

2026 Gainesville-Ocala Contest stories and pictures - ICE AGE KIT BASH

Herbie Goes Down Under and Meets Mad Max by Joe Swails

Among the ice tribes of the southern continent, there is an old road story told in broken camps and wind-cut shelters. They say when the world froze and the engines of giants cracked and died, a smaller thing endured. Australia, once burned by sun and madness, became a land of white horizons and screaming storms. It was in this age that the Road Warrior still walked the ice. 'Mad' Max Rockatansky, last of the old lawmen, is remembered not as a king or warlord, but as a wanderer who refused to stop moving. Where others waited for warmth or death, Mad Max followed the roads that no longer existed.

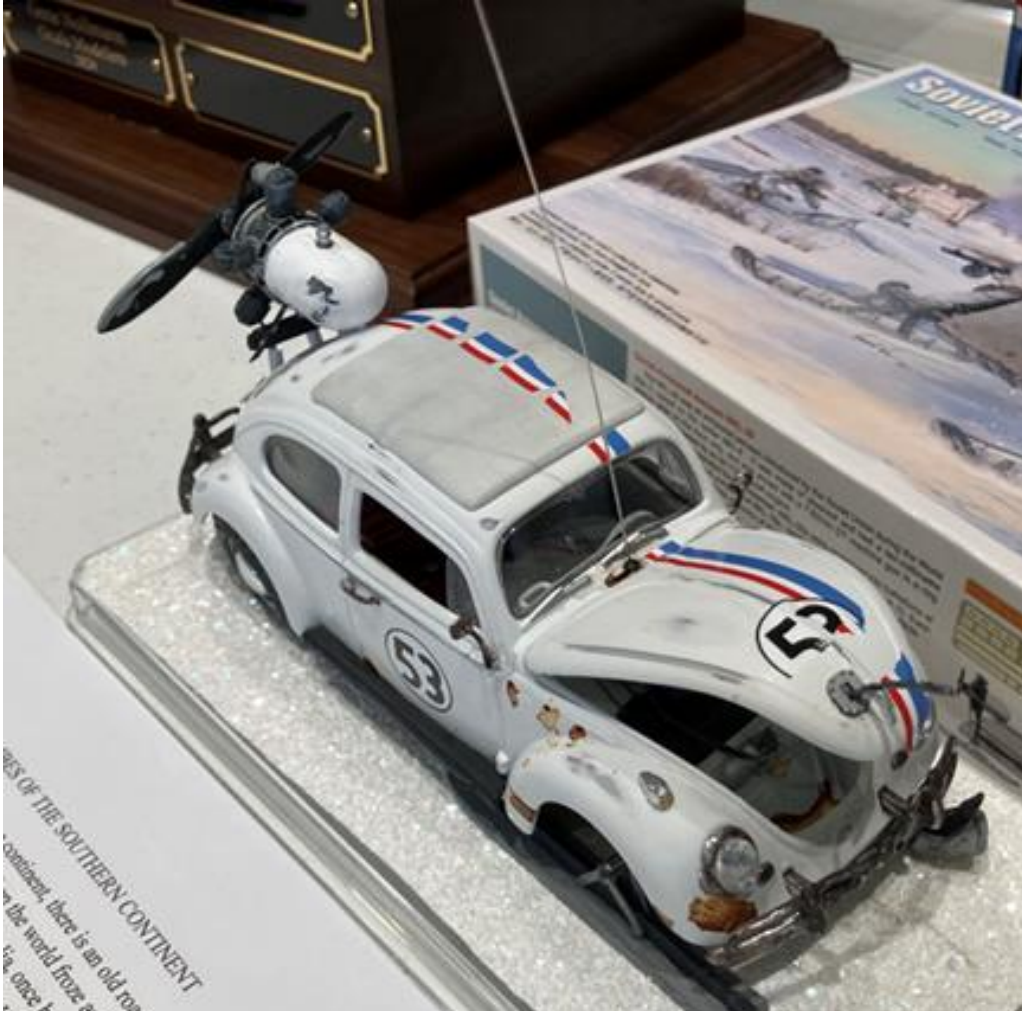
The car he drove was not built for war — at least not at first. Before the ice age, before the fuel wars ended the world the first time, there was a small Volkswagen that crossed nations and oceans as if guided by will alone. The elders say the car had once loved humans, had once raced, laughed, and disobeyed its owners to do what it believed was right. When the seas turned hostile and shipping lanes failed, the Beetle was lost on a frozen crossing to the southern lands. Ice claimed the ship, but not the car. Decades later, Max found it half-buried in a glacier, its paint ghosted to a dull white, metal ringing strangely when struck — as if it remembered things the world had forgotten.

