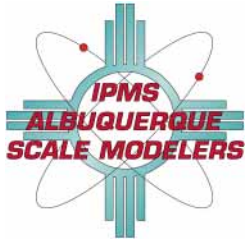


# ALBUQUERQUE SCALE MODELERS



<http://abqscalemodelers.com>

May 2019

## THE ASM PARTS BOX JOSH PALS

How many of us have completed a kit only to find extra pieces on the sprue for an optional build you didn't do? Knowing how precious styrene plastic is, you can't bear to throw away perfectly good plastic. The same goes for that kit you bought that has multiple markings but you only want the one. Do you have an old "dog" kit that you never will build and can't seem to get rid of but don't want to throw it away? Do you have a kit that you bought for a specific part to use in a different build and now are left with a partial kit?

The ASM Parts Box is a treasure trove of all kinds of odds and ends. Whether you're looking for that

one piece you lost to the carpet monster, or are looking for pieces to use on your kitbashing project, the ASM Parts Box is almost sure to have it. So while you're at the next club meeting, be sure to check out the clear plastic storage tote to see what treasures you might find. If you're not looking for any treasure, please consider donating your spare decals or sprue bits!

April Meeting highlights, left to right: members milling about before the meeting, Josh Pals does a presentation on a recent display of warbirds at the Sunport, and the business meeting in progress in a non-standard table configuration.



# ASM MODEL DISPLAY

## MIKE BLOHM

### Update: Kirtland AFB Air Show

Here is an update on ASM's model display at the Kirtland AFB air show on Saturday, May 18. The theme is "Air and Space Fiesta," so we are planning for a mix of USAF models (aircraft, missiles, vehicles, figures) and space models, to include both real space and theoretical real space models. For the USAF subjects, we would like to use a lot of the same items that got loaned for the Folds of Honor and Air Force Ball in 2018. We will attempt to highlight the aircraft and missions that were/are at Kirtland AFB. I will have a list of desired loaners on the big screen at the May 3 meeting. If you have a model that's not on my list, please let me know. We only have two tables for the display, so we will try to gauge what we think will fit. We would like to go with  $\frac{1}{32}$  and  $\frac{1}{48}$  models where possible, as that will be impressive to the crowd. We are going to use some of the big bomber models from the Defense Nuclear Weapons School Museum display to highlight Kirtland's nuclear test mission, so that will use up a chunk of the space. We will bring the "What is Scale Modeling" display and P-51 models and work that in, space permitting. Please let me know what real space and theoretical real space models you have, and we will try to get those worked in as well. We might try to fit in some UFOs for grins.

We will have a signup sheet at the May 3 meeting—looking to have six to eight people for the day. We will have some parking passes to park close to the display building, so we will need to meet ahead of time to car pool onto the base. We do need to supply our own tables and chairs. Wear an ASM shirt if you have one, and bring your ASM name tag.

Expect the usual drill of delivering tubs of models to Hobby Proz in the days before the airshow. Ensure your name is on your tubs and that you have a list of your models in the tub, along with any special instructions on packing or handling. Reminder emails will be sent out as the event gets closer.



# AND NOW, A WORD OR TWO FROM OUR SPONSORS

## TONY HUMPHRIES

Now that we have re-started our eBay effort (for fundraising purposes, of course), I think it's time to issue another appeal. Many of you have been very generous over the years. The people who selflessly do so much for our club and promote its interests are clear—I'm thinking of John Tate, Jack Garriss, and Frank Randall in particular here, but I think other guys on the current E-board, and many of you off it—Tim, Tom, and Pat, for example—have stepped up when needed; and those who don't have kits to donate have put in a lot of time and energy, which is just as valuable and much appreciated also. I hate for us to have to go "cap in hand" to you all once again, particularly those who have donated so much in the past, but we need to ask you once again, I'm afraid, if any of you have kits that you can spare? Alms for an old ex-leper, etc. It's all for a good cause, after all. Presumably you agree, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this or attending our meetings.

