

## The Navy's atomic bomber: *Savage* in 1:72

By Mike Burton

*Savage!* The name is no-frills, direct and to the point. North American Aviation's first attack bomber for the U.S. Navy was very similar in nature, designed to accomplish a feat which would, by itself, save the aircraft carrier: long-range shipboard nuclear bombing.

The navy specifications issued on Jan. 25, 1946 in the wake of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, called for an airplane capable of delivering an 8,000-pound bombload in a horizontal attack from an altitude of 35,000 feet. It was also to be capable from launching from and returning to a carrier with a range of at least 300 miles to its target.

This specification was delivered to Douglas, Grumman and several others, but North American was a particularly good candidate to deliver on this request, one of its products, the B-25 *Mitchell*, having been employed in a long-range carrier strike on Japan only three years earlier.

However, it was not easy going for the *Savage*, or for the Navy, in the late 1940s. The new U.S. Air Force jealously questioned the need for aircraft like the *Savage* and the Navy's planned super carriers in the new Atomic Age. The Air Force's assertions that the carrier was obsolete were

answered by Defense Secretary James Forrestal's statement that "had we had the A-bomb in 1942 and a plane capable of delivering it from the U.S.S. *Hornet*, Doolittle's flight... might have aborted the Japanese war effort."

The Secretary and the planned CVA-58, U.S.S. *United States* would end up early casualties of high pressure Cold War politics. Fittingly though, nuclear armed AJ-1 *Savages* would serve aboard CVA-59, U.S.S. *Forrestal*, the first of new class of "super carrier" he correctly forecast 10 years before.

In addition to providing a long-range nuclear punch, the *Savage* was the first multi-engine aircraft regularly operated off an aircraft carrier. Though not the first, the *Savage* was one of the very few composite-powered aircraft to see operational service, powered by two R-2800 Wasp reciprocating radial engines and a single turbojet (General Electric I-40/J33), all running on the same grade fuel!

The first AJ-1s delivered in 1949 went to our own NAS Moffett Field for use by Composite Squadron Five, whose original aircraft were special weapons (atomic) capable Lockheed P2V-3C *Neptunes*. These were not considered anything but emergency, interim A-bombers by the Navy, and could not return to the carriers from which they were launched except by crane or by ditching along side. The growth poten-

Continued on page 10



An AJ-2P banks away from the camera, exposing the exhaust for its jet engine. The *Savage* was the last composite-powered aircraft (both reciprocating and jet engines) in U.S. service.

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.

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## EDITOR'S BRIEF

The Kickoff Classic is probably less than 100 hours away as you read this. Anyone who wishes to help set up should get to Napredak Hall at 8 a.m. on Sunday; we'll keep you busy. Look for the biggest, most enjoyable event yet!

Election time is almost upon us, and it seems like a great time to assess the health of our club. Membership is down ever so slightly over the past, but the club itself has never been stronger. We survived the back-and-forth over meeting sites, and we're now locked in at Milpitas through May. Our contest has moved to a larger venue and could very well set new highs in numbers of entries. And we continue to be the envy of modelers around the nation simply because we have such access to good hobby shops.

Now, how do we improve the club? Well, step one is for those of you who have not paid your dues to do so. After that, we'll need to get creative!

One step in the right direction is being taken by John Heck. John, who some of you know already, is launching a program to revamp and revitalize our veteran's hospital drive. John's plan is to expand the program from the Palo Alto VA Hospital to cover all three northern California hospitals, and to run the program year-round, so that the VA organizers are not swamped with model kits, and neither are our volunteers.

Here's John's basic plan: we collect kits year-round for the vets, with volunteers storing stashes of 50 or so models. Every few months, on a rotating basis, we'll send the models to the various hospitals. Some kits will be auctioned to raise money for snap-together kits, which are used in rehabilitative services; other kits will go to keep the patients engaged and busy. As Bruce McBride has told us, sitting in the hospital waiting to get well can be boring without some activity to occupy one's mind.

Our special relief packages, like to one we sent to our National Guard troops deployed in Arizona, will continue to be sent. But John's plans to expand what has been a very successful program are just what we need to increase our

### CONTEST CALENDAR

February 17, 2002: **Silicon Valley Scale Modelers** host their ninth annual **Kickoff Classic** at Napredak Hall, 770 Montague Expressway, Milpitas, California. This year's theme is "The Need for Speed." For more information, call Chris Bucholtz at (408) 723-3995 or e-mail him at bucholtzc@aol.com.

March 9, 2002: **IPMS/Seattle** hosts its annual **Spring Show** in Bellevue, Washington. For more information, call Terry Moore at (425) 774-6343 or e-mail him at moorethan4@worldnet.att.net.

October 13, 2002: **IPMS/Orange County** hosts its annual **OrangeCon** in Buena Park, California. For information, call Nat Richards at (949) 631-7142 or e-mail him at richa5011@aol.com.

visibility and our mission as modelers. If you can, please help with this effort, by donating kits, by volunteering to house models, or by participating in any way you can.

Another way to improve the club is to bring in new members. That starts when you invite someone to our Friday night meetings, or to the contest. We don't charge admission to the meetings and we don't harass non-members to join (well, except for Lou Orselli, but he's a special case). Visitors can come and get a feel for the club before they join. This "try before you buy" approach is part of our laid-back attitude; SVSM is about fun, first. To help it grow, let your friends know about it and invite them to come to our meetings.

We're also all about communication between modelers. To facilitate that, the editor plans to publish a new version of the club roster. The last roster came out in April, 1996, so it's about time. We'll follow a similar format to 1996. Here's what the editor's listing would look like:

Chris Bucholtz (IPMS Member)

Address: 957 Curtner Ave., San Jose 95125

Phone: (408) 723-3995

E-mail: bucholtzc@aol.com

Other Chapter Affiliations: Fremont Hornets.

Modeling Interests: 1:72 Aircraft, especially World War II fighters and U.S. Navy subjects, and the occasional ship.

Modeling tip: You can remove light overspray by gently sanding with a 3200-grit polishing cloth

Useless trivia: Served for six years as a Bosun's Mate in the U.S. Navy; is Aviation Editor for Internet Modeler.

To get things started, e-mail the editor your answers to the following questions:

Name:

Are you an IPMS/USA member? (Y/N)

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Other Chapter Affiliations:

Modeling Interests:

Useless Trivia:

Send that data to bucholtzc@aol.com (like it says in the editor's listing!) and we can get the project started. If you don't want to answer a question, leave it out; if you don't have e-mail, just write it down and give it to the editor at the meeting. The roster goes only to club members, so your information will only be shared among your fellow modelers.

On a final note, the editor wishes to express his thanks to Mike Burton, Mark Schynert and Greg Plummer, whose work gives us this issue. These articles came in when the editor was beginning to near desperation, and the quality of their efforts makes this a very good issue. February is a short month, and that means we'll have only three weeks between issues. The time to write is now, because we really and sincerely need it. If you complete your Kickoff Classic masterpiece, please sit down for a few minutes and tell us about it.

Good luck in the contest! Now, the editor has to go slap the landing gear on a 1:72 *Hellcat*...

—The Editor

# Putting the finishing touches on a Yamaha YZR500

By Greg Plummer  
Part 2 of 2

Norick Abe finished sixth overall in the 1999 Grand Prix 500cc motorcycle racing season on his Yamaha YZR500. At the end of part one on building the *Tamiya* kit of his bike, the engine, frame and rear swingarm had been finished. Where this model would finish in a contest, I can only guess. Well, let's continue with the construction.

In assembling the front forks, I encountered the only fit problem in building the kit. The fork tubes would not slide through their mounting holes in the lower clamp, perhaps because they were painted. The clamps are horizontal, bar-like items that hold the fork tubes to the steering pivot point at the front of the frame. This whole assembly is often called the triple tree. A vertical cut was made through both of the

outer edges of the lower clamp, allowing the holes to expand and take the tubes. This is not unrealistic as the real bike has this feature also; bolts at the gap clamp down on the tubes.

Rather than using a handlebar, racing bikes and street sport bikes use "clip-ons," short extensions that clamp onto the forks and hold the throttle, brake, and clutch controls. On the kit, these clip-ons slide onto the fork tubes. Then these are glued to the top clamp. Yet more screws hold the clamps and the steering stabilizer (a thin shock absorber like device) onto the frame. *Tamiya* has engineered all of this so that the forks can turn. The front wheel with brake rotors was then slipped in between the forks and secured with another screw. I'm happy to report that both of my wheels can spin and the forks steer—as if I'm going to play with this thing.

Resin bolt heads once again covered all the unrealistic screw heads. The small front fender was then inserted into place over the wheel. One note here: the fenders, airbox, and various other bits on this bike are made of carbon fiber. It is possible, though difficult, to use 1:12 carbon fiber pattern decal to replicate this material, but many of the up-close photos I've seen show that the full size pattern is barely visible. Simply painting these parts in a semigloss (more on the glossy side) black looks fine.

At this point we have two wheels—we need something to hold the bike up. Like all racing bikes, this Yamaha has no kickstand. They rely on separate stands to keep them upright when there's no rider on them. *Tamiya* has included the rear stand in the kit. It was assembled and painted black, and it proved to be very useful in the rest of the assembly. The model's swingarm has two notches that rest on the stand's

upper pegs, just like the real bike.

