

RT Volume 45, No. 4, Winter 2023

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Cover Comment: *Massimo Santarossa converted the Airfix 1:72 kit to a very fine replica of an RCAF Hurricane Mk. XIIA, using scratchbuilt and aftermarket parts, along with some IPMS Canada decals. See page 13 for the build article.*

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Editorial

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What’s in a word?

In my last editorial I used what I thought was a common phrase that I later found out has a negative connotation rooted in the USA’s past. While I regret any harm this inadvertent use of this term may have caused, in researching this I came to realize that the English language is absolutely peppered with words, terms and phrases that may still be offensive to others, and that they come from all over the world. It’s very difficult to avoid them, even in ordinary conversation, but I’ll try to be more mindful of this in the future.

What do you want to see in RT?

At the September IPMS Canada national executive committee meeting, our incoming Chapter and Member Liaison rep, Alan Luciuk of Saskatoon, touched on a variation of a question that comes up to me every once in a while and my standard answer to it bears repeating here. I’ll be talking to modellers, some who are members, some who are not, and they’ll say they don’t like IPMS Canada and/or **RT** because there’s no articles on topics A, B, C or D. These are usually pretty normal topics, but my reply is always that I’ve published every A, B, C and D article that has been submitted to me for publication. I want to present a variety of topics and writers in these pages, and if you’re not seeing something that tickles your fancy, consider writing something and sharing it here. I’ll help you with the editing and preparation of the material for publication, so don’t worry about not being a trained wordsmith.

Future Free Decals

We've received feedback that members enjoyed the free decals that were distributed with the last issue of **RT**. The good news is that we're already working on a list of Canadian/Canadian-adjacent subjects for future decals and your input and help counts. What do you want to see? Can you help with the detailed research, references and article preparation? Contact us as soon as possible.

And in local news...

After a four-year break (thanks to COVID), on October 14th my local club, IPMS Ottawa, put on our CapCon show at the Canadian War Museum. Aside from being a great museum it is a spectacular contest venue, with lots of quality space for vendors, casual social gatherings, and having the contest tables right amongst the museum's Tank Gallery is certainly an impressive sight. The show was well attended and I was able to spend a lot of quality time talking to friends, chatting to people about **RT** and IPMS Canada and just generally having a great time. However, the biggest thing that left an impression on me is the hard work that was put in by the core organizers - Glenn, Bill, Benoit, Brian, Paul, Mat and Chris - plus a small and dedicated army of club member volunteers (and some of their family members who got dragooned into helping out) who helped keep the show organized, monitored and running smoothly. This shows the best values of any club, and the *raison d'être* of IPMS around the world, to reach out and engage with fellow modellers and to celebrate this great hobby. If your club is putting on a contest to the outside world, please do what you can to help the organizers with making it a successful event.

Czech Mate!

Building *Tamiya's* Panzerkampfwagen 38(t) Ausf. E/F

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The Pzkw 38(t)

Produced in the 1930's, the CKD LT vz 38 was a pre-WWII Czechoslovakian light tank. After the invasion by Germany in March, 1939, this light tank was adopted and renamed the Panzerkampfwagen 38(t). The (t) designation comes from the German word *tschechisch*, which stands for Czech. The 38(t) was incorporated into German Panzer Divisions and served in the Polish Campaign, Battle of France and the invasion of the Soviet Union.

There were several variants of the Panzerkampfwagen 38(t), including the late model Ausf. E/F (**Fig. 1**). This late version was equipped with a 3.7cm main gun and a 125hp engine that could reach speeds of up to 42 km/h. Production ended in 1942 when the 38(t) was deemed obsolete. Its main gun and armament was no match for the Soviet Union's fast and powerful T-34 tanks. An exert from German Tank Commander Otto Carius's "Tigers in the Mud" describes how weak and unequipped the 38(t) was in combat:

"It happened like greased lightning. A hit against our tank, a metallic crack, the scream of a comrade, and that was all there was! A large piece of armour plating had been penetrated next to the radio operator's seat. No one had to tell us to get out. Not until I had run my hand across my face while crawling in the ditch next to the road did I discover that they had also got me. Our radio operator had lost his left arm. We cursed the brittle and inelastic Czech steel that gave the Russian 47 mm anti-tank gun so little trouble. The pieces of our own armour plating and assembly bolts caused considerably more damage than the shrapnel of the round itself – 8 July 1941."

A total of 1,400 38(t)'s were produced.

Tamiya

Tamiya Inc. started in the modelling business in 1948 under the direction of Yoshio Tamiya. Their outstanding quality and attention to detail has made them one of the best and most recognised brand names in scale modelling. Since their inception, they have produced over 3,000 individual model kits. *Tamiya* lives up to their motto "First in Quality around the World" with every new kit they produce. Their newer Panzerkampfwagen 38(t) Ausf. E/F (**Fig. 2**; Item #35364) is no exception. Research for this kit was based on the 38(t) at Kubinka Tank Museum in Kubinka, Moscow Oblast, Russia. This article will describe the steps taken for an "out of the box" build of this stunning kit.

The Kit

Every time I open up a new *Tamiya* kit, I am always amazed to see what "goodies" have been included. Their packaging and organisation of sprues are top notch, an aspect that other scale model manufacturers should take note of. Needless to say, I was not disappointed with their 38(t) kit. The kit is comprised of; 244 parts moulded in dark grey plastic, including link-and-length tracks, tool box, jerry cans, a few stowage items and an excellent tank commander figure; four poly caps, one piece of photo-etch (engine deck screen); a decal sheet with markings for two vehicles on the Eastern Front;

instruction booklet (22 straightforward steps); background information booklet on the 38(t); and *Tamiya Tech Tips* pamphlet. Instructions were clear (no errors detected) and followed to the letter, except for attachment of the roadwheels and construction of the tracks. The roadwheels and tracks were also painted separately with the latter being left off until after the tank was painted. All of the mouldings were crisp, with little to no flashing.

Building the Hull

Typical for *Tamiya* instructions, construction began with the lower and upper hull (**Steps 1-3**). The seven hull parts have excellent raised bolt head (rivet) details, with little cleanup needed (**Fig. 3**). There are ejector pin marks on the inside of the side walls, but they will not be seen. All parts fit perfectly together. The nicely detailed silver photo-etched engine deck screen was attached using CA glue. **Step 4** focuses on building each suspension arm unit. There are four units, each comprised of three parts (**Fig. 4**). The only tedious part was sanding the seams on each arm.

All parts fit together nicely and attachment to the hull was perfect (**Fig. 5**). Next, I built the drive sprockets (**Step 5**). Each drive sprocket consisted of two parts and a poly cap. Again, the detail is outstanding and there was little cleanup.

Step 6 deals with attaching the running gear to the lower hull. Each idler is made up of two parts, but no poly cap. The roadwheels and return rollers are moulded as one piece (**Fig. 6**). The roadwheels also have excellent raised bolt head detail. The edge of each one was sanded in order to remove obvious seam lines. The roadwheels had no ejector pin marks (inside or outside). The sprockets and idlers were attached, but not glued. The only parts I glued to the hull were the return rollers. The roadwheels were not attached so that I could paint them separately. Not gluing the sprockets, idlers and roadwheels allowed me to put the tracks on later with no problems. Building the tracks (**Step 7**) was skipped so that I could paint them separately and attach after the tank was painted.

