



SPRUE EXAMINER®

Newsletter of The Austin Scale Modelers Society

March 2015

www.austinsms.org

Build A Tank by Aaron Smischney

[A guide for the seasoned modeler and new guy.]

So you want to build a tank? Congratulations and welcome to the best modeling subject out there! Tanks are great. They come in all sorts of sizes and shapes, and you can finish them parade clean or beat the heck out of them. Maybe this is your first model? Or, perhaps you have built a lot of models but want to try out a new subject? You are in luck because this guide will cover both!

The first section will be in purchasing basic model tools (for the new builders) while the second part will go over how to pick your first tank for best results. Please note that this is just going over what you need in order to get started and pick your first model. I hope to expand this into three total articles this year: one article on preparation, another on building, and finally, one on painting.

(continued on page four)



Austin Scale Modelers Society (ASMS) is a chartered chapter of International Plastic Modelers Society (IPMS/USA).

ASMS meets on the third Thursday of each month. Annual dues for full membership are \$25/individual or \$30/family.

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author. It is intended for educational purposes only. ASMS does not endorse the contents of any article.

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Upcoming Events

Model Shows

TigerFest XXI, Kenner, Louisiana http://ipmsneworleans.wix.com/flyingtiger#!_site/events	3.28.15
ModelMania 2015, Stafford, Texas http://www.ipms-houston.org/	4.25.15
Cajun Model Fest, Baton Rouge, Louisiana http://www.brscalenodelers.com/	5.16.15
ScaleFest, Region VI IPMS Convention, Grapevine, Texas www.ipmsnct.net	5.30.15

Local Club Meetings

Hill Country Outlaws Model Railroading, King's Hobby, Austin, TX	4.11.15
Austin Armor Builders Society, Austin, Texas http://www.austinarmorbuilders.com	4.01.15
Austin Model Cars, King's Hobby Shop, Austin, Texas	4.02.15
CenTex Scale Modeler's, Killeen, Texas http://www.centexscalemodelers.org/	3.19.15
Lone Star Figure Modeler's, San Marcos Library, San Marcos, TX	4.11.15

Other Events

Build N Bull Day, King's Hobby Shop, Austin, Texas	3.21.15
Pioneer Flight Museum Fly-In, Kingsbury, Texas pioneerflightmuseum.org/	5.02.15

IPMS/USA Support the Troops Initiative

The IPMS/USA initiative was established to provide model kits, supplies and reference materials to our servicemen and women serving in combat zones, recovering in hospitals, and rehabilitating in specialized facilities.

The program is expanding into other areas as well. Some local programs take place in USO facilities, some are centered around active duty personnel and are scattered across the country.

The IPMS/USA Support The Troops program is still going full-tilt. The national program director is Jon Emery and his email address is: www.models4troops@gmail.com

Jon is accepting any and all contributions and is sharing them with all of the active programs around the country.

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Message From The Prez**Randy Bungardner**

Welcome to March and the spring-like weather and extra daylight that comes with it. I trust everyone is rested up from the hour we lost, and furiously working on something to make up for that lost time. Our last meeting was a good one – great turnout, great conversation, and lots of models on the table. Let's keep up the great work and have some more fun!

Last meeting three new ideas were introduced for awards/contests. Two of them, the Model of the Year and Most Prolific Modeler, were hands' down favorites. That is, except for Tim. He says he just wanted to make my first go at President not so easy. We are underway tabulating the entrants. The third reached a bit of a sticking point as members wanted to know more about the criteria for winning Member of the Year. Mike Lamm did a great job of consolidating and writing down the criteria and we'll be discussing it at our upcoming meeting.

At that meeting we also discussed a field trip and agreed that the date will be Saturday, May 2nd. We'll be visiting Williams Brothers Models in Round Rock. It will be a "hands-on" experience as we get up close and personal with the process of manufacturing a model kit. Everything from the little beads of polystyrene through packaging. And, if everyone behaves themselves, I'll host a barbecue at my house afterward. I only live about four miles away from Daniel (Williams Brothers), and I like to do these things. There will be a sign-up sheet at the March meeting.

We will also be drawing for monthly presentations at the next meeting. If you haven't already signed up, we're going to put your name in the hat and pick names for the remaining months that aren't already spoken for or contain a quarterly contest. I'm also going to attempt to shorten the business portion of the meeting so we can do more socializing and model gawking. I think that should be our motto (or at least a goal): *The Kings of Socializing and Model Gawking*. It has a nice ring to it.

That's all from me, I hope to see everyone at the meeting.

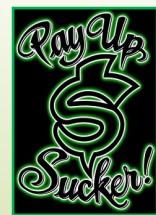
Randy

***Fiddly Bits*****Frank Seibert**

If you have waited until now to pay your annual ASMS club dues, it's gonna cost you, chief! The deadline for the reduced fare for ASMS yearly club dues has passed. Dues for 2015 are \$25.00/individual or \$30.00/family. You may bring your payment to a monthly club meeting or remit same to: Eric Choy, 13213 Marrero Drive, Austin, Texas 78729.



There is a field trip in your future. (Should you choose to accept it.) On May 2, a group of ASMS members will be going to Williams Brothers Models in Round Rock to get a hands-on look at what actually goes into making an injected molded kit.



This should be fun and educational trip. A sign-up sheet for interested parties will be made available at the next several monthly meetings. Start time is expected to be about 11AM. Details will follow for those that will be attending. If you don't sign up, you'll not hear another word about it.

Frank



Getting your tools together: If you think you need to spend a lot of money to get into model building, you are mistaken. What you actually need is just a few tools. With any hobby, it's easy to jump into it and buy every gadget and doo-hickey you can find, thinking it will help you build better models but "things" are not how you build better models.

You build better models by practice and experience! Let's take a look at what necessities you will need to build your first tank. If you have already built a few models there is a good chance you already have everything you need. If you're new, here is what I recommend: a **model knife or x-acto blade**.



During the "build" phase this is your main tool. You can use it to clean up flash and mold seams. It's the most useful tool, as well as the most dangerous one we use. Be careful as they are very sharp! You can pick one of these up at your local hobby or craft store for under \$10. Don't worry about getting a name brand, as they are pretty much all the same. You will want to get some extra blades. The most common size in modeling is called a number '11'.

I recommend changing blades often as the most dangerous knife is a dull knife! Also make sure to keep the protective cap to prevent from accidental stabbings. Keep these out of the way of any small hands, as it's probably one of the last things you want kids to get a hold of.

Side Cutters: When I was a kid in order to remove a part from a sprue, I would just grab it and twist until it came off. That's still a viable technique if your goal is to blow your model up with some firecrackers. but I wouldn't recommend it if you want a model that is presentable!



This is the second most important tool for your modeling arsenal: the side cutter: This particular model is the Xuron 410 flush cutter, and it can be had for ten dollars at Amazon. Tamiya makes a set of cutters but they go for way more, and are not as good.

We use these for nipping our parts off of their sprues. With proper care, they will last years. One word of caution: this model of cutters is for plastic only! If you try to cut wire or metal with it, it will damage the cutting surface and make clean sprue removal more difficult! ONLY use it for plastic!

Sanding Tools: Next up we have sanding. Sanding is needed to clean up parts to get a good glue join as well as preparing surfaces. This is also an area that we can spend WAY too much money on! You do not need to purchase expensive sanding products. The next time you are in Walmart or Walgreens head on over to the beauty section and pick up a pack of these.

These are emery boards, they have a coarse side and a not so coarse side. You can pick them up for less than \$3 for a pack of 24. These work great for removing sprue attachment points and for removing a lot of material.



Don't try to use them to get a smooth surface for painting, they are strictly utilitarian. They do make "modeler" specific coarse sanding sticks but in my opinion they are a waste of money. These things are fraction of the cost and work great.



You will also need some finer sandpaper for cleaning up surfaces for painting. For that you can pick up a pack of Testors sanding film. This comes in a variety pack and costs

around \$10. I don't recommend them for cleaning up lots of material. (That's what the emery boards are for!)

If you are flush with cash you can also pick up a flexi-file starter kit to get a range of sanding sticks and a tool for sanding round parts. This kit is about \$25. The most expensive part of your "start up" costs.

You can skip it for your first model, or just get the sanding films, which are cheaper.

Glue: We are not building snap kits, so you're going to need some glue! If you built kits as a kid, you may remember the tube glues from Testors. Some people still use this glue but I must say, stay away from this. These glues tend to make messes and do not do a good job of gluing.

Lots has changed in the last few decades in the realm of gluing and the best thing to happen is Tamiya's liquid "thin" glue. This should be available online or from your local hobby store for around \$5 a bottle. It comes in a glass jar and has an applicator brush in the cap.



Let's briefly discuss how this stuff works. It is not as much of a "glue" as it is a "welding" substance. It softens the plastic and "melds" the plastic parts together. This produces a very strong joint. The downside is that it will only work on plastic!

As with all things, this stuff is best used in moderation, just a tiny bit will weld parts together. You can easily make a mess of it if you use too much! There are other thin glues out there, but I have had my best luck using Tamiya Thin Cement.

If you need to glue non-plastic parts (like photoetch or rubberband style tracks) you will probably need some super glue. Personally, I avoid the stuff but it can be a necessary evil. Note that depending on what model you get, you may not need it at all!

For basic gluing I use Gorilla super glue. The nice thing about it is that it contains a rubber-particle that protects the glued part from "shock" breakage (more on this later).

