

Mustang makeover: detailing Tamiya's P-51D

By Ben Pada

The P-51D *Mustang* is a favorite among modelers, and, if recent kit releases are any indication, among kit manufacturers, too. *Tamiya* is the latest company to produce a P-51D in 1:48, and *True Details* has issued a resin interior set for the plane. So, with these in hand, I decided to build a Mediterranean P-51D.

I started with *True Details'* interior. I gave the parts a base coat of khaki green using *Gunze Sangyo* color H-80. The floor of the *Mustang* was made of wood, so I painted it brown and then drybrushed lighter and darker shades of brown over the base coat to get a wood effect. The sidewall details were painted according to the instruction

sheet, although I used my own reference material for smaller details like switches and knobs.

I let these parts dry overnight. The next day, I mixed up a

water-based wash of slightly darker green than the base interior green and used it to accent the deeper parts of the detail. When the wash appeared satisfactory, I drybrushed

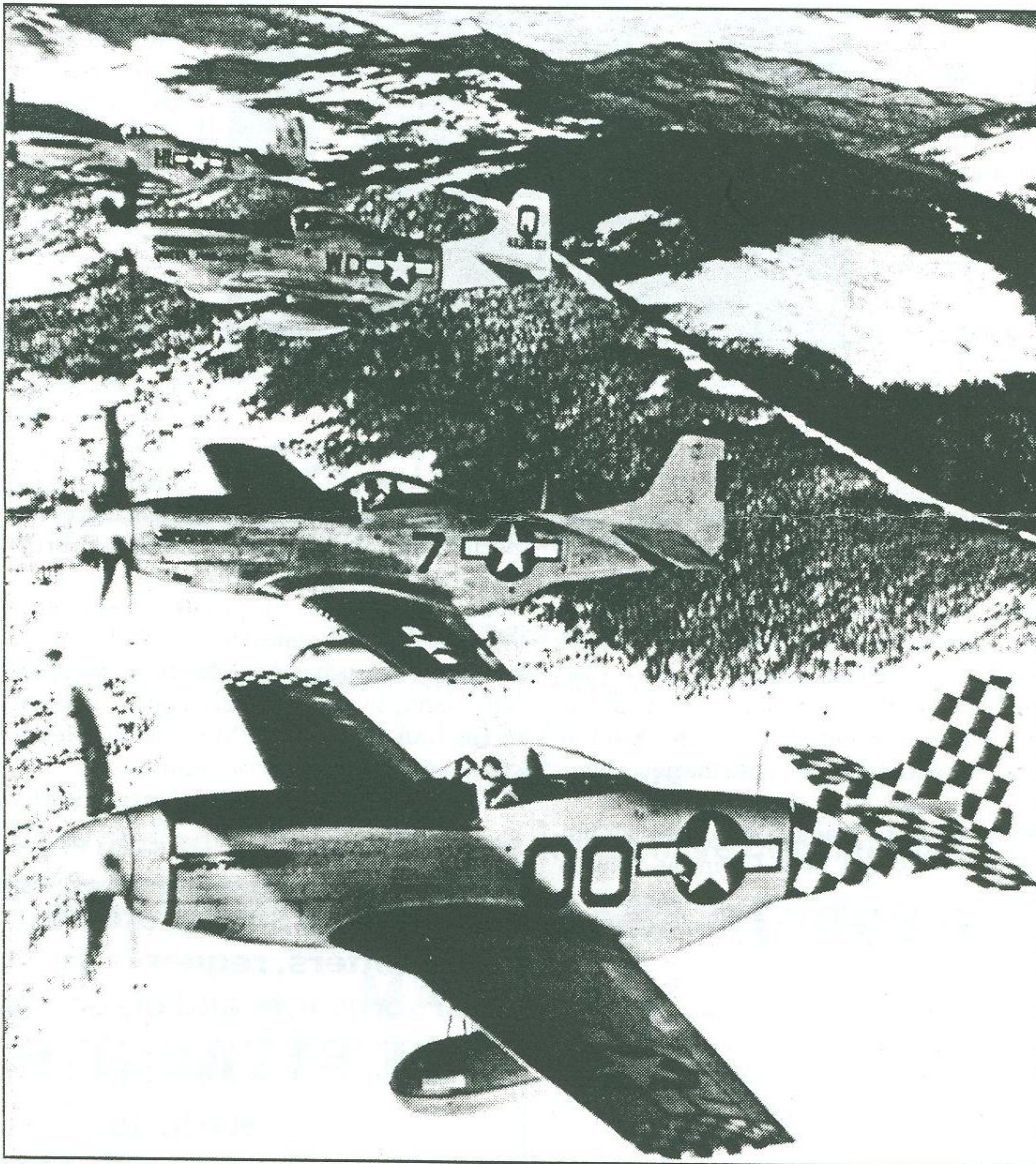
the parts with a lightened khaki green. A little advice: test-fit the sidewalls before painting; I had to thin the sidewalls down in my model, and I was lucky to have not done much damage to the painted parts in the process.

The *True Details* instrument panel was the only part of the set I didn't like, so I used the kit-supplied panel. Unfortunately, the kit panel had no instrument faces, so I added *Waldron* dials to the kit panel. *Tamiya* corrected this problem in their latest *Mustang* kit (a Korean War version), and

they now have a decal sheet to lay over the instrument panel.

The seat assembly was painted khaki green, and the seat

Continued on page 7



A lineup of *Mustangs* from each of the 15th Air Force's fighter groups in 1945. Second from the top is the plane of the CO of the 52nd Fighter Group; Ben chose a plane from this unit for his P-51D.

EDITOR'S BRIEF

One of our long-time members suggested to me that we look at the idea of allowing our presidents to serve for more than one consecutive term, which is what our constitution stipulates now. No, this guy doesn't hold a grudge against Mike Burton; he just thinks that consistency in the offices works to the club's benefit. This certainly is true for contest directors; as you may recall, Mike Meek was director for two years running, and Jim Lewis will be directing his second consecutive event this March.

The idea of restructuring our presidential terms has been around for a while. Modifying them to let presidents serve two terms could help keep some consistency in the club meetings and let presidents plan for events in the distant future. This has helped in our other offices of treasurer and secretary. And, in elections where there are few eager candidates, it could avoid the rise of opportunistic but unqualified people to office.

On the other hand, the rule as it now stands allows presidents to take a year off (as popular presidents Mike Burton and Jim Lewis have done). Holding office involves some work, and it's good to be a member of the peanut gallery for a while.

Also, and more significantly, it avoids stamping the personality of one individual on the club. SVSM isn't thought of as "Mike Burton's club," although Mike had a lot to do with the tone meetings have had over the last six years.

What do you think? This is an issue we should think about and discuss here in the Styrene Sheet. We wouldn't want to mess up the meetings with such talk—let's use the newsletter for that!

Speaking of the Styrene Sheet... thanks are in order for Jim Lewis, Ben Pada, Mike Meek and Brad Chun, as well as

ASK MR. KNOW-IT-ALL

Dear Mr. Know-It-All,

I don't really know why I thought of asking this, but it just sort of came to me. My question is this: I know that the M60 and the M1 get mileage that's pretty low—maybe in the gallons-per-mile range. What is the gas mileage of the M60 compared to the M1?

—Ralph Patino, Salinas

Dear Ralph,

Judging by the size of the models you scratchbuild, I'm not sure if I should answer this question. The last thing I want to see you do is build a giant model M1 and then get arrested for crushing Watsonville or Castroville. But if you must know... The M60 was designed to go 300 miles, and carries 405 gallons of fuel (1.35 gallons per mile). The M1, while a better fighting platform, only gets 1.65 gallons per mile. Use this information at your own risk.

Hubert Chan, Al Gonzalez, Bob Miller, Bert McDowell, Randy Rothhaar, Mike Burton, Jim Gordon, Rodney Williams and all our contributors. You guys make my job very easy—so easy, in fact, that I'll commit to a fifth year of editorship if you'll have me. The fact that my name is associated with the work our members do for this newsletter is a constant source of pride. Keep those stories comin'!

Also, I'm very proud of the mixture of articles—it really reflects our club well. Now, if we could get you figure and car builders to pipe in...

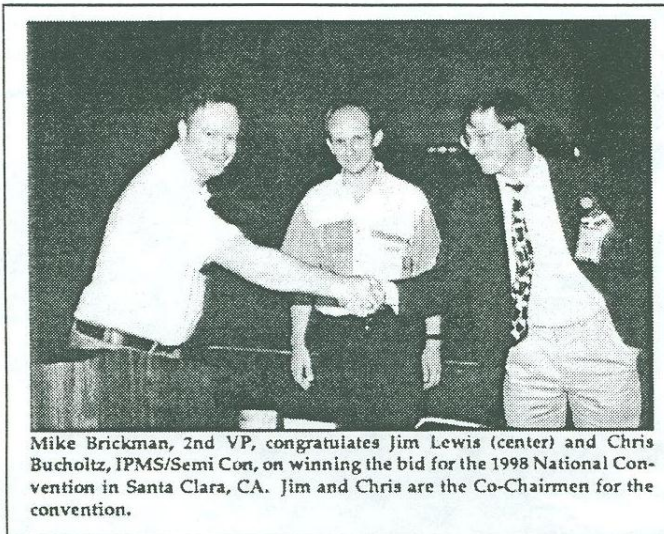
If you scan the minutes in the back of the issue, you'll see that a lot of members (myself included) are building P-51s. And why not? With fine kits in 1:72 and 1:48 of both the "B" and "D" models, this is a great time to build the "Cadillac of the Skies." If you look at the detail sets available, the *Mustang* is the most readily-mod-elled warbird there is, and although I used to despise the idea of building such a familiar plane, the *Mustang* is undeniably a beautiful bird, and

that beauty eventually won me over. We may have to have a special "Mustang Madness" contest in February or March. See this space for further details.

Finally, as regards the photo you see here, and its caption, as it appeared in the latest IPMS/USA Journal: No, Jim has not shrunk by five inches, gone bald and turned white. That's Roy Sutherland, as you probably know. Please make the correction in your scorecard. IPMS officials, please flog yourselves when you have a few free minutes.

Well, gotta go prep a natural metal finish...

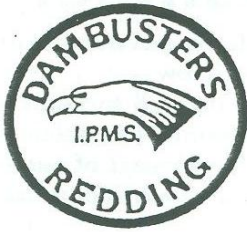
—The Editor



Mike Brickman, 2nd VP, congratulates Jim Lewis (center) and Chris Bucholtz, IPMS/Semi Con, on winning the bid for the 1998 National Convention in Santa Clara, CA. Jim and Chris are the Co-Chairmen for the convention.

To submit stories,
letters, requests for help,
or wants and disposals to
THE STYRENE SHEET

Write to:
Silicon Valley Scale Modelers
P.O. Box 361644
Milpitas, CA 95036
or, by Fax, to
(408) 260-2067
or, by E-mail, to
207-3426@mcimail.com



THE NORTH VALLEY DAMBUSTERS



Present their 1996 21st Annual Invitational Model Contest

Sunday, October 27
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

at Pacheco School, Knighton Road 8-1-5

JUDGING!!!

Judging will be "Chicago style" or open judging. There may be more than one winner for 2nd and 3rd places.

Awards will be based on quality of workmanship and authenticity.

---Bring Documentation---

SPECIAL AWARDS!

1. Fire Bombers
2. Small Air Forces of the World
3. Air Racers (all eras)
4. Test and Evaluation Aircraft (must have documentation)
5. Light Armor
6. NASCAR racers
7. Wheeled Military Vehicles (must have documentation)

NO ADMISSION FEE TO VIEWING PUBLIC!

MASTERS!!!

There will be 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards

Open to all entrants and

BEST OF SHOW

Junior and Senior

For More information, call Harold Offield (916) 221-5716
or Richard Carlson (916) 357-4488

Putting a tummy on a *Tigercat* firebomber

By Bradley Chun

As an aerial tanker, the F7F earned the respect and admiration of a host of west coast firefighters during the 1960s and 1970s. Its load carrying capability and maneuverability made the *Tigercat* an ideal aerial tanker to fight fires in canyons and other inaccessible areas.

But the *Tigercats* didn't fly unaltered. Like the TBF *Avengers* pressed into forest-fighting service, the F7Fs had large tanks strapped to their bellies. The 'slipper' tank could carry 800 gallons of water or slurry; although this is only half the load of a PB4Y or C-47, a *Tigercat* could make twice as many runs during a the same period of time as the larger planes. Despite this, the *Tigercat* was retired as newer, more economical and more easily-maintained aircraft became available.

Today, according to the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum, there are ten *Tigercats* still in existence, eight of which are airworthy. Retired now from the tanker fleet and their battles with forest fires, they are primarily flown on the air show circuit. These aircraft are maintained in immaculate condition by proud civilian owners who spare little expense in keeping them that way.

At least two of the survivors are restored to far better than new condition, and are painted in original Marine Corps colors and markings. One of them, restored to its original configuration and markings, is F7F-3P (BuNo. 80390). Carrying VMD-254 code "D1," it was declared Grand Champion Warbird at the annual meeting and air show of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) at Oshkosh, Wisconsin in August of 1986. This aircraft was restored by the Kalamazoo Aviation History Museum staff at Kalamazoo, Michigan in 1985. The history of the aircraft, color scheme and markings have all been meticulously researched and documented by the museum staff.

