

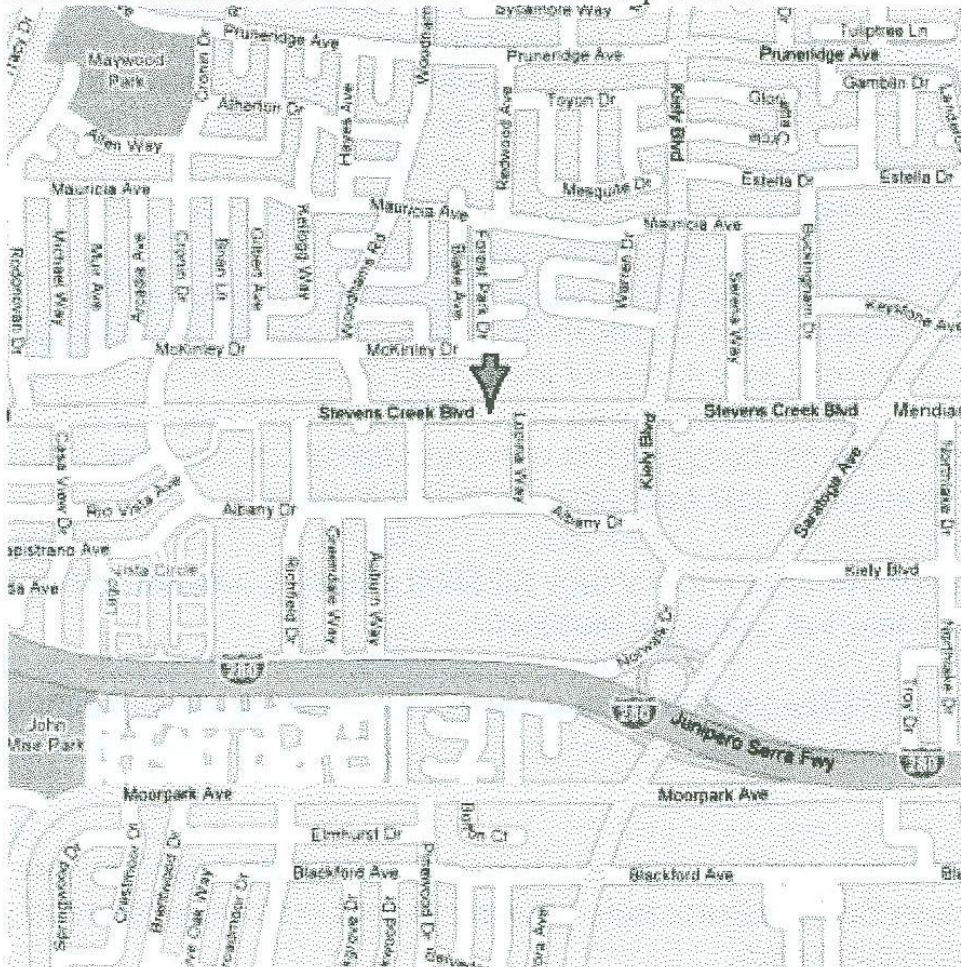


THE STYRENE SHEET

VOL. 42, NO. 2 WWW.SVSM.ORG JUNE 2008

Editor's Ravings – this month, Bill Ferrante

The big news this month is again the meeting location. If you show up to the library, you won't find us there. There was a scheduling conflict this month so we are moving this month's meeting again to the Round Table Pizza where we had the Christmas party at. The address is Round Table Pizza, 4400 Stevens Creek Blvd., San Jose, CA 95129. There is a large sign and there is plenty of parking. We had a good time last month so head on out. See the map below.



This month it is time for the club's annual elections. All the offices are up for grabs so if you have ever given it a thought, throw your hat in. On the other hand, if you don't show up, one of your "friends" may nominate you and you may be given the honor in your absence. All in good fun of course. A special thanks goes to Mr. Bill Dye for the fine article on the MiG-9L. Many years ago I selected an Airmodel Mig-9 as my second vac model. I am glad it was not my first. See you at the meeting.

**1/72nd scale Amodel kit of the
Mig-9L
or
What's the Guy in Back Do?**

By

Bill Dye

Background

I was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania USA last July for my ump-dee-umpth high school reunion. OK, OK it was my 40th. As long as I was there, I just *had* to go back to the Charles Hobby Shop in Mt. Lebanon just south of Pittsburgh, 'tru-da-tubes' – which is Pittsburghese for 'through the tubes' or tunnels, to get to there. My dad and I had been there many years earlier so it was, admittedly, mostly for sentimental reasons that I wanted to visit but it is a nice hobby shop too. And you never know where you will find that next treasure.

