

Tiger hunter: building a Sherman Firefly VC

By Laramie Wright

When the British Cromwell tank was introduced in 1944, it was immediately at a disadvantage against the main Tiger and Panther. Its short 75mm gun had very poor range, and the paltry 101mm frontal armor meant that it was vulnerable should it try to close the range to fire with effect on the German tanks. It was more reliable mechanically than the Tiger or Panther, but it was at a definite disadvantage when it came to long-range shootouts.

The American Sherman had similar shortcomings, but it was large enough to accommodate the British 17-pounder anti-tank gun. This 76.2mm gun could penetrate most German armor at battle ranges, even if the Sherman's armor was still less than adequate against the German long 75mm and 88mm guns. This version, called the Sherman V or "Firefly," had a modified turret bustle and made the front gunner redundant in order to provide room for the gun's larger ammunition. The Firefly was so successful that the British provided the U.S. Army with 300 Fireflies, which provided good service

from the end of 1944 until the collapse of Nazi Germany.

At the time I commenced this project, DML had not released their Sherman VC Firefly kit. There were some conversion items available from *Verlinden*, and *Chesapeake Models* had out what is still considered the best Firefly turret ever. The M4A4 hull conversion kit was available from *Verlinden*, but needed running gear from a *Tamiya* or *Italeri* Sherman. The project began to approach the \$75 mark and I could not justify such an expense. I went through my on-hand inventory of kits and determined that I had the basis for a good VC Firefly already: if I was willing to do a little modeling in addition to assembly. Armed with the Hunnicutt Sherman book and a set of drawings in an edition of *FineScale Modeler*, I set to work.

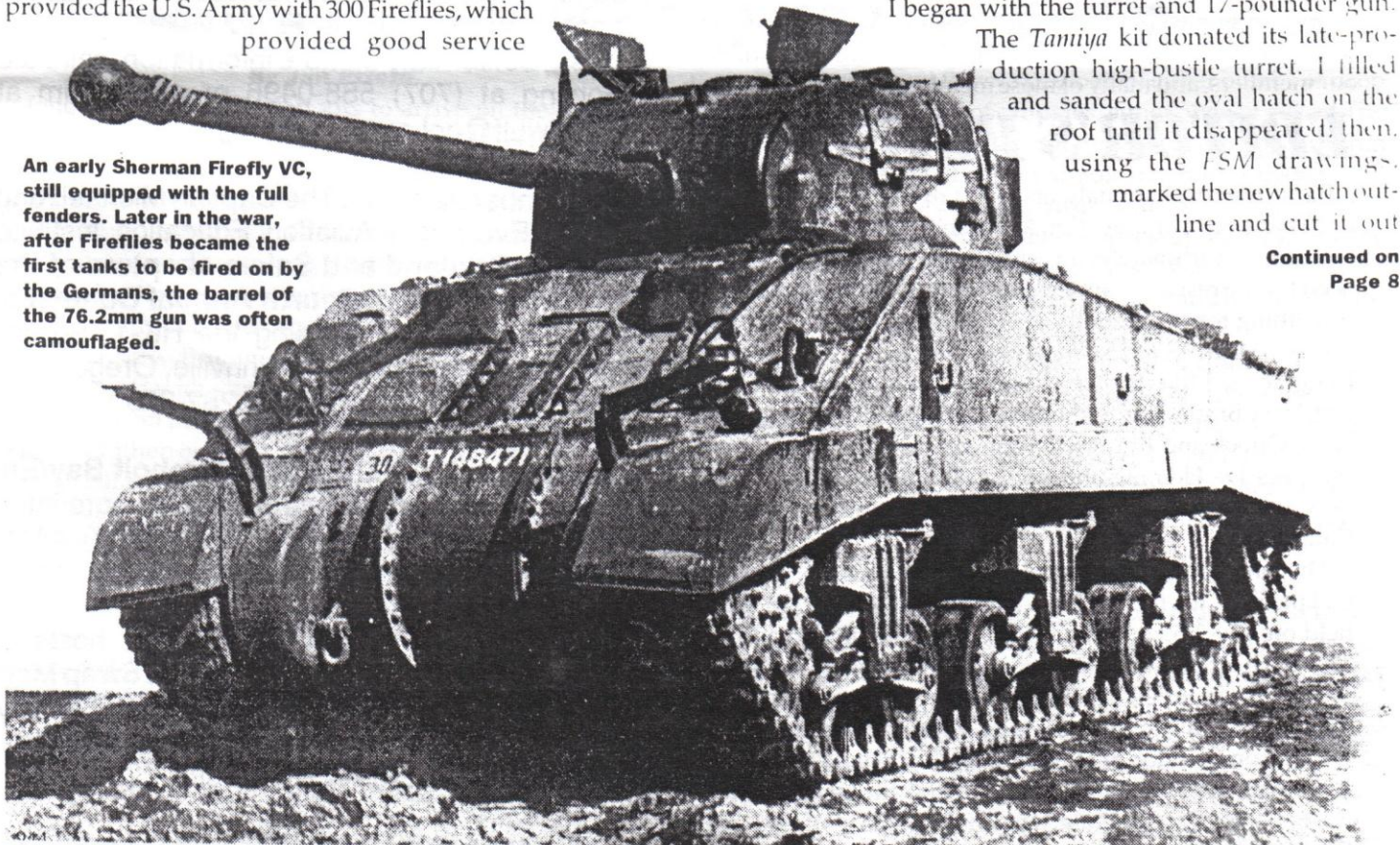
I used two kits for the raw materials, the good old *Tamiya* M4A3 and the then new *MP Israeli* M50 Sherman. Add some brass tubing, epoxy putty, sheet styrene an *Airfix* 1:72 500-lb. bomb and some elbow grease; shake well and voila! A Tiger-killing Sherman is born.

I began with the turret and 17-pounder gun.

The *Tamiya* kit donated its late-production high-bustle turret. I filled and sanded the oval hatch on the roof until it disappeared; then, using the *FSM* drawings, marked the new hatch outline and cut it out

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An early Sherman Firefly VC, still equipped with the full fenders. Later in the war, after Fireflies became the first tanks to be fired on by the Germans, the barrel of the 76.2mm gun was often camouflaged.



