



## THE STYRENE SHEET

Vol. 30, No. 1

March 1996

### By George! Japan's N1K fighters in 1:72

By Chris Bucholtz

The N1K Shiden (Violet Lightning) was the Imperial Japanese Navy's last numerically significant fighter of the Pacific War. The Japanese aircraft industry, hard-pressed by material shortages and air bombardment, still produced 1,435 of these fighters during 1944 and 1945.

The N1K1-J Shiden and N1K2-J Shidenkai were nimble aircraft, and, by Japanese standards, rugged and well-armed. Most N1K1-Js mounted two 7.7mm machine guns and four 20mm cannon, while most of the later, low-winged N1K2-Js deleted the machine guns.

But perhaps the most interesting part of the Shiden's story is its genesis. The plane came about as the result of the Imperial Japanese Navy's 1940 request for an advanced seaplane fighter. Kawanishi embarked on this project, designing a sturdy floatplane around the Mitsubishi MK4D Kasei engine. The prototype was equipped with two two-bladed contra-rotating propellers, to offset torque, but when trials began in 1942, it was decided that this arrangement was too complex and a single three-bladed propeller was substituted, meaning that the pilots of the N1K1 Kyofu (Strong Wind) would need to worry about torque roll on takeoff as well as the hazards of the ocean.

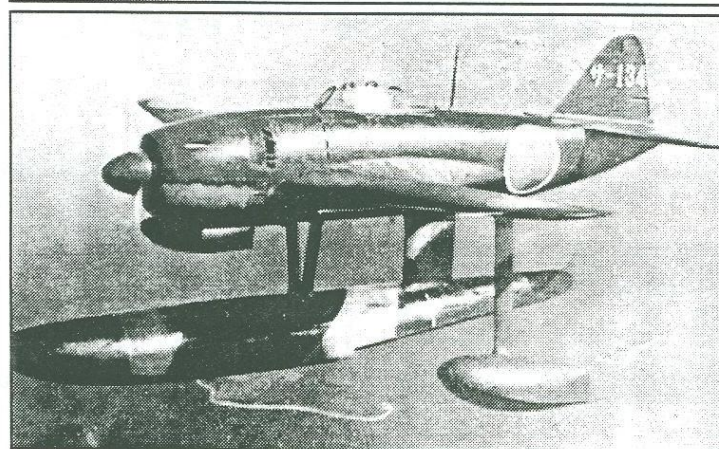
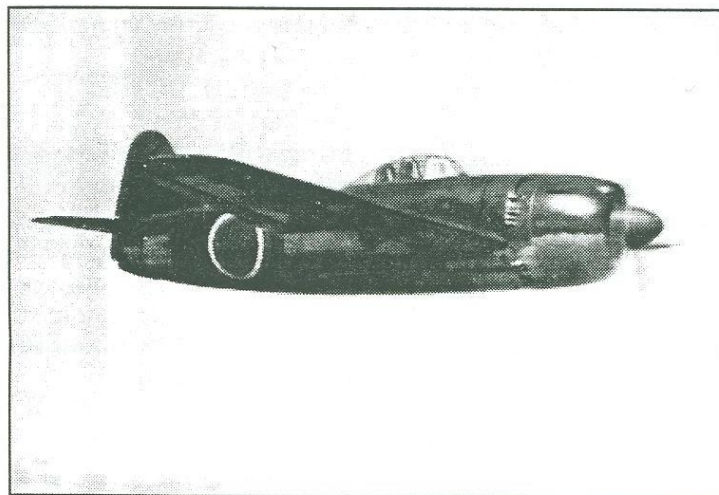
Even with the central pontoon, floats and struts associated with floatplanes, the Kyofu was quick, with a top speed near 300 mph. The IJN realized from its experience with A6M2-N

Reisen that float fighters were no match for carrier- or land-based opponents, and so production of the Kyofu was limited to 96 aircraft.

Kawanishi didn't wait for the IJN's decision to start to develop a cleaner Kyofu. In 1941, the company privately built

nine prototypes of what would become the N1K1-J Shiden. The plane retained the mid-wing design of the Kyofu, but over the course of development was re-engined with the Nakajima NK9H Homare engine, which led to a shorter nose forward of the wing. The vertical stabilizer was also taller and less elongated than the Kyofu's.

The N1K1-J experienced a series of teething problems, not the least of which was the IJN's reluctance to consider a plane not built to its own specifications (the IJN didn't relent until mid-1943). The plane also had engine problems and difficulties with the long landing gear legs. These delays in development meant that the N1K1-J's first deployment to a combat zone came with the 201st Kokutai in Cebu, west of the Philippines. While the planes performed well, the N1K1-Js (dubbed "George" in the allies' code system) were overwhelmed by sheer force of



The N1K1-J (top) was the direct offspring of Kawanishi's N1K1 float fighter (bottom). Note the similar mid-wing layout and vertical tail.

numbers.

Kawanishi wasn't done with the Shiden yet, however. The company redesigned much of the airframe, giving the plane a more traditional low-wing plan, a longer fuselage and an

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*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 360793, Milpitas, CA 95036.

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## EDITOR'S BRIEF

This issue marks the 30th anniversary of the Styrene Sheet, and a milestone for Silicon Valley Scale Modelers. Keeping a newsletter (let alone a club) alive for 30 years on a volunteer basis is something of an achievement—the IPMS Quarterly is almost two years *younger*, and has a full-time editor, for example!

I've had the pleasure of editing 36 of the roughly 360 issues of the Styrene Sheet, and I plan to stay at it for a while longer. The club—and myself in particular—owe a lot to the past editors, including Dave Sampson, Mike Burton, Bill Magnie and Tim Curtis for setting a high standard.

We also owe a lot to our members. Modelers could very easily clam up, keep their secrets to themselves and walk off with awards, but the contributors to the Styrene Sheet are willing to let the world in on their techniques. It's the epitome of what the club is about—sharing modeling to make it a more rewarding experience, for both the teacher and pupil, the newcomer and the old-timer. We have three first-time contributors this time, Jeff Hargis, Bill Abbott and Jim Gordon, who've picked an auspicious issue to make their debuts. I have to thank them and all the others who have written for the Styrene Sheet—you make my job very easy and very rewarding.

Speaking of rewarding... another contest is history, and once again SVSM has showed 'em how it's done! A mess of beautiful trophies were handed out, some great raffle prizes were distributed to eager modelers, and 112 competitors put 310 models on the tables, the most ever at our contest. Not only was the quantity high, but the quality was stratospheric as well (I judged 1:48 aircraft, and I saw some fantastic work in every category, jet and prop). We had 22 vendor tables, and we did well enough financially that we can start planning for

an even more ambitious contest next year.

Best of all, we heard virtually no complaints about the judging! That wasn't all our doing—we had great judges from all over the region that ensured that impartial, efficient judging took place and that the best models did win.

Thanks go to our judges—Greg Schell and Brad Sharp (sorry, guys, I can't rattle off your club affiliations); John Bergsing, Brad Baumgartener, Alan Weber and Bryan Finch from IPMS Stockton Tomcats; Dennis Bruno from IPMS Castle AFB; Bob Moore from IPMS Central Valley; Bill Emery from IPMS Fresno; Dave Hansen and Jim Priete from IPMS Fremont; Mike Braun from IPMS Golden Gate; and Brad Chun, Bert McDowell, Jon Shumaker, Ben Pada, Brian Sakai, Milt Poulos, Dave Balderrama, Mike Meek, Richard Pedro, Bill Dye, Mike Burton and your editor, from SVSM. That's 26 guys, who, in addition to contest director Jim Lewis and aircraft head judge Bill Ferrante, made sure things went quickly and smoothly.

Now you know who supported SVSM's contest—now let's support their contests as well!

By the way, we've already picked a theme for 1997, so you can start building. In the SVSM tradition of whimsy, the theme will be "Here, Kitty Kitty!" Just thought we'd give you a year to figure that one out!

Personnel note: Jim Lewis and I won't be attending the next meeting or the Stockton contest—we'll be holding high-level discussions with a mouse in Southern California on a weekend chosen by our significant others. But we'll be building in the hotel, á la Bill Ferrante, so we'll see you in April with new projects.

Happy hobbying!

—The Editor

## 1996 Kickoff Classic award winners

Winners are listed by category. Winners who are SVSM members are highlighted with a shadow.

### A. Single Engine Jet or Rocket Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller

1. XF-85 *Goblin*, Chris Bucholtz
2. F9F-2 *Panther*, James Wallace
3. Fw 183, Kenneth Uffelman

### B. Multi Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller

1. KC-135 *Stratotanker*, Frank Babbitt
2. XF-108 *Rapier*, Ron Vandergrift
3. XF-103, Ron Vandergrift

### C. Single Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller

1. Bf 109, Charles Betz
2. Fw 190, Charles Betz
3. P-51D *Mustang*, Bill Ferrante

### D. Multi Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller

1. AC-119K *Spectre*, Randy Rothhaar
2. P-38 *Lightning*, Jim Lund
3. Hughes XF-11, Jim Lund

### E. Single Engine Jet or Rocket Aircraft, 1:48

1. F-100 *Super Saber*, Thanh Nguyen
2. F-105 *Thunderchief*, Thanh Nguyen

### F. Multi Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:48

1. Su-25 "Frogfoot," Frank Babbitt
2. F-111F *Aardvark*, Bob Moore

### 3. Su-27 "Flanker," Randy Rothhaar

### G-1. Single Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, Allied, 1:48

1. *Mustang* Mk. I, Dave Shirley
2. *Spitfire* Mk. 1, Tom Trankle
3. XP-40N *Kittyhawk* IV, Harold Offield