Max tore out its old dead heart and gave it a new one. He mounted an old, but working, rotary aircraft engine where newer motors would never survive, its propeller exposed to the sky like a warning. The wind itself became fuel, hurling the car across ice flats where wheels meant nothing. The front tires were removed and replaced with welded skis, allowing the Beetle to glide and carve like an animal born to snow. Steering came not from grip, but from balance and instinct — a skill Max had already mastered long ago. Instead of roaring, the little car howled, its propeller chopping the frozen air, carrying the sound of movement across miles of white silence.

And yet still, the Beetle chose when to live. Ice runners swear it starts without fuel or flame, holds course in storms that blind men, and has pulled Max free when larger machines locked solid and froze where they stood. Some say it remembers being more than metal. Others say it simply refuses to die. In the end, the distinction no longer matters. In a frozen world of broken titans and silent roads, the smallest machine became a legend — carrying the last road warrior onward, proving that survival belongs not to the strongest, but to what can change and endure.



Herbie Goes Down Under and Meets Mad Max





Kawasaki



Kawasaki MEDI-CAT Two One Ought Ought

by Gene Nollmann

It had been quietly rumored that when Panasonic and Universal Studios sat down to hammer a buy-out, Panasonic requested to see Universal's 500 year plan – the Japanese delegates were serious (and in fact were prepared to reveal their own plan) but Universal had to defer that discussion to a later time.

No doubt a similar exchange developed within the license negotiations between the Eurocopter Consortium and Kawasaki Heavy Industries for the manufacturing rights to the EC 145 helicopter (aka Kawasaki's BK 117). Kawasaki's intent was to supply the lucrative Japanese and Asian markets (60% of the world?). The license agreement, presented in the confusion of a typical Japanese document written in a mix of Kanji, Hiragana, Katakana, and Romanji, successfully hid Kawasaki's agenda.

The tactic worked and Kawasaki gained rights to manufacture not only the helicopter, but additionally the right to manufacture, exclusively, any of the components singly. Oh yes, their 500 year plan anticipated the return of a widespread Ice Age and consequently the world wide need for vehicles designed to operate in a sub-zero environment.

Among other endeavors, Kawasaki was keen to market a "snow-cat" utilizing components of the BK 117 cabin and other interior elements. Their engineers resurrected the plans of an old German Panther chassis, reinterpreting the materials by utilizing computer generated matrices of carbon and titanium fibers bonded at interstitial overlaps while avoiding solid epoxy fillers resulting in extreme weight saving, high strength and sub-zero durability. Weight was a special concern to traverse unseen thin ice situations. The individual track element contact area was increased 200% to better distribute weight.



Kawasaki

Power was provided by application of some of Toyota's secret hybrid technology that brought them success in the 24 hours of Le Mans. Within the chassis was placed a hydrogen/electric motor supplemented by electric solar cells on the roof. The hydrogen was derived by electrolysis while on the go. Range was not significantly restricted.

In the Medi-Cat 2100, avionic style radars were utilized; short range forward scanning in the nose and a full horizon sweep mounted above.

The Medi-Cat was designed to respond quickly to thermal urgencies – avoidance of frost-bite being extremely time sensitive.

As anticipated, world-wide demand for the Medi-Cat quickly mushroomed into back-order waits of from 3 to 4 years – a situation which curtailed temporarily plans to develop on the same cabin/chassis combo variants of a taxis, a small bus-cat, and a utility supply feeder connecting small plane shipments to isolated regional markets. Last of all, plans were progressing on a luxury Suburban Utility Cat – all of Kawasaki were quite excited about this project – you should have seen the concept studies! And yes – that is all well within their 500 year plan!





