



## The oldest victim of Tsushima: *Vladimir Monomakh*

By Vladimir Yakubov

It was dawn, and the wounded cruiser moved slowly toward the island of Tsushima. The ship was listing heavily to starboard and the crew was exhausted from fighting for the life of the ship through out the night.

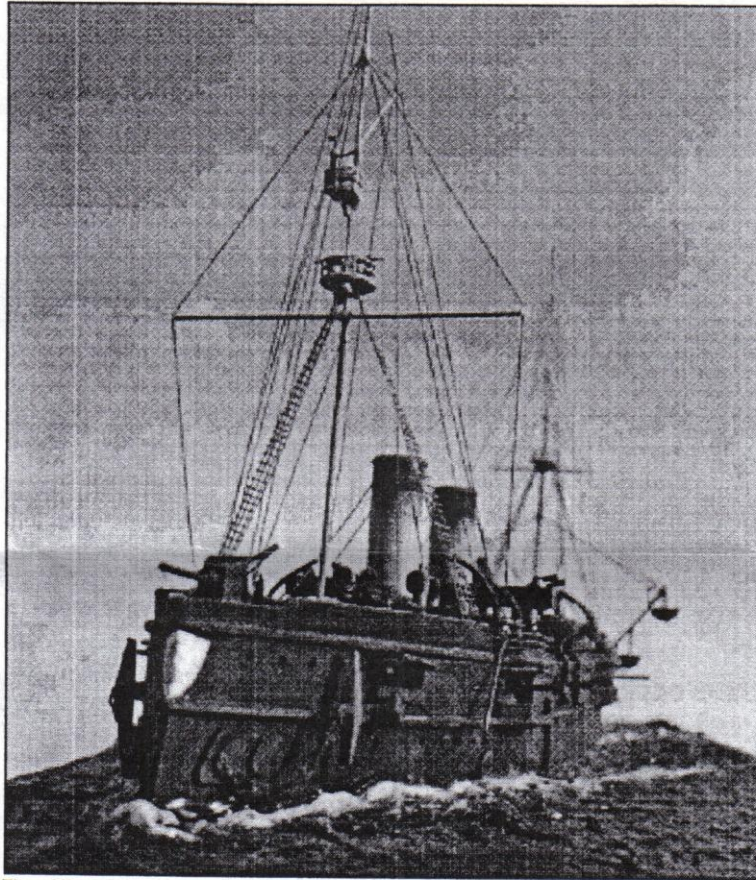
Suddenly, the gray silhouette of a Japanese cruiser was sighted on the horizon. The captain, realizing the hopelessness of the situation, ordered the crew to abandon ship in the few surviving boats.

The Japanese cruiser sighted the wounded ship and opened fire. The Russian cruiser sounded general quarters again, but the list has already reached 18 degrees and only two 3" guns could reply at maximum elevation. The captain ordered opening of the Kingston valves and at 10:20 a.m. on May 15 1905, with the Russian battle ensigns still flying, the cruiser disappeared beneath the waves of the Tsushima Strait.

Thus ended the 23-year career of the onetime pride of the Russian Imperial Navy: Armored Cruiser *Vladimir Monomakh*. The ship was laid down on September 5, 1881. Work went quickly and on July 1, 1883 the ship was commissioned into the Russian navy.

*Vladimir Monomakh* was a one of the first true armored cruisers in the world. Conceived as a commerce raider, she had a long range and weighed in at 5750 tons. She was armed with four 8" and twelve 6" breech-loading rifles. She had a 6" armored belt and 0.5" armored deck. During the trials the ship showed the speed of 16.28 knots, making her one of the fastest ships in the world at the time. Her service speed was 14.5-15.5 knots. As was customary of the cruisers at the time, the ship carried a full sailing rig to extend her range.

The ship had a long and varied career. Her first deployment to the Far East happened a year after her commissioning in 1884. At the time Russia and Britain were in the state of a cold



The *Vladimir Monomakh* in 1:700 as she appeared in 1905. Vladimir Yakubov's model won Best in Show at this year's Kickoff Classic.

war that rivaled the Soviet-U.S. tensions of mid-'50s. In 1885, *Vladimir Monomakh* nearly became the cause for that war going hot. The incident happened on April 24 1885 in Nagasaki. *Vladimir Monomakh* was at anchor in the harbor when a British battleship, HMS *Agamemnon*, which had been shadowing her since she passed through the Suez Canal, and two smaller ships entered the harbor. *Agamemnon*, described as an unwieldy ship with a reputation as the most unhandy ship ever to fly the white ensign, had trouble staying on course and her bow kept turning toward the Russian ship. The Russian Captain Crown was afraid that the British ship would ram his ship and claim later on that it was an accident, so he sounded general quarters. The British saw it a bit differently and they were surprised when they "suddenly received a 'hostile

demonstration' from the Russian warship *Vladimir Monomakh*." Captain Long of the *Agamemnon* reported that he had entered the harbor with his guns covered and turret ports closed. He was therefore very surprised to see the warship "beat to quarter," run out its torpedo tubes, load its guns and then keep them pointed at his vessel until she came to anchor.

The ships missed each other by mere yards, and a hostile standoff ensued. The incident was avoided by some urgent diplomacy by the two captains.

After that colorful episode, the ship had several more routine deployments to the Mediterranean and the Far East. In 1896-97 she was rearmed with modern quick-firing guns and

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## EDITOR'S BRIEF

It's March, and that means that it's time to elect a new president and, perhaps, some other new officers to carry SVSM through 2003 and into 2004. Our by-laws stipulate that a president may not serve consecutive one-year terms, so that means that Greg Plummer, after a year of stellar service, will be free again to sit in the audience while some other volunteer takes the helm of the meetings. If you think you'd like to be president, be prepared at the March meeting to throw your hat into the ring and explain why you'd be the best man for the job. Also up for election are the roles of vice president/contest

## LETTERS TO SVSM

We want to say thanks to the club for the prestigious award that was given to us at the Kickoff Classic. We were very honored and quite surprised. We really enjoy the club and all it stands for and will gladly give our service and support for as many years as possible.

It is nice to get the awards for the models we create and to know our work and talents are appreciated, but this award outshines all the awards we will ever get for our models.

Thank you for your kindness to us and for your friendship.

—Steve and Anita Travis

director, editor and treasurer. If you have a yen to serve, now's the time to step up.

Kudos go this month to Randy Ray for his work as webmaster and for his recognition in the IPMS/USA's Chapter Showcase. Visitors to the IPMS/USA page ([www.ipmsusa.org](http://www.ipmsusa.org)) are being directed to our page ([www.svsm.org](http://www.svsm.org)), and it was described in glowing terms by the national webmaster, Bob Hester. Also of note at the national page this month are photos from the Kickoff Classic, featured in the Chapter Event Showcase. By following the links at both the national page and the SVSM page, you'll see pictures by Ron Grasmick, Clarence Novak and others.

SVSM is setting the pace in contest organization this month. We've already got a date and a theme for the 2004 Kickoff Classic (see the calendar below). It'll be the very patriotic "Stars and Stripes," meaning that any subject with a star on it or stripes qualifies for the theme award. There ought to be many to choose from! Mike Burton, who did such a stellar job this year, has come to the conclusion that the earlier we do work on organizing the basics of the contest, the longer we'll have to promote it across Region 9 and the rest of the west.

Now, don't we all have B-25s to work on?

—The Editor

## CONTEST CALENDAR

April 19, 2003: **IPMS/Seattle** hosts **ReCon 7**, the IPMS Seattle Spring Show 2003 at the Renton Community Center, 1715 Maple Valley Highway, Renton, Washington. For more information, call Jon Fincher at (206) 439-0565 or visit the website at [www.ipms-seattle.org](http://www.ipms-seattle.org).

May 10, 2003: **IPMS/Santa Rosa** hosts its 2003 Model Expo. More details as they become available.

May 30 and 31, 2003: **IPMS/Las Vegas** hosts its **annual contest** at the Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino, 3535 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Las Vegas, Nevada. For more information, call Jim Mitchell at (702) 254-6386.

