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GEORGIA MOUNTAIN MODELERS

2006 REGION 3 CHAPTER OF THE YEAR

BITS & PIECES NEWSLETTER

March 2014

The Georgia Mountain Modelers is a Chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society (IPMS/Georgia Mountain Modelers 03-47). Our club meetings are in a relatively loose, informal, conversational format. IPMS/USA is an organization dedicated to the fun of Scale Modeling. In January of 1964, Jim Sage, from Dallas, Texas, was invited to form an independent and equal branch of IPMS/UK, and soon IPMS/USA was born. There are now hundreds of IPMS chapters all over the world. Many Local Chapters and Regions sponsor Model Shows & Contests every year. You do not have to be a member to attend the shows or our local club meetings. But, you will need to be an IPMS member to enter models in any of the National IPMS events. You can join at the IPMS/USA website… http://www.ipmsusa.org/index.htm . Our chapter is a part of IPMS Region 3; you can learn more about our region, and the other clubs located in the region, at http://ipmsregion3.org/index.html . If you are not an IPMS member, we HIGHLY recommend that you join the organization.

WHY JOIN IPMS?

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, back when Squadron was an actual hobby shop and the only US print option for the scale modeler was the mediocre, "Scale Modeler," the IPMS/USA publications were the only link between the modeler and the outside (the closet) world. Today, there is the Internet. So, why be bothered with IPMS/USA? First and foremost is the network of local clubs that afford the modeler the opportunity to commune with likeminded people and show off his/her work. If you take the time (and I have on several occasions) to compare the number of local shows/contests sponsored by IPMS/USA affiliates nationwide to those sponsored by all other organizations/companies-COMBINED- , you will find IPMS/USA sponsors, on average, three times per year as many as all the others, again, COMBINED.

The second reason to join IPMS/USA is the opportunity to have your work published in our bi-monthly publication, the IPMS/USA, "Journal," magazine. "Oh, piffle," as you turn up your nose at our little pedestrian rag. Yeah, right. Just wait for the thrill of seeing your ebullient words of prose, coupled with your Renaissance creation of a model in print. If you've ever had a date with a crush of the opposite sex, it comes a bit close to that. And, while on the topic, just try getting your opus published by some of the mainstream modeling magazines…..good luck.

Another rather excellent reason for joining IPMS/USA and a local club (or creating your own) is the excellent event insurance Mother IPMS/USA provides. Try putting on a contest or a mall show without insurance. First, it won't happen. Second, it will cost you/your club a veritable fortune. Not so if you are an IPMS/USA affiliated club.

Join IPMS/USA and be a contributing member of a passion worth preserving!

IPMS Membership Form

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IPMS/USA
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Please use this form for both New Member applications and Renewals for existing members. Your expiration issue is shown just above your name and address on the back cover.

You may copy this form if you wish. Please mail form and payment to:

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PO Box 2475,
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44720-0475**

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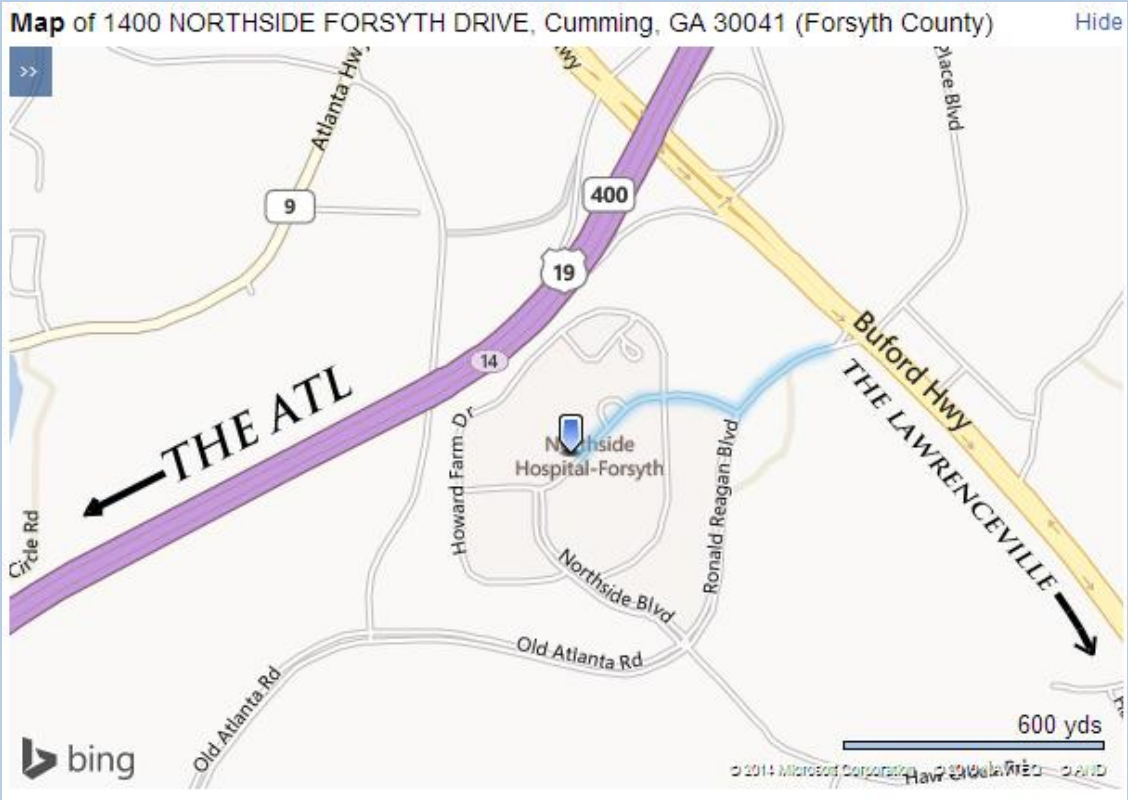
WEB SITE NEWS

Join us on Facebook to continue the modeling fun. No politics, no social issues, no nastiness…just some excellent modeling camaraderie!

https://www.facebook.com/groups/479334665478654/

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, March 25, 2014, @7PM



Northside Hospital Bldg, 1400, Northside Forsyth Dr, Cumming


THIS MONTH'S
MEETING
HERALDS THE
FIRST EVER
GMM SWAP
MEET!!!


BRING THE
STUFF YOU
WILL NEVER
BUILD AND
SWAP IT FOR
OTHER STUFF
YOU WILL
NEVER BUILD!

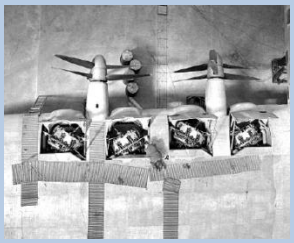
HEAD SHED RAMBLINGS

BRABAZON

Our club is blessed with modelers that specialize in various genres of modeling - ships, cars, planes, figures, sci-fi, and the sometimes "miscellaneous". A unique form of modeling has Chuck Davenport combining his photography with modeling. My interest is in aircraft. As such, I have collected many books and subscribe to several publications on aviation. I'm always finding interesting facts and pieces of history in my reading. The following story is one I read recently in *Aviation History*. The aviation enthusiasts in our club may be somewhat familiar with this story, but I found the details to be very interesting.

