



THE STYRENE SHEET



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Bombers B-47: Minicraft's 1:144 Stratojets

By Mike Burton

Of the five bomber types ordered in 1947, only the first and the last (in order of first flights) ever managed to make it to service, and both did invaluable double duty as espionage agents. North American's B-45 *Tornado* beat Boeing's B-47 *Stratojet* into the air by several months, but that was about the last lead the B-45 had over the sleek B-47. The B-45 was a classic straight-wing design, cautious, big and conservative. Well able to perform as intended, the *Tornado* became the first U.S. Air Force jet bomber to enter service and set many records in its time. However, some of its greatest triumphs had to wait until the end of the Cold War for the crews and planes to receive long over due recognition for their service as a vital "ferret and overflight platform."

On the other hand, the *Stratojet* lived in spotlight from the start. Even today, pictures taken in 1947 of the XB-47 on the desert floor look unearthly and out of place. The XB-47 was a more radical looking aircraft. It didn't take long before her performance put an end to the Martin XB-48, Northrop YB-49 and the svelte, elegant but doomed Convair XB-46.

With swept wings, underwing jet engines in slim nacelles, bicycle-style landing gear and a long, slim fuselage with a fighter style canopy, the B-47 could have almost passed for a

jet interceptor if it not for its size. It flew only two months after North American's first swept wing jet fighter, the XP-86 *Sabre*. The B-47 entered service with Strategic Air Command starting

in 1951, and by 1958 the definitive bomber model, the B-47E, equipped SAC worldwide with over 1300 in operation. Once her performance and potential were realized, the *Stratojet* became a pioneer of modern bomber tactics, a strategic bomber designed to fly like a tactical fighter: go in low level at high speed and "toss" nuclear bomb load in high arc, while making a violent turn to escape the atomic blast.

While later characterized as the reason for the seemingly early retirement of the B-47s as bombers, LABS (Low Altitude Bombardment System) wasn't really the culprit. All *Stratojets* operated at low level demonstrated much accelerated wing fatigue over time. After all, there was a reason it was called *Stratojet*; the plane was designed and built to operate as a high-altitude fast strategic bomber. By 1963 the phase out had begun, and by 1966 all active bombers were retired to sadly be chopped to bits. As a kid in school, I had to watch a documentary film "of our modern age" where Walter Cronkite merrily narrates as "SAC swords begin melting into consumer



A B-47E banks away from the camera plane. At one point, the Air Force had over 1800 *Stratojets* in service.

plowshares."

Behind all the brightly lit retirements and SAC record-setting, many a B-47 soldiered on even after 1966 in the

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

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EDITOR'S BRIEF

As your editor writes this, he is taking a break from unpacking from OrangeCon, which saw a bunch of SVSM members venture down to one of the two best Southern California shows. Roy Sutherland won two awards and our club was represented well by Laramie Wright, Steve Quock, Randy Ray and Mike Burton. Our presence at these shows is important, because it serves as an impetus for southern Californians to come up to the Kickoff Classic. It's also a lot of fun, and that is the most important reason. The next southern Californian event is in Lancaster, and the Antelope Valley Group always puts on a good show. You never know what you'll find in Lancaster—one year, X-15 pilot Bill Dana gave a talk, and another year Frederick Johnsen brought his restored B-24 nose to the show.

On page 14 of this issue, you'll find information on the one show of the year you really ought to attend: our own Kickoff Classic. It'll be the 10th year running that we've used a site in Milpitas, and Napredak Hall worked very well for us in 2002 as our contest continues to grow. To help us make the contest

better, we rely on sponsors for the trophy packages, especially for the special awards. Please talk to Bill Ferrante or Jim Priete about sponsoring one of our awards; it will mean a lot to us and it will help the club continue to promote the hobby in Northern California.

Speaking of promoting the hobby, our make-and-take at the South County Airport was a big success and may lead to more activities at this neat venue. Says Mike Burton, "Many thanks to Chris Bucholtz, Bob Miller and John Heck for their very appreciated help on the shortest notice ever given for a successful SVSM event. Thanks also go to Frank Beltran, Bradley Chun and of course Mike Meek for their valuable moral support. Without all of you the inaugural launch of "SVSM Make 'n Take History" last weekend at San Martin's Wings of History Hangar One couldn't have been success that it was! I am looking forward to our Spring 2003 effort there now!"

What Mike alludes to is the idea of a model exposition at the museum—not a contest, but a chance to show your models in a noncompetitive setting and talk models with modelers and people who appreciate models. We've been talking about doing this for a long time, but the museum's enthusiasm for doing such an event makes it fiscally possible for the first time, and we could help promote this interesting museum. More news on this as it develops.

And don't forget those contests this month...

—The Editor

CONTEST CALENDAR

November 2, 2002: **The Antelope Valley Group** hosts **Desert Classic VI and the Region 8 Regional** at Antelope Valley College, 3041 W. Avenue K in Lancaster, California. The theme is "The Vietnam War, 1946-1975." For more information, call Bill Kelly at (661) 305-7902 or e-mail him at v1rotate@prodigy.net.

November 24, 2002: **The Southern Nevada Scale Modelers** host **Modeltoberfest 2002** at the Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino, 3535 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Las Vegas, Nevada. For more information, call Larry Todd at (702) 397-6113.

February 16, 2003: **Silicon Valley Scale Modelers** presents its **Tenth Annual Kickoff Classic Model Contest** at Napredak Hall, 770 Montague Expressway, Milpitas, California. This year's theme is "That '70s Contest." For more information, call Chris Bucholtz at (408) 723-3995.

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.

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.

This October, two club contests in one

exciting evening!

Air Racers and Real Space Subjects

**Bring out your glossy speed
machines and your orbital
objects and compete for
prizes and the pride of being
the fastest and the most out
of this world!
at the October meeting**

DESERT CLASSIC VI MODEL CONTEST

Region 8 IPMS Regional

Presented by the Antelope Valley Group

Saturday
November 2, 2002



Antelope Valley College
3041 W. Avenue K Lancaster, CA
Cafeteria Entrance

The Theme for this year's contest is : The Vietnam War 1946-1975

Categories

1. Helicopters (All Type, All Scales)
2. 1/73 and smaller Aircraft
3. 1/72 Allied Prop Aircraft
4. 1/72 Axis Prop Aircraft
5. 1/72 Multi-Engine Prop Aircraft
6. 1/72 Jet Aircraft
7. 1/48 Allied Prop Aircraft
8. 1/48 Axis Prop Aircraft
9. 1/48 Multi-Engine Prop Aircraft
10. 1/48 Jet Aircraft
11. 1/48 Multi-Engine Jet Aircraft
12. 1/32 Jet Aircraft
13. 1/32 Prop Aircraft
14. Ships 1/451 and Smaller
15. Ships 1/450 and Larger
16. Tanks Allied 1945 & Earlier (All scales)
17. Tanks Axis 1945 & Earlier (All scales)
18. Tanks West 1946 & Later (All Scales)
19. Tanks Eastblock 1946 & Later (All Scales)
20. AFV, Artillery, Softskins Tracked
21. AFV, Artillery, Softskins Non-Tracked
22. Self Propelled Guns, Assault Tanks
23. Auto - Competition Open Wheel
24. Auto - Competition Closed Wheel
25. Auto - Stock
26. Auto - Street Machine
27. Auto - Custom
28. Figures Historical
29. Figures Non-Historical
30. Busts
31. Vignettes
32. Dioramas Military
33. Dioramas Non-Military
34. Miscellaneous
35. Junior (12 and under)
36. Junior (13 thru 17)
37. Science Fiction / Space

Special Awards

Best of Show
People's Choice
Theme Award
Best Aircraft
Best Automobile
Best Armor
Best Figure
Best X-Plane
Best Naval Aircraft
(Includes USMC)
Best F-16

*** LARGE ***
*** RAFFLE ***

Schedule

9:00 - Noon Registration
Noon - 3:00 Judging
3:00 - 4:00 Awards

Fees

Parking \$0.50 Charged by the College
Adult \$5.00 for 1st entry \$1.00 for each additional entry.
Juniors FREE
Spectators FREE
Vendors: \$20.00 pre-registered \$30.00 at the door. Per Table.
IPMS Members receive a \$2.00 discount.

For more Information Contact

IPMS Chapter Contact: Bill Kelly at (661) 305-7902 v1rotate@prodigy.net
Steve Spandorf at (760) 784-0734 sfrodnaps@msn.com
Vendor Contact: David Newman at (661) 256-6359 dnewman@as.net

For contest news and updates see our AVG Website: <http://fp3.antelecom.net/jaber/avg-ipms>

Note: IPMS Rules are utilized in the judging. The "No Sweeps" rule is in use for this contest. All winning entries from past Desert Classic and IPMS Nationals prior to 2002 are not eligible.

AVG reserves the right to change/alter class structures and entree classification as they pertain to the IPMS Rules and criteria. Judges decisions are final. Neither AVG nor Antelope Valley College can be held responsible for any loss, damage, or injury to entrants, vendors, or spectators and their respective entries, merchandise, and/or personal effects.