May 31: 2003 **IPMS/Washington Alexander Pearson Modeleers** host their **Invitational Model Show and Contest** at the Jack Murdock Aviation Center at the Pearson Air Museum, 1115 E 5th, Vancouver, Washington. This year's theme: The 100th Anniversary of Flight: the First 20 Years (1903-1923). For more information, call Pascal

Valadier at (503) 282-9371 or visit the website at [www.angelfire.com/wa3/ipmspearsonmodeleers/2003%20invitational%20page.htm](http://www.angelfire.com/wa3/ipmspearsonmodeleers/2003%20invitational%20page.htm).

June 21, 2003: **IPMS/Ontario** (formerly IPMS/Chino) plans to hold a contest. More details as they become available.

August 16, 2003: **IPMS/Mt Diablo** hosts its **Plastic Model Contest** at the Vallejo Naval & Historical Museum, 734 Marin St. in Vallejo. For more information, e-mail John Clements at [sjshark2@ix.netcom.com](mailto:sjshark2@ix.netcom.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.

April 24, 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.

# Polish pacesetters: RWD-5 and RWD-6 in 1:72

By Bob Miller

Sometimes the box art sells you on a kit. *Minicraft* captured the grace of a B-17B in flight over Rio, *Tamiya* makes you feel the visible power of a *Phantom* FG1 ready on the catapult. And then there are the little boxes holding the *Mikro 72* kits of the

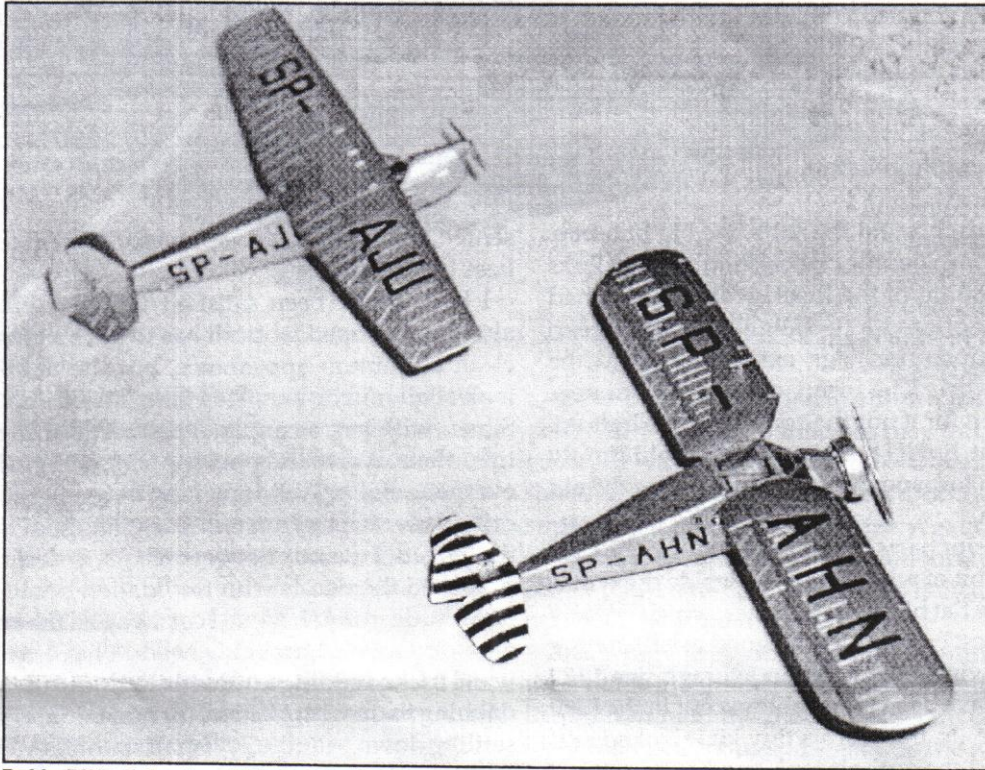
Polish RWD-5 and -6 light-planes. Here is box art that looks like it was painted by a teenager and printed on a 1972 Soviet inkjet machine. I'm not sure whether I picked up the kits out of curiosity or a feeling that the poor things needed someone to give them a home. I wasn't expecting much when I got into them, just something to fill a small space on the shelves. What I found was an interesting look

back on the inter-war period and a respect for Polish aviation that goes back beyond the desperate World War II days with Mike Gladych and Stanislaw Skalski taking their fight eastward from England, back toward home.

The story began when the prototype RWD-5 first flew in 1931. Here was a tandem two-place sport-trainer powered by a Cirrus Hermes IIB engine. Herschel Smith's Aircraft Piston Engines credits the Hermes II with 95 horsepower, but he doesn't mention the B version, so I am inclined to trust a source that says 85kw (112 hp) Only 21 RWD-5s were built, but the last one was particularly interesting and was the version I chose. This one had a fuel tank replacing the rear seat, and extra tankage in the wing center section. Configured like this, it was flown from Warsaw to Buenos Aires in 1933 by Stanislaw Skarzynski, including a hop of 3600 km across the South Atlantic. It set a record for distance for 500 kg or less aircraft that still remains, according to one source, in the form of "the lightest aircraft ever to fly the south Atlantic Ocean" Sources disagree, but the empty weight may have been nearer 450 kg (990 lbs). The 90 h.p. Continental burns about six gallons per hour, which would have called for nearly 750 pounds of fuel with no reserve for the 3600 km flight. All this suggests that Skarzynski took off with payload close to (possibly exceeding) empty weight and likely resulted in a takeoff run and initial climb that looked like Lindberg's had just six

years before. The story reminds us that we, the Yanks and Brits, had no monopoly on good design or sheer guts in these earlier years of aviation.

The kit comes in a tiny box that's barely 1x4x6 inches, and I expected few pieces and a very small model. It is small indeed, with a 5.6 inch span, but in contrast with the usual kit where you drop in the molding trees with an often dismaying lot of excess space around them, these have to be pressed into the box, perhaps stretching it a bit to make them fit. Parts count includes 25 in white, covering two versions of the RWD-5, and five transparent pieces including a very thin and delicate windscreen and different side windows for one- and two-seat versions.



Bob's RWD-5 (top) and RWD-6, built from the *Mikro 72* kits. These designs were emblematic of Poland's advanced aviation industry in the 1930s.

(I damaged the two single-seat side windows in trying to get them fitted, and ended up cutting down the pair for the two-seat version.) I later picked up a second kit, and found parts of a color somewhat like the recent Soviet interior turquoise; I preferred the white. Somewhat unusually, almost all the parts were usable with about three exceptions. The pitot was overly thick, so I replaced it with brass wire, as I did the stick. The instrument panel seemed to consist of a shelf with a little block about 5x6 scale inches perched in the center, which would hardly have held enough 1930s-era instruments to leave the pattern, much less cross the Atlantic. I shaped a piece of scrap to the same contour as the top of the cowling, to add later, then mounted a two-inch magnetic compass on top. Trying to scribe three-inch instruments on this (presumably) more realistic panel caused me to wonder again what I would choose to put in my panel if I had been in Skarzynski's place. There wasn't much room, but the presence of a venturi suggests that there was a turn-and-bank, a small advance over Lindberg's outfit, if I recall it correctly.

The cantilever wing is in one piece tip-to-tip, but was evidently thick enough to cause the mold-makers concern about sink marks, so the inboard half of the span has a separate insert for the lower surface. The idea worked well, plus it allowed me to sand the insert to thin the trailing edge, but it left a small gap at each end of the insert. This was easily

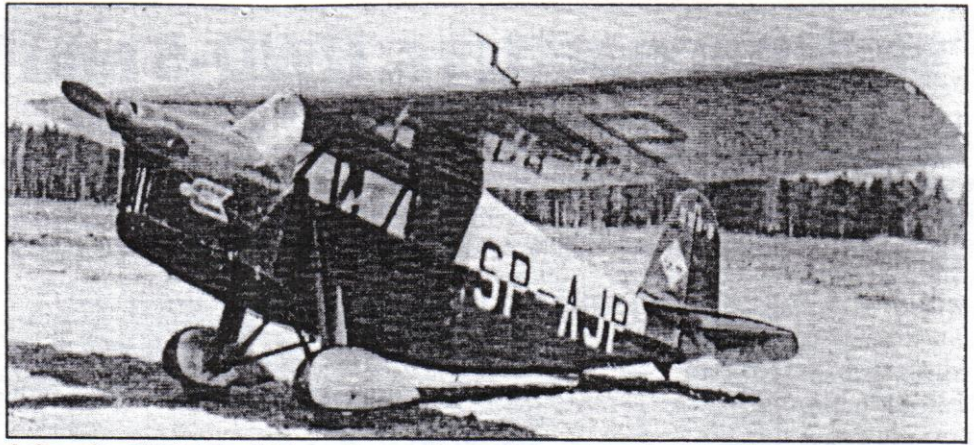
solved with a piece of 5-mil card cemented into the gap then sanded down to match the adjoining rib taping. (Trailing-edge thickness of the ailerons was still a little too great for me, so I sanded them down, sacrificing the rib-tape detail on the bottom.)

