

Porsche's dominator: the 917 in 1:43

By Kent McClure

Porsche has been involved in sports car racing since day one of the company, and it has produced a long line of famous sports and endurance racers—the 356, 550, 904, 906, 908, the eternal 911, the all conquering 917, 935, 936, 956, and the 962. They have countless international and national championships to their credit, and have been driven by many heroes of the sport—Derek Bell, Pedro Rodrigues, Al Holbert Jr., Jo Bonnier, Jo Siffert, Jacky Ickx, Bob Wollek and Mark Donahue to name a few. Porsches have been a favorite for countless independent race teams, and spawned numerous home grown variations, some even better than the factory cars.

My favorite Porsche is the 917. In my mind, this is Porsche's greatest race car, a car that eventually dominated endurance and Can-Am/Interseries racing in an era which I consider to be the golden age of sports car racing.

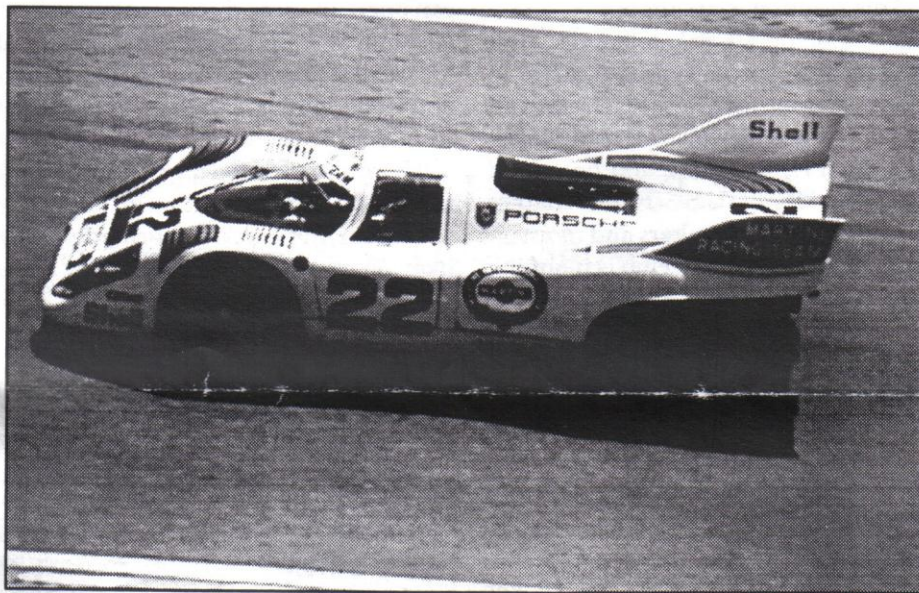
The 917 itself had humble beginnings. Its genesis was in the late 1960s, the era of the epic big block battles of Ford versus Ferrari. The international governing body of racing, the F.I.A., had decreed in 1968 that the era of unrestricted engine size for endurance racing was going to come to an end after the 1969 season and the engines would have a 5-liter maximum capacity beginning in 1970. Porsche realized that its current endurance model, the 908, was not going to make a very big impact on the Ferrari/Ford wars, so they decided to get a head start on the 1970 season by fielding a prototype car powered by their new air-cooled 5-liter engine.

The car debuted at the 1969 Spa 1000-kilometer race. It was to be driven by Jo Siffert, but he found the car's handling to be absolutely wicked and opted for the tried and true 908. The car was turned over to Gerhard Mitter, but went out early

after over-revving the engine on the very first lap. The next race was at Nurburgring, where the privateer team of Frank Gardner and David Piper drove cautiously to finish 8th. Then, at the 24 Hueres du Mans (the 24 Hours of LeMans), the two long-tailed cars made up the factory team and the short-tailed car was entrusted to the privateer team of Woolfe and Linge. Again, the car's handling was absolutely dreadful. Disaster struck on the very first lap when John Woolfe fatally crashed

the short-tailed car at the White House corner. Ironically, this was to be the only fatality that the 917 had in its entire racing career.

Even though 1969 wasn't a spectacular start for the 917, the car would go on to absolutely dominate the 1970 and 1971 seasons in its new redesigned short-tailed body (the 917K). Even the new long-tailed designs proved to be competitive on the high-speed circuits, helping to rack up



In 1971, the Martini Racing Team won at LeMans driving a 917K like this one. The 917 was so successful in endurance racing that the body style was banned, leading it to Can Am.

points for the eventual championships.

At the same time engineers were working on the endurance car, Porsche management was eyeing the lucrative Can-Am series in North America as a means to get the Porsche name into the buying market. Although the series was only in its fourth season in 1969, it had already established itself as the premier North American sports car racing series. With big time corporate sponsorship from Johnson's Wax and Reynolds Aluminum, it was the cutting edge series for modern racing in the U.S. (Ironically, in Europe there was an equivalent series called the Interseries that ran on the same formula as the Can-Am did. Unfortunately, it never got the recognition or status the Can-Am series received and, in many ways, never progressed beyond a "glorified national" series.)

Porsche's challenger was the 917PA (PA = Project America, although I have seen other sources stating that PA stood for

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The Styrene Sheet is a monthly publication of the Silicon Valley Chapter of the International Plastic Model Society (IPMS). Articles and comments should be submitted to Chris Bucholtz, Editor, P.O. Box 361644, Milpitas, CA 95036, or by E-mail at bucholtzc@aol.com. Excerpts may be published only with the written permission of the editor.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Where did the millennium go?

Just like the accomplishments of the last millennium, we as a modeling club have built anything from the dinosaurs of yesterday, to the dreams of the future. It has been a great pleasure being part of the group who I consider to be some of the best builders in the Bay Area. Being elected president and to bring the group into the next millennium is a great honor. My name is David Balderrama, but most people call me Dave for short. I've been attending the Silicon Valley Scale Model-

ers meetings since 1993. Those of you who have gone to some of the region's contest or nationals know that I build mostly anything. My main forte is in Science Fiction and unique subjects in aviation. Feel free to come up and say hi anytime. A warm thank you to all of you for allowing me to be this year's SVSM president. Can you imagine what IPMS Silicon Valley will be like in 3000? And, as a kid from "The Day After" generation, I'm glad we all made it this far. Now, on to the next millennium!

EDITOR'S BRIEF

Although IPMS politics is not the prime point of interest for our club, a change has been made that will affect our club and the operation of our region. Regional coordinator Jim Lewis has resigned and Ken Durling has been appointed our new RC by the IPMS board. This position is an appointed one, a situation that many in this region find to be intolerable. After all, why should the IPMS e-board pick our representative? In a perfect world, we'd vote as a region for a new RC. However, in this case, the process has worked as well as it could have. Jim was asked to pick his own replacement, and he picked well. Ken has managed to get the IPMS/U.S.S. *Hornet* chapter up and running and slowly gaining in members and momentum; word from the chief's lounge is that the club is planning their first show, tentatively set for April 2001.

In the meantime, Ken gets to deal with all manner of scheduling issues. One of the problems our far-flung region has to deal with is the problem of conflicting show dates. There are only so many modelers to go around, and avoiding conflicts between show dates is the difference between two successful events and two money-losers. Other regions have this problem, too; one midwestern region has to juggle 22 annual events, making scheduling a vital function of the RC.

Out west, we have a different set of issues. We have fewer contests, but we have more competition for modelers and

vendors from region VIII, the southern California region. This year, as we had last year, the Sacramento contest is scheduled for the same weekend as the Chino event, and our regional in Fresno is up against a contest in Las Vegas. Hopefully, Ken can open up some dialog with region VIII and work to make sure that modelers aren't stuck with "either-or" choices. After all, we don't have that many events each year in either region, and we certainly don't have many clubs that can absorb losses from poorly-attended contests.

We could also use more articles for the newsletter! Once again, we're getting low on usable stuff. If you want to contribute, don't forget to provide useable images; the editor's okay on aviation subjects, but iffy on cars and armor.

—The Editor

A LITTLE HELP?

Cliff Kranz needs to borrow the instructions for the DML BTR-80 (Kit #3511), the *Heller Alize* and IPMS Journals Vol. 9, No. 7 and Vol. 9, No. 8 from 1997. Cliff is also looking for any information he can get on the Handley-Page *Heyford*. Talk to Cliff at the next meeting if you can help him out.

To submit stories, letters, requests for help, or wants and disposals to the

STYRENE SHEET

Write to:

Silicon Valley Scale Modelers, P.O. Box
361644 Milpitas, CA
or, by E-mail, to bucholtzc@aol.com

CONTEST CALENDAR

May 20, 2000: The **IPMS/USA Region IX Regional Contest**, hosted by IPMS/Fresno at the Fresno Air National Guard Main Hangar. This year's theme: "History in Your Hands." For more information, call Domenic Ortiz at (559) 222-1042.

June 10, 2000: The annual **IPMS/Silverwings summer contest**, held in Sacramento, California. For more details, call Russel Niles at (916) 381-1395 or e-mail r_niles1@juno.com.

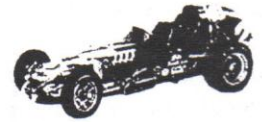
June 11, 2000: The **Annual Planes of Fame Museum Contest**, hosted by IPMS/Planes of Fame in Chino, California. For more information, call Al Parra at (909) 920-9917.

August 20, 2000: **IPMS/Central Valley** hosts its **annual contest** in Fresno, California. For more information, call Nick Bruno at (559) 229-3675.

October 22, 2000: IPMS/Orange county hosts **The Region 8 Convention-OrangeCon 2000** in Buena Park, California. For more information, call (949) 631-7142 or e-mail ocipms@aol.com.