The first real helicopter: Roden PKZ-2 in 1:72

By Tom Young

The Petrochy-Karman-Zurovec PKZ-2 was a failure, but it managed to be the first real helicopter ever produced. Three rotary engines connected to a central gearbox turned two counter-rotating 19-foot, eight-inch solid wood propellers. The whole thing landed on controlled air bags and featured a plywood barrel on top for the pilot, prompting my wife Lynne to refer to it as a "1918 Cuisinart."

The PKZ-2 was first test-flown with three captured 110-horsepower Gnome rotary engines and no cupola on top. The entire affair was tethered from the ends of the outriggers to a drum and pulley system that controlled ascent, descent and level flight. The craft achieved a top altitude of four feet because of its lack of power.

The Gnomes were replaced with three captured 120 horsepower Le Rhones, improved airbags were fitted and the cupola was added for the second flight on May 17, 1918. The PKZ-2 reached 164 feet in altitude and stayed there for a half an hour. Over 30 successful flights followed.

The one and only manned flight occurred on June 10, 1918 with airbag designer Dr. Ing. Theodor Zurovec in the barrel. The flight was a success, but the landing left a lot to be desired. The ground crew failed to properly monitor the cables and the PKZ-2's propellers struck the ground from six feet in the air, causing the parts to cease flying in formation.

Because of the design's modular construction, it was ready to fly again by Nov. 1, 1918, this time with Zurovec-designed water-cooled Le Rhone rotary engines. With the war at an end, the machine was captured by the Italians and it was last seen in an Italian museum in 1935.

The World War I 1:72 aircraft kits produced by Roden, the manufacturer previously known as Toko, have set new standards of excellence in their market. The models have excellent box art, color three-views on the bottom, good instructions, and well-researched parts with credit

given to resources. Their three-dimensional small parts are better than most photoetched metal parts from other manufacturers.

These are all presented with well-chosen, usually in-register decals and amount to superb kits.

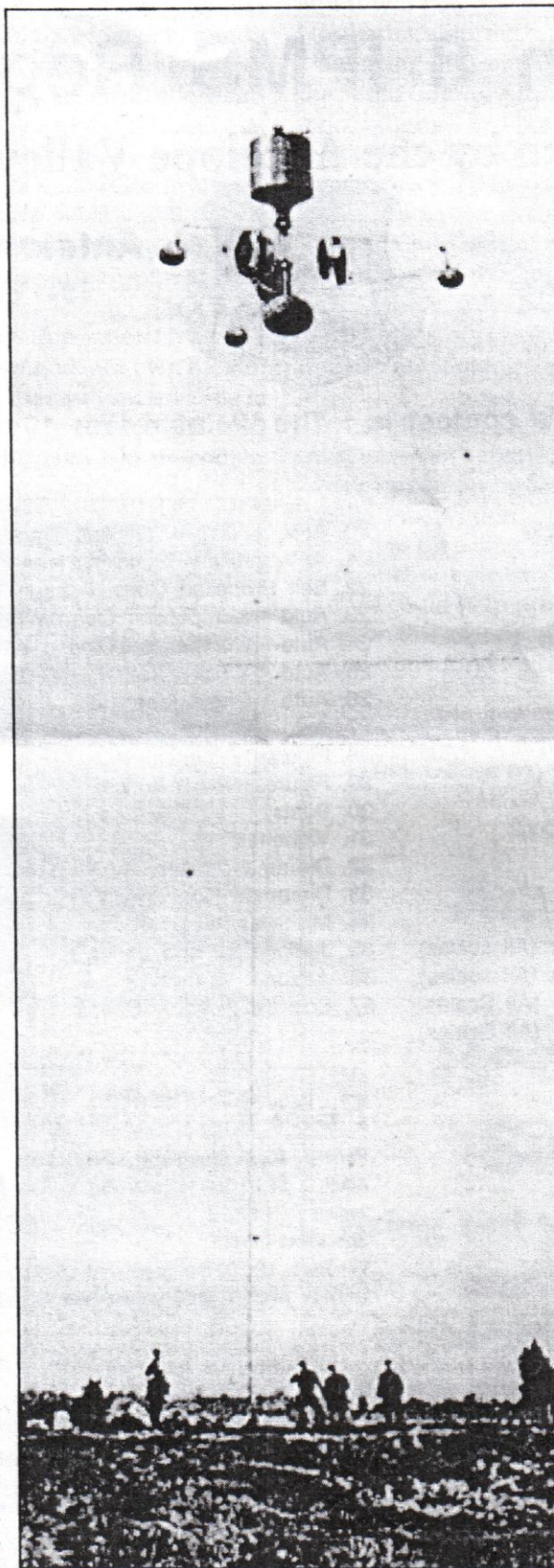
Then along comes their 1:72 PKZ-2. Forget much of the above. The nice box art is there, and the parts look great on the sprue. You certainly can't complain about the subject matter. When Bill Carpenter at Berkeley Ace Hardware's fabulous basement hobby shop showed this one to me, I knew I had to build it right away. Next time, I think I'll try something a bit easier, like the Meikraft Caproni Ca. 3!

The problems in order of assembly were legion. The detailing of the three fuel tanks is great. Just don't glue them front to back as I did. The efforts to repair this little goof were time consuming. The painting guide on the bottom of the box says the tanks should be painted camouflage gray. Actually, they should be painted aluminum, then coat them with Future floor polish and they'll look great. Sanding the seams is a pain as they are so tiny.

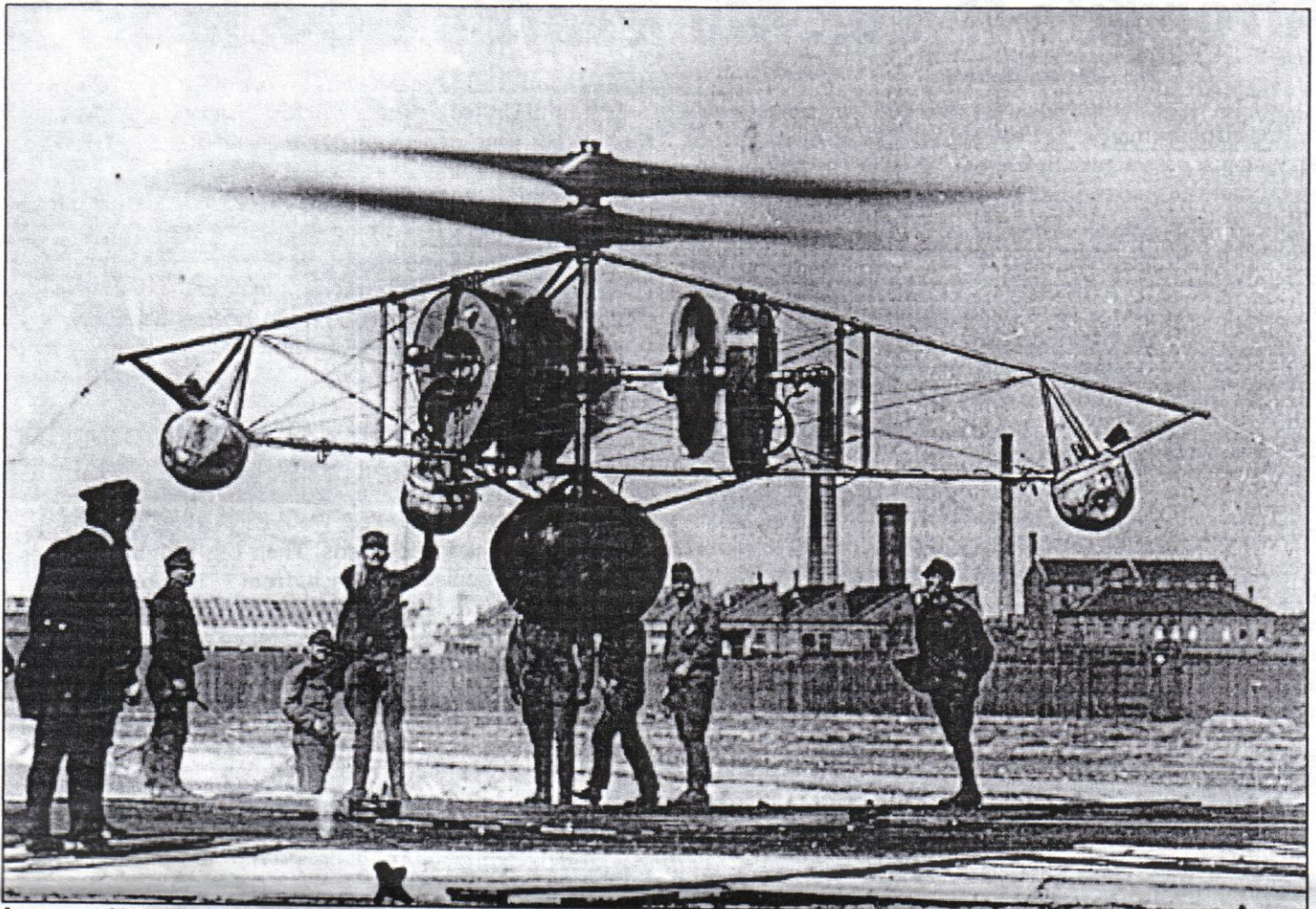
Sanding the seams on the blueberry-sized air bags on the ends of the pylons can cause the loss of your fingerprints. The framework is fragile and could have been engineered with a lot more thought. The little "V" struts all broke and were replaced with sprue. Drill out the end of each strut.

