



LEADING EDGE



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No. 270

October 2010

If it's September, it's Showtime!

As scheduled, the main event of the September meeting was the 'picture show' of many of the aircraft entries at the 2010 IPMS USA National Convention in Phoenix. So, at the appointed time, with hot popcorn aroma abounding, the lights were dimmed and everyone focused on the big screen. The 2+ hour show was great, and we had commentary from three chapter members who were in attendance at the national event in the 'dry heat.'

We would be remiss if we didn't acknowledge the efforts of **Kevin Wilson** in putting together the selection of photos we saw at the meeting. Kevin was working with a total of probably 350 images, and had to whittle the show down to something manageable, yet entertaining. If you have never done a show like this, we can tell you it is quite a task working with so many thumbnail images, and trying not to stop and open more of them than necessary while trying to get them into a sensible sequence. When you do open them to do a final check, sometimes that string of three images you thought were all the same F4F-4 Wildcat turn out to have an FM-2 Wildcat in the middle, which is not the same model at all! Thanks, Kevin!

As mentioned, the program we viewed was an all-aircraft show. If there is enough interest, there is the possibility of an additional smaller show in November, which would give us a look at a variety of categories. Please let us know your preference on that idea!

Huntsville Show

The Huntsville Plastic Modelers Society held their 34th Annual Contest on Saturday, October 2nd at the usual venue...the Huntsville Jaycees' Building. Again this year, the weather was perfect as the usual suspects (AKA chapter members) made the trek southeast to northern Alabama. The chapter was well represented

by members Rich Van Zandt, Kevin Wilson, Scott Doyle, David Morris, Jim Webb, Bill Von Staden, Joe Vincent, Pill Hale, Chad Richmond, Pat Donahue, Jorge Barnard, Stan Parker and Roger Rasor. Kim Hale, Mary Donahue and Margie Rasor also made cameo appearances at the event before hitting the road for their annual ladies day out (AKA road trip to destinations known only to them).

Although vendor count was down from last year, it was great to see that most of the usual ones made it and had plenty of merchandise to tempt visitors. More than a few dollars were seen passing from one hand to another as certain kits, decals and aftermarket goodies were found to be absolutely essential necessities by some attendees.

The model competition attracted a good number of entries, especially in the aircraft categories. This year, some of the categories were combined in a way that included a range of scales and/or a rather unique mix of subjects, and there were very few splits.

Once again, the Memphis chapter fared well. There were seven first place awards among the 17 that the home team carried away. **Pat Donahue's** Eduard Yak 3 took first in the 1/48 Single-prop (Allied) category, **Bill Von Staden's** Eduard Bf 110 E captured first in the combined scales Multi-engine category, **Roger Rasor's** Tamiya 1/72 Fw 190A-3 won first in the combined scales OOB category, **Rich Van Zandt's** AVF Club F-5E captured first in the 1/48 Jets category and his Tamiya A6M5 took first in the 1/48 Single-prop (Axis) category, **Kevin Wilson's** Tamiya 1/24 VW Bug took first in the Stock Auto category and **David Morris'** Revell 1/72 GATO Submarine won first in the contest's combined scales Ships category.

EDITOR: Roger Rasor

CONTRIBUTORS: Bill Von Staden, Phil Hale,
Pat Donahue, Richard Van Zandt,



Chapter members who attended the Huntsville show included: Stan Parker in the foreground and left to right: Rich Van Zandt, Jim Webb, Phil Hale, Joe Vincent, Bill Von Staden, Jorge Barnard, Pat Donahue, Roger Rasor, Chad Richmond, David Morris and Kevin Wilson. Scott Doyle, just like Elvis, already had left the building.



Pat's 1/48 Eduard Yak 3 took First Place Photo by Rich Van Zandt

In addition to these awards, Pat took second in Miscellaneous with his CMK 1/48 Napier Sabre Engine, Bill captured second in 1/48 Single-prop (Axis) with his Tamiya Fw 190A-8 and third in combined scales Rigged Aircraft with his Eduard 1/48 Dr-1, Kevin took second in Soft Skin Armor with his 1/48 Tamiya VW Type 82 Staff Car, Rich

took second in 1/48 Single-prop (Allied) with his Tamiya Spitfire Mk.1, second in Single-prop (Allied – Radial Split) with his Eduard F6F-3 Hellcat, second in Ships with his Dragon 1/700 LCS-2 USS Independence



Rich's First Place AVF Club F-5E 'Adversary' Photo by Rich Van Zandt

and third in 1/72 Jets with his Hasegawa F-111F Aardvark, David won second in a unique category named 'Motorcycles and Dioramas' with his Tamiya 1/12 Pramac Ducati and **Stan Parker** took third in 1/48 Single-prop (Axis) with his Tamiya Bf 109 E-3.

