

ALBUQUERQUE SCALE MODELERS



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February 2011

PRESIDENTIAL INKLINGS VICTOR MAESTAS

Reality Check

Since returning to the hobby, and especially since joining ASM, I've been working on improving the models I build. Seeing the work other club members bring in has opened my eyes to the things that are possible with a kit. Even better is that the club members will share their techniques with you if you ask or even show you how it's done at one of the modeling clinics.

Of all the aspects of building a model, weathering is one of my favorites. It changes a built up kit from something toy-like and brings it to life. It also adds a signature touch that uses an artistic element. A well-weathered model looks like the real thing. You can almost smell the exhaust or some spilled fuel, hear the whine or rumble of the engine, or the clanking of the tracks when a model is well done. Making something

look old and used that is really not takes some practice, appropriate tools, and a vision of the final product (new, slightly used, very used, abused, ruined, abandoned, etc.). The different seasons also show weathering differently and need appropriate techniques to show a tank in the winter or a plane sitting on a hot desert runway.

Weathering also gives some artistic license because most subjects that we are modeling can have a long life and the finished kit is a snapshot of this life. Did it just rain? Is it dusty out? Was the plane just washed? Is the car entered into a car show or just finishing a race?

Reading magazines and web sites on weathering techniques can get out of hand if you only look into the scale universe in the confines of your work bench. Taking a break and looking at the real world around you can restore some perspective and give some ideas on new weathering techniques.

I like to look around at aircraft when I'm at airports, airshows, and museums. Panel lines, grease and oil smudges, and streaks show up even on aircraft that have been sitting around for years. Other interesting things to observe, even on commercial aircraft, are the variations in paint color and metal surfaces that are out in the weather and are being used every day.

For armor subjects, some observations on weathering can be made from semis on the highway, 4x4s, and even regular cars after some rainy weather. I have even gone out to the garage to look at mud splatter patterns on my pickup. There are infinite variations of mud that can show up on a vehicle. Wet mud that has started to dry or a dusty car that has been rained on is a challenge to replicate; but if you do, it will add

January meeting highlights: Members checking out models, and the business meeting in progress.





January's Best of Show winners, left to right: Aleya Montano's *Starship Enterprise*, Ken Piniak's *Imperial Star Destroyer*, and Victor Maestas's *Millennium Falcon*.

that extra touch of realism on a model.

Photos can do the trick if you need a quick detail, but there's no substitute for looking under that plane and seeing how much those tires wear after a few landings and how much crud accumulates in the recesses of the wheel wells. So next time you get the chance, take a look around and make a mental note on how weathering is taking place out in the real weather. Also, take advantage of some of the secrets that your fellow modelers are letting slip...

the trick will be to first find the ship...

A compelling presentation by retired Chief Warrant Officer George Smith was next. A 92-year-old veteran of BB40, he



spoke of the ship being in top shape at all times because of the pride of the crew as well as the tight discipline (no baseball caps with the bill facing backwards).

USS NEW MEXICO VICTOR MAESTAS

The dedication for the "A Noble Legacy: The USS New Mexico" exhibition at the New Mexico History Museum in Santa Fe took place on Sunday, January 23, 2011. Several ASM members were there to see the new exhibition and the 1/6-scale model of the battleship USS New Mexico (BB40), including Keith Liotta, Jack Morris, Jim Guld, Victor Maestas, Glen Bingham, Rick Carver, and Harry Davidson.



The model has been set up at the entrance to the museum in a large glass enclosure. All the people looking at the model were very impressed with the detail and workmanship that had to have gone into the model. A smaller model (probably about 1/350) of the Virginia class USS New Mexico (SSN 779) submarine was also on display nearby.

One of the speakers was Commander George Perez, the CO of the USS New Mexico (SSN 779). He gave a talk on the submarine and its expected mission. The submarine is a Fast Attack Nuclear submarine armed with Mk. 48 torpedoes and Tomahawk cruise missiles. He extended an invitation to anyone to visit the ship and show your NM ID and get a tour. I guess



A short movie on the war experience of the ship was put together by the museum based on the official records as well as some information pulled from the diary of one of the sailors. The ship was nicknamed "The Queen" and won six battle stars. She was involved in the invasion of the Gilbert and Marshall islands. Later she was involved in the capture of Mindoro and Luzon as well as the Okinawa invasion. It was hit by kamikaze planes twice, but did make it through the war. The ship was present at Tokyo Bay for the surrender of the Japanese.

The exhibition at the museum includes uniforms from the time period before WWII, some of the parts from one of the kamikaze planes that hit the ship, and the models on display. Some of the silver settings used on BB40 were on display; they will eventually be sent to be used on SSN 779.

The dedication was a very interesting event that portrayed the history and future of the ships named after our state. The exhibition will be at the museum for four months. If you are in the area, it's worth a look.