In step 3, the part marked "part 3" on the instruction sheet is actually the flat part 4. If you follow the instructions at this stage you won't be able to finish the thing. Drill out the ends of part 4 and, since you're going blind doing this anyhow, part 3 as well. Filling the seam on the central air bag not only loses much of the detail but the last of your fingerprints as well.

The little 120-horsepower Le Rhones are nice. Paint them gunmetal with copper details. The locking washers are meant to allow the engines to spin, but they are best attached firmly to the triple drive



Newspaper clipping of the first manned helicopter flight using the PKZ-2 in 1918. Control cables are faintly visible in this photo.



An unmanned test flight of the PKZ-2. Altitude and lateral position was controlled from the ground by cables, limiting the aircraft's usefulness.

shaft. The detailed side of the engines face outward.

Attach parts 12 and 13 after the rest of this step is done to avoid breakage. Use tube glue for this assembly as you'll need some time to align everything.

When the time comes to bring the four subassemblies together you'll find out why you did the drilling and careful pre-fitting. Nothing will fit unless you are very, very lucky. I found that using tube glue, then reinforcing everything with superglue helped a lot.

Add the hubs to the bottom of the barrel and to the bottom of the top propeller (the props are handed so be careful). Paint the props brown after sanding them to a better shape. Drybrush them with a slightly darker brown, then a slightly lighter brown, and seal them with Future. I added etched metal prop bosses from *Copper State Models*, supplied on an emergency basis in two days from *Aviation Usk*. They were so nice that I bought two more sets and some engines from *Copper State* and I'll be ordering a lot more from *Usk* soon. The prop bosses, which are painted brass, don't show, but I know they are there.

Paint the seat aluminum with a brown leather cushion, but don't attach the cupola until after rigging is done. It took quite a bit of time and tears to rig 21 individual lines using 2-pound monofilament. The central air bag is painted matt dark gray and matt gull gray. The air bags at the ends of the outriggers are matt gull gray with matt dark gray tops.

All paints are given as *Humbrol* colors, which are hard to find in the North Bay Area. I got my paints from a friend in Scotland.

Shortly after I started this thing, I found a new series of soft plastic 1:72 scale WWI figures by *Hat Industries* at Berkeley Ace Hardware. The set of Australian infantry contains four sprues, each containing 12 figures in nine poses. The details and poses are wonderful and quite realistic.

I used the soldier with the slung rifle stock from the box. The pilot is converted from the figure of the officer with pistol and sword. The ground crewman is modified heavily from the soldier advancing with rifle at the ready. The figures were easy to work with a new #11 X-Acto blade. Paints were *Humbrol* as used on the PKZ-2, with hands and faces a mix of *Pactra* flesh and brown and a little red for the pilot's collar tabs.

The base is a representation of the rather haphazard plank platform shown on the *Roden* box art. It's made from fitted sections of model railroad freight car siding and painted to represent rough wood.

The model took about 50 hours to build, mostly drilling, sanding and filling. About five hours were needed for the rigging. I avoided throwing it against a wall twice. It took second place at the IPMS/Santa Rosa contest, then it was awarded a prize that I had never heard of, the "Sow's Ear" Award for a model built from an almost unbuildable kit! Hey! I'll accept that!

Affordable flying: Minicraft's DC-3 in 1:72

By Bill Abbott

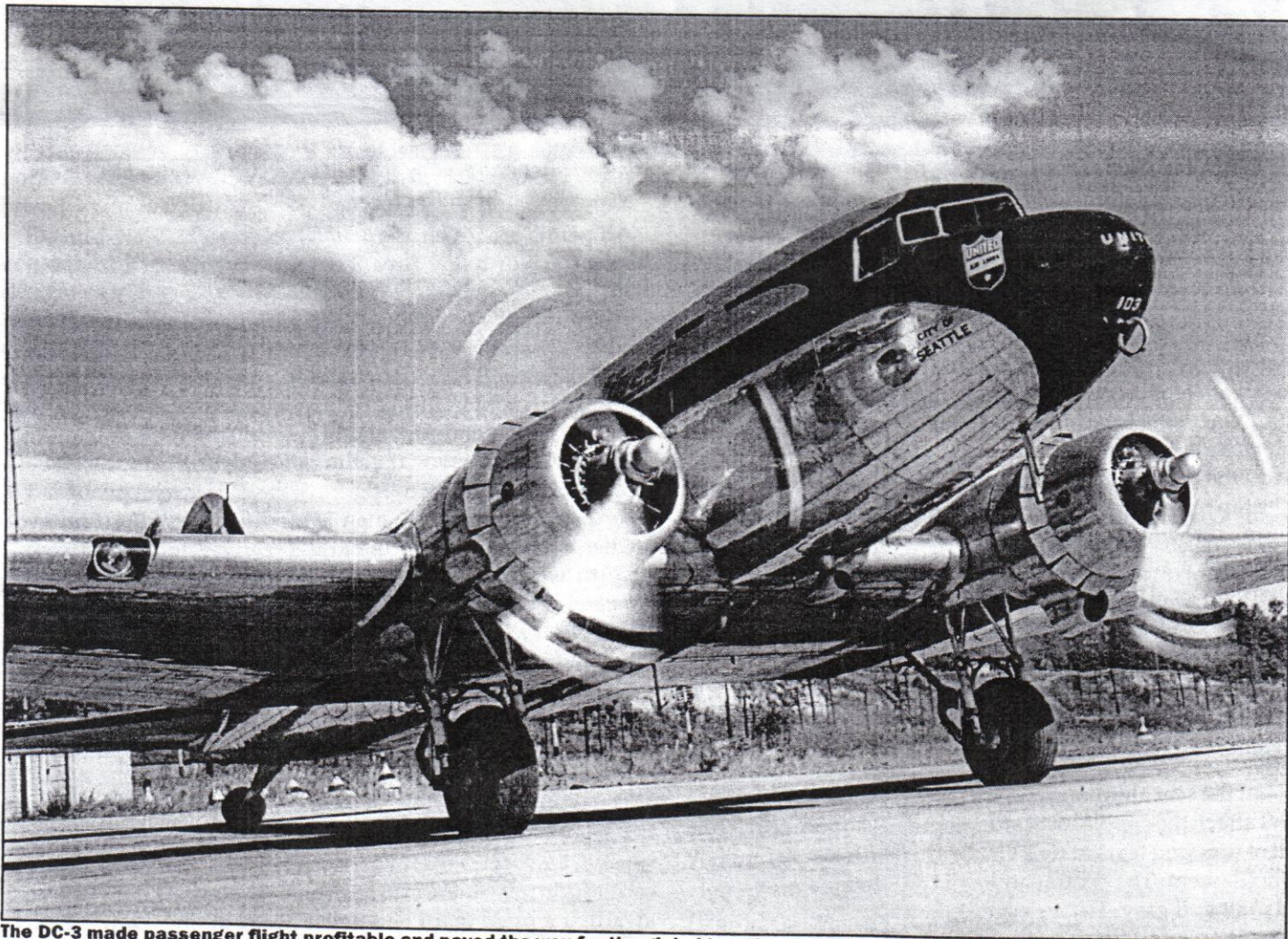
The DC-3 was the airplane that changed the world. It was the first airplane that an airline could carry and operate at a profit carrying just passengers. Before the DC-3, an airline required government airmail contracts or straight subsidies to survive.

The Douglas Sleeper Transport (DST) prototype first flew on Dec. 17, 1935, the 32nd anniversary of the Wright brothers' first powered flight. By 1939, 350 DSTs and DC-3s were carrying 90 percent of worldwide airline passengers. War-time production put the total past 12,000, and the post-war flood of surplus airframes would serve around the world for decades. Total production was 10,655 by Douglas, including military C-47s, C-53s, C-117s, RD4s, etc., and approximately 2500 that were license-produced in Japan and the Soviet Union.

The DC-3's origins have the romance of a Hollywood script. TWA contracted with Douglas to produce a 14-seat transport to compete with United Airlines' 10-seat, 180-mph Boeing 247s. The 247 was the first modern airliner, a cantilever monoplane with stressed metal skin, retractable landing gear and flaps, far in advance of front line military equipment in its day. The 247 made everything else in the air seem either small or old fashioned. But with only 10 seats, United still needed

airmail contracts to break even. TWA couldn't get 247s from Boeing until United's orders were filled, since United Airlines was at that time owned by Boeing and Pratt & Whitney. Competitors had to wait at the end of the line.

In July, 1932, TWA Operations Vice President Jack Frye wrote directly to Donald Douglas, listing the requirements for a new airliner. Douglas had been primarily a supplier to the U.S. Navy up to that time, but the depths of The Great Depression were a great time to be offered new business. Douglas Aircraft applied new analytical tools to establish that a twin-engine airplane could meet TWA's requirements. They adopted Jack Northrop's innovative multi-cellular wing design and thoughtfully applied substantial safety factors. The DC-1 first flew July 1, 1933, followed by production DC-2s. Their twin engines and metal structures met new FAA safety requirements that grounded wooden Fokkers and single-engine Vultees and Lockheeds. Their big Wright Cyclones developed 710 horsepower each, from 1820 cubic inches in nine cylinders. Each was more powerful than all three engines of a Ford or Fokker tri-motor. The Navy and the Army Air Corps even bought a few. The Air Corps tested one to destruction, and it ultimately failed at 300 percent of design limits. Compare this to the 150 percent used in modern commercial



The DC-3 made passenger flight profitable and paved the way for the global travel we take for granted today. This example flew with United Airlines in the late 1940s.