Putty: next, you will need to pick up some putty to fill in seams. I use Tamiya Basic Type putty. This stuff can stink a bit but it sands really well. It should be available from your local hobby store or online for



around \$5. If you can not find Tamiya putty you can also use Squadron "green" putty. For a non-stinky alternative, two-part epoxy putty from Milliput is another alternative.



Toothpicks: While you are at the grocery store pick up some good toothpicks. Toothpicks are used for all sorts of things: applying super glue, smoothing over putty, and mounting parts for painting. It is a cheap

and disposable tool. I recommend getting the round ones since they tend to be of better quality. The square/cheap toothpicks have a tendency to splinter.

Shear cutters: The final tool in your beginner kit is optional. You only need it if your kit has photoetch. Which brings us back to our friends at Xuron: the 9180 shear cutter. These scissors will cost you around \$20 and allow for clean cutting of photoetch from its sprue.



I want to stress that these are optional. However, if you do any amount of photoetch work, they are invaluable. You may get away with using a \$5 cosmetic pair of fingernail scissors, but they have a tendency to bend the metal instead of cutting it and the last thing we want in a hobby is frustration. Much like the side cutters before, if you take care of these they will last you a lifetime.



Your first tank model: Back in the old days (or so I have been told), if you wanted to build a tank, you pretty much where limited by whatever Tamiya manufactured. These days we have a bewildering array of manufacturers and kits coming out. It can be a bit overwhelming! But do not fret, I am here to help!

First off, ask yourself what do you want to build? Modern? WWII? A specific tank? It's important that you are interested in your subject!

If you are not particularly interested in the model, you probably are not going to enjoy yourself.

The second thing is to pick a kit you can actually build! This is very important. If you pick a kit that has fit issues and is practically unbuildable, you are going to frustrate yourself and probably give up.

When I first got back into modeling, I picked up some cheap kits thinking I was going to practice. That was a mistake. I was mostly frustrated and never finished any of those early kits. The first kit I took to completion was a Tasca Sherman (great kit!) and it hooked me.

This piece of advice was something I first heard from Bob Bethea when he was instructing new figure painters: "Don't try to make a crappy figure look good as your first attempt, give yourself a kick-start and do a good figure." In much the same vein we want to give ourselves every advantage we can to make our first model enjoyable.

Some guidelines for picking our first tank model:

Little or no photo etch: This is a big one. Photoetch requires a whole additional set of skills and tools. I have several models under my belt and still avoid photoetch whenever I can! Unless you purchase aftermarket sets, most kits will not come with photo etch, or maybe they will include things like vent/intake screens.

These are usually simple glue-in parts that do not require bending, so they get a pass. Many kits come with plastic alternatives to photoetch. Most of the time the plastic part is just fine. For example, Tasca/Asuka Shermans have both photoetch and plastic light guards. The plastic light guards are already pretty thin and will look just fine on your model.

Reduced parts count: Some kits have more parts than the actual tank (or at least feel like it). For that reason, some manufacturers and kits will be avoided. In general, kits from Dragon Models and Bronco Models can be overly complex and are not really recommended for beginners.

Simple tracks: When I talk to people about tanks, they generally are afraid of dealing with tracks. It's true that tracks can be a big hurdle to overcome. In some kits, the number of parts required for building just the tracks can be over half the total parts count of the kit! Adding to the problem is that some kits have very difficult tracks to assemble.

While this can be overcome by purchasing third-party tracks made out of metal, we want to avoid that for our first tank. Also keep in mind that the cost of after-market tracks could eclipse the cost of the kit itself.

For this reason, look for a kit that has either rubberband like tracks or link and length.

Link and length tracks have large section moldings for the top and bottom (of tracks) with a few individual links for going around the drive sprockets and idlers. Rubber band tracks are tracks formed from a single length of rubber (or rubber like material) that wrap around the wheels and are glued together at one spot.

They may not look as good as individual links, but they are certainly easier to put together. As an alternative to a tank you can build an armoured car like the Stagehound. It has no tracks, just four big wheels!

Buildability: This is a very subjective idea, but an important one. There are lots of kits out there that are accurate but hard to build. They may require building lots of sub-assemblies or have "gotchas" that are not noticeable until later in the build.

What I like to do when I am interested in building a kit is to find build logs online by people that have already built the kit. By reading the build log you can get an idea of problems you may run into. This research may even help you decide whether or not you want to build the kit in the first place! In general, Tamiya kits are the most "buildable".

Simple camouflage/paint schemes: This is going to be more important when we get to the painting stage, but picking a tank with a single color scheme will make it much easier to finish your model.

Here are some recommendations for your first tank model. They may not be the specific tank you want to make but I can pretty much promise you that you will enjoy modeling these. They will give you the experience you need to tackle your next project.

Model: Jeep Willys MB 1/4 Ton Truck

Manufacturer: Tamiya, kit# 35219 Era: WWII; Allied



I know what you're saying, That's *not* a tank! Well, you're right, it's not. Though it is a 1/35 scale model you can build in the morning and paint in the afternoon. When I ask fellow armor modelers what is the best model for a beginner, this one *always* comes up. Usually, as the first choice.

If you decide to purchase one, make sure it is kit #35219. An earlier tooling of the jeep is in Tamiya's back catalog. It is not as good or as easy to build. This kit is very reasonably priced and easy to find. You may be able to pick it up for \$10 at a model show.

On the plus side, this kit is:

- Extremely well engineered and easy to build
- Instructions are clear and easy to follow
- Single color paint scheme

Model: Panzerkampfwagen II

Manufacturer: Tamiya kit# 35292 Era: WWII; Axis



If you're a fan of Axis (German/Italy) armor from WWII this is a great place to start. This kit has a lot going for it:

- Extremely buildable with great instructions and "Tamiya fit"
- Comes with link and length tracks that are easy to assemble
- Only 10 road wheels and simplified suspension make for a very quick build
- It does have a small amount of photoetch, but don't be scared; it's a very easy addition and a good introduction to working with photoetch
- Single color scheme (grey)

Model: KV series (several versions)

Manufacturer: Trumpeter Era: WWII; Allied



Trumpeter has produced a large line of tanks in the "KV" line. These are all big and brutish tanks made by the Soviets during WWII. They have lots of good things going for them:

- Affordable: most of Trumpeters KV tanks are very inexpensive and can be had new for under \$30; I have seen them at model shows going for \$15
- No photo etch: one simple upgrade you can do is replace the kit engine vents with photoetch replacements; this would be a very simple operation
- Tracks: Trumpeter gives you two options: link and length and rubber band; the link and length will require cleaning up some ejection pin marks, but they are very usable
- Single color: you can have it in any color you want, as long as its green! Being Russian, it will also be a great kit to try out weathering techniques when you get to painting
- Low part count/buildability: these kits are very much like the real tank, simple: they do have a lot of road wheels but that's manageable

These are just three examples of kits that you can start with. They range in price from fifteen dollars to thirty dollars. Because of the huge number of models out there I can't review them all. However, these three examples are great starter kits for those of you who are thinking about building a tank.

If there is a tank kit that you are interested in. find an armor guy and ask! Just don't forget to have fun!



Aaron

Web At Night: Rewind

compiled by Jean-Michel D'Aubigne

From Yama Ploskonka, 1684, Cavellier de la Salle part aux Amériques reconnaître les territoires as delà du Mississippi. Au cours de cette expédition mouvementée un de ses bateaux, La Belle , une <>bargue longue>> fait naufrage au large du texas.

1995, une équipe Américaine retrouve et extrait La Belle de la vase qui l'a recouverte et protégée. Ce film d'animation, base sur la monographie de Jean Boudriot reconstitue pièce par pièce la charpente de ce modeste bâtiment.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6JUS9zbd00o>

Mike Lam brought in a smallish model of the Millennium Falcon at last month's ASMS club meeting. The model is manufactured by Metal Earth. Made of thin, laser cut steel, these kits come in a variety of subject matter from other Star Wars and Star Trek subjects to a Ferris wheel, and are not terribly expensive. Most running about ten dollars. Alas, no Taj Mahal kit.

metalearthmodel.com

Dan Hickox has submitted this next item concerning a Vietnam Memorial Flight. This involves a restored F100F by the Collins Foundation. The guest of honor at this event was Major Bud Day who flew the F-100 in Vietnam. There are some nice detail shots of the aircraft for you detailers. The highlight of the video is the look on Major's Day face when he first sees his old bird, *Misty 1*, on the tarmac.

https://www.youtube.com/embed/k9s6t1whZp8?feature=player_embedded

Milton Bell has sent along an interesting piece of modern naval history. This is a short video of carrier trials for the U.S. Navy's latest attack aircraft, the X-47B. This autonomous, unmanned aircraft is expected to replace some manned aircraft missions in the future.

The video is a bit much in that it begins with some stock footage from *Top Gun*, but what you gonna do? Crank up that film's soundtrack and enjoy!

http://www.youtube.com/embed/WC8U5_4lo2c?feature=player_embedded

Dan Hickox, who is currently leading the pack in newsletter contributions has another item for those of you interested in all things Herculean, as in the C-130.

This is an update on the continuing use and adaptability of the C-130 Hercules by the various armed forces of the United States and others. There are a number of embedded videos depicting the 'Herc' in action.

<http://foxtrotalpha.jalopnik.com/the-ac-130j-ghostrider-will-get-a-big-ass-gun-afterall-1682493641>

SBS Models (Poland) has a new riveting tool that may be of interest. It comes in several scales: 1/72, 1/48, 1/32 and 1/100. It is available from a hobby retailer near you. In the meantime check out this review on Aeroscale.