As a famous typewriter enthusiast once wrote "Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their club." It is also written that "By their donations shall ye know them." I'm not sure *where* that kind of (not very) subtle emotional blackmail is written, apart from here of course, but it has to be somewhere. We also mustn't forget that, aside from our own membership, we have been fortunate enough to receive some great donations from outside of the club, too, and from some who have passed on or been unable to continue building due to ill health. With luck (for us at least), those kind of donations may happen again in the future. Not that we want to injure anyone or hasten their demise, however, so please don't go breaking fingers, sticking pins in dolls, or poisoning anyone's coffee at our meetings. We don't want this to turn into a styrene Game of Thrones, after all. I am just hopeful in a general sort of way, not suggesting that we do anything concrete to bring that about!

Just as a word to the wise (and if you haven't already done so) you also might want to take this article as a reminder to have a word with your significant other (or "others" if you live in some of our less traditional communities) and make some plans about

what to do with your own stash when your time comes and you go to that great spray-booth in the sky. Some of you may give instructions for your relatives to contact the club and offer them any modeling related items that you may have remaining, although in my case at least, I would appreciate it if club representatives don't go knocking on my wife's door until she has had a suitable interval to celebrate and dance on my grave (only joking, dear...).

Not everyone will want, or indeed be able, to do that, of course, but if others feel it appropriate to do the same thing (donate, that is, not dance on my grave), then that's great and I'm sure the club will be grateful. Just something for you to think about anyway. If you do want to have that kind of discussion, though, do it *now*. It's later than you think (Bwaaah-ha-ha, etc.). And if you want to dance on my grave once I'm gone, feel free. It's not as if I'm going to be knocking on the coffin lid or banging it with a broom and shouting at you to keep the bloody noise down, after all. I'll already be drinking with Ernest Hemingway in that ever-open celestial bar and probably trying to sneak furtive glimpses down the front of Marilyn Monroe's dress, so you can do what you like at that point. I'll be busy.

Anyway, in the meantime, on behalf of the club I would like to say thanks again to John Tate for his continuing efforts on the eBay front, thanks to all of you who have made donations recently, and thanks also to the eBay Ladies (eBay seller ID **goinggoingsoldtoyou**), who have taken so much of the hassle out of the process for us and for a very reasonable fee. I have bought things from them myself and can't recommend them highly enough. The whole effort has brought us some very useful revenue in the past and hopefully will continue to do so, now that we've re-started it once again. If you can help, your contributions would be greatly appreciated.

And now that our PBS-style beg-athon is over, we return you to our normal programming...

---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ASM WEBSITE

May 9 – 11: AMPS 2018 International Convention. Buffalo Grand Hotel, Buffalo, New York.  
May 18: ASM Model Display at the Kirtland AFB "Air and Space Fiesta" Airshow

June 13 – 15: Squadron EagleQuest 28, Grapevine, Texas

August 7 – 10: IPMS/USA National Convention, Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga, Tennessee. Hosted by IPMS Chattanooga Scale Modelers.

July 31 – August 4: Star Trek Convention Las Vegas 2018, Rio Suites Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada. Trip reports from previous cons are on the *ASM Web Site*.

August 23 – 24 (TBD): New Mexico State Fair ASM-Sponsored Model Contest; Model registration dates are likely on Fri 23 & Sat 24 Aug from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. each day. Judging probably on Monday, 26 Aug.

ASM Display-Only Theme: "1939—Start of WWII" The fair runs September 5 – 15. Model pickup is on the 16th.

August 23 – 25: Bubonicon 51—2019. Science Fiction and Fantasy Convention, Albuquerque Marriott Uptown, 2101 Louisiana Blvd NE (Louisiana & I-40), Albuquerque

September TBD: ASM Model Display at the 2019 Air Force Ball at Kirtland AFB

October 5: Trinity Site Open to the Public. 8:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. at White Sands Missile Range.

October TBD: ASM Model Display at the 2019 Folds of Honor Patriot Gala in Albuquerque

November TBD: ModelZona 2019, Commemorative Air Force Museum, 2017 North Greenfield Rd, Mesa, Arizona, from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Hosted by IPMS Craig Hewitt Chapter, Region 10

---

## STARFEST AND MODELS

### JOE WALTERS

Over the April 26 – 28 weekend, my wife and I will be attending the annual StarFest sci-fi convention in Denver, and rumor has it a couple of folks named Blohm might show up and even bring some models for the excellent competition they put on there! Expect a full report and photos of *lots* of sci-fi models in next month's letter!

In the dealers' room at this show, there are always many model kits being offered for sale, and there are also a couple of local dealers that offer many *accessories* for sci-fi models that you just don't find

anywhere else, so this convention has a lot to offer the sci-fi modeler!