The DC-3 was ideal for places like the Pacific Northwest because of its reliability. This is one of six operated by Pacific Northern Airlines.

airframes.

The DC-2 was a success, with 102 sold and 90 more on the order book, when American Airlines' president C. R. Smith telephoned Douglas from Chicago one summer day in 1935. American had lost \$1 million in its first year of operations, with 4000 miles of routes and Curtis *Condor* fabric covered biplanes offering slow, comfortable travel to too few passengers. American believed that Pullman-car comfort would sell air travel, but speed was an obvious requirement as well. Could Douglas build a 14-passenger sleeper airliner? Donald Douglas was skeptical at first, but by the time the two-hour phone call ended, he'd agreed to build 20 Douglas Sleeper Transports for American for \$110,000 each, with options for 20 more. There would be no formal paperwork until after the first airplanes were delivered!

Douglas Project Engineer Fred Stineman worked closely with American's Chief Engineer, William Littlewood, throughout the design, revising the DC-2 with a new, widened, circular, fuselage, 10 feet more wingspan and the latest Wright Cyclone engines, with 800 horsepower. Upper and lower bunks had horizontal windows, and there was a honeymoon suite. The basic DC-2 cockpit was retained, but new cockpit lamps were designed to allow routine night flights, and fully duplicated flight instruments added safety through redundancy. Landing lights were moved from the nose to the wings, as pilots frequently complained about glare from the nose lights reflecting off cloud or fog while descending. A Sperry gyroscopic autopilot was designed-in to ease pilot workload.

While the DC-2 was the starting point for the DC-3, less than 10 percent of the component parts were interchangeable. The first revenue flight was Chicago to New York, in 1936.

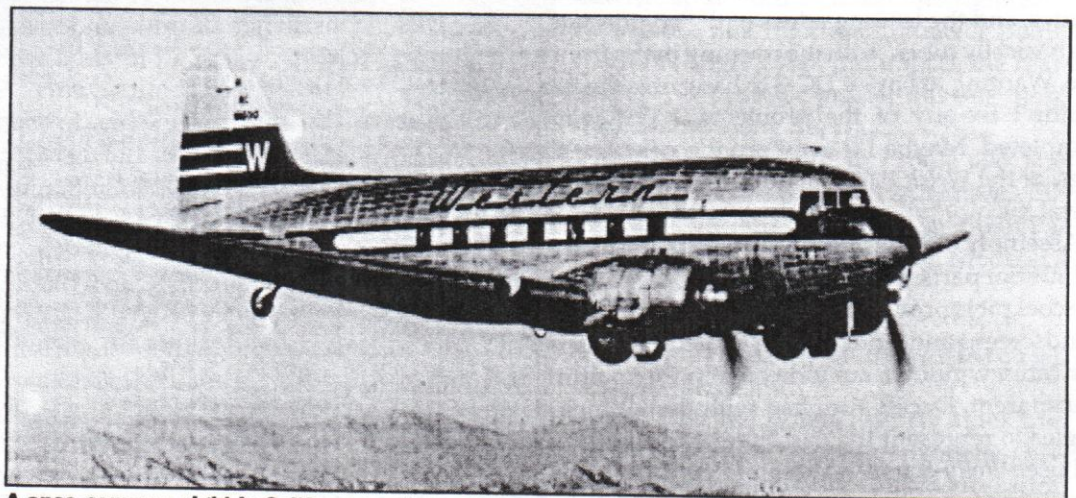
During the design, it was realized that the wider fuselage

could hold 21 passenger seats in a 2 + 1 arrangement, and the DC-3 was born, a DST for daytime flights. This was the big breakthrough. Previous modern airliners, the DC-2 included, simply could not make a profit, even with a paying passenger in every seat. The DC-3 cost little more to fly than the DC-2, but carried up to 50 percent more passengers. The break-even point was somewhere between passenger 14 and 21. American posted its first profit in 1937, and would make millions before World War II changed everything. By the time war came, American's advertising no longer compared them to other airlines. They were after the railroad's business travelers.

Further north, Canadian Pacific Railway was looking to get into the airline business. Canada was, and is; sprinkled with remote locations well beyond the last train station, often well beyond the last mile of road. Some are only accessible in summer. Canadian Pacific was granted the right to run an airline in 1919, but waited until 1940 to start building it. Different sources refer to 9, 10 or 11 bush airlines being purchased and combined into one, but all agree that Canadian Pacific Airlines began business under that name in 1942.

Canadian Pacific's mixed fleet of 100 aircraft of 20 different types must have been maintenance nightmare, though a spotters dream. With the end of the war, surplus C-47s were purchased, along with new-build DC-3s. Even though the DC-3 was no longer the state-of-the-art, it was unmatched in its rugged strength, modest maintenance requirements and docile behavior.

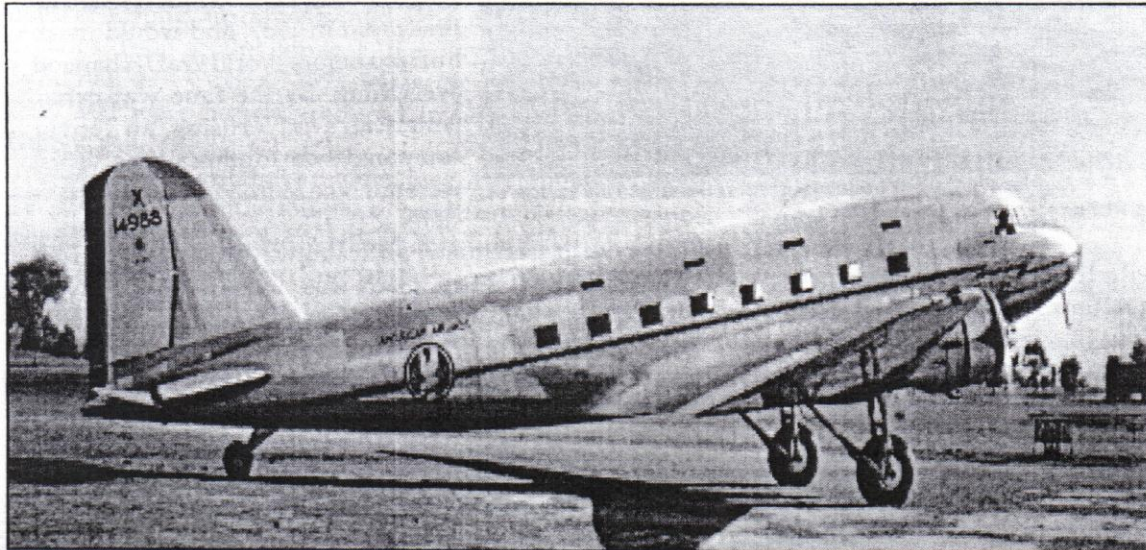
Canadian Pacific Airlines was renamed CP Air in 1968, and the striking orange over red over natural metal colors were introduced with the name change. In addition to its last DC-3, which was retired in 1974, CP Air operated Boeing 737s, 747s, DC-8s and DC-10s in these markings, until Pacific Western Airlines bought it in 1987. The combination was renamed Canadian Airlines International two months later and most know it as "Canadian."



A once-common sight in Californian skies: a Western Airlines DC-3.

Though built as a C-47, the subject of this article was referred to as a DC-3 after conversion to airliner standard in 1946. While most pre-war DC-3s had nine-cylinder Wright Cyclones, most C-47s were built with 14-cylinder Pratt & Whitney Double Wasps of about the same displacement. Pre-war, a DC-3 with Twin Wasps was called a DC-3A. Post war, they were all DC-3s.

I chose these markings before I knew anything about Canadian Pacific—I just wanted a DC-3 that looked different from the natural-metal-and-script-above-the-windows look of the 1930s, '40s and '50s. Russell at *Airline Hobby Supply* suggested



The Douglas Sleeper Transport (DST) was the first step in the evolution from the DC-1 and DC-2 to the wildly successful DC-3.

this *Leading Edge* sheet and I took him up.

Minicraft's 1:144 DC-3 kit has been around for a while now. It was one of the first kits that Al Trendle made when *Minicraft* started making their own molds, along with the 1:144 PB5-5A *Catalina*. Though the tooling was made in Korea and features both good fit and a wealth of recessed panel lines, the nacelles are too close to the fuselage and some say the rudder shape is wrong. Some have said that it's a pantograph copy of an earlier 1:100 kit but I doubt this. Trendle has specifically said its not so.

I think the nacelle location is not quite right, but close enough. The two points that bother me are the propellers, which feature not-exactly-120-degree separation between the blades, and the leading edges of the engine cowls. The cowls are basically tubes, with the opening in the front too big to my eye. Wanting to have a DC-3 to hang on a thread and admire, I didn't fix any of the problems. I just wanted to see it completed. Maybe I'll compare the next one to scale drawings, or the *Welsh* 1:144 vacuum-formed, injection and white-metal kit.

