
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Eric Choy, editor, mechoy@att.net	249-9184

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Mike Gilsbach, webmaster, mike@gilsbachdesigns.com

Austin Model Show Coordinators

Kenny Roady, KAR66@swbell.net	260-2907
Kathy Roady, vendor Liason, kroady@swbell.net	260-2907

Austin Scale Modelers Society (ASMS) is affiliated with the International Plastic Modeler's Society (IPMS) as the Republic of Texas Chapter. ASMS meets the second Tuesday of each month except December. Dues for full membership are \$20 yearly. Subscription to the newsletter *Sprue Examiner* is \$15 yearly. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. ASMS does not endorse the contents of any article.

(Editor's notes: Per Jeff's request at our last meeting, this month I'll print his articles as I receive them with no editing.)

Jeff's Musings...

Here comes our November meeting and you know what that means? We are having our big special contest! I hope to see lots of entries in the vacuum form side and the resin side of the contest. This should prove to be an interesting contest. I'm building a resin kit and I hope to be able to be at the meeting which will be a 50-50 deal because I will be having shoulder surgery on the 3rd of November. I'm getting tired of getting sliced and diced! I hope everyone shows up with an entry or at least shows up for the fun!

Remember our show is coming up soon so start to think about how you can help getting the show running and what you can do on the day of the show.

Our Christmas party will be held at Mike's house in Mountain City on the 9th of December at 4:00pm. Come one and all for lots of fun! I sure have a great time at our Christmas parties and you should too! See you at the meeting and have fun.

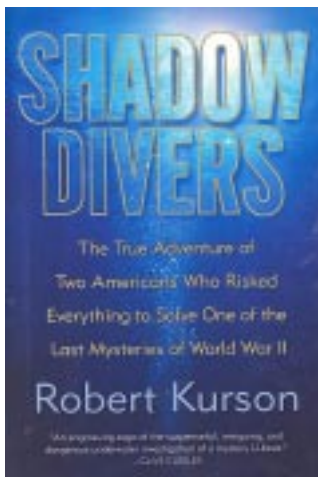
Jeff

Jeff's Book Reviews

IPMS# 30833

Shadow Divers

by
Robert Kurson



I purchased this book from my local Barnes & Noble. It runs for \$26.95 and comes complete with 375 pages and 16 pages of color photographs and 7 pages of black and white photos.

This is a story about two fellows by the names of John Chatterton and Richie Kohler. They are seeking a wreck they believe can be found at 60 miles off the New Jersey shore. This book is great in that it explains all the dangers and procedures

you need to be familiar with if you are deep diving over 200 ft. It is guaranteed to keep you fascinated.

When they first heard about a spot that might contain a deep water wreck that up till now had been undiscovered they

immediately made plans to go and check it out. They gathered 12 good divers to come along and explore the find. On their first dive of the sight they determined it to be a submarine. This book covers the many dives they had to make trying to find anything that would give up the identity of the U-boat. All the war records showed there was no German u-boats sunk so close to the New Jersey coast. It also goes into the incredible amount of secrecy that they took to insure no other divers would come along and lay claim on this incredible find. This book also looks deep into the personalities of each of the characters in the book so you know what makes them tick.

The book also gives you a real look into how dangerous deep diving can be. On their second dive to the wreck they had a diver who suddenly died down on the wreck and almost killed three other divers trying to bring his body up to the surface. On another dive they lost a father and son team. Every dive onto the sub was like reaching out and giving death a slight touch.

While all these dives were going on Chatterton and Kohler were searching all the records trying to come up with an identity to the sub so that their families might be able to close that part of their lives. They searched museums in Chicago and naval records. They even went to Germany and saw the one man who could probably give them the answers they needed. You have to understand that after all those years underwater most if not all of any identifying marks were deteriorated away so after all the dives they made on the sub they still had no ideal what sub it was. In 1997 they identified the sub was U-869. What threw them off was that they had records that the U-boat had been sent a message recalling it to Gibraltar? Apparently it never received the message. They knew there had been an explosion on the side under the conning tower. On the bottom the sub could be seen with a gaping hole and the conning tower lying in the mud next to the submarine. They believed that the sub commander had fired an acoustic torpedo which circled back and struck the sub. The sub and crew were probably dead in 30 seconds lying in 260 feet of water. He had accomplished what he had set out to do, to give the sub a name, the U-869. Now he had to deal with what his obsession had cost him. He divorced his wife and several years later married his girlfriend and gave up commercial diving. He plans on going to college and getting a teaching major and hopes to teach either college or high school history. While Ritchie Kohler needed to try and contact the families of the crew members and let them know of their loved ones final resting place. He arrived in Germany in 2002 and sought out as many family members as he could and talked with them on what he saw and did, it meant a great deal to them.

This is truly an amazing book and is worthy of your time to read it. If you have any interest in building a German IX class sub you've got to read this book.

Jeff's rating - ★★★★★

(Tamiya 1/48 Soviet T-34/76 continued)

Most, if not all, Soviet armor were painted plain "green". I happened to have a bottle of Aeromaster "Warpac Dark Green", and I was all set! Hey, that's close enough for a subject that will get numerous washes and applications of pastels.

One thing I remember John Seaman complaining about when he did the Tamiya Sherman was a lack of boxed-in sponsons. He added the appropriate strips of sheet styrene to solve the problem. I checked the T-34 and yep, it had the same ailment. So I followed the good doctor's advice and boxed them in.