Next, I attached the fenders (**Step 8**). Each fender is moulded as one piece with the top showing quality detail. The bottom of each fender has several "slots", with one having two ejector pin marks that were filled with putty and sanded. The right fender has seven slots while the left has six slots as well as two ejector pin marks near the front end. I used *Tamiya* Grey Putty (#TAM87053) to fill in the slots and ejector pin marks. I thoroughly sanded each fender to a smooth finish (**Fig. 7**). **Step 9** encompasses the attachment of the front armour plate. This step gives you two options to pick from. Option A has the presence of a machine gun while Option B does not. I chose to do Option A (**Fig. 8**). There are ejector pin marks on the inside, but they will not be seen. I drilled out the machine gun barrel with a *Xacto* knife. All of the parts have outstanding detail and the fit is superb, especially attaching the armour plate to the hull (**Fig. 9**).

Next, the engine hoods were built (**Step 10**). There is not much to this step except for putting the end brackets on each hood. There are ejector pin marks, but they are on the inside and will not be seen (**Fig. 10**).

Steps 11-16 mainly deal with building the subassembly equipment and attaching them to the upper hull. I cleaned the front fender angles, hatches, engine hood handle and jack block of seam lines and ejector pin marks. The hatches have ejector pin marks that will not be seen unless you have them in the open position. I attached the jack block to the fender which created a gap on the underside. I used grey putty to fill the gap (**Fig. 11**).

The next section (**Step 12**) involved building the storage boxes. Each box consisted of four parts. The only cleaning needed was sanding the sprue attachment points. Both boxes went together well with no issues (**Fig. 12**). Next, I installed the storage boxes to the right and left fenders as well as other hull accessories (**Step 13-16**). Hull accessories include a pry bar, spare tracks, tail lights, tow hitch and tow cable hooks. Six additional accessories were built before attachment. They include a Notek light, smoke shell case, muffler, grouser box, jack and three Jerry cans (**Fig. 13**). All subassemblies have exceptional detail, especially the grouser box. The box is perforated and consists of five parts. Typical seam lines were removed by sanding. All parts were attached to the hull with no fit problems.

Building the Turret

The first component of building the turret is the subassembly of the gun mantlet (**Steps 17 & 18**). The gun mantlet is composed of 17 parts and one poly cap (**Fig. 14**). The machine gun is the same as the one attached to the armour plate. *Tamiya's* engineering of both machine guns allows them to move up and down, side to side and in a circular motion. The main gun barrel is moulded as a single piece and is attached to the breech with a poly cap.

This allows the gun barrel to move up and down. Before I began construction on the mantlet, I sanded all of the pieces and drilled out both barrels. Interior detail is minimal, comprising only a vision port and a small section of the gun breech. Luckily, the interior will not be seen. All of the parts fit together nicely.

The main turret body consists of six parts (**Step 19**), seven counting the gun mantlet subassembly that is attached in **Step 20 (Fig. 15)**. The turret was straightforward with all parts fitting together perfectly. The raised bolt head (rivets) detail is the same as the upper and lower hulls. Next, I constructed the cupola (**Step 20**). The cupola consists of 14 parts, of which four are vision port units. Each unit is composed of two parts. Again, everything went together well with no problems. The last two parts of the turret to be attached (**Step 21**) were the grab handle (near the cupola) and cupola hatch. I sanded the grab handle seams with a file. Since I wanted the hatch to be in the open position, I filled one ejector pin mark on the inside surface with *Tamiya White Putty* (#TAM 87095). Next, I attached the turret to the hull. The kit provides four each of helmets, canteens and gas mask canisters (**Fig. 16**).

I glued these items to the turret after they were painted.

Building the Figures

Step 21 also involves the construction of the Tank Commander figure. In my opinion, this is one of the best figures that *Tamiya* has produced. The detail is phenomenal, especially the “folds” of the clothes. The figure is in a natural pose, sitting on the hatch of the cupola holding binoculars (**Fig. 17**). It consists of six body parts and three accessories (binoculars, pistol and headphones). The body parts have special connection points that allow for a snug fit. I did not need to putty any gaps. Seam lines were almost undetectable, so sanding was minimal.

Back... on track

With the hull and turret complete, I went back to **Step 7** to build the tracks. The tracks are link-and-length and consist of 20 pieces on each side (**Fig. 18**). Each side is comprised of two long runs (top and bottom), eight short pieces wrapping around the idler wheel and 10 around the drive sprocket. The top runs have realistic sagging between the return rollers. The tracks were crisp and of high quality. I normally do not like building link-and-length tracks. However, this set was straightforward and relatively easy to build. I temporarily attached the roadwheels and built the tracks around them, the idler wheels and drive sprockets. The fit was fantastic! It took me two hours to complete the tracks. I attached them after the tank was painted. Remember, when attaching the tracks, be sure to note their direction.

Painting

Next, I primed the vehicle with *Tamiya Grey Primer* (#TAM87042) to get it ready for painting. The primer provides even coverage and is self-levelling. I only had a few imperfections (gaps) to correct. Once the model dried, I was ready to paint.

Painting the vehicle brings the model to life. It was relatively easy since it was a monochrome grey paint scheme. I used *Tamiya German Grey* (#XF-63) for the base coat. Next, I mixed a pipette full of *Tamiya Flat White* (#XF-2) to the German grey to create a lighter grey colour. I also added a few drops of thinner in order to get a “flatter” finish. The entire tank was painted except for the tracks and roadwheels. This lighter colour was airbrushed to highlight the tank. This makes the model “standout” more than a single uniform colour (**Fig. 19**).

The tracks and roadwheels were painted separately. The roadwheels received the same colour as the tank while the tracks (and spare tracks) were painted with *AK Interactive Track Primer* (#AKI85). I allowed the model to dry for 24 hours before painting the detail parts and accessories.

With the base and highlight colours completed, I started on the small details. Return rollers, roadwheels (outer edge) and machine gun barrels were painted with *Ceramcoat Black* (#02506). The machine guns were highlighted with *Vallejo's Gun Metal Grey* (#70.863). Next, I painted the jack block using *Vallejo's Old Wood* (#70.310), which is an excellent “wood” colour (**Fig. 20**). I used gun metal to paint the pry bar, *Tamiya's Dark Iron* (#TAM81784) and *Anita's Acrylic Red Rust* (#11025) for the muffler and jack. Black was used for the cushion on the inside of the cupola hatch. The tail lights were painted with *Folkart Clover* (#923) and *Vallejo's Flat Red* (#70.957). Clover was used on the left tail light and flat red on the right tail light. I used *Vallejo Field Grey* (#70.830) to paint the helmets and gas mask canisters. The canteen was painted with field grey and *Vallejo's Brown Beige* (#70.875).

Painting the figure was easy, mainly because I didn't have to paint any type of camouflage scheme. I painted the undershirt rain grey (*Ceramcoat* #02543). I used with *Andrea's Black Set* (#AND-ACS-002) for the trousers, jacket and

boots. The binoculars were painted with flat black and *Folkart's Country Twill* (#602). I used *Andrea's Flesh Set* (#AND-ACS-001) to paint the hands and face. Once the figure was dry, I gently dry-brushed it with rain grey and sparingly with sandstone (*Ceramcoat* #02402). The dry-brushing really caused the "folds" and other details to "pop" (**Fig. 214**). To complete the figure and seal the paint, I sprayed it with *Testor's Dullcote* (#TES1260T).

