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Extra, Extra, Extra: Frank Ahern Wins May 2017 IPMS Gators "Middle East" Club Contest

Next meeting:

Tuesday, June 20
at: 6:30pm; at
Oak Hall Library
8009 SW 14th Ave
Gainesville FL

(See the maps at the end of the newsletter)



Frank Ahern won the IPMS Gator Modelers May 2017 contest with his middle east subject "Rommel's Ride." The Fieseler Fi 156 Storch was a small German liaison aircraft built by Fieseler before and during World War II. Production continued in other countries into the 1950s for the private market. - Bill Winter

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The Prez Sez.....

by Jack Mugan



Memorial Day has come and gone for another year. For those of us in the hobby, it is another opportunity to review our history, as we see pictures and hear words about the wars that were fought over the course of our lifetime. This got me thinking about how times were different when I was growing up.

My only awareness of the war when I was in grade school was the paper drives and the drives to bring metal cans to school. I can still remember the piles of paper, all neatly bundled, were measured and piled on the playground. I do not remember what you got for bringing in a lot of paper but they measured your pile for some reason, so maybe you got an extra recess or something. My father couldn't go into the service due to a football injury, so he and my mother worked in the shipyards in Baltimore while I was sent to live with my grandparents. My aunt worked in the bomber plant building the B-29 and my uncle was serving in the Coast Guard driving a landing craft. Everyone was contributing to the war effort in one-way or another.

The only complete peacetime I remember was the few years between the end of WWII and the outbreak of the Korean conflict and then again the time between Korea and the beginning of the Viet Nam war. It was during this peacetime window that I put in my military service.

Times were very different in the 50s with the economy booming, and boys knew that they were either going to college after high school or, in all probability, be drafted into the Army. My parents felt that the military path was probably in my future, and my uncle convinced them the Coast Guard was the way to go. We were living in Colorado at the time and who would think there was a Coast Guard unit landlocked in the middle of the country, but there was. So I enlisted while still a senior in high school and a year after graduation my military career started.





The Coast Guard had an image problem as it wasn't really seen by many as a military branch, but you had to go through boot camp and learn all the same military skills as all the other branches did. Often referred to as the Draft Dodger's Yacht Club or the Hooligan Navy, serving in the Coast Guard was like joining the post office. The main job of the Coast Guard was maintaining river buoys, lighthouses, lightships and air-sea rescue. It was not very glamorous but necessary nonetheless. Shifting gears now; some subjects came up at the business meeting I'd like to share with you. We are

changing newsletter editors once again. In the course of conversation, the question was asked if anyone cared whether we had a newsletter or not. Well those present thought it was a needed club vehicle, but then most of the people there are regular contributors, so their opinion is probably somewhat biased. I have been a newsletter editor in the past and I can assure you the lack of feedback is nothing new. This begs the question if the other members even read the newsletter or care one way or the other? The newsletter takes some effort to produce every month, meaning some are sacrificing their model time to share their thoughts with the other members.

The club website is also a time consuming project that we are struggling with, and we are finding several issues regarding the final product that are going to be resolved in the near future. Once again, I have to wonder if the club as a whole cares one way or the other on this project as well?

Finally, we discussed meeting attendance being down the last couple of meetings, and wondered if the change of meeting location might be a factor? We are trying to grow our membership and want to know if the current members are losing interest for some reason. Remember, this is your club and we need to hear feedback from



the members to resolve any and all problems that may be creating reasons that result in lost members. Please give these issues some thought, as we will be talking about these subjects at the June meeting. I hope to see you all there.



Tamiya 1/48 F4U-1 “birdcage” Corsair

A model with a Mission—WWII Ace Col Jim Swett’s F4U-1

By *Andy Renshaw*



We all enjoy building models and admiring them when finished, and I am no exception. However once in a while I am provided the opportunity to share my talents in a way that benefits others. Such an opportunity arose recently with our local chapter of the United States Marine Corps League. The League is made up of US Marines, those who have both served in the past and presently serving, plus like-minded individuals who desire to serve the local community through various activities and programs. In conjunction with the annual US Marine Birthday Ball, the League raises money by auctioning various donated goods and services. I opted to participate by providing a finished model that had not just a Marine theme, but a historical element as well.

I love the F4U Corsair, and with its iconic look even non-aviation types can recognize it. It made a natural choice of subject, and the 1/48 Tamiya kit fit the bill perfectly in both ease of build and accuracy. For the slice of history, I contacted a local friend who has been collecting the signatures of Ace pilots for many decades. After a quick phone call inquiring on a “USMC Ace who flew Corsairs”, Bruce graciously provided an original signature by Col. James Swett, a three-time ace and Medal of Honor recipient. Swett started off flying F4F Wildcats with VMF-221 on Guadalcanal, but the squadron later transitioned to the F4U where he continued to add to his victories throughout the war.

Considering that this was going to be a piece for “public consumption”, I opted for wheels up, and cockpit closed, as that would provide the least protrusions to get damaged by the new owner. Construction started in the cockpit, and I kept it simple using only the kit parts including the instrument panel decal! The provided pilot figure, which is quite nice, was painted up and secured in his seat. He tends to sit low, maybe due to the absence of a parachute pack, so I raised him in the seat several millimeters, allowing him to at least see over the instrument cowling.



The engine was also built stock, painted and inserted within the pre-painted cowl. Meanwhile, the landing bay doors were fitted in the closed position with some plastic reinforcement on the interior of the wing. None of the wing interior was used, as none would be seen, however joints were reinforced. Before joining the upper and lower wing halves, the outer panels were glued to the corresponding inner portion being sure that the joint was flush on the outside. This insured there would not be any unsightly step on the extended wings. At this point, fuselage and wings were all joined. Continuing with the modifications and corrections, the flap step was filled and the wing fuel filler caps filled and re-scribed one panel inboard. The flarings on the tail gear covers were also removed, as all of these items are carry-over to later mark Corsairs and not appropriate for the -1. Some other detail changes included removing the small scoop on the starboard side cowl (this is for the -2 night fighter), and hollowing out the exhaust once they were secured to the model.