It seems to be a standard feature of Tamiya's 1/48 armor to supply the lower hull as a metal casting. It provides two locations for the self-tapping screws that hold the top half of the model to the lower hull. The metal really adds heft to the model, and it ensures that the model will "sit" level if you give it half a chance.

Construction proceeds at a good pace since the major portions are molded as large pieces. The turret however is molded in two sides, a top, and a back hatch. Hatches can usually be shown open but since there is no interior at all, I buttoned everything up.

The road-wheels are two piece affairs with separate hubs. Since I try to find easy ways to do repetitive tasks, I first painted the wheels, front and back with the green paint. When they were very dry, I chucked a small dowel that would fit the center of the wheel into my handy variable speed drill and painted the rubber "tire" with RLM 66. Doing all twenty wheels took about five minutes. I'm getting lazy in my old age!

The two idler wheels are designed to "float" and actually take up slack in the track. Their mounts are held in place by poly-caps.

The track is link-and-link style, with the longer runs (top and bottom) in sections that run from drive wheel to idler on the top

and across the road wheels on the bottom. The top section is molded with the appropriate "bow" built in, so it isn't an unrealistic straight piece. Individual sections generally make up the curved sections that go around the drive wheels and idler wheels.

I have to say that this was the only problem I encountered with the construction. I added the track near the end of the project after the hull had been painted and all the wheels attached. The individual pieces went around the drive wheel with no problem, but in order to get the track on the front idler, I had to push the idler to the most rearward position. Had I known this would be a problem, I would have tried to add two more pieces from the "spares" to make the track a bit longer and move the idler forward for a more realistic pose. Maybe I'll try that next time or with another T-34 chassis.

The main gun has very slight mold marks. To be sure that the gun tube remained round, I chucked it in my drill and "turned" it against a piece of 400 grit wet/dry paper. The mold line was soon gone and the tube is round. As I mentioned earlier, there is no interior detail, so there is no breech for the gun. It is held in place in the turret by two poly caps.

Two tow cables are supplied that are braided nylon cord. I glued them into the styrene cable heads with plastic cement. I clamped them with locking tweezers until they were dry. It made a very tight bond.



All the metal parts, including the tracks, were painted with Alclad steel. This is a very dark metal finish that looks like worn metal and takes weathering very well. After everything was painted dark green, I gave it all a good coat of Future and let it dry overnight. Then I washed most of the surface with burnt umber oil paint dissolved in a bit of lighter fluid (naphtha) and wiped it down.

Just to be sure nothing got wiped off, I waited to install the numerous hand holds, and small details until I was satisfied with the basic wash. I found out that those hand holds are fragile. I broke two of them in the cleanup process and had to



replace them with fine solder. They blend in very well. Can you spot them? I also managed to dislodge one of the wheel hubs and had to rob a wheel from the old Bandai kit for its hub.

Three wooden boxes are supplied in the kit, but I used only two. I painted them dark earth, washed with burnt umber and then dry-brushed with a bit of sand.

I added the decals before doing the wash, and they responded very well to the decal set. Stains were added with more thinned oil paint. The rusted and burned exhausts were given a treatment of Mig pigment "rust". Mig pigment was also dissolved in a bit of thinner for rust streaks at various joints and seams. After all the washes, pastels, and clear flat, I used my Waldron punch and made a lens for the single light.

I have to say that I'm not used to screwing models together, but Tamiya's design just about guarantees that all components will align when the two screws are tightened. All parts of the kit fit as advertised, and I don't believe I used any filler other than to fill ejector pin marks on the sponson undersides.

This was a fun project, and it spent relatively little time on the work bench. Now I'm back on another aircraft. But I've already put my money down for the Hobby Boss T-34/85, and it'll be a Korean War scheme for this one.

If you haven't tried one of these little tanks, you should think about it. I certainly enjoyed mine.

Milton



Modeling and Your Health Part II

by
Raymond Nickel, III
Doctor of Chiropractic



Head and Neck

Here is a little piece of trivia; you and a giraffe have the same number of bones in your neck. In fact, all mammals, no matter how long their necks are, have seven bones in their neck. From mice to whales to bats to humans we all have seven. The only three exceptions are manatees (6), the three-toed sloth (9), and the two-toed sloth (6).

The primary function of these seven bones is to protect your central nervous system (CNS). Your brain and spinal cord make up the CNS, and they are the only organs in your entire body completely encased in bone. At the very top of the stack, you will find two very specialized bones called Atlas and Axis. Your skull sits on Atlas, and this complex allows for the "yes" motion. The Atlas Axis complex allows for the "no" motion.

Bones also act as origin and insertion points for your muscles, which activate to move bones along their joints to make ranges of motion possible. Interestingly, the neck bones have holes in the very lateral edges through which you will find the two arteries supplying blood to your brain.

Now what does this have to with my neck hurting? More importantly, what does it have to do with modeling?

Stationary, non-moving postures can cause the neck muscles to work up to three times harder than normal, resulting in muscular discomfort and stiffness. The nerves that feed your arms and hands pass through these muscles, and they can also be affected when neck problems arise. Your 10 to 13 pound head is supported by seven cervical vertebrae and the surrounding neck muscles that attach to the base of your skull. Several spaghetti-like nerve roots travel from your spinal cord to the base of your neck and then into your arms. From the front, your neck is supposed to be straight. From the side, it is supposed to have a curve. Anatomists say the curve should measure roughly 45-degrees. They call it "the arc of life" because all electrical transmissions generated in the brain must pass through the nerves in this arch to the rest of your body.