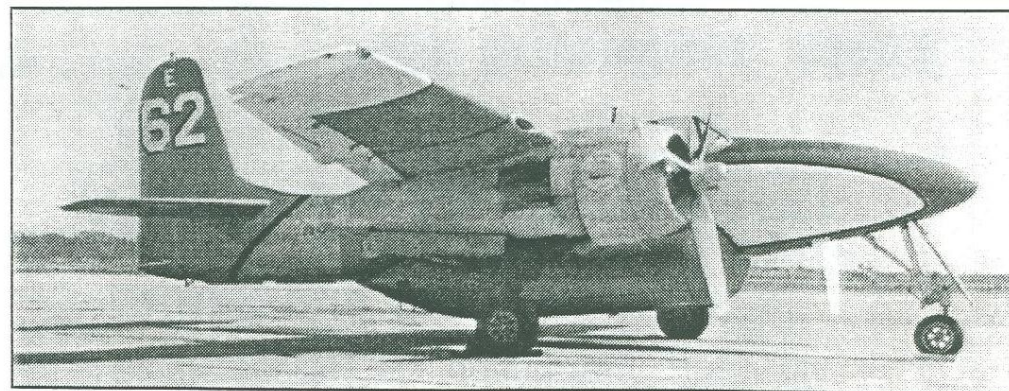
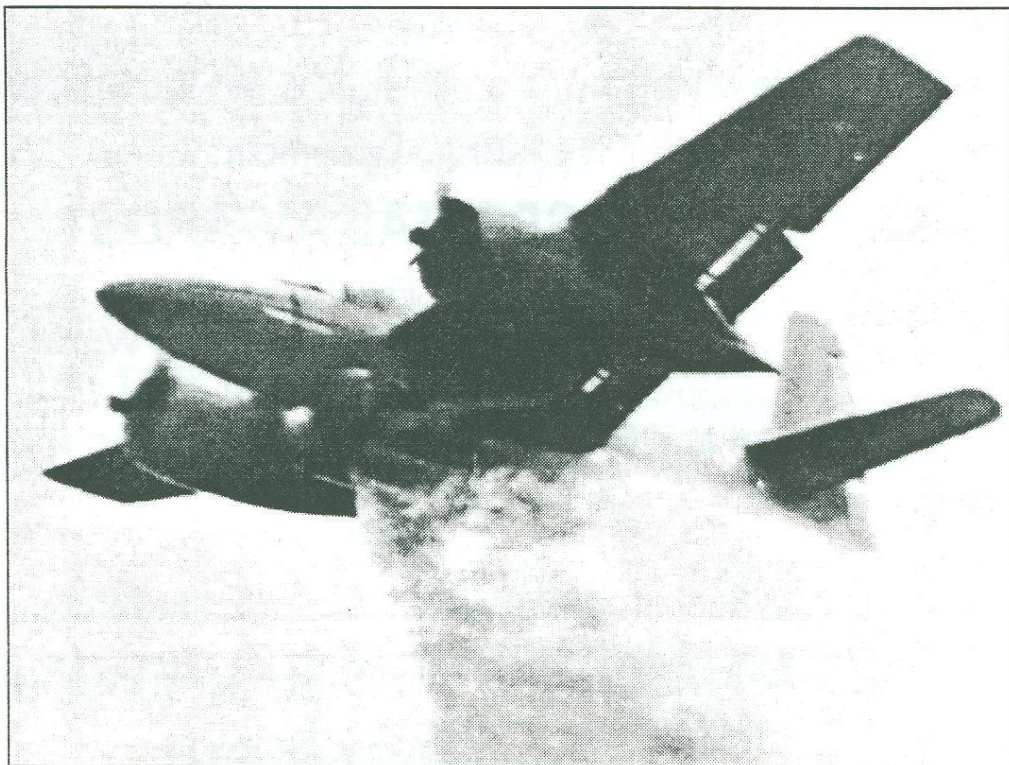
An earlier restoration project on the West Coast transformed former F7F-3 (BuNo. 80532) (which had flown for years as a tanker) into a facsimile of the 1946 F7F-3P (BuNo. 80448) of VMD-254. Aero-Historian/Photographer Bill Larkins and Jack Elliot of the Naval Aviation History Office in Washington teamed to research and document the original markings and color scheme and the results must seem to be fully appreciated. Owners and restorers Gary Flanders and Mike

Bogue keep their prize at Oakland, California and the aircraft is a regular participant in West Coast air shows.

While the plane is beautiful as-is, I decided to build a *Tigercat* with some local connection. California's brushlands were a perfect proving grounds for the concept of aerial firefighting, and *Tigercats* did a lot to beat down Californian conflagrations in the 1960s and 1970s.

I ordered the two-piece resin conversion from *Lonestar Models* after seeing an ad in *Fine Scale Modeler*. I had developed an interest in fire bombers while researching data on an A-26 *Invader* project that I had been working on. With the release of the F7F-3 *Tigercat* from AMT, I had to do this conversion now that a cottage industry company produced the 800-gallon slipper tank.

I received my order about six weeks after placing it. I opened the box to find two big pieces of resin. The slipper tank was slit down the middle and was beautifully cast with no air holes or pin holes to be found on the exterior.



In the top photo, a *Tigercat* drops a full load of water on a fire; below, the modification that transformed the sleek fighter into an effective fire bomber is evident.

The first step was to join the two halves together; this was accomplished by sanding the adjoining edges flat. I sanded the edges as one would sand the edges on a vacuform kit, gluing a sheet of sand paper to a flat piece of wood or plexiglass and rubbing the tank halves against it. Once this was done, I then joined the halves with super glue. The tank required a little putty for the exterior surfaces to match. The joint was further reinforced with super glue and was then ready to be fitted to the aircraft.

After outlining the placement of the slipper tank on the side of the fuselage, I used a technique Roy Sutherland suggested I try. I placed a piece of sandpaper along the sides of the fuselage where the slipper tank is to be fitted, effectively turning the fuselage into a sanding block. I sanded the slipper tank until it properly fit the fuselage, then removed the sandpaper to check the fit and repeated this until I was satisfied with the results.

I had discovered a few gaps where the slipper tank meets the fuselage. Fellow SVSMer Richard Pedro suggested I place Scotch tape along the fuselage where the slipper tank goes, then fill the gap with super glue, accelerate it, and presto, one filled gap. I could then place the slipper tank aside and work on the rest of my *Tigercat* and attach the slipper tank during the final assembly before painting and decaling.

Conversions aside, AMT filled a major gap in naval aviation kits with the release of their *Tigercat* in 1:48. Their first release is the F7F-3 with markings included for three aircraft: a pre-delivery and test scheme; G-142, from an unidentified Marine

unit circa 1946; and A-99, a colorful F7F-3 of VMD-254 from Oakland, right here in the Bay Area, circa 1946.

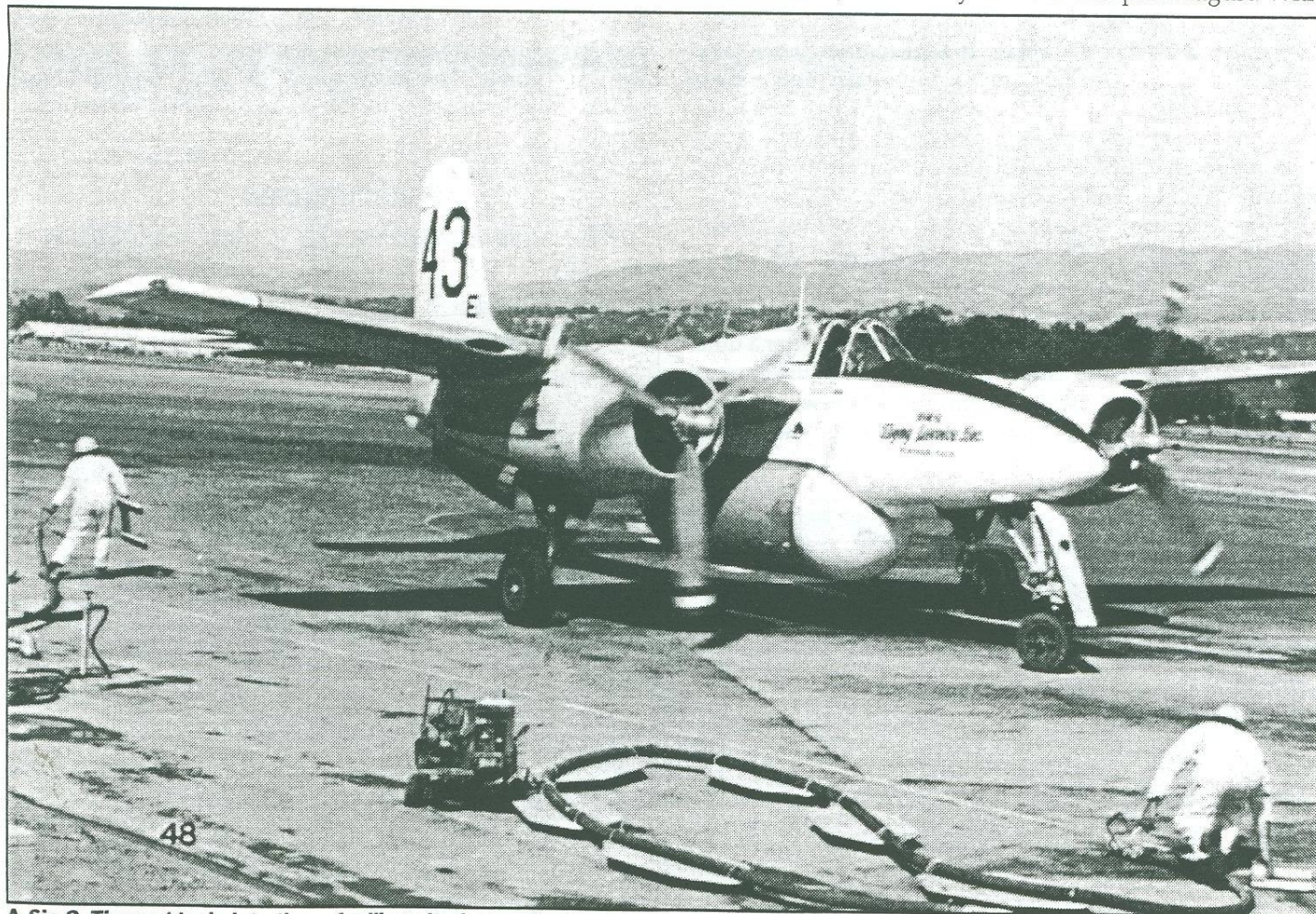
The kit is molded in light gray plastic with recessed panel lines, a two-piece canopy, and three rubber tires. A 55-gallon POL drum with a wooden crate is included for use as a tail prop.

A little flash was found in the kit but nothing the average modeler can't fix. (For a review of this kit see *Military Model Preview*, Volume 3.06)

Construction (and conversion) of my 'Cat began with the filling and removal of the gun barrel ports on both sides of the fuselage and the lower wing halves. This was accomplished by filling the ports with CA glue, accelerating it, and then sanding it smooth. Once this was finished, I glued the cockpit floor and bulkhead together, excluding the pilot's seat, control stick, and instrument panel, which I installed during the final finishing stage. I glued the floor and bulkhead to the right fuselage half and then airbrushed both fuselage halves, the interiors of the engine nacelles, and the landing gear bays with a mixture of interior green and zinc chromate green.

I black-washed and detail painted the cockpit and front landing gear bay, then assembled the fuselage halves together. I then did the same with the wing halves and nacelles. I removed the center-line fuel tank mount and placed the fuel tank, bombs, and rockets into the spare parts box.

I had to remove a couple molding lines on the fuselage where AMT inserts the plug to change the vertical fin for the -2/-2N variant, which they released this past August. With



A Sis-Q *Tigercat* taxis into the refuelling pits for another load of slurry and aviation gas during the fire season of 1969.



An overall white Sis-Q firebomber in profile. Note the black anti-glare panel. This *Tigercat* is a later F7F-3 model with the tall tail.

much of the basic assembly done, I inspected my work and filled and sanded any seams I found on the fuselage and wing/nacelle assemblies.

The stabilizers were assembled and were set aside for final assembly. I removed the *True Details* tires from their 'sprue' and sanded them flat. Some of these after-market 'bulged and flattened' tires look like they contain only 10 psi of air and are grossly mis-shaped, but don't dismiss them all out of hand. There are some really nice examples out on the market also, these included. I then assembled the landing struts, removed any molding lines, and set these aside also.

I chose not to use the excellent rubber tires AMT included in the kit because I am not sure how long their shelf life is. Remember the treads on the old 1:48 *Aurora* tank kits or the graying of *Tamiya's* early 1:12 and 1:20 F-1 race car kits? In some cases, this rubber attacks unpainted plastic after a time!

Next came the engine assemblies. I assembled the engines as per the instructions, painted them, and set these aside also.

This story is about a work in progress. All the sub-assemblies have been set aside as I await the Firebomber decal sheet

to be produced by IPMS/Northern Virginia. This decal sheet will save a lot of time since I won't have to make the markings from scratch.

As a side note, I'd just like to say thanks to the members of Silicon Valley Scale Modelers, IPMS/Fremont Hornets, and Ron Darcy of *R&D Replicas* and *Repliphile*, for all of the help they've given me. Also to the select few who still build "real models," thanks for introducing me to the world of vacuform models.

References:

Scale Aircraft Modelling, Volume 17, Number 10, December 1995.

F7FTigercat In Action, Aircraft Number 79, Squadron/Signal Publications.

Airpower Magazine, September 1996 Volume 26 Number 5.

Military Model Preview, Volume 3.06.

Parts Sources:

Two-piece fire bomber conversion for AMTF7F-3 *Tigercat* no.8843:

Lonestar Models
13758 Drakewood
Sugarland, TX 77478

Bulged and flattened tires for AMTF7F-3 *Tigercat* no.8843:

True Details
P. O. Box 115010
Carrollton, TX 75011-5010

1:48 Grumman F7F-3 *Tigercat* no.8843:

AMTModels,
The ERTL Company, Inc.
Dyersville, IA 52040-0500

1:48 Firebomber decal sheet (to-be-released)

IPMS/Northern Virginia Scale Modelers
15491 Wheatfield Road
Woodbridge, VA 22193

Putting the winning touches on a 1:48 Mustang

Continued from page 1

cushions were painted with a slightly lighter green to add contrast. The lap belts were painted olive drab, the shoulder harnesses were painted flat white and the buckles were picked out with aluminum. The battery and radio unit were painted flat black and I added some home-made wire details to simulate electrical wiring on top of the radio.