In addition, the local CoMMiES outfit puts on a “modeling university,” which includes Make & Takes and presentations much like the clinics we put on at our meetings now and then.

And there’s more! Building a model of the starship *Enterprise*? You can get William Shatner and/or Nichelle Nichols to autograph it, as they are both guests this year (this is Ms. Nichols’s final year appearing at conventions, as she has decided to retire from these appearances). Ben Browder (*Farscape*, *Stargate SG-1*) and Peter Macon (Bortis on *The Orville*) are coming too, as are a number of other guests from various sci-fi related venues, and several physicists and space scientists who will be giving presentations about ongoing and upcoming space exploration projects.

We’re looking forward to this, as we always do!

## IN THE BONUS PAGES!

In this month’s **Bonus Pages**:

- Photos of last month’s contest winners
- A kit review from John Tate
- A kit review from Ken Piniak
- And more!

### Year 2019 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)
- 01 Feb** **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest
- 01 Mar** **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale
- 05 Apr** **SPECIAL CONTEST #2: PRESIDENT’S CHOICE: FABULOUS FIFTIES**
- 03 May** **Automotive**—Any kit/subject/scale
- 07 Jun** **SPECIAL CONTEST #3: D-DAY 75TH ANNIVERSARY**
- 12 Jul** **Man in Space**—Any proposed/realspace crewed subject  
Sponsored Contest: “Best Supersonic” (Patrick Dick)
- 02 Aug** **SPECIAL CONTEST #4: BEGINNING OF WWII 80TH ANNIVERSARY**
- 06 Sep** **ASM Swap Meet**—no contest
- 04 Oct** **Enter the Dragon**—Any DML/Dragon/Cyberhobby kit
- 01 Nov** **Open Contest**—Any kit/subject/scale
- 06 Dec** **SPECIAL CONTEST #5: BATTLE OF THE BULGE 75TH ANNIVERSARY**  
Plus *Model of the Year* competition!

**Note: The most complete and up-to-date details on the contests, as well as detailed rules, as always, are on the ASM Website:**  
<http://tinyurl.com/asmsched>

#### Master

Scott Jaworski . . . . .	475
Chuck Hermann . . . . .	304
Glenn Bingham . . . . .	250
Josh Pals . . . . .	200
Mike Blohm . . . . .	100
Casey Rupley . . . . .	100
Steve Brodeur . . . . .	77
Tony Humphries . . . . .	25
Frank Randall . . . . .	25
John Tate . . . . .	25

#### Intermediate

Ken Liotta . . . . .	12
Larry Glenn . . . . .	4
Jim Medina . . . . .	483
Don Smith . . . . .	225
Rob Whitlock . . . . .	225
Ken Piniak . . . . .	200
Bob Henderson . . . . .	175
Jack Garriss . . . . .	50
David Hasking . . . . .	4
Steve Miller . . . . .	2

Logan Carbin . . . . .	2
------------------------	---

#### Basic

Aaron Schmiedke . . . . .	300
Jeannie Garriss . . . . .	225
Stephen Steans . . . . .	2

#### Junior

No Entries

### 2019 MODELER OF THE YEAR POINTS

As of 22 Apr 19

## CONTACT INFO

President:  
Vice President:  
Secretary/Treasurer:  
Contest Director:  
Members Pro-Tem:

Webmaster:  
Newsletter Editor:

Josh Pals  
Tony Humphries  
Frank Randall  
Chris Kurtze  
David Epstein  
Jack Garriss  
Ken Piniak  
Mike Blohm  
Joe Walters

[jpals871@gmail.com](mailto:jpals871@gmail.com)  
[abkhumphries@gmail.com](mailto:abkhumphries@gmail.com)  
[fcr40.fr@gmail.com](mailto:fcr40.fr@gmail.com)  
[aggressivekill@yahoo.com](mailto:aggressivekill@yahoo.com)  
[sf49erinnm@gmail.com](mailto:sf49erinnm@gmail.com)  
[jgar319113@aol.com](mailto:jgar319113@aol.com)  
[kpiniak@yahoo.com](mailto:kpiniak@yahoo.com)  
[BlohmM@aol.com](mailto:BlohmM@aol.com)  
[jwalters22@comcast.net](mailto:jwalters22@comcast.net)

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.