The show's Best Aircraft award went to Ken Niles for a realistic 1/32 Albatros Dv built from a Wingnut Wings kit. The model was recently posted on the HyperScale Theme Pics forum and has garnered compliments from the likes of Jerry Rutman and Tony Bell. As the photos below show...it was worthy of the award.



Ken Niles 1/32 Albatros Dv won Best Aircraft Photo by Rich Van Zandt



For a long time, the Huntsville event was the last local Region 3 show of the year and it was a great way to bring our annual competition circuit to a close. This year's show was as good as any we've attended in the past and we again take our collective hats off to the Huntsville chapter for another great one. But fortunately for us,



Bill's Eduard Dr-1 rounded out his award 'trifecta' Photo by Rich Van Zandt
we have yet another show to look forward to this year in Region 3...since the IPMS Middle-Tennessee chapter has scheduled their now annual Murfreesboro show for



Roger's First Place 1/72 Tamiya Fw 190 A-3 Photo by Rich Van Zandt



David's 1/12 Pramac Ducati took Second Place Photo by Rich Van Zandt



Rich's Tamiya A6M5 and its First Place award Photo by Rich Van Zandt

November 6. So, as we reflect on the time we had in Huntsville, we can look forward to another opportunity to gather with fellow model builders to enjoy one more local show before we unpack our sweaters for the winter.

October Meeting Up!

We expect to be back in full swing with our regular chapter meeting format for October. This month our meeting will be held on the evening of Saturday the 9th and it will start at 6:30 PM. We will be reviewing the collective Huntsville experience and looking forward to seeing the current crop of in-progress and completed models. So, please bring along what you have been working on and any new books, kits, decals and other modeling goodies you may have picked up recently. The world-famous chapter raffle will be back this month, so bring a couple of bucks for extra tickets!

We request that you show up at about 6:15 PM to try to make the mass entry into the compound. 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!

Bell Airacobra – Part 4

by Bill Von Staden



Photo credited to Bell Aircraft

Last month we reviewed the current 1/72 Airacobra kit option and two of the three current 1/48 options. The final Airacobra kit option for 1/48 modelers is an OOP kit that has its roots in a forty-some year old Monogram kit.

1/48 Monogram/ProModeler – I can honestly say I have not considered building this kit recently, but this late 60's-era kit does manage to solve a few problems that the newer 1/48 kits have.

First, the left door is already shut for you, so it fits flush. Second, the rollover structure behind the pilot is molded as part of the airframe, and not as part of the canopy. So there is no break or step between this structure and the fuselage, you know, like the real thing. And nobody could ever complain about the overall shape of this one – it looks like a P-39. That said, you will have to do a bit of work if you want the cannon bay access panel on the side of the nose to fit closed, as it tends to fall through the opening. And you will need to sand off all of the raised circular 'filler caps' or whatever Monogram thinks they are on the top of both wings. And of course the panel lines all over the surface are the raised type.

In the cockpit, the seat has had a molding defect in it since the late 70's that has never been corrected. But, believe it or not, the ex-KMC resin cockpit set is still available from Squadron Shop under the True Details brand for about \$11! Installing this will go a long way to help with the interior details. Of course, Eduard offers a photo-etched cockpit set for this P-39 kit, too.

Monogram's nose gear oleo section can stand a bit of lengthening, as it is molded almost fully compressed. You can remove it and drill holes up into the strut, and down into the yoke to allow a small length of piano wire surrounded by a piece of

polished 1/16" aluminum tubing to make a new oleo section. A touch of clear over the aluminum will keep it from getting dull with age. The nose gear retraction strut is molded as a single piece, which detracts from the look of the nose gear, and it is very obvious being right there in plain view. The ProModeler release of the kit has this part on the brass photo-etched fret to replace it, but of course it is only two dimensional. A better solution would be to scratch build one from Evergreen square strip styrene, as it would only take about five short pieces. A well-built and finished Monogram Airacobra will still look pretty good sitting beside its forty year younger siblings from the Czech Republic and Japan!

1/32 Special Hobby – Offers three kits in this scale: P-39D, Airacobra Mk I/ P-39F, and P-39Q Makin Island Airacobras. (A special thanks to Scott Doyle for providing all of the 1/32 information for this article.)

Special Hobby has released three versions of the P-39 in 1/32 scale. The breakdown of the model is very similar to the 1/48 Eduard and Hasegawa kits; two fuselage halves, one lower wing with two upper pieces. The flight control surfaces, with the exception of the flaps, are separate and can be positioned as desired. The cockpit doors are separate and the canopy is a single piece. The engine and gun bays are molded closed.