Before I joined the fuselage halves, I test-fit the radiator, and when it was settled into place, I trapped the cockpit inside the fuselage. The fit was very good except for seams on both sides of the radiator exhaust exit. There is a joint just forward of the tail wheel doors, so to make sanding and filling easier, I removed the tailwheel doors. The engine cowling and carburetor intake fit with no

problem -

lems and at this point I drilled out the holes on the carburetor air filter. That's the small perforated panel below both sets of exhaust stacks.

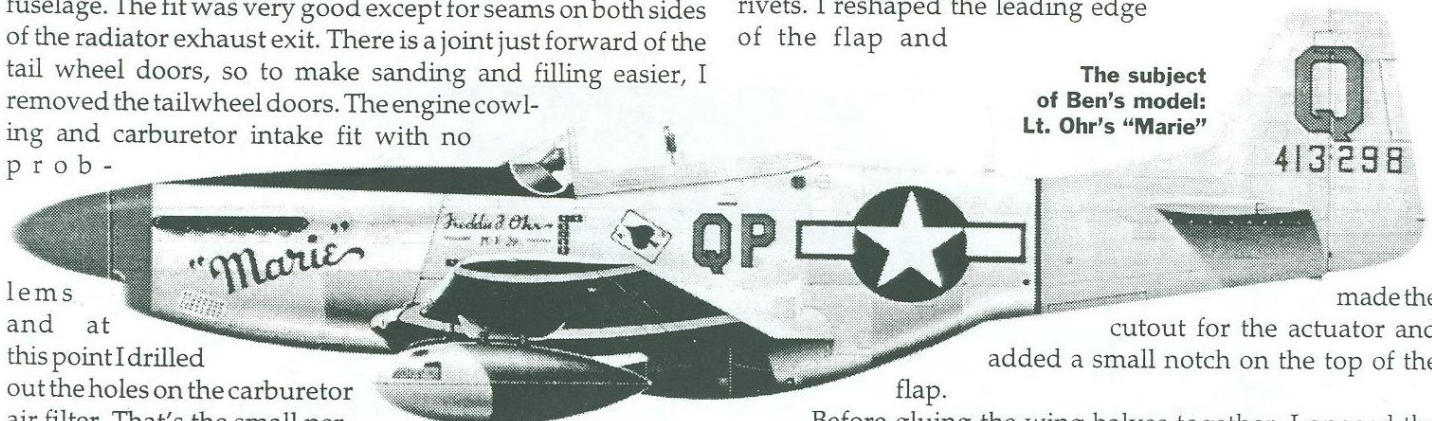
The wings have dropped flaps and deep wheel wells, but there is also a major seam inside the wheel wells, and the flaps need a little work.

The only advice I can give about the wheel wells: fill and sand. I think *Tamiya* could have done a better job on the

engineering of this part of the model, and on their new P-51B with the Malcolm hood—guess what—they corrected this. To fill this seam I used *Gunze Sangyo* Mr. Surfacer 1000 and 500. I painted the filler on, then let it dry and sanded it down, and repeated the process until the seam was filled.

I added plastic stock to the inboard upper corner and leading edge of the flaps (see figure 1). After sanding the upper surface, I used a pin vise with a needle to restore the rivets. I reshaped the leading edge of the flap and

The subject of Ben's model: Lt. Ohr's "Marie"

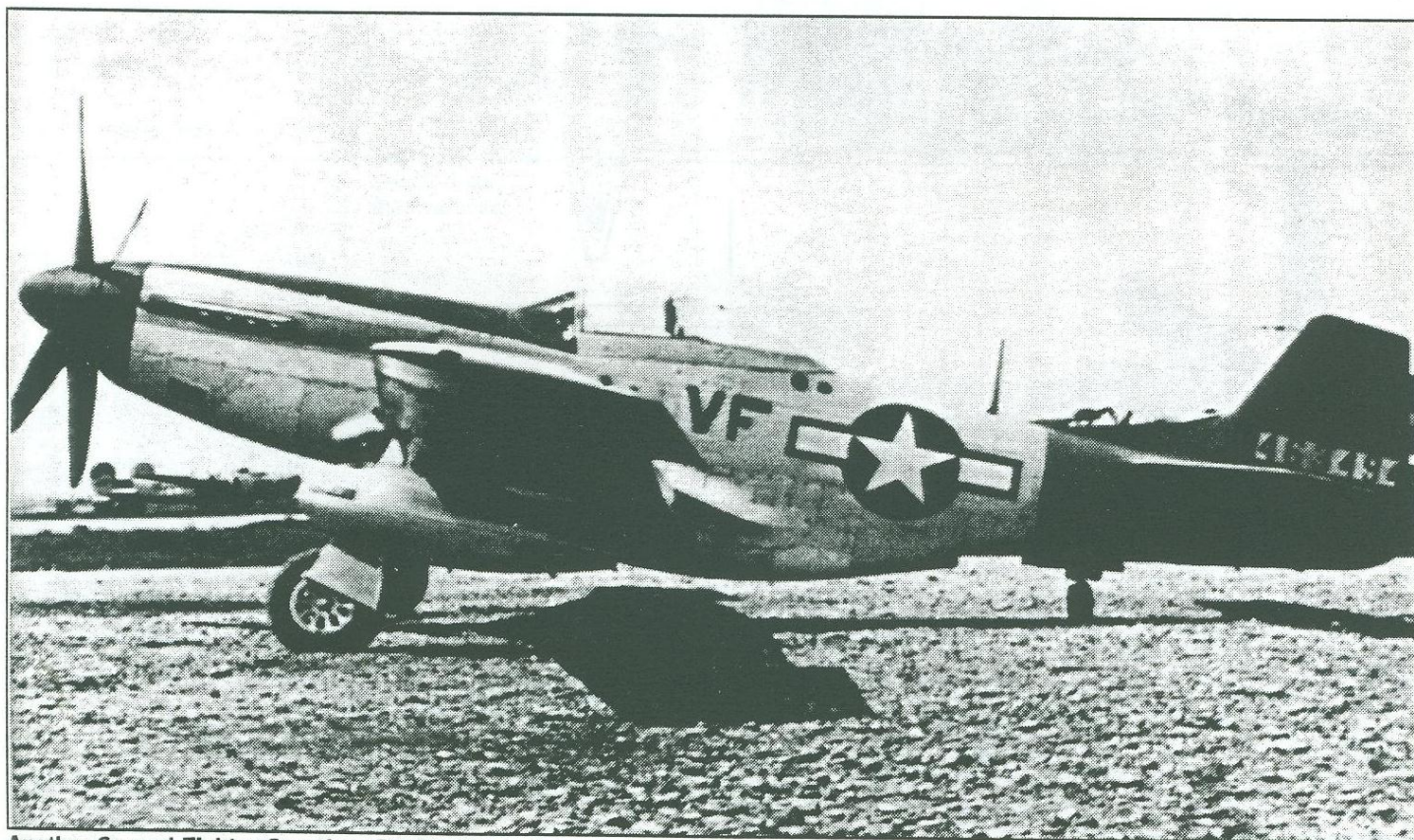


made the cutout for the actuator and added a small notch on the top of the

flap.

Before gluing the wing halves together, I opened the holes for the pylons. The fit of the wings is very good, but I did need to do some filling and sanding around the gun tube openings. The wing-to-fuselage fit is great, requiring hardly any filler, and the same may be said about the tail planes.

The only work I did to the landing gear was to define some of the smaller details. I opened the spokes of the wheels by



Another Second Fighter Squadron P-51D. The unit sported red tails, yellow wing bands and tails and red tail identification letters.

drilling holes in the gaps between spokes and then carved it out with an X-Acto knife (see figure 2). I used a saw to recut the tread pattern in the tires after the tire halves had been joined and sanded. I used a technique similar to that for the spokes to open up the torque links (see figure 3), drilling a few holes in the space to be opened and then carving the remaining plastic away with a knife. I added valve stems to all the tires using small bits of wire and added brake lines and tie-downs to complete the landing gear.

With the main structure of the *Mustang* complete, I installed the windscreen—or tried to install it. I went through six windscreens to get a satisfactory fit. This is the one area where *Tamiya* really blew it.

To get a proper fit, I took a somewhat expensive approach.

I took a second kit and glued the windscreen in place. Once that had been sanded and filled so that it looked proper, I carefully cut the entire windscreen section out of that kit (see figure 4). Next, I removed the instrument shroud and sanded it down. I shaved down the instrument shroud in the first kit and then glued the new windscreen assembly in place and filled any seams between the two assemblies.

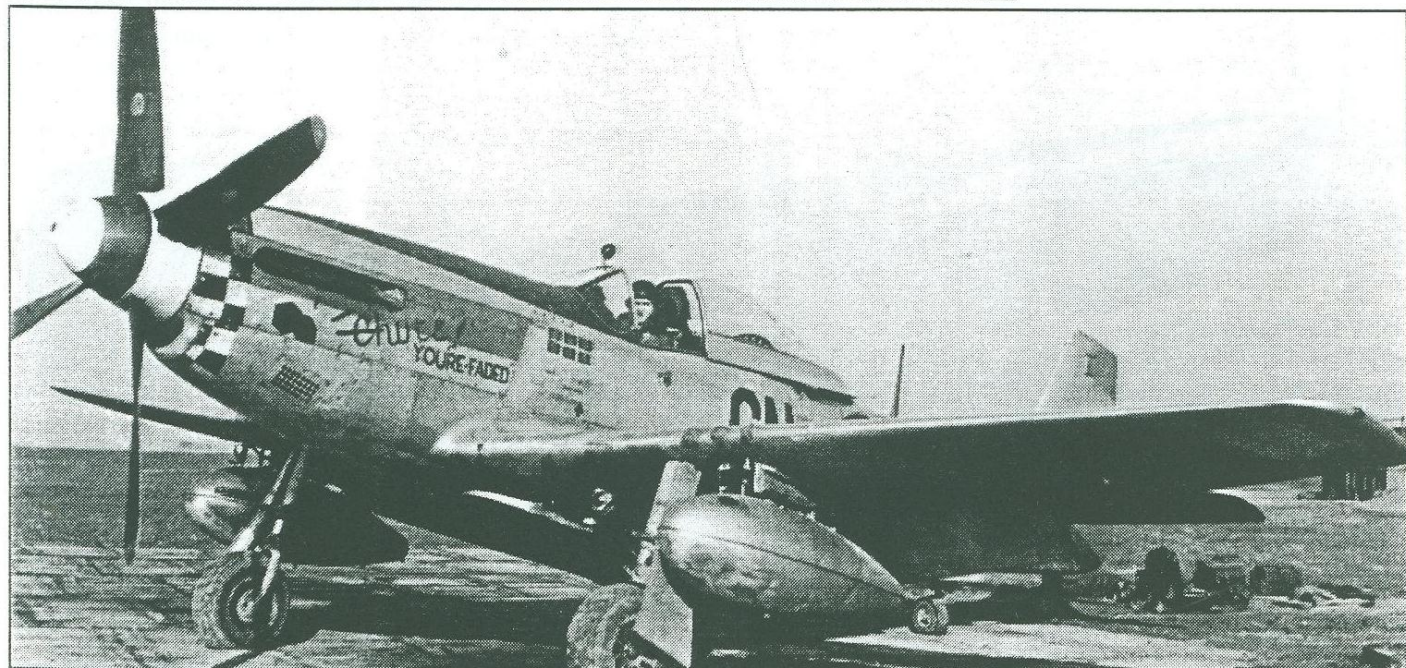
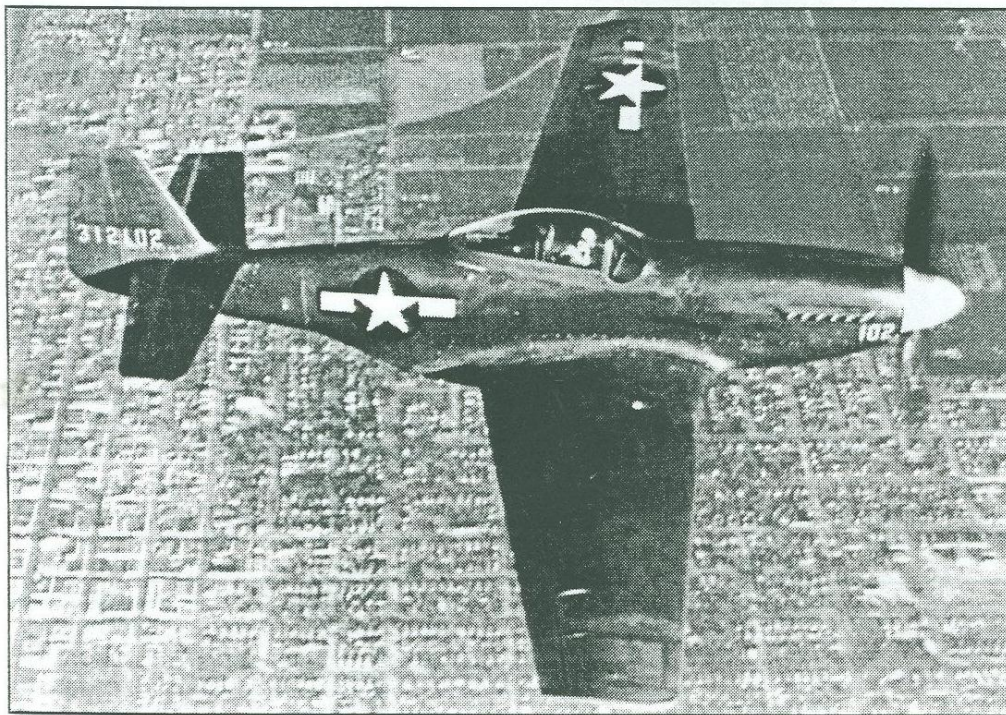
As for the sliding canopy, I decided to replace it with a vacuform version. Since *Squadron* doesn't make one for the *Tamiya* kit yet, use the one intended for the *Monogram* kit. If you're thinking about using the kit canopies from the *Hasegawa* or *Monogram Mustangs*, don't—they don't fit.