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“Rootin’ Tootin’ Xi-Putin” by Doug Spinney

The year is 2026, and the world is business as usual. Economic upheaval, countries fighting countries, fluctuating fuel prices, everything is just a mess. In the mean time, long range sensors from NASA are tracking what appears to be an extremely large asteroid, approximately a fourth the size of the moon entering our solar system. Projections indicate that this asteroid will pass between the Earth and our moon, causing flooding rains and flooding high tides. However, as the asteroid gets closer to Earth it begins to break up into equal, oval shaped objects each about 20 miles in diameter. Hundreds of thousand of them. WE ARE BEING INVADED [sound bite = dun, dun, dun]. Wide spread panic sets in, people all over the world are beginning to flood old air raid shelters across the globe. And since this is global, fighting between countries stops and the world is banning together as one to attempt to fight off this menace.

As these alien ships begin to land, it becomes apparent that they are after the one resource that could spell the doom of the human race. THEY ARE AFTER OUR WOMEN [sound bite – people screaming]. Some husbands begin volunteering their wives. But in all this chaos, the world military's are banding together to fend off this invasion, but to no avail. It only takes a few weeks for the women of the world to be loaded on alien transport ships and whisked away to an alien world, never to be seen again. Except, a few days later our alien invaders returned, they brought back the women that were volunteered by their husbands. [sound bite, men screaming NO, NO]. And to make sure the human race didn't come looking for the rest of the women, the aliens bombed the world into the “Ice Age”. Now remember, the women that were returned and the women that escaped to air raid shelters across the globe are now the future of mankind.