Now it was time for the exhausts, one of the more noticeable features of the bike. Racing two-stroke motors have resonating chambers in the exhaust plumbing, making for some plump-looking pipes. Sometimes mistaken for mufflers, these chambers develop horsepower by using exhaust gas pulses to create back pressure at the cylinder exhaust port; this com-

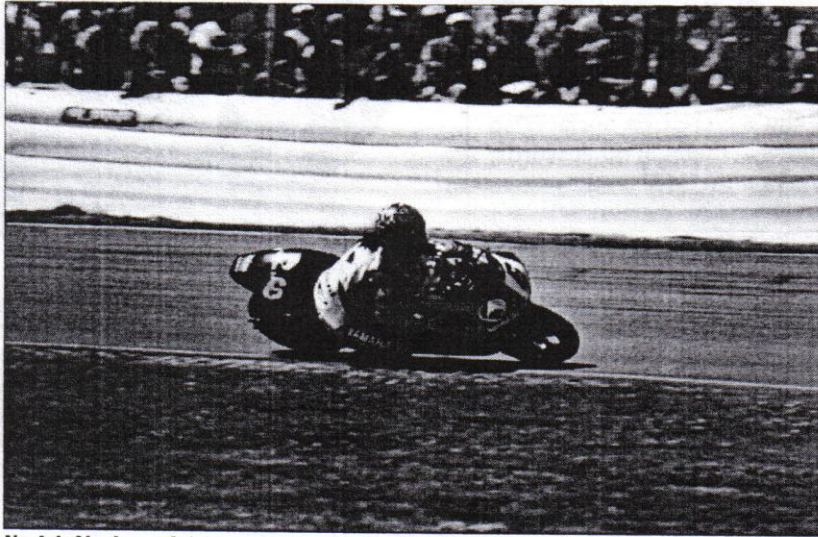
presses the intake mix and in effect supercharges the engine. They only work in a narrow RPM range, but then two-stroke engines produce their peak power in a certain band also. The two are matched to put out fantastic power, but falling below the optimal RPM range results in a significant loss of performance. Yamaha, and its counterparts, have a variable exhaust port valve to help smooth out this power peak, but it only does so much. Part of the

rider's job is knowing just when to shift the six speed transmission to keep the RPMs in the range; the timing has to be near perfect or the race is lost.

The kit has each of the four chambers molded in two parts, making elimination of the seams tricky as there are multiple weld lines around each chamber. I primed them with automotive paint and then airbrushed them with *Alclad* aluminum. As one could imagine, the chambers get very hot being filled with exhaust gasses. This results in coloration of the metal. The areas that get the most heat (cylinder port, any bend in the chamber) turn indigo blue, while other features like the weld lines develop an orange-brown tint. I replicated this by airbrushing clear blue and clear orange/brown acrylics onto the pipes in the appropriate areas. I only used enough tint to get a hint of color—better too little shading than giving the exhausts a custom candy apple paint job.

The mufflers are small canisters that attach to the end of the resonator pipes. These are usually called "stingers." They were painted aluminum and covered with the carbon fiber-pattern decals included on the kit sheet. The two lower exhausts/resonator chambers were attached with a screw, and the mufflers were then installed afterwards. This way, the mufflers could be lined up with each other on their centerlines.

The two upper exhausts are mounted to the rear body/seat unit. The seat assembly has three main parts, two sides and a top. The instructions would have you assemble the two halves, install that onto the frame, screw on the two upper exhausts through the hole on top, and then install the rear body top piece. Rather than do that, I assembled the halves and top together and painted them gloss black. The upper



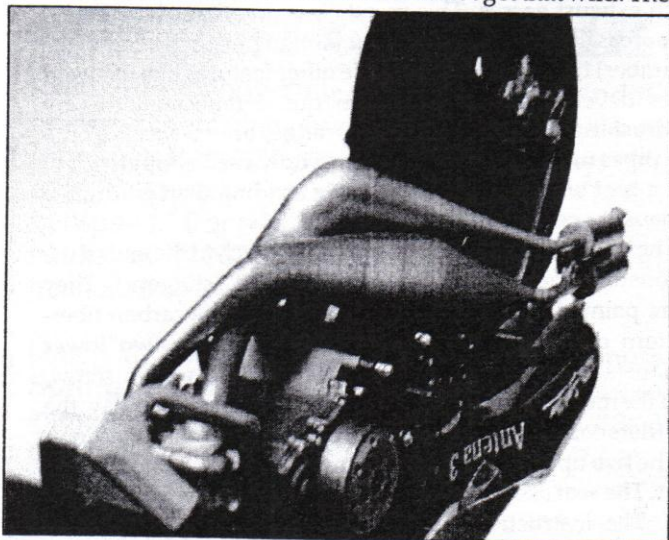
Norick Abe leans into a corner in a race at Assen during the 1999 season. Abe finished sixth in the Grand Prix standings that year; his bike is the subject of *Tamiya's* kit.

exhaust mounting screws go into a little plastic plug that itself goes inside each half. I first screwed the plug onto the upper exhausts and then glued the plug into the rear body unit. Then the whole thing was installed onto the frame, making sure the upper pipes went into the proper holes in the motor. All of this was to allow the rear cowl/seat to be finished at one time, making for a much better appearance. By the way, this rear section was painted with a heavy coat of piping hot *Testors* gloss black straight out of the spray can. Finally, the upper mufflers (note that they are shorter than the lower ones) were then installed and aligned.

With the rear cowl on and the rest of the body ready to be installed, it was time to do the decaling. The thick kit decals bubbled, wrinkled, and silvered on surfaces so glossy you could see reflections in them; in other words, just what you'd expect from *Tamiya*. At least they were fairly opaque. Interestingly, the decals performed a lot better on the gloss black enamel tail section as compared to the *Tamiya* sprayed body panels. It may be that *Tamiya* decals don't like *Tamiya* spray paint. I tried Solvaset, which made the decals wrinkle some but did allow them to wrap around a few tight corners on the body.

I coated the dried decals with pools of future, which improved the looks a little. I left some of the smaller decals off the model - and the model is not worse off without them. Markings and parts on these bikes get changed all the time and it's not unusual to see differences from race to race. Also, after all the work I did on the frame and engine, I had already decided to display the bike with the side and lower panels off anyway, so the whole decal fiasco wasn't too upsetting.

Anyway, the two-piece instrument cluster with its large tach was assembled and installed. Clutch and brake lines were added using the kit vinyl tubing. This stuff was too thick for the throttle cables; I used 24-gauge black craft wire for this. I used the same wire to plumb the electronic modules located on the side of the frame. If one really wanted to get wild, very fine gauge wire could be used to hook up various sensors and other electronic items on the chassis. I didn't get that wild. The



The underside of the model showing the lower exhaust chambers; the upper chambers can just barely be seen under the rear body section in the lower right hand corner. Also note the compact engine/transmission case.



The cowl area of Greg's completed model, showing the top clamp of the triple tree, the clip-ons, and cables.

already painted fuel tank was put in place; the fit once again was excellent.

The front section of the windscreen on Abe's bike is a deep smoked black. Rather than use the decal for this (I learned my lesson), I masked off this area and gave it a coat of *Tamiya* spray gloss black, which is translucent. I installed the "glass" into the front cowl with a little superglue. I used just a tiny amount and the clear part didn't fog. Waxing the part before gluing helped prevent fogging also. The finished front cowl was then snapped onto the frame; no glue was really needed. It sounds easy, but it was pucker factor five here as the windscreen/cowl is on the delicate side and it must be spread in order to fit into place. A couple of braces for the cowl were then installed with tweezers. Actually, a whole lot of parts on this model had to be installed with tweezers.

Final details included picking out body and frame bolt heads in silver and touching up the paint here and there. The flat black seat pad was also added. There should be a plastic radiator overflow bottle near the fill neck; I'm planning on making one. A fuel tank vent hose (clear plastic) will be added too, but for now the model is done. As I mentioned before, I won't attach the body panels. I like the skeletal looks of the bike as it is, and the panels are held on by yet more screws. After 16 tiny screws used in the main assembly, I've had just about enough of them. They do make for a relatively sturdy model though; motorcycle replicas are usually quite fragile.

As I've hinted at throughout this article, motorcycle kits are a challenge. This one really stretched my skills, from seam filling and metal finishes to precision gluing and decaling (yikes!). The results are quite satisfying, though. The combination of smooth body parts and purely mechanical running gear makes for a model that captures one's attention. A motorcycle really stands out in a collection, unless you build nothing but motorcycles of course. Give one a try, but you may go bald from pulling your hair out.

I just might even build another, but first I'll have to recover from this one...



The SR.53 Mark modeled still survives in a museum in England. Its stablemate, XD151, crashed in 1958, bringing the program to a halt.

## Fast build for a fast plane: Airfix's SR.53

By Mark Schynert

The Me 163 *Komet* was the first operational rocket interceptor, in 1944. It may best be described as a spectacular failure. The rocket's prodigious appetite for fuel and oxidant made the *Komet* little more than a glider after the interception. Add that to its excessive speed (making each interception engagement so short that it barely had a chance to fire its guns), the absence of true landing gear and the extremely hazardous nature of the T-Stoff and C-Stoff it carried to power the rocket, and you had an airplane that was literally more dangerous to its own pilots than to the opposing bombers.

Some 12 years later, the last of this breed, albeit a mixed-power fighter, the Saunders-Roe SR.53, took wing.

Originally, the British Ministry of Supply had framed a requirement for a pure rocket interceptor to counter the threat of high-altitude bombers intruding at about Mach .9. However, it became clear that such a fighter would have so little radius of action and so little speed advantage over the intruder that it was impractical. The fundamental problem was that the rocket was excellent providing speed and climb performance, but useless when radius of action, loiter time, or even the logistics of moving the airplane from base to base were considered. The solution proposed was the mixed power fighter, with a rocket for interception, and an auxiliary turbojet for training, ferry, loiter and return to base. The type to fly in answer to this revised specification was the SR.53. With a de Havilland Viper jet and Spectre rocket mounted in

over-under fashion, this attractive interceptor took to the air in mid-1957, but the project was first superseded by a more advanced design, the SR.177, then both were cancelled entirely, becoming casualties of Britain's infamous 1957 White Paper on Defence, which predicted the demise of the manned interceptor. This prediction turned out to be wrong, as the subsequent long and successful career of the English Electric *Lightning* was to demonstrate, but only two prototypes of the SR.53 ever flew, XD145 and XD151. The latter crashed on take-off in 1958, thus ending the flying career of the type.

