

Adding personal touches to a *Knox*-class frigate

By Chris Bucholtz

The *Knox* class of frigates began life as destroyer escorts at the low end of a "high-low" Navy Building strategy—high-performance, expensive major ships for projection of power, and low-cost, moderate performance ships that could be produced in large numbers for the sea control mission. Unfortunately, the high-end ships were canceled, but the *Knox* class survived to become, at 46 units, the most numerous post-war class of warships.

My acquaintance with the *Knox*-class frigate began when I was 13, when I took a tour of the U.S.S. *Gray* (FF-1054). Little did I know how significant that ship would be to me later in life.

At the time, she was an active duty frigate with 10 years of service under her belt. The third ship of the class, she had been commissioned in 1970 and deployed for a six-month WestPac deployment in 1971, where she participated in search and rescue operations. She earned the Flotilla Battle Efficiency "E" during her second WestPac, and in 1974 became the first ship in the Pacific Fleet to qualify for unrestricted steaming.

After a third WestPac deployment in 1974, the ship went in for an overhaul from June 1974 to April 1975. After a fourth WestPac, the ship was selected as the trial and evaluation ship for the *Harpoon* missile system, and

later completed three additional WestPac cruises.

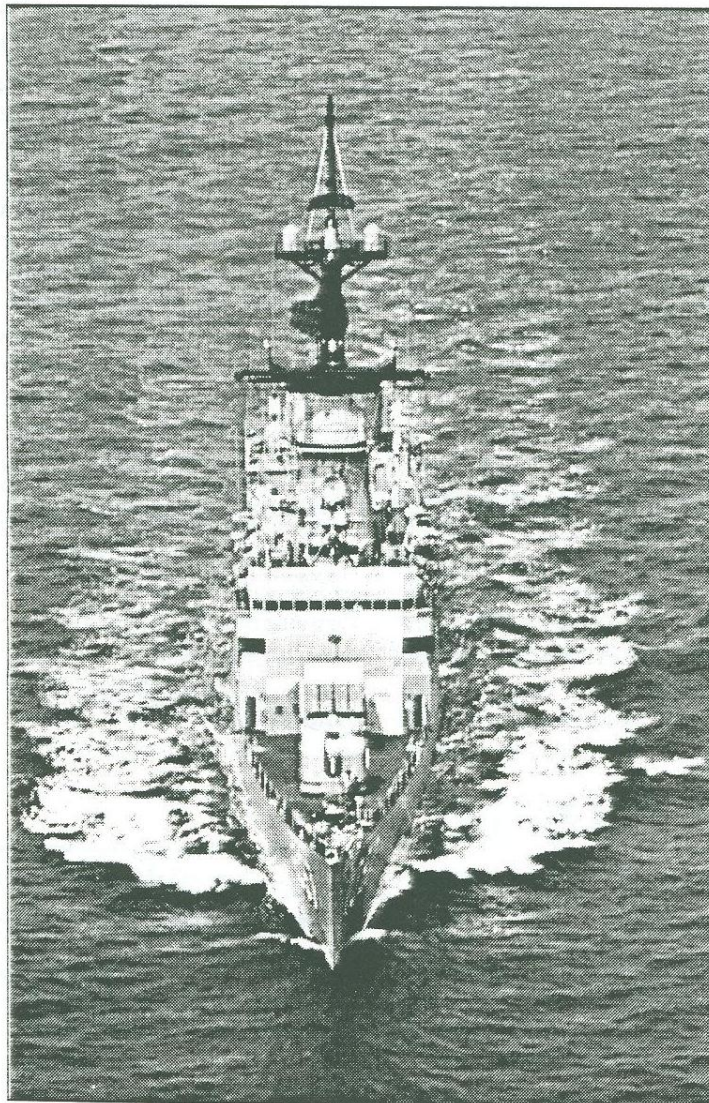
In 1987, the ship was assigned to the ready reserve fleet, and was assigned to Treasure Island, along with U.S.S. *Lang* (FF-1060), U.S.S. *Meyerkord* (FF-1058) and U.S.S. *Roark* (FF-1053). These four ships had crews composed of 60 percent full-time, active duty sailors and 40 percent reservists.

That's how I got to become re-acquainted with the *Gray*—I was assigned to her in 1987. As a Boatswain's Mate, I traveled to exotic ports like Portland, Long Beach, Concord and Victoria, B.C. I also sailed up the Columbia River, traveled to Alaskan waters, watched our ASROC almost sink a range boat, saw torpedoes and *Sea Sparrows* misfire, and painted, painted, painted.

By the time I came aboard her, however, she was showing her age. We had two yard periods during my four years, including one at Hunters' Point, and were a frequent site at NAS Alameda next to the repair ship U.S.S. *Samuel Gompers*. The *Gray* was decommissioned in 1991, and since my enlistment period was up at virtually the same time, we ended our naval careers together.

I had been waiting to build a model of my old ship since I came aboard her, and *AFV Club* finally rewarded my patience in 1995 with a 1:700 kit of the ship. The kit depicts U.S.S. *Robert E.*

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Knox-class frigate underway. This shot was taken before the addition of the hurricane bows.

EDITOR'S BRIEF

After last month's rant, I am pleased to say, we've had two terrific contests in our region, at Sacramento and Travis. You can attribute that to folks in both places putting their heads together and planning beforehand, and approaching their contests with an attitude of friendliness and goodwill.

The Travis show, by dint of attendance, gets the nod as the better of these two shows. Chuck Speir and company did a great job with the site and the vendors, and they invited judges from around the region to judge the models, which resulted in a lack of partisanship among the winners. The best models of the 250 or so entered won—as they should have.

The trophies were unique and clever—the logos of Mt. Diablo and Travis' clubs, the category and the place printed in color on a clear sheet, then sandwiched in a clear acrylic holder originally meant for baseball cards. This holder is kept upright by a nice-looking but homemade wooden base. The special awards were plaques with a similar approach. Chuck said they were inexpensive but they still looked great.

The raffle was almost too long, and between it and the vendors I have to believe that few people left without taking home more plastic than they arrived with. Best of all, the event had a feeling that everything was under control. There was no visible scrambling, the awards went well, and the hosts had a relaxed and friendly attitude that translated into a relaxed and friendly group of attendees. Hats off to Mt. Diablo and Travis!

The Sacramento Regional, while not as well-attended, was a pleasant surprise. For me, the highlight was the sight of more than a dozen 1:72 jets, something rare at most of this year's contests. The vendors weren't as plentiful as they were last December, but there were values to be had. The room, which now has a bank of large windows on one side, no longer is a detriment to the event. And the judging, which again embraced members of other clubs, went well and lacked traces of partisanship. Again, for the most part, the best models on the tables took the awards. And the awards were nice—the Silver Wings logo and the place on a blue-tinted

metal plate mounted on a plaque, very reminiscent of Central Valley's awards.

Above all, there was a feeling of friendliness at the contest—something that I had heard was lacking in past events. However, if their last two events are any indication, Sacramento is on the right track to reforming its image and becoming a major contest site again. And, should these contests continue to go well, participation will improve in the region as well.

Again, our club members have been turning out in droves for these events. Frank Beltran, Tim White, Hubert Chan, Mark Hernandez, Jim Gordon, Brian Sakai, Jim Lewis and your Editor get bonus points for attending both, while Frank Babbitt, Rodney Williams, Milt Poulos, Mike Burton, Bill Ferrante, Angelo Deogracias, Dave Balderrama, Chris John and Joel Rojas made it to one or the other. We should be proud of our track record of supporting other club's events. Sure, we have more members than other clubs, and we're centrally located, but it takes a bit of effort to actually make the trip. (If anybody has perfect attendance—The Kickoff Classic, Stockton, Fresno, Monterey, Travis and Sacramento—let me know. The editor owes you a beer!)