### G-2. Single Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, Axis, 1:48

1. Fw 190, Ernie Gee
2. Ki-61, Ben Pada
3. Bf 109, David Carr

### H. Multi Engine Prop or Turbo-prop Aircraft, 1:48

1. A-26 *Invader*, Randy Rothhaar
2. F7F-3N *Tigercat*, Bob Moore
3. Do 335 *Pfiel*, Frank Babbitt

### I. Biplanes, all scales

1. Ilya Muromets, Jim Lund
2. Fokker D VIII, Joe Fleming

### J. Jet, Rocket and Prop Aircraft, 1:32 or larger

1. F-15 *Eagle*, Randy Rothhaar
2. Macchi 202, Jim Gavin
3. P-47 *Thunderbolt*, Jim Gavin

### K. Civil Aircraft, all scales

1. Trans Brasil 767-200, Sonny Esparza
2. Fournier RF6-B, Bob Miller

3. Bal-Air A310-300, Sonny Esparza

**L. Rotary Wing Aircraft, all scales**

1. UH-1C *Huey* Hog, Randy Rothhaar

2. AH-1 *Cobra*, Fred Shammas

2. Ka-35 "Hokum," Frank Beltran

**M. Military Vehicles, Soft Skin, 1:35 or larger**

1. Fuel Trailer, Mark Ford

2. M29C Weasel, Jim Lewis

3. SAS Jeep, Hubert Chan

**N-1. Armored Fighting Vehicles, closed top, Axis, 1:35 or larger**

1. Hetzer (early version), Mark Ford

2. Semovente 13/40, Chris Hughes

3. Panzer III, Randy Heiler

**N-2. Armored Fighting Vehicles, closed top, Allied, 1:35 or larger**

1. KV-1, Chris Hughes

2. M5 Stuart, Hubert Chan

3. Sherman Firefly Mk. V, Laramie Wright

**O. Modern Armored Fighting Vehicles, 1:35 or larger**

1. M35 Reo Guntruck, Jim Lewis

2. M163 Vulcan, Eric McClure

3. Challenger MBT, Rob Mackie

**P. Military Vehicles, all types, 1:48 or smaller**

1. Type 97 Chi Ha, Brian Sakai

2. Sturm 33B, Jim Gordon

3. Char B Assault, Rob Mackie

**Q. Ships, 1:350 and larger**

1. HMS *Prince of Wales*, Joseph Dunn

2. U.S.S. *Salamaua*, John Parenti

3. Civil War ram, Dennis Trimble

**R. Ships, 1:351 and smaller**

1. IJN *Amatsukaze*, Jim Gordon

2. U.S.S. *Long*, Sami Arim

3. IJN *Hiryu*, Sami Arim

**S-1. Stock Civilian Vehicles, all scales**

1. Ford Thunderbird, Milt Poulos

2. AAR 'Cuda, Peter Martin

3. '37 Ford, Peter Martin

**S-2. Civilian Vehicles, Low Riders, all scales**

1. '65 Impala, Johnny Galvan

2. Suzuki Samurai, Johnny Galvan

3. '65 Pontiac Grand Prix, Tammie Go & Biz Torres

**T. Competition Vehicles, Open Wheel, all scales and types**

1. John Player Special Lotus, Ken Misin

2. Yamaha TZ-250, Ken Misin

3. Bimata, Ken Misin

**U. Competition Vehicles, Closed Wheel, all scales and types**

1. Brymos Porsche, Ken Misin

2. Porsche #60, Ken Misin

3. Momo Ferrari, Ken Misin

**V. Space Vehicles, Real and Fictional, all scales and types**

1. Death Star Laser Tower, Michael Williams

2. Cardassian starship, Randy Rothhaar

**W-1. Figures, 121mm and larger**

1. The Demon Marduk, Fabian Chavarvia

2. The Crow, Richard Pedro

3. Alien "Bottoms Up," Dave Balderrama

**W-2. Figures, 120mm and smaller**

1. Wyatt Earp, Mark Bernardo

2. Girl with a Spatula, Brian Sakai

3. French Drummer, John Boijson

**X. Prehistoric, all scales and types**

1. Velociraptor Antirrhopus, Roy Sutherland

2. T-Rex, Dennis Trimble

**Y. Out of the Box, all scales and types**

1. JS-2 Stalin, Chris Hughes

2. A6M3a Zero, Ben Pada

3. Type 97 Chi-Ha, Chris Hughes

**Z. Dioramas, all scales and types**

1. "Western Offensive—France 1940," Jim Gordon

2. Tiger and Flak, Ardennes, Joe Fleming

3. "Directions," Joe Fleming

**AB. Hypothetical Vehicles, all scales and types**

1. FTA-1 *Penguin*, Harold Offield

2. Bv P.215.02 *Nachtjager*, Mark Hernandez

3. Supermarine Scimitar, Harold Offield

**AC. Miscellaneous, all scales and types**

1. Artillery piece, Dave Shirley

2. Hooters racing Bradley, Randy Rothhaar

3. Sunoco racing Panther, Kent McClure

**AA. Junior Aircraft, all scales and types**

1. P-51B *Mustang*, Matt Reich

2. *Hurricane*, Dan Bell

3. F-15 *Eagle*, Matt Reich

**BB. Junior Military Vehicles, all scales and types**

1. Sturmgeschutz, Jason McChristian

2. Star Wars Speeder bike, Phuc Tran

**CC. Junior Civilian Vehicles, all scales and types**

1. Honda Civic, Carlos Malvido

2. Cadillac, Carlos Malvido

3. Mercedes, Carlos Malvido

**DD. Junior Ships, all scales and types**

1. Bat Boat, Phuc Tran

**EE. Sub-Junior, all scales and types**

1. Plymoth Prowler, Iris John

2. Japanese Aircraft Carrier, Walter Mackie

3. F-14 *Tomcat*, Jefferey Reich

**Special Awards**

1. SVSMPresident's Grand Award—XF-103, Ron Vandergrift

2. Arlie Charter Memorial Award—Best Army Air Corps, Pacific Theatre—P-47N *Thunderbolt*, Ben Pada

3. Ayrton Senna Memorial Award—Best Competition Car—JPS Lotus, Ken Misin

4. Best Wheeled Military Vehicle—M35 Reo GunTruck, Jim Lewis

5. Best Armored Fighting Vehicle—Hetzer (early version), Mark Ford

6. Best Junior Model—Sturmgeschutz, Jason McChristian

7. Best Indochinese Subject (1919 to 1969)—AC-119K, Randy Rothhaar

8. Best Japanese Subject—Ki-61 "Tony," Ben Pada

9. Best 1:48 Cockpit Detail—F4U-1, David Carr

10. Most Unusual Markings or Scheme (all scales and types of models)—Swiss Bf 109, David Carr

11. Most Tasteless Subject (All scales and type of models)—Alien "Bottoms Up," Dave Balderrama

12. Best Collection (as per IPMS/USA rules)—Famous Fokkers, Jim Lund

13. Best Weather-Related Subject Awards

1. Ford Thunderbird, Milt Poulos

1. P-47 *Thunderbolt*, Ben Pada

2. Macchi 202 Folgore, Jim Gavin

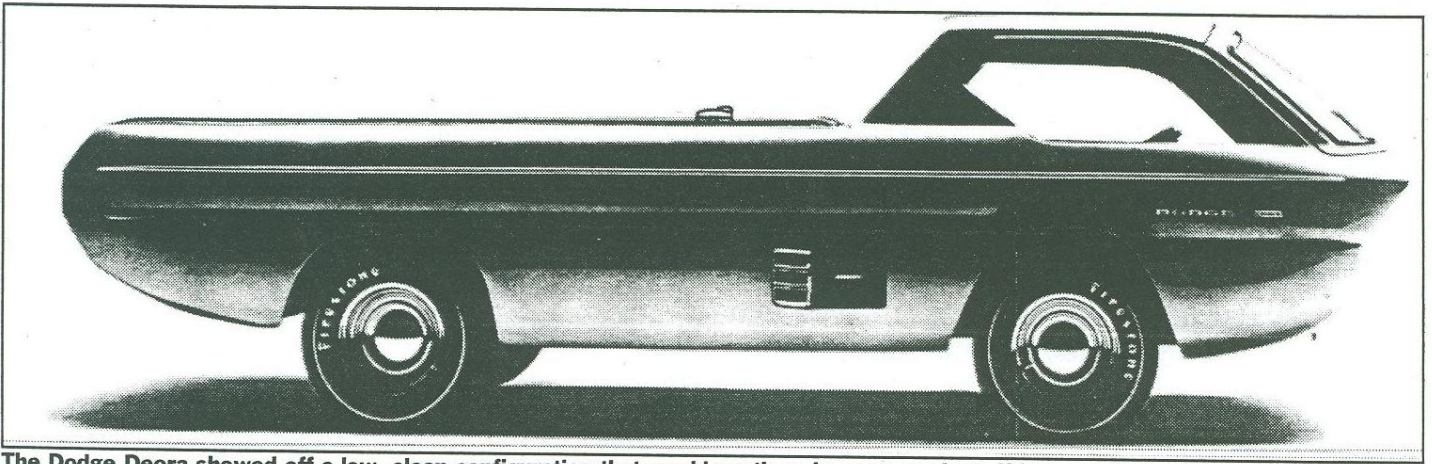
2. Valvoline Thunderbird, Edward Rayering

3. P-38 *Lightning*, Jim Lund

3. P-47 *Thunderbolt*, Dave Hansen

14. Region IX Coordinator's Award—F-111F, Bob Moore

# Dodge dream trucks: the Deora and A100



The Dodge Deora showed off a low, clean configuration that would continue in more modern, if less exotic, sport pickup trucks.

**By Mike Burton**  
**•Part 2 in a series•**

"Golden" is the accepted translation for the Spanish term chosen for the name of this "dream" pickup. I fell for this sleek truck when we both were young, and I built all four of the model versions then available. They were a "stock" pickup, a "custom" panel truck, a "family sports vehicle" camper shell pickup and, last but not least, in several models, a "blown" big slick dragster. I never knew then where she really came from nor was I prepared for her disappearance from the model mart shelves.

For years the only evidence I had to show she had even existed was the black and white Deora brochure I received from Dodge in 1968, plus a treasured color magazine clipping a school chum passed to me around the same period. Still, I would always look for her while shopping the hobby shop car kit shelves.

Joining the San Jose Scale Modelers in 1983 helped reunite the two of us. That put me in contact with others who sometimes understood what sort of strange hold this model car had on me. Some even remembered what it looked like, and warned me of its collector (i.e., rare and overpriced) status. Still, no Deora kits ever showed up in club swap meets or at vendor tables.

I was out of luck until 1986, when I espied that *Airfix* magazine's March issue was out. I snatched up a copy immediately, for in it was a one-page article called "Where Are They Now?" covering... my beloved DEORA!

Model columnist Mat Irvine (he currently does the Fact and Fiction department of *Scale Models International*) had written an excellent history of the real Deora plus a compact review and history of the kit. This, combined with the product brochure I'd had for so long, are my sole sources for this Dodge Dream, but they do offer much useful information. I'll relate it here in condensed format (really!).

The Dodge Deora originated as a joint venture sponsored in 1965 by AMT, Dodge and *Car Model* magazine. She was at that time also a nameless entity. September 1965's *Car Model* had a cover with an artist's rendering and the banner "NAME THIS NEW ALEXANDER BROTHERS DODGE PICKUP & WIN PRIZES! PRIZES! PRIZES!!!" In next six months the

actual vehicle was realized, as was her winning name. For a 13-year-old from Washington state: 40 AMT kits, a stopwatch from Dodge and some other items as reward for his submission of "Deora." Whether he got one of the later 1966 first issue AMT Deora kits (also a prize item) is lost to history.

The PR brochure from Dodge gives no clue about the genesis of the car or its name. Here it simply credits, in a single line at a bottom corner, the construction of the Deora to the Alexander Brothers of Detroit, and you get idea they merely did the messy work for Dodge stylists.

Mat Irvine explains they were advisors to AMT and well-respected customizers of their day. Once you see an original Dodge A100 pickup, which formed basis of the Deora, you gain an appreciation for why the Alexanders were respected. The eventual fate of the real Deora is unknown to me, but at least now I knew from whence it came.

Now we pass on to where the kits and prototype meet or diverge, which may surprise you since the kitmaker was involved so closely the development of the prototype.

**Deora Pickup Truck (1:25 kit) by AMT, various releases: 1966-69, 1976-78, 1992**

A very good rendition which came out most recently in 1992 as a limited edition "classics" reissue, and was a very good value at \$11 because it was a compilation—in other words, the kit included most of the pieces originally issued in the various editions of the past, such as the wheels, camper shell, and tonneau cover. Only the "dragster parts" and the now very rare clear bubble top (painted for a panel truck rear shell) with a roof beam or two surboards atop it is missing.

This 1992 issue even supplied a bottle of water-based pearlescent "gold" yellow paint for an authentic finish, with one exception. The box art application example is fairly authentic, but the chrome moon wheels should not have the domes colored gold according to the color shot I have for reference. Still, the gold paint is a fairly faithful shade for the prototype.

The availability and price of this 1992 issue are fairly good for car kits of this sort, so buying one to build is not a theoretical exercise. My areas of comment will apply to any edition if you're building it for the replica stock category, so do not pass up getting an older one from your closet or at a

giveaway price at a show.

The main visible differences in the kit from the real vehicle are the inside cab, the rear of the pickup bed, and the front end where the windshield meets the lower door. We go to the back of the bus first.

The rear end grille (a chrome piece) has a red taillight glass which is noted as optional on the old instructions. This is just a model part for building a "custom" car, as the real Deora did not have visible rear lights of any sort! The upper, lightly recessed portion of this grille should be finished to represent a "real rosewood accent panel" (shades of paint or creative applique are possible methods). DODGE spelled out next to DEORA in a relief marquee should appear on the lower right of this panel. The lower deep recess is supposed to be very shiny, for on the real truck it was the reflector surface for a set of taillights behind the accent panel. These were shown through microscopic holes etched in the stainless steel panel (this requires a shade change on the kit's chrome) which is a flat surface dividing the grille upper/lower halves. This information comes right from the Dodge photo brochure. Note that the instructions never tell of even basic finishing for this portion of the kit.

Going up front now, the kit's differences from reality are more logical when considered with economic and practical thoughts. The cab on the kit has an opening windshield which lifts up as did the real truck's windshield, and the full cab-width lower door flips down just like the prototype's. Seems right, doesn't it?

Well, the real Deora had a center pivot on a pillar, and the door swiveled and opened into the cabin on the passenger side. To "accurize" the kit requires an amount of work according to the level of competition or desire here, especially if you want it all to operate when done.

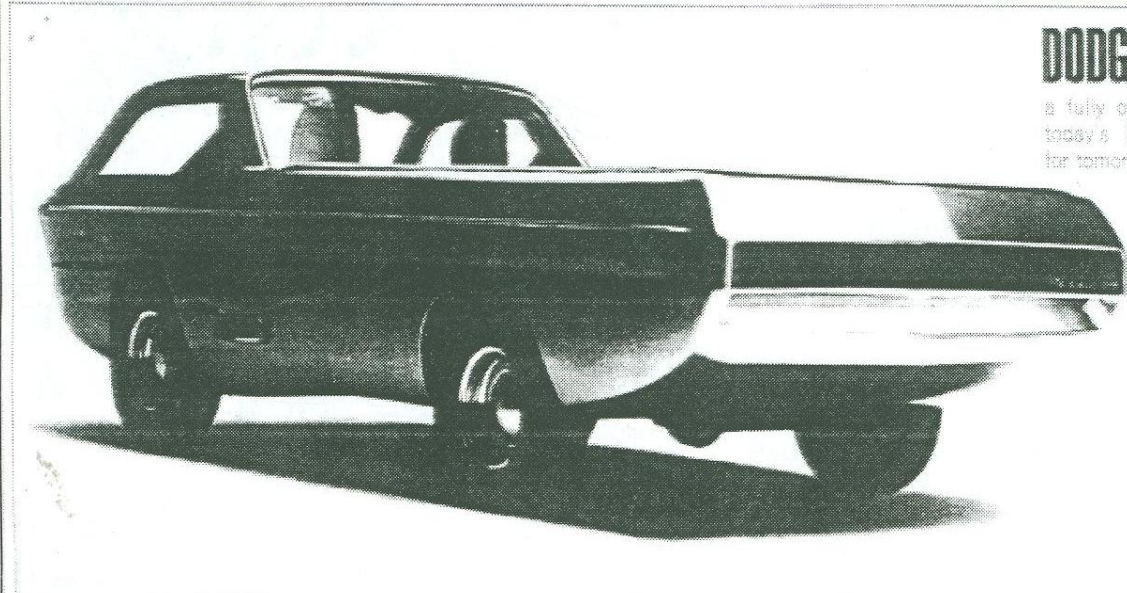
Given the probable work involved and the likelihood that most modelers would never know any better, AMT made the best compromise here. I suggest just posing it permanently open, if adding detailing is your objective. The door has interior padding and sculpting not supplied in the kit, which

you'll need to add as well. The windshield lip where it meets the door is too wide on the kit for a similar reason, but when closed it recreates the real shape perfectly except where detail is concerned. If it's cut away to be the same width as the rest of windshield frame, put the cut-away piece on top of the lower door and you're well on the way to recreating the real arrangement. If the door is modeled closed, putty, join and rescribe to recreate the proper door line.

While we're out this way, the front grille is well done, with the four stepped headlights, but the instructions don't tell you to paint the back panels of the lower grillwork black as the black and white shots indicate. My color shot doesn't clarify this (it's too small) but it appears this could be mesh grille for air flow to the oil pan. Painting it does improve the model's aesthetics anyway.

A good deal of detail differences come out inside the kit cabin. The kit-supplied seats look like something from the Jetsons animation series. The real ones were more plushly upholstered buckets that had large, military aircraft cockpit-styled headrests integral to them. Discard the kit's flying headrests, and then you can easily rework the seats into more realistic shapes. A bigger problem is the interior tub, which has a made-up rear console, incorrectly-shaped rear deck and a not-even-close rendition of the interior coachwork upholstery. The center console with chrome trim, tachometer and speedometer in separate nacelles (as per PR brochure) aren't supplied, and the stick shift goes straight on the floor. A bigger mystery to me is how AMT decided to do the steering arm/wheel so differently from the real Deora truck (which they were so involved in birth of). The real wheel was a cut-down production job which best resembled a P-38 or P2V Neptune flight stick, mounted on arm without the bullet body extension the kit provides along with a circular full size wheel. Once you see the real thing, the oddity of the kit here will always strike your eye.

The final nit-pick point I have with kit is that the body molding lacks the DODGE Deora letters and marquee plate on the front fenders which are so prominent in photos. This is a




**DODGE TRUCK DEORA**

a fully operating prototype utilizing today's Dodge components—paves for tomorrow's travel fun!

**DEORA SPECIFICATIONS:**

Overall length	161"
Overall width	77"
Overall height	67"
Wheelbase	107"
Wheel pitch	170" (17" wheel base) 180" (18" wheel base) 190" (19" wheel base)
Transmission	5-speed manual or Dodge 3-speed auto Ford Automatic
Tires	14" x 7" Powerline 14" x 7" Powerline 14" x 7" Powerline 14" x 7" Powerline 14" x 7" Powerline

©1974 Chrysler Corporation



**CHRYSLER**  
CORPORATION

The Chrysler promotional brochure on the Deora made little mention of the truck's genesis as part of a promotional campaign for AMT.

detail most car kit moldings always have, so I can only speculate that this, like the interior pieces, may have been cut as molds before the Alexander Bros. finished making the real thing.

Now that I've given you a critique of this fine kit's weak points, let me repeat that this is, for the most part, a very faithful model of the elegant Deora "sport pickup" dream styling exercise. Only if you want a more "accurate" model of the concept car is any of the preceeding all that important.

Instead of building an exact replica of this one-off, you may want to build a model to better appreciate the relationship these "dream cars" bear to reality. Despite its "model car" origins, the Deora was an accurate forecast of many things to come, as any look around you today will attest.

Right in the 1967 Deora brochure that vision is best expressed: "Why did Dodge explore (the) plain jane pickup truck in such (a) wealth of luxury and detail? Many now feel (the) vehicles of the not-too-distant future will combine (the) luxurious town sedan with (the) sporty individuality of a GT and add (the) utility of the pickup truck." A little further down: "Deora—far more than a stylist's dream—is the first bold step into a virtually unexplored field of the true 'sports-pickup' presented by Dodge... Deora is truly tomorrow's vehicle on the road today." Well, maybe they don't look like this old Dodge, but today's plethora of individually-styled pickups of all sizes certainly bear out the rest of the dream. And thanks to AMT and the Alexander Brothers you can still build one.

Thanks to another re-issue, we can still build the Deora's Dad—the 1964 Dodge A100 Pickup, issued as a model as the "Little Red Wagon"

1/25 scale A100 "Little Red Wagon," by Lindberg, 1995 (originally an *Industro Motive Corp.* kit, ca 1965)

To me, this kit is unbelievable on two counts. One, that anything as dull as the real truck could be reworked into anything as beautiful as the Deora, and two, that until recently this ugly sucker could fetch much higher collectors' prices than the kits of its lovely progeny. Car kit collector contacts and my own experiences at model shows like the NNL confirmed this latter fact.

The IMC originals and *Testors* reissues of the "Little Red Wagon" dragster/Dodge A100 pickup truck always were outrageously priced whenever they could be found. Wanting one to place next to my same-scale Deora for comparison, I suffered a great deal because none seemed to ever be within my reach. Reasonable modelers would not have one to sell, and unreasonable ones were, well, unreasonable!

Hah! *Lindberg*, the old American model company that receives much abuse at any IPMS gathering, has recaptured my faith. The old IMC truck today lives for 12 bucks retail under their label.

What do you get? Lots of red parts in a "soft" plastic, with all the components for both "Little Red Wagon" versions or the stock A100 pickup. A fine supplement sheet inside gives the history of the Wagon for those like myself who don't know much about it, so there's no reason to repeat that information here. The parts breakdown is good, and much of the truck builds up in subassemblies like the real one from the frame on up, so you can weather and detail easily.

Unlike the AMT Deora, the pickup bed (with the cabin

floor) is separate of the body shell. The back gate is two pieces, so the molding has a real dimension to it. Chains and spare tire mount are supplied so the bed looks complete. The taillight housings are even separate moldings for this area, as are the light lenses.

The front cab has two-piece doors, with inner and outer halves, and the operating hinges are slightly overscale but are still accurate looking. The cab glass is thin, with the single pieces for the front/rear cabin lacking the usual thicker bridge between windows common to car kits. Glass lenses are separate for the headlights, as are the turn signal lenses. The chrome door handles and windshield wipers are individual moldings too, delicately done, as is the door-mounted rear view mirror.

