



June Meeting in Review

We were shy a couple of regular members for the June meeting, but we never let something like that slow us down. And sure enough, many thought we had one of the best meetings in recent memory! With Kevin Wilson being one of the absentees, **Ross Armstrong** wasted no time becoming the 'new Kevin' with respect to the club raffle as he scooped up on another win. Just like that, one of the Hasegawa Airacobras was removed from our raffle inventory! No doubt, Ross was already thinking about the theme for our December chapter contest. He will have to buy the aftermarket stuff for himself though, because we can't supply everything! So again, we thank the faithful chapter raffle supporters, Emmo and the guys at **Mid South Hobbies** in Memphis, and Steve Stohr of **North American Hobbies**. As always, please think of these guys and check with them first when you need a hobby fix!

After a little general discussion about the national convention, the Atlanta Regional and such, **Rich Van Zandt** presented a nifty mini-demo on the use of India inks in modeling. The intent was for Rich to paint the side consoles of a cockpit with ink



Rich demonstrated how he paints with India ink.

Photo by Roger Rasor

by brush and detail it with ink by using the tip of a presented toothpick. In the event, Rich somehow set the brush down at home somewhere and it was not included in the box of supplies he brought with him for the demonstration. Not to worry, he proceeded to do the whole thing with the toothpicks he brought with him, and never missed a beat! To see the finished result, you couldn't tell that there was any compromise involved. Rich also told us he uses the inks to tint other things, like adding green ink to white glue to put on the CRT display on a jet instrument panel, tinting Future for a/c navigation lights or using it to tint Future before airbrushing it on say, a canopy. It seems to be quite versatile stuff, very heavy in pigment and yet drying quite quickly.

In-progress models began with **Roger Rasor** giving us a look at a mini, mini-demo of a subtle, but appropriate correction to the wheel wells on a 1/48 Tamiya Spitfire I lower wing. It turns out that they aren't round enough! If you have one of these kits (or the Mk Vb kit, for that matter) go and check it



Roger's 'corrected' Tamiya Spitfire wheel wells. Photo by Rich Van Zandt

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**CONTRIBUTORS: Bill Von Staden, Phil Hale,
Jack Wade, Richard Van Zandt, Thorbjörn Malm**

out! We think this means Roger is possibly on his way to becoming a Spitfire ‘boffin’, which is kind of like being a rivet counter, except you drink more tea, eh wot? In keeping with the British theme, Roger also gave us a small preview of a 1/32 Wing Nut Wings Sopwith Pup he is working on by showing us the completed Le Rhone engine...a real jewel. Next time we hope we’ll get to see the entire cowling!



Roger's Wingnuts Wings Le Rhone rotary engine. Photo by Rich Van Zandt

Bill Von Staden was in the early stages of his next 1/48 Luftwaffe project, which is to be a Sturmbock version of the Fw 190A-8. This project seems to involve comparing the pros and cons of starting with either the Trimaster, Dragon, Hasegawa or Tamiya Fw 190 kits, and after deciding on the best one, then dragging out a lot of aftermarket parts and pieces available (or maybe not currently available) for this particular aircraft. For the time being, it looks like a Tamiya kit will get the nod as the best starting point.



Bill's next Luftwaffe project is a Tamiya Fw 190A-8 Photo by Rich Van Zandt

Although he called it an in-progress model, we could see **Ross Armstrong** had just about completed the 1/48 Roden OV-1A Mohawk kit. The result looked very nice, but as we have heard from others who have built this one, it is clearly no day at the beach...or at the park...or at a picnic either! Too bad this one was not kitted by a manufacturer that really knew its stuff, like maybe Matchbox or Smer!



Ross' 'in-progress' Roden OV-1A Mohawk. Photo by Rich Van Zandt

Anthony Stead was having a go at a 1/48 Me 262A by...wait for it...yes, Tamiya! (Seriously, did anybody get that one wrong?) He is well into it, with the cockpit largely completed and the nose gun deck ready also. In contrast to the Roden Mohawk, this is really one jewel of a kit - Anthony's main problem probably will be deciding on a paint scheme. We look forward to seeing this one completed!

