



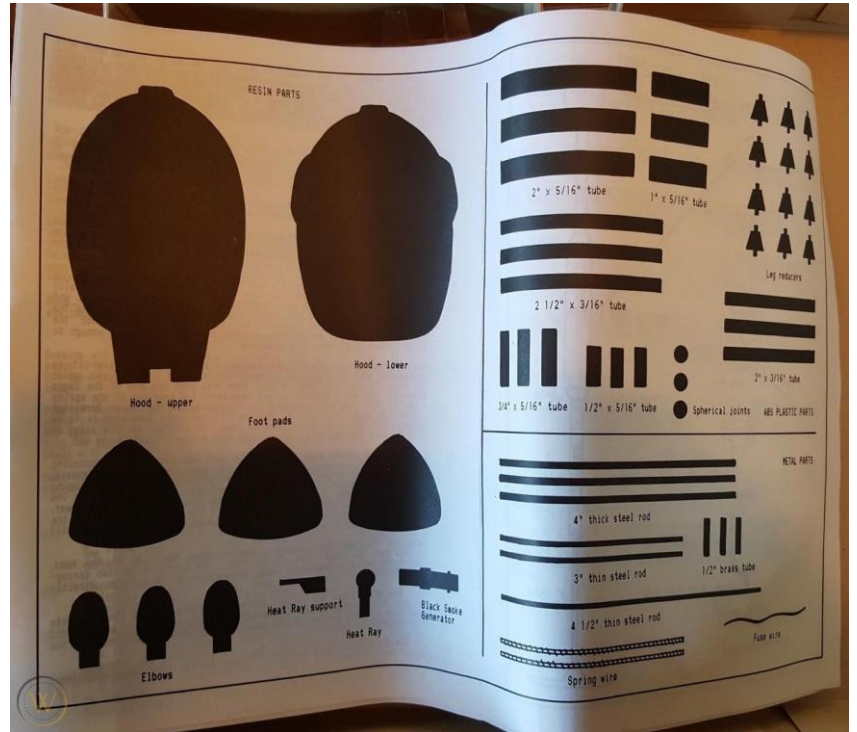
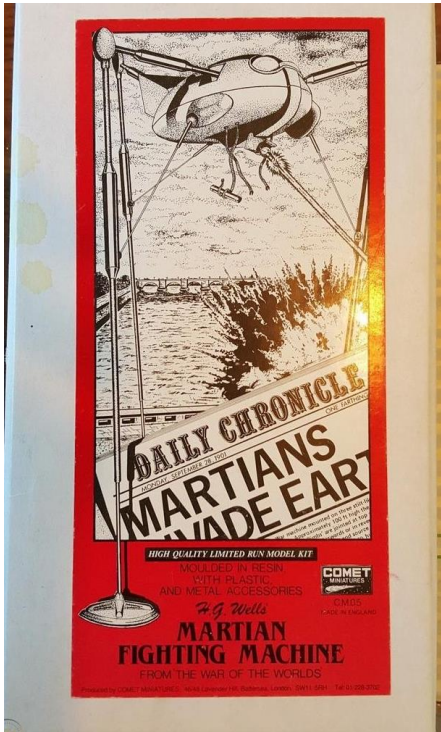
# THE STYRENE SHEET

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## *On Modelling Grandpa's "Civil" Martian War Machine...*



*GUEST AUTHOR MUSES ON OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES FACED WHEN TRYING TO REPRODUCE OBSCURE SUBJECT FROM HIS FAMILY HISTORY*

**My model story starts such as it is, with of course, an illustrative backstory. Since I am surer than sure that while some of you dear readers, have equally if not surpassingly better tales of family history, not likely one where a linkage to time of year, alien encounters and models will neatly intersect within it.**

**As well, a good many of you likely have been educated with the “definitive knowledge” of the basis for my commemorative model of a piece of family lore, comes from “work of pure fiction”**

