



# SPRUE EXAMINER



## An Oldie Moldy 1/25<sup>th</sup> T-34/85

Model by Pat Rourke  
Text and Photos by Eric Choy

Forty-two years ago, an upstart company in Japan was making its name producing WWII armor models. Their lineup of tanks was growing steadily every year, but they had yet to produce a Russian tank model. As late as the 1960s, the Soviet Union still kept a close lid on their WWII military hardware. It stood for a good reason; many of them remained in use by their satellite states and allies at the time.

Being a bit desperate and naïve, the young owner decided to go to the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo to ask for help. Needless to say, the Russians denied his request and showed him the door. The Japanese Police even detained and followed him home for his little visit to our number one Cold War enemy at the time!

All hope seemed lost until a year later. The owner noticed a small article in the newspaper reporting a captured tank on display in an Israeli town shortly after the Six Day War. Even though the newspaper photos were blurry, he figured it

must be a Soviet-made tank. So he immediately made arrangement to go see this war booty. A few weeks later, he finally got what he wanted in Israel: measurements and reference photos of a T-34/85 in service and action less than six months or so previously.

That was the true story of how Shunsaku Tamiya did the research on his company's first Russian tank. Most likely that trip makes the Tamiya 1/25<sup>th</sup> T-34/85 possible; the year stamp on the sprues shows 1969, a year after his trip to the Middle East!

For Pat Rourke, the BAR (or MG42) guy in our squad, the history of this kit also goes way back. He has it in this collection since high school but never get around tackling it. Last year before Thanksgiving when searching for something to build for 2009 Modelfiesta's show theme "Oldie Moldies" (any kit produced 25+ years ago), Pat decided to give this old kit a go.

Since this T-34/85 is an early Tamiya motorized kit, there are serious engineering problems that require substantial conversion to turn it into an accurate static model. There is also a major inconsistency in the parts: the turret is of post-

*(continued on page 4)*

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**Upcoming Events****Model Shows**

ReaperCon '09, Denton, TX	May 14-17
IPMS/NCT, Scalefest 09, Grapvine, TX	May 30
HMSNEO, 21 <sup>st</sup> Annual Tulsa Show, Tulsa, OK	June 5-6
IPMS KC Slammers, Heartland Model Car Nationals, Overland Park, MS	June 13-14
Squadron EagleQuest XVIII (formerly MasterCon), Lewisville, TX	June 25-27
IPMS/El Paso, Bassett Place Mall Show, El Paso, TX	August 9
<b>IPMS National Convention 2009, Columbus, OH</b>	<b>August 19-22</b>

**Air Shows**

Warbirds Over Addison, Cavanaugh Flight Museum, Addison, TX	May 16-17
Celina Balloon Festival, Celina, TX	June 27-30

**Local Events**

Tien Nguyen's Micro Art, Austin History Center	May 14
Battle For The Western Wall—WWII reenactment, Bellmead, TX	May 15-16
Close Assault 1944! Camp Mabry	May 23-24
Pacific Combat Living History Program - Nimitz Museum, Fredericksburg, TX	May 23-24
Memorial Day Program - Nimitz Museum, Fredericksburg, TX	May 25
Evening Band Concert - Nimitz Museum, Fredericksburg, TX	June 20
Pacific Combat Living History Program - Nimitz Museum, Fredericksburg, TX	July 4-5

**Support Our Troops!**

In support of the initiative to provide model kits, supplies and reference materials to our servicemen and women serving in combat zones in Iraq, IPMS/USA has elected to have **SFC Steven DeLong** as the point of contact for **The Iraq Model Network**. Any individual, IPMS chapter, or industry supporter who wishes to make a donation, please send it to: **Baghdad Hobby Club, c/o SFC Steven DeLong, HQ, MNC-I (FSC), 18th Airborne Corps, APO, AE 09342**.

SFC DeLong can also be reached via e-mail at: [steven.delong@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:steven.delong@iraq.centcom.mil)

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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 second Tuesday of each month except December. Dues for full membership are \$20 yearly. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. ASMS does not endorse the contents of any article.

## Mike's Montage...

In today's world, change seems to be occurring faster than ever. We seem to resist change when we get comfortable in the processes that we get used to. But to really experience the offerings in this ever changing world, you have to break free and try something new.

This also applies to our modeling skills; some will only build one subject type or use the same techniques. Doing so is fine. After all, it's your comfort zone. But to really embrace the world of model building and make it more enjoyable, I believe sometimes we need to diversify. Try building something out of your area of expertise. Apply those techniques that were presented in club meetings, modeling magazines or web forums. By doing so, not only will your skills improve, you'll also learn to appreciate the work of your peers. When you finish, you might even like the new avenue that you have chosen.

So give it a shot and try something new. You might be surprised.



Mike

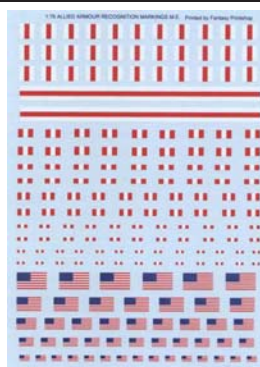
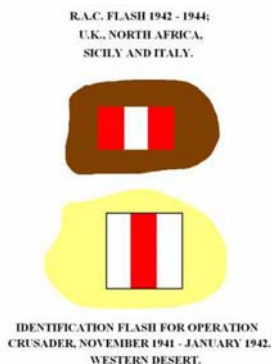
### Starmer's Armour 1/76<sup>th</sup> British & American Recognition Markings, M.E. 1941-43

Cost: £5 + £1.50 shipping

Reviewed by  
Eric Choy, IPMS #44323

Have you ever wondered how the red and white recognition flashes on early/mid-war British AFVs came about? I did last year while I was building my 1/48<sup>th</sup> Sherman III (M4A2). Unfortunately, I was too busy with finishing the tank, and I kept forgetting to look it up on the Internet. Last month I finally had a chance to ask Mike Starmer about it. Mr. Starmer should be no stranger to any armor modeling fan; he is the foremost expert on WWII British armor and has published numerous articles and books on the subject.