I decided to give the plane a natural metal finish, and picked *Alclad* for the base coat. I had tried *Alclad* before and wasn't

happy with the results, but this is supposed to be a new formula. I used *Alclad-O* for the base and shot *Alclad-V* and *Testors Model Master* metallizers for the different panel tones. I was very pleased with the results, and if *Alclad* has a longer shelf-life than *SnJ*, I'll be using it for all my metal finishes from now on.

The aircraft that I decided to do is P-51D-NA (NA.109) 44-13298, nicknamed "Marie" and flown by Captain Freddie Ohr of the 2nd Fighter Squadron, 52nd Fighter Group, Fifteenth Air Force. I thought the all-yellow tail was colorful, and, more interestingly, Ohr, with six kills (including five in P-51s), was probably the only Korean-American ace in the USAAF.

Aeromaster's excellent decal



At top, a factory-fresh early P-51D flies over Burbank; camouflage paints were abandoned in 1944, hence the scheme on "Chute! You're Faded" in the bottom photograph.

sheet 48-226 supplied the markings. The aircraft has an olive drab anti-glare panel, an all-yellow tail, yellow stripes on the wings and a red nose. I used *Gunze Sangyo* for all the colors but had to mix my own shade of yellow. The decals went on with no problems. I also used *Microscale* decals for black striping on the tail and wing bands.

Once the finish was applied, I put the plane on its feet. the fit of the landing gear is very good, and the same can be said of the gear doors. I didn't like the way *Tamiya* depicted the tail wheel as a single-piece strut, wheel and axle, so I cut the wheel and axle from the strut, built a new axle from brass rod and substituted a new wheel from the *Hasegawa* kit.

I used stainless steel tubing for the gun barrels, and drilled out the exhaust pipes before installing them. I painted the exhaust stacks with *Testors Model Master* exhaust and later drybrushed them with *Polly S* rust.

Figure 1 Fill in with plastic stock

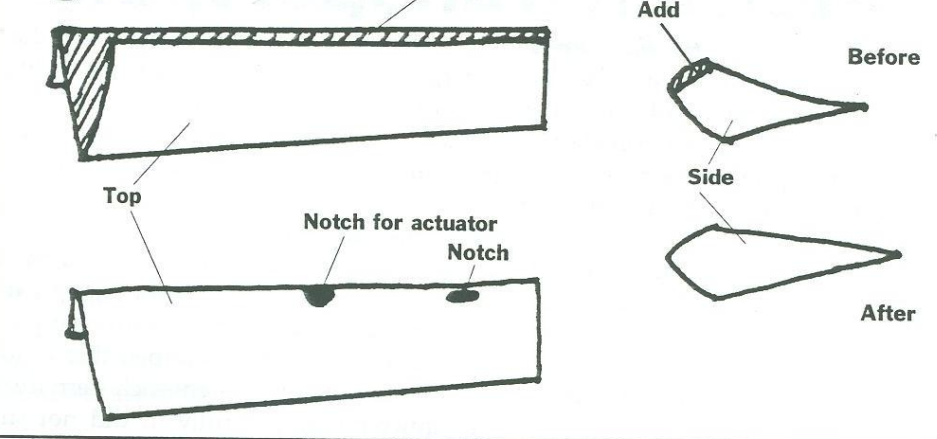


Figure 2

Drill holes, then carve open with knife



The position lights under the starboard wing drilling small holes and then painting them with *Gunze*

Sangyo clear green orange and red. I covered these with a lens made from 5-minute epoxy. For the wingtip lights, I used *Premiere Plus* aftermarket lights.

The propeller was assembled and painted; it required a little filler between the spinner and backing plate.

Once everything was together, I painted the entire model with *Testors Model*

Figure 3

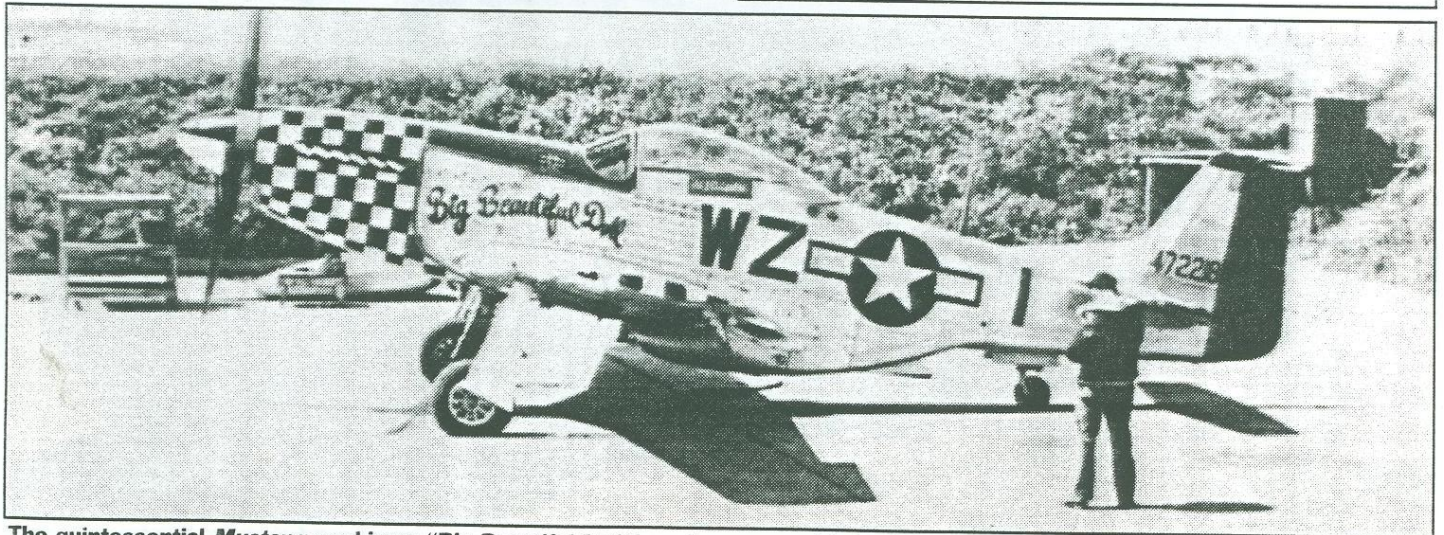
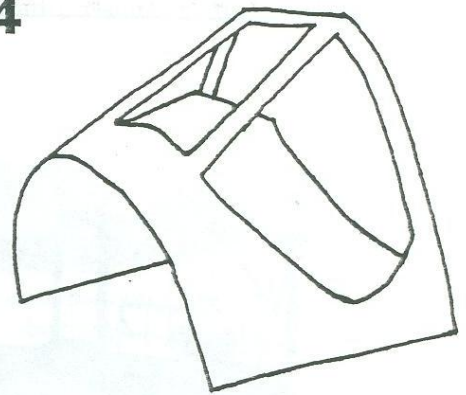
Drill holes inside torque links, then remove



Master metallizer sealer and then treated all the painted areas and decals with a coat of *Gunze Sangyo* clear flat. I used water color paints and pastels to add some weathering to finish off the model.

There you have it—the *Tamiya* P-51D, a good kit that could have been a great kit if not for the canopy and wheel wells. I've built the *Hasegawa* P-51D, and between the two I'd give the *Tamiya* kit the edge, mainly because of ease of assembly and the lowered flaps. Whichever one you choose, you won't be disappointed, and there's always the *Monogram* P-51D to fall back on if you like lots of sanding and filling.

Figure 4



The quintessential *Mustang* markings: "Big Beautiful Doll," as she appeared in her revetment in 1944.

All-terrain transport: the M29 Weasel

By Jim Lewis

The M29 Weasel is a small, fully-tracked cargo carrier, with noteworthy all-terrain and full amphibious capability. Design and development began in May 1942, and the Studebaker Co. delivered prototypes in August that year, with mass production following shortly afterward.

Studebaker produced 4,476 M29s from 1942 through 1945. During this time, 10,647 M29C variants came off other American and lend-lease British production lines.

Plain-looking and squat, the Weasel fulfilled its original Ordnance Department requirement to support airborne troops in winter operations without fanfare. The "snow buggy" filled its mission well. However, it could do much more.

Sources differ concerning the M29's amphibious capabilities, but the M29C was definitely the more capable of the two in waterborne operations. The original M29's hull is also a single-piece welded design like the later M29C, and it could float in water without preparation, but most sources do not consider it a true amphibious vehicle.

Watertight compartments bolted fore and aft differentiate the M29 from the M29C. These compartments had separate drain plugs from the ones already provided in the main body. The rear cell housed the fuel tank, and provided the mounts for rudders. The forward cell housed an engine-powered capstan and winch. The M29C also mounted a fold-down bow shield, usually seen raised or removed altogether be-

cause it blocked the driver's forward vision.

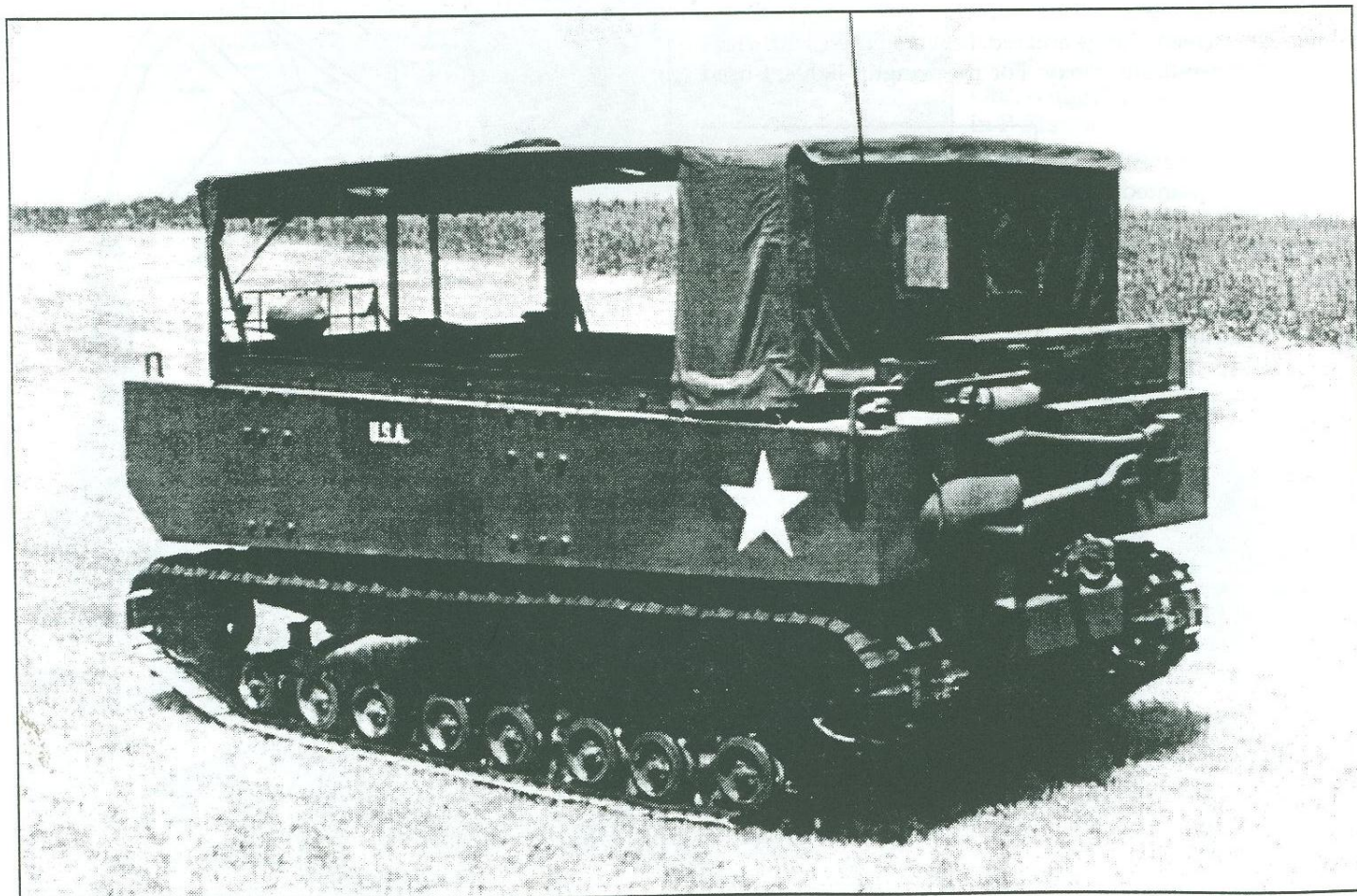
Though the addition of the watertight cells enabled the little vehicle to float and propel itself through the water by means of its tracks alone, steering remained difficult. The designers added two rudders and a simple steering system using small cables. When preparing the Weasel to swim, the crew folded the rudders into the water, and the driver operated them through a tiller bar situated in front of him.

Crews took great care not to subject the M29C to strong currents or heavy surf during waterborne operations. Easily swamped thanks to its low speed and its 10-inch bow and eight-inch stern freeboard, the Weasel crews handled it carefully. It did not suffer performance deficiencies in cross-country operations.

The M29C featured wider tracks than its predecessor. Widening the tracks from 15 to 20 inches decreased the ground pressure of the Weasel. Its rating of 1.91 psi with a payload of 1200 lbs is actually less than a person standing on the ground. Because of this, the Weasel could easily traverse snow, swamps, or muddy fields where no other vehicle could go.

The Weasel also boasted impressive traction that aided it in crossing inhospitable terrain. The Weasel had some 1,121 square inches of track in contact with the ground. In comparison, a contemporary cargo truck of the time could only put 560 square inches of tread in contact with the ground.

With its 65 hp engine, the Weasel's top speed was 36 mph



The sure-footed amphibious Weasel provided all-terrain transport for troops in Europe, the Pacific, Korea and, later, in Vietnam.

on land, with 4 mph at best in water. Cruising range was 175 miles on its 35 gallon fuel tank.