The interior was nicely done (except for that instrument panel) and included seats that looked quite acceptable for a small model like this. I added new rudder pedals with cables running aft, seat belts (guessing no shoulder harnesses), and a few more details, all of which I later found to be quite invisible after the big wing is added.

Assembling the halves, I found the kit's one big boo-boo. There is an insert that combines the central landing gear links with a section of the bottom of the fuselage. If the idea had worked, it would have offered a pre-aligned landing gear, awaiting only the compression legs extending up to the cockpit sill. It didn't work. The insert came nowhere near fitting either the hole left for it nor the contour of the bottom. I fussed with it until it fit, but if I built another I would simply make a new insert, then form new links of wire, using the old piece only for a pattern.

I had painted the interior parts before assembly, so the only touchup needed was a bit of white showing inside the windshield, at the edge of the flat black panel cover, which I did by reaching in with my finest brush, and (oh, good grief!) getting a spot of black on the windscreen. On an average-size 1/72 model, this might not have been noticeable except in the final cut of judging at Nationals, but on this tiny kit it looked as if a mechanic had painted the anti-glare with a house roller. I never would have been able to remove the windscreen without breaking it, so I polished it out with wisps of cotton rolled on toothpicks. That done, it needed only a little final fitting of the wing and fuselage subassemblies before painting.

There was bare aluminum on the cowling and the panels that covered the wing and fuselage tanks, so I drilled out the cooling air inlet and the rather vague little bumps that repre-



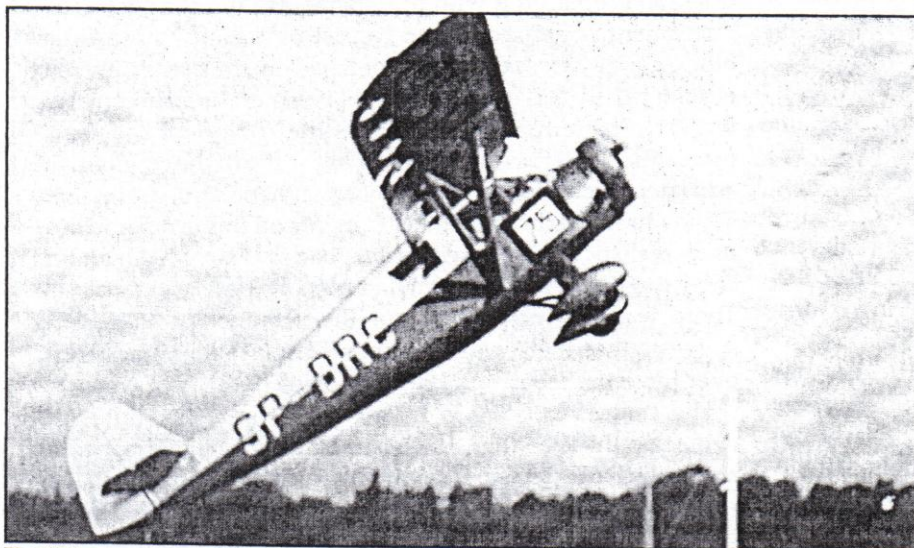
**A view of an RWD-5. The thick-section cantilever wing provided high lift at low speed. A plane like this flew from Senegal to Brazil in 1933, making it the lightest plane to cross the South Atlantic.**

sented the exhausts and sprayed *Testors* Non-Buffering metalizer before masking.

I have never been satisfied with my efforts to simulate aluminum-doped fabric. It has to have a glossy surface and a clean aluminum appearance, but the aluminum shouldn't look at all mirror-like. This time, I tried spraying *Floquil* Old Silver, with just a couple of discreet buffing passes with Q-tips, then overcoating with *Microscale* gloss. (Yes, I know everyone else at SVSM is at least two generations past *Microscale* products, but I am familiar with them and can often get the effects I want.) Between coats, I decaled it. I had approached the decals with trepidation because they looked a little crude in the sheet, so I cut away all the excess so silvering wouldn't show. I probably needn't have worried. Doing my usual trick of adding a little white glue to the decal water, then dabbing them with *Microsol* (or maybe *Supersol*), I found them settling down beautifully. Small stainless-tube exhausts were added in the holes drilled earlier, and it was done.

There is a discreet faux-fabric finish molded in just the fabric-covered portion that started me thinking. On the typical 1:72 model, this surface finish would have been ideal, but on the little RWD-5 it was excessive. Consider: what distance do you view a model from? I find that, for casual viewing, I want to move in until my eye is distant about 1.5 times the biggest dimension. A 1:72 F-104 has a span similar to this, but is so long that I find it best viewed from 16 inches or so away. (All this changes, of course, if I've been roped into judging, or am looking at, say, a 1:144 *Mustang*, which I would like to view from a distance closer than my eyes can focus.) So the faux-fabric would have been much better than that supplied on, say, my *Supermodel* SM-81, which I tend to view from a distance of 1.5 to 2 feet, but it was too grainy for this little model. If I were starting over, I believe I would sand the fabric finish smooth.

It was a pleasant modeling experience. I still like to pick up the little bird, turning it around in my hands and wondering what it would have been like to sit alone in that cramped cabin and realize that my last chance to turn back toward Africa and forget this whole mad adventure was rapidly



**The full-span flaps of the RWD-6 led to the RWD-9 (shown here) and its climbing ability.**

fading into the sea-mist behind me.

The RWD-5 proved to be an enjoyable kit, so I dug out of my collection the next one from the same makers (both prototype and model). This was the RWD-6, and though it comes in the same crude but robust box, it's a different critter. It was maybe best described as a racer/touring plane, seating two side-by-side. It was designed for a 1932 cross-country race of

7359 km, reminiscent of a downsized version of the American Bendix Trophy. Though it invites comparison with Benny Howard's "Mr. Mulligan," the latter (and slightly later) design had a big four-place cabin and over 550 horsepower, four times the RWD-6. The RWD had a ring-cowling and a fairing over the 7-cylinder radial's crankcase that suggested the era of the Boeing P-26. There were full-span slats and one of the few photos I have shows it in an impressive climbing attitude, which I suspect was a zoom-climb, not steady-state. Only three were built, and at rollout had fabric-covered wings braced by a single strut. You might sense trouble in the air there—the fabric cover offers almost no resistance to twisting instability—and they got it! As the English translation of the Polish plan write-up said, "During trials of the SP-AHM the wings have got scattered and the lane has damaged, while flying at a high speed and at the low altitude above the ground." (To be fair, the German translation does seem more fluent than the English, so we typically-monolingual Yanks oughtn't criticize.) The second of the three aircraft won the race in August 1932, only two months after rollout, but later crashed, this time killing both crew. Finally, wings of the remaining copy were reinforced and the second strut added. All in all, the RWD-6 did not have a distinguished history, except that it gave rise to the similar and more prolific RWD-9 and gave the design staff some practical education that served them well until Poland was overrun.

