

Last-stand fighter: N1K1-Jb *Shiden* in 1:72

Armor to protect the pilot, self-sealing fuel tanks, rugged construction, and a hard-hitting armament of 20mm cannon and 12.7mm machine guns. These are attributes one doesn't immediately associate with Japanese aircraft of World War II, but they do apply to the Kawanishi N1K1-J *Shiden*—and they're the attributes that made the aircraft such an unwelcome surprise to American pilots, who first engaged them over the Philippines in September, 1944.

The *Shiden's* evolution is an interesting one. The plane originated from a 1940 requirement for a floatplane fighter, a concept still in vogue in the days before the ascendancy of the aircraft carrier. The N1K1 *Kyofu* (Mighty Wind) was a stoutly-built floatplane, with a respectable Mitsubishi MK4D Kasei 14 engine of 1,460 horsepower and reasonably good armament. Initially, the plane mounted two two-blade contra-rotating propellers to offset a tendency to swing to the left on takeoff, but this proved too complex and was abandoned in favor of a standard three-bladed prop and a bootful of rudder from the pilot.

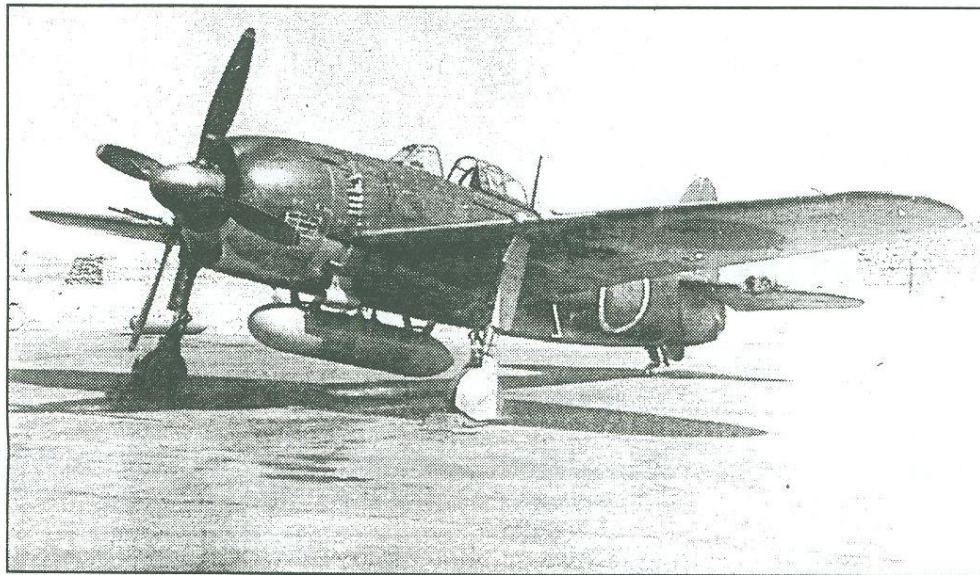
The N1K1 (or "Rex," in Allied parlance) was a great improvement over the "Rufe," a stop-gap floatplane Zero. Japanese Navy officials recognized the design's potential and ordered Kawanishi to develop a land- and carrier-based version, to be powered by the Homare Type 11 1900-horsepower engine. The plane incorporated many of the hard lessons learned at the cost of the cream of Japan's fighter corps: self-sealing tanks, armor and firepower were the only way to survive against the American *Hellcat* and *Corsair*. The plane brought with it the rugged construction of a floatplane, and it seemed like a natural winner.

Unfortunately, getting the plane into service was a trial in itself. Adapting the mid-wing floatplane into a land based

fighter required a set of long, complicated main landing gear and collapses of the gear were to plague the N1K1-J through its entire career. The Homare engine required refinement and development, and there were stability issues to address before the N1K1-2 could make the jump to land.

Not all of these problems had been ironed out when the first

units of N1K1-Js were sent to the Philippines to try to hold back the rising Allied tide. Had the Japanese Navy had a cadre of well-trained pilots at their controls, the N1K1-Js—known as the "George" to the Allies—might have made a significant impact on the invading aircraft. As it was, even with inexperienced pilots, the "George" was ter-



Sitting ready, with a parachute pack on the horizontal tail, an N1K1-Jb *Shiden* awaits a scramble. The *George* was a tough plane, but engine and landing gear troubles hurt its effectiveness.

midable; it was the first Japanese plane many pilots had faced that didn't immediately burst into flames after being hit.

The units in the Philippines were swept aside, but more N1K1-Js were employed in the defense of the home islands where they were tasked with intercepting low-level marauders: *Hellcats*, *Corsairs*, *Avengers* and *Helldivers* of the U.S. carrier fleet, followed soon by *Mustangs*, *Thunderbolts*, and *Invaders* flying from Okinawa. The B-29s were left to other aircraft; the N1K1-J's performance fell off as altitude increased.

The N1K1-J was followed in early 1945 by the N1K2-K *Shiden-kai*, an entirely redesigned version with a low wing, shorter landing gear and a refined tail section, and this aircraft was an even more formidable foe. The *Shiden* and *Shiden-kai* fought until the end of the war; they were not used as kamikaze aircraft, but were considered too valuable as escorts for other aircraft. Some N1K1-Js were modified to serve as dive bombers to oppose the Allied invasion, but these were never put into use.

Aoshima's N1K1-J, when it was released three years ago

Continued on page 10

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.

FOR THE VETERANS

It's Mike Burton's Birthday Sale for the Vets!

Okay, so my birthday has nothing to do with the items being offered for sale, but a little marketing never hurts...!

The list below contains several generously donated items from our collection boxes at D&J Hobby which cannot be directly used for our Vets donation projects. As in past years, we are going to turn these items into cash, which can be stretched quite far for purchasing the snap-fit kits that the VA Hospital can employ in its rehabilitative services program.

Since this business item must be closed out this next month, I'm in charge of liquidating these models ASAP. Here's what I plan to do. At the February meeting, the listed items will be first on sale at the price listed. These prices are nonnegotiable and are very fair. Any items not sold will be auctioned off during the meeting, with the sale price as the minimum bid. As fair warning: I'll be bidding on all these items at the minimum, so you'll have to spend at least a dollar more than me to get them!

I will arrive at 8 p.m. at the very latest, and the auction will probably start around 10:15.

Bring money and buy what you can, since these will likely

EDITOR'S BRIEF

There will be a lot to discuss at the meeting this month, including the contest! As always, we'll need judges, volunteers at the registration desk and people to set up the tables. We'll let you know how you can help this Friday.

The Kickoff Classic, in case you've never attended, is traditionally the region's best attended event, and you're guaranteed to benefit from being there. Even if you don't compete, you're sure to see something that inspires or challenges you, or you'll find something on the vendor tables you've never seen before. What I'm trying to say is that, even if you don't want to compete, come to the show. It will make you a better and more enthusiastic modeler.

The last three contests your editor has attended were held in Southern California, and I've handed out lots of flyers to smog-breathers who have heard of our show. If the weather's good we should expect plenty of competition from the Southlanders. I have no fear that we will be able to withstand most of their challenges... I hope!

Gulp... I gotta get back to that *Skyray*, now...!

—The Editor

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

be the best prices you can get on these models and the idea is to generate cash for more Veteran's donations. See you there!

Kit	Retail	SVSM
Vacuform Kits (all 1:72)		
<i>Eagles Talon</i> F9C-2 Sparrowhawk	\$14	\$4
<i>Esoteric</i> Grumman F2F-1 "Barrel"	\$15	\$4
<i>Victoria Products</i> F2F-1 "Barrel"	\$15	\$4
<i>Formaplane</i> Cutiss SO3C <i>Seamew</i>	\$10	\$3
<i>Falcon</i> Conversion 9: AD-4W, C-2A, FJ-3	\$11.50	\$4
<i>Falcon</i> Conversion 3: two-place F9F, F-106, <i>Mirage</i>	\$11.50	\$4
Resin Kits (All 1:72)		
<i>Victoria Products</i> F2F-1 "Barrel"	\$12	\$3
Canopy Sets from <i>Falcon</i>		
1:72 IJAAF WWII Set	\$10	\$3
1:72 Luftwaffe Fighters Set	\$10	\$3
1:72 Luftwaffe Bombers Set	\$10	\$3
1:48 U.S. Navy WWII Part 1	\$10	\$3
Squadron Signal "In Action" books		
1036 <i>F6F Hellcat</i>	\$8	\$3
1040 <i>P-80/T-33/F-94</i>	\$8	\$3
1048 <i>PV-1 Ventura</i>	\$8	\$3
1054 <i>SB2C Helldiver</i>	\$8	\$3
1060 <i>AD Skyraider</i>	\$8	\$3
1063 <i>B-17 Flying Fortress</i>	\$8	\$3
1067 <i>P-47 Thunderbolt</i>	\$8	\$3
1074 <i>PBM Mariner</i>	\$8	\$3
1080 <i>B-24 Liberator</i>	\$8	\$3
1098 <i>Fokker Triplane</i>	\$8	\$3
1107 <i>T-34 Mentor</i>	\$8	\$3
1108 <i>Tu-16 "Badger"</i>	\$8	\$3
1134 <i>A-26/B-26 Invader</i>	\$8	\$3
1145 <i>F4U Corsair</i>	\$8	\$3
1148 <i>A-3 Skywarrior</i>	\$8	\$3

CONTEST CALENDAR

February 27: The **Seventh Annual SVSM Kickoff Classic**, to be held at the Milpitas Community Center. This year's theme: A Century of Victory. For more information, call Chris Bucholtz at (408) 723-3995 or check the Web site at www.svsm.org.

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.

Revell-Monogram's still-striking B-25J Mitchell

By Bradley Chun

The B-25 was produced in larger quantities than any other American twin engine combat aircraft. Named in honor of Brigadier General William Mitchell, the B-25 served in every theatre of World War II and served with the USAF in secondary roles until 1960.

As with all combat aircraft, the B-25 *Mitchell* went through a series of modifications during its production run, and no fewer than nine distinctive variants emerged.

The plane's lineage began with the NA-40, a high-wing bomber built to U.S. Army Air Corps specifications for a twin-engine bomber. Although the plane had a good layout and such innovative features as tricycle landing gear, there were many areas where the North American engineering staff felt they could do better. When the NA-40B crashed after just two weeks of flight testing, they had their chance, modifying the basic airframe by lowering the mounting point of the wing, widening the fuselage to accommodate side-by-side pilot and copilot

seating, and changing the tail to a twin-rudder configuration.

The first B-25 flew in August, 1940, and 24 B-25s were built. The B-25A added the gull wing configuration to remedy a tendency for the aircraft to "Dutch roll" when one engine was out and added combat features like armor and self-sealing fuel tanks. The B-25B added dorsal and ventral turrets, and the -C and -D models added an autopilot, upgraded engines and external bomb racks. The -E and -F models were developmental types that did not enter production.

The B-25G introduced a 75mm cannon in the nose, an addition brought about by experience in the Pacific with the type. The B-25H increased its armament over the -G, boosting the number of .50 caliber machine guns from six to 14 or 18.

In December 1943, B-25D production was terminated in Kansas City in favor of the B-25J model, which was to become the last production model. The 4,318 produced during its

production run made the B-25J the most numerous of the B-25 *Mitchell* variants. In addition, another 72 of the B-25Js while not fully finished, were flyable, and were included in the termination inventory when the line was shut down. As some of these were to see service after the war, it can be said

that 4,390 B-25Js had been manufactured.

