

## Relampago: The F-47 in Venezuelan service

By Gabriel Lee

Over the Venezuelan Gulf, September 1952—Like all international incidents and border disputes, this incident had (on the surface at least) started innocently enough. It had all started on September 1, 1952 when two Colombian warships, ARC (Armada Republica de Colombia or Colombian Navy)

*Almirante Padilla* and *ARC Almirante Brion* (Tacoma-Class Patrol Frigates, ex-PF 29 U.S.S. *Groton* and ex-PF 51 U.S.S. *Burlington*, respectively), dropped anchor very close to the islands that comprised *Los Monjes del Sur Archipelago* and

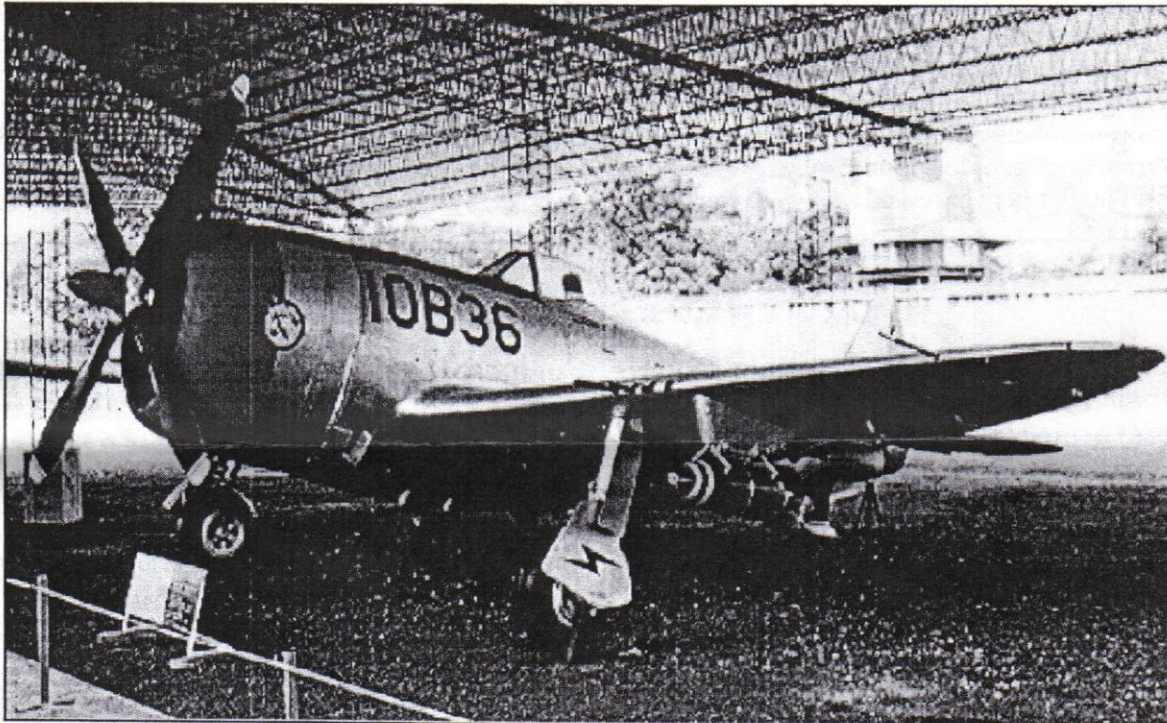
commenced gunnery practice. While barren and uninhabitable, the two islands had strategic importance much larger than their collective size. Their location dominated the entrance to Lake Maracaibo, Venezuela's largest center for oil production.

This affront to national sovereignty had to be answered somehow. Venezuelan Naval forces had sent in response a pair of *Flower-Class* corvettes. Venezuela owned six former *Flower-Class* Corvettes: *ARV* (Armada Republica de Venezuela or Venezuelan Navy) *Constitucion* (ex-HCMS *Amherst* K127), *ARV Libertad* (ex-HCMS *Battleford* K165), *ARV Independencia* (ex-HCMS *Dunvegan* K177), *ARV Federacion* (ex-HCMS *Kamsack* K171), *ARV Patria* (ex-HCMS *Oakville* K178), and *ARV Victoria* (ex-HCMS *Wetaskiwin* K175). The

pair would arrive shortly, until then the FAV would have to deal with the Colombians. Which Corvettes were sent has been lost to history.

Captain Juan Alberto Delgado peered into the distance from the cockpit of his F-47D-30-RA. Surrounding his aircraft were seven other *Thunderbolts* (the last surviving planes of 30 purchased in

1947) and a number of B-25J *Mitchells* of the Venezuelan Air Force. In the distance he could see *Los Monjes del Sur* islands along with the two Colombian warships—*ARC Almirante Padilla* and *ARC Almirante*



Venezuela's first six F-47s arrived in 1947, with 22 more arriving in 1949. Their last three months of front-line service were their most eventful as they faced off against Colombian warships. This one survives in a museum.

*Brion*. Both Colombia and Venezuela claimed ownership of the two islands, uninhabitable rocks in the middle of the ocean that barely showed at high tide. There wasn't even enough room for a landing strip, noted Captain Delgado. The islands themselves (726 meters long by 243 meters wide and 70 meters at their highest point) were not the target of this exercise. His mission was to send a message—the Colombian military was not welcome in these waters. He banked his aircraft and began what would look to those on the ship like a strafing run. The FAV and FAC ended up "skirmishing" by doing a series of simulated attacks and fallbacks. When the FAV did drop ordnance, it was close to the ARC ships—far enough from the ship that the crew knew they weren't the target but close

Continued on page 10

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



## EDITOR'S BRIEF

The 2003 Nationals were a lot of fun for those of us who attended. The numbers were down—probably thanks to the 4th of July holiday—but the modeling was of a very high caliber. Our own Roy Sutherland took a first with his Spitfire 24 and Vladimir Yakubov won three awards for his Russian ships. This means that all of the best of show winners in our region are now ineligible at local contests—start building, trophy hounds!

The Nationals in 2005 will be held in Atlanta, the only chapter presenting a bid. Atlanta puts on a very large contest annually, so their show ought to be very well run. Next year is the Phoenix event, and the team down in Arizona is one of the best groups in the IPMS. It's safe to say the nationals are in good hands for the next two years.

The most important news to come out of the show came from behind the scenes. The people running the IPMS e-board—or at least the most important members of that group—have been listening to what you modelers are saying, both members and non-members alike. A thorough proposal to revamp the Journal has been developed and the e-board is committed to seeing that plan executed. They are starting to

make steering decisions based on input from surveys and other data collection tools, some of which have been facilitated by our rejuvenated website ([www.ipmsusa.org](http://www.ipmsusa.org)). And at the regional coordinators' meeting, we approved a method for regions to vote on their own new RCs, something that we in R9 first proposed in 1995. Little by little, the IPMS/USA is starting to better reflect its membership. If you want to chime in yourself, go to the web page and send an e-mail to the proper officer—most of them have their e-mail addresses listed on the page. For many years, the e-board talked and expected us to listen; now, it's just the opposite.

Our next contest is in Fresno, and we have three events after that are "weekenders" on the West Coast. The editor can vouch for all three contests as being worthwhile events—especially the Antelope Valley contest. Why does he say that? Well, the editor was presented with a \$100 check for our veterans' hospital model drive from the AVG guys while in Oklahoma City, delivered by hand by ex-Marine, current bang-seat fixer and necktie-ower Nick Kiriokos. Thanks, Gentlemen! It will go to a very good cause.

—The Editor

## CONTEST CALENDAR

August 10: **IPMS/Central Valley Scale Modelers** host their **15th Annual Scale Model Show and Contest** at the Holland Elementary School in Fresno, California. This year's theme is "WWII European Theatre of Operations, 1939-1945." For more information, call Nick Bruno at (559) 229-3675 or Jim Cavin at (559) 584-5796.

August 16, 2003: the event planned by **IPMS/Mt Diablo** has been cancelled.

Sept. 13, 2003: **IPMS Portland Oregon** and the Evergreen Aviation Museum Present the **2003 Model Show and Contest** at the Evergreen Aviation Museum, 3685 Cumulus Ave., McMinville, Oregon. This year's theme is "Record Breakers." For more information, call Brian Yee at (503) 309-6137 or e-mail him at [BYee1959@msn.com](mailto:BYee1959@msn.com).

Oct. 11, 2002: The event planned by the **IPMS/Redding Dambusters** has been cancelled.

Oct. 19, 2003: **IPMS/Orange County** hosts **OrangeCon 2003**, the Region 8 Regional and Convention, at the Sequoia Conference Center, 7530 Orangethorpe Ave. in Buena Park, California.

For more information, call Nat Richards at (949) 631-7142 or e-mail him at [ocipms@aol.com](mailto:ocipms@aol.com).