M29 Weasels saw action all over the globe. American forces used them against the Japanese in the Aleutians as well as the bogs and swamps of the Pacific and Far East during the last years of WWII. American forces employed Weasels effectively against German and Italian forces in Europe too. Weasels were instrumental in crossing terrain flooded by German Occupational Forces to impede Allied advances in Normandy and Holland.

The British Army used the Weasels in operations in the Scheldt Estuary, Lake Comacchio, and River Po areas. They used a complete platoon of Weasels as a part of 529 GT Company to support the 52 Infantry Division in the assault on Walcheren. Other Weasels made up amphibious regiments of the 79 Armored Division.

After the Second World War, the Weasel saw service in the role for which it was originally designed—over-snow opera-

tions with British and Norwegian units protecting NATO's northern flank.

During the Korean War, Weasels in the theater saw modifications to perform a multitude of roles, including ambulatory assignments with MASH units.

The French employed the Weasel in the First Indochina War. They armed the gallant little vehicles and sent them out in a vain effort to preserve the former French Indochinese colonies. For the Weasel aficionado, there is more interesting commentary on the M29 to be found in the reference *Military & Civilian Amphibians 1940 to 1990*, compiled by R.M. Clarke.

Monogram's model comes in what appears to be a representation of the original box top art. *Monogram* first released the M29C model kit in 1957, with the last reissue coming in 1982. I think the box top is worth keeping around for posterity.

You get nearly flash-free olive drab-colored sprues of parts inside the box, and there aren't many. Some parts are thick and clumsy, but most are well detailed. Sure, there are ejector pin marks, but these are not in offensive locations and can be easily removed.

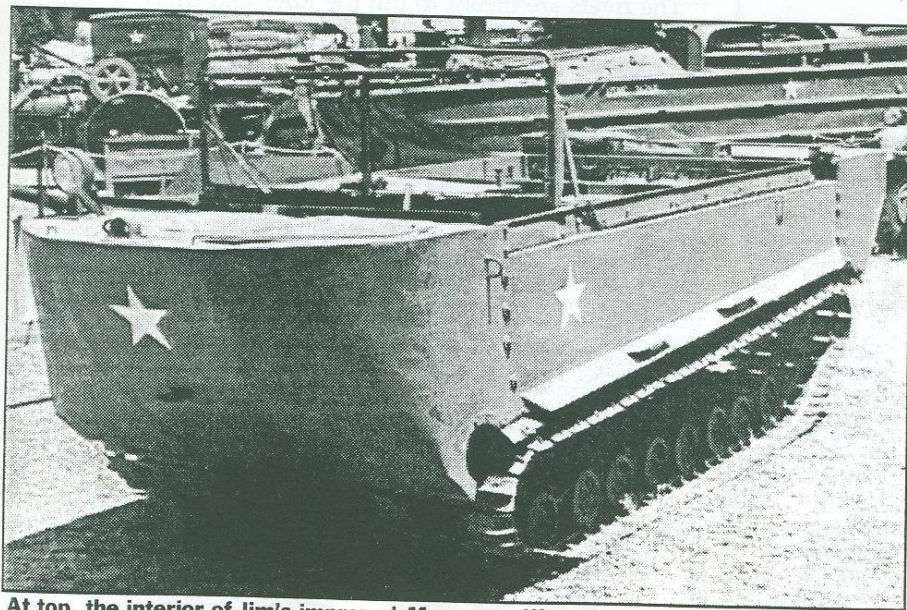
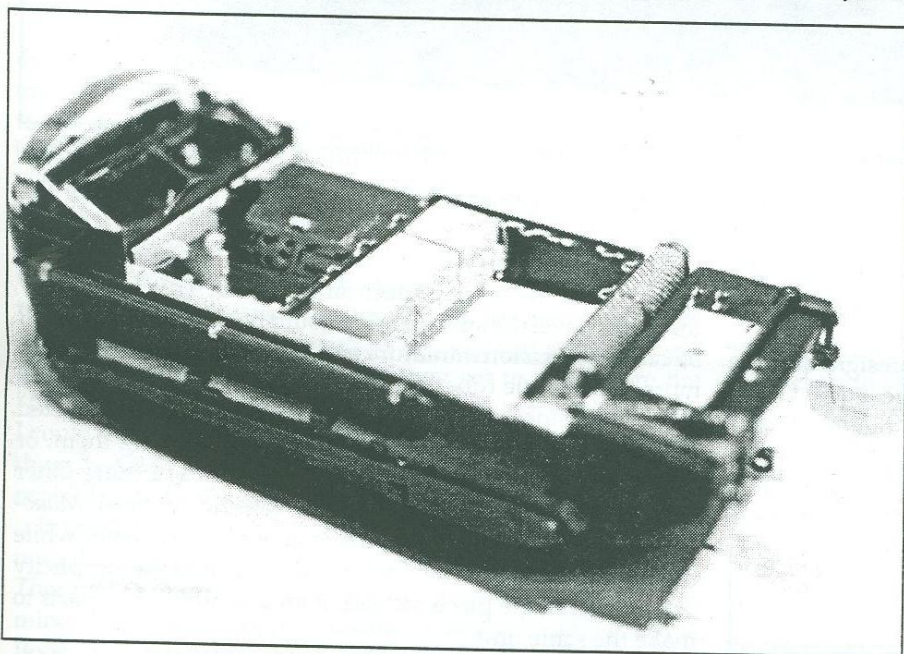
Monogram gives you a nice instruction sheet with this model kit. I enjoyed it. Of course, the instruction sheet is filled with the usual helpful tips. Fine points of the real vehicle, model operating features, and indications of precision as evidenced from scaling off "official U.S. Army blueprints" are also included. Assembly steps number 15 for this little kit, but they are presented better than those included in the run-of-the-mill model kits today. The instructions are worth keeping too, like the box top art.

You get five figures in the kit. I didn't toss them—there's a "first" for everything, I suppose. The standing rifleman, crouching Tommy gunner (who resembles Lee Marvin in *The Dirty Dozen*), and kneeling sharpshooter are reminiscent of the old bagged toy soldiers I cherished as a kid. After seeing the recon squad in the movie *Toy Story*, I didn't have the heart to discard them.

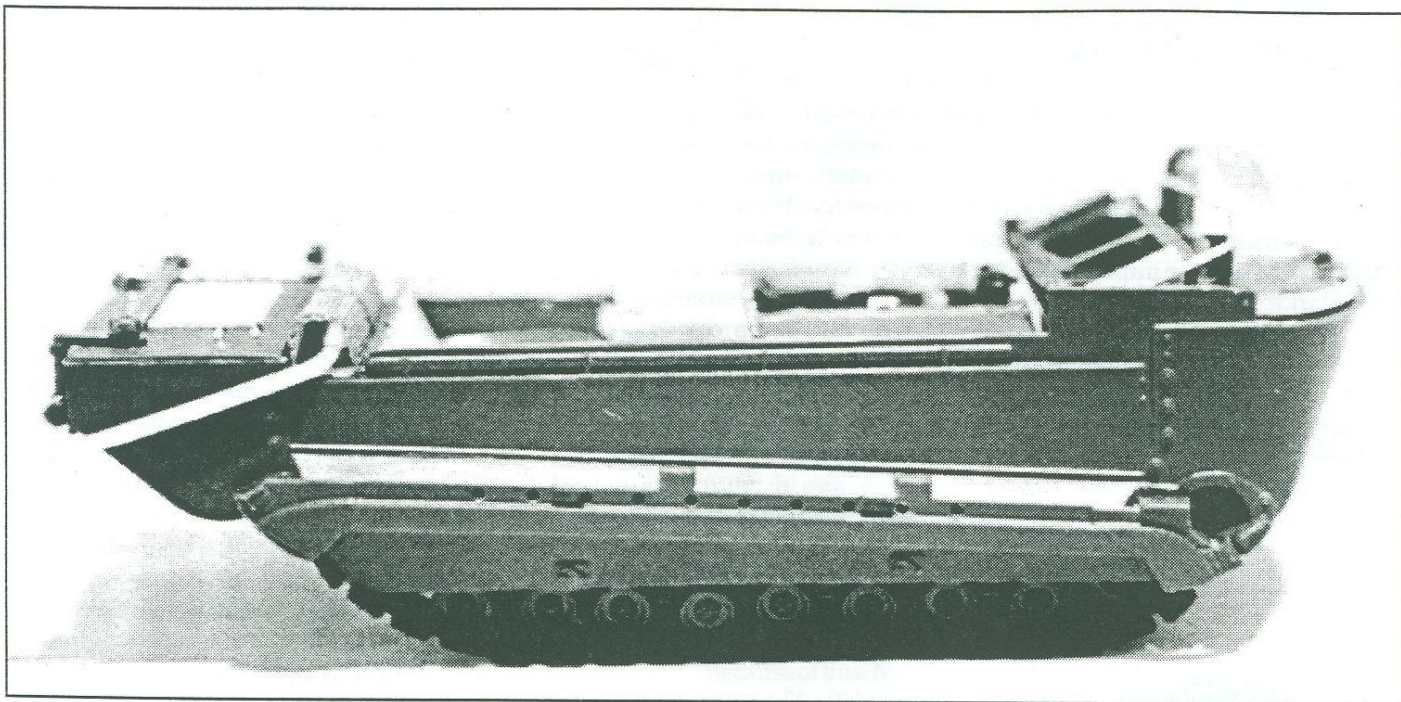
Be advised they suffer from huge-hole-in-the-chest syndrome. The driver and radioman weren't bad either, and weren't victims of the above mentioned malady.

The Weasel's tracks and suspension were unique to this vehicle. The tracks are made of stamped, semi-flexible metal shoes with small rubber pads on the outside surface and centerline guide teeth. These tracks were connected by an endless belt made up of four steel cables sheathed in rubber. A smaller cable was attached near the outsides of the tracks for additional stability. Track tension was provided by the idler wheel at the front of the Weasel, using an adjustable leaf spring.

The Weasel has 16 small rubber-tired



At top, the interior of Jim's improved *Monogram* Weasel; below, a real example shows off the tub-like hull and front cargo deck.



Jim's Weasel has a simplified set of running gear, but as this shot shows, the skirts would hide any additions to much of the suspension.

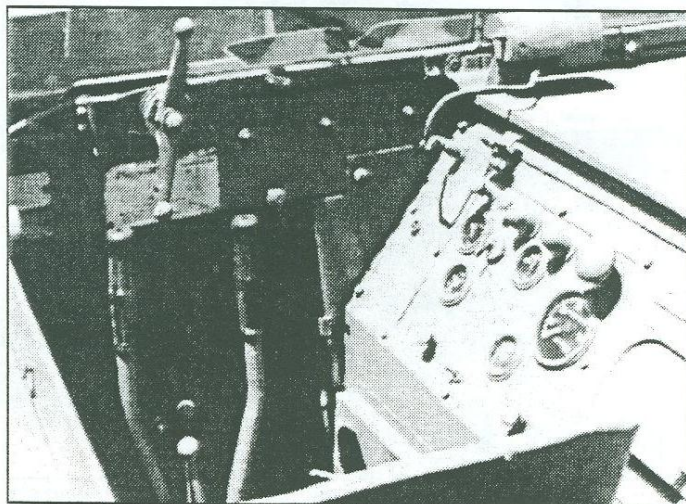
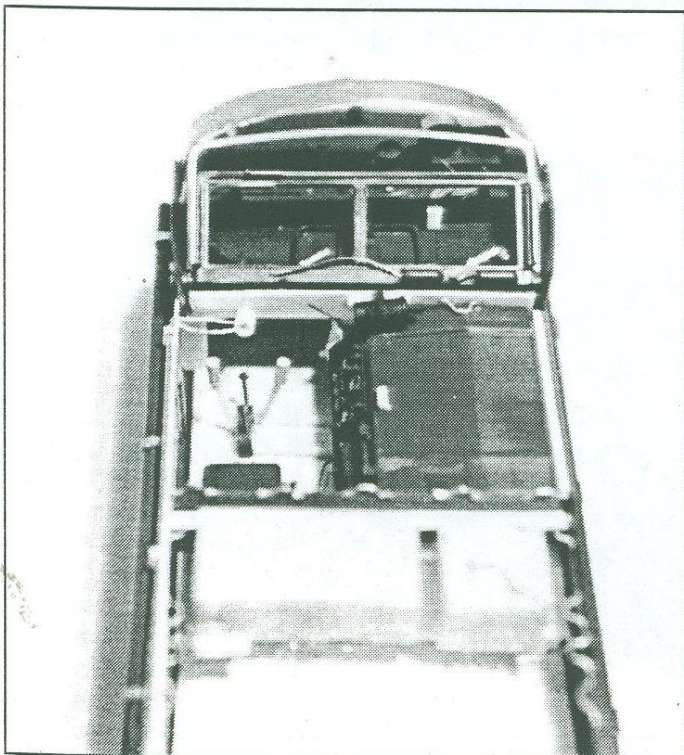
bogie wheels on each side. Four wheels are clustered on a truck, which is mounted on the end of a transverse inverted leaf spring running from left to right. The bogies run on the inner rubber belts, and could move up, down, and had a little side flex as well.

This is a quite complicated and intricate design, and the model's biggest failing. *Monogram's* running gear does "hint" at the full-size features, but remember this model kit was originally produced in 1957. It isn't accurate, in the strict sense of the term, but I decided to evaluate all of the running gear assemblies before abandoning them. I hope I don't speak

"Modeler's Blasphemy" in the following evaluation of the parts.

The idler and drive wheels are attached to the hull halves with pins the instruction sheet calls "rivets." This is probably the lowest level the subassembly could be reduced to and still be called "precision miniature modeling." These aren't much more than simple tubes representing wheels. The pieces are acceptable, since they are nearly invisible in the completed model when the track aprons are fitted. Replacing them, or superdetailing them would gain you little to nothing other than gross personal satisfaction (or self-indulgence). *Monogram* obviously reduced the parts to their simplest level, while maintaining a standard of detail. I appreciated the simplicity of having a single piece instead of an assembly of 10 parts to make the same unit.