Assembly of *Minicraft's* DC-3 is straightforward. There are no interior parts, and no bulkhead for the back wall or floor for the cockpit is provided, but none is needed, as only the pilot's windscreens and landing light lenses are transparent. Passenger cabin windows are indicated in the molding but are not transparent. Decals supplied with the kit include dark rectangles to represent the passenger windows.

I used *Polly-S* non-toxic liquid cement and it holds fine. I was even rewarded with some cement-induced sink-marks

on the center section of the flaps where cement accumulated inside the joint between the upper surface wing fillets and the lower surface. I made one addition to the kit—modern DC-3s have a red anti-collision light mounted on the top of the rudder. The kit represents a Pratt & Whitney powered airplane in the 1930s or '40s, so this light is missing. I sliced into the vertical fin with a hobby knife and inserted a tapered piece of 0.035 *Evergreen* plastic rod for the lamp.

The trailing edge to fuselage joint was the only place where filling and sanding was required to bring the parts into harmony. I usually apply cement and then tape the pieces

together and this can raise a little mound of solvated plastic at the seams. I smoothed these down, I thought, with wet sanding with sanding sticks, and began painting.

To do a mixed finish of paint and natural metal, I have learned to put on the paint first, masking the area that will be natural metal, then mask the painted surfaces and shoot the natural metal finish. This avoids having to mask the natural metal finish, which is usually

more fragile than paint, and gives the natural metal surface bare plastic as a base, which I find most convincing. In 1:144, the decal sheet supplies the red stripe, so I decided to paint the whole painted part orange, and apply the decal stripe over the paint, rather than over then natural metal finish, which I feared would tone it down.

I masked the areas to be orange or red, then sprayed *Testors* flat white from a rattle-can as an undercoat between paint and the kit's medium gray plastic. *Polly Scale* makes a Canadian Pacific color in their water-based railroad line, but it looked wrong to me, so I choose their Utility Orange. It's one of those colors that dry to a different color than it was when wet, darker in this case. I thinned the paint with tap water, to the consistency of milk, and sprayed it with my Badger paint sprayer, using a bicycle tire pumped up to 65psi as an air source. It took about seven coats on three different days to get an opaque finish. If I hadn't spotted a flat spot I'd made with the sanding sticks, filled it with *Squadron* putty thinned with balsa airplane dope thinner, re-sanded, and had to re-prime, probably only five coats of the orange would have been needed. I should have shot a gloss coat over the orange at this point, but I didn't. The white undercoat and orange topcoats together were fairly thick, so after I removed the masking tape, I worked them down with a fine sanding stick and a lot of running water. I didn't mind if the edge wasn't solid orange, since I'd be putting the decal over the boundary. (That's why they call a third color stripe between two others a "cheat line.")

However, I wanted a smooth masking line, and didn't want

any Metalizer wicking under the tape, so for masking off the orange area, I used *Tamiya's* yellow rice-paper masking tape, and it's really very nice—very flexible, sticks well, and comes off when you want it to.

For natural metal I used *Testors Buffable Aluminum Plate Metalizer* in a rattle can. It's a lacquer product; use it with lots of ventilation. Several light coats resulted in a characteristic grainy surface. I let it dry thoroughly, 24 hours, and then buffed it with a facial tissue.

The resulting surface is VERY fragile but looks very much like polished aluminum metal. If I hadn't gotten foolish and glued on the Pitot probe and direction-finding "football" fairing, I wouldn't have broken them off during the polishing.

Naturally, I handled the airplane by the masking or with a tissue while polishing. Removing the masking to show the orange was also gratifying—no leakage, and only a couple spots where gaps in the masking had allowed little sprinkles of Metalizer onto the orange. I removed these with 1500 wet-dry paper, rinsed and dried the model, and then sprayed



The DC-3 soldiered into the '80s as a mainstay of many second-tier air services.

three coats of Future floor wax, diluted 1:1 with rubbing alcohol (isopropanol and water) and sprayed with my Badger sprayer. One coat would have sealed the Metalizer quite well; three were required to bring up a gloss on the orange so I could put on the decals.

Leading Edge's decals have a beautiful instruction sheet, with a color 4-view showing all marking placement. The decals themselves are very nicely printed, with very little clear around the color. They respond gently to *MicroSet*. The red stripes are not opaque enough to hide the orange-to-natural-metal transition, however. The shape of the red stripes is tricky and my initial masking for the orange color was wrong in several places—off line on both sides, too close to the windscreen on top. The result is orange extending beyond the red on the port side and above the cockpit. I will probably fix it by masking and re-spraying the Metalizer after I seal the decals with one more coat of Future. The decals and kit tooling agree nicely—the red caps of the fuel tanks in the wing-walk decals are right on top of the engraved details.

Next time I think I'll copy the cheat line decals onto *Tamiya* masking tape rather than trying to mask free hand with reference to the instructions. I'll also shoot the gloss over the paint before the Metalizer. Each coat of Future makes the Metalizer look more like high quality silver paint. Even one, light, coat, diminishes the realism of the finish. I consider this one more experiment along the way.

References: Aircraft In Profile #96 The Douglas DC-3, Propeller Airliners, Bill Gunston, various DC-3 and Canadian Pacific Airlines web-sites, Airline Modeler's Digest (AMD) on line.

www.douglasdc3.com

www.aircareintl.org/history/douglas_series.htm

www.aircareintl.org/history/index.htm

www.boeing.com/companyoffices/history/mdc/twa.htm, dc-1.htm, dc-2.htm, dc-3.htm, skytrain.htm



After helping defeat Germany in World War II, the DC-3 was adopted by Lufthansa in the 1950s. Here, one awaits passengers at Stuttgart Airport. Lufthansa operated three DC-3s.

Boeing, Boeing: a pair of B-47s in 1:144 scale

Continued from page 1

reconnaissance role. This fact was commemorated by a "little toy dog." That was the title of a book written in 1962 by William L. White that gave the public a look at the heroism of those who flew "unarmed and unafraid" in vital strategic aerial recon missions along the Iron Curtain.

Two months after Francis Gary Powers was downed over the Soviet Union, an RB-47H "ferret" flying in international airspace was shot down by MiGs, with four of the six crew members lost in the Barents Sea. It wasn't the first nor the last time an RB-, ERB- or EB-47 would see fire while on one of these missions, but for a long time this incident was the only peek anyone outside the intelligence community had as to what was up with those odd-looking lone *Stratojets* seen here and there. In an interview, one pilot related how his crew would answer curious onlookers at a temporary duty station when they asked what the black nose was used for. "Why, it's used when training new pilots in in-flight refueling, in case of bumping into the tanker," he said.

The B-47's history might have been even more exotic had Australia gone ahead and leased two squadrons of B-47Es that were offered by the USAF in 1963 as "Project Australia" while the RAAF awaited delivery of its F-111Cs. We may have missed out on seeing camouflaged *Stratojets* over Vietnam, where the RAAF had an exemplary record flying *Canberras*.

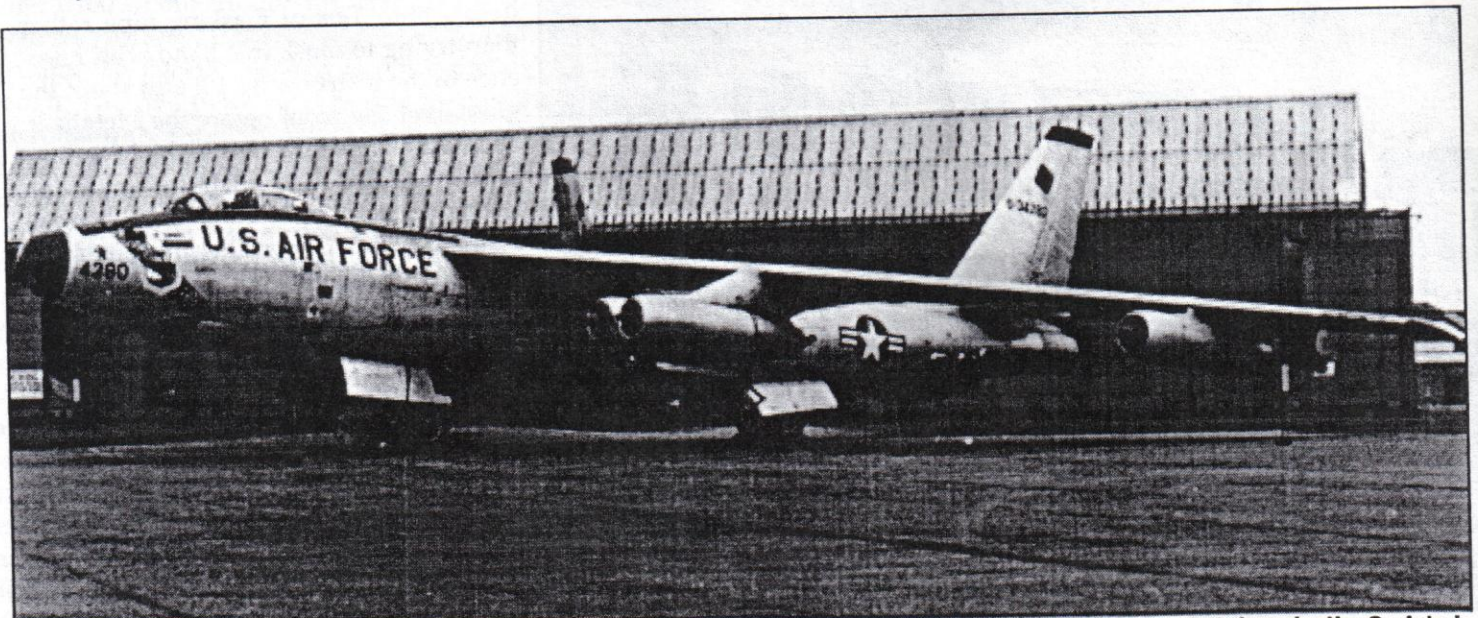
As terrific and tempting a classic aeroplane she may be, the B-47 has been almost ignored in the plastic scale model market outside of the *Hasegawa* 1:72 kit from the 1970s. This has been rectified somewhat by *Hobbycraft* of Canada. In 1:144, the company offers three lovely kits of the B-47, from which the intrepid modeler may branch out into any number of variants. I have built two of them and have the third on hand for reference, so I can note the differences between the "First SAC Striker" B-47B, the "Intercontinental Watchdog" RB-47H and the definitive B-47E.