This past weekend, another contingent from SVSM went to the contest at the Planes of Fame Museum in Chino. Results of this will come too late for press time, but expect some nifty photos in next month's special IPMS Nationals Issue. Also, Las Vegas hosted a contest on June 1; Milt Poulos was going to write up a report, but apparently he's following the old saw, "if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all."

Speaking of the IPMS Nationals issue, get your submissions in now! We plan to make it another jumbo issue (20-24 pages), and it will be distributed at the National Convention in Virginia Beach, which should be the site of some interesting news for Region IX...

Anyway, I've gotta go combat a case of Advanced Modelers Syndrome (resin casting wheels and making wing fences from scratch? I must be nuts!)

—The Editor

IN WENDY'S WORDS

You may or may not have met Wendy Sloneker, the Editor's charming girlfriend. This new feature (in the time-honored tradition of "Does It Suck?" presents aircraft identification through the eyes of someone who doesn't give a whit about airplanes. Here are our first three aircraft, as interpreted by Wendy:

XB-70 *Valkyrie*: "Freakish and unnatural."

SR-71 *Blackbird*: "It's kind of floofy-looking."

F-89 *Scorpion*: "It looks like a bunch of pens glued together."

There you have it. Next time you think your model is a major event in human civilization, realize that a large percentage of humanity views it like this. Have a nice day.

Have a favorite aircraft whose appearance you'd like to have belittled? Send your entries to "Space Fillers," PO Box 361644, Milpitas, California 95036. Editor is not responsible for content, no matter what you say.

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requests for help, or wants and
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The model may be hard—but the case isn't

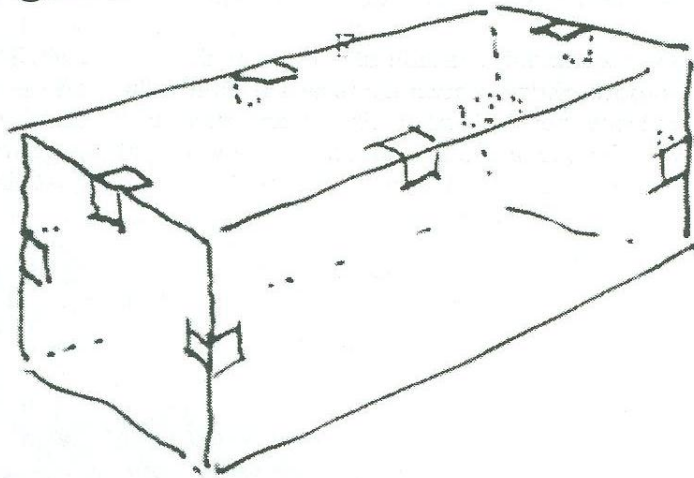
By Sami Arim

Hey, guys, don't let your beautiful models sit under the dust! If you don't have a glass showcase and you're worried about how to keep your models clean, build your own Plexiglas showcases. It's not difficult or time consuming, but it will cost money—from \$3 to \$10 each, depending on the size. Here's how to do it:

Once you determine the size of the case and the thickness of the Plexiglas, go to your local Tap Plastics or another plastic products store, where they can cut the Plexiglas for you. If you have your own cutting tools, the purchase of the plastic can be a little less expensive. You will also have to purchase acrylic cement and an applicator. Both are also sold at Tap. You don't need to buy a lot of cement—two fluid ounces of cement will last a long time. Remember, this is very thin cement and the whole issue is not to get the cement on the Plexiglas. The concepts of "use cement sparingly" and "avoid getting glue on the clear parts" also apply in making display cases.

First, sand the corners and edges of the Plexiglas sheets. You don't need to sand them perfectly, but rather just enough to remove the traces of the saw. Then, take off the protective covers from the Plexiglas and clean their surfaces with a paper towel. Put the box together by using a little masking tape to hold the sides together (see Figure 1). Now you're ready to apply the glue.

Figure 1



Tape the Plexiglas sides together before gluing.

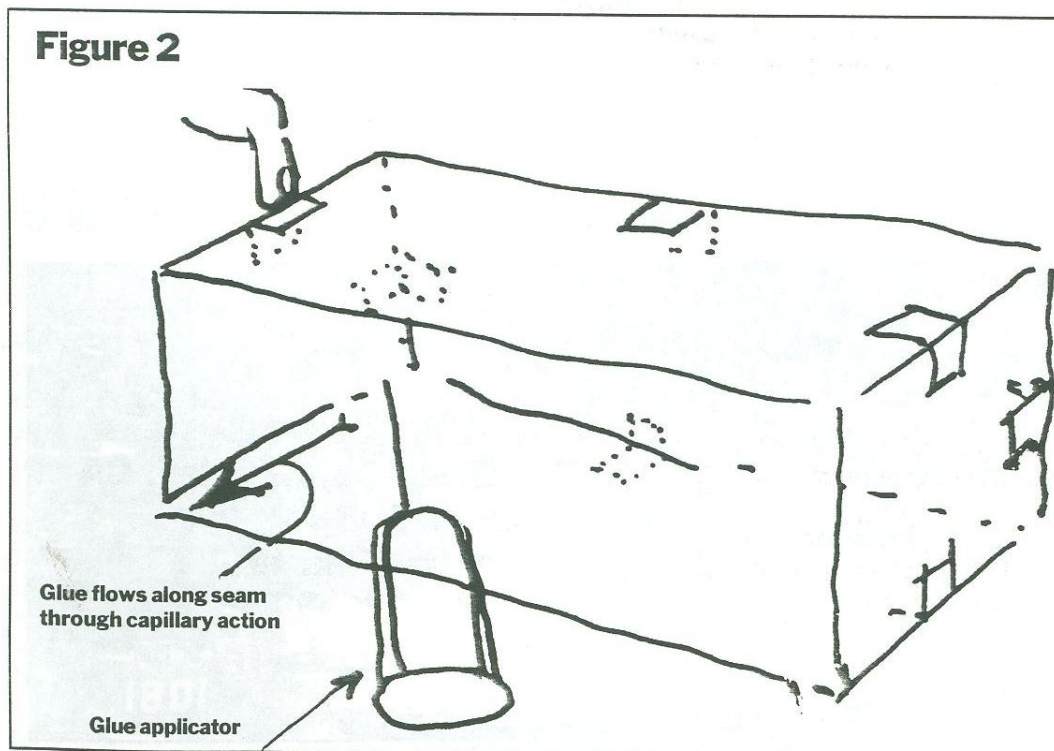
Remove the masking tape from the corner you are going to glue and hold the box firm with your finger. Don't apply the glue before you remove the tape or else the tape might stick and leave a permanent residue. Release the air from the applicator by squeezing it just enough so that the glue won't drip when you turn the applicator over to the Plexiglas. Now you have time to arrange your needle on the right spot when air starts coming back into the applicator. Once the air fills up the bottle the glue will start to spread between the sheets (see Figure 2). Capillary action will draw the glue along the seam. It dries in seconds, but it also gives you a little

time to correct small mistakes. If your needle clogs, simply heat it with a flame from matches or candles. Glue each corner one at a time. Leave the top of the box for last.

Plexiglas is very soft and easy to scratch. Don't use regular glass cleaners to clean it. Buy Kleenmaster to clean and glaze it, and Mirror Glaze to remove any scratches or glue drops.

(Editor's note: Cliff Kranz also contributed a suggestion about show cases. If you plan to put the case on a base, build the clear showcase first—it's easier to have a wooden base cut to the size of the showcase than to match the four sides of the showcase to a base.)