# BONUS PAGES!

## APRIL CONTEST WINNERS

From April's "Fabulous Fifties" Special Contest in April, top to bottom: John Tate's *French M-8 Armored Car, Indochina 1951* (Masters), and Bob Henderson's *1956 Ford F-100 Pickup* (Intermediate). There were no Junior or Basic entries.



# BONUS PAGES!

## KIT REVIEW

### JOHN TATE

#### Takom 1/16 Renault FT “3-in-1”



Several of us in the club built these big-scale Renault FT tank models for ASM’s Group/Chapter entry at the 2018 Nationals and did well enough with them to win a respectable second place. But after Nationals I still had one half-built on the model shelf so decided to finish it up and do a review.

First, it’s true what you’ve heard—the Renault FT was the first modern tank and easily the best tank of WWI. But when the Great War ended, the FT’s service was far from over, as these tanks saw plenty of action between the

wars, from Brazil to China, and were still useful enough as a combat weapon to see action in the early stages of WWII. What that means to us as modelers is that there is plenty of variation in markings and camouflage to make this kit a fun build.

The Takom FT is a recent kit, with the “3-in-1” version released in 2017, so generally it’s well-engineered and goes together nicely. There are three basic construction stages—the hull, the running gear/tracks, and the turret. I built the kit with an interior and spent much time painting and detailing the engine and driver’s compartment, but then buttoned it up anyway, so if you’re looking for a quicker build you can





skip most of this work. The engine is very nice but needs spark plug wires and priming valves, and the throttle controls in the driver's compartment need control wires that run to the front of the hull. Here you have to decide if you want to build the turret with the Puteaux cannon or Hotchkiss machine gun; the cannon version used the kit shell racks and the machine gun version had ammo boxes attached to the inside of the gunner's area, but unfortunately no ammo boxes are supplied with the

kit. No cannon shells, either—a noticeable oversight if you want to open up the interior.

Something else I noticed about the interior—there's a firewall separating the engine compartment from the crew compartment. Some accounts say the WWI tanks lacked this firewall, so check your references.

Two turret choices—the hexagonal omnibus turret or the round Girod turret. Both could house either the cannon or the machine gun, and both were used throughout the service life of the tank. I chose the Girod turret with cannon, as the shell racks for it came with the kit. The Girod turret took some work to get right, as I had to add the raised seam line around the top of the turret, plus some bolt heads that were either missing or poorly formed, but no significant problems.



The running gear and tracks are almost models in themselves and although tedious to get together, are generally trouble-free. The tracks are fully workable when properly assembled. Paint as you build to make finishing easier, and use extreme care when separating the individual track plates from the sprues or you'll end up with divots in the plates which will have to be repaired. You'll also need to decide at this stage if you want the WWI-style wooden front idler wheel, commonly used on most FTs, or the updated steel one, as seen on many French tanks in 1940.

Well, after several weeks to months of steady work, you're finally finished, so how do you









paint it? First, do your research and match your build to a real vehicle in a real photo. There are a myriad of FT images online, so finding something interesting shouldn't be difficult, especially as no two of these beasts seemed to be painted the same way. There weren't a lot of variations with the FT itself, but there were a few that were noticeable, so pay attention to details in the interest of accuracy. I selected a Vichy French FT used in colonial Morocco to oppose the Allied landings during Operation





Torch in 1942, as it had the French post-WWI steel idler wheels and double trail hooks for the tow chains, but still had the early WWI-style vision plate for the driver. Many French FTs that faced the Blitzkrieg in 1940 had a later armored visor for the driver, which unfortunately isn't included with the kit. Decal markings for the model were from the spares box, as there is a distinct lack of accurate decal markings for the FT in this scale, although those that come with the kit are usable.

Overall, this is a nice kit of a great historical subject, and well worth building if you want to try something different in an uncommon scale for armor. By the way, a reminder—the FT would make a good addition to ASM's "1939" display at the State Fair this year, as it was in service with both Poland and France at the start of WWII.



