

ALBUQUERQUE SCALE MODELERS



<http://abqscalemodelers.com>

January 2013

PRESIDENTIAL SPIEL TONY HUMPHRIES

So here we are at the start of another year of modeling. Another year older and deeper in debt too, probably, if you're anything like me. So, having consumed enough turkey to sink a battleship and having barely moved from the sofa for three weeks, it's now time to get back in to the swing of things. Sorry, but it is. Yes, really. We begin this year with a new(-ish) E-board—no less than three new E-board members (including myself) who I am sure will all bring something fresh and exciting to the club. Well, the other two will, anyway. I don't know so much about me...

This is a great year to be a modeler—more kits and aftermarket accessories than ever before will be available to you and with the IPMS Nationals in our own back yard this year, what more incentive do you need to stuff the tables at our points and sponsored competitions in preparation for a Viking-style raid on the Nationals later this Summer? Well, okay, you'd be advised to keep the looting and plundering down to an acceptable level, as the FBI and Colorado State

Troopers probably take a dim view of that kind of thing and there's nothing worse than getting your Hurstwic or your Spangenhelm confiscated. Believe me, I know. I certainly hope to see many of you up there in Colorado this summer though, and look forward to seeing the many trophies I'm sure you'll be winning and to joining you for some wassailing and probably generous quaffing in the bar afterwards to celebrate (quaffing is like drinking, by the way, but it's noisier and you tend to spill more... wassailing requires Personal Protective Equipment). So what if Loveland sounds like an adults-only theme park, a hippie commune or a Jimi Hendrix album? I'm reliably informed that it isn't any of those things (hopefully that doesn't disappoint anyone, by the way?).

So, how about getting some more models built this year? You know you want to. What better incentive do you need than the Nationals almost coming to town? How about finishing that B-17 you glued three parts together on back in 1995 and have kept in the box ever since? Or the Tiger 1 that you

December meeting highlights, below L – R: Members checking out the Model of the Year candidates; a camouflaged cake appropriate to a club with a large military-interest contingent; and the business meeting in progress.





2012 Model of the Year winners, left to right: Aleya Montaño's *Darth Vader TIE Fighter*, Matt Blohm's *F4F-3 Wildcat Butch O'Hare*, Dave Straub's *USS Langley Seaplane Tender*, and Gil De La Plain's *Buick Grand National Gun Carrier*.

spent \$300 on photo-etch for before you developed that chronic brass allergy. Get the gloves out and give it a go! Why not try something different this year and stretch yourself—for example, I pledge to build at least one aircraft and one ship/boat this year and I'm a dyed-in-the-wool armor guy. Talking of which, for those of you who want to join in the Matilda group build which will be our chapter build for this year's Nationals, we can still use new members. We covered ourselves in glory with the Char B build a couple of years ago (at least, I think it was glory) and apparently seriously upset some guys from Texas, too, which is an obvious bonus. So if you want to try and do it all again and probably upset the same guys even more, then see Jim Guld or myself and we'll be happy to sign you up. In the meantime, break out the Plastic Weld and that new X-Acto blade and get to work. You know it makes sense!

CONTEST DIRECTOR UPDATE VICTOR MAESTAS

Well, we certainly ended the year with a bang. Between the Model of the Year Showdown, the Pearl Harbor Special Contest, and Josh Pals's sponsored contest, we had a total of forty-seven entries, nice turnout! For the Model of the Year showdown in the Juniors division, Aleya Montaño's TIE Fighter takes the award for the year. In Basic, Matt Blohm's F4F Wildcat took the top award. Gil De La Plain's Grand National Gun Carrier took the Model of the Year award for Intermediate. In the Masters division, Dave Straub's scratchbuilt Langley took Model of the Year. There were some very nice entries and it was difficult to judge these models.

For the Special Contest, the theme was Pearl Harbor. There were no Junior entries, but in Basic, Matt Blohm took best entry for his A6M2 Zero. In Intermediate, Frank Randall's P-36A earned a best entry award. In Masters, Pete Beck earned a best entry award with his USS Reuben James.

There was a great turnout for Josh Pals's sponsored contest. The theme was "From a Movie/TV Show" and it had a total of nineteen entries, very impressive.