When I first began to spend every nickel of my allowance on models, back in the mid-'60s, I saw an Airfix kit of the SR.53 at some point, and thought it was cool. But I had no idea what it was; my aviation library at the time consisted of little more than the first six volumes of William Green's *Warplanes of the Second World War*. I concentrated on Messerschmitts and Spitfires, MC 202s and D.520s, and paid no attention to the "modern" stuff.

Then, last November, I saw the SR.53 kit again. This time, it was a re-issue of the same molding by a Polish concern, Aerodrom. Apart from the decal sheet, which I am guessing is new issue, the kit is the epitome of '60s Airfix. On impulse, I bought the kit for the princely sum of \$7; it was probably 59¢ way back when.

It was just another kit to add to the 300-plus in my stash at home, but then it occurred to me that I ought to build this one just as if I were a kid again—real fast. The difference: I now

have better skills, better tools, better paint and lots of parts support. Not only did this stand to generate a nostalgia bonus, but it meant I wouldn't feel compelled to supplement my library to get the details right. A quick look found the only two pictures and three paragraphs I expected to find in my library; the kit looked pretty good from what I could see. Later, I came across a third photo, and still later at the public library, a fourth photo and an entire chapter in the book *Early Supersonic Fighters of the West*, by Bill Gunston.

But for now, I'd done my five minutes of research, so it was time to get slamming. I told myself I wasn't going to be stopped by anything; if I encountered a problem, I'd either bull ahead, or switch to another task, but I would keep working. In my misspent youth, it would have taken no more than thirty minutes and a dozen gluey fingerprints to finish this kit. I wanted to see how long it would take now while maintaining a modicum of skill.

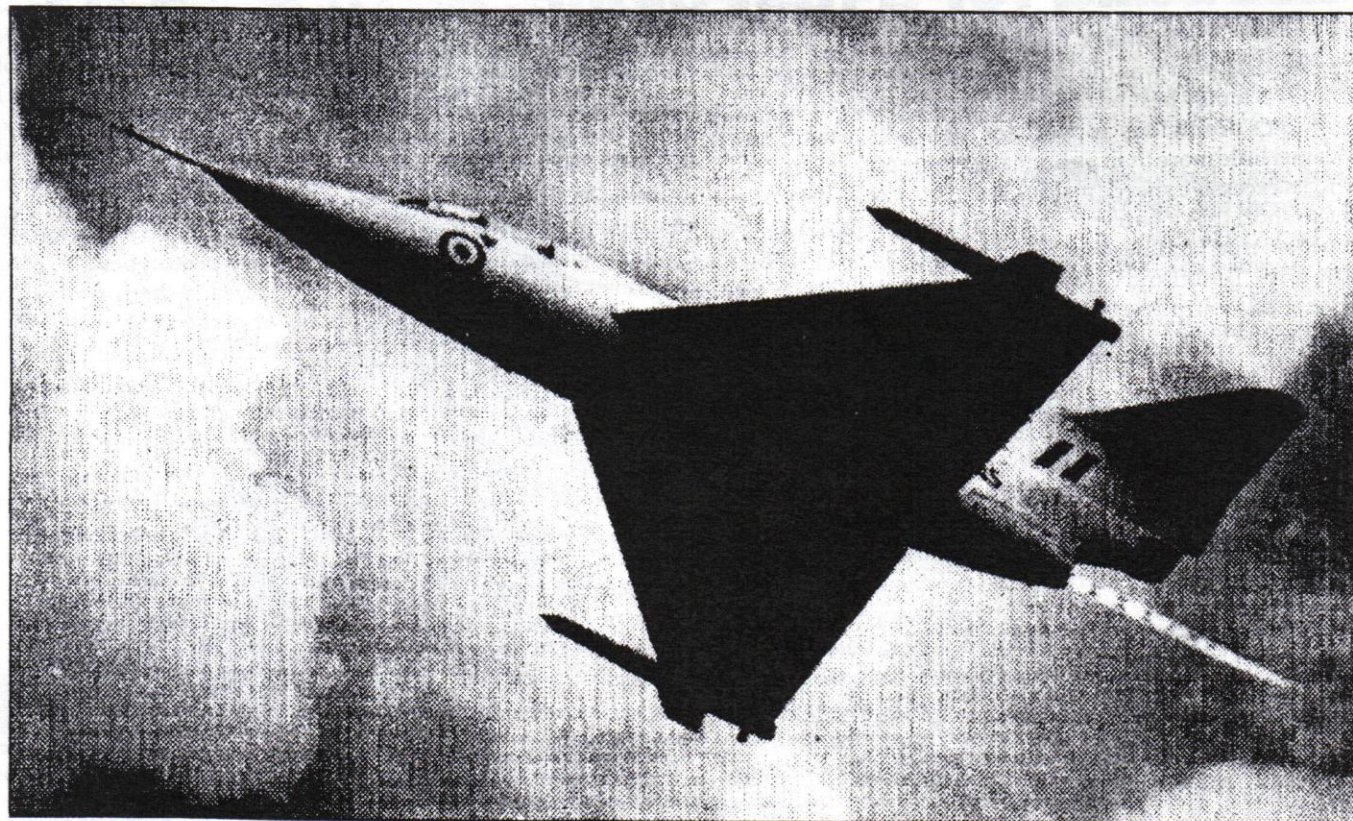
First off, I saw that the cockpit was bare—only a seat was supplied, to be mounted on little brackets. I immediately ordered a photoetched set for the aforementioned *Lightning*, reasoning that these two twin-engined British fighters of similar era might have similar cockpits.

While waiting for the photoetch to arrive, I glued the airbrakes into their recesses on the aft fuselage halves. It took some trimming to get them into place, and then vigorous file work to blend their contours into the fuselage. Elapsed time: thirty minutes. So much for building as fast as when I was a kid! I then turned to the wings. Despite their thinness, they were top-and-bottom halves, which I quickly trimmed and glued together. I applied a fair amount of superglue and microballoons to the leading and trailing edges to get rid of

gaps, and sanded the wingtips flat, as I did not intend to mount the air-to-air missiles that came with the kit. The wheel wells looked a bit bare, so I took a some leftover photoetched parts from a Gloster *Meteor* set (air brakes, boarding steps, struts,) and added them to give the bays some texture. Another half hour gone.

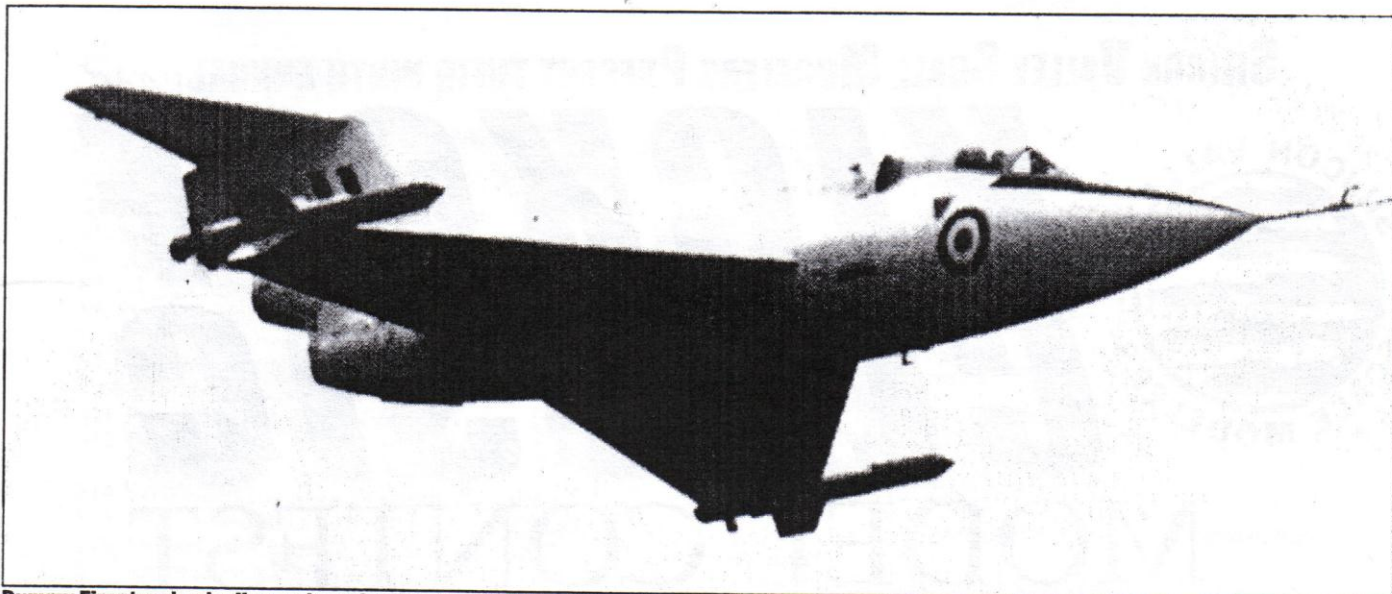
These old kits are famous for their "hollow look" intakes and exhausts. I thus spent close to an hour shaping an old *Revell* DC-8 burner can and a ship's wheel to give me the rocket and jet burner can ends respectively, as well as building enough supporting structure inside the fuselage halves to mount them and house the area in general. In the same vein, I added plastic to blank off the jet intakes immediately above and behind the cockpit. While this was drying, I cleaned up the landing gear pieces. The nose wheel and leg are all one piece, while the main gear legs are separate from the tires. The inevitable injector pins had to be expunged, but this just took five minutes. When I was a kid, those were features, not bugs!