WEST COAST HOBBY EXPO 2000

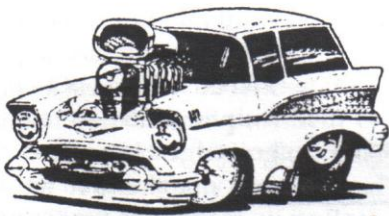


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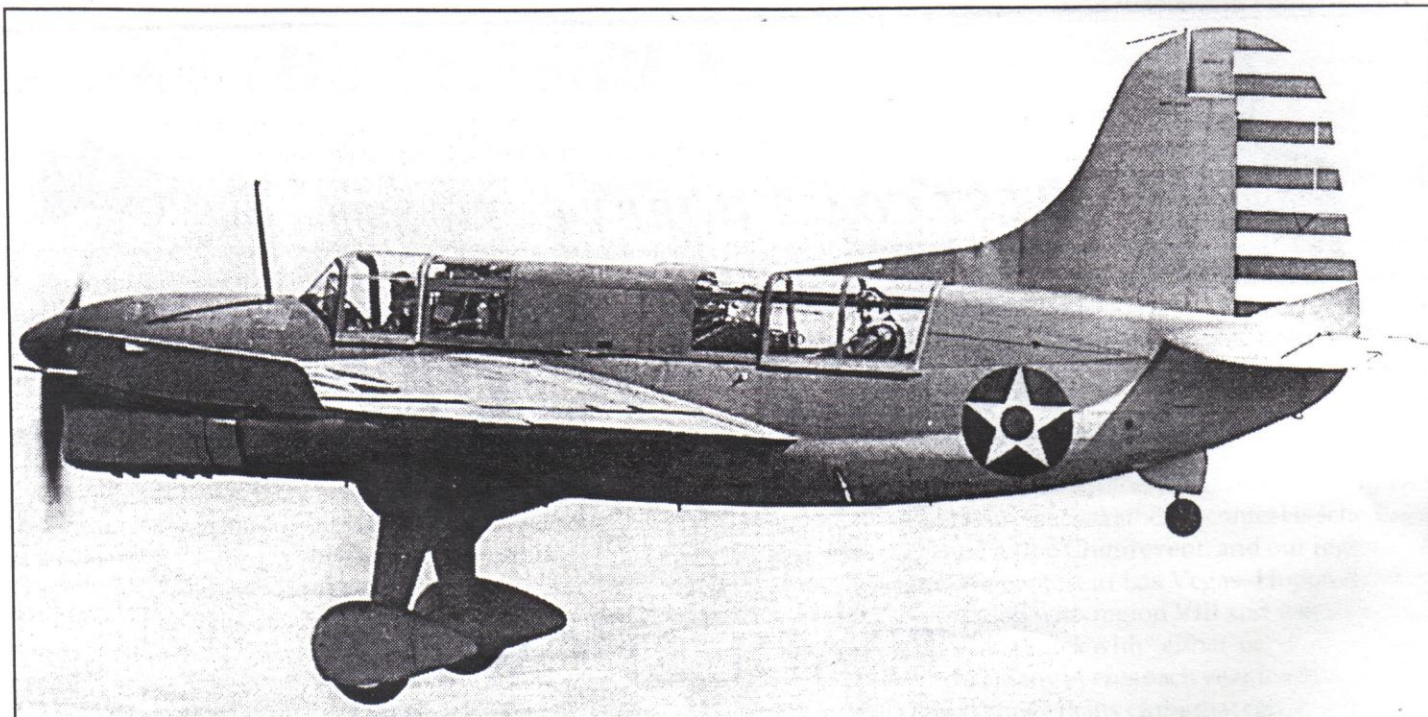
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With its upturned wingtips and extended tail fillet, the S03C was an ungainly airplane, especially when fitted with landing gear.

Ruminations on the S03C, its engine, and models

By Bob Miller

Researching my *Hudson* article of a few months ago sent me poking about in odd corners of the Internet, and at one point I happened upon an article by an old-timer reminiscing about the cardboard models of his youth. *Hey, I did some of those*, I realized, and then remembered that, as a confirmed pack-rat, I still had some plans around. Maybe them young whipper-snappers in the club should see what us old-timers had to go through to build a model, eh, Bert?

Looking back to pre-WWII years, the typical model material in the USA was wood, and Wylam's plan books of the late '30s suggested how to go about carving one, hollowing it out, filling the grain, etc. The British were way ahead. A history of *Frog Models* by Lines and Hellstrom says that *Frog's* first known injection-molded kits in an already-standardized scale of 1:72 were dated November 1936, and done in cellulose acetate. They were quite pricey, at up to 15/- for a Short *Singapore!* (All right, I give up...what exactly does that mean? How many newspapers would I have had to sell at \$0.025 profit each to buy one?) But production of these stopped at the beginning of the war. Here in the U.S., a typical kit of the war years consisted of a few blocks of wood with a simple and sometimes rather imaginative plan, in a fit-the-box scale. Balsa (a postwar

favorite) was scarce for civilian use, and pine was common. Whittling pine blocks into the semblance of an airplane without doing inordinate damage to the fingers was pretty challenging to a kid. What to use to supply the airplane-crazed boys with the more offbeat models? Ah, cardboard, of course!

While there were various ways of making a kit of cardboard, I happened to have one that featured 25 to 30 die-cut pieces which were to be punched out of a sheet about 1/16 inch thick and glued together. They formed the approximate contours of the fuselage and wings and the plan offered the choice of the "sanding method" which involved sanding the cardboard down until everything reached the lowest level of the steps between layers, or the "sculpting method" which invited you to build it up to the highest edges. I leave to your

imagination the effects on scale accuracy. On the favorable side, the cardboard must have been well-chosen, as it sanded fairly clean without fuzzing up excessively, and produced a better model than one might expect. My kit included a set of three U.S. Navy aircraft, an SBD, F4F and S03C *Seagull*. (The last gets



Before the fixes, the S03C indeed looked like a sleek, modern scout, capable of at least capturing the imaginations of kids like Bob!

referred to these days as *Seamew* but that was the British name. In the U.S. in the early '40s, it was *Seagull*.)

That *Seagull* was a favorite of mine. The pocket-sized identification books that were popular at the time showed a very

trim, attractive airplane. Whether the pictures were heavily airbrushed or pure artist's conceptions I do not know. When float planes all seemed to have numerous struts, braces, and wires, this one was totally clean. And the out-thrust float and slender nose were redolent of Freudian implications. (But, hey, what did nine-year olds know about Freudian symbolism?) Just from the pictures, I knew the *Seagull* was a cool airplane.

The cardboard kit by *Laminated Art Products Inc.* advanced the image. The dimensions (as taken from the plan) were reasonably accurate, except that the fuselage was slightly narrow. The nose was slender and (done by the "sanding method," at least) reminiscent of the Menasco-powered racers of the '30s, or even of the Gypsy Queen-powered DeHavilland *Comet*. The kit went together well, but wasn't exactly kid-proof: there were lines printed on each cardboard piece that were to be aligned with those on the piece below to get the correct contour. To my eye, they were wrong. A float was like a boat and should be flat on top. If the lines were going to produce a rounded float top, they had to be ignored. Oh, well...

Despite the 40-some parts count, there were no transparencies, no interior, no propeller, no decals. Decals didn't appear for a few years after the war. The carved-pine *StromBecker* kits had printed paper detailing to be glued on. Recognition models of that era often appeared in the background of news photos from training bases or 8th Air Force ready rooms, typically in 1:72 and painted plain overall black. Whether in imitation of these, or because their products might somehow find their way to the war front, kit manufacturers used minimal detail and suggested the same overall black color. Actually, when the kit instructions suggested color, the results could be bizarre: I have the plan for a *StromBecker* SBC-4 that proposes, "To obtain a more realistic model, finish it in the regulation Army color, olive drab, or a camouflage." On an *SBC*? Extended landing gear were never provided, either, so the models lay ingloriously on their bellies on my dresser. And there sat my *Seagull*, up on its float, towering majestically above all!

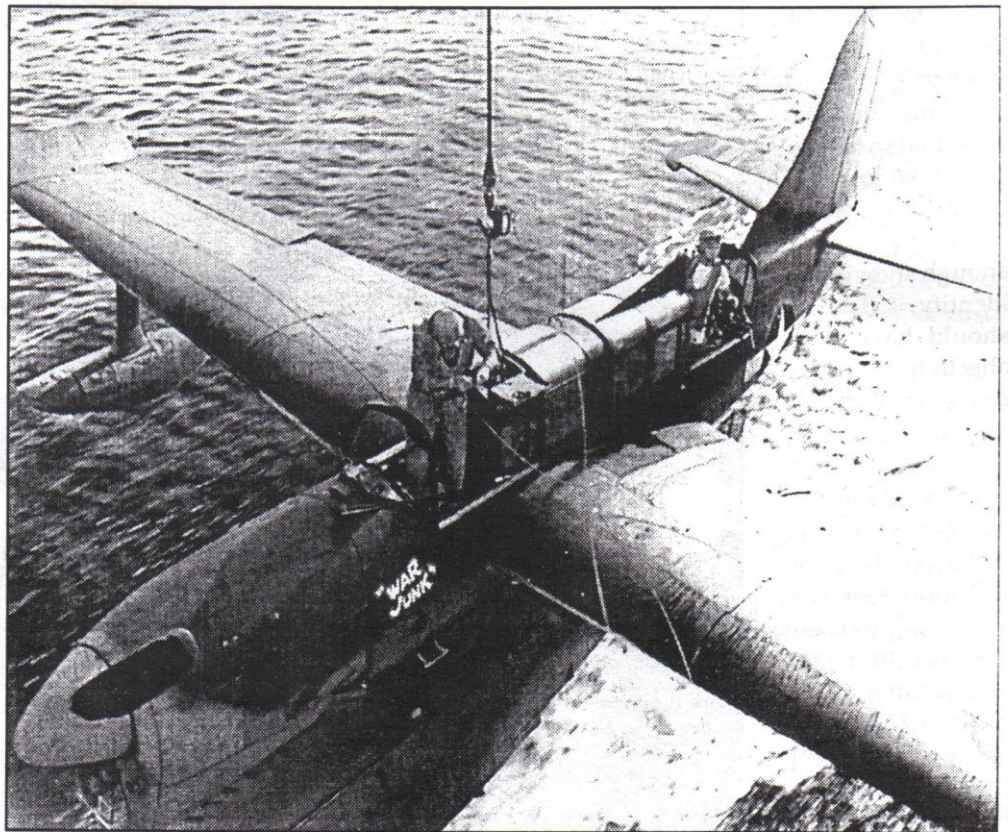
Actually, I suspect the basic outlines of the *StromBecker* wood kits, in particular, were not bad, and some quite good models may have been produced from them. And further, wheeled vehicle enthusiasts were quite well provided for. I have a plan for a Bofors 40mm gun and carriage mount in something like 1:35 that shows over 240 parts in wood and card stock. In skilled hands, this must have made a beautiful model! But polystyrene was on its way; my last wood kit plans are dated 1951, and *Airfix* first appeared about 1952. There were some fumbling steps earlier than that. A plan

for a 10-piece kit of a GeeBee racer has no date or manufacturer listed and suggests "acetone or model airplane cement" for assembly. It *may* have been polystyrene, but it leaves one wondering whether the manufacturer ever tried assembling one before shipping them out.