Figure 2



Using AFV Club's Peary to build the Gray

Continued from Page 1

and the hurricane bows added to the class late in the ships' careers.

The kit was the first ship I'd built in many years, and the quality of the engineering impressed me. The kit includes 73 parts, with most of the 1 and 01 level decks included on the hull. The superstructure components had 45 degree beveled edges, making alignment of these parts a snap. And the details are accurate—I found myself saying, "There's the paint locker, and there's the signal flag boxes, and there's my UnRep station..."

The kit also includes a multi-piece SH-2F *Seasprite* helicopter and the best modern small boats I've seen (once the ejector pin marks on their keels are removed).

That isn't to say the kit is perfect. Deep sink marks on the hull both at the bow and the fantail required some filling and sanding to remove. The placement of the bow waterbreakers is wrong. They need to be moved aft—where they're molded, they wouldn't do any good. Equally frustrating is the fo'c'sle, a small triangular section of deck that fits into the bow. It's nearly impossible to fill and sand the seam this piece creates, although clever painting and decalling can obfuscate the problem. And the *Seasprite* has a massive sink mark in its side. Since my ship rarely had one embarked, I left it off.

After I filled the sink marks in the hull, I replaced the waterbreakers with strip styrene in their correct position. This position varies from ship to ship, so check your references. Next, I assembled the forward superstructure, a five-piece operation. The fit of the top of the pilothouse was a bit tricky, but patience and careful filling solved the problem. I then cut out rectangular holes in the bridge wings, where ladders would go later in assembly.

This assembly required a little filling where the tops of the superstructure attached to the sides. Otherwise, the fit was fine. I then attached the signalman's shack and cut away the two molded-in ladders leading to the pyrotechnics/signals deck, to be replaced later by photo-etched ladders.

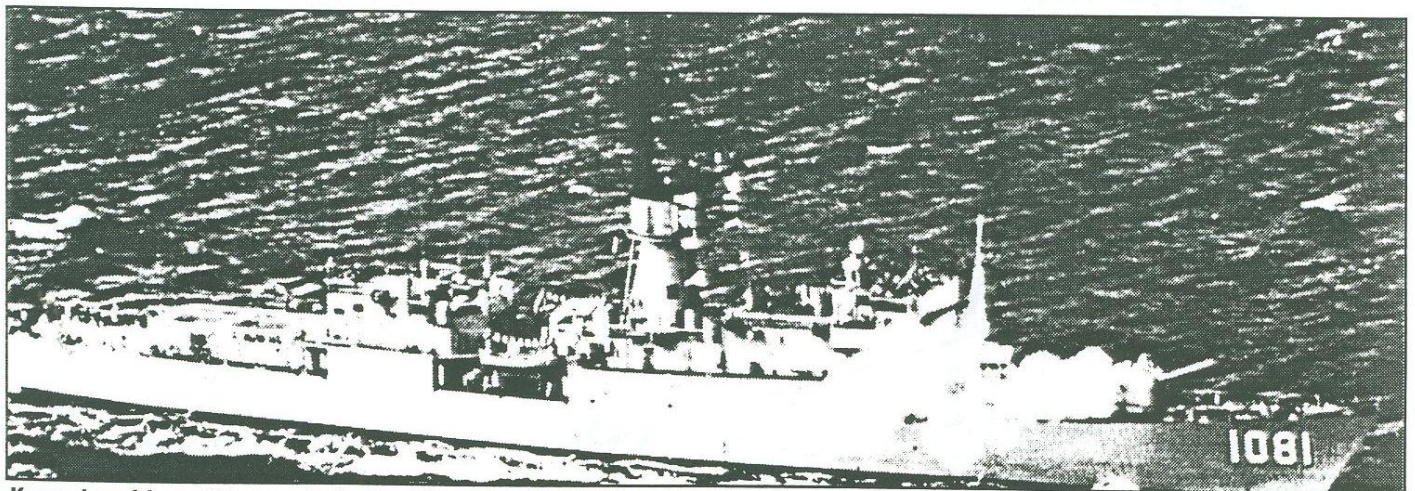
I drilled a hole in the gun director to represent the

gunners' mate's seat (yes, someone actually sits in there). I left this off until later, as I did the 5-inch, 50-caliber turret and the Mk.16 ASROC launcher from the kit. Since the *Gray* never mounted the Phalanx, I left this off and substituted a Mk. 25 BPMDs box launcher from the *Skywave* set in the aft position. The *Skywave* launcher sat too low, however, so I inserted a small block of scrap styrene that acted like a telephone book to boost the launcher's height. I drilled a hole through the box launcher, the styrene block and the base and inserted a piece of styrene rod, which slipped neatly into the hole in the deck for the weapon. When the weapons were assembled and painted, I set them aside.

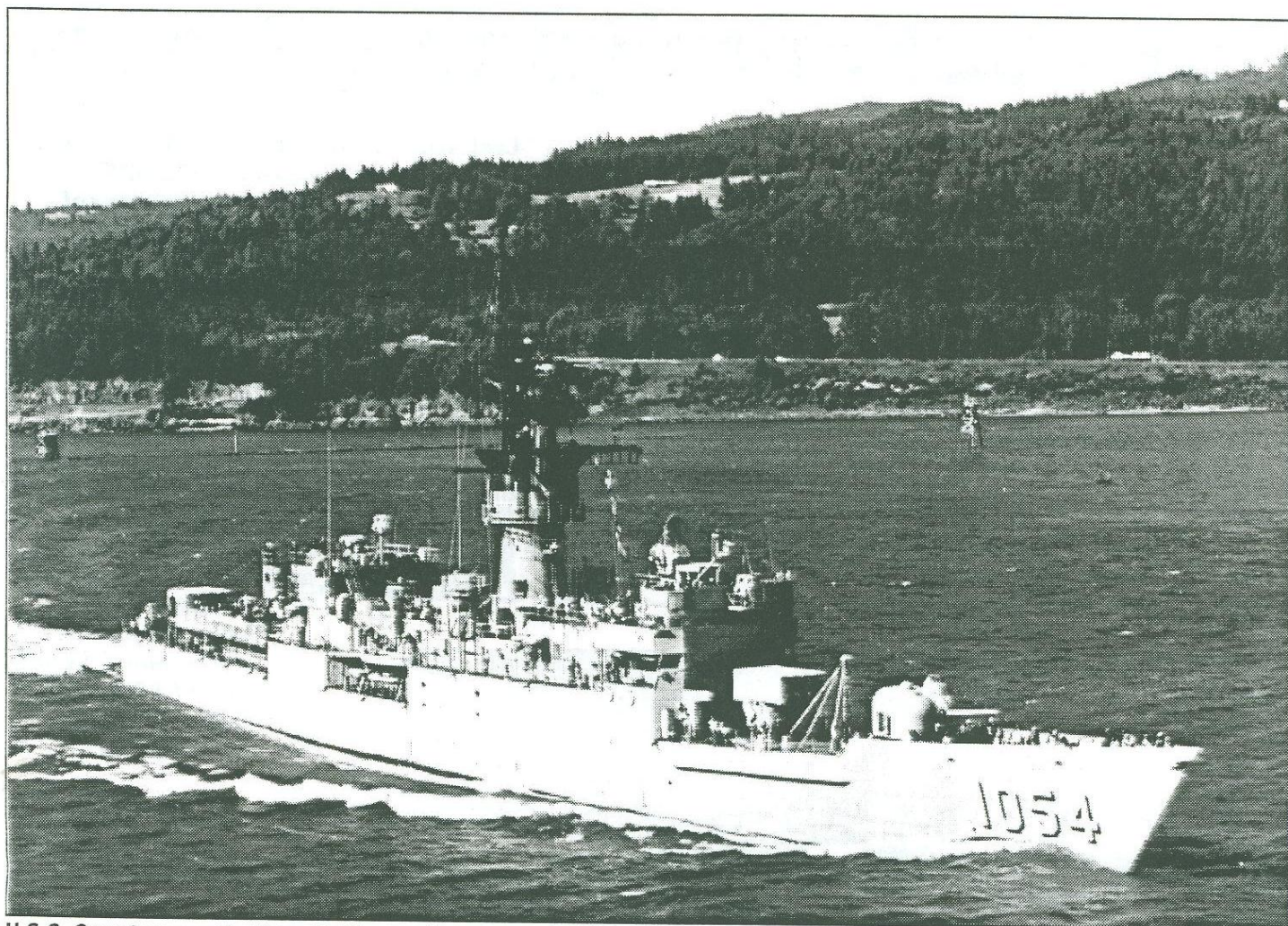
I then added some small details to the hull, including a hatch above the aft crew's lounge on the fantail and another hatch to the boson's locker on the fo'c'sle. I made these with small pieces of styrene topped with *Gold Medal Models* hatches. Watertight hatches were also added to the boat decks, bridge wings, AFFF firefighting stations and the aft enclosed passageways. I also added the small hatches to each side of the 5-inch turret, and drilled out the gun director's dome on the turret with a pin vise. By building this dome back up with Micro Krystal Kleer, I ended up with a realistic clear dome on the turret.