As it turned out, they had closed the original store a few months or so before and moved several blocks into a barn like structure a few block off of the main street. I toured the new store. No, there were no horsies or cows, just lots of hobby toys. I climbed down the stairs to the lower level where they had the plastic kits. Of course they had lots of Hasa-miya type kits (not that there's anything *wrong* with those. I mean, they fit with machinist precision). But then I saw some obscure airplanes in boxes by smaller name kit manufacturers.

These are the kits of odd aircraft where discerning flash from parts is usually a challenge. I looked through their collection and then I saw it: one of the ugliest things I'd ever seen and I loved it; an Amodel Soviet MiG-9L. What the heck was that? The 'L' part I mean. Of course I barely knew what a MiG-9 was. I liked the bump on the nose and the aft canopy that looked like it should have been fitted to a motorcycle side car. Well, I just had to have it.

We drove back to Asheville, North Carolina with my new addition securely packed along with souvenirs from Kennywood Park and the Carnegie Museum.

So what gives with the guy in back? Was he added as a trainer, for joy rides, or just simply ballast? I had to find out.

History

I found a blurb from the internet (free) and I was going to just cut and paste it but, well, let's just say that the 'not so good' Russian/Eastern European, I guess, to English translation read worse than my prose. So I'll attempt to paraphrase:

A MiG-9 aircraft was modified for testing the Raduga KS-1 Komet air-launched antishipping (cruise) missile guidance system. They conducted what they referred to as 'pointing' (guidance) tests. The 'pointing' apparatus of the KS-1 cruise missile as well as an add-on instrument station for a research engineer were installed on the MiG-9. Test flights conducted in 1949 (a very good year by the way) enabled the Soviets to master the pointing system reducing the development test time of this Soviet cruise missile intended for installation on the Tu-4KS and Tu-16KS.

Technical and tactical specifications of MiG-9L

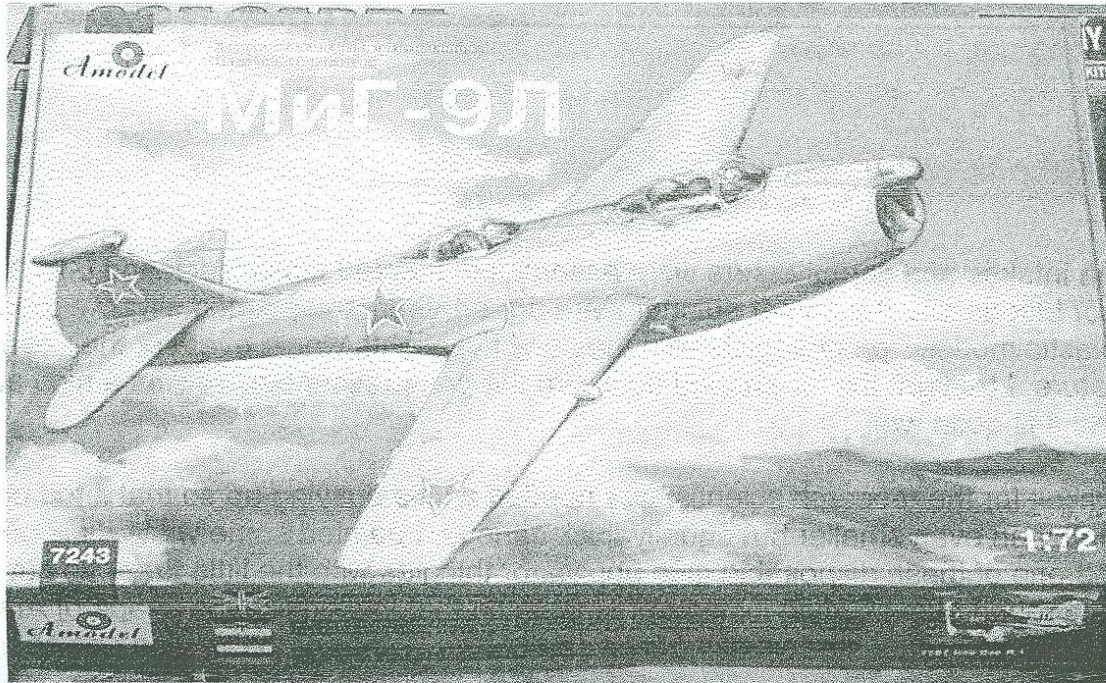
Length - 9,750m

Wing area - 18,2m²

Maximum start weight - 5500kg

Span - 10,000m

Maximum speed 910kph



The Kit:

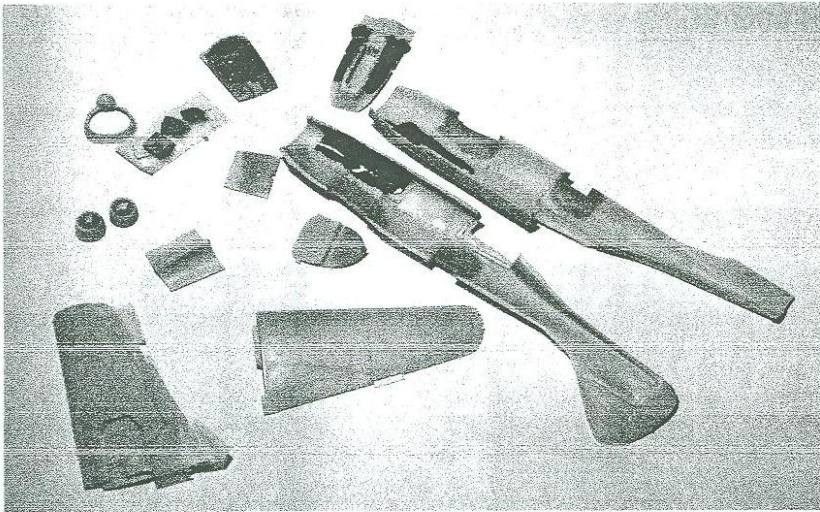
When I first opened the box I felt the fear . . . "E-GADS! What have I done?" But I've seen this before and, as I suspected, after close examination and cutting a few of the major pieces off of the sprue I could see that this kit should go together just fine needing only a little TLC. As far as accuracy to the real airplane, I have no idea. And, frankly, with such an unusual aircraft, to me anyway, I really didn't care.

It's molded in somewhat soft gray plastic (certainly not any where near the Rockwell hardness number of Hasagawa plastic). It had engraved panel lines that were, frankly, much better than I expected. The clear pieces were, however, what I expected, about one foot thick full scale. Decals looked OK but I thought I might consider a backup source for the Soviet red stars incase when they hit water they suddenly oozed that white goo that pollutes the decal water, not to mention the model. Or they might just disintegrate upon contact with water. I'd have to wait and see. I examined the instructions and thought the air intake design was pretty cool.

Construction

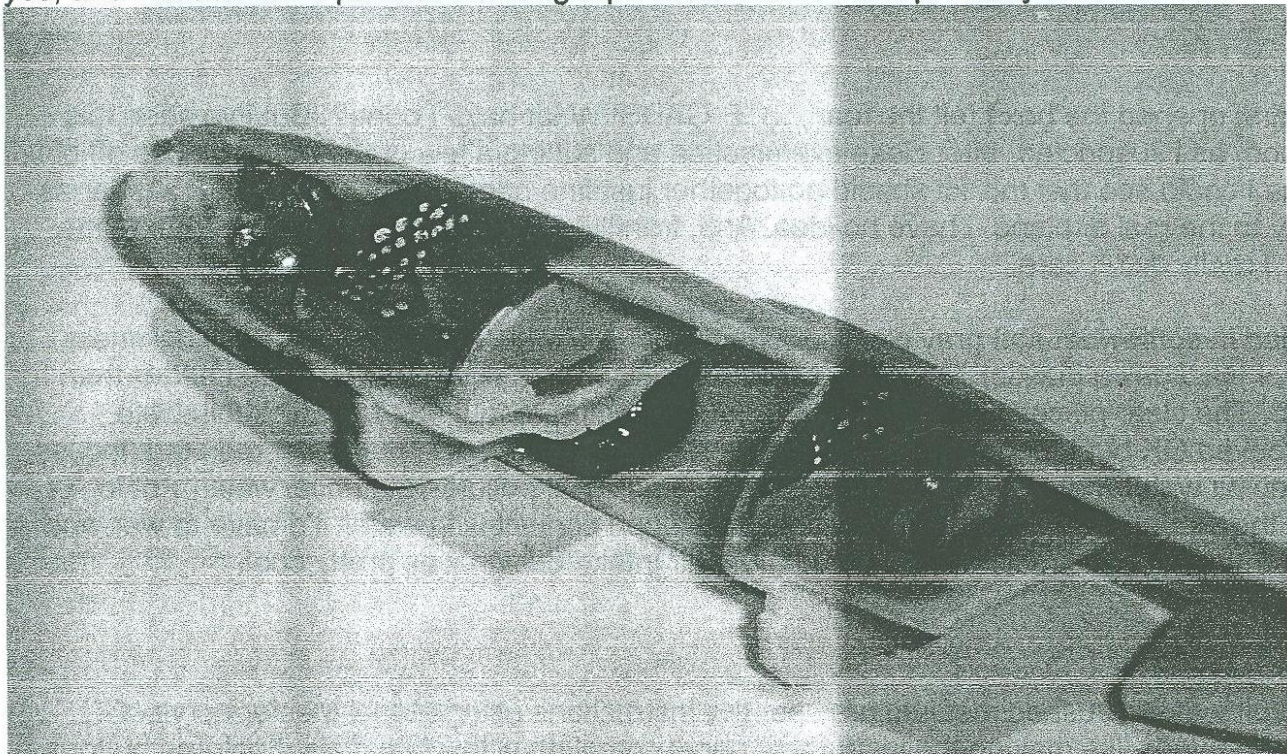
Cockpit/Fuselage:

The cockpit was airbrushed medium gray per the instructions using Model Master acrylics. Of course I did things like making the instrument panel complete with white dials; I painted buttons on the side consoles, dry-brushed the consoles and floor with silver and made seatbelts from painted masking tape. You know, all that stuff that you won't see through the thick canopy.



The engine intakes and compressors were assembled, painted gloss black and later the compressor blades and the center spinner were dry-brushed and painted silver respectively. But only the plastic modeler proctologists with their tiny flashlights would ever set their eyes on this hidden feature. I thought the 'S' shaped duct with the compressor blades was a nice additional nuance and it fit quite well.

The aft cockpit for the research scientist guy needed a little busying up so that it too could be covered up by an even smaller but equally thick canopy. I painted some white dials on the black panel using one of those disposable glue applicator thingies with the little fuzzy tip cut off. This made a nice round blob of white instead of something that looked like the shape of Alaska. Oh yes, and I added more painted masking tape seatbelts. . . . that probably won't be seen.



Enough weight was added to sink a blimp (super glue, spit for accelerator – done; my spit doesn't smell nearly as bad as that accelerator stuff, well, usually) and the fuselage halves were joined after about a half hour of coaxing. Trust me on this one, put as much weight in as you can.

Then I test fit the aft canopy for the guy in back. The canopy was too narrow, so the area distinctly marked on the fuselage to be removed for the guy in back was too wide. Enter a few slivers of plastic to narrow the aft cockpit opening.

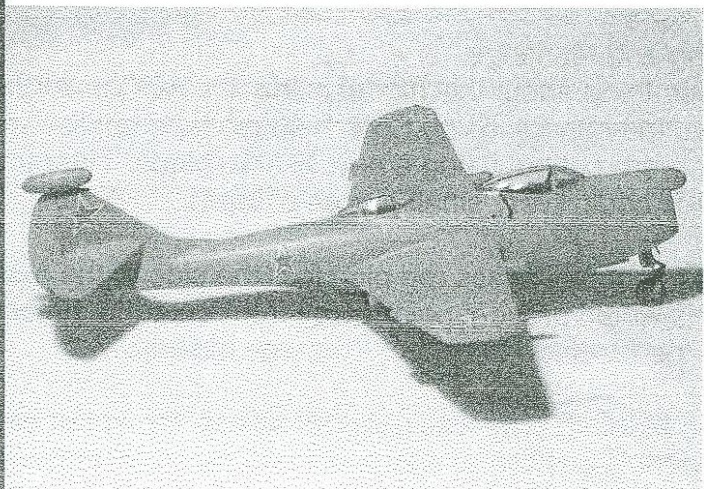
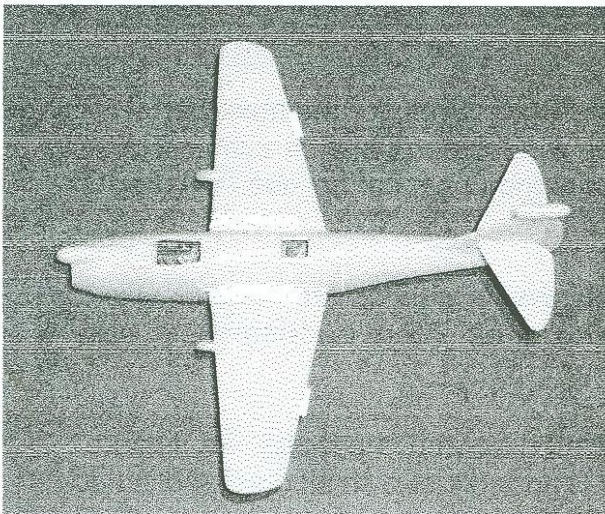
The intake center structure/wedge joint was sanded smooth and the funny bulb nose was glued in place, then the top cap that blended the little nose to the top of the fuselage. It started to look ugly . . . I liked that.

