Scale Views

The newsletter of the Australian Plastic Modellers Association – **Issue 7 2021**

ABOUT SCALE VIEWS

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Scale Views *appears as a supplement to* **APMA**, *the Association's quarterly magazine. Contributions for inclusion in the magazine and newsletter are welcome from any and all members.*

Submissions do not have to be camera ready; the Editorial team are happy to assist with organising and formatting text and drawings based on your drafts.

To submit material for inclusion in Scale Views contact the staff at ***apma.newsletter@gmail.com****, see us at a meeting, contact Bill via his personal e-mail* **wjrenfrew@gmail.com** *or send correspondence to the Secretary,* **PO Box 464, Cremorne, NSW 2090.**

The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect those of the members or committee of the Australian Plastic Modellers Association or of the Newsletter Editorial team.

APMA MEETINGS

APMA meets monthly (usually on the second Saturday) at
Gladesville Sporties Club, 181A Ryde Road, Gladesville NSW

For meeting details visit the APMA web site at:
http://apma,org.au

NEXT MEETING: AUGUST 14 @ Noon

2021 Committee

President – Lindsay Charman
Vice President – Warren Evans
Secretary – Steven Leslie
Treasurer – Dave Muir
5th Committeeman – Chris Cole

EDITORIAL DROPPINGS

Welcome to the seventh of our Newsletters for 2021. Our thanks go to DC, Ley, Lindsay, Mike, Bill and Simon for their very welcome contributions.

To everyone else: shame on you! It is not hard to do a review or an article…just jot down your thoughts, stick them in an email and the Editorial teams will happily do the rest.

JULY NON - MEETING

Thanks to the lockdown of the (Not So) Greater Sydney Region the July Meeting had to be cancelled. We hope you all used the opportunity to get some modelling done and we look forward to seeing the results in August, assuming things have improved in the meantime.

As we traditionally show at least one photo from the meeting we have raided Simon's archives for photos of meetings and members in the distant past…way, way back at the beginning of APMA.

UPCOMING SHOWS

Subject of course to confirmation the known dates are:

Sydney Model Shipbuilders Club Expo: 28 & 29 August
Sydney Scale Model Show 4th September
Clarendon Classic Rally September 18 &19
Wagga & District Scale Model Show: 23 & 24 October
Australian Model Expo:(Melbourne) 30 & 31 October
ScaleACT: (Canberra) 30 & 31 October

QT BUNNI COMPETITION

REMINDER: The QT Bunni Comp is on in August and just under a month away…so it is time to get modelling!

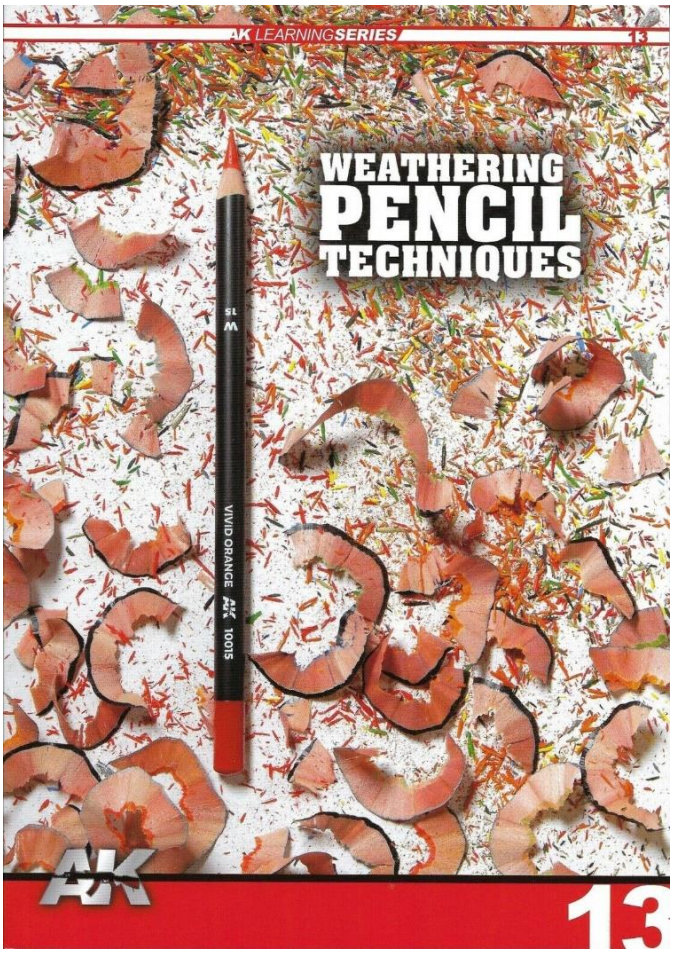
2021 – Songs

This year's competition will feature subjects that are mentioned in the title or lyrics of popular songs. Bunni is available at meetings if you have any questions.

BOOK REVIEWS

WEATHERING PENCIL TECHNIQUES

AK Interactive Learning Series No 13
Reviewed by Mike Buonarotti



As a modeller usually building race cars and boats I have little need for much weathering beyond a bit of light exhaust staining. However, I have been recently asked to make a model of a somewhat run down boat for a friend and needed guidance on how to approach some serious weathering. Having done a lot of drawing and sketching since I was a kid pencils seemed like an easy introduction to this art. So I leapt in the shallow end and purchased a set of AK pencils and this book.

Its 92 pages are divided into three main sections. Part 1 covers pencil manufacturing, pencil types and qualities and basic application methods using both wet and dry approaches. Part 2 looks at specific types of weathering of various materials such as metals, paint, temporary distempers, rust, moss and mould, wood and fluids. Part 3 looks at ten examples and shows how to weather vehicles, aircraft and objects using the techniques described in Part 2.

I found the first section on manufacturing and pencil types both interesting and informative with readable text and helpful illustrations. It gives a broad and useful understanding of the background and use of the different types of pencils and how they are used. Part 2 sees a change in format from the chunks of text supported by illustrations in Part 1 to lots of illustrations supported by very small amounts of text – in reality just captions - and this latter style carries over into Part 3.

