

Taking a *Mosquito* to sea with *Paragon's* parts

By Jim Priete

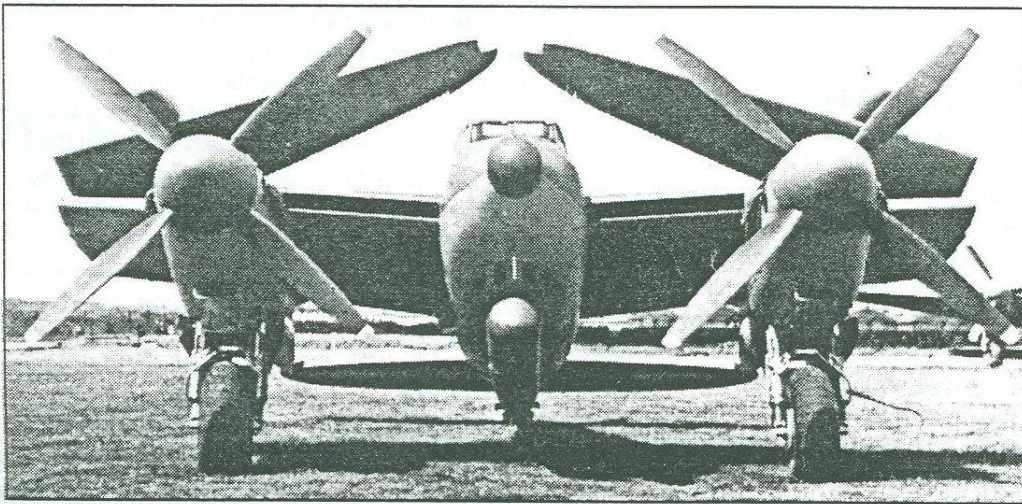
When I came across *Paragon's* conversion for a *Sea Mosquito* TR.33 in 1:48 at the IPMS Nationals in Albuquerque a couple of years ago, my modeling imagination immediately shifted into high gear. I had always wanted to build the *Airfix* "Mossies," but I was put off by the fact that the kit was an FB.VI, my least favorite mark. Now I had a chance to build one of my favorite versions of this aircraft, and a Fleet Air Arm subject as well!

Most of you are probably familiar with the *Airfix Mosquito*, but for those who are not, it is a very fine kit and despite its age, it is accurate and well-detailed, even by today's standards. The only other kit in 1:48 is the old (30+ years) *Monogram* kit that is not even in the running. It lacks the most basic details and suffers from glaring inaccuracies in shape. Needless to say, the *Paragon* conversion is designed for the *Airfix* kit.

I ran into a few problems with this conversion set, but the quality of the pattern making and resin casting is, in general, very good. You get new propeller blades, a torpedo, tail

hook and fairing, a radome nose plug, and a radar set for the cockpit. A small fret of photo-etched parts similar in quality to those produced by *True Details* includes wing folds and details for the torpedo, and a small sheet of basic instructions is included. Unfortunately, these

instructions don't give any information on paint schemes, but if you have books on the Mossie or the Fleet Air Arm, or if you have any back issues of *Scale Aircraft Modelling* with articles on the *Mosquito*, you should be able to scrape together just enough information.

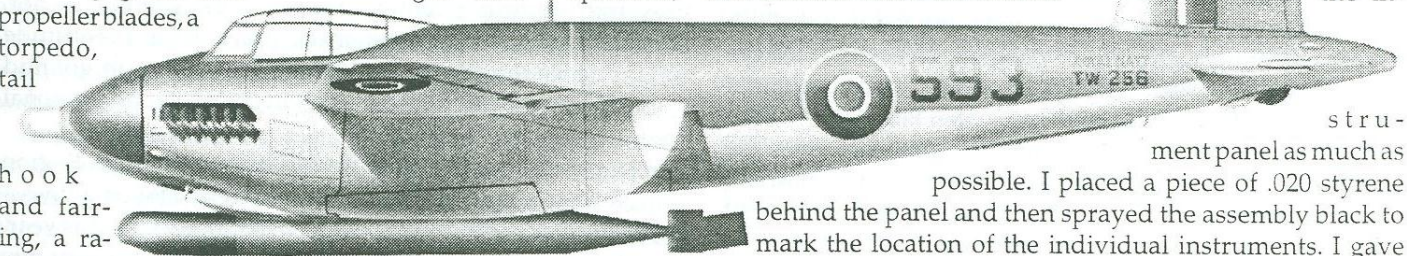


This head-on view shows many of the *Sea Mosquito's* defining traits—the folding wings, four-bladed propellers and thimble nose housing the radar.

the Mossie had a small and very busy interior. *Eduard* produces a photo-etched detail set that is tailored to the *Airfix* stage. Even though it is meant for an FB.VI, many details are common to all *Mosquito* variants.

I also tried a technique for the instrument panel that I had heard about some time ago. I drilled out the dial faces the instrument panel as much as possible. I placed a piece of .020 styrene behind the panel and then sprayed the assembly black to mark the location of the individual instruments. I gave this sheet a coat of Future acrylic floor polish to create a gloss surface, and then cut out individual instrument dials from decal sheets, applying them over the marked locations. I then glued a piece of clear styrene on top and attached the whole

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Driving home from OrangeCon '97 gives you a lot of time to think. For me, much of this time was spent thinking about the contest I just attended. All of my thoughts centered on a question a friend asked me at the close of the contest. Actually, it wasn't so much a question as it was a statement.

"You don't have much luck in LA," he said with a grin. I hadn't seen him since last year, and it was good to see a friendly face. I shrugged my shoulders in reply.

This was my first time attending OrangeCon. I've heard many, many good things about the event and the caliber of competition, and people who attend regularly. Instead of being skeptical, I was eager to venture down to the Southland and give it a go. I left the demons of Pasadena and Las Vegas behind, and came into it with an open mind.

I found the event one of the best managed I've seen. They were quick and efficient, for the most part, through registration and the room layout for vendors and contestants. The location is excellent, and well-located. Kudos to IPMS Orange County for such a well run contest.

However, the highlight of this trip was meeting five members of the Los Angeles Tuskegee Airman. Aside from Morry Bellville, the R-8 Regional Coordinator who is one class act, these guys were the charm and personality of the event. I bought my wife a T-shirt with the planes they flew in the war. She wanted them to sign her shirt, as we'd mount in a shadow box. We didn't have a permanent marker for them to use, but Oliver Goodall went all the way across the street to Albertson's to buy a marker to sign his name. I was humbled and thrilled that someone made that kind of a gesture to sign our shirt.

In contrast, I literally had to beg, and never got, an ink pen from the guy at the registration table. He was so gruff and annoyed by my request; I left the pen on the table where it lay. All of the Airmen signed our shirt. Later in the day, I purchased my first book about the Tuskegee Airmen, and the attending members signed the photos in which they appeared in the book.

I doubt you'll find a more approachable, entertaining, jovial, cordial, intelligent, and interesting group of personalities as the Tuskegee Airmen are. I'd hate to use the cliché "larger than life", but it is appropriate for these gentlemen. I really want these men to attend our Convention next year and share a little of what they've seen with you too.

Where meeting such genuine people such as the Tuskegee Airmen buoyed my spirits, there were others who brought it down—not just the guy at the registration table.

I've never made secret of how ill run and ill-conducted the last IPMS Las Vegas event I attended was. Without rehashing it all here, suffice to say that they needed a serious dose of "basic judging knowledge and technique" infused into the contest mentality. It isn't enough to pin a moniker of "best in the west" on your contest without actually exemplifying this motto. However, through it all I initially found them a nice group of people and a pleasure to be around. The efforts of one lead individual in their group changed my impressions.

This chimp made every opportunity to challenge and goad me into a second round of unpleasantness—even after two years. I counted five separate efforts, at the top of his already spent lungs, to vocalize how bad my attitude was or is

towards contests and how he thought he'd never see me ever again at a contest. Inside or outside the contest room, it didn't seem to matter. He felt the need to verbally assault anyone within earshot (me included) with his tirades until I found something more interesting to look at or listen to. I would like to think, observing the reactions of people around him and some of his compatriots, that this guy was wearing his self-worth on his sleeve for all to see. Though annoyed, I refused to give this blowhard the satisfaction of addressing him. In typical Neanderthal fashion, he kept on pushing.

I felt no need to defend myself anymore, no need to again tell this jerky-boy that he has no idea of whom I am, or what I think, say, or do. Actually, since he chose to delve into race issues, I gave up talking to him entirely. His assumption of my ethnic nationality, as if it plays a part in model judging, is as ill informed as his modeling efforts, so further conversation would go for naught.

This loser from Slot-City got his satisfaction with the award presentation, though. In every contest, there are going to be some strange calls, some mistakes, and some blatant cases of "home-cooking." OrangeCon is no different, and I find some of the calls just as confusing. In my particular case, it seemed the winners were models with basic flaws apparent to anyone who understands the term "basics." Simple and clear, and I'm blowing no sour grapes here. These were models you'd love to have on your shelf. I've been competing and judging these things long enough to state that. Interestingly enough, the winners happened to be buddies of this chimp, and he himself happened to be on the scene at the table when I packed my model away—to continue spouting his rhetoric and revel in his "victory." This is where I have problems with contests, and this mentality and undercurrent seems to be to the norm. His actions only confirm my suspicions.

I left feeling the fix was definitely in this time around—perhaps not with the members of the contest committee, but just a few bad personalities seeking to satisfy a grudge. For me, attending a contest is not worth a verbal barrage and a blatant screw job in the judging. I hope that filled this guy's empty heart, finally. I'd gladly give away any awards to help a loser like this.

There were other strange calls and occurrences, but I might stray into sounding contemptuous of the event. I'm not. Though I wish not to go down there with that kind of attitude and influence running around unchecked, others might find it entertaining. I put a lot of stock in how I spend personal time.

In Region IX, we evaluate models differently than Region VIII. Neither is right or wrong, just different. I loved witnessing the caliber of the models entered in OrangeCon this year. From two feet away, they are breathtaking. Yes, I meant two feet away. Where the basics are judged heavily here, they are not down there. The results of the contest bespeak this fact, as do the results of ours. I go to the events to understand where the judges and the local modeling community are coming from. For artistic impression and conversion efforts, OrangeCon is second to none. However, the basics seem to take a backseat to the above. Up here, it might very well be the reverse, and I prefer the basic approach.

Looking at the contest from the outside in made me think about how we might look from the inside out. Sacramento has been chided for some of the same actions in the past, but they aren't solely guilty. It isn't so hard to smile and enjoy oneself when getting together, is it? Don't bring your bad day, week, or whatever to a gathering like that. Smile, have a little fun or a kind word to say. The rudeness of a single guy at the registration table, or some other numb-nut from another club can sour an otherwise good experience. I don't feel like an outsider at our R-9 events, so I don't often feel the impact of these attitudes, like I have going elsewhere.

To answer my friend, I don't have much luck in LA, but I do learn a lot. By going out there, I look back into myself. I see why contest attendance is declining; though chapters have momentary 'ebon' events. I see why basically nice guys tend to shy away from the contest scene, and eventually chapter membership. The beauty and craftsmanship displayed on the tables does not make up for the lack of courtesy and sports-

EDITOR'S BRIEF

Here it is, November already! Just three months until the Kickoff Classic, and just eight months until the IPMS Nationals in Santa Clara. I've been wearing two hats for the last 18 months—one as your editor and a second as the chairman for the nationals. I think that, instead of talking about what's going on locally in the present, I should talk about what will be going on "nationally" next summer.

The basic stuff can be found on the Internet, at http://home1.gte.net/jkberg97/nats_home.htm. That's the URL for the 1998 Nationals Web Site, created by John Bergsing of the Stockton Tomcats, by trade a trucker but by hobby a high-tech web publisher par excellence! John and I have been adding bits and pieces to the site, which will grow and evolve right through the time of the event itself.

While the web site provides the basics, I want to let you know about the work behind the scenes. Mike Burton and Jim Lewis have used their high-tech know-how to create easy-to-use computer systems for registration and model entries. If you asked Mike right now who's registered and what they're eating at the banquet, he could tell you—it's that fast and that detailed. As for Jim's end, there will be no modelers' names on the tables, and no more handwriting of those names by judges—the computer will take care of it, creating a detailed list of names and model descriptions for the winners based on a simple numeric code. We'll have those names up on the website right after the banquet, too!

Angelo Deogracias has been magnificent in keeping an eye on the hotel reservation system, which has had bugs. When those bugs affected our guests, Angelo personally sorted things out. Kudos to him! Our vendor tables are completely sold out, and we're now taking names for a waiting list. Thanks to Mike Braun and Mike Burton; the two Mikes helped us surpass every goal we had for vendor space sales.

Dennis Bruno at the Castle Air Force Base Museum and Chuck Speir at Travis Air Force Base have gone great guns in organizing tours of those sites. For the hardy visitor, these will be rewarding day trips.

Now, for the stuff that isn't quite firmly set in stone... The tireless Bruce McBride is setting up a tour of the Western Aerospace Museum, and he's also trying to work with Otis

manship so often encountered.

Anyone can deal with close judging calls and decisions that don't go in their favor. That's the breaks in the competition circuit. However, no one should have to deal with the chimp I did in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, or a National Convention. This behavior is what I'm growing tired of. I wish I could change it, and I try on my level of participation. For those venturing to the next OrangeCon event, I have this to recommend.

Treat it like any other contest. It'll be as good or as bad as you want it to be—in other words, be a part of what's happening around you. Make it fun and have fun, for the good of yourself and the good of all around you. Don't be a member of a carload of jerks from over the hills, and don't dump on someone else you might not like or understand. Don't be the anonymous face in the crowd.

—Jim Lewis

Spunkmeyer Air to get some of our out-of-town visitors aloft during their stay. The Otis Spunkmeyer DC-3 is one of our tentative decal subjects, and a flight aboard the plane could really inspire modelers to put those decals to use.

Speaking of decals, these are always one of the great surprises of any nationals. Your editor has been working on a research project for a sheet of P-47D razorbacks, all with amazing cartoon nose art painted by a single pilot. You'll hear more about this as the nationals approach. Other subjects tentatively set: two or three notable (and local) P-51Ds; a set of decals for armor researched by Jim Lewis; 1:700 and 1:350 decals for ships (we're not telling what classes yet!), decals with a local connection for an upcoming *Hasegawa* release, and markings for some law enforcement vehicles with a local twist. Our goal is to preserve a local connection, but to provide subjects that modelers will want to use.

Our themed displays have some modelers—most specifically Jim Lewis, Bryan Finch, Brad Chun and the prolific and ambitious Jim Lund—building specifically for them.

We're also planning a few new tricks for judging. One of them is a display on judging criteria. Another is a concerted attempt to minimize the handling of models through organization and judge training.

A lot of you have asked how you can help. Well, you can volunteer to be a tour captain (basically, make sure that everyone who gets off the bus at a tour site gets back on!), help with set-up on July 1 (we'll need plenty of you for that!), man the registration tables, work with Bob Phillips on the security team, and help contribute to the Convention Publication. Let me know what you'd like to do; the more of us who volunteer, the less work we'll all have to do and the more fun we can have at our nationals!

Finally, let me thank Angelo Deogracias, Mike Burton, Mike Braun, John Bergsing, Chuck Speir, Bob Phillips, Dennis Bruno, Jim Lewis, Bill Ferrante and Mike Meek. These have been the hard-chargers and go-do-it guys of SemiCon, and you can attribute the success of the '98 nationals to them.

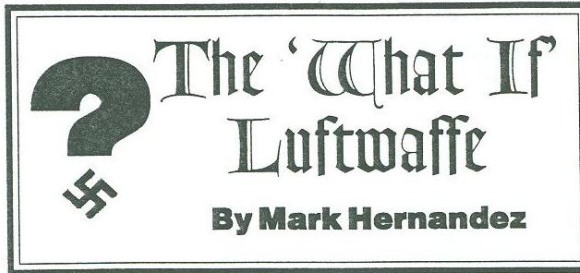
Well, gotta go finish a Kickoff Classic entry; if I shoot for that goal, just maybe I can finish in time for the Nationals!

—The Editor

Pilot's perils: Rammer and Glide bomber

Some German proposals late in the war neglected to treat the fate of the pilot as an important design consideration, indicating the desperation felt by the German authorities about the likelihood turning the tide of the European air war. *Planet Models* has depicted two of these "pseudo-kamikazes" in a 2-in-1 kit, and since both models are in 1:72, the resulting pieces are rather small.