Next came the aft superstructure. This included the helicopter hangar, the door of which was nearly always partly open. I cut down the door until it was about two-thirds closed—open enough for reality, but closed enough so that the interior of the hangar was invisible. I then assembled the hangar telescopic extension, added it to the hangar facing, and put together the rest of the superstructure. I then added the helicopter deck after sanding the raised markings away. To my surprise, both assembled superstructures fit the hull beautifully.

I took this opportunity to paint the ship. I sprayed *Floquil* deck gray on all the horizontal surfaces, which were carefully masked. For the hull color, my first attempt, with *Floquil* haze gray, was much too blue. Comparisons to color photos showed the true shade to



Knox-class frigate firing a missile from her Mk. 15 ASROC box launcher. Note the preponderance of antennae topsides.



U.S.S. *Gray* steams up the Columbia River on the way to the 1989 Portland Rose Festival. The boom on the fo'c'sle between the 5-inch turret and the ASROC launcher is for underway personnel transfer. Note the position of the waterbreaker.

be closer to *Polly S* German light blue, a gray with a green cast to it.

I then turned my attention to the "mack," the combined mast-stack that gives the *Knox* class its distinctive silhouette. Again, the pieces fit together beautifully, with only a minor amount of clean up. By this time, I had in hand some photo-etched parts from Gold Medal Models, and I used these to replace the SPS-10 and SPS-40 radars on the mack. The sheet also had a photo-etched topmast, which looked infinitely better than the kit part.

At that part, I started to go a little nuts. With the photo-etched parts in hand, I proceeded to add the railings to the upper platform of the topmast. This was my first experience with photo-etched ship parts, and, although the final result was pleasing, the process was nerve wracking.

After painting the top of the mack flat black, I attached it to the hull, along with the two signaling towers that flank the forward superstructure. Next came the gun turrets and launchers, and the gun directors, GPS antenna mast and aft ventilation ducts. I also added *Skywave* signal flag boxes to the forward superstructure.

With most of the ship done, I turned to the photo-

etched details. Ladders from *Tom's Modelworks* best replicated the diagonal ladders, and the *Gold Medal Models* parts worked well for the railings, safety nets and vertical ladders.

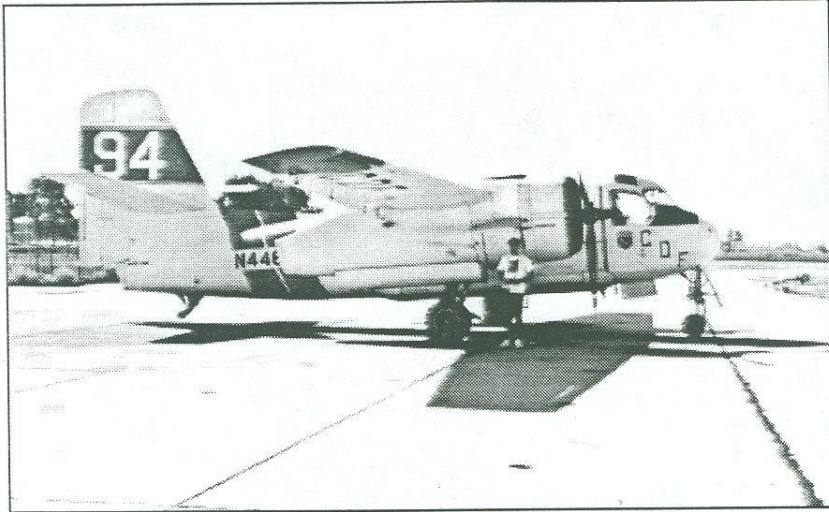
This was the most involved part of the model, and my truly compulsive side came out while doing this—I stayed up all night the night before our contest and ended up something of a nervous wreck! Next time, I'm going to avoid this pitfall.

I applied *Gold Medal Models* decals for the hull number and the helicopter deck markings and warning stripes from the kit decals over a coat of clear gloss. I then scuffed up the helo deck and warning stripes with more deck gray, effectively "fading" the markings. To bring out the bridge windows, I gave the bridge a quick wash with black watercolor paint. Then I shot *Testors* dull cote over the entire ship, knocking down the shiny spots from the super glue and giving the model an even, dull finish.

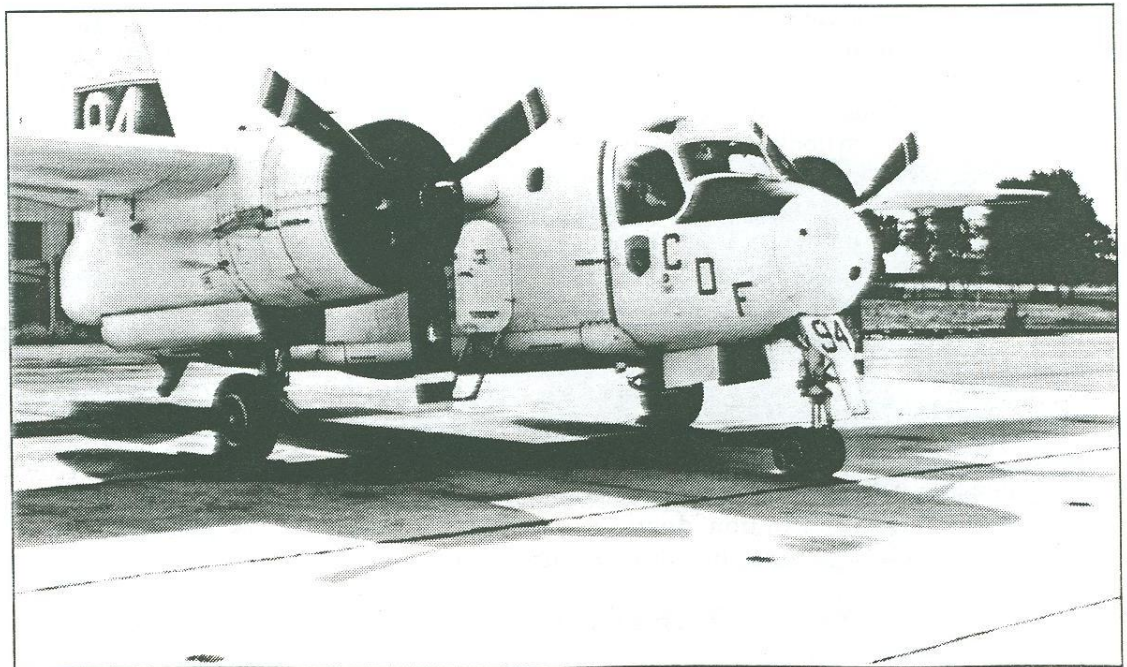
I'm still not entirely finished—the small boats and boat decks are next, followed by details on the pilothouse and rigging in the masts and a nice ocean base.