Most people have a problem called "military neck" with little to no curvature from the side. So if we are designed to have, and are born with this 45 Degree curve, how and why does it straighten out? Very simply, poor posture. Watch your children studying, co-workers on the computer, or friends building model kits. For the most part you will notice them sitting with arms and shoulders forward of their center of gravity. Notice the

head, weighing roughly 10-13 pounds, is suspended out in space, not over the body's center line.

Just as athletes continually train their muscles to perform certain tasks, you are training your muscles to keep a head forward straight neck posture. Imagine your head as a bowling ball on the end of the broomstick. Over time, this bowling ball moves forward in space, and it is no longer over the center of gravity. This causes your muscles to work harder to control it.

It is interesting to point out the nerves supplying your upper extremities (hands, wrists, elbows, arms, shoulders) originate in your neck and travel down through your shoulder with the arteries. As your muscles work harder, they tense up and cut off blood and nerve flow. The loss of curvature in the neck also impinges nerve flow through the misalignment of those seven neck bones. This bone misalignment and muscle exertion are what lead to or contribute to symptoms like pain, fatigue, stiffness, carpal tunnel syndrome, body parts falling asleep, etc.

So what can I do to prevent this? The micro breaks discussed in the last article are a great way to start. Beyond that, I would say, "work on that neck curve." Proper spinal curvature can be restored or improved without surgery. I have seen many cases of patients improving from a straight to a decent neck curve with before and after x-ray film. This not only helps with the patient's symptoms but also addresses the underlying problem.

How much restoration can happen with your spine depends on many factors, including age, activity level, rate and phase of your spinal degeneration. But just about everyone gets some results. Micro breaking, being more mindful of posture, and movement will all help you at the modeling bench.

If you have any questions concerning posture, your spinal curves, or spinal restoration, please feel free to ask me. So until next time, don't stay too long in one place.

Ray

WARNING! The information contained in this article is intended for educational purposes only. It is not to be substituted for current care. Be sure to consult your doctor if you have any question.

Got Tips?

Want to be famous on the Internet without having to pose nude? Try sharing that favorite modeling tip of yours with the others on our website! Email it to our webmaster, Mike Gilsbach (mike@gilsbachdesigns.com), and he will post it to our latest tip section on our homepage. And be sure to visit the tip section regularly. You'll never know what neat trick you can pick up from your fellow members.

Editor

Revell 1/12

RM Custom Chopper Kits

#85-7314 or 85-7315

Part I - General kit walk around

by

Keith Townsend, IPMS # 41791

Ok, so most of you know me as a car guy, and you would be correct. I'm a car guy...at least most of the time.

Earlier this year just before the ASMS Show, I finished an Airfix 1/24 scale motorcycle kit that I had. I managed to place second in the motorcycle category, and that inspired me to build a bigger bike bug. I found a cool looking decal set on the Internet (Google "Spiderman", one word) for a racing bike to go along with this desire. Now the problem was having to justify the dollar amount I was going to spend on my build.



Then one day I was traveling through the local Wal-Mart, and I saw these two Revell kits sitting on the shelf. Ok, I know...Wal-Mart? I do hope Rudy will forgive me, but I have found good deals on kits that I'd like to build there in the past. As I'm always looking for a good deal, I thought here's my chance to hone some needed skills on a \$12.99 kit instead of a high quality yet pricey Tamiya kit.

The Kits

One of the first things I noticed with these kits were the sheer size of the parts when you open the boxes. You know the kind of box I am talking about here; it's the standard Revell car box that, when you open it, has a lot of car part trees and a car body. This usually leaves a lot of space in the box. These 1/12 scale motorcycle kits, on the contrary, leave VERY little extra space in the box.



The kits come with parts to create either the Crusader or Aces Wild bike. These kits were designed to have interchangeable parts for the seats, exhaust pipes, rims, carburetor covers, and gas tanks. Each kit does come with two different style gas tanks (circled in yellow in picture), and everything else come individually. The instruction sheets show where you can exchange parts to form your own bike design.

The kit parts are molded in white and chrome. The frame of the bike consists of two parts, which will cause some interesting issues when building and painting begins. I'll describe in more details of the problems that came into play in the second part of this article.

Each kit comes with two different set of decals. They are both nicely done.

I think Revell may have missed the mark when they identified these kits at skill level two. The clear and easy to follow instructions make putting them together look easy at first. But don't be fooled. Some real challenges lie ahead. It'll be a frustrating but eventually rewarding project.

Keith

King's Hobby First 1/48 Armor Contest Winners



Pat Rourke's King Tiger, First Place: Axis



Pat Rourke's Panther G Polish Resistance, First Place: Allied



Tamiya 1/72 F4U-1 Bird Cage Corsair A Quick Review

by
Milton Bell, IPMS # 16702

It has been several years since I built Tamiya's 1/72 F4U1-D Corsair kit. I recall the fit was very good, and I don't remember using any putty. The only drawback was that, although it had a good interior, the canopy was not designed to be displayed open. Bummer!

Since then I've wondered if Tamiya would ever release the earlier Bird Cage version based on that kit. Well, it is finally here, and it looks pretty good.

So, what's new inside the box? A quick scan shows the major parts are identical to the original release. The cowling flaps can be shown either open or closed as per the original kit. The wing is basically the same. The right, inboard flap has that step molded in. But wait. Here's something different — an extra sprue "D", and it has a flap sans step. Great!