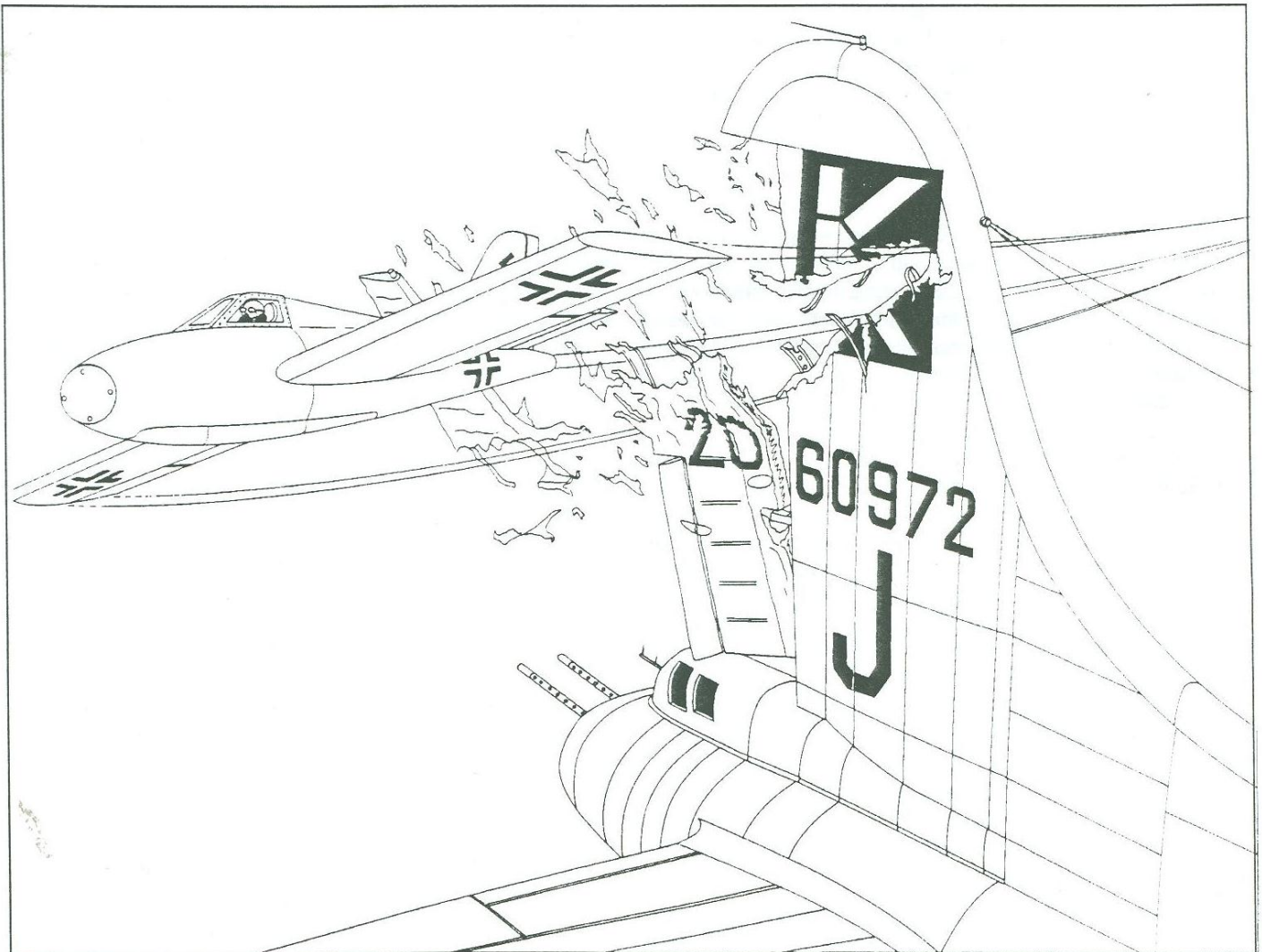
The Zeppelin "Rammer" was a project first proposed in November 1944. The Rammer was to be towed aloft by another fighter (most likely a Bf 109). Once released, the pilot was to ignite the solid-fuel rocket, accelerating to 970 km/h (602 mph), then launching the 14 R4M rockets housed in the plane's nose at the target. With the rockets gone, a second pass was to be made, this time using the plane's reinforced wings to make ramming attack. It was calculated that, at attack speed, the aircraft could cut cleanly through the tail section of a B-17 without great loss of speed or stability. After the attack, a gliding landing was to be made on a retractable skid.



The *Planet* kit is small. It measures out to 2 7/8 inches in length by 2 1/4 inches in span. It's typical *Planet* resin with nice engraved lines, a vacuformed canopy and decals. The whole kit is seven pieces: fuselage, wings, horizontal stabilizers, skid and canopy. There is no interior detail except for a molded-in instrument panel, which has 3 instruments on it. I added a seat

from the spares box and added seatbelts from a *Cooper Details* set and a head rest. I also added a control stick that I had to shorten and a few interior wires, and used a photo-etched canopy latch to simulate the rocket activator switch, much like in an Me 163. The resin fuselage has a few small pinholes to fill with super glue.

The wings and tail come on a mold tree and care must be taken to cut them off. Since there are no locating pins, I drilled holes into the fuselage for the wings and tail and used brass wire for attachment points and strength. I used a #85 drill bit for the drilling on the tail since it's thin in cross section. I used



An artist's conception of what the Zeppelin rammer was supposed to do after firing its nose-mounted rockets—if it could survive a hail of fire from American bombers.

a slight amount of super glue on the seams of the wings and tail. I must have fractured the tail 3-4 times before it finally settled down—and when I stopped hitting it by accident, that helped too! I noticed that the wings are not a good match. One wing had a slight twist to it but it's not very noticeable unless you really stare at it straight on. I also drilled out the tail where the rocket exhaust would be.

The skid provided was the most difficult to cut off the runner. It's molded along the length of the skid on the interior side. The trailing edge is extremely thin and I cracked mine. Once it's glued to the bottom of the aircraft you can just fair it in with super glue and sand it.

The canopy is typical *Planet*. It's not very clear, although with minimal sanding using a very fine grade of paper and the use of Future floor polish it clears up a little. It doesn't fit very well, or I didn't cut it out that well, and I had to trim part of the front latch on the instrument panel to get it to move back to sit against the rear of the cockpit.

I finished off my model with Model Master paints. I used RLM 76 for the bottom and RLM 83 bright green for the top with a squiggle pattern of RLM 81 over it. I painted the nose cover over the rockets Panzer Buff and finished with a ring of red paint around the base of it.

I gloss coated it and started with the decals. A word of caution here: If you use the kit decals make sure that where place them the first time is precisely where you want them to go, because that's where they're going to stay. I must have left these decals in the water for 10 minutes before they even started to loosen up. Some ended up sticking to my brush and there was no way I could get them to unravel. So I ended up using some of the kit decals and some after market decals and also altering them because they needed to be very small. Another gloss coat to seal them followed by a light wash for weathering and then a dull coat, and it's done.

There's no dolly to put the aircraft on. I made a stand using

a silhouette of the aircraft in white styrene as a base and a couple of clear parts cut out as a cradle.

The second subject in the kit is the Lippisch Gleiter Bombenflugzeug (glider-bomber), a project for a glider-bomber

able to dive at high speed against naval targets with a 1000 kilogram bomb as its main armament. The machine was carried or towed by a Ju 88 to an altitude of 8000 meters up to 10 kilometers from the target. After launch, it dived until reaching a calculated approach speed of 1296 km/h. At a distance of 700 meters from the target the bomb was released and the glider moved away in a slightly ascending arc. The machine had a folded balloon inside a dorsal tank behind the pilot. The balloon could be ejected and gradually inflated using a compressed gas bottle. The system foreseen to recover the pilot is unknown.

This kit is typical *Planet* style. There are only six parts: the fuselage, nose cone, instrument panel, seat, canopy and bomb. The whole kit measures out to be 4 1/2" long by 2 1/4" in span. The aircraft looks like something out of a Jules Verne novel—kind of fish like, or even like an alternative design for a lawn dart.

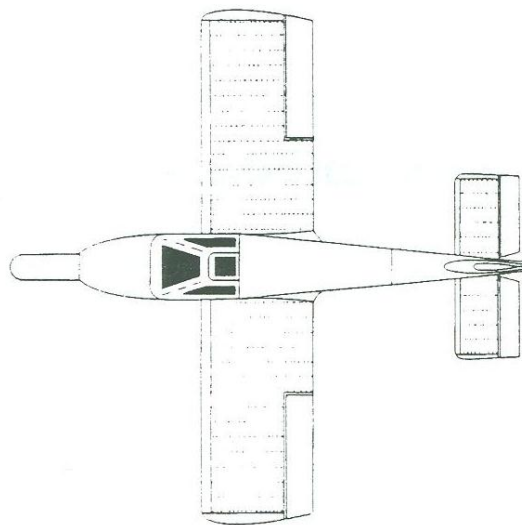
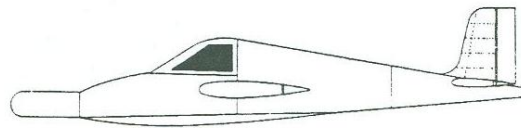
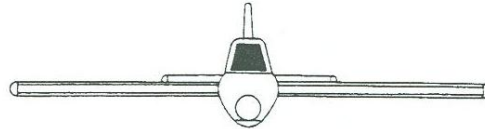
The main fuselage is one piece with a separate nose. The trailing edges

of the wings are very thin and almost translucent. I did have some damage at the area of the trailing edge wing root-to-fuselage fillet. It's a slight curve into the body, and mine has a few nicks in it. The rod running from the main body to the tail isn't quite round or even in thickness. Care must be taken in sanding around this area.

Since the cockpit is very basic I added belts to the seat and a head rest.

I added a shortened control stick and I added a few additional wires and handles like a cable release mechanism and an oxygen regulator. I didn't like the look of just sticking the instrument panel in, so I made a shroud to go over it, running all the way up to the front of the cockpit. I took this idea from looking at interior pictures of gliders a member of my flying

Zeppelin Rammer



club gave me. I made the shroud using shim brass, and it took three attempts before I got the right fit.

The kit comes with a 1000-kilogram bomb. At first I thought this was too big for the kit until I sized it up on a 1:72 drawing of an Ar 234 in the Aero Detail book. It was the right size. However, since this was a future "project" aircraft to attack naval targets, I wanted it to look more the late-war style bombs. I decided to use a BT 1400 torpedo bomb I found in a DML Ar 234 C kit. It worked out great.

Now all I had to do was figure out how I was going to attach it, since you are not given anything to attach it to, just a rack on the bottom of the aircraft. I drilled two small holes in the bomb and super glued fine brass wire into them. I studied numerous bomb racks of the Fw 190 and other contemporary aircraft. The Fw 190 actually carried the BT weapon.

I ended drilling two small holes in the bottom of the rack to accept the wires for the bomb. I then drilled holes in the side of the rack and inserted brass wire, which I bent down to shape. I stamped out small plastic disks to act as part of the hold down mechanism. I attached the bomb to the rack and I was able to slip the disks between the bomb and the bent brass wire. This gave me the correct angle on the disks and I just super glued them in position. After they dried I was able to remove the bomb and I could reattach it any time.

I cut out, masked and attached the canopy. This canopy fit is pretty good, or I'm getting better on figuring out how much

additional plastic to leave on *Planet*'s canopies before a final trim. I then drilled out a hole in the nose to accept a pitot tube. None is provided in the kit so I made my own out of stainless steel rod and tubing. This would be the last item I would attach after painting.

I painted my aircraft with Model Master paints. It's overall RLM 02 with spots of RLM 81 along the leading edges of the wings, forward fuselage and tail. The bomb is grayish black. The only decals called for in the instructions are a number 1 or 2 on the tail.

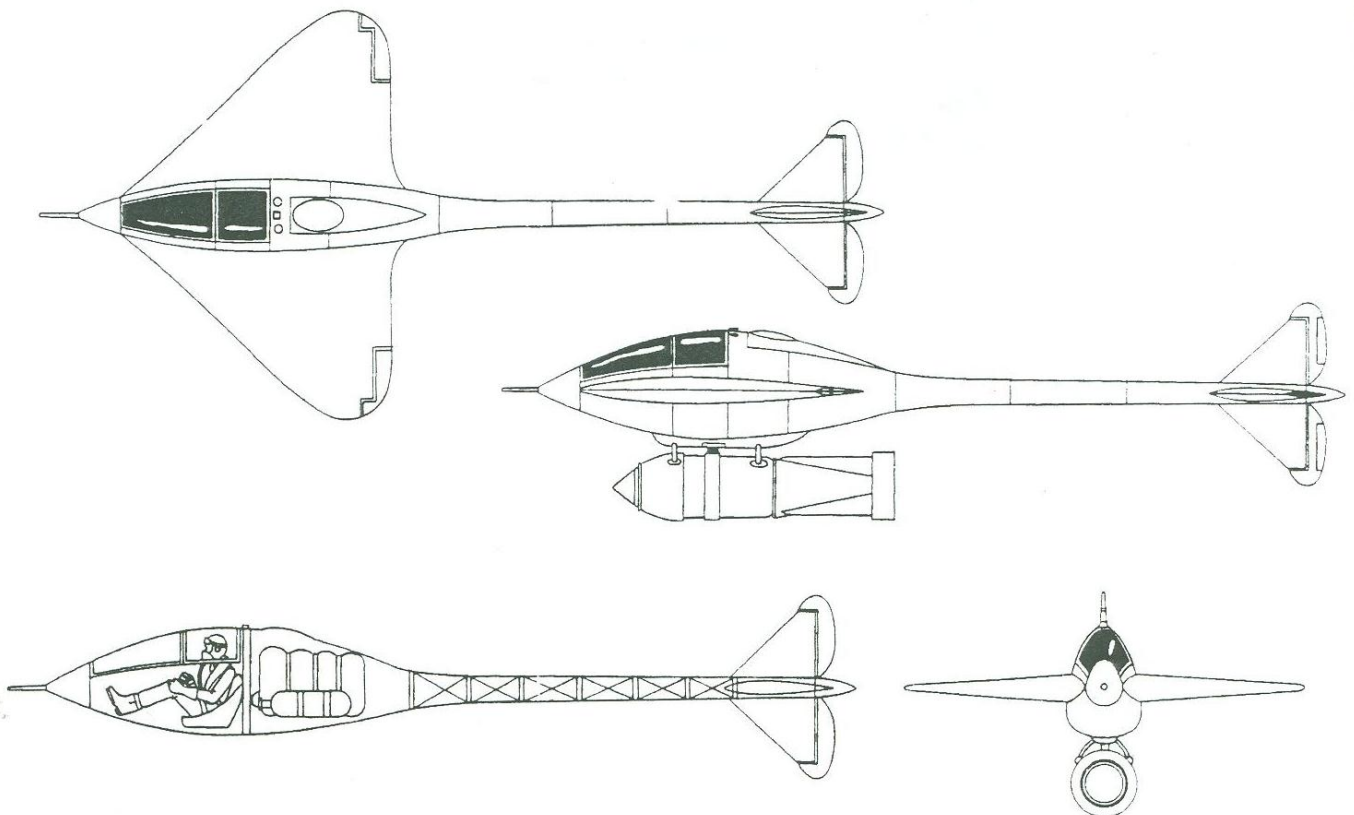
The decals from this kit are bad. Again, once they stick to a surface they will not come off, so if you make a mistake in placement there's no going back. I was very careful with these decals since I didn't have any replacement numbers of the appropriate size—naturally, those in my spares box were either too big or too small.