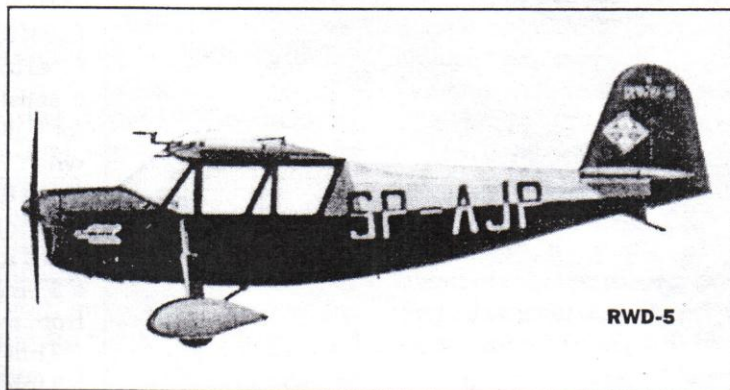
This time, there are 45 parts in white and 4 transparencies, with decals and extra parts for either the single-strut prototype stage or the two-strut version. Transparencies are not so beautifully thin and smooth as on the RWD-5, but the overhead section has to mount the wing, being part of an all-round greenhouse, so it presumably needs to be more robust. That's a generous parts count, and the detail is correspondingly good: the exhaust takes five pieces,

the fixed gear takes seven, and the interior nine. The interior was good as delivered, but I had to add rudder pedals, a firewall ahead, and (guessing that these utilitarian little racers had no need of a panel to close the rear fuselage from the cockpit) a wire elevator push-rod to distract from the fuselage joint, which I suspected might be visible through that extensive green-house. Again, the panel was a perplexity: the kit

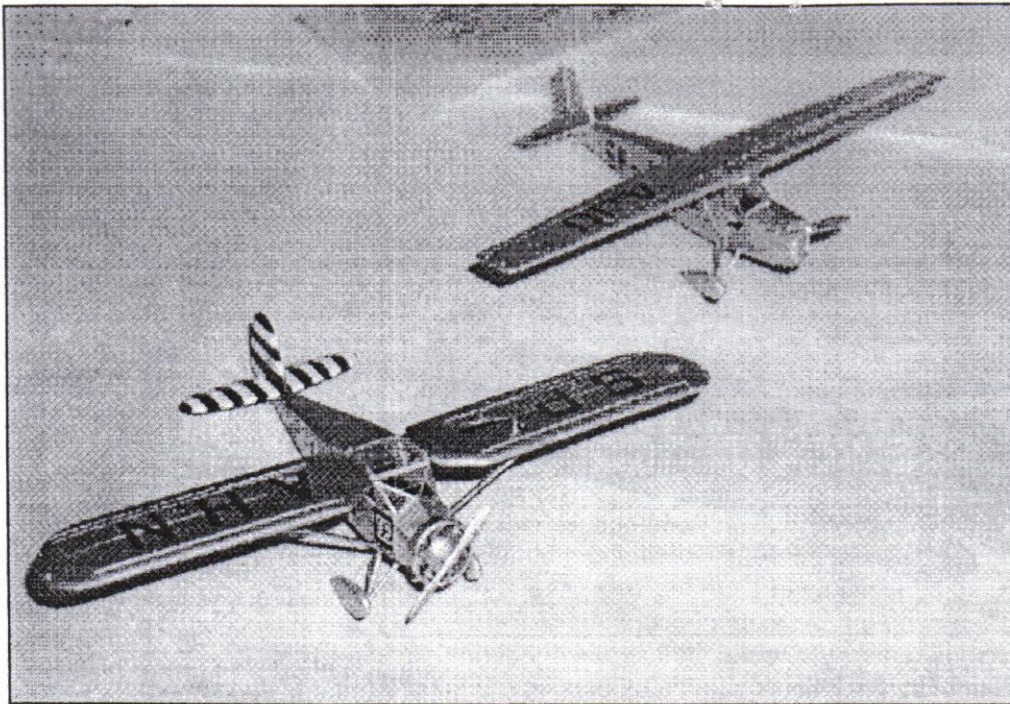
provided a tiny piece to set atop and a little ahead of the frame cross-member at the front of the cabin. It's a measure of how nicely the kit is designed that the structure is quite believable. This cross-member would have been part of the frame that tied together the wing spar attachments, struts, landing gear front link and bungee strut, and the front door frame, and it all makes sense. It's a beautiful

piece of mold making in a dinky, insignificant little three-dollar kit, to reveal as much as they did. The only problem, I guessed, was that the instrument panel provided was too shallow, and set too far forward of the cross-member that supported it, so I made a new one. Again, a two-inch magnetic compass to set atop and push-pull throttle and mixture at the center ("just a hunch, ma'am," as they used to say on "Drag-net"), and I called the interior done.

The wings provided the only significant problem. They were made in top and bottom halves, but in making molds for the bottom half, the die-maker seems to have forgotten the lower half of the full-span slats. So the wing ended up with a sharp leading-edge with nothing below, where the lower half of the slat should have been. A piece of 30-mil square stock cemented under the overhang and sanded to shape fixed it. I found as I finished it that the wings came out too thin. I should have cemented about a 5-mil shim between top and bottom halves to make them work. Tabs on the cabin overhead transparency were provided to match up with recesses on the bottoms of the wings, but here I questioned the prototype structure that this represented, because the top surface of the



Pilots and crew celebrate the performance of the RWD-6 at the 1932 Challenge de Tourisme International.



Bob's models on the table at the Kickoff Classic. The RWD-6 (foreground) features red trim.

wing would have been noticeably below the contour of the top transparency. I cut off the tabs and filled the recesses, then cemented the wing panels on with top surfaces aligned. This necessitated new longer struts, but *Contrail's* "Strut Pak" solved that one easily.

This RWD-6 was finished like the RWD-5, but this time decided to do something about that faux-fabric finish: I sanded the fuselage smooth and then added just a hint of fabric grain by light dry sanding passes at right angles with 500-grit paper. A good prototype fabric finish does not actually show grain unless viewed from just a few inches away, but putting some sort of simulated grain on models is so customary that this seemed a good compromise. Then, once again, I used *Testors* metallizer for cowling, wing slats, and front panels, though these latter were actually finished with the same circular-polished pattern that Lindberg's "Spirit" used. I simply had no idea how to simulate that here.

Next I undertook my familiar *Floquil* Old Silver finish technique, but my last bottle ran dry in the midst of spraying and finish sanding. No prob. I bought another. But something was wrong here; the finish was totally wrong for *Floquil*. So, I did what any skilled modeler would do: I headed off to D&J Hobbies and asked Al if he had heard any reports of problems with *Floquil*.

"Ha-haa!" quoth Al. On a Victorian theater's stage, his next line (delivered with a twirl of the mustache) would undoubtedly have been "He is foiled! Foiled!" But what he actually said was "So you are just now discovering the new *Floquil*?" Thence he spake unto me of the sad and sordid tale of the demise of the old *Floquil* and suggested that I might get the desired effect by experimenting with cutting the new *Floquil* with lacquer thinner. And Dio-sol is totally incompatible with the new system.

OK, I finally got an acceptable finish, though not what I considered a good one. (I now understand why Jim Lund claims to do aluminum finishes with big spray cans of Or-

chard Supply Aluminum. "Claims" I say! Yes, because you can't fool me, Jim, nobody can get that kind of finish with those big clumsy spray cans! Nobody! Ha-ha! Wait, who are these men in white coats, and where are they taking me?)

There were 24 little decals, plus black-and-white striped tail surfaces to fuss over, but overall it was a satisfying little model. Respect for Polish engineering waned a bit when I considered the wisdom of using those single struts with a fabric wing, but the pair of guys who raced it, squeezed side-by-side into a 33-inch wide cabin, get a salute from me.

Thus fortified, and enjoying Polish inter-war period light aircraft, I dug out a kit of the RWD-8DWL, by PZW-72. Here was a tandem two-place, open-cockpit, parasol wing design that first flew about 1933.

Maybe. I say "maybe" because the history and instructions are entirely in Polish. So "maybe" 570 aircraft were built before everything ended in 1939, not a bad production run for that era. The three decal choices are for club aircraft, but some went to the military.

The kit consists of two thin windshield transparencies and 38 parts in red plastic. The choice of color makes sense to the degree that some of the trim on two club aircraft is red, but it would be difficult to cover with the mainly white that the box art shows. Well, actually it's mainly srebnny, which is maybe better at covering. Srebnny?

Anybody here read Polish?

Fit is good, the detail work is satisfying, with control horns and bellcranks provided in plastic, but the center section struts are made with thick, blocky cross sections that are quite disconcerting. These can be replaced easily enough. The wing and tail surface detail is another matter. They have represented the fabric sag and rib-stitch taping by sharp step-downs that are grossly over-deep. The only plausible solution is to fill all these and re-sand the airfoil shape. And that's where I came upon the most egregious error I have ever seen a mold-maker commit. Of all the amazing things, they molded a flap on the right wing and forgot it on the left. Outrageous! Obviously this needed fixing. I went to work with filler and scribing to get them symmetrical.