I noticed that the nose bump they provided seemed too small in diameter based on a grainy photo of the real aircraft printed on the instruction sheet. So if I were to build this kit again I would cut a hunk off of the top centerline of the nose and insert a plastic rod slightly larger in diameter than that provided in the kit. It would be cut to length and rounded on the end for the dome. It would have been more work but I think in the long run it would have looked closer to real airplane. But, I didn't do that . . .

The forward canopy to fuselage fit was less than stellar and took quite a while to get right – well, close anyway. I discovered that the thickness of the canopy was so great that the inside edge of the canopy was contacting the curved fuselage which actually lifted the entire canopy by about 0.015 inches or so creating a gap of that size at the outer edge of the canopy. I know, I'll file down the inside edge. That took five minutes. What took another hour was sanding out the scratch I put on the *inside* of the canopy because I was too lazy to stuff in a small piece of tape to protect it. Sanding with 600, 1000, 2000, Brass-O, washed, dried, repeat, then Future wax; fixed. The aft canopy was OK, just some minor tweaking. My vac-u-form machine was in storage; otherwise I would have vac'd a new one. The time spent to make a vac set would have been the same as fitting the kit parts.

Wing

The wing pieces went together only after a fair amount of filing and sanding with the 'course' sanding stick to get the thickness correct. Some flash had to be removed from around the wing perimeter. There are some trim-tab thingies on the wings that were poorly molded. I cut them off, filed a slightly recessed slot and cut two pieces of thin (about .015") scrap plastic sheet and glued them in place. They were coated with super glue, putty and Mr. Surfacer to build up material flush with the top and bottom surface of the wing trailing edge. Then I sanded and scribed them. The Darlin' yelled, "Survivorman is on." Good stopping point.



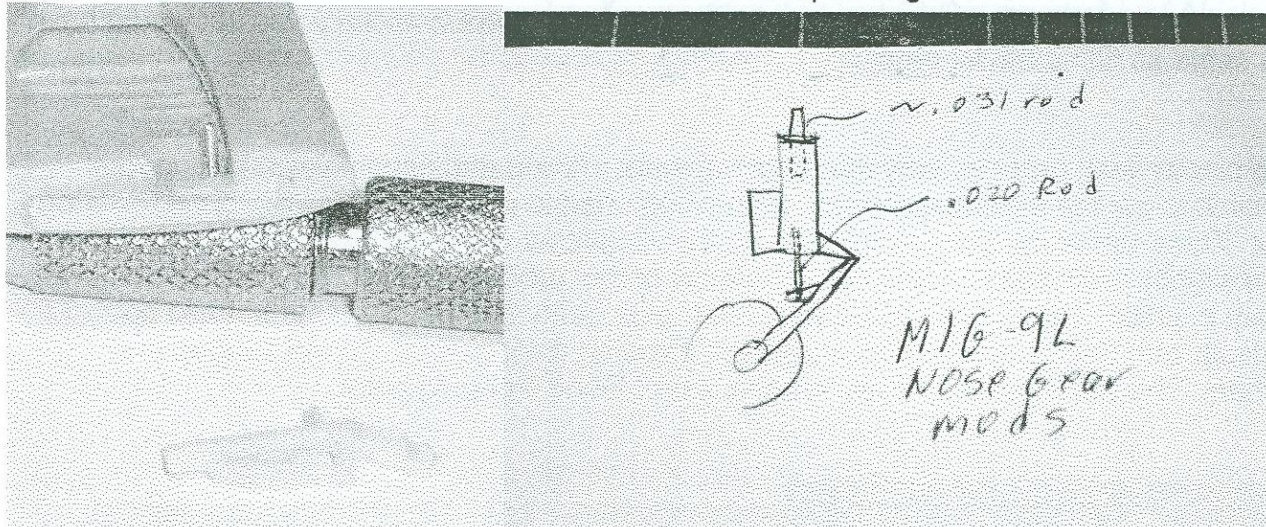
The wing to fuselage joints required some 'adjustments' but weren't too bad – well, it wasn't exactly Hasagawa, only a moderate amount of shims and/or putty was required to fill 1/16th wide inch gaps here and there.

Final Assembly

The horizontal tail surfaces were cleaned up and glued on. So was the watermelon that they put on top of the vertical tail. I think it was a special antenna pod. But wait, it had a big sink hole in it – more putty, more sanding.