<http://www.aeroscale.co.uk/modules.php?op=modload&name=Reviews&file=index&req=showcontent&id=3578>

Mike Lamm has submitted the following YouTube Channel link. This channel provides a week-by-week account of WWI in 10 minute videos. The timing of the material in the weekly updates coincides with what happened during WWI that same week, 100 years ago.

There is already 6 months' worth of information, so there's a little catching up to do for people who haven't been following it from the beginning.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheGreatWar>



Jean-Michel

Quarterly Contest Schedule

ASMS holds four quarterly model contest throughout the year. There is prize money for first, second and third place at each contest. Prize money is provided by King's Hobby Shop and ASMS. Thanks and appreciation to King's for their continuing support of ASMS. The dates and themes for 2015 are:

<u>Month</u>	<u>Subject</u>
April 16	Open any subject/any era
June 18	Open any subject/any era
September 17	Bondo Special*/ Open
December 17	White Elephant [Any model received at the annual ASMS Christmas gift exchange.]

*This contest features any kit from the estate of Phil 'Bondo' Brandt or any subject/any era. The Bondo Special winner will receive a plaque whilst the open contest will feature first, second, and third prizes.

Holy Of Holies by Rick Cotton

Someday, I tell myself. Someday, no matter what it takes, whether I can compete with a straight face or not...I'm going to the Nationals.

Most of us have never been to the ultimate, the Big Show, the Super Bowl of Modeling...the IPMS/USA Nationals.

A few hearty souls have been in that rarified air, and even fewer have actually won something there. These individuals are rare beings indeed. That's good, or else they'd be kicking our butts in lots of categories at the local shows, on a regular basis. We can't have that.

I, myself, have never been to a Nationals, or "Nats" (not to be confused with "gnats"). I have heard tales of them, and seen photos that boggle the mind. I have seen the glistening eyes of those who have actually gazed upon the works of the modeling demigods at these events, yet lived to return and tell about it. It changes a man.

I am dying, just dying to go to at least ONE. Like the World Series, the Grammys, or the Adult Video Awards, it is one of those events that one dreams about attending. To borrow liberally from Scarlett O'Hara, as God is my witness, I will attend at least ONE! Then, they can plant me, as I will die happy.

But there are problems: the first is the location chosen for this hallowed event. Funny, geographically, the center of this great, model-building nation would work out somewhere near Kansas City. Somehow, they never seem to get near there. Oh, they got close once or twice recently, in places like Colorado, and Omaha. Omaha? Nobody goes to Omaha...willingly!

Lately it has been landing on the East Coast, which is fine if you live on the East Coast. Otherwise it's a pain. Fly? Yeah, right, I'm letting the baggage handlers and TSA folks who couldn't outsmart a pack of gophers handle my models. I don't think so!

Driving is the only safe option for your models, although it's certainly less safe for the modeler. One can pair up with a buddy...after a 3,000 mile round trip in a Corolla, chances are you will never want to speak to each other again.

Even if you DO maintain your friendship, there are still the hotel stays. If you cut costs (and what modeler doesn't) you'll probably pair up and save money by



getting one room. This leads to two embarrassing situations: first, I always have to tell the clerk YES, TWO BEDS, we're not THAT close as friends.

Second, we have to listen to our friends snore or make even worse bodily noises all night long. I don't know what my friends wear, if anything, to sleep in, and I darned sure don't WANT to know!

There are the meals...sounds like a pleasant thing...until it gets to "I don't know what I want to eat, what do you want to eat?" repeated back and forth for ten minutes.

Invariably, by the time the two of you have decided what to eat, you will be on a stretch of interstate with no restaurants for a hundred miles. You'll drive along in abject starvation and misery, subsisting on Slim Jims and Twinkie knock-offs.

But let's say you survived all of this. Let's say you have driven for 36 hours and gotten to The Show. You may be bleary, red-eyed, unshaven, and smell like old Cheeto's, but you are there. You march proudly (or limp slowly) into the Gargantua Civic Center and Hotel Resort Conference Complex.

Ahh, the vendor room. About the size of a blimp hangar, it is packed with displays by manufacturers. The Big Boys are all there: Tamiyagawa, Fujirectifier, Lumpeter and DMZ...all there with booths, and cute models (girls, not kits) waving around new, expensive models (kits, not girls)!

Stuff you can't get yet! Zuki Moo...Zooey Mooey....whatever the hell their name is are there, with a 1/32 B-52 with a complete interior, and it's on sale for a mere \$1500!!! Wa-HOO! Yes, they'll take plastic.

Then, you step through the door into the room that is the focus of the entire trip: hallowed ground, the Holy of Holies, the absolute Mecca of the model-building fanatic's world:

THE DISPLAY ROOM (cue the choir music).

It's unbelievable. There are no words. You wander, slack-jawed, eye-bugged, from masterpiece to masterpiece, unable to believe your eyes. These guys aren't builders, or hobbyists, or just plain modelers....they are wizards.

You see the names on the nametags guys are wearing...names you see all the time in magazines and on websites. You cautiously nod and smile, and.....they smile and nod back!

You look down at the own creation you have brought. You know, you *absolutely know* it doesn't compare to the works of art on the table. You know for certain that you have about as much chance of placing as Hillary Clinton has of marrying Rush Limbaugh.

Yet, you have paid your entry (and it wasn't cheap), and you have come 3,000 miles for this. You sheepishly place it on the table, and turn to slink away. You stop a few paces away, and turn, as you want to actually see your entry, your one and only entry at the show of shows, just one time.

There is someone standing there, looking down at your model. YOUR model. He looks it over closely, for a long time, and finally looks up and over at you.

You look at his nametag...OMG, it's him! Multi-nationals winner...several Best of Shows...possibly the best modeler ever to take up a #11 blade in history. The guy NO ONE BEATS.

The guy they'll name a memorial award after one day! "Nice!" he says, and warmly smiles at you. Somehow...you know he means it. He talks to you about it. Treats you like a human being. YOU!

You may not place. You may not ever even be here again. But you are now a winner, because you have gone, and competed, and been accepted as a competitor... by a competitor. That, my modeling friend, is winning. Just going is winning.

"You miss 100% of the shots you never take."
-Wayne Gretzky

Rick



The First F-117 Stealth Fighter has arrived at the bone yard in Tucson. Visitors will not be able to climb into the cockpit for liability reasons.

[Photo via Milton Bell]





IPMS/USA 2015 National Convention July 22-25, 2015 Columbus, Ohio

The International Plastic Modeler's Society 2015 National Convention website is available to peruse.

There is a lot of information there and more will be added as the actual event approaches.

More information about the National Convention may be obtained at:

ipmsusa2015.com



Monthly Program Schedule

Month	Presenter/Subject
March	Gen. Kenneth Wisian/ Flying the B-52/C-130
April	Quarterly Contest
May	Gen. Peter Bonanni Virginia Air National Guard
June	Quarterly Contest
July	Milton Bell/TBA
August	Rick Herrington/TBA
September	Quarterly Contest
October	TBA
November	TBA
December	Quarterly Contest

If you are interested in giving a presentation at a future ASMS meeting, contact our Vice-President/Program coordinator Aaron Smischney.

vicepresident@austinsms.org

Vipers Den by Floyd Werner Jr.

Werner's Wings is pleased to announce the release of our latest decals, AH-1Z Vipers Den (WW Decals 48-08), for the new Kitty Hawk 1/48th scale AH-1Z Viper. The sheet contains markings for eight aircraft from the often overlooked West Coast units, as well as limited stencils for two aircraft.

Thoroughly researched by Mason Doupnik and Patrick Najmulski, these decals are the same quality that you've come to expect from Werner's Wings. The colors are spot on and the markings are unique and interesting options.

The units included are:

- HMLA-369_SM45
- HMLA-169_SN45
- HMLA-267_UV50
- VMM-163 (REIN)_YP43
- HMM-268 (REIN)_YQ41
- HMM-364 (REIN)_PF44
- VMM-161 (REIN)_YR44
- VMM-166 (REIN)_YX46



They are available now through the Werner's Wings website (www.wernerswings.com) or at our Ebay store. Pricing will be the same as our other 1/48th scale decals, \$14 plus shipping.

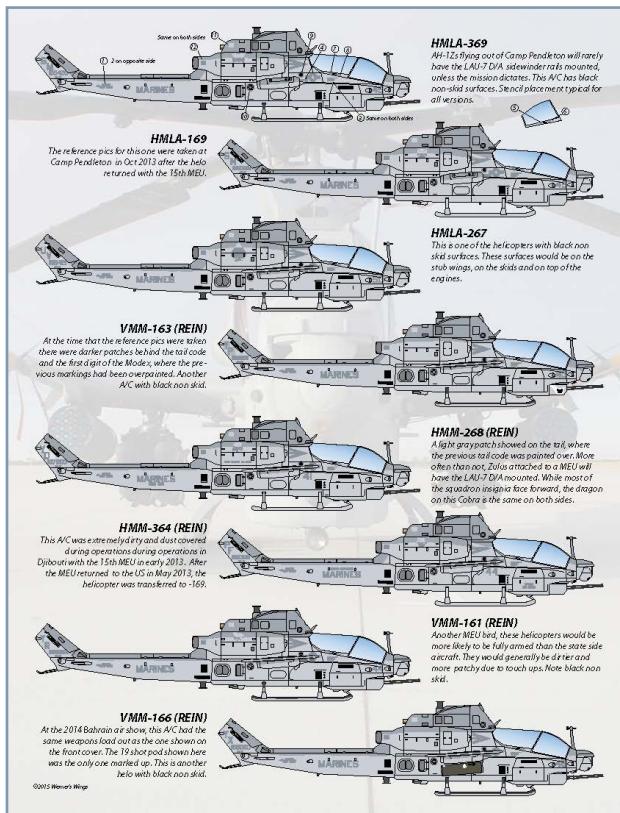
Our next release will be for the Kitty Hawk 1/48th scale UH-1Y Venom. WW Decals 48-09 will be entitled UH-1Y Deadly Venom. Look for it shortly. We are also working on a Marine Corps AH-1 Sheet that will cover the Corps' use of the Cobra from the AH-1G models in Vietnam to the Zulu in Afghanistan.