Markings

The kit decal sheet provides two options for vehicles on the Eastern Front (**Fig. 22**). Option A is for tank #522 of the 19th Panzer Division in Russia, 1941. Option B is for tank #112 of the 7th Panzer Division in Russia, 1941-42. I chose Option A to represent a 38(t) used during Operation Barbarossa. Before applying the decals, I trimmed each one to remove excess film. I used a liberal amount of *Solvaset* to help the decals adhere to the surface of the model. They nestled down nicely with no problems. After drying, I applied *AK Interactive Matte Finish* (#AKI 183) to seal and dull the decals (**Fig. 23**).

Weathering

The last major component of this build was weathering the vehicle. Weathering adds realism by showing the wear and tear of the vehicles' exposure to weather conditions, the terrain (environment) and combat. I believe it gives the model character and helps tell its story. Since I wanted to depict a vehicle in the early stages of Operation Barbarossa, weathering was minimal. I started with applying an oil wash (burnt umber and odorless thinner) over the entire tank. This accentuated the various details, especially the raised bolt heads (rivets). Next, I dry-brushed the highlights with rain grey and applied another oil wash. I dry-brushed the tank a second time with sandstone. Dry-brushing really made the details stand out (**Fig. 24**).

Next, I applied a thin coat of *AK Interactive's Terrain: Muddy Ground* (#AKI8017) mixed with real dirt and white glue to the lower hull. I allowed it to dry for 24 hours. I administered an oil wash to these areas to give them depth. Once it was dry, I dry-brushed the muddy areas with *Tamiya Flat Earth* (#XF-52) to represent dried mud. I used *MIG Production's Light European Earth* pigment (#P415) to show a light buildup of dried mud and dirt (**Fig. 25**). I placed generous amounts to the upper and lower hulls, roadwheels and suspension (**Fig. 26a-c**). I also added small amounts of pigment to certain areas of the upper hull, primarily on the fenders and front glacis plate. I used *AK Interactive's Pigment Fixer* (#AKI48) to secure the pigment in place.

Oil stains were added to the center of the roadwheels using *MIG Production's Oil and Grease* stain mixture (**Fig. 27**; #P410). Next, I used pastel chalks to simulate rust on the exhaust (muffler), spare tracks, and pry bar and sparingly around some of the raised bolt heads (rivets). Light chipping was done with gun metal to areas that would show natural wear on a combat vehicle.

I weathered the tracks with *Rust-all* (#RUS1236) and an oil wash. Once they were dry, I dry-brushed them with gun metal (**Fig. 28**). European light dust pigment was added to the tracks and "fixed" in place. Next, I sprayed the entire tank with *Dullcote* to seal the paint and pigments. To complete my model, I applied a light dusting of pigment to the lower hull, running gear and fenders (**Fig. 29 and 30**).

I decided to make a quick base for my finished 38(t). I used leftover sprues and the kit box. A square platform was made out of sprues and placed in the bottom of the box. Next, an opening was cut in the box lid so that the sprue platform would go through it (**Fig. 31**). The kit box was secured to a black wood base (**Fig. 32**). A name plate (**Fig. 33**) was made and purchased from a local trophy awards store. It was placed on the base. The finished tank was placed on top of the sprue platform. I thought this display would be appropriate since I built it "out of the box."

Conclusion

I have to say that I am extremely pleased with how my 38(t) turned out. It took 38 hours to build, paint and weather. This kit was a pleasure to build. The instructions were straightforward and easy to follow. The kit has excellent details and great fit. I did not encounter any major issues. I would recommend this kit to any level modeller.

I wanted this build to be straight "out of the box." In the future, I will add music wire for the antenna, wire for the Tank Commanders' headphones, a strap for the binoculars, and uniform insignia for the figure.

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About the author:

Richard Guetig was born and raised in Louisville, KY, and is a retired high school administrator. After a 20-year hiatus (girls, college and career), he returned to modelling at age 37. "Wolfgang" dabbles in armour, dioramas, vignettes, sci-fi and figures; he is the treasurer of the Military Modelers Club of Louisville and has been a member since 2000. The most important aspect of modelling is "It is relaxing and allows me to be a kid again!" Other interests include the outdoors, fishing, collecting comic books and Marx toy soldiers, and spending time with his family. Richard has been married for 36 years to Sara, his high school sweetheart, and they have a son, daughter and two grandsons.

The 'Bouncer'

RCAF Hurricane Mk.XII

Massimo Santarossa

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Calgary AB

Being an IPMS member, and specifically a member of IPMS Canada, certainly has some advantages. One of these is the **RT** you are currently holding, being designed as it is for the enjoyment of members. Every so often there is a bonus that comes included with your **RT**, namely a set of IPMS designed and produced decals focusing on unique Canadian subjects. It was just such a decal sheet in the Fall 2016 issue, featuring markings for Canadian-built Hawker Hurricanes, that was the inspiration for one of the projects to come across the model bench.

The Hurricane in question was a Mk. XIIA, produced by Canadian Car and Foundry, and flown by No.1(F) Operational Training Unit. Called a "Bouncer," it played the role of an enemy aircraft in the training of would-be fighter pilots. The Mk. XIIA had a number of uniquely Canadian features, but as this version of the Hurricane did not exist in model form, some converting and scratch building was going to be needed.

The Airfix kit

As a basis, the nicely-moulded Airfix 1:72 Hurricane Mk. I was selected. First released in 2013, the kit comes in grey plastic, has recessed panel lines, good detail for the scale, and is a straightforward build. It does, however, feature the Hurricane's early fabric-covered wings, so to correct this, Alley Cat Models' metal wing conversion was acquired. Designed to fit this specific kit, this one-piece resin wing is well-cast with only one or two minor blemishes, and includes a set of clear resin lights and a replacement windscreen. To round out the aftermarket bits, a selection of Quickboost resin parts was also purchased.

Winging it

As good as the Alley Cat part is, it still needed slight modification to create the Mk. XIIA wing. This Canadian-produced wing mounted twelve .303" Browning machine guns, the additional four (two per wing) were incorporated into the outer half of the wings. Using drawings in the SAM Publications Hurricane Datafile 22, new lines for the outer gun access panels were laid out and scribed. Openings for the barrels were drilled into the leading edge, being careful to ensure the correct staggered positioning was achieved. With the pin vice still in hand, the wing's other gun barrel openings were enlarged as these were cast by Alley Cat as glorified dimples. The wing was then assembled as per the instructions, with the appropriate kit parts added where needed.

Cockpit time

The cockpit as offered by Airfix has good detail for such a small area. Included is a pilot figure which looked fine, but this also meant that no seat belts were provided if an empty cockpit was desired. To remedy this, a set of laser-cut paper seat belts from Kamizukuri was selected and glued in place with cyanoacrylate (CA) glue. The remaining kit parts were built up as designed, after which it was time to add some colour.

The top of the resin wing centre section formed the cockpit floor, to which the kit's foot channels were attached. As this was a resin part, it first received a coat of Model Master (MM) Primer which was then followed by Alclad Aluminum, this area generally being left in bare metal. The bulk of the cockpit was painted MM RAF Interior Green, with details picked out in various colours. Once dry, Future Floor Finish was brushed on so that the decal comprising the instrument panel could be attached, and a pin wash could be applied overall. Using Burnt Umber oil darkened with a touch of Lamp Black, a pin wash was flowed into the recesses and along the edges of parts to deepen their appearance. Further highlighting of the parts was accomplished by dry brushing them with some silver paint after they had been sealed under a flat coat. Overall, the work was kept to the basics as not a lot was going to be seen of the cockpit through its closed, framed canopy.