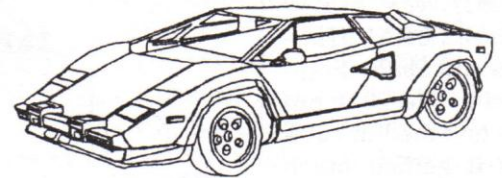
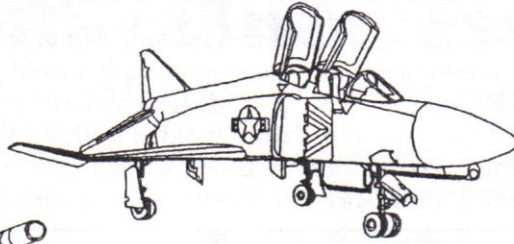
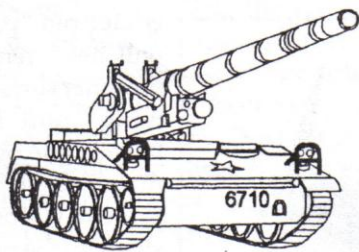
Nov. 1: The **Antelope Valley Group** hosts **Desert Classic VII** at Antelope Valley College, 3041 West Ave. K in Lancaster, California. For more information, call Michael Warman at (661) 256-7069 or e-mail him at [michael.warman@imco.com](mailto:michael.warman@imco.com).

Nov. 15: **IPMS/Silver Wings** hosts their **annual contest** in Sacramento, Calif. More details to follow. For more information, e-mail Scott Bell at [SnJmodprods@aol.com](mailto:SnJmodprods@aol.com).

Feb. 22, 2004: **Silicon Valley Scale Modelers** host the eleventh annual **Kickoff Classic** at Napredak Hall, 770 Montague Expressway, San Jose. The theme is "Stars and Stripes." For more information, call Chris Bucholtz at (408) 723-3995.

March 27, 2004: **IPMS/Fresno Scale Modelers** host the **Region 9 Convention and Contest**, to be held at the Fresno Air National Guard station or, in the event of national defense conflicts, at an alternate site. More details to be announced.





**IPMS**  
**CENTRAL VALLEY SCALE MODELERS**  
**15th Annual Scale Model**  
**Show and Contest**

**August 10th, 2003**

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Special Theme:  
W W II European  
Theatre of Operations  
1939 - 1945

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Raffles & Special Awards as follows:

Best of Show, Senior  
Best of Show, Junior  
Best of Show, Aircraft

Best of Show, Armor  
Best of Show, Civilian  
WW II E.T.O. Award

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**Holland Elementary School Cafeteria**  
**10AM to 4PM**



# Classic Airframes tackles the Reggiane Re. 2001

By Bradley D. Chun

The Reggiane Re.2001 was a result of the development of the Re.2000 radial engine fighter. The Re.2001 utilized the same wing, undercarriage and empennage as the Re.2000, but the proven Daimler-Benz DB601 inline engine powered the Re.2001. The powerplant upgrade brought the performance of the Re.2001 to a similar standard as the Macchi C.202 *Folgore*. At high altitudes, the RAF's *Hurricanes* and *Spitfires* outclassed the Re. 2001, but at low and medium altitudes it gained much praise from its pilots for its superb maneuverability.

Since production priority was given to Macchi fighters, production of the Re.2001 was sporadic and slow. Between 1941 and mid-1943 only 237 aircraft were produced. As well as the

basic fighter-interceptor version, the Re.2001 was produced as a night fighter, Re.2001CN *Caccia Notturmo*, equipped with two 20mm cannons, and a bomber version was also produced, the Re.2001CB. The Re.2001CB was equipped with a bomb rack capable of carrying a 220- or 550-pound bomb. On rare occasion, it would carry a 1,400-pound bomb that obviously exceeded the manufacturer's specifications.

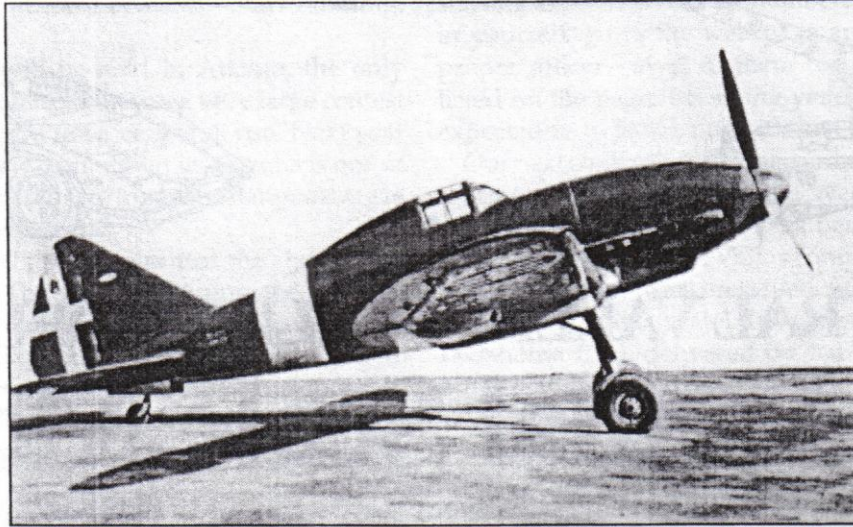
The Re.2001 equipped the 2nd and 22nd Gruppo in the Mediterranean area as well as home-defense units in Italy. The Italian Co-Belligerent Air Force also used Re.2001s operationally from 1943 until mid-1944.

*Classic Airframes'* kit is topped with a Don Greer illustration, and inside the box the modeler will find an instruction sheet, a painting and marking guide, two sprues of injection-molded parts, a bag of resin parts, a set of vacuform canopies, and a decal sheet.

The instruction sheet is a single folded sheet containing brief history of the Re.2001, specifications, universal assembly symbols, paint reference guide, parts layout diagram and eight-step assembly process. The instruction sheet is clearly defined and one should have no problems with locating parts and building the model. Detail painting and assembly instructions are included in the assembly process for what appears to be a quick build out-of-the-box.

As with prior *Classic Airframes* releases, this kit also appears to have been tooled for a low-pressure epoxy mold, but it isn't, as evidenced by the shiny surfaces of the parts. This is the first *Classic Airframes* model to be molded in a metal tool. The two sprues of injection-molded parts contain the upper wing halves, lower wing section, horizontal stabilizers, fuselage halves, upper engine cowl, centerline rack, spinner halves, landing gear doors, landing gear legs, radiator housings, wheel halves, propeller blades, antennae, and tail wheel. As

is the case with prior *Classic Airframes* kits, there will be some cleanup along the mold part lines. With that being said, the parts do have some minimal flash cleanup, but are nicely and fully molded with no loss of detail. Panel lines are of the recessed, scribed type, and no sink marks could be found. As with other *Classic Airframes* releases, there are a few raised



Using the DB601 engine, Reggiane created the Re. 2001, an effective fighter, from the airframe of the Re.2000.

ejector pin "pads" that will need removal on the inner surfaces of the wings and fuselage halves. The only detail that needs to be added to the kit will be the drag struts on the main landing gear legs from styrene rod. Even the fabric surfaces look "in scale" and are not overly emphasized, and the trailing edges of the wings appear quite thin also.

The bag of resin parts contain the detailing parts for the cockpit, ex-

hausts stacks, radiators, engine intake, and main landing gear bays. All of these parts are nicely molded with no air bubbles or pinholes to be found. The cockpit parts have some fine detail molded to them that will pop out with a nice wash once painted. The seat has the harnesses molded on. A very nice touch is the clear, clear red and clear green resin identification lights.

Two vacuform canopies are included in this kit for those hamfisted like me, or for those who would like to have their canopy posed/folded open. The frames are nicely raised, making masking an easy task, and will aid in removal from the carrier sheet. A dip in Future should make these canopies crystal clear.

The painting and marking guide provides the modeler with the painting and decal placement for two versions, and includes FS numbers for the primary colors of Verde Oliva Scuro (dark green), and Grigio Azzuro Chiaro (light grey).

The decals are provided for a Re.2001 flown by Sergente Maggiore Giovanni Dringoli, 358th Squadriglia, 2nd Stormo, and for a Re.2001 flown by 362nd Squadriglia, 22nd Gruppo, Sicily, 1942. The decals are nicely printed with minimal carrier film and appear thin. No problems were found with registration, and they should apply easily enough.

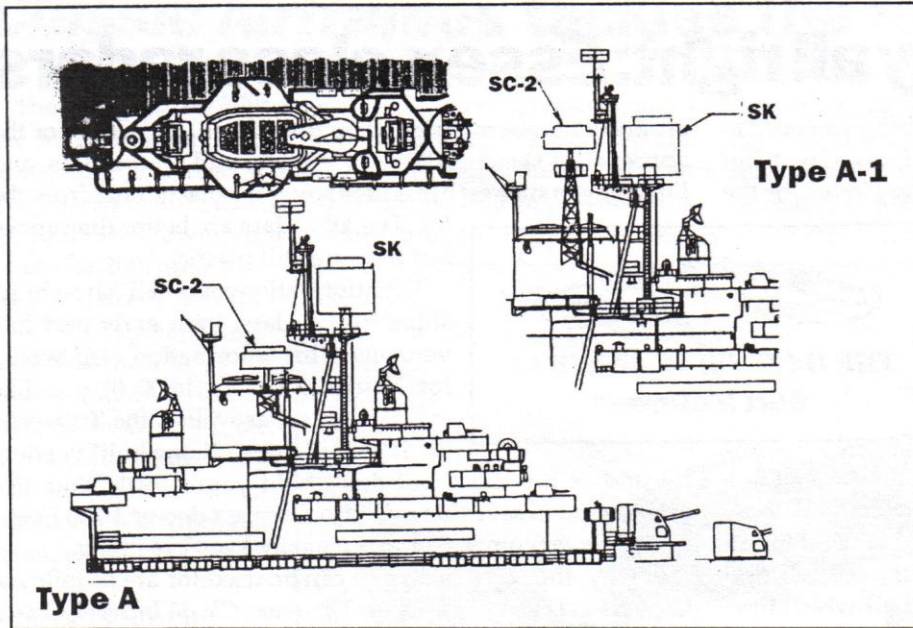
*Classic Airframes* is a company that is known for its subject matter. They have produced subjects that this modeler thought that he would never see in injection form, and maybe, just maybe, there would be a slim chance that a vacuform kit existed. This kit may appear to be a limited run kit, but it includes resin details that only an aftermarket company would provide. At last, 1:48 Italian aircraft modelers have another aircraft model that can be displayed next to their Macchi C.202s and 205s. I know at least one modeler that was happy to see this subject released.