**I won't even try to dissuade you. Was warned long before I ever ventured out “into the real world” of that by my immediate family and our closest friends. That any serious effort aimed at overcoming this clear misconception of the truthfulness of this, would only manage at best, make me butt of jokes. Worst, provide me a severe loss of freedom experience that would make even today's situation seem tolerable. Although the splendid facility that I have spent most of my adult life in assures me I may be able to resume residence, once the friendly folks who run it can safely be within 6 feet of me...So odd.**

***However, I digress unnecessarily. My first problem, is in fact a familiar one, to many a modeler ...***  
*(continues page 3)*

Editor's Ravings – this month's editor, Mick Burton



“ ACE BANDAGE EDITORIAL EDITION ”

***SORRY TO REPORT THAT WE CANNOT LEGALLY TRAVEL OR MEET AT OUR FRIEND & MEMBER'S HOUSE THIS COMING MONTH OF MAY, AS WE HAD ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO DO.***

***IT IS CONSIDERED NON ESSENTIAL & IS NOT PERMITTED UNDER ORDERS OF OUR LOCAL AUTHORITIES.***

***FOR YOUR PROTECTION.***

***THANK YOU Santa Clara County Health Dept and Executives and you too, Governor.***

CANCELLED NEWS – **DO NOT HEAD THIRD FRIDAY OF MAY OVER TO Mr Jim Lund's house**

=====  
*Meanwhile Your Cranky and Aggravated Editor will continue to carry his papers on his person at all times to make sure that he can show proof he has permission to travel to his daily work which is deemed essential. Where he is considered to be “at risk at all times” and working with “very high risk vulnerable population” Of which demographic he too is a member and also recognizes what life is, even without Gov. Nuisance's not so solid assistance here and his fairly difficult to pin down specifics on just when the “stand down” can be forecast... Let's hope we don't have to rely on more of these “oops, flawed studies released too soon” for help*

**YES, YOU ARE CORRECT THIS APRIL LETTER IS BEING PUBLISHED LATE IN THE MONTH TOO ☹**

***NOW HEAR THIS !***

***SVSM's “ Shooting Stars ” Club Contest Retry***

***Is On HIATUS UNTIL SOME FUTURE DATE***

***For Assembly & Final Judgment***

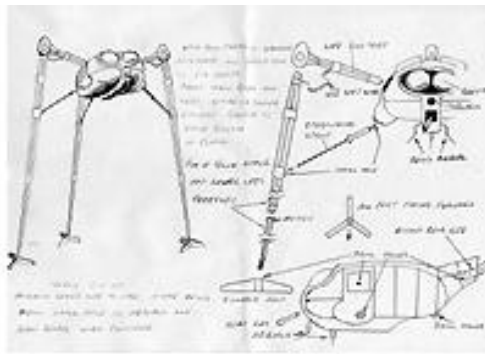
***THIS IS YOUR GENTLE LATEST REMINDER***

*Until next newsletter then, Editor signs off,- mick fini*



*Editor Off His Feed & Nut ( from page 1 )*

*A snippet of kit instructions from **The Martian War Machine** by one **Comet Miniatures**, whose model illustrates the cover for article*



*That being the problem of severe **lack of accurate and reliable documentation, especially photos or illustrations. Both publicly available and private data sources, even inside my own family archives !***

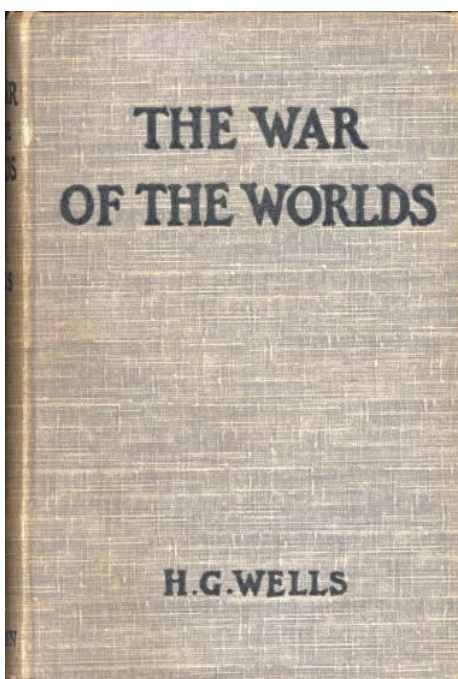
Made even harder still, as I mentioned, by running into a stubbornly held belief. That true facts of all this matter were that in any case I was seeking material falling in the realm of speculative or “science” fiction. With a clear implication that to expect any firm historical record or broad based foundation for supporting existence of this material or the related events was utterly ludicrous.