In no time I received chapters and verses from Mr. Starmer on the creation and usage of the Royal Armoured Corps (RAC) flashes. He also happened to mention one of the decal sheets his company Starmer Armour is producing has RAC flashes in various sizes for 1/76<sup>th</sup> models. I promptly ordered a copy for my future armor projects. With the buck-to-quid ratio at an all



time low lately, one must take full advantage of it to stock up anything from the land of hope and glory!

The top half of this particular 10cm x 15cm (approx. 5" x 6") decal sheet contains 33 white/red/white flashes and 104 red/white/red flashes in various sizes. Included also are two horizontal white/red/white stripes (3.75") for continuous edge applications. These flashes are

applicable to any British 8<sup>th</sup> Army AFV that operated in Middle East or Italy from 1941 to 1943.

The rest of the decal sheet contains 48 U.S. Stars and Stripes flags also in various sizes suitable for any American AFV that participated in Operation Torch, the Allied invasion of Sicily. Despite being marketed as 1/76<sup>th</sup> decals, I don't see any reason why they will not work on 1/35<sup>th</sup> models as well.

All decals are printed in perfect registration, and they appear thin and easy to use. I highly recommend this sheet to any WWII armor modeler.

Starmer Armour also offers the following decals in 1/76<sup>th</sup> scale:

- B.E.F. 1939-41 Divisional insignia and service flashes.
- B.E.F. 1939-41 Squadron symbols in 3 colors and range of sizes.
- Middle East 1941-45 Air recognition signs (RAF type roundels) in six sizes and two styles.
- U.S. Army stars and solid circles (Tunisia, Sicily and Italy) in white, 4" to 20" and 25" to 60".
- U.S. Army stars and solid circles (Tunisia, Sicily and Italy) in yellow, 4" to 20" and 25" to 60".
- British Army Squadron symbols and numbers, four colors, 6", 9" and 12".
- British Army Squadron symbols and numbers, four colors, 12", 15" and 18".
- British Army Squadron symbols and numbers, four colors, 18", and 21".
- British Army Squadron symbols and numbers, four colors, 24".
- British Army WD numbers in black for British and US AFVs in Middle East.
- British Army WD numbers in white for British armored cars and wheeled vehicles.
- British Army WD numbers in white for British tanks, carriers and self-propelled guns.
- British Army WD numbers in white for tanks, wheeled vehicles and self-propelled guns of US origin operated by British and Commonwealth Forces.
- Civillian style registration plates for 1939-40 British military vehicles (printed on fine art paper).
- U.S. and Allied M4 Sherman unit signs, codes, numerals and names plus ID marks (Europe 1944-45).

For pricing, ordering and shipping questions, please send e-mail inquiry to [mike\\_starmer@hotmail.com](mailto:mike_starmer@hotmail.com).

Eric



(An Oldie Moldy 1/25<sup>th</sup> T-34/85 continued)

war Czech production style while the hull is typical of WWII Russian design. Pat decided it was easier to fix the hull to match the turret than the other way around. That dictates Pat's tank to be post-war version instead of WWII vintage.

### Low Hull

The first thing Pat did was "de-motorized" this kit. He lowered the front of the hull by 1/16" and got rid of the big raised area on the bottom plate of the front hull that housed the motorized mechanism. The screw holes underneath the tank were filled as well as the sponsons.

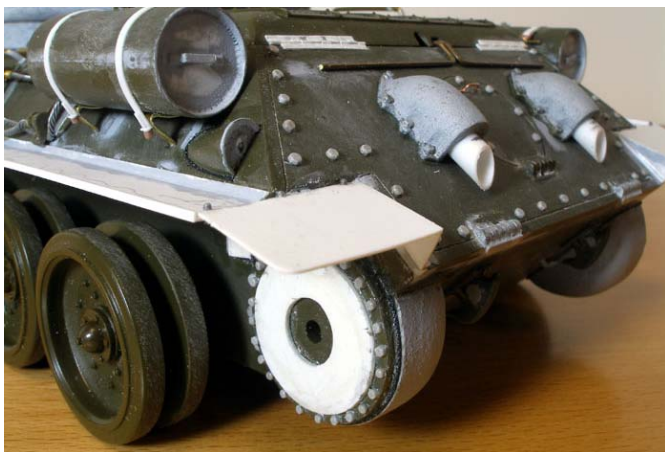
The original suspension is meant to be workable, and Tamiya provides tiny little springs to make each road wheel bounce up and down. This toy-like feature may amuse many, but they are of no use to a static modeler. So Pat glued them into positions where he estimated the road wheels would go. While he was at it, he also drilled out all the holes on the idler wheels.

The kit wheels are okay. They are the post-war solid rubber non-pierce kind that are commonly seen on late-model T-34s. To make each hub cap flush with the wheel, he cut the poly-cap in half and glued the wheel to the suspension arm with Gator Glue before attaching the hub cap.

The kit tracks are also the workable kind for motorization. They were designed to fit into the front wheel sprockets, but because the drive bars were molded wrong on the sprockets, the track teeth were hopelessly undersized. Pat figured it would take forever to correct that, and since the tracks are pretty much hidden from sight on the finished model, he left them alone.



The rear of the tank also received major attention from Pat. The transmission housings were completely rebuilt to correct the undersizing problem. The exhaust pipes were also scratchbuilt out of plastic tubing, and the armor covers were rebuilt with A+B putty to make them resemble the thicker post-war version.



### Upper Hull

Before starting construction of the upper hull, Pat had to give the tank a "facial" first. Apparently all the vertical surfaces on the hull and turret were cast in a peculiar pebbly finish. All of that had to be scraped and sanded smooth. This process took some time but was necessary or, according to Pat, you'll get a very "fuzzy tank!"