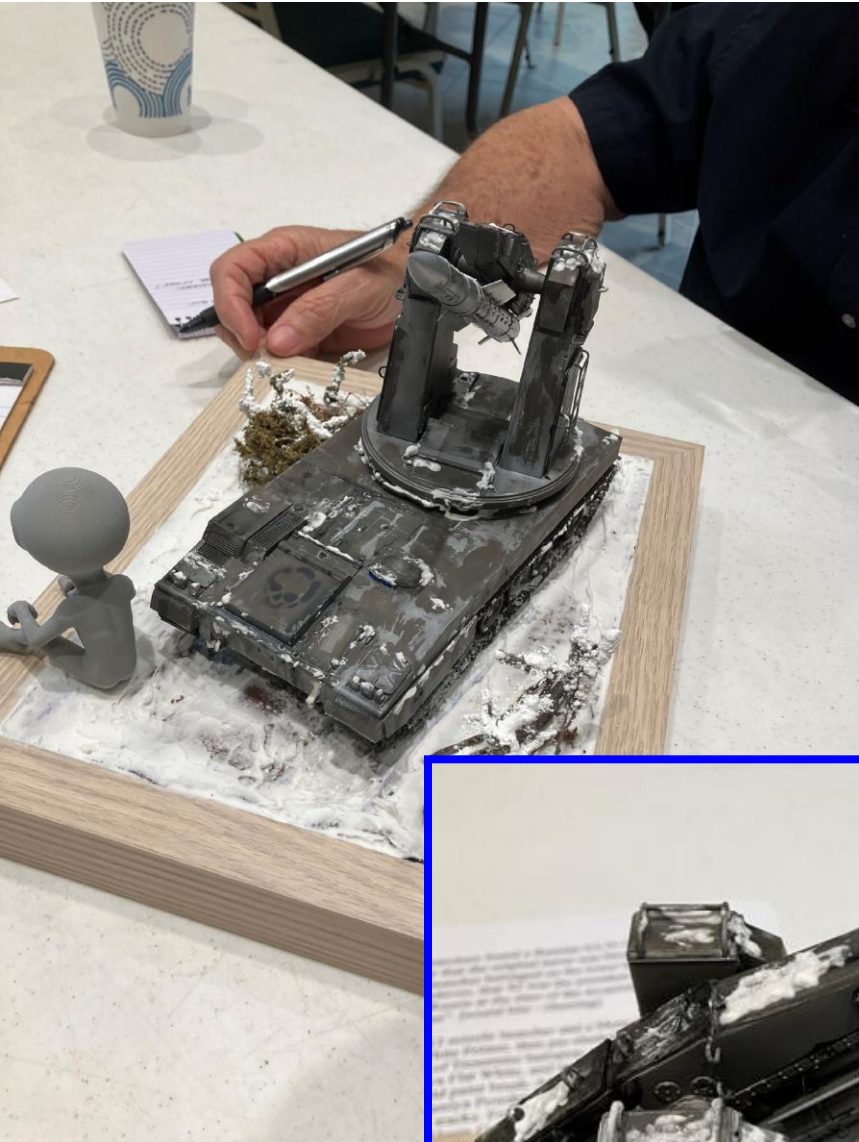


Fast forward two thousand years to 4026, the world is still a big ice globe, but we have managed to repopulate the planet. Archaeologists from 4026 are beginning to unearth old military equipment used in the great purge. Several of these archaeologists uncover an old Chinese PLZ05 Self Propelled Howitzer, but without the howitzer, it seems that the turret was blown off. But next to the PLZ05 researchers found a Russian SA-N-12 missile launcher. Not having a clue that the original turret was blown off, they presumed that the missile launcher belonged on the lower hull of the PLZ05. They also new, from old archives, that XI was the president of China and Putan was the president of Russia at the time of the invasion. So I give you the “Rootin’ Tootin’ Xi-Putan”. [sound bite – people cheering]

Made from a Takom SA-N-12 missile launcher and a Meng Chinese PLZ05 Self Propelled Howizer. Both painted with Tamiya White Primer, then pre-shaded with Tamiya Flat Black. Then a light coat of Tamiya Light Grey. Followed by two light coats of Tresemme hairspray, then painted them with Tamiya Flat White, and removed a good portion of the white with water and an old paint brush. Additional weathering was with oils, and additional snow is Tamiya Powder Snow Effect and Hydrated Lime. The tracks are R-Model metal tracks. For the Missile Launcher and the PLZ the handles were made from .73mm Galvanized Steel Wire.

“Rootin’ Tootin’ Xi-Putin” by Doug Spinney

The diorama was made with pink insulation, primed black, and painted Hobby Lobby Acrylic Earth Brown. Over that I used a product called Golden Light Molding Paste, a bit of dead foliage, and sticks from driftwood that my wife has no idea that I took. [sound bite – wife, “You better not have”]. The diorama is mounted in a picture frame also from Hobby Lobby.



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Ice World—The Leemon Express by Darryl Palmer

The Leemon Express is a Bombardier BR-21 screwbus that runs the Chilwaukee to Kalamatroit line. Screwbusses are uniquely adapted to travel conditions on the frozen expanses of Lake Michigan, as they can traverse snow, pack ice, slush, marsh, and even open water. Modeled after 20th Century Russian vehicles for retrieving stranded cosmonauts, the propulsion system works on the principle of the Archimedes screw. As the twin auger-shaped cylinders turn in opposite directions, their blades grind into the surface and push the vehicle forward or backward over terrain. When both cylinders turn in the same direction, the screwbus can move laterally, which is especially useful for avoiding crevasses, ruins, and icebound vessels. The spinning blades also act as a deterrent to bands of skidoo-mounted pirates. The hollow cylinders are buoyant, so the screwbus can easily make the transition from semi-solid ground to water and back again. With its powerful Evinrude 3000 micro-fission engine, the screwbus can attain speeds of almost 30 mph over land and 20 knots in water.



Inside, the passenger cabin of the Leemon Express is spacious and luxurious. Double-paned solar-heated windows keep the air at a comfortable 5 degrees Celsius. Leather seats are cushioned to absorb vibrations from the floorplates and can turn 180 degrees to face flip-up tables for a relaxing game of cards. A bathroom, wash station and kitchen provide creature comforts, and small cots can be folded out from the walls for overnight travel.

Screwbusses like the Leemon Express are used extensively to ferry supplies, dignitaries and hostages between metropolitan sovereignties within the 42nd Parallel Alliance. Although municipal warlords often complain that screwbusses are slow and inefficient, they are still far superior to the wooly mammoth caravans of 20 years ago.