The tires are rubber stockers with no brand/size markings, and unlike most drag slicks, you get five stockers so the spare is included! The stock wheels come in pieces so you can apply the hub caps selectively (for junkers, work trucks, and the results of sharp turns) and the wheel assemblies are well represented with drums and spindles separate.

As for the "Little Red Wagon" portion of kit, I have nothing but the kit item (Bill Golden's advertising flyer) for reference. You're given clear directions on what parts to use versus the stock version. Everything seems correct in these directions, but no paint color data for the body, details for inside the cabin, etc. are given for this version. Maybe someone else has the material to do a good review of this kit as the "Little Red Wagon" version?

For modeler seeking an accurate replica of the Dodge Deora's roots for a before-and-after display, like me, or anyone seeking the all-too-rare "stock" pickup, this reissue certainly comes highly recommended.

# HobbyTown USA

**SPRING  
1996**

## MODEL CONTEST

**SATURDAY,  
APRIL 27**

**categories**

Aircraft, Sci-fi,  
Automobiles, armor,  
Dioramas, Ships,  
Figures and more!

**contest info:**

Landless Ave. and 5490  
1468 Landless Ave.  
Merced, CA 95326  
Phone (408) 945-8654  
Fax (408) 945-6223

**schedule**

Sign-up: 10 a.m.-12  
Judging: 12:30-3:45  
Awards: 4-4:30  
Pick-up: 4:30

**entry**

12 and under: \$1.50  
13-16: \$3  
17 and over: \$3  
Additional: half price!

**TROPHIES AND RIBBONS AWARDED!**



# Details determine success of detail photos

By Bill Abbott

We've all had that moment, when we went to attach the left side framastat to our latest masterpiece and we realized we didn't know what the rest of that part of the model should look like. A quick check of the kit instructions and the two magazine articles we were using for reference gave us no clues. And yet we clearly remembered looking at the framastat on both sides in Watsonville last year...

This is one reason to take one's own detail pictures.

Another reason is that a good picture is really cool to have and to share and show off to friends. And for some of us, it's cheaper, easier and neater to collect a lot of detail pictures than it is to break down and build a kit!

I've made every mistake I could think of so far in taking detail pictures, so I thought I'd share some of the good ones and lessons learned. I'll warn you now, you won't save

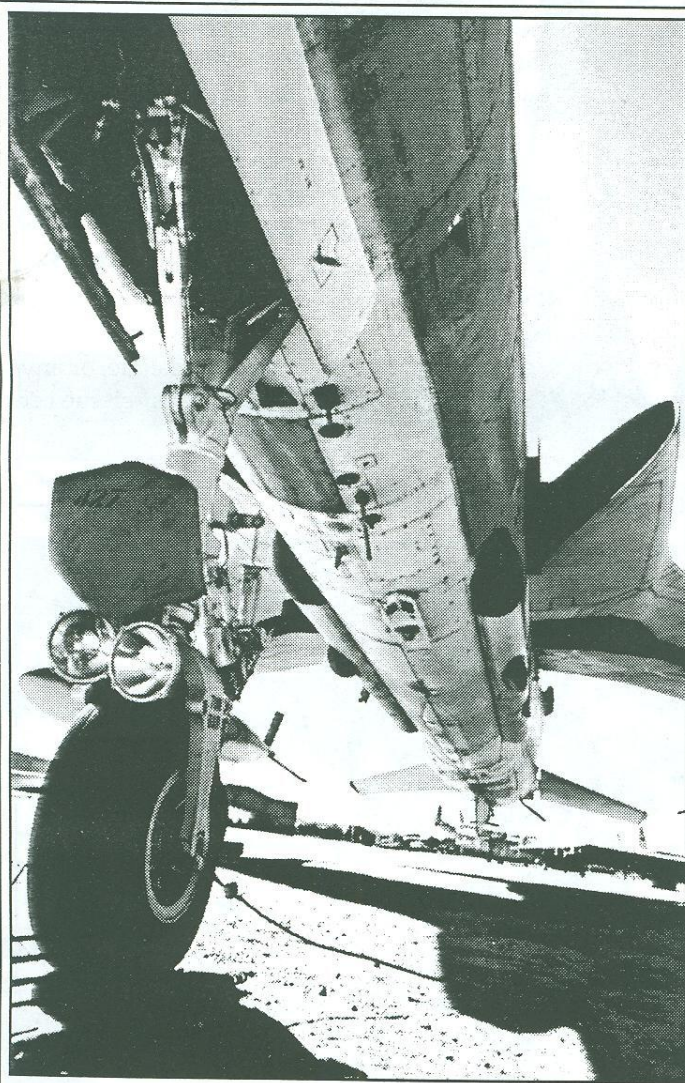
money taking your own pictures, unless you're a better photographer than me.

Picture taking is a lot like modeling—the technology makes it easier every year, and the basic modeling rules apply:

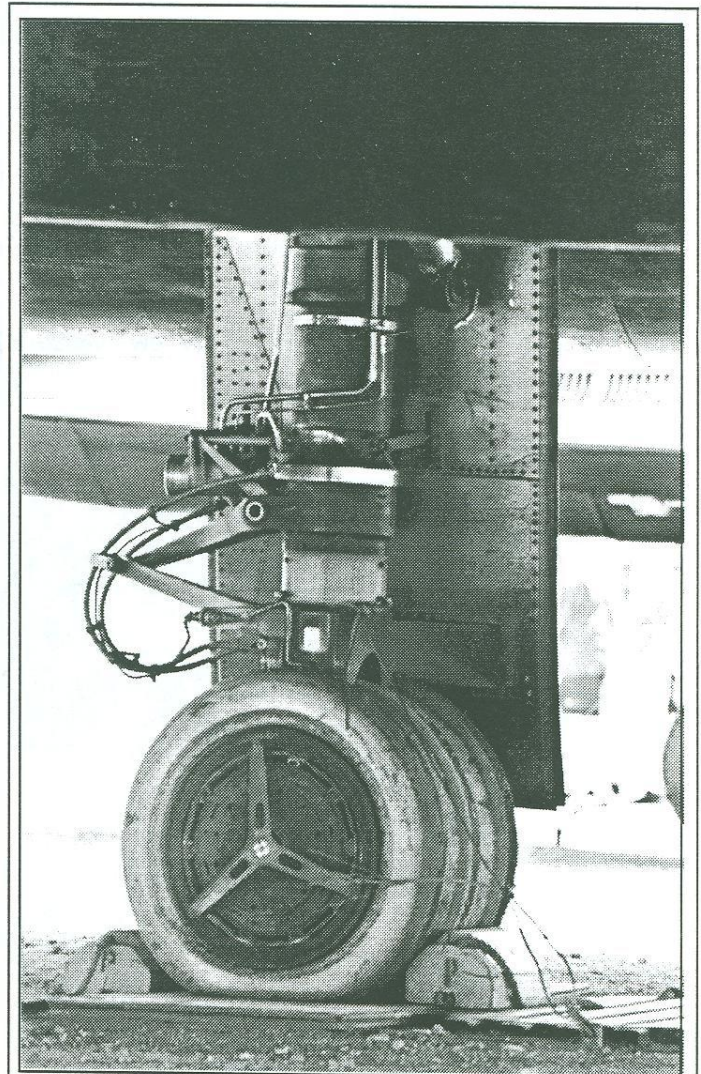
1) Plan Ahead. Know what pictures you're going to need. Know what's already available. The fronts of airplanes, cars, tanks, and even dinosaurs are very frequently photographed and drawn. Know what you don't know and take the pictures to fill those gaps.

For example, F-14, F-15, F-16 and F/A-18 cockpit shots, looking forward, are pretty common. What about the area behind the seat, and the back of the seat itself?

2) Take Your Time. You talked your way into the Accura dealership and got them to pop the engine cover on the NSX. Don't take two snaps and flee! Take a deep breath, focus and re-focus. Don't be afraid to re-shoot a picture if you don't think it was right the first time. At worst, you get a duplicate.



**F-105G underside. Pima County Air Museum. 'Silver' (aluminum paint) landing gear struts and wheels, gear doors same color inside and out. Note the profusion of antenna and other stuff on the belly. Main gear wells are HEAVILY weathered green zinc chromate inside. This started to be just a nose gear picture, but a little time spent at it got the rest of the detail in. I metered the underside of the shadowed side of the fuselage and opened a stop of two over that. The 105 is so slim and stands so tall on its gear that there isn't too dark underneath!**



**(This photo and next page) SR-71 main and nose gear, Pima County Air Museum. Something painted black and underneath an airplane on a sunny day is tough to photograph. I "overexposed" these by two or more stops, and they came out just right. The gear legs are metallic gray, and the inside of the bays is natural titanium. Tires are visibly silvery.**

Check, and double-check, your exposure, if it's adjustable on your camera. To capture details in the deep, dark, recesses, set the exposure by metering your hand in that same recess. Most cameras are designed to produce acceptable pictures of people, which means the meter is set up for skin tones. Most people's palms are about the same shade, and you'll always have yours with you, so meter it.

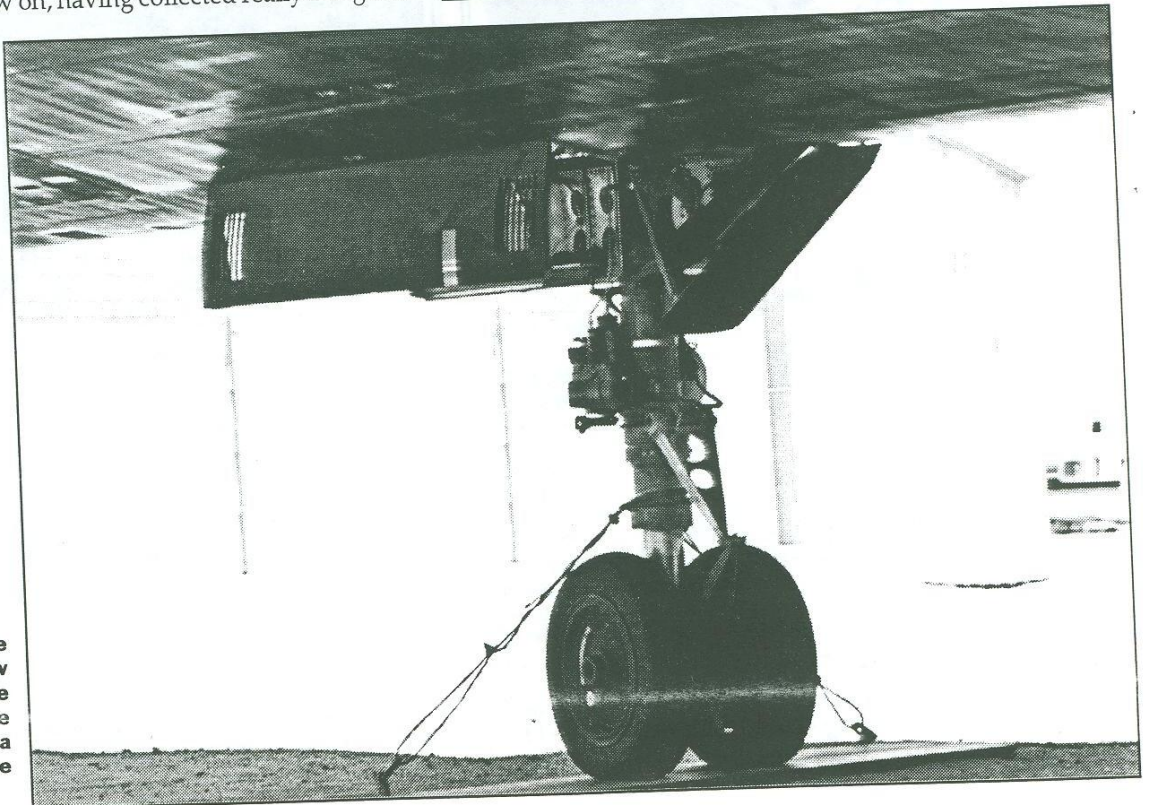
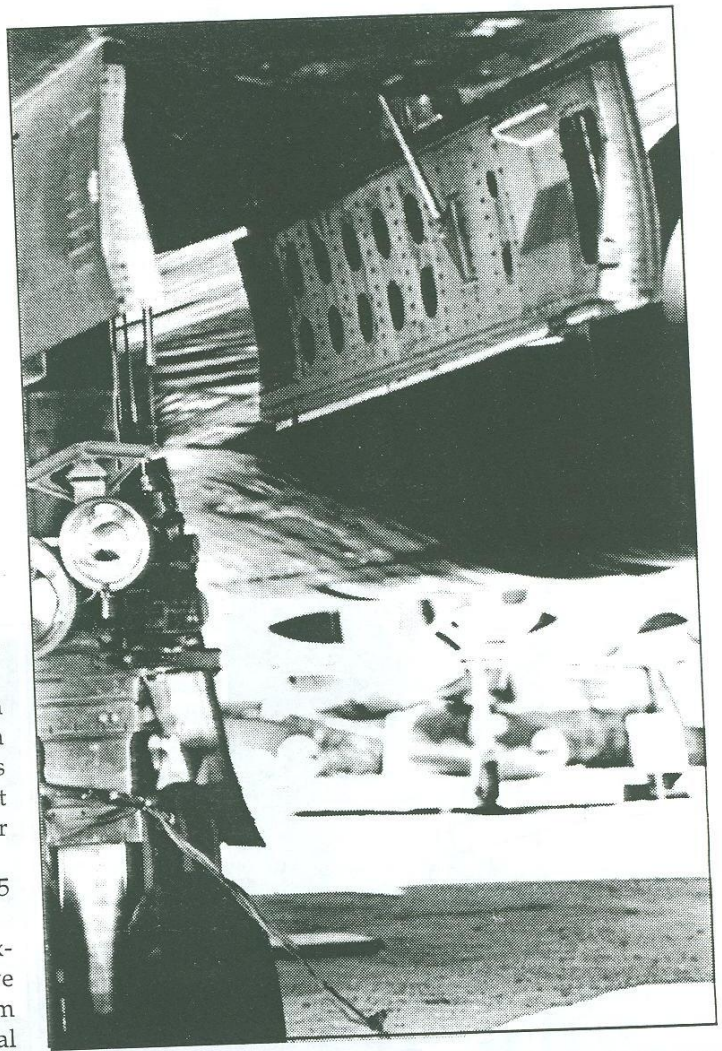
Don't cut off the very tip of the nose, the top of the steering wheel, the first two feet of the bow. With the real thing in front of you, it's easy to "see" what isn't in the viewfinder. It takes extra patience to get everything into the picture. This is my biggest failing so far. You can get more than half the modeling value from pictures taken with the camera rolled 45 degrees clockwise, but they're hard to look at.

3) Know Your Medium. Modern print film has a latitude of +/-1.5 or even 2 F-stops or shutter speeds. Say you can get an acceptable picture at F-8 and 1/125 of a second. You'll get about the same picture down to between F-11 and F-16, or opened up to between F-4 and F-5.6. If you want to get a *different* exposure, more for shadow detail, or less for high-light detail, change the exposure by 2 or, even better, by 3 stops. Especially in shadows, try a 3-stop bracket.

Note that this tells us that ASA-400 print film isn't much better than ASA-200, and ASA-1000 isn't much better than ASA 400. My experience confirms this. The slower film has less grain and tends to be more forgiving, too. I shoot 200 at outdoor museums and airshows, 400 and 1000 indoors (or inside the exhibit!) and for telephoto shots outside.

For slides the latitude is about half that for prints, e.g. +/- .75 to 1 stop. So 200, 400 and 1000 ASA are really different.

4) Get Enough Light. Personally, I have very few overexposed pictures, and lots where a little flash would have helped a lot. My brother now carries a flash unit and I'm carrying mine from now on, having collected really marginal pictures inside the CAF's B-29 and a B-52D I got to sit inside. A cardboard box camera with a built-in flash would have taken better pictures.