The photoetched set for the cockpit came the next day. Unfortunately, the *Lightning* turns out to have a much bigger front office than the SR.53, so all I could use in there were some fittings and belts for the seat, the rudder pedals and the heads-up display (!); a few other bits would later go on the exterior. I rummaged around and found a seat that could be turned into a plausible ejector seat. Getting it to work in the cockpit required a floor and back bulkhead, as there wasn't anything enclosed except at the top of the fuselage. A couple of hours of fitting, cutting and gluing later, I had the enclosure complete. I also added a blank instrument panel, cut down to fit, on which I had applied rub-on instrument transfers from a *Supermodel* MC 205 kit. Just another example of those clever



The SR.53 in flight, running on its jet engine. The aircraft was designed to be a point interceptor with more loiter time than rocket fighters.

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Dummy Firestreak missiles on her wingtips, the SR.53 makes a slow pass for the cameras. Note the multi-sensor nose probe used in testing.

British taking advantage of advanced Axis technology! I also used leftover radio-face decals from my Bv 138 kit to give a hint of side panel detail, though the rather thick and small canopy promised to obscure most of this. Just before gluing the fuselage together, I put some lead shot in the extreme nose.

The fuselage halves went together, and the wings went on, followed quickly by the T-tail, in all of five minutes. I even had a glue smear! I added the way cool and pretty much out-of-scale nose probe, and mounted the wings with dihedral (2 or 3 degrees), only to find those third and fourth photos a week later suggesting that the plane actually had anhedral of about 5 degrees. Oh well. The wing attachment grooves allowed a lot of slop, and at least my approach minimized the seam problem.

Seam problems. Ah yes, here is where I really slowed down. As a kid, I paid no attention to seams; they were just there. Now, they are an abomination, especially as presented in a kit this old. Luckily, the kit did not suffer from rivet rash, having instead panel lines in a few places, presumably engraved by the fellow who later was in charge of trenching at *Matchbox*. In reality, a few hundred rivets would hardly have mattered, as the amount of sanding the surface was now subjected to would have obliterated them anyway. Armed with my superglue, microballoons, riffler files, and sanding sticks in six different grits, it took me only about six hours to resolve the seams. By the way, in case you're counting, this was now Day 3 since I started. The most fun was around the nose probe, which in no way matched the contours of the rest of the nose, until I resculpted the contours. I also noted some unsightly gaps around the burner cans, which took several sessions to close up.

Sad to say, by now I was taking my time, probably because

the kit was turning out rather well. I decided to rework the tail contours; the fin and rudder both needed some reshaping at the top, and the T-tail was blended into the fin at the leading edge. I also took a small strip of .05 card, sanded it even thinner, and put it in the nosewheel well to cover the seam running through there.

The paint scheme is pretty simple: white, except black for the anti-glare panel and around the exhausts. Since the plastic was translucent, I needed a good opaque white, so I varied from my usual paint choice and used *Tamiya* white. I first applied a couple of coats to reveal any remaining flaws; there were a few. Resolving these, I added the anti-glare area forward, using *Polly Scale* NATO tri-color black, then remasked and went back to the *Tamiya* white. Used to be, if I even painted, it was quick work with a brush, but in this case, I kissed another two hours goodbye.

After adding the remaining cockpit inwards, the next step was decals. These went on without much challenge, being simple and few. The kit gives serials for both prototypes; I went with XD145, though the aircraft were apparently identical except for the serials. At less than fifteen minutes, this was almost as fast as I could manage in the good old days—if one doesn't count the application of *Microsol* and the subsequent Future coat.

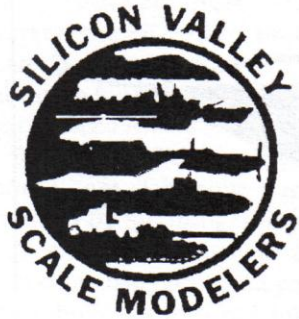
I added a stub airfoil antenna ventrally and a feature to the nose probe, then slapped on the landing gear and gear doors. The last thing was to get the canopy taken care of. Not surprisingly, the fit was poor, but I got it in place finally, then used white decal stripes to outline the canopy and windscreen frame.

So, with about thirteen hours into this kit, I was done. It took something like twenty-six times longer to build than in my extreme youth, but it also looks thirty times better!



An exciting day at the airfield! A low-altitude pass at Cosford in 1957.

SILICON VALLEY SCALE MODELERS PRESENT THEIR NINTH ANNUAL



# KICKOFF CLASSIC

## MODEL CONTEST

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17

NAPREDAK HALL, 770 MONTAGUE EXPWY. MILPITAS, CA.

***This year's theme: THE NEED FOR SPEED***

46 CATEGORIES, PLUS SPECIAL AWARDS INCLUDING

BEST WEEKEND WARRIOR SUBJECT (NATIONAL GUARD, RESERVIST) • BEST SMALL AIR FORCES SUBJECT

ARLIE CHARTER MEMORIAL AWARD—BEST USAAC SUBJECT, PACIFIC THEATER

AYRTON SENNA MEMORIAL AWARD—BEST COMPETITION AUTOMOBILE • BEST CALIFORNIA SUBJECT

MIKE WILLIAMS MEMORIAL AWARD—BEST SCI-FI, FANTASY OR REAL SPACE SUBJECT

TED KAUFFMAN MEMORIAL AWARD—JUDGES' BEST OF SHOW (SENIOR) • BEST FLESH & BONES SUBJECT

BILL MAGNIE MEMORIAL AWARD—JUDGES' BEST OF SHOW (JUNIOR/YOUTH) • BEST 60TH ANNIVERSARY MIDWAY SUBJECT

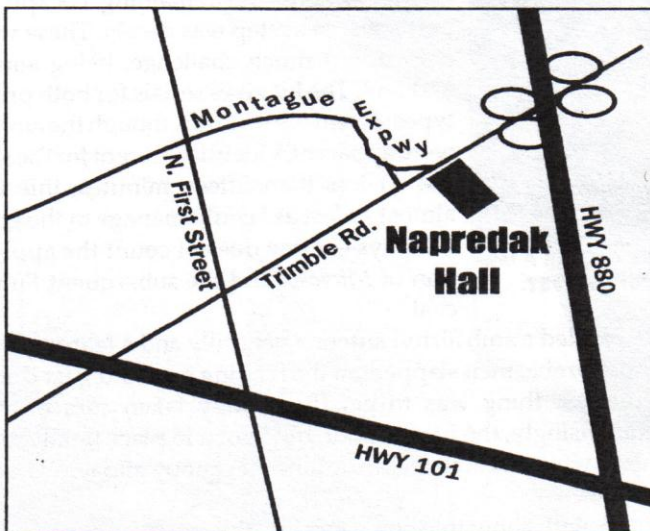
BEST BRITISH SUBJECT • BEST AIRCRAFT IN FOREIGN SERVICE • BEST VACUFORM • BEST AFV (INCLUDING SOFTSKINS)

BEST U.S. ARMOR SUBJECT, ETO, 1942-45 • BEST WW2 NORTH AFRICA THEATRE ARMOR SUBJECT • BEST AIR RACER

BEST NEED FOR SPEED THEME SUBJECT • BEST NON-TURRETED ARMOR SUBJECT (ANY ERA)

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## SENIOR (18+ YEARS)

- S1. Single Engine Jet or Rocket Aircraft, 1:72
- S2. Multi-Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:72
- S3. Single-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, 1:72
- S4. Multi-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, 1:72
- S5. Single-Engine Jet or Rocket Aircraft, 1:48
- S6. Multi-Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:48
- S7. Single-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, Allied, 1:48
- S8. Single-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, Axis and Neutrals, 1:48
- S9. Multi-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, 1:48
- S10. Jet and Rocket Aircraft, 1:32 and larger
- S11. Prop Aircraft, 1:32 and larger
- S12. Biplanes/Fabric & Rigging, all scales
- S13. Rotary Wing Aircraft, all scales
- S14. Civil, Sport and Racing Aircraft, all scales
- S15. Jet, Prop and Rocket Aircraft, 1:144 and smaller
- S16. Military Vehicles, Softskin, 1:35 and larger
- S17. Armored Fighting Vehicles, Closed-Top, to 1945, 1:35 and larger
- S18. Armored Fighting Vehicles, Closed-Top, post 1945, 1:35 and larger
- S19. Armored Fighting Vehicles, Open-Top, 1:35 and larger
- S20. Towed Artillery and Ancillary Vehicles, 1:35 and larger
- S21. Military Vehicles, all types, 1:48 and smaller
- S22. Ships, 1:400 and larger
- S23. Ships, 1:401 and smaller
- S24. Automobiles, Stock, all scales
- S25. Automobiles, Custom (Other than Low-Rider style) all scales
- S26. Automobiles, Competition, Open-Wheel, all scales
- S27. Automobiles, Competition, Closed-Wheel, all scales
- S28. Automobiles, Specifically Styled as Low Rider, all scales
- S29. Space Vehicles, Fictional (Science Fiction or Fantasy), all scales and types
- S30. Space Vehicles, Real, and Missiles, all scales and types
- S31. Figures, Historical, all scales
- S32. Figures, Fantasy and Fiction, all scales
- S33. Out of the Box, all types and scales
- S34. Dioramas, all types and scales
- S35. Hypothetical Vehicles, all types and scales
- S36. Miscellaneous
- S37. Collections, all types and scales

## JUNIOR (13-17 YEARS)

- J1. Aircraft
- J2. Military Vehicles
- J3. Automobiles
- J4. Dinosaurs and Figures
- J5. Miscellaneous

## YOUTH (12 AND UNDER)

- SJ1. Aircraft
- SJ2. Military Vehicles and Ships
- SJ3. Automobiles
- SJ4. Miscellaneous

## SPECIAL AWARDS

- SA1. Ted Kauffman Memorial Award—Judges' Best of Show (Senior)
- SA2. Bill Magnie Memorial Award—Judges' Best of Show (Junior Youth)
- SA3. Arlie Charter Memorial Award—Best U.S. Army Air Corps Subject, Pacific Theater
- SA4. Ayrton Senna Memorial Award—Best Competition Automobile
- SA5. Mike Williams Memorial Award—Best Science Fiction, Fantasy or Real Space Subject
- SA6. Best Flesh & Bone Subject
- SA7. Best British Subject
- SA8. Best Aircraft in Foreign Service
- SA9. Best California Subject
- SA10. Best AFV (including softskins)
- SA11. Best WWII North Africa Theatre Armor Subject
- SA12. Best U.S. Armor Subject, ETO, 1942-45
- SA13. Best Air Racer
- SA14. Best Vacuform
- SA15. Best Non-Turreted Armor Subject (any era)
- SA16. Best Midway Subject Celebrating 60th Anniversary
- SA17. Best Weekend Warrior Subject (National Guard and Reservists)
- SA18. Best Small Air Forces Subject
- SA19. Best NEED FOR SPEED Theme Subject
- SA20. Tim Curtis Award—Given to honor service to the Silicon Valley Scale Modelers IPMS chapter

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 9 a.m.-noon—Registration; Contest Opens
- 11:45—Judges' Meeting
- 12:00-3 p.m.—Judging
- 4:15 p.m.—Awards Presentation

### FEES

- Seniors: \$5 Registration, \$1 per model entered
- Juniors: \$1 Registration, .50 per model entered
- Spectators: Free

### 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 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 number and nature of the entries.
3. No model that has won an award at an IPMS National contest is eligible, nor are any models that were first entered in any Re-

gion IX competition prior to Feb. 27, 2001. 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 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 done on model entries must be done by the entrant.