We are working on some resin updates for the Kitty Hawk AH-1Z. They will be printed in CAD and hopefully available shortly. We have a few projects in the works including helicopter crew and pilot figures by Doug Cohen in a variety of scales.

We will also be releasing our first 1/72nd scale upgrade for the AZ Models and the Special Hobbies AH-1Gs. Both kits and most UH-1D/H kits have the incorrect tail rotor so we are providing a new tail rotor blade assembly.

If you or any of your readers have any questions, feel free to contact me at fwernerjr@comcast.net.

Those readers who are overseas should write me at info@wernerswings.com. We also have an Ebay Store to purchase items.



We are also on Facebook for those who want to get the latest news and just say hi.

Floyd



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On Research by Yama Ploskonka

I am currently preparing a 1:36 scale wood kit of La Belle 1684, based on accurate data resulting from her rediscovery in 1995 and the currently (2014-2015) ongoing reconstruction as the centerpiece for the premier Texas History Museum in Austin, Texas.

La Belle ("the beautiful one"), a 54 foot French barque-longue built in 1684 AD, sank the following year in Matagorda Bay, dooming La Salle's expedition to a footnote status, and relieving this land from having to learn the subjonctif plus-que-parfait unless we do it for pleasure.

*[Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch.]*

The short:

- Research can turn an out-of-the-box model into an out-of-the-heart one as we learn and share the story behind a particular event and our insights and connection with it
- There is the enjoyment of the hunt when doing research. For some modelers the model itself "flows" out of the research, and the manual exercise becomes secondary to this intellectual one.
- Research can be expensive. Buying a kit and a few after-market parts is at least something we can somewhat account for, maybe even resell. When a particular project needs data that is only available in that obscure €300 tome plus shipping, ouch.
- Research can be enormously frustrating, and there might be as many dead-end research attempts as there are partially built kits. At least it doesn't take as much storage room...

The long: There is joy in building a model out of the box. A bit of sanding here, painting there, perhaps some standard decals, and it's done.

*[Yama holding a Dremel,
ready to carve fine detail
in an F-15 model landing gear.]*

There's nothing wrong with that. Some people add that special detail, then another one, some Bondo. Photoetch? Sure!



But, was it the 47-E variant in the Ardennes or the one in the Eastern Front that used the square dust filter? If the former, the model in green camo should not also carry the double antenna, even I know that!

A vintage photo found through painstaking research and, voilà, we have reasonable certainty: only one antenna. But then some of us will take the vorpal sword two-handed, and carve out our own scratch-built, right out of the Tumtum tree.

Scratch-built. I can feel the awe and anguish of reverence brought on by something bordering on masochism. When good quality plans accompanied with detailed pictures flow aplenty, and descriptions with documents exist, the kind that the people "in the know" agree as to accuracy and provenance, no problem. The canon is set by clear evidence. Just a matter of tools and time.

However, anything beyond "living memory" gets hairy really fast. For example; at Trafalgar, did the HMS Victory have solid forecastle bulwarks or not?

The most authoritative painting shows her that way. That painting was vetted and approved by those that actually manned the ship during that famous battle and became the "canonical" source for the majority of her scale models. Yet, most contemporary opinions (meaning 21st century) agree that the bulwarks were actually not there until after the 1803 overhaul. Other paintings of the occasion show her one way, others the opposite. And that just happens to be the most modeled ship of all time.



Out of who knows what unknown last bit of wisdom, I decided that my first scratch-build wooden ship would not be the HMS Victory but, to stay close to her, then, one of her boats would be it. That attempt is what got me started with these reflections.

Simply said, regarding those small boats, no valid authority really has reasonable certainty as to their specific design. How many frames were there? What were their dimensions? How many ship boats were carried? What day? Was one of them towed?

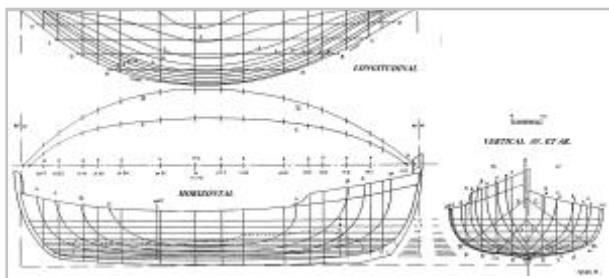
The often published list of the HMS Victory boats is known to merely copy the RN guidelines, thus becoming completely useless, especially when we recall that most captains did not necessarily follow those! See, some boats were personal property of the Captain, and hilarity ensues as noble blood competes to show off pomp, prestige, and size envy (it's on record that Nelson's boat was rather, uh, making some others feel insufficient. And that Nelson often made his own rules).

In the midst of all that nonsense, I arrived at my first "aha!" moment. A shy modeler looking for nice step-by-step recipes before going on his own can feel out of place when it is clear that there are none to be found. Worse for one such as I, an almost total noob, trying to get a start. Not even nice tracings to turn into lines and actual design!

Without going into details, it turns out that the Royal Navy had very, very detailed and stringent rules for building major ships in order to ensure quality and reduce waste and shipyard profiteering.

Other naval powers also had rules, but the big difference was that England enforced them, while French and Spanish nobles got rich from finding loopholes. In my humble opinion this in itself explains a lot about Britannia ruling the waves over the combined navies of the rest of the world at the time. But I digress.

*[Nice lines, nice tracing.
Not for the Vicky's boats...]*



The design of a RN ship-of-the-line is reasonably certain, but when it came to their ship boats, they just purchased them from local Thames River people within generic guidelines. There are no standard designs. I guess an officer could access a boat's quality easily enough. Pretty much anything goes, or sort of. A standard way for kit modelers to do the Vicky's boats seems to be to hijack a few from USS Constitution kits.

Life goes on, I give up on a Vicky boat, get involved with patenting a machine to make scale model rope and cordage, and then during the November meeting

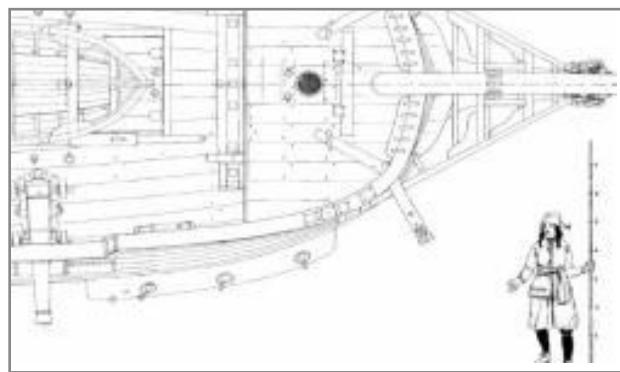
of the Austin Scale Modelers Society a brother mentions that the remains of La Belle, a 17th century French ship, are to become the centerpiece exhibit of the top Texas History museum, right here in town.

During my HMS Victory due diligence days, it became sort of a major issue that to get the level of detail that I wanted I would need to get to Southampton with a camera. Marginal note: let it be known that the primary reason that I am getting into scale models is as a business pursuit. Thus, such a trip would be totally a business expense. Now. all together, say, sweeeeet!!!

Ahh, La Belle. Dreams of paid-expenses to Europe are great (le Musée de la Marine, here I come), but realities of a business not yet making profit require a touch of reality. The enormous convenience to have own-town access to an authentic naval relic is too much to pass up.

So getting my wiles into high gear, let's get data on that so-called Belle! A preliminary search shows that the major owner of the research is Texas A&M (insert Aggie joke here). Hmm, early find, a thesis by a certain Grieco, the maker of several La Belle scale models, with many pictures, good lines. Great. Then The Authority, a monograph by French author Jean Boudriot. Uh, €240 euros? Plus shipping! You're joking, yes? Alas, no. A pirated scan of his drawings, for \$2. Yikes, not good.

My experience in dealing with Universities has been mixed. When properly introduced, wonderful. When not, a failure. After two months, I wish I had been properly introduced to A&M. The webmaster was nice and helpful. Most others either denied being able to help or I couldn't reach them. Best thing ever: theses are public. There are several dedicated to La Belle available from A&M and others, and they provide a lot of detail, at no cost unless I print.



[Boudriot's exquisite drawings. Why, oh why couldn't we say they are accurate and we move on?]

The Bob Bullock Museum initial contact was hitting a total wall, as if their phone operator had orders to discourage people. Eventually, as I kept digging and digging (I don't give up easy) I got to the right people and to a very warm welcome and kindness and help, even on to a first name basis with several main stakeholders.

So what about scale models? The Bob Bullock labels La Belle as "The Ship that Changed History." You would think that many people would be making models, yes? You would be right, as long as you're not picky about Europeans.

To begin with, ship models, especially wood sailing ones, even US classic ones happen mostly in New England. Between LaBelle being French and ending up in Texas... I have no real numbers, but I'd say the grand total for completed models of La Belle is maybe 150, worldwide. Five are in Texas. Maybe 130 in Europe. Even Poland likely has more La Belle 1684 models than the USA!