Basic construction



Painting



Advanced construction



Weathering

With the aircraft in flight, the next largest modification to the kit beyond closing up the landing gear bays is raising the flaps. There are aftermarket sets for this, however the kit parts can be used quite effectively and the modification is simple. On the flaps themselves, remove all the protruding pins and pegs. Then on the wing, thin the upper trailing edge so that the flap can sit almost flush with

the surface. At this point, the flaps will fit in the raised position quite well. The underside gap covers, which would be pushed down by the raising of the flap, can be replicated with some strip plastic cut to length and placed between the flap and wing.

Once the canopy was masked and placed, painting started with coat of interior green over the canopy parts, and then followed by some random dark grey over areas that received some amount of putty work, such as the landing gear bays and flaps. The dark grey was also used to pre-shade hinge areas and some random splotches. This was followed with a Model Master "Neutral Grey" for the underside. The grey they had a overspray of Light Gull Grey for some weathering and fading effects, keeping it subtle. Once dry a quick strip of masking tape was placed along the underside wing fold line, as this is a sharp demarcation between the grey and blue portions. Model Master #2055 "US Navy Blue Grey" was lightened some measure with Light Gull Grey, then sprayed on the upper surfaces and lower wing portions. The fuselage demarcation line was done freehand while spraying. Having mixed more Blue Grey than needed, I added a bit more Light Gull Grey to make a faded hue, and oversprayed the previous Blue-Grey areas in a random pattern.



Decals



Weathering



Weathering



Nice Engine, Andy!
- Bill Winter (editor)

Back at the workbench, light grey Vallejo acrylics were thinned and brushed over the fabric surfaces for even further fading and weathering. Some of the ammo tray covers, and other random areas, were painted slightly different shades of the Blue Grey, including Intermediate Blue, to provide even further visual interest. When doing these effects, keep the contrast a few steps on the heavy side, as a later final fading will blend them all together. Once satisfied a clear gloss acrylic prepared the model for decals. The kit decals provided national insignia and stencil markings and the spare bin provided the fuselage number. Another coat of clear gloss sealed the decals. Now Mig Ammo panel line washes were applied and allowed to sit for at least 30 minutes, then I gently removed the excess with a moistened cotton cloth. A final overspray of some clear flat tinted with a fair amount of Gull Grey faded the decals and blended the overall hue of the paint.

Final weathering on the Corsair included the addition of some "tape" seals, exhaust stains, and chipping. Chipping was done with a first pass using Testors Zinc Chromate enamel, followed with Prismacolor silver pencil. Exhaust stains were simply added with layered pastel and pigments rubbed into the surface. The tape seals over the gun ports and around the fuselage fuel tank directly in front of the cockpit were made with real tape, painted a dirty off white. This was simply cut into strips and applied. Note that many decal sets include the fuel tank seals, and most apply these as with any other decal including setting solution. However they replicate tape, and should not sit within the panel line and stand a little proud of the surface. Being that the aircraft is depicted flying, and presumably fired its guns, once the tape was placed over the gun ports it was punched through where the port was located. On the ground, this tape would be intact.

The base was constructed from pre-milled pine, and finished with a ebony wood stain followed by a coat of semi-gloss varnish. The flags, representing Swett's 15-1/2 kills, were drawn using some computer drawing software and printed. The authentic signature was originally on a index card, and was trimmed down and sealed with a clear acrylic. Care was taken not to bleed the inked signature. Once sealed, both the flags and autograph were applied to the base, and the whole given one more coat of semi-gloss varnish. The acrylic rod was cut to length, then carefully heated over the kitchen stove and bent to the desired angle. The rod is inserted into a hole drilled into the base, and the



opposite end milled to a squared tab, which corresponded to the slot on the bottom of the model. In hindsight, I may opt to slice the acrylic rod at an angle producing a flat edge, and then mount a bolt through the aircraft and rod.

Building a model "in flight" is a nice break from the usual shelf sitters, and offers a chance for a dramatic pose. I really like how this Corsair turned out, and I would encourage you to look for opportunities to use your hobby to help your community. The auction winner couldn't have been happier, plus the Marine Corps League was able to augment their funding from my talents, a win for all involved!



Biography:

James E. Swett was a United States Marine Corps fighter pilot and ace during World War II.

He served with VMF-221, flying first F4F wildcats, then the iconic F4U Corsair, downing a total of 15.5 enemy aircraft during the war, earning eight Distinguished Flying Crosses and four Air Medals.

On his first combat mission over Guadalcanal, he both became an Ace and was awarded the United States' highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor, for actions over Guadalcanal on April 7, 1943.

Swett checked out in the Vought F4U Corsair to which VMF-221 was converting and moved to a new base in the Russell Islands. Promoted to captain, Swett continued combat over Rendova and New Georgia, then later onboard the USS Bunker Hill, flying strikes over Japan and supporting landings at Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

At wars end, he had 103 combat missions, 15.5 confirmed victories and 4 probable's, earning:

2 Purple Hearts
8 Distinguished Flying Crosses
Medal of Honor

Retired from Marine Corps Reserve in 1970 as Lt Colonel, and passed away January 18, 2008.

Meeting Minutes from May 17, 2017

By Frank Ahern

President Jack Mugan opened the meeting and welcomed 10 members present, and guest Steven Freymann accompanied by his mother and sister. Mugan noted that this was the 3rd meeting in a row with a guest who came prompted by the club flyer on display at Hobbytown.



The meeting door prize raffles were held and AJ Kwan won both the attendance and the model raffles. He chose the King Tiger model for his prize.

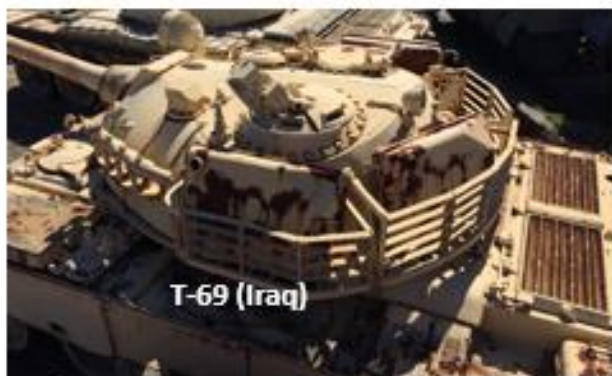
Historian Bruce Doyle brought up a proposal to have a theme for each meeting based on an anniversary of historical significance or other major event during the month of the meeting. Members would be asked to bring any model or artifact they might have pertaining to the theme. Doyle said he would begin to develop a list of possible themes for upcoming meetings. (continued next page)



Mugan reminded the group that the Ocala IPMS club has invited our members to attend a special meeting on June 22. The CEO of Moebius Models will come to the meeting to discuss what's going on at his company and the state of the modeling industry, as well as answer questions from club members. Mugan encouraged as many as possible to attend the meeting and support the Ocala club's effort.