Two more photos of the SR-71's gear. Notice how Bill hasn't settled for one photo—multiple positions allow for a better view of more details



## MEET THE MODELER

# Ralph Patino: scratchbuilder *par excellence*

By Jeff Hargis

Ralph Patino, it would seem, has a mental defect. That defect is the lack of that little voice most of us have in the back of our heads that softly but clearly states, "You can't do that."

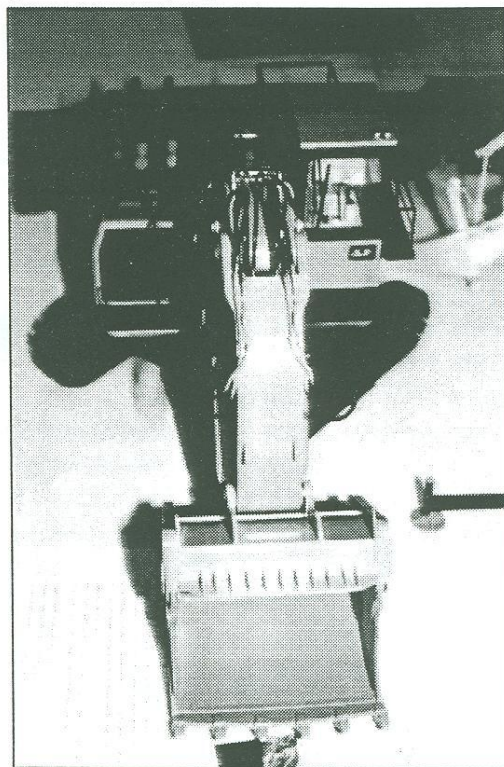
Fortunately, Ralph has lacked that little voice, and that has allowed him to pursue a 20-year career of teaching art classes to elementary school students, rebuilding to showroom condition a large number of classic automobiles from the '50s and '60s, and scratchbuilding models of heavy construction equipment with the use of a few simple tools.

Ralph's love of assembling things started early. When he was 10 years old, his grandmother purchased a model car for him and it was only a few years later that he moved into a larger scale. That large scale was 1:1, and was in the form of a 1953 Mercury Monterey his father purchased for him to work on. Most 13 year olds would be overjoyed at having a car of their own to work on, but for many long it wouldn't take long for that little voice to start in with, "You can't do this." The initial joy of working on your own car might be overwhelmed by such a large project, but Ralph has that "defect" of not being able to hear that little voice, so he went about the business of restoring the car and enjoying himself.

He did such a good job on the car that two years after the purchase he came home from school one day to find his dad had sold the car. After the shock wore off, instead of being

discouraged, Ralph started buying old muscle cars from the '50s and '60s and restoring them to showroom condition. Ralph has a sizable collection of before-and-after photos of cars that started off looking like something a junkyard wouldn't want and became classics any one of us would be proud to own after Ralph's careful attention.

Besides rebuilding cars,



This diesel shovel started life as sheet plastic



Ralph in his home, with some of the model kits he's accumulated over the years. Recently, Ralph has forgone kits for scratchbuilding.

Ralph has volunteered his time to teach art classes at the local elementary schools, which in some cases also leads to teaching kids how to build models. It was also not uncommon for Ralph to get a call from a school asking him to bring his models in to teach students about the history of World War II.

Another outlet for Ralph's modeling talent was a seven-year stint that he and his wife Brenda spent owning and operating the cafe in the Greyhound depot in Salinas.

You might be asking what in the world owning a cafe and modeling have to do with each other, but in photos of the diner it seemed as though a battle was taking place as to whether the place was a cafe or a hobby shop. It seemed as though every spot on the wall or ceiling had a model hanging from it, and hundreds of kits were stacked up which he and Brenda would sell to people just passing through, or to regular customers from the area.

A couple down years forced Brenda and Ralph out of the cafe/hobby shop business, but Ralph is in the process of liquidating well over a hundred kits that he had left over.

With the cafe not taking up the time it used to, Ralph needed an outlet for his energy and artistic talent and decided to model heavy construction equipment. Since the selection of commercial kits is limited, he went to work trying his hand at scratchbuilding. Brenda helped him get started by scouring local flea markets for old

toys and radio controlled toys and buying them for the wheels. Ralph considers that the hardest part, after that, it's all

down hill.

The building process takes about a 100 hours for each model, and the only references Ralph has are from brochures from local equipment dealers and some opportunities to crawl all over the equipment to see where various hydraulic lines and vents are. Brenda then helps him with some of the smaller measuring, because Ralph's eyesight is severely limited.

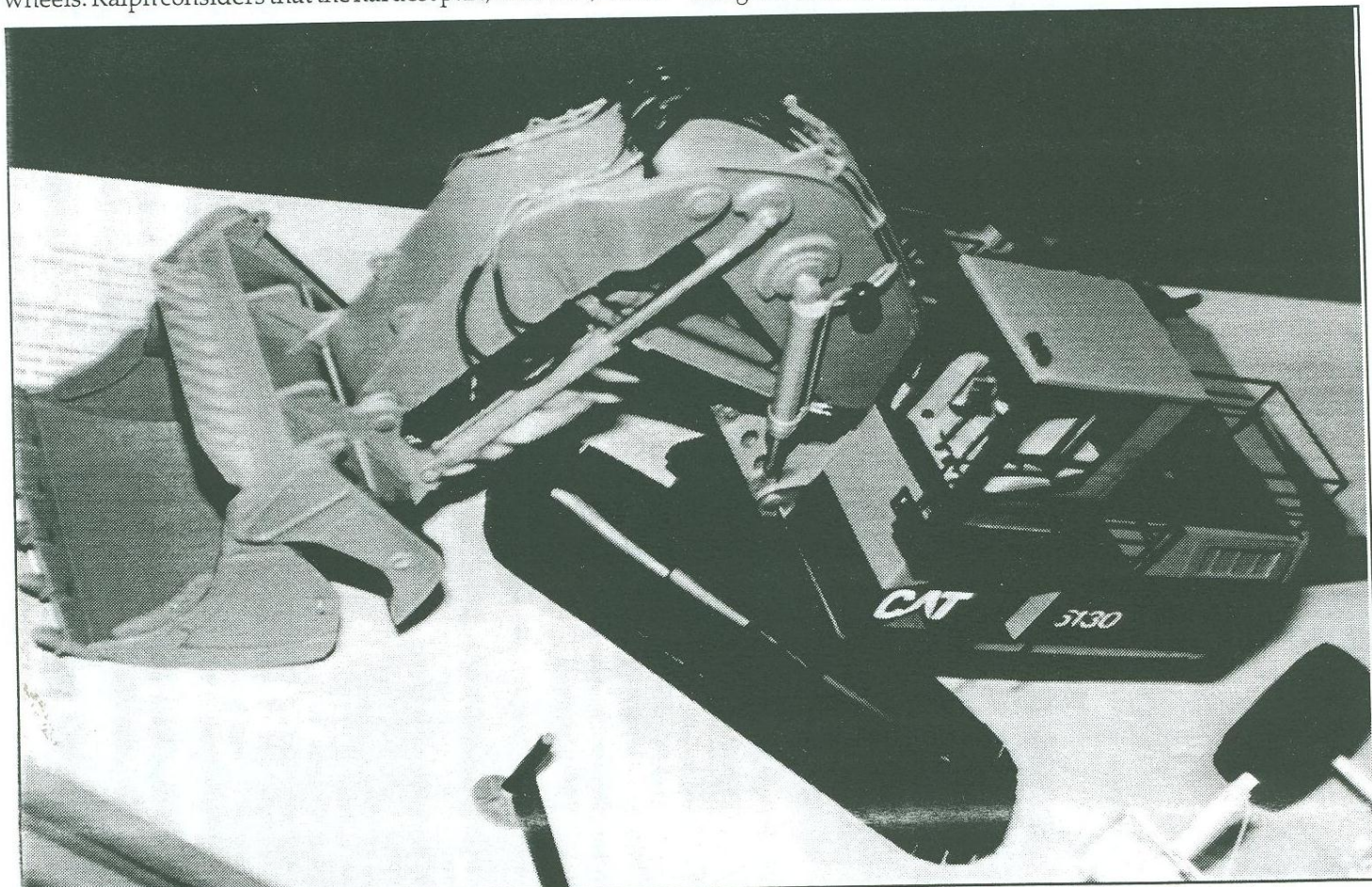
The plastic he uses is 1/16" thick and he buys it in 8'x4' sections, which he has cut down to make it easier to work with. The shovel that made an appearance at the Kickoff Classic used up about a half of a sheet.

Even the smaller scraps are put to good use in making gussetts for adding strength to the models. For those who think he is using some high-tech, computer-aided, laser-guided tools along with exact blueprints, think again. A T-square, pencil, a pair of scissors and Testors tube glue, along with Krylon spray cans, are all the tools Ralph uses.

Ralph keeps his models not only simple but inexpensive as well. He spends from \$15 to \$20 on the wheels and about \$8 on plastic on the average project, which is not bad considering the cost of some of the kits on the market today.

Many of Ralph's creations are on display at local heavy equipment dealers, and he has requests for many more. Next up for Ralph is a earthmover that is in progress and a giant diesel tow truck.

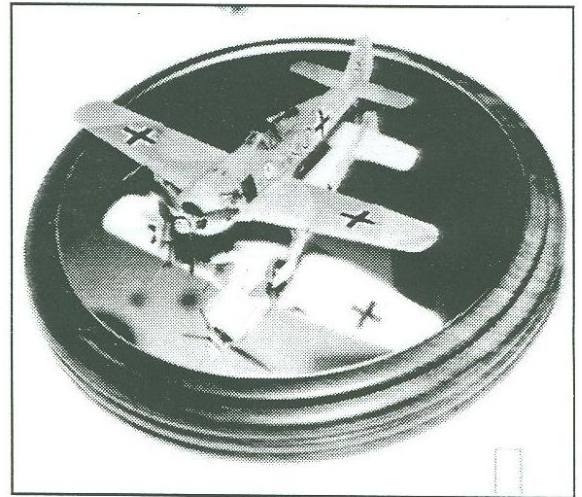
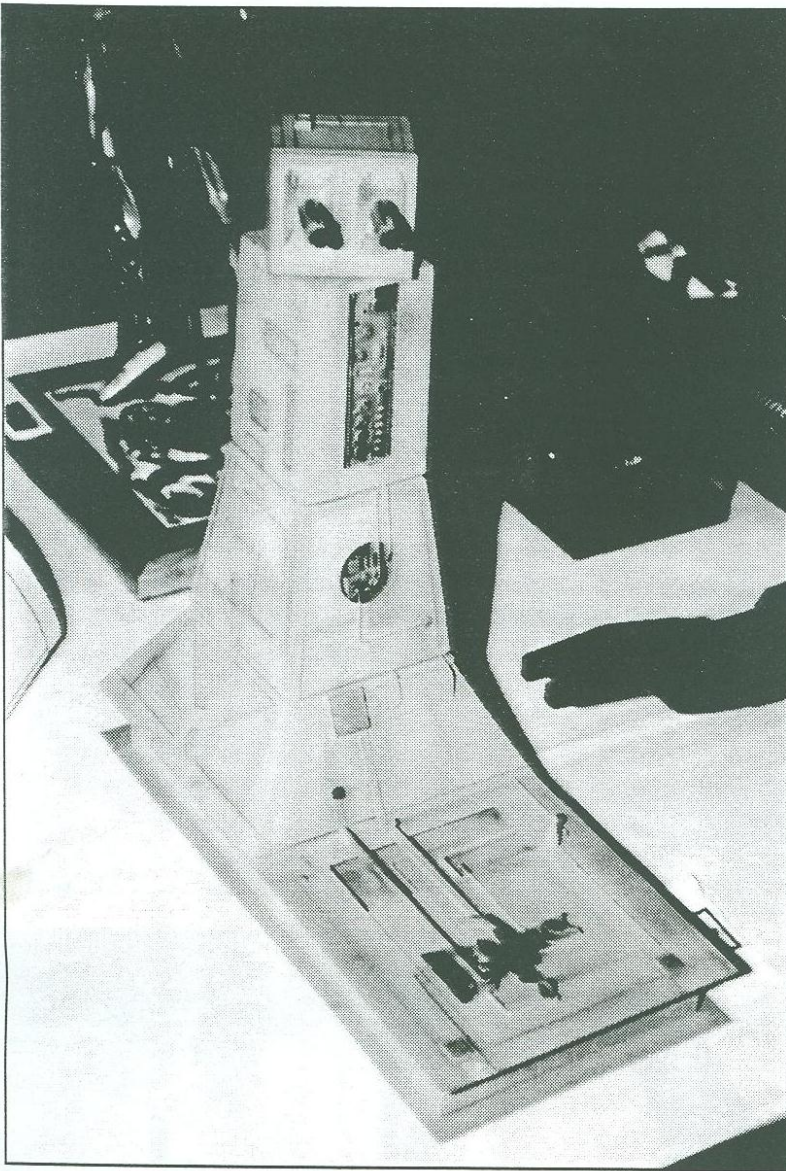
The club might have to get longer tables if he builds something for the tow truck to tow.



Another view of Ralph's scratchbuilt Caterpillar diesel shovel. Ralph estimates the project took about 100 hours to complete.