As World War II was raging all around them, the British government was looking ahead to what British commercial aviation would need when the war was over. A committee headed by Air Minister, John T.C. Moore-Brabazon was formed to develop a series of recommendations for five different classes of airliners. Specifications for the largest proposed airliner were a 100-ton, eight-engine, land-based craft capable of carrying 100 passengers 5,500 miles at a speed of 250mph. (Does anyone see the fatal flaw in this concept?)

The Bristol Aeroplane Company was selected to build the airliner named after the committee chairman. It was to be called the Brabazon. Initial plans called for two prototypes and ten production models. Some of Britain's best and innovated aviation minds were part of the design team. The aircraft was to be 177 ft. long and have a wingspan of 230 ft. Eight 18-cylinder 2,650 hp air-cooled engines were to provide the power. The propulsion design was unique. Two of the engines were coupled to drive contra rotating propellers – two sets of propellers left and right. The cabin was fully pressurized and air-conditioned. Passengers were to be treated like royalty. They were seated in private cabins, which made into sleeping berths. There was a bar, a smoking lounge, dining area, and a 32-seat theater. WOW! (Has anyone picked up on the reason why this aircraft didn't make it?)



Construction started in October 1945 and the aircraft flew for the first time in September 1949. According to the test pilot, Arthur J. Pegg, it was a very normal first flight. The aircraft did not exhibit any unsavory habits or faults. It appears that the design team had done an excellent job. Over the succeeding months the craft was exhibited at Farnborough and presented to airline executives, but to no avail. No one was interested.

Much to the chagrin of the concept committee, air travel had changed. The airlines needed to generate revenue. They could no longer afford to treat wealthy passengers as if they were on an ocean liner. The airlines were moving into the mass-transit bus mode. Herein was the basic problem with the Brabazon. A hundred paying passengers could not support an aircraft of such a huge size and expense. This was the basic flaw in the concept. I'm sure the arrival of the first DeHavilland Comet in July 1949 with its "bus" seating configuration didn't help.

Sadly, the largest airplane ever built in Britain came to an inglorious end. In October 1953 after 164 flights and only 382 flight hours it was broken up and sold for scrap. Only a few pieces remain in museums across the country.

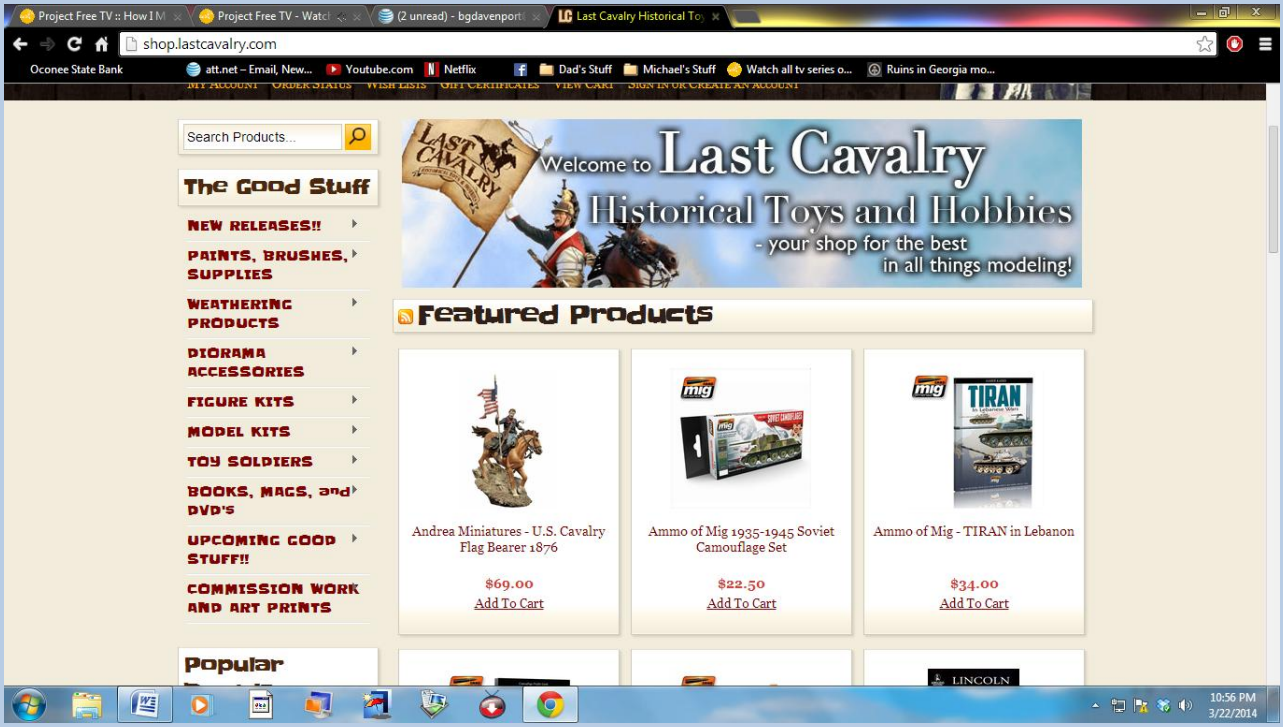
If you want to learn more about the Brabazon, this is a very good YouTube clip.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=miRV-SgYx7Q

The only kit of the Brabazon I could find is the Amodel 1/72 kit found on http://modelsua.com/Bristol-Brabazon-I.html for $396. At that scale the model would be 29.5 inches long with a 38.3-inch wingspan. Anyone besides our resident airline aficionado, Leo, interested?

IN THIS ISSUE

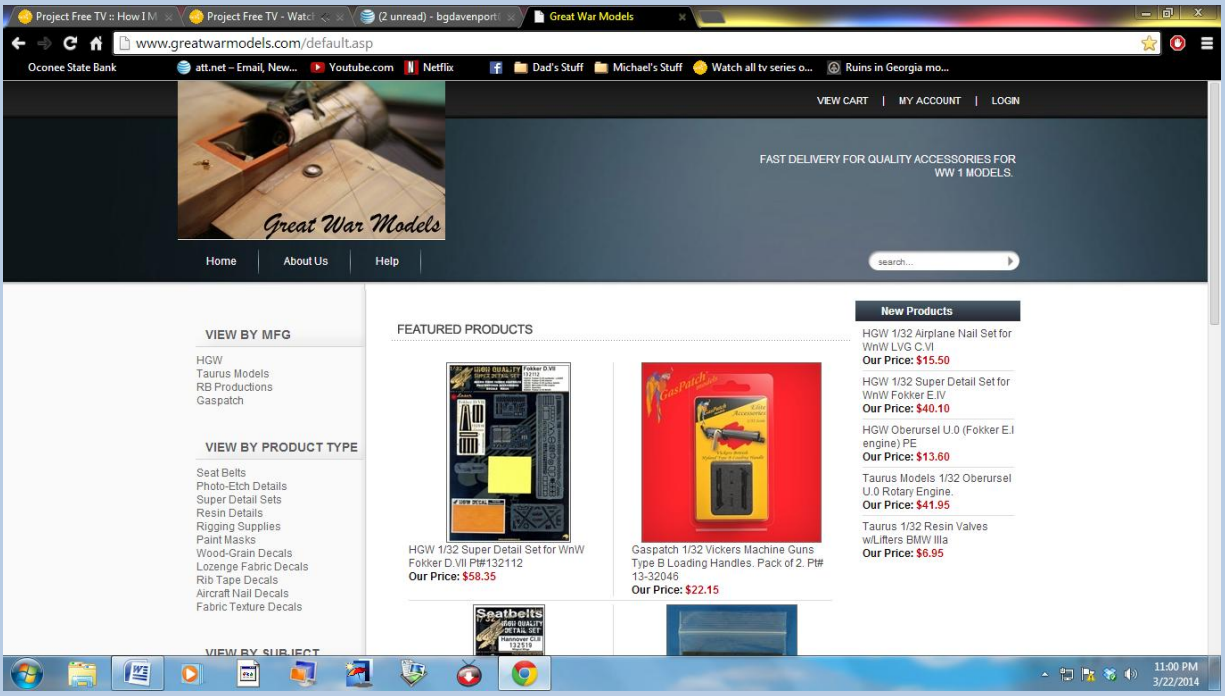
NEW STUFF!