You might remember that **Rich Van Zandt** won the **Battle of Britain** theme award for aircraft at the recent **King Con** show in Memphis. In an unusual and entertaining idea, Rich brought the winning 1/48 Tamiya Spitfire I he built to win the award, as well as another Spitfire I which he built from the same kit, but ten years earlier. The contrast between the two, and the conversation about the differences and Rich's personal modeling 'learning curve' were interesting. Rich gives a lot of the credit for his improved skills to joining our chapter, our philosophy of sharing best practices, and



Rich's new Tamiya Battle of Britain Spitfire Mk.1. Photo by Rich Van Zandt

attending and competing in the various regional and national model contests we go to. It does go to show how your model building results can be limited if you do it 'in a vacuum' as we often call modeling by yourself. Lucky for us, we're here...and Rich is one of us!



Rich's old Tamiya Battle of Britain Spitfire Mk.1. Photo by Rich Van Zandt

Stan Parker recently had completed the big 1/32 Academy F-16C kit and he shared it with us. Of course, it was painted in a three-tone gray scheme, but Stan also had opened the Radome to display the radar details to add visual interest. Nice job!



Stan's latest jet is an Academy 1/32 F-16C. Photo by Rich Van Zandt

Jack Wade had also completed a 1/48 Tamiya Spitfire Mk I kit for the Battle of Britain theme. Jack's model featured the large squadron codes and small underwing national insignia in the extreme



Jack's Tamiya Battle of Britain Spitfire Mk.1 Photo by Rich Van Zandt

outboard positions. Jack and Rich compared the undersides of their models, and despite the fact that they were both painted with unaltered Sky from the Gunze Aqueous line, the two were very different!

Anthony Stead then finished off the session by displaying a Tamiya P-51D and a Bf 109G-6 by Hasegawa, both in 1/48 scale. The Mustang was in the markings of the 357th FG in England and painted with RAF dark green over gray. The Bf 109 was in



Anthony displayed his 'finished' Tamiya P-51D Photo by Rich Van Zandt



Anthony built his Hasegawa Bf 109G-6 in a week Photo by Rich Van Zandt

the 74/75/76 gray scheme and painted in the markings of one of Erich Hartmann's aircraft. We gotta say, the Mustang was nice, but Anthony seems to have a good feel for Luftwaffe aircraft, and the 109 was very good, despite being completed in only a week! (At the meeting, we heard someone say; "A week? It takes me a week just to get the parts off the sprues!")

July Meeting Contest Time!

Our July meeting will be held on Saturday the 10th. As mentioned in the last newsletter, we will be holding our Open contest at this meeting. This is the first contest we have had in some time where the model does not have to conform to a specific theme (other than being an aircraft.) With no need to conform to a theme, and given the extra month to complete your model, we don't

see a good reason why everyone attending the meeting can't have something there!

Since we want to devote as much time as possible to discussing the models that are at the meeting, we ask that you hold any in-progress models or other finished models until the August meeting. But please feel free to bring all the new stuff you may have recently acquired (at Atlanta or elsewhere). Please try to show up outside the building at 6:15 to make the mass entrance through the security gate. If you are late, call either Kevin Wilson's cell at (901) 833-7051 or Roger at (901) 237-3977 to get in the door. We look forward to seeing you there!

Hotlanta Model Expo 2010

On Saturday, June 25, the Metro Atlanta chapter hosted their 2010 show and contest (AKA, the 2010 Region 3 Convention) at the Cobb County Civic Center. The facility was familiar to those who have attended the last two shows, but the competition was a different matter. Gold/Bronze/Silver judging was the buzz of the day, but the show was otherwise a typical fine combination of good fellowship, vending and super builds on the tables. The venue featured an upper mezzanine for contest and display models and a lower level for vending. It was fun to lean on the rail with a bird's eye view of your friends pulling rabbit ears out of their pockets at the vending tables. There was a good bit of trade going on and several IPMS Memphis members took advantage of the opportunity.