For those interested, here are some contest statistics from this year:

Total Model entries:	304
Total Models In-Theme:	177
Total Models in Special Contests:	18

Year 2013 Contest Quick Reference Chart

Titles in **blue** indicate contests for points

- 04 Jan** **SPECIAL CONTEST #1**
SCI-FI/SCIENCE/REAL SPACE/FANTASY
Sponsored Contest: "Frickin' Laser Beams" (Patrick Dick)
Sponsored Contest: "Rolls Royce" (Patrick Dick)
- 01 Feb** **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest.
- 01 Mar** **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "Revell 1/48 Ventura" (E-Board)
- 05 Apr** **More Than One Radial Engined**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Famous Motorsports Vehicles—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "Best Sci-Fi Spaceship" (Don Smith)
- 03 May** **SPECIAL CONTEST #2**
SINGLE IN-LINE ENGINED AIRCRAFT
Sponsored Contest: "Revell 1/32 He-219" (Hobby Proz) **tentative**
- 07 Jun** **Cold War**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Cherche la Femme—Female-named subject, any kit/subject/scale.
- 12 Jul** **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "North African Armor" (James Guld, Tony Humphries)
- 02 Aug** **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest.
- 13 Sep** **On the Water**—Anything waterborne, any kit/subject/scale.
Beyond Babe Artwork—Any subject with non-pinup nose art.
Sponsored Contest: "TBA" (Gil De La Plain)
- 04 Oct** **Axis of WWII**—Any subject excluding Germany and Japan.
Go Figure—Any humanoid figure.
Sponsored Contest: "Big" (Brian Peck)
- 01 Nov** **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale.
Sponsored Contest: "Danny Roberts / Best P-38" (Mike Blohm, John Tate)
- 06 Dec** **SPECIAL CONTEST #3**
JET POWER
Plus Model of the Year competition!

Total Models entered in the State Fair: 18
Total Models in Sponsored Contests: 40
Total Models brought for In-Progress: 59

I hope everyone enjoyed some of the new contest twists put in place this year. If there are comments (positive or negative) on the contest schedule, judging, awards etc. please get with me.

I also want to thank all the folks that helped judge this year. It's a group effort and it wouldn't get done without all the help. Kudos to Mike Blohm for putting together the new-style awards for Best of Show and People's Choice as well as Matt Blohm for getting them printed and delivered to the meetings.

KIT REVIEW

TONY HUMPHRIES

Dragon/DML Valentine Mk.III 1/35

Some kits give off an immediate and perceptible aura of quality. When you pick up the box, a shaft of sunlight pierces the darkness, illuminating the box art. A reverent hush descends upon the Hobby Shop before the sound of the celestial choir rises in tribute to the manufacturer and to you, o wise and mighty master of the X-Acto knife. You know that by selecting this masterpiece, your mantle as a modeler of taste and discernment is forever assured. Some kits are undoubtedly the pinnacle of the injection molders' art. Kits that you feel you could be emptied onto the workbench and they would immediately re-arrange themselves into a form that is so truly pleasing to the eye that Michelangelo himself, having seen it, would have wept and hung up his brushes forever. Well, I'm afraid this isn't one of them...



This kit has been around for many years and released by several different manufacturers. A quick inspection of the contents will inevitably leave you wondering why. It is originally of Russian origin, I believe (somebody like Alan, Togo or VM were the original manufacturers) and this would indeed make sense as someone has clearly been overdoing the vodka, if this kit is anything to go by. It is seemingly a final defiant middle finger raised in the direction of the West by the dying Soviet

FRED'S FOTO FILE

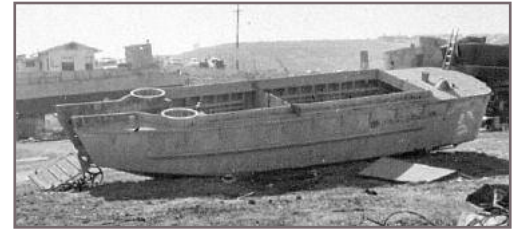
FRED FRANCESCHI

Landing Craft

Ever since I was a kid, I've thought that landing craft were among the most interesting boats ever made. They are so ugly that they have a beauty of their own, and they were instrumental in the success of the American invasions during the Second World War in the Pacific, Mediterranean, and European theaters. Interestingly, the Japanese were the first to develop ramped landing craft, and an American Marine observer, Captain (Later General) Victor Krulak, took photos of the Japanese using these craft in 1937 during their invasion of China.