I tried to dry fit the landing gears but there were no holes or mounting pads to mount or support them sigh. A few very short pieces of brass rod were cut and filed smooth. These pins would hold the landing gears onto the wheel wells. I carefully drilled the same size hole as the brass pins into each landing gear strut and into the gear well at the correct location. (Well, I thought it was the correct location. Turns out they were too far forward. This I discovered after the model was done. So, be sure the landing gears are to the aft edge of the gear wells.) And, I managed not to drill through the top surface of the wing . . . I hate it when I do that. These pins would hold and significantly increase the strength of the landing gear attachment.

Brass attachment pins and holes for the gear doors and antennas were done now instead of trying to wrestle with the little buggers after painting was complete. You know, like scraping off paint on the inside of the wheel wells, trying to not get that blob of superglue on anything, etc. This makes the installation of these bits a lot easier after painting.



Painting and Markings

The nice thing about this model is that it's AOC or All One Color. Well, for the most part. I masked the canopy using Scotch Magic tape applied one windscreen panel at a time. These panels were cut out using a *new* X-Acto blade. The remaining bubble canopy was masked anyway I could (very small pieces of tape).

I put a temporary brass rod plug into the side of the fuselage where the antenna boom was to go. This would prevent paint spray from entering the cockpit area. There is a bare metal area below the fuselage tail boom; this was masked.

Tamiya Medium gray was used for almost the entire aircraft. I 'quilted' the model, i.e. I make some panels a different shade ala natural metal finishes. I added just a small drop of black to

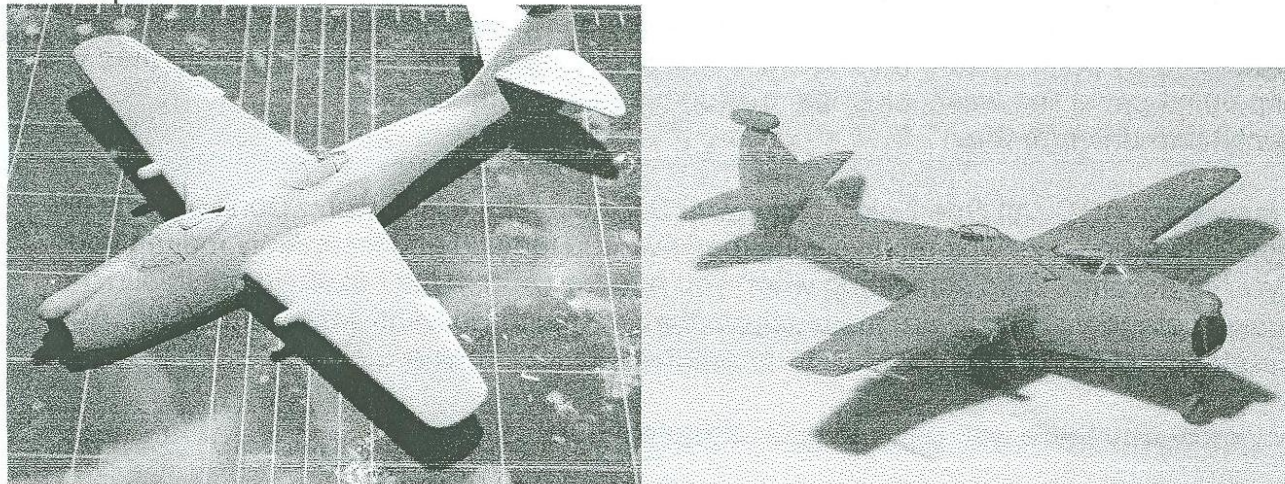
the Tamiya gray, hosed down a few panels masked with post-it notes and then did the same on the elevators and ailerons with a lighter shade using white in the gray. Although this is barely noticeable in the photographs.

After the first coat of gray there were, as usual, several trouble spots that required attention and repainting. A clear coat of Future, thinned 10% with rubbing alcohol, was sprayed over the model (but not the bare metal area) after it was buffed with a polishing stick (Walgreens, KISS brand nail polishing stick, the '2 step' one . . . FANTASTIC!)

The bare metal area mask was removed and the fuselage was masked next to this area. I polished the bare plastic lower aft exhaust panel with my KISS nail stick and then painted it with SnJ steel and buffed it out.

The engine exhausts were painted Testors Metalizer steel.

The kit decals were fine. I would have replaced them but my Soviet Stars sheet did not have the smaller stars and the shade of red was just a little different so I went with the kit decals. But instead of their red stenciling I used some red F-4 Phantom stenciling. You really can't read anything; but I turned them all upside down. Now it really looks Russian! The model was Future coated again and then panel lines were washed with some gray Model Master enamel thinned with turpentine.