The only part that retains the original texture is the engine housing on the top of the rear hull. Surprisingly, it resembles the cast iron look that Pat prefers.

Once all the vertical surfaces were cleaned, Pat replaced the kit fenders with scratchbuilt ones in sheet styrene. The new fenders are now in three pieces (instead of the one-piece junk provided in the kit) with the proper forward lips.

To make the engine deck more realistic, Pat drilled out the square openings of the screen bracket with a Dremel tool and replaced the screen with HO scale aluminum railroad chain link fence. Hinges were also added to the louvre cover. Every bolt on the engine deck was replaced with Grandt Line plastic ones as the molded on kit parts are either over or under sized.



All the things that goes on side of the hull had to be repositioned as they are all at the wrong places. The auxiliary gas tank brackets were rebuilt with brass and finer details added. All the plastic handrails were replaced with brass rods, and for the tire loops, Pat used copper wires.



The headlights came from Pat's spare parts box, and the light guards are copper wire put together with super-glue. The cable head retainer springs were also scratchbuilt as none is provided in the kit. The hinges on the driver's hatch are wrong on the kit, and they need to be replaced.

The kit machine gun looks like a plastic tube sticking out of the housing, so Pat rebuilt the lip housing, textured the gun mantlet, and added a muzzle break to resemble the real thing.

### Turret

The basic shape of the turret is there, but the armored roof needs to be heighten by 1/4". The access panel to the gun is molded all wrong, and Pat had to rebuild it from scratch. The opening of the kit barrel needs enlargement, but otherwise it is a okay. All the

hinges on the turret, on the other hand, need rebuilding. Pat also scratchbuilt all the access panels and added weld marks.

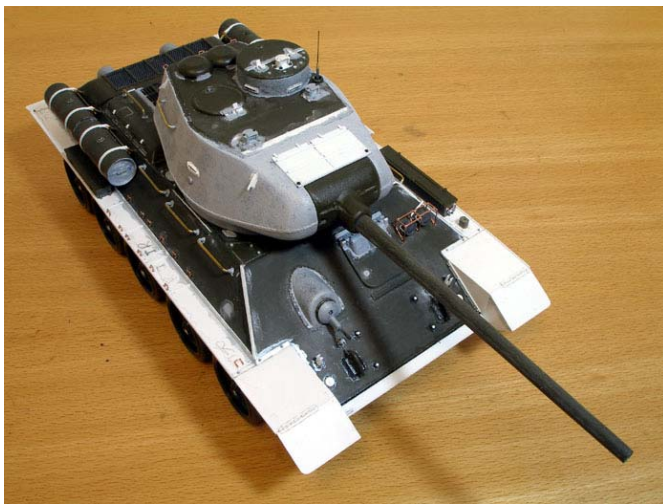
The bulge on the side of the turret is an auxiliary engine installed on late model T-34/85s to motorize the turret. Pat built that up with A+B putty to the proper shape and covered the sides of the turret with Tamiya putty and liquid glue to simulate cast texturing.



Numerous items on the turret, such as commander copular, pistol port covers, hinges on the loader's hatch, armored scope guards, and periscope housings, were all scratchbuilt because the kit parts are overscaled with incorrect details. The top of the "twin peak" ventilation domes were sanded flat to look like the post-war version.



To finish things off, Pat scratchbuilt the turret hooks with sheet styrene and made them look like they were welded onto the turret.



**Painting**

Most Czech produced T-34/85s were exported to Middle Eastern countries, and since Pat had enough of painting monotone Green on Russian tanks, he decided to paint it in Egyptian Army scheme.

Pat mixed several Tamiya acrylic colors to create the pinkish tan that was used on Egyptian T-35/85s deployed to the Sinai Peninsula in 1967. Washes and drybrushing were done with artist oil paints. Because this model is so much bigger than what Pat used to work with (his favorite scale is 1/35<sup>th</sup>), Pat tried to paint his tank in scale and did not want to panel-fade it too much to avoid making it look like a toy.

Several people had asked Pat why his tank did not carry any unit marking or numbers on the turret. According to his research, many color photos from period newsreels show Egyptian tanks in battle have none of the black arabic numbers that were painted for ceremonial occasions. So he decided to leave it plain to show it is not a parade tank.



Putting colors on the tracks turned out to be a major issue. The old vinyl tracks did not hold enamel or straight-from-the-bottle acrylic paint well at all. After several experiments, Pat found Tamiya paint thinned with denatured alcohol seemed to stick to the tracks best. So he painted them in a rusty reddish brown color, accentuated with Humbrol Buffable Steel, and applied a homemade mud color wash over them.

**Conclusion**

It took Pat two months to finish this project. Most of the time he spent was on making custom detail parts as there are no aftermarket parts to rely on. He decided to went all out on this model because he doubt he'll ever build another kit in 1/25<sup>th</sup> scale again. Well, that was before Tamiya brought back their Centurion and Chieftain kits. I wonder if he's going to change his mind now. 🐸

*Eric*







## Monogram 1/48<sup>th</sup> P-47 Donation Needed

Starting next month (June), Tim Robb will be conducting a five-week "Scale Model 101" class at the San Marcos Library every Wednesday night. In this "semester," Tim has chosen **Monogram's 1/48<sup>th</sup> P-47** as the subject for his "students" to build. He has in his possession five of these P-47 kits already, but he would like to have five more in case the turnout is heavier than usual. If you or anyone that you know of can part the Monogram kit for this noble cause, please bring it to the next meeting.

Tim is not picky, so either bubble top or razorback version of the P-47 will work just fine. For more information, Tim can be reached via phone (512) 392-0611 or via e-mail [TRobb@mccoys.com](mailto:TRobb@mccoys.com).