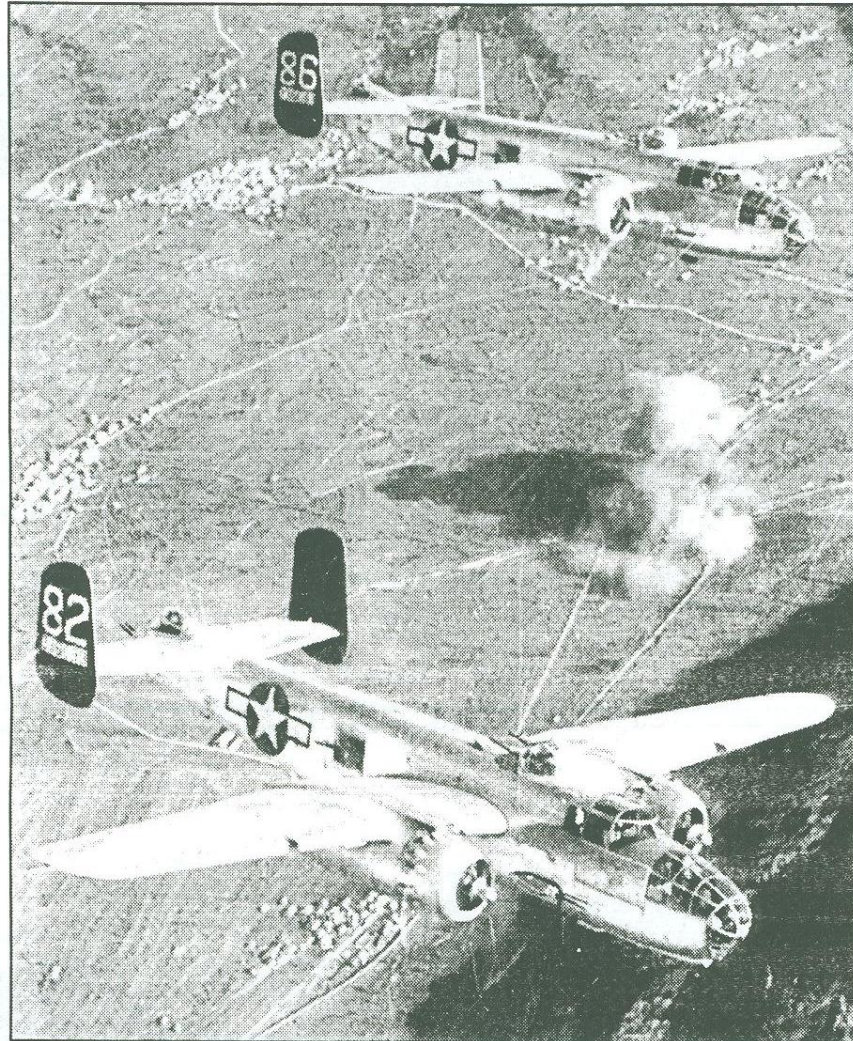
The B-25J returned to the conventional glass-nose compartment with one or two fixed or flexible .50 caliber nose guns. Four other fixed and six more flexible guns were featured in the same arrangement as with the B-25H variant. The crew was increased to six, as the bombardier was returned to man the bomb-sight. Eight hundred of the B-25Js were built with a solid nose with eight nose guns upping the number of .50 cal machine guns to 18. This easily made the B-25J gunship the most lethal medium bomber in WWII.

The RAF received 313 B-25Js and designated them the *Mitchell III*. RAF serial numbers ran from HD346 through HD400, K1561 through KJ800, and KP308 through KP328. The majority of the *Mitchell*

IIIs were assigned to the Second Tactical Air Force of the RAF.

Many of the glass nose B-25Js were converted to the solid nose in the field using nose kits supplied by North American. Underwing racks were added to many B-25Js so that they were able to carry four 5-inch rockets. Another field modification was the addition of a 150-gallon fuel tank in the radio compartment for added range.

Revell-Monogram has once again thwarted collectors seeking high prices for once out-of-production and limited in availability kits. Revell-Monogram is re-releasing some of the kits that were highly sought after, and others that were considered "state of the art" back in the late 1960s when most modelers were just "kids." These kits were considered "state of the art" as they included many features such as folding wings, retractable landing gear, and droppable bombs and torpedoes. Ahh, the memories of building the *Hellcat* with folding wings, and the *Helldiver* that dropped its bomb.



B-25Js of the 319th Bomb Group wheel above a target in Italy. The tail color is cobalt blue, while the cowling front faces are white.

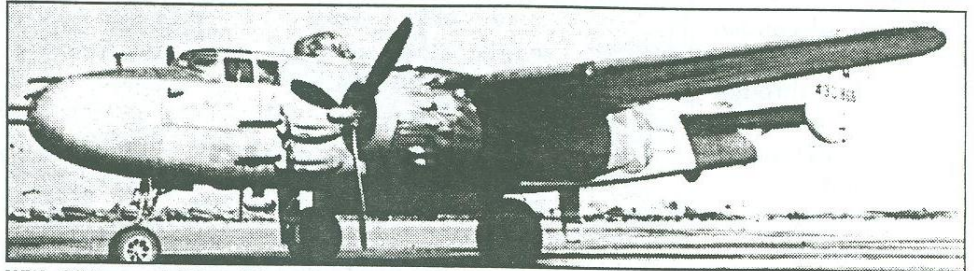
Revell-Monogram's B-25J, glass nose version was originally released as "Panchito" and is still much sought after. The most recent version was the *ProModeler* solid-nose strafer. Modelers can now breathe a sigh of relief as parts are included from the original and *ProModeler* kits. There was also an eight-gun nose 1:48 B-25J released by *Revell-Monogram*.

Much to my relief, the cost of this "new" kit is quite a few dollars cheaper than the *ProModeler* kit. Once again, *Revell-Monogram* has chosen to package the B-25J in the flimsy, clamshell type box that quite a few modelers have come to dislike.

The style of the instruction pamphlet is now the norm for *Revell-Monogram* kits. It is eight pages in length, and contains a brief history on the aircraft, the ever-present "read before you begin" warnings, a paint reference guide, 17-step assembly process, and decal placement guide. The assembly process now includes the part name and parts number, unlike before when "universal" assembly codes were used. Detail painting of parts is also now called out during assembly. The modeler must decide early on if they wish to build the strafer gun nose version, or the standard bombardier version. Its nice to see the part name and detail painting called out during the building process. This will definitely help younger modelers to learn the name of parts and give them some reference to painting their model if they have a small reference library.

The four sprues of injection molded parts are the same as the previously released *ProModeler* version. The sprues have

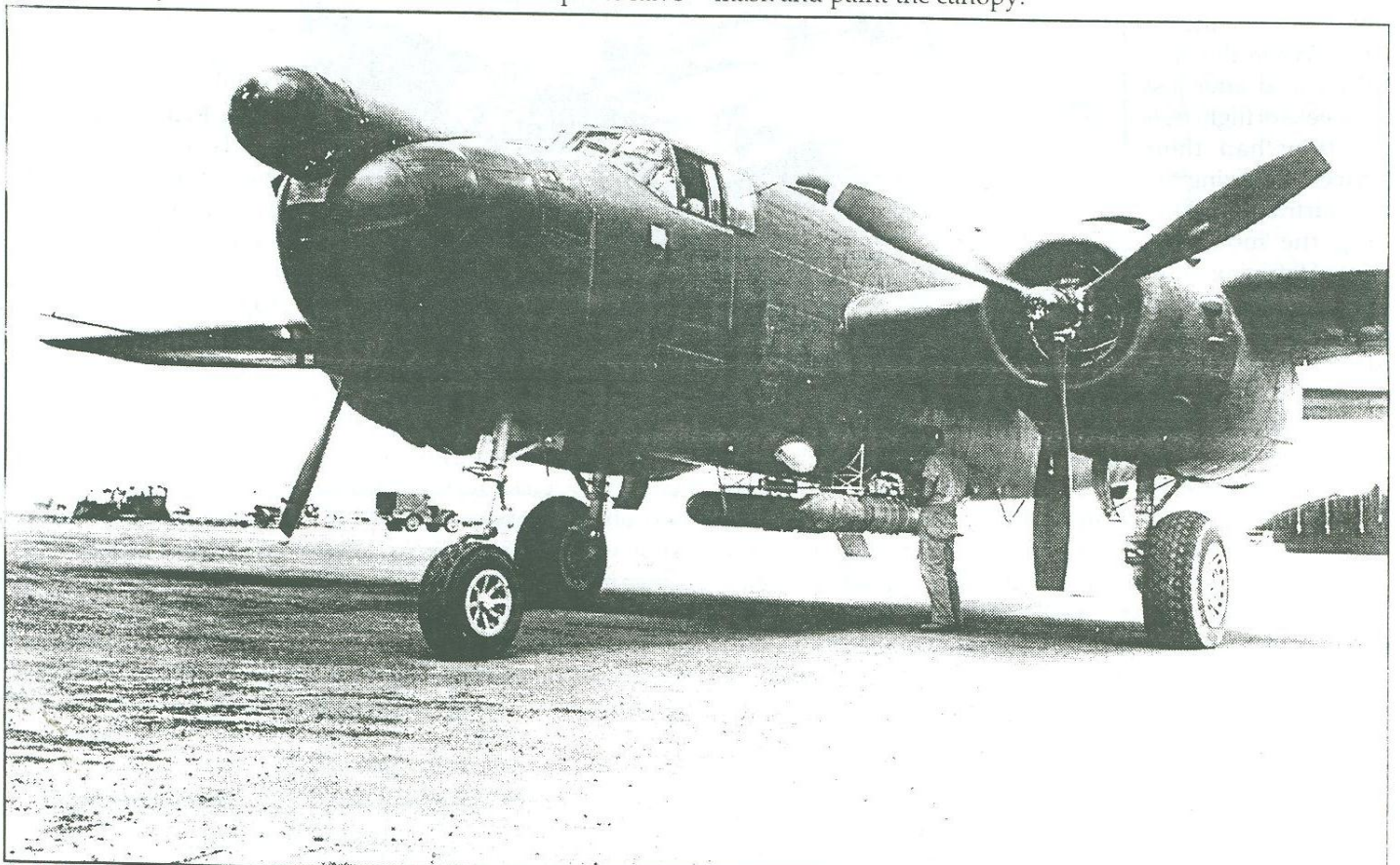
the same package guns, flattened nose and main wheels, the additional .50-caliber machine guns for the strafer version, bomb run camera and housing, and nose gun gas extractor. Unfortunately, I found quite a bit of flash on the sprues, but not excessive flash like what can be found on limited run kits. The detail is still pretty sharp on all of the parts, and careful dry brushing will make the details pop right out. The panel line detail is still of the raised variety. The panel lines appear