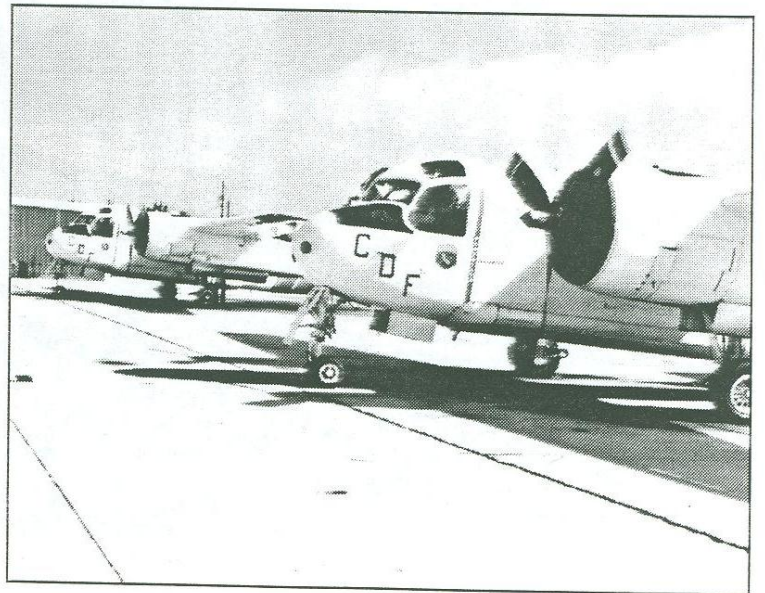
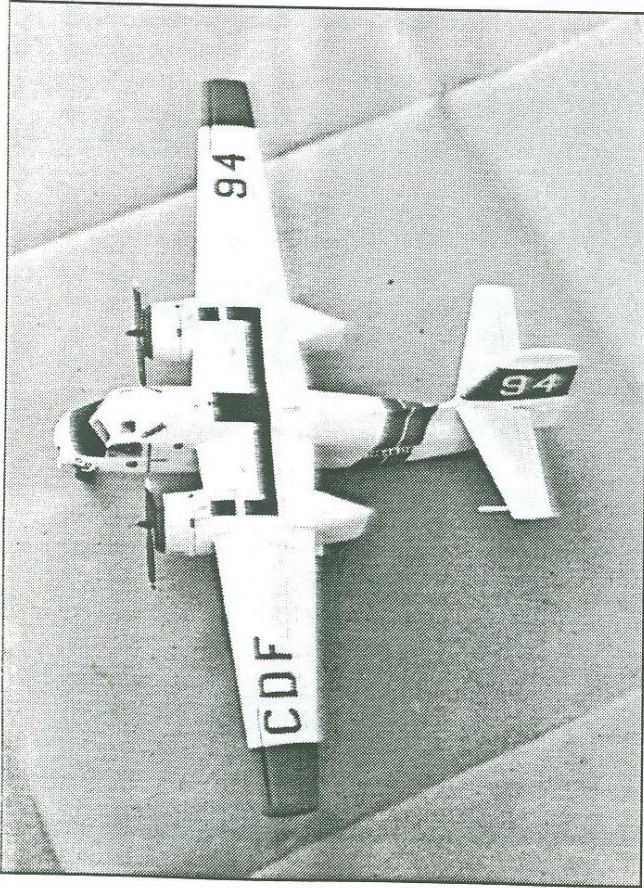
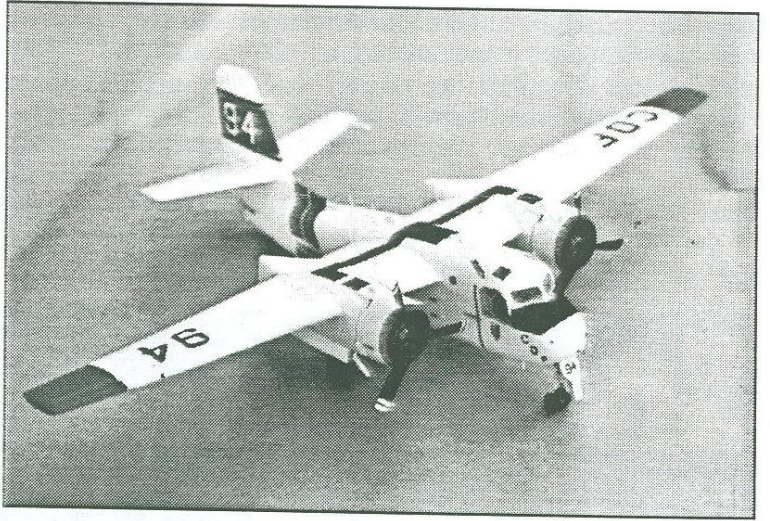
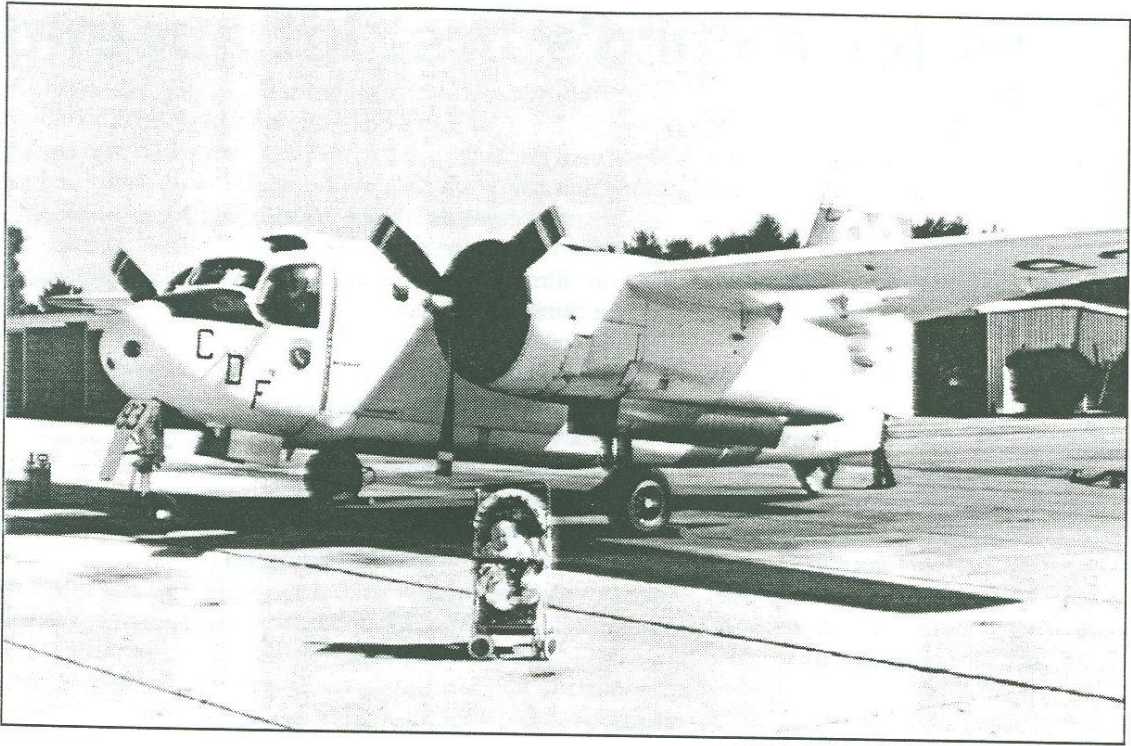
The *Gray* is probably the only model of something I've eaten, slept and worked on. Building it brought back a lot of memories and taught me a lot of lessons about ship modeling.