All three kits contain some parts not used in that specific kit, namely gun barrels for the various configurations used on P-39 variants. All versions contain a centerline drop tank and bomb. A nose weight is not included, but will be required. The decals are by Aviprint. Below is a short description of each kit.

Kit # 32002 P-39D

The first release of three kits consists of six gray plastic sprues and one clear. Three resin parts - a pair of tubular exhausts and a gunsight, are included. A single photo-etch fret contains a pre-painted US style harness, hinges for the nose wheel doors and doors for the under wing radiators. Markings are for three OD/Neutral Gray US Army aircraft based in New Guinea.

Kit #32025 Airacobra Mk. I / P-39F "In RAF & RAAF Service"

This release contains everything in kit #32002 with the following additions and changes. An extra plastic sprue contains the AeroProducts propeller used by the P-39F. The single set of tubular resin exhausts is replaced by a set of RAF-style fishtail exhausts and a set of twelve stub exhausts, both in resin. The resin gunsight remains. The big addition to the kit is two large photo-

etch frets containing both US & Sutton harnesses and two complete instrument panels, all in color. There are PE parts for the undercarriage, wheel bays, interior of the cockpit doors and mounting hardware for the centerline store. Markings are provided for two RAF (Mk.I's) and one RAAF (P-39F) aircraft. If you wanted to model a P-400, this would be the kit to get as the instrument panel and exhausts needed are included.

Kit #32026 P-39Q "Makin Island Airacobras"

The third release is the most expensive of the three. The one propeller and one set of tubular exhausts from the P-39D kit are included. Two photo-etch frets with color US Harness and P-39Q instrument panels are included as well as the etch cockpit components of kit #32025. The exterior PE pieces of that kit are not included. A new plastic sprue with nose gun vents and underwing gun pods is included. This kit includes more resin consisting of a cockpit floor, rear bulkhead and incidentals. Markings are included for two Makin Island aircraft, one in overall black and one in OD/NG. Two Canton Island Aircraft are also included, both in sand over light blue.

Aftermarket Parts:

1/72 Scale (All for the Academy kit)

Aires – P-39Q/N Cockpit (Resin and Brass), Allison engine (Resin)

CMK – P-39Q Cockpit (Resin and Brass),

Eduard – Offer several photo-etched detail sets, and canopy masks

Pavla – P-39Q Cockpit (Resin)

Quickboost – P-39Q/N Resin Exhausts, P-39N/Q Allison Engine (exposed on one side only)

Verlinden – Resin/Photo-etched Detail set includes resin control surfaces, brass flaps, cannon bay detail and parts for cockpit.

1/48 Scale (Intended Kit in Parenthesis)

Aires – Control surfaces (Edu), Wheel bays (Hsg)

Avionix – Cockpit (Has)

CMK – Armament set (Edu), Engine set (Edu), Interior set (Hsg), Exterior set (Hsg), 6-stack round exhausts (all), 6-stack flared exhausts (all), 6-stack fishtail RAF exhausts (all)

Cutting Edge – Cockpit (Edu) great, but now out of production. I believe there is not currently another resin cockpit on the market for the Eduard kit. The Verlinden detail set includes only a couple of cockpit parts.

Eduard- Airacobra photo-etched (Mon), Airacobra photo-etched (Edu), Landing flaps photo-etched (Edu), Landing flaps photo-etched (Hsg), P-39D/P-400 Color photo-etched set (Edu), P-39N/Q Color photo-etched

set (Edu), P-39D/P-400 Detail photo-etched set (Hsg), P-39N/Q Detail photo-etched set (Has), Airacobra Placards (Edu), P-39/P-400 Color Zoom photo-etched, P-39N/Q Color Zoom photo-etched.

KMC (see True Details below)

Moskit – 12-stack exhausts (all)

Quickboost – P-400 Exposed engine (Edu), P-39C/D Exposed engine, P-39N/Q Exposed engine, P-39C/D Flared exhausts (Edu), P-39Q/N 6-stack round exhausts (Edu), P-39Q/N 6-stack round exhausts (Hsg), Gun barrels (Hsg)

True Details – Cockpit ex-KMC (Mon), Early wheels (all), Mid-Production wheels (all)

- Note: the Mid-Production Wheel set is referred to as "Late" which they are not

Verlinden – Detail set (Edu)

Ultracast – Seat w/Sutton harness (all), Seat w/U.S. harness (all), Seat without harness (all), 6-stack exhausts round (all), 6-stack flared exhausts (all), 6-stack fishtail RAF exhausts (all), 12-stack exhausts (all)

1/32 Scale (All for the Special Hobby kits)

CMK – Engine Set (in resin, left side of engine in compartment with access panels), Undercarriage Set (replacement main wheel wells in resin), Armament Set (resin nose armament)

Eduard – offers four etched sets to enhance the Special Hobby kit; Flaps, Exterior, P-39D Cockpit (self-adhesive) and Undercarriage (main gear doors.) They also offer a canopy mask set, and everything together in their Big Ed set.