*Editor*

## 2009-2010 Monthly Meeting Program Schedule

As you all aware, we're doing our monthly meeting presentations a little bit differently this year; instead of asking members to volunteer, we are "drafting" our monthly presenters from the membership lottery. Whoever chosen can either present a program himself/herself or invite someone to come give us a talk. Program subject is not limited to modeling related topics (e.g. favorite tip/technique, research/reference material, model collection). It can also be personal experience that inspires us to build (e.g. recent trip to a model show/museum, wartime stories).

At our last meeting, our VP Rick Herrington had chosen the following fortunate members to present programs for the rest of the year and the first two months of 2010:

May	<b>Russ Holm</b>
June	<b>Ion Tesu</b>
July	<b>"Bondo" Phil Brandt</b>
August	<b>Bill Delk</b>
September	<b>Rick Herrington</b>
October	<b>Kathy Roady</b>
November	<b>Mike Kachoris</b>
January	<b>Eric Choy</b>
February	<b>Tim Robb</b>

If your name is on the list and you know your program topic already, please notify Rick and I so it can be published in this newsletter and on our website.

*Editor*

**USAAF NEWSREELS 1944-1945**

Victory Film Productions presents:

**EXPANSION TO AIR POWER:** 1944. On the growth of the AAF from 1939 to 1944. Animated diagrams trace increases in personnel, planes, missions, and appropriations between flashes of world situations affecting these increases. Russian German pact is signed, Germany invades Poland, France, and other nations. Pearl Harbor is attacked, U.S. planes fight in Europe, Africa, and the Pacific. Japanese convoy is bombed and strafed, Pantelleria is bombed, Germany is bombed night and day. Estimates extent of AAF activities in 1944. BW, 43 min.

**USAAF NEWSREELS 1944-1945:** Airborne invasion maneuvers England. Allied air front invasion bombers. Invasion B-24's and B-17's fly through Iwak, B-29 raid on Japan, Battle of France, Red Devil paratroopers: World salutes heroes who stood alone. Air giants speed Pacific war, Remember Arnhem, Truth about Ploesti, B-29's open air war on Japan, Salpan raid, Battle of the Bulge, Buzz bombs, Norden bombight, Corsador, Little Tiger, Air pickup rescue, Bomber girls, Germany after defeat. BW, 62 min.

TRT: 1 Hour, 45 min.

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**VICTORY FILMS**

**USAAF NEWSREELS 1944 - 1945**

**ARMY AIR FORCES NEWSREELS**

**1944 TO 1945**

**DVD**

## Victory Films USAAF Newsreels 1944-45 MSRP \$29.95

Reviewed by  
Floyd S. Werner, Jr., IPMS #26266

The final years of WWII showed impressive growth in USAAF's planes and personnel. The latest release from Victory Films focuses on the weekly newsreels that were played in theaters around the United States in late 1944 and 1945. This period covered the invasion of Europe, the beginning of the B-29 raids on Japan, through the end of the war. It is interesting to notice the differences between the newsreels made during pre-war and the final years. By this stage of the war, the American public was getting weary of the fighting.

The first newsreel is titled "Expansion to Air Power." It tells the story of the fifteen Air Forces around the world at the end of 1943. What is really amazing is that in 1939 there were only 36 airfields within the US and four overseas. The Army Air Force (AAF) had 24,724 personnel with just 2,402 aircraft, of which only half were combat types. In contrast, Germany had 8,000, Japan had 4,000, and Italy had 3,000. By June 1943, the AAF numbers had increased to 2,300,000 personnel operating 57,000 planes. The growth rate is just phenomenal.

Equally impressive is the build up of AT-6s by the Soviets. Literally, a thousand bombers were being produced per week. There are plenty of B-24s, P-38s, B-25s and B-17s shown in operations. Armor guys shouldn't feel left out as there are plenty of German tanks from the early war period.

"Airborne Invasion" is the second newsreel which highlights the parachutist of the airborne. Ike and Monty are prominently in this newsreel. Lots of great footage of the C-47s, gliders as well as parachutists.

The first air raid on Berlin is next, and there are plenty of B-17s, of which 40 planes were lost, shown throughout the mission, including crash landings.



B-26s with lots of flaks and fighters are the highlights of the next sequence. Model builders will find the weathering patterns on the aircraft to be of great interest. There is plenty of footage for diorama modelers. Great nose art is another highlight of this sequence. The belly landing by a B-26 is very impressive.

If you like Bf.110, you will enjoy watching them flying in formation in the next sequence. Also featured here is Ike firing the guns of a P-47. This newsreel also has lots of B-26s.

Pacific Theater of Operations is not forgotten on this video. The first photos of B-29s flying out of China are shown as well as a photo op of Chennault with a Super Fortress. The size of a B-29 is apparent, especially when it is compared to common things such as a city block. The factory photos are quite nice also.

B-29s out of Saipan are featured in a newsreel that also includes a Japanese retaliation attack and some very interesting nose art.

A newsreel on the Battle of France is next with gliders, C-47s, and a spectacular P-51B in flight shot. The ships of the invasion fleet can be seen, and the quantity is quite impressive.

Operation Market Garden is discussed in the next newsreel. Amazingly, the loss of so many parachutists is just glossed over. So much for the "truth" of the newsreels. The chalk nose art on the gliders is really interesting.

The Battle of the Bulge is also touched on as it occurred during this time frame. If you listen to the newsreel, you would think the situation wasn't too bad as the fighter bomber umbrella was always there. There is a P-47 crash sequence that is spectacular to say the least.

The V-1 flying bomb is shown... made in the US of A! Yes, there is a newsreel that shows V-1s being made and test flown in the US. The Loon project is unique, and the internal footage of the assembly will be very useful for the modeler. The V-1 taking off with a B-26 chase plane banking over the trolley is impressive flying on the bomber pilot's part.

Little Tiger Joe is one of those newsreels that personalizes the "friends" of our allies. A four year old Chinese orphan, who is taken under the trust of some soldiers, is just too cute to not like.