# BONUS PAGES!

## KIT REVIEW

### KEN PINIAK

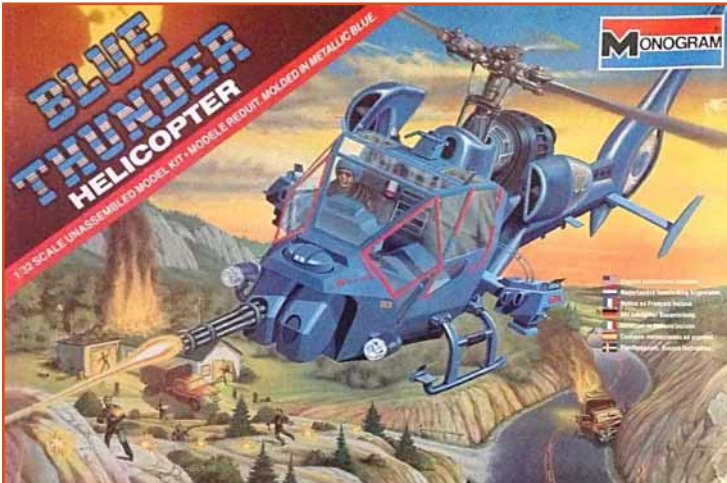
#### **Building the Blue Thunder Prototype 01**

The movie *Blue Thunder* (Columbia Pictures, 1983) follows the testing and ultimate destruction of the Blue Thunder helicopter prototype number 2. No mention is ever made of prototype number 1. This, then, is the story and model build of prototype number 1.



Sometime before the events portrayed in the film, #1 was involved in an accident and returned to the manufacturer for repair. I could find no information as to the cause of the accident, the condition of the pilot, or the extent of the damage to the aircraft. After repairing the damage, the manufacturer opted to retain the aircraft for additional upgrades and testing, based on field reports from testing the two aircraft in an urban environment. The aircraft proved to be under-powered, so they upgraded the engine, transmission, and rotor assembly. The engine went from 590HP to 650HP. The strengthened composite rotor blades were much stiffer than the originals, which had a pronounced droop when stationary. The belly armor was replaced with a new, lighter composite armor,  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick. The electronics and surveillance equipment received major upgrades. New communication equipment was added to connect to more databases, which resulted in a new antenna array. The rear cockpit configuration was changed, with one monitor unit removed, and other units and the keyboard relocated. Initial testing showed that it was desirable for the observer to be able to control all of the various sensors as well as the gun turret when the pilot cannot. Since the aft cockpit is not configured to use the Harrison Fire Control system, a joystick was added in the old keyboard location—the observer can use it to operate all of the sensors as well as the gun if it is not being used by the pilot. Lastly, operating the helicopter in an urban environment revealed a serious hazard of wire/cable strikes. Wire cutters were added to cut through power lines, telephone lines, etc. Since the aircraft would most often be used at night, a very dark blue over black paint scheme was applied. After testing out the new upgrades and modifications, the manufacturer turned the aircraft over to the Los Angeles Police two months after the second prototype was destroyed in a collision with a train. It was used by the City of Los Angeles for many years, and was often loaned out to the DEA, Border Patrol, and Customs. It was heavily used in the weeks after 9/11. After 27 years of service, Blue Thunder was officially retired in 2010. Its final fate is unknown.

I originally built the Monogram 1/32-scale Blue Thunder helicopter back in the 1980s, when I was much younger and less experienced. I did an okay job on it, but I can do a better one now that I am older and wiser(?). So I decided to have another go at it. Digging through the spare parts box, I found the original cockpit, canopy, rotor, tail boom, and other small parts. The main fuselage, landing gear, and gun turret were missing. I had never painted it (I liked the blue plastic) or added decals, but the decals were missing. I would need a new kit to work with. There are two 1/32-scale kits of Blue Thunder; the original Monogram kit and a copy made by Kitech, out of China. The Monogram kit is long out of production, but can be found at swap meets, sales, or on the internet (eBay is my friend), at prices ranging from really low to crazy expensive. At the time I could only find a Kitech kit, which was really cheap at about fourteen bucks.



I had heard that the Kitech kit was a reboxing of the old Monogram kit; it is not. It is a low-quality copy or “knockoff” of the original, and definitely inferior. It has much less detail than the Monogram kit, and has major fit issues, which are aggravated by severe warping of many of the parts. The decals are awful, and the clear parts are not clear. Nevertheless, if you are willing to put in some work, it can be made into a nice model. Since the Kitech decals are crap, and I had lost the original Monogram decals, I ordered a great set from Fireball Modelworks (unfortunately, these are no longer in production).