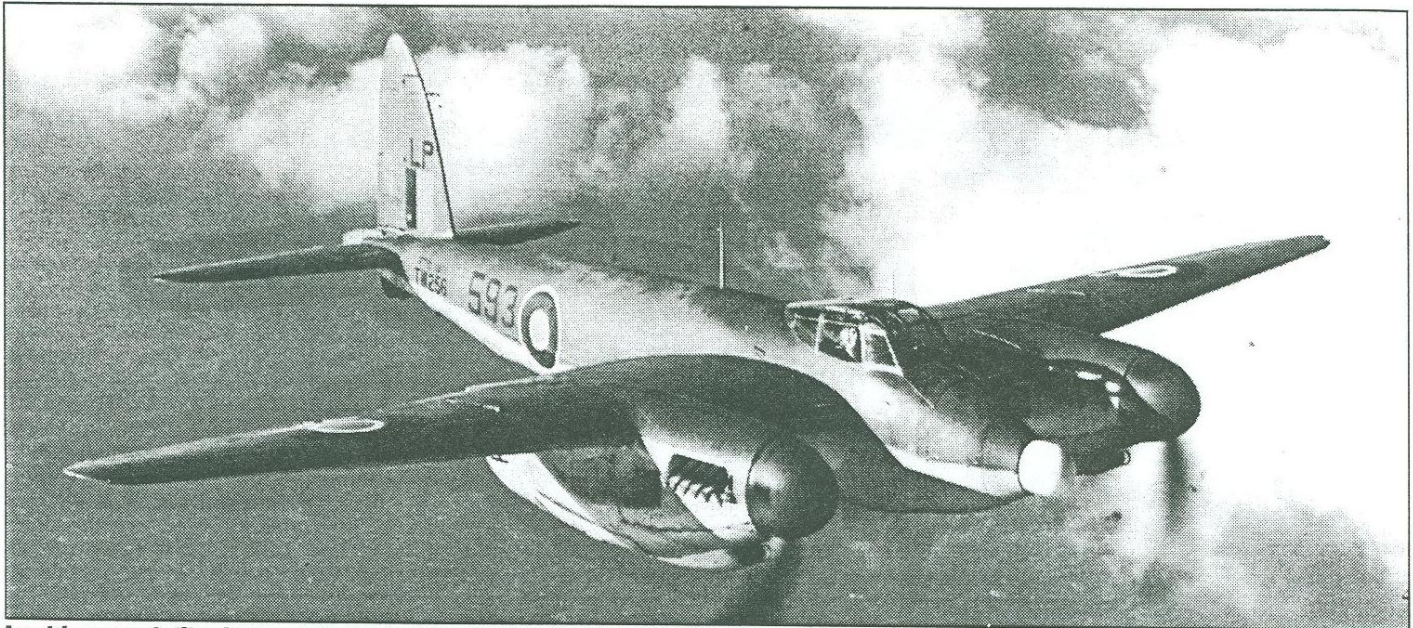
Again, I gloss-coated the plane with Future before decaling, followed by some light weathering and then a dull coat.

Like the rammer, there is no dolly to attach the kit to, so I made a stand by making a silhouette of the plane in white styrene and using a couple of clear parts for the cradle.

If you want to build either of these planes straight out of the box, you could probably slam them together in a couple of nights. It's only appropriate, since these planned planes probably inspired more than a couple of nightmares in their prospective pilots!

Lippisch Gleiter Bombenflugzeug





Looking much like its land-locked siblings, this *Sea Mosquito* is distinguished by the thimble radome and Royal Navy codes.

Going to sea with Airfix's 1:48 *Mosquito*

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thing to the back of the thinned-down instrument panel. The results look okay, but it was a lot of work. Next time, I think I will go back to my usual method and just apply individual decals to the front of the instrument panel and use five-minute epoxy to represent the glass faces. It is much less time-consuming, and I think it looks a little bit better, too.

The next areas that needed attention were the wheel wells. Those provided in the kit are quite bare, so I decided to add as much detail as I could. I didn't have very much information for this area, so I used my imagination as much as possible. The two problems with this, as I discovered later, is that *Mosquito* wheel wells are boxed in, so most of my detailing was wrong. The other problem, or perhaps saving grace, is that once you attach the landing gear and gear doors, you can't see very much in there anyway. My advice to anyone building this model is to not make much of an effort here—just throw in some basic details and leave it at that.

Among the areas that do benefit from extra detailing are the wing-mounted radiators. The kit items are a bit basic, and the *Eduard* set again is very useful. I removed the details from the kit radiator faces, added a piece of .100 by .080 styrene to the back of this to give the radiator block some depth, and glued the photo-etched radiator pieces in place. *Eduard* provides faces for the backs of the radiators as well, so some attention to the exhaust area is called for. Once the photo-etched parts were in place, I removed the molded-on radiator doors and glued pieces of .020 styrene sheet in place to represent the curved shape of the radiator exhaust ramp. I left the trailing edge of this ramp slightly proud of the lower wing surface, and when the glue was dry (which was almost instantly, as I used superglue for construction of the entire model), I sanded this flush with the lower wing surface. One important point: remember to paint and drybrush the radiators before you glue the wing halves together. Otherwise, there won't be enough room to do a proper job.

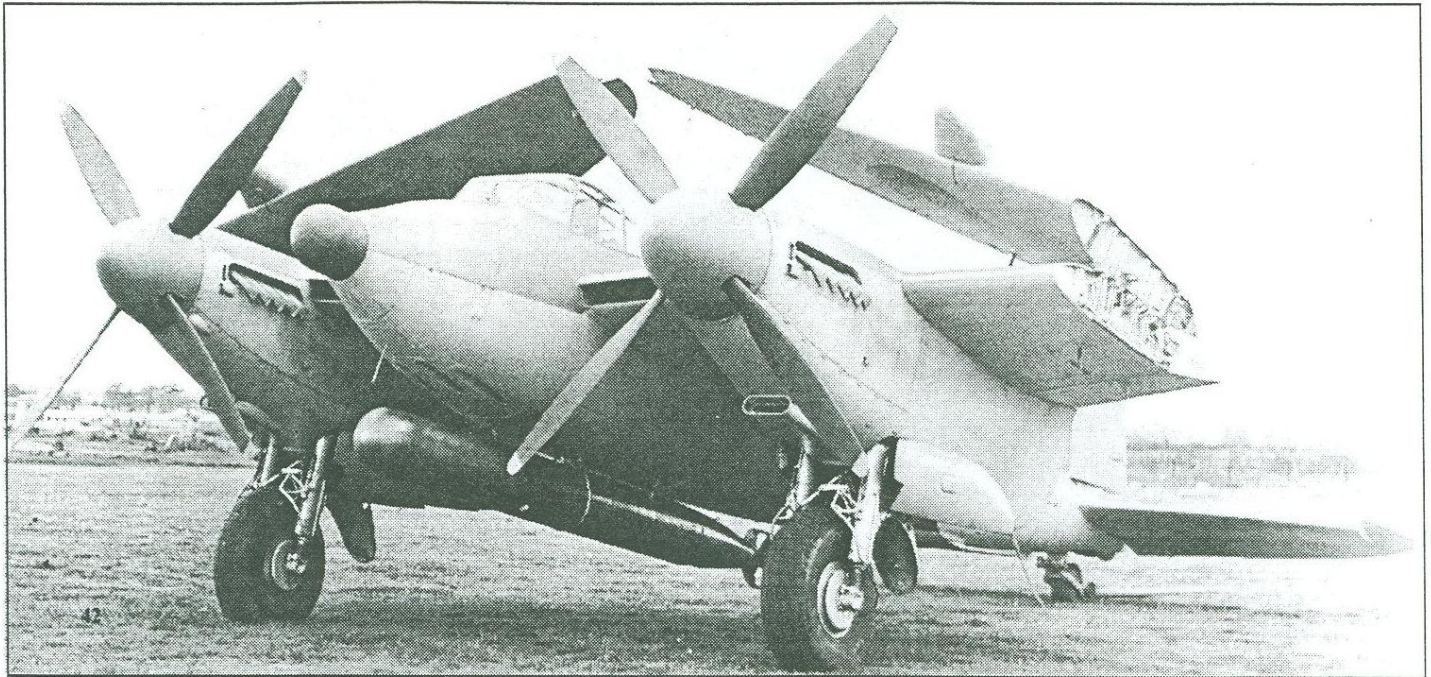
I replaced the radiator doors with a pair made out of .010

styrene sheet. The *Eduard* set includes a pair, but I could not get these parts to fit right. It was also necessary to block off the ends of the radiator intakes. I removed the end face detail molded onto the fuselage halves and replaced this by cutting a slot chordwise into the intake area about 1/16 of an inch out from the fuselage, into which I inserted a piece of .010 styrene. The gap between this and the fuselage was filled with superglue and the whole thing was sanded to conform to the shape of the intake. For the radiator end plate next to the engine nacelle, I carefully trimmed a piece of styrene to fit the small gap that appears when the nacelle is held in position and glued this in place.

When all the detailing was completed, I removed all of the raised panel lines and rescribed them using a *Trimaster* circle template as well as various templates I made for scribing the engine nacelles. Fortunately, there aren't too many panel lines on the *Mosquito*, since most of the aircraft was wood, so this task wasn't as difficult as it might seem. I also scribed the wing fold lines, using the conversion kit instructions as a guide.

One of the shortcomings of the conversion set became apparent at this point. While studying some photographs and drawings, I noticed that there is a very prominent fold hinge fairing on top of the wing at approximately mid-chord. *Paragon* does not include this part in their conversion, so I made a pair of fairings from two pieces of styrene rod by scraping down half the diameter of the rod with an X-Acto knife, then rounding off the ends. After I glued the pieces in place, I carefully sanded the top of the fairings level as shown in a photo and scribed four hinge lines into each one. I chose not to use the photo-etched wing fold details as I felt they didn't have enough depth to give them the right look. I think they would have looked much better as resin pieces.

Once the cockpit was assembled, I glued the fuselage halves together and attached the canopy. I decided to use the kit canopy rather than the very nice vacuformed canopy avail-



With its wings folded and a torpedo loaded, this *Sea Mosquito* looks like a quintessential carrier aircraft. Ironically, thanks to the advent of the *Sea Hornet*, the *Sea Mosquito* only served from land bases.

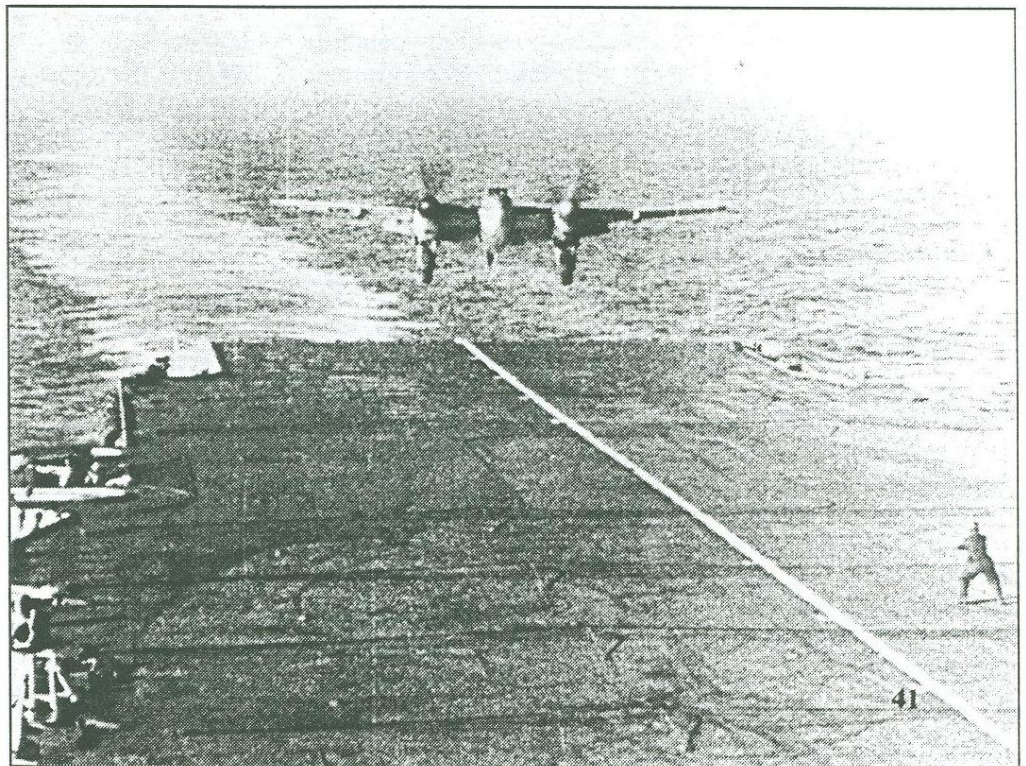
able from *Falcon/Squadron*, simply because I don't have a lot of experience with vacuformed canopies, and I had a limited time to finish the model. The kit canopy is a bit thick, but once I had it faired in, the frames sanded off and the whole thing polished, it looked pretty good. There is some distortion where the sides curve over to meet the top, but otherwise it is remarkably clear.

The next thing was the addition of the resin nose plug that includes the radome. The piece fits well, but while studying photos I noticed that the nose plug is not quite the right shape. The radome portion is just fine, but the fairing that it is attached to is curved to follow the lines of the fuselage nose, which I realized was not correct. It should have a straight taper to it and there should be no curve at all. Unfortunately, I discovered this after I had everything painted, so I decided not to go back and correct the shape. This inaccuracy is a bit annoying but it really doesn't detract from the appearance of the completed model.

Another problem I discovered was that there should be two external stiffeners that run along the lower fuselage sides. The standard *Mosquito* variants had one stiffener along the lower right side, but all *Sea Mosquitoes* had a second stiffener on the left side to compensate for the extra stresses encountered in carrier deck landings. *Paragon* left this detail completely out of the conversion set, and I feel that they should have at least mentioned it in the instructions. Not to be

daunted by this, I removed the kit stiffener and made new ones out of styrene rod, scraping half the diameter away with an X-Acto much as I had with the wing hinge fairings.

At this point I also did some extra work on the spinners and propeller blades. The replacement resin spinners did not have the small pieces that fill the gap right behind the prop blades, so I made these from strip styrene. To make matters worse, the blades themselves don't come with the shaft portion that would slide into the spinners. Instead, you get partial blades that just butt up to the spinner. I didn't like this at all, so I reshaped a kit blade and had a friend cast eight copies (the *Sea*



The batsman brings a modified *Mosquito* aboard during trials of the feasibility of a sea-going 'Mossie.'

Mosquito had four-bladed propellers). I drilled proper mounting holes in the resin spinners and attached them. These look much better than what you are given by *Paragon*. The resin torpedo looks very nice, but when I ran out of time for this project (I was trying to finish it for a local contest) I chose not to use it.

Another point that is not mentioned in the instructions concerns the style of landing gear. The *Sea Mosquito* had a conventional hydraulic oleo strut designed for it from the outset, as the standard *Mosquito* landing gear had no shock damping ability, having rubber blocks for springs only. The hydraulic

oleo was necessary for carrier operations, but only the first few *Sea Mosquitoes* were fitted with them. The remaining production versions had standard landing gear, since they all operated from shore bases. *Sea Mosquitoes* never operated from carriers, except for the prototypes that underwent testing, so the kit landing gear is correct. If

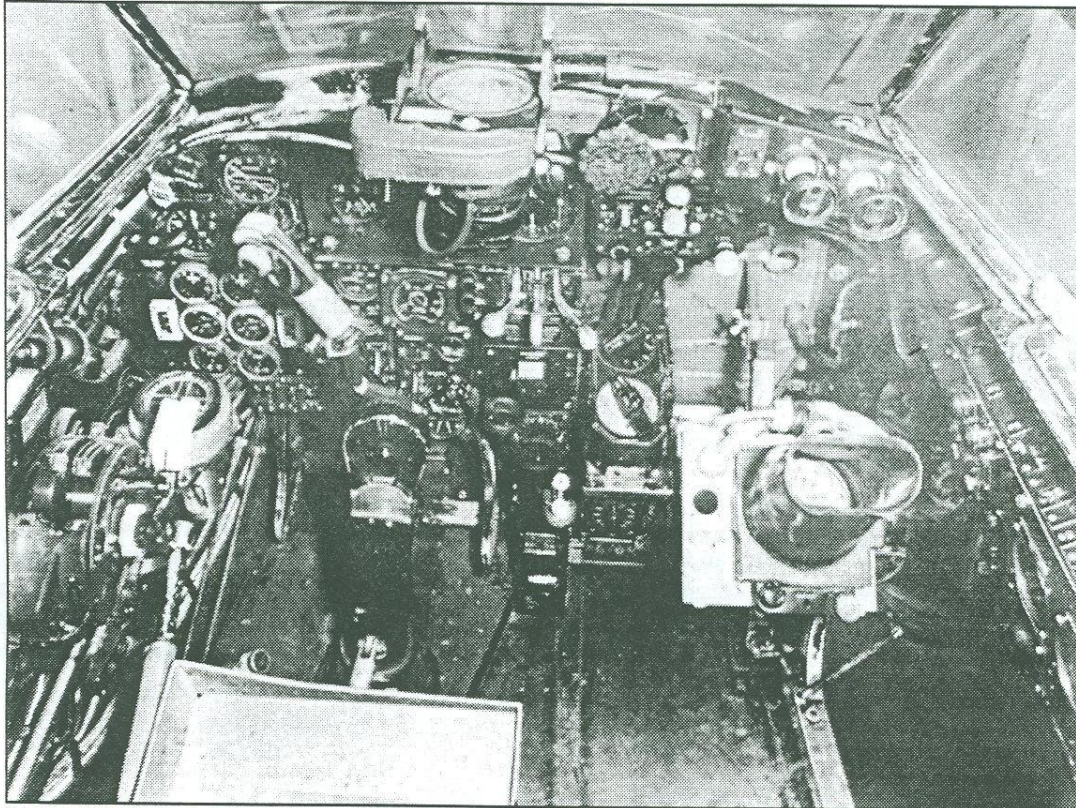
you want to scratchbuild the Bendix hydraulic landing gear, study as many photos as you can and remember the wheels and tires are smaller in diameter than the standard items.