Aeroscale is a UK-based online magazine, http://www.aeroscale.co.uk/ It is full of photos, new products, reviews and other great stuff that aerophiles love!

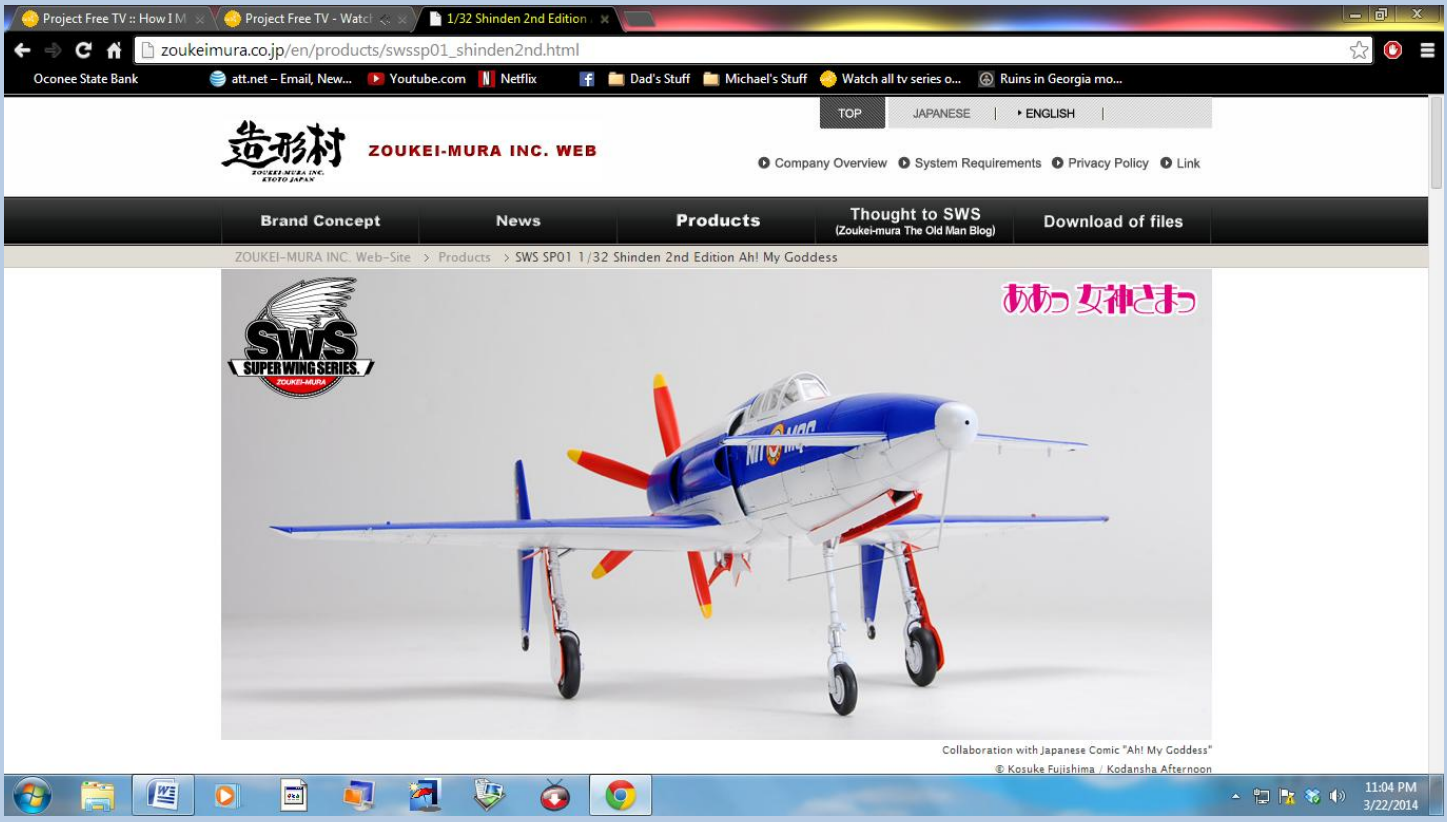


Last Cavalry is your one stop on-line shop for military model-related products. http://shop.lastcavalry.com/

LC carries the Uschi van der Rosten line of scale wood finish decals which are unparalleled for their ease of use and realistic finish.

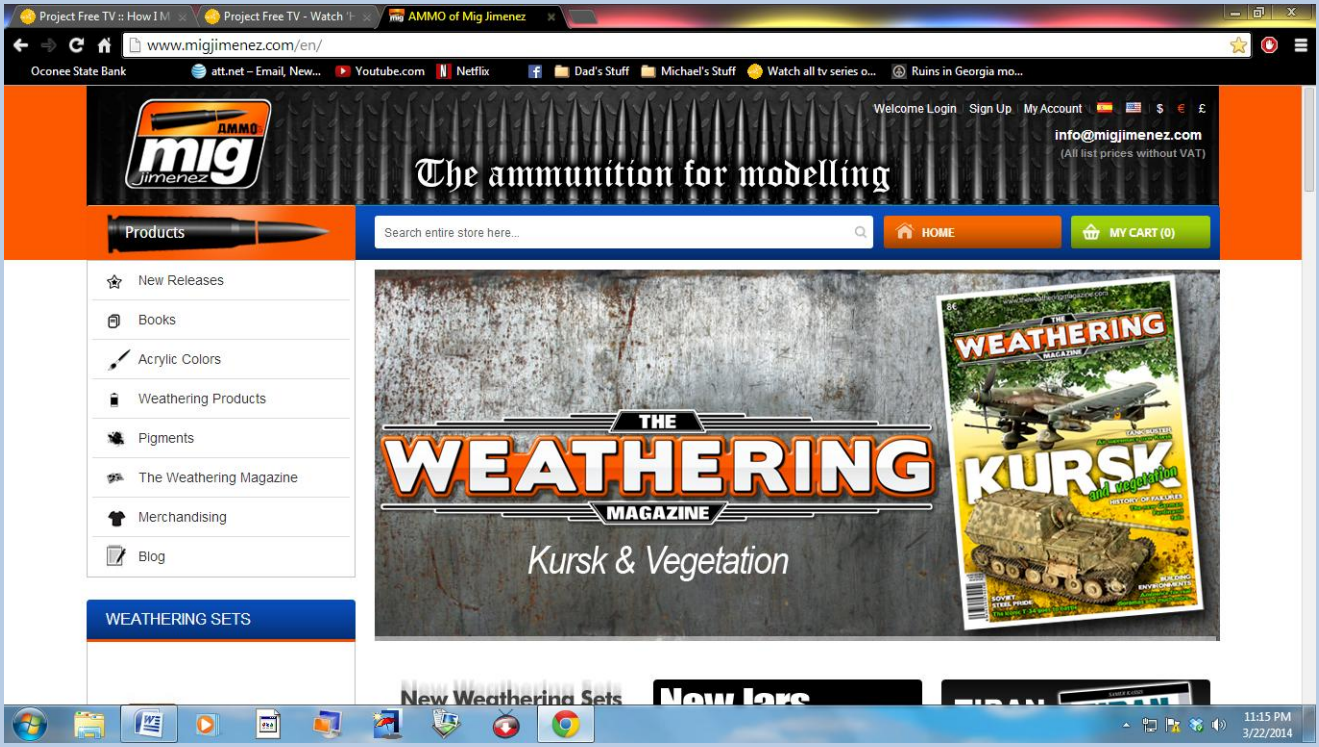


Great War Models, http://www.greatwarmodels.com/default.asp is your source for accessories for your WWI aircraft. At this point, the company is offering details specifically suited to 1/32 biplanes.