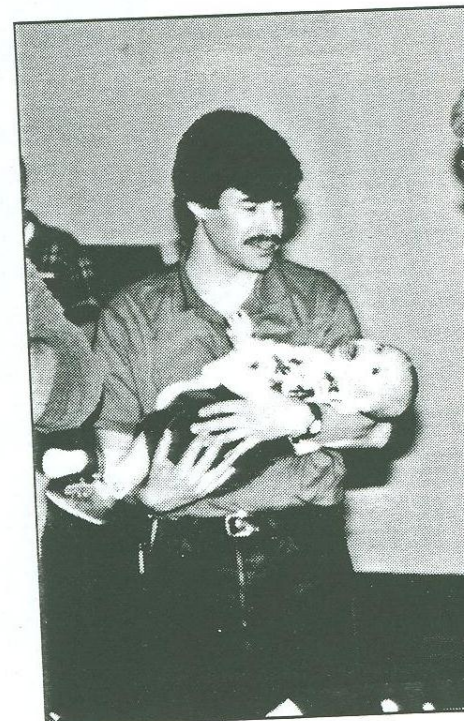
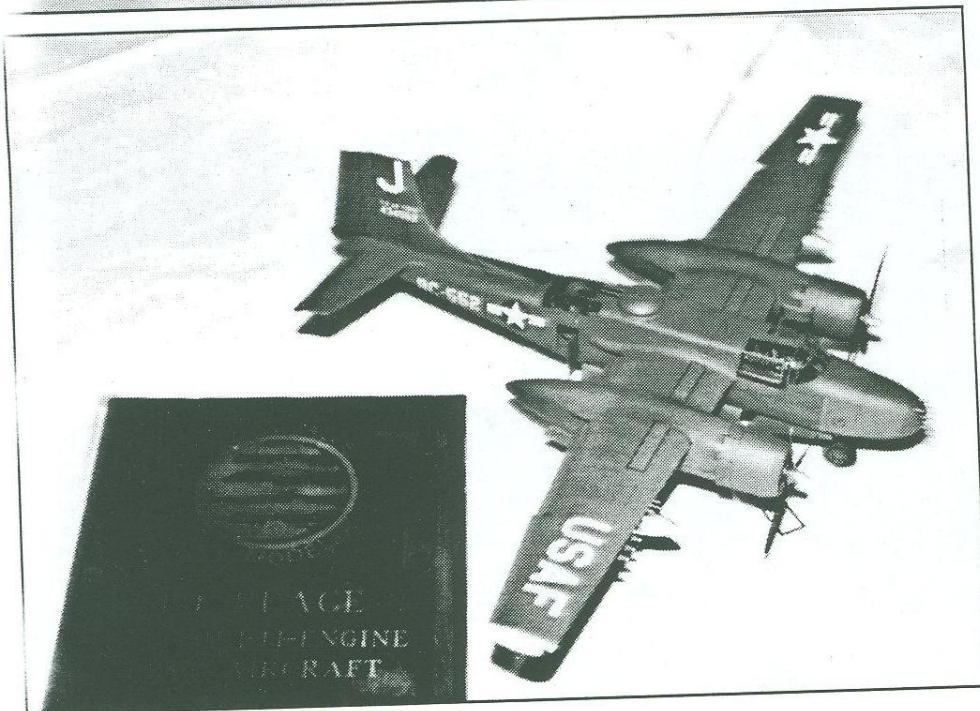
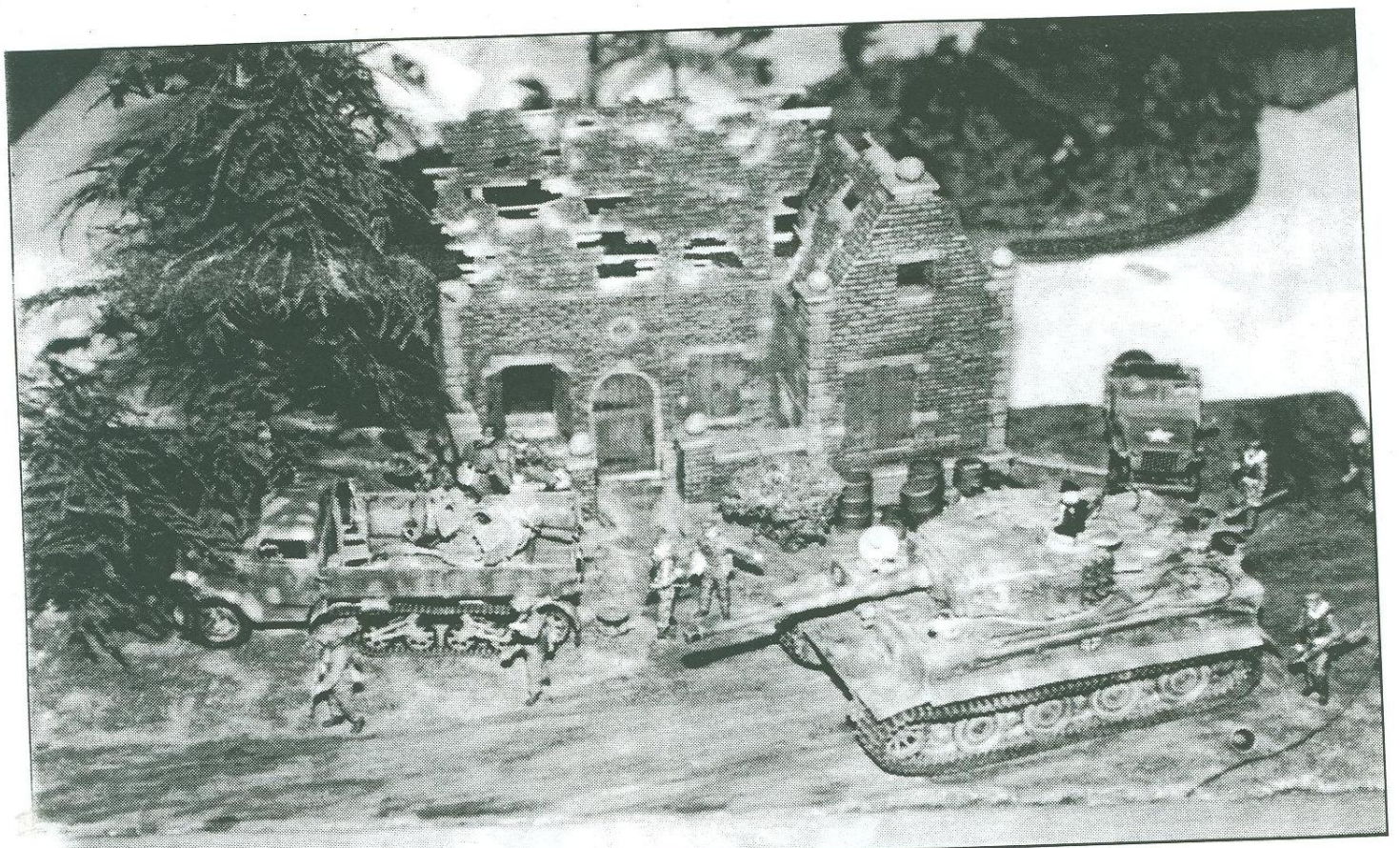
# 1996 Kickoff Classics

*Photos by  
Jeff Hargis*

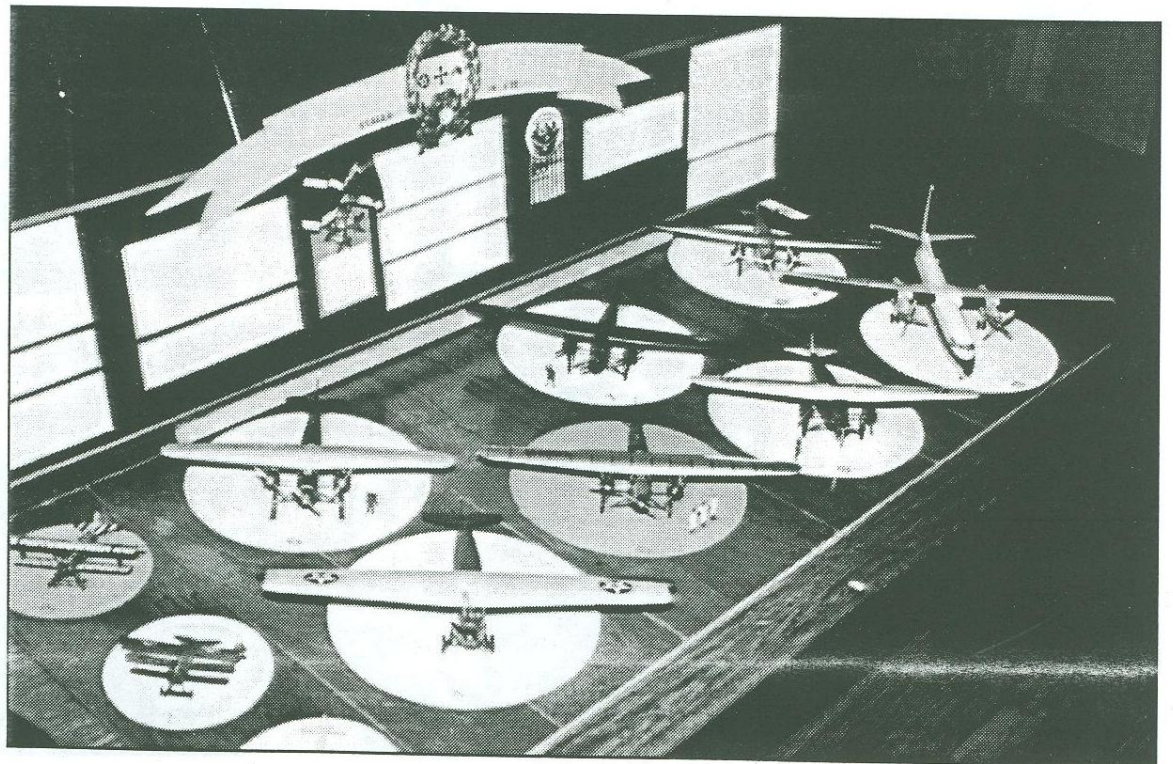
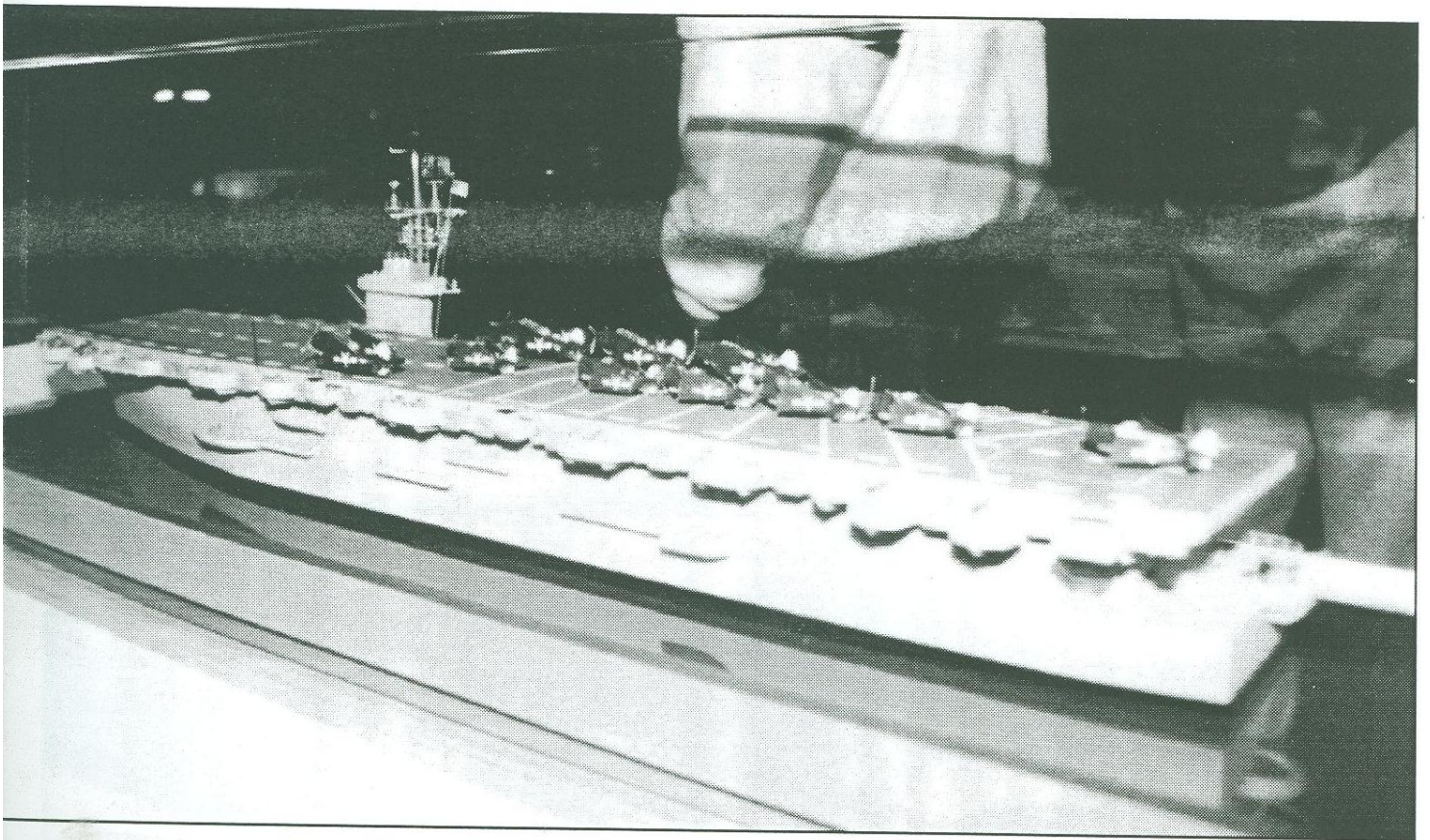


Some of the winners from this year's Kickoff Classic Model Contest: Michael Williams' scratchbuilt Death Star laser cannon tower (top left); Ernie Gee's first-place 1:48 Fw 190 (top right); Frank Beltran accepts his third place plaque for his Ka-35 Hokum from Vice-President Jim Lewis (bottom)

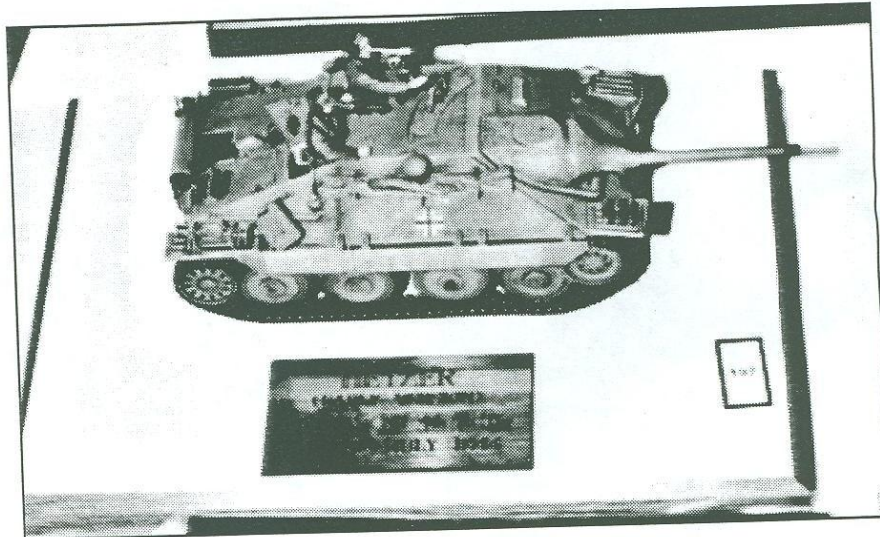




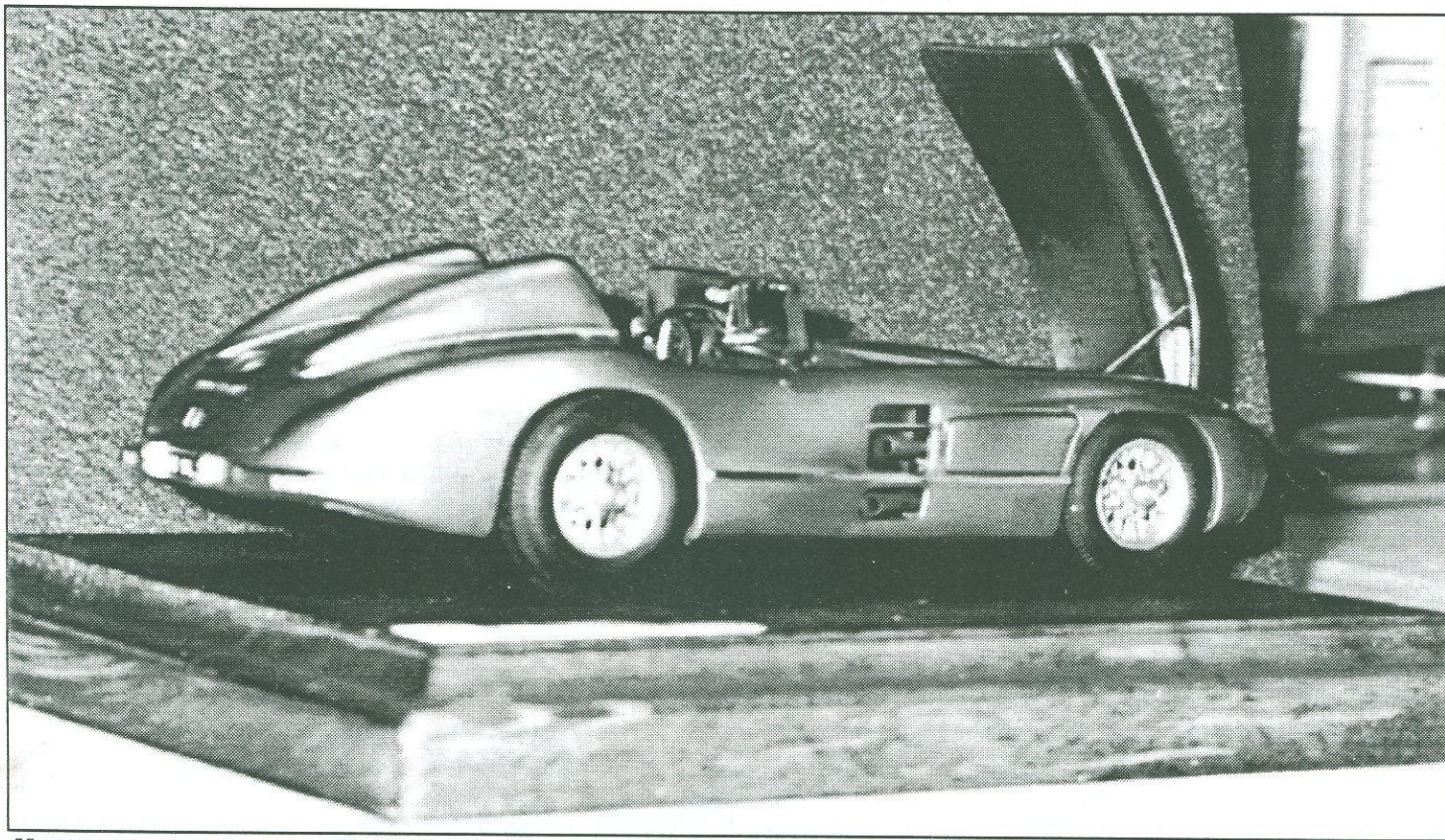
More winners (clockwise, from top of this page): Joe Fleming's second-place diorama, "Tiger and Flak, Ardennes;" John Parenti's mammoth 1:192 scratchbuilt escort carrier U.S.S. *Salamaua*; "Famous Fokkers," the Best Collection winner, by Jim Lund; Tom Trankle examines Milt Poulos' most ambitious project, a 1:1 scale infant (Milt had significant help from his wife on this project); Randy Rothhaar's first-place A-26 *Invader*



**Mark Ford's Hetzer won best Axis Armored Fighting Vehicle and Best Armored Fighting Vehicle (right); Dave Hansen, Ben Pada and Chris Bucholtz hard at work judging (below); Fabian Chavarvia's huge scratchbuilt king Gremlin was too big for the table and shared space on stage (bottom)**



# Monogram's 300SLR a winner of a model



Monogram's 1:24 Mercedes 300SLR builds into a fine replica of the car that took Grand Prix racing by storm in the early 1950s.