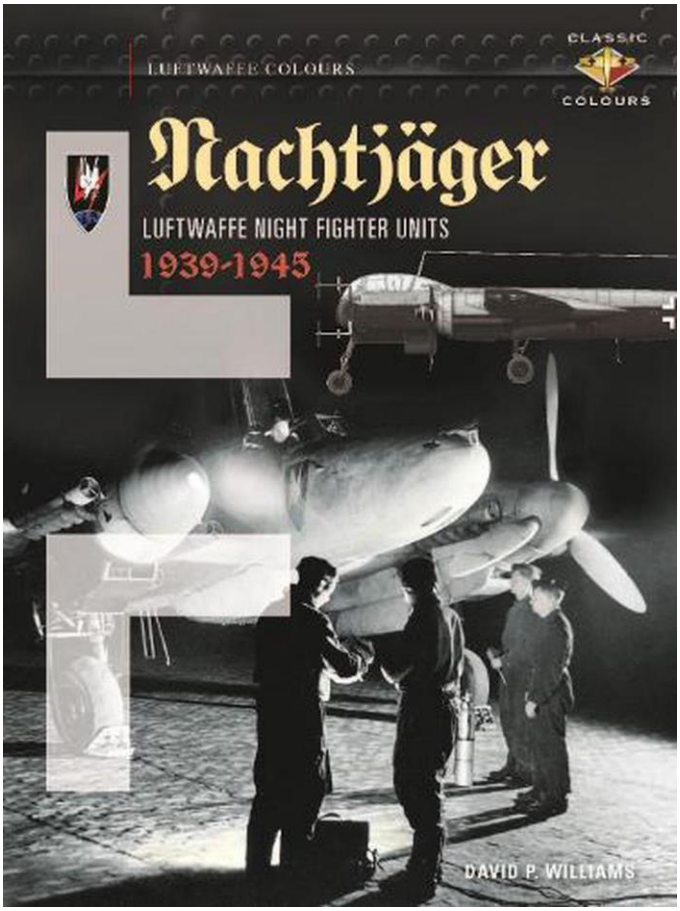
This second approach is fine when the subject is covered over several pages and in some depth but does not work nearly as well when the coverage (as it is for many of the examples) is sparse and limited to only two pages. Having read the surprisingly short (one of those two pagers) on “Chipping on Airplanes” I was a disappointed to be not much the wiser. The longer ‘chapters’ taking you step-by-step through the processes are certainly more successful at introducing the reader to weathering processes.

The best aspects of this book are the discussion on materials and qualities of pencils at the beginning and the multitude of images of full size and scale weathering on different materials. While the examples shown tend to be over weathered to my eye that is a matter for each modeller and, given the title of the book, really only to be expected.

It does suggest and encourage the neophyte (like me) to experiment and try different colours and techniques, pointing out that mistakes are largely reversable with erasers and water. I suspect that its utility will diminish over time as I build up some practice time and skills in the darkening arts. However, available widely for under AU$20 I think this book is reasonable value and thus RECOMMENDED with some qualifications. I will let you know about the pencils once I have had a go with them…

NACHTJAGER – LUFTWAFFE NIGHTFIGHTER UNITS 1939 – 45

By David Williams
Crecy Publications ISBN: 9781906537562
About $60.00 from specialist bookshops and online.
Reviewed by Ley Reynolds



My late father, Wal Reynolds, flew 43 operations over Europe in Halifax's with 466 (RAAF) Sqn, 4 Group, Bomber Command in 1943-44, during which his aircraft was attacked by a nightfighter just once. He was rather dismissive of this threat and always maintained that searchlights and ack-ack were more dangerous. Hence I've long been interested in obtaining more information on these aircraft and operations.

This 192 page hardback is a compilation of two earlier books published in 2005. Whether there has been any updating is unknown as the former have been OOP for some time and I have yet to seen them. The text comprehensively covers the Nachtjager arm from its modest beginnings in 1939 to its final defeat in 1945, accompanied by hundreds of b/w photo's, some close ups and 30 colour plates covering all the major types employed.

These not only illustrate the colours and markings but also such details as armament and aerial fit, all of which are a boon for modellers. It also adequately describes the totally dysfunctional command regime of the Luftwaffe, beset as it was by petty jealousies, but does not opine on what effect this had on the night arm's ultimate defeat.

Not surprisingly, the text concentrates on German successes but often fails to put these in context – for example Operation Gomorrah (the Hamburg firestorm) is described in detail but concentrates on the loss rate increasing over the four raids as evidence that the Luftwaffe had somewhat recovered by the last raid; it does not mention the catastrophic damage to the shipbuilding industry or that fires were still burning in 1946.

Similarly the 1944 Nuremberg raid (705 bombers despatched/95 lost to all causes – i.e. 13%) gets three pages but does not mention that Bomber Command was flying upwards of 1000 sorties per week virtually every week in 1944. There is also the seemingly obligatory concern for dead German civilians.

Of virtually no interest to this reviewer, potted biographies of nightfighter "aces" are sprinkled throughout the work and, in my view, only make for a confused layout and add very little to the narrative. It appears that the author has done considerable research on these but they come across as "heroic airmen defending their homeland" (from bases in France, Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Poland!) rather than the servants of a racist, murderous, despotic regime that they were.

One even includes the laughable claim that the pilot always aimed for the wing so that the RAF crew would have time to bail out! More colour plates and/or photo's would have been a better option or even some text on the overall "state of play" to provide context.

So to recommendations. If you want a plethora of details of colours/markings/equipment of Luftwaffe nightfighters – this is definitely for you. If you want a comprehensive narrative of the night air war over Europe 1939 to 1945 – this only has half the story. And if you are a Nazi arse-licker convinced of the superiority of all things German – this is right up your alley!

KIT AND PRODUCT REVIEWS

BOEING S-307 STRATOLINER

BAT Project Kit 72012 in 1/72
Reviewed by David Clark

By the mid-1930s, airline travel was becoming more common. However, although there was at the time no official requirement to do so, operations were generally limited to below 10,00 feet above sea level because the reduced air density above that level was dangerous for crews – hypoxia is insidious and can seriously affect the ability of flight crew to make proper decisions.

This caused its own difficulties because operations below that level was uncomfortable for passengers – most weather occurs below 10,000 feet, and the thermals and ground-induced turbulence which results has caused many a lost lunch. Many aircraft manufacturers sought to overcome these difficulties by developing a means of pressurising the crew and passenger accommodation on their products, thus enabling operations above 10,000 feet with an equivalent cabin height well below that limit.