Completed with uniform and pop gun, he was given the official title of Assistant First Sergeant. Too cute.

The first US helicopters are seen being used. Also the first use of a snatch and drag recovery system is shown. A sheep is the first one to try it. Notice the human guinea pig didn't look too nervous at all.

The final sequence covers the painting of pinup artwork on the bombers. You can see how it is actually done, and like the newsreel says, the ladies are swell for boosting morale. How times have changed.

This DVD, like the rest of the great films from Victory Films, is full of information and great footage. The quality of the newsreels is the best I've seen. If you want to see what the audiences saw in the theater, then this is a must have. With much footage that hasn't been seen before, this video is a valuable historical research tool. The late war has always fascinated me, and this DVD, as well as the rest of the series, is a real value for the money. Highly recommended.

Thanks to Victory Films and Wade Meyers for the review copy. Purchase of this video can be made on-line at <http://wademeyersart.tripod.com/id73.html>. Let them know you heard about it here. 

Floyd

## Scalefest 2009



Saturday,  
May 30, 2009  
9am - 5pm

Exhibit Hall  
@  
Grapevine Convention  
Center  
1209 South Main St.  
Grapevine, TX 76051

Admission:

Adults \$9.00  
Juniors \$1.00  
(ages 6 - 17)

Model Registrations Fees:

Adults \$2.00 each model  
Juniors \$1.00 each model

Contact Info:

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Scalefest 2009  
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Phone: 940-597-9160  
E-Mail: [aseang@hotmail.com](mailto:aseang@hotmail.com)  
[www.ipmsnct.net](http://www.ipmsnct.net)



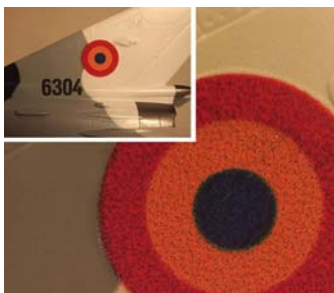
## Do It Yourself Decals Eduard 1/48<sup>th</sup> Albatros D.III in Turkish Markings

by Ken Murphy, IPMS/Seattle

Each December, IPMS Seattle holds a group build contest. The subject for this year was the WWI Albatros. A great choice I thought, since the colors and schemes are endless.

I started working on the Eduard Weekend Edition D.III, planning on doing one of those flashy schemes, when I received my copy of "Small Air Forces Observer." This excellent black and white newsletter covers interesting aircraft and histories of small air forces worldwide (if you're interested in this sort of thing, contact the publisher, Jim Sanders at [saf@redshift.com](mailto:saf@redshift.com)). I was enjoying an article focusing on the air war in the little known conflict between Turkey and Greece just after WWI, when to my surprise the author mentioned the role played by a few Albatros D.III's! How cool is that? An Albatros in bright red Turkish crescent and star markings would certainly stand out on a table full of black crosses. There was just one problem – where could I find decals of such an obscure subject? The only real choice was to make the decals myself.

It's not as though I hadn't done it before. I had just recently made decals for a Romanian MiG-21 with Testors Custom Decal System using decal paper for ink jet printers. They turned out okay, but I was less than thrilled with the sharpness and density – as in basically there isn't any. Ink jet inks are transparent and they are just that on the decal. In order to get the kind of density I needed, I printed up the roundels on white decal paper first, and then placed two more copies printed on transparent over them to finally get a "solid" color. They look



okay at a normal distance, but close up, they look a bit soft and you can see the dithering pattern (dithering being the dot pattern created by the printer to blend and overlap the primary colors to create other shades and tones. The coarser the resolution of the printer, the more pronounced the dither).

If you have tried the Testors system yourself, you've probably had mixed reactions as well. It seems to be fine for basic colors, solid red, blue, yellow, and black, in other words, colors that can be made up of 100% cyan, magenta, yellow or black. The trouble comes when you have a color such as orange that's composed of say, 100% yellow and 50% magenta. The printer "dithers" a dot pattern of 50% magenta in the yellow, which at most printer resolutions is plainly visible. I found that overlapping copies such as I did for the MiG will blur the dithering a bit and deepen the color, but it also makes for a more blurry edge to the image.

I certainly considered these issues when I contemplated creating the decals for the Albatros. Since I was going to be doing something in solid red (100% magenta, 100% yellow), I thought I might just get away with using the Testors system, but just as I was about to take a deep breath and give it a go, my modeling buddy Scott Kruize turned me on to a new product: BEL INC laser print decal paper (<http://www.decalspaper.com:80/>)

Wow! Something you could run through a laser printer! I was excited for two reasons: much higher printer resolutions and much denser, more opaque print. As the site declares:

*"Create your own water slide model decals for planes, trains & automobiles! Develop your own water mount model decals for detailed model projects like model railroads, die-cast cars, ships, vehicles, rockets, airplanes, etc. Water slip decals can help to customize your models with signature stripes, logos, initials, and signs to make each creation an original."*

The paper works with ALPS printers, laser printers, and color copiers and comes in:

- Clear Paper: White backing paper with clear lacquer film.
- Blue Paper: Blue backing paper with clear lacquer film.
- White Paper: White paper with white film.

They are sold in packs of 25, 50, and 75 at about a dollar a sheet, less for the larger packs and you can select any combination of papers in your order.

You can use clear decal paper for most lettering. However, most printers or copiers do NOT print white except for the ALPS 5000 printer. If you are using an ALPS and printing white, they suggest their blue decal laser paper (with clear coat) so that the white print will be easier to see on the blue background. The ALPS printer utilizes dry ink to print single colors or multiple combinations of white, gold, silver and many other colors. However, if you do not have an ALPS printer, you can use their "white" paper for graphics that have a white color background.