Taking shape

Installation of the cockpit and closing the fuselage was as simple as following the instructions. Mating this section to the wing was not as clear cut. Although made to fit this kit, the Alley Cat wing simply did not snap into place, though admittedly it was close. The lower section of the seat mount/armour (part D5) was removed as it interfered with the fit. The edges of the fuselage wing roots needed some filing and thinning, as did the forward tops of the resin wing to get a close fit. Even with this work, putty was needed to fill some minor gaps where the two parts met.

With the mainplanes in place, the rest of model could be assembled, a task made easy by the low parts count. The tail planes were glued in place with a smear of Mr. Surfacer used to ease the join line, and then the rudder was butt joined to the rear of the airframe. Once the canopy glazing had been protected with Eduard's pre-cut masks, it was installed in the closed position. The Mk. XIIA had exhaust glare shields above and behind the exhausts, similar to night fighter Hurricanes, so these were fashioned from .010" sheet plastic. With the bulk of the build accomplished, the model was wiped down with isopropyl alcohol to remove to remove any dust and finger prints in preparation for painting.

But before that, a new prop spinner

Attaching the small bits would normally come next, but first they had to be built, or more precisely one specific part needed building: the propeller. Canadian-built Hurricanes used a Hamilton Standard prop, the same as used on the Catalina flying boat, which was larger than the British standard unit. As a result, the normal Hurricane spinner would not fit over the new hub, which is why many home based RCAF Hurricanes were seen without the part installed. Eventually a home-grown spinner was produced, where the profile differed by being slightly longer and with less curve to its conical shape compared to a British-built Hurricane.

To reproduce this Canadian propeller, the Quickboost Catalina resin part was used. As for the spinner, the kit version was modified. To create the new profile, the part's size was increased with a thick layer of Milliput Fine White Putty. To ensure a secure bond between putty and the plastic part, the latter was notched with a file to give the putty something to grab onto. Once dry, and using photos supplied by the **RT** editor, sanding sticks were used to re-profile the spinner into something approaching the correct 'Canadian' shape. The overall length was increased to 8 mm. Mr. Surfacer dealt with any scratches or nicks in the putty, and when complete the spinner was glued to its kit-supplied base plate and was painted MM Guards Red.

The Quickboost propeller came with a hub, but as this wouldn't be seen under the spinner, it was omitted and blades glued in place with CA. This proved a bit trickier than anticipated, and care was needed to remember which way the prop spun so as not to mount the blades backwards. Oddly enough, when mounted to the airframe, the spinner assembly looked a bit small which made no sense as its size was actually increased.

Painting time

Due to the dissimilar nature of the materials used, plastic and resin, and the bright colours that would follow, the model was primed with Tamiya Fine White Surface Primer. This was decanted from the aerosol can, thinned slightly with Tamiya's own lacquer thinner, and shot through the airbrush. Another benefit of a primer undercoat was that it highlighted any flaws in construction, of which there were a couple. These were addressed by either sanding or filling as needed, and then the painting continued.

The "Bouncer" sported a bright yellow nose, making it look almost like a Bf 109. Using MM Insignia Yellow, the forward section of the plane was sprayed. Once masked, the underside of the fuselage received its colour, MM Sky Type S, which in turn was also masked so that the first of the upper shades, MM Dark Earth (ANA 617) could be applied. To create the soft-edged camouflage pattern, thin rolls of Blu Tack were laid out with masking tape, sealed with liquid mask, filling in the areas to be protected. The pattern was based on the **RT** colour profiles as well as kit painting instructions. After the MM RAF Dark Green had been applied and allowed to dry, the masks were removed and the model given two coats of Alclad Aqua Gloss clear.

The RT contribution

For decals, two sources were used, with the kit providing generic items such as stencils while the IPMS Canada sheet was used for the airplane-specific markings. These latter decals were produced by Canuck Model Products (now sadly no longer in business), and featured perfect registration and rich colour density. Being very thin they conformed to the model's shape well, but could easily be torn if not handled with care. They responded well to Micro Set and Micro Sol, and soon were well embedded in position.

Weathering

A lightly-weathered appearance was envisioned for the model, so after another coat of clear to seal the decals, the same Burnt Umber/Lamp Black oil mix was again used as a pin wash in the panel lines. These oils were left for about an hour until they looked dry, then any excess was wiped with a dry brush or cotton swab, always keeping mind to wipe in the direction of airflow. Any oils that remained gave a pleasing patina to the camouflage. After flat-coating the model, paint chipping was simulated along the leading edges and wing walks with a sponge dipped in silver paint, while a silver Prismacolor pencil was used more strategically on other parts of the airframe such as around access panels.

Final approach

Quickboost also provided a pair of resin exhausts and the additional machine guns. The exhausts were straight replacements for the kit parts, and after being painted Alclad Dark Aluminum were secured in place with white glue. Period photos show the outboard machine guns protruding from the wing leading edge to varying degrees, so to show them off they were glued in place with their tips showing.

With the model sitting on its landing gear, the final bit of weathering ensued. Some rust-coloured pigments were applied to the exhaust stacks while the actual streaks were replicated with a light application of black pigment. A bit of dirt and grime was simulated with Mig European Dust and Doc O'Brien's Grungy Grey. The last item installed was the antenna wire, this being made with smoke-coloured quilting thread secured in place with a couple of drops of CA.

Membership benefits

As the saying goes, membership has its privileges. Over the years, IPMS Canada has produced a number of high quality and unique decal sheets that have allowed us to expand the Canadian content of our display cases. Couple that with some the latest and greatest kits on the market and you have a winning combination. The Airfix Hurricane kit was a very nice kit on its own, featuring quality details and ease of construction. The conversion into a Canadian Mk. XIIA was a simple affair, one which most any modeller could tackle. This was not the first IPMS Canada-inspired build, nor will it be the last.

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- ◆ *The Hawker Hurricane: A Comprehensive Guide*, Second Edition, Modellers Data File 22, SAM Publications, 2013

About the author:

Like most plastic afflicted individuals, Massimo has been building since he was a young boy. He considers himself an omnivorous modeller, building everything from planes to ships, tanks to trucks, although he does has a soft spot for aviation, usually with a maple leaf on it. This may stem from the fact that for the last 30 years he has flown one type of airplane or another, the latest being the Boeing 787. Originally from British Columbia, he now calls Calgary home, along with his wife and daughter.

Decking Out a Kaiten-II

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Some of my favourite things to build are 1:35 scale midget submarines, man-driven torpedoes, and other unique naval vessels. Fortunately, there is quite a good selection of kits available from mainstream manufacturers (Merit, Bronco, Italeri) and smaller companies (Azimut, MikroMir).

For our Easter 2023 Blitz Build over a four-day long weekend, I chose to build MikroMir's 1:35 Kaiten-II Japan Suicide Craft. I had previously built a 1:72 FineMolds Kaiten-I, and I always thought it would be an interesting subject to build a larger version. **(Fig. 1)**.