Boeing was one of the first to succeed in this venture, offering in 1935 a pressurised airliner known as the Model 307 Stratoliner based on its Model 299 heavy bomber, the B-17, then under development. The first flight occurred on 31 December 1938, with the first production versions being ordered by Pan American, followed shortly thereafter by TWA. Ten were produced before WW2 intruded and production was curtailed. The ten were requisitioned during the war, being returned to their owners on the coming of peace. Most passed on to other operators, and some continued in service until the mid-1970s. Boeing used the knowledge it had gained from the 307 and B-17 in the design and manufacture of the B-29 and, after the war, the Stratocruiser.

THE KIT

Bat Project is a new arrival on the scene – I had not heard of them until this kit was announced. The firm is one of many that is emerging from behind what used to be the Iron Curtain. It is clearly a small operation – the kit's fuselage is split just ahead of the tailplanes, presumably so that the parts will fit into the company's moulding machines.

The kit itself comes in a large (340 x 240 x 80mm) top-opening box, inside which is a zip-lock bag containing no less than 16 frames of light grey styrene containing 139 parts

– two frames with the forward fuselage halves, two with the tail unit, five with the wings, centre section and spar, and the remainder with the engines and other small details.

In addition, there are some 29 parts shown as not being used on this kit (the Pan Am version), but which are presumably intended for other, future, boxings. The transparencies (32, with a further 9 not used) come in a separate bag. The decals, by Decograph from the Ukraine, are also separately bagged. They are in good register and look to be nice and dense. (They are of only academic interest to me; on my model I will be using the old Crosswind Hobbies sheet for one of the three aircraft of the International Control Commission used in Indochina after the French withdrawal. They were all ex-TWA aircraft formerly operated by the French company *Aigle Azur Transportes Ariene*.)

The instructions are in the form of an eight A4 page pamphlet printed in black and white. They include a potted history of the type, a painting guide with Humbrol colours, a parts map, and a 14 stages of pictograph instructions. On separate sheets there are rigging diagrams (the radio aerials) and colour schemes for the two aircraft covered by the decals.

The parts are typically short run items. There is a bit of flash, although nothing of serious consequence, and a plethora of moulding gates on the frames. These are not intrusive, but it may be preferable to use a razor saw to remove parts. There are no guides to joining large components, such as fuselage halves, so that care will be required to ensure that parts are properly in alignment before cement is applied. A dry fit of the fuselage halves suggests that there are no major problems in this area, and that most parts will line up if care is taken.

The review kit came from Hannants – I don't know whether there is an Australian distributor yet. It wasn't cheap – just under AU$184 plus postage – but compared to the alternative it's well ahead. (The alternative being the Maquette kit, which came with wings and tail from the never-released Frog B-17 kit and a limited run, low pressure moulding for the fuselage. The fuselage plastic had the consistency of used chewing gum, and the whole exercise could most politely be described as "rough".)
I'm happy to recommend the kit if you need a model of the Stratoliner in 1:72, despite the high price – after all, it's the only game in town …

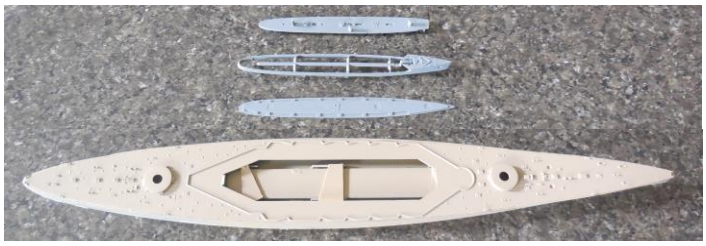
SMS *LÜTZOW 1916*
GERMAN DERFFLINGER CLASS

Flyhawk Kit FH1301S in 1/700
Review by Lindsay Charman

This is another lovely kit of one of WWI's larger warships by Flyhawk, this time a German vessel. With this waterline kit Flyhawk dabbled with the Aoshima (and sometimes Tamiya) approach to offering special versions of their new kits. This is where the manufacturer includes a second (or third) replica of a related small vessel in the same box. So, this particular version of *Lützow* comes with a bonus G-37 class torpedo boat destroyer, or TBD (this one being G-38). I think I was probably lucky to get this edition of the kit on special fairly recently, hence this rather late review (the kit was originally released overseas in 2014). Interestingly, the Scalemates website says that there have been as many as seven different editions of this 1/700 *Lützow*, though even they do not seem to be sure what all the variations and parts are in each edition.

The *Lützow* was actually launched in 1913 but was not fully commissioned until 1916 due to problems with her powerplants. There were three ships in her class. She had a very short life – she engaged in the bombardment of Yarmouth and Lowestoft in the UK, and then a few months later she took part in the Battle of Jutland / Skagerrak. She is said to have sunk the British battlecruiser HMS *Invincible* in the battle (and perhaps the HMS *Defence,* a large armoured cruiser) but she was herself mortally damaged such that she could not make it home to base. Consequently she was abandoned by her crew and subsequently sunk by her escort, said to be G-38 (which explains the identity of the bonus kit).

PARTS
The edition of the kit offers a basic plastic version of the battlecruiser with a small amount of photo etched material, plus the little replica of a German torpedo boat destroyer as its bonus – and as mentioned above there were a whole host of later deluxe and commemorative editions, each with varying amounts of extra parts, mainly photo-etch detailed bits, brass gun barrels and small resin components. I have not seen these kits in Australia so I can't comment on them. The picture below shows how tiny the little TBD hull is compared to the SMS *Lützow* hull.



There are several hundred parts (or so) of plastic parts (yes, I gave up counting as it was too hard to see the bits and too tedious); four complete sprues along with separate plastic pieces of the superstructure, separate hull components, plus major and minor superstructure parts, a waterline piece, a hefty 'weight' piece, a small but satisfactory decal sheet and the sheet of PE. The little TBD comes in a bag with its own instructions and PE.