Besides the corrected flap, sprue "D" also has an accurate narrow chord prop, the correct turtle for the cockpit side windows, a rather rudimentary gun sight, and a short tail wheel strut assembly. Be aware that for the most part, Bird Cage Corsairs were relegated to land bases as they weren't considered safe at the time to fly off carriers. Although the Brits had been doing it for some time and had developed the technique for landing, we were a bit slow to catch on. Therefore, check to be sure the arresting hook was still on the model you choose to do.

Clear parts include two styles of canopies, the windshield, quarter panels (side windows) and a window for the belly. As for that troublesome sliding canopy, you are better off looking elsewhere for a vacformed replacement. I doubt that the kit supplied part can be shown in the open position.

The usual excellent Tamiya fit is expected here, and the build should be another "puttyless" affair. Have fun with it!

MB

Showtime in Canada!

IPMS Vancouver

36th Annual Fall Model Show & Swap Meet

Show Report

by

Eric Choy, IPMS #44323

Last month I had the opportunity to go to Canada to visit my sister and attend IPMS Vancouver's Annual Fall Model Show. Although model building is not exactly the national pastime of our northern neighbor, one thing I know for sure is there are good modelers everywhere in the world. So I was looking forward to attending my very first Canadian model event.

The show was held in a community recreation center in Burnaby, a suburb of the Greater Vancouver metro area. Armed with my camera and a notebook, I arrived early hoping to beat the crowd. The entrance fee was cheap, only \$3 CDN (about \$2.54 USD). Seeing the contest tables were relatively sparse, I decided to do some shopping first.

The vendors' area was in a room about 45'x50'. The number of vendors present was low. I counted only sixteen, with all together about 35 tables. No too many local hobby shop showed up either. Most, if not all, of the vendors were modelers. Armor and car kits were abundant on most tables while most aircraft kits were of Canadian and RAF subjects, naturally.

Despite my early showing, the room was already jam packed with shoppers. Being accustomed to everything supersized in Texas, I was not used to maneuvering in a cramped room looking and haggling for bargains with people trying to squeeze pass me all the time. Fortunately, I didn't see anything I cannot live without. So after loading up a few 1/72 kits, it was time to go check out the contest tables again.

Compared to the vendors' room, the contest showroom was larger and better lit. Up on the stage on one side of the room I found the door prize and trophy tables. There were not too many trophies, but all were beautifully crafted. Unlike us having trophies for every winner, IPMS Vancouver chose to give out ribbons instead to the top three models of each category. Only best-of and special award winners were given trophies.

There were 456 model entries in the contest. Here is a breakdown in each category:

Aircraft	150	Diorama	11
Armor	75	What-if	8
Automobiles	87	Miscellaneous	4
Figures/Vignettes	51	Masters	3
Scifi Vehicles	9	Juniors	40
Nautical	21		

After going through each table photographing and counting models, I was surprised to find Canadian Armed Forces subjects did not dominate most military categories. Only 15% of the models had maple leaf roundels/markings on them. Later when I chatted with a judging official, I was told many US modelers from "south-of-the-border" came up for their event. That may also explained the high number of aircraft entries as Seattle, the former HQ of Boeing, is only a 2.5 hour drive away.

As the showroom closed for judging, it was the cue for me to go. I was impressed with how the show was run and all the wonderful models I saw. I thought the number of vendors was on the skimpy side, but I doubt the venue can handle it if anymore shows up. Overall, it was a good show, and it's definitely worth returning to in the future.

Eric



Shop til you drop...vendors' area.



Contest Showroom



Trophy Table



Foreground: Boris Carloff getting ready for his next scene.
Background: Vampire slayer showing off his trophy.



Excellent "Curse of the Werewolf" bust.



1/12 Custom Chopper.



Star Trek: Next Generation figures



Nice finish on this 1/24 Volvo Big wig.



"Tradition of Excellence" - a collection of Canada's air demo teams.



CAF 425 Sqn "3 Wing" CF-18 Special



CAF 439 Sqn Starfighter in Tiger Meet livery.



Another Tiger Meet entry: 1/48 Portuguese Alpha Jet.



Postwar Lancaster on SAR duties. Hasegawa 1/72 kit.



The old Airfix 1/72 Heinkel He.115 made a rare appearance.



Hobbycraft 1/48 CF-105 Arrow. Suffered the same fate as UK's TSR.2, the Arrow project was cancelled due to budget cut.



Tamiya 1/35 M4 105 Howitzer in winter camo scheme.



1/18 Jeep Rubicon diorama.



1/350 WWI German light cruiser SMS Emden.



Awesome 1/76 diorama titled "Come on Canada - To Victory".



Big scale Eagle Transport from 1970s Gerry Anderson's TV show "Space 1999".



Anigrand 1/72 P6M "SeaMaster" OOB First Look

by
"Bondo" Phil Brandt, IPMS #14091

Kit #AA-2061. Cost: \$114
(includes postage to the USA)

Background

Although not a navy troop, Bondo nevertheless has had a lifelong fascination with flying boats. Maybe because his dad had long ago owned a Chris-Craft Riviera runabout, which seemed, at least to an impressionable twelve-year-old, to "come up on the plane" and "fly" over the waters of New York's Lake Chautauqua.

This boy modeler's been accumulating flying boat and amphibian kits for at least 35 years, from the WWI Felixstowe through WWII's Coronados, Catalinas, Mariners and Mars, Korean War's Albatrosses, all the way to the Marlins and (again) Albatrosses of the Southeast Asia conflict. In between the Korean and Vietnam wars came the unarguably piece de resistance of flying boats and, sadly, pioneering Martin Aircraft's last gasp, the all-jet cutting edge P6M.