And then, as I tend to do, I kept researching. I came upon a photo of an RWD-8 with wings folded neatly back to lie nearly along the fuselage. In order to keep the trailing edges from colliding when folded, without some complex geometry to angle one upward and the other downward or something, there was a separate flap on the right wing, inboard of the aileron, that was folded out of the way. On the right wing only?

Oh.

I'll write later about finishing it. I seem to have some more work to do.

# Czar's elderly cruiser: *Vladimir Monomakh* in 1:700

Continued from page 1

her new armament consisted of five 6"/45 and six 4.7"/45 Canet guns as well as sixteen 47mm Hotchkiss anti-torpedo boat guns. By that time the ship was obsolete and she was relegated to the training role. It seemed that she would quietly end her career training new cadets in the Baltic, but the Russo-Japanese War interfered and ultimately brought her to her death half a world away.

*Vladimir Monomakh* was a part of the 3rd Pacific Squadron, which was sent to support the 2nd Pacific Squadron after the fall of Port Arthur. The squadron consisted entirely of old and obsolete ships and had a very questionable combat value. The ships of this squadron were so useless that the commander of the 2nd Pacific Squadron, Admiral Rozhdestvensky, actively tried to miss his rendezvous with these ships. Thus, on the morning of the May 14, 1905 the 3rd Pacific Squadron found itself in the tail of the Russian squadron and *Vladimir Monomakh* was at the very end of their formation. Ironically the ships of the 3rd Pacific Squadron were the best trained ships in the Russian fleet, having served as training ships before leaving for the Far East. That day they shot better than the more modern ship at the head of the column.

During the day battle, *Vladimir Monomakh* went mostly undamaged. At the beginning of the battle, protecting Russian support ships, she engaged the Japanese cruiser *Idzumi* and hit her several times, forcing her to retire with no damage to herself. Later in the day, together with her half-sistership *Dmitry Donskoy*, engaged several Japanese cruisers, driving them off with little damage to themselves. At the end of the day *Vladimir Monomakh* received five hits, which killed one and wounded 16, damaging one 4.7" gun and the ship's boats.

In the night battle that followed she defeated several attempts by Japanese destroyers to torpedo her until three destroyers flashing garbled recognition signals overhauled her from astern. This caused the Russian gunners to delay just long enough for the Japanese destroyers to launch a torpedo at almost point-blank range. The torpedo hit just in front of the front boiler room. Old bulkheads couldn't hold the pressure and broke one after another; pumps couldn't keep up with the

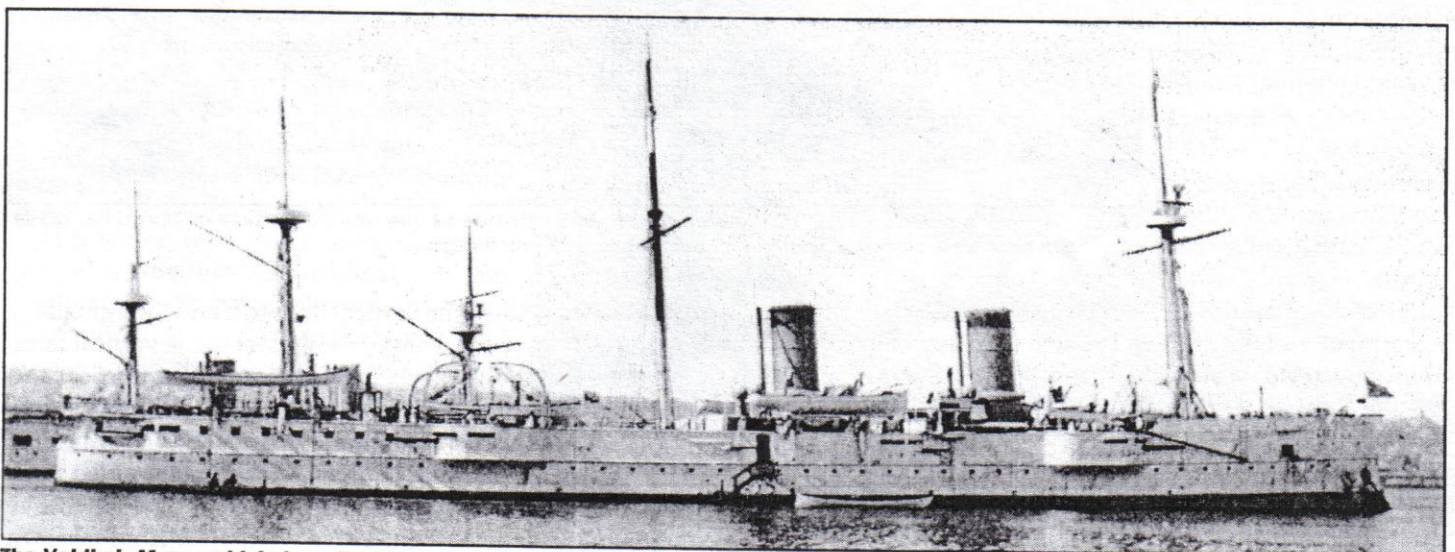
flow of water and the electricity soon cut out and they went dead. By 2 a.m., the water reached the starboard engine-room and Captain Popov, realizing the hopelessness of the situation, ordered a course to be set toward Tsushima Island.

The 1:700 scale kit of *Vladimir Monomakh* comes from a Russian company *Kombrig*. The kit consists of 93 exquisitely molded resin parts, with sharp castings and no air bubbles. The ship reflects *Vladimir Monomakh* as she appeared at Tsushima in 1905. A photographic review of the parts can be found at [www.steelnavy.com/Combrig%20Vladimir%20MonomakhPre.htm](http://www.steelnavy.com/Combrig%20Vladimir%20MonomakhPre.htm)

The hull is excellently cast and, as customary with other *Kombrig* kits, there was no pour plug. Due to the interesting layout of the ship the upper deck is molded separately on a very thin carrier of resin, which was very easy to clean up. For some reason *Kombrig* still uses the "Aztec ladder" instead of leaving ladders to be replaced with photo etch, so they need to be carefully cut off from the hull.

When the hull was unpainted some irregularities were seen in her main deck, but they disappeared after painting. Due to the interesting layout of the ship I decided to open the gunports. The gunports are molded shut, but I judged that it will be easier to align all of the guns with them opened than to try to drill the holes for them and align them through the holes. Besides they look much more interesting this way (due to the top deck being separate I opened up the gunports in the solid part of the hull as well, and since the aft 4.7" guns were placed in the captain's saloon, I opened up that whole area, and in the fit of insanity scratchbuilt a table and some chairs). I built the gunport covers from 0.05 styrene sheet, through since then I found other material that works even better—photo paper from the ALPS printer.

According to the text in my references, the middle mast was hacked off just before leaving for Tsushima, so the correct paint scheme in this configuration would be black with yellow funnels. If you want to do a white color scheme you will have to add the middle mast. I painted the hull with Model Master acrylic black diluted with white, so that it doesn't look like a black hole. The deck was painted with a custom mixed



The *Vladimir Monomakh* in her all white paint scheme with all her original armament and all her masts in place.

color. After painting I went over the deck with "Black-It-Out," which is a water soluble black wash. It showed off the deck planking and other deck details. I cleaned up the excess with Q-tips after it dried.