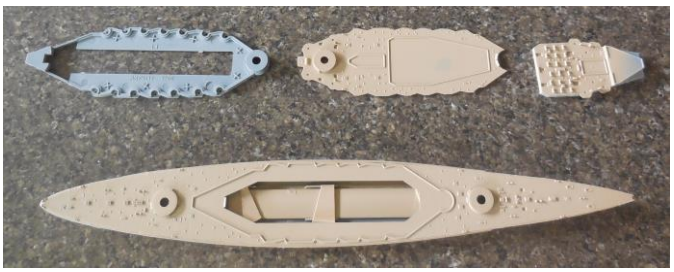
The waterline hull consists of two halves, a base piece and a deck in two pieces. The metal weight piece is to stick to the waterline bottom, presumably for stability or perhaps to reduce the chances of hull warping or maybe both. The decal sheet provides two big ensigns and some smaller flags. There are booms and 'netting' for the long hull mounted anti-torpedo nets. The ship was fairly long – 210.4 m, so the kit is impressively sized at just over 300mm.

DIMENSIONAL & SHAPE ACCURACY
I have to confess I lack a lot of reference on German WW1 vessels. However, the overall accuracy (to the extent that I can tell) and, in compliance with online references (which abound), looks spot on. The little G-38 seems to be pretty accurate too. Importantly, everything above the main deck seems to be nicely in proportion to the hull structure. The shape of all the main parts also look fine and it compares well to photos of the real thing. The turrets, boats and funnels all look very convincing.

DETAIL
Flyhawk's usual super-detailed small parts are much in evidence. *Lützow* was a fairly clean ship on her hull sides, but these have a really nice representation of plating, scuttle and porthole detail. The turrets have lovely surface detail and the finesse of the small parts, eg the smaller guns, is excellent.

ASSEMBLY
I have only partially assembled the basic components of the hull to date - just the main deck and some of the superstructure so far – and this has been very nice and easy, except when I was joining the main deck to the upper area of the two hull halves. I found fit was less than ideal and confess I ended up reinforcing it with small pieces of 40 thou styrene scrap and superglue. Then I partially smeared a small section of the deck trying to get it in place. This may simply have been incompetence on my part as I am more used to single piece hulls these days! A bit of light sanding got rid of the smear, though I lost a little bit of the beautiful deck detail. The decks are painted now and we'll see how the rest of the build goes.

The rest looks generally quite simple, although with a little bit of fiddliness at times, especially when, for example, I start on the photo etch – some of which looks really small and complex. As always, it will pay to proceed slowly and regularly check parts alignment.



OVERALL APPEARANCE
I think it will nicely take the standard German two shades of grey and it should also weather up nicely. The little G-38 TBD should be in a very dark grey or black, with brown linoleum decks. The overall finish of Flyhawk's *Lützow* model is very convincing and accordingly this kit is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

GLOSTER METEOR NF.14

SWORD Kit 48011, 1:48
Reviewed by David Clark

INTRODUCTION
The Meteor NF.14 was the last variant of a series that began during the Second Great Unpleasantness with the Meteor F.1, and could trace its lineage from the Meteor T.7 through the NF.12 and NF.13 (a tropicalised NF.12), the major differences between it and its two immediate predecessors being the replacement of the NF.12's APS.57 radar with the more powerful APQ.43 set and a new, blown clear vision canopy sliding to the rear. Ejection seats were also available, although it appears from the photographs I have been able to find that very few were fitted with them in RAF service.

Deliveries began in November 1953 and the type remained in service until Javelins began to replace it in 1957. 101 examples were produced, all serving with the RAF (although two were made available from RAF stocks to the French Air Force). The last front-line unit to use the NF.14 was No 60 Squadron, which undertook its final Meteor operational flight from Tengah in August 1961. Thereafter the type was used by No 1 Air Navigation School, for which thirteen examples were modified and designated NF(T).14, until 1965. Examples were also on charge with various research and other establishments well into the 1970s. A couple made it onto the civil register in similar roles.

THE KIT
Sword Models from the Czech Republic has now released a kit of the type in 1:48 scale. It comes in a largish (420 x 205 x 60 mm) top opening (bless them!) box. Inside is a large zip-lock closing bag containing four medium grey sprues, a second small bag containing the injection moulded transparencies, the instructions and a decal sheet.

The grey bits are cleanly moulded and total 98 parts. As seems to be more common these days, the fuselage halves have small pins and holes to assist with assembly, although they do not appear on the wings or tailplanes. There are no intrusive ejection pin mouldings on any interior surfaces other than the joining faces for the horizontal tailplanes, and these will have to be removed to get the tailplane halves to join properly. A quick dry fit of the main parts suggests that there should be no other major problems with fit or alignment.

Included in the grey bits are a detailed pair of cockpits, wheel wells, a pair of wing tanks and the ubiquitous Meteor belly tank. They include a pair of "narrow" air intakes for the engines. These have no internal detail to speak of. As all marks of Meteor had trunking from the intake lips to the internal wing/nacelle junction, this will need to be added.

Somewhere in my stash I have a pair of Barracuda "narrow" intakes, which I will dig out to see if they fit, with or without modification. They will give the trunking; as a bonus, being cast from a solid chunk of resin, they should help ensure that the model is not a tail sitter when built. Similarly, I will try replacing the kit mainwheels with a pair of Barracuda resin replacements, which will avoid having to fill an inconvenient seam on the kit parts.

The transparencies consist of the main canopy, alternate windscreens with and without the clear vision panel on the port side, the nose wheel door and a pair of wingtip navigation lights. They are nicely thin and clear.

The instructions are A5 sized and run to 13 pages. They include a brief type history, a parts map, instructions in the now standard pictogram style, and painting and decaling information. They are, with one exception, more than adequate for the job. The exception is that they do not indicate whether or not nose ballast will be required to prevent the model from being a tail sitter when complete. I suspect that, even with the Barracuda intakes, some will be required, but it would have been nice if the instructions had provided this information. Fortunately there's plenty of room in that long nose!