There was discussion of an invitation from Hobbytown to hold a model contest at the store with club members acting as judges. Several questions were raised about how the contest would be run and it was decided that more information would be needed before a decision could be made.

After show and tell presentation from those who brought models to the meeting, the semi-annual themed club model contest was held. The theme was "Middle East". There were seven entries and the winner was selected by secret ballot voting from members. The winning model was "Rommel's Ride" by Frank Ahern. He was asked to select the theme for the next contest to be held in November. He chose the theme "Made in Italy".



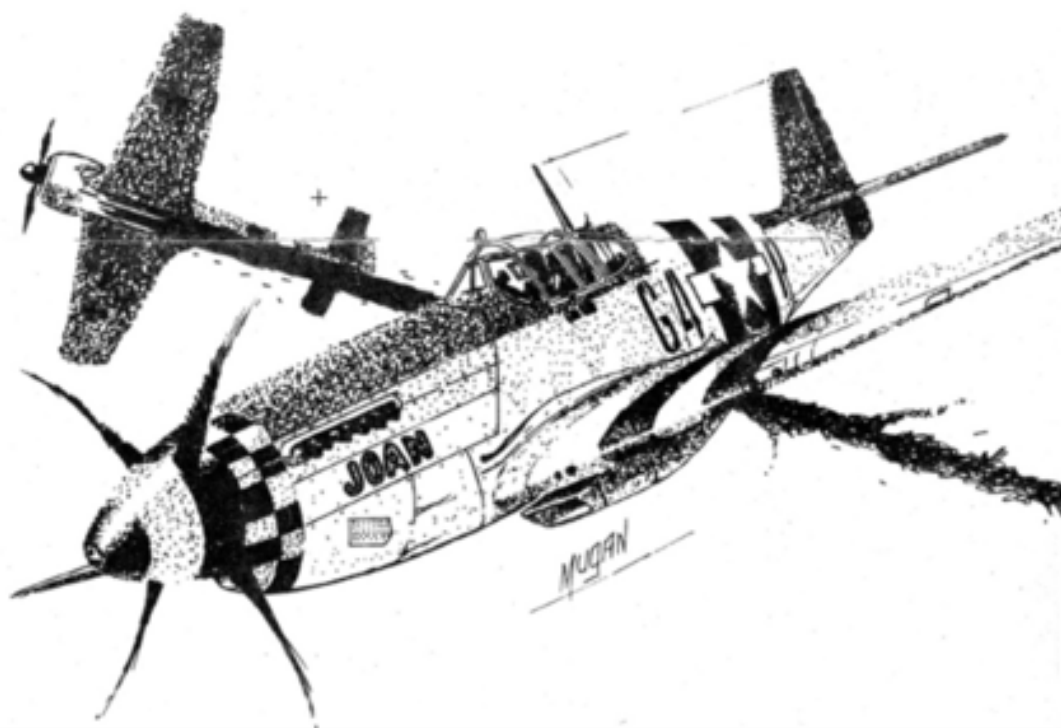
Finally, Bill Winter and Ed Ingersoll presented a slide show on a visit they recently made to the Armor Museum at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

Memories of the good old days

By Jack Mugan

Long before computers, newsletters were a lot more labor intensive, requiring things like type setting, screen prints and key lines. Fortunately, I worked in the graphic arts field and had contacts and resources that made me a good candidate to be the newsletter editor, as well as writer, art director, production artist and the guy who got it printed, addressed and stamped, and yes, put it in the mail. It was fun at times, but a lot of effort went into each issue. As today, there were few contributors to help fill the pages.

I was able to recruit my better half to do the typing on the then new IBM Selectric ball typewriter, and I had contacts with production companies who helped me with screen prints, the method of converting photos into dots for printing. Of course, this took a lot of modeling time, but I wanted our club to have the best newsletter in Region five.



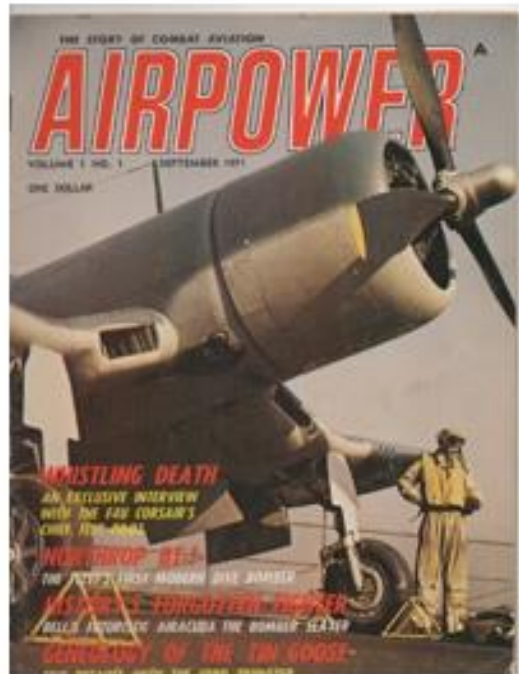
The other day I ran across one of the pieces of art I created for one of the covers, and I thought I'd share it with you.

Back in the day...

By *Jack Muga*

Last month I told you about the Challenge Publication *WINGS*, and this month I share with you the sister publication *AIRPOWER* that appeared on the stands in September 1971. Like *WINGS*, the magazine attempts to bridge the gap between scholarship and entertainment in recreating the story of combat aviation.