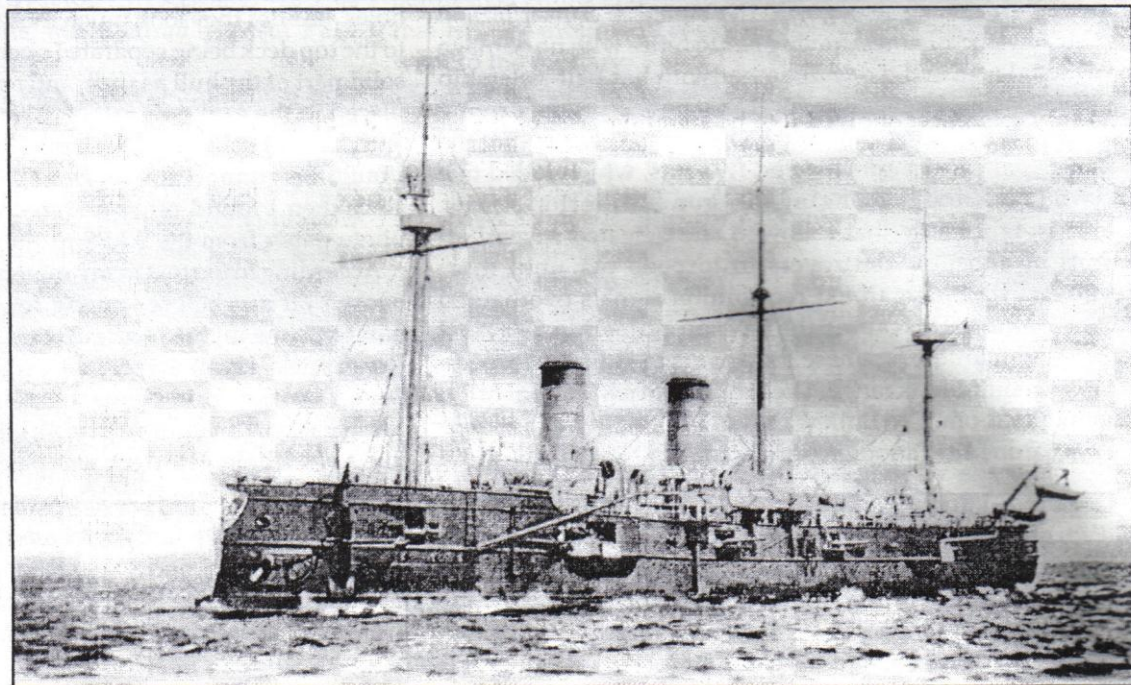
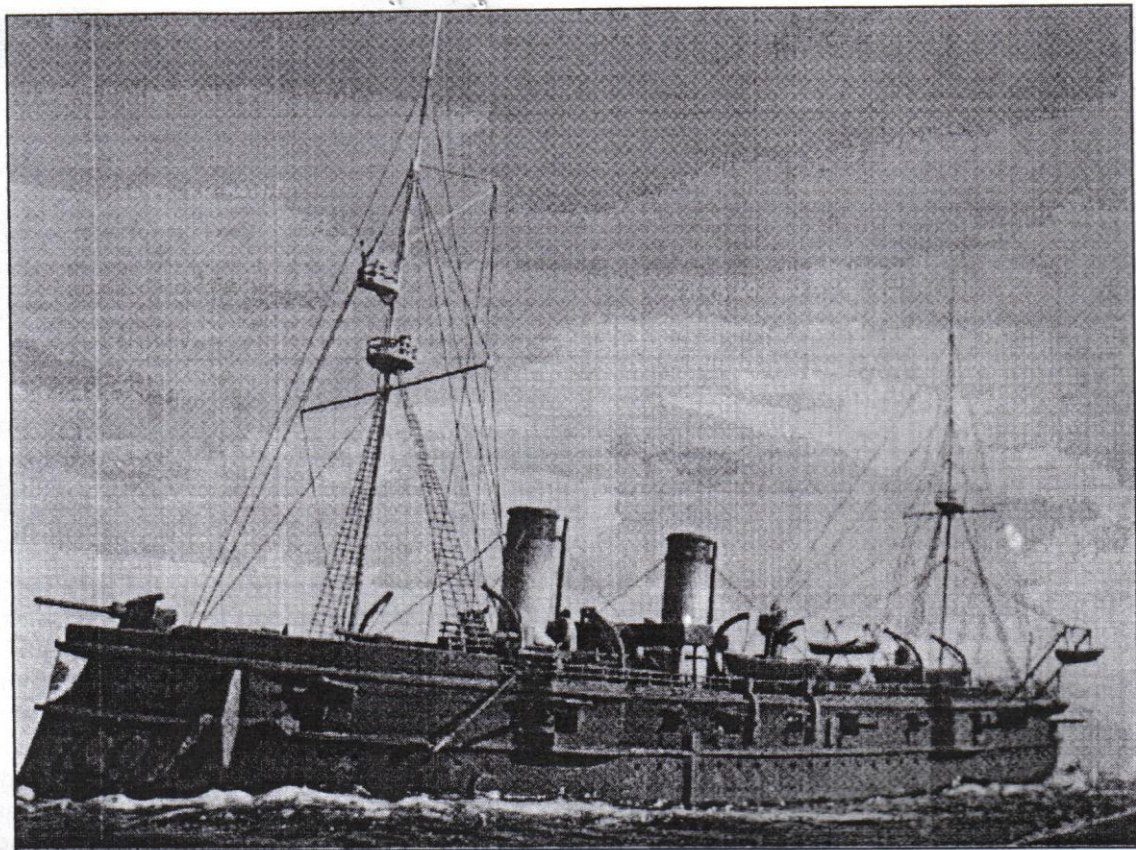
I dry brushed the deck with a lighter shade of tan to bring out the details and to smooth over the wash. The black funnel tops were made from decals so that they were even and straight.

A word of caution, since the top deck covers a portion of the gun deck: the guns on the main deck need to be installed before gluing on the top deck.

I replaced all of the barrels on the 6" and 4.7" guns with hypodermic tubing. One of the drawbacks of the kit is that all of the guns provided are the same 6" guns, while the ship carried four 6" and four 4.7" guns on her gun deck. Since 4.7" guns were noticeably smaller, I scratchbuilt them. There were sixteen 47mm guns on the real ship, but only twelve are provided by *Kombrig*, so I got four more from my spares box. The 47mm guns in the kit come with gun shields, but according to my references the guns on *Monomakh* didn't have them, so I removed them prior to installation. Six 37mm guns came from the *White Ensign Models* photoetch set for the Russian Cruiser *Askold*.

I scratchbuilt the masts from brass rod; through I used too thin a rod. It was very hard not to over tighten the rigging and tilt the mast and I actually had the forward mast collapse under tension from the rigging (at least I assume that that was the cause since everyone in the house swears on their life that they didn't touch it). The rigging and ratlines were made from stretched pantyhose.

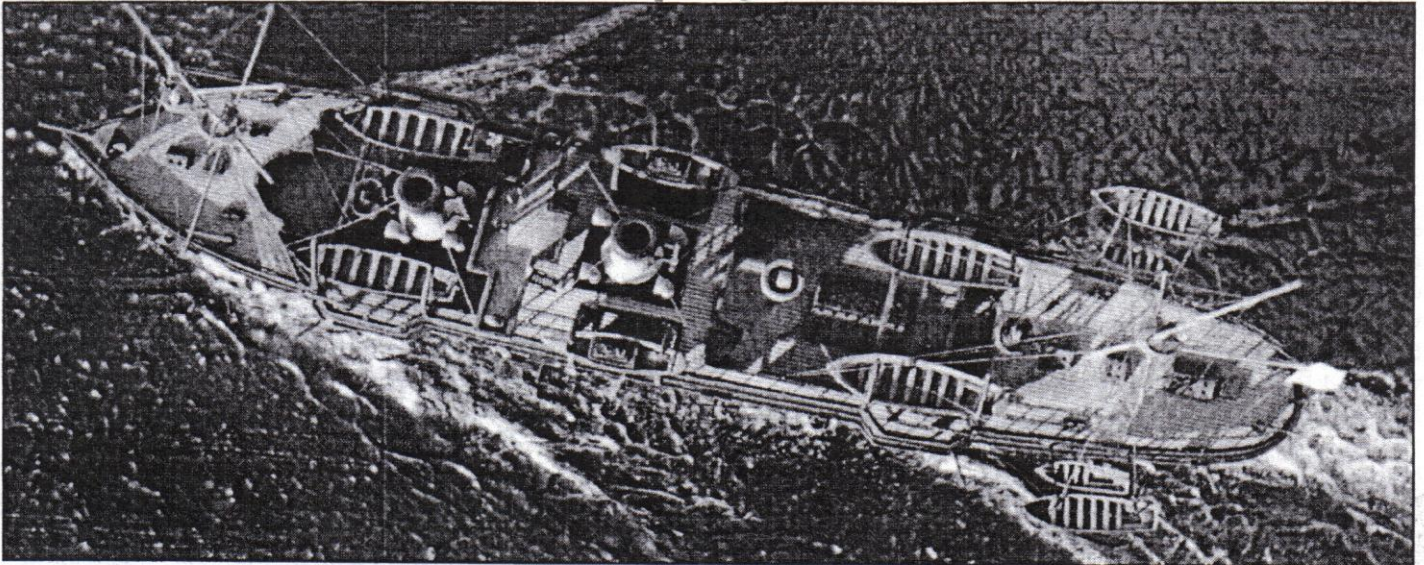
The ratlines were made on a jig. I cut out a square in a piece



At top, Vladimir's model; below, the *Vladimir Monomakh* outfitted as she was at the time of Tsushima. These two views show how closely Vladimir's model matches the real ship.

of styrene then glued the vertical lines to it and then glued the horizontal lines to the sides of the jig, not to the vertical lines. Once everything was dry a carefully glued the vertical and horizontal lines to each other (being careful to dab any excess superglue right away with a finger). Once they were dry, I cut them out as I would from a photoetch sheet and glued them to the ship, tightening later with a match. Since then I've found a much less labor intensive alternative from our own Sami Arim, who makes photoetched ratlines for 1:1250 ships,





Overhead view shows the deck detail present on the *Kombrig* kit, and shows how effectively the acrylic gel medium paint can be for replicating water, especially in this scale.

but which can also be easily used in 1:700.

