

Building 'Teddy Ballgame's' Korean War jet

By Chris Bucholtz

In today's era of an all-volunteer military, the idea of a celebrity serving in uniform—let alone fighting—seems a bit strange and would be viewed as a peculiar publicity stunt.

But during World War II and the Korean conflict, celebrities were inducted into the armed services like every other able-bodied man, and several of them ended up as fliers. Jimmy ("I—I can't move my arm") Stewart flew P-47s as a member of Hub Zemke's Wolfpack, and Clark Gable was a tail gunner on B-17s.

Perhaps no group of celebrities was impacted more by WWII than America's professional baseball players. Of the 5,800 major and minor leaguers in the U.S. at the time of Pearl Harbor, 5,400 were in uniform by 1945. Over 50 were

killed during the war.

Greats like Bob Feller, Joe DiMaggio and Hank Greenberg spent time in uniform, and the autumn draft of the Yankees' Tommy Heinrich had a direct impact on the 1942 World Series.

Another great who served—but under more controversial circumstances—was Ted Williams. The temperamental Red Sox slugger had initially been classified 3-A because his mother was financially dependent on him. This classification caused the already contentious Boston fans to ride him unmercifully until a disgusted Williams, along with BoSox second baseman Johnny Pesky, enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve. Williams completed flight school and checked out in F4U Corsairs, but was too good a pilot to go overseas. Instead, he was assigned to serve as an instructor, an assignment which rankled him after the jeers he'd received for being "unpatriotic." Ultimately, after repeated requests to be transferred to a combat unit, Williams got his wish—just as the war

ended. In 1945, he was discharged.

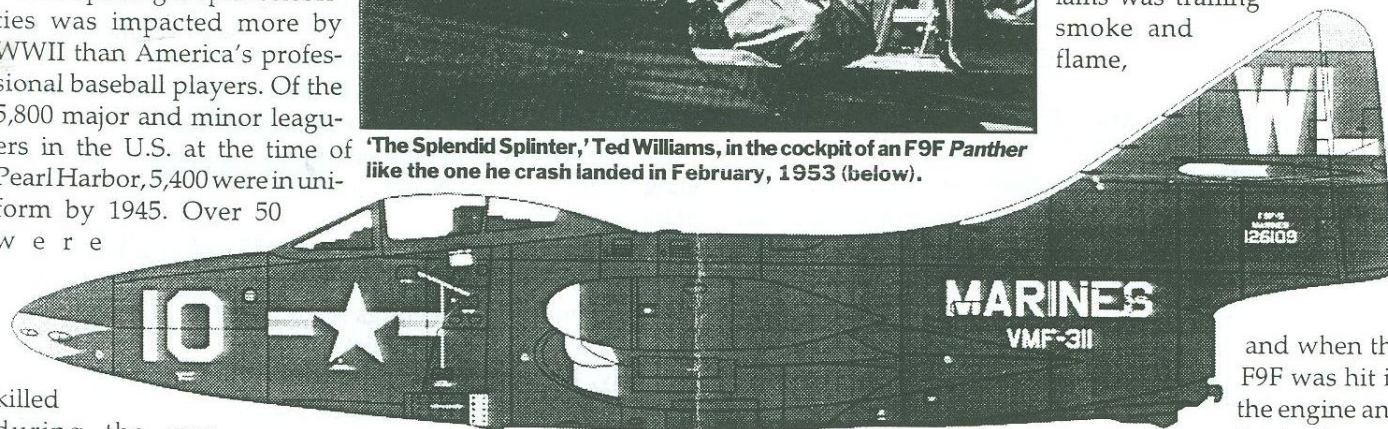
Seven years later, the Marines came calling again. The 33-year-old Williams, along with 2,100 former naval aviators, was recalled for the war in Korea. This time, Williams was truly infuriated, and insisted on a combat assignment. His big

mouth landed him in VMF-311, in the thick of combat in Korea.

On his first mission, of February 19, 1953, Williams dropped his ordnance on a troop encampment near Kyomipo. As he pulled off the target, his F9F-5 Panther was hit by ground fire. Williams was trailing smoke and flame,



'The Splendid Splinter,' Ted Williams, in the cockpit of an F9F Panther like the one he crash landed in February, 1953 (below).



and when the F9F was hit in the engine and a fire broke out, the tail section blew off nearly every time. Williams' fellow pilots saw this and screamed at him to bail out of the stricken plane.

Unfortunately, Ted's radio had also been put out of commission. He looked down at the sea and saw it partially frozen over, and rationalized that a bail out would be tantamount to suicide. So, in a burning F9F, he pressed for Suwon.

When he reached his base, the wheels and flaps failed to come down. Williams nursed the plane onto the ground, sliding 5,300 feet across perforated steel plating, and barely escaped from the plane before it was enveloped in flame.

This story has all the elements I need to build a model—the Splendid Splinter, a good story and a naval aircraft! Once I nailed down the particulars, I set out to build this Panther.

While Hasegawa's 1:72 F9F-2 kit is deservedly praised, I

Continued on page 10

The Styrene Sheet is a monthly publication of the Silicon Valley Chapter of the International Plastic Model Society (IPMS). Articles and comments should be submitted to Chris Bucholtz, Editor, P.O. Box 361644, Milpitas, CA 95036, or by E-mail at 207-3426@mcimail.com. Excerpts may be published only with the written permission of the editor.

EDITOR'S BRIEF

Here it is, December already! The contest season has come to a close at last, with Sacramento's second event of the year marking the tenth event in the region (SVSM, Stockton Tomcats, Travis AFB/Mt. Diablo, Central Valley Scale Modelers, Fresno Scale Modelers, Monterey Bay, Yuba City, and two in Sacramento). A job well done by Region IX, and a performance which any other region would be hard pressed to match.

Now, we'll take a three-month break before our Kickoff Classic on March 9 and build, build, build! No other plans have been set forth by the rest of the region yet as far as contests go, but I'd imagine we'll see at least six contests next year, and with any luck old favorite haunts like Fremont and Castle AFB will be back on the circuit.

If you didn't go to any contests last year, you missed out on a lot of fun. Just talking about models with their builders is great, and there were a lot of fine models on the circuit to talk about this season. Jim Lewis' M35 gun truck just about cleaned house, garnering many times its weight in plaques. Roy Sutherland's *Seafire* was a force before its nationals win took it off the circuit. Jim Gordon's *Cleveland*-class cruiser, Milt Poulos' F/A-18, Brian Finch's M3 Stuart, Bob Moore's F-111 and Alan Webber's "Civilschmitt" grabbed a mess of awards, too.

The best thing about these models is that their builders are all such personable people. Contrary to the stereotypical image of the crotchety IPMS old-timer who keeps his secrets HIS secrets, the winners in this region will gladly tell you how they accomplished something. This shows that the awards aren't the goal—having fun is. Sure, winning awards is fun, and for accomplished modelers, a loss can bruise one's pride or, in the case of poor judging, cause a great deal of annoyance. But the modelers in our region, by and large, just like to put their models on the table, talk modeling and participate.

Participation—that's the key word. For your editor, participating in contests is much more important than winning an award. To see my work on the table with Roy Sutherland's, Bill Ferrante's, Bill Dye's, and Mike Burton's... well, at first, I couldn't believe they let me put my models within ten feet of theirs! Now, after knowing them for a while, it's clear that I was as welcome as any newcomers would be. Now, we're getting a host of new modelers who are there to participate—Hubert Chan and Dennis Ybe spring to mind immediately.

I've also been to two nationals, where the odds against winning mean that you have to be a real talent to have a chance. Still, by putting something on the table, I've had a chance to chat with modelers from all over the country. That's the return on your entry fee—not some piece of wood to brag about (after all, anyone worth his salt would rather look at your models!) but friendships and fun times.

Having said that, I hope that you all take a good look at our categories for this year's Kickoff Classic. For whatever reason, our event is the region's biggest, so to reflect that we've increased the number of categories by 18! We've included categories for missiles, railroad subjects and a number of new classifications for armor and automobiles to reflect the increasing interest in these fields. Also, we'll have 16 special awards, including awards for *Monogram P-47 Thunderbolts*,

firebombers and air racers—all of which many of you have already started work on! We're hoping that everyone in the club can make it to the event—not necessarily to compete, but to be there, talk about models and have a good time. That's the only reason we put this event on, and we hope you'll be a part of it.

Speaking of contests, I'd like to use this opportunity to thank the members of Region IX who have contributed money—and plenty of it—to help finance the 1998 IPMS Nationals. As you may be aware, the event is not being sponsored by ANY of the region's clubs, but by a coalition of people from around the region. As a result, all the funding has come not from club funds but from individual's wallets and pocketbooks. The first payments for space amounted to nearly \$4000—and the members of the SemiCon group have banded together to contribute the money. If you get a chance, thank one of these people—they're bringing the nationals TO YOU through their hard work and generous financial investments, and they're doing it at a time of the year when money's all the harder to come by because of the holidays.

This issue is 16 pages, and much of it is my F9F-5 article. That's because contributions have been getting a little slim lately. Matt and Jeff's articles really saved my bacon this time around. If you get a chance over your holiday vacation, do me a favor—jot down a few words about the latest model you've worked on! It really isn't that difficult a process, and I take great pains to carefully edit each story for readability, so there's no reason limit yourself because you aren't the modeling world's equivalent of Ernest Hemingway. Share your hobby with us!

Also, don't forget your favorite meeting and mine—the December pizza party and model swap. This event makes our usual rambunctious meetings seem like PTA meetings! You don't want to miss out on this!

Finally, I want to wish each of you and your families a joyous holiday season, and I hope that you find lots of plastic beneath your tree on Christmas morning!