All three kits out of box are different in detail, but the smartly-arranged mold design provides a basic "E" wing and

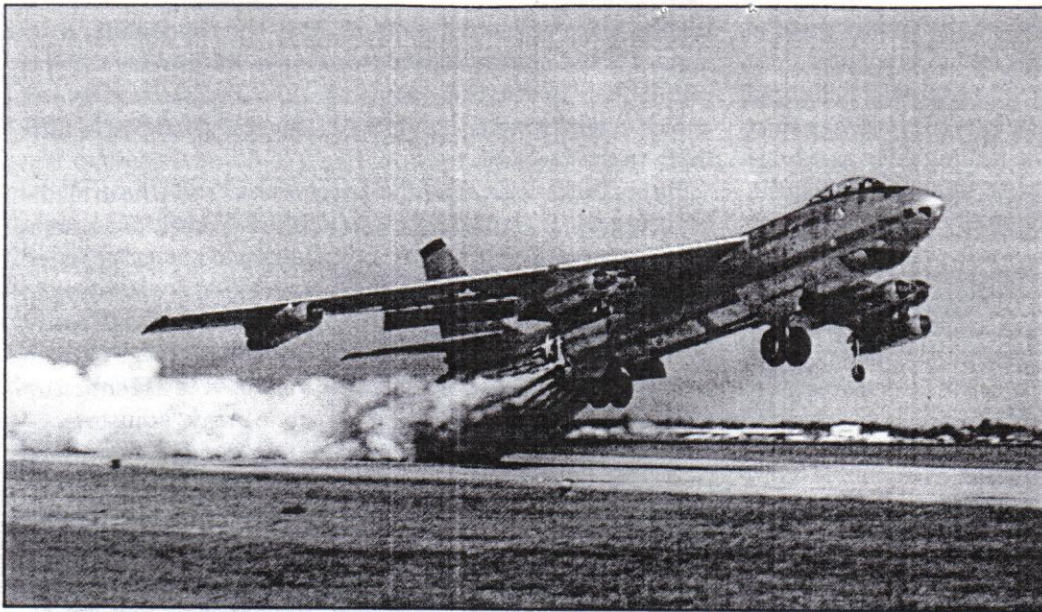
fuselage that the modeler adds to or modifies into the selected variant. In all boxings, the modeler gets a very crisp set of parts in tan-toned gray plastic with light, sharp engraved panel lines, and a small number of clear parts that vary according to each type. The decals offered in the B-47B offer the choice of two natural metal schemes; the RB-47H provides two very similar schemes in natural metal; and the B-47E gives you three schemes all involving white undersides with some variety in application. The B-47E has a nonspecified 1964 scheme for s/n 23363 (the plainest of the lot), a 320 Bomb Wing/441 Bomb Squadron aircraft with a swooping white underfuselage pattern and all white pylons and jet pods, and a 384 BW/546 BS plane with sharp definition on the undersides and with far less white on the pods and none on pylons. Dave Newman of *Muroc Models* also produced a set of decals for the B-47E kit for a lovely *Stratojet* with white, natural metal and fluorescent red nose, tail band and wingtips, plus nifty black tail fin markings, based on photos in the R.D. Archer book *Edwards AFB Open House at USAF FTC 1957-1966*. Although you'll have to inquire as to its current availability, the sheet is very nice.

The cockpit includes the basics, with no frills. For the superdetailer, there is plenty to revise and add. The kit provides two seats, control yokes on sticks, and a floor with simple representation of the pilot and copilot's panel on the right side running the length of the cockpit. While there is plenty of room to superdetail, even if one were to saw the canopy open, in this scale there is not much return for the effort, as very little can be seen. Once you have painted the cockpit items with a few basic grays and blacks, add the cockpit to one of the fuselage halves.

The gear bays are two well done if deceptively simple looking boxes. These are attached to the bottom of the cockpit floor. At this point, for a B-47E, you can proceed to the wing. For the B-47B, this is the time to remove the panel areas where the ATO (Assisted Take Off) boosters were located on early model *Stratojets*. *Hobbycraft* molded the fuselage with flashed-



An RB-47H in front of its hangar in 1960. That same year, a 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing RB-47 was shot down by the Soviets in international waters near the Kola Peninsula.



Trailing a plume of smoke, a B-47B makes a rocket-assisted take-off. Note the clear areas in the nose, a throwback to traditional bomber designs.

over panels inside the fuselage so these parts can be scored from the inside with a sharp knife and punched out with little or no flash or trashing of the mating edges. On mine, only a slight bit of filling and sanding was required to blend them in on one side, and the second side was a breeze. The depth of the ATO "holes" might be too shallow for some might attempt to drill them all out. I found them to be fine in this scale and left well enough alone.

For the RB-47H, this early stage is more complicated. The instruction sheet doesn't tell you until much later where all radomes and antennas go, and you would be wise to skip ahead and make provisions for them now. Carefully drill out the many little holes from the inside (they're molded into the inside of the fuselage). The sheet uses the typical "international language" symbology along with arrows in step 2, while the rest of the steps leave out any mention of these drilled holes.

This vagueness in the instructions continues in all three versions for the wings. If you think you'll later want wing tanks on your B, E or H, drill the holes in the lower wing from the inside now, while you can find them quite easily. It is easy to fill them later if you change your mind.

The upper and lower wings are in complete halves, with the upper half including the proper fuselage spine section for the variant, and Hobbycraft molded in the proper amount of droop in the two I have built. For the RB-47H, remember to drill out the hole for the upper fuselage antenna housing in the wing assembly.

For all three versions, the wings and tail planes are added to the fuselage next. The horizontal tail planes are one-piece moldings and getting the alignment right is critical. The wing fits into the saddle of the fuselage back precisely, requiring only a the briefest sanding to blend it in.

At this point the differences between variants become very clear. In the B-47B kit, there's a well-molded clear nose part that has lightly outlined window areas. I painted the interior color nearly to the edge of each panel from the inside by hand; it didn't stress me out and gave a more opaque basis for the final finish. If you use metalizers, you may find out just how thin a coating

they can be when a strong source of light shines through the painted sections of clear parts. You can prevent this by painting the inside of the transparencies.

The B-47E kit has great "button" nose in clear plastic that looks every inch a fierce *Stratojet* bomber when it is in place, and the RB-47H has the classic bulbous nose with no adornment (or even a paint cheat line for the black radome).

The engine pods are little works of art. They are molded in upper and lower halves, with separate intake and exhaust cone caps. The inboard twin nacelles also have the outrigger gear bays, which are well-detailed and look quite convincing once painted. All the intake cones are well-shaped and the fan engraving is quite nice. The only improvement I can see might be to add depth to the exhausts by drilling them out.

Everything about the engines on my two B-47s built up with no fit problems or notable flaws of any sort. The engine pylons



The roll-out of the first XB-47 in 1950 gave the USAF a bomber with capabilities unmatched by any other bomber in the world and one vastly superior to the North American B-45 Tornado.

are one-piece moldings; on the paired set, you mount them to the assembled engines, then to wings, and alignment is very straightforward. For the outboard singles engines, I had some trouble. On my "B," the "handed" pylons fit snugly against the inner wing saddles and along the trailing edge as advertised. On my "H," one did not want to sit snug against the wing and it required some cutting to finally fit properly. The other side fit snugly but was too high on the trailing edge side and had a clear gap that had to be filled. Maybe this was an anomaly.

There were also aggravating sink marks on these the single engine pylons in the RB-47H kits that thankfully weren't present on "B." I had a devil of a time trying to fill and blend them to the wing, and your eye is drawn to this area on the RB-47H since it has distinctive wingtip radomes. The RB-47H instructions tell you to cut off the existing wingtips. Once you've done that, amazingly, the radome parts to modify the wing fit perfectly.

The main gear is again another lovely multi-part assembly. The central leg forms a point to which you attach the axle, oleo fork and handed wheel and tires, which are molded in crisp detail. Fitting them into the bays can be slightly tricky; on both of mine they resisted going into the bays, and the installation of the retraction frames required patience. Leave off the wheels until after final painting.