Especially as the base material was machinery from the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, said to be from a “ more innocent time, far less modern than the high tech, high speed world we now live in ”.

Yes, as if folks in my Grandfather’s day felt that theirs was any less so, same in those days. Quite the contrary, as any truly educated person with any true right to that description at all, have already known. Reading of a mass market media or published en masse “higher brow reading” from then, such as say from likes of Verne or the not much later Burroughs or London, would help anyone fairly dissuade that notion quite swiftly and contrarily. In fact then as now, writers and authors would comment on modern times in “fictive” ways, either to get at hard truths more palatably, for safe harbor, or just being ornery.

Yes, as I was seriously dissuaded early on from disputing a “popular version” of events which gave a basis for my Grandpa’s strange but true adventure in adaptive re-use of war tools for civil purpose. It’s that exact period in volume now known to most as “The War Of The Worlds” by H.G. Wells, ca. 1898.

So I am well given to understand all preceding events which lead to my Grand relation having chance to possess for his own, a War Machine to be repurposed on his farm in period postwar, now are seen as being splendidly rendered. But wholly lacking a substance or material reality, in this world then or now



Which does occasionally, make for difficult passages when one researches. One has to explain patiently what it is you’re after.

Without stressing or expressing frustration at, as what is really a simple fact to you, is taken up as you’re utterly daft or lost soul in some hallucinatory state.

Especially as family history did further complicate with facts ...

*First Edition hard cover of the 1898 published work by one Herbert George Wells and a 1927 reprint of the title page (both public domain)*

**The WAR of the WORLDS**  
*By H. G. Wells*  
Author of “Under the Knife,” “The Time Machine,” etc.



## ***-WHAT MAKES THIS PROJECT SO MUCH HARDER TO RESEARCH & MODEL –***

As well and often told to me and others in the family, what made Grandpa's MWM so special and a success as an adaption, but earning him lifelong aggravation with his community for his cleverness at the entire project, was its rarity as an entity, even within its own context. This surely, several out there of you readers will indeed appreciate, in context of your own modelling interests, I guarantee. Set to one side any reservations you may have reading thus far, or quandary over whether or not this War did, or did not occur, as I understand it versus outside of my family. Let things simply be as presented here

My Grandpa *was not* the only person to have chance to possess one or more of these machines. That's always made clear in any telling, from first time I ever encountered any familial references to the facts of his "Furrin Alien Recovery Machine ( Tripod )". The fuller renditions of the family's pride filled telling of the tale always make so plain, why it is that *One*) No one else seemed to have any where the success in the process of converting the machines, that Grandpa had with his F.A.R.M. (Tractor). *Two*) How it seems that nearly everyone after a while, seemed to act as if none of this ever occurred. How it was that evidence to contrary mysteriously disappeared, along with any supporting documentation or reliable witnesses if you went outside of the family. *Three*) How now, only this "fictional record in form of a novel" of events preceding all of which I know as "postwar lore from family history" is what is left for a single basic document. *Four*) Grandpa went out of his way to deny any of this ever came to pass in his later years. SO the HOW was pretty well outlined for me, or others, but nary answer why.

In my younger days it was sure ticket to go behind shed for an "instructional purposes with wooden instruments" period, if you pressed for more details or questioned any for the why. Even within family, Grandpa's machine, Grandpa were at times considered "too weird or fantastic, best left alone as topics for discussion". Mind you, curiosity only grew over the passing of time and of relatives who knew any.

For after unearthing a handwritten journal in my Grandpa's own hand when dealing with my father's estate in the last phase, I set out to one day fully research and try to answer the questions nagging me.

Those four I outlined aforesaid, and many others I would over time develop as I maddeningly found that even the simplest dimensions of the tale and machine, taken solely as a story, removed from the contested contexts, still left much "bloody vague or downright at odds with the published material".