The rivets are meant to pin the idler and drive wheels to mounts on the hull halves. These are also simple tubes, and not representative of the actual parts on the Weasel. The drive wheel moves the tracks through contact with the centerline



The improved *Monogram* Weasel's driver's station, at left, and the same position on a real example of the M29C.

guide teeth. This feature is absent from the *Monogram* kit, as are the centerline guide teeth. The drive wheel is in the rear of the Weasel, and again, superdetailing this part will gain you little to nothing as it's invisible when the track aprons are fitted.

Monogram replicated the transverse spring design with simple lengths of plastic. At first, I was a little miffed at getting such a simple piece to represent a sophisticated design, but in the end I was amused. How better to represent the part, and what would you see in the completed model? The part fits, and represents the unit on the real vehicle adequately. What more could you ask for? You'll sprain your neck looking for it on the completed model anyway.

When gluing these parts to the model, dry-fit the bogies. You'll need them to ensure they line up properly for permanent attachment later. I also sanded seams off the guide wheels for later painting and attachment. The bogies are instrumental in making the tracks line up on the completed model.

Monogram's tracks are basically accurate representations of the 20-inch units on the M29C, but could stand a little additional detailing. They have the main bands connecting the tracks, but lack the rounded guide teeth, the outside stability bands, and relief detail on the inside of the track. The very least you could do is add the outer band detail with foil strips. This is most visible in the completed model.

The first time out building this kit, I used the *Monogram* tracks and running gear. Though the model came out nice, the tracks hurt the finished model, due to excessive warpage during packaging. I went back to refinish and reattach these parts, watching them closely as they set to make sure the "plastic memory" didn't cause them to go awry again. Sure, I could take the chance on purchasing another kit to replace them, but I'd eventually go for a more ambitious solution in replacing them altogether.

In the second assembly step, you're instructed to place seats onto the cargo floor. This single piece floor is nice, if simple. There isn't a great deal of detail you could add here other than minor cosmetics. I suggest cutting off all the tie-downs on the floor, and replacing them with new ones if you use the *Monogram* part. This goes for all the tie-downs on the model. The Weasel was covered with them, and in different locations. Some had them all, but some were removed in the field for specialized assignments. Early Weasels came equipped with seatbelts for all personnel in the vehicle, and it might be a nice touch if you decided to add them. I chose not to add them—my crew was a bit too macho for this feature. (It was that Lee Marvin lookin' soldier who opposed it.)

I chose to discard the kit floor part in my model, replacing it with sheet styrene. I replaced the tie downs, driver's seat, steering levers, gearshift housing and ducting with plastic stock in far less time than detailing the kit part would have taken. The Weasel's rear seats could be removed, which I wanted to model anyway, for cargo hauling. It would take forever and a day to sand down those seat cushions molded into the floor board.

Next, I sanded off a couple of ejector pin marks on the rear of the windshield frame. Most of the details of the Weasel windshield is molded in the *Monogram* part, except for the canvas bow support rod, canvas top hooks, and minor cos-

metic pieces. Plastic rod and strip corrects these deficiencies. I left the windshield wipers alone for the time being, since I would not attach the finished windshield to the model until after painting. The two bumps on the lower right hand corner of the windshield frame represent motors for the lower wipers, so resist sanding them off. I drilled holes in them for running electrical wiring.

Also in this step, you add the powered capstan and lights to the bowdeck. Minor detailing and thinning of the capstan goes a long way. I added two tie-downs here, and sanded away the headlight cable molded into the bowdeck. I chose to replace the headlight/blackout light cluster with spares from the parts box, wiring them to an electrical junction box.

Spotlights equipped early Weasels. These were replaced with the headlight/blackout light arrangement, and on later models, just a single headlight. The Weasel's engine-powered capstan winch was used to recover vehicles, or the Weasel itself, when needed; it used a long rope, which is commonly seen stowed on the M29C's bow deck.

Before continuing assembly, you must address a deficiency in the kit. There's a major void between the floor, bowdeck, and engine bay that must be filled. Blocking off the driver's compartment is simple, and two plastic sheets will do nicely. For the driver's bulkhead, use the molded-in edge of the front cell on the outside of the hull as your guide for placement. Extend the engine wall forward from the piece *Monogram* provides you to meet the driver's bulkhead.

Next, you'll mount the floor and bowdeck to the hull halves. You'll also pin the windshield between the hull halves. I had to sand my kit's hull halves to provide an even mating surface. I glued them with liquid cement, and pinned them together with rubber bands—high tech, I know, but I wanted a solid bond that could withstand the heavy sanding that would come later when eliminating the ugly seam down the middle of the hull. I also ran lengths of plastic strip down in seam inside the hull, to help shore up the gaps. The actual Weasel's hull is a welded single-piece design, and a seam running down the middle just won't do.

References:

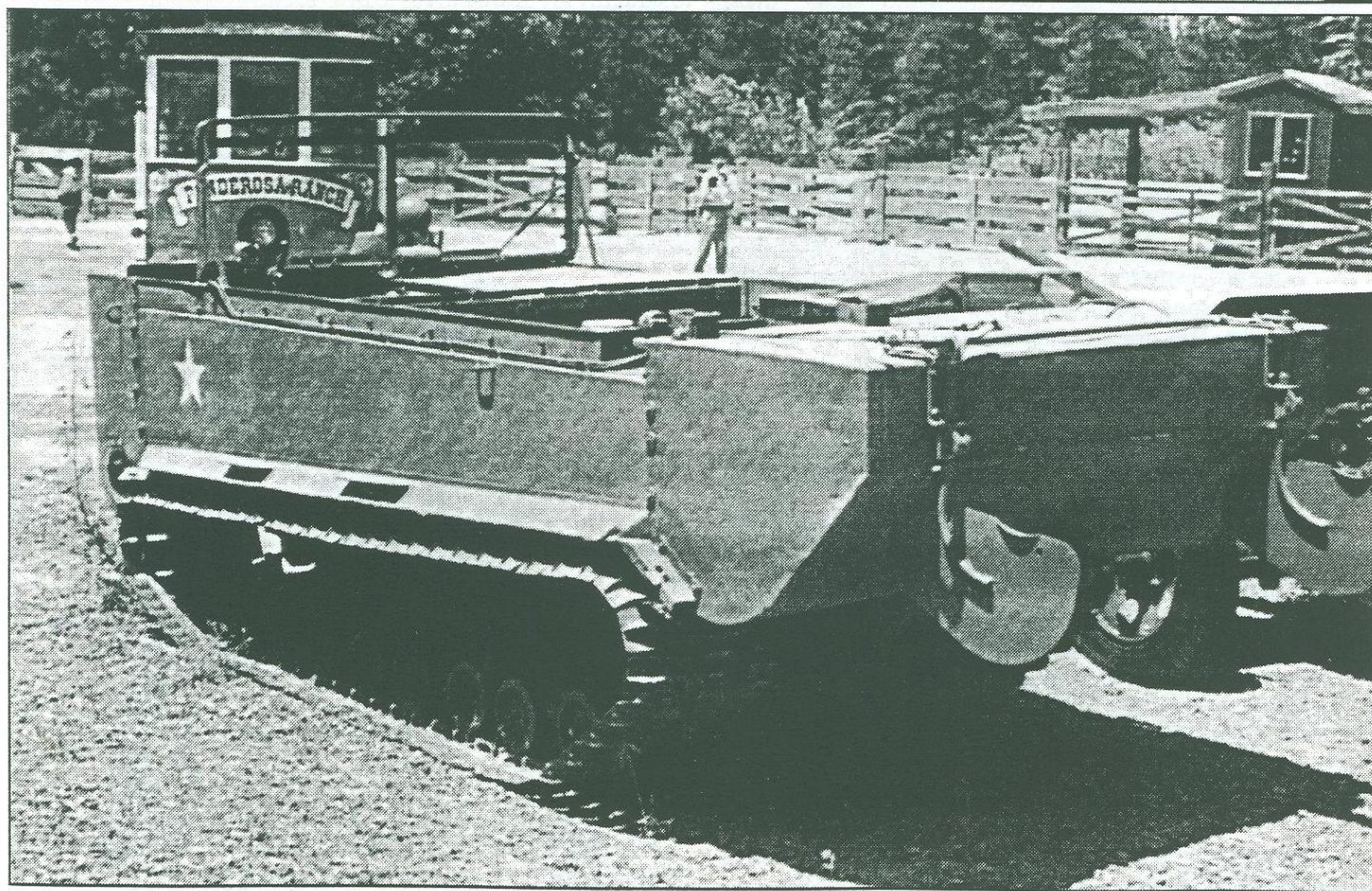
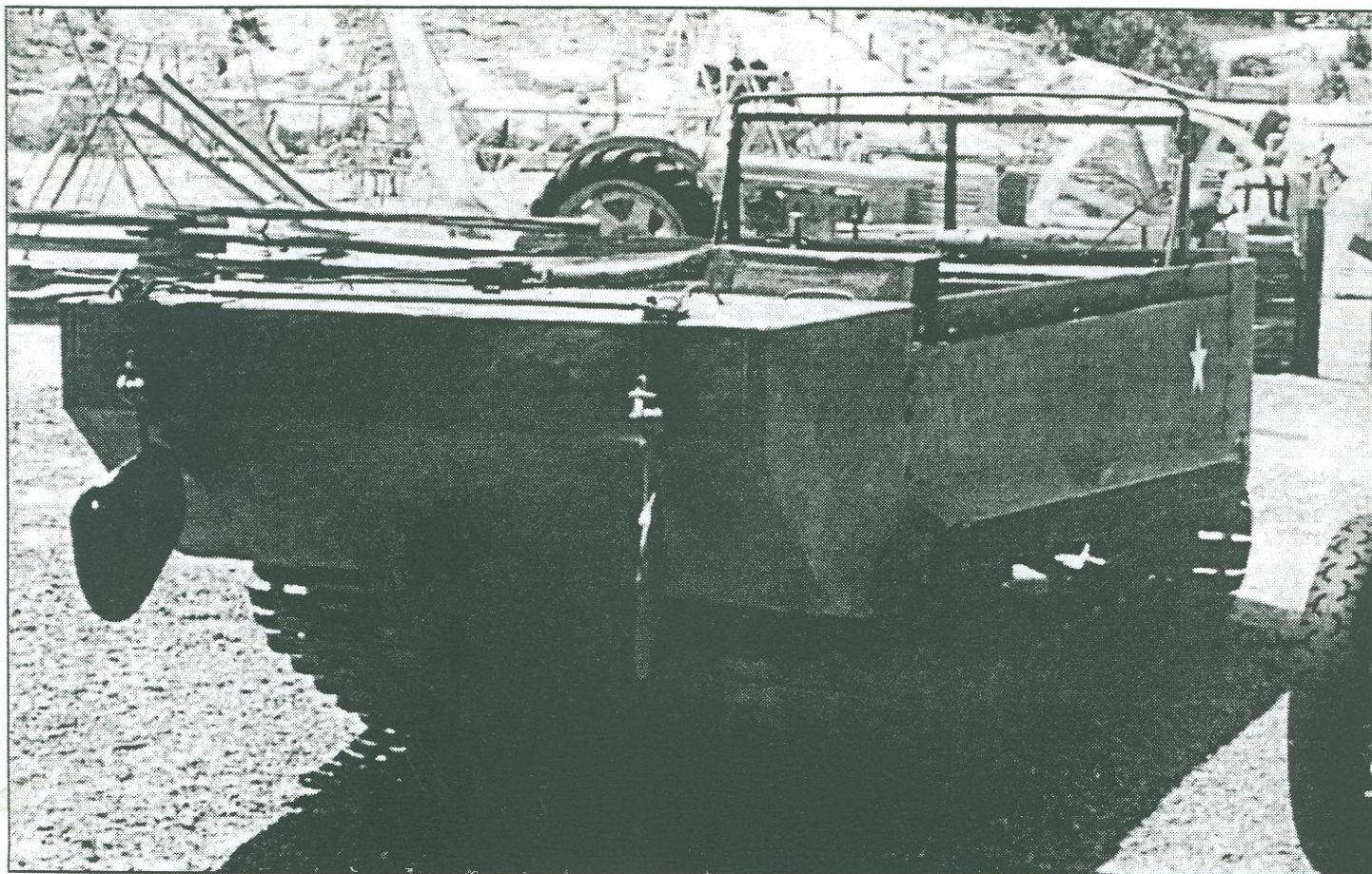
Military & Civilian Amphibians 1940—1990, by R.N. Clarke; Brooklands Books Ltd. (UK), 1996

World War Two Military Vehicles—Transport & Half-tracks, by G.N. Georgano, Osprey Publishing, 1995 (Book Packaging Co. (UK) 1994)

Armor in Korea, by Jim Mesko, Squadron Signal Publications, 1984

Armor in Vietnam, by Jim Mesko, Squadron Signal Publications, 1982

Military Vehicles of World War 2, by John Church, Blanford Books Ltd. (UK) Sterling Publishing (USA), 1982



Two rear views of Weasels, showing the "one side fits all" twin rudders to good effect. Also, note the unique track construction, a feature the *Monogram* kit lacks and any serious effort at building the model needs.

I sanded all of the molded in tie-downs and replaced them with new parts. When the hull had dried completely, I sanded and filled the centerline seam. This is much easier said than done. On the left hull side, I cut away the gunwale and replaced it with plastic strip and loops to run cables for connecting the tiller bar and rudders.

I then cut the molded in splash plate away with a razor saw. I replaced this part with a new one fashioned from foil and added brackets for articulation. I chose foil for the splash plate to simulate, with denting and minor bending, how flimsy the actual piece was. When I cut away the splash plate, however, I noticed a large gap between the hull and bow deck. This was filled with plastic strip before mounting the foil replacement splash plate permanently.