New from Zoukei-Mura, http://zoukeimura.co.jp/ is this Japanese comic version, "Ah, My Goddess." If you haven't seen these kits in 1/32 scale, they build almost like the real aircraft. Think super-detailed Monogram Phantom P-51 and you have an idea of what these kits are like.

Alliance Model Works has an exciting range of naval products including this really cool, Steampunk submarine. Your editor has been giving it some serious consideration. If you need naval diorama details, check this company out. http://www.am-works.com/store/index.php



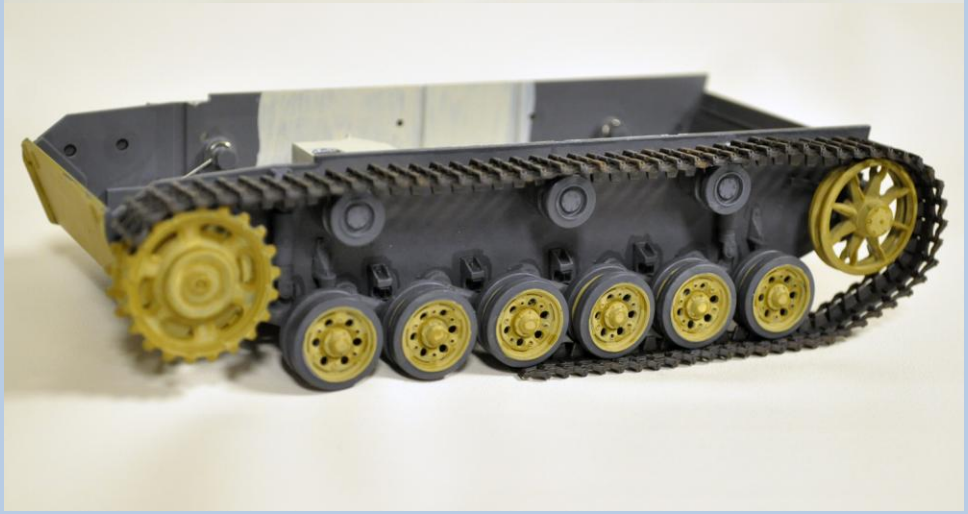
Here's another cool modeling site, http://www.migjimenez.com/en/ offering tips, tricks, and all kinds of products for the armor modeler! Check this out.

SHOW AND TELL

Jim McWhorter's hand-painted Japanese copy of the German Bf-109E, code named, "Mike," in 1/72 scale.

Here is Jim McWhorter's handpainted Heinkel He-111 H-6 in 1/72 scale depicting a machine of Kg 53 of the Condor Legion.

And, rounding out Jim's modeling contributions this month is his, once again hand-painted, Panther ausf.G in 1/35 scale.



This is Bill Richter's 1/72 Short Stirling in 1/72 scale, complete with an added bomb bay.

Here is Colby Counter's '40s Willy's Gasser just waiting for more of Colby's loving touch!

Bill Crisler's 1/48 Recon Spitfire look for a review of the kit in this issue.

Paul Cohen is busy working away on his USS Pine Island.


URMUTH

The previous page shows the editor's treatment of Chris Fontenot's award-winning "Urmuth," complete with his scratchbuilt waterfall!

The following images detail his award-winning "Irish Rifles" diorama.

While you are enjoying Chris' work, allow me to point out that Chris recently entered these and other works of art in the recent Pensacola Blue Angels Modelfest where he was awarded the following accolades:

Gold - The Samurai

Silver - Irish Rifles

Best Asian Figure - The Samurai

Best Female Figure - The Geisha

Best Medieval Figure - The Samurai

Best Sci-Fi Figure - Fiddler's Grin.

Dave Eitel showed off the preliminary work on his A-10 Warthog.

Steve Hall showed his Fiat G.91R

Leelan Lampkins explained that he finally finished a model, this one, Amaterasu, is a fantasy figure he completed for his daughter.

Leo Dashievskiy added to his growing collection of airliners with the YS-11. Your editor thought it was a cool piece, too, and Shopped it into a scene.

GMM HAPPENINGS

GMM Club Meeting: 25 Mar SWAP MEET

ANNISTON 2014

THE PHANTOM PHURBALL 2014

SATURDAY APRIL 5, 2014 AT THE ANNISTON CITY MEETING CENTER

Featuring:

Best Invasion Stripe Aircraft | any Allied aircraft in D-Day invasion stripes

Best Ford Mustang | Any Ford Mustang from 1864-2014

Best Civilian Aircraft

Best Tiger Tank

Best Vietnam Subject

Rescue Me! | Any rescue vehicle or figure in any scale

The BEST raffle in the southeast!

Vendor table information:

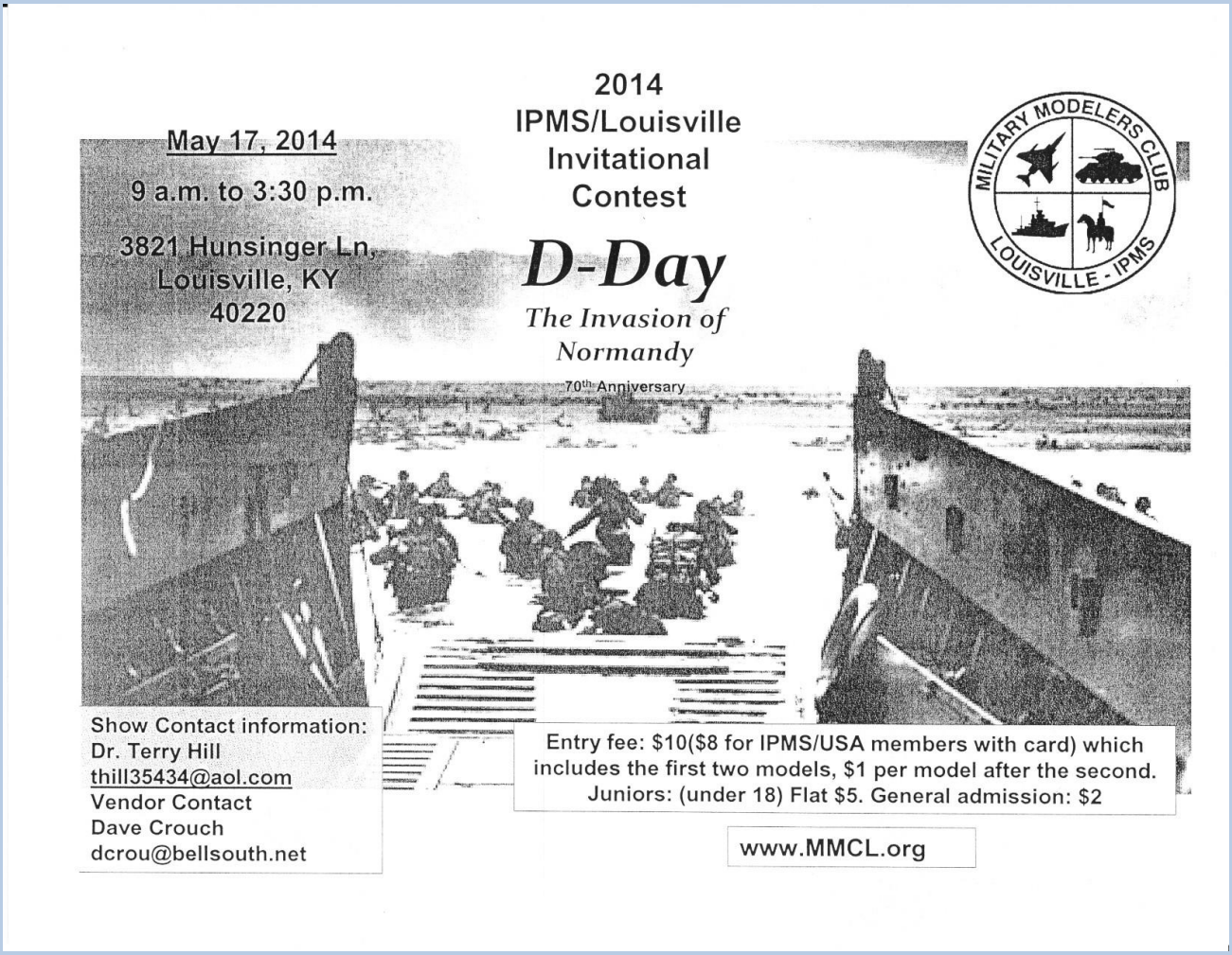
Vendor tables may be purchased for $20.00 per table. Anyone reserving more than five tables will be charged $20.00 for the first table and $15.00 for each additional table.

VENDOR TABLES CONTACT:

Trey Rush | email: rushwal@gmail.com
Phone: (205) 478-4091

GMM Club Meeting: 29 Apr

5/10/2014	Georgia Marietta Region 3	IPMS Atlanta Con 2014 WWW Marietta, GA - IAM Local 709 Union Hall 1032 South Marietta Pkwy SE Map IPMS Atlanta Bill Johnston (678) 308-7308



6/7/2014	**Georgia** Warner Robins Region 3	**ScottCon 2014** WWW Museum of Aviation 1942 Heritage Blvd **Map** IPMS/Gen. R. L. Scott **Bill Paul** (478) 929-3210

GMM Club Meeting: 27 May

GMM Club Meeting: 24 June

GMM Club Meeting: 29 July

GMM Club Meeting: 26 Aug

GMM Club Meeting: 30 Sep

GMM Club Meeting: 28 Oct

GMM Club Meeting: 25 Nov

GMM Club Meeting: 30 Dec or TBD

Airfix 1/48 scale

Supermarine Spitfire PR.XIX

Kit # 05119 Retail around $26

By, LtCol William Crisler, USAF (Ret)

For many years, I've been collecting expensive aftermarket parts to detail and correct Academy's 1/48 scale Spitfire F.XIV and to convert it to the PR.XIX, which is arguably the most attractive variant in the entire thoroughbred line. Airfix now provides a simpler and very reasonably priced alternative that avoids the work involved both in the conversion and in fixing the well-known dimension and shape problems of the Academy kit.

Apart from its high performance, good looks, and long service in the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, the PR.XIX is noteworthy for some unique operational contributions. Its daring high altitude recce service in its primary role during WW2 was significant in its own right, but even more important was the fact that such reconnaissance was known to be taking place by the Germans, and this provided explainable cover for intelligence gleaned by Allied codebreakers. The PR.XIX continued in the photo recce role until replaced by Meteor and Canberra recce assets in 1951. Late in its career, it provided weather data to support the London-Tokyo routes flown by the De Havilland Comet, the world's first jet airliner. Its last operational role was in 1963, when a single gate guard was recalled to service as a P-51 emulator to train pilots flying the Mach 2 English Electric Lightning. They had to figure out how to deal with P-51s or other high-performance piston-engined fighters that might be encountered in the Far East.

The complicated story of Spitfire development to accommodate higher-powered engines and achieve greater altitude and speed performance has filled many readily-available volumes, so only a brief summary is needed here. The PR.XIX is commonly described as being very similar to -- or just a PR version of -- the F.XIV. As

early as October 1944, even official technical specs described the PR.XIX as a recce version of the F.XIV. The first official order in March 1944, however, described it as an F.VIII fuselage (which is similar to that of the F.XIV), an F.XII pressurized cockpit, and the wings and photo equipment from a PR.XI. The PR.XIX was produced in two distinct versions: an initial batch of around 25 unpressurized Model 389s and subsequent batches of pressurized Model 390s. Total production was around 225. The first Mk XIX entered service in May 1944 to replace the Merlin-powered PR.X and XI. Production ended in early 1946.

The Airfix 1/48 scale kit presents all the major, unique features of a late-production, pressurized Model 390, including both large and small teardrop blisters under the wings to cover the extra fuel pumps, rounded PR windscreen and pressurized canopy, pencil inlet and ice screen for cockpit pressurization on the port forward fuselage, and lack of cockpit entry door. The interior sports the fore and aft cockpit pressure bulkheads, the different O_2 bottle arrangement, a camera control box in lieu of a gunsight, and three cameras with their frames.

The finished model scales out to almost exactly 37 feet in span and 33 feet in length. That's pretty close to the 36 feet 10 inches and 32 feet 8 inches for span and length, respectively, published in References 1 and 3. Laying the fuselage halves down on the 1/48 scale drawings of the F.XIVe in Reference 3 (which appear undersized by about 4 scale inches) suggests that the slight discrepancy in length may be evenly distributed over the entire fuselage, so there may not be an easy way to make it perfect, even if the error were significant enough to warrant it. The model "sits right" on its new Scale Aircraft Conversions landing gear and the forward fuselage profile looks right. The characteristic rudder and spinner both look right, too, and all of these features further mitigate any minor issues with fuselage length.

I also compared the forward fuselage of the finished model to that in the DACO 1/48 scale "improvement set" for the Academy Mk.XIV kit. I was encouraged that they're nearly identical in width when viewed from above, but the DACO unit is noticeably deeper in profile and a scale foot longer from the spinner to the first major panel line. I haven't built the Academy kit, but I assume the DACO part simply matches the Academy kit and attempts to correct its deficiencies. None of the other DACO parts provide substantial improvement over the Airfix kit. The KMC set for the Academy Mk.XIV kit likewise has nothing to contribute.

Converting to the earlier, unpressurized Model 389 (RM626 thru 646) requires just a few simple steps. I don't have any primary reference material on the PR.XIX, but I gathered all I could from several secondary sources. I was surprised that no single source listed all of these features.