Note: the paper is slightly thicker than normal copier paper, so be sure to feed it into the printer one sheet at a time. Be sure to mention this fact if you go to Kinko's or some other print shop. Also I recommend that you test a couple of sheets with your printer or copier to ensure compatibility prior to producing multiple copies, and make sure you're printing on the correct side of the paper!

After the prints are made, I use a light coating of clear lacquer or acrylic clear to seal and protect the decals. The manufacturer suggests Krylon Crystal Clear finishing spray. Further instructions on how to use the paper are on the website.

Before I could try it out of course, I would have to create the artwork. Not a problem in my case. I'm a professional graphic designer by trade, and I have the kind of tools I would need. But how do you do it?

Well, there are a number of ways to get started in the Do It Yourself Decal industry. In fact, you don't even need a computer. If you can find an image of the graphic you want to use, you could take it to Kinko's and make a copy. Of course, you'd want to size it correctly. My method for this is to measure the model as accurately as possible, then copy the image in several sizes, going about 5-10% larger and smaller than my measurement. I then make a copy on plain paper, cut out the image and place it on the model. I often find that it's one of the other sizes that fit best.

Once I've identified the winners, I make a copy of them on the decal paper and I'm on my way. The advantage of this method is that it is cheap and fast. The downside is that the images are copies of copies and quality suffers accordingly. For that reason alone, I prefer to do my own artwork. So how do you do it?

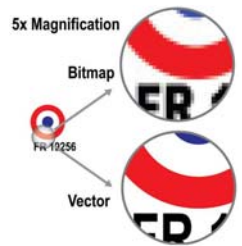
First of all, be aware that you do not need to be an artist to do this! Building roundels, crosses, numbers, or stencils requires no artistic skills or ability. All you need is access to some tools. First of course, you need a computer. It doesn't have to be super hot, most of this stuff is not memory intensive. It helps if you have a scanner, or access to one. I have one of those combo scanner/printers: an Epson Stylus CX4800. It's an ink jet printer, so I can do the Testors stuff here at home and the scanner does a very nice job up to letter size. We'll see why that's handy in a moment.

Again, you don't have to own these things. Your local library has computers available, and maybe you have a relative (say your hyper-computer savvy son or granddaughter) who can help you out.

Next, you'll need a graphics program to draw with. I use Adobe Illustrator, which is a very capable professional tool. Unless you plan on going into the business, I don't recommend it, as it is quite expensive at \$600! Corel Draw is another great program with tons of features, but it too is pricey at nearly \$400. But what if you'd rather spend that kind of money on models rather than

## Bitmaps vs Vectors

If you don't know the difference between bitmaps (paint) and vectors (draw), perhaps a short explanation will help. Vector graphics use geometrical forms such as lines, curves and shapes, which are all based upon mathematical equations, to represent images on your computer. Vector graphic formats differ from raster graphics (often referred to as bit maps), in which the images are an array of pixels, as is typically used for the representation of photographic images. The advantage of using vector tools is that you can create using shapes and forms that remain sharp and clear at any size. Type manipulation is also sharp and flexible. Raster or bitmap editing tools can be more intuitive, but output is severely degraded if the image is enlarged. You may have noticed how images degrade when you print them out from the web. A comparison between the two might be this: vectors are like cutting out shapes with a scissors and placing them on top of one another like a collage.



Raster images are like finger painting; you smear the pixels around 'til you get what you want. But the best thing is to use them together, as we shall see. In the meantime, for more detailed information about this hot topic, visit the Wikipedia article at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vector\\_graphics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vector_graphics)

software? Well there are a lot of alternatives from cheap to down right free.

Many computers these days come with some sort of drawing program in their software package. Check to see if you have one and if it's easy to use. But if you want to get a program more powerful than the Etch-o-Sketch that came with your computer, you can take a look at what's available out there. Wikipedia gives a nice list of programs. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_vector\\_graphics\\_editors](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_vector_graphics_editors))

Of the Vector Graphic Editors, the one that seemed to me to be the easiest to use and most capable is **Inkscape**. It is an open source program, and best of all it's FREE! Just go to this site to download it (<http://www.inkscape.org/>). I was able to draw the roundel, cross and serial number in just a few minutes of fiddling around with it.

Another recent "find" of mine is a FREE web application call **Sumo Paint**. You don't download it, but use it right off the web, so it doesn't take up space on your computer. You can find it at their website <http://www.sumopaint.com/web/>. This is a bitmap editor program much like Photoshop. If you prefer to "paint" rather than "draw," this might be a better choice.

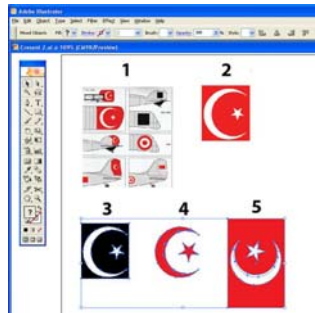
It helps to be familiar with these types of programs, but even if you aren't, I'm sure you will be able to figure it out with the Help feature and some trial and error.

Now that you have the equipment, the software and materials, what's next? Here are the steps I took to create my decals:

As you can see in this screen shot from Illustrator:

1) I did my research – finding this illustration in "Military Aircraft Insignia of the World" by John Cochrane & Stuart Elliot, which I scanned, then

2) cropped the part of the insignia I wanted and placed it in Illustrator.



3) I was able to use Illustrator's tracing function to trace the crescent and star creating a vector graphic (as indicated by the blue lines and squares that represent the curves and lines of the vector).

4) I removed the background square and changed the fill color to red (just to check that I had what I was looking for, I could have used any color), after which I

5) rotated the image, drew a box around it, colored it red and changed the red crescent to white to complete the image.

I used a similar approach for the black square and script for the fuselage sides. In this case however, I needed to find some way to recreate the Arabic script. I decided to do it the old fashioned way, as you can see in the second screen shot:

1) I enlarged the photo,

2) made a print and traced it with tracing paper and pencil and scanned the results

3) which I then traced using the tracing function.