Once I had everything together, I laid it all out to see just what I had. While the Kitech kit is definitely inferior overall, some of its parts are equal



to or even better than the Monogram parts. The instrument panel, rear cockpit bulkhead, and engine are great! The cockpit tub and gun are decent. The main rotors are okay. My original cockpit



looked good, but not very accurate; back then references and photos were impossible to get. Today, however, a quick search of the internet brings up all kinds of photos and information. From this information, I learned that I could not use my parts (or even the entire new kit) to build the helicopter as it looked in





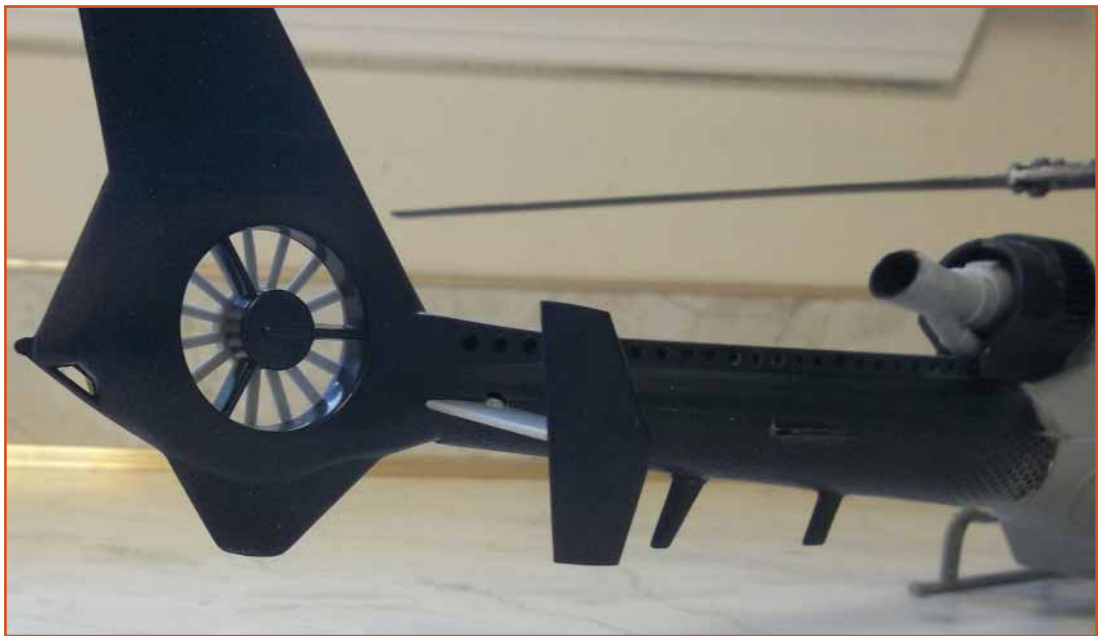
the movie. The Monogram kit was based on the short-lived TV show, with a number of differences to the aircraft, especially in the cockpit. The decal set by Fireball included alternate decals to make prototype #1, so I decided to build that instead of the movie bird.

Starting with my original Monogram cockpit, I added wires, boxes, and a joystick to represent the “new upgrades” added by the manufacturer’s engineers. I also added a fire extinguisher (missing in both kits) to the rear bulkhead. The observer’s seat swivels, and I added shoulder harnesses. The Monogram kit includes a nice hexagonal pattern in the molded on “belly armor” that I like. The Kitech kit includes this under the main fuselage, but not on the tail boom. So I removed the tail from the Kitech body and grafted on the Monogram tail in its place. Ironically, I liked the Kitech tail fan better, so I cut out the Monogram fan and added the Kitech unit. I installed the cockpit and the transmission and glued the body together. Because of the warping of the Kitech parts; I started with the tail (Monogram, no warping) and slowly worked my way around the belly, top, and nose, clamping as I went. I was going to graft the Monogram engine to the top, but the Kitech engine was just as good, so I kept it. The landing gear was warped, and did not fit the mounting points on the body. It took lots of work, super glue and epoxy putty to get it all lined





up and cleaned up. The curved front plate (behind the gun turret, shown on the previous page) had huge gaps all around. It required lots of styrene strip, epoxy putty, and more super glue to blend it in. Because of all that warping of the fuselage, neither the Monogram nor the Kitech canopy fit well. I went with the Monogram part because you can see through it (the Kitech