Kaiten were manned torpedo suicide craft used by the Imperial Japanese Navy in the late stages of World War II. The Kaiten-II was the second major variant created in late 1944, though it never developed beyond the prototype stage. The Kaiten-II was 54' long, 4.4' diameter, weighed 18 tons, and had a 3300 lb warhead.

Building the Kaiten-II

MikroMir is a Ukrainian model company which produces short runs of unique and rare military equipment. Building their kits requires patience and elbow grease, and acceptance that they do not have the same quality and ease-of-building as, say, a Tamiya kit.

(Fig. 2) In 1:35 scale, the Kaiten-II measures 19" in overall length and approximately 1.5" diameter. The grey plastic is soft, and detail is low-to-moderate. Attachment points on the sprues are thick, requiring heavy cutters or saws to separate the parts.

The Kaiten-II kit hull is divided into several long tubular sections with joining collars in between. Each section of the hull is divided into halves. Upon starting construction, it became evident that a lot of sanding would be required to make the joints smooth. **(Fig. 3)**

Blitz Build progress. By the end of **Day 1**, I had most of the hull assembled, apart from the tail section. **(Fig. 4)**

Day 2 was spent attaching the tail section. Most of my time was spent eliminating the prominent 'step' at the joint, filling & smoothing the joint, and re-scribing panel lines.

Day 3 broke the tedium of building a long cylinder. The tail section – fins, rudders, dive planes, and propeller guards – all went together well, though the movable parts had to be carefully thinned to a more-scale thickness. The contra-rotating propellers also had very thick edges, so time was spent sanding all propeller blades down to a knife-edge before assembly. **(Fig. 5)**

The upper and lower hatches received hinge detail (strip styrene) and improved handles (styrene rod). **(Fig. 6)**

The low bulwark - perimeter barrier - around the upper hatch was formed from the kit's included thin brass parts, though annealing (heating with a butane torch then quenching with water) was required to make the metal easier to shape **(Fig. 7)**. I attached the bulwark to the hull using thick rubber-infused CA, and its long working time let me shape it to resemble a weld bead (using a sharp toothpick). After assembly, I primed the brass parts with Tamiya Metal Primer.

I replaced the kit periscope with one that I scratch-built from various sizes of telescopic metal tubing and strip styrene. **(Fig. 8)**

Painting

After the final assembly was complete, I arrived at the painting stage. Operational Kaiten (all variants) were painted black overall, but training craft (like this one) had white upper surfaces. I mixed a few monochromatic shades of Mr. Finishing Surfacer (MFS) 1500 (white, black, and two shades of grey) for airbrushing, thinned with Mr. Color Leveling Thinner. MFS 1500 is my 'go-to' primer, though in this case the white and black primers were also the final paint colours. They dry to a smooth, tough, satin finish. **(Fig. 9)**

I airbrushed the white upper surfaces first, then masked along panel edges. Then I airbrushed the black and allowed it to dry. **(Fig. 10)**

The propellers were primed in MFS black, and then hand-painted with AK True Metal "Old Bronze." I set them aside for later installation. **(Fig. 11)**

Weathering

To weather the black hull, I first used an airbrush to randomly post-shade sections with MFS 1500 medium grey, and then I applied light grey and white oil paint washes to accentuate details. To weather the white upper sections, I applied washes of oil paints – dark brown for grime, Burnt Sienna for surface rust – as well as splattering random patches of colour. **(Figs. 12 - 15)**

And so ended the 'blitz build' of the Kaiten-II vessel itself, which was started & finished within the allotted four-day timeframe. For all of the shortcomings of short-run kits, the Kaiten-II was a relatively straightforward build (albeit with a lot of sanding and smoothing taking place) and I was rewarded with a fine-looking model which joins my growing collection of unique 1:35 naval vessels.

Planning the base

The 'base' that was included with the Kaiten-II kit was a pitifully small rectangle of plastic with two small posts. It was questionable if it would even support the assembled Kaiten-II, and it certainly would not look good doing so.

I thought back to my 1:72 Kaiten-I on the deck of an IJN ferrying submarine, and I began planning to do something similar in 1:35 scale (albeit with greater detail). I would use the FineMolds kit box art as the inspiration for the base. **(Fig. 16)**

Per the box art, my vision had the Kaiten-II tied down in cradles on the top deck of a ferrying submarine, which would have the following features:

- a raised deck with an 'overhang' side section
- stained & weathered teak wood deck planking
- four metal support cradles
- a ventral crew access tube coming up through the deck
- four tie-down assemblies and numerous deck tie-down anchor plates

Building the Deck

I used a thin wooden plank - obtained from a craft shop - as the basic platform of the ferrying submarine's top deck. It would be glued atop a 2x4" wood block to raise the height of the deck.

On the wooden plank I laid out the contours of the overhang side section below the deck, and then roughly cut the edge to shape with a scroll saw. Afterwards I shaped the leading and trailing edges of the overhang section using a wood file and sandpaper **(Fig. 17)**. I fabricated a wide outer retaining edge of the deck using various sizes and shapes of strip styrene, and then epoxied it in place. **(Fig. 18)**

Deck Planking

The teak wood deck planking was replicated using 3/32" x 1/4" basswood, glued in place with carpentry glue and then clamped for several days to dry thoroughly. Afterwards, I wiped on teak oil with a paper towel to give a staining effect. Applying light films of teak oil brought out the wonderfully varied colours and grains of the basswood planks. (Fig. 19)

Cradles

I worked closely with my friendly neighbourhood 3D designer/fabricator – Mr. Paul Bornn – to create the cradles and other parts I needed. After smoothing and priming, the cradles were airbrushed in various shades of iron, and then rust effects were applied using Ammo by Mig 'U-Rust' products. (Fig. 20)

Anchor Plates

With the cradles done, I began positioning the Kaiten-II in its cradles on the deck. A collection of Paul's 3D-printed anchor plates was created so the tie-downs could be attached to the deck; these were placed along the deck edge and centreline. The centres of the anchor plates were hollowed out with a small cutting ball in a motor tool, and a single brass wire rail was fitted within each. (Fig. 21)

Raising the Deck

With most of the top deck designed and underway, it was time to raise the bar... or rather, the deck... so I could create the sides of the submarine hull. It started by placing a 2x4" wood block beneath the top deck platform. (Fig. 22)

Hull Sides

The sides of the submarine hull have an array of oval 'limber holes' (indicated) to allow quicker flooding when diving (Fig. 23).

Using thin sheet styrene for the side of the hull, I laid out the limber holes, then cut them out and shaped them... all 51 of them. (Fig. 24 - 25)

With the hull side complete, I laid out and created ribs - which support the hull skin from beneath - using thin sheet styrene. With all the parts ready, I glued the hull side 'skin' and 'ribs' in place using hot glue. (Fig. 26)

To create ripples in the thin hull 'skin' - a common effect on submarine hulls called "oil canning" - I applied gentle heat to skin sections between the ribs, carefully using a small butane hot air blower (to soften the plastic) and then pushed the plastic inwards slightly with a curved wooden handle. (Fig. 27 - 29) Lastly, I puttied and smoothed the hull skin, and then airbrushed it with MFS 1500 Grey.

Weathering effects were applied to the metal parts of the hull using 'splatter' spray templates with various shades of grey and tan paints, and rust pin washes were applied to the anchor plates. I also weathered the deck planking – the stained teak looked far too pristine – by splattering "Neutral Wash" and "Cold Grey Wash" enamel washes from Mig Productions.