CDF+S2F=firefighting Stoofs



Last issue, we published Ken Miller's article on converting Hasegawa's 1:72 S2F Tracker into A California Department of Forestry firebomber. Unfortunately, our photos didn't arrive at the Styrene Sheet offices until after the May issue had been mailed. So, here's a selection of shots that could help you with your Stoof project. Counterclockwise, from left: The photographer/author, under the wing of CDF 94; a Stoof pulls into the refuelling pits; a shot of the plane's nose, showing the nose gear to advantage; Ken's model, showing off the upper surface markings; two S2Fs on the ramp at Hollister, waiting for a fire; a lower angle of Ken's model, showing the CDF badge and nacelle details; and the port side of CDF 94, with a full-size tot for size comparison.





Good choices for a child's first kit abound

By Kent McClure

My two children, ages three and (almost) seven, have watched their daddy enjoy his hobby on many an occasion. And, as is wont to happen, they have both expressed an interest in building their own models.

I decided that I would start with my oldest, my son Jason, and make this month his journey into the world of plastic. So it was off to the hobby store with my son to have a look-see as to what was available to him.

While we perused the shelves, I was very pleased to see how the U.S. model companies are addressing the beginning modeler with their various "snap together" lines, covering all of the familiar subjects—automobiles, armor, aircraft and ships. Even space and science fiction subjects can be found as snap-together kits. Since the intent of this trip was a "scouting mission" rather than a buying one, I allowed Jason to decide what kit he would like to build. My only guidance came in the form of 1.) keeping him pointed at the snap-together kits and 2.) providing a steady hand on the financial side of his decision.

His final choice was an aircraft subject—the F/A-18 *Hornet*. Specifically, the *Monogram* kit, whose box art sports the white and blue color scheme of prototype. Interestingly enough, it was the box art that finalized his decision. I told Jason that I would get the kit for him later (knowing full well that the NNL swap meet was looming in the near future), and we both went home as happy campers.

Since that first excursion I have had time to trip down the path of nostalgia to my own humble beginnings into the hobby. It was in the BS days (that's Before SnapTites!) when

Testors tube glue ruled the land. My first kit was the *Monogram* Tu-16, a Christmas present from my brother's Cub Scout pack to all the kids. I can still remember putting that thing together without glue and flying it into the Christmas tree. And then there was the first kit that I actually used glue on—*Revell's* Fokker E.III. True, the glue was Elmer's white glue and I couldn't understand why the thing fell apart after the third time I took it into the bath, but hey, it was glue!

Painting, when that finally became important years later, was done with bottled glossy paints and paint brushes that could have doubled as trimming brushes for the house. And last, but not least, I could buy a kit with one or two weeks allowance if I wanted to.

By stark contrast, my kids don't have to use glue if they don't want to, since the engineering on some modern kits makes glue redundant. Most of the kits are well thought-out in regards to how they assemble, and the fit tolerances are quite tight. And since the kids are building for fun rather than competition, they are more forgiving of less than perfect results.

My son won't have to paint his kit by brush, since Jason has already had experience using my airbrush for painting some of the boxcars for his model train layout. (My daughter has yet to show an interest in spray painting, but that option is open to her). Both kids have the advantage of having a father who is in the hobby who can help to guide them along, as well as take advantage of his resources and reference materials. The only down side is the higher cost of the kits themselves and the associated modeling supplies. The average price of a snap together kit is about \$8-9, compared to 39-50

SnapTite
NO GLUE REQUIRED
STICK-ON DECALS INCLUDED
MONOGRAM

SKILL
Snaps Together
No Glue Required
15 Pieces

DESK TOP 1:110
SR-71A BLACKBIRD

Monogram/Revell Snap-Tite SR-71 is sold in a variety of packages, including the "My First Model" line. Except for instructions, the contents of all these kits are the same.

cents when I was growing up. (As a good reflection of the times that we currently live, have you noticed that the “cent” symbol does not exist on many keyboards?) A 15 cent bottle of *Testors* enamel paint now costs \$1.25. It is definitely more expensive to be a part of the hobby today.

Anyway, back to the story at hand. I was able to find Jason the kit of the F/A-18 at the NNL swap meet, and we started it a few days later, only to find that it had a deformed landing gear and was missing a wheel. So Jason had his first lesson of consumer rights as we wrote a letter to *Monogram* requesting replacement parts. A couple of weeks passed before the parts showed up, but show up they did.

With the instruction sheet spread out before him, Jason attacked the project at hand. Being fairly independent of mind, Jason put the kit together by himself, only asking for help when something didn't seem to fit right or wouldn't snap together correctly. Unfortunately, he put one of the vertical stabilizers on upside down and we discovered that the other one was missing. This put the entire project on hold, but I promised Jason that I would find a replacement kit for him. In the meantime, I started “kit cramming” for our contest.

At our contest, I was lucky to pick up three more *Monogram* “snappies” —an SR-71, an F-4 *Phantom II* for my girl and, lo and behold, a replacement F/A-18. The kids were ecstatic when I brought the kits home.

I told Donelle, my little girl, that I was going to help Jason first and then her because he was older. I then went off for an hour to do some project around the house. When I came back I was surprised to see that Jason had already put the SR-71 and the F/A-18 together without help from anybody. (Unfortunately, the nose probe broke off and was lost in the process, and somehow the cockpit glass disappeared also.) Now he was ready to paint.

I showed Jason my *In Action* book on the *Blackbird*, and asked him to go through the book to see if there was a color scheme that he liked. Needless to say, the color drawing of the black and silver drone carrying A-12 caught his eye, and he proudly announced that he wanted to do this plane.

So, I went looking through our stock of paint and pulled out what I thought would be a good practice paint to use—*AccuFlex's* Santa Fe Silver and Engine Black. I like these paints because they can be shot straight from the bottle, there is no odor, it dries fast, and most important of all because I had them “in stock” and didn't have to run out to buy them. So, we gloved and masked Jason, sat him on my lap and kicked on the compressor. We shot the silver first, and Jason did a good job with only an occasional reminder to spray across the entire plane in one complete motion. We let the plane dry overnight, then I masked off the silver for him. He sprayed the black the next day, and again we let the kit dry overnight. (Jason really likes to use my airbrush, especially since once he's finished spraying the model and shooting a cleaning blast of soapy water through the airbrush he's done. He doesn't have to strip down the airbrush and clean each individual part.)

The next day, which was our club's meeting night, Jason added the sticker decals and painted the SR-71 lettering on the base. His initial painting was a little sloppy, but I showed him a little trick using a slightly wetted toothpick to clean up around the raised lettering. I did one edge of a letter and he did the rest. I showed

Jason where the markings went, but he applied them himself.

We succeeded in accomplishing our goal of finishing the kit in time for me to enter it on his behalf in the Stockton Tomcats' contest. He took first place in the Subjunior category, but unfortunately he was the only entrant in that category (which may be an indictment as to how the hobby is going). However, I was pleasantly surprised when he was awarded a third place *Aeromaster* Award. (Being a typical parental modeler, I didn't even pay attention to any of the special awards since what I was entering wasn't covered by any of them. I call this parental attention deficit disorder). So now the model resides on a shelf of our display case with the awards prominently displayed.