Indeed the unusual judging format was thoroughly discussed throughout the day. It did not follow the "AMPS" format of having a single panel of judges tally points within a set criteria with gold, silver or bronze medals awarded for totals reaching certain levels. Rather the competition models were divided into just seven general categories – aircraft, armor, figures, ships, automotive, space and sci-fi, or dioramas and miscellaneous – and each model was judged by a team of two or three and awarded either a gold, silver, bronze or no medal without benefit of judging sheets or scores to determine award level.

In practice though, there were multiple teams of judges each apparently assigned to certain sub-categories that were divided into the more familiar scale and subject categories, e.g. 1/48 props and so forth. This made for a hybrid sort of format between the standard first/second/third by scale and subject judging and the "AMPS" style where categories are not really applicable. Richard Van Zandt participated in the judging and said he would do it again, but thought that there were quite a few wrinkles to be ironed out in the future, none the least of which would be the need for

training the people who volunteered to judge. At the end of the day, it was an enjoyable experience, if not a bit unorthodox.

For the statistically inclined, Rich reports that there were 421 models entered in all categories. 265 models received a medal (62.9%) with 77 taking gold (18.3%), 89 taking silver (21.1%) and 99 taking bronze (23.5%). Clearly there was a high standard of modeling on display.

Successes within the IPMS Memphis ranks included builds by David Morris, Roger Rasor, Richard Van Zandt and Jack Wade. For the record, chapter members Scott Doyle and Phil Hale also attended the event but did not enter models in the competition.

David took a gold with his Tamiya 1/12 scale Ducati Pramac and a bronze was awarded to his Revell Type VII and Special Navy Type XXIII U-boats. Roger received gold medals for his 1/72 Fw 190 A-3, 1/48 RAF Canadair Sabre Mk.IV and 1/32 Ki 84 Frank as well as a silver for his 1/48 B5N-1 Kate. Rich had an impressive list of awards, taking eight gold medals with his F-16C Falcon "Arctic Aggressor", TA-4J Skyhawk VF-127 "Desert Bogies", TA-4J Skyhawk VT-7 'Eagles', F-5E Tiger II VC-3 'Fighting Saints', F-8E(FN)P French Navy Crusader, Typhoon F.2 No. 3 Squadron, F-111F 48th TFW "Desert Storm", and E-2C Hawkeye VAW-115 'Liberty Bells'. Rich also took three bronze medals for his A6M5 Type 52 ZERO "Battle of the Philippine Sea", F6F-3 Hellcat VF-1 "Battle of the Philippine Sea" and Supermarine Spitfire Mk.1 "Battle of Britain". Jack was awarded a gold medal for his 1/72 Westland Lynx HAS.3 'Black Cats' and his 1/72 Mosquito B.Mk.IV and received a bronze for his 1/72 Hunter T.Mk.7A conversion.

Again, for the statisticians, that works out to about 8% of the medals awarded going to members of IPMS Memphis. Congratulations to all who won and thanks to the host chapter for putting on the show.

Jack Wade
IPMS 45604

Turbo's A-4N Skyhawk

When he's not jetting between places like Geneva and Kuwait, our 'longest distance' member Thorbjörn Malm enjoys his free time at the model workbench just like the rest of us. And fortunately, from time to time, he updates us on recent builds. One that he shared with us a few months ago is a Hasegawa A-4 modified to an Israeli A-4N. According to Turbo, "If I remember right, I used a Cutting Edge set that included: the extended jet exhaust (which is a lot shorter and has a smaller diameter than the Quick Boost one), a different spine,

larger air intakes, and for some reason white metal under wing gun pods (which had a bad fit!)

The decals were from Isradecals. After finishing the model, Isradecals (Isracast?) came out with a new book covering all Israeli A-4s. That's when Turbo determined that the green color should be a deeper green on all A-4s (and early ones also had a darker brown) and the light blue on the underside changed to light grey on the N. So, after getting the book (and after these pictures were taken), Turbo added, "I have made a few changes like antenna locations and added a small air intake on the spine but I have not bothered with repainting."

In our opinion, it looks about like an Israeli A-4N should look after a few months of basking in the kind of bright sunlight that would bleach any paint color.

Next month, we'll share photos of a Russian MiG-17 that Turbo finished more recently.



Two views of Turbo's 1/48 Israeli A-4N.