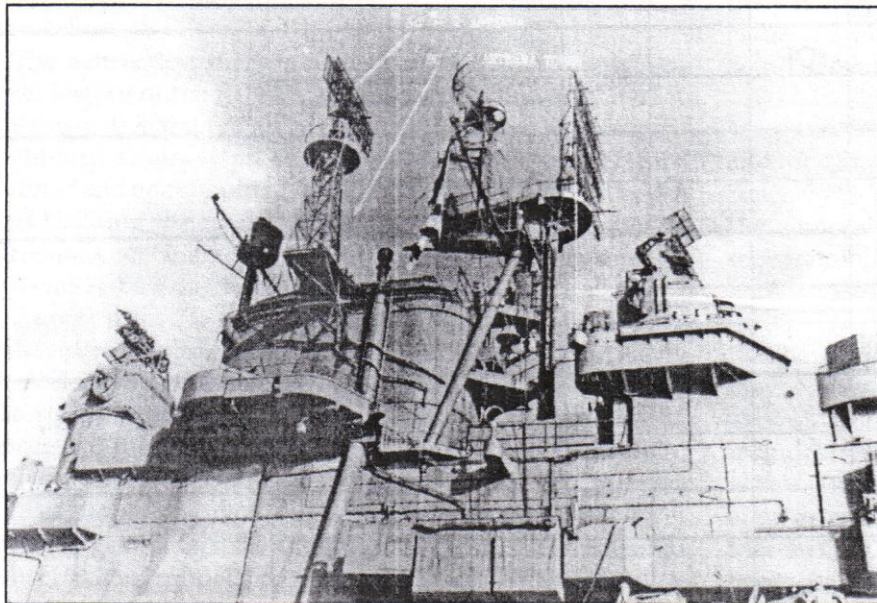
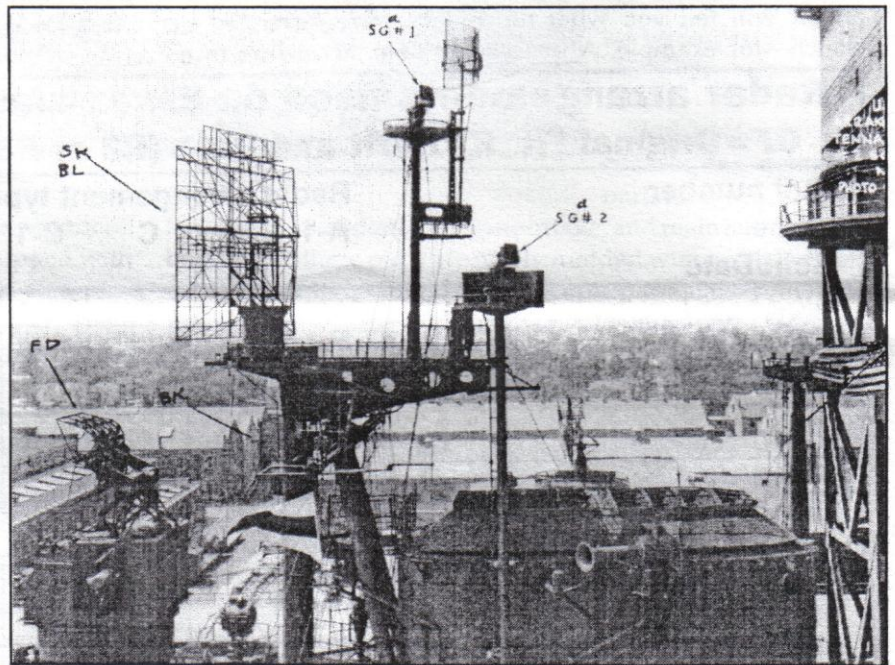




# Type A and A-1



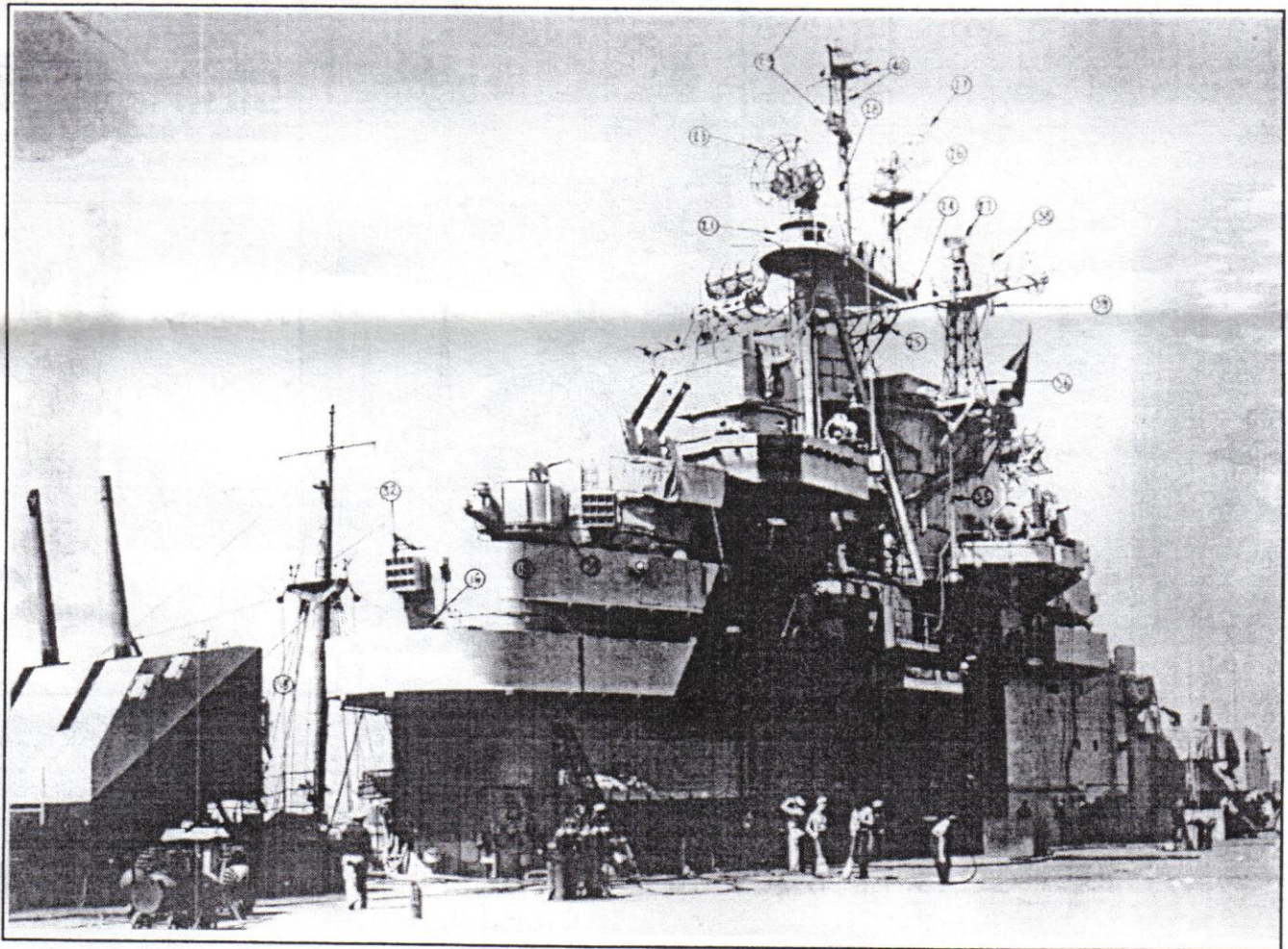
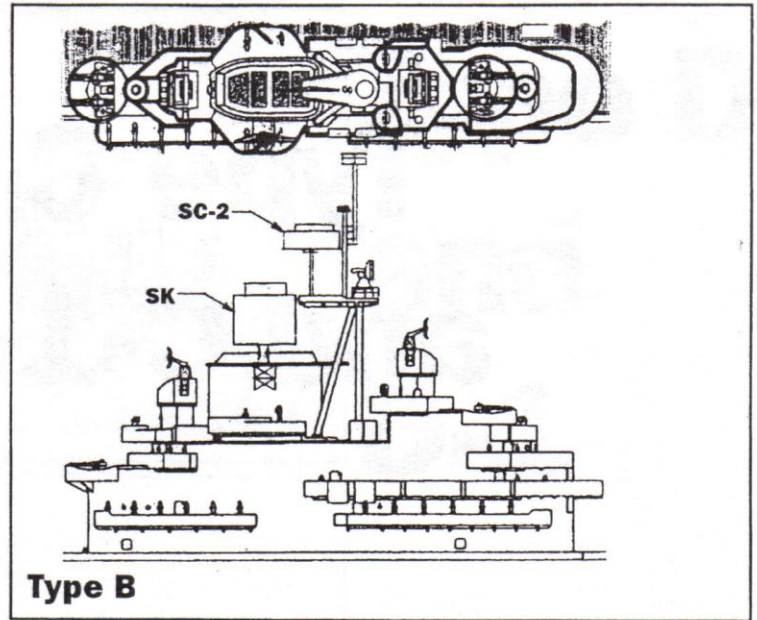
A Type A array: the U.S.S. *Intrepid's* masts as she was completed. Originally, the mast that carried the aft SG radar was positioned at the aft end of the stack. By Sept. 10, 1943, it had been moved to the location shown here, but the old mast was left in place.