—The Editor

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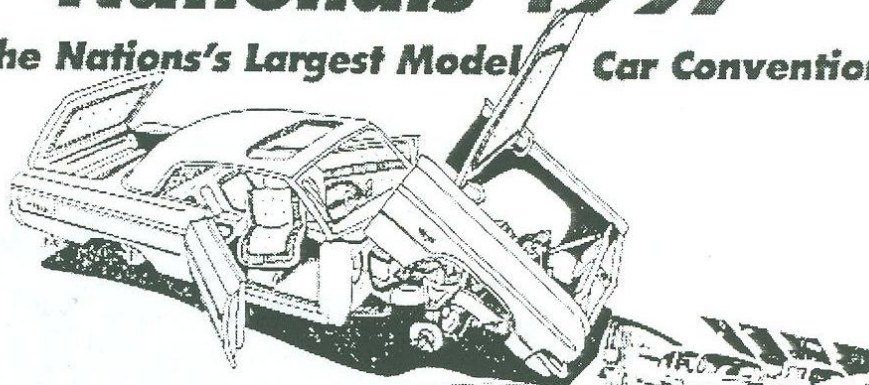
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Sunken merchantmen avenged by Atlantic TBFs

By Jeff Hargis

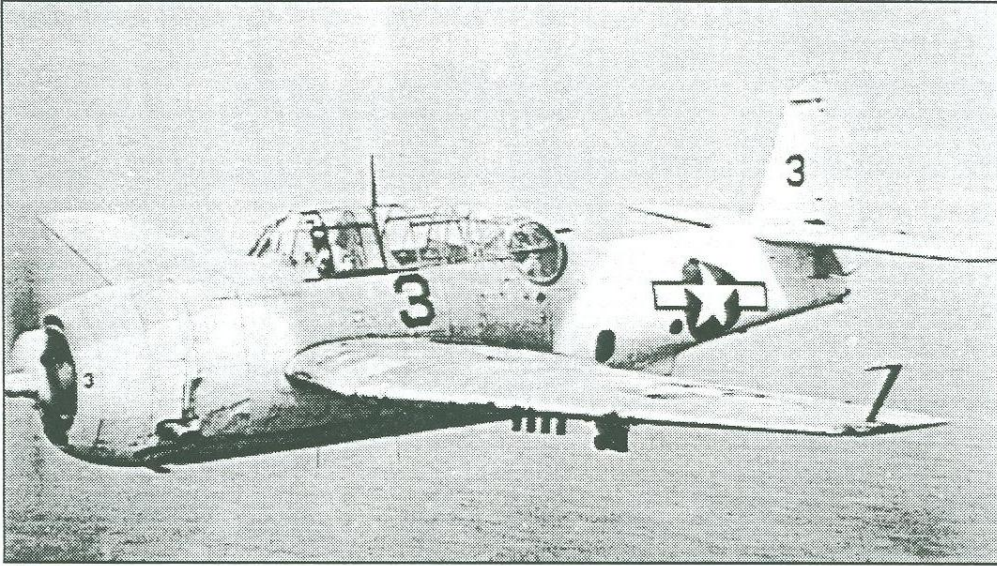
On the morning of January 12, 1942, the British steamer *Cyclops* was plodding along 300 miles east of Cape Cod. Suddenly a torpedo slammed into the vessel and she quickly sank. Operation *Paukensschlag* (Roll of the Drums), Admiral Dönitz' offensive against American coastal shipping, had begun.

By the end of the month, five U-Boats had sunk 35 ships totaling more than 200,000 tons. Slowly, the United States responded to the threat. A black-out of the East Coast was imposed, escort ship tactics were honed to better protect convoys, and as long range patrol aircraft became available, the U-Boat threat was slowly reduced.

While land-based planes reduced the U-Boat menace near the coast, they could not reach an area in the center of the ocean called the Mid-Atlantic Gap. There, U-Boats still were able to prey upon merchant shipping almost at will.

In order to combat the threat of U-Boats in this area, the

United States Navy built small escort carriers (CVEs). The offensive punch for these "Jeep carriers" was provided by the Grumman TBF *Avenger*. With a wing span of 54 feet, 2 inches and a length of 40 feet, it was massive for a carrier aircraft. Powered by a Wright Cyclone 1700 horsepower radial engine, it had a range of 1000 miles and a speed of 270 mph. With a crew of three, it could still carry a 2000—pound load in its belly.



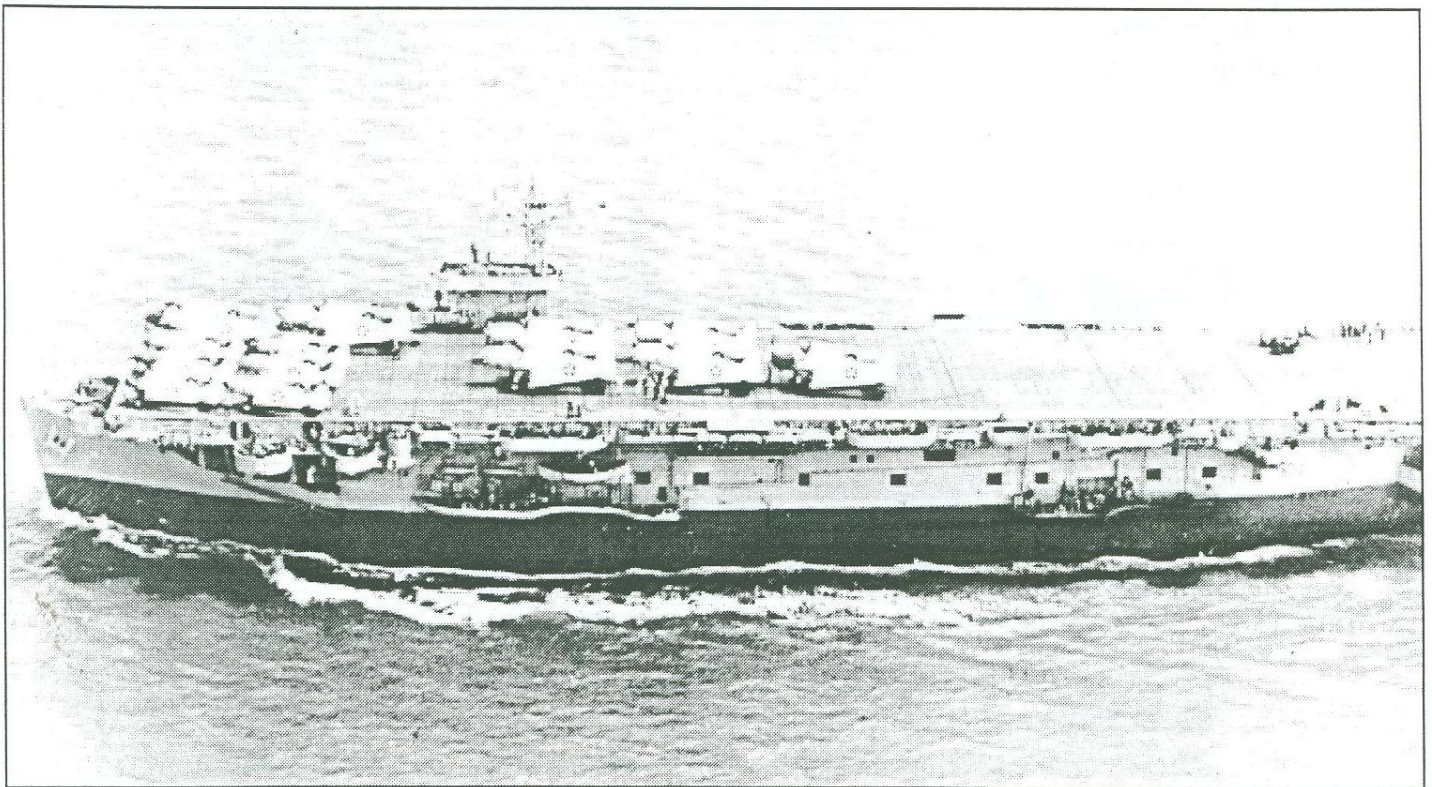
An *Avenger* on patrol over the Atlantic. Note the underwing rocket racks.

it could still carry a 2000—pound load in its belly.