- Mick Condra concisely outlined the major starting points in the July 2013 issue of ***Scale Aircraft Modeling International***. Remove the pencil inlet and ice screen and then back and fill the resulting scar, substitute QuickBoost fishtail exhausts meant for the Academy F.XIV (48-229), and scribe or make a cockpit entry door for the port side. Ultracast makes a colossal selection of top-quality detail parts for 1/48 scale Spitfires, including some handy cockpit entry doors and seats. Mick's review didn't mention it, and the text in the Reference 1 is vague and ambiguous, but I suspect the cockpit pressurization bulkheads and canopy parts (but not the rounded PR windscreen) should also be exchanged for standard fuselage frames and canopies if you convert to a Model 389. (Can somebody please verify that? My speculation is based on the notion that real PR aircraft were lightened as much as was practical, and they wouldn't have added the heavy bulkheads if they didn't provide some benefit. The drawings in Reference 1 also show the original bulkheads, not the pressurized bulkheads.)
- In the December 2009 issue of ***Military Aircraft Monthly***, Martin Rosa adds that the pressurization seals around the sliding canopy rail need to be removed and the fuselage around the canopy slides returned to its original F.XIV shape. The cockpit vent (C17) should not be used and its locating divot should be filled. (Some pressurized 390s lacked this vent, so check your photos and serial numbers carefully.)
- In his aggressive re-work of the 1/72 scale Airfix kit in the August 2012 issue of ***Model Airplane International***, Libor Jekl points out that the smaller blisters outboard of the wheel wells should be removed and that the small bottle on the back of the head armor (D3) should be deleted. He references the aircraft operating manual to suggest that there were only limited combinations of cameras that could be used. (Reference 1 confirms this point.) Furthermore, the camera support structure may need alteration to an earlier configuration. This may not be critical in this scale, and if you don't open the camera access doors, none of this detail is visible, anyway. He also calls out the lack of fuel tank pressure relief valves near the wing tips, but I can't spot them in either the photos of his model or in photos of the real airplane.

Engineering, parts break-down, and assembly sequence are generally conventional and appropriate, but a few features are unnecessarily complex, inconsistent, or downright nuts. As always, close attention to making the parts fit before gluing will solve a lot of problems before they arise.

- The sturdy tray-and-cover box is big enough to hold the model during construction, at least until the rudder, prop and spinner, and landing gear are attached. Clear parts are bagged separately.
- Instructions are clear and well-printed. There's no parts tree diagram, but it's not needed. Exterior colors are called out by name and Humbrol number, but interior colors are designated by numbers only.
- You can choose retracted or deployed flaps and landing gear, compressed or uncompressed tires, open or closed canopy, and open or closed camera access doors. The radiator flaps are fixed open, but it should be easy to re-position them.
- Leading edges and tips of the wing panels join true, but tabs on the horizontal stabilizers (C-4 and C-5) must be trimmed to avoid an overly tight fit that induces unwanted dihedral.
- The upper wing-fuselage joint is tight and level and easily worked, but watch the last ¼" where the wing trailing edges meet the fillets: the surfaces there are thin and unsupported and need to be matched up carefully. The uneven gap where the aft end of the bottom panel joins the fuselage should be shimmed.
- The gap between the carb inlet and lower fuselage is deep, wide, and difficult to dress. It's an ideal spot to use Milliput or metal-filled epoxy, which can be shaped and smoothed with a wet Q-tip while curing and which doesn't shrink once cured. Some flaws in the mold around the lip of the carb inlet were also difficult to clean up, and some reviewers recommend drilling out the inlet to make filling the interior seam a little easier.

- The tiny air vent on the fuselage spine is a separate piece, which facilitates finishing the fuselage seam, but the small inlet on the upper cowling is molded to the fuselage and impedes finishing that seam. Why not make separate parts for both?
- Control surfaces are all separate but exceptionally well-fitting pieces, as are the main wheel hubs and tires. Exhausts and prop are -- thankfully -- single pieces. The one-piece full-span elevator and torque tube replicates the full-scale original, but it requires installing a small plug to seal a gap at the rear spar of the vertical stabilizer. (Oddly enough, the new Eduard Mk.IX uses the same approach.) This extra complexity wasn't worth the trouble. I separated the elevators at the midpoint of the torque tube where the cut couldn't be seen, faired in the plug to the vertical stabilizer, then installed the elevators last.
- Radiator baths and cores are separate, well-detailed pieces. Separate radiator panels are a nice touch, but these must be trimmed or sanded to avoid fouling the interior of the baths. The baths must also be trimmed or sanded to better fit the lower wing panel.
- Flap wells and wheel wells needed no embellishment beyond sealing the tiny gaps with Micro Kristal Klear.

- To achieve an open canopy on its recent Spitfire releases, Airfix molds the sliding hood and the small fixed clear section as a single piece and then requires you to cut into the fuselage to make it fit. It looks bad, and it's hard to paint. It's a bad design: it's simply nuts and should never be done again. It's far better to either make the clear parts thin enough so they'll seat properly regardless of how they're posed or to make separate parts that do fit for each configuration. (Converting the Academy kit will also require you to rework the incorrectly shaped cockpit opening and substitute some clear parts.) I used the closed hood option to avoid this problem, but despite my best efforts at sealing everything before I started airbrushing the exterior, some fumes got inside and fogged the canopy. Next time, I' won't lock down the sliding hood so tightly. Instead, I'll seal the gap temporarily, pull the hood off and clean the inside with Q-tip once I've finished airbrushing, and re-install and touch up the hood at the end.
- The delicate aileron attachment points must be notched carefully to get a flush fit with the wing, but the rudder and ailerons fit with no extra effort beyond ensuring the horizontal stabs are properly aligned.
- The long-serving (and very well done) RAF pilot figure is included, but he'll need significant trimming to fit inside the cockpit, and you'll need to connect him via some foil harness straps to the seat.

Moldings are generally well done but occasionally inconsistent.

- Gates were properly sized and placed, and I encountered no problems separating parts from trees or cleaning up the blemishes.
- Crisply engraved panel lines are slightly heavier than what you'd see on a Hasegawa kit but not overdone.
- Trailing edges of flying surfaces and prop blades needed only cursory clean-up and sharpening, but joints at the sharp edge of the distinctive wing-fuselage fillet required much effort with 400-grit wet-or-dry to reshape and sharpen.
- The round exhaust pipes had a lot of flash, and you have to get it all off: the full-scale pipes do not have weld seams. There are some small and scarcely noticeable mold marks on the base plate that must be cleaned up, and you may want to shave a little off the length of the base plate: otherwise the exhausts may foul when you try to insert them into their slots on the fuselage.
- The main landing gear struts in the kit are not round in cross section, and I didn't trust the soft Airfix styrene for durability. I replaced the gear with Scale Aircraft Conversions set 48-232. You may have to open up the mounting sockets a tiny bit, and you should shave off some of the mounting tenon on the inboard side of the strut if it fouls on the gear door. As with any Spitfire model, you must be especially careful with final alignment of the gear. Slow-setting super-glue or 5-minute epoxy should be used to give adequate strength and working time.

- To close the gap between the spinner and its back plate without undue binding, you may have to use a round file to open up the holes around the prop blades just a little.

The styrene is exceptionally soft: use extra care when clipping parts from runners, using files, or re-scribing panel lines. I backed off one grade of sandpaper (e.g., 400 instead of 320, 600 instead of 400, etc.) compared to what I normally use for each step in fitting and finishing. ScotchBrite pads and 00 and 0000 steel wool also worked well. The styrene did not react well to Tenax or Testors cement, but Tamiya cement worked fine and super glue worked well as both an adhesive and filler. I had adhesion and drying time problems using "green" lacquer thinner when airbrushing. About halfway through the build I reverted to super glue and a hotter, more conventional blend of lacquer thinner and got much better results. Priming with Tamiya gray primer covered up sanding scratches and improved paint adhesion.