Ventral Access Tube

A ventral access tube allowed the single crew member (pilot) to enter the Kaiten-II from inside the ferrying submarine. The watertight access tube went through the top deck, and sealed against the bottom of the Kaiten directly below the ventral hatch. A 3D-printed, 1" dia. hollow access tube was created to mate against the bottom of the Kaiten-II. It was later painted black and given light surface rust effects. (Fig. 30)

With the Kaiten-II, cradles, and access tube ready for permanent placement, everything was glued to the deck.

Tying it all Together

The 18-ton Kaiten-II had to be strongly restrained to ensure it did not move during ferrying operations. The cradles were bolted to the deck, and heavy cable tie-downs were used to secure the Kaiten-II in the cradles. I designed and built the four tie-down assemblies as per the Kaiten-I box art: 3D-designed rigging screws & shackles, cables made from stretchy beading cord, wooden blocks made from basswood, chain links, and a LOT of patience. (Fig. 31)

The Other (missing) Kaiten

Kaiten were ferried in pairs on the deck of a submarine, meaning that there would be two sets of cradles, two ventral access tubes on the deck. Since I only built one Kaiten-II vessel, to complete the scene I installed the other (empty) set of cradles and another ventral access tube (with interior). **(Fig. 32)**

Kaiten-II Crew

To complete the scene, I added AeroBonus (by Aires) 1:35 figures which were designed for this Kaiten-II kit; a sailor and an officer. The sailor (Kaiten-II pilot) is climbing out of the open access tube, observing the officer toasting the Kaiten-II.

The sailor figure was used straight from the package - albeit with some minor surgeries to pose him differently. Care was taken to paint his uniform patches and headband properly. The officer figure received a different head and hands (Hornet) for more realism and a better pose. **(Fig. 33)**

Wrapping It Up

This 'blitz build' project wrapped up a few months after it began. The project took on a life of its own after I decided to build a 1:35 section of a ferrying submarine deck as a base. However, the result (and satisfaction) were well worth the time and effort. I would like to give a huge shout out to my friend and 3D design guru, Mr. Paul Bornn, for working with me to create some of the finer detail parts of this project. To see the full photo album of this build, please visit the Google Photos album:

photos.app.goo.gl/Fne2qbh1ctbomKn58

About the author:

Glenn Cauley, living just outside Ottawa, Ontario, is an IT Business Analyst in the healthcare field. He started modelling at a very early age, built off and on for many years, and then returned to the hobby in 2005 after a long absence. He became President of IPMS Ottawa in 2009 and remains in that role to this day. Glenn has a penchant for submarine models - though he builds anything that catches his interest, in any scale - and he maintains a modelling blog site at gc-scalemodels.ca

VR-1D:

Ride of the (two-seat) Valkyries

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Introduction

Big in Japan but less well-known in the West, the subject of this build is the VF-1 Valkyrie, which was first featured in the early 1980's Japanese anime anthology television series, *Macross*. A design that was equally at home in the atmosphere or in space, the 'VF' stands for 'Variable Fighter,' as the airframe can transition between three different functional forms. They are: the self-explanatory 'Fighter'; a mid form which goes by the curious name of 'Gerwalk'; and finally a Japanese favourite, the 'Batteroid' giant robot figure. All three of these have been released in kit form by Hasegawa, but this build will concentrate on the pure fighter version of the VF-1.

Each successive *Macross* storyline introduces a new fighter design, the latest being the VF-31J Siegfried from 2016's *Macross Delta*. Hasegawa has kitted many of the different designs, most in 1:72 but a few (VF-1 standard/Strike Valkyries, plus the VF-19) have been released in 1:48 scale, and these make very impressive models once complete.

The kit and the conversion

This build is a conversion of Hasegawa's VF-1D two-seat trainer, (**Fig. 1**) into a photo reconnaissance (PR) machine, designated as a VR-1D. Modifications include a new PR pod, adding armament and an additional sensor, plus a low-vis alternative to the trainer's eye-watering white and bright orange paint scheme.

To complicate things further my kit was bought second-hand. It had a minimum of previous construction started, but of a kind to cause me a headache or two, which will be discussed later. This is all part of our great modelling hobby, I hear you cry, even if sometimes it is nicer to do without some of the challenges.

Building begins in the cockpit

As is traditional, even with anime kits, construction begins in the cockpit. This comprises a combined tub and nose wheel bay, instrument panels and two seats. The latter may be accurate representations of the originals in the show, but they more resemble reclining armchairs than ejection seats (although I'm not sure exactly how wise it would be to pull the ejection handle in the depths of space anyway) so I replaced both with F/A-18 resin alternatives from Quickboost. Once the casting blocks are removed from the resin parts and slots cut in their bases to locate them on the cockpit floor they can be added to the tub. They need a check against the canopy interior to ensure there is no issue with the seat heights interfering with the clear parts. (**Fig. 2**)

Parts from the spares box filled in spaces and a splash of colour is provided by the instrument panel decals. No mention in the instructions is made of nose weight being required, but as insurance I added a little Liquid Gravity, about five grams or so, before joining the nose halves together.

Wings and central fuselage

Next was the centre fuselage and wing construction. The kit features a functioning swing-wing mechanism, but I elected to fix them in the forward position to aid in adding the external stores.

The problem I alluded to earlier was the previous kit owner's addition of magnets into the lower wing halves. Removing them would have been very hard work, so I left them in place and found a solution to the problem of adding weapon pylons, which I'll detail later.

The kit's swing-wing mechanism will allow the wings to sweep slightly too far forward. To guard against this happening I laid the assembly over the marking instructions' plan view and adjusted the wing leading edges to the view before adding superglue to fix the wings in the correct position. **(Fig. 3)**

The kit supplies a small photo-etch detail fret which includes a baffle for masking off the wings' swing mechanism; once in place the mid-fuselage halves can be joined. When the tail unit is added later this area is virtually inaccessible, so painting this, along with the booster unit under the tail is advisable at this stage. **(Fig. 4 & 5)**

On the wings the four clear leading edge lights are oversized and the wingtip lights are undersized. To address this I glued clear sprue pieces on the wing tips and sanded them to shape, while the leading edge kit parts were added and filed down to match the wing profile before being polished clear again.

As mentioned, the magnets mounted in the wings, placed there by the kit's first owner, had eradicated the locations for the pylons. My solution was to snip off the existing mounting pins on the pylons, and then add a small length of brass rod as far aft as possible on each pylon. Six new location holes were then drilled, just outside the diameter of the magnets, replacing the missing locations. **(Fig. 6)**

Locating the tails

Adding the tails also proved a test of ingenuity, as their locating and alignment aids were practically non-existent, consisting of two tiny pips per tail and equally miniscule indents in the upper fuselage. A front elevation drawing and the markings guide gave me both the desired tail angles and I calculated a 39 mm scaled dimension between the two fins **(Fig. 7 and 8)**. I drew the angles out on a 3" x 5" index card, with the base width being the measured distance between the tail mounts. The top of the fuselage was taped to a cutting mat and the tails were glued in place using the guide to check their angles and a ruler to measure and maintain the 39 mm dimension across the top of the fins as the adhesive set. **(Fig. 9)** This was a lot of work but the first thing you'd notice on the finished model would be two tails sitting at different angles, so it was worth the time and effort for me. Remember to hang onto the card guide, as it will come in handy for your next Valkyrie build!