If you're building a B-47B or -E, you're nearly done. Your only decision from here is whether or not to fit the wing tanks. However, for the RB-47H, here's where the fun really starts! All the various radomes and antennae blisters should be added now. All three *Stratojets* have the underfuselage forward radome, provided by *Hobbycraft* as a single part that makes it a seamless fit, although it can be deceptively hard to place the item where it belongs on the fuselage. For the B-47B/E, that's it for the radomes. It's just the start for the "H," and the guide to what you'll face getting the major mid-belly bulge (which is the bomb bay mod for windowless "Raven" compartment on the real birds, with two or three Electronics Warfare Officers seated this area) and the rear underfuselage bulge. Slightly harder to install because of their size and shape

are the five small antenna—four little ones on the rear fuselage and the skinny tapered one atop the fuselage. Tape, rather than tweezers or my fingers, ended up my tool of choice after losing these items in several attempts to affix them to the fuselage.

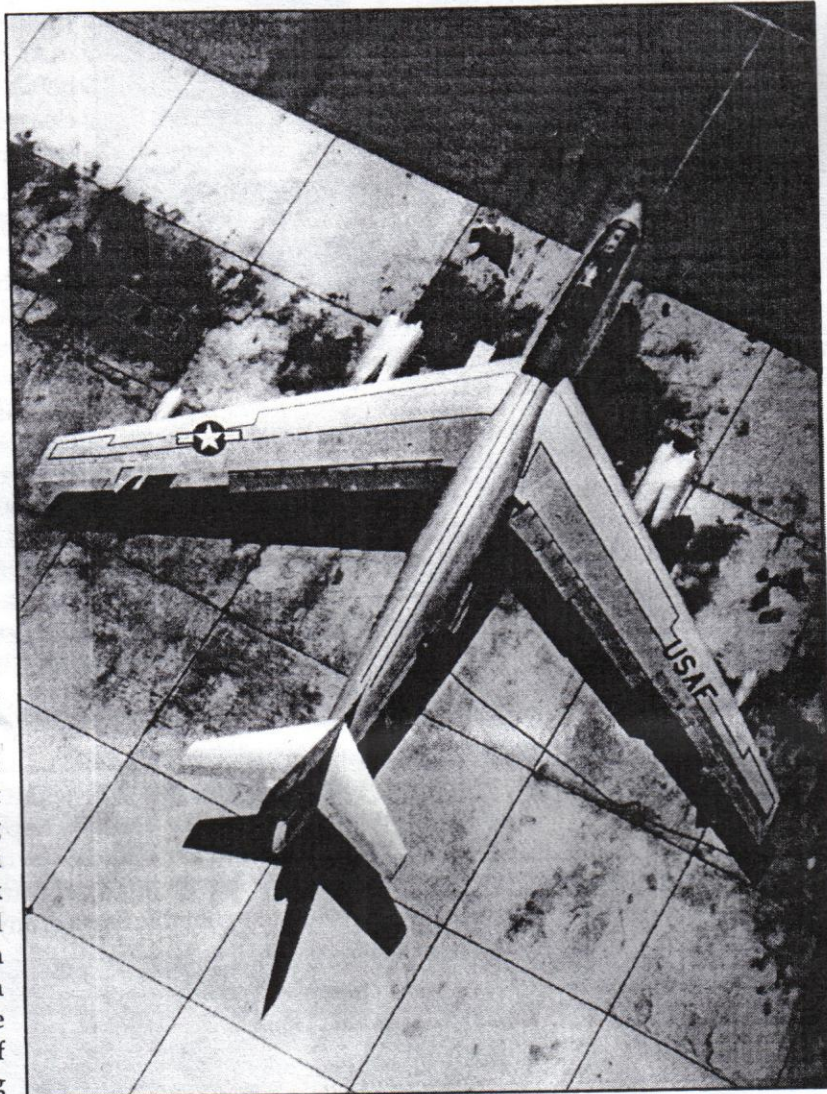
Fitting the outrigger landing gear was a headache in all the kit versions. These delicate legs and tiny wheel/tire assemblies need to be "adjusted

as needed," according to the instructions. About 1/3 of the gear legs on both my B-47B and H ended up gone in my "adjustment." The gear doors for the outriggers and the main gear, however, are nicely-molded thin pieces that, with exception of the "V" shaped ones that are affixed to outriggers, fit without any trouble.

The single-piece canopy could be cut and posed open if so desired. Mine was left well enough alone and glued closed. In the B-47B, you get an accurate early tail turret equipped with .50 caliber gun barrels; this fits into the "generic" fuselage. For the B-47E, the round tail turret with its delicately molded separate 20mm cannon barrels go in this position. On the RB-47H, you are instructed to install only the round turret without the cannon barrels. A check of references will show that not all "Watchdogs" went out "unarmed and unafraid," at least to extent of the tail turret.

For the B-47B, an overall natural metal finish even in this small scale was somewhat too bland, no matter how cleverly the tonal variations were applied. Not being especially ambitious, I used two separate coats of *Testors* Non-Buff Aluminum Metalizer to get the majority of the bird covered. Careful buffing with soft cloth and, in some areas, a little polishing with *SnJ* aluminum powder yielded a pleasing and subtle finish. I hand-painted the "burnt metal darkened aluminum" areas on the rear of the engine nacelles. A flat black anti-glare panel and the painting of the front portion of the under-nose radome, which is a buff/olive-tan color, complete painting.

The "P in Square" markings for a 1951-vintage 306 Bomb Wing bird provided a nice splash of red in the tail band and a bolder tail marking than the other options. These are quite attractive for out of the box markings and less plain looking than a first look at the sheet would suggest. A nice touch,



The modern lines of the B-47 make it easy to forget that this jet pioneer was designed more than a half-century ago.

which all three kits decal sheets share, is the decal provision of vortex fences which are far too subtle to mold in this scale. Once applied, they're effective enough.

For the "Watchdog" RB-47H, I painted the model in the same manner as my B-47B and selected decals for s/n 34296 of the 55 Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, circa 1967. The other option is for an aircraft which was outfitted at some point with the "Senior King" update including and ALD-4 ECM pod. None of these modifications are in kit!

About the most difficult part of finishing the RB-47H is that *Hobbycraft* gives you no scribed line for masking the distinctive radome on end of the nose. I would recommend you save

yourself lots of hard work and make one before applying your selected metalizing finish. The reward here is the colorful look of the combined standard markings and the various antennae and radomes. It is subtle but very eye-catching just the same.

With two finished and at least three more to go (a standard out-of-the-box white/natural metal B-47E, the "Red Edwards" B-47E and a "Senior King" RB-47H operating out of Upper Heyford), my recommendation is that you try at least one of these kits. In this scale, getting a collection entry together doesn't mean sacrificing room for other models in your display case!

SVSM BOOKSHELF

Armored Car: A History of American Wheeled Combat Vehicles

By R. P. Hunnicutt

Copyright 2002, Presidio Press

This is the tenth and last volume in Hunnicutt's ongoing study of American armored fighting vehicles. In it are photos of all wheeled armored vehicles designed or used by the American military. There are 1:48 drawings of most of the important vehicles from World War II to the present day.

The book is broken down into five parts: Early Development; WWII Development

Program; The Cold War, Korea and Viet Nam; New Wheeled Combat Vehicles and Reference Data.

I have just finished reading the Early Development section and found out some interesting things. The first armored car was designed in 1898, a Duryea light three-wheel car mounting a Colt 1895 "Potato Digger" .30 caliber machine gun. What is interesting is that it was not designed by the army but by a Col. Davidson of the Illinois National Guard. In 1933 J Walter Christie made an armor car that he claimed would do 110 MPH. For those who saw the movie "Tucker," there are two exterior and one interior photo of his armored car. In 1937 the U.S. Army decided to stop development of the armored car and develop the scout car. It was only after the British use of armored cars in Africa in 1940 and '41 did the Army decide to start development again on armored cars.

When I ordered the book I thought it would mainly cover armored cars, but the book also covers all-wheel armored vehicles designed for combat use. It covers the M-3 scout cars, a short section on wheeled amphibians (the Ford Jeep amphibian and DUKW), Viet Nam guntrucks are mentioned, and the HMMVW and even some of the fast attack dune buggy style vehicles are covered.

I enjoyed the way Hunnicutt organized this volume. In previous volumes he basically discussed the proposal, design and production of each vehicle with the final chapter having some combat photos of the vehicles. In this volume, at the end of a chapter dealing with a vehicle that saw service in combat, there are some photos of it in use. While some people will consider the writing dry (but aren't most history books dry?), I find it interesting and informative.

This book is not for the general modeler looking for vehicle markings or service photos. If you are interested in why a vehicle was proposed or designed or the differences between variants of a vehicle, then this is for you. I would however

recommend to do some shopping before buying. I preordered my volume before publishing for below \$70. I have also seen the volume on sale online for around the same price. It is a great value for whatever you pay.