As for a review of the models themselves, let's begin with the SR-71. The listed scale is 1:110, but I think the scaling was an afterthought. This looks more like “make it fit the box first, then we'll figure out the scale.” It does, however, captures the overall look of the SR. The kit includes one clear part and 14 black plastic pieces, of which two make up the base. There is no landing gear as the kit is designed to be an in-flight model. Basically, the plane consists of an upper and lower fuselage which you snap the stabilizers, diffuser cones, “rear fuselage” and exhausts to. No cockpit detail whatsoever is included, which makes sense since it would be barely perceptible in this scale.

The kit-provided decals are sticker types and represent one of the all-black SRs, but appears to be incomplete when compared to the placement guide. Overall, I consider this to be an excellent “first kit.”

The F/A-18 is listed as 1:72 scale, and consists of 15 pieces of white plastic and one clear piece. This kit has a separate cockpit piece that is rather interesting in its design. It is a single piece that has the pilot, a rudimentary floor and the front landing gear all molded into a single piece. This is trapped between the vertically split front nose halves. The rest of the fuselage is horizontally split. The landed gear and gear wells are molded as left and right sets and have two of the kits missiles embedded into the molding. These sets are interlocked between the upper and lower fuselage halves, and, while not a super tight fit, it is passable. The front nose section plugs into the rear fuselage section. The vertical stabilizers have little split arrowheads which fit into slots on the upper fuselage. Unfortunately, the instructions are not 100 percent clear as to which is left and which is right. And once installed, they can't be removed without splitting the entire rear fuselage. This is what happened to Jason, and unfortunately this snap-together kit is not an unsnap-together kit.

We bought a second kit rather than risk breaking the pin that holds the entire rear fuselage together. Even when installed properly, there is a lot of slop between the vertical stabilizers and the fuselage. This kit is definitely a bit more complicated than the SR-71, and not just from the assembly point of view. It requires more painting since the pilot, cockpit, wheel wells and landing gear are all visible.

My son has not painted his kit yet, but he has told me that he would like to paint it in a camouflaged scheme. It could be quite interesting to see what colors he picks out (I can see it now—an F/A-18 with a WW2 Italian spaghetti camo job).

The Virginia/Washington area, part 2

By Bob Miller

I wrote earlier of my impressions of the museums in the Newport News-Washington D.C. area, in case IPMS'ers might want to extend their trips to the nationals this fall. I visited again in May, and brought back some additional notes from this fabulous area. Working south to north...

I mentioned Quantico (officially, the **Marine Corps Air-Ground Museum**) and the recommendation given me by modeler/frequent traveler/NASA Chief Engineer Warren Ahtye, but at that time I had not stopped. This time I did. I'd give it 5 on a scale of 10. Museum guidebooks show a huge collection here, but Quantico is the "owner" of all Marine museum aircraft, and the majority are lent out to museums from Pensacola to San Diego, so what's actually on hand is not too exciting, though presentation is good. There are three hangers featuring the '20s and '30s, WWII, and Korea. Notable from the '20s are an F6C-4, an American-built version of the WWI 2-man Renault tank, and a 1915 armored car. WWII includes the usual aircraft plus a few tracked vehicles ("targets" to the aeronautically inclined), but Korea gets interesting with HO3S and HRS helos, and a MiG-15. There are bored Marines in each building to keep you from driving off with a tank, but you can get in close, and by bringing along a bunch of cards with samples of various metallizer finishes and laying them right on the MiG, you might define once and for all that elusive anodized finish the 1950s Soviet jets used.

Away beyond the buildings and off in a field are a very derelict-looking F4D, FJ-3, and F3D. This last survivor is actually an EF-10Q, the Vietnam version of this inelegant but long-lived bird. It is stripped of instrument panel and Q-bird antennas, but engines are installed. The escape slide was down and there was nobody around, which made it tempting to climb in, but the tires are flat and the wheels are so sunk into the mud that I would have had to literally crawl to reach the slide, and somehow that didn't fit the moment. Bill Gunston says in *Night Fighters* that F3Ds downed more enemy aircraft in Korea than any other Navy or Marine type, so it deserves better than this sad state, but at least you can get as close as you wish to take pictures.

There is a restoration facility, but I was there too late to see what is happening. Prospective researchers may contact Mike Starn, the curator, at 703-784-2606.

Passing the Quantico airstrip, you may notice the Presidential helos of HMX-1. I didn't try stopping for a photo.

Not a museum, exactly, but a fascinating little hobby shop is **Air, Land & Sea**, at 1215 King St, Alexandria, VA, right on your way to D.C. The owner specializes in buying up collections, and the shop, about seven feet wide and looking like it hasn't been redecorated (or dusted) since Burnside rode past on the way to Manassas, is *loaded*. He stays open "until 6. Or maybe later. I hate to break up an interesting conversation just to go home." Catch the books and magazines upstairs, also.

I mentioned earlier the **Navy Museum at the Washington Navy Yard**, but this time I found their photo archive. This is the primary archive for the U.S. Navy up to 1920 (and secondary to the National Ar-

chives after that time) and it is an awesome yet very accessible collection. Small copies of their photos are on cards about 5x8 inches, filed by ship or facility, and they will pull a file tray and allow you to browse through with a magnifier lamp. I had some questions about Pacific coast monitors, and USS *Monterey*, for example, had a stack of cards 3 inches thick. As an ironic turn, the most informative of the photos came from Union Iron Works, via the San Francisco Maritime Museum, so I didn't actually need to go to D.C, but what an interesting stop this was! The crew there is very knowledgeable, but if you want photos of a ship of interest, you must search it yourself. Phone 202-433-2765. They only have room for three or four researchers at a time, so call ahead.

At NASM's **Paul Garber Facility (Silver Hill)**, restoration is under way at long last on the Aichi Seiran. The bad news is that budget cuts have decimated the restoration crew so no one was working while I was there, and for the first time they are using students to do some of the work. (You wanted a balanced budget? You didn't *seriously* expect Nootie and the Blowhards to cut tobacco subsidies, did you?) Their *Hurricane* and a Nieuport 28 were also in stages of restoration. Tours were restricted to two buildings, but a third should be open by August. I spent a day in the Archival Support Center there, and found it very worth while if you have a well-defined topic to research. (browsing is nearly impossible.) They will copy up to 50 8.5x11 pages for you real-time at two bits a page, but D-sheets from microfilm are slower and pricier. Or you can get a roll of microfilmed drawings copied for \$17.50 and start on your very own 1:1 scale P-40 or Ju88 next week. For a tour, call 202-357-1400. (Call early. The docents are volunteers and space is limited.) For the Silver Hill Archives, call 301-238-3480. Again, space is very limited, and they do a computer search for your topic to help you prepare, so call early (like now!)

An hour north of DC, if you have time, is the **Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Museum**. The presentation is less polished and evocative than Sacramento's, but the collection of locomotives seems bigger and goes back to the very beginning. One loco is, as I recall, the most powerful non-articulated steamer ever.

Warren Ahtye also suggests the **H.H. Rogers Collection** at the Naval Academy at Annapolis for ship enthusiasts. This site houses the biggest collection of dockyard models outside of Portsmouth, England, with models of sailing vessels spanning the era from the 17th century to the 1850s. These big models are in 1:48 scale! Upstairs is the Naval Institute Press, where Robert Sumrall, who doubles as the curator of ship models, works. "A very accommodating guy," says Warren.