A Type A-1 array: U.S.S. *Essex* in August 1943. Note the new tower for the SG antenna.



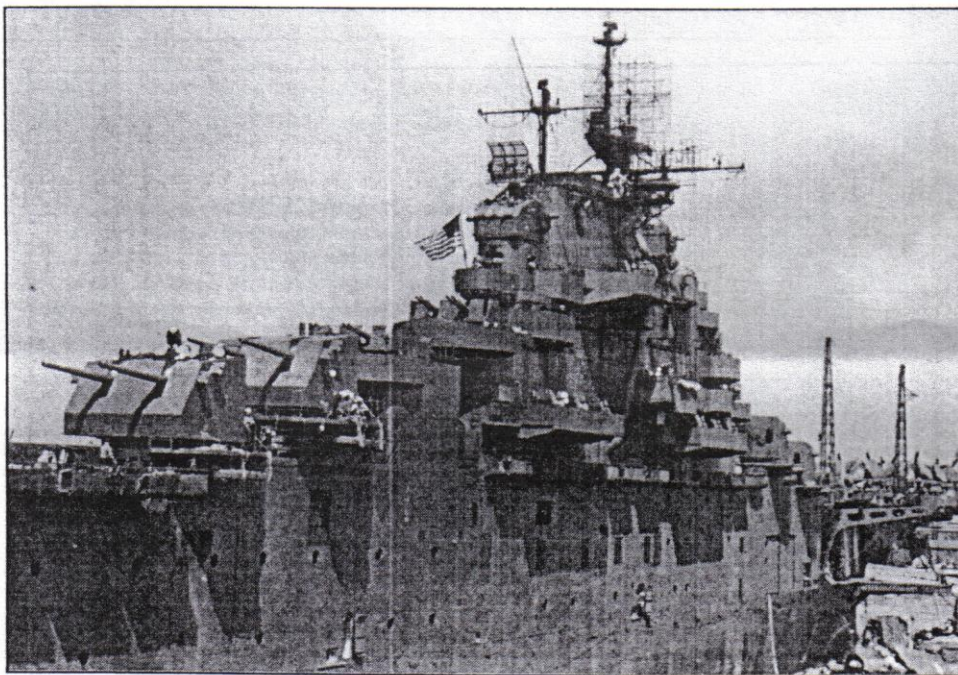
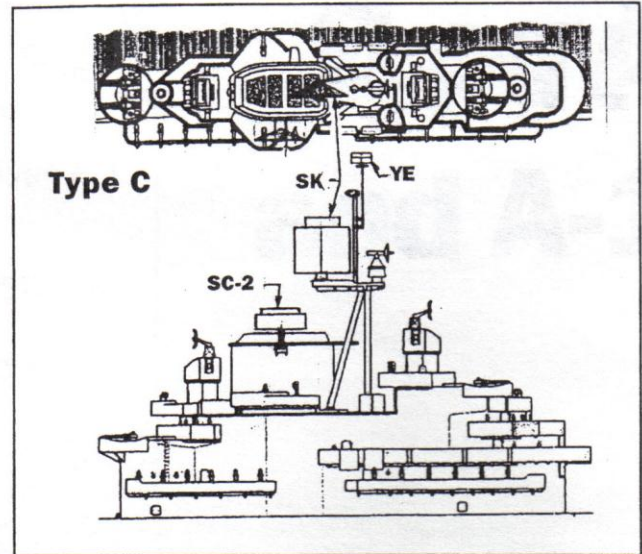
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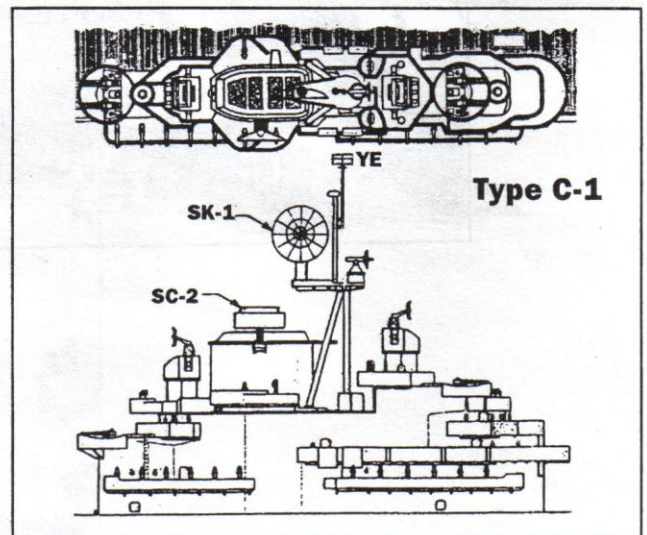
**A Type B array: U.S.S. Essex after her 1944 refit. The radars have been rearranged and SM radar has been added at the fore end of the mast platform.**



# Type C and C-1

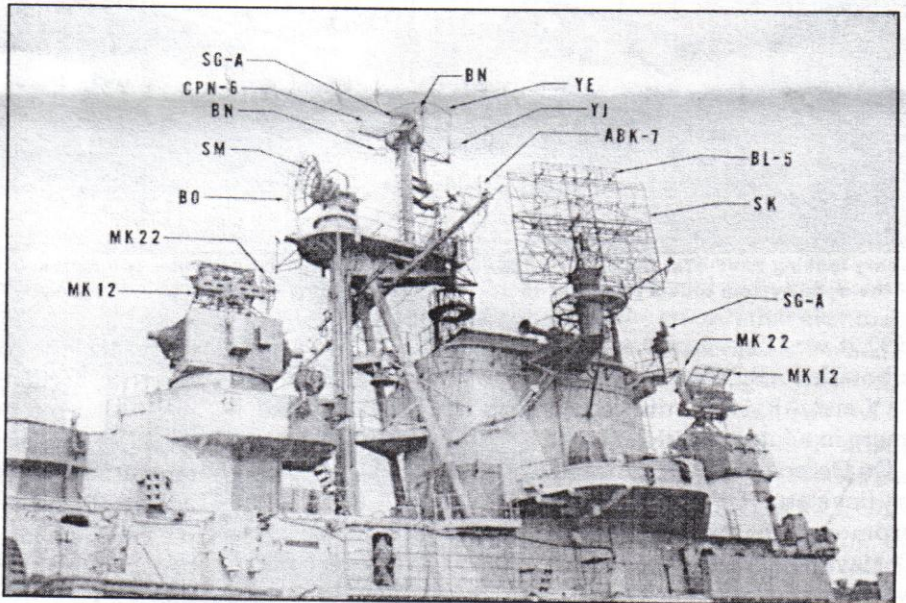
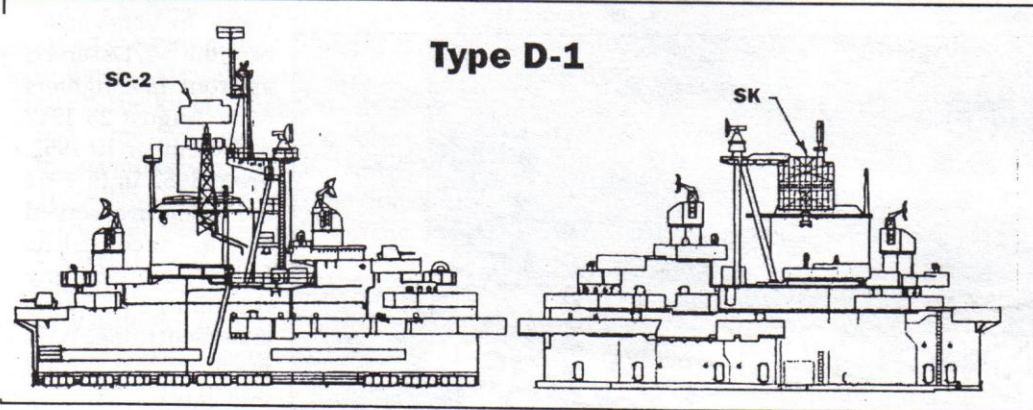
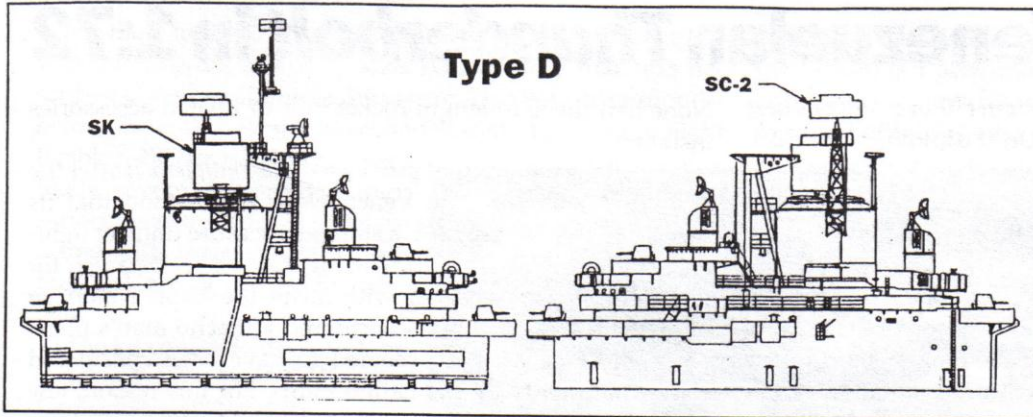


A Type C array: U.S.S. Yorktown in 1944. The YE antenna is not visible in this photo, although its mast may be seen.