Polystyrene was on its way and welcome to it! Next time you feel like grumbling about a kit, think where we came from. Make a few copies of the *Seagull* plan, find a piece of cardboard to cut the laminations out of, and start superdetailing. We do have it good, don't we?

As I was writing up recollections of my early modeling days and the elegant *Seagull*, I got the February Styrene Sheet with an offer by Mike Burton to sell a vacuform kit of my old favorite. This was like contemplating your 30-year high school reunion and getting another chance to meet the lovely prom queen. Your efforts were so clumsy the first time around, you recall, but this time you're sure those elegant curves will yield to your touch! Of course in real life, you hear, performance didn't measure up to looks. Well, to put it bluntly, she came to no good end, finally being sacrificed to the needs of wanton young men as radio-controlled target drones. But, oh, to finally caress those lovely lines you so fondly remember...

The *Formaplane* kit proved to be a fairly typical example of the kits of more off-beat subjects that were available in the early '70s. Quality was often variable, like early *Airmodel* which ranged from unbuildable to exceptional. There are about 32 parts in soft white 32-mil sheet, two very good transparencies, and a white-metal prop. Surface quality was not all good, however, and edge definition was so vague that I had to do even first-pass sanding by reference to calipers and plan instead of to the plastic, as usual. Vague hints of control surfaces were engraved, but the best thing to do was fill and



Pilot hooks his SO3C to the crane of the U.S.S. *Biloxi* in 1943. The nose art eloquently describes what pilots thought of the unreliable *Seagull*--"War Junk."

re-cut. On the plus side, both land- and sea-plane gear were provided, there were alternative horizontal tails (but no mention of why the choice), and a separate cowling face appeared to match photos well. There was no engine or interior detail except a floor with a couple of lumps that could be interpreted as seats, and no details on the plan to help in these areas. But it was an immeasurable improvement on the *Seagull* kit of 30 years before. If you wanted an interior, at least it was hollow!

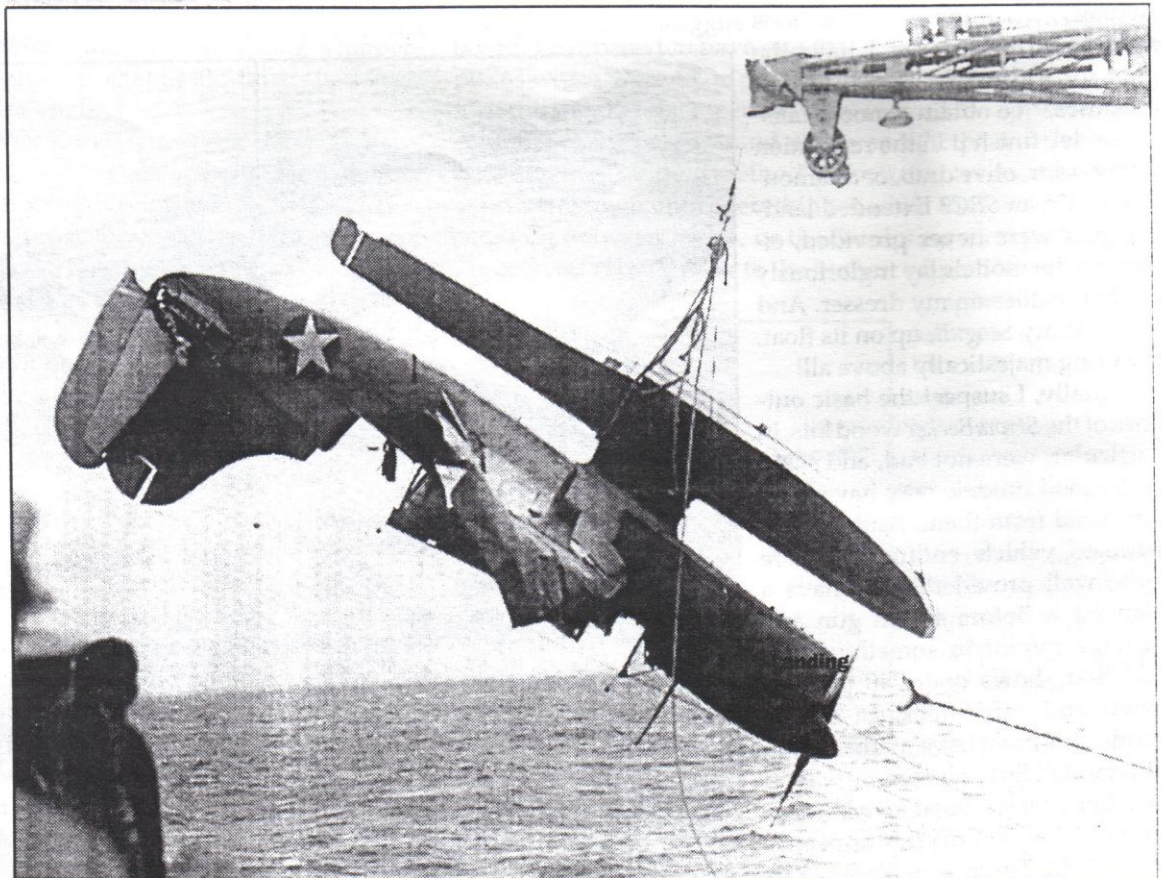
You'd come to your 30th reunion looking for the lovely prom queen you remembered. Perhaps she doesn't look so good, 30 years later. Those perky, perfectly rounded lines up front, that trim, curvaceous shape that was so enticing when you were young, they all seem to have sagged and spread a bit. Matter of fact, she's not attractive at all, this *Seagull* kit. The slick, Menasco-racer cowling of the early '40s has been drooped and broadened until it has an inlet you could stuff a Thanksgiving turkey into and still have enough airflow to cool a properly-installed engine. What happened here?

Here was an airplane that seemed to prove quite the reverse of the old adage "If it looks right..." By all accounts I've seen, it was one of the most abject failures on the allied side. Though some 800 were built, they were unusual in that most passed straight to training and target-drone use.. Herschel Smith in *Aircraft Piston Engines* (reviewed earlier in The Styrene Sheet) footnoted, "When the definitive title of 'World War II's Worst' is finally awarded, it will probably carry a Curtiss nameplate..." Some histories tell vaguely of stability problems, including the lateral case that Curtiss attacked with those tuned-up wingtips. Problems in handling on the water seemed to be confirmed by 1942 views in NASA's Smithsonian video-disc photo collection that show a prototype being hoisted

upside-down from the water with the front 3 feet or so of the floatbuckled, as if it had gone end-over-end, and another that shows an aircraft so lost in a cloud of spray that there was not enough showing to identify it. Curtiss should have been able to fix this: they more-or-less rescued the SB2C from a similar bad start. But Curtiss was also notorious for poor weight control, and the 'gull/mew was some 27 percent heavier than the comparable OS2U *Kingfisher*. Then, in the search for a culprit, we glance at that V-770 engine. Suddenly, like a

good Dashiell Hammett novel, everything gets still more complicated and Bell's XP-77 even steps briefly out of the shadows to lead us in deeper.

You seldom see books on engines, especially mundane engines best suited to trainers, like the Rangers. The air cooled in-line type became popular around 1930 for racing, sport, and small commercial types. The names DeHavilland, Menasco, and Hirth evoke some of the great images of the era. Fairchild was building light planes and joined in with an inline six that was a classic fit to its Model 24, then picked the name Ranger for its engine division. In 1930, Herschel Smith writes, the company prototyped a twelve-cylinder version by building a new crankshaft and case to join two banks from a version of its six. The sixes filled the needs of the time, and there was nothing compelling about the twelve, since its power range put it in competition with small radials, and it was more complex to install and maintain. (The air-cooled inlines needed tight, well-fitted baffles to move the air past the cylinders, in contrast with radials that would cool well enough if you just stuck the cylinders out in the airflow.) So the Ranger 12 remained essentially unused, until the threat of war loomed. Suddenly, the country needed all the engine sources it could get and the Ranger V-770 seemed to have possibilities. It had climbed from about 300 horsepower in 1931 to 420 in 1940. If it could deliver more, it could be useful. In Germany, Arado, Focke-Wulf, Siebel and others used comparable Argus engines, France had the little Renault 12-powered Caudron 714, and Britain the great Gipsy Twelve of 525 horse. Americans could do anything better than these fumbling Europeans, couldn't they? Hap Arnold and/or Ranger seem to have talked of 600 hp from the V-770.



U.S.S. Denver lost two of its four SO3Cs on one day on Jan. 24, 1943. This one crashed on launch.

Increasing the power of a reciprocating engine was conceptually simple. Supercharge it, and increase the rpm's. Since the prop tips need to stay comfortably subsonic, increasing rpm means gearing down from crankshaft speed. Nearly all radial engines and some models of the Allison used planetary gearing so the prop was directly in line with the crankshaft, but Ranger opted for spur gears (two gears side-by-side on parallel shafts) perhaps for reason of simplicity and cost. It worked fine for Daimler-Benz and Hispano where the prop shaft centerline was moved to the middle of the cylinder banks, which allowed the entire engine (of the Bf 109F for instance) to fair in behind the spinner, and a gun to fire between the banks, through the hollow shaft. Only it wouldn't work for the air-cooled Ranger. The gear case would block the airflow. So they raised the prop centerline to the top of the crankcase, increasing the height of the engine at the front by nearly four inches. The neat cowling lines of the civilian engine were gone, and to keep the same thrust line, the whole engine would have to be lowered correspondingly.