Conceived as a high speed mine layer, the SeaMaster suffered the agony of being conceived, designed and tested at a time of very high strategic planning flux among U.S. armed services. The Air Force strongly objected to a sophisticated, large, multijet-engined navy airframe treading on its sacred "turf", strategic bombing. Even within the P6M's own service branch, nuclear-powered, ICBM-armed submarines, and the advent of long-ranging nuclear aircraft carriers were obstacles that turned out to be show stoppers.

The SeaMaster "died" on 21 August, 1959. Although Martin Aircraft had other non-aircraft projects in work, the loss to its large flying boat manufacturing facility at Middle River, Maryland was catastrophic. And to top off a really grim situation, the Navy unbelievably disregarded aviation history by directing

that all P6M airframes, manufacturing fixtures and blueprints be destroyed. No complete SeaMaster airframes remain today; aviation enthusiasts, including us modelers, are also victims of that same, shocking decision.

Kit Chronology

Although there might have been a Japanese injected model of the SeaMaster, the most well-known kits today are an injected "box scale" (1/136) effort by Revell in the Fifties (H-244) and the 1/72 vacuform kit from Germany in the Seventies. The Airmodel kit is typical of vac technology of its time: thin plastic, male molding, rounded edges, panel line "trenches", and poor clear parts, etc. Granted, the kit is doable by a competent scratchbuild modeler, but prepare for a plastic "beating".

I had for all intents given up hope that there would ever be a P6M kit in 1/72 scale to replace the Airmodel vac, and I had even cut out the parts and sanded trailing edges. Matthias Simon, the nice guy new principal of Airmodel has been slowly trying to upgrade the old, more desirable releases by doing resin details and refinements. He had already kindly sent me gratis a redone canopy and seats for the SeaMaster.

Then enter Arnold and the good guys at Hong Kong's Anigrand Models, and now it's a whole new ball game. I'm very sorry for Matthias to have to report that the much more expensive Anigrand version of the P6M simply blows any previous efforts, by anyone, out of the water. Unless, that is, "practice bleeding" is the modeler's *raison d'etre*.

The Kit

Anigrand's all-resin release is perhaps the largest undertaking yet by this firm, and that presages future releases of even more interesting subjects, such as the C-124 that is to be released in October 2006. Woooweeeeeee!!!

The castings are clean and smooth, very reminiscent of Planet and other Czech resin releases. Engraving is crisp, ever so slightly more aggressive than, say, on 1/48 Tamiyagawa kits. But I think we're dealing here more with the master modeler's personal style than what the real scale panel line width/depth would be. In any event, this *machs nichs* to this modeler.

Small bubbles occurred on my copy, especially at the aft edge of the canopy "hole". Luckily, some of the bubbles have that tissue-thin covering over the bubble, so I plan to merely fill in with CA+ on the bubbles' backsides. A few additional bubbles were also found at the end of the afterburner cones. The flying surfaces are very thin and generally warp-free. Engine nacelle mounting holes in the top surface of the wings should not be confused with bubbles!

Each half of the long fuselage is, in turn, broken into two components, with the break well back on the empennage. Alignment holes and pegs are provided, along with a substantial overlapping join area; no weak butt joints, as is the custom with Collect-Aire kits! The delicate spray chines on either side of the



nose area are nicely represented, but you might want to reinforce them with a thin fillet of CA.

Details

The builder is given the choice (and parts) of doing the prototypical XP6M-1 with the prominently separated, long afterburner sections and "cage-style" canopy, or the definitive production version, the P6M-2, with the more outwardly canted, more faired-in engine nacelles and bulbous, "cleaner" canopy. Cursory fitting of the separate bottom aft afterburner sections reveals that this is a likely place for filling and sanding.

A note regarding the two possible versions: Anigrand seems to have missed the fact that the production P6M-2 featured a revised wing with essentially no, or very little, anhedral. That is, the wings no longer "drooped" as much as in the XP6M-1s but were much straighter all the way out to the wingtip floats. This change caused the whole P6M-2 airframe to, when at rest in the water, weirdly cant to one wingtip float or the other depending on balance. Builders will have to make their own changes in the wing joint to accommodate whichever version they choose.

Additionally, Anigrand makes no provision for the XP6M-1's thinner "teardrop" tailplane fairing at the top of the vertical fin but addresses only the "fatter" profiled fairing of the production P6M-2. The early version builder is on his own here.

Cockpit

The cockpit consists of the aft bulkhead, seats (with cast-in harnesses), consoles, instrument panel and control yokes. Both canopy versions (vacuforms) are provided. They're clear and clean with petite engraving. When doing the production version with the large unframed canopy area on top, the builder might want to "busy-up" the cockpit by adding some miscellaneous PE panels from the spare parts box. Bondo's copy unfortunately arrived with large portions of the cockpit floor broken off and missing. Scratchbuild City; life's too short!

Other Details

Included are engine compressor faces and exhaust tubes. Left

out are the late engine nacelle modifications such as intake fences, spoiler strips and prominent intake splitter plates.

Beaching Gear

What beaching gear?? I'm surprised that so prominent an assembly has been ignored by Anigrand. The builder is faced with just resting the model on a table or base, doing the water jell bit, building a simplistic cradle ala a ship model, or employ Bondo Industries' standard practice of scratchbuilding the complicated, "busy" gear from available color pictures. To be fair to Anigrand, Arnold just may offer the distinctive, large yellow rig in the future. I wish it had been included up front, even at an increased price.....