# Type D and D-1



**A Type D-1 Array: Two views of U.S.S. Yorktown in September 1944. The big SK radar has been moved aft to make room for an SM fighter-control set on the foremast.**



# FAV F-47s: Venezuelan *Thunderbolt* in 1:72

Continued from page 1

enough to get them nervous. It wasn't in either country's best interest to get into an all-out war. Until diplomacy worked, the FAV would have to continue flying their F-47Ds, rapidly burning up any flying hours left in their airframes. The incident lasted an entire week, with the F-47Ds flying almost continuously.

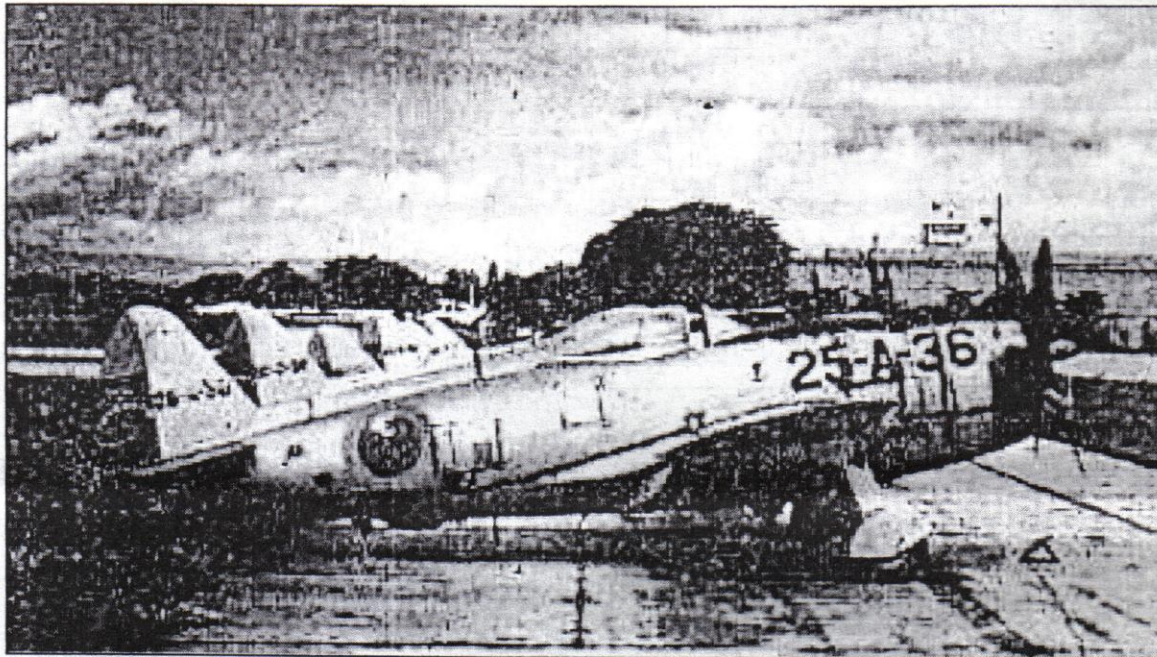
After a week of "shots across the bow," the ARC decided that it was not worthwhile to go to war over some barren rocks in the middle of the ocean, and left the area in short order. Colombian newspapers ran angry editorials about this decision—they felt that the archipelago belonged to Colombia. In

None had the zero-length rocket rails or related accessories installed.

Like all the nations that purchased the *Thunderbolt* after the Second World War, the Venezuelans understood that its service life would be short, a stopgap measure until jet fighters arrived from the north. The big *Relampago* (Spanish for thunderbolt) was popular with all of the Latin American pilots who flew it. It was considered a macho man's plane while the F-51 *Mustang* seemed to have been considered somewhat dainty by the Latino pilots. For this reason, few Latin American air forces adopted the *Mustang* into their

ranks. In Venezuela's case, the F-47Ds served as front line fighters from August 28 1947 to December 10 1952. From 1952 until 1954 the *Relampago* served as a second-line fighter. By 1956 any remaining F-47s were either sent to the FAV's museum or turned into gate guards.

Venezuela has had a border dispute with Colombia since just after independence. Because of the dispute and other military matters, Colombia and Venezuela were frequently at odds. When the FAV received its F-47Ds they decided to



**Weary-looking FAVF-47s. The plane in the foreground displays the standard FAV codes. Often, the accurate use of the code system took a backseat to deceiving neighboring countries about how many F-47s the FAV had.**

1992 it was *deja vu* all over again, when ARC *Caldas* and submarine ARC *Tyrona* entered the same waters. Again the FAV and ARV were dispatched to deal with this incursion (more in a future article).

On December 10, 1952 the F-47D was relegated to secondary line status. On that same day Captain Juan A. Delgado got promoted to the rank of Major and commanded the DeHavilland *Vampire* squadron—in 1952 only three aircraft were physically in Venezuela. Eventually Juan Delgado would become the first Venezuelan to break the sound barrier over Venezuelan skies. He would retire as a Major General.

The P-47D *Thunderbolt's* story did not end with World War II and the birth of the jet. The *Thunderbolt* (and several other veteran designs) simply went "south of the border." The first operators of the *Thunderbolt* were Brazil and Mexico. The Venezuelan Air Force soon followed. Since the fighters had been purchased in August of 1947 (a month after the USAF was born), the designation of "P" for pursuit had been revised into "F" for fighter, making the FAV's planes technically F-47Ds. Thirty TF-47Ds were purchased by Venezuela, to be exact. Most of the Latin American *Thunderbolts* were "bubble top" *Thunderbolts* with a handful of "razorback" versions.

reorganize the Air Force. The Fighter Squadron was divided into two sections: section A and section B. In theory, the numbering of the *Thunderbolts* went something like this: airplane number-section letter-squadron number with 15 aircraft in each section. In theory, aircraft 10-B-36 stood for aircraft 10, section B, 36th squadron. In theory, that is, because the FAV was intent on not letting military rivals (mainly the FAC) figure out how many airplanes the FAV had. To avoid this the FAV used an unusual yet simple tactic: Not all the aircraft were numbered

The aircraft that were numbered had numbers that were not necessarily in sequence. Some were given higher numbers (for example 22-B-36 was the last reported unit number for the *Thunderbolt* that ended up in the Lone Star Flight museum first as "Big Ass Bird" then was repainted as "Tarheel Hal." It has been asserted that the particular aircraft in question had many other unit codes painted on it during its operational life).

Unfortunately it is now impossible to clear up what unit codes belonged to which aircraft (except the surviving gate guards and museum planes) since the records were wiped out in a flood that wrecked the old flight museum in Maracay.



The most interesting point in the FAV F-47D's service life was the incident at Los Monjes Archipelago that was described at the beginning of the article. This was three months before the F-47D went into second-line status. The last eight flyable F-47Ds in FAV service very likely severely shortened their service lives by stressing the airframe with their almost round-the-clock flying during the incident.

The kit chosen to depict a Venezuelan F-47D-30-RA is Revell of Germany's 1:72 P-47D-30. The author believes that this particular kit is a new classic, preferable to the old classics (*Hasegawa, Jo-Han*). The kit is molded in silver and comes with the Curtiss-Electric asymmetric or "paddleblade" propeller. It comes with the dorsal fin that was standard from the P-47D-30 until the P-47N. The wheels are spoked. The cockpit is very different from that found in the old classics: there is a realistically molded seat (instead of the standard "throne"), detailed instrument panel and controls. An examination of the wing halves shows indentations which one may drill out in order to make a P-47D-40. The model does have its problems, or at least idiosyncrasies. One of these is that the modeler must examine the instructions thoroughly before plastic comes anywhere near cement. For example, in building the cockpit one must insert the control column into the floor panel before anything else. One would

not realize there is a problem until placing the control column last—there is a projection on the column that fits under the seat. Later on, there is a somewhat vague reference to cementing the tail wheel well between the fuselage halves when