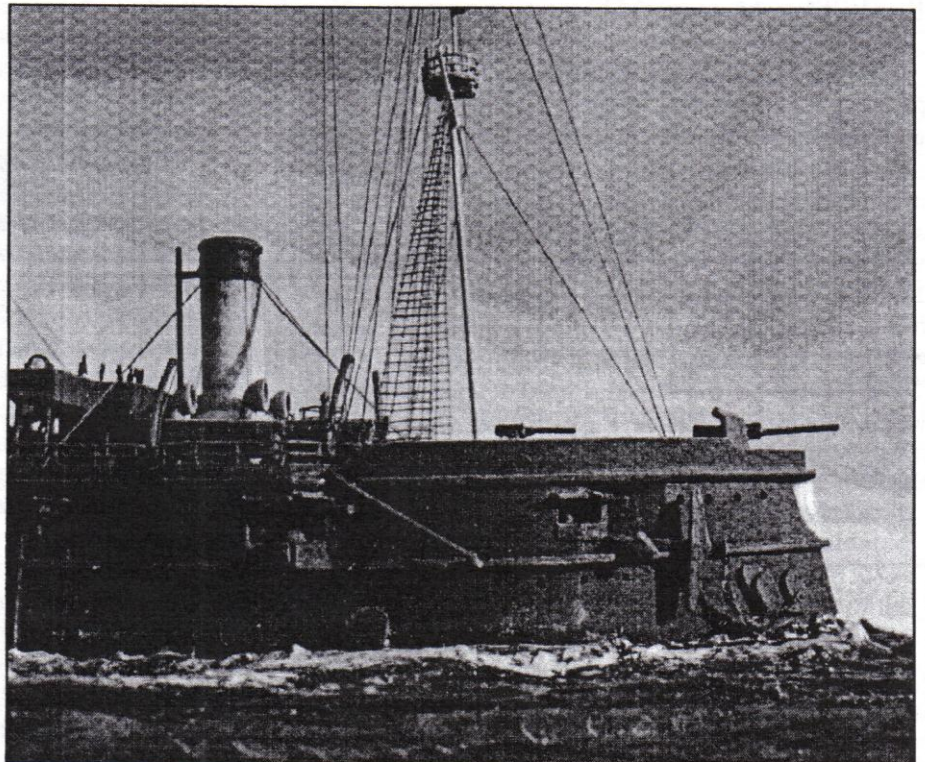
The fighting tops were a mystery, as there are drawings of the ship both with them and without them, but as there are no photos of her (that I've been able to find) during her voyage to Tsushima I decided to go with *Kombrig* drawings, which had them. There should be splinter shielding around them, not railings, but it was too hard to do, so I went with railings. I also scratchbuilt the forward and aft searchlight platforms. The forward platform on the fore mast wasn't present at all and the platform aft on the deck was cast as a single block, while my references showed it to be standing on four posts.

To complete her boat load out, I used two of *White Ensign's* Russian 36' pinnaces. While the kit had boat davits, I didn't like them and scratchbuilt my own from brass rod. The boat skids over the main deck were not provided, so I used square styrene strips to make them. The smoke stacks on the steam launches were made from hypodermic tubing. The ship had four anchors, but only two were provided in the kit and I didn't feel like scratch building the other two so I just went with two. The anchor chain was made from the *White Ensign* photoetched chain (assembled link by link). The Imperial Eagle on the bow and the shield it is on were printed on ALPS printer. After everything was complete, I sprayed the whole ship with *Testors* Dullcote to get rid of any glue marks.

The water was made using Liquitex acrylic gel medium (available at Arts and Crafts stores). Some people prefer to mount their model before they do the water, but I prefer to do the water first and then to mount the model as a very last step. To do that, I traced the shape of the hull of a piece of styrene and placed that cutout on the base and made the water around it. I created the waves and bow wave first with copious applications of the gel medium

and then, after spreading a thin coating of it all around the base, I used a stiff brush to do the ripples by stabbing it at the thin spots. After that, I painted the water blue and dry brushed with white where appropriate. After gluing the model to the base, I touched up the joint between the model and the water with gel medium.

Overall, it is an excellent kit. The detail and fit on this kit is one of the best I've ever seen. After suffering AMS with my aircraft kits, I don't go out of my way to measure the ship kits, so I don't know how good it is dimension wise, but it certainly looks right. I thoroughly enjoyed building this kit and I plan to build one more backdating it to the original layout with sails and full rigging.



This detail of the bow shows the anchor with its photo-etched chain and the six-inch bow gun. The crest on the bow is a decal made on an ALPS printer.

# SVSM BOOKSHELF

Warpaint #37: *Gloster Gladiator*

By Tom Spencer

The *Gladiator* was the last biplane fighter to enter squadron service with the RAF, and considering it was totally outmoded by the time World War II started, it saw a surprising amount of action. Serving with the RAF and FAA, *Gladiators* were on the front line in small numbers during the Battle of Britain, served with ill-starred expeditionary forces to Norway and France, fought in Greece, the Western Desert and East Africa, and are famous (in the somewhat mythical guise of "Faith, Hope and Charity") for their flights in defense of Malta. They were also used in combat by the Norwegians, Finns, Swedes (!), Chinese, Iraqis and Belgians, and found their ways into the inventories of the Soviets, Germans, Portuguese, Egyptians, Irish, Latvians, Lithuanians, Greeks and Free French. A handful of Iraqi *Gladiators* even flew escort missions for *Anson* "bombers" against Israel in 1948, certainly the last biplane fighter sorties in history.

This monograph somehow manages to detail all of the complex history of the type in 48 pages, while including about fifty color drawings, a two-page 5-view drawing in 1:72, and a whole raft of really interesting photos, some of which are color detail shots of museum examples. Like any technical historical work, it might have errors, but I did not find them. If you intend to model a *Gladiator*, or even if you just want to know more about the type, this volume is indispensable.

—Mark Schynert

*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 B-17s), 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 he was shot down while flying with the 97th BG. I found it interesting that in the 15th Air Force, aircraft were traded between units 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 they could fly the long range missions. Also, the 483rd BG arrived in the MTO in late March 1944 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 at the lack of fighter escort that the units in

the MTO had. 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," losses for the 8th AF were 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 does have some shortcomings. As I mentioned in my previous review, the author went to some 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

No. 43 'Fighting Cocks' Squadron

Osprey Aviation Elite Units 9

By Andy Saunders

No. 43 Squadron was based in Sussex during the Battle of Britain and saw more than its share of combat during the summer and fall of 1940. It went on to serve in Africa and Italy, and had 19 aces among its ranks during the war. Saunders' history of this important unit is complete and quick, with a wealth of photographs that will make modelers eager to get to building (especially tasty is Wing Commander Raymond du Vivier's Mk 9 *Spitfire* coded "R • du V"), and detailed captions and descriptions that include serial numbers.

During the war, No. 43 Sqdn flew *Hurricane* Is and IIs and *Spitfire* Vs, VIIIs and IXs, and the book's profile section includes a good sample of the colors and markings the unit used (including the white-trimmed red codes used during its Italian service).

If there's one shortcoming, it's that Saunders tries to get too much into the text and it can get crowded with detail to the detriment of the readability of the book. Saunders, an admitted fan of the unit, clearly did not want to omit anything, but in 125 heavily-illustrated pages, there's only so much room.

An above-average title in a very good series. For WWII RAF buff, this is a must-have.