**By Jim Gordon**

In the early '50s, the Mercedes-Benz marquee returned to the post-war racing scene and dominated the sport with its 300SL Gullwing aluminum-bodied racers, winning the 1952 LeMans and Carrera Pan America endurance races.

In 1954, the stunningly beautiful Mercedes-Benz W196 Grand Prix racer won five of the seven major events of that year. The next step in development was the 300SLR open-top racer, similar to Mercedes' W196 Grand Prix car, but somewhat more conventional. I say somewhat, because some 300SLRs incorporated rather radical design ideas, such as the Trunk Lid Airbrake. At the end of a long straightway, the trunk lid would deploy, popping up into the airstream, theoretically slowing the car. This airbrake feature was soon abandoned due to detrimental effects on handling.

Although more of a road car than the Grand Prix racers, the 300SLR inherited their fluid lines and elegance; it is the look of an era when racing cars were sleek and slippery-looking, before the hard science of aerodynamics and the black magic of ground effects were applied to these types of machines.

The 300SLR used a tube frame and aluminum body with the W196 engine, a 3 liter fuel-injected power plant of 310 HP output, good for a top speed of 180 miles per hour in 1955! Seat belts were not provided--only Real Men with leather hair helmets need apply to drive this roadster! Sterling Moss piloted a 300SLR to its first victory, the Mille Miglia endurance race in Italy, 1955.

I was in a KayBee toy store with my son Max, glazing over in the action figure aisle. How many times can you check out the same action figures without getting relief? I found some

relief in the rather anemic model section of the store. At least they carry models. Okay, I've seen them as many times as the action figures. However, this one *Monogram* kit kept catching my eye: the Mercedes 300 sports car. The box photo is not pretty, but I thought I could see some potential there. Hmmm, skill level 3. Must be a lot of parts, at least. Hello! Only \$4.99 marked down! Yeah, I was bored and bought it on impulse. I think you know how it is.

Upon opening the box I encountered five sprues of parts, 117 all together. Wow, a full tube frame! Lots of chrome! Rubber tires! This was new and different, a needed break from my usual ships and armor modeling.

I scanned the directions and skipped the first part, the engine assembly, and went straight into the frame, the fun part. To my surprise the various tubes all fit well. Be prepared to do a LOT of seam scraping. I'm not kidding about this. When the frame was complete I sprayed it a dark blue-gray, my scale effect "black" color. I try to avoid black, especially with a silver finished vehicle, because it just looks too cliché.

Next, I assembled the engine, and it is a nice little model in itself. Now it was time to put the engine into the frame. Uh, oh. It wouldn't fit in between some of those frame tubes. So much for not following assembly instructions. Penalty: lose one hour sawing apart some frame tubes and then putting them back together after engine installation. Then comes the radiator, headers, more engine parts, and an odd airfoil-shaped container on the left side of the engine bay which will cause interference with the body unless you move it further into the frame assembly. I added the cockpit tub and dashboard, and more frame tubes.

It was about time to check the body fit on the frame. Expect to do this 15 or 20 times during assembly. The hard part is sliding the side exhaust pipes through their outlets in the body shell each time. The body seemed to dry fit fairly well, so I took it off and painted it with three coats of *Polly S Graphite*. This is a darker metal color than aluminum, which the real body shell was made of, but I think aluminum paint is too bright for a model car, and I wanted more of a scale effect. It sprayed nicely, and after 15 minutes I buffed it with a soft cloth. It gives a nice illusion of weathered metal.

I turned my attention to the beautifully done, if too dazzlingly bright, wire wheels. Each wheel is four parts, two outer rims, an inner rim, and the tire. Of course, I assumed that all the wheels were the same. Wrong. The fronts are 600X15, the rears 6.50X15. This small difference really screwed up my assembly line pace. I had 16 parts trimmed and laid out and had to match up the correct four pieces for each wheel. Penalty: 45 minutes of sorting and matching. After wheel assembly, I sprayed thin medium gray over the wire wheels to tone down the chrome. It is a realistic touch: how often do you see bright chrome wheels on a car that is driven a lot, or in a hard manner?

Now came the moment to mate the body with the frame. I wrestled the body over the dashboard, side pipes, radiator, and other obstacles. It no longer fit well at all. I had to file down the bulkhead behind the seats, and around the top of the dashboard.

Once it fit properly, I started superglueing the rear frame to the body. That went well, but now the front frame was hanging many millimeters below the front body. The frame is somewhat flexible and I was able to persuade it into position, and glue it using lots of CA accelerator. Wheel check: three in good alignment, one way off. Let's just say that I used some alignment techniques that in real life would result in serious loss of control and bodily injury to the driver. But this *is* only a model, right? Having four straight wheels, I checked the hood clearance. Whoa! Way off...something in the engine bay was interfering, and I soon found it: the massive air intake plenum that necessitates the nice bulge in the hood. No problem, I just got a big, round motor tool bit and proceeded to hollow out the bulge to scale thinness, and then sand it smooth. Penalty: one hour. It ended up fitting adequately, but overall, the shape of the hood to the hood opening is not as perfect as I would have liked. (It was about at this point that I looked at the box art and thought that "Skill Level 4" was a more realistic appraisal of this kit!) Good enough, and it will probably be displayed hood open anyway. At this time I also chucked the cheesy plastic air intake grill part that fits into the hood and replaced it with fine brass plumber's screen. This one change makes a huge improvement in the model overall.

Next I glued the center frame to the body, did final wheel alignment and glued them on along with their knockoffs. At this time, I touched up the frame parts; they were pretty beat from all the body dry-fitting action. I then added the windshield, which is not bad although the fit could be better, the steering wheel, shifter, lights, and other small parts. Almost finished.

I saved the seats for last because they use a novel "decal upholstery" approach. This could be a clever idea if the decals were any good. The best I can say for Monogram's is that they

do stick to the plastic, but they are only a little more pliable than sheet styrene, and totally immune to decal set. Have a lot of white glue on hand, and matching colors to fix the numerous tears. They are a really jaunty pattern, kind of a blue picnic blanket motif, and add a certain "devil may care" feeling to the vehicle. The seats were then inserted into the cockpit, and I declared the model assembly finished.

I did not put racing markings on my car, one reason being that stated above: the lousy decals. Moreover, I wanted it to look like a factory prototype test car that had been driven hard and often. I sprayed dark gray mixed with burnt umber all around the lower sides and wheel wells as well as the side exhaust area, and again over the wheels. This imparts a very nice road grime effect which boosts the illusion of realism quite a bit.

*Monogram* did a great job capturing the look and details of the Mercedes racer. The parts fit is generally very good, the only difficulty coming in final body assembly and alignment. The poor decals are a minor point, and taking into account the reduced price of this kit, it is one of the best model bargains out there today. The finished model invites casual gazing, and rewards careful scrutiny. Highly recommended.

# **IPMS Monterey Bay**

**presents its second annual**

## **Model Contest**

**Sunday, May 5, at American Legion  
Post 694 in Marina, California**

**Registration: 10 a.m.—11:30 a.m.**

**Judging: noon—3:30 p.m.**

**Awards: 4 p.m.—5 p.m.**

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# Kyofu, Shiden and Shidenkai in 1:72

Continued from page 1

but a lower grade for execution. There's a nice Japanese-style seat, with all the lightening holes suggested, but—oops!—there's an ejector pin mark on the left side of seat pan. Just try to sand and fill that without losing detail! The instrument panel is represented by a decal, and while there are side consoles molded to the cockpit floor, there are no instruments provided. There's a convincing stick and even a clear gunsight part, and an aft bulkhead with a molded A-frame structure in it. Unfortunately, right inside the "A" is another ejector pin mark.

(While we're at it, let me ask the kit manufacturers: honestly, is it so hard to arrange parts on the molds so that the ejector pin marks are on the sides we don't see—the bottom of seats, the back of bulkheads, the insides of fuselages? I noticed that the *back* of the bulkhead and the *bottom* of the seat are just perfect—but who cares? You can have sinkholes, mold marks and ejector marks galore in those spots and no one will mind! Please think about it!)

After a Prozac break, we now look at the rest of the model. There's a part that's sandwiched between the fuselage and cowling, which gives the plane the clean front end of the early version Kyofu. The correct long spinner is also included, but both cowling and spinner are included on separate trees, indicating that a later Kyofu may soon be in stores. The engine and propeller blades look very nice and assemble in much the same way as the propeller on *Hasegawa's* recent Zero assembled.

*Hasegawa* is thoughtful enough to supply you with a form-fitting plastic ballast weight for the main float, though I might just use tried-and-true lead weight to maintain a proper attitude. The one-piece canopy is clear but thick, and would do with a vacuformed replacement to show off the interior.

A nice touch is the boarding ladder and the beaching dolly, a nine-piece assembly that allows you to display the plane in a somewhat graceful manner out of the water. This would look good with other Japanese floatplanes—*Petes* and *Rufes*, for example (who's got casting resin...).

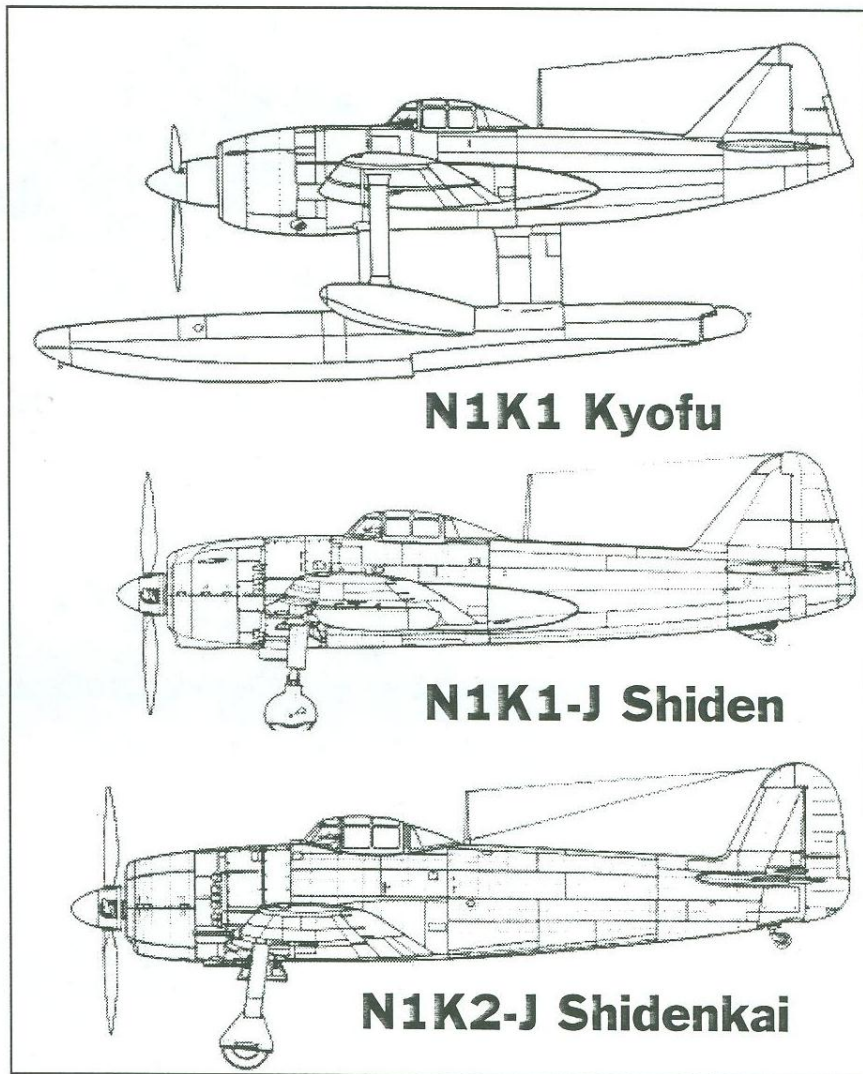
The decals are somewhat thick (surprise!), and depict two green-over-gray Kyofus—one out of Java in June 1945 and a second that's part of the "Ots Air Group," Sept. 1944.

The price (\$18.95 at the local hobby shop) is the only major problem with this kit. Whether it's worth it to you depends on how much you like the subject—it's the only game in town. Still, it's a one-of-a-kind that won't take much work to complete into a fine replica. If you like flying things with big red dots on them, or if you like planes you can fish from, I say go for it.

**Kawanishi N1K1-J Shiden in 1:72 by MPM**

This is one of *MPM's* earlier short-run kits, and it has all the

shortcomings of a short-run kit—gigantic sprue mounting points, small parts that are blob-shaped and lack three-dimensional detail, etc. But, for the money, you do get a great starting point on my favorite member of the family—the mid-

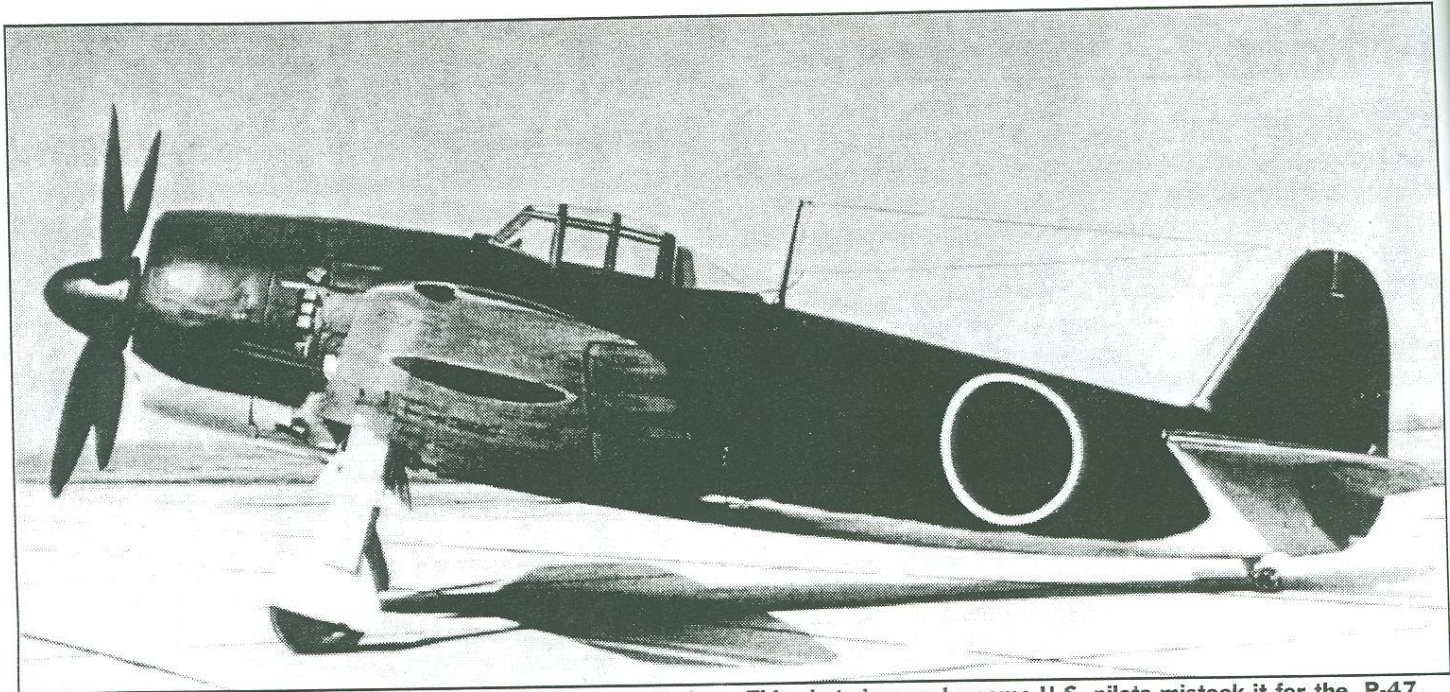


wing gives it a bit more character, and building this kit will build character in you.