Having decided that like others before me, making a three dimensional rendering of the object in the question might at very least, shed light and keep focus stable.

In other words, conceiving A SCALE MODEL would be a thing for me to do here, yet even after this seemingly simple enough concept was set upon to do, more madness or maddening soon followed.

Okay, yes the original preceding events which provided means for my Grandpa's "MWM device" took place (taken as fictional or otherwise, they are documented as having occurred) in somewhere circa 1898 or shortly thereafter or shortly before. Yet only some artist's drawings and writ text exist.

There were plenty of historical items and accepted ways to generally conceive that both written and illustrative evidence, including "MODERN PHOTOGRAPHY" existed. All these were in greater than isolated or only lab oriented environments as availability, so why is it so bloody difficult to find ANY solid material for this particular subject, be it fictional or otherwise, from that period? Other than book.

What also complicated my project a little further was an in plain sight (or rather, ear, not only eye) clue in the tale when told more fully by some family, and confirmed by my Grandpa's own journal.

That he "civilianized" not a Martian War Machine (MWM), but a much rarer, little known "Engineer Vehicle Mod" of same such. So not only was I trying to locate accurate illustration beyond textual description of the MWM, to establish a baseline accuracy "look" of that vehicle, I will then have to

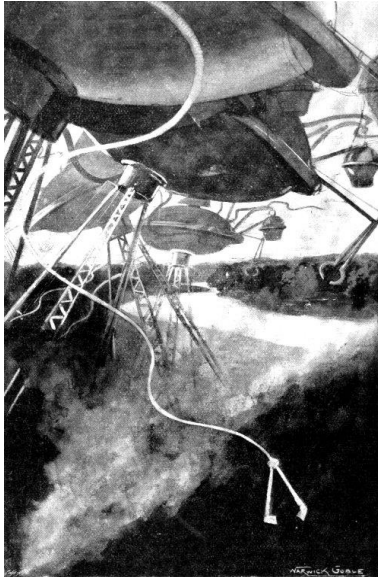
decipher the work from my Grand's own account in a backwards manner. This all to ascertain what comprises the rarer type "mod" EV or, to put it as an Armor Modeler or Historian would, an ARV.

ARV = "Armored Recovery Vehicle" which is also what Combat "Engineers" modified vehicles from the fighting versions are called here on Earth, worldwide. Not unheard of vehicles, just a bit rare.

So now, perhaps you see more the problem I am encountering in trying to establish starting basis here.

If you research "Martian Fighting Machine" and "War of the Worlds", you will today find plenty in one sitting, thanks to the Internet and other excellent time wasting means at your disposal. Even may lead you as it did I, to learning back in the day when all of this was fresh, new, that even H.G. Wells himself expressed disgust at "how wrong it could go even with the written evidence to guide you":

*The illustration from the initial appearance Pearson's Magazine in 1897, by Warwick Goble, that H.G. Wells personally dismissed*



**( this passage taken as exemplary quote for purposes of illustrating above point, from Wikipedia)**

"The original conceptual drawings for the fighting machines, drawn by Warwick Goble, accompanied the initial appearance of *The War of the Worlds* in *Pearson's Magazine* in 1897. When Wells saw these pictures, he was so displeased that he added the following text for the novel's hardcover appearance:

*I recall particularly the illustration of one of the first pamphlets to give a consecutive account of the war. The artist had evidently made a hasty study of one of the fighting machines, and it was there that his knowledge ended. He presented them as tilted, stiff tripods without either flexibility or subtlety, and with an altogether misleading monotony of effect. The pamphlet containing these renderings had a considerable vogue, and I mention them here to warn the reader against the impression they may have created. They were no more like the Martians I saw in action than a Dutch doll is like a human being. To my mind, the pamphlet would have been much better without them.*" (End quote)



Taking a look to the left, you will see a picture that apparently did not raise the ire of Messr Wells.

It's from a 1906 edition of *The War of the Worlds*, depicting the vicious battle of MFM tripod versus the mighty British warship HMS Thunder Child.