In the eighth step, you're directed to mount the centerline bulkhead separating the driver/engine compartment from the cargo area. Not much to do here. I drilled six drainage holes on the bottom left side. Clean up an ejector pin mark, sand down some locating pins, add some tie-downs, and this step is done.

Monogram's radio and transmitter unit is quite interesting, if questionable in its accuracy. You could replace them if so inclined, but I wouldn't knock the builder for using them. Dressing up the parts offered in the kit will give you some nice units to put in your model. Carefully adding a little shelf made from plastic sheet and rod will allow you to remove the *Monogram* radios if more complete information appears in the future on the radio fit for the M29C.

The Weasel's electrical system is fully suppressed for mounting radios. This, coupled with its excellent cross-country and amphibious abilities, made the Weasel an ideal command and radio vehicle.

I chose to make a radio shelf for my model from plastic strip and rod. I turned to *Verlinden Productions'* excellent resin castings of WWII radio sets to complete the section. These resin pieces are gorgeous, and add to any model. Since the Weasel is a small model, the radios become a central feature if you decide to mount them. I drilled holes to wire the transmitter, receiver, and generator in the end assembly at this point.

The engine deck is a simple piece. Sand off the molded tie downs, and replace them with new ones if desired. Some pictures show these, some don't. I didn't replace them.

I drilled out my instrument panel and added new gauges to the tiny holes. I also added a map bag and a kick panel for the driver's compartment, with bolts for securing it. Some Weasels had a removable plate above the engine deck to increase cargo carrying area, and you could too with a simple plastic sheet part measuring scale 2'3" x 3'. I wanted to show the markings on the engine deck, so I decided not to add this.

The fun part of this step is mounting the stern deck. What can I say other than break out the sanding block and the #5 grit sandpaper. It might be more expedient to tie the part to a brick, leash it to your bumper, and take off down Highway 237. *Monogram* molded the axe and shovel to the rear deck—molded it on good and thick. Even the plastic soldiers will thank you for sanding off these parts.

After parking the car, I filled and sanded the seams between the hull and rear deck. Then, I replaced the detail I removed from the rear deck with sheet styrene and bolts. I cut off the

large hooks for the rudders and replaced them with little foil loops. Toss the muffler guard *Monogram* gives you, and replace it with foil brackets, brass mesh for the screen, and plastic tubing for the muffler and exhaust.

Weasels had extended exhaust pipes that ran horizontally out the muffler's right side, to the edge of the vehicle, then curved over to run down the side of the hull. You'll need to provide this, as *Monogram* didn't. I have seen photos of Weasels without the exhaust pipe, but this isn't common. I cut a length of solid plastic rod, drilled out one end, and bent the part to the appropriate shape. Sand, file, drill, and you're done. The muffler is accomplished in the same manner, with a slightly larger diameter plastic tube.

I added an antenna mount appropriate for the time period, and wired it to a connection on the radio. I also added a loop on the stern deck for guiding cables connecting the tiller bar and the rudders.

Next I added the boat hook. Purists will want to replace the entire part with pieces fashioned by hand. I found *Monogram's* part quite acceptable after some clean-up.

The instructions call for the track aprons to be attached to the hull now. I chose to wait until the end assembly—after attaching the tracks, naturally. The apron parts themselves are nicely done although I suggest you drill out the drainage holes. You can find examples of the actual Weasel with and without the track aprons, so you're not required to mount them on your model. I chose to because the vehicle used them as part of its propulsive system when water borne.

The track aprons on the full-sized vehicle trap water inside the sponsons when waterborne. Track motion forces the water trapped inside the aprons against the hull towards the bow, in effect pushing the Weasel in the direction of track motion. A Weasel just doesn't look ready to swim without its aprons on.

Next, tackle the rudder assembly. Some Weasels had their rudders removed for other battlefield duties like ambulatory transport, so you could ditch this sequence altogether. Again, however, a Weasel just doesn't look ready to swim without its paddles...

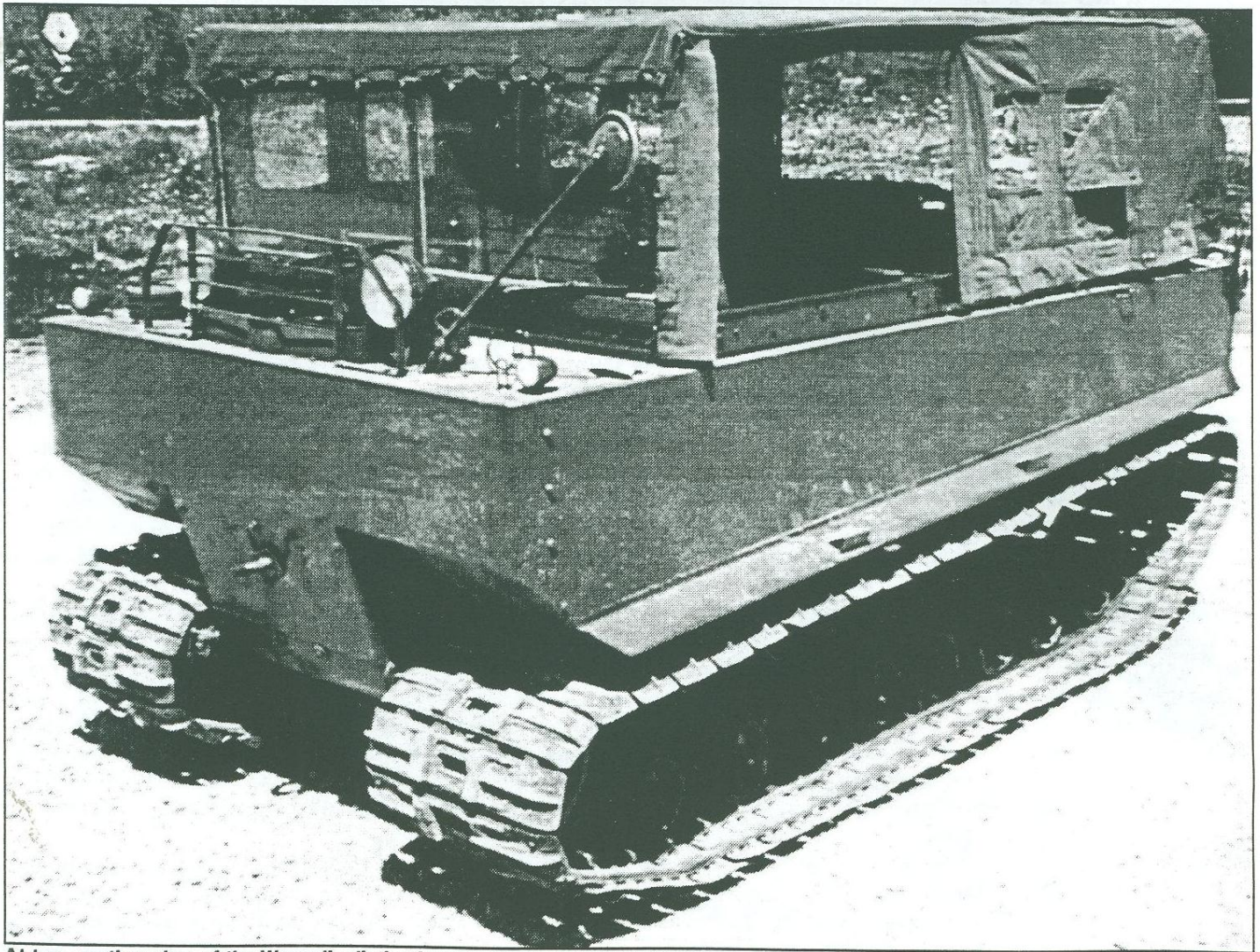
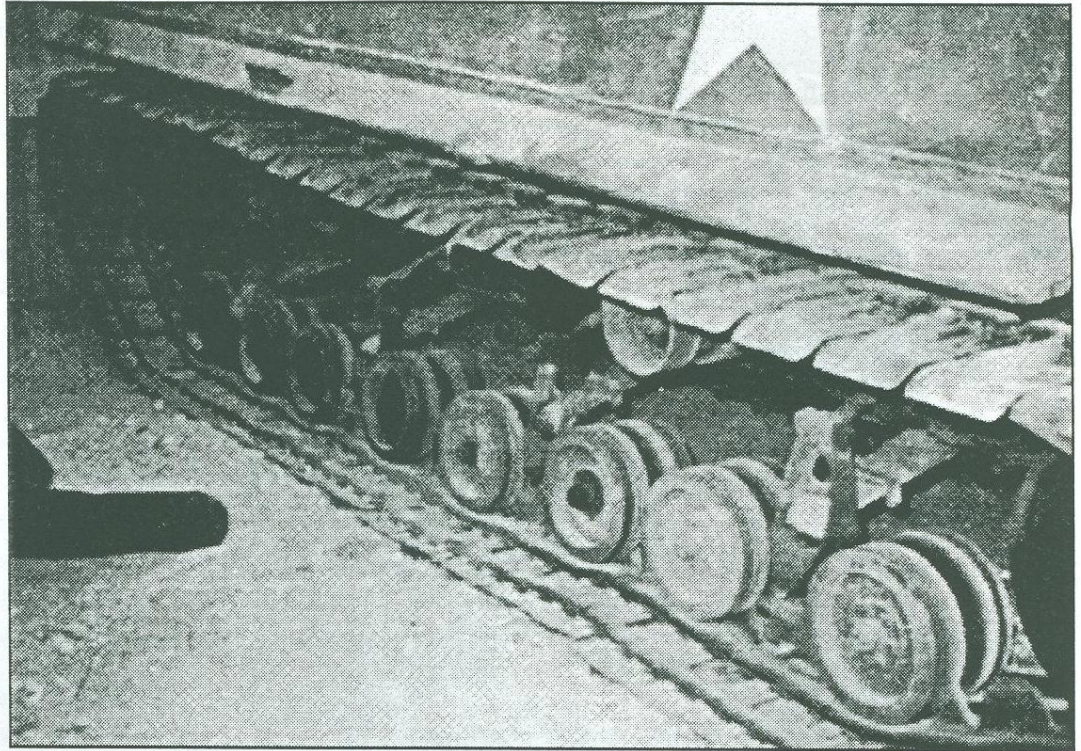
The *Monogram* rudder assembly is just a bit too thick, and laughably huge compared to the simple and totally inaccurate mounting hooks they provide. For 1957, the working rudders were cool and the beefy hooks to hold them were acceptable. Hopefully, you cut these ugly things off when you attached the probably still-warm-from-sanding rear deck to the hull. If not, break down and cut 'em off now.

The actual Weasel's rudders are much, much, thinner than the examples you get in the model kit—by several scale inches. I liked the kidney shaped parts. Use them as templates for cutting replacements from sheet styrene. With a half-round file, dish the top of the rudder paddles. This feature aided in tucking in the paddles when stowed for land operations. Drill a hole in the top of the paddles; this hole represents where a rope is used to lash the paddles to the connecting bar or tie-downs for stowage.

Interestingly, the paddles were not mounted symmetrically like you'd expect to see. The stiffening rods, which connected the paddles to the rudder arms, are affixed to the left sides on both rudders. From the left side of the Weasel, you could clearly see the stiffeners, but from the right side you

only saw the paddle face. Replacing a damaged unit was easy, with no "right" or "left" sides to stock.

The last details were numerous tie-downs normally seen on the full-size examples. Inside the cargo area, and in some locations around the cargo carrier, the Weasel had many of these. As not all Weasels were utilized in the same manner, some had more of these fittings, and in different spots. I chose, again, to model the Weasel in a prototypical fashion, and add the basic fittings. Stuck on how to replicate these prominent tie-downs, I turned to scavenging an upcoming project. My Challenger 3 Mk. I MBT surrendered its tie-downs from the *On-the-Mark Models* brass detail set. These



At top, another view of the Weasel's distinctive running gear and tracks; below, a Weasel with the canvas roof in place. While the roof was great for crews, modelers will probably want to leave it off to show the much-needed work they've done on the kit.

were the large-size fittings I was looking for, as the full-sized Weasel's tie-downs were anything but subtle.

Lastly, sand off and add new windshield wipers. The Weasel had three of them. On the driver's side, there were two wipers, top and bottom. The right side of the windshield has a single bottom-mounted wiper. You'll need to add windshield glass in the end assembly too.

The actual Weasels were used for all the same jobs Jeeps were in non-amphibious units. They often hauled around the 1/4 ton trailer commonly seen behind Jeeps too. As this trailer is amphibious, it is a natural for a Weasel's cargo duties. It was common for the Weasel crews to tie a rope to the tow hitch when pulling a trailer. This rope was strung up to the driver's compartment, and if the need arose where the Weasel had to make a speedy departure, he could tug the rope and cut the trailer loose.

Wanting to replicate this feature, without adding a trailer behind my model, I decided to run the rope from the tow hitch to the driver's compartment. My trailer would later be attached to my Weasel's stablemate, a Ford G.P.A.

Painting this model is pretty straightforward. Again, olive drab overall, with white standard markings. I found no references with nicknames or other tags to dress up the Weasel other than a Red Cross banner on the sides and top. This isn't because soldiers somehow refused to nickname their Weasels. The French adorned their M29C Crabs (not called Weasels) with nicknames and their normal colorful markings. I felt no urge to model a French Crab whatsoever, especially just to get colorful markings and nicknames.

Snow camouflage schemes were used on early Weasels, but later models were flat olive drab and wore no camouflage at all. I have seen no good reference on them either, so I can't reliably point you in a good direction for the camo schemes.

The model is so small that painting goes pretty quickly. There aren't special details that need to be picked out for special colors. Weather your seats, rust your exhaust pipe and muffler, basic stuff.

The only legitimate knocks on the model are in the running gear. The tracks are passingly accurate overall, and require additional detailing to meet today's standard. This can be realized. Replacing the road wheels is a bit more complicated, but can be done too.

I found the model is wonderful with the original parts, and I pondered the decision to modify the running gear for almost as long as it took to build the kit. I got a nice model with the original parts. For eight months, I've pondered the ultimate replacement for the tracks and running gear for the Weasel. Though I'll accomplish this modification in the future, I decided to fix this model's original parts and save the replacements for a new Weasel.