—Chris Bucholtz

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**or, by E-mail, to bucholtzc@aol.com**

# FEBRUARY MINUTES

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At February's meeting, a big thank you was sent to all the volunteers who helped make the Kickoff Classic a big success. SVSM also took the award for chapter of the year 2002, and the contest got the club off and running toward the same title in 2003.

We were also reminded that March is the month for our annual elections. If you have a desire to take one of our executive positions, be prepared to throw your hat into the ring at the next meeting.

In model talk... Pete Wong couldn't attend the meeting, but he sent along his finished *Italeri* B-25B just the same. He used 10 pennies in the nose to keep the *Mitchell* on its tricycle landing gear. John Carr is also working on a B-25; it's his first airplane in 10 years, and he's learning about filling seams and other techniques that he doesn't have to worry about so much with figures or armor. It took several attempts, but Ron Wergin finally got a spectacular natural metal finish on his *Italeri* RB-66 *Destroyer* using Rub N' Buff over *Tamiya* primer. He washed the panels with *Tamiya* smoke, and he finished the canopy frames with Bare Metal Foil. Rodney Williams was a winner at the contest with his 1:72 DC-3 in Polynesian Airlines colors; Rodney used white lacquer and *SnJ* to finish the model, and his decals were custom printed on an ALPS printer. Rodney is also working on a couple of 1:32 F2G-1 *Corsairs*, the detail parts of which will become the basis of an *Obscureco* conversion set. Jim Lund brought in an armada of Bellancas in 1:72, including a 300 *Pacemaker*, the plane Lindbergh had hoped to fly the Atlantic in (it was instead used in an ill-fated trans-Atlantic flight by a team of Lithuanian pilots); a Bellanca 2870 racer, built from the *Dekno* resin kit; and a Bellanca *Aircruiser* freighter, which came from an *Execuform* vacuform kit. Jim found the vacuform its much more fun than the resin kit. Eric McClure completed his *Tamiya* Willys Jeep out of the box, although he used some special techniques to paint the seat and to apply "dust" to the lower part of his GP. Vladimir Yakubov's diorama will feature two 1:700 "Oscar"-class submarines when it's done, plus some modified *Tamiya* Japanese tugboats. Vladimir is depicting the return of a Soviet sub to its home port. Vladimir is also working on yet another Russo-Japanese War destroyer, and it will be joined by a *Kambrig* kit of the Russian ice breaker *Yabmok*, a nice simple model that appealed to Vladimir because it has no guns to worry about! Also in the pipeline from Vladimir is a 1:72 BT-2 tank from a Ukrainian company. Mike Burton also brought an icebreaker; his was the old *Revell* *Burton Island*, which he built several years ago. Also on the table from Mike: a *Minicraft* 1:144 RB-47 *Stratojet*, which won an award at the contest; a *Revell* rat rod constructed as part of a club collection with several other SVSM'ers; two *Italeri* B-25s, one for the Doolittle Raiders project and a second that will wear a desert paint scheme; and two V-173 "Flying Flapjacks," one from the *Sword* kit and the other from the old *Eagles Talon* vacuform. Chris Bucholtz is hoping to put paint on his *Hobbycraft* CF-100 *Canuck* Mk. IV soon, but he was able to finish his *Mac Distributon* 1:72 Fi 103 "buzzbomb" in time to take a second place in the contest. Bill Abbott is working on what is purportedly a flying model depicting a DC-9 from the

*Dumas Model Boat Co.* He says the finished product will make at least one flight! Bill's smaller projects include an *Airfix* *Tiger Moth*, painted red with yellow spots by his son Benjamin; a 1:72 *Revell* *Hurricane* IIB; and a *Sweet* 1:144 FM-2 *Wildcat*, which features some wild Anime-style box art. Roy Sutherland took the Mike Williams Memorial Award with his *Imperial Walker*, a kit made by improving and casting parts off the old *AMT* kit. Tom Trankle was delighted to take a third with his *Accurate Miniatures* 1:48 SBD-5 *Dauntless*. Tom used *Eduard* details, and employed a tricky *Lego* jig to ensure alignment. Brad Chun has *Hasegawa's* new 1:48 F-8E *Crusader* taped up; he says it's nice but it has a few issues that need to be addressed. Brad also built a rat rod for the contest, a 1932 three-window coupe that reminded him to read the instructions when he was forced to take it apart partway through construction when the wheel wells wouldn't go in. And, from the *Tamiya* 1:48 *Kettenkraftrad* kit, Brad built the 1:48 Goliath demolition vehicle. Another rat rod came from Mike Meek, who used an old *MPC* kit to build his street machine. Mike also used an *Obscureco* cowling, *Eduard* brass parts and an *Engines and Things* P&W R-2800 to turn a *Testors* 1:48 F8F *Bearcat* into Darryl Greenamyre's "Conquest I." Ben Pada redid the engine and interior of his 1:48 *Tamiya* F4U-1 *Corsair*, then painted it with gradually lightened shades of *Gunze Sangyo* paints. Also in Ben's aircraft collection were a *Tamiya* F-84G, finished with *SnJ* and *AeroMaster* decals, a *Hasegawa* P-47D finished in Pacific markings from a *SuperScale* sheet, and a freshly-painted *Hasegawa* Ar 234, which Ben says looks nice once built but isn't an easy model to master. Ken Miller's Aloha Airlines 737 is making some progress; he had two of the 1:144 airliners on the table, and he also had several of Jim Lund's old airliners present: a 747 from *Airfix* in American Airlines markings, two DC-8s (Pan Am and United), and a SwissAir *Convair* 990 built with the old *Microscale* sheet. These models were damaged and Jim gave them to Ken, who repaired them and added them to his collection. Frank Babbitt has started work on a *Trumpeter* MiG-15UTI "Midget," and he's using parts from *Aires* and *Kendall* to turn an *Academy* MiG-21bis into a detailed MiG-21MF. Rather than build a conjectural cockpit for his PM Ta 183, Kent McClure painted over the inside of the canopy! Also in 1:72, Kent built the *SHQ* metal kit of the Belgian T-15 tank, an *Esci* T-62 as a winter camouflaged Syrian vehicle from the 1973 war, and has started work on his *Italeri* B-25. Kent's other big interest is 1:43 cars; on this evening, he had what might be a collection for the 2004 contest: a Porsche 917 shorttail conversion of the *Highland* die cast kit, a 917 longtail, a *Starter* 917 coupe, a 917PA interseries, and a 917 CanAm car. Greg Plummer says *Trumpeter's* YF-107 is not a great kit, but it is buildable. Despite some complex engineering, it is devoid of detail in the cockpit and the wheel wells. Aiden Mackin said some of the small parts of his 1:72 *Airfix* SdKfz 234/1 Puma just didn't fit, but he battled and came up with a neat little armored car. And the model of the month goes to... Cliff Kranz, who just finished a 28-year-old *Ertl* kit of a pay hauler dump truck! Cliff used six bottles of *Testors* yellow to paint this massive model of a massive truck.

# Kickoff Classic Best-of-Show

Next meeting:

**7:00 p.m.,**

**Friday,**

**March 21**

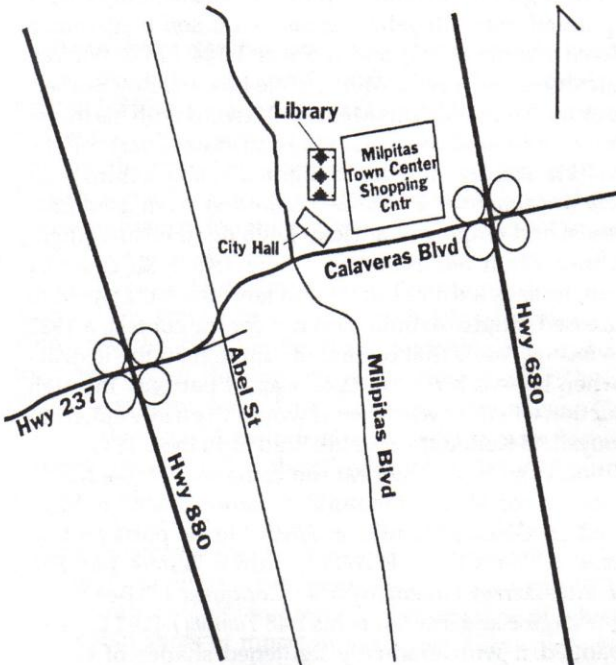
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