The kit comprises 17 injection parts, a vacuformed canopy and an exquisite sheet of 31 photo-etched parts by *Eduard* for the cockpit and landing gear. The cockpit seat is rudimentary and there are no sidewall details, and the stick looks like just that. But the rudder pedals are present, as is a fine control panel with an acetate backing.

The propeller needs cleaning up, but the spinner is adequately crisp. The two-part engine (a row of cylinders and a crankcase) would best be replaced, although it is usable if the model is to be displayed in dim light or away from people who know what an engine looks like. A properly-shaped drop tank is supplied, along with photo-etched sway braces, although it will need some clean-up.

The landing gear legs are surprisingly crisp, although the wheels are just bad. But as bad as the wheels are, the landing



An N1K2-J Shidenkai. Note the redesigned low wing and tail plane. This shot shows why some U.S. pilots mistook it for the P-47.

gear legs are good—multi-piece photo-etched parts that look in-scale. There's also a photo-etched wheel bay piece for each side, which will save you some detailing time.

The wings have sizable ejector pin cylinders on the inside of each half, but a quick pass with a motor tool should reduce them quickly. The 20mm cannon gondolas are supplied, although they're a little rough. Interestingly, the wing guns are a separate piece—no holes in the wings will force you to build one variant, and if you want to substitute metal tubing, you can start with a clean canvas. This is an approach I like.

The canopy is clear, thin, and just begging to be cut open.

The decals provide markings for four green-gray Shidens—a home defense Shiden of Genzan II Kokutai in 1945 and, more interestingly, two Shidens from the 341 Kokutai, 402 Hikotai and one from the 201 Kokutai in the Philippines in 1944. These last three planes have black borders around their hinomarus.

This model is not for the neophyte—if you haven't built a short-run kit, pick up one of MPM's later short-run kits for experience. But if you are experienced, this kit could yield good results. Furthermore, it's been selling for \$2.99 in the Squadron Mail-Order catalog—at that price, get it for the photo-etched parts and canopy and consider it a detail set for the Hasegawa Shidenkai!

#### Kawanishi N1K2-J Shidenkai in 1:72 by Hasegawa

My review kit is of the vintage of Hasegawa's laughable translations of the aircraft history ("It was in this battle that their excellency was actually proved"), and the kit shows its age. There are 34 parts (including a pilot) and assembly is straightforward.

The cockpit is simple, with a stick (please, guys, don't take that term so literally!) and a seat that's made to fit a sumo wrestler. The cockpit floor has three ejector pin marks (ugh!), but there is a nice A-frame aft bulkhead. The control panel is once again a decal, and no sidewall detail is present.

The engine is clearly what MPM used in its kit. Replace it, if you can. Also, find replacement wheels. MPM's soft, indis-

tinct wheels look like works of art compare to these, which look like puffy manhole covers.

As for the rest of the model... nice! The outline, from the rounded tail to the husky cowling, is present, and the wing



Cockpit of the Shidenkai under restoration at Champlin Museum. (Photo by Bill Abbott)

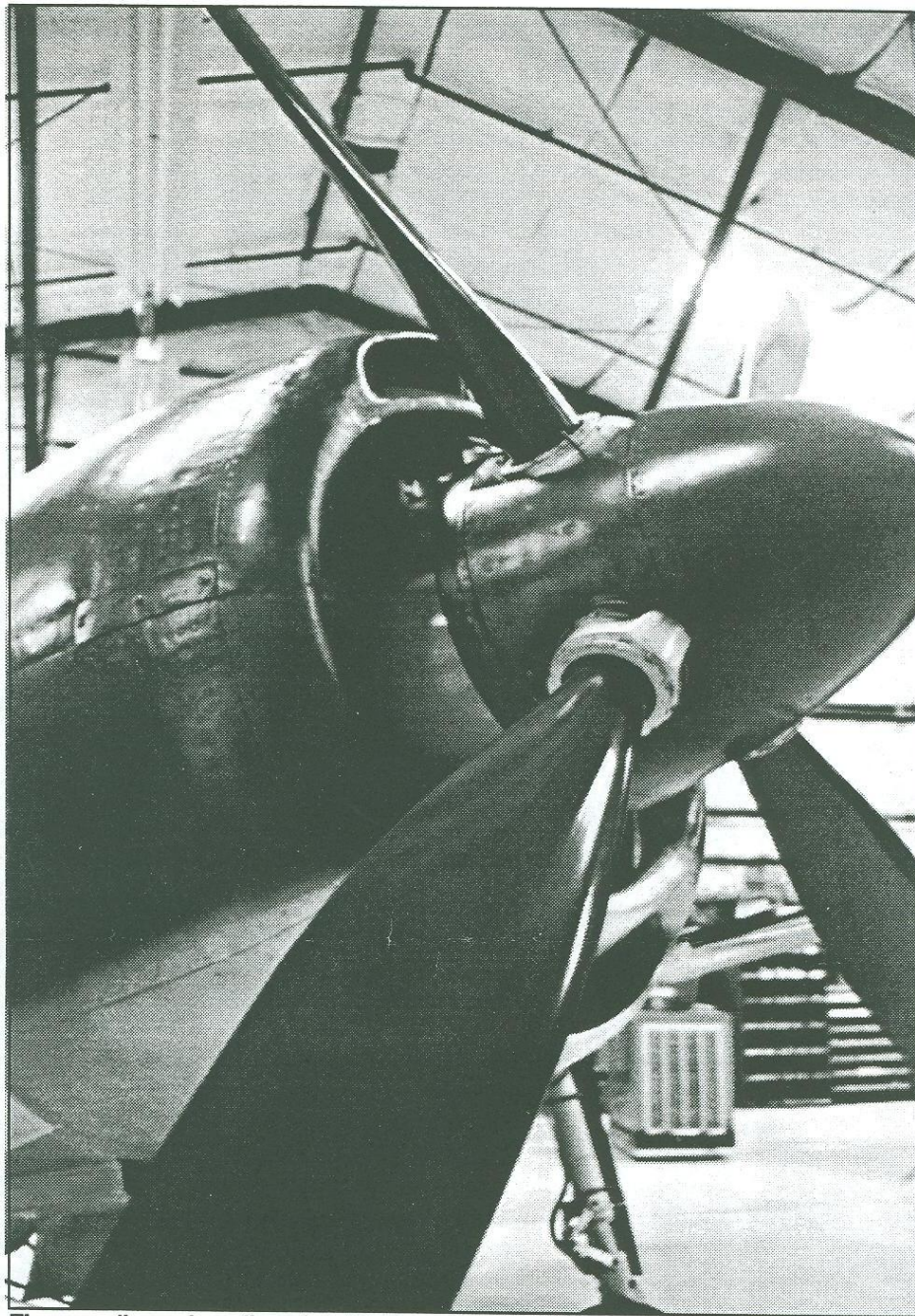
roots, which flare well away from the fuselage, will make sanding the wing/fuselage seam a snap. This was one of *Hasegawa's* first recessed-panel efforts, and it the effect is subtle.

There's a drop tank included, but its sway braces are too thick. Filling the slots in the tank and adding replacement braces would be easy. The landing gear legs are petite, although they have some minor pin marks. The wheel covers need to be cut apart to be displayed in the lowered position, and the 20mm cannons are molded into the wing and suffer from flash that could be impossible to remove without wrecking them. The one-piece canopy is very nice for its era—thin, clear and accurate in outline.

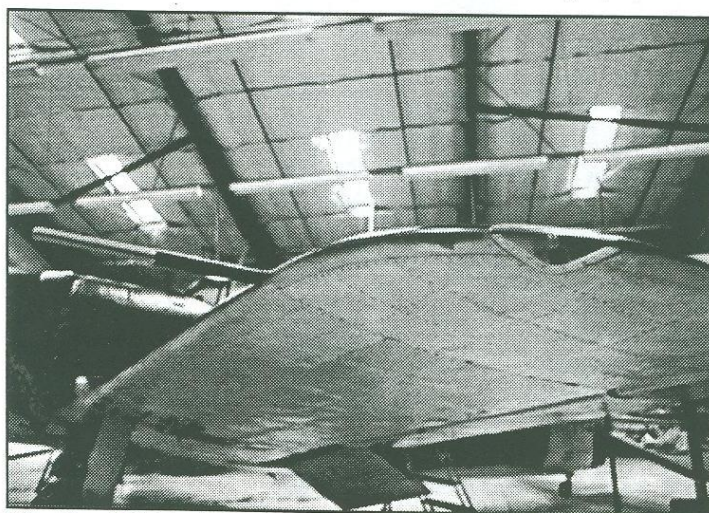
Decals provide three green-over-gray *Shidenkais* of the 343rd Navy Air Wing—CDR Kanno's of the 301st Squadron, CPT Sagibuchi's of the 701st Squadron, and CPT Hayashi's of the 407th Squadron. The accuracy of these decals is somewhat dubious; Kanno's markings appear on Superscale sheet 72-67 as yellow bands, while the kit's markings are all white. These decals may be different in later releases.

Old? Sure, but not a bad starting point. With some cockpit work (maybe from the *MPM* kit?) and a little clean up, this *Shidenkai* could be a force to be reckoned with.

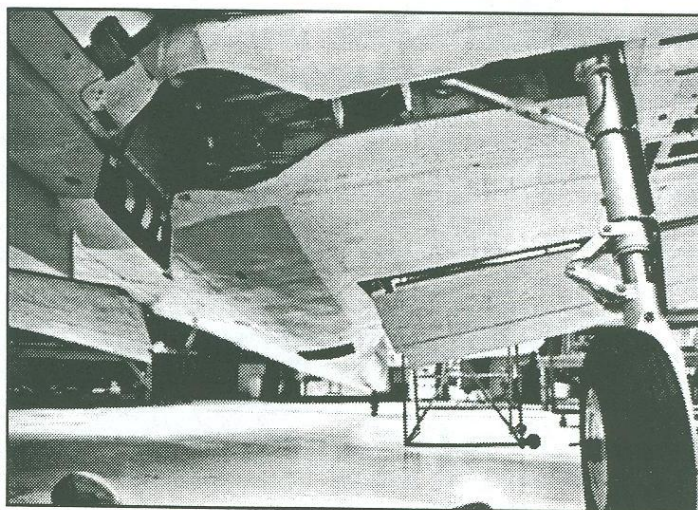
Incidentally, a great reference for all three planes can be had for less than four bucks. *Great Airplanes of the World #53* covers the *Kyofu*, *Shiden* and *Shidenkai*, with lots of excellent drawings, cockpit shots, markings, drawings and so on. The photos are so extensive I've toyed with the idea of doing the family in captured U.S. markings!



The propeller and cowling of an N1K2-J. Note the cuffs just inside the spinner.

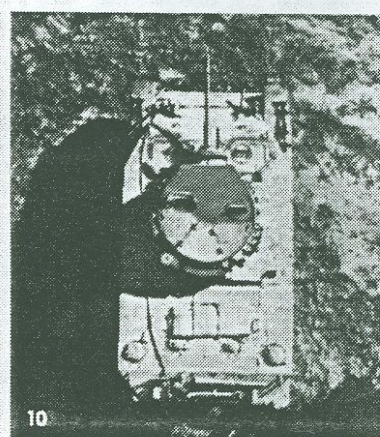
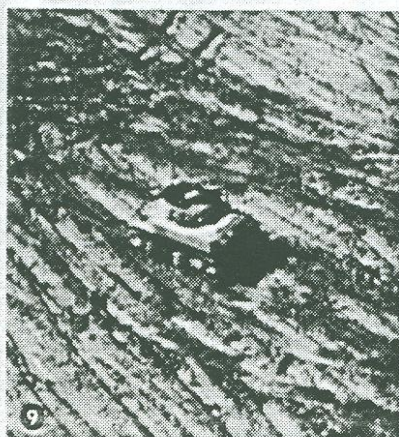
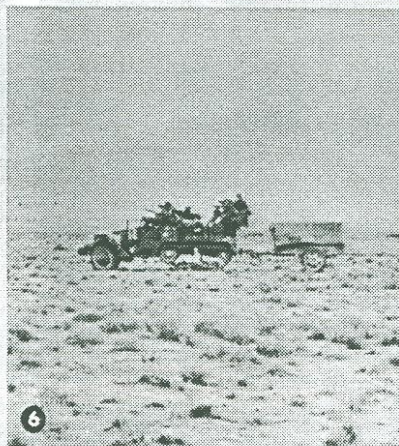
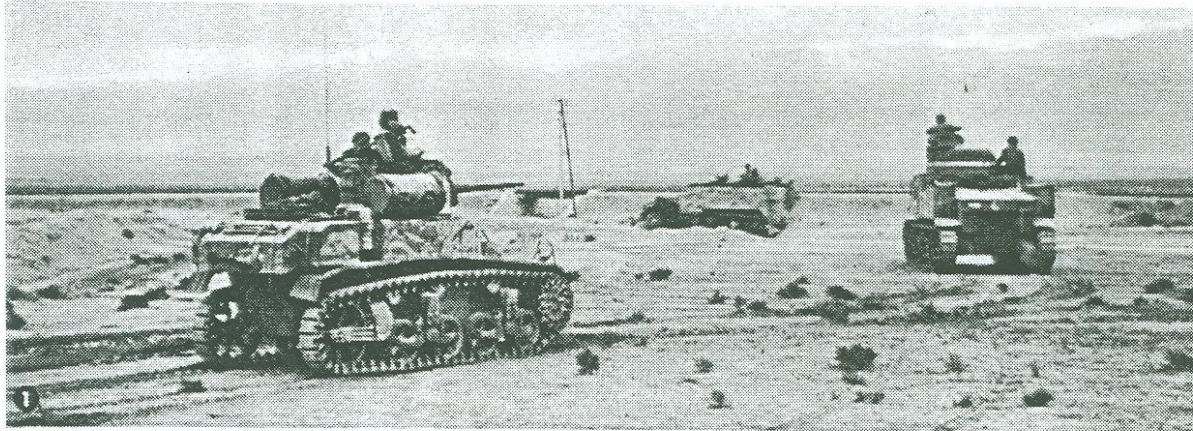


Wingtip of *Shidenkai*; tip of pitot is brass, and landing light is a colored bulb in a clear fairing. (Photo by Bill Abbott)



Wheel well of the N1K2-J, showing details of inner gear door. (Photo by Bill Abbott)

# ARMOR QUIZ



Can you identify these World War II armored fighting vehicles? This quiz was circulated among servicemen in 1943 to help them learn to identify friend from foe. Answers are below.

1. M3 Stuart, M4 Halftrack and M3 Grant; 2. Saladin armored car; 3. M4 Sherman; 4. Churchill; 5. Panther; 6. M15 Halftrack; 7. Fiat 13/30; 8. M4 Halftrack; 9. M10 Gun Motor Carriage; 10. M3 Stuart

# SVSM BOOKSHELF

*The Aircraft Cockpit, from stick-and-string to fly-by wire*, by L.F.E. Coombs; Patric Stephens Limited, England, 1990.