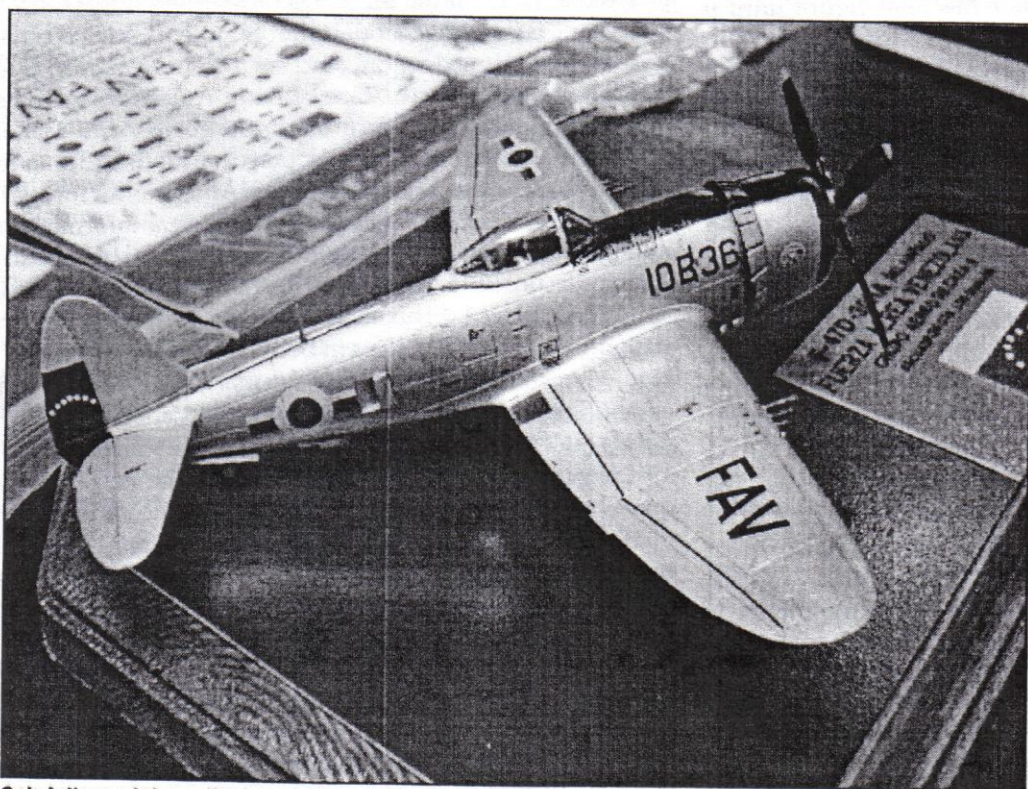
The F-47 Gabriel modeled in its days as an active fighter aircraft. The same aircraft can be seen on the cover in its preserved state.

cementing the halves together. Since there is an option for closed tail wheel well or open tail wheel well, if the modeler does not read the instructions carefully, he may find later on that an option has become nullified. Another issue is that the model's cowling is molded with open flaps. Some modelers prefer the open cowling flaps, some modelers prefer the closed cowling flaps. More on this later. Another is the way the bombs hang on their pylons. When viewed from the front or back the fins should form a box and not a diamond. A

Dremel tool or pin vise quickly fixes this.

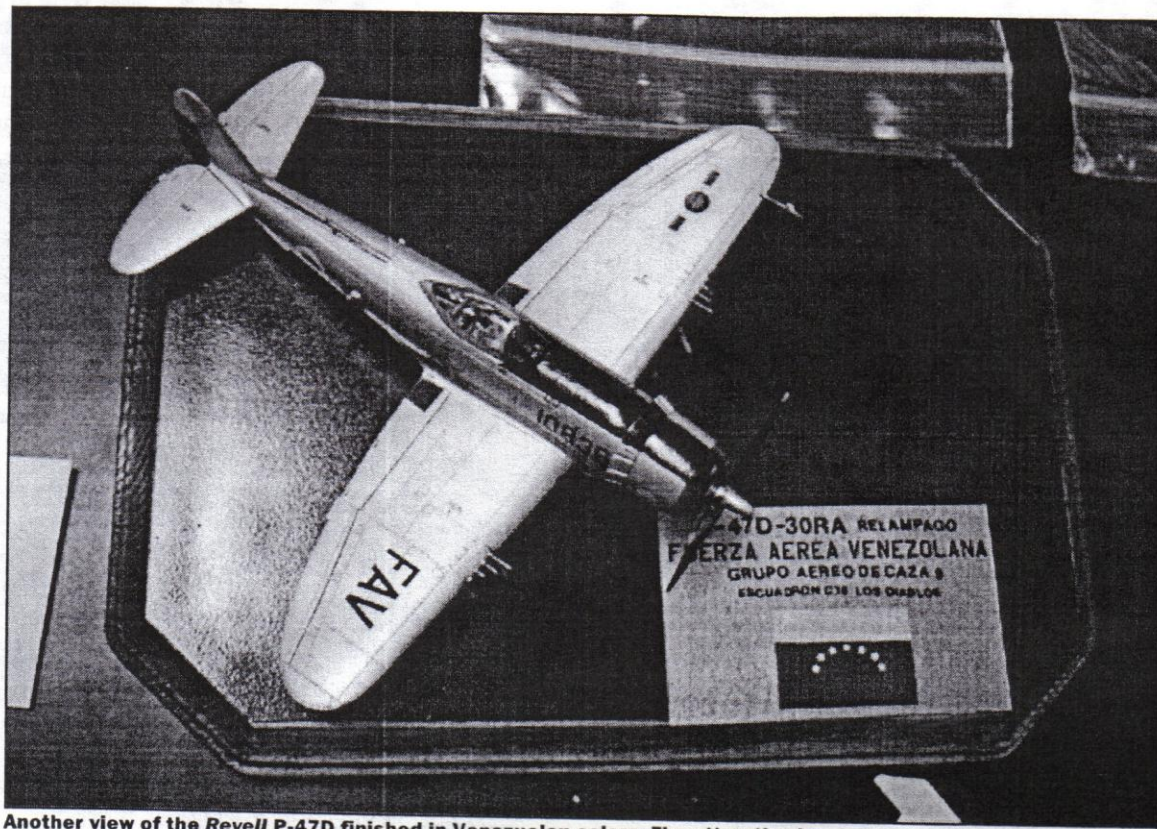
The original plan had been to build the aircraft that eventually became "Tarheel Hal," owned by the Lone Star Flight Museum. It had its own colorful history which would require its own article. Unfortunately, as was stated earlier, a flood wiped out the records and would make marking the model difficult. Plan B was to build the pristine (or at least the less abused) FAV 10-B-36. 10-B-36 is the best-restored FAV F-47D and is located in the FAV's museum near El Libertador Air Base. The USAF knew it as TF-47D-30-RA SN: 44-32809. This aircraft participated in the incident at Los Monjes. The author had built a more beat-up version of this same aircraft previously using the *Hasegawa* P-47D bubbletop.

After building, painting and installing the cockpit assembly into the left fuselage half, the au-



Gabriel's model, on display at the July Fremont Hornets meeting. The wonderful surface detail of the Revell kit is apparent in this shot.





Another view of the Revell P-47D finished in Venezuelan colors. The attractive base announces it as yet another in Gabriel's growing collection of FAV models.

thor wanted to display the model with a pilot figure inside. One thing became quite obvious when seating a leftover Hasegawa pilot figure was that the seat was too low! Reading *Detail & Scale's* book on the *Thunderbolt* gave the author the best and simplest (and in engineering terms: the "elegant") solution: place a few shims under the pilot figure until it reached the correct height. *Thunderbolt* pilots sat on their parachutes as their seat cushions. It was either build a cushion or raise the seat (after some surgery). Now you know what the author's thought process was like at assembly time. The fuselage halves were then cemented together. When the time came to install the cowling, Chris Bucholtz's words came back to the author's mind. "You have no idea how exasperating it is to cut and re-paste all those cowling flaps," he said, or at least something similar to that. Chris had told the author he was building something that seemed like a full squadron of *Thunderbolts*, using the same kit the author was using. Going the same route sounded painful, like the type of pain some people pay to be surrounded by stainless steel, strange odors and the occasional cries—often called getting a root canal. As the British are fond of saying, "in that way lies madness," the author's sanity is often questioned regardless. There is no need to give anyone more ammunition. The author then decided to go with the cowling "as is." Unfortunately this led to other problems. The usual way of making a straight line is to mask with masking tape, but with cowling flaps sticking out at various angles, this was not possible with a single strip of tape. This would make masking off the antiglare panel more difficult but not impossible. Eventually the model came together with very little filling necessary.

Painting was another story. While the fuselage itself was bare metal, the cowling came into question again. Photos of

10-B-36 show a red ring in the front of the cowling. Some photos show this ring going at least up to halfway up the cowling other photos have the ring just in the first part of the cowling. The author chose the latter version. The next puzzle would be painting the rudder with the Venezuelan tricolor; this was done with standard tape and paint (and lots of patience). The rudder was painted first and kept masked until after the fuselage was painted, the cowling ring came next, and finally the fuselage was painted in natural metal. First a light coat of white was

sprayed, followed by light coats of *Testors* buffable aluminum. The author still can't get the light misty coats that some of the bare metal experts can achieve, but this most likely requires lots of practice. Finally all masks, except for the canopy, were taken off and the model sprayed with *Testors* Glosscote. Time for the markings.

Painting is fine, but a model is not complete until it receives its markings. How does one find such obscure markings for a finished model? In the case of Latin American air forces (and the Spanish Air Force too!) you go to *Aztec Models*. *Aztecmodels.com* has a fine selection of all kinds of decals for aircraft past and present used by Latin American air forces. In fact, the business manager for *Aztec Models* informed the author that his company also makes decals for *Aeromaster*. The closest possible choice to the FAV F-47D was sheet 72-018 "Stunning *Sabres* 1." This sheet is a treat for *Sabre* aficionados with decals for F-86F *Sabres* in Bolivian, Honduran, Colombian, Venezuelan, and Argentinean markings; the last one is camouflaged and has a shark mouth. The Venezuelan F-86F decals (at least some of them) were from the same squadron and were the same size as those used on the F-47D. These decals are thin. Slide them off on a glossy surface, add a touch of *MicroSol*, and they look practically painted on. The stencil markings were straight from the kit's decal sheet, however. After painting and decaling, the author decided to only lightly weather the model.