The first feature story covers twelve pages titled "Ford had a better idea, four decades with the indestructible model T of the air," written by C. M. Daniels. This was followed by "Bomber One,"

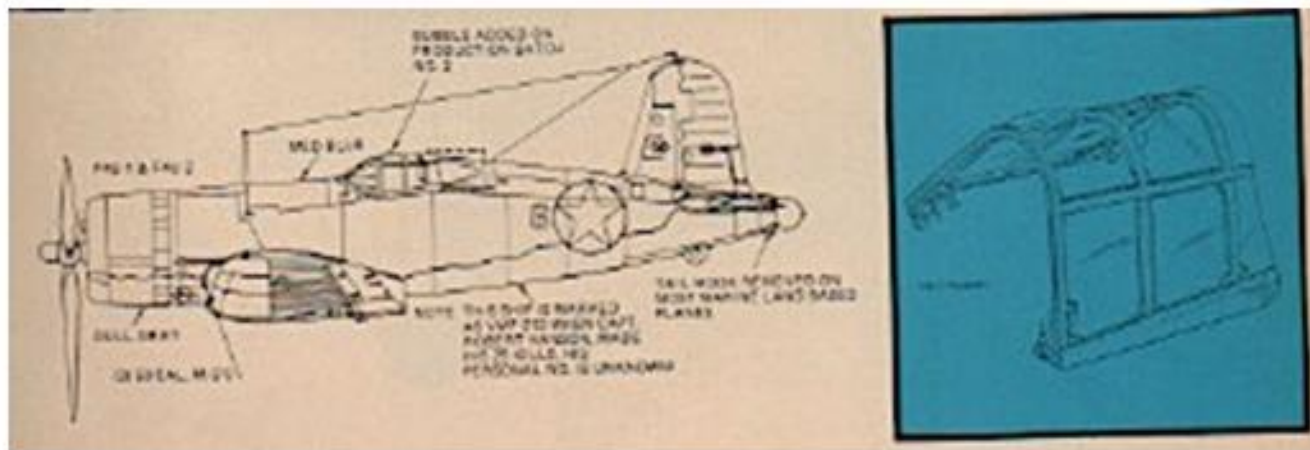


Northrop's BT was the fleet's first monoplane dive bomber and progenitor of the classic SBD covering ten pages that include a color page showing squadron and section markings.



The main feature article was on the Sky Tiger, built as a bomber destroyer, Bell's futuristic Airacuda really had no future...but assured the success of the company that created it, covers twenty five pages of photos and text written by Walt Boyne. There is also a two page color spread showing a profile of the Bell YFM-1 Airacuda.

The next article, **Old Hog Nose**, features Vought's F4U Corsair covering sixteen pages of photos, diagrams and color profiles. Written by Boone Guyton who was a test pilot, naval officer, aviation representative and probably knows more about the F4U series of fighter planes than any other man. He gives his analysis as the man who flew them all, from the original prototype through the F4U-7, and shows us why it was, in his opinion, the best combat plane of WWII.



When these magazines were available, there were no computers and Photo Shop to rework the photos. Most were black and white, somewhat fuzzy and in many cases too dark to show a lot of detail. Color was used sparingly, probably due to costs, but the articles were in depth in content, and at this point in time, there was very little else available as reference material for the modeler.

From Paul's Toolbox



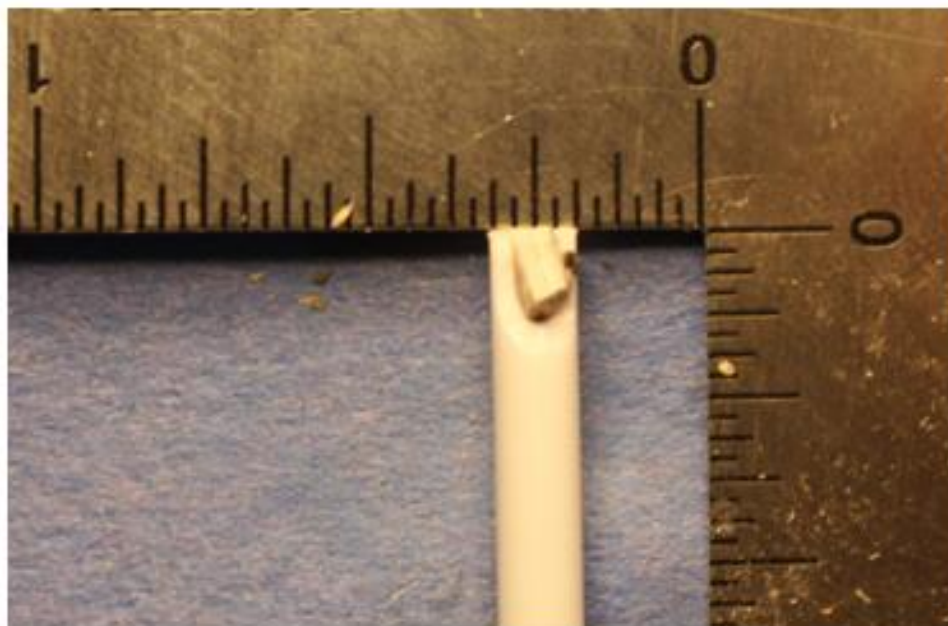
By [Paul Bennett](#) - Homebrew Tools: The Lightwand

There is something to be said for "Out of the Box" thinking and creativity. It is possible to come up with an unusual and creative solution to an unexpected problem. Recently I was building a Kinetix Kfir C7 and, thanks to an ongoing illness, overlooked a few details in the instructions. Like drilling out ten fuselage holes to mount weapons hardpoints. All glued together, seams puttied. Well this is embarrassing... Now what?

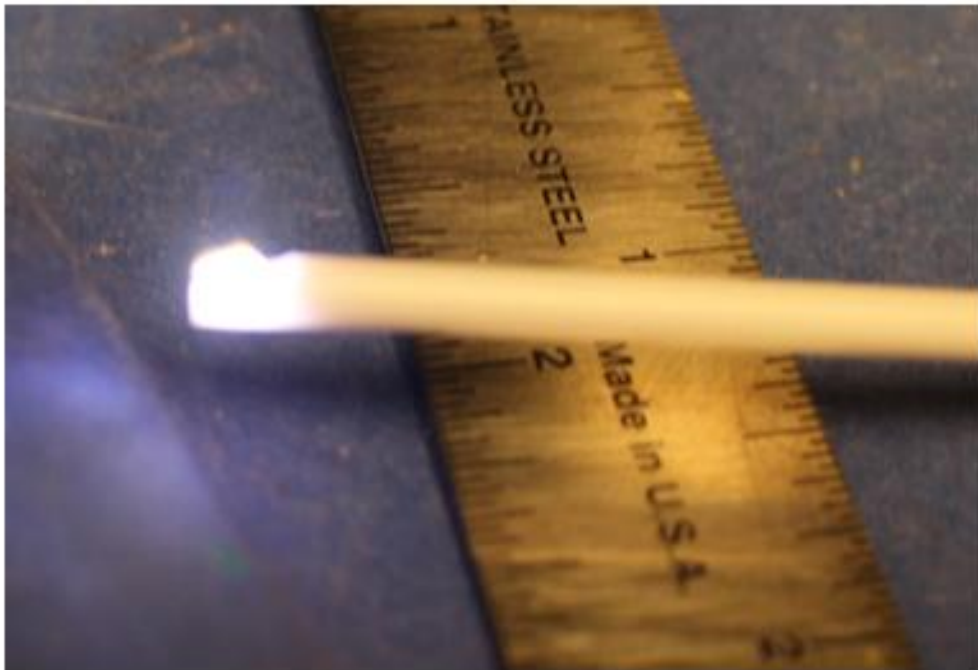
Well, I got to thinking. LED's are bright, often a problem for a model builder when they shine through the plastic so surely they would make the hollows in the plastic obvious. I have these LED modules I mentioned last month, but they are a little large. So time to consult "Ye Olde Junque Boxe" by way of my parts database.