In step 9 two sets of K1/K2 parts form channels which attach to the K10 parts. If assembled with their mating faces together the channels will angle down. As both the tail and the gun or the PR pod rest on these parts, they too will sit at odd angles. Ignoring the kit instructions, I added the K10 parts to the underside of the fuselage first, then sleeved the combined K1 and K2 parts over them using a strip of plastic to prise and keep the assemblies slightly apart as the adhesive set. **(Fig. 10)** The channels now run parallel to the fuselage horizontal centreline and the two units that rest on them will sit in the correct positions.

Additional armament and engine pod construction

The kit comes with a GU-11 gun pod and a twin ventral cannon turret as armament, but no underwing stores are supplied. However, these can be found in Hasegawa's 'VF-1 Valkyrie Weapons Set'.

For this build I also added Storm Shadows (air-launched cruise missiles used on real-world Tornados and Typhoons) from Hasegawa's 'Europe Aircraft Weapons Set' and ASM-2's from their 'JASDF Aircraft Weapons 1 set'. All four missiles were modified to fit the VF-1 pylons and the kit's gun pod was replaced on the fuselage centreline by an EADS GAF Telelens Recce pod by CMK. Two RMS-1 pylons with sway braces (which was fun to scratch build in this scale) were added. These would occupy the wing outer pylon positions; all the various stores and pylons were painted and set aside for adding later in the build.

Intakes and the nose undercarriage are assembled next. I used the kit nose wheels but the undersized main wheels were replaced by items from Reskit intended for the JASDF's Mitsubishi F-1; with both being Japanese subjects it seemed appropriate to me. Place the wheels on their spindles first before adding the undercarriage bay doors as the latter obscure the wheels once in position.

The two engine pods put together in step 13 are complex assemblies. Once completed, locating them on the intakes at the correct angles involved considerably thinning the plates aft of the wings from the underside and re-angling the slots in the intakes themselves. The markings instructions' side views were used as a guide to the pods' correct positions.

The weak attachment points used on the tails were also present on the ventral fins attached to each pod so I resorted to using card guides again. I cut 45-degree angled edges into two pieces of card and taped them to the sides of a 'Mr. Cap Opener' tool, which was both the right width to hold the fins in place and could sit unsupported on its edge on a flat surface. When placed against the pods, this provided support for the fins as they were glued in position and ensured both sat at the same angle while the glue dried. (**Fig. 11**)

The PR pod and the ventral turret were test-fitted to the underside of the airframe. (**Fig. 12**) As a result of this test I thought the pod sat too far back so I drilled another location hole further aft in the pod to move it forward on the pylon.

Adding a new sensor

The final modification required was an additional sensor, which was added just ahead of the cockpit canopy. A resin F-14A/B Tomcat Chinpod - early sensor (Quickboost QB 72 565) was used, with the lower section cut away and shaped to form a fairing (**Fig. 13**). Once fixed in position, I applied some Deluxe Materials 'Perfect Plastic Putty,' which blended the sensor onto the radome surface. However, with 20:20 hindsight it should have been located further forward to clear more of the anti-glare panel. With all the construction steps complete I could move on to painting and adding the markings.

painting

The basic trainer camouflage pattern was followed, but using Mr. Hobby paints I substituted C376 'JASDF Radome Gray' for the off-white overall colour, and a roughly 50:50 mixture of H334 'Barley Grey BS4800' and H335 'Medium Sea Grey BS381C' replaced the orange panels. A mix of 85% H11 'Flat White' and 15% H315 'Grey FS16440' was applied to the radome and the nose cones of the Storm Shadows. To provide a touch of colour to the overall grey finish the trainer's bright orange shade (70% H14 'Orange' and 30% H4 'Yellow') was added to the wing tips, tail fins, forward sections of the ventral fins and the cover plate on the gun turret. (**Fig. 14 and 15**)

markings

I used the kit's U.N. Spacy roundels and codes (**Fig. 11**), but added a winged Pegasus to the outer tail surfaces; this was cut out of a larger design on a spare F-14B decal sheet. Much to my surprise it was a perfect fit on the Valkyrie's central tail panels! (**Fig. 12**) The 'Instructor' and 'Pupil' names from the kit decals were replaced on the canopy framing with pilot names from a single-seater that provided three marking options. The decals were sealed with a gloss clear coat; once dry the panel lines were picked out with thinned Winsor and Newton's 'Payne's Gray' oil paint. A finishing coat of Mr. Hobby H102 Semi-Gloss clear was applied, and adding the weapon loads under the wings and fuselage completed the build.

conclusion

This was my third completed VF-1 so it's a good time to consider making another of the variable fighter designs. The VF-31J Siegfried, with its forward-swept wings, or the carrier-based VF-0S Phoenix featured in *Macross Zero* are possibilities, while the elegant VF-25F Messiah which graces the *Macross Frontier* series is a third option. None of these have so far been released in my preferred scale of 1:48, so if Hasegawa does release them they can rest assured that I will be first in line to purchase them at my local hobby shop!

Kit and conversion parts used:

VF-1D Valkyrie Hasegawa 65780

F/A-18 ejector seat Quickboost 72 126 (two used as it's a two-seater)

Europe Aircraft Weapons Set Hasegawa 35115 (for the Storm Shadow missiles)

JASDF Aircraft Weapons 1 Set Hasegawa 35010 (for the ASM-2 missiles)

VF-1 Valkyrie Weapons Set Hasegawa 65706 (for the six weapons pylons)

Mitsubishi F-1/T-2 resin wheels Reskit 72-0055 (for the main wheels)

F-14A Tomcat IRST 'Early' resin sensor Quickboost QB 72 565

References

SB Creative Corp., *Variable Fighter Master File VF-1 Valkyrie: SDF-1 Macross VF-1 Squadrons*, Soft Bank Publishing, 2014

On page 90 of this publication there is an illustration of the VR-1D variant featuring a different and much bigger PR pod under the fuselage compared with the one I used on my model. Perhaps fuel for a scratch building exercise later?

There is an excellent VR-1D build at this site: rocketpunch.biz/completed-hasegawa-72-vr1d-valkyrie/

Giving credit where credit is due, this article supplied me with ideas for armament, the additional sensor and the final paint scheme. I did put my own spin on various aspects but this online build was my starting point and I'm happy to acknowledge it and suggest checking out this website. It has lots of other interesting builds and is well worth investigating.

About the author:

Peter Shanley was born and still lives in Stockport which is about eight miles south of Manchester in the north of England. He is a 3D designer and has worked on site at Bombardier in Montreal and also at Embraer in Brazil and Sukhoi in Moscow. After a long hiatus he returned to modelling around ten years ago and his principal interests, aside from trying to not glue all his fingers together, are Japanese aviation and anime subjects, especially those related to the Macross animation series. Currently he is contemplating retirement so he can spend more time with and try to reduce the size of his much-too-large collection of kits.