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Ice World—The Leemon Express



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Polar Air Cargo Wrecker by Bill

The unexpected ice age that developed in the 2030's required that transport companies adapt to snow and ice that had moved into Florida (even during the summer). Florida became closed to travelers because of poor road conditions and limited air travel and cargo delivery (see Florida sign with a "closed" banner over the sign).



To remedy this situation, Polar Air Cargo (<https://www.polaraircargo.com/>) began to serve Florida airports. Polar Air Cargo (PAC), therefore, needed equipment that could operate regardless of the weather. *To keep planes flying and ground vehicles operating*, PAC called on General Motors Corporation (GMC) to build a tracked wrecker vehicle.

The GMC tracked wrecker uses a truck cab (seating 4 people) and a tracked suspension to travel through snow and ice at Orlando International Airport and Miami International Airport. When needed, cleats can be added to the tracks to improve performance.

By design (having a large engine compartment) the GMC tracked wrecker can be powered by any number of diesel engines: the Cummins X15 (15L), the Detroit Diesel DD15 (14.8L), the PACCAR MX-13 (13L), the Volvo D13 (13L), or the Caterpillar C15 (Legacy). Because of the "open" design of the wrecker, it is extremely flexible and can be setup for a wide variety of uses.

In order to produce the "GMC tracked wrecker," GMC partnered with Caterpillar tractor to construct the tracks and track suspension. The tracks are single-pin in design optimized for ice and snow traction. The drive sprocket is placed at the rear to reduce the likelihood of a "thrown" track.



Using the aircraft tow bar attached to the wrecker, the wrecker is able to pull even a 1,000,000 lb 747 airliner or air cargo aircraft (See photo below). The Boeing 747-8 is the largest version of the



747 aircraft ever built. It is the longest passenger airliner in the world at 250 feet. This model of 747, including the 747-8I passenger (Intercontinental) and 747-8F freighter, represents the final and largest generation of the 747 family.

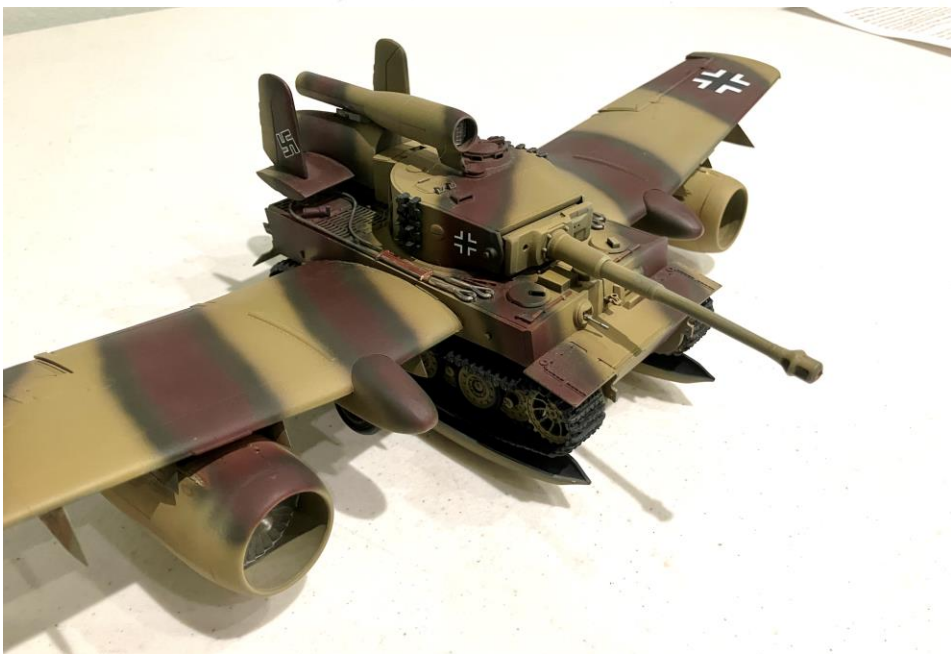
Because of the success of the GMC tracker wrecker prototypes that were first used in Florida, the company has put these wreckers into full-scale production with plans to eventually produce 20 units per month. Low initial rate production (LIRP) was 2 units per month. Several versions are in use today. **THE END**

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Polar Air Cargo Wrecker



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Doug brought in his 2022 winning model to share!



THE END