Internet tip: use quote marks to refine your search. "ship scale model" will give you more useful results than without the quotation marks, as the latter will send economics analysis reports your way. Searching "la Belle" is not a good idea. "la Belle" "1684" is much safer. My second step is often to look for images, easier then to visually select scale models, then visit the corresponding web pages.

While I continue to believe that this is a business opportunity I really beg for your feedback. You could save me from a serious mistake! Or maybe encourage me on to something great.

So, by now, I feel empowered by too much knowledge. It's funny/pathetic/tragic how I can talk opinionated Labellish with full fledged professional archaeologists and almost make sense. Onward to design.

Boudriot's La Belle 1684 design is the current international canon. Even our own A&M Grieco, who is one of those few to have had a full time paid job building models, based his first Belle on Boudriot's plans, before he knew better. The problem is, Boudriot is possibly as close to genius as you can get in the modeling world.

He has been blamed with the renaissance of classic ship modeling in France, that Jean Boudriot's monographie Acheter d'occasion EUR 239,90 being just one among several major accomplishments in world-class museography and historical research.

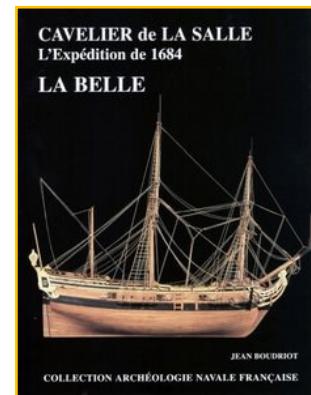
His design is how La Belle should have been, maybe if French shipbuilders in 1684 La Rochelle paid attention to the rules. Alas, that does not fit with what was unearthed. Even though he already had some data regarding the lines of the frames from the dig, for some reason he decided to draw his own, accurate as to his documentary research, not to bare metal (er, wood) facts.



[28 models of La Belle, step by step. Am-a zing!]

No one, not even Boudriot, claims to be certain as to what precisely, La Belle really looked like. Yes, the retrieved timbers from Matagorda Bay give us the most exact knowledge of parts of the hull structure of a 17th century French vessel ever, to a level of detail that is simply amazing. Keel, planks? Yay! Frames? Even the tiny original scratch marks used by builders to line them up. There are many, many other features both fancy and plain.

It is claimed that over a million items were retrieved from the wreckage. Even some that were believed to have been lost forever, such as imprints of the remains of the sails found under the ship. Said to be too fragile to conserve, they are mentioned as having been photographed and documented.



I wonder, why not make a cast? A question to ask the pros later, if I want to risk a noob second-guessing a

pro. Maybe not a good idea yet. So far, it has been impossible for this Texas tax payer to get to those Texas tax-paid photographs...

But even the basic matter of whether La Belle was two-masted or three-masted is not settled, and evidence on this issue is admitted by the experts to be inconclusive either way. Of course, that won't stop some from their firm opinions and authority. Which just shows the issues you find when dealing with opinionated, expert people... More so when the object of controversy was a quite minor ship (or a large boat? "barque longue") which even within La Salle's expedition was not much more than an afterthought

French scale modelers are quite excited with La Belle, thanks to Boudriot publishing early. To deal with some of the issues mentioned above, at least a major site subtitles their collection of build logs as being "La Belle according to plans by Jean Boudriot."

I can understand that it becomes difficult and unsightly to try to compare and have scale model competitions where what the judges see is very different from one to the next, as when we lack historically accurate data. Thus, our colleagues are building what is actually a fictional design where most differences are resolved, bypassing the challenges of individual research and opinion. While wise in many ways, in my humble opinion it's not quite "right." Some La Belles show up among the top finalists in every single European master modeler championship for the last 5 years or so.

[Grieco's cannon, not THE canon...Interestingly, Glenn Grieco did his Master's thesis on building a scale model (of La Belle, no less). So, what we do for fun can actually be of some use when done in earnest...]



Very interesting schoolyard politics show up, as someone demonstrates why Grieco's reconstruction is wrong (so much for me trying to believe Grieco being the canon), and someone else welcomes Italian modelers rising to quality (Italian modelers already have a long tradition of quality, thank you), and a Russian seems to be so far the only one offering a kit, very much based on Boudriot, thus "wrong," alas. (Or joy, since that will make mine the first one to be "right" :-)

All the world over, victims of the lure of the "beautiful one" claim that a scratch-built La Belle is easy for beginners. It was declared so by an Authority, one mas

ter scale modeler Frölich, whose work is portrayed in Boudriot's. Hmm. I will agree a Belle is easier than a Connie or a Vicky, but even then. No scratch-built is ever "easy".

Personally, I am having a ball. A French expedition specifically coming to provoke the Spaniards, who got duly provoked and came post-haste to see a boat sunk in a modern-day English-speaking land, fiduciary messes galore...

This results in three different nations that feel they "own" some part of the story, each producing kingly reports, commentaries and documents in several different languages, plus Italian scale modelers cooking their pasta as mentioned, and even some materials in Portuguese that show up! Oh joy!

I manage sort of okay in all five of these languages. Not much Russian written so far, but Хорошо has pictures. The challenge of the extra languages is delightful and even in English, I still need to learn the sailing ship glossary. That, in itself, might force many to retrench to some subject more familiar but I am up for the challenge!

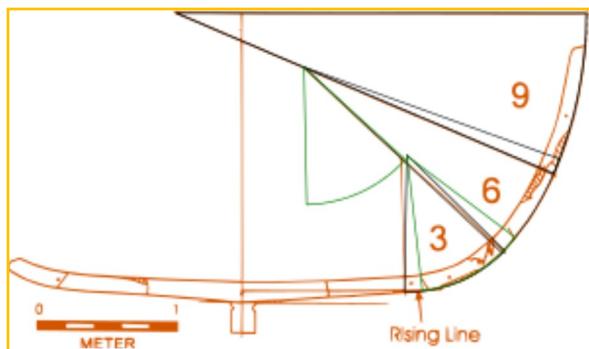
So far, I have found the Italians to be the most generous with their knowledge. Tutto bene. The French are warm and well organized, as well as, very encouraging. It is almost embarrassing to be welcomed and treated as a peer by people who know so very much more than I do, who really excel in the craft. But I should get used to that, as it is the way I have been treated by the ASMS members in Austin.

A bottom line about me: as mentioned above, I am into scale models as a potential revenue-making venture. I believe in the importance of being very original and creative, especially in my mistakes. There is no use repeating the mistakes made by others, so I am moving slowly. I can't invest much time or money, so it is important to stay focused

Wood ship scale modeling is still big, but not in Texas. Welcome internet sales! With much of scale modeling, the reality is that certain designs are widely accepted (USS Constitution, HMS Victory, HMS Bounty, Cutty Sark) resulting in a glutted market. Trying to challenge Walmart has been described as a "stupid frat-boy business idea," so don't!

However, there are very good reasons not to go where nobody else has gone. La Belle seems to be an elegant, on-the-rise "product." Many kits offer more than one finishing alternative. So be it, après Boudriot.

Having zero experience with selling a wood ship model, I keep an eye on La Belle but continue my previous plan, which is to start by offering some after-market elements which could be free-standing items even for people who are not scale modelers.



[Yama trying to replicate geometry for frame designs.
After work by Dr. Donald Keith.]

I am unsure on how to deal with my intellectual property acquired through research. For one thing, I really need to fill my rice bowl. For another, this whole thing about public-funded research, public-funded institutions dedicated to culture all locking Heritage of Humanity knowledge behind paywalls is grotesque, and it would be good to break that open.

In many things that I do, I am "scratching my own itch." For example, my main business is to design and manufacture extremely affordable construction toys - in big part because when Yama was a kid he couldn't afford anything expensive, and I feel there are many kids out there that could benefit from these types of toys.

My top of the line La Belle kit will not be that cheap, say \$350 MSRP, but what about putting the design out there for modelers to pick at? As an Open Design, to be improved and used by all? Tempting. Since as a small business, what I need most is to become visible, that would make me visible all right. Might kill La Belle as a profit-making kit (anyone would copy it easily from my plans, even if not commercially), but might make me "known" as a source of "good things." This being somewhat far in the future I will not delve further. Simpler, cheaper, more "noob friendly" kits are more likely.

My aim is to make something that even I could have afforded when I was a kid. Not easy, but worth my effort.

Yama



Newsletter Contest In Full Swing

The Sprue Examiner editorial staff continues its sponsorship of The Sprue Examiner newsletter contest.

This year-long contest challenges all members of Austin Scale Modeler's Society to compete against each other. All members of ASMS are competing for the coveted prize of having their club dues paid for by the editorial staff for the upcoming year (2016).



Past recipients of this coveted award have included such luminaries as Milton Bell and Mike Lamm.

The contest rules are very simple and require minimal effort on the contestant's part. Simply stated: whomever sends in the largest number of items for publication in the newsletter during the course of 2015 wins.

Those items can include anything that the contestant deems to be of interest to the modeling public. These can range from websites, photographs, articles, antidotes, essays, cartoons, reports on new kits, etc.

All items submitted to the newsletter editor qualify whether or not that item is published.

There is still plenty of time left in the calendar year for you to win this sought-after prize.

Please send all submissions to :
editor@austinsms.org

USAAF Attack Aircraft, Douglas A-20

by Ron McCracken

Next in our Attack aircraft series is the Douglas A-20, a twin-engine, all-metal monoplane attack aircraft with a shoulder-mounted wing, tricycle landing gear, and a very narrow fuselage. An extremely versatile type, it eventually was used as a strafer, level bomber, photo-recon, and night fighter aircraft. But, were it not for early foreign orders, it might never have been used.