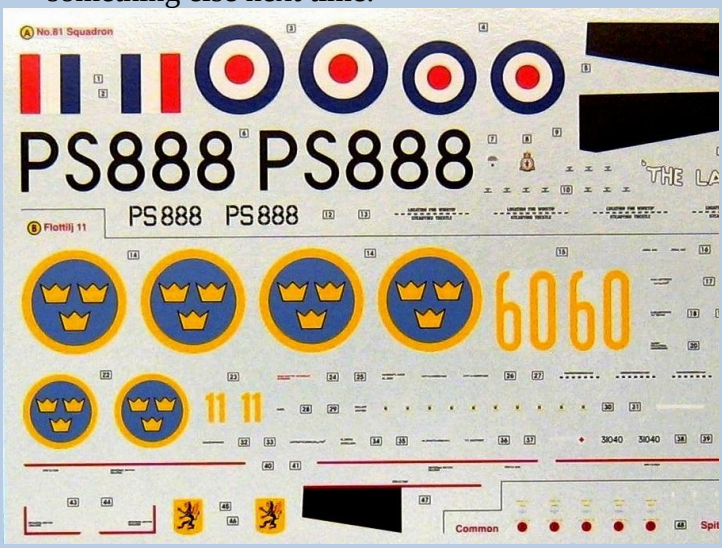
With the notable exception of the open-hood combo part, the clear parts were shiny and reasonably thin, but they exhibited considerable optical waviness and some tiny tool marks where the molds weren't completely polished out. Polishing and then coating with Future helped but didn't completely eliminate these problems. The parts for the closed-hood option fit remarkably well, once you remove the fine parting lines on their edges and the gate on the aft edge of the windscreen frame. I attached all the clear parts and filled the tiny gaps with Kristal Klear. It was easy to fair everything in with a slightly damp Q-tip as it dried.

Cockpit detail is exceptionally complete and well-molded for this scale and is accomplished with a reasonable number of small but delicate parts. Careful painting, washing, and dry-brushing yielded excellent results for this scale. There are a few issues with the cockpit, however.

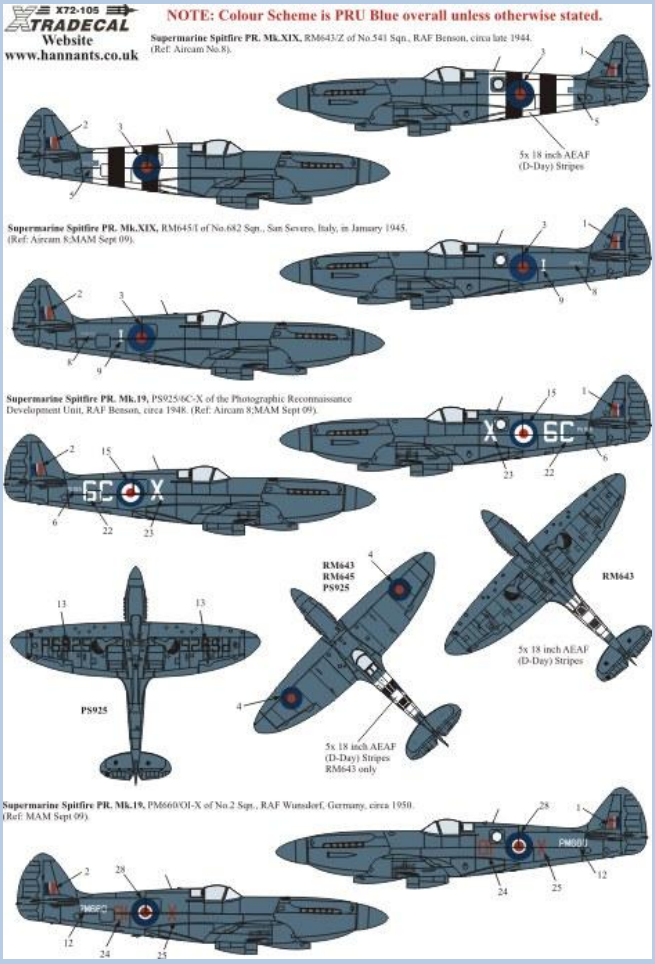
- Some parts are hard to position. Specifically, the landing gear lever box (B-6) can foul on the frame (A-17), and the brace (A-20) between the rear cockpit frames must be sized to length correctly (or replaced) or it will distort alignment of the frames.
- The edges of the seat pan are thick, and the pan lacks the depression in the bottom. The flare rack on the front of the seat is poorly executed. There's no hint about the pilot's harness, and the slot in the head armor for the harness does not go all the way through. If you're not going to use the pilot, replace the seat with

QuickBoost 48-401, a beautiful casting which includes the harness and seat jack. Some sources suggest that the flare rack should be deleted from PR Spitfires, but I can't confirm that, and several of my photos show the flare rack in place.

- Rudder pedals are poorly defined and should be refined or replaced.
- Gluing surfaces for the clear camera ports are poorly defined, and I couldn't devise an easy way to install them after exterior finishing. I rounded the holes with a Dremel burr and glued from the inside with Future to avoid fogging the parts, but the oblique window popped out later when I fat-fingered it. I'll try something else next time.



Marking options in the kit decals include only two examples, a Swedish bird in overall PRU Blue and PS888 in post-WW2 Medium Sea Grey over PRU Blue. Nonetheless, the sharply-printed kit decals are some of the best I've ever encountered. They include wing walks, prop blade markings, lots of stencils, and simulated spinner fasteners.



Xtradecal 48-118 provides 8 options, including RM643, an unpressurized model 389 in overall PRU Blue and invasion stripes. Mick Condra's review calls out that the Xtradecal instructions incorrectly show RM643 as a pressurized late-model 390, but the decals are actually correct for an unpressurized 389. Xtradecal sets are available from Hannants and Brookhurst Hobbies.

Marking options included only two examples, a Swedish bird in overall PRU Blue and PS888 in post-WW2 Medium Sea Grey over PRU Blue. This seemed a little sparse, since I was expecting at least one of the attractive WW2 RAF examples with invasion stripes. I was a little concerned about colors in the Swedish roundels, but a quick survey of my decal stash revealed that no two sheets out of a dozen different Swedish subjects and manufacturers were the same.

I airbrushed the exterior with ModelMaster PRU Blue, thinned heavily with lacquer thinner and lightened about 5% for scale effect. The model is still pretty dark, and I'll look at more aggressive scaling next time. Like other ModelMaster flats, this paint dries to an absolutely dead flat finish, and it will feel like 600-grit sandpaper if you don't thin it enough and spray very thin coats at appropriate pressure. Mixing in some clear gloss might help, too. In any case, spraying some trial coupons is a simple, quick way to reduce risk of a major disaster. Prior to spraying on any clear coats, moderately rough spots can be buffed out with an old cotton dishcloth.

I use professional *photo refinishers' lacquers* for gloss and flat coats. These products have a UV-inhibitor that prevents yellowing. I'm using up the last few ounces of a product that has recently gone out of production. When I find a suitable replacement, I'll describe it in my next review.