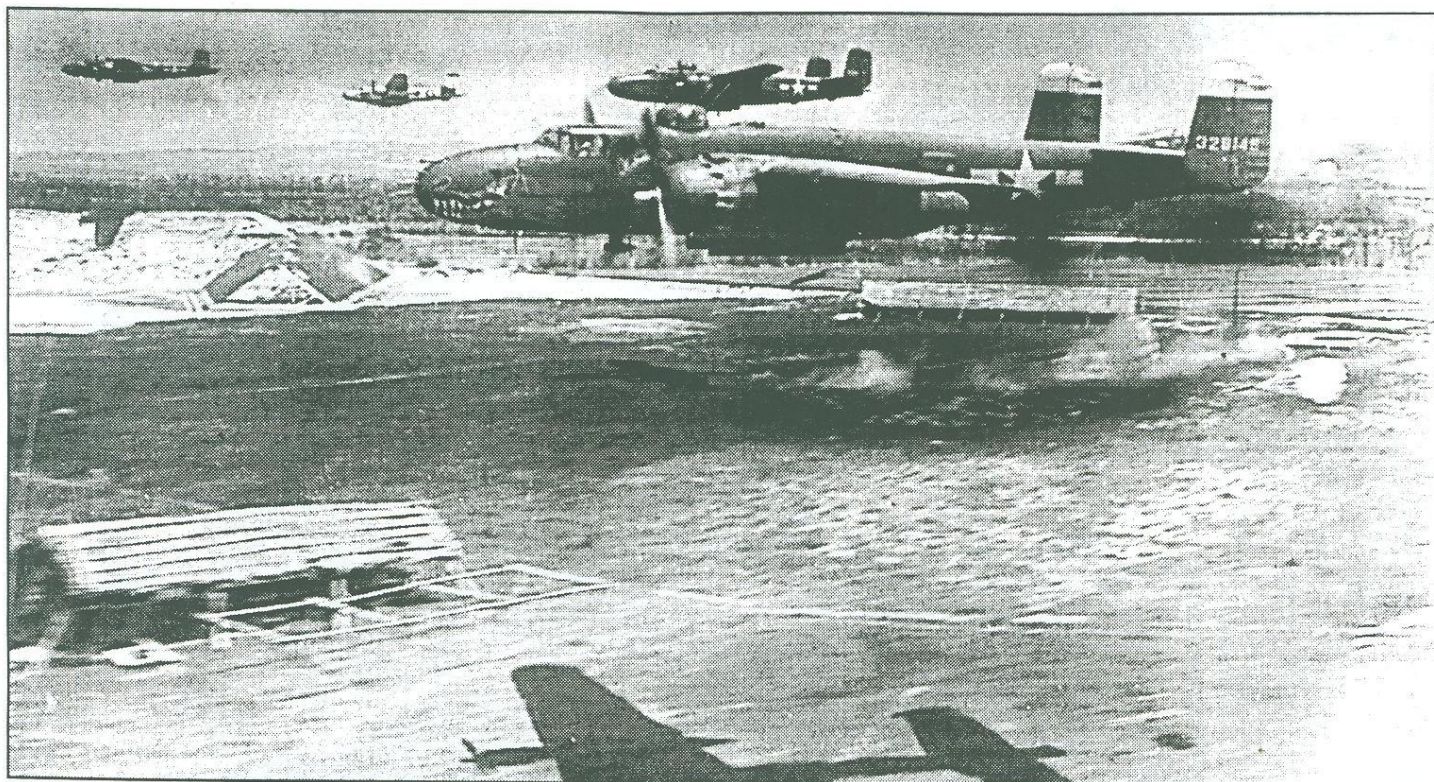
With 12 forward-firing .50 caliber machine guns, the B-25J was a potent air-to-ground threat.

"finer" than in previous issues, and rescribing them would not pose a problem for modelers with some experience rescribing panel lines.

In this re-release, *Revell-Monogram* has included two sprues of clear parts. This kit can be built as the strafer version with five .50-caliber machine guns in the nose, or with one fixed and one flexible .50-caliber machine gun in the nose. Parts such as the canopy, tail gunner's greenhouse, top turret, and waist gun windows have been duplicated. Surprisingly, all of the clear parts are still clear. The raised detail for the canopy framing is sharp and will aid the modeler when its time to mask and paint the canopy.



In Marine hands, the B-25J became the PBJ-1J. The movement of the radar from the wingtip to the nose was a common modification. Note the Tiny Tim rockets mounted under the fuselage; these were not operational before the end of World War II.

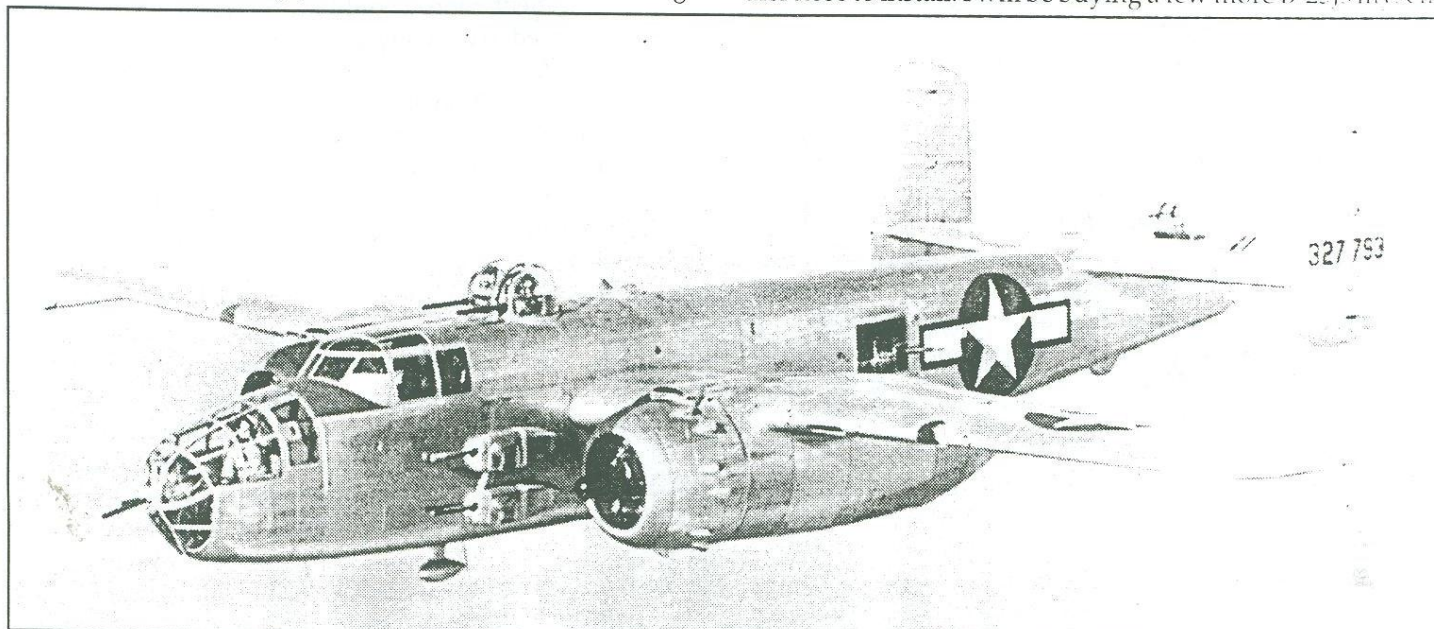


Low-level attacks by strafing B-25s must have been a shattering experience for the Japanese. The altitude of this massed attack can be gauged by the shadow at the bottom of the photo. Note the parafrag bombs streaming behind the Mitchells.

Two different decal versions are included in this release. The first version is an olive drab over gray B-25J named "Jaunty Jo," a B-25J-11-NA, serial number 43-36192, of the 498th Bombardment Squadron, Biak Island, New Guinea, May 1945, and this is a strafe with five .50-caliber machine guns in the nose. The second version is a natural metal B-25J named "Finito Benito - Next Hirohito," a B-25J-25-NA, serial number 43-0092, 12th Air Force, Corsica, 1944, and is a glass nose version with only one .50 cal in the nose and no package guns. The decals are printed nicely. The Air Apache symbol is the same as in the *ProModeler* kit, although the green background is a shade lighter on this release. The nose art for "Jaunty Jo" is also nicely printed, unlike the female on "Night

Take Off" from the *ProModeler* F-84, who appears to be suffering from measles. I could find no problems with registration on this decal sheet.

For modelers who had purchased the initial release or "Panchito" or the long discontinued *ProModeler* release, this kit will be no stranger. This kit will be a welcomed addition to any modeler who may have missed out on the two earlier releases. Many modelers will be happy to know that they will no longer have to pay the "high" prices sought by dealer-selling "collectable" kits. This kit is released exactly as the *Promodeler* kit was, back in 1996, except the retail price is cheaper, and the modeler now has a choice of which bombardier nose to install. I will be buying a few more B-25Js myself



Even the glass-nosed B-25Js could deliver withering firepower from nose, package and turret guns. This factory-fresh B-25 mounts 11 guns.

Shaking the myths surrounding DML's P-61

By Mike Burton

"Did the Moldmaker Lie?" "Doesn't Match Lines?" Yes, the alternate acronyms for the initials DML (*Dragon Models Limited*) come to my lips too during discussions of this company's work. However, in an effort partly to obtain a gasp of astonishment from the crowd, I assure you the DML P-61 *Black Widow* fits, more or less. In no way is it perfect, but it's hardly the awful catastrophe some have characterized it as being.

This two-part article will point out where the fit problems occurred for me. In the end, I would say the problem here is one more familiar to vacuform builders. While this is an injection-molded kit, the very thin part walls and small and sparsely distributed locating pins provide a lot of opportunities for modelers to make mistakes. Like a vacuformed kit, the thin walls have a tendency to flex under a little pressure, and the mating pins were not real positive locators in many cases.

Approaching many of the major P-61 kit components like a "pinless" vacuform kit provided a satisfactory answer for most solutions. Before you glue, take some time to dry fit, tape, and learn the particular tendencies of each assembly.

We'll start with the engines. The cowlings are well-molded, with a step inside the cowling for the front bank of engine cylinders and crankcase cover to rest against. Be careful cutting off the sprue gate that crosses inside the cowling lip, and you will be rewarded with a lovely part. The inside of the cowling should be painted interior green, and it only needs the engine with its rear bulkhead to complete it. The cooling flaps are thinly molded as a separate ring in the open position; this mounts on the rear of the cowling. On my model, this provided a nice mount for a ring of crushed lead fishing weights, which was superglued between the rear face of the engine and the front inside face of the flap ring. Note that for both my cowl/engine/flap ring assemblies, the alignment and fit of the parts was dead on target, with no sanding needed. It will require you to hold the parts firmly while you're gluing the parts though, because there is a tendency for the parts to slip off center slightly around the flaps-to-cowling joint.

Because I needed to establish what the center of gravity on the finished model to establish how much weight should be

added to the front of the model, I had to build the booms and wings as sub-assemblies in order to balance the model after dry fitting the parts.

Each boom is molded in halves, which include the rudder on each. The trailing edges are thin, with no mating pins or sockets on the entire upper edge. This means you can expect a slippery, flexible alignment if you don't watch it. This can create extra work and frustration, so plan for this ahead of time. I found after doing the first boom that the main gear leg

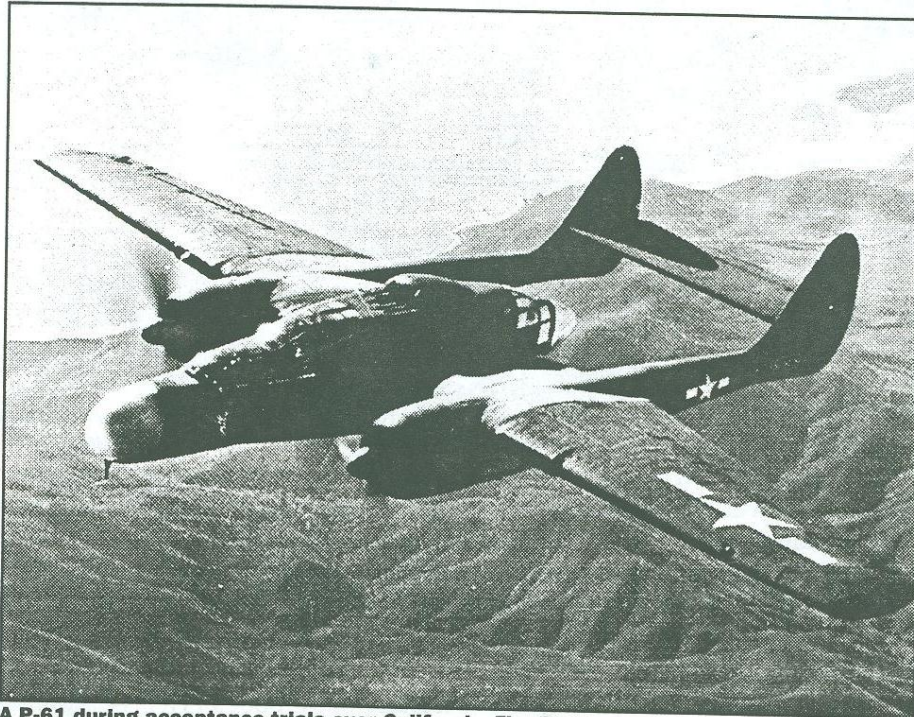
can be installed after boom is glued together. This makes the process of gluing much like a vacuform kit, starting with superglue being applied to the joint at the front underside of the boom and getting the part into good alignment. As you add glue to the remaining seam back to the last pin at the bottom edge of the rudder, the "squishy" fits begins. Getting the bottom and front end edges set right makes the completion easier. I had to break a seam once to get it into proper alignment.

but I ended up with both booms in nearly perfect shape, with the mating edge to the rear of the wing being the only clear area of misalignment. Since I could sand that area when the boom was mounted to the wing later, this seemed like a good place to leave off.