What can be said about *Revell's* kit? It has its flaws, but any model builder with decent skills can get around them. Building aircraft used by small air forces has this bonus—you won't find too many of those on many people's shelves. What about the FAV F-47D? Sources say none are flying, but they are wrong!. Just look for "Tarheel Hal" at an air show and you will see a Venezuelan *Relampago* in flight.



# Ideas for organizing your reference library

By Mark Schynert

One of the reasons that I enjoy scale modeling so much is that it complements another hobby of mine, aviation history. Over the years, I've accumulated more than 500 books and more than 800 magazines relating to aviation, with a focus on the late 1930s and all of the 1940s (World War II, pretty much). I suspect this is not an unusual collection size for a scale modeler, particularly of 20th Century military subjects. It's always easy to find something to read or re-read, and it gives me a vast ready-reference resource for modeling. If there's a fly in the ointment, it's that memory will only take me so far if I want to track down references for a new project.

The solution to the problem of rediscovering references that are relevant to a project is to organize the data. Easy to say, but how many of us are comfortable with database software? Worse, if you don't have some other use for the database software, you'll have to pay for it too, unless you're lucky enough to get a bundled application.

I started almost 30 years ago by keeping a catalog of 4 x 6 file cards, organized by aircraft type. Each type got its own card, and I would abstract the reference with an abbreviation, and list the quality of the article on a scale of 0-4, as well as list the total number of photos by nationality, and the same for drawings. This was fine with 200 aircraft and maybe 150 books and magazines, but it was very time consuming—every time I got a new book, it would take a while to write all the stuff down. Twenty-five years ago, I wasn't really modeling at all, I wasn't married, I had no kids and my job was a very staid 9-to-5. In other words, I had a lot more free time than I do now.

Although I got my first computer in 1979, I didn't attempt to use a computer instead of the file cards until sometime in the late '80s, when I got a simple database program. I tried to design a database and got totally bogged down, since I sought to track references, kits, and details about the airplanes themselves. I was starting to get the modeling bug about this time, and was bothered by the notion that once I started building in a serious way, I would feel foolish not knowing where to look for pictures, drawings and so forth that I had somewhere in the house. The old card catalog still existed, but it was too time-consuming to keep up to date.

I finally concluded that the actual composition of the books and articles really didn't matter so much as the fact that I needed to be able to put my hands on them quickly. There had to be a solution using the computer, but I looked at the newer database program I had, and again groaned. The learning curve and the data entry time were prohibitive. Then I realized that word processors have "search" or "find" commands.

My initial attempt was the essence of simplicity—I just listed every airplane type for the WWII period, from the Abrams Explorer to the Yokosuka R2Y, in alphabetical order, then used a unique code for each reference following each aircraft. For example, for the Airspeed Oxford, I typed in the following entry (it started out a lot smaller, with maybe six entries transcribed from the old card, instead of the four dozen there now):

Airspeed A.S.10 Oxford; Consul: ACMB-4, PROF-227, ARWW, CAMM-21, AEO MR'79, AEO AP'80, AENU-10, AEO JL'81, AEO MY'80, AEO NV'80, AEO JA'85, AINT-30 [JA], AEO SP'83, SPAC, APC AU'87, PLAW, I I AEO MY'91, AEO DC'90, AEO NV'90, AEO MY'89, AEO JN'89, CAWW, WRLD-5, WRLD-3, JNWW, AINT-42 [MY], AEO JL'92, AEO AU'92, WBRD-2, AEO FB'93, AEO JN'93, WSP FB'90, BEAC, CCUT, AEO NV'89, AENU-92, ACL FL'79, APC SP'66, AEO FB'83, HBRA, AEO OC'78, AEO JN'80, AEO DC'80, AEO MY'86, AEO JA'84, AEO FB'86, ARAF

Looks like a lot of gobbledigook, right? I started a second document to list the codes and their full title, in case I couldn't remember what they were, but I tried to use mnemonics as much as I could, so you have PROF-227, or Profile 227; CAMM-21, or Camouflage & Markings #21; AEO JN'89, or *The Aeroplane* magazine, June 1989 issue, and so on. I gave everything except the periodicals a 4-letter code, and then volume numbers if necessary. Periodicals had three-letter codes, followed by an indication of the date. I found that some periodicals were really more like journals, eventually coming out in bound form (*Air International*, for example,) so I often went with the four-letter code in these cases. I didn't bother with page numbers, figuring I would be able to leaf through the book or magazine and find what I wanted without much delay. Over the years, this has proved to be true.

This approach is very compact, and should work for any modeling reference library, no matter the subject concentration; I've now amassed over 17,000 references tied to 1774 different types of aircraft from the WWII period. It takes me two to three minutes to enter the references from a simple magazine article; a complex book like Gunston's *Aircraft of the Soviet Union* might take many hours, because there's so much content, a lot of which was new to me when I got the book. Typically, I can get all the data from a new magazine or small book into the computer in 15 minutes or less.

Searching the document is very easy; what I can't find by relying on alphabetization, I can find by entering a search word, so if I want "Dakota," I just type it in, and since I've listed every last name, nickname and designation I can for each type, I will be taken directly to: Douglas DC-3; Dakota; Skytrain; C-47; Lisunov Li-2; R4D; Showa L2D "Tabby;" L3D; C-41A; C-48; C-49; C-50; C-51; C-52; C-53; DST; C-68; C-84; CG-17; PS-84; "DC-21/2":

Unfortunately, looking at abbreviated references, I couldn't always tell whether a given reference was one grainy photo, or a full-blown monograph, or somewhere in between. My solution was to start a third document, with the focus on references that were monographs or very close to that quality. I added an additional nuance by listing aircraft subtypes as well as the main type, so if there was a monograph focusing on just the B-17G, it would be listed apart from the general B-17 monographs. I still used the same codes. At this point I have 884 monograph references to 462 types.

This is still not perfect; if I want to find the two pictures of "beer-barrel" Spitfire IXs I have somewhere in this library, I am faced with 274 references through which I will have to slog. Variants for Bf 109s, Fw 190s and so on are almost as



tedious to find, unless I get a hit in the monograph document. Maybe that's why I never build anything mainstream! Of course, there are solutions, such as separating the *Spitfires* into Merlin-engined and Griffon-engined, or separating out the *Seafires*, but I generally only break down a family of aircraft where the airframe itself becomes drastically different. Thus, I track radial-engined Fw 190s apart from in-line-engined Fw 190s and Ta 152s, and P-36s from P-40s.

I have since taken one additional step in organizing references. I now have a bibliographic database program, Endnote, into which I enter every book, and a few specific periodical articles I wish to track. Apart from allowing me to easily check to see if I have a particular work, it also allows me to summarize content, see which works I have by each author, and I can search on a whole variety of criteria by searching against key words. However, this isn't really a focused one on modeling, since my word processing files will already direct me to almost all the information I need. It does support my interest in aviation history.

Finally, there is the physical issue. There's not much point in detailing references if you cannot easily lay your hands on the hard copy. I do two things to make it easy to find what I want. First, all the aviation materials live in one room. I pretty much know where the books are, and since there are a limited

number of places to look, I almost always find the book right away. Second, I have two Liberty magazine sorters; these are cases with 36 magazine-sized cubby holes each, and each cubby hole has a label showing the magazine or monograph pamphlet category. Where I have many issues of a magazine, the label will also give dates for that cubby hole's contents. Again, finding what I want is quick and easy.

Does this take away time from my modeling? Possibly, but I think I get it back by not wasting a lot of time sifting through everything looking for that one picture I remember, but can't quite locate. The other question is whether you want to start from scratch if your collection is my size and you've never started to organize the data. It might be worthwhile to begin anyway, since even a partial data collection is bound to be helpful at least some of the time, especially when referring to magazine contents, which tend to be heterogenous. Since I've described a customizable tool, it's to your advantage to use the ideas as a starting point, and evolve what suits you best. You might even find that a true database application works best for you. However you approach it, it's been my experience that having references easily at hand is very satisfying, so I urge anyone who has a lot of reference material to consider some form of organization.

## **SVSM BOOKSHELF**

*B-17 Flying Fortress Units of the MTO*

Osprey Combat Aircraft 38

By William N Hess

The third and possibly last volume on the *Flying Fortress* (unless Osprey decides to do one on the Pacific 17s, but I haven't heard anything), this volume covers the B-17 units from their start in England to transfer to North Africa as part of Operation Torch and finally to Italy. The book's author has a unique perspective in that he served as a gunner for 16 missions until shot down while serving in the 97th Bomb Group. I found it interesting that in the 15th Air Force, aircraft were traded between groups when headquarters decided to set up certain groups. A couple of examples: the 2nd and 99th BGs trading all their B-17Fs with "Tokyo Tanks" to the 97th and 301st BGs so the 97th and 301st could fly the long range missions. Also, the 483rd BG arrived in the MTO in late March '44 and had to give up all their new B-17Gs to the 99th and get the 99th's war-weary B-17Fs in exchange.

I was surprised while reading this book at the lack of fighter

escort that the units in the MTO had deal with. Early in the war it was not uncommon to be intercepted by 100+ fighters. Another thing I was surprised to learn was that during the "Big Week," the 8th Air Force lost 157 bombers, or 4.8 percent, while the 15th lost 90, or 14.6 percent.