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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FROM THE PRESIDENT

First, there is some business that must be conducted. Some members have discussed some dissatisfaction about trying to meet again at the Milpitas Library once the library is able to hire a janitor. I have noticed, along with others, that attendance at the club meetings has dropped considerably since the meetings have been in Los Altos. I made a comment about the distance I travel in response to another modeler when he commented on the convenience of the Los Altos sight. A modeler then came to me during the break and stated that I was being selfish, and not thinking of the club. My best interest is for the club and what will benefit the members. This modeler also suggested that I start another club if I wasn't happy meeting in Los Altos. So, as members of this club, the board members are now asking what location you feel is in the best interest for the club to meet. And, if the day and time are not adequate, which day and time do you prefer? Remember, this is your opinion about what is best for the club. Granted, not everyone will be happy with the final result, and nothing is guaranteed. Some members travel great distances just to attend meetings, because of their interest in this hobby. Let us know what you think. I can be e-mailed at Pres4SVSM01@aol.com. As a note, the Milpitas Library now has a janitor, or industrial engineer, for Friday nights. The only problem is that we can only meet from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., and we have to be out by 10 p.m. Thanks to Rodney for coordinating with Milpitas Library.

On to more exciting news. IPMS Santa Rosa held its first contest as a club on June 16. The contest was well attended by our members, and many of those members in attendance took

EDITOR'S BRIEF

Back from the nationals, and right to work on the newsletter! Thanks to Laramie, Jim, Mark and Mike for their contributions. Unfortunately, this about runs the well dry, so we'll need for the rest of the members to pick up the slack and write something for next month.

It was fun seeing so many of you in Chicago. Angelo Deogracias, Mike Burton, Pastoria Aguirre, Mark Hernandez, Mike Braun, Roy Sutherland, Bert McDowell, Sami Arim, Steve Quock and Jim Priete were all there, as were alumni/escapees Joe Fleming and Ed Van Brabant. The show went very smoothly, and many awards were brought back to California!

The only odd thing about the event was the choice of Oklahoma City for the 2003 Nationals. Their event will be held on July 3-5, with the Fourth of July falling on a Friday. This bid beat bids from Dayton and Minneapolis; the editor is on the Convention Advisory Committee and has all the paperwork on the bids. Despite what the committee may have recommended, it seems the IPMS officers went with the bottom line; Oklahoma City estimated the most profit. Of course, they also estimated they'd draw just 61 fewer registrants than Chicago, with July 4 right in the middle of the event. Your editor has been there, done that, and has several boxes of T-shirts in the basement as a result of a July 4 convention. We shall see how this one comes out.

—The Editor

home trophies, including many of the Special Awards. There were not as many models entered as at the Kick Off Classic, but the quality was definitely there. There was no indication that this was a "first" contest held by the club, as the contest went that smoothly (at least from my observations), Congratulations, IPMS Santa Rosa!

The IPMS National Convention and Contest is now history. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend this year. I'm sure a few of the members will give us a report on this year's National Contest.

Also, IPMS-Phoenix is having their contest September 8. The contest is being held at the Holiday Inn Hotel at 1600 South Country Club Road in Mesa, Arizona. They will have over 60 categories for models and special awards for Best Of Show, Spectators Choice, Best Aircraft, Best Military Vehicle, Best Ship, Best Auto, Best Figure, Best Sci-Fi/ Space and Sponsors choice awards. You can go to their website at: www.ipms-Phx.Iwarp.com for more info.

We are also meeting at the Los Altos Library again this month.

—Brad Chun

CONTEST CALENDAR

June 16, 2001: IPMS/Santa Rosa hosts its first annual contest at the Finley Center in Santa Rosa, California. For more information, call Dale Bohling at (707) 568-0496 or e-mail him at nachtwulf@aol.com.

September 22, 2001: The Captain Michael King Smith Evergreen Aviation Education Institute and the Portland and Salem chapters of the IPMS present their Fourth Annual Contest at the new museum housing the HK-1 "Spruce Goose" flying boat in McMinnville, Oregon. For more information, call (503) 282-2790.

September 29, 2001: IPMS Humbolt Bay/Eureka holds its annual contest. For more information, call Melissa Stockton at (707) 4441-9433 or e-mail her at moexu@hotmail.com.

October 6, 2001: IPMS/Vancouver hosts its 31st Annual Fall Model Show and Swap Meet at the Bonsor Recreation Complex in Burnaby, British Columbia. For more information, call Kevin Brown at (604) 939-9929.

October 14, 2001: IPMS/Orange County hosts OrangeCon 2001 in Buena Park, California. For more information, call Nat Richards at (949) 631-7142 or e-mail him at ocipms@aol.com.



A Japanese ground crew pose with their J1N Gekko twin-engine fighter. The last of the "destroyer" type fighters, the Gekko was not a success.

Superb new J1N Gekko in 1:48 is typical Tamiya

By Jim Priete

One of the latest aircraft kits to arrive on the scene from Tamiya is the Nakajima J1N "Irving" in 1:48. The Gekko type 11, as it was known to the Japanese, was their navy's answer to the much vaunted twin-engined heavy fighter, intended to perform a role similar to Germany's Me 110 or America's A-18, and was contemporary to the Japanese Army's Ki-45 *Toryu*. The "Irving" saw service in the Solomons campaign, serving with interceptor squadrons stationed at Rabaul on the island of New Britain, and also as a somewhat lack luster night fighter with various home defense units in Japan.

It may seem peculiar to some that Tamiya should produce a kit of a rather obscure aircraft, but it seems to me a quite logical subject in light of their recent list of eclectic offerings. The *Skyray*, "Betty," *Swordfish*, F-84, and now this. Who can say what's next? Maybe a quarter scale Short *Stirling* isn't so far fetched after all!

When I first saw the kit at the Pasadena Scale Modelers' contest in February, it was plain to see that the kit was a winner. Beautiful moldings with finely scribed panel lines and lots of detail. What more could you want?

So, what do you get for your money? Well, a large-ish box crammed with lots of gray parts. And very nice parts they are, too. In addition to the finely scribed outer surfaces that I already mentioned, you get a very well detailed interior, with full cockpits for pilot and observer, and a nicely detailed rear fuselage gun bay for the type 99 cannons with a separate access hatch. The fuselage side walls and wheel wells are nicely detailed, although the side walls are marred a bit by a couple of dozen ejector pin marks. You also have a choice of

open or closed cowl flaps, a payload of either bombs or drop tanks, and two choices of canopies, either open or closed. The canopy parts are very clear and the open canopy is just thin enough to look good if you should choose to display the cockpit. The tail wheel and strut come as a single unit, a feature that I intensely dislike, especially in 1:48, but the assembly is molded in two halves. This at least makes it easier to carve away the tail wheel from the strut and be replaced for a better appearance.

The decals are typical for Tamiya, well-printed but with carrier film that is hopelessly thick. It might be best to wait for an aftermarket decal company to remedy this problem. The instructions are in Japanese and English and are of course easy to follow. There is also an insert that describes in greater detail the history of the Gekko, again in both languages, a nice touch.