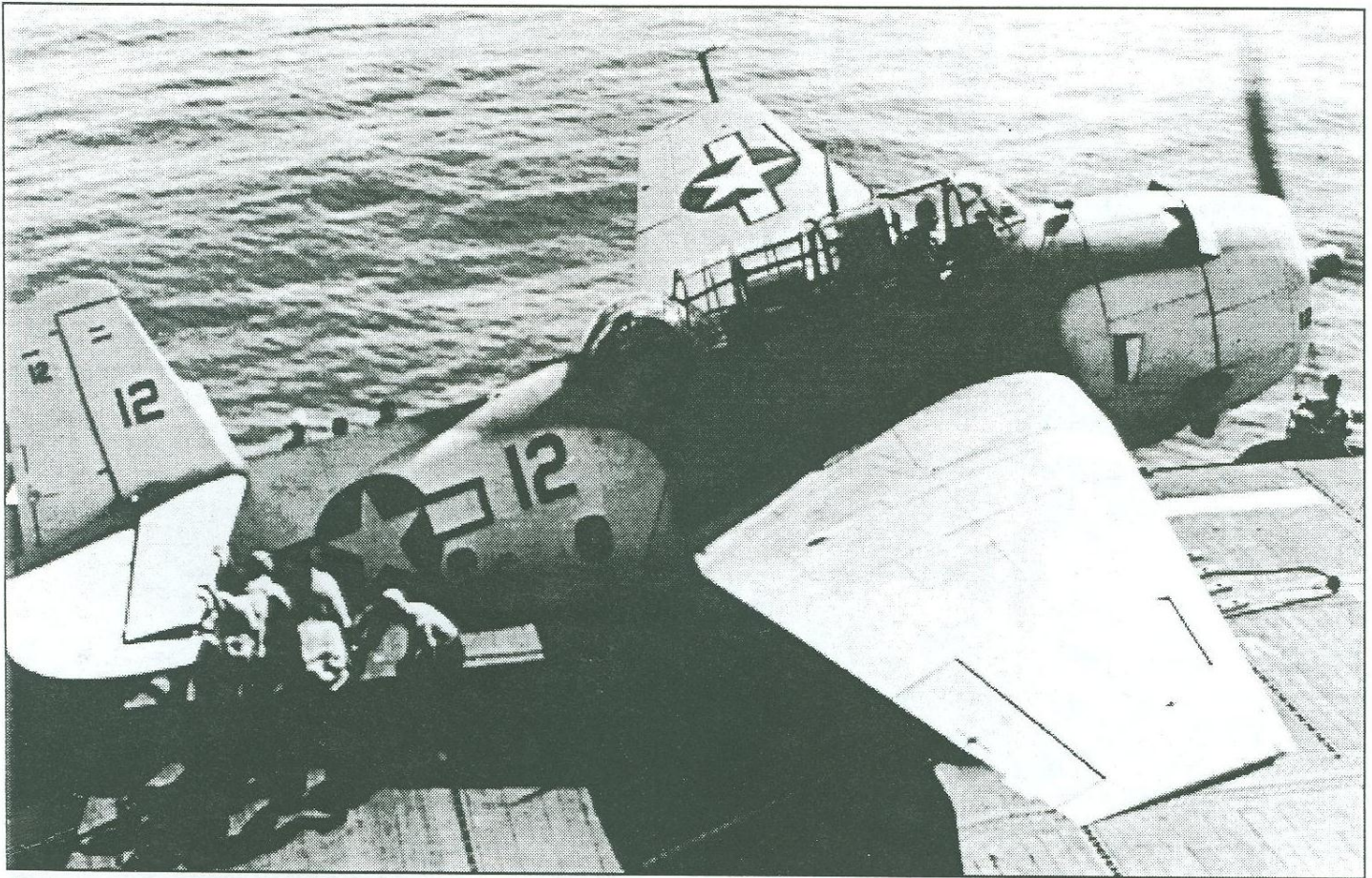
The demand for the TBF became so great that General Motors' Eastern Aircraft Division began producing the plane under the designation TBM. While conceived as a torpedo bomber, *Avengers* in the Atlantic carried 500-pound bombs and 350

pound depth charges for anti-submarine work. Later versions carried up to eight rockets and a 50 caliber machine gun in each wing.

In 1943 several CVEs, with *Avengers* aboard, began operating in the Mid-Atlantic Gap. Organized into hunter-killer groups, they operated separately from the convoys and ended



This shot of *Block Island* shows how big the TBF *Avenger* was—and how small the decks it was required to fly from were.



An Avenger is positioned on deck before an Atlantic patrol. Of all U.S. Navy U-Boat kills, 65 percent were credited to CVE-based TBFs.

up sinking 65 percent of the total number of U-Boats the United States Navy destroyed during the war.

Innovative use of the *Avenger* included stripping the plane of all armor and weapons and installing extra fuel tanks in the fuselage and belly. This allowed the plane to fly all night and use its Air to Surface Type B Radar (ASB) to direct escorts to U-Boat contacts.

A more daring tactic was developed by Captain Dan Gallery of the U.S.S. *Guadalcanal* (CVE-60). The plan called for relays of fully armed *Avengers* to fly throughout the night covering the convoy. This meant night takeoffs and landings on the small 450-foot decks. Despite the increased danger, within 48 hours Captain Gallery's group sank U-68 and U-515. It was also Captain Gallery's group that conducted the first rocket attack by American aircraft, in which U-758 was severely damaged and forced to return to port. The *Avenger* played a major role in turning the tide against the U-boat threat in the Atlantic.

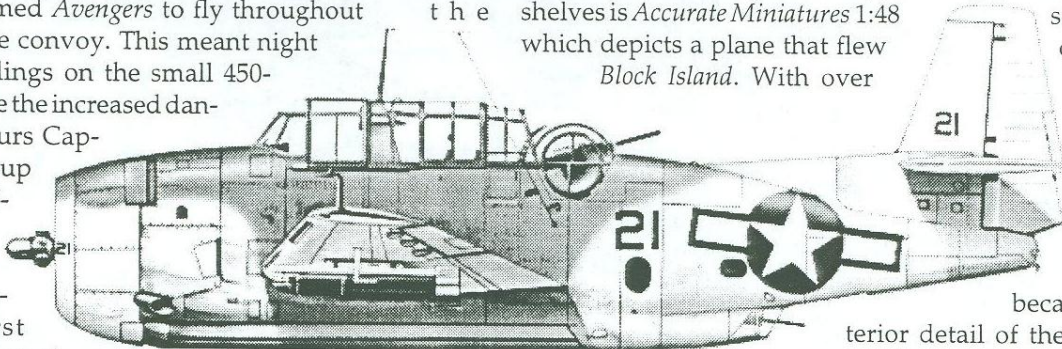
Two modern kits of Atlantic *Avengers* are now on the shelves, *Hasegawa's* 1:72 scale and *Accurate Miniatures* 1:48 scale version. The *Hasegawa* kit has been out for a year and received a good review in *Fine Scale Modeler* (March 96) and

our editor, Chris Bucholtz, also gave it a positive review in *The Styrene Sheet* (December 95).

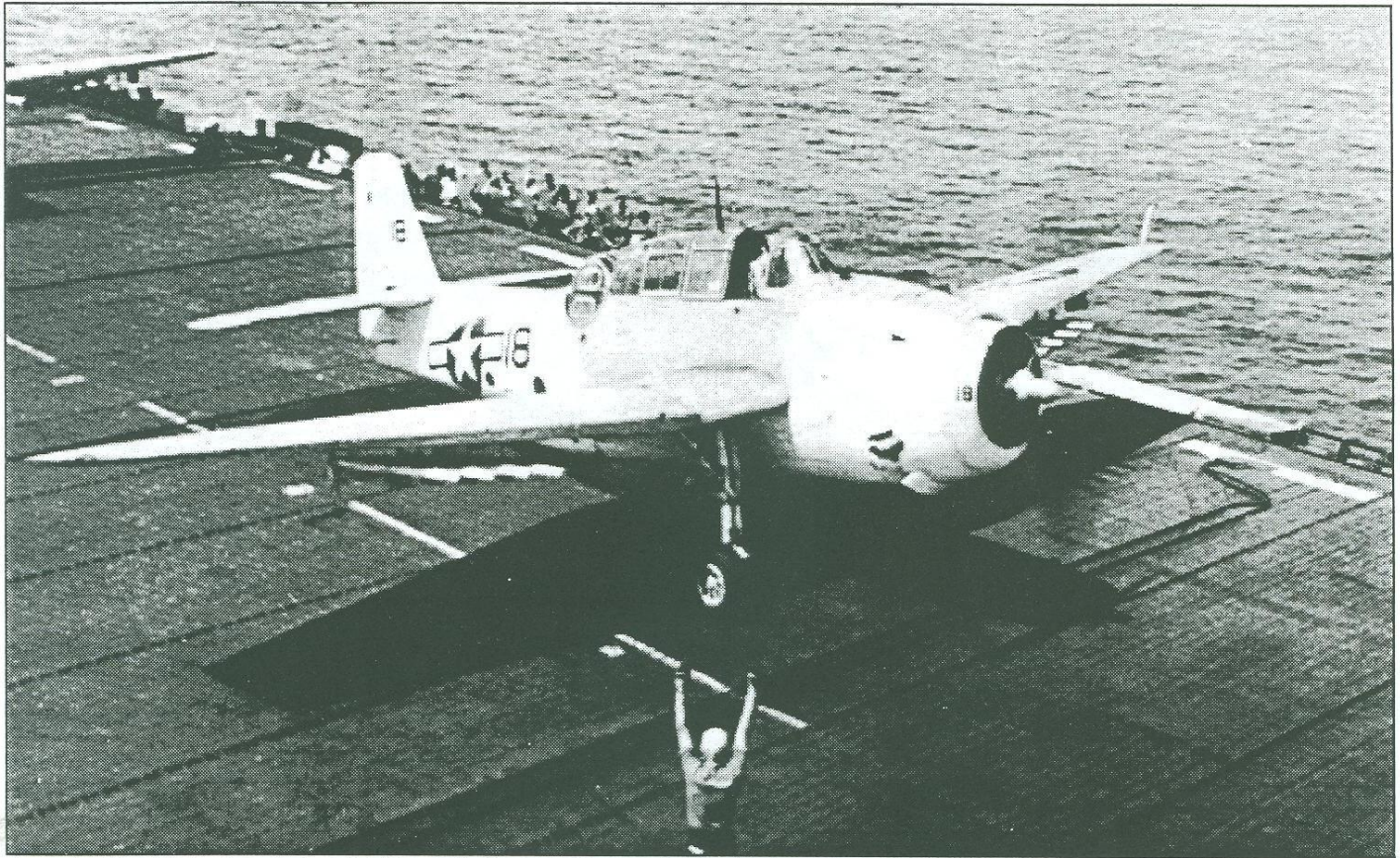
My *Hasegawa* kit, so far, has been easy to put together. It comes with a torpedo, is not correct for the Atlantic version, and the instructions tell you to leave out what appear to be 3.5 inch rockets, which would be prototypical for an Atlantic Avenger. Hopefully, I will have this kit completed for the January meeting.