As my second attempt at building a vintage armor kits, this project was very satisfying. Again, cheap and not a very bad model kit, *Monogram's* Weasel really deserves a closer look. For a kit that is some 39 years old, it simply is not the gross blob of plastic I expected to find. It is downright good in most respects, and stands the test of time.

For my money, a Weasel in the hand is worth a *DML* kit in the bush...

Of scales and rails: how models got that size

By Bob Miller

Ever wonder why *Esci* armor is scaled 1:72 and *Airfix* 1:76, close but an irritating five percent apart? Or why car models come in 1:43? I came near the answer in a comment I made in a review of *Railway Modeller* magazine some time ago, but I finally got the definitive word in a slim but info-packed book called *How to Go Railway Modelling* (Norman Simmons, Patrick Stephens, publisher, Cambridge, England). Let's see if I can interpret from the English to whatever it is we speak.

The key to this is "loading gauge," the limiting dimensions set for railway rolling stock by tunnels, track spacings, etc. Early on, the Brits set theirs at 9 ft 0 inches wide, by 13 ft 6 inches high, with some shape details modifying this at the corners. In the U.S. the corresponding numbers are 15' 0" and 10' 6", and continental Europe is, in general, 10' 2" and 13' 8". Standard track gauge (spacing between inner faces of rails) is the same for all at 4' 8.5". So in model railroading, HO gauge is 16.5 mm, at a scale of 1/87 (or 3.5 mm/ft), and N gauge is 9 mm at 1/160 (or 1.91 mm/ft).

But not in Britain. Everyone uses (for instance) 9 mm track gauge for N, so the smaller British loading gauge means that there's nearly a millimeter less space between a wheel flange and the outer face of a car. But you need some minimum amount of space out there because most wheels run in outboard needle bearings, plus you need enough plastic for a robust running gear.

This tended to force the substructure out of proportion. They solved it by adopting 1:148 (2.06 mm/ft) scale. Now,

their track gauge is smaller than true scale, but rolling stock looks good. (It does not look good, however, if you put British and U.S. or continental rolling stock on the same layout: turns out that British stock is significantly smaller than ours, and the models make them look similar in size.)

But things get still odder: turns out that at about the time that Rapido in Germany invented N-gauge, the Brits proposed OOO gauge, 9.5 mm, with a corresponding scale of 1:152.4, or 2 mm/ft. How did they arrive at this? Well, HO at 1:87 scale is an *American* standard. The Brits, for reasons I described above, use 1:76 (or 4 mm/ft) scale on 13.5 mm track gauge, and call it OO. So, whaddya know, their OOO scale is (almost) exactly 1/2 their OO scale. By comparison, U.S./Continental N is not related to HO in any rational way I can see. It's like Rapido picked the smallest motor that was available and cheap and scaled to that. Although OOO has essentially disappeared, they still refer to both OOO and N as "2mm scale".

See how that clarifies everything? Car models in 1:43 are actually British O gauge scale (American O scale is 1:48). *Airfix* armor models are OO scale of 4 mm/ft (an interesting number in itself: it's as if they said "well, metrication may be coming eventually, but we're only going half-metric for now"), and if you come upon buildings or vehicles in British N, OOO, or 2 mm scale, they would go beautifully in a diorama with *Minicraft's* new 1:144 DC-3.

Now, can somebody please explain where 1:35 scale came from?

SEPTEMBER MINUTES

Attendance—and spirits—were high at the September meeting. We had an expanded raffle, thanks to Cliff Kranz, Ricky Yokogawa and Hobbies Unlimited, Tom Harrison and Bert McDowell of *Tom's Modelworks* and Randy Rothhaar of HobbyTown USA. Speaking of HobbyTown, the store is moving across the street, and for their grand opening, we'll be arranging a display of models. It's a great opportunity to "meet the public" and perhaps inspire some future modelers. Call event coordinator Richard Pedro for information at (408) 262-5412.

Also, don't forget—October is the kickoff for the annual Veteran's Administration Model Drive! Last year we collected over 450 models—let's top that number this year! The best models are simpler kits; these will be used in the rehabilitative services department of the hospital.

Model Talk featured more than 70 projects! Newcomer Dennis Ybe's *Italeri Panther A* is about ready to take to its tracks; Dennis' homemade zimmerit is covered with camouflage created with *Floquil* and *Polly S* paints. Dennis also built a model of a Nissan 300ZX, a subject he's familiar with (he owns one!). Roy Sorensen will not be pigeonholed: he displayed a beautiful *Monogram* '39 Ford delivery truck, spruced up with '37 Ford headlights and windows from a '37 Plymouth; a *Tamiya* Bradley AFV with a detailed interior; a *Revell* '32 street rod, painted with *Boyd's* pearl purple paint, and an AMT XB-35 Flying Wing! Bill Ferrante brought in a bust of an alien from the upcoming feature *Mars Attacks!* sculpted by a friend of his; those wishing to have this example of Martian life should contact Bill. Tom Bush the elder's large '55 Ford and '65 Mustang were painted with *Car Color* paints straight from the can, and looked great. Gil Macias chopped—and chopped, and chopped and chopped—his '49 Mercury, and then gave the royal roadster a coat of purple paint. Hubert Chan's latest armor project is a *Tamiya* Panzer IV; he's using the *Czech Master's* detail parts as a reference for improving the old tank. Tom Bush Jr. assembled his 1:43 Honda NSX out-of-the-box, then polished the plastic and added a photo-etched Honda emblem for a sporty lil' speedster. Kent McClure is spacing out; his impressive fleet of 1:2400 spacecraft allow him to practice his painting skills in an "anything goes" environment, and his Aphid aliens for another game allow him to practice his figure painting. When Kent's stuck in the office at lunch, he works on a *Zvezda* Italian 15/40 tank kit. Ralph Patino's scratchbuilt wrecker will be a showpiece; he's got the wrecker painted in automotive jade green with yellow striping, and he's waiting to add the boom to the bed. Roy Sutherland's got a Bf 109D-9 and a *Hasegawa* 1:72 Grumman *Martlet* in progress, and other modelers will progress faster on their kits thanks to the masters for *Jaguar's* 1:72 *Hurricane* set Roy had on display. Chris Hughes is going nuts on his *Tamiya* Sherman, turning it into an early version by adding details from *On the Mark Models* and *Chesapeake Models* and scratch-built details made of wire and styrene. The finished Sherman will belong to the 75th Tank Battalion during fighting in the Philippines. Tom Trankle is applying a familiar formula to fix up *Hasegawa's* 1:48 Ju 87 Stuka: *Eduard* detail parts and *Ministry of Small Aircraft Production* decals. Richard

Pedro's Goro figure is on its feet and entering the final painting stage; Rich is getting good results using combinations of raw sienna, burnt sienna and white paints from *Liquitex*. Rich's next figure looks to be a figure from the Japanese film *Cyber Ninja 2*. Mike Burton is working on a series of P-51s from *Monogram*; his "B" will be "Ding Hao," with markings from the *Aeromaster* sheet. Mike's also in the mood for our club contests; he's building *Aviation Usk's* Tsurugi purpose-built Kamikaze for the "Missiles of October" contest, and he's turned an *Otaki* Ki-100 into the flagship for Team Nippon Racing for our November "Unlimited Air Racers" contest. Cliff Kranz showed that simple kits can yield good results, putting a shine on a Snap-Tite truck kit. Mark Hernandez is expanding his "World War II 1946" collection, adding a Lippisch P.212 that will feature a new cockpit and a seat by *Airwaves* when it is finished. Rich Solomon's diorama showed a ship in a different action than we're used to; the bow and stern of his torpedoed ship are from *Hasegawa*. Kelly Avery is building six 1:48 P-38 *Lightrnings*; his first, the "E" and "J" models by *Minicraft*, fit well, he says. Mike Williams is building another *Star Wars* deflection tower, this one with lights and blinking laser cannons. Brian Finch plans to douse the competition at Redding with his P-47 *Thunderbolt* firebomber; he plans on putting the details currently on his *Monogram* "D" into an "N" before the event. Brian is also working on a *Tamiya* P-51D and a Dodge WC-51, which he's turning into a gun truck, complete with new tie-downs and foot pedals. Ben Pada is adding to his 1:48 stable with a *Hasegawa* Macchi Folgore, a *Hobbycraft* Bf 109E-6 and a P-51D from *Tamiya* that's getting a *Tekniks* interior. Brad Chun is building his own convoy escort, this one an M4 half-track with sandbags made of Milliput. Eric McClure has rescribed his *Hasegawa* 1:72 *Hurricane*; unfortunately, it's too early for the *Jaguar* detail set, so Eric will have to build another one someday! Mark Forester is building a "World of Outlaws" sprint car from the frame up, changing the chassis and building his own tube cage for his car. Laramie Wright's M60A1 from the *Esci* kit had a few sinkmarks, but went together well, he says; it now wears a Marine Corps scheme of green, black and tan. Al Gonzalez was an adviser in El Salvador in the bad old days; he built *Monogram's* A-37 *Dragonfly* as a Salvadoran tweety, using *Eduard* details and an overcoat of *Testors'* Metallizer sealer as a base and overcoat. Rob Mackie and Jim Gordon presented a little history lesson; they each did the Japanese light cruiser *Agano*—Rob's model being the 1944 version, and Jim's being the 1922 original configuration. Both benefited from *Tom's Modelworks* brass parts, stretched sprue rigging and other details. Jim also scratch-built a Kawanishi H6K "Mavis" flying boat in 1:700! Frank Babbitt fashioned the *Heller* Saab J-29 *Tunnan* into one of the few Swedish planes to see combat in its native colors, using the scheme the planes wore in the Congo in 1961. Bill Shipway is bashing together a German scout car, which he plans to motorize at some point. Ken Miller's scale is bigger than Jim Gordon's, but his 1:144 planes are still small. On the table this time were an *Aeroclub* HU-16 *Albatross* (with optional position weight), an F-117 and a checkerboarded P-51D

cross-country racer. Chris Bucholtz displayed various parts of his F-6D *Mustang* conversion, which is based on the *Hasegawa* 1:72 kit and uses detail parts from *Cooper Details*, *Eduard* and *Puget Sound Models*. Chris also parked a 1:8 Ferrari F.40 on the table; this sprawling model came from the *Pocher* kit. Joel Rojas is working on a fleet of Caprices and Impalas, many of which suffer from similar sink marks on the suspension and underbody components. Randy Rothhaar's 1:32 RF-4C *Phantom II* will use the *Revell* nose mated with the *Tamiya* fuselage and wings, and use *True Details* ejection seats for crew safety. Randy is also updating his *Tamiya* MiG-15 with *Kendall Models* seats and gun bays, and he's building a model of his new Ford

Mustang from the *Monogram* kit. Also on display—his finished Coast Guard HH-3F *Pelican*! Jason McChristian might not disagree when the plane builders call his SA-9 from *DML* a "target," since he's dressed it in Iraqi markings (and dressed it up with brass details). Larry Roberts "recycled relics" this time were two Bf 109s in the markings shown on the front and back covers of *Messerschmitt Bf 109 In Action Part 2*. And the Model of the Month goes to... Matt Reich, who engaged in building almost the scope of modeling! Matt displayed a bent-up Terry Labonte NASCAR racer, a *Hasegawa* P-51, a *Minicraft* Tiger tank, and a *Spitfire* Vb in 1:48! If variety is the spice of life, then Matt's collection could make great chili!

Coming in October:

Ask not what your country
can do for you. Ask what you
can build for the

Missiles of October contest!

Anything that meets the definition of "missile"
("a weapon or other object, as a rock, spear, bullet,
rocket, etc. designed to be thrown, fired
or launched toward a target") can be entered!

Let your imagination go ballistic!

•October 18•

Coming in November:

"GENTLEMEN, YOU HAVE A REALLY, REALLY
WILD MODEL CONTEST!"

UNLIMITED AIR

RAGERS 2

If it turns a prop and is NOT
regularly seen at Reno or Chino, it's
eligible at SVSM! Racing rarities
limited only by your imagination!

•November 15•

Coming in December:

The third annual Holiday Pizza Pig-Out

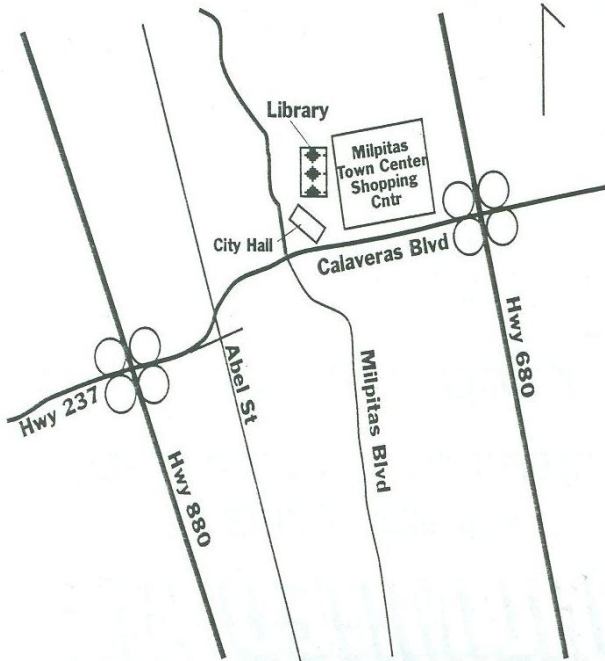
and Gift Theft Party

And special bonus event

WORLD WAR II

THUNDERBOLTS' CONTEST

•December 20•



Next meeting:
**7:30 p.m.,
Friday,
October 18**

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

Fax: (408) 260-2067
E-mail: 207-3426@mcimail.com



**Chris Bucholtz, Editor
Silicon Valley Scale Modelers
P.O. Box 361644
Milpitas, CA 95036**



**DAN BUNTON
910 NIDO DRIVE
CAMPBELL CA 12345**