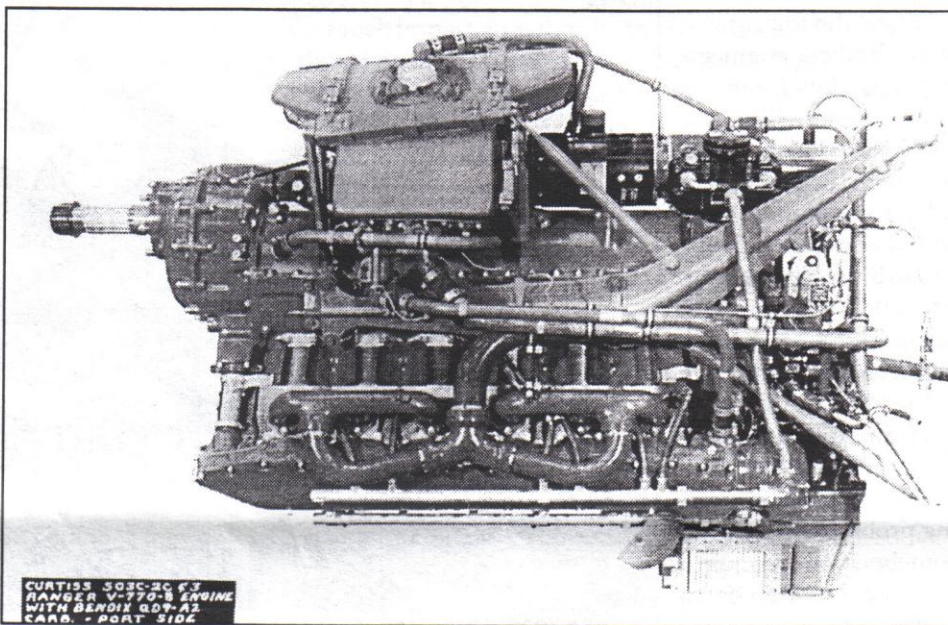
Here, things get complicated because sources differ widely on which engine was used on which version of the *Seagull/Seamew*, but also because *Jane's*, the classic reference, uses civilian engine designations and sources on the 'gull/mew use military numbers. The XSO3C probably used a V-770B-4 (in Navy terms, V-770-4) putting out 315 hp for takeoff. The production types probably used an SGV-770B-6 (V-770-6), delivering 500 hp at takeoff and 420 hp at 5700 ft, but too bulky to fit the cowling of the "X." (The "SG" means supercharged and geared.) It may have delivered the power, but seems to have turned into a very bad engine. Herschel Smith again: "When flown slowly, as many observation missions required, the engine tended to overheat and quit suddenly." Not a good thing if you're out someplace over the ocean. Not surprising, though. For maximum endurance, you're using low rpm's and high manifold pressure, flying slightly slower than the speed for maximum range, and leaning it out, which makes it run hot. Not to trust the airplane for the mission it was designed for must have been the last nail in the poor *Seagull's* coffin.

Modelers can be pretty knowledgeable about what goes into their handiwork, getting right down into differences between dash-numbers of the R-2800s in their *Corsair* versions. But despite its having powered at least five U.S. designs and two foreign, how many people know much about the V-770?

Evidently *not* the model makers at Czech Model. I have their Bell XP-77, yet unbuilt, and my search for the soul of the *Seagull/Seamew* led to the resin detail parts in this kit. One casting includes the nose-gear box and a representation of the V-770 that doesn't match reality...*any* reality...no matter how I look at it. What should it have been? For that matter, how did

a cobbled-together civilian lightplane engine end up in a fighter, anyway?

Birch Mathews' *Cobra* tells of Larry Bell's plans for the XP-77. Bell was an early advocate (for the U.S., at least) of bigger guns in pursuit types, and obviously favored putting them on the centerline. He also had a record of thinking "outside the box" which must have made him an attractive contender when the air force started thinking about a light-weight fighter along the lines of the Caudron 714. Plans were evidently laid for upgrading the V-770 to a -9 by raising the supercharger output for more power and altitude capability, and modifying the reduction gear and backplate mountings to allow a 20mm cannon to fire over the crankcase and



One of the *Seagull's* biggest handicaps was its engine, the Ranger V-770-6. Overheating at low RPMs and unexpected failures made the engine a poor choice for a shipboard patrol plane.

through the prop hub. This engine didn't appear in time (and probably *never* did) so the XP-77 flew with a V-770-6, changed into an Army engine by calling it a "-7". The engine was under-powered and could not fit the 20mm cannon, the airplane was overweight, performance made it worthless, and time had passed it by. The XP-77 became another casualty.

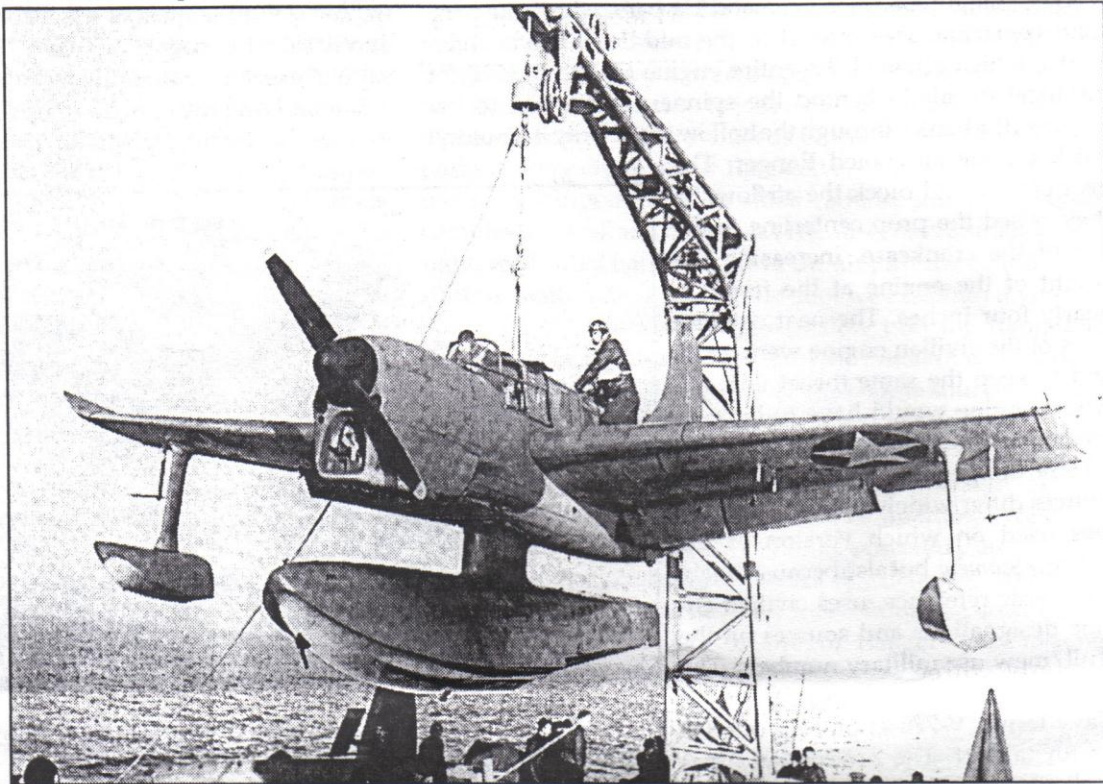
The modeler eventually has to ask, what does an installed V-770 look like? Despite the big inlet opening, none of the photos in *Cobra* or the videodisc collection show much of the engine, mainly because of the high contrast that resulted from outdoor photography. But take one to a competition and someone will eventually shine a flashlight into the inlet, so you can't just paint it flat black. Oh, what to do? If you have the Internet available, a good photo of a V-770-11, which is very close to a -6, is found at www.wpafb.mil/museum-engines/eng36.htm. It's shown overall gray, but *Jane's* of the era show the camshaft housings and cylinder fins black. I never found a straight frontal view, but the airflow pattern in all air-cooled vees evidently was down a clear passage between the banks, then *outward* past the cylinders. (They were *not* cooled by longitudinal flow as were radials.) Since the cylinder fins seem to have been approximately square with rounded corners in plan view, a fair representation may be

just card stock scribed to represent cylinders, painted black and dry-brushed aluminum, then set at a 60-degree angle. Add a gear case with camshaft drives, and you have a passable V-770. (A digression here: the most widely used air-cooled vees of the war were the Argus 410 and 411's used on types like the Fw 189, Arado Ar 96, Siebel Si 204, etc. These were pushrod engines, rather than overhead cam types like the Ranger. A photo of the NASM's *Storch* shows the dominant visual feature to be the camshaft and pushrod housings, but the AS 410 and 411 seem to have put the pushrods outboard.)

Looking at the engine installation photos of the *Seagull/Seamew* again, I don't get the impression of methodical engineering and development. Some copies (like the *Formaplane* kit) had two cowling air outlets per side, some had a third added above the aft one, and in line with the front. Some flew with the spinner installed, some without, which couldn't have helped the already poor performance. And the huge inlet looked as if the solution to any cooling problem was to send somebody to hammer it out bigger and see if that helped. Measuring some available drawings and kit parts for air-cooled vee installations (which is admittedly risky), I find the Curtiss had by far the biggest inlet of any type, and had greater inlet area per horsepower than any of the later and better-developed air-cooled engine installations. In turn, all V-770s had bigger, messier cooling provisions than the German installations. Is this what doomed the American air-cooled vees?

Maybe not. In WWII, development of fighters in particular involved a continuing search for power. The air-cooled vee seems to have hit a near-insurmountable barrier at around 500 hp, everywhere. Nobody seemed able to produce an air-cooled engine of more than about 230 hp per bank, including the British Napier Dagger, which took 24 cylinders in a 2-crankshaft H-pattern to get 890 hp, and was said to produce such an ear-and nerve-shattering racket that the Handley-Page *Hereford* turned out unusable because of this problem alone. Trainers or liaison types did not need high power and the U.S. had good sources of radials like Jacobs and Kinner to do the job when high performance and clean installations weren't critical. The V-770 went into Fairchild's little used AT-21 and prototypes of the XSO2U and the sweet-looking single-seat Edo OSE (kitted by *Airmodel*). In Poland, it went into the prototype of the twin-engine two-place PZL-38 *Wilk* fighter, another very neat-looking aircraft that suggests what

might have resulted if the DeHavilland *Comet* racer had been developed into a fighter. Postwar, Ranger developed a new reduction gear that moved the prop in line with the crankshaft and produced a very neat package that was used in a few Italian airliners, but that was the end. The U.S. had no tradition of favoring inline engines as did the European industries, and there were lots of surplus DC-3s, so the story of a type that generated lots of hope and yielded lots of disappointment ended. Except...