An interesting addition that is not apparent on the instruction sheet is a separate nose cap and four radar aerials for the radar armed version. The kit instructions and decals are only for the late model without radar. And the top rear fuselage comes as a separate piece, which allows Tamiya to produce the Kai (first modification) model with a stepped rear fuselage spine. So at least two more versions of the Gekko appear to be in the works.

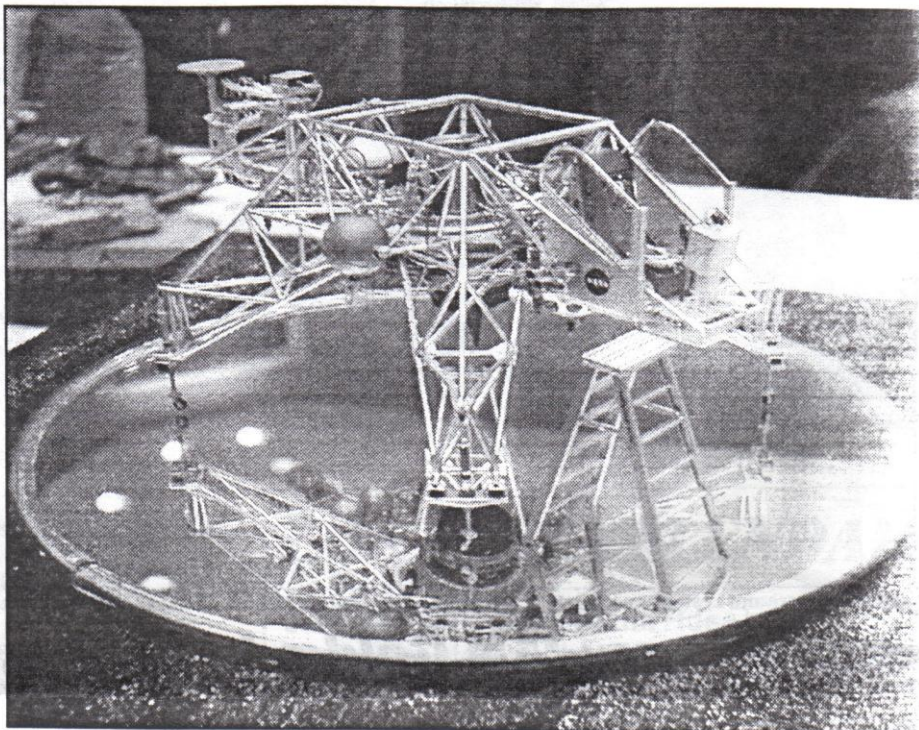
Overall the kit is great. It's a bit on the expensive side, around \$40.00, so if this is a problem for you then check out the discount houses and web sites for a better price. If you like Japanese aircraft or anything on the unusual side, then I say go for it. If the Irving builds as nicely as their Betty kit, then I can promise you that you will enjoy this one!

A walk around the display room at

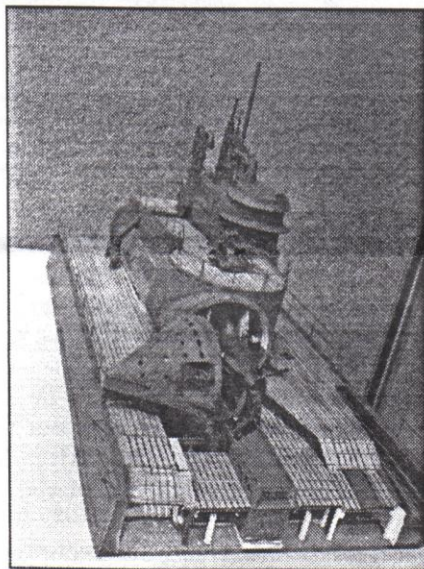
2001 IPMS/USA NATIONALS

Photos by Mike Burton

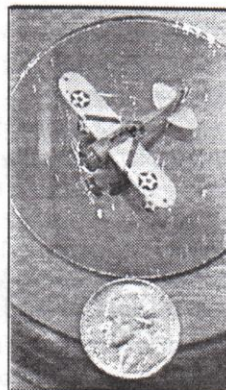
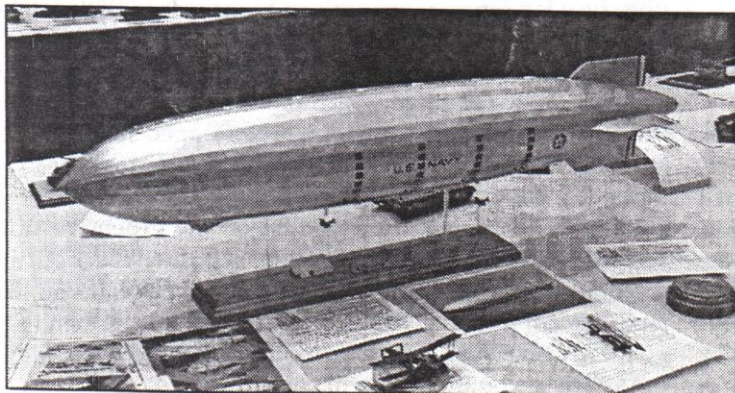
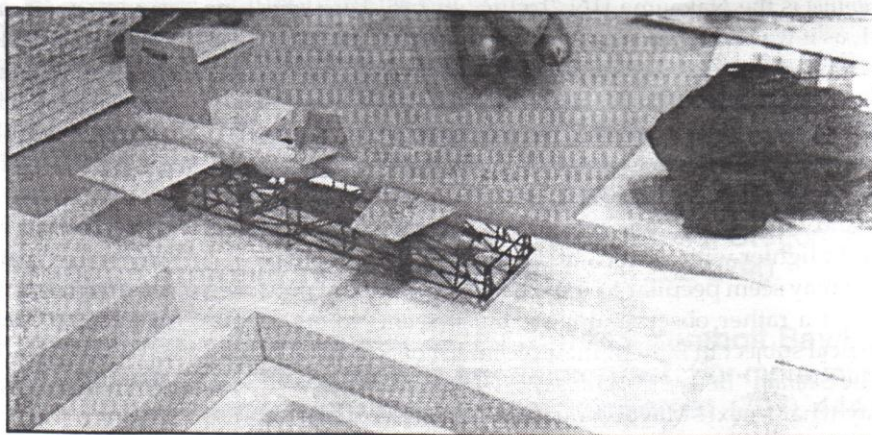
Ben Guenther, who won best of show in 1996, took best aircraft with this LLRV, scratchbuilt in 1:48. The LLRV was the trainer for the lunar lander.