There are 39 profiles in the center section, one on the rear cover and a cover painting of the author's aircraft. This book does not contain the side view drawings showing the difference between B-17 models like the past two volumes but does have a 1:108 drawing of the top, bottom and both side views of a B-17G-70-BO.

While this volume was nice, it did have some shortcomings in my opinion. As I mentioned in my previous review, the author went to the effort to mention which German pilot shot down what B-17 if known. This author just covers the losses with an occasional mention of the German (or their allied) units involved. The author does give the claims by the B-17 gunners, but nothing about what the actual German losses were. Still, this is a very good volume and the markings used by the 15th AF would make some very nice models.

—Eric McClure

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# **STYRENE SHEET**

**Write to: Silicon Valley Scale Modelers, P.O. Box 361644  
Milpitas, CA 95036 or, by E-mail, to bucholtzc@aol.com**



# JUNE MINUTES

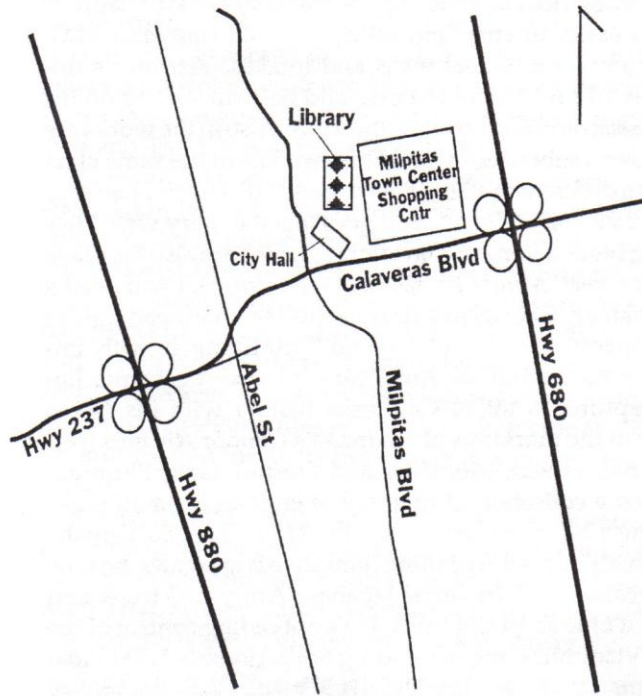
The June meeting brought news of the revival of club contests by current president Mike Burton. In September, we'll see the return of the "Monogram Mastery" contest, in which the builder must enter a completed *Monogram* kit. In October, we'll have our annual Air Racers contest, plus "October Oddballs." And next February, our contest theme will be "Out to Launch." Start building your entries now!

Lou Orselli brings news of his efforts to revive IPMS/U.S.S. *Hornet*. The principal change to the club will be the relocation of meetings to the Western Aerospace Museum, and the club's name will change to IPMS/North Field. For more information, speak to Lou at the next meeting.

In model talk... Ralph Patino built two *Revell* 1:110 PBM *Mariners*, and he wanted to make a base for them. Instead of making a water scene or some beaching gear, Ralph instead scratchbuilt a seaplane tender, the U.S.S. *Currituck*, in 1:110 scale! He took turrets from a destroyer kit, but scratchbuilt the rest of the model. It was so big that he couldn't bring it to a meeting until he and his wife Brenda bought a station wagon big enough to fit it! Escorting Ralph's seaplane tender was the U.S.S. *Melvin*, a *Fletcher*-class destroyer built from the *Lindberg* "Blue Devil" kit by Peter Wong. Peter made the railings with steel and copper wire and painted it with spray paints from Orchard Supply Hardware! The model will be displayed permanently at a bed and breakfast near Yosemite. Cliff Kranz saw drawings of the proposed U.S. Navy F-15N, so he set about building one. His model sports folded wings and will get eight *Phoenix* and eight *Sidewinders*. Ken Miller says that *Revell's* old 1:144 P-3C *Orion* is not the greatest kit ever, but he's working hard at it. Ken drilled out the escape hatch windows and added portholes, and he plans to finish it in arctic markings. Ken also has several of his son-to-be Aloha Airlines 737s primed; he's hurrying to finish them for the airliners contest he and Bill Abbott are running in July. John Heck is researching the markings of the F-86F flown by a friend's dad and applying them to *Hasegawa's* 1:48 kit. This is John's first natural metal finish model. Mark Schynert is working on a correction for the horizontal tailplane in *Revell's* 1:72 Bv 222, adding some length and working with the slots in the leading edges. Chris Bucholtz has found a new way to store his in-progress models, keeping the kit, books and all other pertinent items in one shelf per kit of a plastic stacking storage system. When he's done working on a model, he can put the entire shelf away and not lose small parts. Chris has a *Hobbycraft* CF-100 and a *Hasegawa* P-47 almost ready to paint, and he's done some scratchbuilding work to improve the cockpit and bombardier's station on *Azur's* Martin *Maryland*. Andy Kellock took his love of music as inspiration for a collection of 1:8 scale guitars; the bodies were carved from balsa, the fretboards were made of fuse wire, and stretched sprue was used for the strings. Andy also turned a '66 Oldsmobile into a "Vaquero" pickup, what Olds' answer to the El Camino could have been. Eric McClure's latest accomplishments on his *Tamiya* half-track with the *Kendall Model Products* M3 77mm gun motor carriage conversion are the gun shield and headlight guards. The *Planet Models* SA-2 missile is hard to build, says Vladimir Yakubov, but the launcher is easy. He wished he could say the same about *Italeri's* new MiG-25,

which he describes as a bad copy of the *Hasegawa* kit; Vladimir found it easier to strip and refinish an old *Hasegawa* MiG, adding a cockpit, wheel wells and intakes. Vladimir's finished his 1:72 B-11 armored car, and he's embarking on his next Russian armored cruiser, the *Rurik*. Also in the works are two Russian submarines, or rather two kits of the same class from two different makers, *Kombrig* and *HP*. Gabriel Lee says *Revell's* 1:72 P-47D *Thunderbolt* goes together very well. He's building his as a Venezuelan aircraft, which are also his plans for *High Planes' Mirage* III. He says the *Mirage* kit will need a lot of clean up. Gabriel just finished his Hammerhead fighter from "Space: Above and Beyond," outfitting it with improved missiles and an American-style paint scheme. Jim Lund captured a bit of California history with his *Dekno Fleetster* in the markings of Alameda's Condor Airlines (service to Bakersfield, Monterey and Fresno). Greg Plummer displayed a collection of motorcycle engines in small scale, including a Y-5 from the *Tamiya* RC 211 and an '83 Yamaha 500 engine. Greg is not limiting himself to large scales; he took on *Hasegawa's* 1:72 Imperial Japanese Army fuel truck and painted it blue as an IJN truck. He's not ceding control of the seas to Vladimir; Greg is building *Seals Models's* 1:700 Japanese armored cruiser *Izumo*, which survived to the end of World War II. Laramie Wright is working on the seams and rescribing portions of *Azur's* 1:48 Loire Nieuport 411 carrier fighter, and he's building *Italeri's* new F6F *Hellcat*. Laramie says the kit has many areas, like the control surfaces, that are not up to snuff on a modern kit. Steve Travis' 13th '34 Ford is a roadster that's been channeled, has *Arrowhead* wheels and tires, and *Model Details* mufflers and pipe points. Steve gave his model 19 coats of paint! Lou Orselli got a bargain price on the "SeaQuest: DSV" submarine, built the 1:600 model quickly, then finished it with silver paint dappled with water-based gray paint to capture the luminescent texture of the T.V. submarine. Lou also added scratchbuilt struts to *LS Models' "Willow"* trainer, and made some remarkable modifications to *Revell's* 1:32 Bf 109 to make the model accurate, including a new spinner, propeller, and plugs in the fuselage to correct the length. Ben Pada had an assortment of his "out of the box" builds, including a *Hasegawa* Ki-84 that features *Gunze Sangyo* paints mixed by Ben himself, a *Tamiya* Me 262 (Ben dislikes the open gun bays in the kit, because they're difficult to model closed), and a *Tamiya* P-47D Razorback finished in D-Day stripes. Roy Sutherland modified the bull nose of *Tamiya's* *Mosquito* NF.13/17 kit; he's building an NF.19, so he also modified the "Gee" indicator. Roy also showed off the new *Falcon* canopy for the *Grand Phoenix Fairey Firefly*; Roy made the master for this new product. Mike Burton made two P-63 *Kingcobras* in 1:48, one in Soviet markings from *MPM* and the other in French markings from, appropriately, the *Hi Tech* kit. Mike finished his 1:48 *ICMP-51D* as a British *Mustang* Mk. III, and his *Hobbycraft* YP-59 sports a mock propeller, added to the airplane on the ground to disguise its identity from onlookers. And the Model of the Month goes to... Mark Schynert, for both his *Revell* 1968 *Dart*, modified into his old *Dart* 270, and his 1:72 *Hawker Tornado*, crafted from a *Ventura* conversion kit and an *Aviation Usk Typhoon*. These models were the product of many hours of hard work on Mark's part.





Next meeting:  
**7:00 p.m.,**  
**Friday,**  
**July 18**  
**at the Milpitas**  
**Public Library**  
**40 N. Milpitas Blvd.**  
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