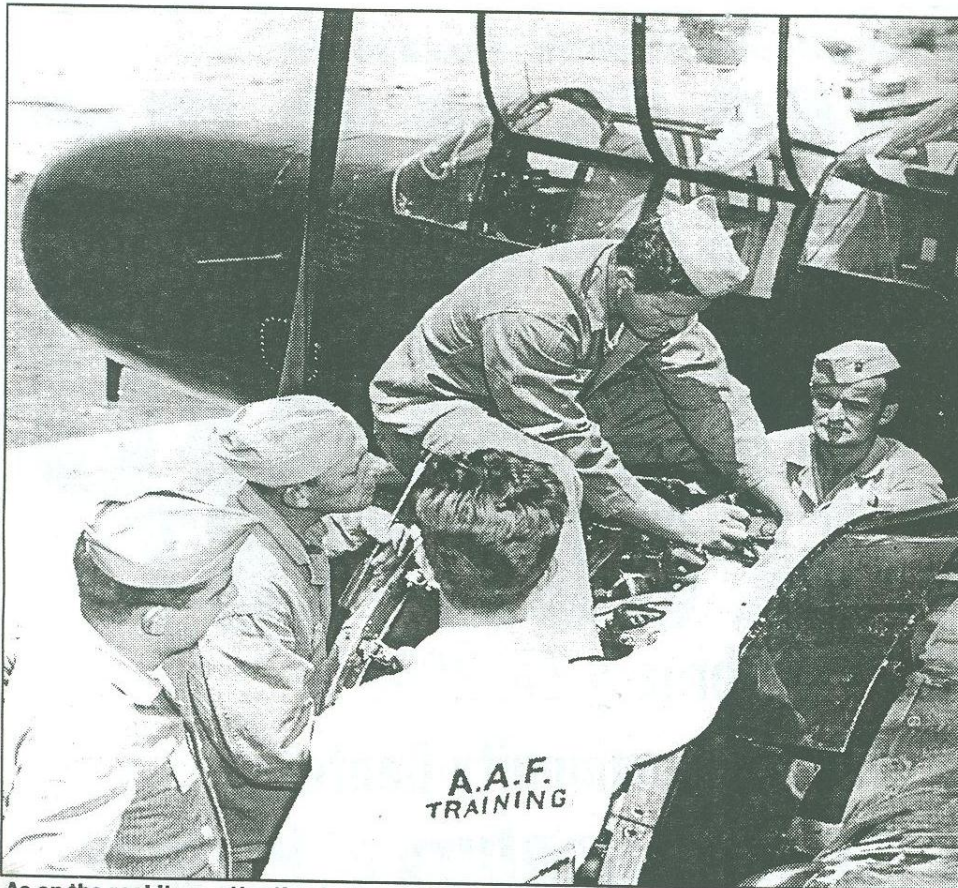
If you delay the addition of the gear leg, you get a bonus in that the blending of slight seams will be simpler.

The fuselage is provided in halves, with a multi-part cockpit for the front and rear. Before building these, the underfuselage cannons should be installed. Substituting metal tubing for the kit parts is easily accomplished with no modifications by using the existing troughs and holes. For my model, I used the boring but fast solution of stock plastic cannons. The cockpit sidewalls of the main cabin compared very favorably to the photos in the Czech reference on the P-61.

DML supplies decals for the sidewalls, as well for the silver tank on the rear bulkhead of the front cabin. The main cockpit floor is mated with the roof of the nose gear bay; the rectangular opening that is left becomes the crew entry ladder's opening. The seats are all molded separately with individual gunner's periscopes to mount alongside them. A lovely bowtie handled bomber-type control yoke with a flat-faced column



A P-61 during acceptance trials over California. The *Black Widow* introduced a number of revolutionary features, but was declared obsolete just eight years after entering service.



As on the real item, attention to the cowlings and engines can avoid major problems with the kit parts. This shot shows students getting first-hand experience with the R-2800-10 engine.

is provided. The cockpits are painted interior green primarily, with olive drab, black, silver and red details. With a good wash, these parts make for a very fine out of the box cockpit for a 1:72 kit. However, you will need to watch for the cockpit sidewalls, which are separate and must fit with the cockpit floor/nose bay sandwich; this requires careful alignment using that assembly as a jig. When closing the fuselage halves the front portion where the radar will mount is easy to misalign because the main instrument panel rests on it.

With the fuselage nearly complete, I taped together the main sub-assemblies to again make sure that the model would sit on its tricycle landing gear. More lead shot was required! I filled up the rest of the assembled cowlings and added a plug of shot to the lower cavity of the fuselage cannon area to about the halfway mark of the bulkhead of the front cockpit. Later dry fits determined that still more weight was needed. I flattened two fishing weights to fit behind the main instrument panel, then glued the bulkhead for the nose radar in front of this since no more nose weights could be fitted.

The wings are very solidly molded, with a good airfoil section. The cranked inner portion and the straight outer wings are captured very well. The trailing edges are thin, the leading edges match up fine, and recessed areas for cooling radiators are provided. The wings have lots of engraved detail and include an underside cavity on each for the lens of the navigation lights.

In examining the fit of the wing to the fuselage,

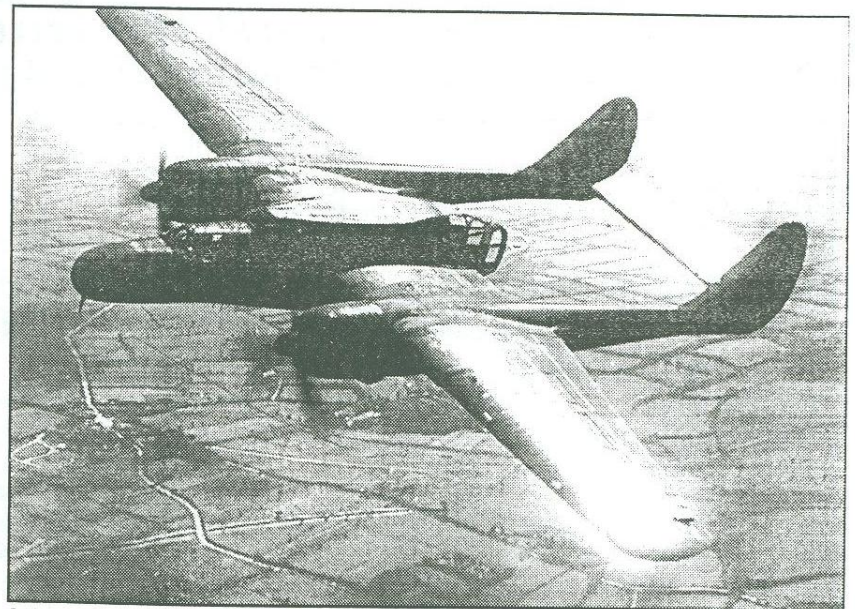
I discerned where some of *DML's* bad rap is earned. Dry fitting did not clarify the fit, due to the tongue mount on wing, with some slight help from the mating slot on fuselage. The wing tongue gets a slight airfoil curve in it when the wings are glued tightly. The fuselage slot is just slightly off line, and this accentuates the twist the tongue introduces when the wing is pressed flush for mating. Beveling the tongue with a flat sanding tool to lower the leading edge of wing and carving down the slot to rise at rear and fall at the front made the final wing fit locked to the fillet almost dead on. The *DML* mold maker got cute with the upswept fillet built in to the inner flap of the wing, which creates a friction lock with the fuselage; this also provides exactly the force to correct the aforementioned twist.

As stated before, treat this kit more like a standard vacform and the "bad fits" often disappear. The wing without the tongue fits nearly dead on, but this was a drastic solution not required in the end. It does illustrate that the essential kit is molded satisfactorily.

It's poor execution in those mating components that are usually standard to injection kits that creates the "doesn't match lines" reputation. Given the choice, with *DML's* lovely thin walls, crisp molding detail and essential good shapes, I'd vote they leave it up to us the modelers to figure out how to put them together.

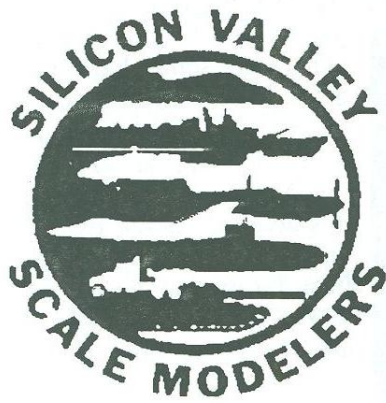
Once the wings are on the fuselage and glued in place, the strength of the entire assembly increases noticeably with virtually no flexure to crack any of the joints now present.

To be continued next issue



A dusk shot of a P-61 shows how glossy the black scheme was when first applied.

Silicon Valley Scale Modelers Present their seventh annual



KICKOFF CLASSIC MODEL CONTEST

Sunday, February 27, 2000

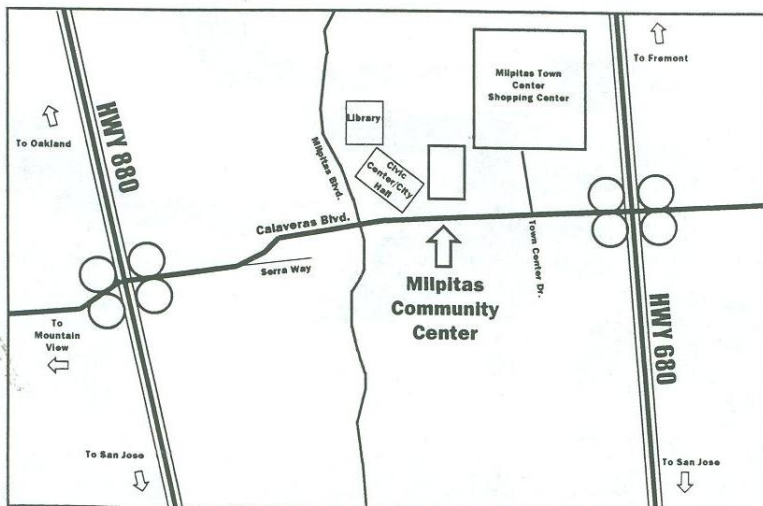
at the Milpitas Community Center

This year's theme: A Century of Victory

Special Awards Include:

- Best Vacuform • Best Conversion • Best NASCAR • Best Air Racer • Best Firebomber
- Best WWII ETO U.S. Armor • Best Arab-Israeli Wars Subject
- Best Armed Fighting Vehicle (Including softskins) • Best French Subject • Best British Subject
- Best Canadian Subject • Best Westland Aircraft
- MONOGRAM MASTERY (any 1:48 single-engine prop Monogram kit—1st, 2nd and 3rd places)
- The Arlio Charter Memorial Award (Best WWII USAAF Pacific Subject)
- The Ayrton Senna Memorial Award (Best Competition Car)
- The Mike Williams Memorial Award (Best Sci-Fi/Fantasy Subject)
- The Bill Maglie Memorial Award (Best of Show Junior)
- The Ted Kaufman Memorial Award (Best of Show Senior)

Free to all non-competitors! Door Prizes! Vendors! And the work of Northern California's Finest Modelers collected in one room!