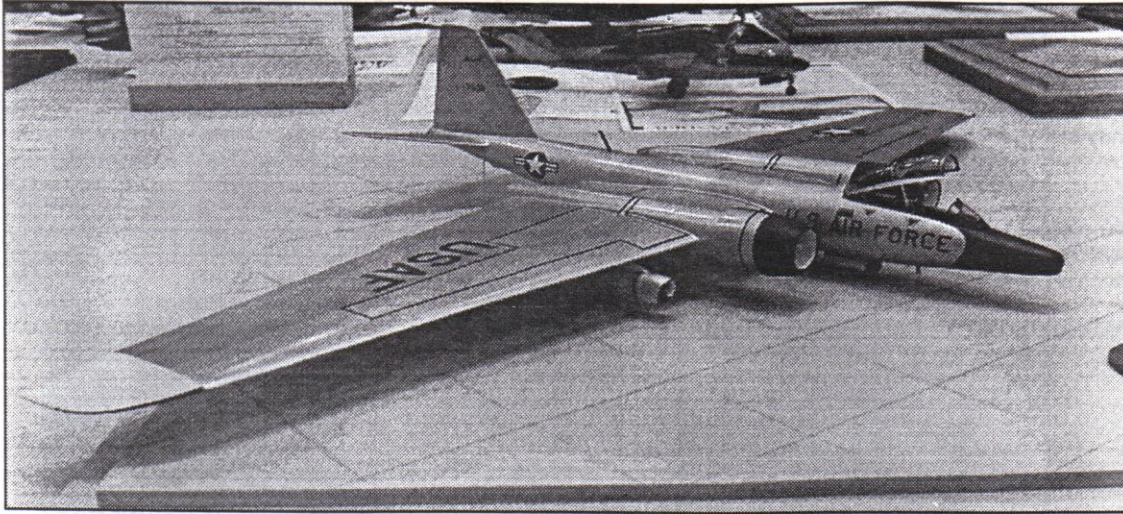
Shades of Ralph Patino! One modeler decided that the 1:48 Tamiya Seiran was so good he'd build the rest of the submarine around it!



The X-7 ramjet missile, part of a triathlon entry



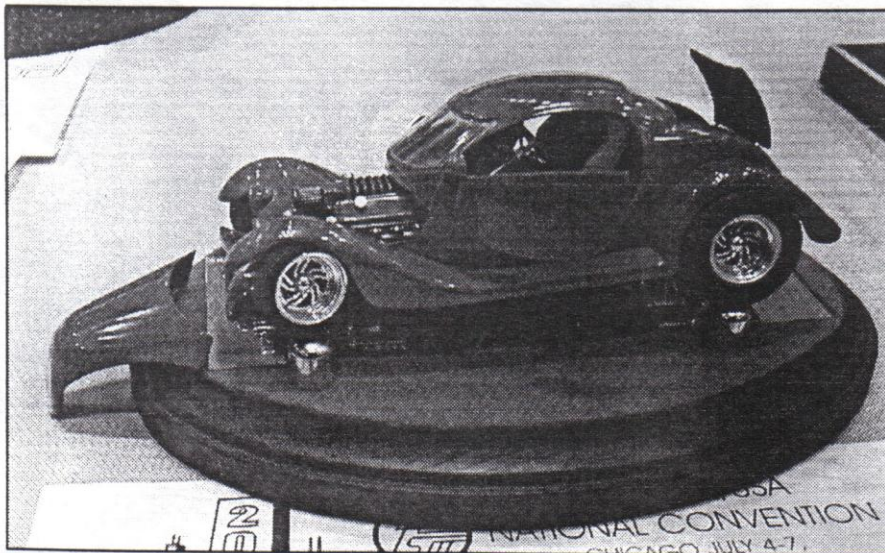
The U.S.S. Macon, depicted in 1:200 with her F9C Sparrowhawks coming aboard. In case you can't see the specks in the overall shot, at right is a single F9C, entered in small scale aircraft.



This RB-57 isn't the Mach II kit, but a conversion of the Italeri B-57 using vacform and resin parts from the now rare DB set.



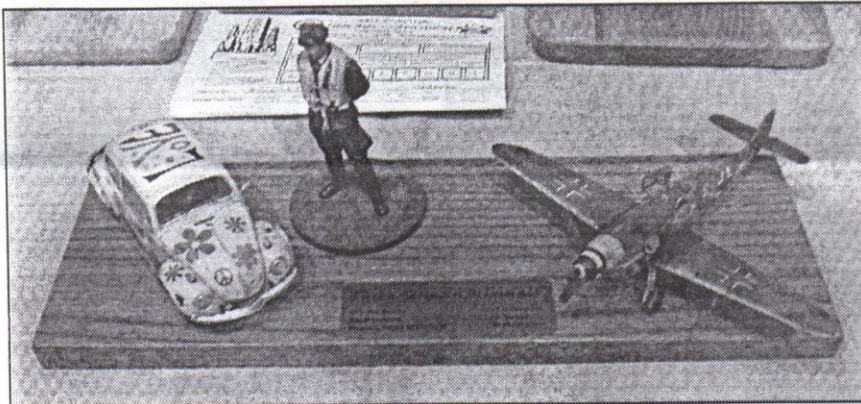
The biggest and best Blue Angels collection we've ever seen! There are two Constellations and Hercules, as well as the ultra rare Aurora F7U-1 Cutlass and two conversions of the two-seat F9F-9T Cougars, and the Williams Bros. C-46 done in a very smooth metal finish.



The finish of this cherry-red custom can only be hinted at in black and white!

USA
NATIONAL CONVENTION
CHICAGO JULY 4-7

This clever diorama only showed reruns of "The Andy Griffith Show."



A Triathlon entry featuring "Three German Originals" a Volkswagen Bug, Adolph Galland and a Bf 109G.