Decals

No decals were included in my kit, and a quick email to Hong Kong saw said sheet at my door in less than two weeks. The sheet features the distinctive prototype SeaMaster script logo, national markings, and a few stencils for both versions. I think I'll go the aftermarket route.

Instructions

Both sides of an 8.5x11 inch sheet. Perspective parts blowup with individual callouts and a short history. On the reverse side are two-view B&W drawings of both versions showing color delineation and decal callouts.

Conclusion

A VERY welcome release and well worth the righteous bucks for everyone but modeling masochists. No problems that can't be handled *tout de suite* by most builders, the beaching trolley excepted. Arnold REALLY needs to offer this feature! Highly recommended.

"Bondo" Phil



WEB AT NIGHT

..... ON AFTERBURNER

Rafael Power

Gato class subs

Revell-Germany (RG) will shortly surface with a new masterpiece. Just as they did with the release of their 1/72 scale U-boat, RG will shortly strike another coup with the release of their new 1/72 Gato Class submarine. Photos of the built-up Gato kit can be seen at the RG site http://www.revell.de/en/products/model_kits/services/picture_galleries/submarine_gato_class_05047/?id=675&L=1

(Photo by Revell-Germany)



Besides Revell, others are also working on the test shots of the new kit to make changes, corrections and additions. The aftermarket companies will keep up with new resin and photoetched detail sets to upgrade the Gato. Here's a sample:

Nautilus Models (<http://nautilusmodels.com>) has announced 1/144 and 1/72 Gato class submarine accessories to be available shortly this year. So far no detail is available on what these accessories will be.

White Ensign (<http://www.whiteensignmodels.com>) will release a slew of detail sets for the Gato, which include deck guns, .50 cal machine guns, and Mk.14 21" torpedoes. Prices TBA.

What the well-known companies from the Czech Republic will do is still a mystery. Although announcements on new details for the Gato are still slow, expect that to change when the kit arrives. There will be tons of detail sets to configure the Gato according to the time of service, particular hull and equipment. Also available will be fitting sets, crew figures, railings, hatches and more. If you want to convert the Gato to the follow-on Balao Class in postwar configuration, plan on doing some work on the conning tower with new communications antennas and radar scanner, sonar and a new color scheme and markings.

Although the principal source of references on the subject you are building can be found in museums and photos (in this case the Gato sub), sometimes that may not be sufficient. An excellent reference material may come from other modelers' work as well as from companies specializing in desktop display models sold to the general public. Not all desktop model companies are equal. According to the price scales, you get what you pay for. Some are rather short on detail and finish as they are made in the Philippines, etc. Others will offer much detail and quality like the following two companies:



www.silentthundermodels.com/ship_models/gato.html

Silent Thunder Models offers a 1/150 scale USS Barb (\$275.00) among its military and civilian ships. The close up photos will give you some ideas of the details and configurations on this particular Gato Class sub. Although there are quite a number of fitting details on the deck, the actual panel lines we come to expect on a U.S. sub are not there. Rather, the manufacturer depicts the deck as flat and featureless. Still, the model is quite good. There are other warships available as well as warbirds, cruiser liners, airliners, etc.



www.fineartmodels.com

If the previous site leaves you still asking for more detail, Fine Art Models (FAM) should be your next stop. FAM competes favorably with museum built models. You won't find a 12-foot USS Enterprise in their lineup. Rather, They cater to individual, military units and smaller museums where space is a premium yet demand exacting details.

Among their catalog is a 1/96 scale Gato Class sub. This Gato is more complete and detailed than the Silent Thunder USS Barb. At \$2,995 the price may shock you, but the larger scale and superb detail more than make up for the difference. The paint finish, super detailed deck guns, railing, conning tower antennas and periscopes, hull plates welding, and the deck surface panel lines are amazing. It just makes me reach for my wallet to order the Revell Gato! FAM also produces other subs of equal quality like a WWII German Type VIIC U-Boat and a postwar Balao Class based on the Gato.

While there, examine their battleship Yamato and the three Fletcher Class destroyers. Detailed to the max!

Want more? Check out these sites:

http://www.steelnavy.com/gallery_submarines.htm

Large model sub gallery.

http://www.ipms.dk/DM2005/E_2005.htm

Ships and subs from IPMS Denmark

<http://uboot.net/allies/warships/class.html?ID=146>

History and information of all the 77 Gato Class subs.

More on weathering, etc.

Last month's special on the model railroad weathering opens the door to other alternative sites. Usually, there are other sites that open up after the fact. These are some of them:



<http://www.brushthralls.com/index.php>

I find some interesting sites by chance, not by choice. And this one is rather difficult to categorize. It looks like it is run by a group of fantasy figure modelers. Like their work, the members are a bunch of rather extreme and eccentric modeling graffiti artists. It's a toss up between who are the more "bizarre dudes" — the artists or the figures they create. But behind their lunacy there is a saving grace: their grasp of the use of paints and other materials to create superb finishes. How do they make figures with such realistic metals, leather and fabrics which others just envy? They do it by thinking and living outside the box. They may not fit our life-style pattern, yet their work is very good.

The site explains in detail many of the techniques needed to master the use of metal parts, different paints techniques and their finishes, figure alteration, simulating skin, hair, fur and leather, etc. Most of these tutorials are quite adaptable to modeling aircraft, armor, ships and cars. Just like adapting some of the techniques from the model railroaders, this site is too good to pass. It is full of good stuff. You do have to go in with an open mind though.