The decals may be the best kit decals I've ever used. They're tough and very hard to tear, yet they conformed completely and without silvering to both raised and recessed surface detail. The price for this is remarkably short working time: you only get a couple of seconds (and sometimes not even that) to move them around once they touch the model. This wouldn't be a problem with ordinary RAF roundels, but you have very little time to rotate the Swedish roundels to align the crowns. At first I was concerned about the yellow decals changing color over the PRU Blue, but once they came off the decal paper I could see that everything had been under-printed with white, and there was no noticeable change in color. Prior to applying decals to the model, I gloss coated the unused flap pieces and tested several decal solvents on some of the unused RAF decals on both the flat and ribbed surfaces. Everything I tried worked fine, including Solv-a-Set, which I used to set the majority of the decals. There was very little excess decal film, and what little film there was completely disappeared under another thin coat of gloss and the final semi-gloss coat.

Adding small details adds visual complexity and is worth the minimal effort.

- Round exhaust pipes always benefit from having the ends drilled out.
- Using arcs of black decal punches for the small air inlet on the cowling and the outlet behind the cockpit is easier than drilling them out.
- Fairings for the wingtip formation lights should be trimmed off while leveling out the wing leading edge seams and then built back up. I used 5-minute epoxy tinted with Tamiya clear red and green acrylic. The clear light on the back of the rudder can benefit from the same treatment.
- Using a slightly lighter shade of the base camouflage colors for contrast on control surfaces is common practice for subjects that have fabric-covered control surfaces. The PR.XIX has metal-covered control surfaces, but the trick enhances this otherwise monotone scheme, too. I also used a semi-gloss mix for the main airframe, dead flat for the prop and tires, and no overspray at all for the metallic exhausts, main gear legs, and main wheel hubs.
- Add separation hooks for the slipper tank to the lower fuselage. Some photos show them, but others don't. The new Eduard Mk.IX has PE parts you can use for size, shape, and location of some scratch-built hooks.
- Use little bits of wire to replace the solid molding for the rudder actuator, to add the small L-shaped de-icer nozzle inside the mouth of the radiators, and to replace the ice screen frame in front of the pencil inlet.
- Again, replace the seat and add the pilot's harness if you're not going to use the pilot figure.
- If you want the hood open, consider a vac-formed canopy.
- The inside of the tail wheel well could use some detail help.
- I simulated camera lenses with 5-minute epoxy. They look very convincing as they peep through the camera ports. Reference 4 has lots of detail photos of the cameras.
- The box art and instructions don't show it, but many photos (and even most 1/72 scale kit box art) show a whip antenna on the aft fuselage spine, slightly offset to starboard. Many photos also show a small bump on the lower fuselage just behind the aft camera port, also offset to starboard.
- I drilled out the spinner fasteners and highlighted them with a wash in lieu of using the kit decals.
- I lost one of the main gear covers during the build, but I got lucky: the new Eduard Mk.IX kit has an extra set of gear doors that look and fit just fine.
- If you want the flaps down, the small doors that cover the flap actuators should be opened, and you'll have to scratch-build the mechanism. I forgot about this until after I had the wing assembled, and it was too late and too much trouble to do anything about it at that point

Bottom line: This is a very good kit and an excellent value. Most of the expensive correction sets in my stash are now just historical oddities as far as the PR.XIX is concerned. A week's work yields an attractive model straight from the box, and a little extra effort and a few replacement parts can lead to an outstanding and competitive model. I'll do a Model 389 as soon as my Xtradecal set and QuickBoost parts get here. Kudos to Airfix for their ambitious efforts to flesh out the Spitfire / Seafire line in 1/48 scale.

Pssst…Testors has dropped PRU Blue in the ½ oz. Model Master bottle, and rumor has it that they may only sell it in spray cans, if at all. If true, it seems short-sighted, given the release of this kit and the likelihood that we'll see more – not fewer – PRU Spitfire and Mosquito kits and conversions in the near future.

The teardrop blisters for the extra fuel pumps and camera ports for the PR.XIX are well-defined. The characteristic fillets at the wing-fuselage joint are also properly represented but need careful sanding to get the sharp edges. Landing gear are from Scale Aircraft Conversions, and the main gear covers are from the Eduard Mk.IX. Note the small bump just aft of the camera ports and the slipper tank hooks between the radiator baths.

Annotated References and Sources

1. ***Supermarine Spitfire PR Mk.XIX***, Zdenek Patek and Robert Theiner, MPM Ltd. *Essential but hard-to-find soft-cover reference for any PR.XIX project. Color profiles, B&W pictures, scale detail drawings, excellent text and list of references, including RAF pilots' notes and service manual.*
2. ***The Supermarine Spitfire: A Comprehensive Guide for the Modeller, Part 2: Griffon-Powered***, Robert Humphries, SAM Publications, 2001. ISBN 0-9533465-4-4. *A handful of color photos and 1/72 scale drawings.*
3. ***Aero Detail 30: Vickers-Supermarine Griffon Spitfire***, Shigeru Nohara and Nobuhiko Okazaki, Dainippon Kaiga, 2001. ISBN 4-499-22741-0. *Extensive color photos and scale drawings. Useful insofar as the F.XIVe is similar to PR.XIX.*
4. ***Classic Warbirds No.11: Merlin PR Spitfires in Detail***, Malcom Laird and Wojtek Matusiak, Ventura Publications, 2009. ISBN 0-9582296-5-1. *Excellent source of detail photos and scale drawings for PR.XI. Acquire the whole series if you can find it.*
5. *www.ultracast.ca*
6. *www.quickboost.net*
7. *www.scaleaircraftconversions.com* This model got crushed during my recent move from Colorado to Georgia. The landing gear were bent almost into the retracted position, but I was able to bend them back into the correct position quickly and with no problems. I'll never build another kit without using SAC gear, if they're available.

Monogram 1/25 '70 Plymouth Road Runner

Reviewed by Perry Downen

By the late 1960s the muscle car industry sales were beginning to show signs of slowing. To combat this slump the manufacturers begin adding creature comforts not offered when the cars were first introduced. In 1968 Chrysler took a different path with the introduction of the Plymouth Road Runner. Creature comforts gave way to pure performance and lower prices. They wanted a car that would sell for less than $3,000 and be able to run a 14 second quarter mile. The Road Runner was based on the full-sized Belvedere, but stripped of most amenities in order to make it rugged, light and cheap. Plymouth's advertising capitalized on the Road Runner theme by enlisting the help of Looney Tune's Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner cartoons. In 1970 the front of the car was given a new aggressive and neat look. A distinctive feature of the '70 Road Runner was the Air Grabber hood. Press a button in the passenger compartment and an air scoop on the hood would open. Press it again and it would close.

Monogram has released a great recreation of the Plain-Jane muscle car, the '70 Plymouth RoadRunner. The nicely detailed parts are molded in white, clear and chrome plated. The details really show up on the huge 440 cubic inch V-8 engine with the chrome six-pack carburetors sitting on top. Other examples of the fine details are found in the interior and suspension. The hood comes with the Air Grabber scoop. This kit fits the original Plain-Jane theme with economy style bench seats, "Dog Dish" hubcaps and stock factory markings.

However, it can be finished with a light cosmetic customized look by using the optional set of steel wheels, custom paint color such as orange pearl, and an eye-catching striping found on the decal sheet. Either finish uses the stock soft black tires. Any Mopar fan will be excited to build this iconic muscle car and add it to his collection. (The model would look better if I closed the hood completely before taking any pictures.)


"That's all Folks!"