After I attached the wings and stabilizers and gave everything a final sanding to remove any imperfections, I sprayed the undersides with *Floquil's* sky color from their enamel range of paints. I toned the sky down with a bit of gray because the color straight from the bottle is a little too bright. For the upper colors, I arrived at the proper shade of dark slate gray by using a 50-50 mixture of *Floquil's* dark slate gray, which is too green, mixed with extra dark sea gray, and I used the extra dark sea gray straight out of the bottle for the second camouflage color. I masked and sprayed the canopy frames individually. The cockpit and wheel wells were sprayed with standard interior green, and the spinners and prop blades were painted black, with yellow tips on the props. The landing gear was sprayed silver and the tires were painted a very dark gray.

After the paints had been allowed to dry for about a week, I gave the model a couple coats of Future as a barrier coat for

the panel line washes and to provide a gloss surface for the decals. I mixed a dark gray wash (never use black for your panel line washes—it's too strong), and allowed it to flow into the panel lines that I had scribed onto the model. Don't worry about any sloppy overflow; once the wash is dry, you can take a Q-tip or your finger with a small amount of clean thinner on it and clean them up.

Next come the decals. The type C and C-1 roundels came from the 1:48 sheet by *War Eagle*, now out of production, but still available at vendor tables here and there and well worth having. These decals go on very nicely and, with a bit of



The cockpit of this *Sea Mosquito* is dominated by the plane's rada apparatus. Otherwise, the cluttered cockpit resembles that of the standard *Mosquito*.

Solvaset, will conform to any surface, no matter how uneven. The "Royal Navy" titles and serial numbers for the fuselage and wing undersides had to be individually assembled from a *War Eagle* sheet intended for the *Sea Fury*. I ran into a bit of a problem coming up with the aircraft numbers and "LP" station code for Leeon-Solent, the airfield

where the *Sea Mosquito* I modeled was stationed. I borrowed a decal sheet that had the correct style of numbers from a friend and made my own numbers with a photocopier and clear decal film. The station code letters were pieced together from some scrap decals of unknown origin. Once the decals had set for a day or so, I sprayed the entire model with *Testors* Dullcote, and when this was dry all the remaining subassemblies—the landing gear, gear doors, arrestor hook and frame, spinners and props—were attached.

So, now that I've finished my *Sea Mosquito*, what do I think of the *Paragon* conversion? Even though there were several omissions and inaccuracies, I was very pleased with this product. It isn't every day that you find good quality conversion kits for the *Mosquito*, and the problems were all correctable, the inaccurate nose plug being the most serious problem I experienced. Since information on the *Sea Mosquito* is rather hard to find, I feel that more detailed instructions should have been included. Most of the problems probably resulted from this lack of information, and if so, hopefully *Paragon* can spend more time on research in the future.

Piper's PA-20 *Pacer* and its role as a... tanker?

By Bob Miller

General aviation aircraft, and especially light planes, are rarely displayed on contest tables or at meetings. That's unfortunate, I think. There are some nice kits out there, among them AMT's 1930s classics like the Stinson Gullwing and the Beech Staggerwing, Heller's Cessna *Skymaster* and French light planes, and *Minicraft's* (formerly *Entex's*) Cessna

subject for you if your tastes run to unique and downright odd moments of aeronautical history. You can use the PA-22 kit to replicate a participant in one of the oddest ever: the only fully-documented instance of a supersonic U.S. Air Force jet making refueling rendezvous approaches on a propeller-driven light plane. Stay tuned for the rest of this story.

The model has seven clear and 34 ivory plastic pieces, plus

figures of a hunter, photographer, and dead mountain lion that belong in the "figures" category rather than with the airplane (PA-22's were *not* famous bush planes). It scales rather consistently at 1:33.6, a miss by contemporary terms but not a bad fit to a 1:32 collection (for instance, ranked alongside a Storch and a Do 27, two very successful STOL designs). Markings are confined to registration numbers and four Civil Air Patrol insignia, so the modeler is left to mask the paint scheme which, from the factory, was a bit elaborate. Shapes and contours look very good, and the fabric sag on the wings is exceptionally well executed. Access panels are excellent. Mercifully, they didn't put fabric weave on the surfaces ("mercifully,"



A Piper *Tri-Pacer*, the successor to the *Pacer*, at rest. The plane's tricycle gear was a departure from its taildragger forbearer, the Piper *Cub*.

and Piper two-placers. But I'd like to focus here on a couple of *Monogram* old-timers that are still fine kits, and still to be found in shops or on vendor's tables, their Cessna 180 and Piper PA-22 *Tri-Pacer*. The kits may be old, the PA-22 carrying a 1957 copyright date inside the aft fuselage, but they look good.

The 180 comes in two versions, land- or float-plane. It's an odd 1:42, and the decals aren't much, but it's big enough and open enough to detail, and 180's are often buffed and polished like mirrors, so if you like trying for the ultimate aluminum finish, this is a nice choice.

However, the PA-22 kit is the real topic here. There were 7,760 PA-22's built between 1951 and 1960, quite a successful design, but it was originally just a minimal modification of the taildragger PA-20 *Pacer*, of which 1,149 were built from 1949 to 1954. This was virtually an airplane from a different generation, and modeling it shows the difference, although the airframes are very similar. The *Tri-Pacer* was a rather awkward little craft, sort of like a bear in ballet slippers, standing tippy-toe on that short wheelbase.

It looked like what it was, an improvisation to modernize an old design. If its nosewheel was reaching tentatively to the future, those mains were planted solidly in the past. This is a

because on a well-done fabric job, you can't see weave from more than a few inches away) but the flying surfaces are a little too smooth and might have benefited from rib-stitch tapes (I don't ask much, do I? *Nobody* puts these on.) Transpar-



Bob converted his *Monogram Tri-Pacer* to resemble an old friend—his *Pacer*, N6953K. The real plane still flies today!

encies are reasonably thin and free of distortion, not '90s state-of-the-art but still commendable even today. Parts are free of flash and fit is good: you can do a "shake the box" assembly and it will look good on the shelf.

Problem areas?

There are some basic ones. There are a few sink and ejector pin marks to fill, and cavities to locate struts in both wings and fuselage are inordinately large and really need filling. The doors are hinged to open and

close, and they shouldn't have tried; the model has strap hinges that might look almost okay on a Cessna, but doors on these Pipers are piano-hinged. Pose the doors open or closed, but the whole hinge system was a bad idea that should go. (It looks bizarre, but the arrangement of a right door for the front seat entry and a left door for the rear is correct and well modelled, provided you eliminate those hinges.) The cowling can be removed to show the engine, but the way they do it is by lifting off the nose pan, top panels, and prop in one piece.

Displaying the engine is a good idea, but by all means do it by cutting off the nose pan and gluing it to the bottom section of the cowling, then opening one of the access panels. The engine is sort of okay, but it is too long and is mounted wrong. In reality, the magnetos are between the back plate and firewall, and the mounting is by a tubing structure from the longerons at the firewall to four points on the engine backplate, whereas the model has cradle mounts and virtually no clearance between backplate and firewall. You can shorten the engine by... naah, on second thought, paint the engine black and glue the cowling shut. By the way, the starter and generator are at the lower front end of these Lycomings.

Getting into the smaller improvements you can make, elevators and rudder might be cut loose and posed, because there is a noticeable gap between fixed and moving surfaces on the prototype. Trim in pitch for rag-wing Pipers is by moving the leading edge of the stabilizer in a slot, so there is also a gap between the stabilizer and the fuselage. But in this kit, the horizontal tail is tabbed into the fuselage, so there's no gap "out of the box." Perhaps this is nitpicking, but the kit just doesn't show how the airplane works. There are bracing wires that run from the bottom of the rudder post, through

the stabilizer at 33 inches out, then to the top of the fin. The bulge at the top leading edge of the fin is where the paired VHF receiver antennae mount, trailing back at 45 degrees. The transmit antenna went in various locations at various times,

but the strip that covered the gap at the wing root was a convenient one. (Remember, on a fabric airplane, you can't just put it wherever.) The fuel fillers are too smooth to be realistic: The caps were slightly recessed, and looked like generic 1930s auto types. Inside, the kit's seats are



This Tri-Pacer shows off the spindly look that resulted from the stretching of the old Cub design.

molded integral with the floor, but in actuality, they were about four inches thick and mounted to the fuselage sides with a space below. (If you model doors open, it shows.) They didn't include the lever for the manual flaps, which is on the floor just ahead of the seats, looking rather like a parking brake. Up front, add a pair of tubes, scale about 5/8 inch diameter, from just inside the windshield at centerline, to the wing roots at the front spar. Lastly, the main landing gear is made with the two legs connected by a piece that appears to be part of the lower fuselage. Actually, that joiner piece represents the cover plates to the bungee/oleo assemblies under the front seat. It should droop slightly below the bottom of the fuselage when sitting on the ground, so *do not* fair it in or sand it smooth. There you have it, a very nice and updated model.

The family history of Piper aircraft is a bit complex to explain here, but it is easy to turn *Monogram's Tri-Pacer* into a PA-16 *Clipper* or a PA-20 *Pacer*. That's what I did, several years ago. I was not modeling seriously then, but I did own a *Pacer*, the 46th one off the line, and it needed a new fabric job and some airframe work. It was to try out an idea for a paint job that I modified the *Monogram* kit into a representation of my bird, N6953K. I did not do a good job of it then, but for a good modeler, it's quite easy. The sketch shows the significant differences.

The major modification is the landing gear. For both PA-20 and -22, the fuselage frame station that mounts the strut fittings also includes one gear hinge point and the bungee/oleos at center, so to model it correctly, fill the triangular aft portion of the gear-crosspiece cavity and recut the front edge to extend 3/8 inch forward, to meet the lower longeron where it meets the door-hinge frame (which is where the forward hinge is). Or, just fill it, and use thin card later to fake in cover plates just barely open. Cut off and reverse the individual gear

legs, and narrow them at the back by 3/16 inch, then reshape this to a thin faired edge. The sketch shows the tailwheel as well as I remember it, but I didn't follow through enough to provide good detail: you need either more research or a bit of imagination.

The cowling is the second major difference. *Tri-Pacers* had from 125 to 160 hp engines, and needed the oil cooler intake at the bottom of the cowling. *Pacers* lacked this feature (108 hp engines didn't have oil coolers and 125 and 135 hp had them inside the cowling.) It seems most practical to cement the two sections of the cowling together, after reinforcing the inside of the lower piece. Remove the carb and oil cooler intakes, fill the resulting cavity, and sand smooth. You may wish to use the cooling air outlet fairing as-is, but I think it was actually wider and shallower on PA-20's. Add the new carb intake, which is a simple bent-up flat sheet assembly, as shown on the sketch (again, shown as well as I remember.) The third item is the instrument panel. PA-22 panels were humped on the left side to make room for basic IFR instrumentation: the sketch of the panel from 53-kilo shows that space was limited to eight three-inch instruments and a two-inch clock and compass. True, it was a very early *Pacer*, but the panel belonged much more to the mid 1930s than to 1949. The radio on the left (the one most convenient to the pilot) was a LF/MF type that could use A-N range or loop antenna for navigation and had a single 3Mc band transmit channel. The handcrank-tuned ("coffee-grinder" in popular terms) VOR radio was mounted at the far right, maximally inconvenient to a pilot who was in

any doubt as to where he was or who he was listening to. The direction finder loop on 53-kilo was fixed, to make things even harder to deal with, and located on the bottom center line, just abaft the cooling air outlet. 53K also had a wire antenna that stretched between wingtips, via the top of the fin, with a lead-in from the center of the port side span to just abaft the windshield.

My *Pacer*, 53K, had a few of its own idiosyncrasies. It had spent much of its earlier life in Alaska, and had not only ski fittings, but fat 8.00x4 tires instead of the standard 6.00x6 as included in the kit. It also had no spinner. Sheet metal fairings covering strut fittings were missing, presumably to make it easy to inspect for corrosion. None of this helped the decidedly sedate cruise, nor is this very practical to model. The cowling nose-pan and struts were painted a grotesque mustard yellow, I presume to make the little bird easier to see in case of a forced landing.

The PA-16 *Clipper* takes you even further back. It lacked flaps, had only one wing tank plus a small tank in front of the panel, and had stick controls rather than wheels.

Did I finish rebuilding 53-kilo? Surely you jest! It takes me three months to finish a 1:72 kit. That 1:1 multimedia job with numerous moving parts and an airworthiness certificate would have taken six lifetimes. I sold it. They say it's flying, back in Michigan.

So that's the story of... Yes, there was a question? *What was that fish story about a supersonic Air Force type making a refueling rendezvous with your airplane?* Hey, that was no fish story, it was all true. It happened in the mid-1970s, when the B-1A was being developed as a supersonic bomber. NASA-Ames got an extremely urgent requirement to investigate handling qualities of the B-1 during refueling operations. I happened to have been away on vacation at the time, so I missed it, but just how urgent it was can be judged by Ames' willingness to disrupt an entire schedule to accommodate the test.

It happens that, at that time, my office partner was the contract monitor for all of the flight simulator visual systems, which then used computer controlled TV cameras traveling over a 20x76 foot terrain model. (Oh, yes. It was a simulation. Didn't I mention that?) Seems the visuals group lead man came dashing into the office one day in a state of panic, like a prototype of Kramer arriving at Jerry Seinfeld's apartment. From earlier projects, they had a B-1 computer model ready, they had the simulator interior fittings, the controls, everything but a refueling tanker model. Ideally, it should be a KC-135, in about 1:48. One was on order, but it would be a while.

"We gotta have a model, *Now!*" he tells my roomie. And then he spots my little *Pacer* model, sitting atop my file cabinet



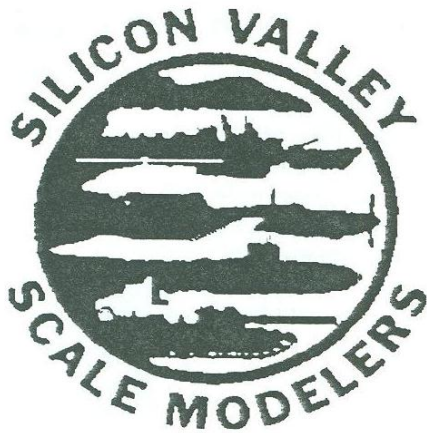
Another view of Bob's model, which served a role at NASA Ames as a tanker target in a simulator!

where I can contemplate my paint job at leisure. "That'll do," he says and grabs it. An hour later, it's been fitted up with a refueling boom and hung on fishing leader above the terrain model, and the system is being checked out.

One of the remarkable things about the project

test pilots that passed through Ames was their ability to ignore anything that wasn't relevant to the test at hand. If they hear in a briefing that their tanker will be doing 450 knots at 30,000 feet, and by the way, it's a single engine (prop), fixed-gear light plane, their likely reply would be "OK. So go on, what am I investigating here?" But I do wish I'd been there to listen in to what went back and forth over the intercom when they called tanker in sight.