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

# Building Rareplanes' 1:72 shutterbug Savage

Continued from page 1

tial of the *Savage* was quickly exploited by the Navy, which had the design upgraded to allow carriage of the new higher-yield Mark 6 bomb as the original Mark 4 (Fat Man) was retired beginning in 1950. A photo-reconnaissance version (the AJ-1P) was also ordered, which led to the definitive *Savage*, the AJ-2. At first, this design change was most easily recognized by the revised tail group that eliminated the rear end strakes and horizontal tailplane dihedral seen on AJ-1s. A modification to remaining -1s in service fitted them with AJ-2 tails and removed the strakes.

The AJ-2P *Savage* made for an ID quandary, but the belly full of camera windows was an easy to spot feature,

along with the distinctive nose change. However, different serial number -2Ps had various seating and canopy changes, so very individuated aircraft. Brave were the crews aboard these "Shattered *Savages*" for they were truly unarmed and unafraid, as the entire run of AJs were built without defensive armament.

Missions were covertly flown over China during the Korean War by Squadron VJ-61, among other secret sorties, but AJ-2Ps also served as mapping aircraft stateside for U.S. Department of the Interior, covering the western states. AJ-2 atomic bombers would, for a short time, carry the 40-kiloton Mark 18 bomb, the largest yield weapon ever fielded by a *Savage* in its original mission, before being replaced by the Douglas A3D *Skywarrior*.

As the A3D entered the fleet, the *Savage* was converted for use as an aerial tanker. When the last *Savage* left service in 1959, civil operators began buying surplus *Savages* for conversion to fire bombers. Two AJ-1s flew with AJ Air Tankers flying out of Van Nuys, California into the late 1960s, and two more ended up in Washington state but never saw a fire.

This completed a circle for the *Savage*, from the bringer of atomic fire, to sustainer of jet fire, to extinguisher of fires. Sadly, it would appear that only one of these aircraft still exists, an AJ-2 formerly operated as an engine testbed by Avco Lycoming. Flown to NAS Pensacola in 1984, it is part of the collection of the Naval Aviation Museum.

I have a soft spot for this odd bomber, but it was becoming a sore spot over the years, because acquiring data on the *Savage* is almost as tough as finding any kind of kit! In the 1970s *Airmodel* began offering an AJ-1 in vacuform, and it was a *savage* kit indeed. In the 1980s, Gordon Stevens' *Rareplanes* mold of the AJ-2/AJ-2P was released. After getting my first

one for full retail at then expensive \$19, I learned that another *Savage* was coming soon as a 1:72 injection-molded kit. However, when the *Mach 2* kit showed up and I compared it to the English vacuform, there was no comparison. Buy more *Rareplanes* kits! The *Mach 2 Savage* is available at a mere \$75. A committed, happy vacuform builder could use the same money to build four or five *Rareplanes* kits and I bet it would



Two VJ-62 AJ-2P *Savages* in formation, showing the bulbous photo-reconnaissance nose to good effect.

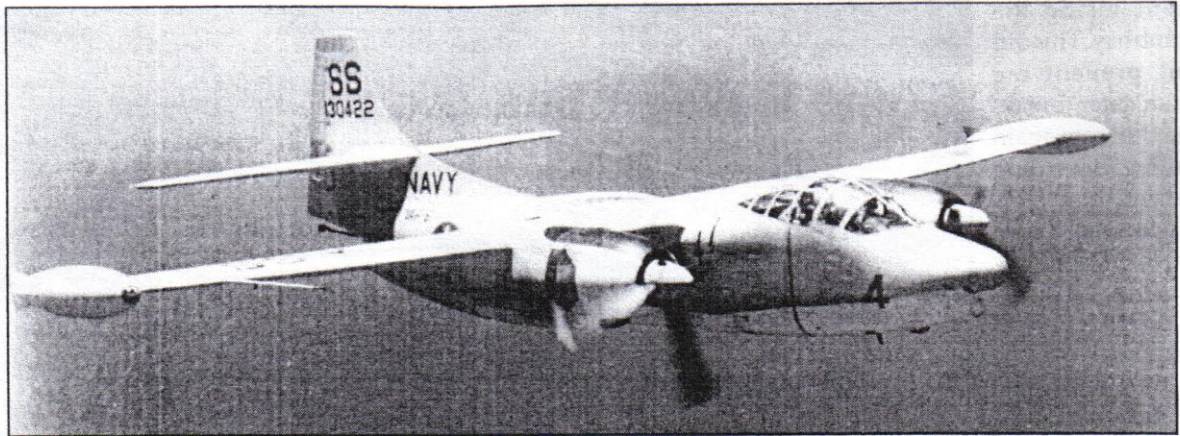
consume the same amount of time as one of the "superior" injected styrene versions. I've read independent confirmation on this several times. However, keep in mind what you're about to read took me over three years of on and off construction!

With the *Rareplanes Savage*, you get two sheets of white styrene vacuform parts, two identical canopies and white metal propellers, spinners, landing gear and wheels. Not only that, but there's an excellent full color decal sheet with complete markings for two aircraft. The instructions contain very useful 1:72 drawings of the aircraft which double as paint and decal guides. The builders' notes are spare but useful, but the list of references is a little incomplete. Find yourself copy of the vital Ginter Naval Fighters # 22 Book titled *AJ-1 Savage*, but covers the entire *Savage* family. Another inexpensive but very handy reference is *Airpower* magazine Vol 17 # 4 from July 1987, which has the same banking *Savage* on its cover as does Ginter's book.

Interestingly, the two schemes on the decal sheet give you beautiful but not deadly *Savages*. The gull gray-over-white scheme is for an AJ-2 refuelling tanker, although it could be modified back into a bomber at that time in service (1958), so you need not fair over the jet orifice as was done later when the *Savages* were committed exclusively to tanking. The glossy sea blue scheme is for an AJ-2P from VJ-61. You could make other *Savage* marking options for either basic color scheme using these decals as a start. It is a shame that "Mean Hairly Hog" (a blue photo *Savage*) and tankers with nose art "Use Our Gas or Go to Shell" and "We Give S&H Green Stamps" are not available, but perhaps some intrepid garage decal producer will come through.

Wanting the classic 1950s Cold War blue bird and also being a fan of reconnaissance birds, my first *Savage* choice was the AJ-2P. The kit fuselage has the camera ports and photo nose molded in place on the fuselage. Opting to build an AJ-2 means you have to remove the camera ports with light, careful sanding and swap the photo nose to the bomber nose, which is provided as two separate halves.

With the fuselage out of the sheet, I recommend not completely sanding the carrier off until you free up one vacuum canopy and the one-piece upper surface of the wing. These two parts should be sanded and trimmed to nearly final condition for use as fuselage



**VP-61 was one of the two final squadrons to operate the Savage, turning their machines over in favor of A3D Skywarriors in February, 1960.**

sanding guides. The airfoil shape of the wing pretty much guides sanding by itself, and the raised detail ribs on the canopy give a clear reference to its final shape. Two internal bulkheads are provided, but I do not recommend them as gauges for sanding the fuselage halves. The crucial areas are the cockpit opening (having the canopy is very handy to gauge the progress of your sanding), and the upper mid-section of the fuselage where the wing with the distinctive bulge (the jet air intake housing). There's a subtle set of curves on the wing front and rear that the fuselage spine matches to. I found that building the basic wing and fuselage simultaneously worked out the best. The basic fuselage halves, once sanded, will mate properly and remain wide enough at the cockpit and wing junctures.