The decal sheet, by Techmod, is in good register and looks to be nicely dense in saturation. It provides markings for two aircraft (WS833 of 72 Squadron, Church Fenton, in 1956, and WS776 of 85 Squadron, also at Church Fenton, in 1958), both in the standard RAF Dark Green/Medium Sea Grey/Dark Sea Grey camouflage of the period, as well as stencils and other airframe markings. Surprisingly, it does not include anything for the instrument panels, the modeller being left to his own devices for these. Other squadrons, as well as the special units, had the NF.14 on charge, and I suspect that it won't be long before we see something from one or more of the usual aftermarket suspects. Hopefully the instrument panels will be included…

RECOMMENDATION
All in all, this is a welcome addition to the market. As well as enabling a fine replica of an NF.14 to be built, it means that it is now possible, with a bit of farnarkling here and there, to build an example of every Mark of Meteor, from alpha to omega, in 1:48 scale!

SCHERTEL-SACHSENBERG Sk116

Mikro Mir Kit No 35-011 in 1/35
Review by Mike Buonarroti

The Schertel-Sachsenberg *Sk116* hydrofoil torpedo boat project, conceived as a way to combine a stealthy approach with high speed delivery and escape, was armed with one torpedo and designed to be operated by one man. Like so many of Germany's wartime projects the *Sk116* had a slightly Buck Rogers feel about it, especially as it was also designed to work as a hydrofoil and as a submarine.

Strange though it may be the *Sk116* was a serious concept conceived by two people who were more than accomplished in their own fields. Baron Hanns von Schertel had pioneered hydrofoils in Germany in the late 1920's and early 1930s. Gotthard Sachsenberg had led a storied life; naval officer, commander of MFJ III, a 31 victory fighter ace in WW1, founder and leader of Kampfgeschwader Sachsenberg while fighting the communists in the Baltic in the 20s, federal politician and founder of Aero Lloyd in the 30s, ship builder into the 40s.

Joining forces as the Schertel - Sachsenberg Hydrofoil Syndicate in the mid-1930s they built high speed passenger boats before turning to this project in 1942. After the second World War they founded a Swiss company, Supramar, who developed and successfully commercialized passenger hydrofoil technology.

THE KIT
Mikro Mir appear to have a fondness for such oddities and have produced a short run injected styrene kit of the beast based on the very limited information – essentially just one general arrangement drawing – that is available about the project. Delivered in a somewhat skimpy box it consists of just 35 mid-grey, 2 clear and 3 PE parts plus a three part mid-grey stand, it is not a particularly complicated kit.

However, it is not without challenges. For starters there are no pins or other locating devices to help with aligning the hull and its shape (a double ended circular cross section tapering in both directions) is challenging enough to keep truly round by itself. Then comes the fun of hanging all the complicated foils off both ends, again without any location assistance.

None of which is helped by the surprisingly resilient flash around the mating surfaces that has to be removed first. A preliminary clean up, some homemade locating tabs and the supplied base stiffened with scrap plus lots of tape, lots of dry fitting and improvised jigs are essential to getting the bits to fly in a close and correctly aligned formation.

A nominal interior (a bulkhead and a seat base) are provided but, in reality, not much will be visible through the small viewports. The supplied bulkhead has no marked location and does not fit closely anywhere along the portion of the 'hull' aft of the portholes where it might possibly go. A look at the drawings available on line – to which MM seem to have paid only scant attention - suggests that the back of the bulkhead and the cockpit hatch/canopy are 9 to 10mm aft of the front edge of the solid part of the kit fairing as supplied. Wherever it sits it needs considerable adjustment to get a good fit to the hull halves and the torpedo recess that runs along the underside of the hull. Once again dry fitting, tape and lots of filler are needed.

The bulkhead position brings into question the clear parts that form the front of the fairing; instead of one piece with three ports (as per the drawing) it has two pieces with four. Rather annoyingly the parts map in the instructions shows the former but Micro Mir supply the latter. This is nasty error to fix as the join runs right through the central window at the front of the 'three window' arrangement. So there is a difficult choice to be made: use the kit parts and have four view ports that don't match the only reference, or take the trouble to make a new piece with three and at the same time take the opportunity to move the panel line 9mm aft.

This is not such a silly option. Combining the front 9mm of the fairing with the clear parts should make a quick and easy

master for a bit of plunge moulding or vac-forming, using clear sheet to make a replacement hatch/canopy to fit from the front of the cockpit opening all the way back to the line in front of the relocated bulkhead. Which opens up a great opportunity to add interest by leaving the canopy open and doing some internal imagineering by fitting out the cockpit with a control wheel, consoles, instruments and assorted do dads.

There is also room to add the sort of practical external details (a snorkel, mooring cleats, a radio mast, etc.) that would have inevitably appeared on the developed craft. One small correction is to fill in the oval recess on the left/port side. The drawing – again ignored by Mikro Mir - shows only one exhaust pipe coming out of the oval on the right/starboard side; add it with a piece of thin wall tube and fill the other side.

Roughly 390mm long this makes into a substantial model and, given the dangly bits fore and aft, displaying it needs some thought. The supplied base is pretty ordinary and probably best sacrificed as a temporary support/jig during the build. The real thing would probably have been moved to and from the water by crane and supported ashore on some sort of cradle. So, a couple of lifting eyes on the centre line in front and behind the fairing and a bit more imagineering are needed. If you need inspiration for the cradle, take a look at Bill Cook's excellent diorama (www.bcmmodels.com) which is also shown on MM's own website (www.mikro-mir.com/en/64-schertel.html).

REFERENCES
There are a couple of versions of the simple GA drawing on the net and that is it; no photos, no other documents. Mikro Mir's suggested colour scheme of grey mottle on light grey is acknowledged as purely hypothetical so there is plenty of scope to indulge any camouflage fantasy's you may harbor. After all would it have been camouflaged for its time above, on or below the surface?

RECOMMENDATION
A nice break from having to match the details of better referenced subjects. One to enjoy, not obsess about.

M113A1 WITH T50 TURRET

S-Model Kit SP072002 (one vehicle only) in 1/72
Reviewed by Lindsay Charman

The 1/72 AFV and ship model firm known as S-Model have been steadily producing over the past ten years or so some refreshingly simple, quick to build and nicely detailed kits, mainly of 1/72 AFV models, but also some 1/700 ships. In the past few years they have rather sadly gone a bit quiet but just recently I was lucky enough, through Platypus Publications' assistance, to acquire four 1/72 "M113A1s with T-50 turret – Vietnam War Australian Army" (S-Model's not entirely accurate product description) as used for a very long time now by the Australian (and for a shorter time by the New Zealand) armies. I gather the kit, billed in some quarters as a 'Special Edition', has been available for around three years now but somehow I only recently heard about it and had to have a few.