A recent (and long-awaited) arrival on shelves is *Accurate Miniatures* 1:48 which depicts a plane that flew *Block Island*. With over

rival to the scale TBF-1C, off the U.S.S. 100 parts, this kit doesn't look like it is for beginners, mainly because of the interior detail of the cockpit and weapons bay.



The kit looks like it would build up into a big, beautiful model. Moldings are clean and I would guess the fit would be great just from the way the kit looks. Recessed panel lines, weighted and unweighted tires with hub inserts, a three-piece radial engine, along with bombs and depth charges, add to the detail. The only problem areas are the pilot's canopy, which is cut out, and the ball turret which are split down the



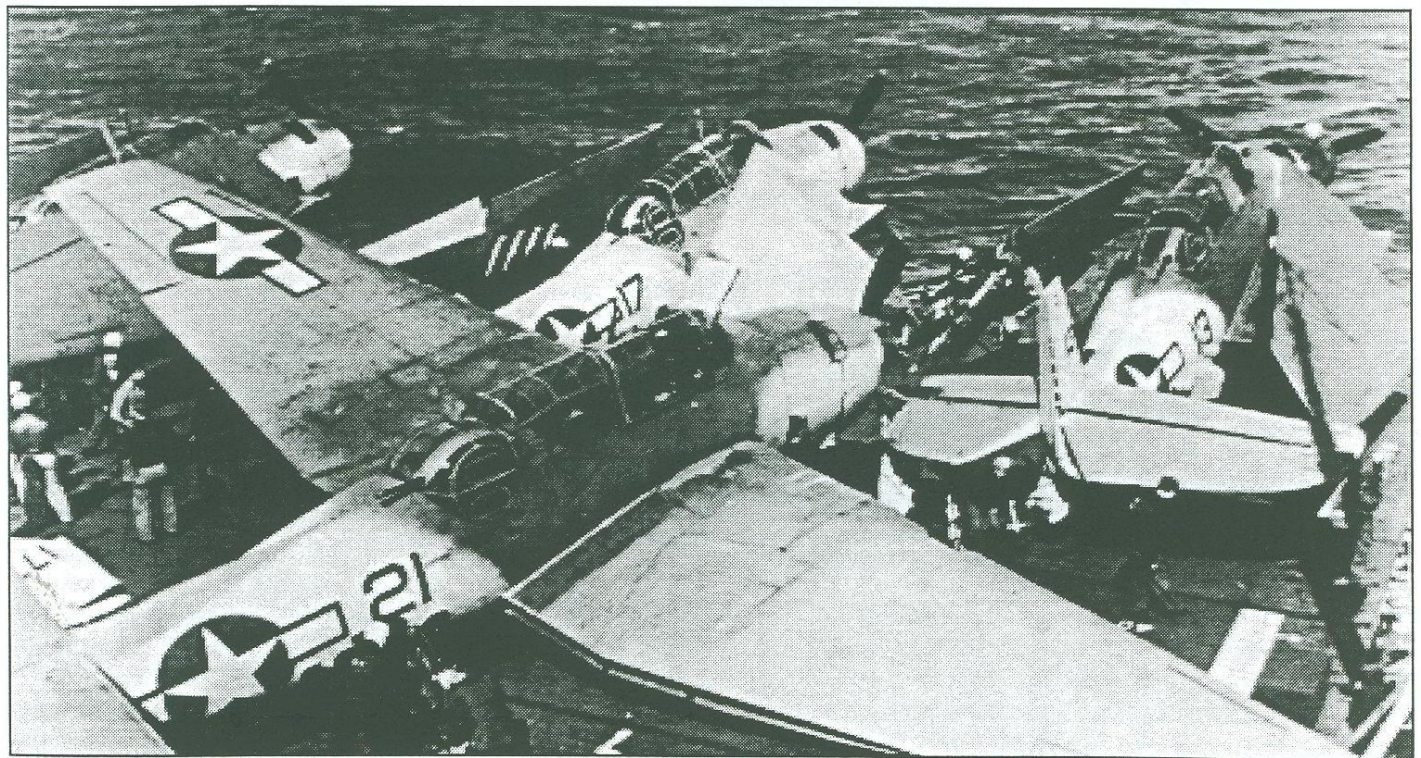
Armed with 3.75-inch rockets, this TBF awaits the signal to launch. The 'Turkey's' broad wings were an asset in lifting off from CVE decks.

middle. The decal seat belts also seem a little strange.

The instruction sheet is large, with good drawings, and plenty of information about construction. The sheet also includes the codes for almost any paint you can think of, including Federal Standard numbers and numbers for Model Master and all other popular brands.

A pleasant surprise is the kit, at \$28.95, is only \$9 more than the *Hasegawa* kit, and you get a whole lot more for a few more dollars.

If you have the time, experience, and money the *Accurate Miniatures* kit would build up into a great model straight from the box.



On the other hand... As docile as the *Avenger* was, accidents like this one were always a hazard aboard escort carriers.

After your race car is finished—crash it!

By Matt Reich

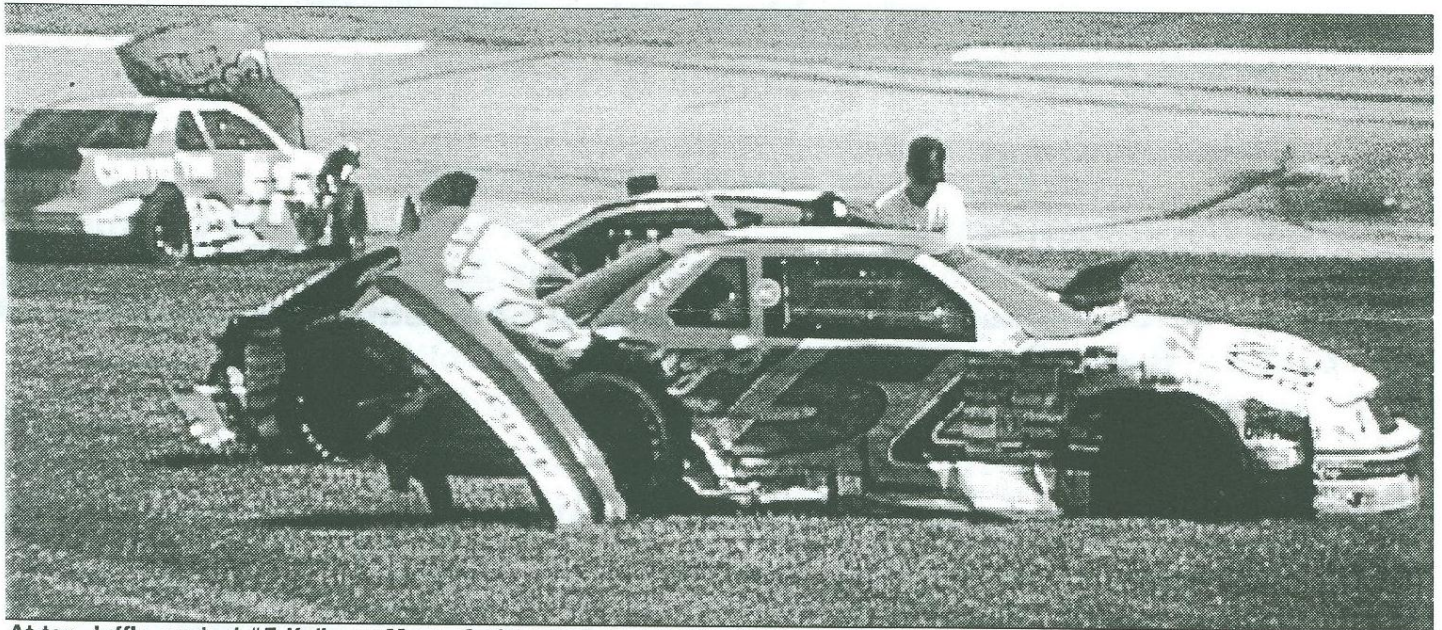
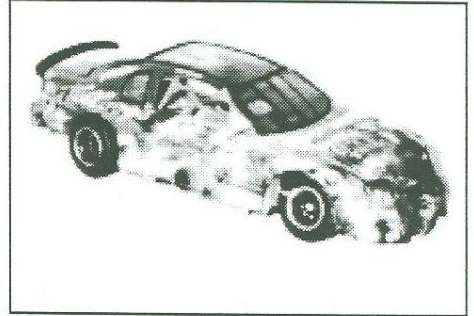
This idea came when I was sick of looking at shiny finishes on model cars. I was also sick of sanding and polishing. I was watching a NASCAR race on ESPN one Sunday. I pulled out the Jeff Gordon Monte Carlo by *Monogram* I was working on. Just then, the announcer screamed out, "Crash in turn 4, crash in turn 4!" I threw a tape in the VCR and recorded the replay, and I decided to modeled this crashed car.

I didn't want to trash my colorful Dupont car, so I pulled out my already-built *AMT/Ertl* #5 Kellogg's Monte Carlo. This car is piloted by Terry Labonte.

The key tool in damaging your car is a brand new, unused pencil. The part you want to use is the eraser tip. The other key tool is a candle. Hold the assembled car about 1-2 inches from the flame. This is so the model doesn't catch on fire. Hold it over the heat for about 15 seconds. Now remove it. Using the eraser end, push in the body panels. Don't overdo it, though. The car just hit a wall, not a landmine.