canopy can be fixed by polishing it out) and I had cut open the side hatch to show off the cockpit. Again, this piece had to be glued a little bit at a time. I ended up with a slight gap at the front which had to be filled in with styrene strip. The “engine intake” parts, engine cover, and the “camera surveillance unit” parts are Monogram, the “Nitesun” searchlights, shotgun microphones, and gun turret parts are Kitech. The rear synch elevators and “ammo belts” for the gun are a combination of both kit parts. The new antennas and wire cutters are from the parts box. I used an MV lens for the landing light. The decal set by fireball Modelworks is complete and accurate, with every marking and stencil seen on the aircraft in the movie. They are even readable! The paint is Testors Copenhagen



The new antennas and wire cutters are from the parts box. I used an MV lens for the landing light. The decal set by fireball Modelworks is complete and accurate, with every marking and stencil seen on the aircraft in the movie. They are even readable! The paint is Testors Copenhagen





Blue Metallic, which came out darker than I expected. Worse, when I added a flat clear (to match the matte look of the real bird) the paint turned almost black! I had to go back to a gloss/semigloss finish to bring back the blue. The belly armor is Model Master flat black. The observer's helmet is from the Kitech kit, the pilot's "Harrison Fire Control Helmet" is from a 54mm pilot figure. With the hatch in the open position, she sits ready, waiting for the crew to jump in and take off after the bad guys!





**HE'S OUT THERE...**

Flying the most lethal weapon ever made...  
The Blue Thunder Special.

At his fingertips, an infrared camera that can see right through your bedroom walls.

A microphone that can record your most intimate conversations.

And a 30mm electric cannon with six barrels that can turn your neighborhood into a raging inferno.

But he's not headed for a war-torn country.

He'll be cruising the skies of America.

And only one man can stop him from using it on you.



**ROY SCHEIDER**  
**BLUE THUNDER**

COLUMBIA PICTURES Presents  
A RASTAR-ORDON CARROLL Production A JOHN BADHAM Film  
ROY SCHEIDER "BLUE THUNDER"  
WARREN OATES • GANDY CLARK • DANIEL STERN  
and MALCOLM McDOWELL

Music by ARTHUR B. RUBINSTEIN Edited by FRANK MOHRBAUS Director of Photography JOHN A. ALONZO, A.S.C.  
Executive Producers PHIL FELDMAN and ANDREW FOGELSON Written by DAN O'BANNON & DON JAKOBY  
Produced by GORDON CARROLL Directed by JOHN BADHAM



# BONUS PAGES!

## CROSSING GENRES

### TONY HUMPHRIES

#### **Thoughts of an Armor Modeler on Building an Aircraft Kit...**

So, it has finally come to this, has it? Growing tired of the challenge of building in the scale-of-the-Gods (i.e.,  $\frac{1}{35}$ ) and out of curiosity (I was never confused though) picking up a  $\frac{1}{72}$  aircraft and deciding to try and build it. I have to say, I feel a bit sordid when first opening the box, a bit like an NFL owner caught in a Florida massage parlor. Well, probably... and when opening said box, a number of questions immediately spring to mind:

- Where is the photoetch?
- Why so many decals? Decals are evil and should be ruthlessly suppressed, in my humble opinion.
- Can you really make a realistic replica of this thing with so few parts?
- Only three wheels? Really?
- Why do they split that aircraft right down the middle so that you have an enormous seam to deal with? Why not mold it in tubular sections? The technology exists and it just seems logical to me. But there I am, making that fundamental mistake and trying to be logical again. Tsk, tsk, etc.

And so the construction process begins. Most of this seems pretty straightforward for the most part, at least in terms of assembly. But then again...

The seams! Oh dear God, the seams... How do you people put up with this? That fuselage must have needed a bucket of filler and about a square yard of sandpaper and I'm not even finished. My entire house has less spackle than this. Fill, sand, repeat. Fill, sand, repeat. Fill, sand, repeat. Oh, and then re-scribe. I have developed an entirely new facial tic and am beginning to giggle quietly to myself. The fuselage seams are a Herculean challenge in and of themselves. I know we get this with gun barrels in armor modeling, but they are:

- a) Smaller and easier to deal with
- b) If you get fed up with it, you can always buy a resin or turned metal aftermarket alternative. Where is the turned aluminum fuselage replacement when you need it? Nowhere, that's where!
- c) You rarely have to re-scribe (or even de-scribe) anything.