Now, S-Model generally seem to me to aim at a market that steers away from complicated, time consuming 1/72 armour models and who might want quick to build replicas that are reasonably accurate, beautifully moulded and which often come with a little bit of photo-etched detail parts. My thinking was always that they aimed for the wargame market clientele, or old folk like me who can no longer stand making a fiddly complex time consuming kit!

THE REAL THING
Back in the 1960s, initial deliveries of the diesel powered M113A1 APC were armed with the then standard single pintle mounted .50 inch Browning MG for the vehicle commander. This soon required a large but simple shield for a modicum of protection in Vietnam. The later Australian and New Zealand M113A1 APC variant was eventually fitted with a dedicated MG turret called the T50, designed by Cadillac Gage. It could mount two fully enclosed .30 inch MGs, or one .30 and one .50, side by side. If fitted, the .50 was always mounted on the left, with the .30 on the right when that combination was carried.

In the Army Reserve we rarely had more than one .30 fitted, and even then only on range days or our bigger exercises. In Vietnam, the Australian APCs with the T50 turret were sometimes seen fitted with a single .30 inch pintle mounted externally and a single .50 mounted in the left side, though side-by-side twin .30 guns fitted internally in the turret were also sometimes photographed. As always it pays to check your reference photos.

KIT PARTS
This kit has parts for one vehicle only, unlike many (most?) other S-Model kits where you often got two vehicles per box. This may be because it is a 'special edition'. On the single sprue provided, S-Model supply you with 37 neatly moulded polystyrene parts as offered in their 'standard' M113A2 kit. My kit's Part 18, the early commander's cupola, was actually missing from the sprue, though fortunately it was not needed of course for this version.

To add to the main plastic bits there are several finely moulded resin bits, mainly the turret itself, two .30 inch machine guns, a delicately moulded separate turret hatch and the replacement hinged, rear roof (or cargo) hatch with its dedicated Australian NBC box to mount on it (which replaces Part 20 on the plastic sprue).

Finally, a neat, small and finely executed fret of photo-etch provides items that include the tow bar/hook, the roof mounted antenna base brush guards, the turret roof guard for the site/periscope and the hull mounted and fixed turret-plinth 'barrel stop' guard rail, apparently intended to stop the real guns firing on the rear of the vehicle.

The PE also includes a circular, almost starfish shaped very thin web of PE that does not feature in the instructions on my kits. It *may* be supposed to represent the raised welded which seems to run around the circumference and up the sides of each plate of the T50 – in 1/72 perhaps achieved by wrapping it around the resin turret piece – I must try that and see if it is a correct guess.

DIMENSIONAL ACCURACY
This all scales out pretty well, according to my calculations and most of the angles look right to my eye as well.

The M113 family generally could be fitted with rubber side skirts that were more or less permanently fitted in non-Australian ownership. These are said to have acted as a water flow control device over the moving tracks, which also provided water propulsion while the vehicle was amphibious.

On this kit, the pair of one piece side skirts (at least the 'rubber' section) is a little too shallow in side view, I think, and the forward part of it (an end cap or fixing plate?) is poorly shaped. In addition, or perhaps because of the general side skirt shape and size issue, the drive sprockets might also be moulded a little bit too far back from where they really should be.

SHAPE ACCURACY
Mostly looks very good to me, with the glacis angle correct and the character of the real thing captured well.

I do feel the side skirts are the main weak point of the kit – in that they don't look quite right to me. The forward skirt "fixing plates" (or whatever they are called) seem to be mounted very slightly too high and forward and are incorrect in shape, and this seems to throw out the look of the overall skirting shape while the depth of the rubber component is too shallow – it's quite noticeable to me. I don't think these are supposed to be the later shallower side skirts, rather I think it looks like the mould maker may have got confused by the two different varieties of skirt.

Leaving them off entirely solves that issue of course, though even in this small scale you will then really then need to drill some holes for the nuts that secure the skirt rail to the hull, or fit some "rivets" to simulate the nuts, which were usually (always?) fitted even if the skirts and rails were not. There were four nuts at the front, eight running down the side and three at the rear – each side.

Note, if you choose to not fit the side skirts you will also need to add a rectangle of thin 10 though plastic sheet cut to shape to represent what I think was additional armour fitted over the left and right sides roughly flat above the first three roadwheels of each side's suspension – this is omitted in the kit and admittedly would not be visible at all if you fit the side skirts (or are they called track guards?) as S-Model intend.

The upper hull piece still includes a small representation of the small rear-roof mounted circular and mushroom shaped dome covering the original air fan/NBC unit, which was evidently standard on US (and presumably all other) M113's, but not for Australian and presumably new Zealand M113A1s. These vehicles of course had a hatch mounted NBC unit covered in a hatch sized flattish box shape. You get the Australian NBC box and hatch, but you'll need to remove the moulded on US type 'mushroom' dome.

DETAIL
Fidelity of detail is very nice, as always with S-Model, despite the kit's relative simplicity. The PE tow-bar is a little emaciated looking and might best be replaced with a spare from elsewhere, or else perhaps scratchbuilt from scrap. You could easily add more detail if you wanted to though, especially items like the Vietnam operations spare ammo box rack, some stowage, and crew, but for my tastes the kit supplies all that I want.

ASSEMBLY
This is quite straightforward as you'd expect. The main hull consists of 5 parts, the running gear/suspension comprises only 16 pieces, with one piece track and outer faces of the drive sprocket, roadwheels and return roller, to which you need to attach the inner faces/halves of those roadwheels, drive sprocket and return roller. The suspension pieces with the track moulded integrally have some representation of the guide teeth on the inside, with just a little detail – trackpads etc – to be added to show on the outside edge of the track for them to be acceptable.

When completed, the running gear units are then added to each side of the completed hull. Something to note is that S-Model have given you two suspension units with each side mirroring the other, which in reality was not the case. The torsion bar suspension meant the wheels on the left side (if I assess the scale drawings of the beast correctly) were an inch or two further forward than the equivalent wheels on the right side. This was not a big issue to me, of course – and is not really noticeable in 1/72.