Ah Ha! Here we go... A nice, very small Panasonic white LED with a 2000 millicandle output. Very bright, effectively 2 candle power. Don't look at the LED when it is on! Very small, and surface mount technology, which ought to be interesting.

I soldered the LED to a pair of very fine wires and fed them through a plastic tube.



As you can see, the LED is $1/16''$ across and mounted in a $1/8''$ styrene tube.

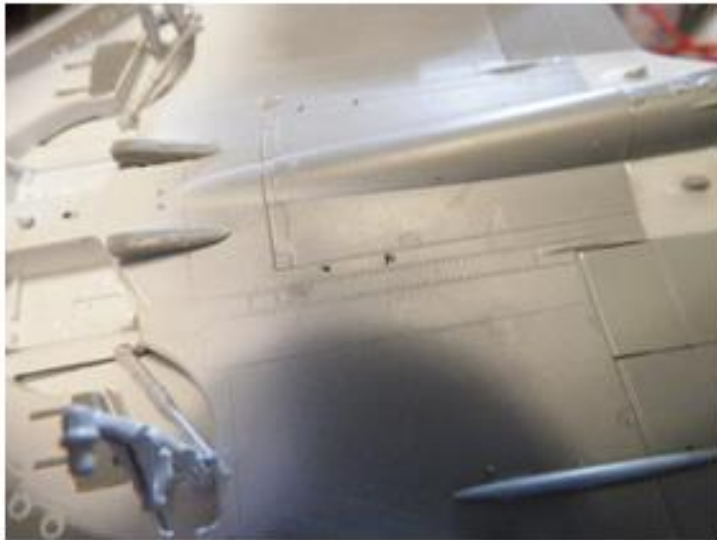


Above is the illuminated LED which is quite bright.



This is the complete unit, with battery and dropping resistor.

Did it work? Yes, quite well.



Here is the bottom of the aircraft (disregard the marks, I had already used the wand).



(Same photo as on the left but with arrows pointing out the light.)

And here you can see the light shining through the plastic.

This first one was a quick "thrown together;" however, I am building a more advanced and nicer looking one. It did work very well and the small size meant it could easily fit in a model. It could also show cracks where plastic parts were not properly joined.

Building it turned into another adventure with its own problems which I will go into next month.



Sightings

By *AJ Kwan*

I heard rumors of an X-Wing and Batmobile on 8th Ave. near Waldo Road. So I was driving back from Jacksonville one day and decided to detour from my regular route home. I went down Waldo Road south until I came to 8th Ave. I turned right, west, on 8th. As I drove slowly, it was Sunday; I scanned both sides on the road. On the left, a huge red brick building, with a chain link fence. Lots of signs that say, "Keep out, dog training area", Alachua County Sheriff's Office. I then see one; it is the Batmobile, Michael Keaton era, sitting under a tree. Then I see an X-Wing. End of the fence, I take a left; more signs, and another vehicle, Tow Mater. I take some photos which I am sharing with the club.



Upon further snooping, the building belongs to a company, Phalanx Defense System. "Phalanx Defense Systems, L.L.C. pushes the limits of engineering and design in the creation of truly innovative armor safety products for the Law Enforcement, Fire & Rescue and Public sectors" (web site). Rumor has it that the owner collects movie memorabilia. That is all I could find.

An Experienced Modeler?

By Frank Ahern



Almost every kit review I've ever read ends with a recommendation based on whether you are an "experienced modeler." This has always raised the question in my mind – am I an experienced modeler? There was no question, when I first got back into the hobby about 10 years ago, that I was not. Now, after a decade of modeling under my belt, you would think I would be, but I'm not so sure. If being an experienced modeler means knowing what to do in any situation, I've still got a ways to go. I'll use the kit I'm working on now as an example.



I picked up the Tamiya F-84G "Thunderbirds" kit at Jaxcon, because I knew we were about to embark on a club build of the T-bird aircraft. With Tamiya's well-deserved reputation for quality I assumed this would be an easy build. That assumption only lasted as long as it took me to open the box and be confronted with two sprues of silver-plated plastic parts instead of the usual dark gray plastic. While the metallic-looking plastic looked good on the trees, I am experienced enough to know that you can't build a model without touching the surfaces with glue or sandpaper. It didn't take long to realize that the silver plating was easily scratched and quickly dissolved when touched with the plastic cements that I normally use.



Now I started questioning my own ability. Surely Tamiya wouldn't put out a model that an "average" modeler like myself couldn't build. How can you make a seam invisible without paint or sanding? Should I try to paint over the plating? The questions that ran through my mind every time I sat down to work on the model made me feel like a newbie again.

I eventually got a piece of advice from Howard Burke of the Ocala club, who has built almost all of the Thunderbird planes. He said that he painted over the silver with a glossy aluminum finish. He felt it looked more realistic than the silver anyway. This raised more questions – should I remove the silver or just paint over it? That was answered for me when I tried to paint the tip tanks half red/half blue. Let's just say it didn't work. In the cleanup process I discovered that the silver plating was easily removed with lacquer thinner. Now the way forward became clear. Strip the silver plating off and start over.



This revealed another oddity of the kit. The plastic underneath the plating on the fuselage and stabilizers is white, while the plastic on the wings and tip tanks is yellow. I've never seen Tamiya use these plastic colors on a kit before. I'm sure there is a reason, but I don't have a clue as to what it is.