Photos by Thorbjörn Malm



Dr. Phil

Howdy boys. Well, by now some of us have had our first taste or distaste of the Gold, Silver and Bronze method of model judging, and I'm sure you all have your varied opinions. What I've heard from several sources is it was an odd event at best for many who attended with no rhyme or reason to what were the winners and losers. Oh well, such is life. Maybe there will be enough feedback to give the boys in Whoville reason to make the necessary corrections.

I'm not totally against GSB, but I'd rather see some concrete standards in print ahead of time so that we all might know and understand the rules and help guide the judges who are new to the idea. Hmm...now "Display only" is starting to look very good to me.

OK, getting down to business or maybe monkey business, who knows? Oh yeah, Luke wants me to tell you all that his first release of "Felines Gone Feral" is scurrying up the charts. The animal film critics 'Rascal and Enus' have given it "two paws up" while the film has broken into the Wallscrech Journal's Top Ten Best Seller List. Needless to say, it has been a real "zoo" around here. OK, OK I'll work on it.

Roger wanted to know if I could scratch my head a few times and write up a little something about the P-39 kits I've built to go along with Bill's multi-part treatise on the subject. Since I have built both the Eduard and the Hasegawa 1/48th scale kits, I thought well "what the heck". Now, I have to say right up front that I had less trouble with the Eduard than with the Hasegawa. The major bone of contention...what? ...bone of what? Attention?...no, no Contention...get outta here, Luke. As I was saying, or trying to say, the main problems with the Eduard P-39 are the thick trailing edges and the left or port cockpit door being very difficult to model in the closed position.

The fit is excellent throughout and the Profipack versions supply a wealth of photo-etched parts that really enhance the overall model. In the Profipak kits, Eduard also supplies a shaped nose weight to keep the finished model from sitting on its tail.

Undoubtedly, the most difficult area to overcome in the Eduard kits is the cockpit door. The fit there is OK but, if you want to close it, the shape of the upper door does not really match the shape of the canopy or the fuselage side. It can be fixed, but not without some work.

Thinning down the trailing edges of the wings is a matter of sanding and test fitting, and will require some filling around the fuselage/wing area, so be aware of this before you start. Overall, I can recommend the Eduard as the easier one to build despite the above mentioned problems.

I think I'll stop at this point because Roger said he was a little tight on space this month and Luke is now dancing around like he wants to be on Dancing with the Stars. What's that Luke? You think you're the star? Luke, we really gotta have a talk!

So I'll be looking forward to seeing you guys at the meeting this Saturday night and then pick up on discussing the Hasegawa Airacobra build and more about the Eduard Airacobra build next month.

Dr Phil



Photo from U.S. Air Force Collection

The Bell Airacobra – Part 1

by Bill Von Staden

We thought the idea of an ‘Airacobra’ theme would be a good one for our December 2010 chapter contest. The Birmingham chapter did a theme contest like this many years ago when there was only one decent P-39 kit available, and they had eleven Airacobras entered, and no two of them had the same markings! With three manufactures currently offering numerous 1/48 kits, one manufacturer marketing three versions in 1/32 and one currently marketing two boxings in 1/72 scale, the potential for a good contest should be even greater today.

When we agreed on this contest theme, some members raised enough questions about the Airacobra that it seemed appropriate to provide a little background on the real aircraft and some information about the kits and detail parts to choose from. It’s a subject of personal interest, so I thought I’d share what I hope will be of benefit to you as you get rolling on your Airacobra project.

Airacobras (some of them were not called ‘P-39’) were flown by American, Australian, British, French, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Russian forces in virtually every theater of WW II. If you have plenty of references or already know enough about the Airacobra to get by, this article is not really aimed at you. But the intent here is to give you something [probably in two parts] to help you sort out what you might want to build for the contest.

It isn’t necessary to know the history of the Bell Aircraft Corporation to build a decent model of an Airacobra. On the other hand, it helps a little to know what was going on in the world between 1939 and 1942 or so to help you follow the chronology of P-39 variants.