Scale Aircraft Conversions – makes a replacement landing gear strut set in cast metal.

Zotz – has released a 1/32 decal sheet containing markings for some of the more famous PTO Airacobras, including Air-a-Cutie, Wahl Eye II and White 23 with fighting Donald Duck.

There are many 1/48 scale P-39 decal sheets and a few in 1/72, both current and out of production. We will not attempt to list them all here because of space limitations. And it's difficult to tell which of the sheets would actually be available, as 'out of print' does not necessarily mean a distributor does not have them. If you have questions about any of these however, please feel free to e-mail them to me at bvonstaden@yahoo.com and I'll answer what I can.

So, we bring to a close our series covering the subject of the military versions of the Airacobra and what is available to the modeler who is interested in building one. Hopefully, this 4-part series has provided enough of the information needed to build something to enter in the chapter's December contest. We sincerely hope so.

Dr. Phil

Howdy boys. Like I said last month, I thought I'd share something with you this month that is related to the subject you guys are currently most interested in...at least airplane-wise. I thought...yeah, I know...you thought I pay Luke to think for me most of the time...well, anyway, this time I thought...and then, when I woke up, I actually remembered what I was thinking. Since the P-39 contest was coming soon and since Bill has been doing a wonderful job on the multi-part article on the old "Iron Dog"...and, since I can't remember if Bill covered the Air Racing Airacobras so far and since it was 2:13am on a Thursday morning and since it was on my mind, I thought I'd share something about the two most successful P-39 Air Racers.

Bell bought back from the USAAF two P-39Qs SN 42-20733 and 42-20869 for test purposes but they soon became property of Bell's Race Division "Skylanes Unlimited". All the military equipment was stripped from the machines and they were fitted with up-rated Allison V-1710-135 engines with single stage superchargers. Both were fitted with a P-63E four-blade propeller plus a water injection system. The water injection systems sprayed a fine mist into the cylinders to cool them for limited bursts of higher speed.



Photo of Cobra II showing shape and position of the underside cooling system
An additional cooling system was added to the underside of the fuselage that consisted of a P-40 oil cooler in a streamlined fairing. The pitot tube was re-located to the cannon port in the center of the



Cobra II '84', as it looked when Tex Johnson flew it to victory in 1946

propeller spinner. Jack Woolams and Tex Johnston, both Bell test pilots, were picked to fly the Cobras in the Thompson "R" Trophy (speed) Race of 1946.

Unfortunately, Jack Woolams crashed the Red and Black Cobra I (42-20733) NX92847 into Lake Ontario on a test run. Speculation gave two possible reasons for the crash. One was a failure of the windscreen and the second was a structural failure of the tail section. Either way Cobra I, and a great pilot were lost.

Cobra II (42-20869) NX 92848 had its tail section reinforced and was painted in a beautiful yellow and black scheme identical to Cobra I except for the colors. Tex Johnston was able to win the 1946 Thompson Trophy race with an average speed 374 mph at sea level. Cobra II had qualified at 409.1 mph and was the fastest racer that year. Cobra II went on to race in other Thompson Races but never fared as well as in 1946. It was sold before the 1947 speed race and the race number was changed from "84" to "11" and Jay Demming replaced Tex Johnston as pilot.



Jay Demming poses with Cobra II after it was renumbered from '84' to '11'
Demming went on to win third place in the 1947 Thompson "R" Race, beaten only by the Pratt and Whitney 4360 powered F-2G Super Corsairs. The Corsairs' big P&W 4360 developed 3650+ horsepower and Navy pilot Cook Cleland flew his F-2G to an average speed of 396+ mph placing first.

The post war Thompson Trophy races, like most of the other national competitions, were literally owned by then current and former military aircraft and the focus was on increasing horsepower. Cobra II was again in new hands for the 1948 Thompson and



Last iteration of #11, with 'Kaiser Frazer' and 'KF-1' replacing 'Cobra II'

was fitted with an Allison V-1710-G-6, an oversized blower and alcohol-water injection providing an amazing 2850 horsepower. The paint scheme was changed again because the exterior was smoothed, puttied and sanded providing a good base for the many coats of paint.