Development began in 1936 in response to a USAAF request for a

twin-engined attack bomber. Five companies were contacted, with Douglas, Stearman, North American, Bell, and Martin re-

sponding with design proposals. All were sent back to the drawing board, at which point Bell dropped out of the competition. The remaining contestants built prototypes.

The Douglas prototype (model DB-7) was delivered to the USAAC for evaluation in 1938, and crashed during testing (with the French Air Attaché on board), which caused it to initially be rejected by the USAAC.

However, the French somewhat surprisingly given the circumstances, expressed interest, along with Belgium. They placed orders, but both nations fell before their orders could be delivered. Those orders were taken over by the aircraft-hungry British as the Boston I, II, and III.

So, by a curious set of circumstances, the A-20 was the only proven twin-engine attack design in U.S. production at the outbreak of war. The Air Corps reconsidered their earlier rejection of the design and placed a small order for the A-20 as a high altitude light bomber with turbochargers for the engines.

However, the requirement shifted to low-to-medium altitude operations after only one had been completed, and the remaining aircraft of the initial batch were delivered as un-turbocharged A-20As, P-70s, and F-3s. Eventually ten attack variants, three night fighter variants, and three photo-recon variants were developed, and thousands of the type were built.



Since the A-20 is generally very well documented and frequently kitted in various scales, this article will focus on structural and equipment differences the modeler will find useful in producing an accurate rendition of any desired version of this important aircraft.

The basic structure of the aircraft remained fairly constant throughout its production. Differences are confined to the nose forward of the pilot's cockpit, the gunner/observer's station, and the engine cowlings and nacelles. The same basic engine, the Wright R-2600, was used in all variants, although with improvements in power output as the engine developed.

Here is a table of the A-20 variants:

A-20, high-altitude light bomber-supercharged engines.

A-20A, low altitude light bomber-unsupercharged engines.

A-20B, low altitude light bomber-all-.50 defensive armament.

A-20C, low altitude light bomber-improved A-20A.

A-20D, high-altitude light bomber-none built.

A-20E, non-combat test aircraft-converted A-20A.

A-20F, armament test bed-used to develop A-26 turrets.

A-20G, strafer-solid nose.

A-20H, strafer-uprated engines.

A-20J/G, with bombardier nose.

A-20K/H, with bombardier nose.

All variants from the A-20 up through the A-20E had the same fuselage from the front bulkhead aft. The F was a one-off test bed with remote-sighted dorsal and ventral turret installations. (this was probably the armament test bed for the follow-on A-26).

All subsequent variants, with the exception of the first production block of the G, incorporated a Martin dorsal turret in place of the original gunner's sliding hatch, with slight widening of the fuselage structure behind the wing root to accommodate the turret diameter. So, you have but two fuselage variations to consider.

The nose section is another story altogether. There were four distinct types. The A-20, A-20A, A-20C, A-20E, and A-20F (the A-20D was a design study only; none were built). All of these had a "greenhouse" type bombardier nose whose lower canopy line sloped sharply upward from front to rear.

They were equipped for up to four .30 caliber machine guns mounted in the "cheeks" of the nose, to either side of the nose landing gear. Two of these guns were housed in removable, protruding bulges, when they were carried.

All had provisions for twin flexible .30's in a dorsal gunner's position, and a single .30 caliber "tunnel gun" for rear lower defense.

The A-20B also had a bombardier "greenhouse," but the lower canopy line was a series of steps. That is the best A-20B identification feature, but is not the whole story. Of the pre-G models, only the B was armed primarily with .50 caliber, rather than 0.30 caliber machine guns.

The use of two .50 caliber machine guns in the buried cheek positions in place of the four .30 caliber guns of other models forced redesign of the nose section, including lengthening from the 67 1/2 inches of the A and C models to 75.8 inches. The gunner had a single flexible .50 in the dorsal position, rather than the twin .30's of other early versions.

The A-20G and A-20H eliminated the bombardier's position altogether, with a new, all-metal nose section designed to accommodate a battery of forward-firing guns, initially four 20 MM cannon, later six .50 caliber machine guns. Cannon-armed G models are obvious, as the cannons protruded several feet ahead of the nose. The early, cannon-armed G also did not have the dorsal turret.

The A-20J and K re-introduced the bombardier's position, but now with a frameless, blown plexiglass canopy, and two .50 caliber machine guns in cheek positions.

Although the gunship G and H were well suited to the strafing and skip-bombing tactics in the Pacific theater, in Europe they proved to be poor medium-altitude level bombers, so enough J/K machines were procured to act as lead aircraft for formations of A-20G/H aircraft, who would drop their bombs when the lead dropped.

The other area of variability is the engine cowlings and nacelles. This is an area I've studied for a long time, as most of the available drawings of the A-20 have errors in the exhaust and cowl flap arrangement, as do many of the kits that have been produced of this aircraft.

Certain characteristics of the A-20 powerplant installation dictated an unusual exhaust arrangement. For example, the oil cooler air intake was located on the inboard side of the engine nacelle behind the cowling, and it was necessary to avoid dumping either hot exhaust gases or engine cooling air into this intake.

The leading edge of the wing, which was immediately behind the rear of the cowling, blocked the most

convenient exit for upper cylinder exhaust and cooling air. These facts forced an asymmetrical arrangement for both cowl flaps and exhaust stacks. Since this area is a frequent source of errors, I'll spend a good bit of time on it.

All variants had a total of seven movable cowl flaps, two atop the leading edge of the wing to either side of the carburetor air scoop, and five at the rear of the bottom half of the engine cowling, two inboard of the cowl

ing vertical centerline, and three outboard. On either side of the nacelle where it meets with the wing, the rear of the cowling was permanently bulged outward to provide an exit for both cooling air and individual exhaust stacks.

There were several variations of engine exhaust arrangement. The sole A-20 had its exhaust routed outside the nacelle to a large supercharger housing attached to the outboard side of the nacelle and had no other exhaust ports. No more need be said about that.

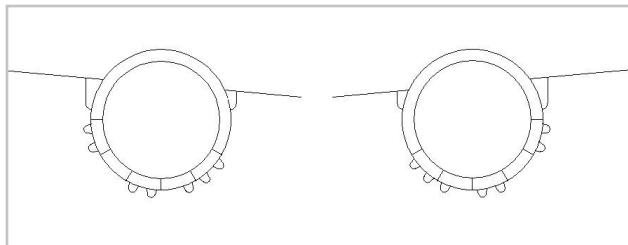
Three other exhaust configurations were used; a collector ring for the lower cylinders leading to a single large exhaust stack on the outboard side of the engine nacelle (type 1), individual exhaust stacks routed to the aft edge of the cowl flaps (type 2), and "stub" stacks exhausting through "D" shaped fairings around the rear half of the engine cowling (type 3).

On all variations, the seven upper cylinders exhausted through those bulged areas under the junction of the nacelle and the wing, four to the outboard side and three inboard.

On Type 1, the rest exhausted through the collector ring, and all five lower cowl flaps were plain, flat flaps.

On Type 2, The lower seven cylinders exhausted through individual stacks that exited at the rear edge of the cowl flaps, and the flaps themselves had bulges in their trailing edge to clear the exhausts. The upper inboard flap had two bulges, the lower inboard had one, and these were arranged in an equally-spaced series of three.

The upper outboard flap had two bulges, the lower outboard also had two, for a total of seven (the center outboard cowl flap was a plain flap with no bulges). Most drawings I've found get this wrong.



[Figure 1 illustrates the layout of the bulged cowl flaps.]

On Type 3, the lower seven cylinders exhausted through "D"-shaped fairings on the outside of the engine cowl ahead of the cowl flaps, similar to the exhausts on late model B-25s. They were arranged in two rows, with four on the outboard cowling side and three inboard.

The early A-20 cowlings had a series of eight paired oval cooling air ports in a row running from about the 2 o'clock position to the 8 o'clock position (if viewing the port cowling from the front, starboard is mirror image).

According to a source I found on the web. They were closed off by detachable backing plates on most A-20 variants, but are usually opened on the A-20A. Unfortunately for the modeler, they could be removed in the field, so the presence of oval holes in the cowling isn't a definitive characteristic of the A.

The A-20A used the Type 1 collector ring exhaust configuration. The B had a type 2 arrangement of exhaust stacks. The B also extended its carburetor air intake to the front of the cowling, presumably to accommodate a sand filter.

The A-20C is where things begin to get tricky, and you need photos to be absolutely sure of accuracy. Its exhaust configuration could be type 1 or 2, and it might, or might not, have the extended carburetor air intakes.

RAF Boston IIIs used the collector ring arrangement, and since some of these were "repossessed" by the USAAC as A-20Cs, you see the occasional "C" in U.S. markings with a collector-ring exhaust.

The A-20E and F were converted from A-20A's, so presumably had similar, type 1 engine setups. The A-20G and J exhaust arrangement is the type 2, like the A-20B, but it may or may not have the extended intake housing, so again, photo documentation is needed to assure an accurate model.

The G and all subsequent variants had a larger carburetor intake fairing that extends well back over the wing, in contrast to the shorter and smaller fairing of

earlier variants. The A-20H and K introduced a more powerful version of the R-2600, and with that came the introduction of the type 3 exhaust arrangement. The carburetor intake scoop and fairing resembles that of the G/J.

Ron



Speaking Of Contests by Mike Lamm

There are several new contests, or should I say awards, that have been instituted by ASMS. These are the *Model of the Year* and the *Most Prolific Modeler* of the year. As the name implies, these are awards are based on the year long participation of ASMS members.