For more information,
call Mike Meek at
(408) 275-0909

Vendor Contact:

Brad Chun at (925) 829-0443
email chun325@aol.com
Vendor tables are limited in number
and available on a first paid first
served basis.

California Resale/Tax Permit required
Tables are \$40 each if paid before
January 15, 2000; \$45 each if paid
between Jan. 16 and Feb. 26, 2000;
\$50 Day of event (if available)

Enter your models in Northern California's biggest annual contest!

Categories

Senior (18 years and older)

- S1 - Single Engine Jet or Rocket aircraft, 1:72 or smaller
- S2 - Multi-Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller
- S3 - Single Engine Prop or Turboprop Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller
- S4 - Multi-Engine Prop or Turboprop Aircraft, 1:72 or smaller
- S5 - Single Engine Jet or Rocket Aircraft, 1:48
- S6 - Multi-Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:48
- S7 - Single Engine Prop or Turboprop Aircraft, 1:48 Allied
- S8 - Single Engine Prop or Turboprop Aircraft, 1:48 Axis and Neutrals
- S9 - Multi-Engine Prop or Turboprop Aircraft, 1:48
- S10 - Jet and Rocket Aircraft, 1:32 or larger
- S11 - Prop Aircraft, 1:32 or larger
- S12 - Biplanes, all scales and eras
- S13 - Rotary Wing Aircraft, all scales
- S14 - Missiles, all scales and eras
- S15 - Civil, Sport and Racing Aircraft, all scales
- S16 - Jet, Propeller and Rocket Aircraft, 1:144
- S17 - Monogram Mastery: 1:48 Single engine Monogram Fighters
- S18 - 1:35 Softskins and Support vehicles
- S19 - 1:35 Armored Fighting Vehicles, closed top
- S20 - 1:35 Armored Fighting Vehicles, open top
- S21 - 1:35 Artillery, towed and Ancillary vehicles
- S22 - Military Vehicles, 1:48 or smaller
- S23 - Ships, 1:350 and larger
- S24 - Ships, 1:351 and smaller
- S25 - Automotive, Stock
- S26 - Automotive, Custom
- S27 - Automotive, Competition, Open wheel
- S28 - Automotive, Competition, Closed wheel
- S29 - Space, Science Fiction or Fantasy vehicles
- S30 - Space, Real vehicles or subjects
- S33 - Figures, Military, Historic, others
- S34 - Figures, Science Fiction or Fantasy
- S35 - Prehistoric Subjects (Dinosaurs, etc.)
- S36 - Out of the Box, all types and scales
- S37 - Dioramas
- S38 - Hypothetical Vehicles, all types and scales
- S39 - Miscellaneous
- S40 - Collections (5 or more subjects in a theme, as a single entry)

Junior (13-17)

- J1 - Aircraft
- J2 - Military Vehicles
- J3 - Automotive, all scales and types
- J4 - Dinosaurs and Figures
- J5 - Miscellaneous

Sub Junior (12 and under)

- SJ1 - Aircraft
- SJ2 - Military Vehicles and Ships
- SJ3 - Automotive
- SJ4 - Miscellaneous

SPECIAL AWARDS

- SA1 - Ted Kaufman Memorial Award (Best of Show, Senior)
- SA2 - Bill Magnie Memorial Award (Best of Show, Junior)
- SA3 - Arlie Charter Memorial Award—Best USAAF Pacific Theater Aircraft
- SA4 - Ayrton Senna Memorial Award—Best Competition Car
- SA5 - Mike Williams Memorial Award- Best Science Fiction, Space or Fantasy Subject
- SA6 - Best Westland Aircraft
- SA7 - Best Canadian Subject
- SA8 - Best British Subject
- SA9 - Best French Subject
- SA10 - Best Armed Fighting Vehicle (including softskins)
- SA11 - Best Arab-Israeli Wars Subject
- SA12 - Best U.S. Armor, ETO, 1942-1945
- SA13 - Best Firebomber
- SA14 - Best Air Racer
- SA15 - Best NASCAR
- SA16 - Best Conversion
- SA17 - Best Vacuum
- SA18 - Tim Curtis Award for Service to SVSM

Schedule of Events

- 9 a.m.-noon—Registration
- 11:45—Judges' meeting
- 12:30-2 p.m.—Judging
- 3 p.m.—Awards Presentation

Fees

- Seniors: \$4 Registration, \$1 per model entered
- Juniors: \$1 Registration, .50 per model entered
- Vendors: \$30 per table

General Rules:

1. IPMS/USA rules and criteria will be used for this contest. However, no model may be handled by the judges. Model placement will be handled by the builder. SVSM invites members of other chapters in our region to participate by joining our judging teams.
2. The contest director will make the final ruling on all disputes during the contest and may split or combine categories based on the nature and number of entries.
3. No model that has won an award at an IPMS National Contest is eligible, nor are any models that first were entered in any Region IX competition prior to February

28, 1999. SVSM appreciates the honor system, and hopes participants will as well.

4. SVSM asks that all contestants keep away from judging teams during the course of the judging to ensure impartiality. Interference with judging teams by the contestants will be handled per IPMS/USA rules, and could render the offenders' models ineligible for award consideration.

5. All work on model entries must be done by the entrant.

6. All contestants must have fun—otherwise, they aren't doing this right!

Adding to Aoshima's N1K1-Jb "George"

Continued from Page 1

came as a great surprise. For many years, *Aoshima* had been synonymous with 1:72 scale ineptitude. Their *Avenger*, *Dauntless*, *Tigercat*, and *Helldiver* are among the least accurate and most poorly detailed models I've ever seen, and their series of underscale, over-featured Japanese aircraft represent the low point of Japanese kit design and manufacture. The only reasonable looking buildup of one of these kits I've ever seen was a P-63 *Kingcobra* unlimited air racer modified more heavily in real life than *Aoshima* accidentally modified the plane in making their kit! However, the "new" fighter series, including the N1K1-J family—and the N1K2-J and Ta 152 families that followed it onto the market—are as far removed from these kits as you could get. The kits

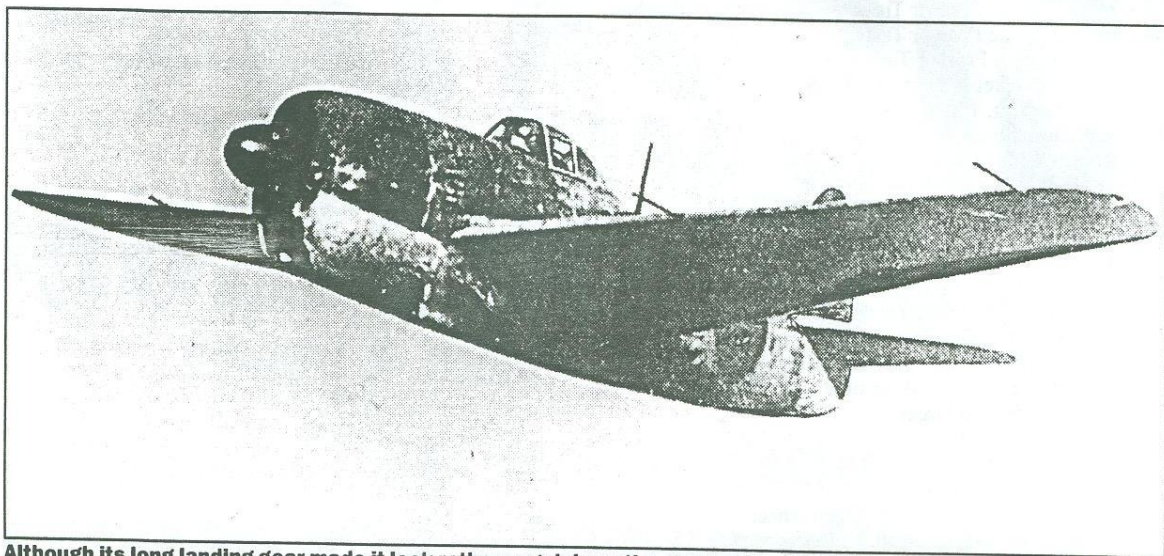
feature accurate outlines, fine recessed panel line detail, and good fit, a shocking change from the company's earlier efforts.

The kit includes a good engine, respectable interior detail, and boxed wheel wells; the landing gear struts and strut doors are molded as single pieces, but look great. A one-piece cowling covers the engine and joins smartly to the fuselage, and the fit of the wing checked out as better than acceptable.

The N1K1-Jb kit has all the features unique to that variant. This sub-model had improved 20mm cannon mounted integrally in the wings and squared-off horizontal stabilizers.

This feature gave the N1K1-Jb the most rakish appearance of all the mid-wing *Shidens*.

Although I'm an enthusiastic student of the Pacific War, I had just one Japanese aircraft in my collection, a MXY8 *Ohka* I built for a club contest. A little prodding from our editor motivated me to dig out this kit, along with an older *MPM* kit



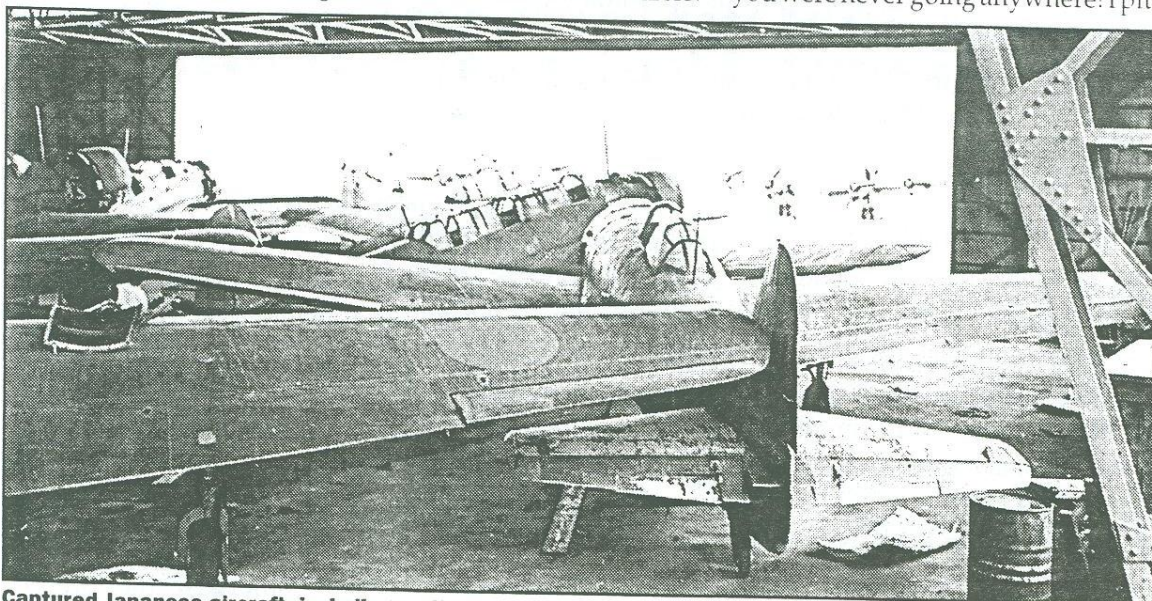
Although its long landing gear made it look rather ungainly on the ground, the N1K1-J cleaned up into a nifty fighter once in the air. This is the N1K1-Ja, which carried two of its four 20mm cannon in underwing gondolas.

of the same subject and the *Famous Aircraft of the World* volume on the *Kyofu*, *Shiden* and *Shiden-kai*. I also picked up the *Eduard* brass set for the N1K1, which borrows heavily from the detail in the *MPM* kit.