CONTEST UPDATE

JOSH PALS

Greetings fellow model builders! Well, it's a new year and I'm the new Contest Director for 2011. If January's contest is any indicator of what we'll see for the rest of the year, it's going to be a great year! Not just for the quantity of the entries but the quality as well. The winners for January's contest (Non-Points) Sci-Fi/Real Space are as follows:

In Juniors, Aleya Montano took a Gold Ribbon for her "Mystery Machine" complete with Shaggy and Scooby and a Best of Show for her U.S.S. Enterprise.

In the Intermediate Division there were a lot of nice builds which made judging pleasantly difficult. Adrian Montano took 3rd place with his three-ship set of Starship Enterprises in $\frac{1}{350}$ scale. 2nd place went to Pete Beck for his "Wrath of Khan" version of the Starship Enterprise that despite being $\frac{1}{350}$ scale still took up most of the table! And Best of Show went to Ken Piniak for his Imperial Star Destroyer by MPC/AMT. Anyone who has or seen this kit knows just how much work went into this model. Ken did a lot of scratchbuilding, added aftermarket parts and wired it for lights and sound!

The Masters Division wasn't any easier to judge. Mike McNichols took 2nd and 3rd with his Assault Marine Squad and his Dragon, respectively. And our new club President Victor Maestas took Best of Show with his $\frac{1}{444}$ -scale Millennium Falcon that was beautifully weathered.

There is no contest for February's meeting. Instead we will be having our annual Swap Meet night. March's meeting will be our first "points" contest with the theme being "Open;" any model, scale or era. Keep up the good work and I can't wait to see all of your models in March!

JIM'S ARMOR CORNER

JAMES GULD

This month we'll look at the Academy M10 Gun Motor Carriage kit #TA990. I'll go through the build and what I added or changed to portray the initial version seen in the first battles in Tunisia.

The kit came out in 2001, and was soon picked apart for a number of size and angle issues regarding the turret. I decided to forego trying to fix any of those problems and instead planned to add the missing details to the turret and the hull interior. The kit comes with a decent hull interior but like most kits it could use a little help here and there. There are aftermarket updates for this kit both in photoetch and resin but I decided to break out the styrene and just use bits of photoetch I have in my stash.

Starting from the bottom up, the kit comes with what modelers think of as the later style M4 Sherman bogie with your choice of an initial top return symmetrical skid or the later style skid seen most often. I opted to use a style of skid that was seen on Shermans and M-10 built in 1942 and early 1943. These are sometimes called the intermediate style skids. Dragon models provide them as an option in some of their newer Sherman kits and I had them in the spares box. Since the M-10 I'm modeling is from the initial production

batch from the fall of 1942, I needed to use these. The bogie units themselves had a few injector pin marks on the front faces that needed to be filled along with adding on some of the missing bolt detail for the return roller mounts on the top and the backside of the mount. I drilled out the four corresponding mounting holes on the opposite side of the return roller arm. The bogie units were designed to work on either side of the tank. I went with the open style road wheels. The kit comes with this and the stamped style and from pictures I've seen both are possible for an M-10 from this time period.

The kit comes with a fixed rear idler but I cut it off and added an adjustable one from the spares box. I also had to change out the front drive sprocket for a Tamiya one since I ditched the kit tracks for a set of T-41-style DS styrene tracks from Dragon. I had to shorten the Dragon tracks down by two links. You could use the kit drive sprocket but would need to shim it out by about .015" to get the tracks to fit.

The kit comes with both styles of cast one piece final drive covers so I used the earlier style and added on the missing casting part numbers made from the Archer Transfers resin casting symbols and numbers set. These are great. They go on like regular decals and look great.

Other additions to the front housing included moving the siren to it from the front hull glacis plate, adding on the small U-shaped step made out of styrene and a small L-angle plate you see welded onto most early style covers. I also added on the missing bolt detail on the bottom of the housing where it would connect with the lower hull. The only other thing I added on the lower outside hull was weld beads for the rear shackle mounts. The front mounts were part of the casting but the rear mounts were welded on. Fit-wise, the sides of the lower hull to the front final drive cover needed some putty.

Moving on to the hull exterior, I decided to just thin down the kit's plastic light guards for the front and rear. I had to make arms for the rear ones after I broke the kit ones while trying to thin them down. For the front guards, I also added on the socket mount brackets with chains that you would see in most pictures. When the lights were removed there were small plugs that went into the light sockets to protect it and this was attached to the cylinder mount with a small chain. I had to change out the kit's front hull lifting lugs for a more U-shaped ones. The ones provided for the front of the hull I ended up using on the rear of the hull since they were the correct shape for an M-10 of this time period. I also added on small pads that the lugs were cast onto. These in turn were then welded to the hull front and rear. Later style lugs on M-10s were just welded on directly. This is when doing research comes in handy.