The Model of the Year: Our February meeting was the first month for the newly created Model of the Year award. Each month, we will award one model presented during show and tell as Model of the Month. The winning model (voted on by attending members) from each month will then be eligible for the Model of the Year contest at our December meeting. The winner will receive a hearty hand-shake and bragging rights.

The Most Prolific Modeler: The criteria for this award is based on the sheer number of recently *finished* models in 2015 that an ASMS member brings to the show and tell portion of our monthly meetings this year.

In February, we had 13 models included in the Model of the Month contest. After a close contest, Ron McCracken's 1/72 Academy Chinook was chosen as our model of the month. Way to go, Ron! We'll look forward to seeing that model again in December. Now go build a model!

Mike



Old Rumors/ New Kits 2G

Randy Bumgardner, Rick Herrington, Mike Poole,
Golzar Shahrzad, Aaron Smischney

Aircraft

It's March, and we have a light report this month. Some big things are coming out or have just been released.

First, though, I want to share a website I stumbled across: <http://www.unicraft.biz/>. If you like esoteric aircraft – stuff that didn't see anything but paper, or only a handful were produced (or less), then this is the place for you to get your next kit.

These are limited production resin kits. For the most part, they manufacture 1/72 scale kits, although they do have a large assortment of conversions and UAVs listed on their site. While most of the kits are Luft '46, there are a large variety of Soviet and U.S. aircraft as well. Give it a look. You might like something you never thought you would build.

Starting off our monthly round-up is a kit that I've mentioned in previous columns, so I thought I'd mention it again. The Kitty Hawk 1/32 North American F-86D has



just been released. Reports coming in from the great wide interwebs seem to indicate a positive response from those who have seen the plastic. This could just be the euphoria of a large scale Cold War interceptor... Although, I've seen images of the production parts and it does look nice. If you get a chance, head down to your local plastic purveyor and give the sprues a sniff and a once over.

Sticking with the jet theme, AMK has released their 1/48 Fouga CM.170 Magister.



Even though it was released about two weeks ago, it should just be hitting the retailers now. The kit looks nice, with lots of detail packed into it. The kit also contains photoetch and white metal parts for landing gear and other structural elements.

The really nice touch is the plastic box which contains the white metal parts. It's not that the parts are in a plastic box, banging around during shipment and deformed. It's the separate compartments within the plastic box that caught my eye. It's a very nice touch that shows attention to detail and that they care how the parts arrive to the modeler.

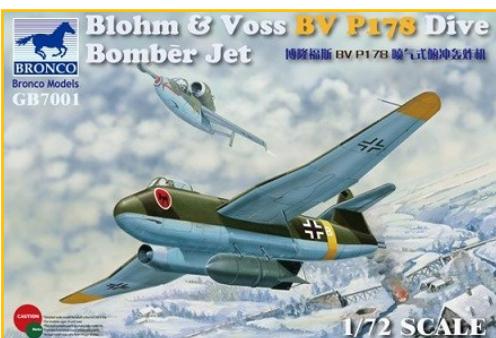
Moving on to another jet, Hasegawa is releasing a limited edition of the 1/200 Boeing P-8A



Poseidon this month. This edition features markings for VP-16 who fly out of Kadena.

The kit, based on the B737-800, contains all of the lumps and bumps that the Navy requires for its mission. For those wanting a "different" version of the normal airliner, this may be something to consider.

Our last jet of the month is a Luft '46 machine that never got itself past the drawing board. Bronco is bringing out a 1/72 Blohm & Voss P.178. This aircraft, keeping



with the asymmetrical configuration Blohm & Voss have used before, features a Junkers Jumo 004B turbojet under the wing mounted just to the starboard of the fuselage.

This aircraft was intended for use as a dive bomber, with the fuselage containing the fuel tank and recessed mount for an SC500. Oh, and the pilot sat just forward of this explosive material.

This is another kit that might strike the fancy of those who like esoteric subject matter.

Next up, as we return to aircraft with a fan on the front, Revell of Germany has released a new version of their very nice 1/32 Arado Ar 196. This time it's the Ar 196B-1.



This is the version with a centerline float and wingtip floats. And no, they have not improved the canopy assembly. HPH to the rescue. At any rate, this kit should sell well as Revell of Germany is producing very nice kits at affordable prices.

On to Eduard and their Spitfire series. Next kit up is the 1/48 Spitfire Mk.VIII, so all you Grey Nurse fans get ready. Not only did Eduard give us all new fuselage parts, doing away with any kind of strange points where panel lines didn't exist.



Eduard has also given us new wings as well for

the Mk.VIII, both of which depict the subtle differences the Mk.VIII contains. How cool is that? Well, that's a rhetorical question. Anyway, their Mk.IX is a great kit and this one is too.

'til next month... go build a model!

Randy



Automotive

Let's see what's making its way into the new car showroom this month.

Named after the successful Le Mans racing car, the all-wheel drive Audi R8 with its bodywork constructed

completely of aluminum makes an aggressive appearance. This issue is the matte black body so no polishing or clear

coat is necessary.

Who knows, maybe it'll absorb police radar too! With a 186 mph top speed, you'll need

it. It's available now through Revell of Germany for around \$45.



AUDI R8

The latest issue Ferrari F12 Berlinetta is available now. What can I say about this kit? Complete! After years of Fujimi giving us bare-bones kits, it appears they've had a change of heart. This kit features opening doors, full

engine, two

(yes, two) sheets of photo-etch for brake rotors and dash displays.



One of the two sheets of etch is

even color printed, so no painting is required there. Even seat belt fabric is included in this kit. The best part is that with the ridiculously strong dollar, Americans can pick this one up in the \$35 range.

Coming soon from Revell-Monogram is a reissue of the 1940 Ford Standard Coupe. Its powerful flathead V8, sleek shape, and comfortable styling would influence car design for years to come. Unfortunately, production was cut short by another influence sweeping America: entry into WWII.



The kit features detailed factory stock flathead V8, separate frame and rear fenders, and whitewall tire inserts. Look for it this spring for around \$25.

Okay, if the Ford Standard Coupe is too blasé, how about a 1959 Cadillac Biarritz also being reissued around the same time? This car is, to me, the epitome of Detroit '50s excessiveness.

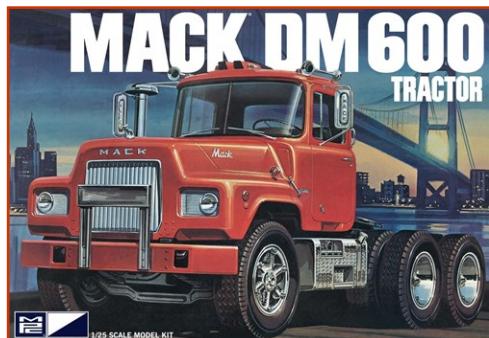


Built for an era when traffic was light on the motorways

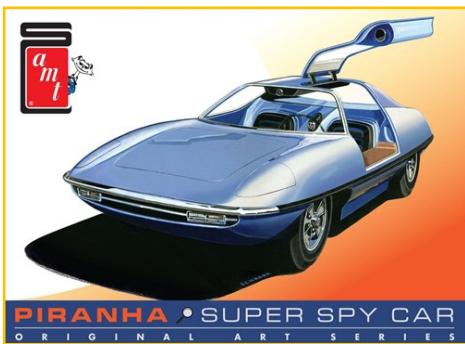
and gasoline was given away for free, this panzer wagon of a car was too long to fit in most American garages. The front bumper alone likely weighs more than a Volkswagen. Look for it in the \$25 range from Revell Monogram. But make sure it'll fit on your workbench first!

For the commercial truck lover, MPC will be reissuing their classic Mack DM in a day cab tractor soon.

Macks may not have the charismatic good looks of the West Coast trucks, but as they say, nothing is built like a Mack.



Even in tractor configuration expect hundreds of parts in this one. It would look really good covered in mud with timber bunks straining full of fresh cut saw logs bringing up the rear. Look for it soon in the \$35 range.



I thought I'd end my section with some campy fun from the '60s. Upon searching the internet, I believe this one comes to us from the TV series

"The Man From U.N.C.L.E." From all the features Described, I gather that in the cold war era it was important for successful spies to be seen in a flamboyant gull-winged silver soap bar with twin flame throwers. (And here I thought spying was about subtlety).

This boxing also features an art design book illustrating the development of the kit back in the day. Psychedelic, baby! Look for it out soon in the \$25 range.

I hope you enjoyed kicking tires in the showroom. No new tooling this month but there's enough old steel being dusted off and heated up to convince most anyone to want to take a walk on the shiny side.

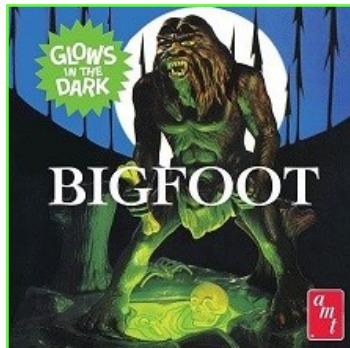
Mike



Miscellaneous

There is now physical evidence that Sasquatch exists. From AMT, it's a 1/12th scale limited edition Big Foot. The kit also glows in the dark. Perfect for your nightstand.

Revell is offering some 1/72 figures to go along with their 1/72 WWII U-Boot. The German Naval figures feature 51 figures in fixed poses. They are molded in color (blue) and are lots cheaper than the CMK figures, although not quite as detailed.



Italeri has a 1/9th scale motorcycle for you. This is the MV Agusta 500 '4 Clindri' 1964. This bike was world champion from 1962 through 1965.