Raising a *Seagull* on to the catapult was a dangerous and labor-intensive task. Here, the pilot and observer ride their plane back onto the catapult track.

Ironically, the nation with the reputation for the weakest aero-engine industry did manage to break the 230 hp per bank barrier. Isotta-Fraschini built the 1630 cubic inch Delta RC 35 of 770 takeoff hp that went into the Caproni 314 (kitted by *Italeri*) and the SIAI *Dardo* fighter (vacuformed in 1:72, I forget by whom). By 1949, they had raised the rpm to 2850, maximum boost to 40.5 inches, and takeoff hp to 1000, and renamed the engine "Delta RC20/55." (In the U.S., this would have been just a dash-number change, but Italian designations were incomprehensible: even *Jane's* seem to have been embarrassed by their own lack of detail.) Caproni had a reputation for unreliability, but think for a moment of the sound of a revving Ferrari, and you have to wonder if a *Dardo* might not have been, in its own way, as awe-inspiring as a *Merlin-Mustang* or *Spitfire*. It remained an answer without a question, though, and by 1951, this magnificent-sounding machine seems to have disappeared. The motto of the RAF is "Per Ardua ad Astra"...roughly, I think, "Through Struggle to the Stars". A good motto for the whole genre of air-cooled vees occurred to me one day: "Per Ardua ad Obscuritas".

EPILOGUE...This is a fascinating hobby, isn't it? I start out to reminisce about a 47-year old model plan, and get drawn into a look at the beginnings of plastic modeling, a 30-year reunion, and a requiem for an engine type. How'd I do that?

SVSM BOOKSHELF

American Spitfire: Camouflage and Markings

By Paul Ludwig and Malcolm Laird

1998, Ventura Publications

When America first entered World War II, its fighter force consisted of a precious few P-38s and a fair number of P-39s and P-40s. This motley force was seen by British and American authorities alike as an ineffective weapon with which to fight the Nazis in northern Europe, although it took a failed experiment in long-range ferrying to dampen American enthusiasm for the *Airacobra*. Thus, as a means to speed American fighter pilots into combat and to help balance out the books of Lend-Lease, American pilots initially received the *Spitfire*.

This volume, despite its title, covers only three units: the 31st Fighter Group, the 496th Fighter Training Group, and the spotter-Spits of Navy squadron VCS-7. The *Spitfire* was also flown by the 52nd Fighter Group, 4th Fighter Group, and 7th Photo Reconnaissance Group, but these get only a brief mention. If you're looking for a comprehensive reference to the American use of the *Spitfire*, you should look elsewhere, but if you're interested in the 31st FG, you're in luck. This book provides a complete history of the 31st during its *Spitfire* days and takes the story up and through its re-equipment with P-51 *Mustangs*.

The book is profusely illustrated with photos of the *Spitfire* in American hands. While there is the oft-seen photo of the ditched *Spitfire* Vc on the Salerno beachhead, there are also a myriad of less familiar photos. Many of these show much more spectacular nose art than RAF planes displayed, especially LTCOL Gustav Lindquist's "Toffy"/"Hello," which features a larger-than-life-size nude on the *Spitfire*'s slim nose.

The text is clearly written, but is more like a unit history than the cockpit-action approach taken by other series, like Osprey's "Aircraft of the Aces" books. However, it never claims to be about aces but about markings and camouflage. An appendix lists various insignia and their proper sizes; another provides FS numbers for British colors, and a third discusses RAF camouflage patterns.

The best section, from this reviewer's point of view, is the brief four-page section on VCS-7's use of the *Spitfire*. This Navy unit operated *Spitfires* for 20 days around the Normandy invasion for shipboard gunfire spotting duties. This little-known unit was composed of floatplane pilots comman-



deered from battleships and cruisers, and they performed admirably in these borrowed aircraft.

Spitfire fans will enjoy this volume (especially if they're not Anglo-centric when it comes to the Spit) and modelers will appreciate the attention paid to colors and details.

Typhoon and Tempest Aces of World War 2

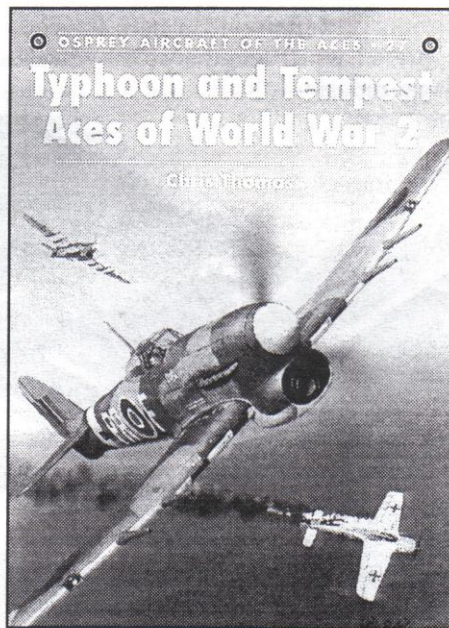
By Chris Thomas

1999, Osprey Publishing

The *Typhoon* is usually identified as a rocket-firing nemesis of German motor transport and armor, while the *Tempest* is thought of as a powerful dogfighter that arrived too late to make much impact. In actuality, the two Hawker fighters had an almost equal air-to-air score—246 for the *Typhoon*, 239 for the *Tempest*—and this book articulately communicates the combat history of these two types.

The *Typhoon* served at first in home defense, spoiling attacks by Fw 190 Jabo fighter-bombers in 1942, then teaming with the new *Tempests* in anti-"diver" missions, destroying V-1 flying bombs. The *Tempest* was a menace to the Germans once released from anti-V-1 duties, tallying an impressive number of Me 262s among its kills.

This volume, number 27 in the series, is another example of how good these books can be. The author includes a large number of first-hand accounts, including some compiled from his own interviews, and the illustrations tell the tale well. The profiles include 48 aircraft, all in the standard scheme, with restrained variations—different colored spinners, small personal insignias, invasion stripes and codes. They provide links to the pilots—people like Roland Beamont,



Hugh Dundas.

Pierre Clostermann and David Fairbanks, each of whom has a unique story. Thomas, who co-authored *The Typhoon and Tempest Story*, keeps things moving, although he sometimes relies on the occasional verbatim after-action report written in a bloodless, detached manner. For the most part, however, Thomas picks his first-hand accounts well, and gives the book a

crisp pace right up to the end of the war.

Like most books in the series, this is not the authoritative work on the subject but will provide modelers with plenty of information, and could easily lead to a greater yearning for a deeper knowledge of the subject.

—Chris Bucholtz

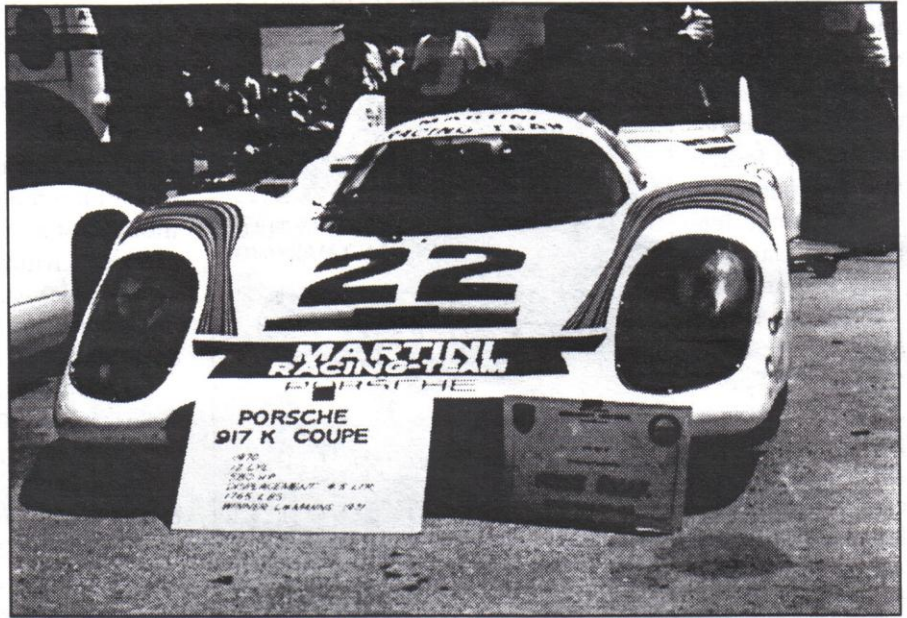
World-beater: the Porsche 917PA in 1:43

continued from page 1

Porsche Audi). The 917 chassis received a spyder body (i.e., a short tailed body with an open cockpit versus a closed coupe) and a 4.5-liter engine and debuted at the Mid-Ohio Can-Am in August (which was at the tail end of the season). Driven by Jo Siffert, it competed in only four races and raced with three different distinct noses. Nevertheless, it did well enough to give Siffert a fourth place in the championship. Porsche sat out the 1970 Can-Am season to do development work on the PA for the new European Interseries, and the original 917PA with a 4.9-liter engine was bought by privateer Milt Minter. When Porsche learned that the 917 was going to be banned from endurance racing (the penalty for being too good), they accelerated the development on the Can-Am cars. The engine was increased to 5 liters as a temporary measure. Meanwhile, the engineers were busy trying to adapt twin turbochargers from a diesel installation to their flat 12 engine. This resulted in an progressive increase in power. The normally-aspirated 4.5 liter engine produced 580 bhp, while the 5 liter variant could produce 630 bhp. But by turbocharging, the power output increased dramatically to 850 bhp for the 4.5-liter engine, 1000 bhp for the 4.9-liter version, and finally 1100 bhp for the 5.4-liter engine. In order to handle this increase in power, the chassis had to be beefed up. The original aluminum spaceframe was strengthened and the chassis made extensive use of magnesium and titanium. A new 4-speed transmission was incorporated, which lengthened the wheelbase slightly. The body was redesigned to incorporate a high

downforce nose and fins at the rear. The resulting car was known as the 917/10 (also identified as the 917-10).