In the account, the Thunder Child eventually taken out by the Heat Ray of a tripod MFM, only after the ship has taken out TWO of the MFMs. *Go, J. Bull!*

Compare with "offensive" Goble drawing and next.

Now on the right, another 1906 book illustration, this time for a French edition of *The War of the Worlds*.

I am pleased that at least, here, there is a modicum of consistent agreement in the MWM appearance for the most part, between the two. Helps that the same artist was creator of interpretation, perhaps. Based on Wells account given in form of various witnesses, including the otherwise anonymous Narrator and his brother.

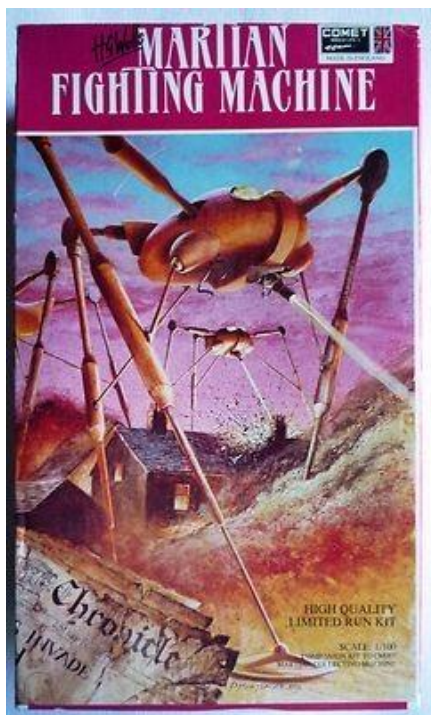
Now, in comparison, the much, much later arriving limited run Comet Miniatures 1/100 scale model kit in various iterations, seems to be headed to what Mr. Wells might have again felt disagreeable in result.

Take a look at some of the photos of that I managed in my research efforts to cobble together, never able to afford either time or funds to acquire one for my own.

Between the two 1906 illustration and the “offensive” 1897 Goble work, I’d say the Comet is a neat splitting of the difference.



Providing quote from Wells’ text may give shape to what pertinent features are between all in compare



( this passage taken from Chapter 10 of “*The War of The Worlds*” as exemplary quote for purposes of illustrating above point )

*And this Thing I saw! How can I describe it? A monstrous tripod, higher than many houses, striding over the young pine trees, and smashing them aside in its career; a walking engine of glittering metal, striding now across the heather; articulate ropes of steel dangling from it, and the clattering tumult of its passage mingling with the riot of the thunder. A flash, and it came out vividly, heeling over one way with two feet in the air, to vanish and reappear almost instantly as it seemed, with the next flash, a hundred yards nearer. Can you imagine a milking stool tilted and bowled violently along the ground?*

*That was the impression those instant flashes gave. But instead of a milking stool imagine it a great body of machinery on a tripod stand... Seen nearer, the Thing was incredibly strange, for it was no mere insensate machine driving on its way. Machine it was, with a ringing metallic pace, and long, flexible, glittering tentacles (one of which gripped a young pine tree) swinging and rattling about its strange body. It picked its road as it went striding along, and the brazen hood that surmounted it moved to and fro with the inevitable suggestion of a head looking about. Behind the main body was a huge mass of white metal like a gigantic fisherman's basket, and puffs of green smoke squirted out from the joints of the limbs as the monster swept by me. (End quote)*



Again, one more illustration from an unrecorded source yet noted that in fact the creator is again the same French artist who interpreted more closely than any other I have encountered, the basics of the MWM Fighting Machine as relayed in the now only surviving account of the war.

All of this has only managed to frustrate me further on the subject of pinning down what exactly comprises an accurate configuration of this machine/vehicle.

So as to then determine of course, what changes to infer from the scant clues within my family's oral history and Grandpa's journal, that make up the extremely rare ARV of Martian Fighting Forces, which he had converted.

Mind you, my Grandpa's compatriots of the time had it not much easier in their own entrepreneurial excursions, albeit working with less distance from begin to ending.