The cockpit parts of the kit are good starting points, with a stepped control panel, floor, seat, control column and rear bulkhead. The seat is oversized, so I discarded it and folded together the *Eduard* seat, only to discover the thing was absurdly undersized; with a seat this small, there would be no need for seat belts—once your backside was jammed into this, you were never going anywhere! I pitched the *Eduard* seat and

found a suitable-shaped seat in resin from the *Pavla* set for the P-39.

The *Eduard* set provides very upper surfaces for the wheel wells. To add them, I used a Dremel tool to thin down the kit wheel well tops, then cut them out with an X-Acto knife. The brass was a perfect fit and added detail to the already-good wheel wells; three U-braces per well further enhanced the look.



Captured Japanese aircraft, including an N1K1-Jb. Note the square-tipped horizontals, which only the -Jb had.

These braces' ends projected above the wing surface, so when the superglue was dry I filed them flush with the wing.

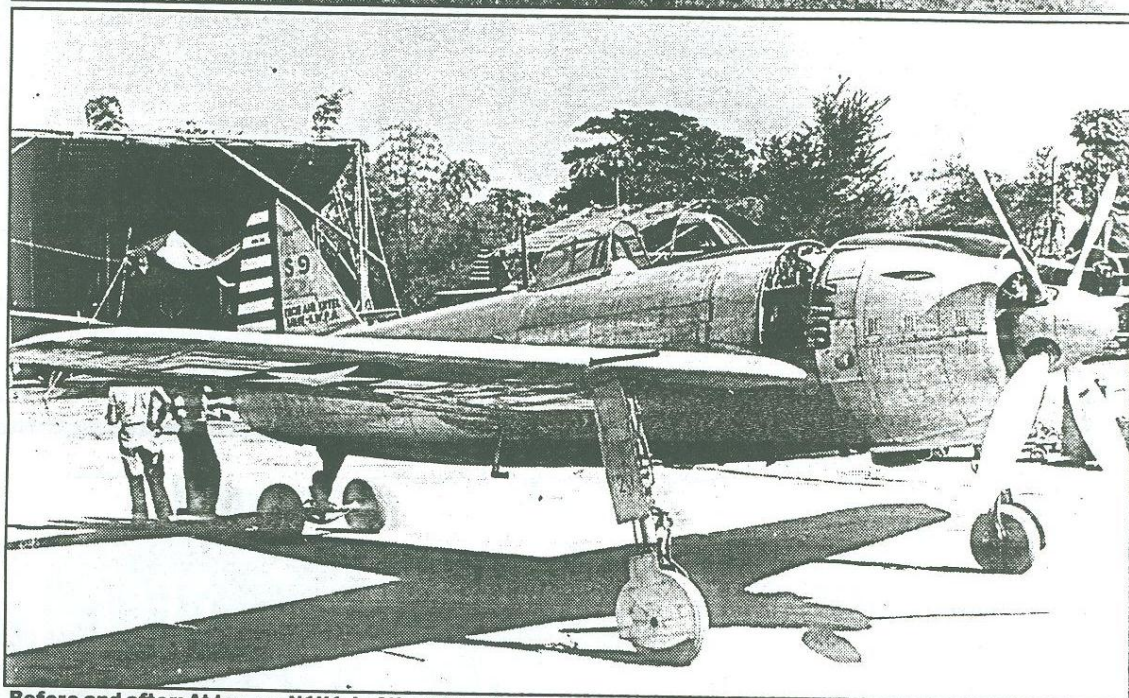
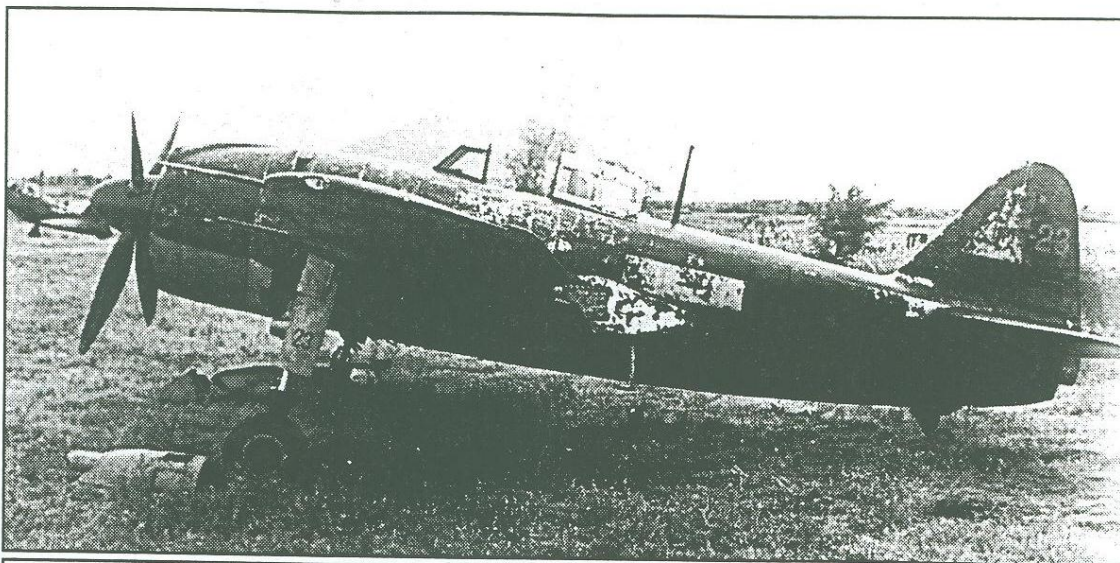
Styrene strip was used to add detail to the sides of the fuselage. *Eduard* provides brass kickplates and a four-piece rudder bar, which I added to the floor section. At this point, I was worried about breaking off parts, so I glued them into place on the one-piece lower wing section. I airbrushed my cockpit parts with RAF interior green, tinted slightly with blue.

As I took inventory of *Eduard's* parts, I noticed that there were many facets of the brass set that didn't jive with the photos of an N1K1 interior in the FAOW book. Furthermore, the directions in the *Eduard* set were incomprehensible, even by the standard of *Eduard's* own early products. I started picking and choosing parts to match the photos, and added a few boxes from the scrap box. The *Eduard* instrument panel was airbrushed with two shades of dark gray, and once it was added to the instrument panel, it looked quite nice.

I added various bits of resin and brass to improve the interior, including parts from *Reheat*, *Cooper Details*, *Hawkeye* and, of course, *Eduard*. This busied-up the interior to match the photos. These were painted to match the photos. The cockpit of the "George" has numerous levers with colored knobs; these were replicated with dabs of white glue, which were painted the appropriate color once dry.

The kit control column was added to the floor, and the cockpit assembly was anchored to the lower wing, which has raised locating tabs to accommodate it. This allowed me to add small details, like additional levers and knobs, without having to handle the cockpit parts. The wing served as a handle, and I could add bits to the cockpit sidewalls and test fit the fuselage and wing to check alignment and placement. All in all, it was a very civilized way to finish up a cockpit!

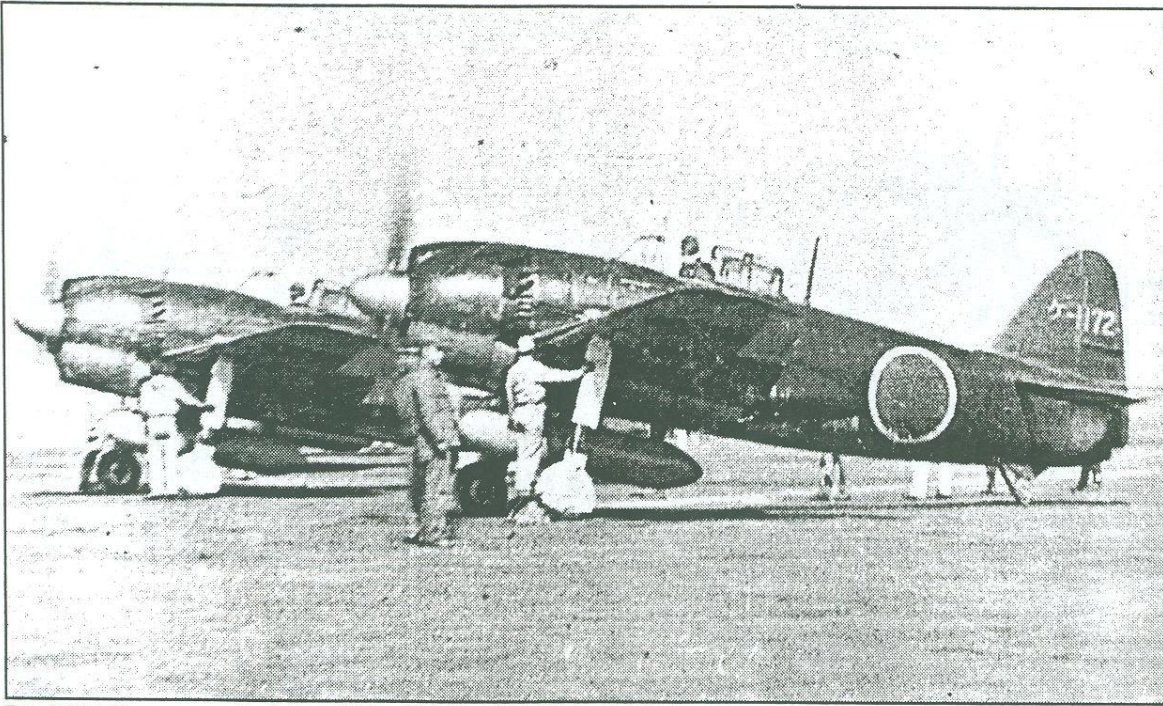
When I was satisfied with the interior, I superglued the two halves of the fuselage together. The fit was spectacular and left only a mild ridge to be cleaned up on the lower fuselage. The



Before and after: At top, an N1K1-J of the 341st Kokutai, as it appeared when captured in the Philippines. Below, the same aircraft with Tech Air Intelligence Unit-S.W.P.A markings, now stripped of paint and adorned with red and white stripes. The faint "23" on the wheel leg door is the only clue to the plane's original identity.

fuselage was dropped onto the lower wing, which fit extremely snugly—too snugly, I discovered later. The top wings went on next, and these left some gaps at the root. Sanding these was complicated by the root shape; essentially, the wing, root and fuselage formed three distinct planes, which came to a point about an inch from the leading edge.