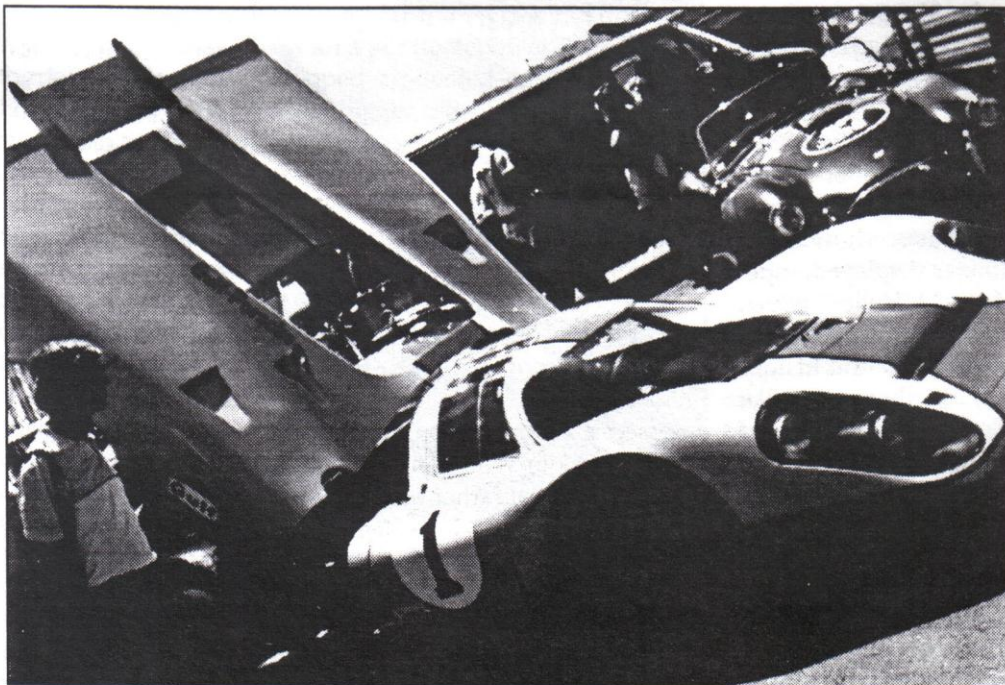
The 917/10 was debuted at the 1971 Watkins Glen Can-Am



The businesslike front end of the Porsche 917K. This car has the twin tail-fin configuration of the 1971 LeMans winner.

with Jo Siffert as the driver and STP as their main sponsor. The car went on to campaign in only six of the 10 races, but did well enough to once again give Siffert a fourth place in the final championship standings. As a result, Porsche was very confident that the 1972 season would be theirs with a new winged version of the 917/10. But disaster struck when Siffert was killed late in 1971, driving a BRM in a non-championship F1 race at Brands Hatch, England.

Porsche was now forced to re-evaluate their 1972 plans. This resulted in pairing the new finned and winged 917/10 with the highly efficient Roger Penske Organization and their driver Mark Donahue. The season started off on a very good note with Donahue cleanly taking the pole and easily leading the first race until a jammed pressure relief valve forced him into the pits. Even with a pit stop, he easily stormed back to finish in second place. Then disaster struck while testing at Road Atlanta. The rear bodywork came loose and flew off, causing the car to crash heavily. The chassis was destroyed and Donahue was put out of action for four months with ligament damage in his legs. Penske quickly signed George Follmer to campaign the rest of the season, who went on to dominate the races and



Another 917K, this one in the configuration used by the John Wyer Automotive Gulf Racing Team. The addition of a small wing between the "ironing boards" is notable.

easily win the championship.

For 1973, the Penske Organization was again the Porsche factory team and was fielding the ultimate Can Am 917 - the 917/30. The bodywork was redesigned to be more aerodynamic and was coupled to the 5.4-liter turbocharged engine. Mark Donahue was 100 percent fit during the season and was absolutely untouchable, easily winning the championship over a field made up of mostly privateer 917/10s and older McLarens. The only other factory entrant was an effort by Shadow, but they barely scratched the Porsche juggernaut. Then came the gas shortage of 1974 and a series of regulations that made Porsche lose interest in the series. The 917/30 was driven by Brian Redman for Penske, but the regulations downgraded the engine severely. Privateers continued to campaign the 917/10, but it was to be the year of the Shadow and the final year of the Can Am.

Models of the 917 have always been a popular 1:43 subject. However, for the most part these were limited to various versions of the endurance car rather than the Can-Am/Interseries car. Those few Can-Am machines that were produced were manufactured in the late '70s and did not have very long production runs. (For you aircraft modelers, the situation is very similar to

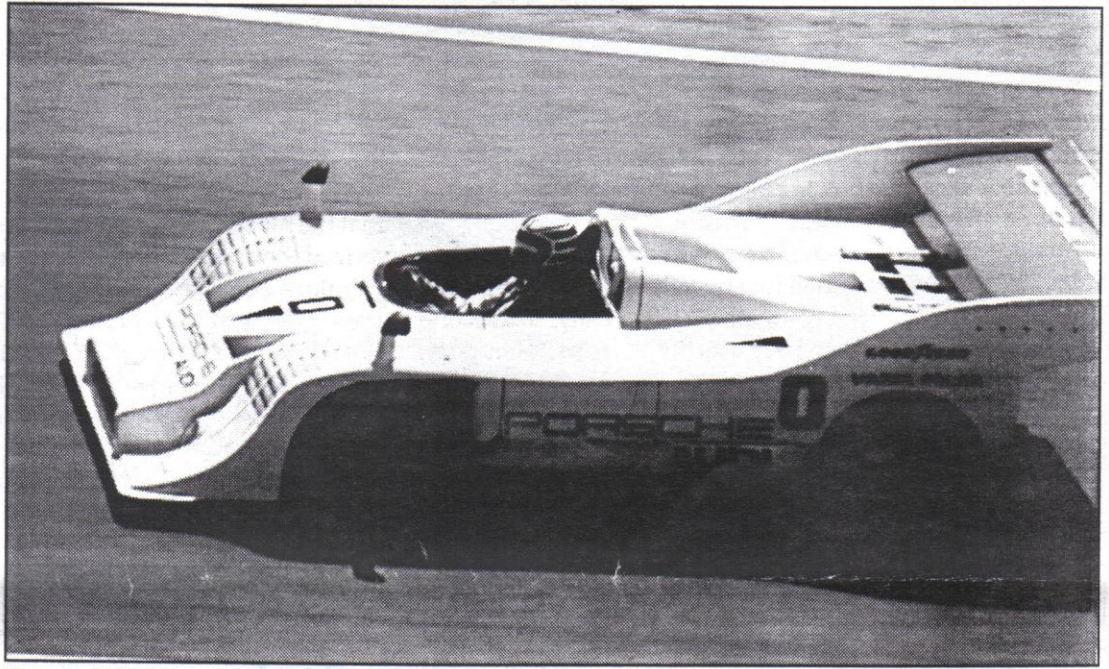
limited run kits—x number of kits produced, stuck on the shelf and, once they're gone, they are gone! The problem is that the entire 1:43 industry is run like a cottage industry. Even the major manufacturers like *Starter* and *Provence Moulage!*) Only recently models of Can-Am cars have come into vogue again - both in white metal and resin. Kits in markings of Interseries cars are even rarer. That's a shame because one of the wildest looking cars that I remember seeing was a McLaren M8D that looked like a Led Zeppelin album cover.

The subject of my build is an Interseries Porsche 917PA produced by an Italian company called *F.D.S.* The vintage of the kit is roughly 1978, and while it captures the basic shape it's nowhere near the current state of the art for a white metal kit.

Building this kit is fairly basic and rather simple. Being a softer form of white metal, clean up was rather easy. Armed with the usual array of X-Acto knives, files and sandpaper (Rambo modeling), the pieces were scoured for any signs of mold lines and flash. This is always the easiest part of clean up, but special attention needs to be given to the wheel inserts. With the basic pieces cleaned up, I turned my attention back to the body. Using a scribing tool, I went over all of the existing panel lines and louvers and deepened them. Then the body halves were lightly wet sanded using successive grades of

used 200, 400 and 600 grit sandpaper. Any obvious pits, scratches or "oopsies" made while scribing were filled with *Squadron Green Stuff* and sanded smooth. The body was given a quick wash down as a final prep for priming then mounted on a stand made of a bent coat hanger.

The old airbrush was pulled out for a quick spray job. My personal primer preference is to use *Floquil* primer, a nice light gray color. It sprays very nicely right out of the bottle, no thinner is needed, and doesn't seem to have any adverse effects on resin or Green Stuff. However, it could cause regular plastic to craze if applied too heavily. It dries fairly quickly too, without obscuring fine details. If I was in a hurry,



Porsche 917-10 to Can Am Car going through its paces at Laguna Seca. This car is in the markings of Vasek Polak's 1973 car.

I could have used a blow drier to speed things up a little. Since there was no panic, I just popped the kit into a box to keep dust away for the night.

The next evening I pulled out the body halves and examined them for any flaws that were missed during the pre-prime stage. These were filled with putty and sanded smooth, followed by the entire body receiving a light sanding. The body panels were again cleaned out using the scribing tool, and a final coat of primer was sprayed.

Since our contest was looming in the near future, it was time to decide which version of the car to build. The stock version was for a yellow car with red swirls that ran in the 1972 6 Hours of Silverstone and was sponsored by Shell. My other choice was to use a FDS transkit to convert the car to the 1973 Interseries car raced under the Boeri Sports banner. This version had flimsy-looking rear fenders added to the tail and was finished in a rather unusual green color. Both had their pluses and minuses. I was leaning towards doing the Boeri Sports car because I have a liking for Can Am/Interseries cars. Plus, I didn't know when or if I would be able to pick up another FDS 917 kit. It took me two years to find this one. Don't ask why I bought the transkit before I had a model to use it on. We all do it.

When I finally decided to do the Interseries car, I discovered

that I couldn't find where I put the silly transkit. After two or three frantic searches failed to turn up anything, it seemed that the decision was made for me—DO THE SHELL CAR!

The body halves were pulled out for one last pre-painting examination. A light rubdown with very used 600 grit sandpaper brought the primer down to a smooth surface. Creating a smooth surface is important when trying to achieve a glossy color scheme, because it affects how well light will reflect off the painted model. You can also see now why I deepened the panel lines and louvers—all this priming and sanding could easily cause this detail to disappear. A final wash down with warm soapy water, a good rinse and a quick dry job using the hair drier came next. The body halves and the turbo deck plate were attached to the coat hangers and it returned to the work bench for painting.