I happened on this book at the Santa Clara Library (call #629.133 C77), so have no information on price or where you might buy a copy—but what a find! For an airplane enthusiast with a taste for the unusual, cockpits are a real problem, but this book makes an exceptional contribution. There's a lucid and worthwhile text, and a great collection of exceptional pictures. You can find a Handley-Page V1500 and Vickers *Vimy* in very fine detail, the Armstrong-Whitworth *Argosy*, shots of the Fokker FII and Farman *Goliath* airliners of the '20s, and details of Jimmy Doolittle's NY-2 trainer that was used for the first completely 'under the hood' flight, including a display of the instrument presentation of his approach guidance system. Here I found that I was wrong about the British TSR.2: the cockpit was light gray instead of the black that was common at the time. It obviously couldn't include everything, but if you are interested in the French weirdos of the 1930s, having a look at the cockpit of the Wibault 283 or the Bloch 220 would at least give you an idea of what the French considered to be good practice. It's an exceptionally good piece of work!

*The World's Worst Aircraft*, by Bill Yenne; Dorset Press, England, 1990.

I've read and enjoyed a book of the same title by James Gilbert (St. Martin's Press, 1975), and thought this might be the same sort of work. Gilbert selected about 15 aircraft for the title of "World's Worst," and wrote in some informed detail about why he nominated them. He also wrote some very

vivid prose, as when he said of a low pass during the great Saro Princess's appearance at Farnborough that the pilot was "...only a quivering bootful of top rudder from the most spectacular disaster in the history of airshow flying." (Is that evocative writing?) If Gilbert could write an enjoyable book about failures, Yenne could too, couldn't he?

I bought the book at Recycle Books in San Jose before I realized that the answer was 'no, actually'. He repeats most of Gilbert's choices but with mundane text. Many of his own nominations were actually just adequate responses to bad specifications, which is not at all the same as bad airplanes. The P-39, Convair *Sea Dart*, and XF-85 *Goblin* were examples of this. Rather weirdly, he lumped the XFV-1 with the XFY-1, talked entirely about the Lockheed design and then, on that basis, decided that the better-designed Convair delta was a "Worst Aircraft" also.

Nominating the "World's Worst" is an enjoyable game that anyone can play, and I wonder that neither author seem to have read the comments of test pilots like Scott Crossfield, who unhesitatingly names the XF-92 the worst he ever flew, or CPT Eric Brown, who wrote of the beautiful DeHavilland 108, "A killer. Nasty stall. Vicious undamped longitudinal oscillation at speed in bumps." (From *Wings of the Weird and Wonderful*) Three DH108's were built: all crashed, killing their pilots, and Eric Brown was nearly one of them. That seems to merit a nomination as one of the "Worst."

I enjoyed Gilbert's book immensely. About Yenne's...I should have looked closer before laying down \$10.

—Bob Miller

## The P-39: failure is in the eye of the beholder

By Bob Miller

Some of the great "Urban Legends" in aviation history surround the "failure" of the P-39. Yenne says, for instance, that it fell short of the performance of the A6M Zero because "the USAAC decided to save money by...ordering the aircraft with a non-supercharged V-1710..."

Actually, it had the same supercharger as the early Mitsubishi Zero, a shaft-driven single-stage type (see *Zero Fighter*, Robert Mikesh, Janes). It held a sea level rating of 1,150 hp to 12,000 feet, according to the 1942 *Janes'*, and listed a service ceiling of 33,000 feet. The 'Cobra compared very well, until the Zero type 32 introduced a two-speed blower. So what was the difference? Yenne says "the P-39 was almost exactly the same size as a Curtiss P-40..." Actually, Bill, the span was nearly 10 percent smaller than the P-40. So what? Well, induced drag (the drag due to lift) is proportional to the square of the span loading, which is the load the wing is carrying (weight x G's) divided by span, divided by air density. (The formula is usually written in terms of aspect ratio, which gives induced-drag coefficient, but you don't overcome a coefficient: you overcome drag.) A P-39 flying 300 knots straight and level on the deck would spend about 35 thrust horsepower on induced drag. No problem. But try to pull a 3G turn at 30,000 feet with that airframe, and you need nearly 1000 thrust horsepower just to overcome induced drag, with nothing left for the other drag terms (ordinarily the big ones). Meanwhile, the Zero 21 at a gross weight of about 5300 pounds on a 39-foot span had less than 40 percent of the P-39's induced drag, so at any

altitude, it could make better use of the lesser power it actually had. So Jiro Horikoshi beat Larry Bell in the turn before they even finished preliminary design.

I hear you muttering. "Well, if it had been turbocharged, none of this would have mattered." Yes and no. That's a whole article by itself, but recall for the moment that Merlins with two-speed, two-stage shaft-driven blowers were unexcelled high-altitude engines, and the simpler but cleverly designed (and still shaft-driven) DB 601's performed exceedingly well with one stage. Crudely put, we're comparing Chevy engines with Rolls-Royces and Benzes. Which would you choose?

Ironically, Allison finally fitted a two-stage supercharger to the same engine for use in the 38.3-foot-span P-63. Perhaps it would have been effective at high altitude, but it was used only at low level. Finally, and only after the war was over, Allisons in turn replaced Merlins in the P-82.

So, what am I saying? That the P-39 was a great airplane except for that high span loading? No: the P-51 had a [span loading]<sup>2</sup> that was 75 percent higher than the P-39, and it was arguably the greatest of all. It also had a Merlin, two years of advancements in technology and the design team to use them, and the most advanced wing in the world. The P-39 was an OK response, using OK engine technology, to a spec based on a 1937 guess about the next war, by people who had heard of Guernica but not Guadalcanal. It was simply unfortunate enough to share the sky with designs that were superb, not just OK.

# FEBRUARY MINUTES

The first order of business at February's meeting was the election of a new president. Mike Burton was elected by a 17-7 margin over Dave Sampson. The other three officers were elected to their positions for another year by acclamation.

In model talk... Michael Williams is taking on AMT's AD-4W "Guppy." he says the detail is somewhat soft, just like the plastic AMT used. Peter Wong took Esci's 1:35 BMP-2 and finished it in Finnish markings. Peter also did a good job on Esci's 1:48 F-4E Phantom II, which he dressed in Tiger Meet markings left over from a Hasegawa kit. Bill Ferrante used Testors Metallizer paints to make his Hasegawa 1:72 P-51D shine. Frank Babbitt used a different approach on the Otaki 1:48 kit of his namesake, the Ki-84; he used SnJ for the natural metal finish on his 52nd Fighter Sentai Hayate. Milt Poulos' latest 1:32 jet is an F/A-18C, but it started life as an F-17 Hasegawa kit; Milt's added Paragon resin parts, rescribed the panel lines, and has basically rebuilt the kit. The plane will be assigned to VFA-113 once it's finished. John Parenti scratchbuilt his big 1:192 Casablanca-class escort carrier from basswood, paper and photo-etched parts. He also scratchbuilt the planes on the deck of the U.S.S. *Salamaua*. Tom Bush Jr.'s Lindberg Grand Cherokee had working lights and stereo and was finished in Boyd paints, which he says provide a myriad of shading when applied over different colors of undercoating. Brandon Christopherson's Revell Missouri looks great, especially when one considers the kit is almost 45 years old! Thanks to Revell's program of releasing old kits, Cliff Kranz was able to build the 1:48 Ford 2 1/2-ton stake truck, the one kit in the series he missed. Tom Bush is also tackling an old car kit, modifying the fenders and adding Boyd's paint to his latest car kit. Tom's also detailing the CHP motorcycle that came in the kit to match the car. Alan Weber is building a model of a movie star—namely, Hobbycraft's Ha 1112 "Civilschmidt" used in the movie *The Battle of Britain*. Alan added a Cooper Details cockpit, and made sure the spinner was drilled out as inaccurately as the one in the film! Mike Meek's conversion of the Mustang racer Stiletto is progressing; he's added a True Details interior, and has chopped and repositioned the headrest. Next come the sprayer bars for the racing radiators! Eric McClure's got a winner on his hands with Italeri's M163 Vulcan; the armed APC wore European camouflage and awaited final assembly at the meeting. Brad Chun built Monogram's 1:48 Me 262 as a hypothetical night fighter; this is his first attempt at rescribing an entire aircraft's panel lines. Brad's also embarking on an A-26 firebomber conversion. Dave Balderrama's "F-117" is actually a stealthy robot from the Macross Japanese animated series. Dave's also working on a second Testors "Gray" alien. Mike Fletcher has applied camouflage and Aeromaster decals to Otaki's 1:48 P-47 to represent Hub Zemke's Jug. Mike's also working on a Hasegawa Me 109 and an P-40B. Rich Pedro's Crow figure is from a simple kit, but there were some big gaps he had to fill! Rich finished it off with paints by Pactra for the clothing and Howard Hues for the flesh tones. He's now working on AMT's 1:6 Darth Vader kit for review in the IPMS Quarterly, and has an Zen Intergalactic Ninja lurking in the future. Ralph Patino has outdone himself once again, this time with a crane unit he says took him about three days to scratch build! Ralph found

the tires in the RC section of his hobby shop, and went from there. His next project is a Caterpillar 631 earthmover, which has wheels and tires from an RC monster truck! Chris Bucholtz' U.S.S. *Gray Knox*-class frigate wasn't quite the right shade of gray yet; repainting and detailing remain for the ship (the one Chris served on in real life!). Randy Rothhaar is adding extras to his HH-3 *Pelican*, a Coast Guard rescue bird made from joining two SH-3 *Sea King* kits. Kent McClure's Sunoco racing tank (heavily modified from a Bandai 1:48 Panther) is what Mark Donahue might have driven had the war gone differently. On a more conventional track, Kent crafted a fine 1:43 Astin Martin DBR IV and Ferrari Testarossa from metal kits, and displayed a nice conversion of a Thompson tank engine in 1:90 (*Who else thinks we should have a railroad category or two at the next contest?—ed.*) To keep things from getting too anchored in reality, Kent moored his 1:700 Kamikaze carrier nearby, with 1:700 MX7Y *Ohkas* spotted for launch. Funny how there's no arresting gear, barriers or landing signal officer aboard this carrier... Jim Gordon put some elbow grease to good use, shining up his Monogram Mercedes 300 SLR in the metal finish it wore while racing. Jim also added two escorts to his 1:2400 carrier *Junyo*, the deck markings of which he learned about from a friend on the Internet. But Jim's crowning achievement of the evening was a Me 155, a projected high-altitude fighter. This little-known project started out as a carrier fighter, then a fighter bomber, and was later handed over to Blohm und Voss. Jim's plane had a similarly convoluted history, starting out as a Hawk Me 109 that had been used as a fish tank decoration, but was then salvaged, given balsa wood wing extensions, P-51 wheels, an Fw 190 spinner and superchargers made from Q-tips! Ben Pada's Hasegawa Ki-61 Tony also used Q-tips—Ben used cotton swabs soaked in denatured alcohol to remove overspray from the natural metal finish to make sure his camouflage squiggles were uniform in width. Ben also built the Hasegawa Zero out of the box, used SnJ to buff up his resin Ki-44 "Tojo" kit, had a good head start on Tamiya's new P-51B kit, and is adding Meteor Productions decals to Minicraft's P-47N Thunderbolt. Dave Hansen says people "go ga-ga" over the clear parts on his Hasegawa TBM-1C, and the aren't even cut and repositioned! Dave gave the Avenger a smooth tricolor coat of Aeromaster paint. Hubert Chan's SAS jeep came from Italeri's 1:35 kit, and got an effective spraying of Tamiya acrylic olive drab and black to bring it to life. Jim Rasp's got his 1:144 B-52 in good shape—with both wings attached to the fuselage—and he's built an interceptor for it to duel, a 1:144 Fulcrum fighter. Laramie Wright's tackling Monogram's Hi-Tech P-47D, building the late-1944 mount of Dave Schilling. Laramie's also devoting energy to a Tamiya SdKfz 250 half track, to which he's installed a new distributor and spark plug wires (oil change is extra). Matt Reich posed a figure from the Monogram A-26 kit with his Tamiya P-51D, and displayed three nice cars—a Monogram Boss 302, a Revell '69 Mach 1 and a Camaro whose windshield has caused Matt much grief. Larry Roberts painted his two Monogram Mustangs in the attractive olive drab-and-yellow applied to captured allied birds. Jeff Vermurlen cranked out a slew of birds—A Polikarpov I-16, by Hobbycraft; a Me 109G-6R6, decked out

with Aeromaster and Tauro Models details; a Tamiya F4F-3 Wildcat in Jimmy Thach's markings, courtesy of Aeromaster decals; a Tamiya F2A Buffalo; and a Hasegawa Macch 202 with a True Details cockpit. Kelly Avery's air force included an Otaki F4U-1 Corsair, an AMT F7F Tigercat, a Hasegawa F6F-5

Hellcat, a Testors F8F Bearcat and a Tamiya F4F Wildcat! Gold Wings and Blue Water to you, Sir! And the Model of the Month goes to... The midnight shift mystery modeler from Monterey! He bolted before the editor could get his name—more work/models to do, perhaps?

# IPMS STOCKTON TOMCATS



*Proudly Announce Their 1996*



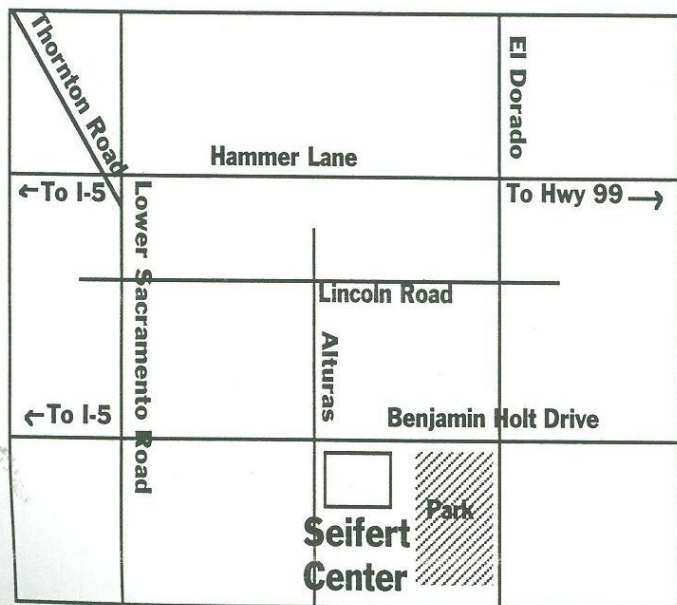
## PLASTIC MODEL CONTEST

**Saturday, March 16**

**from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

**at the Seifert Community Center**

(Corner of Benjamin Holt Drive and Alturas, Stockton)



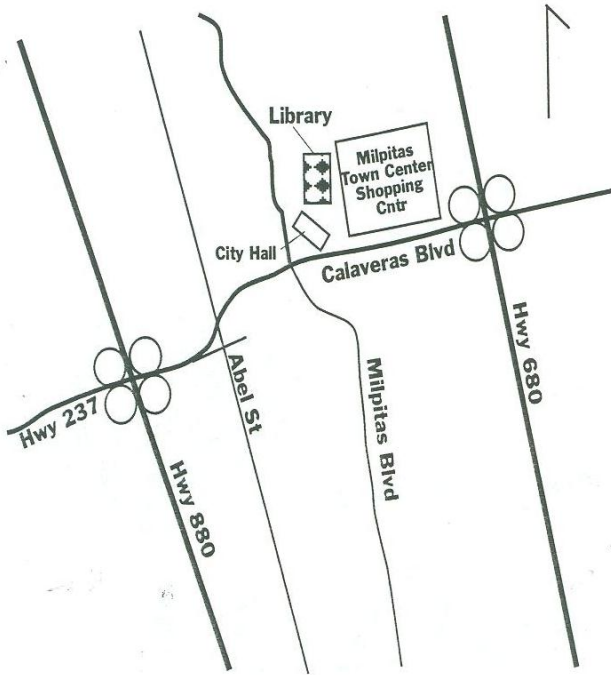
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**For more information, call**

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Next meeting:  
**7:30 p.m.,**  
**Friday,**  
**March 15**  
at the Milpitas  
Public Library,  
**40 N. Milpitas Blvd.**  
For more information, call the  
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