While all though "only" seeking to make some practical use of these now discarded machines of very much a more "higher tech" plane of than that of their home planet, these canny farmers and neighbors of them still were faced with bridging quite a gap. No one really knew much about how these operated, beyond the scant data the "Used MWM Equipment/Scrap Dealer" passing through their area could put in their hands as he sold them the bill of goods, er, I mean, gave them opportunity of a lifetime to buy!

Grandpa was a bit more adventurous and willing to take an educated risk than most, and clearly in all counts was one of the "ring leaders" on why any of them should even consider taking on handing over their hard won monies to purchase these strange equipments. Machines only too recently that were in full operating condition, wholly on a mission to eliminate them, all they knew, loved, had stood for. By beings which Wells had so succinctly summed up in his account, early on, in mission and of character:

**Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us.**

—H. G. Wells (1898), *The War of the Worlds*

Yet, as it were, not without prodigious precedent in human history by any means, here they were now, a people needing to get back to work rebuilding a war torn land and society. Looking at recoverable tools and resources in the form of discarded mechanisms of war for the taking, only slightly more alien in composite character perhaps than those prior examples. Here is someone who comes to them,

presents some demonstrable, credible working knowledge to overcome their initial suspicion and doubts as to any potential at all to premised offer to take advantage of these resources before they of course are snapped up by folk smarter, more future thinking, all around higher grade than they, in short order after this poor gentleman and his helpers go on down the road...

Granted, after the “helpful strangers” had left with their monies, leaving behind the “best of the lot” for these “forward thinking Renewed Future Farmers and FactoryMen” to “quickly” retool from a war machine to peaceful productive civilian use, the process broke down in the details which lead to why perhaps the majority of material evidence and reliable histories by reliable witnesses were later found scant or nonexistent.

While the “grasping tentacles” seemed perfectly adaptable on initial consideration for all sorts of uses around the farm and in applications where skilled labor would of course expect increasing wages, time with family, nights off, etc, the practice of getting a one to few crew to replace by employing MWMs in their stead didn’t come out. Apparently, uprooting well established trees, deeply embedded building foundations, trashing in short order buildings and opposing forces personnel/vehicles requires tech that doesn’t “dial down”, even if you can “understand Martian and Martian Mechnology”.

So after a series of unfortunate and tragic episodes resulting in the complete loss of scarce cattle, bins of fuel coal, rare running “traditional work vehicles” and unwary co-workers in your fields, barns and warehouses due to mishaps with “civilianizing attempts” with that aspect of the Fighting Machines, a similar set of bad to worse endeavors with the Heat Ray (not at all suitable for replacing “smoke pots” for anti-freeze measures, nor meeting your large family’s need for constant hot water on demand if you still need the house, water tank to be standing, not utterly incinerated due to slight miscalculation...)

Or finding out the “gas dispersion” mechanism is harder to cleanse of remnant annihilating chemical, before being repurposed to send clouds of anti freeze smoke in unoccupied (by humans at least) fields or worse, cooling fogs for field hands hard at work harvesting crop in hot sun in hurry to meet deadline

While all this unintended havoc was being wreaked, apparently my Grandpa was having oh slow but steady, although still very limited, success with his “odd man out” Engineering Vehicle mod version of these same machines. It is recorded both in the fuller tales told within family and in some detail by him in his work journal which I referenced having uncovered, his initial choice of taking his chances buying this odd beast was seen as foolish by his compatriots, especially as he had encouraged or echo responded to their own takes on the adaptive potential of the distinct Fighting Machine which as you now know, didn’t work so well (at all). Now it seems, his lack of disastrous consequence, competent sure however glacial it seemed progress, and choice to go with “fancy overbuilt crane/block & tackle and coal hauler” version didn’t look foolish at all. In fact, apparently after figuring out how to shorten the tripod to a more useful size for working in regular environs, Grandpa learned that his ARV version had much gentler tentacles with greater range of motion, delicate (as in context of a heavy machinery for recovery of the same can ever be said as such to be) and the same was being determined facility of his complex mechanisms aboard that it seems, were in fact a superior form of mech block and tackle.

As it happened, in the end he managed to actually employ successfully for a short while this very odd War Machine in useful manners about our family’s farm and related businesses, which enabled him to keep much of our family, community in war’s aftermath intact, then improving our lot in years ahead.