Opening up the cockpit and nose gear bay is next. A box is provided for the nose gear bay, and while you can detail it from references I left it as-is. The cockpit components provided in the kit are basic but good. Ginter's book or equivalent

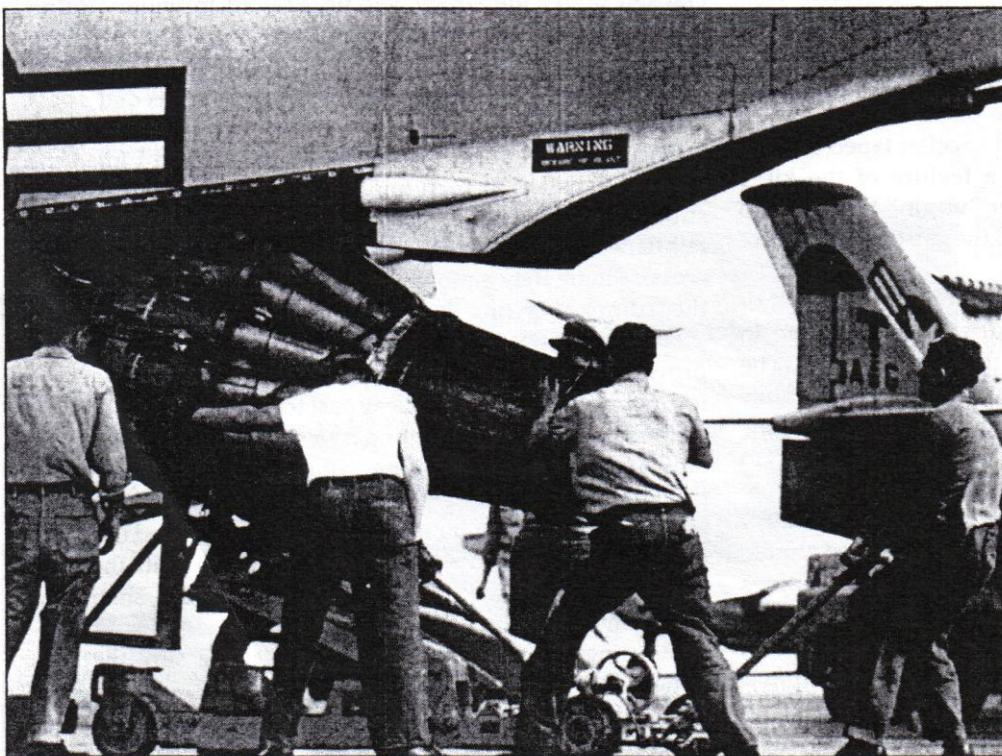
references are needed, though, for even a basic attempt at detailing. All AJ-2s were not the same and the ribbed greenhouse canopy makes the cockpit very visible.

The instructions give an almost accurate floorplan and control panel for a bomber/tanker version. Choosing the -2P meant sketching another cockpit layout, creating a photo navigator's station next to the pilot, opening up the floor for the flight deck stairwell and adding a bulkhead for the lower crew member's station. I mounted the canopy and began slowly sealing it into place. I outsmarted myself, though, by on leaving out the third seat upstairs. Later, while reading the Ginter book, I found out that this particular AJ-2P has four crewmen on board. No matter what, the kit illustration is in error for all AJ-2s and the four crew -2Ps in that the third seat should face aft, directly behind pilot.

Another tricky area on the fuselage is the tail jet opening. Using the kit's two-piece exhaust tube only partially solved the problem. Looking at photos and how the kit parts fit together, I ended up resetting the tube at a slant. You can avoid this entirely if you are doing a late service model, aerial tanker or a fire bomber. Simply sand in the exhaust, as the faired-over jet opening would appear as it already does in the kit.

For the AJ-2P, this is the time to add weight in the nose. I didn't add weight on mine, instead hoping the metal propellers would provide enough weight to get it to sit properly on its tricycle gear. It just does. This was a regrettable decision; next time, I'll play it safe add weight.

The hard part of closing up the fuselage is managing the long seams of the belly, which tend to flex and crack during handling. Using the kit-supplied bulkheads helped, but not enough. Eventually, I cut the belly open before putting the wing in place and placed a styrene strip reinforce-



**Crewmen remove the jet engine from a VC-6 Savage for maintenance aboard Yorktown in 1956.**

ment inside the bomb bay. This did not prevent me from later breaking the seam again during a sanding session by squeezing the fuselage too hard in the middle. I would add two more bulkheads in between the wing box just to be sure.

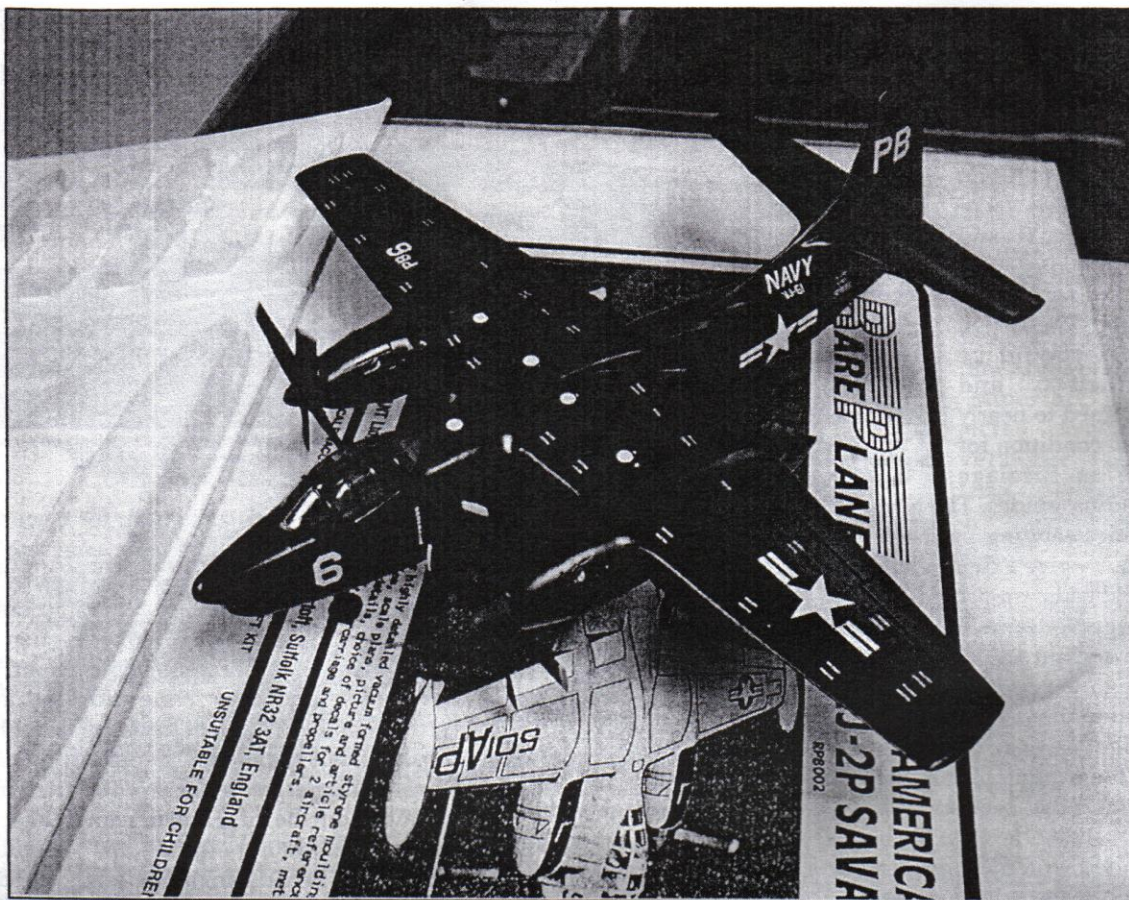
The upper surface of the wing is a single-piece molding. The underside components include large outboard undersurfaces and two small inboard undersurfaces that leave an opening to fit the engine nacelles. The nacelles are each two parts with separate fronts with the detail of the radial engines. These form a critical

matching template for the nacelle halves. As a starting point, I taped the upper wing tightly to the fuselage, then sanded the outboard undersurfaces to an airfoil shape. The outboard sections fit the upper wing fairly closely, but clearly there were going to be some gaps at the nacelles.

The inboard undersurfaces came next, and I was dismayed to see that any way you added these parts, a gap was left. However, getting the roughly-sanded nacelles taped on for a final check showed this to be just a feature of the kit. I confirmed this by getting out another "virgin" *Savage* kit to compare my sanded parts against, and the gap clearly was not caused by overambitious sanding.

Left with my choice of gaps, I settled on a best match of edges for the inboard wing undersurfaces, taped them in place, removed the wing and glued the parts together. The result was fairly sturdy and had a slight sag, which looked like the photos and kit drawing. This left slots for the engine nacelles to fit into. The nacelles need the intakes opened up and the exhausts drilled out. The small gear doors were removed but I left the main doors alone; these stay shut except during the retraction and extension cycles. I installed simple plastic blanks for the oil cooler intakes so that the gear legs wouldn't be visible through them later.

One tricky task was configuring the mounts for the metal main gear legs. By using the 1:72 side view provided and careful guesswork, a simple slat which bridged the inside of the nacelle was drilled to friction-fit the gear leg. An additional set-back bulkhead was similarly fit inside so that drill-



Mike's AJ-2P poses for the camera on the box it came in. The black walkways show up even against the dark glossy sea blue paint scheme.

ing holes through for the propeller mounts would not depend solely on the nacelle parts, whose joints likely would have cracked under the stress. The nacelles fit to wing with no further surprises, but I held off gluing them until after the wing assembly was glued onto the fuselage in order to have more access to the inner wing joint, which needed some sanding and filling.

Once this was done, the nacelles went on and I filled the various gaps left at each joint with scrap plastic strip and super glue. I let this harden up and went to fit the horizontal tailplanes. If you can get them sanded to the correct thin airfoil cross-section, they almost seat themselves. This made up for the tedium of getting those underwing gaps blended in.