Remember that, just like with airplane weathering, car damage has a distinct direction to it—front to back. A "Darlington stripe" will result in stripped paint from any and all raised parts of the car's side—usually the right side. As in any project, a look at photos (or video tape) will give you a good idea of your objective.

After the model has cooled, drybrush the damaged areas with aluminum paint. You can even add black overspray to replicate smoke stains, and, with pastels, tire marks from other cars. There you have it, your very own crashed stock car.



At top, Jeff's crashed #5 Kelloggs Monte Carlo; below, Terry Labonte's real mount after it came to grief in a 1994 race.

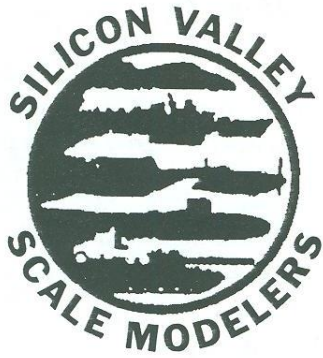
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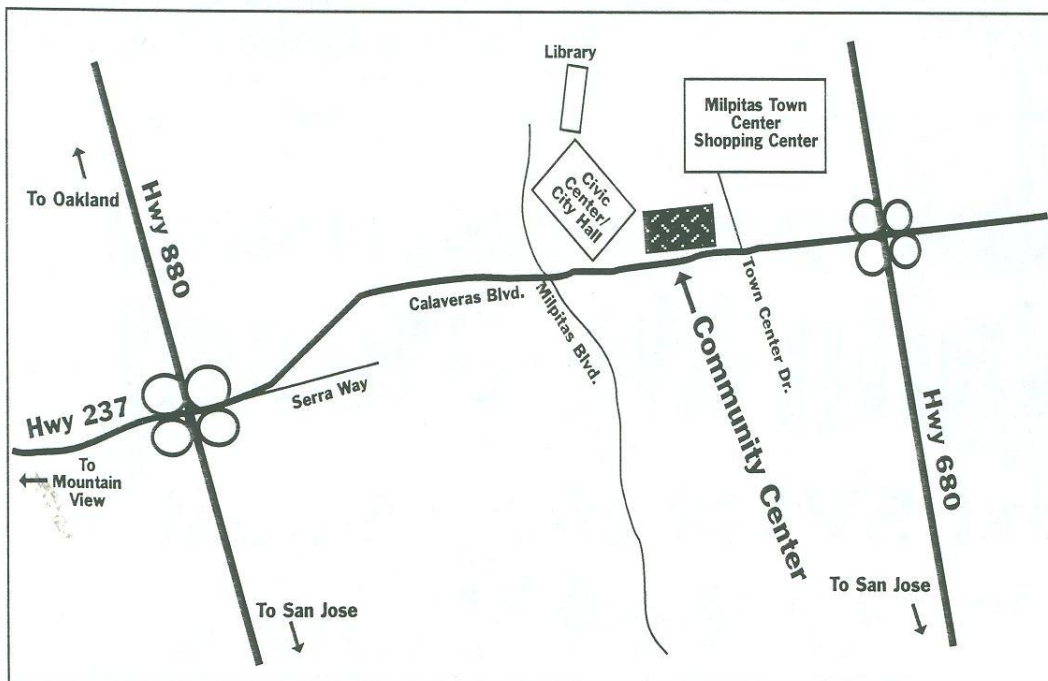
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Senior 18 years +

- S1. Single Engine Jet or Rocket Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller
- S2. Multi Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller
- S3. Single Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller
- S4. Multi Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller
- S5. Single Engine Jet or Rocket Aircraft, 1:48
- S6. Multi Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:48
- S7. Single Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, 1:48, Allied
- S8. Single Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, 1:48, Axis and neutral
- S9. Multi Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, 1:48
- S10. Jet and Rocket Aircraft, 1:32 or larger
- S11. Prop Aircraft, 1:32 or larger
- S12. Biplanes, all scales and eras
- S13. Rotary Wing Aircraft, all scales
- S14. Missiles, all scales
- S15. Civil Aircraft, all scales
- S16. 1:35 Softskins and support vehicles
- S17. 1:35 Light armored fighting vehicles, wheeled
- S18. 1:35 Light Armored fighting vehicles, tracked and semi-tracked
- S19. 1:35 Main Battle Tanks, Axis and neutral
- S20. 1:35 Main Battle Tanks, Allied
- S21. 1:35 Artillery, towed and Ancillary Vehicles
- S22. 1:35 Self-propelled artillery
- S23. 1:48 and smaller Softskins and Artillery
- S24. 1:48 and smaller Armored Fighting Vehicles
- S25. Automotive, Competition, Closed Wheel
- S26. Automotive, Competition, Open Wheel

- SA1. Best Flying Cat
- SA2. Best Armored Cat
- SA3. Best Floating Cat
- SA4. Best Automotive Cat
- SA5. Arlie Charter Memorial Award—Best Army Air Corps, Pacific Theatre
- SA6. Ayrton Senna Memorial Award—Best Competition Car
- SA7. Best Wheeled Military Vehicle

Schedule of Events

- 9 a.m.-noon—Registration
- 11:45—Judges meeting
- 12:30-2 p.m. — Judging
- 3 p.m. — Awards

General Rules

1. IPMS/USA rules and criteria will be used for this contest. However, no model may be handled by the judges under any circumstances, or by any other contest staff member unless absolutely necessary. Model placement will be handled by the builder. SVSM invites members of other chapters in region IX to participate by joining our judging teams.
2. The Contest Director will make the final ruling on all disputes during the contest.
3. No model that has won an award at an IPMS National Convention may be entered in this contest, but winners are invited to place their work on display.
4. Out of the Box categories are per IPMS/USA rules. Box art and

- S27. Automotive, Stock
- S28. Automotive, Custom (Low Riders)
- S29. Automotive, Custom (all others)
- S30. Automotive, Commercial Vehicles
- S31. Ships, 1:350 and larger
- S32. Ships, 1:351 and smaller
- S33. Submarines, all scales and eras
- S34. Sailing ships, small boats and commercial boats, all scales and eras
- S35. Dioramas
- S36. Railroad-related subjects
- S37. Figures, Sci-Fi and Fantasy
- S38. Figures, military or historic
- S39. Dinosaurs and prehistoric mammals, all scales
- S40. Sci-Fi and Fantasy, Movie or Television
- S41. Hypothetical subjects, all types and scales
- S42. Miscellaneous Subjects, all types and scales

Junior 13-17 years

- J1. Aircraft, 1:72 and smaller
- J2. Aircraft, 1:48 and larger
- J3. Military Vehicles, all scales and types
- J4. Automotive, all scales and types
- J5. Sci-Fi and Fantasy, all scales and types
- J6. Miscellaneous, all scales and types

Sub-Junior 12 years and under

- SJ1. Aircraft
- SJ2. Military Vehicles
- SJ3. Automotive
- SJ4. Miscellaneous

Special Awards

- SA8. Best Armored Fighting Vehicle
- SA9. Best 1:48 Cockpit Detail
- SA10. Best 1:48 Monogram P-47 Thunderbolt
- SA11. Best Firebomber
- SA12. Best Racing Plane
- SA13. IPMS/USA RC9 Award—Judges' Choice
- SA14. SVSM President's Grand Award—Best of Show, Senior
- SA15. SVSM President's Grand Award—Best of Show, Junior

Fees

- Seniors: \$5 registration for 3 model entries; \$1 per each additional model entered
- Juniors: \$1 registration, .50 per model entered
- Vendors: \$25 per table

- instructions are not mandatory for this contest. SVSM appreciates the honor system, and would also appreciate these supporting materials if available to the contestant.
- 5. SVSM asks that all contestants keep away from judging teams during the course of the contest to ensure impartiality. Interference with judging teams by the contestants will be handled per IPMS/USA rules—and could render the contestant's model ineligible for award consideration.
- 6. All model entries will be handled per IPMS-USA rules, and all work must be done by the entrant.
- 7. All attendees will have fun—otherwise, they aren't doing this right!

Improving Matchbox's F9F-5 Panther

Continued from page 1

couldn't use it as a starting point. The -5's intakes were radically different, and the nose of the plane was nine inches longer. Instead, I opted for Matchbox's F9F-5 kit, which is accurate if not exquisitely detailed.

The Matchbox kit consists of four trees in three different colors of plastic. Most of the smaller parts—landing gear struts, bombs, wing fence, gear doors, ejection seat—are thick and crude. The kit has simplified raised panel lines, a thick canopy and deep trenches for control surfaces. Like most Matchbox kits, it's a rough starting point, but it's also the only game in town.

I started work on two of the planes simultaneously, intending one as a gift. I armed myself with a pair of Airwaves' photo-etched detail sets for the F9F, a set designed for the Hasegawa -2 kit. Oddly, the set had the flush side consoles of the -5 instead of the stepped consoles of the -2, a fortunate accident for my project.

The first step was to improve the cockpit. The Matchbox kit's cockpit tub includes some raised detail, but I preferred the more refined detail of the Airwaves side consoles. I also decided to discard the ejection seat and control panel.

I used an X-Acto knife to remove the side console detail from the cockpit tubs and trimmed away the molded-in armored headrest. After cleaning up the Airwaves side consoles and side panels, I airbrushed the parts interior green and black, using very small strips of tape to mask different sections of the detail parts.

While the photoetched parts are nice, painting them with a brush is nearly impossible. Instead, to bring out the recessed detail in the side consoles, I used a white watercolor paint pencil. I sharpened the pencil, dipped the end in water, and then "painted" a coat of white watercolor over the control panels. When this was dry, I dipped a cotton swab in small amount of Tamiya thinner and removed the excess white paint. The end result was something like a wash, with the panel detail crisply defined in white.