So I sprayed the stripped-down model with a coat of my favorite primer – Badger Stynlrez – only to get another nasty surprise. An unexplained crack had developed near the tail.



I had not dropped the model and could think of no reason for it. Maybe Tamiya, in their quest for historical accuracy, had mimicked the structural problems that plagued the original F-84 (Yeah, right!). Fortunately I was able to fill it and sand it smooth, but I was beginning to wonder if this model was cursed.

Now it was time to begin the arduous process of masking and painting. The basic natural metal finish is augmented by tip tanks that needed to be painted half red/half blue. The tail and stabilizers needed to be white, the intake cone red, and the anti-glare panel olive drab. All of this required a ton of masking. I used every masking method I knew – from Tamiya tape to blue painter tape, from Parafilm to Post-It note paper.



When it was finally done I had a pile of masking material that nearly filled a small wastebasket. There were a lot of breathless moments as I peeled masks away, anxiously hoping that it didn't lift paint. The real challenge of this model came in decaling. Most of the large Thunderbird-specific decals came in

multi-parts, which had to be positioned and aligned together. Fortunately Tamiya had contracted with Cartograph for the decals and they withstood the pushing and pulling required to get everything to look right.



One thing I didn't have to do on this model is weathering. As a demonstrator for the Thunderbirds you can be sure that these airplanes were never dirty. I did a light wash to enhance panel lines and hatch covers, and used some pigments on the tail pipe to give a burned metal look, otherwise I kept it clean.



The final product, after all the drama and angst of the beginning stages, looked good to me. It was rewarding to build a colorful and eye-catching model - one that required almost all the skills that I have acquired in the past decade.

Am I now an "experienced" modeler? I'm still not sure. Each new kit seems to bring a challenge that has me scratching my head, but maybe that's what keeps the hobby interesting. Having everything figured out would be boring, so I prefer to stay in the "learning" phase. THE END!²⁰

Hollywood Heroes



BY FRANK AHERN

This continuing feature is designed to showcase the often-unpublicized military service of many of the entertainment icons of the previous generation who served their country

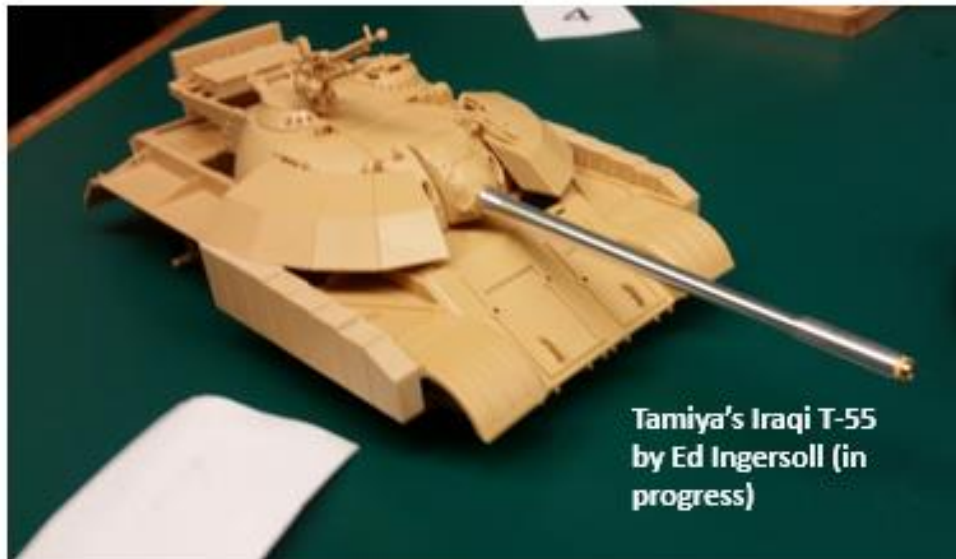
Dale Robertson

Robertson entered the U.S. Army during World War II. After stateside training he served as a tank commander in the 777th Tank Battalion under General George Patton in the North African campaign. He was standing in the hatch when his tank was hit by enemy fire. His tank crew was killed, but he was blown out of the hatch and survived with shrapnel wounds to his lower legs. Fully recovered, he went on to serve with the 322nd Combat Engineer Battalion during the European campaign. He was wounded a second time, in the right knee, during a mortar attack. Again, he made a complete recovery. He was awarded the Bronze Star and Silver Star medals, as well as a Purple Heart.

Dale Robertson is best known for his roles in TV westerns during the 1950's & 60's. His longest running series was "Tales of Wells Fargo" on NBC from 1957 - 1961. He played the lead role of agent Jim Hardie. He died in 2013.



May 2017 Gator Modelers' Club Contest: Theme: "The Middle East." [1]



Tamiya's Iraqi T-55
by Ed Ingersoll (in
progress)



Italeri's M4A1
suited out as an
IDF M1 tank by Ed
Ingersoll

NOTE: For those members who brought contest models that are not pictured, please accept my apology for not finding a photo of your model. However if you send me a photo, I'll put it into next month's newsletter.

May 2017 Gator Modelers' Club Contest: Theme: "The Middle East." [2]





Aaron Alt



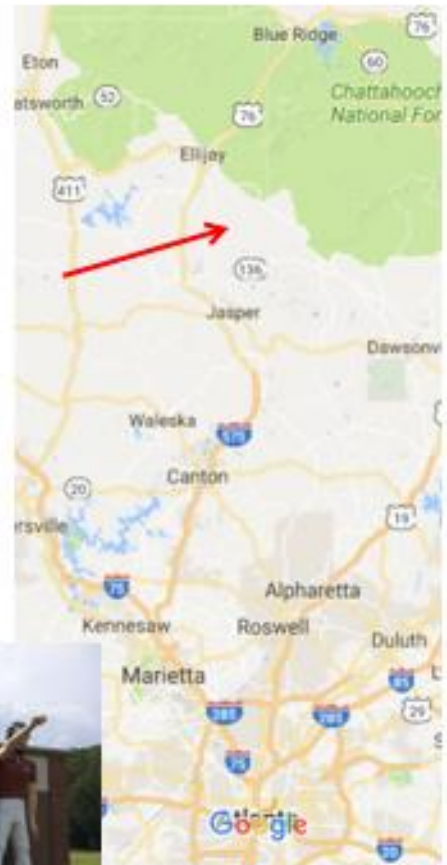
Bruce Doyle's Matilda

Bill's Column

By Bill Winter

This newsletter is so BIG and wonderful, I will be quick.