Finally a clear Tamiya base flat, Future, Alcohol mixture (10, 40, 50) was sprayed on the model (except the metal area).

The canopy masking was removed and the clear parts were cleaned up, frames touched up with gray.

The landing gears and doors went on quite easily with the predrilled holes and the brass pins. Just a tiny amount of five minute epoxy and they were on and done. Well, all except for the three piece nose gear including the wheel. The fork was just too weak so I removed it and drilled a small (0.020) hole in the top part of the strut and the fork and inserted a .020 brass rod that replaced the plastic olio. Much better.

The brass rod 'plug' described earlier was removed from the fuselage. The radio antenna strut made earlier from brass rod (filed on two opposite sides to make it more elliptical shaped in cross-section) was white primed and then painted gray and glued into the hole in the fuselage plus another but much smaller one just under the watermelon mounted on the tail. An antenna

wire was made from a few strands of black pantyhose and some white glue blobs made for insulators. Hey, pantyhose works . . . it's 'springy'. 'Course now this model gets whistles from my other models . . .

Summary/Conclusion

Some of the high points of what I did or noticed about the kit:

1. General fit of everything was much better than I expected considering the cost (I'd buy another)
2. Be sure to use LOTS of weight in the nose.
3. Engraved panel lines better than I expected. Clear pieces were, thick. OK Decals but might consider a backup source for the Soviet red stars and stenciling
4. 'S' shaped duct with the compressor blades was a nice additional nuance and it fit quite well even though no one will see it
5. Area distinctly marked to be removed from the fuselage for the guy in back was too wide, fit check rear canopy first
6. Replace kit nose 'bump' with a slightly larger solid tube rounded off
7. Remove molded wing trim tabs and replace with card stock
8. Drill out gear struts, add tiny brass pins to significantly increase the strength of the landing gear attachment
9. Put main gears to the aft of the wheel wells
10. Replace plastic antenna strut with a brass rod bent and shaped as required
11. TAMIYA grey paint, Future (thinned 10% with alcohol), Decals, enamel paint thinned with turpentine panel line wash, clear flat overcoat except metal area
12. Pantyhose antenna wire

It was a fairly easy AOC (All One Color) build, well OK it did take a little work. Don't sell kits like these short, this Amodel kit was relatively inexpensive, fun to build and it certainly makes you feel like you've accomplished something when you're done. And, I don't think I'd put this in the 'crap to cake' category . . .there are many others that are much worse. It was a nice build. And it will look pretty good next to a shiny MiG-15 or another Soviet airplane.

And now I know why there was a guy in back of the MiG-9L.

Done . .

Bury me with sandpaper

Bill Dye

Still thinking of ya'll from beautiful downtown Asheville, NC

At the May meeting, André Dulieu brought us greetings from IPMS France. André was in town on business and he showed us photos of his model area and some of his projects, including an impressive scratch-built Soviet portable radar system and its truck!

In model talk... Ron Wergin built Accurate Miniatures Yak-1 and finished it in extremely worn winter white camouflage. Ron's also made short work of Trumpeter's 1:35 E-10 tank destroyer. He said the model's pioneer tools are exquisite and the entire model has a very high level of detail. Chris Bucholtz has painted some of the red decorations on his F-4B Phantom that were missing from all the decal sheets for this particular plane, and he plans on using black "cheat line" decals to disguise any lack of crispness around their edges. Chris also has his P-51D-5 almost ready for paint, and an order to Walthers resulted in a suitable cargo for his 1:72 Jeep in the form of several racks of wine bottles and a couple of beer kegs, all from a Prieser set. Greg Plummer wasn't completely blown away by Revell of Germany's Audi R-8, saying it's not as crisply done as Japanese kits would be. He finished his model using Tamiya paints. Gabriel Lee's building the Heller 1:35 VAB as part of his Venezuelan collection and with an eye on the French award at the October Fremont contest. His Rutan Terminator fantasy fighter is now resplendent in a coat of green paint. Cliff built his Lindberg BTR-80 without the instructions, but it's his third such kit, so there wasn't much he needed instructions for anyway. He says he's ready to move on to something with less than eight wheels. Mike Burton's Italeri X-32 has been converted into an F/A-32 and given a brown paint scheme along with spurious markings from the South African Air Force. Jim Priete wasn't at the meeting, but he left his A-Model Yak-38R "Firebar" at the Fremont meeting, so we put it on the table and talked about it. Kent McClure is working on another WWI 1:72 vehicle, this one an ambulance based on the Ford Model T. The RPM kit has a touchy suspension, he says, and the storage boxes foiled the fit of the main components. Mark McDonald's Mini Art T-70 was ready for paint when he decided to replace the radiator screen with mesh, then spotted another screen in the front of the tank. He'll have it painted soon, he says. Mark's also building Revell's reissue of "Rif-Raf's Spitfire," a re-issue of a classic caricature kit. The fit of Dragon's Panther G Late "Smart Kit" is excellent, reports Laramie Wright, who also says this variant didn't have zimmerit and is even more of a pleasure to build because of it. Laramie's also nearly done with two 325th FG P-51Ds, built from the Tamiya kit and using decals from the same SuperScale decal sheet. The Mustangs, flown by Barrie Davis and Art Fiedler, were painted with Tamiya rattle-can silver and yellow, and the excess checkerboards on the tail were removed with a light swipe of sandpaper. Paul Bishop's shelves have long housed his Airfix Bv 138 and his He 219, which were brought out for the Friday night crowd. Dave Balderrama is stretching his skills by trying out several new techniques on a hapless old Starfix HH-3 helicopter, which he says is largely based on the Revell kit of about the same vintage. Dave's son Mark is building Lindberg's 1:48 XFV-1 Pogo, another venerable kit. And the model of the month goes to... Mike Woolson, who built his Tamiya P-51D in the markings of Don Bryan's "Little One III" in just four days, using Eagle Strike Decals. Mike built it for the Fighter Aces Symposium at the California Aerospace Museum; afterwards, before Mike could stop him, Bryan autographed the model!