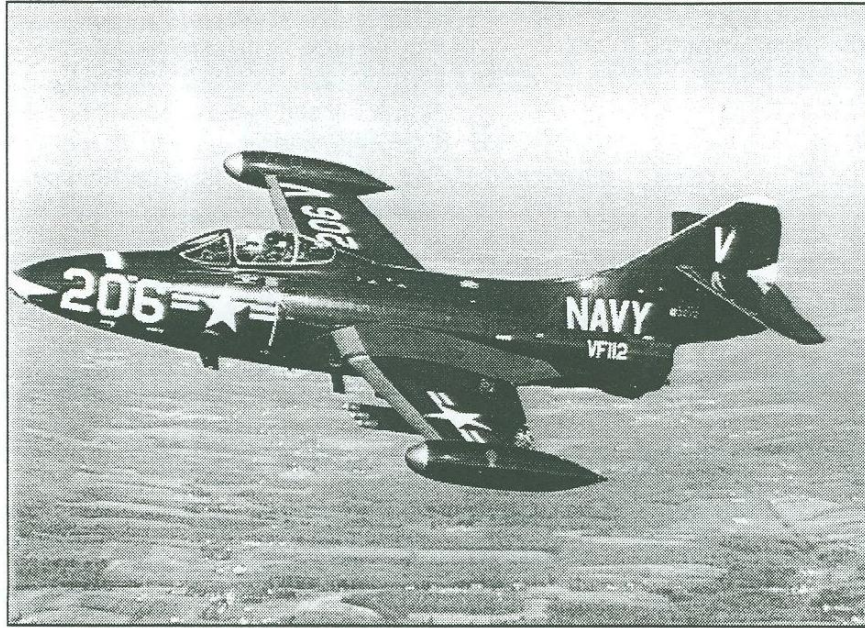
Once the side panels were glued to the fuselage sides and the side consoles were in place in the tub, I found some discarded acetate controls from Eduard detail sets and modified them to fit within the bezels of the Airwaves panel. This was tedious but worthwhile; the panel looks odd and empty without dial faces inside the bezels.

Once the panel's instruments were "installed," I "dry-brushed" the panel by

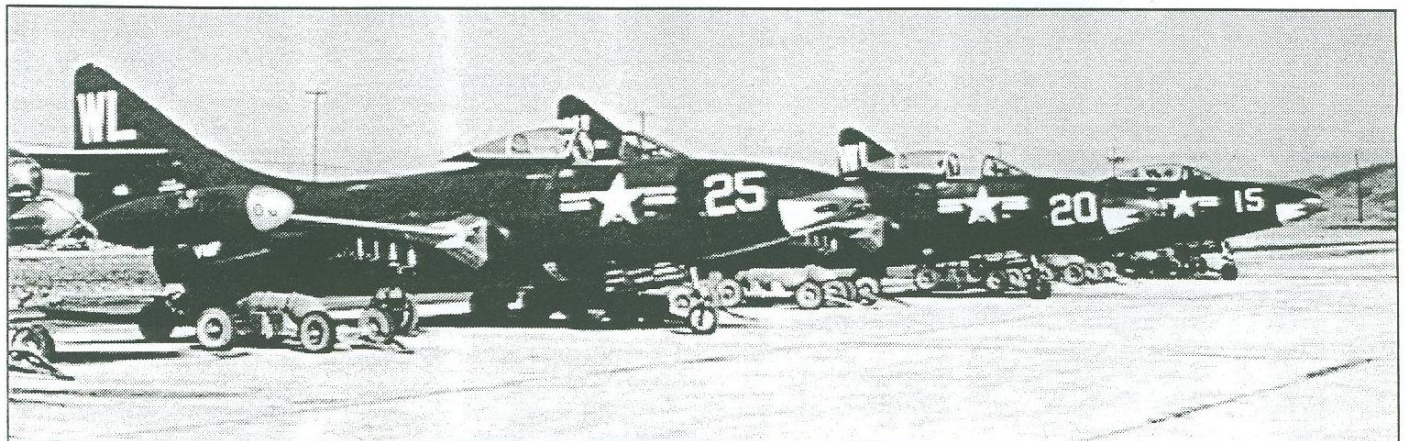
running a dark gray watercolor pencil lightly across the raised details. These watercolor pencils are very useful at highlighting cockpit details like placards and switches, because they can be sharpened to reach small details and, if you make mistakes, they can be cleaned up in seconds.

I added the Airwaves rudder pedals and cleaned up the kit control column, and used strip styrene to indicate some cockpit floor structure.

I left out the ejection seat until later so that I could mask the cockpit more easily, but this detail proved among the most challenging of the project. I first hoped to find the answer in



A restored F9F-2 in flight. Note the F9F-5-style wing fences outboard of the intake, a feature retrofitted to most service Panthers.



A line-up of VMF-311 F9F-5s being bombed up prior to a strike in Korea. These aircraft have white and red nose flourishes, one of three distinctive decorations used by the Tomcats.

Aeroclub's line of white metal seats, but the unit billed as an F9F seat has almost no detail to it and the frame and headrest areas are completely wrong. Looking at the other available aftermarket seats provided no solutions, either. I decided to build my own seat, and it ended up being easier than I'd thought.

I purchased *True Details' F-94 Starfire* detail set, and carved away all the detail from an ejection seat except for the seat pan, which resembled the F9F's seat pan. I rearranged the lap belt mounting points with the aid of some brass parts from *Tom's Modelworks*, and built up the rear framework with bits of T-channel and styrene rod. For the firing cylinder, I wrapped fine copper wire around a piece of rod styrene. Seat adjustment handles were made with small bits of wire and tiny drops of white glue. The headrest consisted of two pieces of styrene strip topped with the *Starfire* headrest, with a piece of thin styrene sheet on top to house the face curtain.

Bill Ferrante offered to cast this unit in resin, but the shape of the seat had too many overhanging parts and made mold-making a chore. In fact, one of the molds refused to let go of the master and pulled the framework and headrest clean off! So, the original was rebuilt and installed in the finished model. After the seat was painted, I used a piece of fine woven thread as the face curtain lanyard; this material was a perfect match for the twisted line used to fire the seat.

When all the cockpit tub details were added, I glued the tub into the upper half of the fuselage. I say "upper" because the kit's fuselage is split horizontally, a somewhat unusual arrangement that would return to vex me later.

The fit of the halves was surprisingly good, although the fuselage seemed slightly out of round. I sanded down any apparent shape problems, then put the vertical tail parts together and glued them to the top fuselage half. Again, fit here was quite nice. The wing root sections also went together well, although the intakes were far too shallow to be left as is. Although I carved away the backs of the intakes and made

new ducts for this area, in the end I made FOD covers and simply closed the intakes off to spectators' eyes.

It should be noted that all of these nicely-fitting parts—fuselage, tail and wing roots—came molded in a dark blue color. As is *Matchbox's* way, the kit came in three colors. The other two colors gave me nothing but problems. Detail parts were in black, and as stated earlier were crude and completely

unacceptable, save for the cockpit tub. The third color was light blue, and this seemed to be engineered to cause nothing but fit problems.

First up were the distinctive -5 intakes. These came molded in two parts, both of which had large sinkmarks in them. After the sinkmarks were filled and the parts were joined, I found large gaps which required significant shimming on all three sides where the intakes join the fuselage and wing. The wing fences that run on the outside of the intakes were represented by crude, oversized pieces, so I filled the slots where these were to attach and made replacements from lead foil, which were installed after the plane was painted.

The outer wing parts are similarly bad. The kit was designed with the option of folding wings, but the fold is in the wrong place. If you want to model the kit with wings extended—which

I did—you'll be forced to use plastic strip and superglue to fill the massive gaps between the wing roots and outer wing panels.

The horizontal stabilizers were molded in the friendly dark blue plastic, so naturally they fit in place with a minimum of problems. I did remove the locator tabs to get a truer match between the placement of the two stabilizers; if assembled without the modification, the stabilizers are slightly out of alignment when viewed from above.

Do you remember that statement about building two of these kits? Well, at about this point the number dropped to one. As I was cleaning one of the models up for painting by fine-sanding the fuselage seam, the top and bottom halves of the fuselage popped apart. I tried to repair the seam, but my efforts seemed to do more harm than good. Finally, while trying to work superglue into the seam, I heard a pop and the



This head-on view shows the tell-take bulged intake, wing fence and tall tail characteristic of Dash-5 Panthers.



VMF-311's Panthers receive attention at their Korean base. The primitive nature of Korean air bases proved a challenge that the Marines' Panthers were up to.

cockpit tub came loose and slid into the rear of the plane, becoming lodged somehow. I quickly realized that I would have to pop the fuselage open, break off the wings and start from scratch. Instead of taking such radical measures to save such an unworthy patient, I instead gave the plane an anger-fueled flight test, during which the plane set the all-time speed record for a 10-foot course. It hit the closet door and, quite literally, exploded. The good part of this is that the impact neatly separated all the photoetched parts from the model, so I'll probably use them sometime in the future in another project!

The kit-supplied perforated dive brakes were too crude for my project, but *Airwaves* missed this feature, a natural for photo-etching. I used *Airwaves'* World War I details and modified two "basket" style seat backs into brakes. Once painted, these looked fairly convincing and fit relatively well in place.