If you ever get north of ATL, up 575 to 515, stop at **"Freetime Hobby"** in Blue Ridge, Georgia. I stopped there on my recent visit to Ellijay, Ga. Freetime has several aisles of "wall-to-wall" plastic. Freetime is a major internet vendor. They have an especially SUPER collection of ships.



I even saw 1:700 scale figures... yes... you heard me right: 1:700 scale figures. I thought they looked like dust particles. I hope to have more for you next month...



But 'nough for now! - Bill

Fiddley bits

BY Stretch Sprueman, IPMS #144



“We have a need for speed!”

When Tom Cruise uttered that iconic phrase in the movie “Top Gun” it echoed down through the millennia of human existence. Running man topped out at a maximum + or – 20 mph, whether it be caveman, “Thor,” fleeing a sabretooth tiger or Olympic Gold-Medal sprinter Usain Bolt.

Except for some poor anonymous schlepp who fell off of a cliff and reached terminal velocity – 180 mph- (pun intended), mankind only reached triple digit velocity – and survived – early in the 20th century: in 1904 a train (Great Western Railway’s City class no. 3440, City of Truro) from Plymouth to London, England reached the historic unheard of speed of 102 mph.



To put this into perspective: my anthropology professor liked to use an analogy for the evolution of mankind in the age of good mother earth. Using a calendar year with the earth formed out of the primordial mist on Jan 1, man appears at a second before midnight on December 31. Using the same analogy, except this time on Jan 1 Homo erectus stands upright: it then takes until noon on December 31 for him to reach 100 mph. Homeric!

And then it took a little less than three quarters of a century to go from 100 mph to over 2000 mph (SR71). Rocket-power space flight literally pushed the envelope for the “need for speed” to the universe.

The Federation Aeronautique International (FAI) is the official sanctioning body for world absolute speed records. These are determined by the average of 2 speed runs – in opposite directions – at a set altitude over a precisely measured course. I will use the FAI records for my discussion as found in *Janes Pocketbook of Record Breaking Aircraft* published in 1981.

Piloted flight first reached 100 mph (100.2) on 29 February 1912 (a leap year in more ways than one). When Jules “Don’t call me Verne” Vedrines flew in a French Deperdussin “Monoque” (see top of next page)



200 mph (205.2) was conquered almost a decade later (Sept 1921) in a Neuport-Delage Sesquiplane.



300 mph (318.6) was reached in a Macchi M.52bis (float plane) in March 1928 (see below).



The first official 400 mph flight (407.4) was achieved by R. J. Mitchell's Supermarine S.6B floatplane on 29 September 1931 displaying the classic bloodlines of its more famous descendant – the Spitfire. (see right)



The 400 mph plateau topped out with a dueling German/Nazi duo- the Heinkel HE-100 and the Messerschmitt ME209- who within less than a month of one another – March-April 1939 hit 463 mph and 469 mph, respectively. The brutish-looking ME209 held the world-piston engine speed record until Blackbird test pilot Darryl Greenmayer broke it in a heavily modified Bearcat at 482 mph in August 1969. (Greenmayer you may remember tried unsuccessfully to retrieve a crashed B-29 out of Greenland).



Heinkel HE-100



Messerschmitt ME209



Bearcat

The “Dogs of War” – WWII – interrupted these record-breaking attempts as more important issues like life and death and survival of civilization were overcome. The 500 mph barrier may have been unofficially topped by a hapless P-47 or Fw-190 pilot in a dive who did not survive to tell the tale. Fittingly, however, it was a wartime development in both England and Germany that ended the piston-engine rein and pushed the envelope to even greater speeds: the turbojet (and rocket) engine.

Appropriately enough it was a British aircraft – the Gloster Meteor – that smashed the old pre-war record by nearly 30% and officially pushed through the 500 and 600 mph barriers. Shortly after VJ day the aviation world celebrated when on 7 November 1945 Group Captain H. J. Wilson pushed the record to 606.3 mph!



From that date in November 1945 until January 1976, the FAI world speed record changed hands 21 times, set by 18 different aircraft, and from only 3 countries: England, Russia and most notably, the USA. I have built 1:72 models of 8 of these airplanes with more on order or in my stash. It's unknown to me if there are decals for the specific record-setting aircraft (Caldwell/Carl Skystreak is available) so a generic kit will have to do for now (2019 Collectors' Day?) Stay tuned for a breakdown of the 18 aircraft and 21 speed records in future installments.

What I can achieve, however, is a model of the specific aircraft for a parallel project: the “Mach Busters.” Since these planes were rocket powered and air launched from mother ships they don't qualify for FAI recognition for speed or altitude records, but that does not diminish at all the historic accomplishments that they achieved. To wit:

Mach 1 (670 mph) Chuck Yeager in the Bell X-1, 14 Oct 1947 (below, left).



Mach 2 (1291 mph) Scott Crossfield in the Douglas D-558-2 “Skyrocket” 20 Nov 1953 (above, right).

Mach 3 (1818 mph) Milton Apt (tragically killed in the attempt) Bell X-2, 27 Sept 1958.



Mach 4 and beyond – the North American X-15 flew the fastest piloted flight: Mach 6.72 (4,528 mph) 28 June 1964 by Pete Knight. (354,200 feet altitude on another flight Aug 1963).



To go any faster you literally had to strap on a rocket - Mercury, Gemini or Apollo!

The need for speed indeed! These accomplishments by our fearless Navy, Air Force and NACA/NASA test pilots make an American aviation enthusiast truly proud! Happily, there are models for all of these incredible, historic aircraft. I will breakdown those I know in 1:72 scale for the "Mach Busters."

X-1 "Glamorous Glennis" – Tamiya and Hobby Craft: Tamiya is exquisite – as always – with optional clear fuselage, stand, and decals/canopies for the all of the early X-1s (6062, 6063 and 6064).



X-1, second generation: X-1A/B/D Special Hobby, PE, resin, decals with beautiful in-color painting guides (below, left)



X-1E Special Hobby – on order (above, right)

X-2 Mach 2, down to their usual substandards – stop laughing Paul.