Bell made a net profit of only \$9000 in 1939, and an order from the French government for 165

examples of an export Airacobra variant and the advance of two million dollars in early 1940 probably saved the company from going under. The aircraft was called the Bell ‘Model 400.’ Luckily for Bell, the purchase contract was backed up with a provision that should the French...*for some reason*...not be able to take delivery of these aircraft, that they would go instead to the British. The French shipped some equipment to Bell that they wanted fitted to the aircraft on their order. Included were Hispano Suiza 20mm cannons to be placed in the nose of the aircraft in place of the American-built 37mm unit, and a lot of French equipment for the cockpit.

As events unfolded, in May 1940, German forces provided the reason the French would not be able take delivery of their Airacobras. The British not only agreed to take over the French order for these planes, but increased it to a total of 675 aircraft. The 20mm cannon stayed, but the British now wanted the aircraft fitted with British equipment. This included .303 caliber wing guns, and a lot of British equipment for the cockpit. However, the 20mm Hispano cannon remained.

The British took delivery of part of this order, first renaming the aircraft the Caribou, but later going back to Airacobra I. Although it might be said that the British were not really giving the plane a fair chance to succeed, in all honesty it was not going to compete *as a fighter aircraft* at the altitudes most of the combat over Europe was taking place. At this time, there was no pressing need for ground attack aircraft. So the British were not really keen to take delivery of the remainder of their Airacobra order.

History again stepped in, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor provided a reason for the British not to take delivery of too many more of the Bell fighters. The U.S. took possession of many of them, re-named them as the ‘P-400’, and diverted them to American forces in the South Pacific, where they were used in units mixed-in with P-39D-1’s and D-2’s. (Due to shortages of 37mm cannons, these aircraft were also equipped with the 20mm Hispano cannon.) The RAF divested themselves of their Airacobras by sending them, and any further examples delivered, to the Russians. In the end, Russia would prove to be the major user of the P-39 and almost the exclusive user of the larger Bell P-63 Kingcobra that followed it.

OK, that’s all fascinating stuff, but maybe all you want to do is build an Airacobra model. The good news is that there are not a lot of major external variations in the different variants. Except for experimental examples like a P-39E with swept wings, and the Bell XFL-1 Airabonita prototype for the U.S.

Navy, Airacobras share the same airframe and overall dimensions. And, they were all powered by one version or another of the Allison V-1710 liquid cooled engine. The only visible external differences you will be able to see are different exhaust stacks on the engine, the brand of propeller (with minor differences in diameter), armament fit, and the wheels. There are a few small things that differ on some models too, but for the most part, you don't have to deal with any number of the intricacies you would with something like a late model Messerschmitt Bf 109G.

Right here, let me say that if you do not have many, or even any, reference sources on the Airacobra, but you would like to have something to have and hold, there are two books I would recommend as starting points. These are the *P-39 Airacobra in Detail & Scale* by Bert Kinzey, and the Mushroom Model Magazine 'Yellow Series' book *Bell P-39 Airacobra* by Juszcak and Peczkowski. Both have a good balance of variant breakdown/technical details and photos of different sections of the aircraft showing the details you need for modeling.

Production model Airacobras really begin with the P-39D, which is the first model to have the fillet at the base of the fin, which remains in place through the last P-39Q built. ***Many, if not most, Airacobra variants built owe their existence to substitutions of one piece of equipment for another, due to production shortages.*** Some models were built in hopes of improving performance in one area or another. But none of these was to prove very successful.

Before we get into variant specifics, here are some general notes on the Airacobra. As mentioned, all Airacobra models were powered by the venerable liquid cooled Allison V-1710, which is an upright (not inverted) V-12, having six cylinders on each side. All models of the V-1710 have two exhaust valves and also two exhaust ports *per* cylinder. Thus the exhaust manifolds fitted to the engine can have twelve pipes per side, or the two exhaust ports on each cylinder can be routed to exhaust into a single pipe, giving six exhaust pipes on each side of the engine. These six-pipe manifolds could have round openings at the ends, or be flattened to a 'fishtail' configuration. And the fishtail-type exhaust pipe could have more than one shape (i.e. the fishtail could be flattened to different degrees.) But different exhaust manifolds for the Allison V-1710 can be interchanged. So the type of exhausts fitted to an Airacobra is not necessarily a good indicator of which variant you are looking at.