The test went through with uncommon urgency, and when I got back, my *Pacer* model was already back on top of my filing cabinet, considerably the worse for the experience. The KC-135 model arrived a few weeks later, and the brief era of supersonic jet pilots easing up toward a boom trailing from a fixed-gear light plane ended, presumably forever.



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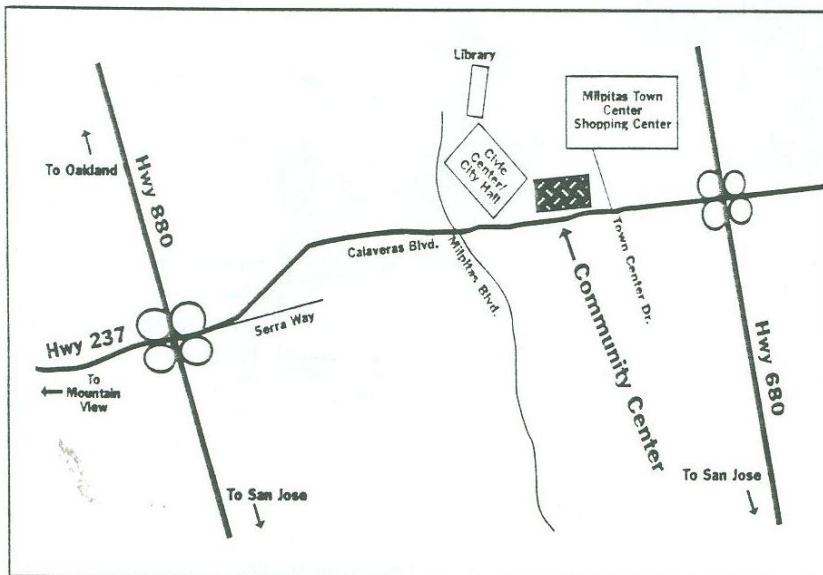
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Turning Monogram's F7F into a black photo cat

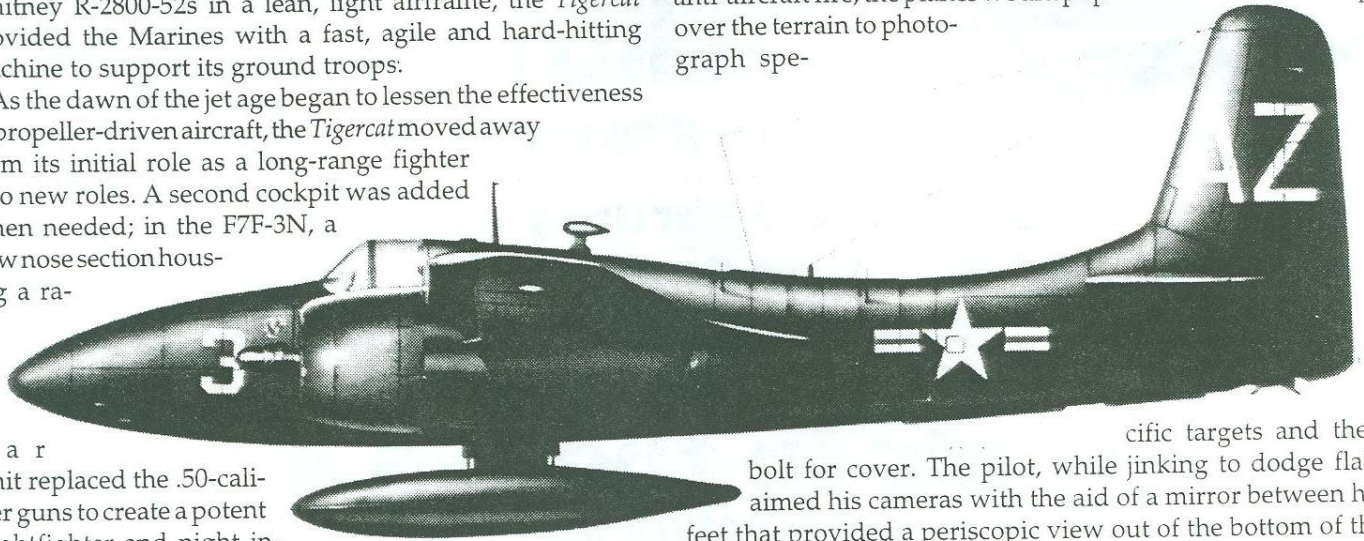
By Chris Bucholtz

While the F7F *Tigercat* arrived just too late to see action in World War II, it did provide the Marine Corps with a versatile and powerful fighter for the post-war. Packing an impressive weapons load, including four 20mm cannon and four .50-caliber machine guns, and incorporating two Pratt & Whitney R-2800-52s in a lean, light airframe, the *Tigercat* provided the Marines with a fast, agile and hard-hitting machine to support its ground troops.

As the dawn of the jet age began to lessen the effectiveness of propeller-driven aircraft, the *Tigercat* moved away from its initial role as a long-range fighter into new roles. A second cockpit was added when needed; in the F7F-3N, a new nose section housing a ra-

in Korea served with VMF(N)-531, the task of operating most of these F7F-3P recon birds fell to the Marine Headquarters Squadron, or HEDRON, of the First Marine Air Wing, which operated an odd mixture of types over the course of the war

A typical mission for the Hedron recon pilots took them north to where the shooting was. Flying fast and low to avoid anti-aircraft fire, the planes would pop up over the terrain to photograph spe-



d ar unit replaced the .50-caliber guns to create a potent nightfighter and night intruder aircraft, which would go on to achieve success in Korea. *Tigercats* also were used as drone controllers, and later became valued on the civilian market as firebombers.

One role that is largely overlooked regardless of the type involved is photo reconnaissance. The F7F was especially suited to this task, and some *Tigercats* were modified for this purpose from the outset (a few early versions were on Okinawa when WWII ended). The plane was tough, agile and could carry a large load of cameras, making it an ideal candidate for tactical reconnaissance—not the “unarmed and unafraid” approach of the high, fast flyers, but the down-in-the-weeds, shoot-your-way-to-your-target approach that the Air Force’s F-6 *Mustangs* had pioneered in WWII.

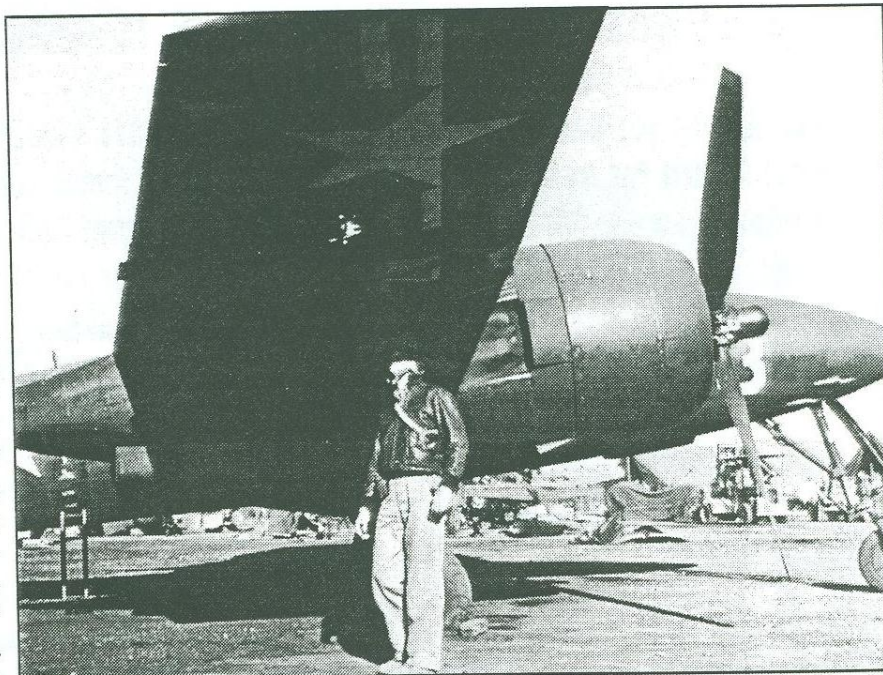
While the F-6D played a role in Korea (under the new moniker RF-51D), the Marine Corps needed its own intelligence assets in Korea, a country that was virtually unknown to most Americans when the war started. While most *Tigercats*

cific targets and then bolt for cover. The pilot, while jinking to dodge flak, aimed his cameras with the aid of a mirror between his feet that provided a periscopic view out of the bottom of the plane through a viewfinder located under the seat—not an ideal place to be looking at low altitude in unfriendly skies.

Tigercats took shrapnel and small arms hits with regularity, and one F7F-3P came home with evidence of a tangle with a tree wrapped around its nose and wing leading edges. One pilot, CAPT Kenneth Dykes, could testify that, in these circumstances, the rugged *Tigercat* was the right airplane for the job. On one mission north of Seoul, a 37mm anti-aircraft shell hit the plane in the right wing, outboard of the engine, blowing a hole the size of a basketball through the wing. The plane shuddered, but after the initial shock, Dykes realized the plane was still flying

normally, and he successfully reached his base with his load of precious photos intact.

I’ve always like ‘50s aircraft, and the planes of the Korean War in particular. A few years ago, at the Chino contest at the Planes of Fame Museum, I got another boost of enthusiasm for the *Tigercat*. There, inside the fence of the museum, were no



CAPT Kenneth Dykes inspects damage to his F7F-3P photo-recon bird. An anti-aircraft shell punched a hole in the wing, but Dykes made it back to base safely.

fewer than three F7Fs—one in parts, one complete in natural metal, and one fully restored in its glossy sea blue active-duty scheme!

With that in the back of my mind, I planned to take on *Monogram's* old reliable F7F kit, adding scratch-built details to the spots where the kit falls down. Seeing as though this model is as old as I am—released in the summer of 1967, just like me!—it's held up well over the intervening 30 years. Like many of the *Monogram* kits of that era, the model captures the shape beautifully. Although the kit doesn't say it, the model has the tall tail of the —3 version, and includes a single cockpit position.

The model consists of a fairly conventional parts breakdown—fuselage halves, upper and lower halves for the wings, right and left halves for the nacelles and single-piece horizontal stabilizers. There are some old-timey features as well, however, like the cowlings with molded-in engine faces, and landing gear doors molded into the nacelle halves. Also, a belly drop tank and pylon are molded into the fuselage halves—an odd placement which makes sanding seams on both the tank and the fuselage difficult.

Most modelers would find the greatest fault in the absence of any cockpit detail or wheel well detail whatsoever. I was amassing re-

search material to scratchbuild these components when *Aries*, a Czech modeling company, released in succession a cockpit set, a resin R-2800-52 and a deluxe set, containing two engines, the cockpit and parts for the wheel wells, as well as hardware for detailing the landing gear and mounting both engines completely exposed!

The set is pricey—I've seen it offered from \$34 to \$28 through mail order—and, for a kit that at its most expensive has sold for \$7, may seem like a little much to some. I purchased mine at the lower price through Pacific Front Hobbies in Seattle, and I was glad I did! The quality of the castings is great, and the photo-etched sheet is good as far as the cockpit components go. There's also the obligatory photo-negative instrument panel included, an almost mandatory part of all Czech detail sets.

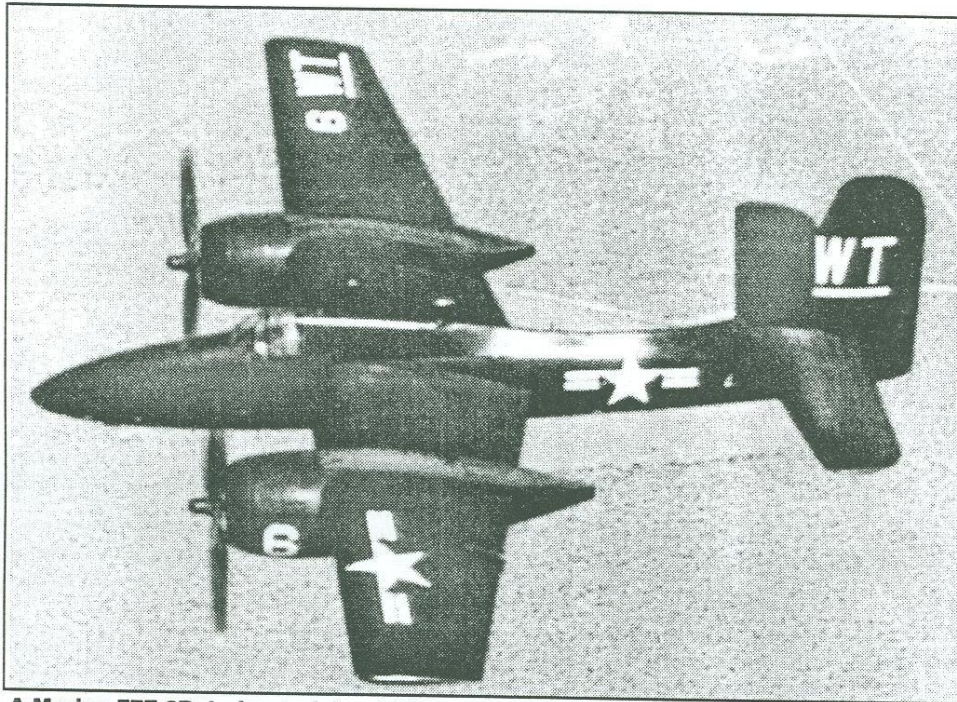
Before I started work on any resin, I took some steps to tidy up the *Monogram* kit. First, I sanded the raised detail down and patiently rescribed the model, which is a bit of a task considering the lattice-like approach Grumman took to the tail section. At this point, I also addressed some sink marks on the wing and fuselage and ejector pin marks on the horizontal tail, filling them with superglue and sanding them flush.

I used a Dremel tool to thin the inside of the upper wings underneath the oil cooler exhaust doors, which are molded in the open position, but which have blanked-off faces. With a sharp knife, I cut these faces away, leaving a rectangular hole to simulate the open exhaust. Since there are intakes in the leading edge, light would be readily visible, so I cut strips from a black promotional postcard and glued them to the upper wing, blanking off the exhausts. Who says junk mail is useless?

Next, I added some detail to those intakes, in the form of fine brass screen. Small squares of this were cut out, folded where appropriate, and glued into the lower wing section.

As a final preparatory step, I used a heavy-duty grinding bit in the Dremel tool to bore out the engine faces in each

cowling. From the amount of plastic that piled up on my workbench, I'd have to say that this is probably the thickest part of the kit! Boring through it took patience and muscle—so much so that I managed to lose the second cowling while working over the first! Luckily, a request for help on the rec.models.scale Internet newsgroup had a new set of cowlings on



A Marine F7F-3P during training. This variant and the F7F-3N saw action in Korea.

their way from Frank Henriquez within hours! One was bored out, the other left behind to serve as a reminder of why I spent three hours drilling and sanding the cowlings out in the first place!

With the cowlings done, the natural next step was *Aries' R-2800-52s*. These are miniature kits in themselves, comprising a crankcase, accessory section, magnetos, distributors and individual cylinders in resin and a wiring harness in photo-etched brass. The parts are magnificent, with every cooling fin visible in the cylinders and lots of detail throughout. I left off the accessory section and assembled the cylinder rows first; some of the holes for the cylinders have a bit of play, so take caution in aligning them. Also, on my first engine, I glued the magnetos and distributor in place before adding the wiring harness—a real boo-boo that required some major manipulation of the harness to get it in place!

The assembled engine was painted silver, followed by multiple washes of black until it looked sufficiently dirty. The front of the crankcase was finished in gull gray. The final step was the addition of 14 pushrods made of wire

which were added to the front row of cylinders only. These were painted black before being added to the engine. In all, each engine had 27 separate pieces—they would have had 42 pieces, not counting the engine mounts, had I opened up the cowlings as the *Aries* kit allows you to do.

As I said, these engines are complex but beautiful kits in their own rights. I have extras destined for a late-model *Corsair* and a *Bearcat*, and I will not hesitate to use them again.