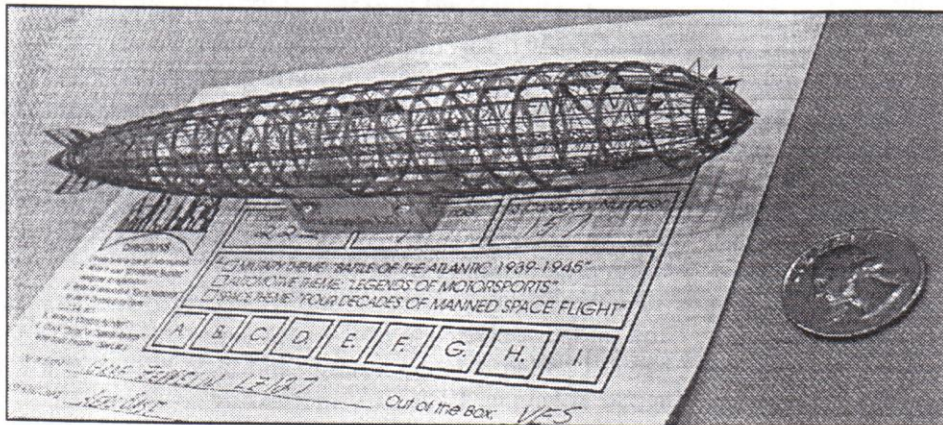
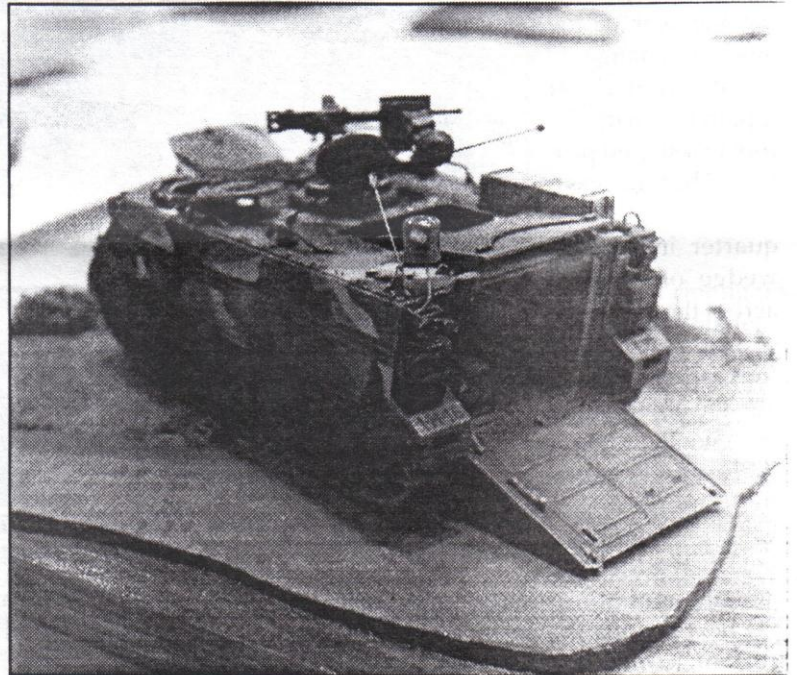
A few years ago, science fiction was an under-contested category. Now, it's exploding, as this table full of entries can attest.





One for Anita Travis! Either an impressive collection of Aurora monsters, or the view of the hotel bar in Chicago at closing time.

This M109 Mortar Carrier features a fully detailed interior, scratchbuilt exterior details and a well-weathered exterior and it was in 1:72!



Another dirigible, this one much smaller and missing its outer skin. The quarter gives you an idea of scale.

Getting all the details right on the Firefly

Continued from page 1

using a drill to mark the perimeter and then connected the holes with a nice sharp X-Acto knife. Final shaping and truing was done using files and sand paper, resulting in the appropriate rectangular opening. I roughed out and refined the hatch itself from sheet styrene and putty and planned for the hinges and raised coaming that would surround the hatch. I would attach that and other more delicate details after some surgery on the bustle.

As I said earlier, the *Tamiya* M4A3 turret is the late high-bustle model. I filled the underside of the bustle with superglue and strips of plastic. Once that had set, I began filing the rear of the bustle to change its profile from a flat top, in line with the roof to a sloped profile. That necessitated removing a quarter inch or so wedge of material across the rear edge of the turret bustle. I took care not to damage the antenna pot on the left corner of the turret. Once I had the shape right, I finished the final sanding, then added the antenna-mounting bracket on the right side of the bustle.

I next tackled the armored stowage box mounted on the rear of turret. The box was for the radio that had been displaced from within the turret to make room for the large 17-pounder gun. Following the drawings and photos, I built the armored box from .030" styrene. Once the main box was built and sanded true, I cut three access plates for the top panel from .010" styrene and attached and detailed them with *Grandt Line* bolt heads. The box was attached to the rear of the turret and the prominent weld seams were added to mimic those on the real item. So far, the project was a piece of cake. Then came the really fun part, the gun and muzzle brake!

I used a couple of lengths of brass tubing, one telescoping inside the other, to establish the basic size of the barrel. I cut a round collar out of styrene that was fitted to the rear end of the barrel, establishing the correct diameter at the point it emerged from the mantlet. The barrel was covered in epoxy putty and smoothed to approximate the final contours. After the putty cured, I chucked the barrel in a power drill and

turned it at low speed using various grades of wet or dry sand paper. This process took longer than I anticipated, as it was easy to get the barrel out of round or to put grooves in it applying too much pressure. I took four sessions, adding putty in between each, but it resulted in a nice representation of the main gun tube. The muzzle brake was a challenge and

I tried a few ideas that failed. I just could not get the contours right and add the holes without collapsing the part. Then I had an epiphany. What did I already have that looked like a muzzle brake?

I went to my spares box and located a 1:72 500-lb. bomb from an old *Airfix* kit. The front of the bomb was rounded like the front of the muzzle brake, and the rear of the bomb where it tapered to the fins was angled just like the rear of the muzzle brake. A bit of surgery cutting out the too long center section, followed by reattachment of the ends, followed by drilling out the baffle holes and finally a little putty and sanding to shape produced a good 17-pounder muzzle brake. The muzzle brake was super glued to the barrel