This time the choice was Testors Model Master bright yellow (#2717). It was mixed three parts of paint to two parts of thinner. A light first coat was applied and the parts were popped back into the box to dry for a couple of hours. During this time the airbrush was torn down and given a good cleaning. After the two hours were up, the pieces were pulled out of the box and examined for any telltale signs of lint, paint splatter or orange peel. Luckily there wasn't any, so a second coat was sprayed on. Then back into the box for a 24 hour dry. A third coat was sprayed the next day. I had hoped that only three coats would be needed, but after the third coat had dried for about an hour I realized that at least one more coat would be needed before the final "wet" coat could be sprayed. At this time, I remembered why I hate dealing with yellow paint. You never seem to get enough coats down to get a completely even coat.

Oh, by the way, it was about this time that I found the Boert Sports transkit. It appeared that I had put it into a different box to take to work to clean up the pieces during lunch. As it turned out, it was a good thing that I went with the stock kit. The Interseries car would have necessitated removing the two vertical fins on the rear deck and the decals were somewhat yellowed. I would not have had the time to rectify these two problems before the contest.

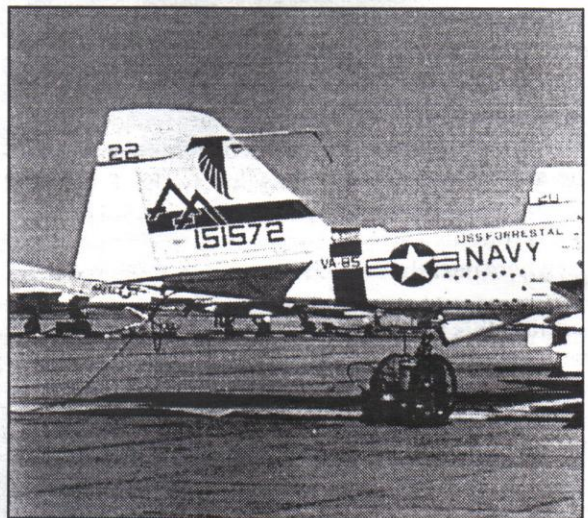
While the body was drying, I hand-painted some of the small parts. This was somewhat frustrating since the instruction sheet's colors for some parts contradicted some of the photographic evidence that I had of other Porsche 917PA's and 917K's. In the end I went with the photos' choices. I used a combination of Polly S and Polly Scale acrylic paints for this. Suspension and bodywork support brackets were painted using flat black and flat aluminum. The basic engine block was flat black with the gearbox painted with a black/metallic bronze mix.

After putting the seats in to the cockpit tub, it was evident that the tub looked too bare and the tube framing that characterized the open cockpit 917s had to be added. Luckily, in The Fabulous Porsche 917 there are excellent photos of the cockpit framing of a 917/10. Now the 917/10 was derived from the PA so I figured that there wouldn't have been too much difference in the layout. I used plastic rod to fabricate what tubes would be seen through the small cockpit opening. Once completed the entire tub got a coating of flat aluminum, while both seats were painted and the single set of seat belts were finished in medium blue. I thought about adding a fire bottle, but looking at the photos of 917/10s revealed that these were pretty well hidden from view.

April's Club Contest: **Football Heroes**

**Subjects that share a name with
NFL teams are on tap this month!
Bucaneers! Sea Hawks! Panthers!
Chargers! Patriots! Jaguars! Titans!
Falcons! Broncos!**

**Find a connection between a team
and your model and you're in!
(For this contest, as was the case
in the last NFL season, the Jets are
NOT considered a real team!)**



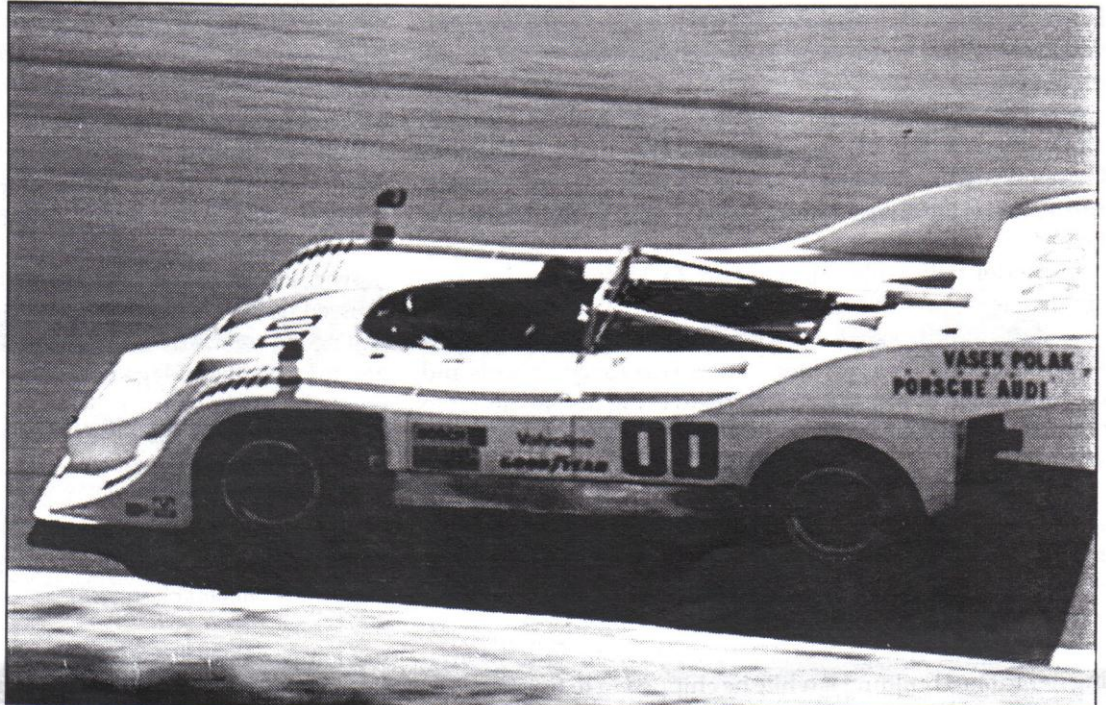
**Another fun part of being an
SVSM member!**

The body was placed temporarily on the chassis to see where flat black should be painted, then the wheels were assembled. The axles provided in the kit were also made of the soft white metal and were therefore pretty useless. These were tossed and replaced with brass rod. I slid everything in place, popped the body back on and found a fairly level surface to gently use the chiropractic method to get the body to sit evenly. (You know the method—gentle, persuasive force applied on the proper corners) I popped the body off once more so I could get a better view of the engine block as I gently threaded the exhausts up through the bottom of the chassis and the suspension/axle assembly. Unfortunately there were no locator pins of any sort on the engine block, so there was some “best guessing” needed to get everything to look right. This also meant that there wasn’t a solid face to glue the exhaust to either. Some gel type super glue or accelerator would have been helpful here, but of course I didn’t have any. So I just muddled along, hoping that the rotten thing wouldn’t come unglued at the most inopportune time.

While it was drying, I looked at the rear body support brackets that I had painted earlier. I realized that they were way too thick and had to sand them down. This led to another small delay as these pieces had to be re-primed and painted. Of course, that wasn’t the end of my problems. When I tried to install the rear bracket, I discovered that the exhausts ran smack dab into the middle of the lower bar. So now I had to gently bend the exhausts up a little and hope that their glue points to the engine block would not pop. Luckily the two side brackets were able to go in without any interference.

A coat of Future was swabbed over the body and it was set aside to dry until the next day. I expected that the decaling should take at least a couple of hours and I wasn’t too surprised when it actually ended up being more like three and a half. The decals themselves were very nice, being made by Cartograph. They were neither too thick nor too opaque, with very little trim about them. For the most part, MicroSet was used as the setting solution. I only had to resort to using Solvaset for a couple of really tough places. The two large red swirls that start at the nose and go around the side of the body before it returns to the nose actually come in five pieces and had to be carefully matched up. The most difficult match was the two halves that went around the nose and front fenders, because this was split at the nose as a right and left half rather than a top and bottom. Using the setting solutions and a hair dryer to speed up drying was very helpful. Unfortunately

while trying to manhandle the car, I broke loose both the instrument panel and the turbocharger decking. And to add insult to injury, the heat from the hair dryer softened the Future a little and resulted in a small fingerprint near the front fender. The rest of the decals were pretty straight forward. However, I discovered a possible reason for why I had so much trouble with the nose decal. I assumed that the decal was designed to go all the way to the bottom of the Porsche’s nose including the small lip around the front. Wrong! I didn’t



917-10 tc in Vasek Polak's 1972 colors. Note the exposed roll bars; this is the chief difference between Polak's 1972 and 1973 entries.

noticed that there was a thin piece that probably was meant to cover the lip. That decal didn’t go to waste, though, as I used it as a donor for touch up pieces. When I finished I did have two small red decals left over. These were mirror images of one another so I can safely assume that they are a right hand side and left hand side marking. However, the solitary photo of the 917 which is meant to be used as a decal placement guide doesn’t show them. Furthermore, their shape doesn’t seem to fit any possible place on the car’s rear body work. I decided that it was safer to leave them off until such date that proper photographic evidence can be found.

And that’s that. I took the car to our annual contest and was very surprised to get a third place in the Competition Cars - Closed Wheels category. (I saw a batch of NASCAR trucks show up just before noon and figured that I was out of the running). I also entered it in the Nationals just for the fun of it to show it off. I now have a nice addition to my collection of sports cars that didn’t cost me too much money or frustration. The kit is definitely not up to the current standards of 1:43 cars, but it is a cut above mediocrity. In my mind, a good gauge for 1:43 models is whether or not you would be willing to buy and build the same kit again, regardless of what problems you might have had with it. That being said, would I build another 917? Well, you see, I really don’t have a choice. I’ve got this transkit you see and I’m too cheap to not use it eventually!

MARCH MINUTES

The March meeting was election night, and never has there been such a night of back-room deals, quid pro quo behind-the-scenes bargaining, and burning of the midnight oil in smoke-filled rooms. When the intense politicking was done, and after the back room had been emptied and the smoke-filled room had been ventilated and deodorized, Dave Balderama was our new president. Our vice presidents are Mike Meek, Brad Chun, Angelo Deogracias and Rich Pedro; Bill Ferrante remains treasurer and Chris Bucholtz remains secretary/editor. All in all, one new person was added to the officer corps.