As mentioned above, the kit also supplies two side skirt units (one part for each side) and the instructions expect you to mount them, but I rarely saw any M113 with them fitted due to the possibility of damage from the bush, or compacted or churned mud which tended to get caught up in the running suspension. To repeat, these skirts seem to represent the early full height versions – I think the reduced area, shortened US style skirts were eventually fitted in ADF and NZ service so these would need modification if you wanted to say, depict your skirted M113A1 in late NZ service with MERDC camouflage.

OVERALL APPEARANCE
The overall finish of the model is very convincing and would look great in either overall original US Olive Drab, Australian Olive Drab Lustreless, modern Disruptive Paint Pattern or NZ MERDC finish. I must admit I don't recall ever seeing an Australian M113A1 in Deep Bronze Green or US Olive Drab but it may have happened.

Thanks to Platypus I have four examples of this nice kit – with three to wind up in some of the wonderful ad hoc camouflage finishes that were applied to A-Res APCs, and one in NZ MERDC – and it is RECOMMENDED.

Examples are available online for around $23 plus postage.

BENZ PATENT- MOTORWAGEN

ICM kit 24040 in 1/24
Review by Bill Moore

Built in 1885 the Benz Patent-Motorwagen is regarded as the first automobile powered by an internal combustion engine to enter production with a couple of dozen or so subsequently being built in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Benz's wife Bertha famously drove Patent-Motorwagen No 3 a little over 100km from Mannheim to Pforzheim in 1988. Since then Mercedes Benz and others have created a number of excellent replicas of Benz No 1 that seem to be fairly true to the original and there are plenty of images on line and some excellent Mercedes Benz advertising videos available on YouTube that show it in action.

THE KIT

ICM initially released their kit of Benz No 1 in 2020. At first glance it is a simple kit with just one main sprue, two (duplicate) wheel sprues and a sprue for the wheel jigs for a grand total of 68 pieces plus a large PE sheet. Don't be fooled; this is quite a complex model and every part needs care as they are all very visible once the assembly is complete. The level and fidelity of the detail is impressive as is the finish and fit of all the parts, the latter being helped by small, well placed and very positive pegs and sockets.

The part breakdown is logical and parts that are painted in different colours are generally separated and the few that are not are relatively easy to mask. There is a lot of bare metal (steel, brass and copper) on this one so being able to mask and unmask easily is a real bonus. The moulding is universally excellent and completely flash free with some of the finer pieces getting down to around 0.5mm in diameter and still being perfectly formed.

None the less some care is needed when cleaning up the several cylindrical pieces as it is easy to sand them out of round when smoothing the join between their halves. The task is not made any easier by the pipework that is moulded attached to them and it may be easier and quicker to remake them from rod or tube and graft on (or replace with brass or copper wire as appropriate) the plumbing recovered from the kit bits.

There is not a lot of need or room for additional or replacement detailing apart from the wheel spoking discussed later. The fanatical may want to replace the grey plastic sight glass on the engine for a piece of clear sprue and add the flask and ignition wick beside it plus a few rivets here and there but that is about all.

Two options are suggested by ICM for the drive belt; one uses the supplied parts but is tricky to paint and assemble, the other suggests the modeller scratch build the belt but gives no other guidance as to materials or dimensions. Because it allows for easier installation, simpler painting and a much neater finish the second option is best. A strip of thick grey-ish off white paper sliced to match the width of the kit parts works well.

ICM do provide an impressively thin copper PE sheet with the spokes for the wheels and the three part chain final drives. The final drive is surprisingly convincing but it pays to keep track as the two inner and four face parts are easy to mistakenly interchanged. To ease the assembly of the wheels it supplies a moulded jig to correctly align and form the spokes and fit them to the rims. While clever the result is less than perfect to my eye as photo etch always looks "flat" rather than round and thus looks larger than scale.

With the widespread availability of small diameter metal rod and tube from the likes of Albion Alloys, Hobby Design and Wonder Wire, building a set of wheels with proper round spokes looks doable if a bit tedious. However, in this instance the ICM jig and the fact that there are just two layers per wheel and all the spokes are the same length and radial between hub and rim should make it easy, especially when compared with a 64 spoke four layer Borrani for example!

The kit comes in a top opening lid over a stronger internal box housing the parts (in a resealable plastic bag) with a sixteen page instruction booklet, a facsimile of the 1886 Benz patent application drawing and the PE in its own stiff card envelope. For once there are no decals but you may want to scrounge some 1/32 scale aircraft woodgrain decals from the aftermarket for the clear finished timber parts.

The instruction booklet devotes two pages to a parts map, 12 pages to the assembly diagrams and one page to a coloured 3 view showing the front, back and one side. The diagrams are computer generated and are very clear and unambiguous as to where parts are located and aligned.

Colour callouts are given for Revell and Tamiya paints. It is doubtful that anyone knows what colours were originally used on the Benz and this is reflected in ICM's painting notes for a couple of the key components (such as the engine and flywheel) which suggest two options from which the modeler can select. A look at a couple of the replicas in museums reinforces this point as all have slight differences, eg a dark green rather than a black frame.

ICM have reissued a second boxing of these parts as kit 24041 with the addition of three figures, namely Bertha and her two sons, Richard and Eugen, who accompanied her on her 1888 journey. Sadly the Benz No 3 she actually drove is significantly different to No 1 as kitted by ICM so the car is a bit of an anachronism for that particular journey, although she may well have had a drive of No1 at some point.

This is an excellent kit; well engineered and beautifully and very delicately moulded. Built out of the box it makes a good replica and with a bit of effort on the wheels can be built into a stunning model. RECOMMENDED.

HILLER YH-32 HORNET

AMP kit 48-005 in 1/48 and Aurora kit 501-79 in 1/16
Review by David Muir

Designed in the early1950s the Hornet was one of the first helicopters powered by anything other than an internal combustion engine, in this case a pair of Hiller 8RJ2B ramjets on the ends of the main rotors. A civilian example was built, flown and publicized widely in 1951, appearing on the cover of Popular Mechanics among others.