4) I cleaned up the image to smooth the lines using a smoothing tool, then

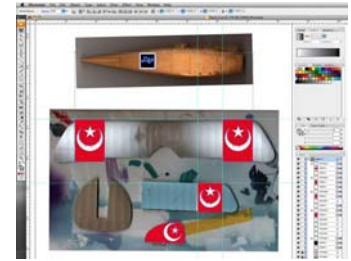
5) drew a square and placed the script inside.



If you were using a raster or bit map editor instead of a vector program, you can use the scanned image to "paint" over it, creating your graphic. If you already have a scanned image, why can't you just use that? Of course, you can – if the image is of acceptable quality. Most images you may want to use may be of poor quality, due to printing dot patterns, lack of color

(black and white pictures such as I was working from) or just generally not a crisp copy. The whole point of doing this process outlined above is to give you a clean, sharp image.

With the insignia now made, I needed to size them. In this case, rather than guesstimate, I just taped the wing, tail and fuselage on a piece of scrap plastic and scanned them. I then took the scan and placed it in the file with my insignia and used it to size the decals.



Then it was just a matter of making the copies on the laser decal paper. I used clear film, so I had to paint the areas under the decals white, which created one last problem. The decals were just a hair wider than the white areas on the wing,

leaving a dark edge. I solved this by aligning the decal exactly on one edge of the white, then took an X-acto knife and gently rocked it along the other edge to cut off the excess.



The new laser decal film is excellent. The laser printer gives a nice, bright, dense copy. Using a vector program allows you to create crisp, sharp graphics. The great news here is that these tools will allow us to create any images, any insignia, any flashy graphics we can think of. We are no longer restricted to whatever we can find in the piles of decal sets at the hobby shop. Not that I have anything against the great decals they provide. In most every case, buying a special decal set for something you want to build is the easiest and fastest way to decal-up. But when there's a subject that you just have to do and there's nothing out there, you're not out of luck anymore. ✈️

Ken





## JG-Tarleton: A 1/32<sup>nd</sup> Bf.109 Fighter Group in Central Texas

Back in January of 2007, Milton and I made a trip to Killeen to report a model building class at **Tarleton State University-Central Texas**. **Jim Fullingim**, a good friend of Milton, started this course not only to teach students aviation history but also to arouse interest in scale model building. Two years later, I'm happy to report his noble creation is still alive, well, and being offered on a regular basis (every Spring semester).

Under the title of "**Historical Applications in Aircraft Design**," Jim designed this accredited elective course around the building of an aircraft model. Utilizing **Floyd S. Werner, Jr.**'s DVD as the text, each student is required to complete a Hasegawa 1/32<sup>nd</sup> Bf.109 model in order to receive a passing grade. Now this may sound easy for us modelers, but for young lads and gals this day and age, it could cause more headache than writing a research paper!

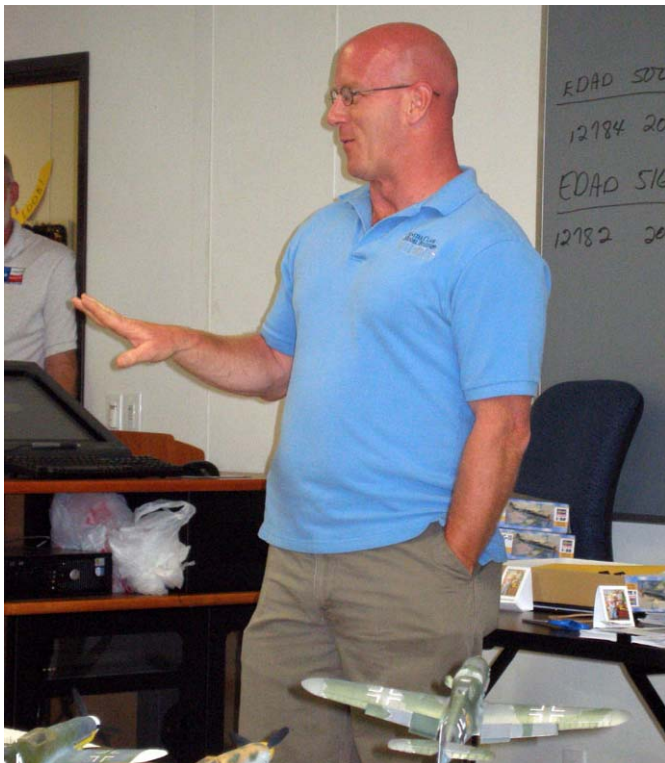
As before, the course culminated with a model contest on the night of the final meeting. This time I managed to drag Russ with me to attend this event, and I had a good reason for us to make the trip: Jim had invited Floyd to come down from Baltimore to speak with his students. For those who are not aware, Floyd was an active member of both Centex Modelers and ASMS when he was stationed at Fort Hood in the 1990s. So this speech tour is more like a homecoming trip for our Bf.109 aficionado!



Jim Fullingim and Floyd took turns addressing the students.



Twenty one students proudly showing off their 1/32<sup>nd</sup> Bf.109s.



Man of the hour: Floyd S. Werner, Jr.

As far as we know, this course is the only one in the nation that blends college school work with our hobby. We sincerely hope someone would take notice of Jim's excellent idea and expand it to other fields of studies. For all of us, it was nice to meet or see Floyd again. If only we could entice him with his once favorite restaurant/gentleman's club so he'll stay a bit longer here in Austin... ✈️

Editor

## Old Rumors & New Kits

Veteran ASMS member Floyd Werner stopped off in Austin for a short visit earlier this month before traveling north to Killeen where he was guest at a day long group build session and speaker at Jim Fullingim's college class.

It was great to have the opportunity to visit with Floyd. He and wife Vonnie were active participants in many ASMS activities before Floyd retired from the Army and moved out of state. He is now in Baltimore, Maryland, flying helicopters for the Baltimore PD and chasing bad guys. While in Austin, Floyd enjoyed a trip to King's and some good Tex Mex.