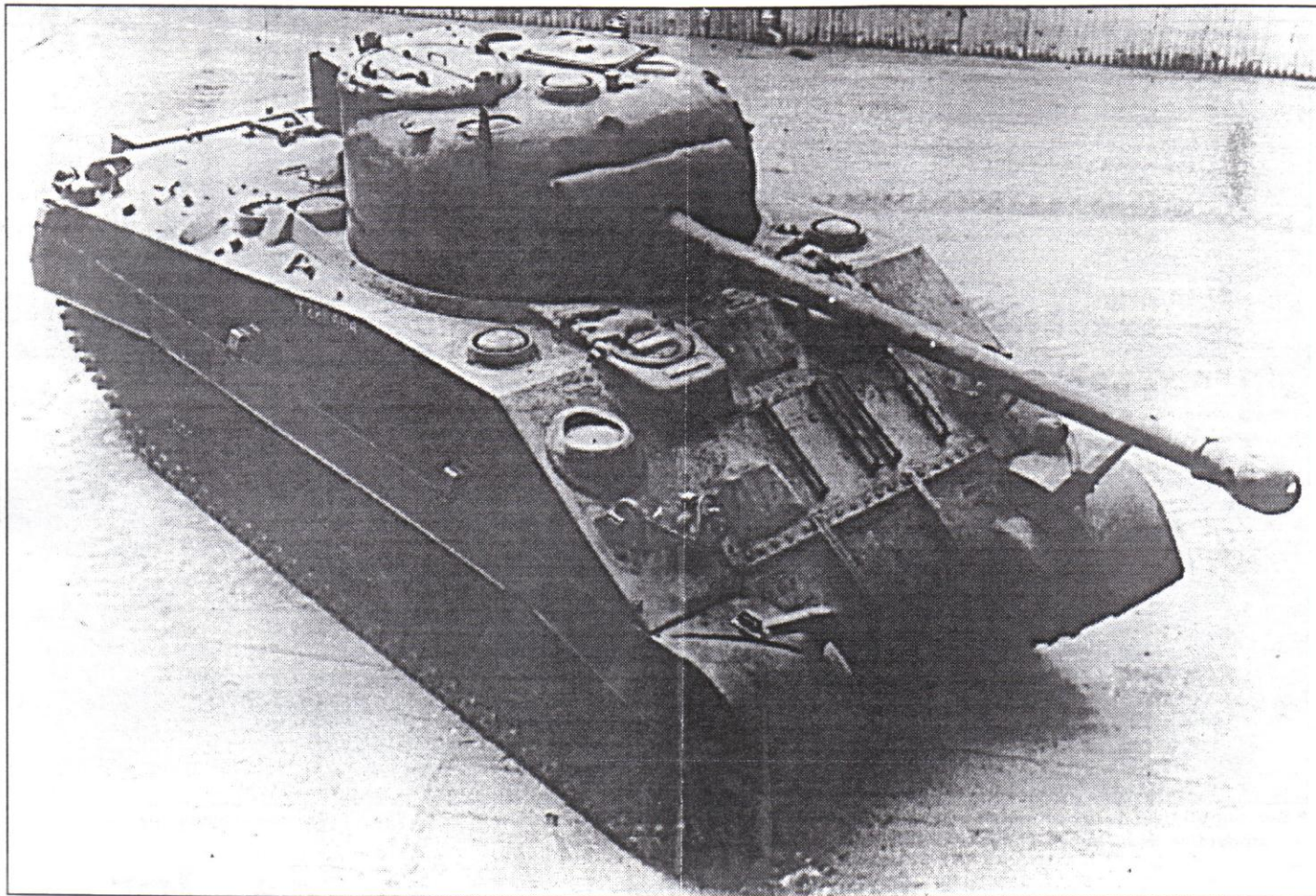


At top, an excellent view of the rear turret and storage area on a Sherman Firefly VC. The rear stowage box was often moved to the front plate.

and the joint filled and sanded.

There are differences between the standard M34 mantlet for the 75mm and the mantlet for the 17-pounder gun, mostly related to the larger diameter of the gun at the breech. I reamed out the opening to accommodate the new tube and added a new lip around its circumference from a ring of rod that was wrapped around a dowel to get it circular. New holes were drilled for mounting bolts and the bolts were simulated using styrene rod. I sanded them to a domed shape and then cut screw slots in the faces with a razor saw. They were then cut to length and glued into the previously drilled holes in the mantlet. The completed gun and mantlet was not added to the turret until detailing work was finished.

I used a number of styrene and wire parts to detail hatches, and added a periscope to the split ring tank commander's hatch. I added antenna mounts and used brass rod for the actual antennae. I added some texture to the turret using liquid cement to soften the plastic and stippling with a brush, followed by a second application of liquid cement to smooth



Overall view of a Sherman VC, showing the lack of a bow machine gun and the additional turret hatch for the loader.

rough spots. U.S. casting methods resulted in a fairly smooth finish, so I did not want it to look like a Tankograd slag pile. Once the details were done I attached the gun and mantlet.

The MP M4A4 hull was part of their short-lived Israeli M50 Sherman kit. I had a couple of them and had gotten a deal when I bought them. The hull went together well and I added the bogie trucks, wheels, sprockets and idlers from the *Tamiya* M4A3 kit with no difficulties. It was necessary to add a few items unique to the Firefly. I added the armored plug that was placed over the location where the hull mounted .30 cal. would have gone. I fashioned it out of laminated sheet styrene, cut filed and sanded to shape to match the source photos and drawings. A tow cable and brackets were attached running from the left front to rear over the sponson.

The long 17-pounder gun required a set of longer cleaning rods, mounted on the left rear sponson. I made the rod sections from styrene rod and the brackets from thin sheet plastic. A retaining strap was fashioned from sheet lead and wrapped around the cleaning rods. Next up was the unique travel lock mounted on the left rear engine deck. I scratch built it from plastic strip and used a thin section of brass tubing for the lock itself. The result was most pleasing. I scratch built the large stowage box that was mounted across the rear of the hull and attached it.

I had obtained a copy of Concord's book on tank fighting in Normandy that had a profile of a Firefly "Velikiy Luki." The caption identified the vehicle as the Firefly that knocked out the Tiger I operated by Michael Wittmann, an SS Panzer

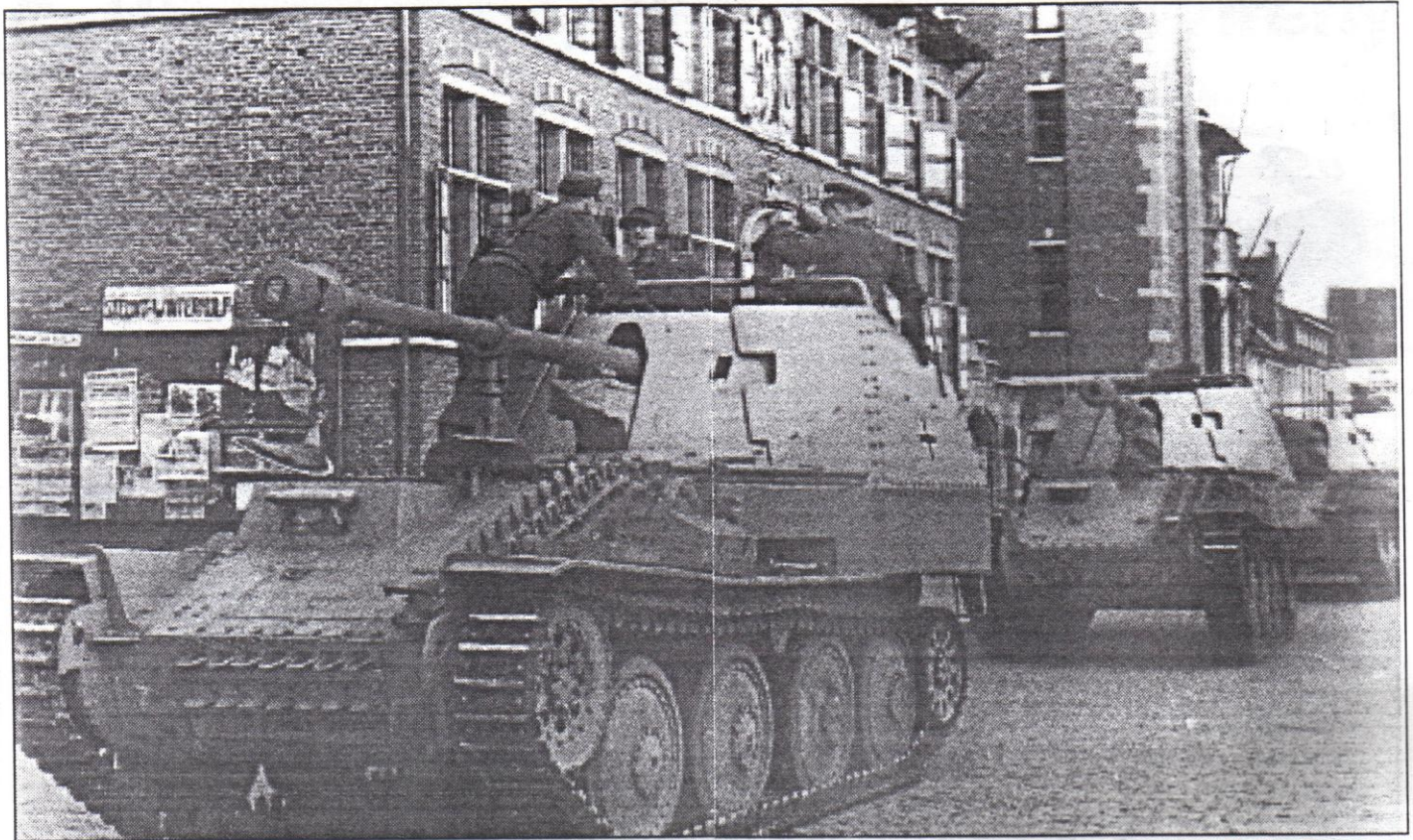
commander of legendary stature who had run riot against British formations earlier in the campaign after similar deadly performance on the Eastern Front. I could not resist the notion of the Uber Ace being zapped by a British Sherman.