For the front hatches, I added on some missing details and on the rear hull deck I added on the missing retention chains for the fuel/water/oil caps. I also added on the missing handles for the fire suppression system mount. For the onboard tools mounted on the rear I added on the missing footman loops and straps. I made the footman loops out of styrene discs punched out with my punch and die and the arm for the loop is .010" styrene. Some of the tools are from the kit and others came from the spares box. The kit tools were kind of poor, IMHO. I had sand and file the gun support mount on the rear deck so the gun tube would fit since I'll be showing mine in the travel mode. I used the kit-supplied tow cable ends and

added on a resin clasp mount on the rear deck from Formations, along with some nylon thread for the cable itself.

On the rear deck I filled in a small seam along the sides where the rear deck plate meets the sides of the hull. I added on the thin sheet metal bracing for the front fenders and the thin lip you see were the upper hull overlaps the side and angles inward. It is a subtle thing but something Academy missed. This is why a lot of people on the Allied DG on Missing-Lynx are hoping for a new M-10 and M-36.

Moving on to the inside. This is where I did the most work. Here is where good reference books come in handy. I added in the missing wiring and the main electrical junction cutoff box to the hull floor. I tried something different on this kit and went with .010" and .015" styrene for a lot of the wiring instead of solder. I used .032" solder for the heavier cable going to the electrical junction cutoff box due to the many twists this piece had. I used Plastruct styrene for this. Evergreen only goes down to .020" and seems a bit more brittle than Plastruct.

Other additions include the seat operation mechanisms and a more correct looking style of radio for an M-10. It should be a SCR-610, which I believe only Formations makes in resin, but I did have a SCR-510 left over from a Dragon halftrack kit which is very close. I then added the relay box on the sponson wall. Other minor additions were seat belts and straps for the ammo.

The turret needed a bit of work as well. I made a mold of one of the kit interior stowage boxes and cast up a couple more since Academy only gives you two in the kit and you need four. They didn't provide the larger stowage box seen on the right side interior and missed the stowage rack and Thompson on the right rear wall. I added on a spare .50-cal barrel and to the left rear wall along with another smaller missing stowage box down in the lower left corner. I had to cast up a fire extinguisher for the interior.

Other missing items included some interior footman loops, springs on the side of the recoil guard, pads on the side of the recoil guard, and some other smaller L-angle mounts on the left interior, for which I have yet been able to figure out what their function was. I made up the signal flag canvas cover out of Duro Kneadtite putty.

Moving on to the outside of the turret I added all of the missing welds and added on the casting numbers for the gun mantlet. I made up the initial field expedient turret counter weights seen on some M-10s in Tunisia. The stowage was made from the Duro putty and the packs were made from Apoxie Sculpt. I have molds of packs and can impress the putty into them and then carefully take it out of them and

form them to make different shapes on my tanks. After it dries I add the straps to the packs. The same goes for the stowage. I roll out the shapes I want and impress the areas where the straps will be and then later put the straps on.

I won't be painting this one for a while, but when I do it will be done in OD with the mud-applied camo that was often seen on US vehicles in Tunisia.

Some of the references I used are pictures from friends I've meet through Missing-Lynx along with the following books:

"US Tank Destroyers In Combat 1941 - 1945"

by Steven J. Zaloga

"Walk Around US Tank Destroyers" by Jim Mesko

"British Tank Destroyers Achilles 17-PDR M-10 S.P."

by Wojciech J. Gawrych

"Sherman A History of the American Medium Tank"

by R.P. Hunnicutt

Note! Jim provided several photos for this article, too many to print, so they're all visible on the Bonus Pages for our electronic subscribers!

Year 2011 Contest Quick Reference Chart

Titles in **blue** indicate contests for "Modeler of the Year" Points

07 Jan **SPECIAL CONTEST #1**

SCI-FI/SCIENCE/REAL SPACE/FANTASY

04 Feb **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest.

04 Mar **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale.

01 Apr **Super Clinic Night**—no contest.

06 May **SPECIAL CONTEST #2:**
SHINY SHOW RODS

03 Jun **1941**—Any kit/subject/scale.

08 Jul **SPECIAL CONTEST #3**

MORE OR LESS (THAN FOUR WHEELS)

Sponsored Contest: Post-Apocalyptic (Josh Pals)

05 Aug **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest.

Nationals Debrief Night—Bring Models & Trophies!

09 Sep **Mediterranean**—Any kit/subject/scale.

07 Oct **SPECIAL CONTEST #4**

COMMON KITS (SEE WEB SITE)

04 Nov **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale.

Sponsored Contest: P-39 (Don Smith)

02 Dec *Sponsored Contest: BMW (Patrick Dick)*

Plus Model of the Year competition!

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ASM members are encouraged to submit articles, reviews and other items as appropriate. Contact editor Joe Walters for details and specs. Submission deadline for each issue is the 20th of the preceding month.