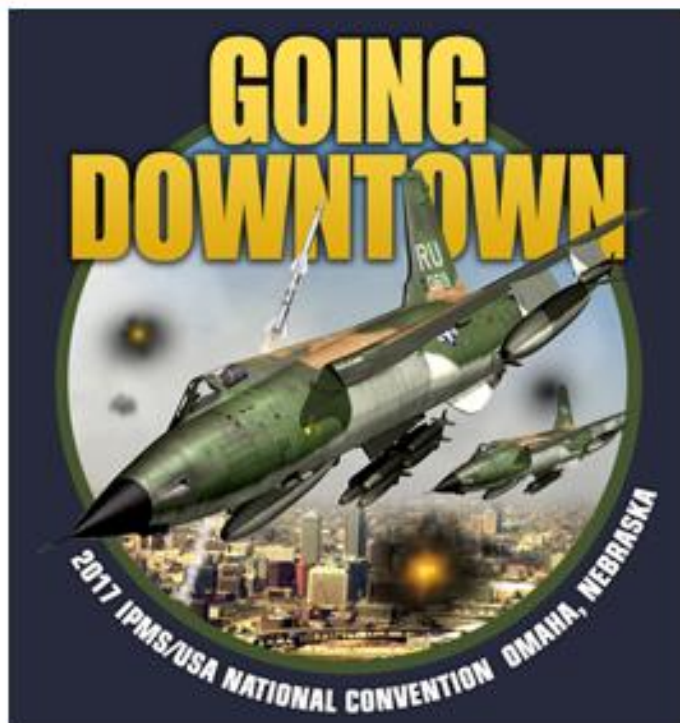
X-15 Revell (China) can be built in both versions – includes a stand for the Mach 6 scram jet version (Monogram I assume also uses this kit to pair with the B-52 mothership).

Douglas D-558-2 "Skyrocket" Special Hobby gives you both fuselage options: turbojet/rocket combo or pure rocket (on order). (see left)

Special Hobby also makes a nice kit of speed-record holder Douglas "Skystreak" (as mentioned). I've built 2 – challenging, but rewarding. (see below)

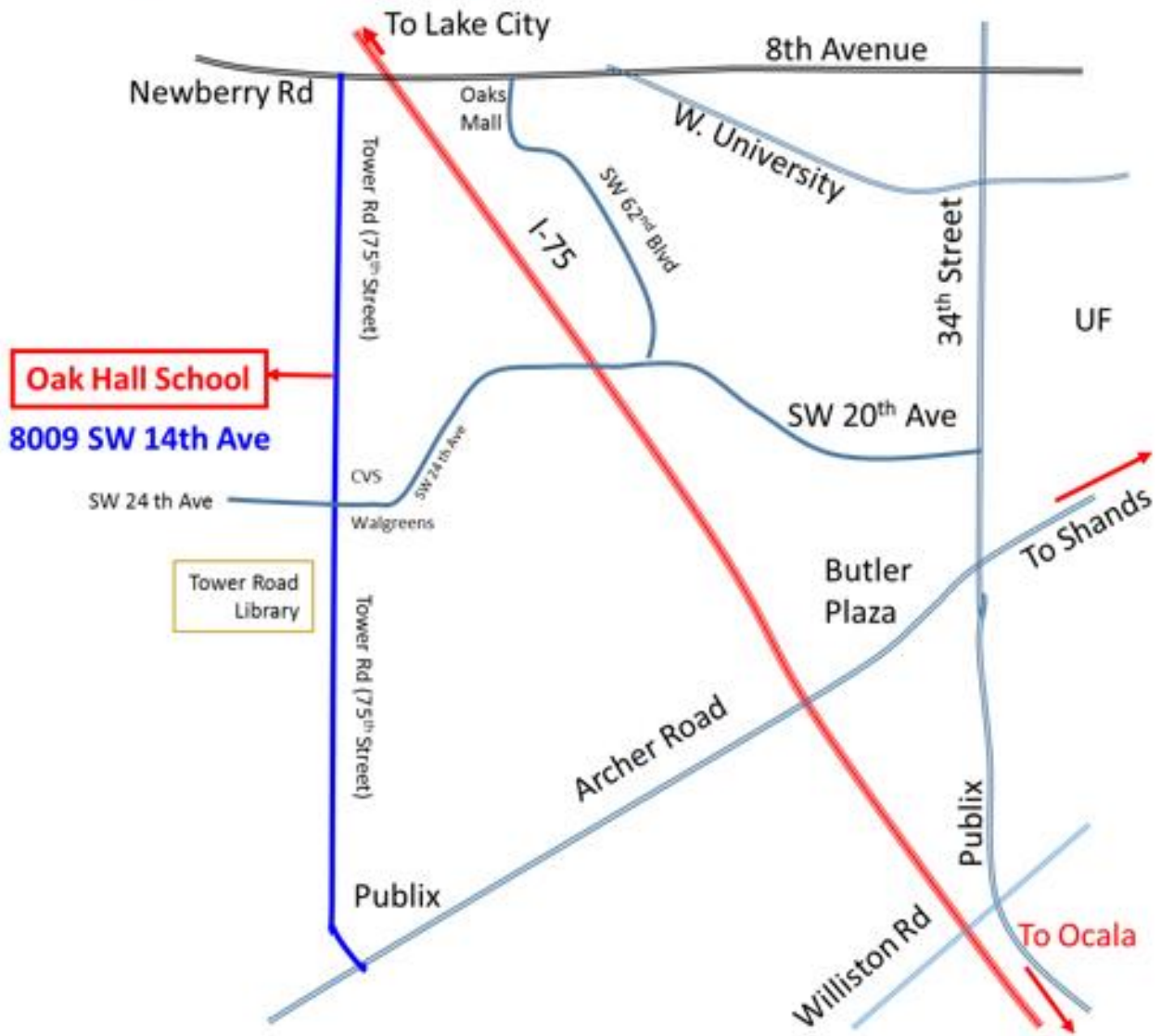


I know Revell makes a 1:32 X-1 kit (see above) but I'm not sure of any 1:48 or 1:32 scale kits for any of the other subjects. **Anyone? Stay tuned. . . .**



The IPMS Nationals are JULY 26 through JULY 29, 2017 at the LA VISTA CONFERENCE CENTER outside of Omaha, NE

How to get to the meeting



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