The next problem the kit presented was the landing gear, which are crude and simply don't meet today's standards. I fished the nose gear and main mount struts from my *Hasegawa*-2 kit, and located some very nice wheels in an *Airfix* F2H *Banshee* kit. Randy Rothhaar and Rich Pedro were kind enough to cast these in resin, along with some 2.75-inch rockets from the *Banshee* kit. I had earlier opened up the main gear bay and

added some detail to the wheel wells. After painting, the resin parts fit snugly onto the model. The gear doors were all replaced with sheet styrene, and a bit of wire was added to the strut to represent the brake line.

Rich and Randy provided the rockets, but I also wanted my Marine *Panther* to pack a heavier punch. I tried to find decent 500-pound bombs in other model kits, but most were either the wrong shape or provided a major sanding challenge. I tried *Aeromaster's* 500-pound bombs, but the photoetched bomb fins didn't fit the accurate resin bomb casings they came with. In the end, I removed the fins from the bombs in *Minicraft's* F6F *Hellcat* kit and added them to the *Aeromaster* bombs. To paint the bombs, I used dark olive drab and then weathered them with brown and black watercolors. Photographs of the bombs in Korea showed them being rolled through the mud, stacked in the open air and used as seats, cots and football field sideline markers. Obviously, a clean bomb in Korea was a rarity, so I felt obliged to mark my bombs up.

For a canopy, I chose the *Panther* canopy from *Falcon's* post-war navy set. The windscreen and canopy were dipped in Future and allowed to dry; then using white glue, I attached the windscreen to the fuselage, where it fit nearly perfectly. The canopy was another story; the F9F canopy was intended

for the *Hasegawa* kit, and was far too large for the *Matchbox* kit. Luckily, the *Banshee* canopy included in the same *Falcon* set was nearly identical in shape and fit the *Matchbox* cockpit almost perfectly!

I masked the windscreen with Parafilm and filled in the rest of the cockpit with wet tissue. Then, holding the model by a



A ground crewman straps in Ted Williams before a mission. Williams flew 39 missions, many with future Astronaut John Glenn as his wingman.

metal tube inserted into the jet pipe, I airbrushed insignia red onto the fin tip and masked the area off. Then, I sprayed the plane with a mixture of *Testors* Model Master Blue Angel blue and dark sea blue. The dark sea blue by itself is far darker than the photos I have of planes of the era show the planes to be, so a 4:2 ratio of sea blue to Blue Angel blue is my choice for all '50s navy subjects. Of course, Blue Angel blue isn't really the color the Blue Angels use, but that's another story...

Using mist coats of thin paint, I built up a gloss finish on the airplane. At this point, I drilled out the cannon ports and added the tailhook.

When it came time to decal, I used a number of *Aeromaster* and *Superscale* sheets to depict Williams' plane, WL10 BuNo. 126109. The information for this scheme came from Hal Tippins of *Yellowhammer Models*, who was working up a fine 1:48 sheet of this same subject. If you build 1:48 jets, you can duplicate my efforts in a larger scale with considerably less effort using *Monogram's* kit and Hal's decals, or, if you insist on purist scale, Hal will shortly be re-issuing this set in 1:72.

After the decals were in place, I sealed them with a coat of Varathane. For the leading edges of the wings and horizontal and vertical stabilizers, I used bare metal foil, which was less than cooperative around the intakes. Using lights from an A-6 kit, I made formation lights and added them to the tip tanks.

With painting done, I attached the bombs, rockets and landing gear. Metal tubing was inserted into the gun ports and a short piece of metal

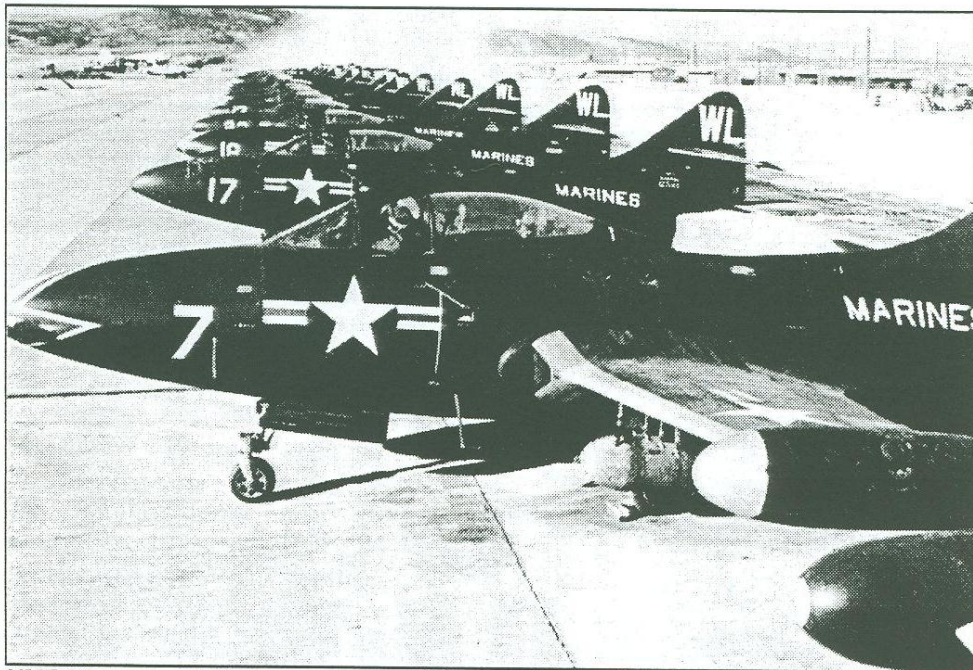
tubing was outfitted with the *Airwaves* photo-etched exhaust grille and inserted up the plane's backside as the tail pipe.

Next came the area behind the pilot. I painted the area interior green and made a shelf for the rear area of the canopy. A new piece of headrest armor was fashioned from sheet styrene; behind that, a length of unpainted solder served as a brace. To busy things up, the tip of an A-4 refueling probe was fitted with a hose and became an oxygen regulator, and a bit of paper clip became the canopy actuator rod. Luftwaffe radios from *Cooper Details* masqueraded as the radio gear behind the seat and on the shelf, and, as a final detail, a small bit of copper wire was wound around another piece of wire to form a loose spring and painted black, then strung between the headrest and a radio on the shelf to depict the coiled radio wire.

I was still left with a couple of canopy details. To depict the white trim on the interior of the sliding canopy, I used white decal trim film, cut to size with a straight edged and an X-Acto knife. Sharp-tipped tweezers helped me guide the decals into place; when I saw they weren't sticking well, I gently re-dipped the canopy in Future, effectively sealing them in place.

Next, I was confronted with the problem of gluing the canopy in place. The solution was simple: I made canopy rails from styrene strip, glued them to the lip of the canopy, and painted them *Floquil* grimy black. The canopy took just two tiny drops of glue on the rails to stay in place.

The result of all this effort was well worth it. While the basic kit isn't exactly state of the art, that made the project more rewarding; nothing beats the feeling you get when you start with something crude and refine it into a model you can be proud of. It's more work, certainly, but the extra work is what will make you feel like a major-league modeler when you're done.



VMF-311's aircraft lined-up and armed before a mission in Korea. These are F9F-2s, with short tails and straight intakes, and they have an earlier style nose

NOVEMBER MINUTES

November's business was brief—just a reminder that December's meeting will feature the gift exchange and the World War II *Thunderbolts* contest, and that March will be *Mustang* madness and April will be Racing Armor! Time to whip out your whimsy!

In model talk, Hubert Chan took a break from armor to build a sporty Westland *Whirlwind* from the *Airfix* 1:72 kit. Hubert used *Gunze Sangyo* paints to put the proper British camouflage on the sleek twin. Kent McClure cleaned up the tail fin to give his Ford C.100 a better appearance. Kelly Avery graciously volunteered to rehabilitate—er, build the *Lindberg* kit of the Hawker *Hunter* for the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino. Kelly's also put a lot of work into his own *Tamiya* F4F *Wildcat*, adding *Aeromaster* decals to depict the aircraft of Guadalcanal ace Maj. Robert Galer. Cliff Kranz used an *Airfix* P-40 to build the P-40Q prototype, a project he completed years before any short-run kits were available of the bubbletop *Warhawk*. Also toiling on a P-40 is Rodney Williams, whose *Revell* 1:32 kit is being extensively detailed. Rodney's also straining on his *Tamiya* MiG-15, which presented him with a parts problem. Seems *Tamiya* only replaces entire parts trees, not individual parts! Roy Sutherland has put an Anglo angle on his *Hasegawa* 1:72 F4F, adding a *True Details* interior and a few home-grown modifications to depict a Fleet Air Arm *Martlet* Mk. V. Mark Hernandez displayed his winners from the Redding contest in the "World War II 1946" category, a *Huma* Triebflugel, a *Pioneer Models* Ta 183 and a *DML* P.1101. Mark's also working on a *Special Hobby* P.212. Roy Sorensen took a break from his NNL work to finish a *Monogram* F-117 Stealth fighter in 1:48 scale. Back in his usual genre, Roy is building a 1:8 roadster pickup and a matching Harley Davidson, both with machined aluminum wheels. Mike Fletcher created an attractive display case to go along with his *Hasegawa* 1:72 B-17F, which wears the famous markings of the "Memphis Belle." Chris Bucholtz largely disassembled his F-6D *Mustang* reconnaissance fighter after he became dissatisfied with the finish; he's also rehabilitating *Airfix's* Hawker *Sea Hawk* kit, filling multiple sink marks and ejector pin marks. Ben Pada's *Tamiya* P-51D had no such problems; Ben built the plane out of the box and used *Aeromaster* decals for the finishing touches. Kent McClure added new headlights to his *Zvezda* M.14/40 Italian tank; he's also added much modeling work to a Robotech figure he's building with his son. Milt Poulos' 1:32 F-14 was too big to bring to the meeting, so Milt just brought a representative piece—a beautifully detailed landing gear strut! Tom Trankle has at last finished his *Hasegawa* Ju 87; the Stuka features *Eduard* detail parts, *Ministry of Small Aircraft Production* decals, *Aeromaster* paint and *Kendall Model Company* resin bombs! Matt Reich is working on a *Monogram* P-47 for our December contest; he's also completed a *Tamiya* *Spitfire* V, a big 1:32 F-15 *Eagle*, a snap-together '97 Ford F-150 truck and a *Lindberg* Firehawk. Brian Finch is putting himself through all manner of grief with his F2G *Corsair* conversion; it started life as a *Revell* F4U-1A, but has been up-engined and re-shaped. Brian has actually finished a *Tamiya* M3 Stuart in Marine Corps markings, and he's also working on a German armored car. Larry Roberts' Bf 109s in