Downside: No link to other websites.



<http://www.michtoy.com/index.html>

http://www.michtoy.com/MTSCnewSite/supplies_folder/WeatheringSupplies/WeatheringSupplies.html

I seldom review online model hobby shops. However, this one caught my eye. Michigan Toy Soldier (MTS) caters to figure and armor modelers with a large selection of kits, paint, books, tools, and more. Among its items is a section dedicated to weathering supplies. When I clicked on that portion of the site, what appeared on screen got me puzzled. I thought perhaps I had been transferred to an Avon cosmetics catalog. There are these little plastic flip top makeup cases containing what appears to be ladies blush and applicators/brushes. What's next I thought: mascara, wrinkle cream? What kind of weathering products are these?

Well, rest easy. This shocking revelation is nothing more than Tamiya's line of weathering products. Having recovered from the shock, I moved on to the other product lines. These include

the MIG pigments, Rustall, Weather All, The Detailer, Bragdon Weather System, Gunze Sangyo and more. It's almost a specialty store for all weatherers. MTS does offer a very comprehensive source of weathering products for all modelers under one roof.

Besides weathering, MTS stocks a number of acrylic, oil and enamels paints and mediums as well as casting and sculpting supplies. Add to that all the glues, putties, primers, tools, finishing materials, books, magazines and display stands.

Like all hobby shops, models are their bread and butter, and MTS has plastic and metal figures, armored vehicles, collectible soldiers and figures in all scales. Purchases can be made through their on-line order form instead of the more common shopping cart system.

This is a well designed site with links and information on new releases, hobby news, shows and everything a modeler requires. Recommended!

Downside: No aircraft, car or ship model. No gallery.



<http://miniatures.de/englishContent.html>

From Darmstadt, Germany comes Military Miniatures Magazine (MMM), an online magazine dedicated to armor and figure modeling. To start, you have the choice to read the text in English, German, French Italian and Spanish by switching to your language of choice. Not too many sites offer this option with this number of languages.

Although their title and emphasis on 17th and 18th Century warfare may inhibit some armor and aircraft modelers from entering, this site has tons of information of use to modelers in the field of aircraft, cars, ship and armor. There are many guides on part fabrication (from sprue), resin casting, weathering, conversions, camouflage, dioramas, metal soldering, color tables, and working with wood. Especially useful are tips and techniques on painting small scale figures. After all, the site is aimed at small scale wargamers and figure modelers.

Overall, their list is extensive and worth exploring. This may be the impulse 1/72 and 1/48 aircraft modelers need to make the leap from a solitary aircraft model on the shelf to a nice little diorama. Recommended!

Downside: most text has few or no illustrations or photos.

Rafael

Know Thy Fellow Member

Name
Jeff Forster

Day job
Senior Production Mechanic at
Hospira Inc.

I'm a...
"Reborn" modeler for 28 years.



Primary modeling interest
Aircraft, cars, sci-fi, armor, ships, and whatever my mood is at the time.

Favorite era and subject of my primary modeling interest
WWII to Vietnam

Main reason why I build models
It is relaxing, and it gets you into the historical portion of the model.

Other than building models, I enjoy...
Woodworking, welding, and reading.

I was influenced/inspired to build models by...
No one really. I grew up an Air Force brat, so I was always around airplanes.

My favorite "master" modeler is
Floyd Werner, "Bondo" Phil Brandt, Milton Bell.

I consider myself...
A builder as well as a collector.

The size of my unbuilt collection
Somewhere between 1001 and 2000.

My spouse's opinion of my hobby is...
Positive, but she says I need to build more.

Best excuses I used for buying yet another model kit
"You got to buy it because it will be discontinued before you know it".

Plan for my unbuilt collection before I die/give up this hobby
I hope they will be offered to my kids. If they are not interested in them, I told my wife it's okay to try and sell them so she could have the money.

First model I completed
Batmobile in 1967.

Longest time I took to finish a model
Canberra. Two years and counting.

Best model I built so far
1941 Willys Jeep

Worst model I ever encountered
The Canberra I'm working on!

I'm currently working on...
A-26 Intruder.

Dumbest thing I ever did when building a model
I once pulled my power paint stirrer out of the paint bottle without turning it off. Got paint all over myself and the model.

Worst thing I ever did to express my anger or frustration while building
Took it outside, loaded it down with gas, sat back and watched the show.

Modeling story I like to share with my peers
During the first couple of shows I entered in after I got back into the hobby, I would stand by my entries and listen to the comments people made about my models. It sure made my day.

Christmas Tree Ornaments

by
Tim Robb
IPMS # 34705



Ever get bogged down in a complex modeling project and want to build something simple? I usually build 1/48 scale aircraft. But for the last few years, I've built one or two 1/144 scale jets fast and simple to decorate my Christmas tree in December. It's a nice break from concentrating on detail, and I work on them in between steps of my modeling projects.

My Christmas tree is green, so I have limited my selections to white or gray painted airplanes in order for them to be visible on the tree. I just throw the model together quickly, undercarriage up, no weapons (it is a Christmas tree!), paint it up and add the decals. There is no time-consuming cockpit detail on a 1/144 scale kit. To mask off the cockpit area during painting, I glue the canopy on with white glue and paint right over it. When I'm ready to use the canopy, I take it off, clean off the paint with denatured alcohol on a cotton swab, and give it a coat of Future to bring back the sparkle.