Next came the wheel wells. The nose well was straightforward, a resin plug that slipped neatly into place. Some removal of the mounting points for the nose gear was required. The

main gear wells were a bit more involved, with a large metal piece that folded up to form the top of the compartment, a photo-etched rear bulkhead, a resin oil tank and several brass cross-members. These cross members were the big problem with the detail set. Quite simply, they're too big and don't fit inside the nacelles. I made replacements

of styrene rod; ultimately, when the model is complete, the insides of the gear bays are impossible to see anyway.

The nacelle halves and wing halves were assembled and attached once the gear bays were complete. Unlike most multi-engine kits, the nacelles here presented few gaps, because the entire nacelle is slung under the wing.

At this point I started the resin cockpit. The detail set gives you a single piece floor, left console and rear bulkhead, right and left sidewalls, a seat and stick, and a throttle quadrant in resin and a photoetched instrument panel, seat belts and trim wheel, along with lots of small levers. All of these parts are immaculately detailed—maybe not as cleanly as *Cooper Details* sets, but better than *True Details* early run of 1:72 parts.

To attach the floor/rear bulkhead, you must first cut away the molded-in bulkhead in the kit. When I did this, I found that the new parts didn't fit well into the upside-down "V"-shaped

area behind the pilot's head. I filed this problem away for future consideration.

The interior parts were primed in black, followed by a coat of interior green (sprayed from above on the sidewalls to impart a "shadow" effect). A source told me that some *Tigercats* had their rear bulkheads painted in yellow zinc chromate, so I masked the rest of the cockpit and sprayed the lighter shade on the rear bulkhead, which added much color to the entire cockpit.

The consoles and radio boxes were painted in a variety of shades of tire black and grimy black, both from the Floquil

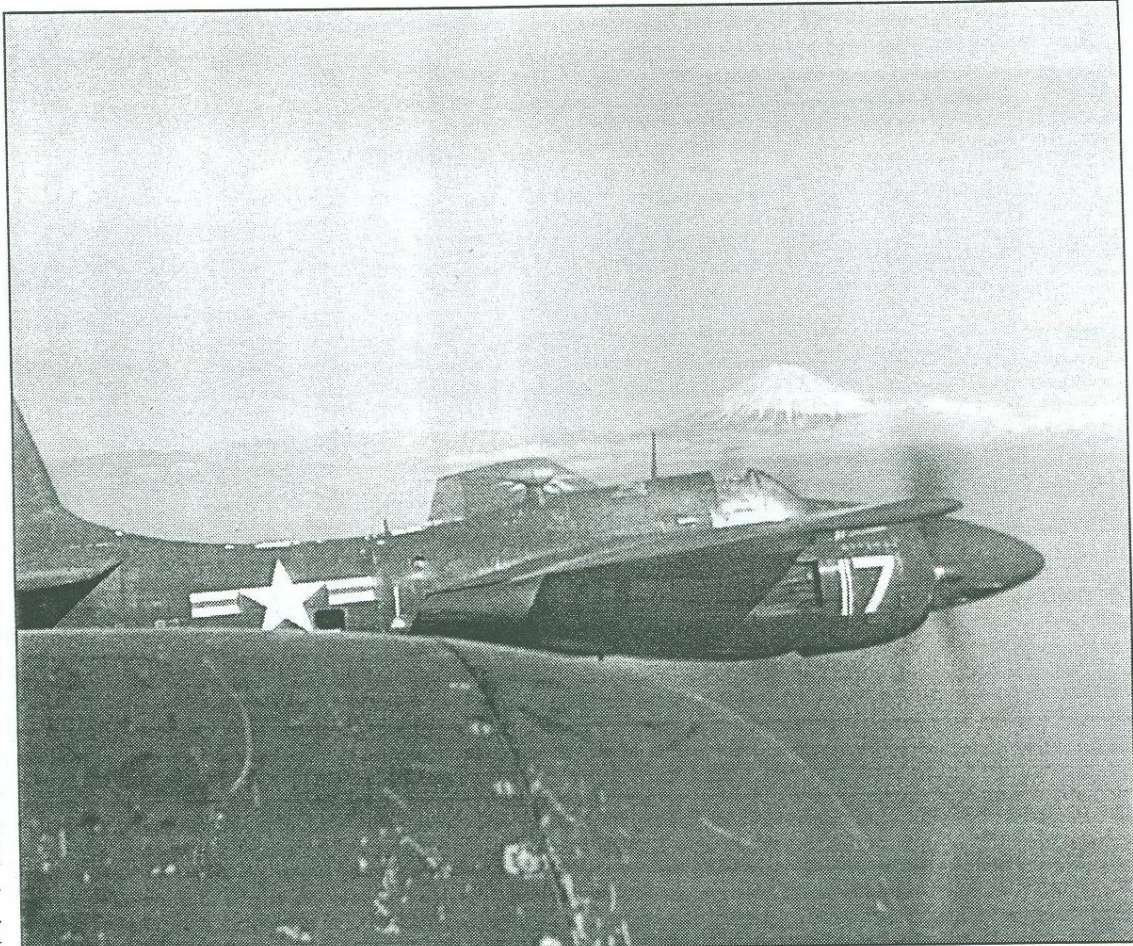
line; don't use flat black, or else you'll lose your detail in the already-dark cockpit. Next, I ran a dark wash over all the cockpit parts, followed by a drybrushing of the raised detailing in a lightened shade of interior green, or a lighter gray for the dark parts.

At this point, just when I was ready to install the cockpit, I lost the

sidewalls on my workbench! I spent another few hours painting a new set of sidewalls from a second cockpit set; when I was done, naturally, the first set magically reappeared. Oh well... Next time I do an F7F, I have one step out of the way!

Test fitting the cockpit parts showed that the sidewalls were too high in relation to the cockpit edge, so I trimmed them down from their lower edges until the floor/bulkhead and sidewalls all fit properly. The photoetched control panel and its acetate instruments were painted and prepared, as was the seat, seat belts and control column, and these were installed into the left side of the cockpit. In the nose, I glued several ounces of fishing weights in place to serve as a balance for the heavy tail.

When the fuselage halves were closed, there was still a sizable gap left above the rear bulkhead. I filled this gap with



First Marine Air Wing HEDRON F7F-3Ps fly past Mount Fuji. These aircraft wore the all-black paint scheme usually associated with *Tigercat* nightfighters.

bits of styrene and superglue and sanded it flat, taking the resin pilot's headrest with it! Fortunately, the shape was simple and I was able to make a new one from styrene scrap, with the added bonus that it could be painted without masking before it was added to the model.

The fuselage had few gaps—except for where the belly tank and pylon had been. I managed to rip one half of the tank off while test-fitting the cockpit parts, so a large gap had to be filled with styrene where the pylon had been. I sanded the seams, rescribed the panel lines, and moved on. One note here: *Monogram* includes the upper and lower fuselage strakes in the kit nicely, but these are so petite and so subtle that I've heard and read of people mistaking them for flash and removing them! They do belong there, so leave them in place!

At this point, I decided that the trailing edges of the wings and tail had to be sharpened. I was worried, though, because *Monogram* captured the shape and texture of the fabric-covered control surfaces very nicely, and I didn't want to ruin that. Fortunately, I discovered that sharpening the trailing edges with a flexifile only enhanced the appearance; the surface now looked like fabric drawn tightly over sharp-edged wooden rib instead of a thick, blunt one! I also turned my flexifile loose on the wingtip lights, removing a notch in the tips for future improvement.

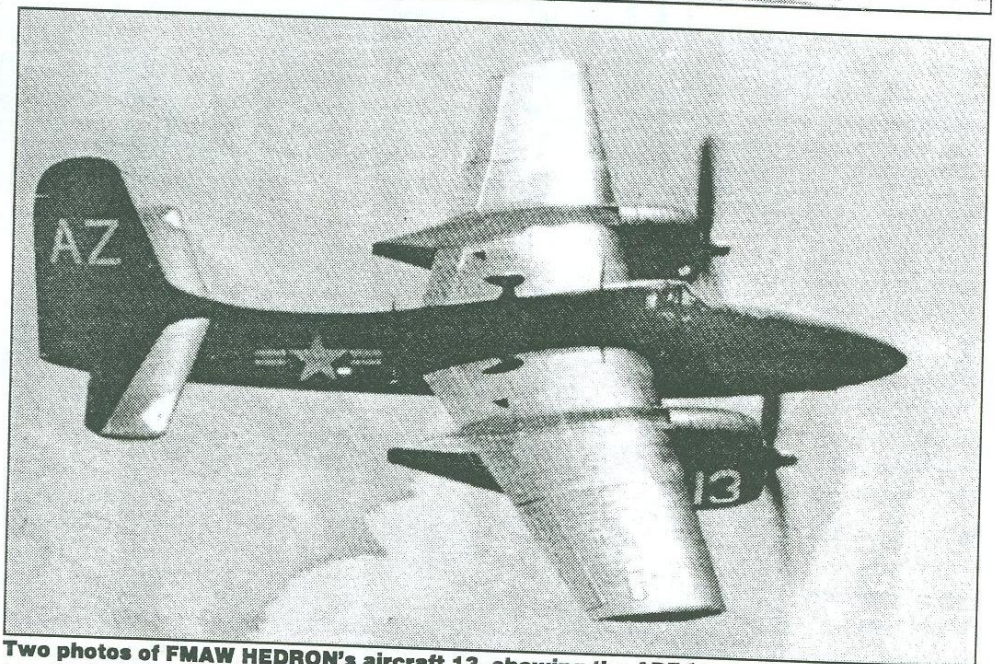
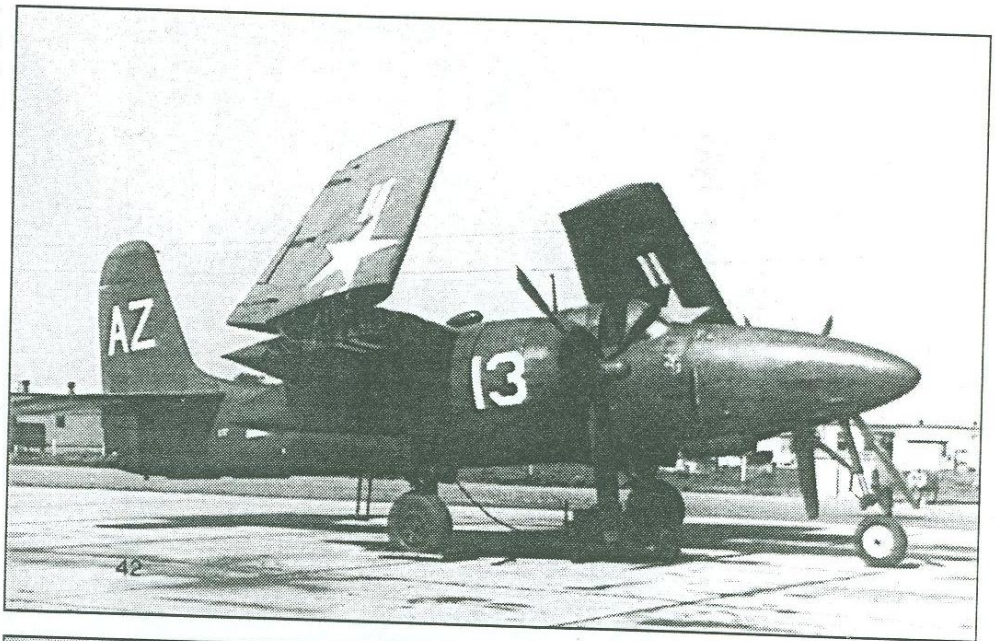
The wings' fit to the fuselage left a bit to be desired, and required some serious shimming on one side to eliminate gaps. Superglue, sanding and patience helped out here. The horizontal stabilizers also required some clean up of their join lines to the fuselage, followed by some refreshment of the panel scribing.

Now that the entire airframe was assembled, I polished the model vigorously with Blue Magic. This gets the surface ready for paint and can also show up sanding flaws without requiring an extra layer of paint.

I masked off all the openings and shot the model with—*Testors* buffing aluminum metallizer. Huh? Why did I do that? Well, first of all, it provides a good check of the seams, and second, it sets you up to do some realistic chipping of the paint. I also shot the cowlings and the *Aries* resin gear doors with aluminum.

Now the fun part—the markings. I really wanted to do a

black F7F—it just looks so much more menacing that way!—but all my references showed were blue *Tigercats*. I first settled on "Photo Flash," one of the end-of-the-war Okinawa birds, but a second look at the photo showed that the plane had the early F7F-2-style short tail! Another option was the green-and-white striped *Tigercat* seen in the '50s at Livermore, but



Two photos of FMAW HEDRON's aircraft 13, showing the ADF football, one of the -3P's identifying characteristics. In the lower photo, the one of the camera ports on the fuselage is open.

this scheme has been done to death, with both the *AMT* kit in 1:48 and the reissue of this kit by *Revell* of Germany featuring it among the decal options.

Luckily, just before I was going to paint the model, *Scale Aviation Modeler* ran a three-page pictorial featuring profiles of F7Fs. One of them—to my surprise and delight—was CAPT Dkyes' black, single seat F7F-3P! Wary of artists' interpretations, I looked for photographic confirmation, and quickly found it—the title page of Warren Thompson's *Air War: Korea*

Part 2 features two all-black FMAW HEDRON -3Ps flying past Mt. Fuji.

Up until this point I hadn't planned on doing any subject other than a straight -3; to do a -3P, I needed to make some changes.

Luckily, this "conversion" hardly qualifies as such. I had to scribe five ports for cameras on the sides and belly of the airplane, which seemed like nothing after the rigamarole of scribing the entire model! Also, I had to add a few whip antennas to the spine; I did this after painting by drilling small holes with a #80 bit in a pin vise and adding lengths of fine, stiff wire.

F7F-3Ps in the Korean HEDRON were fitted with direction finding "footballs" on the spine. I scavenged one from an Airfix J2F Duck and made a mount from styrene strip, which I faired in with small amounts of thin superglue. I also cut the kit windscreen from the sliding canopy, dipped it in Future and cemented and faired it into place, then used Parafilm to mask it for painting.

At this point, I had a silver *Tigercat* with a football on its back. Time to paint it black—or rather, a mixture of Floquil flat black and tire black to give a "scale effect." While the scale effect idea gets debated a lot in modeling circles, in 1:72 and with very dark colors, and especially black, it's almost mandatory. Flat black over a large 1:72 model does not look right—it's too toy-like. A lightened version of the color looks right—like you're viewing it from a distance.