Lastly, a correction to my earlier notes. I said of the Allen Lee Hotel, "It's a one-star place..." The *Lee* hasn't rated a star for years. Bluntly, it's a flea trap. But I prefer to get rid of my rental car and see DC on public transit, and for that, it's adequate. Most people would probably prefer to get a motel out where prices are better, like Falls Church, and find a Metro Park-and-Ride (their version of BART) if you want to see the Mall. Just don't try to drive there. But if you haven't seen DC, get there! The area is a wonderful place!

MAY MINUTES

One of the highlights of our May meeting was an appearance Barry Bauer, the most remotely-located member of SVSM (he lives in Germany). The club voted to send \$30 to Sacramento for regional awards and \$50 to the IPMS/USA for national awards. As good as our modelers are, we'll get our investment back (wink wink).

In model talk, Tom Bush Jr. proved himself to be one of the few who feel affection for *Lindberg* kits. He sprayed his 1:20 Nissan King Cab pickup flat black for that "survived a forest fire" look. Tom Bush Sr. put his detailing skills to work on his own truck, a Chevy, which featured an engine that looked good enough to run. Peter Wong modeled two British aircraft of dramatically different eras—a 1:48 *Esca Tornado* of today, and a 1:72 *Fairey Battle* dating back to the battle for France. Jim Priete (That's pronounce *Preet*, not *Pre-yeti*, thank you!) hand-painted the hinomarus and insignia on his *Tamiya* Ki-84 Frank fighter. While this may not make him a master of *Yamato-e*, the Japanese art of brush painting, it does make for a masterful model (*I'm sorry to use such highfalutin' terms as Yamato-e, but I saw an opportunity to use my art history minor—at last! The editor*). Bert McDowell is praying that *Skywave* puts out a kit of the *Allen M. Sumner*—class destroyer, because he's working hard on the *Albatross* 1:700 kit, which leaves something to be desired. Laramie Wright's been visiting the desert, in his own way; he built *Tamiya's* M1A1 into a sharp piece of armor, and his modifications to a second sand-dweller have resulted in an Israeli M48A5. Cliff Kranz measured the wheels on his *Lindberg* Wabco dumptruck; it's 1:42. At the other end of scale is his *Macross Zjentholaudy* standard battleship by *Arii*; it's 1:20,000! Milt Poulos has his F/A-18 upright and looking good following a virtual re-building of the kit. He also parked a *Revell* Impala on the table. Brad Chun is building a P-47N the hard way, with a *Monogram* "D" model and the conversion kit from *Medallion Models*, plus a *Hi-Tech* cockpit detail set. He's also turning *AMT's* 1:48 F7F *Tigercat* into a firebomber. Mike Burton has submerged himself in work on his 1:350 U.S.S. *Dallas/Typhoon*-class submarine tandem. He says that *Polly S* dust paint is great for touch-ups on subs. Angelo Deogracias is at last done with the long-awaited *Monogram* 1:48 *Typhoon* he's been struggling to complete. Stun Muniz brought an *Ansaldo* SVA-5 by *Aeroplast*. Kelly Avery is working on two naval types, a *Fujimi* A-6A *Intruder* for his A-6 collection, and a F4D *Skyray* he's assembling. Rich Pedro is repairing an 1954 Chevy highboy that was broken in the 1989 earthquake, and he's also building a *Mauve* P-40N and painting a limited-edition bust of Darkness from the movie "Legend." Matt

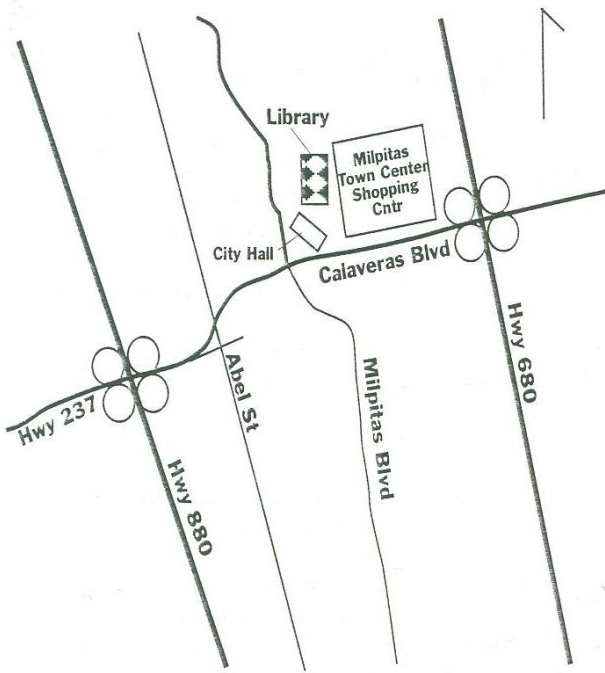
Reich has been busy, building a *Tamiya* F-15 *Eagle*, a B-25 by *Monogram*, a *Tamiya* Sherman, a *Tamiya* Fw 190A-3 and, last and not least (kitwise, that is), a *Monogram* P-51 *Mustang*. Frank Babbitt built a winner from *AMT's* KC-135A kit. Frank hasn't been around much lately because he was visiting China; there, he says, they sell models on the street like produce or poultry! Randy Vandraiss crafted a kit of the Galaxian, a lightweight vehicle of the '50s, and gave it a "paint job" of bare metal foil. Randy based this conversion on a Ford Galaxy. Randy also displayed the Orange Mustang from the *Ertl* box art, which he purchased at auction. Mike Meek is ready to round some pylons with his *Testors* 1:48 F8F *Bearcat* in racing configuration. His plane depicts a competitor from the late 1960s. Kent McClure is tentatively testing his tenacity with a trial vacuform kit; for lunch, Kent relaxes with a Henschel 132 and a *Classic Airframes* Flea fighter. Mike Ackerman is still on his World War I binge, fashioning a Bristol Scout D from the *Aeroclub* kit. Dave Balderrama plans to give a natural metal finish to his late war Me 262. Dave's advice: "always check your references..." He's also finished his *Macross* F-117 (what references go with this, Dave?). Chris John is feeling flaky, and to prove it she's building Terry Labonte's Kelloggs Monte Carlo from the *Ertl* kit. Randy Rothhaar is proceeding with his "Siamese Sea Kings," also known as his HH-3 *Pelican* conversion. Chris Hughes' armored division now includes a *Tamiya* Sherman, a *Tamiya* Type 97 and a *DML* JS-II. Joel Rojas built a replica of the 1991 Motor Trend Car of the Year, a Chevy Caprice Classic. Joel also snapped together an Impala. Bill Shipway scratchbuilt his San Francisco Bay garbage scow from an old photo and a lot of patience. Ken Miller showed off his modified S2F *Tracker* firebomber that was showcased in last month's cover story (see photos in this issue). Paul Cabana showed off a set of planes from the Valkyrie science-fiction show. Tim Yeh's Star Trek U.S.S. *Reliant* was the victim of a Plastic Weld meltdown, but hopefully Tim can devise some sort of fiendish alien weapon that could do that (a Gorn Glue Gun, perhaps?). Larry Roberts displayed his usual quota of two *Otaki* Me 109s, spruced up with some unusual *Aeromaster* decals. And the model of the month goes to... Michael Williams, who could teach Lockheed a lesson in thrift: his killer scratch-built killer satellite is based around a pill bottle! And the HobbyTown USA Just Cool Award goes to... Shane Johnson, who concocted a conversion of a Stealth F1 car, and painted it a very suave glossy black. (Thanks for these minutes go to acting secretary Angelo Deogracias, the master of matching model with its maker!)

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