Two prototypes and twelve production aircraft were built in the mid-50s as the YH-32 for the Army with five more (three for the Navy and two armed as YH-32As for the Army). These shared the same basic structure as the civilian model but differed in details such as the shape of their boom and the configuration of their tail surfaces. Because the ramjets operated at subsonic speed (and therefore very inefficiently) the YH-32 was seriously under powered with limited lifting capacity, endurance and range. Worse yet, it was horrendously noisy and, as evidenced below, the jet efflux was highly visible at night. Not exactly stealthy. Unsurprisingly, service interest did not proceed beyond the trials; very surprisingly a few have survived in US museums.

THE AMP KIT

Bizarre as it may seem there have been two kits of this contraption. AMP currently do one of their short run styrene kits of the military version in 1/48 scale. It consists of 53 grey parts plus one clear windscreen and a PE fret with detailed parts such as the seat belts and control pedals.

This is a neat little kit albeit with a lot of very well executed but very fine details that will demand careful handling and extremely careful clean up. Built out of the box it should satisfy most modellers but there is scope to enhance and add detail if you are so inclined. Take a look at Martian's (sadly yet to be completed) build on Britmodeller if you need inspiration! Either way some parts (eg the cross beams for the undercarriage (B41 and B42)) that will inevitably be very fragile but replacing them with metal – either wire or Hobby Design stainless steel tube - is straightforward.

AMP's instructions run to eight pages with a brief history, paint chart, parts map and acceptably clear assembly diagrams and decal placement diagrams for two Army and one Navy examples. Masks are provided to allow you to paint the yellow tail band and the edges of the windscreen but aligning them to achieve a consistent 0.8mm strip on each side is difficult. A better solution is to use pre-painted strips of decal and just use the masks on the top and bottom. Another weird but HIGHLY RECOMMENDED kit from the AMP range.

THE AURORA KIT

The other Hornet kit allegedly depicting the military version but actually modeling the civilian prototype was issued by Aurora back in 1956 in 1/16 scale. With just 22 parts at three times its size it is HUGE by comparison with the tiny AMP kit and lacks any of the details and finesse of the smaller scale Ukrainian offering. The overall shape is acceptable and a 'Martian style' scratch built interior should be easy enough as there is plenty of room to work at this size.

However, the cockpit openings differ from both the prototype and the box art and need a lot of work with sheet and putty; tedious but not difficult to do. Thankfully the windscreen is a single curvature piece and thus easily formed from clear sheet such as the one provided by Aurora. Decals are supplied for Air Force, Navy and Marine insignia and titles (none of which it ever wore) and white scripts for the civilian version. Modern technology - either as decals or Silhouette cutter masks - should make creating red replacements to match the actual airframe as illustrated below fairly easy.

RECOMMENDATION: Hard to find and CHALLENGING

GENERAL NEWS

New stuff in the news from Ley at Platypus Publications:

From **H & C:**
Les Vehicles Diamond T de US Army
Traction Avant sous l'Uniforme

From **HELION**:
75 Years of the Israeli Air Force:
Volume 1 The First Quarter Century 1948-73
Volume 2 The Last Half Century 1973-2023
Crucial Air Battles of the October 1972 Arab-Israeli War
Israeli Air Force Operations in the 1948 War
Israeli Air Force Operations in the 1956 Suez War
Lebanese Civil War Volume 1: Palestinian Diaspora, Syrian and Israeli Interventions 1970-1978
Bullocks, Grain and Good Madeira; The Maratha and Jat Campaigns 1803-1806

From **TRACKPAD**
British Armour Downrange: a collection of photos of AFVs on British and European firing ranges.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE ~~JULY~~ MEETING

(Notes by DM, Images courtesy of Simon Wolff)

With the July meeting cancelled we bring you some images from the very beginning of APMA – in fact what I think was our first ever Annual General Meeting held way back in December 1976.

Up until that year Sydney's plastic modellers had just one club, a branch of IPMS (Australasia) that was run (for want of a better description) out of Melbourne. We met in Fosters Pub near the Town Hall, thereby beginning a tradition of only using venues that served Reschs.

Melbourne, being Melbourne, liked to control everything: they took all our membership fees, issued all the rules and (at ever longer and more infrequent intervals) printed and published a supposedly quarterly magazine called 'Modelcraft'. Sydney became increasingly bolshie when the subs always seemed to disappear and the magazines failed to turned up each year, even after Ley Reynolds organised for the Sydney branch members to prepare content for an entire issue to help them catch up.

By late 1975 the Fosters crew had had enough and instructed it's then Committee to go to Melbourne for the Australasian AGM, find out what the Mexicans were doing about the money and magazines, and report back.

They got short shrift: the IPMS (Australasia) Committee effectively issued no accounts or audits, refused to answer any questions about the finances and only grudgingly thanked Sydney for its magazine efforts while clearly having no plan to get the magazine subscriptions up to date. Added to which was some question as to the ownership of 'Modelcraft' as both a publication and as a trade name and what appeared to be anomalies in the Societies accounting. None the less, they got re-elected.

It was not all acrimony: the Sydney crew (IIRC Gary Riley, Ley Reynolds, Dennis Brignell and yours truly) stayed with Fred Harris's family, which was always a fun time. After a very, very long and very, very liquid fuelled night I fondly, if vaguely, recall being woken from my slumber on Fred's floor sometime before 6.00 am by Mr Reynolds handing me a hip flask of rum and wanting to discuss a detailed strategy for the AGM to be held later that day.

Even the trip down had its moments. Being near Christmas Melbourne was in the grip of its traditional beer strike so the cars were loaded to the gunnels with cartons of the stuff, a few models and very little else. The Fruit Fly inspectors at the border were a bit suspicious when told "models and beer" when they asked what was in the eskys and under the blankets? They were surprised by the amount of beer but incredulous when we showed them the eskys were, indeed, full of models…as you did in summer days before car air-conditioning…

On our return, the Branch Committee resigned on mass and announced that a meeting to form a new club would be held at the same time and place in January 1976. And so APMA was spawned…

The upstairs bar at Fosters with the publican handing out the annual awards in what appears to be 1976. In the top photo are Ley Reynolds (on the left), Dave Clark (in the centre) and Jim Travis receiving his gong. And below is yours truly doing the same. Beards, shaggy hair and slim waists were clearly all the go…and not a grey hair to be seen.