—Eric McClure

Squadron In Action

Aircraft #182 FH/F2H Banshee

Armor #40 Pershing/Patton

By Jim Mesko with color art by Don Greer

Copyright 2002, Squadron Signal Publications

These are the latest titles in the "In Action" series by Squadron. Both volumes are the standard 8 1/4" X 11" horizontal format. Each volume starts off with a short history, the reason for the development of the vehicle, and covers the basic versions with drawings to show the various differences between models. There are color profiles in the center of the volumes with one color painting on the front and two color paintings on the back page (the two color paintings on the back of the Pershing book looks like the backgrounds are photos combined with paintings of the vehicles).

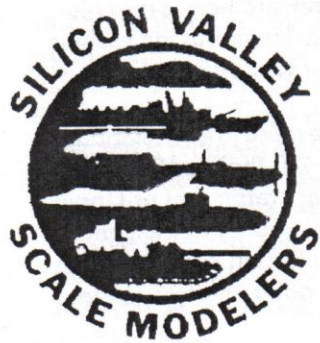
The FH/F2H book is interesting in that it starts with the FH Phantom aircraft and then moves into covering the various versions of the Banshee. While I knew that the Phantom was a McDonnell aircraft I never really put together the close relationship to the Banshee.

The Pershing book covers the reason for the development of the Pershing and goes through the M47 Patton. The M47 was more of a stopgap vehicle while a new vehicle was designed. Some reviews have felt that it would have been better to break this volume into two volumes but I don't think there would have been enough interest in a volume on just the M47 to justify it.

Both volumes are a good investment for the dollar and I would recommend each to the modeler. Some on-line reviewers prefer the Schiffer publication book on the Pershing because of the full page photos of the Cologne Panther engagement. I would have agreed if the photos were clear or if the editor had used a computer program to enhance the photos in the Schiffer book, but as is they are blurry and basically useless. I would not buy both books, since most of the photos are the same in each book but the Squadron has the version difference drawings that tip the scales in its favor.

—Eric McClure

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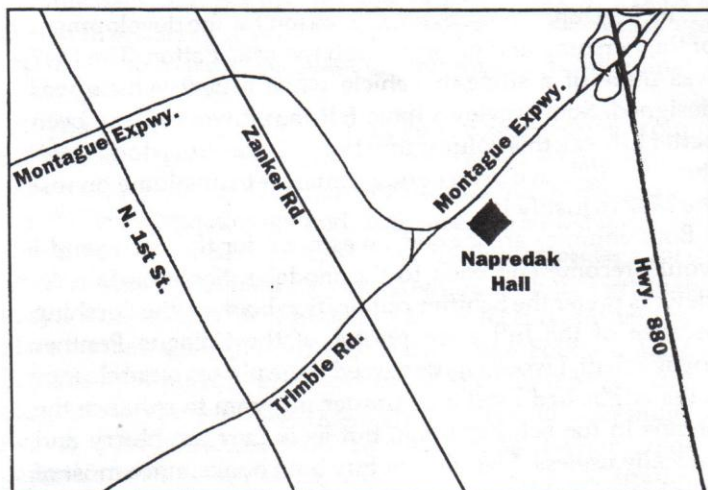
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SEPTEMBER MINUTES

Greg Plummer, aka "el Presidente," reminded the members at the September meeting that October would see two club contests: our annual air racers contest, and a real space contest. Get to work!

In model talk... Peter Wong said his *Swordfish* was built from the *Smer* kit, and there were almost no seams to worry much about. Pete's son finished the model, using regular Orchard Supply Hardware silver paint to achieve a silver-doped finish. Ron Wergin did a fantastic job on a 1:72 *MPM* He 100 "propaganda fighter" and painted it using 38-year-old *Humbrol* paints. Ron says the carpet just loves the tiny parts in *Tamiya's* 1:700 Japanese submarine I-58, but Ron finished it anyway. Ron also built a Jagdpanzer using parts from *Academy* and *Italeri* kits. Mark Schynert's Supermarine *Seagull* was built from the *Maintrack* kit and received a lot of small extras to finish it off; Mark's depicted the plane in its short-lived guise as an air racer. Mark's next tough subject is the *Pegasus* Fokker D.XXIII, and it's taken a lot of careful effort (plus lots of superglue and filler) to get the booms of this Dutch fighter aligned properly. Vladimir Yakubov is working on the last two entries in a collection of five Russian torpedo boats from the Russo-Japanese War. Vladimir is improving models from *Cambri* by reshaping the superstructures and re-positioning the weapons. Vladimir is doing similar work on an armored cruiser of similar vintage, since the kit is an amalgamation of two cruisers of the same class and is thus accurate for neither of them. Buddy Joyce found a mess of armored vehicle models at a garage sale, including one he thinks is scratch-built, and the old *Monogram* Goodyear Blimp, complete with lighted sign. Don Savage's newly finished 1960 Ford is the most frustrating kit he's built since getting back into the hobby! The interior didn't fit, among other problems. Don started the model in April; he finished it the night before the meeting! Ben Pada quietly sneaked in three of his 1:48 aircraft—a *Hasegawa* F-86F with a *True Details* interior, a *Monogram* F-86D with a *Black Box* interior, and *Hasegawa* Arado Ar 234 that's making progress. Three jets from Ben Pada? Good grief! Chris Bucholtz is working three different categories with his current projects—multi-engine jets (he's detailing a *Matchbox* T-2C *Buckeye* and building a *Hobbycraft* CF-100 *Canuck* with the *Obscureco* detail set that he did the master for),

rotorcraft (an *Italeri* OH-6A with a scratchbuilt interior) and single engine prop (a *Heller* T-28 *Trojan*, converted into a T-28C). All are in the early stages. Roy Sutherland has all but finished his *Airfix* *Spitfire* 24, having fixed the grievously incorrect *AeroMaster* decals. He will next experiment with some weathering techniques to finish off this long-in-the-works model. Mike Burton rescued a castaway *Monogram* P-39 *Airacobra* and is turning it into a civilian aircraft. Another version of the same kit will become a Soviet *Airacobra*, says Mike. He's also got an *MPM* 1:48 P-63C *Kingcobra* under way to give him a mighty herd of Bell snakes, although that herd isn't as large as his herd of *Mustangs*. Among the P-51s Mike is working on is a *Monogram* P-51D done up as Dan Martin's warbird "Ridgerunner III," complete with a rear seat and decals from the 1998 nationals, and two *Hasegawa* and two *Monogram* *Mustangs* in lesser conditions of completion, including a *Mustang* III in British markings. Mike also had on hand some 1:72 projects, namely a *KP* Yak-23 finished in the markings of a Polish civilian flying club, an *Airfix* Grumman *Gosling*, and an F-86H *Sabre* built using the *Rarebits* conversion. Greg Plummer built *Revell's* Rat Rod (actually, a 1929 Model A Ford) in true rat rod style, changing the tires and finishing the model in a "primer" color made by mixing gloss black and RAF Dark Sea Gray. Kent McClure built a 6-inch quick-firing gun mount in 20mm scale for a war game; he initially thought the gun mount was too low but further research proved that the model is correct. Kent also built an *Airfix* 1:76 universal carrier for use in a game involving the Wehrmacht and King Arthur, whose knights appeared next to the carrier. Continuing up the scale of oddness, Kent's other army was a collection of malignant snowmen, each made from *Sculpy* with wire for arms and weapons like icicles. Eric McClure's model could probably take out Kent's stuff—he has a *Revell of Germany* 1:72 M2A2/M3A2 Bradley waiting to go. Cliff Kranz is building the *Revell* issue of the *Italeri* jeep just the way he likes it—out of the box. And the model of the month goes to... Postoria Aguirre's Lear Business jet, the first model he's finished in 25 years! It's the old *IMC* kit, and it has a removable roof to show off the interior. P.A. used some unorthodox resources, like resistor chips and stuffed animal eyes, to add detail to his remarkable jet.

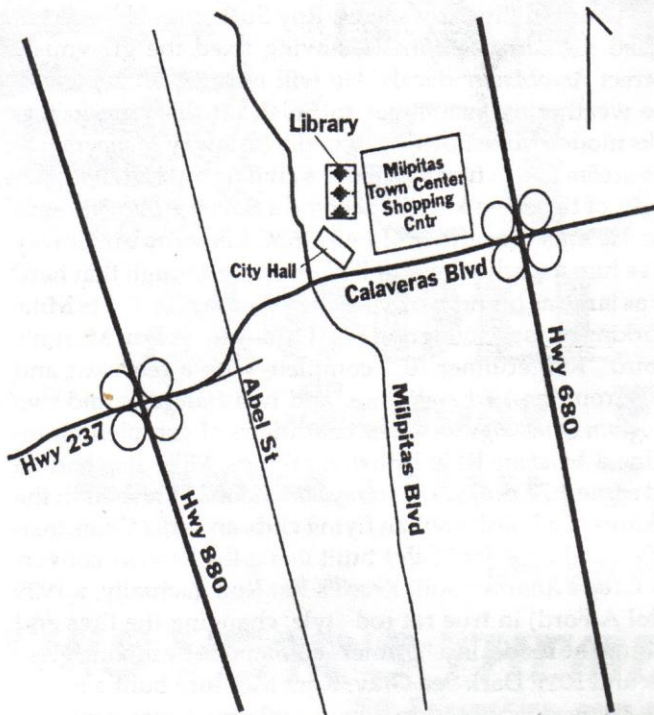
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