An introduction to Macross Box Top Artwork

**Peter Shanley,
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This is an appreciation of the wonderful artwork created by Hidetaka Tenjin for Hasegawa's series of Macross kits, his box top images are a highlight of each new kit release. While great box top art perhaps can't persuade you to purchase a kit you really don't want, I'm fairly sure that bad artwork can put you off a kit you might have been wavering over adding to the stash. In the UK where I hail from, the most celebrated artist in this field is Roy Cross, whose classic work for Airfix these days appears in hardback editions. The artwork shown here will be less well-known but is no less vital and dynamic, providing the look that your finished model should strive to emulate.

In broadcast order, the VF-1A Valkyrie was the first to appear. But a prequel to the original series revealed that the very first 'variable fighter' was in fact the VF-0A Phoenix, which bears more than a passing resemblance to a CF-18 Hornet. The design was carrier-based and flown in the atmosphere only.

The dogfight opponent for the 'Zero' (which is a good name for a fighter, right?) is the sinister SV-51. It is a product of the unlikely combination of design teams at Dornier, Sukhoi and Israel Aircraft Industries.

Chronologically the VF-1A Valkyrie came next, seen here in the colours of the 'Sonic birds' squadron and about to launch from the deck of the carrier 'Prometheus' watched by the deck handling crew.

Massive armament and booster pack additions leads us to the VF-1S/A Strike Valkyrie which can venture into space from the end of an extended launch arm as in this illustration for the 1:48 kit release.

Serving as a trainer with the 'New Edwards Test Pilot School' this VF-11D two seater features in 'Macross Plus'.

This VF-19A Excalibur of SVF-569 is seen overflying a busy carrier deck; note the pair of VF-11 single-seaters providing low air cover below.

Perhaps the most elegant of all the 'VF' designs is Frontier's VF-25F/S Messiah, seen here in its smart 'New United Nations' scheme.

Leading a flight of VF-25's low over the ocean of an alien world is this RVF-25 with the AWACS dish mounted on the upper fuselage.

From 2016's *Macross Delta* (note to the animators - surely it's time for a new series?) is the newest variable fighter, the impressive wings swept-forward VF-31J Siegfried.

And not to be outdone by the RVF-25 there's the VF-31E with, if anything, an even bigger dish.

Conclusion

Most of the kits portrayed here are 1:72 but a few are available in 1:48, due to the size of the airframes ('spaceframes', perhaps?) even in the smaller scale the finished models are around the same overall size as a medium-sized 1:48 WWII fighter. These stunning pieces of box top artwork represent some interesting and different designs, any of which would make eye-catching additions to any club display or model contest.

DH.88 COMET

G-ASCR

Norm Sheppard,
C #3167
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In 1933, Sir MacPherson Robertson proposed an air race to take place between Mildenhall, England and Melbourne, Australia. de Havilland decided that they would design and construct a special aircraft specifically to win that race, and so the DH.88 Comet was born. It was to be a low wing twin engine monoplane of mainly wood construction. Three were ordered by various people at the bargain price of 5,000 Pounds Sterling, well below the cost to produce them. de Havilland having decided to take the loss in exchange for the exposure that would ensue if they won the race. Construction began in March of 1934 and was completed in September. The MacRobertson Air Race would start on October 20th and the red Comet, named Grosvenor House, won easily. After the race, two more Comets were built making a total of five aircraft. Only two originals of these beautiful examples of 1930's design exist today, the airworthy red race winner G-ACSS and G-ACSP Black Magic which is currently being restored to flying condition. A couple of airworthy replicas have been built as well.

Reference

: de Havilland, A Pictorial Tribute by Gordon Bain, 1992. ISBN 1 85648 243 X

The Kit

When KoPro introduced their new de Havilland Comet model a few years back, I decided to order a few of them since they were not too pricey. I had built a Frog Grosvenor House kit back in 1968 and an Airfix Black Magic in 2019, so I wanted to build this one as the green Comet, G-ACSR.

The kit consists of two light grey sprues and a small clear one with the canopy and landing light lens. It includes a nice set of Peewit canopy masks, a decal sheet, and colour instruction booklet. The parts are well-formed with nice engraved panel lines and no flash. There are very few locating lugs but the parts fit is better than I expected for a limited-run kit.

(Fig. 1-2)

There is a fairly detailed interior in this kit, which I will describe in a later article. It consists of as many parts as the entire Airfix Comet kit!

Construction

I assembled the completed interior into the left fuselage and checked for proper fit of the halves. Tamiya Extra Thin Cement held everything together. I added the tail planes after test fitting them. (Fig. 3 - 4)

After assembling the wing halves, I decided to strengthen the structure by inserting a wood dowel spar through the fuselage. Careful measurements are needed to locate the holes and insure good alignment. I use a digital Vernier for that operation. I marked the hole positions on the fuselage and inserted the dowel after drilling. After marking the wings and drilling them, the wings were cemented in place and allowed to dry. (Fig. 5 - 8)

The engine nacelles were next on the list. I always like to have moveable propellers on my models and this kit presented a challenge. The hubs had a small stub on them and are intended to be glued in place so I figured out how to fix that issue. After cutting off a slice of a sprue, I glued one on each hub which had been shortened to match the thickness of the

nacelle plastic. The nacelle halves then capture the prop hub and allow it to turn. Fixed propellers always seem to get broken over time and can't be posed for photography. (Fig. 9 - 11)

The landing gear legs were added to the nacelles and after a bit of sanding for a correct fit, they were cemented in place. The tail skid was then attached and a bit of filler was required at the nose joint. The model was ready for primer. (Fig. 12)

Painting

A coat of Alclad 2 White primer/microfiller helped bring out a few imperfections (Fig. 13) that were looked after and then I airbrushed a few coats of Scale Finishes Racing Green, lightened with a bit of white. At the same time, the canopy framework was painted using the very effective Peewit masks that came in the kit. In my opinion, every model kit should include masks like this. (Fig. 14)

Markings

Two coats of Future Clear floor finish gave a nice gloss base for the decals, which were very thin and were floated into position with water. Some folks say that the Green Comet had gold lettering, but the kit decals are silver. I went with the kit colour, regardless. They turned out quite nicely, in my mind. (Fig. 15)

Final Construction and Finishing

The kit pitot tube was not very accurate, the one on the real aircraft is tapered into the wing while the kit part is not. I decided to make my own from stretched sprue, to better mimic the actual item. (Fig. 16 - 18)

The kit exhaust pipes were also too simplified for my taste (Fig. 19), so I scratchbuilt a pair from styrene rod, which I drilled out.

The nacelles were drilled and the new pipes glued in place. (Fig. 20 - 21)

The finished model was given a semi-gloss coat of Testor's Acryl, as the real Comets were not high gloss as I had always thought. I recently saw an advertisement from the paint supplier for the actual Comets, and they clearly had a satin finish.

Conclusion

I now had a Green Comet to display with the red one that I built 53 years ago and the more recent Black Magic by Airfix. The KoPro kit is not for beginners, but makes a very nice- looking replica of the wooden racer built by de Havilland in the 1930's.

About the author:

Norm Sheppard was born in Ajax, ON in 1954, and lived in Oshawa until moving to Sackville, NB in 2002. He is a licensed motorcycle mechanic, machinist and millwright, now retired. He began modelling at age six, and one of his early recollections is a purple plastic Aurora Me 109. He has been investigating and protecting the sites of some WW II training crashes in the Maritimes with local historian Daniel Goguen. Norm is a Director of the Turnbull NB Chapter of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society, looking after the Don McClure Aviation Gallery at the Greater Moncton Romeo LeBlanc International Airport.

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