Last year I had two light gray airplanes, an Su-27 and an A-6E, and two airplanes in white and red flight demo team colors, a Patrouille Suisse F-5E and a PRC Shenyang F-7. After the models were built, I balanced each one on my finger to find the center of gravity and drilled a hole there with a small bit. Then I fastened them on invisible threads with super glue and tied them to Christmas tree hooks. When the models were hanging on the tree, the slightest breeze made them turn and bob on the thread.

Go build a model!

Tim

Old Rumors & New Kits

Football season is well underway, and it will be turkey-day before we know it. If you can pull yourselves away from the TV long enough, there are some great models to build and some great new accessories. Also, remember that Christmas is just weeks away. You might think about what to "ask Santa or SWMBO for".

I just saw a great stocking stuffer at King's the other day. It's the latest DVD from Floyd Werner and Rafe Morrissey. This one tells you all you need to know about using Alclad and getting that really great natural metal finish. If you haven't seen it, check it out. If you aren't familiar with the "series," the club has a copy of Floyd's original 3-disk set on building the 1/32 Hasegawa Me.109-G6. Both are highly recommended.

Though not confirmed, I've heard that Floyd's next DVD will cover the use of aftermarket detail materials—resin and PE parts. Look for it next year...maybe.

That new 1/48 Fw.109 from Eduard is still making news. The first batch was pretty popular. The distributors ran short, but I hear the supply has been replenished. I'm still amazed at the amount of detail that Eduard has packed into the kit. Next up will be an Me.110 also in 1/48. It should be ready by "next summer".

Now I have a rumor that Eduard is working on a F6F Hellcat. If it's done to the same level as the 109, it will blow the competition out of the water! I have no idea which dash number will be done, and at this point I don't care. The idea of a 1/48 Hellcat with detailed engine and probably gun-bays is enough. And since Eduard has announced a series of Fw.190s, I assume a family of Hellcats will be offered as well. No word on when that might materialize, but it's supposed to follow the 110.

Eduard is also working on a 1/48 Fokker Dr. I which should be ready by mid 2007. And all the while, work continues on a 1/48 Avia B-534, a really good-looking little biplane developed by the Czechs in the late '30s.

If you peruse the on-line hobby shops, you may have noticed that HobbyLink Japan is taking pre-orders for a new kit from Tamiya. To be honest, I've not seen anything from Mr. T, but HLJ's owner, Scott Hard, isn't likely to stick his neck out for a rumor. Which kit? Oh, it's a 1/48 F-16CJ. I expect the full announcement to come at the next Shizuoka Hobby Show, but HLJ says we should expect the kit, which will sell for just over \$30, to be out in February.

Still no word on the bidding war of Humbrol/Airfix, but I've heard of a couple of kit re-releases from Airfix, obviously being produced outside of Europe. The 1/48 Spitfire Mk.I is supposed to be out this month together with the old 1/24 Mustang, this time dressed as a P-51K with new propeller parts, and louvers

to do the K plus an uncuffed Hamilton-Standard prop for late D models.

Hasegawa is showing a new version of their Fw.190-A4/F1 which comes dressed for work in Tunisia. This kit is based on the old DML series, and it takes a certain amount of care to build into a convincing model.

Speaking of Focke Wulf's, there has been a recovery of an A-3 from waters in Norway. The aircraft is in pretty good shape, considering it has been underwater for 62 years or so. Go to www.luftwaffe.no/wreck/index.htm for some very impressive photos of the recovery process. I've not found the site that shows the wreck after cleaning off all the organisms and crud, but it should be interesting to see. Some of the colors are still bright.

Another recovery, this time from a lake in Estonia, has yielded an extraordinary find. It's a Soviet T-34/76A tank in German markings that appears to have been driven into the lake back in 1944. A local boy found tank tracks going into the shallow lake but not coming out. A few years ago he recounted his boyhood story to a local historical group. A search began, and the tank was found and recovered. Everything in the tank was in working order except the engine. It still contained 116 rounds of live ammo. I've since heard that the engine, a diesel, has been given new bearings (all it needed) and has been started! Go to www.mil.hiiumaa.ee/2009_09_14_kurtina_T-34-36/ for photos and text.

These little 1/48 armor kits really are getting better! I took possession of a HobbyBoss T-34/85 kit that is about as complete as that Eduard's Fw.190! This kit has a complete engine, 85mm breech, full interior hull and turret. It's the most detailed armor kit I've seen in some time, and it's under \$30. There is even a photo etch screen already attached to a styrene frame. Several markings, including North Vietnamese and Syrian, are provided. So far the only problem I can see is the lack of decal placement info other than for the box art Russian version. Now how will I open it up to show off that interior?

Kagero will soon release P-47 Vol.III which will come with masking foil. This seems to be a trait of several of the latest Kagero publications. I like the idea of either bonus decals, PE, masks, or now masking foil. It helps justify the price of the publication, even if it's reasonable.

This is the last regular meeting of 2006. Next month we'll meet at Mike and Sally Kachoris house for our annual Christmas get-together. Be sure to bring that "white elephant" gift for the exchange. Remember, it doesn't have to be anything special or "good". Just take something from your stash that you'll never build, sell or swap. This is the perfect way to pass it on.

Regular meetings will resume in January when we will elect new officers. Happy Thanksgiving to you all.

Milton

**Next Meeting
November 14, 2006**

*Austin Scale Modelers Society
Eric Choy
13213 Marro Drive
Austin, TX 78729*