After the "black" paint had been applied and had dried for a few hours, I began to take it off—on purpose! With the point of an X-Acto knife, I began chipping the paint at the leading edges and around panel lines. The faded, flat black paint didn't stand up well to the Korean elements, and I wanted to simulate that. I also chipped the now-painted engine cowlings, and, to simulate the wear in the Thompson book's photo,

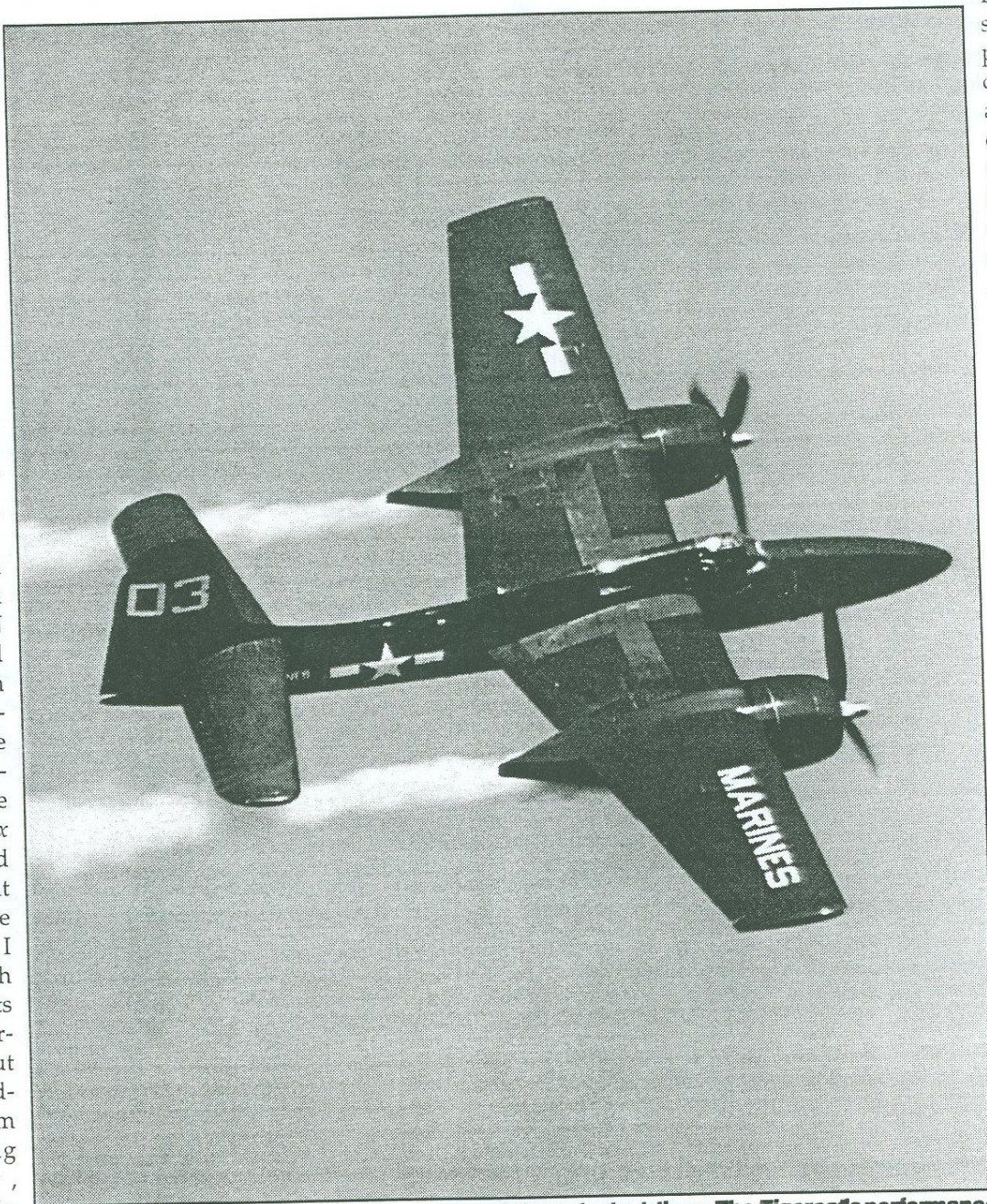
I used a sharp silver artist's pencil to indicate the rivets around the cowling, all of which had been stripped of paint during maintenance. At first, I thought my chipping was somewhat overdone—easy enough to do, because this sort of weathering is a lot of fun to do!

The next step took care of this problem. I sprayed the model with water-based gloss Varathane to prepare it for decals, and while it made the flat near-black paint glossy, it toned down the shiny chips!

The Varathane is useful in two ways. It prepares the surface of the model for decals, of course,

but it also dries hard as a rock and protects the model from your mistakes. It gave me confidence to try to apply sooty gray exhaust streaks on the wings and nacelles with my airbrush—an experiment, really, that was possible only because the Varathane was there as my safety net.

Since the cowling had yet to be added, there was nothing to mask off. I mixed up a batch of extra thin light gray paint, and very carefully sprayed a pattern of paint like a candle flame from the exhaust stacks back over the wing. When this was



This restored *Tigercat* shows off the Grumman fighter's sleek lines. The *Tigercat's* performance is so impressive that one F7F has performed an aerobatics routine with an F-14!

done, I still wasn't satisfied, so I went back and mixed black and brown paint to obtain a burnt metal color. Again, this was thinned, and this time I sprayed it only in a quarter-inch area behind the stacks.

This looked too dark, too burned, and nowhere near subtle enough. So, I mixed up more of the original gray color and sprayed a bit of it at the center of the brown pattern, then let off the pressure and lightly dusted the entire brown area. The result was a nice, subdued effect that still looked like the plane had been flown with the throttles firewalled—which it had.

Now I applied the decals—a simple set of white-and-red

with an application of *Testors* metallizer sealer, which gave the props a realistic sheen. I also added some chip marks to the blades' leading edges, and slipped them into place on the engines.

The next additions were the landing gear. The use of the *Aries* parts necessitated some modifications to mount the nose and main struts, and after the necessary portions were cut away I painted the struts glossy sea blue. I assembled the kit tires, painting the hubs blue and the tires *Floquil* tire black, and got the model up "on its feet," before adding the rest of the undercarriage parts—photo-etched retraction struts on the

main gear, photo-etched anti-torque scissors on the nose gear, the kit nose wheel door and the resin *Aries* main gear doors.

Next came small details. I drilled out the underwing signal light and replaced it with an *MV* lens of the proper size. The wingtip lights, which had been filed away earlier, had small bits of painted wire—red in the left wingtip, green in the



The streaks behind the exhausts are characteristic of sea blue and black Navy planes of the '40s and '50s.

stars and bars in four places, stolen from a sheet for F4U-5N nightfighters, and the large "AZ" tailcodes, from a *SuperScale* sheet for 1:48 RAF bombers. The number "3" on the nose was another *SuperScale* decal, cribbed from a sheet meant for *Avengers*; I tried *Aeromaster's* white codes, but they were translucent and looked awful against the black paint. (Note to decal manufacturers: If you're going to do white code letter and number decals, you really ought to make sure you use enough ink to make them opaque. They're probably going to go on a dark surface anyway!)

The final touch on the decals was a small Marine Corps emblem, which came from *Superscale's* decals for pre-war U.S. Navy and Marine Corps units. This went below and ahead of the cockpit, and added a bit of color to the scheme.

Once this was done, I finally added the engines and cowlings. I had drilled out the propeller hubs to accommodate the *Aries* engine prop shafts early on, so now I painted the propellers' tips yellow with flat black blades. I followed this

right—glued into pre-drilled holes to simulate colored bulbs, with five-minute epoxy applied over them. I held the model nose down until the epoxy set in a way that conformed to the wingtip shape to simulate clear fairings.

Metal tubing was inserted in the wing roots in the 20mm cannon positions, and a photoetched mast antenna went behind the sliding canopy, which came from the *Squadron* vacuformed replacement pack and was Future'd, masked and painted along with the windscreen. An *Aries*-provided gunsight went on top of the instrument shroud, along with a bit of clear acetate for a reflector, and I carefully rigged the aerials using fibers from a pair of smoke-colored panty hose.

There it is—a black cat, and one that's been around the block by the looks of it. My sources tell me that *Pavla Models* will soon be releasing an F7F-3N in 1:72, as will an up-and-coming aftermarket company, both no doubt based on *Monogram's* solid old-timer. When it arrives, I may have to build a mate for my *Tiger* using the lessons I've already learned.

SVSM BOOKSHELF

Grumman Albatross: A History of the Legendary Seaplane

By Wayne Mutza

Copyright Schiffer Publishing Company, 1996

One of the most beloved airplanes of the post-war era is the UF-1 *Albatross*, the last of the great flying boats. The "Goat" served the Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard from 1949 to 1973, serving as a rescue platform, a lifeline to remote outposts and even an anti-submarine platform for some foreign operators. After its military service, the *Albatross* flew with airlines and performed research for the Smithsonian Institute.

Wayne Mutza tackles this subject with both enthusiasm and an incisive sense of organization. The sprawling career of the aircraft is deftly dissected, splitting the technical aspects of the plane from its service history and maintaining the book's flow.

Mutza summarizes the Goat's Air Force career in a single chapter, but includes an avalanche of facts that doubtlessly required hours of research. For instance, how many of the readers know that an *Albatross* was credited with a MiG-15 kill in Korea, or that one of the major operators of this seaplane was the West Virginia National Guard? Mutza sprinkles the text with details like these, all of which could serve as inspiration to the ambitious modeler.

The photographic coverage of the *Albatross* is simply outstanding. The entire interior is depicted in photographs early on, and the many color photographs provide a history of the many markings the airplane wore.

Later chapters cover the somewhat unsuccessful conversion of the *Albatross* to airline service with Chalk Air and turboprop conversions to the Grumman airframe.

All of the diverse paths the *Albatross* took through its career are woven together masterfully by Mutza, who shows an obvious love for the subject. While modelers who wish to tackle the UF-1 should also pick up Steve Ginter's

Action" volume on the *Albatross*, Mutza's history will provide the inspiration to for modelers to put all three to work.

—Chris Bucholtz

Douglas A-1 Skyraider: A Photo Chronicle

By Frederick Johnsen

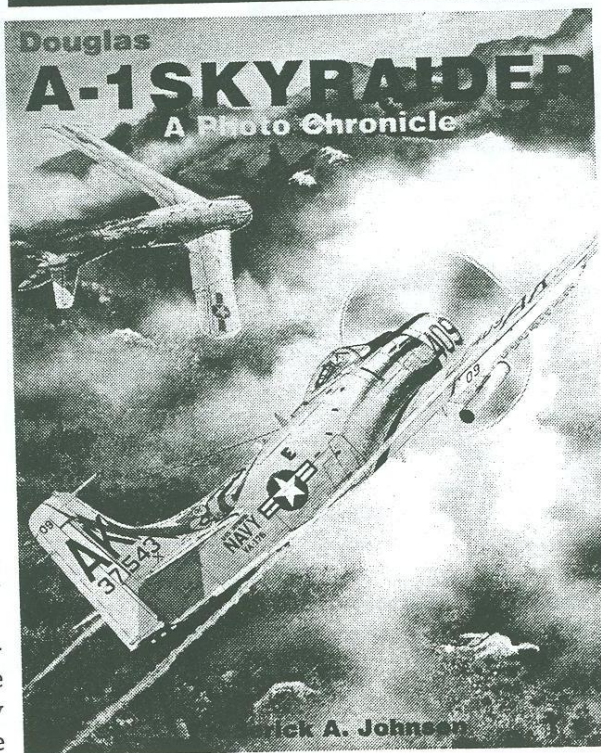
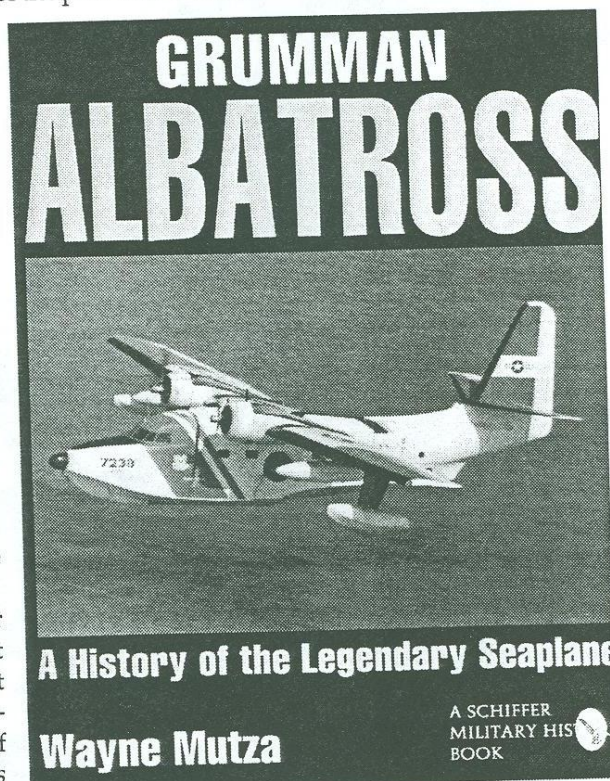
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When this book came out in 1994, our resident SPAD guru Mike Burton reviewed it. With *Tamiya* planning a new AD-6 in 1:48 for early next year and *Hasegawa's* release of a 1:72 *Skyraider*, It might be useful to revisit this book.

Johnsen's text is a valiant attempt to recount the history of this long-lived airplane from inception to retirement in a 112-page, heavily-illustrated book. The first two chapters, on the design and introduction of the AD, are good, although the story was told better by the plane's father in *Ed Heinemann—Combat Aircraft Designer*. The plane's success in Korea is given rather sketchy coverage in just nine pages, with combat accounts that seem disjointed, as if Johnsen had lifted stories from a random pile of "Naval Aviation News" issues of the era (Johnsen doesn't do himself much good when his footnotes reveal that this is exactly what he did). This is the most under-reported facet of the *Skyraider's* service; one would have hoped Johnsen would have dug deeper and talked to more aviators about their relationship with this reliable plane.

Foreign operators (other than South Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand) are given an almost dismissive six pages of coverage. Again, with users as diverse as Great Britain, France, Chad and Gabon, Johnsen could have told an interesting story. Instead, he instead provides a rather superficial overview of the plane's history.

Johnsen's chapters on the *Skyraider's* use in Vietnam are dominated by excerpts from an interview with Nguyen Cao Ky, former vice president of



South Vietnam and president of the Vietnamese Air Force. Page after page is devoted to Ky's tales of the *Skyraider*—but the entire experience of the Navy's SPAD pilots over Southeast Asia, including the remarkable experiences of MiG killers William Patton and Clint Johnson and POW escapee Dieter Dengler are glossed over in just two pages of truncated text. This unbalanced approach, combined with the rudimentary coverage of Korea, indicates a complete lack of effort on Johnsen's part to research the career of the SPAD at sea beyond the basics.

By trade, Johnsen is an Air Force historian, and his thorough coverage of Air Force Sandies indicates where his true interests lie. Johnsen recounts in detail the Medal-of-Honor missions of Bernie Fisher and William A. Jones, and sheds interesting light on the use of *Skyriders* in the Son Tay prison raid in 1970. The last chapter briefly describes restored ADs, with a selection of photos of flyable ADs.

Photos are this book's strong point, especially photos of Air

Force *Skyriders*. Readers who come to the book with a working knowledge of the SPAD can find some interesting data in the photos, although the colorful SPADs of the Navy's Vietnam era are largely absent. If you're looking for data on an Air Force *Skyraider*, however, you should find plenty of inspiration for a camouflaged Able Dog.

Unfortunately, the writing that should bind this photo coverage together doesn't do the job. While his intent is good, Johnsen's execution is somewhat sloppy. Evidence of the guiding hand of an editor is completely absent. Frequent repetition and poor organization mar Johnsen's writing, and while he has no trouble with technical details his accounts of combat are sterile and echo the dry nature of field combat reports. Johnsen has no grasp of how to convey the drama, excitement and emotion of combat. For a book about a plane that evoked such a visceral response from the people who worked with it, this is a major shortcoming.

—Chris Bucholtz

LETTERS TO SVSM

Dear Editor and Contest Director,

I've just returned from the regional contest at Eureka, and I was greatly impressed with the contest in every regard. It was an amazing first effort. However, I have one issue I would like to raise, with an eye toward SVSM's upcoming Kickoff Classic. This is a matter of category definition, and I raise it now because I am currently disinterested (as a competitor) and I could envision it resulting in a protest or injured feelings.

One entrant in biplanes in Eureka was a 1:48 Fokker EV/DVIII. It (or another like it) was entered as a biplane in an earlier contest I attended, also. Only problem is, it is a monoplane. No doubt the builder, if pushed, would have pointed to the airfoil-shaped fairing over the axle and said it was a lifting surface, ergo, the model is a biplane. I will admit that I'm not above trophy hunting; having gone out with a 1:72 prop-driven, civilian, biplane Bu 131, I could have waited until the last minute and picked the class with the best chance to win, but the Bucher is, at least, genuine. I think, however, if I had sweated out rigging an Ilya Murometz only to lose to a monoplane, I would be seriously irritated. So I would like to propose that, assuming there is to be a biplane category, "biplane" should be defined before the fact.

This is a bit analogous to the time Louis Armstrong was asked to define jazz. It comes down to knowing intuitively what is right, but needing words. The first question probably should be, "why have a biplane class at all?" I suggest that the reason that the reason is that biplanes have one or two additional ways to commit errors and lose points, compared to a monoplane, in particular the rigging job, and secondarily the alignment of the wings and struts to each other—not just to the landing gear, tail and ground. Consider some ambiguous cases, in addition to the EV I mentioned:

- Flying boasts with sponsons, like the Boeing or Martin clippers or the Dornier boats from Wal to Do 24. Monoplanes, I argue. The sponsons contribute some lift, but they are really a part of the alighting gear (like the axle fairing on the EV).

- The Bellanca C27 (*Execuform*, 1:72), an odd bird with

downward-angled stub wings that mount the landing gear, with sharply tapering airfoil-shaped struts angled outward. Structurally, it's a fully rigged sesquiplane with lift, landing and diagonal brace wires terminating at the end of the stub wing. *Execuform* plans do not show the full rigging, and I don't know what you have without the struts and rigging, but when accurately modeled, it is a biplane.