Mike Meek and Rodney Williams extended their thanks to all the many volunteers who pitched in to make the Kickoff Classic a success. We had 110 entrants with 310 models at the show, and 76 of those entrants went home with at least one award.

In model talk... John Heck's 1:48 Ta 156 was an unusual sight, at least in that scale. John used the ARBA kit, which he said had an odd knack for losing parts off his workbench while he wasn't looking! John added *True Details* wheels and an assortment of scratch-built parts to bring his '46 fighter to completion. Mike Meek's "Roto-Finish" *Mustang* was a big winner at the contest; now Mike's working on the plane "Roto-Finish" evolved into, the RB-51 "Red Baron." Mike started with a *Tamiya Mustang* and has added a new tail, fuselage fairing and other details to the model. Mike's also working on a *Minicraft* 1:144 Boeing 377, which he says takes a lot of sanding, and an *Aviation Usk* F2G Super *Corsair*. Pete Wong collaborated on a *Hawk* T-33 with his daughter, allowing her to start building it while he chipped in to finish it. Pete used Orchard Supply Hardware spray silver for the finish, along with some Apple Barrel craft paints! Brad Chun is working on what is a first for him—a biplane! Brad's building the *Accurate Miniatures* F3F-1, which he has partly painted and entirely taped together. Barry Bauer had a great time with *Italeri's* 1:72 Bell 47 helicopter, which he's turning into an agricultural sprayer. It was a one-night build for Barry, who put it together with great enthusiasm—so great that he forgot to paint the engine before he built up the tail booms! John Carr is working on a 1938 civilian vehicle turned military; he's doing a polish street machine commandeered by the Nazis and turned into a staff vehicle. Vladimir Yakubov is building a World War II Soviet gunboat from scratch, with the possible exception of the gun turret. In real life, this turret was taken from the T-34 tank assembly line. Vladimir also busied himself working on a petite *Alby* resin GAZ-67 in 1:76, a Soviet jeep-type vehicle. Laramie Wright has two Shermans in the works: an M4A3 that's been decked out with photoetched parts, suspension improvement, and home-made weld beads, and a mobination of a *Tamiya* Jumbo and a *Tank Workshop* Jumbo turret and barrel. Laramie's re-doing the welds on this tank as well. Laramie's *ICM* Lynx was finished in a three-tone camouflage just in time to win an award at the kickoff classic. Another armor winner at the Kickoff Classic was Jim Priete's PT-44 mine-roller tank, the subject of an article in last month's Styrene Sheet. Jim confessed that this was his first armor model in over 20 years! Jim Lund built *Combat Models'* Dornier Do X as close to out of the box as he could. That meant he only

had to build new wings out of wood and then form plastic over their surface! Luckily, he got an assist from Roy Sutherland on the 12 propellers! Since it was St. Patrick's Day, Jim displayed a *Hawker Hart* of the Irish Air Force, finished in the colors of 1940. A lack of instructions didn't slow down Greg Prindle, who faked it to build *Hasegawa's* 1:72 B-47E *Stratojet*. Carrying on with the big bombers, he also constructed *Monogram's* B-1B and finished in a dark camouflage scheme; he says these dark colors helped him get away with a lot of small mistakes. Roy Sutherland's 1:72 Fw 190A-1 conversion and *Spitfire* IX both were finished in time for the contest and both brought home much-deserved awards from the IPMS/Seattle contest. Roy used *Cooper Details* parts and *Tamiya* paints to build Anton Hackl's Bf 109G-6 in 1:48, a model destined to go to a paying customer! Mike Braun says the engine is visible from the outside on *Tamiya's* FAMO heavy mover, making it one of the few areas that needed to be dressed up on his model, but outside of that it builds quickly and needs very little "aftermarket" help. Jonathan Williams, heir to the Williams legacy, showed off his best of show, junior winner, a resin bust of "War" sculpted by Randy Bowen. Jonathan used *Tamiya* paints to finish the model, with some *Snj* for the bronze parts. Loren Conn took *Italeri's* M-8 Greyhound and built yet another lovely armored vehicle for his collection. Steve Travis has another '32 Ford in the works, this one a '32 Duece hot rod. He fixed the trunk, cast resin wheels from the *Monogram* Long John Silver, and a beer keg fuel tank. Steve made a "mahogany" dashboard by running a cherry-red felt pen over a popsicle stick (!), and gave the model its lustrous finish with 12 coats of Boyd's true blue over flat white. Ben Pada utilized *True Details'* cockpit set to jazz up his *Tamiya* Dewoitine D.520. He also had two P-47Ns, one a *Monogram* and an *Academy* example, and two *Hasegawa* P-47Ds. He said the bubbletop version was easier to build! Michael Hernandez is becoming an accomplished modeler, tackling *Revell's* kit of the Space Shuttle with a full stack of boosters and fuel tank. Ken Miller reminds us to read the instructions, especially when you have four engines to worry about. He thinks he glued the wrong halves together on his *Glencoe* Convair 880, and now he has some extra filling and sanding to do over and above what the kit provided to begin with! Mark Hernandez has kits in the on-deck circle of flying saucers that would have been manned by little green Germans—a BMW *Flugelrad* B-1 and a slightly larger V-1 #2, both from *Planet Models* kits. Mark also has a Lippish P.12 delta-winged fighter in store for his hypothetical collection: this prone-pilot plane is from *Sharkit*. Alan Weber wants to build a collection of "stuff he's flown in," and the first up is a 757, to be built from the *Minicraft* 1:144 kit. Ron Wergin has a *Tamiya* Fw 190A, finished in *Testors* Acryl paints, which he really likes. The peer-pressure-resistant Ron also had a pilot for the plane, a *Luftwaffe* figure from the old *Monogram* line. Rodney Williams emptied out his display case this meeting, showing his award winners from the Kickoff Classic—namely, his 1:32 *Hellcat*, his 1:48 F/A-18 *Blue Angels Hornet*, his 1:72 F4D *Skyray* from the *Tamiya* kit, and his *Aviation Usk* F2G Super *Corsairs*, #57 and #74. Rodney also showed some of the many parts he's scratch-built for his 1:32 F2G. Dave Balder-

rama won at the Kickoff Classic with his *Planet Models* Sack As 6 "Flying Beer Tray," despite its fit problems. Now, Dave is suffering similar problems with his *Czech Model* Bv 40, which he's building around the rudder—the only straight, aligned part of the kit! Frank Babbitt broke the nose gear on his Dutch Air Force Fokker F-27 on the way to the meeting, but is looking forward to fixing this award winner. Frank's model was built using the *Esci* kit. Chris Bucholtz has finished the masters for the *Obscureco Jet Provost* T.5/5A, and had them in place on his "test bed" kit, which was firmly affixed to a piece of plywood, a base that looked very poor compared to Ron Wergin's. Greg Plummer is tiring of real cars, so he's now playing the role of '60s concept car designer; one of his first creations is a '65 Phantom Chevelle 2-door wagon! Yikes! Cliff Kranz is using the old *Veb Plastikard* kit to build a model of the Tu-144. Cliff's creation will depict the prototype when it's all finished. Rich Pedro has some twisted role models; he's using Rodney Williams' drawings and notes to turn a 1:24 P-51D

into a P-51B. This is Rich's second attempt at this; he says this one will be completed as a Tuskegee Airmen red-tailed plane. And the model of the month goes to... Eric McClure, for his *MB Resin* Mk. IV Male tank! Eric took his time with this model, and finished it off with a nice trench base with barbed wire made from sections of sliced window screen dipped in Rustail.

Our contest in March was Antipodean Antics, featuring down-under subjects. In third place, with an Australian P-40E, was Greg Plummer. Greg used the *Academy* kit, and it was the first U.S.-made WWII plane he'd ever built! In second for his CAC *Wallaby*, was Mike Braun. Mike made his hypothetical fighter from the *Minicraft* XF5F *Skyrocket*, modified with a *Wildcat* tail, a Bf 110 nose, and an appropriate foliage-green paint job. And the winner, with his captured M13/40 Italian tank, was Laramie Wright. The paint scheme—which included a big kangaroo—made this an irresistible subject for Laramie!

Local appearances by aerobatic teams in 2000

Blue Angels

Sept. 14-17: National Championship Air Races, Reno, Nevada

Sept. 30-Oct. 1: Redding Air Show, Redding, California

Oct. 7-9: San Francisco Fleet Week, San Francisco, California

Oct. 13-15: MCAS Miramar Air Show, San Diego, California

Thunderbirds

May 13-14: Airfest 2000, March AFB, California

July 1-2: Moffett Field Air Show, Sunnyvale, California
 Oct. 14-15: Air and Space Show, Vandenberg AFB, California

Snowbirds

Sept. 19-Oct. 1 California International Air Show, Salinas, California

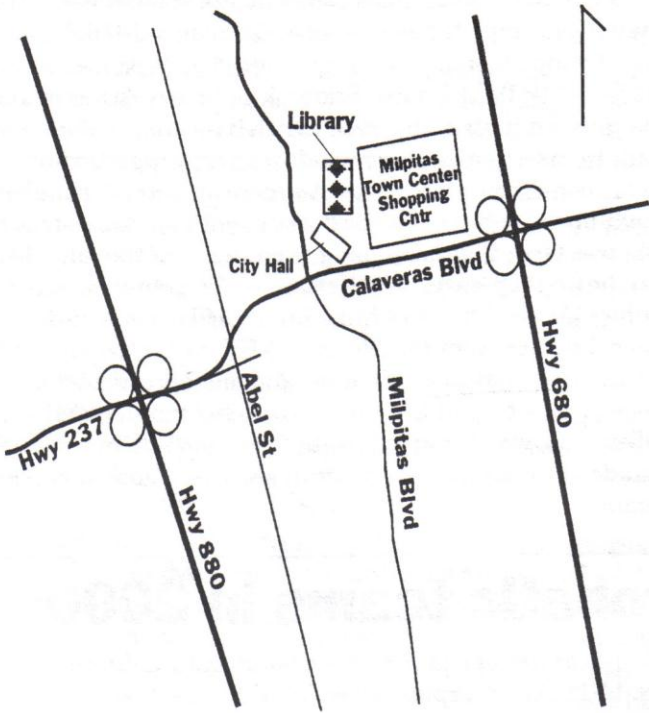
Oct. 13-14: Airshow, Las Vegas, Nevada

—Compiled by Cliff Kranz

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