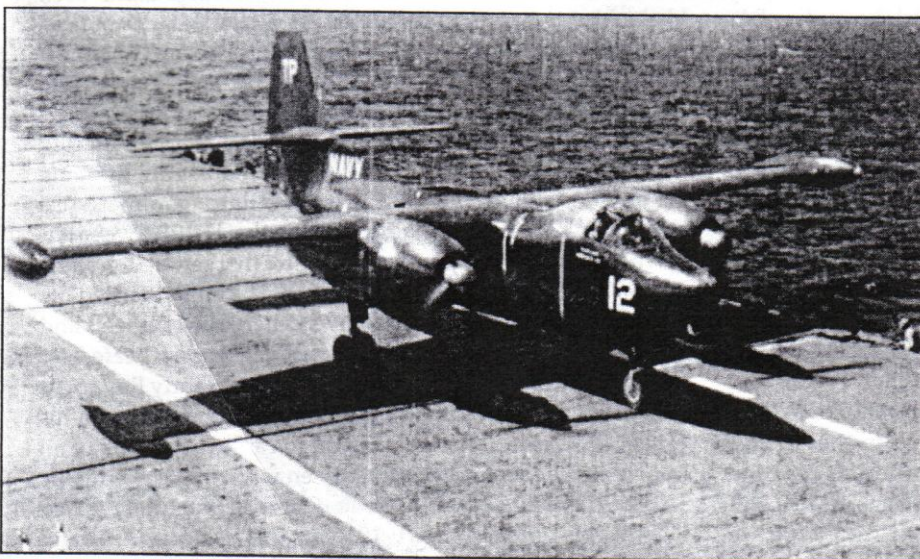
Fitting the photo nose camera window under the pug nose proved fairly easy. The task here is sanding that tiny vacuum dimple given for the clear part to shape. This was rough on the fingertips, but mounting it went smoothly. The wingtip tanks also have a clear nose, which has much greater fit problems. After managing to get two tanks with clear noses created, I saved them for another AJ, because I liked the looks of my photo bird without them. The harder part with the wing tanks is that must make two that are same in size, shape and arrangement of the clear nose cap. I ended up subtly recontouring the noses of my tanks to make sure the caps appeared to be same size on round tanks.

The finishing details came next, starting with the one-piece white metal nose gear. The leg is a bit too thin and bends at the slightest provocation, and with the weight needed to keep the

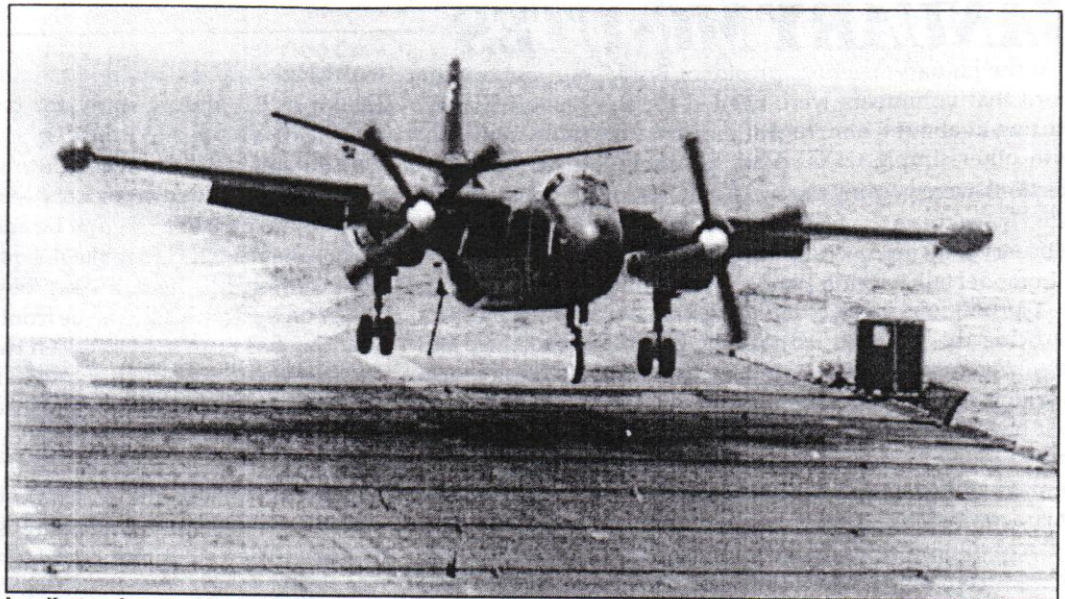
nose gear on the deck, this part is not likely to survive much time on the shelf, let alone being transported anywhere. I fabricated a paper tube that was soaked with thin superglue (the poor man's resin or fiberglass!) that has friction-fit over the weak part of the gear leg. Once glued into nose bay and painted, all that is visible to the casual viewer is the metal, detailed portion of the nose gear.

The painted main gear legs were outfitted with the wheels and tires and friction-fitted into the gear bays, then were set at the proper height using the 1:72 drawing in the kit. The white metal propellers and spinners make you wish the kit offered you the option of vacuformed props. Vacuformed spinners are provided, but not propellers. The spinner caps and the rear pan, which has the four-blade props on it, did not mate very well. Also, the blades themselves are molded in a totally flat pitch and have to be carefully twisted to even approach being correct. White metal is not easy for me to work with, and breaking the blades off several times in the effort did nothing to improve my opinion of the medium.

Next, I primed and painted the propeller assemblies. The wooden toothpick I inserted in the spinners as painting aids wouldn't come out, so they became my *Savage's* prop shafts! I hope my 1:72 crew chief never finds out when he does maintenance!. Finally, I painted the aircraft *Testors Model Master Enamel FS 15042 Dark Sea Blue*, with enough "hot" airbrush thinner to get the shade to go on smooth and lose enough gloss for a scale appearance.



A VAP-62 AJ-2P taxis forward after trapping aboard a carrier in 1956.



Landing a plane as big as the *Savage* aboard carriers was an adventure, especially since the angled flight deck had yet to be introduced. This VC-6 AJ-1 is trapping aboard *Kearsarge* (CV-33).

The kit captured the outline of the *Savage*, but only when the lovely kit-supplied *Extradecal* markings were applied did the AJ-2P really become truly eye catching. The black wing walks are correct for this airplane in blue as well as the grey. Be careful trimming the large film surrounds on them; the stripes are hard to see when wet and they folded up several times on my dark painted plane as I was trying to get them in place! Once I installed the red spinners and black propellers tipped in yellow, the AJ-2P was sitting pretty on its gear. It still didn't quite look right, though. I've since consulted with a master builder and fearless scratch modeler who figured out for us both that a Lockheed *Neptune* propeller blade would just about match those pictured in references. Hamilton Standard provided propellers for both the real aircraft, and examining a *Hasegawa Neptune* verified this premise.

So, someday, with the help of the leftover vacuformed spinners and some scratchbuilt blades based on those in the 1:72 *Neptune* (but a bit longer—*Savage* prop tips cleared the ground and fuselage by about a foot), more accurate *Savage* propeller assemblies will adorn my two *Savages*. Yes, I said two. Despite all the struggle and gnashing of teeth, another AJ-2 is already out of the sheet. I have to make the grey and white one. Why let a good decal sheet go to waste? I enjoyed polishing my *Savage* and simply have to do it again.

This kit is highly recommended to all *Savage* fans. Hannants has ceased making *Rareplanes* kits and no one has announced a new *Savage*, not even *Trumpeter!* *Mach 2* is still offering their injection-molded 1:72 AJ, and I have yet to see anyone but the brave builder in Ginter's book finish one. Go for the English *Savage* vacuform—you won't be sorry.

# JANUARY MINUTES

At the January meeting, president Brad Chun put out the word that volunteers were needed for the Kickoff Classic, starting at about 8 a.m. to put paper on the tables and help with other simple tasks. Also, he reminded the club that elections were coming up in March, and that anyone interested in seeking a term as an officer should step forward at the February meeting.

In model talk... Ralph Patino is scratchbuilding 1:16 armor at a prodigious rate, completing his BTR-80, despite not knowing the vehicle's actual name until the meeting, and knocking out a SdKfz 234/2 in two weeks! Ralph's also working on a 1:16 DUKW, although he's found references that have driven him to re-build the interior. In 1:25, Ralph scratchbuilt a 1937 Sterling bus, and in lieu of Sterling colors, he painted it in period Greyhound markings, since Sterling was acquired by Greyhound. Vladimir Yakubov is also scratchbuilding armor, but in 1:72 scale; his BA-11 uses a chassis from a BST. Vladimir's also completed the hull and turret of an *Italeri* T-26. Jim Lund took a Polish *Broplan* vacuform kit and turned it into a lovely Savoia-Marchetti SM.74 airliner that looked like it was ready to tour Europe on a moment's notice. Speaking of Italians, Lou Orselli has taken a break from Italian aircraft to work on two cars—a *Testors* '48 Ford, customized with the tub and engine of a '67 Chevelle to duplicate a real car Lou has seen in San Lorenzo, and a '53 Studebaker body from *Fremont Racing Specialties* on a frame from the "Christine" funny car. Lou also has been inspired to start building 1:100 helicopters based on the fun he had with *Tamiya*'s UH-1B *Huey*. He's now looking for some low-visibility Army markings for his little chopper. Ron Wergin hand-painted the canopy frames on his excellent *Hasegawa* 1:48 A6M2 Type 21 Zero. He also kept his hand in armor, completing a *Fujimi* Tiger in 1:72 and a *Revell* Panzer IV and a *Tamiya* Jagdpanther in 1:35. Cliff Kranz is looking to build some big can openers, he already has *Verlinden*'s two-seat cockpit and *Cutting Edge*'s single-seat cockpit for the *Trumpeter* 1:32 A-10 *Warthog*. Braulio Escoto finished up *Fujimi*'s 1:72 AD-6 *Skyraider* in the overall glossy sea blue markings, and carried the Moffett Field theme over to his 1:48 *Tamiya* F4D-1 *Skyray*, finished in NACA-Ames colors. Braulio used the *Cutting Edge* decals to replicate his test *Skyray*. Chris Bucholtz' *Academy* *Tempest* Mk V, the subject of last month's cover story, was present, as was the *Academy* F6F-3 *Hellcat* he's working on. Chris has used lead foil to box in the lading gear bays and replicate the back edges of the control surfaces. Masa Narita took just a month to build *Hasegawa*'s 1:48 F-14 and convert it into a "Bombcat." He said his real challenge was the weathering; obviously, that was one challenge he was able to overcome! Greg Plummer's latest automotive flight of fancy is the *Monogram* '53 Corvette customized by Tom Daniels as "Vette-Agin," and further customized by Greg as the Compact Pussycat driven by Penelope Pitstop in the old "Wacky Racers" cartoon series. Hubert Chan used the *Tamiya* kit to build his JS-2IIIM, and he's fixing the many flaws in the *Accurate Armor* BT-7, which has plenty of issues around its rear end. Jim Priete applied *Cavalier* zimmerit to *Tamiya*'s StuG III with superglue, rather than the five-minute epoxy the *Cavalier* set suggests. When Jim ran out of the *Cavalier* stuff, he made more