Floyd spent some time at the Fort Hood museum taking notes and measurements on some helos. Since he has his own line of resin parts now (check out [www.wernerswings.com](http://www.wernerswings.com)), I suspect we'll see some more resin detail parts.

Dragon has a new-tool Sd.Kfz.7/1 Flakvierling kit that looks very good even to this almost non-armor builder. And of course it's 1/35<sup>th</sup> scale. Alpine Miniatures has a set of German infantry (2), and Legend Production has a Panzer IV Stowage set and an M1A2 (A1) TUSK conversion.

There aren't a lot of "new" aircraft models at the moment, but that could change at any time. Hasegawa's 1/48<sup>th</sup> TA-4J has finally made it to the shops. It's a good kit, and I suspect the release of additional markings pretty soon. If you are building this one, check out Hyperscale's Forum. I've heard of an error in the instructions regarding orientation of one part. Chances are it wouldn't affect the appearance of the finished model.

Hasegawa has announced a 1/32<sup>nd</sup> Ki-44 Shoki "Tojo," and I expect it to be released anytime now. It will be a good companion for the Frank and Tony. It was a small airplane, so doing it in 1/32<sup>nd</sup> won't take a lot of shelf or work space.

Hasegawa has also released an 1/48<sup>th</sup> F-16I Sufa IAF kit, obviously based on their very nice F-16 series. They have also released an F-8E in French Navy markings.

Don't forget the new accessories. True Details has a set of resin Misawa tip-tanks for their 1/32<sup>nd</sup> F-80C, a must detail if you are doing a late Korean War F-80. Aires has a resin cockpit for the 1/32<sup>nd</sup> Ki-84 Frank from Hasegawa.

Since the last newsletter, the Pacific Coast Models Ta.152H-1 has appeared and seems to be popular. For a 1/32<sup>nd</sup> kit, it is priced right and seems to have ample detail. The kit has its detractors, but most model builders will have no problem making it into a convincing model of the Ta.152.

Special Hobby surprised us with a 1/32<sup>nd</sup> He.100D-1. There haven't been many model kits done of this rival to the Bf.109. Only 25 or so were actually built, so marking choices are

limited UNLESS you want to do a "what if" model. It's often called the "propaganda fighter."

Special Hobby also released a 1/32<sup>nd</sup> Nieuport 16 of the *Lafayette Escadrille*. They also have a 1/72<sup>nd</sup> Hawker Tempest Mk.II, of the IAF or RPAF (Indian or Pakistan).

Trumpeter has three more releases; big airplanes in varying scales. First, two 1/32<sup>nd</sup> kits; the Eurofighter followed by the BAC Lightning F1A/F3. Then, there is a new kit of the Tu16K-10 Badger. This one is in 1/144<sup>th</sup>, so it will fit on the shelf or the workbench. I like 1/144<sup>th</sup> for big multi-engine aircraft. Speaking of which, the Revell RoG C-17 is back in stock.

ICM has released another version of their LaGG-3. I'm pretty sure it's the same plastic that I used for the series 4 model, but this time it's for the later series 7 to 11. Look for different markings. I strongly recommend testing an unneeded decal to see if it breaks. If it does, get a bottle of Microscale Liquid Decal Film and give the marks you want a good coat. It saves decals and patience at the same time!


For you ship modelers, Fujimi has announced a new 1/350<sup>th</sup> IJN aircraft carrier *Shokaku*. Aoshima will release a light cruiser *Nara* and Tamiya will do a heavy cruiser *Nagara*. Look for the new Fujimi IJN battleship *Ise*. All are 1/350<sup>th</sup> scale.

For Japanese aircraft fans, there's a new book out that you may find useful. It's *Aircraft of the IJN; Land Based Aviation from 1929-1945*.

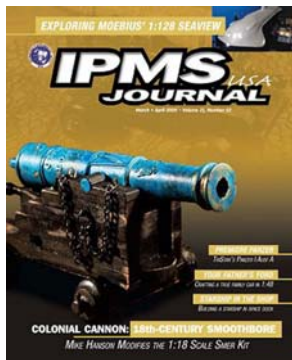
For the last few weeks, modeling news on the Internet has been centered on a model manufacturing firm in New Zealand. The firm, Wingnut Wings, is reported to be associated with Peter Jackson, the movie producer who gave us Lord of the Rings and plans to do The Hobbit in the near future. Jackson is a fan of WWI, and has a company that restores and manufactures flying 1:1 replicas.

An announcement that his production company would do a remake of The Dambusters was made last week. The Dambusters chronicled the mission to destroy the dams in the Ruhr Valley in WWII. Since there are only two flyable Lancasters left, Jackson has had to make a 1:1 model to use for ground shots. I'm sure the computer graphics people will be busy doing the rest.

So, what does this have to do with modeling? No, I don't expect a new Lanc. But Wingnut Wings has released a series of four very respectable 1/32<sup>nd</sup> WWI aircraft and has announced six more. Unfortunately, they aren't sold via distributor, so don't look for them in a hobby shop. You get them only through direct sales from the company.

That's all for May. Don't forget the Dallas Show—make that Grapevine! Summer is here and paint dries fast. Go build something! 





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### IPMS Journal

Mar/Apr 2009  
Volume 21, Issue 2

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- **1940 Ford Convertible** — Polishing the old Lindberg 1/32 kit, by Gil Hodges;
- **Spaceship Tune-up** — Combining Blue Moon and AMT kits in a Star Trek space dock, by Scott Scariot;
- **Cañón de ánima Lisa: Captian Alonso** — Turning the Smer kit into an 18<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish smoothbore cannon, by Mike Hanson;
- **Voyage To The Building Of The Seaview** — Building the new Moebius Models 1/128<sup>th</sup> TV submarine, by George Mustafa;
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