After considerable effort, the roots were blended in and the panel lines that had been lost were restored. Next came the tailplanes; the *Aoshima* kit includes both the standard rounded horizontal tail and the squared-off tail of the N1K1-Jb. These squared stabilizers fit spectacularly, requiring only a bit of filler. Only then, when I was able to compare the wing's alignment to the tail's alignment, did I notice that the left wing was slightly higher than the right! I tried to gently coax the wing down when I heard a loud SNAP! The upper wing snapped off at the root, wrecking all of my work to blend it in! When I pushed it back into place, the wing took on the right dihedral. Apparently, this kit won't allow you to build a bad model from it!



Two N1K1-Js warm up for take off from Kubota airfield in early 1945. Technicians stand by the landing gear, a chronic weakness of the type that led to the development of the low-wing N1K2-J.

After blending, sanding and scribing the wing back to an appropriate standard, I started on the engine. The kit engine is nice enough, but the addition of *Eduard's* pushrods, a bit of tubing for the oil system on the crankcase cover, and ignition wires to each of the cylinders helped it out immensely. I painted the inside of the cowling and the firewall in RAF interior green and added them to the fuselage, and at this point the accuracy of the kit shape became apparent.

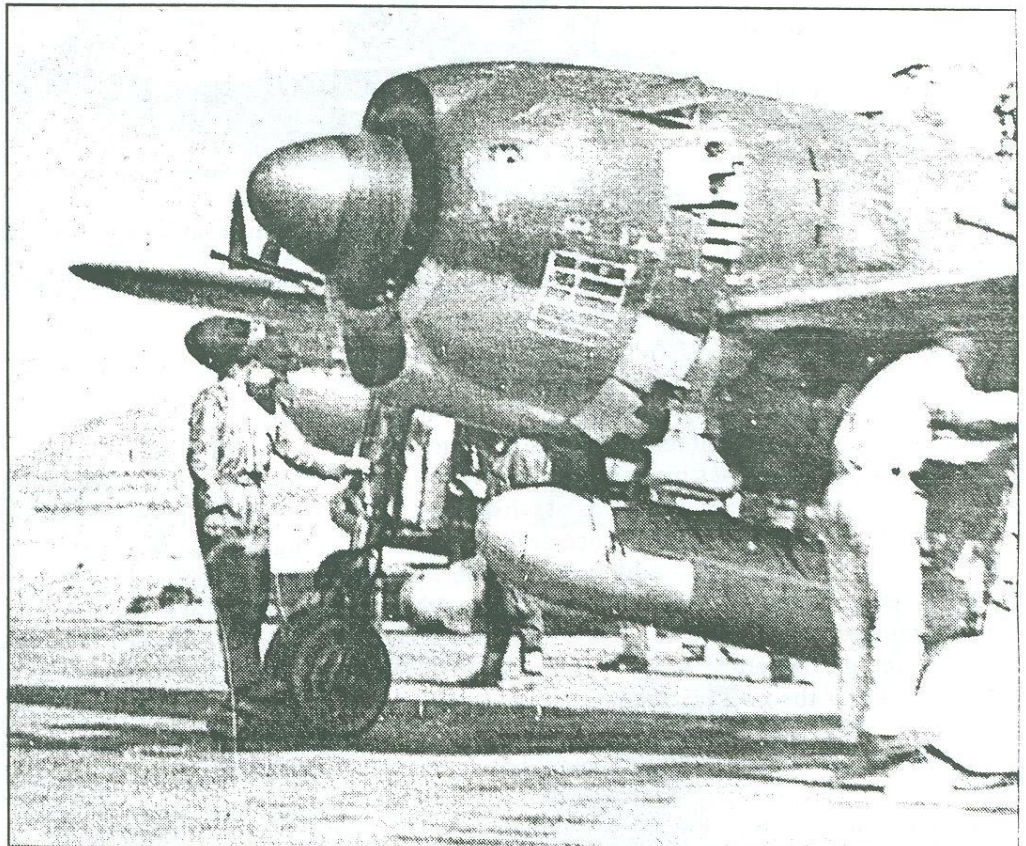
I added a gunsight made from resin and styrene bits and a ring and bead from the *Eduard* set to the top of the instrument panel and glued the windscreen in place. This was masked with Parafilm M, as were the rear canopy and sliding section. Then, the entire model was airbrushed with *Testors Model Master* non-buffing aluminum. This would provide the lower surface color—by the time the -Jb version came around, the Japanese had abandoned painting the undersides of their airplanes—and give me a basis to weather the plane later. Next, I masked off the ID panels and painted them with *AeroMaster* Japanese ID yellow. These were masked off, and I made additional scalloped masks from *Tamiya* masking tape to delineate the border between upper and surface colors.

With these in place, I gave the upper sides a coat of *AeroMaster* IJN Green. As soon as this was dry

to the touch, I attacked it with a sharp X-Acto knife, chipping and scratching the paint. Japanese paint was notorious for its poor adhesion, so I chipped it liberally, especially around the cowling, ammunition bay doors, wing roots and leading edges of the wings and tail. Then, I painted the fabric surfaces of the ailerons and elevators with IJN gray; these parts were still painted. With this done, I sprayed the model with a 50-50 mixture of Varathane and wa-

ter; this provided me with a smooth surface for decaling and was dry in just a few minutes, too!

All was going well until now. Lacking any Japanese decals, I selected the kit's markings. They all went on well, until I hit them with SuperSol; at that point, the hinomarus wrinkled up something awful. For once, I obeyed the SuperSol instruction and didn't touch the decals, trusting in God, country and



The "George's" Homare engine developed 1990 horsepower. Despite its dubious reliability, the Homare was the most important Japanese radial by war's end.

modern chemistry to flatten out my decals. When they dried, they did not smooth out, so I removed them with tape. This, in turn, pulled up my Varathane gloss coat and left horrific circular blobs on the lower wings in the natural metal. Worse yet, a patch of green lifted off on the fuselage spine, a completely unrealistic location for such weathering. To say I was displeased would be a dramatic understatement.

This required me to apply some new paint over the flawed areas. I used an index card with a hole cut in as a "moveable mask;" this allowed me to re-paint the offending areas without marring the rest of the model. Once this was dry, I shot another coat of Varathane over the model and added new Hinomarus—these from an *AeroMaster* set, which behaved much better.

The landing gear was next. I sanded mold lines on the struts and painted them aluminum, then added a bit of blackened copper wire as a brake line. The kit wheels and tires were cleaned up, and the hubs were painted silver. Photoetched wheel covers came next. I added the wheel covers and brass actuators to the fuselage, then popped the landing gear into place.

The drop tank was assembled, sanded and painted IJN gray. Its supports were painted silver. This fit into place without any troubles.

The propeller posed a challenge. The prop governor on the real item projected from large cutouts in the spinner, but the kit had just small cuffs on its prop. I enlarged the spinner cutouts with a round file and then added the backplate, allowing me to paint the spinner without needing to mask the propellers. I then cut small lengths of metal tubing to length

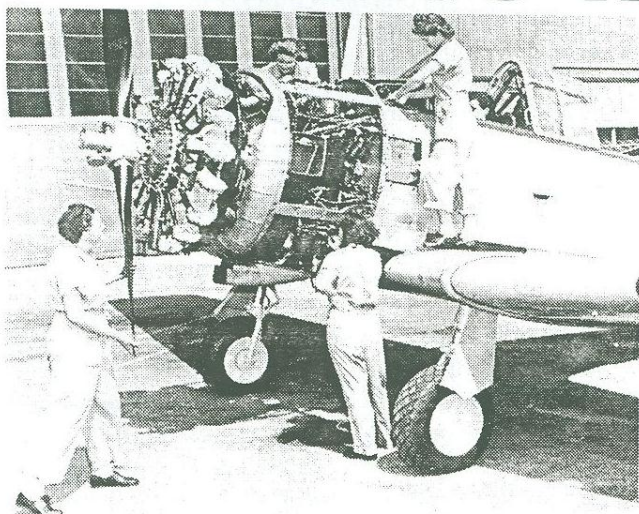
to form the governor assembly. A small bit of the tubing projected from the spinner, allowing me to slip it in later. The propeller was snipped from the hub, and the cuffs acted as perfect stoppers in the tubing. The blades were painted, the prop was assembled, and I was able to move toward final assembly.

The kit's cannon barrels were grossly oversized. I nicked the barrels from an *Airfix Mosquito* and drilled them out, then glued them into the wings. The pitot tube was next; the inner rod of the tube was superglued into a predrilled hole, and the outer tube was slipped over this and attached to the wing. This assembly has much more strength and durability to it than it would if the entire rod/tube assembly was glued to the wing leading edge.

I brush-painted the exhaust stacks with *Testors Model Master* burnt sienna, and ran a dark gray wash over the model to pop out the panel detail. Next, I shot the model with a thinned coat of *Testors* dullcote. When this was dry, I added the rear canopy and sliding section, the radio mast and the drop tank assembly. Early on, I had cut out the wing formation lights; now, I added painted bits of red and green wire into predrilled holes in these notches and added small drops of 5-minute epoxy to form light covers. Finally, a few fibers from a pair of smoke-colored panty hose were run from the tail to the radio mast.

The final product is a sharp-looking fighter, and it could have been finished easier and more quickly had I not had the wing and decal mishaps. *Aoshima's* mid-wing "George" is a first-rate kit befitting one of Japan's finest fighters.

February's Club Contest: **Ladies' Night Out**



**SVSM salutes the
fairer sex! Naughty
nose art,
accomplished
aviatrices, and lovely
ladies are our
subject of the month!**

**Coming up:
March: Antipodean Antics
April: Football Heroes**

JANUARY MINUTES

At the January meeting, the officers announced that our club contests and raffle would become quarterly events in the near future, as would our raffle. This decision was motivated mostly by money issues; with the Kickoff Classic coming, the club needs to make sure we have the funds to hold our most important annual event.

If you want to see these meeting features restored to a more frequent status, the best thing you can do is participate in the Kickoff Classic and do your small part to assure that the event is a financial success.

In model talk... Peter Wong built an old *Hasegawa* 1:700 carrier that he initially believed was the *Shokaku*, but now believes is the *Zuikaku*—missing instructions and boxes being one hazard of buying second-hand kits! In any event, the old kit was a study in frustration for Peter. Bert McDowell had his own Japanese carriers, only these were still in their boxes. The *Zuiho* (which Bert said was heavy-handed) and the *Shoho* were the first Japanese carriers, but the last to be kitted in injection-molded styrene. Both kits are doable, said Bert, but they'll need work. Barry Bauer added an eight-scale-inch extension to the nose of his *Italeri* F4U-5, and made many other modifications, including scratchbuilding the tailwheel, replacing the landing gear bays, adding a *Teknics* engine and swapping a propeller from an *Academy* P-47D. Barry says the *Italeri* F4U-7 was too long for a -7 and the F4U-5 was too long for a -5! Tom Trankle used a *Teknics* cockpit to spruce up his *Tamiya*'s F4F-4 *Wildcat*, which will eventually be finished as a Battle of Midway fighter. Robin Powell managed to assemble *Accurate Armor*'s Centurion ARVE, despite the instructions, which fail to mention many of the parts in the kit! Robin painted up a pre-production version of *Cooper Details*' Martin-Baker Mk. 2 ejection seat for use in his 1:48 vacuformed *Falcon Canberra*, and his *Meteor* NF.14 is finished; it's an *Aeroclub* kit, and it has lots of resin, an unusual touch for *Aeroclub*. Best of all, says Robin, it's the correct length! Laramie Wright has had a lot of fun with *ICM*'s Lynx armored car kit; he's added a replacement engine, screening and details to what was already a nice kit. Laramie's also beefed up an M4A3 late-model Sherman, with scratch-built weld seam detail and applique armor adding to the tank's authenticity. Vladimir Yakubov had a 1:72 explosion, converting a *Fujimi* T-34/57 from the *Tamiya* kit by adding a 57mm gun to backdate it to a 1940 model, building another *Fujimi* T-34 as a T-34/76 from Stalingrad, and completing a lovely *Alby* BA-6 armored car. Vladimir also paid attention to ground support, although the subjects might have been of dubious utility; he did a beautiful job on both *Azur*'s Breda Ba.65 and *Pavla*'s Niemann R-10. He said both kits are rather thick in their moldings, but the details included in the kits and the accuracy of their shapes make them nice kits. Chris Hughes used a copy machine to create custom decals for his Fiat SCCA car. Chris had a lot of fit issues with this P-40K from *AMT*, but he completed this and a second P-40, this one a B model from *Hobbycraft*, to his usual unusually high standard. Lou Orselli doesn't need *Accurate Miniatures* to build an attractive MiG-3; his combination *Wings 48* vacuform/*Karo-As* model predates the effort from Bill Bosworth and company, and if you believe in karma, it probably caused its release! Cooper Sutherland built