funny markings won first, second and third in Redding's "Small Air Forces" category; his Messerschmitts hail from Romania, Hungary and the Russian Army of Liberation. Laramie Wright is building an *Otaki* Zero as a fun project, and is working more seriously on an Israeli Mutt with a TOW launcher from the *Minicraft* kit. Steve Pringle is muddling through *Eduard's* Siemens D.3; he says the fragile decals have helped make this kit more challenging. Rory Goodwin has built a Bf 109 of his own, and is also working on a Polish-owned, American-flown and German-built Albatros from *Glencoe*, another arduous kit. Joel Rojas' fleet of police cruisers has taken another step toward completion; one of Joel's latest adaptations was to convert the interiors from cloth to leather. Ken Miller modified the Volkswagen Vanagon from "Magnum P.I." with mag wheels, and is planning to do a Bug as a dune buggy to add to his German jalopy collection. Mark Forrester slammed together a snap-together Ford Explorer, which looked just fine considering its origins. Barry Bauer put his nose to the grindstone to build his M4A1 early Sherman, combining the *Tamiya* M3 chassis, a Verlinden resin turret and a *Nichimo* upper hull. Dave Balderrama built a Stuka, an Me 163 and an He 162 for the Panzer Leader video game, which is being re-vamped by SSI. He said building these kits quickly and simply was a nice change of pace. Bill Shipway fashioned a saucer shape from some sort of material; he's going to refine the rough shape into some sort of spacecraft (stay tuned!). Al Gonzalez used a *Tamiya* T-62 and plenty of brass parts to model a T-62 captured by the Israelis. And the model of the month is... Frank Babbitt's Dominican P-51D in 1:48! Frank went through a lot to find photos of the plane, and once he did, he also discovered that no one made the Dominican national logo—so he used decal trim film to make his own! Although it's not yet on its landing gear, Frank's pony is already looking racy, in a Caribbean sort of way!

Also on the table was a massive turnout for our Unlimited Air racers contest! Cliff Kranz entered a yellow *Airfix* P-39 which he built when this aircraft was actually entering events. Cliff also built a beautiful De Havilland *Comet* racer, resplendent in red with a new cockpit. Kent McClure's Saab J21 racer hasn't progressed beyond the cockpit detailing, but promises to be a killer come March (two booms are better than one!). Mike Burton hadn't quite put the finishing colors on his "Team Nippon" entries, the *Otaki* Ki. 100 and the Ki. 84 V-tailed racer. Bill Ferrante's "Team Optimism" entered an all-yellow PZL. 11 with plywood wings registered "SP-LOT," indicative of the sound it would make at some point in the race. Ken Miller rendered E.D. Weiner's checkerboarded Race 14 *Mustang* in faithful 1:144 scale. Rodney Williams' efforts at producing the Gulf *Hawk* out of the *Hawk Bearcat* have lead him to use lots of *Eduard* brass and to scratchbuilt several parts—but what else in new? Mike Meek's national-award-winning Red Baron in 1:72 was present, as was his model of Darryl Greenameyer's "Shockwave" hybrid racer (freshly painted, and perhaps farther along than the actual plane). Alan Webber gave a spiffy paint job to his *Otaki Spitfire* pylon passer. And the winners were... divided into three categories! With a special third for outstanding effort, Dennis

Ybe's Norhrop *Gamma* from *Williams Brothers* took the trophy. This was Dennis' first natural metal finish! In the "Unfinished" category, third went to Ben Pada's "Frankenstein," a combination of a Ki. 84 fuselage, Ki. 44 wheels, a P-51 tail and the cockpit of a Bf 109, with a 1:72 *Banshee* canopy to provide a small bubbletop. In second was Mike Meek's *Bearcat* racer, heavily modified to represent "Rare Bear." And in the "Gold"

race for finished models, third went to a Volkswagen bug by Ken Miller (it's air cooled, and it has raced). In second was Mike Meek's Miss Budweiser F-82 *Twin Mustang*, much-modified with a faired-in second cockpit. And the winner, with a much modified 1:72 entry, was Bill Ferrante and his "Plynetics Rapide." Thanks to all who entered or tried to enter!

The SVSM Gift Exchange—how it works

It's that time of the year—they're playing that idiotic barking dogs song, Perry Como has emerged from his crypt and weekend traffic has reached critical mass. You know what that means—it's time for SVSM's annual Pizza Party and Gift Exchange!

Those who have experienced this ritual of pain know how it works. For the uninitiated (or pollywogs, as we liked to call them in the Navy), here's the lowdown:

The pizza and drinks will be supplied by the club. If you're a member (in other words, you've paid your dues), it's free. If you aren't a member, it will cost \$5.

Unlike last year, when models were barred, we'll be having our World War II Thunderbolts contest that night. If you have a P-47, A Folgore or a Raiden, bring it on in! Otherwise, keep your models at home until January's meeting, lest they be fouled by tomato sauce, cheese and/or pepperoni.

After we have feasted, we then have the part of the evening that induces nausea in some people: the gift exchange. It works like this: each person participating should bring a wrapped gift, like a new kit, book, tools or other model-related present. The rule of thumb is that the gift should be in the \$10 range, but the more generous you are, the more fun can be had as the evening wears on. Please feel free to bring in that 1:48 resin U-Boat or that *Pocher* 1:8 metal Dusenbergl if you really feel like it. For the sake of completeness, we're asking that the kits be shrink-wrapped or at least have the parts inside the kit still in their packing bags. And, because of popular demand, this year's motto is **NO LINDBERG!**

The presents will be piled on a table, and each person who brings a gift will have his/her name put on a slip of paper

which will be placed into a hat. After we're through stuffing our faces, we'll start drawing names. The first person selected (let's call him Dan Bunton) will select a present—any present—from the pile of gifts. He will open the gift—no doubt the latest, most detailed and most desirable kit on the market—in front of the rest of us. The next person whose name is drawn (let's call him Pichard Redro) has the option of selecting a gift from the pile and opening it in front of us—or he can take Dan Bunton's gift, at which point Dan chooses a new gift. Person number 3 (say, Jim Pre-Yeti) may then steal either Dan's gift or Pichard's gift, or he may take a new present. This continues, as is hallowed tradition, until Bert McDowell has his ship model stolen or all the names have been drawn, whichever comes last.

Any person who has a gift stolen may select a new gift or may steal someone else's gift, with the exception that he cannot steal the gift that was stolen from him in that turn (the dreaded "no backsies" rule). The final rule: no present may be stolen more than three times. (Here's a helpful hint: for a present, buy something YOU want, then steal it from someone else. That way, you get a kit you want, plus the satisfaction of sticking it to your buddies! Merry Christmas, monkey boys!)

This system results in a lot of fun and very few arguments, fistfights, home invasions, etc. have resulted from the organized anarchy this event inspires. If you have any questions, call the editor and he will try to explain how it works and/or allay any fears you may have. You're guaranteed to come home with a new model and a gut full of pizza—what could be better?

Also in December:

THE WORLD WAR II THUNDERBOLTS CONTEST

**If it's a P-47, a Raiden or a
Folgore, it's eligible!
Don't miss out on being
part of this line-up!**

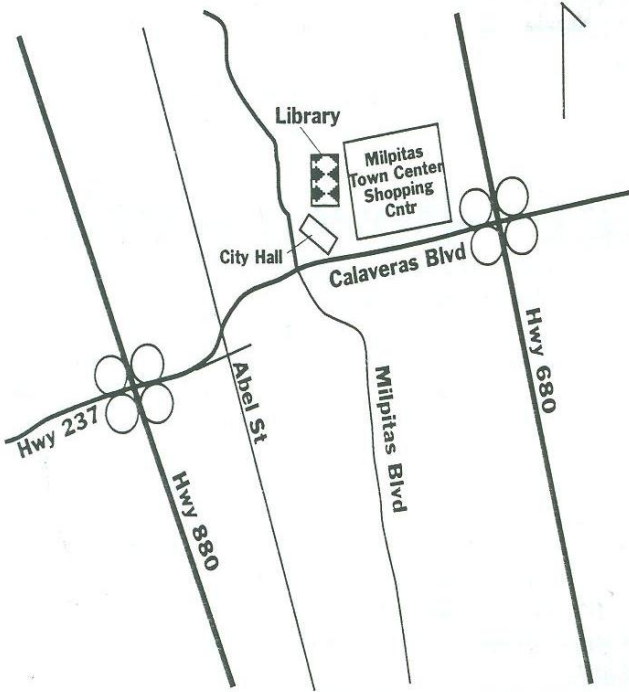


Next meeting:
**7:30 p.m.,
Friday,
December 20**

**at the Milpitas
Public Library,
40 N. Milpitas Blvd.
For more information, call the
editor at (408) 247-2204**

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