with Magisculpt and a *Tamiya* zimmerit comb. Jim also has a *Tamiya* P-51B almost ready for paint, and he's hoping to finish a *Hasegawa* 1:72 F4U-1 "birdcage" Corsair in time for the Kickoff Classic. Kent McClure's many tiny bits of plastic and metal included a Vickers Mk VI light tank from *JV Models*, and a PM Ta 183 that he added some cockpit details to, ruining his effort to make it a quick out-of-the-box build. Mike Burton has been a busy boy, completing the AJ-2P *Savage* on the front of this issue from the *Rareplanes* kit. Mike's attention has been split between two P-63 *Kingcobras*: a 1:72 version from the *Toko* kit that will become the P-63F, and a 1:48 Hi-Tech kit that will be finished as a Russian lend-lease example. Another example of Mike's double vision: he has a 1:72 *Heller* F-86F under way and an F-86H, built from a *Rarebits* conversion and *Hasegawa* wings and wheels. More evidence of this split personality is needed before you can diagnose Mike's bi-polar tendencies? Okay, how about his two 1:144 *Hobbycraft* *Stratojets*, one an RB-47 and the other a B-47B? Mike says these two kits are very nice, and his models give one no reason to think otherwise. Joe Fleming has fixed the tires from *Tank Workshop* that were supposed to fix the tires in *Tamiya*'s LRDG kit; see Joe for details on getting some of these for yourself. also on the table from Joe was a BA-6 from *Eastern Express* and three figures in the 100-120mm range: a *David Parkins* German machine gunner from World War I and a pair of British redcoats from *Fort Duquesne* and *United Empires*. Joe's Mongol warrior figure is also still in progress. Mike Meek is planning on finishing his heavily cleaned up *Aviation* *Usk* F2G *Corsair* as Cook Cleland's Cleveland racer. In 1:48, Mike has most of the formative work done on his RB-51 "Red Baron" conversion, which started life as a *Tamiya* *Mustang*. Robin Powell could not stop complimenting *Aeroclub*'s 1:48 B(I).6 *Canberra*. He used rolled-up sausages of Blu-Tac to mask the camouflage to get a tight feathered edge. Ken Miller's 737s are making progress; he filled the doors with superglue, but now he's getting pinholes he thinks are attributable to using the thick gap-filling stuff. Ken is also working in an Airbus A310 he's trying to get done for the contest; it'll be in Pan American colors. Charles Lamb used *Model Master* paints to finish his *Hasegawa* A-24 *Dauntless*. Laramie Wright has his *Shanghai Dragon* Panzer IVJ almost ready to paint; he's spruced the kit up with parts from *Tamiya*'s Panzer IV pioneer equipment set. His *Tamiya* Mathilda is also slowly making progress, and he's started work on the old *Tamiya* PAK 36/37 anti-tank gun, thinning the splinter shield and adding rivet detail. Laramie's also about ready to close the halves of his *Italeri* H-19B *Chickasaw*. Steve Travis' latest '34 Ford is a dragster that saw action at the Baylands Raceway in Fremont in 1988. The model started life as an *AMT* Vintage '34, but received aftermarket wheels and tires, a scratchbuilt interior and roll cage, and a beefed-up engine. It's number 11 in Steve's collection. Randy Ray spent a lot of time to get a crappy paint job—on purpose—on his *Tamiya* T-72 turret. Randy's trying to capture the look of an Iraqi tank whose sand paint has been worn off, exposing the Soviet green underneath. Brad Chun has actually glued together his 1:48 *Hasegawa* F-104C and his *Hasegawa* A-4E and has them almost ready to paint. It's Brad's second A-4; his

dog ate the first one! Brad's also used *Cavalier* zimmerit to enhance *Tamiya's* King Tiger with the Porsche turret. And the model of the month goes to... Sami Arim, for his 1:700

Japanese repair ship *Akashi*. Sami used the *Skywaves* kit, and he said it was a "shake and bake" kit... except for the photo-etched parts and scratch-made brass masts!

## **SVSM QUICK REVIEW**

### ***Italeri's 1:72 F6F-3 Hellcat***

Eric Brown, who has more types in his log book than any other pilot, said the greatest fighters of World War II were the Hellcat and the Fw 190. Modelers have had plenty of great 1:72 Fw 190s, but the same can not be said for the *Hellcat*. When *Italeri's* kit arrived at my local hobby shop, I was in the process of kitbashing the *Hasegawa* and *Academy* kits. The *Italeri* kit solves one of the thornier problems, but introduces a host of new ones.

The kit is billed as an F6F-3, but clearly *Italeri* will release a -5 later. The fuselage halves have the rear windows flashed over, and these need to be opened for a -3. Unfortunately, *Italeri* wants the modeler to leave the front frame on the fuselage, making this task much more difficult than it needs to be. *Academy's* approach provides the rear windows and front frames as part of the clear piece, allowing the modeler to mask and paint the frame, a far easier option.

The cockpit consists of a tub, a rear bulkhead, seat with molded-in straps, and a stick. The control panel has the shape of the panel right, but the gunsight is too high and the center pedestal is connected; in reality, this is separate from the main panel. The rear bulkhead lacks the curved cut-outs of the -3 (these were needed to see through the rear windows). All detail is provided by decals, which look rather poor.

Shape-wise, the fuselage looks good, although the tip of the fin is too rounded (no kit has gotten this right). The panel lines are all scribed. Two signal lights on the spine are cut in half astride the seam; why kit producers can't figure out a way to move the seam off-center to preserve such details is beyond me.

The kit's biggest problem is the texture used on the control surfaces. This looks like it was done with thick Celluclay or moistened toilet paper; while the ribs are slightly visible on the real *Hellcat's* control surfaces, the fabric covering is tight as a drum. Every control surface in the kit needs to be puttied and sanded out in order for the model to not look like a neglected wreck.

If the control surfaces are the weak points, the treatment of the wheel wells and flaps are the strong points. The wheel wells are boxed in, except for the at the rear. The rear of the wells was made up by the leading edge of the flaps, and *Italeri* cleverly provides dropped flaps, a first in any scale. Some of

the scribing, like the shell ejection chutes, is a little weak, but in exchange the rocket rail holes are flashed over, unlike the *Academy* offering. Also unlike the *Academy* kit, there are no bomb racks provided.

While the propeller is good, the engine reduction gear cover is incomplete, blanking out from the magnetos on up. The cowling is decent in shape, but the open cowl flaps are unconvincing and provide a view of the incomplete engine area. Also, the cowl needs to be cut and modified to represent a -3 with two additional flaps at the bottom of the cowling. These are provided as separate pieces, as are the exhaust pipes and -3-style exhaust bulges.

The landing gear struts are nice and have only a hint of flash. The wheels are of the correct pattern but lack detail. The one-piece tailwheel is a real mess; for some reason, the lightening holes on the strut are represented as raised cylindrical projections. The drop tank depicts the early version with the vertical reinforcement band, and external straps are provided. The inclusion of this style of tank is a first in any 1:72 kit.

The clear parts are another problem. The windscreen and sliding canopy are the later F6F-5 style, although an armored glass plate (a la the -3) is also included.

Decals are provided for three schemes: A U.S.S. *Princeton*-based VF-27 machine with the familiar snarling mouth in the markings of LT Richard Stambook (although the decal provided calls him "F.LT Stambook," as if he had been shanghaied by the RAF); a second three-tone aircraft in the colors of U.S.S. *San Jacinto's* VF-51, which carries nose art identifying it as "Little Joe;" and the *Hellcat* of LCDR Stanley G. Orr of 804 Squadron on H.M.S. *Emperor*, which is finished in the standard Royal Navy scheme of slate gray and dark sea gray over sky, although the box calls out European Green, Flat Gull Gray and Pale Green! Any modeler following these instructions will end up with a very weird looking *Hellcat*! The patterns shown for the three-tone scheme are also way off. To *Italeri's* credit, the roundel red and the VF-27 markings are in different shades.

Anyone hoping for the ultimate 1:72 *Hellcat* from this kit will be disappointed. Still, for less than \$10, you can get a reasonable starting point for a kitbash or super-detailing effort, as long as you keep your references handy.

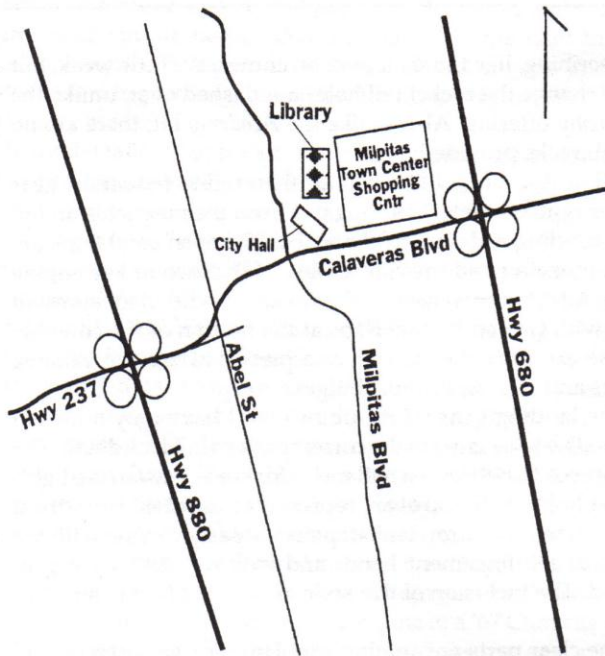
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