In 1958, when I lived in Spring Valley, California, as a teen, I discovered a private junkyard with landing craft in it and took these photos, and I regret that I did not take many more. These boats were apparently being stripped for parts, and I suspect that the remains were later burned.

The first of the American ramped landing craft was the Landing Craft Personnel Ramp, or LCPR. The ramp was, as near as I could calculate, 3½ feet wide. Higgins designed and made this boat "under protest," as he believed the ramp was too narrow to be practical. But the preceding landing craft was the Landing Craft Personnel, Large LCP(L), which had no ramp at all. You exited that boat by jumping over the side.



The LCP(L) and LCP(R) were followed later by the Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel, LCVP, which all of us think of as "the landing craft." This is the one in the D-Day photos.

There are several photos of an LCP(R). You can see how narrow the exit ramp is. One person at a time, you jumped out in front of the boat hoping a wave didn't push the boat forward on top of you. And you couldn't see what happened to the person in front of you, a situation that had tragic consequences (read the book).



Next are photos of an LCVP, boat 3 of LSD 17, the USS Catamount, a Dock Landing Ship, named in honor of the Catamount Tavern in Old Bennington. No, I'm not making this up. I'll let Harry Davidson explain why a Navy ship was

named after a tavern—that's his specialty!

And there are several photos of a Landing Craft Medium, LSM from AK-105, the Attack Cargo ship USS Naos.

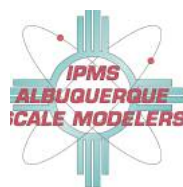
[Editor's note: The full text of Fred's article and all of Fred's Landing Craft photos, including multiple shots of the above examples and detailed close-ups, may be found in the Bonus Pages! -JW]

Union. To be fair, the kit does contain relatively clear instructions, 375 parts, with individual track-links and a reasonably good commander figure, actually. This is where the good news ends, however. To say that the fit of the parts is poor, would be a hysterical understatement. No two parts are alike, even when they are obviously supposed to be. The wheels, for example, are several different sizes and the axles are of different lengths, even upon the same bogie. There are six sprues contained within this kit. I can only assume that they were manufactured in widely different places (possibly prison camps) by people who made no effort whatsoever to communicate with each other. Indeed, they may have been embroiled in some kind of Hatfield/McCoy-style blood feud if the quality and interchangeability of parts is anything to judge by. There are more craters in the plastic (the term "sink-hole" is grossly inadequate in this context) than there are on the battlefields of The Somme. The plastic itself is reminiscent of the kind used to make garden hoses and nothing less than arc-welding, copious amounts of industrial strength superglue, or possibly voodoo will persuade them to stick together. The decal sheet provides two poorly-researched subjects and the decals themselves will dissolve if they are placed within ten feet of the merest hint of moisture. If ever the phrase "designed in a pub, built in a shed" can be applied to a kit, it's this one. It's a horror story of Lovecraftian proportions. If Donald Trump's plastic wig has an equivalent in the modeling world, this is surely it.

I was going to incorporate more pictures of the kit itself and

the build process, but the kit is so ugly that my camera froze the moment I pointed it towards the kit box and it hasn't worked since. It will probably be okay after a brief vacation and some kind of restorative therapy, but I can't guarantee it. In summary then, I can honestly say that this is the kind of kit that, rather than depicting wars, actually starts them. I wouldn't normally advocate physical violence, but if anyone offers you this kit, I would suggest that you administer the vigorous beating that their impudence so surely merits. There isn't a jury in the entire country that would convict you. If anyone has the temerity to ask you for money in exchange for this kit, then tarring and feathering would be a positively lenient response in my humble opinion. This kit was clearly designed to be the ultimate plastic insult. If you find this kit in your stash, soak it in gasoline and burn it. Scatter the ashes over a wide area and, if at all possible, plough salt into the earth where they land, lest the evil persist. I think I've made my point...

Would I recommend this kit? Absolutely not. Not even to a Frenchman.