Next under general notes may save you a few bucks on aftermarket accessories. Airacobra variants with two guns in each wing do not have exposed gun

barrels with the cooling jackets showing. I have to laugh every time I see this done on a model as it is a waste of time and money. Airacobras have a piece of stainless steel that conforms to the leading edge of the wing and has two tubes welded to it to enclose the guns. All you can see of the gun barrel is the very end. On the P-39Q with underwing gun pods, you can see the cooling jacket on the .50 caliber gun.

Regarding those cockpit doors, and whether they are open or closed, which I admit are kind of a 'thing' with me; the throttle quadrant on the P-39 is located on the left side of the cockpit, halfway into the front of the port cockpit door opening. With the throttle lever closed (pulled back) the throttle assembly impinges even further into the door opening than just the quadrant does. Even for a pilot of limited stature, trying to enter the cockpit wearing a parachute would be somewhat of a challenge. This is why the pilot's manual for the P-39 instructs pilots to enter the cockpit through the right side door.

Normally you will only see photos of the plane with the left door open for maintenance purposes, and many times in these instances the door is removed completely. Most of the P-39 kits provide separate doors. It is generally not a problem to close the left one, if you plan on building the model with the door closed from the outset. The trouble usually arises when you try to fit the door to a finished fuselage with the canopy already in place. By then it is more difficult to perform the necessary tweaks to get a good fit. OK, enough about that, you can mount your doors however you see fit.

The standard finish for propellers on U.S. aircraft during WW II is that the blades were painted flat black with insignia yellow tips on both front and rear. P-39's started out using Curtiss Electric, but these were in short supply very early on, so props from AeroProducts were substituted. For whatever reason, you will see a lot of wartime Airacobra photos where the props are not painted black. They are either unpainted, or painted a light metallic gray. If they are not black, the yellow tips are not present most of the time. But there are also photos of planes with the blades painted black, but still without yellow tips. I do not know if the blade color is related to the brand used (Curtiss or AeroProducts) or what the reason is. But if you have a photo of your subject, you might want to check it out.

In the next two installments on this subject, we'll provide an overview of the Airacobra variants and their differences, and provide a quick look at the variety of available kits and aftermarket goodies that currently are available for the Airacobra in each of the common scales.

IPMS Canada Members

Chapter members who are also members of IPMS Canada are reminded that notices were mailed to those who's membership will lapse with the current issue of RT. If you found a special message tucked in the issue you recently received, it's time for you to mail them a check.

2010 Contests and Other Events

August 4-7, 2010 IPMS/USA National Convention and Contest, Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, AZ. Hosted by Arizona IPMS Chapters. For details, go to www.ipmsusa.org or visit IPMS 2010 on Facebook.

Sept 11, 2010 Gateway to the West Show & Swap Meet, IPMS Gateway, Hitter's Choice Batting Cages, 534 Workman Rd, Eureka, MO. Contact Doug Barton 636-332-9960

Oct 2, 2010 Huntsville Plastic Modelers' Society 34th Annual Contest, Huntsville Jaycees Building, 2180 Airport Road, Huntsville, AL. Contact David Lanteigne 256-348-8392

Nov 11, 2010 IPMS Middle Tennessee Annual Contest, Lane Agri Park, 315 John Rice Blvd, Murfreesboro, TN. Contact Novis Henry 615-478-2305

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Remember, the *Leading Edge* is a product of monthly contributions from chapter members and friends. Send our Editor Roger Rasor and/or Bill Von Staden any information you have for the next issue. Email your information roger.rasor@ipaper.com and/or bvonstaden@yahoo.com

IPMS Memphis

www.ipmsmemphis.com

Annual membership in IPMS Memphis is \$15/year, payable in January of each year, plus \$3 meeting dues collected at each meeting attended.

Meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month at the Pinnacle Airlines training center, 1785 Nonconnah Blvd, Suite 111, Memphis.

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IPMS Memphis is a chartered chapter of IPMS USA and IPMS Canada. For more information, visit www.ipmsmemphis.com