Coming Events

Sunday, July 19

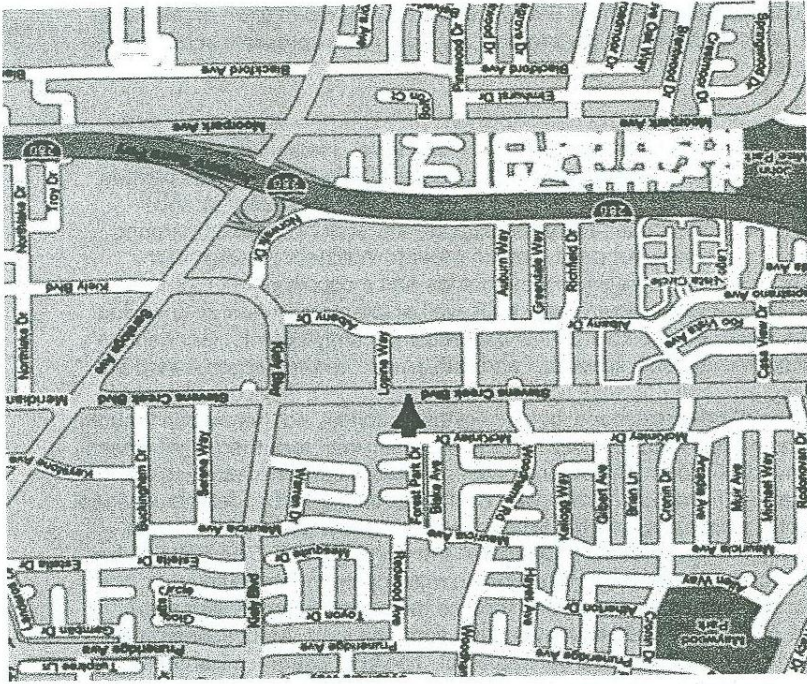
IPMS/Dragon Lady presents its annual contest at the Plaza Room, 210 Julie Drive, in Yuba City, CA. The theme will be "Speed." For more details, contact Don Terbush at (530) 674-8194 or e-mail him at donaldterbush@yahoo.com, or visit the club website at www.myspace.com/ipmsdragonlady.

Saturday, August 9

Kings County Scale Modelers host the **2008 Far West Region 9 Contest** at the VFW Hall, 3538 North Blythe in Fresno, CA. For more details, contact Scott Gist at (559) 816-6226 or e-mail him at webmaster@kcscscalemodelers.com or visit the club website at www.kcscscalemodelers.com.

Saturday, November 1

The **Antelope Valley Group** presents **Desert Classic XII** at Antelope Valley College, 3041 West Avenue K in Lancaster, CA. For more details contact Mike Valdez at (661) 304-4941 or e-mail him at mikevaldez151@msn.com or visit the club website at www.avg-ipms.org.



This month's meeting is on June 20th at the RoundTable
pizza at 440 Stevens Creek Blvd., San Jose, CA 95129
7:00 pm

Silicon Valley Scale Modeler
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Milpitas, CA 95036

DAN BUNTON
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CAMPBELL CA 12345