Hasegawa's Kfir and Yak-3 with the aid of his father (no doubt resisting the encouragement to add resin parts at every turn). Roy Sutherland has added his own resin cockpit and homemade camera bays to an *Airfix* *Seafire* 47. Vince Hoffman used his own kits to build two atmospheric shuttles, one blue and one red, and a study that he used to evolve the final shape of his shuttle. Vince also showed off his Soyuz conversion from *Real Space Models* that will go to improve his *Apex* 1:144 Vostock rocket. Ed Van Brabant is building a *Hasegawa* 1:48 P-38 for a friend who was the crew chief for the commanding officer of the 459th Fighter Squadron. If you're careful with the fit of the booms, says Ed, this builds into a very nice kit. Last month's cover subject, Mike Meek's Rotofinish P-51, was joined by another Meek modification, the RB-51 Red Baron. Mike grafted an *Academy* *Spitfire* XIV nose to *Tamiya* *Mustang* and modified the spine and tail to get the shape of this racer right. Jim Lund used the *Hooker* vacuform fuselage and the *Monogram* B-36 to build a big, shiny XC-99 transport. At the opposite end of size spectrum was Jim's scratchbuilt "Little Looper," Lincoln Beachy's pusher plane that was the first to do a loop. Jim built his model of this Bay Area pioneer using drawings made by Chance Vought in 1914! Mike Braun is making short work of *Tamiya*'s FAMO half-track, which he says is a great kit. To give the FAMO something to tow, Mike has turned a metal barrel for *Precision Models*' K38 110mm gun, a resin kit with many parts. Ron Wergin's 1:35 projects included a *Tamiya* Panzer III and a British tanker figure, while his 1:72 subjects encompassed Pierre Closterman's Hawker *Tempest*, built from the *Academy* kit, and a *Revell* Focke-Wulf "Flitzer" German "paper plane." Mike Burton has been working on his *Eagles*' Talon GTD-21 drone in 1:48 for six years—a long time for an aircraft with no cockpit and not landing gear! The GTD-21 is a vacuform kit that's caused him no end of troubles. Mike is also building the vintage F-84 *Thunderstreak* for a future article in *Plastic Kit Constructor*. Greg Plummer took the *Toko* Hansa Brandenburg W.29 he won at the model exchange in December and built it, adding a few details but generally building the kit stock. Being a car builder, Greg naturally used automotive primers to apply the lovely paint scheme! Rodney Williams also employed automotive lacquers to get a high-gloss finish on his Blue Angels F/A-18 *Hornet* in 1:48. Rodney's big 1:32 *Hellcat* is creeping up on completion, finished in the markings of ace Alex Vraciu, next to it was Rodney's heavily-weathered 1:48 *Hellcat*, brought in to illustrate the difference between weathered and unweathered aircraft. Chris Bucholtz has his *Tamiya* F4D-1 *Skyray* and his *Aoshima* N1K1-Jb "George" almost ready for paint, and he's finished a small diorama of a Slingsby Type 19 towed target being hooked to a towline. The Slingsby's use is somewhat cloudy; even the Slingsby Corporation was unable to provide any details of it—but they were willing to take any information that Chris could provide! Kent McClure is still pattering along on his Austin 1:72 armored car of World War I vintage and his armed Model T patrol car, both by *Rivarcasa*. Kent also had a division of Egyptian soldiers in 1:285 scale, intended for war gaming purposes. Bruce McBride is setting sail on the old *Glencoe* rescue launch, which started life as an *ITC* mold. Bruce says the fit is rather weird in places. Rich

Pedro is putting together a 120mm U.S. Marine infantryman, who's packing an M79 grenade launcher. Rich is using this figure to perfect a technique for painting black skin tones. Cliff Kranz used the *MicroScale* decals to civilianize *Monogram's* SR-71 *Blackbird*; the decals allowed him to build the YF-12C variant. While he had the black paint out, Cliff took a *Monogram* UH-1 kit, painted the windows blue on the insides, and made himself a "black helicopter" belonging to some unnamed government agency! Ben Pada's current crop of aircraft includes a *Mustang* outfitted with an interior from *Jaguar* and enhanced by re-positioned control surfaces, a *Hasegawa* Frank he's building straight from the box, a *Monogram* P-47N and a *Wildcat* from *Tamiya*. And the model of the month goes

SYSM BOOKSHELF

Walk Around: F/A-18 Hornet

by Greg Davis and Chris Neill, color by Don Greer, illustrated by Richard Hudson. Squadron Signal Publications, 1999. ISBN 0-89747-401-5. \$14.95 U.S.

A long time ago, I built the *Hasegawa* 1/72 F/A-18 *Hornet* kit. My main areas of interest during the building process were the configuration of the dropped flaps and ailerons, the cockpit interior colors and details, and how to model the weathered paint finish found on U.S. Navy aircraft.

Don Greer's cover illustration showing Lt. Mark "Mr. T" Fox splashing a MiG-21 during Desert Storm in 1991 is very well done. Inside, there are color and black and white photos, with the photographer obviously benefiting from U.S. Navy cooperation in order to get access to some of these areas, such as the interior of the cockpit. Clearly written to be used as a modeling reference, the photos are clear and sharp. Also, there are line drawings showing the general arrangement of the F/A-18C, and color profiles showing various squadron markings.

In my opinion this book would benefit from a little more attention to detail. For example, a caption for the cockpit interior photos says, "...The cockpit walls and floor are generally painted gray, while the modular components of the instrument panel and consoles and the seat are flat black..." Why couldn't the authors have taken a Federal Standard color chip set to determine FS numbers? There are two pages containing photos of the dropped flaps and ailerons, but none really show the critical details of how the actuator fairing works when the flaps and ailerons droop when the aircraft is parked. There is no general camouflage color pattern drawing given, nor are any FS numbers referenced for any exterior colors. In my opinion, in addition to the "standard" paint scheme, the new style aggressor birds would make great modeling projects. The book skimps on this, with only a color profile and a small black and white photograph of the aggressors. Also, the F/A-18 E and F models are covered in a superficial manner. It would also have been good to design the binding of the book to allow it to lie flat on the modeling bench, instead of being forced to use various objects to hold the book open.

Overall, this book is useful as a modeling resource, even though it falls short in the above areas. Fortunately there is a lot of other information available to supplement it. Hopefully when it is updated to include information on the F/A-18 E

to... Vladimir Yakubov, who used a paper model as a "mold" for a plastic MiG-13 experimental jet fighter! Vladimir is doing lots of scratchbuilding work on this 1:72 plane, and he may have invented a new way of making plastic kits from paper plans!

Our club contest was "Detroit's finest." The winners, sharing equal glory, were Greg Plummer's out-of-the-box Mustang fastback, finished in a tasteful maroon color, and two from Rodney Williams: an Oldsmobile Aero concept car, finished in a highly polished steel color, and a pink 1959 Cadillac, which Rodney struggled with, breaking windshield after windshield until he got it right! The Caddy was pink, with gold chrome trim—very classy!

and F versions, the authors will address some of the weak points of the book. I give it a rating of three out of five.

—Mike Yamada

The Reluctant Raiders: The Story of United States Navy Bombing Squadron VB/VP-109 in World War II
by Alan C. Carey. Schiffer Military History, 1999. ISBN 0-7643-0757-6. \$ 29.95 U.S.

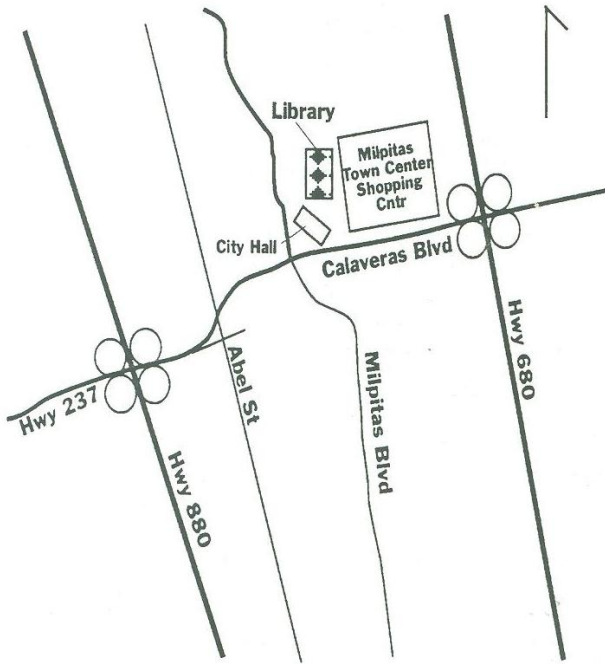
One of the less appreciated parts of the Pacific Island hopping campaign is the role that patrol units played. Spanning huge amounts of ocean to deliver attacks to enemy outposts, disrupt shipping, and watch for submarines and surface craft, the patrol units of the war flew a thankless mission, one that was exceedingly dangerous and left little chance for survival if a plane was forced down.

This book tells the combat history of one such squadron in meticulous detail, from the day it stood up in August 1943 until its combat tour was halted on August 15, 1945. In between, the unit sank hundreds of ships, destroyed numerous aircraft on the ground, and attacked installations on Kwajalein, Truk, Okinawa, Wake Island, Ponape, Iwo Jima, Korea and the home islands of Japan. To say this unit, which operated PB4Y-1 *Liberators* and PB4Y-2 *Privates*, was daring would be a vast understatement.

Carey tells the story of this unit in meticulous detail, but also manages to convey a sense of drama throughout. Since the PB4Ys often attacked at mast-top height or duelled with gun emplacements, you might think that Carey had an easy time of it. But the exploits of such units are so difficult to uncover, the detail and completeness of the book paired with the crisp writing makes the book both a great reference and a good read. In the back, the reader will find a 79-page appendix, listing crews, nose art names, the missions those crews and aircraft flew and the hours each crew amassed. This will help modelers and at the same time build a connection between builders and the men who flew these missions.

If the book has a weakness, it is the clarity of the photos, some of which are rather blurry. That being said, virtually every page has a photo illustrating some aspect of the unit's history, including virtually all of the unit's nose art, and considering how rare photos of Navy patrol units are, this book is a gold mine for PB4Y-1 and PB4Y-2 builders.

—Chris Bucholtz



Next meeting:
7:30 p.m.,
Friday,
February 18

**at the Milpitas
Public Library
40 N. Milpitas Blvd.**
For more information, call the
editor at (408) 723-3995

E-mail: bucholtzc@aol.com



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



DAN BUNTON
910 NIDO DRIVE
CAMPBELL CA 12345

ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! If the date on your mailing label is red, this is your last issue unless you pay your dues!