The new engine and the smooth exterior enabled pilot Chuck Brown to attain a blistering 418 mph qualifying speed. Brown was able to make one lap at 413.097 mph, allowing him to take the lead but then had to drop out of the race on lap 19 with a troubled engine. Unfortunately, Brown thought he actually had won the race, thinking he was on the last lap of the 20-lap race.

Cobra II was then sold in the late 1960s to Mike Carroll who had planned to restore her to her past glory...but it was not to be. Cobra II was destroyed when it crashed on a test hop and pilot Carroll was killed, when he hit the tail section as he attempted to bail out.

There were many other P-39s and P-63s that attempted to win both the Thompson and the Bendix Air Races but none that had the success of Cobra II. The old "Iron Dog" may have not been the best fighter of World War II, but down low she was fast as "greased lightning" and did achieve some glory as an air racer. Every dog has his day!

Got to go for now. Take care and my best to you all. God bless.

Dr Phil

Snakebit?!

So, after reading the good doctor's article about the two racing Cobras, if you are interested in building a 1/48 model of the famous Thompson Trophy Cobra I or Cobra II, where do you start? Do you remember the 1950s Revell box art painting of the P-39 racer? Hmm, some of us do...and we remember it fondly. But, that kit was not really 1/48 and it's a collector's item now.

Well, last year Accurate Miniatures released a new kit of the air racing Cobras...based on the plastic that comes out of the Eduard molds. But, unfortunately what is packed in the Accurate Miniatures box will not get you there, just as the old Revell kit really would not get you there back then. So what is a modeler to do...?

Well, take heart...if you don't mind doing a little research and work, Pat Donahue has told us you can build an Accurate (no pun intended) Cobra racer by using a lot of what comes in the Accurate Miniatures kit as a starting point. Next month Pat will pick up where Bill and Phil have left off and provide more details about the racing versions of the Airacobra and a description of what you need to do to build one of them.

December is Approaching Fast

And as the days get shorter and the temperature begins to fall, please remember that our December meeting also will be the night of our final contest of the year...The Airacobra Theme Contest.

The Airacobra series Bill is concluding in this issue was intended to fill in the blanks for those who needed information about the subject. We hope that everyone has found the series beneficial as they have moved forward on their entry for the contest.

Rumor has it that a couple of members have been adding the finishing touches to their models already and another rumor has it that a couple of other members are just beginning work on their models. We look forward to a good turn out.

Roger is working on a great looking plaque that would look good over any member's work bench, so we hope you will get back to work on your entry as soon as you finish reading this issue of the Leading Edge.

And While on The Subject

We soon will be discussing contest themes for 2011. In the past, we have paid tribute to both significant aircraft and significant events...we've built aircraft with one engine and two crew members, camouflaged aircraft, multi-engine aircraft, aircraft 'in other markings' and aircraft with roundels. We'll kick things off as usual in March with the traditional Out-of-the-Box contest, but then what will follow?

Well, everyone will have a vote. And, as we ponder the subject, it's worth noting that next year will see some significant anniversaries in military aviation history that deserve consideration... such as the **75th anniversary** of the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, the **70th anniversary** of the attack on Pearl Harbor, America entering WW II, enactment of the Lend Lease Act and the first combat of the Flying Tigers the **60th anniversary** of China's involvement in the Korean War, and the **50th anniversary** of the Bay of Pigs. And, in addition, **75 years ago** (in 1936) history recorded the first flights of the Spitfire, the Lysander, the Bf 110, the Ju 88, the Ki27 Nate and the Polikarpov I-153. So there are quite a few aircraft subjects and anniversaries worth considering as we look forward to our contest themes in 2011.

A Parting Shot

So, you say you've got an old aircraft engine lying about and have always wanted to find a way to star in the remake of Easy Rider? Is that what's been bugging you Bunkie? Well, cheer up...just look at what some clever dudes in the Midwest did when

they were confronted with that very situation...



Believe it or not, Rotec Engineering, makers of radial engines like the one in this photo, say there are at least 4 of these projects in various stages of completion at the present time. Hmm...just might be the right thing for Dr. Phil to ride on when he's out making house calls...

2010 Contests and Other Events

Oct 23, 2010 ScottCon 2010, General Robert L. Scott Chapter, Robins Museum of Aviation, Robins AFB, Warner Robins, GA Contact Jerry Hall 478-329-1435, or wrgahall@cox.net

Nov 6, 2010 IPMS Middle Tennessee Annual Contest, Lane Agri Park, 315 John Rice Blvd, Murfreesboro, TN Contact Novus henry 615-478-2305 or nhenryjr@bellsouth.net

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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

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

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