Master

John Tate	2337
Paul Kirchner	1558
Larry Glenn	1133
Mike Blohm	596
Brian Peck	547
Dave Miller	532
Glenn Bingham	473
Dave Straub	335
Ken Liotta	268
Ray Ayles	189
Josh Pals	178
Mike McNichols	125
Fred Franceschi	75
Maestas, Victor	65
Patrick Dick	30

Intermediate

Tony Humphries	2815
Adrian Montaño	2090
Robert Meeker	1755
Frank Randall	1414
Don Smith	572
Pete Beck	325
Gil DeLaPlain	300
Steve Brodeur	260
Gorham Smoker	210
Robert Meeker III	135
Kyle Garber	129
Rick Carver	125
Ken Piniak	122
Blaine Couch	110
Gil Johnson	30

Basic

Matt Blohm	2733
John Drackert	4
Chuck Girvin	4
John Drackert	2

Junior

Aleya Montaño	930
Phillip Trujillo	325
Matthew Ortiz	125
Travis McDowell	35

**MODELER OF THE YEAR
POINTS STANDINGS
2012 (FINAL)**

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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.

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The Marines went to Andrew Higgins and his boat works in New Orleans to see if he could develop an equivalent boat, and the landing craft we are familiar with came out of that discussion. There is a fascinating book about the Higgins Boat Works, "Andrew Jackson Higgins and the Boats that Won World War II" by Jerry Strahan, that I have read several times. The ups, downs, humor, and pathos of Higgins and his boats are well documented in that book, and I highly recommend it (the Albuquerque Public Library has a copy for anyone interested in reading it).

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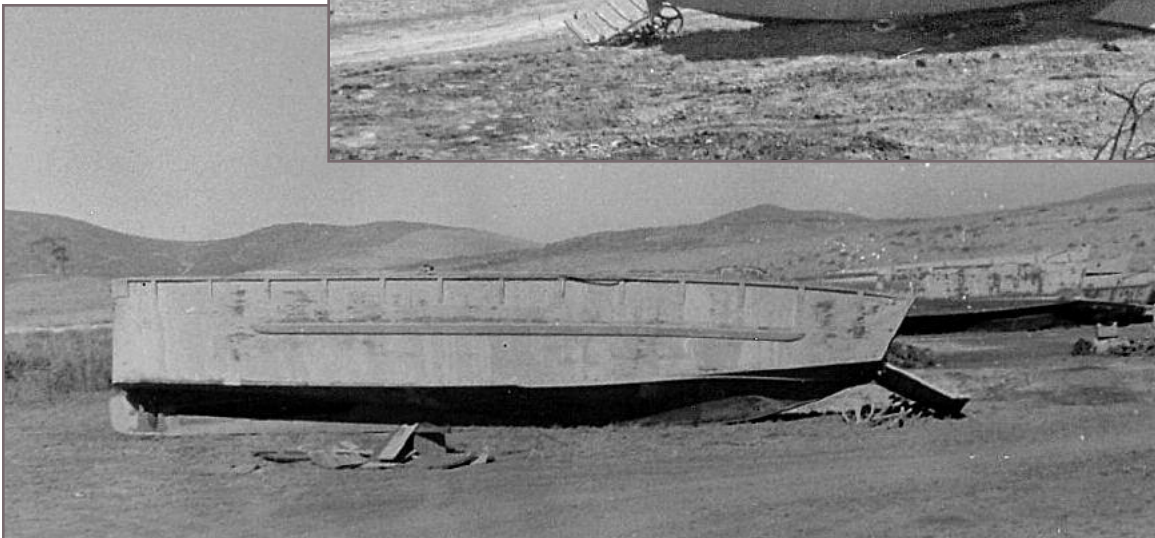
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Interestingly, all of these 36-foot landing craft were called Higgins Boats, although other boat yards also manufactured them. Depending on the skills of these other boat yards, the sterns of some were rounded, like the one in the LCPR photo, others were angled, like the LCVP, or just plain flat backed.

So much for history, now the photos.

Here are photos of an LCP(R). You can see how narrow the exit ramp is. One person at a time, you jumped out in front of the boat hoping a wave didn't push the boat forward on top of you. And you couldn't see what happened to the person in front of you, a situation that had tragic consequences (read the book).



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