- The Nieuport-Delage 622 and Soviet I-4 variants: ridiculously small lower wing, and no wire rigging. It doesn't seem in the spirit of the category, but they admittedly are biplanes.

- Morane Saulnier type L parasol (which appears as a very nice 1:48 kit from *Eduard*): unquestionably there's only one lifting service, but a rigging job equal to most biplanes. If someone builds a really nice one of these, complete with a few of the flaws that can befall someone in the process of all this rigging, does he really have to compete with *Accurate Miniatures'* P-51 or a *Fine Molds* Ki-43?

- How about that ultimate rigging job, the Etrich Taube (*Classic Planes*, 1:72)? It even has a spar below the monoplane wing that, structurally, takes the place of a lower wing. Its natural competition in a contest would be rigged biplanes, but it is clearly a monoplane. In what category does it go?

Maybe the nationals already has a set of rules to govern this issue, but I'd suggest some early thought. A biplane may not require rigging, but should have two or more wings, which should be primary aerodynamic surfaces, not parts of the alighting gear, nor wing struts shaped to provide lift, as in some Bellanca designs, nor bomb supports as in the Westland *Lysander*. I'd also propose that a monoplane that has sufficiently complex rigging should find its natural competition in the biplane category, but that should not admit a P-26 or a Curtiss *Shrike*, with their simple pairs of wires to the front and rear spars. It's not clear how this should be resolved, without resorting to nit-picking numerology.

So what is a Mistel composed of two Me 262s? Beats me, but it is more nearly a biplane than that infamous Fokker EV.

--Bob Miller

OCTOBER MINUTES

Don't forget that November's meeting will be held at the Milpitas Police Department—see the map on the back of this issue. This is a one-time location, and December's customary gift exchange will be back at the Library!

At October's meeting, representatives from the Veteran's Administration Hospital spoke to the club about how the models we gather each year in our Veterans' Model Drive are put to use—from helping in rehabilitative services with even the most seriously affected patients to providing outpatients with something to use to connect to their grandchildren. Hopefully, these words will inspire the membership to once again be generous in their contributions.

In model talk, Bob Turner displayed two stock cars he bought as promo items from Billings Chevrolet, and a pair of buses in 1:72 scale he purchased back in Oklahoma. Bob also displayed a '72 Oldsmobile convertible that he intends to finish as a duplicate of car he owns. Lou Orselli brought in some out-of-the-ordinary birds—a Skodakirov B-4 trainer, built from the *Wings 72* kit, and a *Falcon* Reggiane Re.2005 from *Falcon's* kit. Lou's taking an "Italian vacation"—or a vacation from Italian subjects—with his *Matchbox* Hs 126. Joe Callahan's subjects were also in a German vein—namely, a Messerschmitt Me 119 and a Blohm und Voss Bv 117. Ken Durling has caught the airliner bug; he's planning to finish his DC-8-63 in the livery of Flying Tigers Airlines, and he used aluminum foil and *MicroScale* adhesive to put a shiny surface on *Entex's* 1:100 DC-3. Ken's also taking a shot at *Hasegawa's* 1:200 707-200. Matt Reich has nearly completed his three-cars-into-one Caprice police car, and has one of *Lindberg's* new Crown Victoria's on deck. Matt's also done a bit of work on *Accurate Miniatures'* TBM Avenger, adding seatbelts from the photo-etched fret included in *Monogram's* ProModeler release of the B-24. Bob Miller was in a railroad mood, showing the climax geared locomotive he wrote about in last month's newsletter and a *Roundhouse* oil/electric motor coach, a hypothetical railroad subject. Bob also showed a few of his veteran models, including a *Martlet* I built from the *Minicraft* F4F-4 kit to represent one of the two planes credited with a Battle of Britain Ju 88 kill, and his IJN carrier Shoho, a conversion from a 1:700 cruiser hull. Patrick Chapman populated the table with a collection of Dark Angels space marines miniatures painted and built for the Warhammer game. Jim Lund created a lovely P2Y-2 amphibian using the *Contrail* vacuform kit, and he showed preliminary work on what will be a spectacular project—a 1:72 U.S.S. *Macon*, which he hopes to have done for next year's nationals. Mike Yamada is still going crazy superdetailing a Star Wars X-Wing fighter, and he's also working on something slightly more down to earth—an Impala, detailed with various Mustang parts to create a Galaxie 500 concept car. Mark Hernandez showed his completed Zeppelin rammer (as described in Mark's article elsewhere in the Styrene Sheet) and a new kit from *Planet Models* of Arado's Ar 238, a very large nightfighter design that never made it off the drawing board. Ken Fadrigon, our club's rotorcraft specialist, added a muffler, engine details, control cables and seatbelt harnesses to *Airfix's* re-issued "Little Nellie" autogyro. Ken is also working on a *Revell* 1:48 F/A-18, which is nearing completion despite an unfortunate drop-

ping it suffered during the decal process. Frank Babbitt says he wants to get into armor, but not all at once; his first effort is a nicely painted 1:35 crewman, for which he says he'll build a tank later! Kent McClure's latest fleet of small-scale starships has a "Flash Gordon" feel to it, since Kent modified weapons from *LS's* 1:144 weapons set, including a *Bullpup* missile, a minigun pod and a Mk. 84 bomb, into spaceships. Kent also displayed a die-cast model of the British land speed record-setting jet car from *Lido*. Dave Balderrama said the new *Testors* Roswell UFO has an okay fit, but some of the parts had a bit of warp in Dave's kit. Dave is also working on building *Imai's* "Space: 1999" Eagle, and for fun Dave brought in the old MPC kit of Moonbase Alpha. Roy Sutherland has a *Hasegawa Spitfire* IX almost ready to paint, and he's trying to get the cockpit done for his *Tamiya* 1:48 *Spitfire* V. Roy's also considering giving *Eduard's* 1:48 *Tempest*; he says the only inaccuracy is a fuselage that's just a bit shot. Chris Hughes' new Sherman is finished as a Pakistani tank from the 1971 war with India, and features a *Tank Workshop* turret, a *Chesapeake* 76mm barrel and other home-made details. Chris also used a *Verlinden* turret, a *Chesapeake* 75mm barrel and parts from *DML*, *Tamiya* and *Italeri* to model an M3A4. Chris has a Panzer I command tank in progress. Joe Fleming has finished his *Hobbycraft Hurricane*, modifying it by substituting .303 machine gun ports for the kit provided 20mm cannons. Joe's "eternal Sherman" is continuing its slow path to completion, with new running gear and photoetched parts. Joe's also working on a Soviet tank destroyer that may find its way into a diorama. Cliff Kranz displayed a whole family of self-propelled guns, including an M-109 with the 75mm gun, an M-110 short-barrel, an M-110A-1 with a *Verlinden* barrel and an M-110A-2 with a new muzzle brake. Jim Lewis used *Hasegawa's* balloon tires on *Tamiya's* new kubelwagen, with no problems whatsoever. Jim also had his award-winning gun truck and his gun mutt displayed as a preview of the

CONTEST CALENDAR

Dec. 6: **The Holiday Classic**, hosted by the Silver Wings chapter of the IPMS in Sacramento at a new location—the Ramada Inn at Fulton Ave. and Auburn Blvd. For more information, contact Scott Bell at SnJmodprod@aol.com or (916) 428-7217.

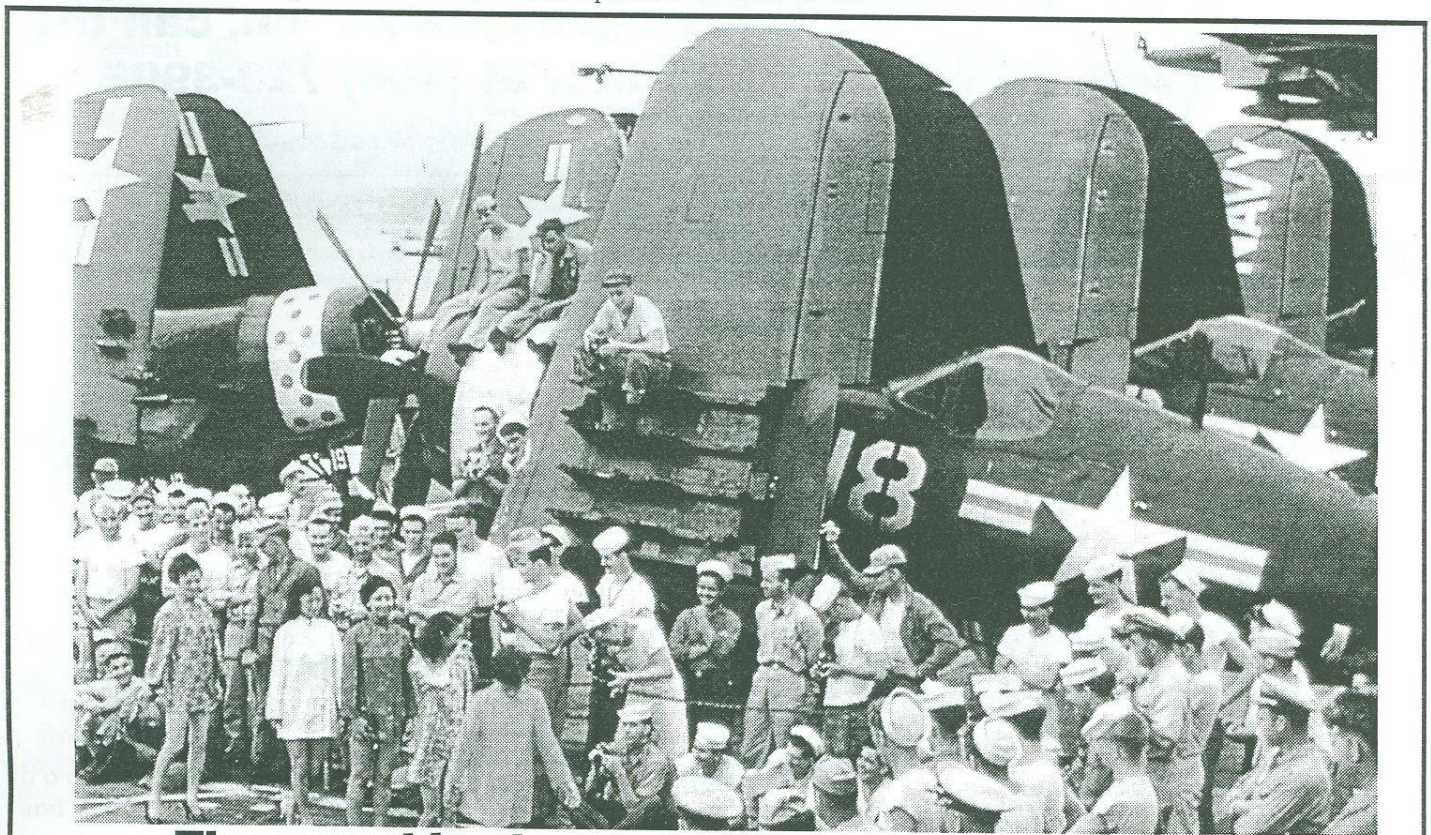
Feb. 7: **Fifth Annual Kickoff Classic**, hosted by the Silicon Valley Scale Modelers in Milpitas, California. Theme: Made in the U.S.A. For information, call Chris Bucholtz at (408) 723-3995.

July 1-4: **The 1998 IPMS/USA National Convention and Contest** at the Santa Clara Convention Center, hosted by IPMS SemiCon and the members of Region IX. Theme: Rockets' Red Glare. For more information, call Chris Bucholtz at (408) 723-3995.

Vietnam armor display planned for next year's nationals. Bruce McBride displayed a 1:10 card-stock mock-up of his planned scratch-built Saxon armored car, which he may build as the basis of a remote-control vehicle. Brad Chun is building a pair of *Lindberg* Crown Victorias, both as his own Oakland Police Department car. Brad says he'll have to find the right light bar and modify the interior cage. For some reason, Brad tried to build the *DML* Alfa Soviet submarine, and he's having some better luck with *Koster's* conversion of the *Monogram* 1:48 B-24 into a Navy PB4Y-1. Chris Bucholtz is adding the *Kendall Model Company* interior to *Hasegawa's* 1:72 AD-6 *Skyraider*; he says the engineering of the cockpit tub could have been better had the sidewalls been molded separately. Mike Meek is feeling racy—he's used Camaro wheels, frame and chassis parts on *Revell's* 1:25 Trans-Am Mustang, along with a scratch-built roll-cage, to depict Ron Fellows' #4 car, and he's replicated the work needed to create the unlimited racer "Miss Ashley," using a *Hasegawa* Mustang fuselage, a *Hasegawa* Lear Jet 23 wing, an *Academy* Spitfire XIV nose and a *CollectAire* P-51H tail to re-create the "Learstang" flown by Gary Levitz at this year's Reno air race. Marc Wilson's hypothetical racing Mustang is built from the old *Hasegawa* 1:72 kit, with clipped wings and it's own Spitfire XIV Griffon nose. Marc says it will end up as a Hawaiian Punch-sponsored

airplane. Marc's also adding cockpit detail to *Hasegawa's* MiG-25, to replicate the photo-*Foxbat* the Egyptians used to keep tabs on Israel, and he's also working on a 600-series racer as a break from airplanes. Ben Pada used decals from *SuperScale* and *Aeromaster* to come up with a correct set of markings for John Glenn's plane; they'll be applied to *Hasegawa's* 1:48 *Saber Jet*. Ben is also working on a *Tamiya* Mustang. Randy Rothhaar is building the title ship from "Start Trek: Voyager" in its current configuration, complete with added Borg armor. And the model of the month goes to... Mike Wilson, who took it upon himself to scratch-build a lovely version of that not-so-lovely French airliner, the *Breguet Provence*. Nice job, Mike!

October was also the natural date for our annual missiles contest. The winners were... In third place, with a camouflaged MXY7 Ohka suicide bomb, Cliff Kranz' heretofore unnamed "Lady Friend" (sort of the Carlton the Doorman of our club...). In second, with his NASA 1:144 F-104—the "missile with a man in it"—was our club's small scale specialist, Ken Miller. And the winner, with his screaming orange JB-1 *Loon*, was Jim Priete, for the second year in a row! Jim used the V-1 from the *Monogram* He 111 kit—not the new *Tamiya* kit—because it had the best shape of any buzz bomb in the scale.



The crowd is already gathering for November's club contest...

Corsairs—F4Us and A-7s

Coming in December: *Twins (Anything having to do with the number two)*

ATTENTION! SPECIAL TIME AND LOCATION!

Next meeting:

7 p.m.,

Friday,

November 21

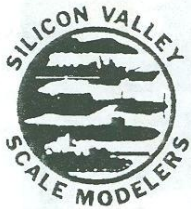
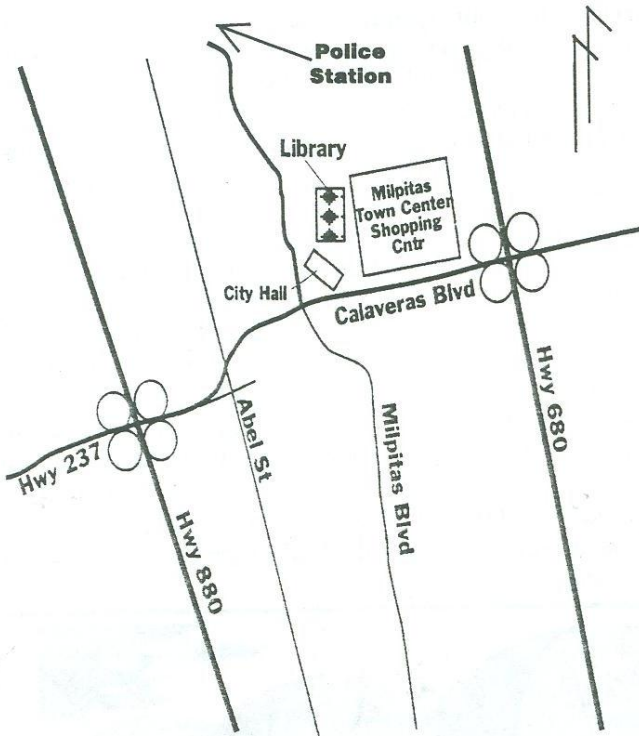
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