The overall paint scheme was *Tamiya* Olive Drab, over sprayed with *Tamiya* Khaki Drab. Most British tanks were painted in Shade 15 Olive Drab, a color similar to the U.S. OD, but not an exact match. I added a bit of dust, stains etc. to make it look used. I used a little clear gloss on panels that were to receive decals. There were very large tactical numbers on the turret, a small tactical number and sign on the rear of the armored radio box, the name VELIKIY LUKI on both sides. I applied the large turret numbers in red.

After painting was the attachment of tracks. I did not want to buy aftermarket tracks and found enough photos showing British Shermans running on U.S. steel chevron tracks that I decided to use the *Tamiya* kit tracks. I cut off all the duckbill extenders, then reversed the tracks so that the trimmed side was inboard, and out of view, and the chevrons were still oriented in the right direction. The tracks and running gear were painted in a dusty brown overspray, and then the tracks were dry brushed with steel and highlighted with silver.

I used thin wood strips to force the top runs of track down onto the skids for a more realistic appearance, securing them with white glue. Once the glue was dry I removed the wood shims.

With that, I had a big-gun Sherman in 1:35. *DML* now has a kit of the Firefly, but I know my model has the details right.



A German SS tank destroyer section prepares to move out during fighting in Germany in 1945. The Marder was replaced by the Hetzer on the production lines, but was successful enough to remain in combat to the end of the war.

Tamiya hits the mark with its Marder III

By Jim Priete

When I was attending the Pasadena Scale Modelers contest recently, it was announced that representative from *Tamiya* had arrived with a test shot of their new "Irving" kit. I rushed to the display room to take a look since I had heard of this kit a couple of weeks before. What I wasn't prepared for was the other test shot that was also on display, a Marder III in all its glory. The Marder III was a Czech PzKw 38(t) chassis mounting the Russian 76.2 Model 36 anti-tank gun re-chambered to take the German 75mm round. Later versions mounted the German L/46 Pak 40/175mm anti-tank gun. The Marder had a crew of four and had a top speed of 25 mph.

Since this is one of my favorite armored vehicles, I was pleasantly surprised to say the least! When it was my turn to look at the test shot I was quite pleased, *Tamiya* had outdone themselves this time, I said to myself.

Now that I actually have one of the kits I can only reaffirm my first impressions. This is a beautiful kit. Molded in the usual yellow-tan plastic that all of their newer German vehicles can be found in, this has to be the best 38t chassis ever produced. All of the basic suspension components are separate pieces, and the inner surfaces of the road wheels are properly detailed. Rivet detail is depicted on both inner and outer surfaces when necessary, and this includes the inner framework that the outer plates would have been riveted onto.

The hull is engineered so that all the fine detail remains after assembly. There is some basic detail on the hull floor, just enough if someone should look down inside. Most of the add-

on parts to the outer hull, towing pintles, boxes, tools, etc., are also separate which will add to the appearance of the finished model. The tube frame basket on the engine deck that served as seating for the crew or as a receptacle for shell casings is very nicely molded as a three-piece assembly.

There are two crew figures included that have separate heads, arms and torsos which allows for reposing or modification, I suppose. The travel lock for the gun is also a gem. Which leads me to the gun assembly! I counted 28 pieces for the gun, not including the gun shield and the equipment that is stowed on its interior. The pieces are typically well detailed, including the muzzle brake which was unique for the Russian gun... Hmm, I wonder how the Marder III gun assembly would look on the *Alan Marder II D* kit? An expensive solution, but then I would have a spare hull for my 38t recon tank conversion... Oh, sorry, I'm letting myself wander off a bit!

Now where was I? Oh! The tracks come as the usual vinyl one piece things that *Tamiya* is so fond of, although they are nicely detailed on both sides. I still think that tracks from *Model Kasten* or *Fruimodelismo* would look better. The decals are pure *Tamiya*, nicely printed but too thick and therefore absolutely useless, and the instruction sheet is also typical, blah, blah, blah.

So if you like Kraut-machines or are thinking of building your first armor subject, then this is the kit for you. If the price of about \$40 makes you more athsmatic than a Bolivian brass band, then find a cheaper source, they're out there. Just buy this kit and enjoy it, you won't be disappointed.

JUNE MINUTES

At the June meeting, we were pleased to see that Steve Travis has made a successful comeback from his recent heart ailment and was back less than a month after surgery. The club gave Steve a 1940 Willys model to help his recovery, and we expect to see it built in no time!