All at a lower overhead thanks to his patient ingenuity and within the immediate family, no outsiders we did not already have trusted prewar relations with to take outside any important news we didn’t see as something we wish to share. But as I alluded to earlier, because he seemed to be only winner of the risk lottery, appeared also suffer far less for “this evil foolishness trying to take these devil implements of an alien enemy and make something good of them. Bah, one would have to be insane or in league with same to conceive such a plan” theme was not long how Grandpa’s results were now characterized



This horrific turn against, came from the very same folks who had so eagerly been in on the schemata with him at the beginning. Determined did he, family that in re the MWM ARV civil rework: Nothing good would come of further pursuit and harm quickly enough did follow to emphasize the implement of our “less said of that, the better for all” lockdown of all having to do with any of this matter.

As it is, no good deed goes unpunished would be a splendid summary catchphrase. Likewise now, oh more than ever, the term/concept of “credible deniability” and if there’s no “real evidence”, well then, there you have it, it’s *our* word against yours that any of what you say happened, even happened. Who do you think any are going to believe? Some remnant holdover of a clearly off the beaten track clan of social misfits who apparently took their innocent, right thinking neighbors for a proverbial ride and got paid back for it? WE KNOW THE TRUTH and what’s more, what’s good for you and yours.

Lost in the family lore and likely now forever with the passing of more tightlipped members every year as life continues the inexorable journey from birth on through into the known unknown, are any clues to actually where all the “recovered war material”, including Grandpa’s much modified machine went. Mentions of connection to some nearly unknown US Government agency or another, an “Area” (whatever THAT vague term is supposed to mean, especially when spoken of in hushed or awed way) all this somehow explaining under rubric “for national security reasons” that everything I have been in pursuit of was somehow spirited away from all the previous owners and they were sworn to secrecy.

Sounds all very much like a rejected for cause, draft script treatment for that old series “The X Files” or even longer ago, redress of Henry Slesar cautionary tale of the Cold War that Rod Serling (he too, no slouch at couching real events and uncomfortable real truths within “fictional tales for entertain”) adapted for his legendary “The Twilight Zone” as a teleplay (The Old Man In The Cave)

Therein lies the tale, such as it is, the backstory to my convoluted but heartfelt wish to create a scale replica of this success of my Grandpa’s, trying to achieve that mythical task of turning Swords into Ploughshares (or in this case, a wholly alien weapon of war for the recovery of alien war weapons).

*Alas, as it turns out, I have run out the room allotted me for this month as a guest contributor, and will not be able to cover the detailed processes I undertook, to finally settle on a “presumed accurate enough” basic Martian War Machine (Fighting) configuration to create as working drawings. From existing kit reference and other “deemed reliable but unable to reference, for credible deniability reasons” sources, then proceed to develop another large scale drawing set with “best guess” revisions/modifications to baseline presumed accurate basic Martian War Machine (Engineer or Alien Recovery Vehicle) configuration. Thusly having something to finally begin that famous “mystical process” of modelling known as Scratchbuilding, create a scale model of Grandpa Furrin’s old Furrin Alien Recovered Tripod, as he finally termed it when done.*

SO, UNTIL NEXT TIME THERE’S ROOM TO BE HAD ... and I still can’t believe that eerie coincidence that somehow, we ourselves are the edge of the same precipice which apparently felled the Martians in spite of their vastly superior technology and mighty intellect. As Wells’s narrator so neatly summarized it in the book:

“And scattered about it, some in their overturned war-machines, some in the now rigid handling-machines, and a dozen of them stark and silent and laid in a row, were the Martians – dead! – slain by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their systems were unprepared; slain as the red weed was being slain; slain, after all man’s devices had failed, by the humblest things that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth.”

— H.G. Wells, The War Of The Worlds

*fini* - I.M. Furrin

**7:00 PM OPEN, MEETING 8:00 PM SHARP**

**FRIDAY**

**APRIL 17 (CANCELLED)**

**At**

**COMMUNITY ROOM**

**Milpitas Police Administration Building**

**1275 N. Milpitas Blvd**

**Milpitas, CA**