New guy Matuo Kasten has a 1/144th scale Sherman. This is the M4A2E8 version and comes with four figures. Now you can test your skills at painting small figures.

I stumbled upon PMasks quite by accident. They are a Polish company that has been making cabin (canopy) masks for some few days now. The canopy masks range in scale from 1/24th to 1/72nd. They are self adhesive and the company also has camo masks for armor and aircraft. Check out the full line at : www.pmask.eu

For the airliner modeler in you, Welsh Models is offering a 1/72 DH 106 Comet 4B. This is the one with the long body and short wings. The kit contains a vacu-form fuselage and the other bits in resin with decals for Olympic Airlines.



For those wanting to fill out their Eastern European military collection, Micro Mir has a 1/350th scale Zaporizhzhia, Ukrainian submarine.



This is a full hull injected molded kit with photo-etch and decals. These kits, generally, build up nicely but are not for the faint of heart.

What with Mike Poole's fondness for motorcars, I'm surprised he missed this one. AMT is offering a 1/25th scale injected molded kit of the 1969 Chevrolet Corvair.

The '69 model was always the cool looking Corvair for me. That is, before Ralph got them pulled off the roads, thankfully.



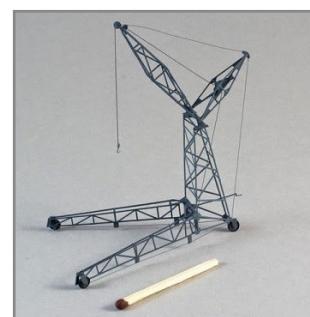
Authentic Decals has some decals that fill a long overdue niche. They are 1/72nd scale propeller stenciling. The decal set contains three types of logos: Aeroprop, Hamilton-Standard and Curtiss Electric.

Canuck Model products, not to be outdone, has some symmetrical decals for that 1/32nd scale CF-104 you have been meaning to do. I believe that these decals would qualify your entry for the Canadian Award at the next IPMS/USA Nationals.



For those with better eyesight and folding skills than I, F4 Models has a U.S.1940's -'50's maintenance crane.

This photo etch crane is in 1/72nd scale. The company also will be offering a starter cart in resin that was used by the USAF during the 1950's.



Eastern Express is back in the news with a Russian field car in 1/72nd scale. The GAZ-67B is an injected molded kit.

Staying with 'land animals' for a moment longer, Armory has a 1/72 Pz. KPFW.VII Löwe. This is an injected molded kit of a German WWII prototype tank.



Another small scale kit coming to a hobby shop near you is the SG-38 Schulgleiter. This injected molded kit



is from Special Hobby.

Golzar



rendering of it.

[No, that's not a test shot!]



Armor

Greetings armor fans and hello to y'all armor curious! Let's see what's new this month, shall we?

Not new but good news is that Asuka (formerly Tasca) is up and running and re-popping the Tasca kits.



We should also see Tasca kits for a bit less (\$50 range instead of \$80). Sherman and German Luchs fans rejoice!

Once again, model makers decided that a rare subject needs to be kitted by several manufacturers all at once. We now have three Soviet T-10 heavy tanks on the way! To be fair, two of them are from Trumpeter (both early and late models) and one is from Meng. The T-10 was the last of the Soviet heavy tanks, and like most Russian tanks, it's big and brutish. And, green. Here is Meng's T-10 and a very nice cad



Let's check in with Hobby Boss. They are gracing us with a T-50 soon. The T-50 was a neat little tank, but complicated to produce and was short lived.

Previously only available in plastic form from some dubious Russian kit makers, this modern kit is a welcome sight.



You can see the T-34 DNA in this little guy. Several of them were captured by Finnish forces.

We may get lucky and Hobby Boss will give us the decals in the box. If not, I am sure the aftermarket decal guys will fill in that void.

Hobby Boss is also coming out with a 100% new Leopard 2A4M.



Some experts online spotted some errors in the box art, but supposedly the errors are not in the actual plastic? It sure looks like a Leopard 2 to me. I guess we will find out when it hits hobby shop shelves sometime in April or May.

Those are the highlights. Til next time!

Aaron



Shipping News

Here's the stuff. Beginning with 1/700th scale we have from Cyber Hobby the USS Enterprise CVN-65 (1969) Carrier.

Dragon will be releasing the USS Arthur W. Radford AEMSS. This is the Advanced Enclosed Mast Sensor System DDG 968.

For WWI fans, Trumpeter is showing the British battleship HMS Dreadnought (1915).



Pit Road has a couple of DKM vessels for you. The Graf Spee (1939) and the Prinz Eugen (1945). Both

come with photo-etched railings and such.

Pit Road is also releasing two companion kits that include



equipment for IJN ships. Kit #8 has some heavy cruiser main gun turrets and kit #9 will allow you to spiff up your IJN ship with torpedo tubes and fire control directors.



Staying with the IJN, Aoshima has the IJN destroyer Mutsuki.

And, last but not least, another IJN Yamato by Fujimi. This is the ship modeler's Tiger Tank.

Manufacturers never tire of releasing new kits of her and ship modelers never tire of buying them.

In the 1/350th scale category comes Aoshima with the IJN Battleship Kongo. This is an upgraded edition of their previously released kit.



Dragon also has a larger sized kit for your enjoyment and surprise, surprise it's a another German destroyer. This time the Z-32.

Avis will be adding to their submarine fleet with the Sturgeon Class US submarine, Long type. Avis is associated with Mikr Mir.



ROP o.s/Samek has two pre-WWII submarine kits coming soon. Both are British Navy subs, the HMS M1 (1924) and the HMS M2 (1927). The major difference between the two boats is that the M2 was fitted with a seaplane. Both kits are resin and white metal.



That's it for this month. Grab a kit from you stash and build it.

Rick



Dispatches by Roy Lothbrok and Randy Bumgardner

This past Saturday, March 14, a small contingent of ASMS folk journeyed to Farmers Branch, Texas for the Metroplex Car Modelers' Association annual model contest: *Showdown 2015*.

In attendance were Mike Poole, Randy Bumgardner and Ziggy Bumgardner.

I had planned to attend but was unable due to a scheduling conflict. In lieu of a first-hand report on *Showdown 2015* we have dispatches from Randy Bumgardner.

10:39AM - We're here, finally! Dallas does love their potholes and traffic jams.

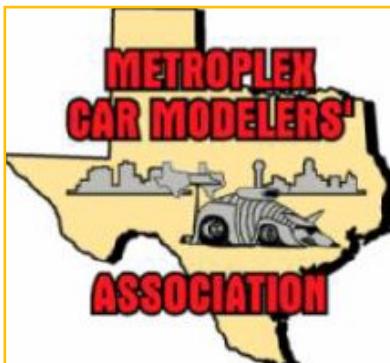
11:35AM - Update! Mike managed to find a bicycle in the vendor area. The venue is interesting. It's the up-stairs viewing area of a hockey rink. We do get to watch the Zamboni, though!

12:21PM - Ziggy remarked that "life is good!" as he spends his Dad's money.

1:22PM - At lunch. Judging is occurring right now. There are some nice models on the tables.

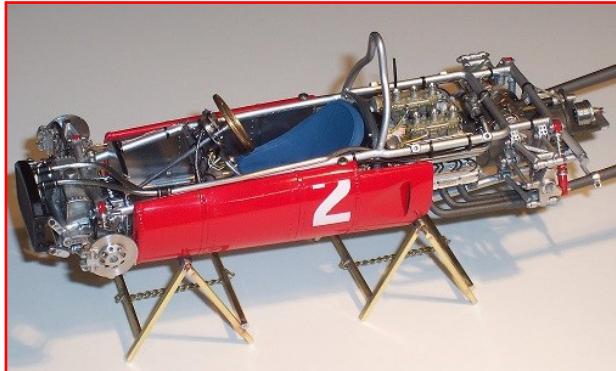
2:23PM - Apparently, they close the contest area for judging.

3:51PM - Rumor has it our Mike Poole will be winning Best of Show, again! Houston, here he comes.



4:03PM - Ziggy took first place with his Camero. I haven't won anything. Of course, I should enter something to establish that expectation.

From subsequent reports, Mike Poole did indeed win Best of Show with his Sharknose Ferrari. As previously mentioned, Ziggy Bumgardner finished first in his category with his Bumblebee Camaro. Congratulations on their outstanding showings!



It should be noted that Mike has won Best of Show at the last four contests he has attended and entered something. Having gone four for four, he only needs one more Best of Show to become an ace.



Roy

Randy



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http://ipmsusa2.org/forms/ipms_application.pdf

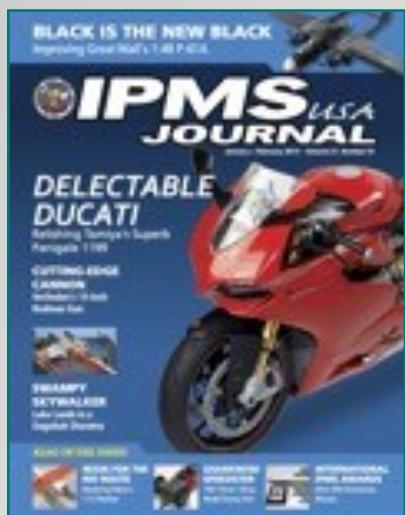
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- Night Hunting Widow - Building Great Wall Hobby's P-61A Glass Nose, by Andy Renshaw
- Ducati Dominance - Performance Personified by Tamiya's 1:12 1199 Panigale S, by Steve Taylor
- From Cutting-Edge Casting a Cannon Comes - Scoring a Hit with Verlinden's 15-inch Rodman Civil War Gun, by J.R. Dietrich
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