In model talk... Ben Pada gave the short and to the point rundown on his current projects: a beautifully finished F-84G *Thunderjet* from the *Tamiya* kit, topped off with *AeroMaster* decals; a *Tamiya* P-51B *Mustang* with the *Jaguar* interior and a final finish of *Gunze Sangyo* and *SnJ* paints; and an *Academy* F-86 *Sabre* with the *Jaguar* interior. Ron Wergin's *Tamiya* 1:700 *Kiso* is the first ship he's built as an adult, and it came out quite nice! Ron also did a bang up job on his *Verlinden* German soldier figure, and his *Esci* 1:48 Saab Viggen looked good, although he said it was a horrible kit. The assembly wasn't what got him riled up... it was the crazy Swedish splinter scheme that drove Ron crazy! Robin Powell says he measured the *Hasegawa Spitfire IX* on a laser-based calibration device, and he says its length is accurate to within 1.93 scale inches with the pointed rudder and .040 inches with the regular rudder! He says it is a superb kit and has his ready for paint. Robin also has much of the basic shape of the AH-56 *Cheyenne* built; Robin is building a 1:48 scratchbuilt model of this attack helicopter. Chris Bucholtz has put a lot of scratchbuilt detail and etched brass into the cockpit of the *Hasegawa F-117 Nighthawk*; the model, despite being relatively new, has considerable problems with fit. A better fitting model is Chris' *Tempest Mk. V*, built from the *Academy* kit. The only tough seam, he says, is the one inside the radiator scoop. If Pastoria Aguirre's latest effort to "reeducate" himself about car modeling is any indication, he's going to graduate magna cum lauda! He's using a *Celica* kit to get the hang of painting, from the body finish to drybrushing to replicating a leather interior. He's also done a mess of work to improve the model, with a folded seat and an improved suspension among the most visible improvements. Kent McClure's space taxi is progressing, with a control panel and airlock warning lights being the newest and most visible changes. Kent says he hates the crew figures, which may end up as "space hippies!" Mark Schynert's *Supermodel Bv 138* has a beautiful beaching trolley, but he says the rest of the model is not so aesthetically pleasing out of the box! Mark scratchbuilt the interior, including new turrets made from *Falcon* transparencies, *Airfix* B-24 mounts and *Aires* resin machine guns. Mark's next tricky task will be getting the booms and tail attached and aligned. Greg Plummer's *Pend Oreille CM.170 Magister* trainer "fits horribly," but that shouldn't stop Greg from building the plane as one of the few aircraft ever operated by the Katangan Air Force. Ron Wergin gave the old *Monogram* F-80 *Shooting Star*

a Korean War paint job, and he dressed up the *Monogram* Ostwind flak tank in a very convincing version of the late war ambush scheme. Cliff Kranz took two old Cessna 180s from *Monogram* and kitbashed them into a "Super Cessna" forward air control aircraft in Vietnam camouflage. Cliff also brought in his Peterbilt tow truck, a model he made during his days in the army by scratchbuilding everything from the cab back. Bill Ferrante was exceptionally glad that his *Fujimi* A5M2 "Claude" was finished, and his effort to build an entry for our club contest this month, a *Monogram* F11C *Goshawk*, wasn't complete but was looking good nonetheless. The fit of *ICM's* 1:48 Yak-9R is a little iffy, says Laramie Wright, because the engine causes fit problems. Otherwise, he says, this is a neat little model! Braulio Escoto landed on the table a selection of 1:48 *Panthers* he's built over the years, including the "Blue Tail Fly" and its opposite number, a *Panther* with a silver tail and a blue nose. Lou Orselli says that *Falcon's* Reggiane Re 2005 is the best model of this Italian fighter you can buy. The vacuform parts fit "unbelievably well," and the cockpit is supplied in resin with metal parts. The decals are by *Tauro*. Also from *Tauro* is Lou's Bucker Bu 181 Bestmann trainer, and Lou has a Grumman J2F *Duck* from *Classic Airframes* that he may add to his collection sometime soon. Alan Weber was almost completely satisfied with *Tamiya's* A-1H *Skyraider*, but he did add a propeller from a *Monogram* kit to finish it off. And the model of the month goes to... Bert McDowell's *Bogue*-class escort carrier! This *Skywave* kit served primarily as a test bed for painting and brass parts, he says, but the result was a very nice model worthy of the time Bert devoted to it. This was not the last award that Bert's *Bogue* would win this summer...!

In our quarterly contest, "Monogram Mastery," Lou Orselli entered a T-28 *Trojan* in 1:48, converted to a Laotian "Farm Gate" attack version with the use of Yankee ejection systems and underwing ordnance from *Kendall Model Company*. Laramie Wright took the F11C biplane in 1:72 and built it up as a VF-3 fighter, complete with chrome yellow wings and a red tail. He also rescribed and opened up the engine and nose areas of a *Monogram Airacobra*, finishing it with the armament and exhausts of a P-40 (know to pilots as "the equivalent of a P-40 with a Zero on its tail"). And the winners were: In third, with a P-47D finished in the markings of David Schilling's "Hairless Joe," was Laramie Wright. In second, Greg Plummer took the much newer Fw 190 and converted it to a catapult-launched floatplane. And the winner, with a fictitious Navy version of the powerful P-47N, was Greg again! Greg gave the plane a tailhook and folding wings to prepare it for participation in "Operation Olympic," the invasion of Japan. Congratulations for all our winners!

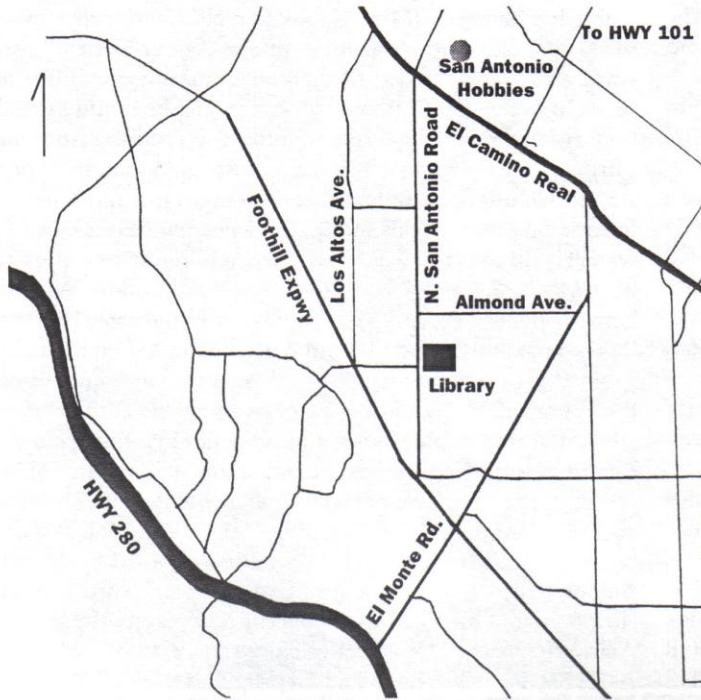
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