Once you get well into the assembly stage you realize quite how many angles there are to get right, even on the simplest aircraft. Everything has to be exactly ninety degrees. Except when it doesn't. And the transparencies have to be, well, really transparent. All of this precision business is a bit unreasonable if you ask me. If it looks cool, so what if the rear wings are a couple of degrees out of whack? Maybe they should build the real things like that? Maybe they do? It might explain why Fairey, Bell, or Convair went out of business, anyway (well, that and the intensive bombing in Fairey's case). Okay, it might be a bit more of a challenge to fly the thing in real life, but what do we spend all this money training these pilots for, anyway? At least this would make them earn their money and keep them on their toes...

Okay, so my first efforts are probably going to look as ugly as a 1970s FIAT (where the rust is the only thing holding it together), but at least I'm making an effort. Actually you probably didn't get many Italian cars over here until recently, and honestly I can't believe we have them now. I grant you, they can build a very nice supercar, but when it comes to the humble sedan? Not so much. I knew someone in the late-'70s who bought a new Lancia and several months later he drove around a corner and the driver's door fell off. Actually fell off. Now there's quality for you... The only thing remotely as bad was anything with the name British Leyland on it. Everything they produced was a short-circuiting, fake rubber and cheap

steel nightmare. I can only assume they were part of an elaborate joke, which most of us completely failed to understand at the time. Much of the world fell for it, actually, at least for a while. Funny how you don't see many models of those cars around these days. Even Airfix stopped bothering. People seem to like the fantasy Luftwaffe malarkey, 1946 and all that. But no one wants to build fantasy cars. Like an MG that was well put together, liked the damp, didn't break down and need re-wiring every 500 miles, for example. A dream indeed. But anyway, getting back to the topic in hand...

Paint finishes need to be a little more precise and consistent with aircraft models, it seems. I am going to need to hone my airbrushing skills. Well, actually, I'm going to need to develop some... I know a lot of you who like these funny winged things believe that armor modelers just dunk their builds in a large vat of olive drab and they're done. It's not quite as simple as that (we need more than one vat, for a start) but the finishes are certainly simpler in my view and the scope for weathering is much greater. Plus sometimes you can just smear mud or a bunch of crew stowage over your mistakes and get away with it. Not often, but sometimes. A word to you potential judges here—if you see an armor model that is positively festooned with stowage, or looks like it's been wrestling in pudding (and lost) be suspicious. Very suspicious. Nothing says “glaring error” like 200 sandbags and a large tarpaulin. Just like aircraft modelers who cover the canopy or other significant parts of the plane with a tarp or canvas cover. That's a flat-out admission that I've made a complete arse of this cockpit and I'm doing my best to keep it under wraps. Literally. Or should that be figuratively? Well, that argument aside (and don't think I haven't been tempted with the tarp and stowage trick here too, by the way), I must say I'm having a hard time getting sharp-edged camo and a nice smooth finish all over on these aircraft kits anyway. The mistakes here seem more obvious and more glaring than on armor, which makes me wonder if this wasn't a bloody silly idea in the first place, to be honest.

When building armor, I actually like to use super glue (cryoanalyate or whatever it's called) at least part of the time too, oddly perhaps. Not usually a good idea with aircraft though, it seems. Things tend to get a little foggy and people seem determined to cling to this old-fashioned idea that the pilot should be able to see where he's going. Isn't that what instruments are for? Pilots are altogether too pampered these days, if you ask me...

Anyway, if having worked your way through this whole bizarre process you end up with something that sits on at least two of its three wheels and has the requisite number of wings, then well done indeed! Kudos is deservedly yours. After all, it's a funny old game. But enough about chess... This build process does sometimes resemble a chess game, actually, where your opponent is a grand master, has more arms than Shiva, and at least four queens on the board at any one time. I guess eventually, I'll get used to it. In the meantime though, get ready to see some aircraft on the table that look as though they have been built by a seven-year-old, while in mid-seizure. But don't judge me too harshly and try not to laugh. At least I'm trying something new. Are you? If not, why not? Challenge yourself a bit. You (probably) won't be sorry!

### **Thoughts of an Armor Modeler on Building a ship kit...**

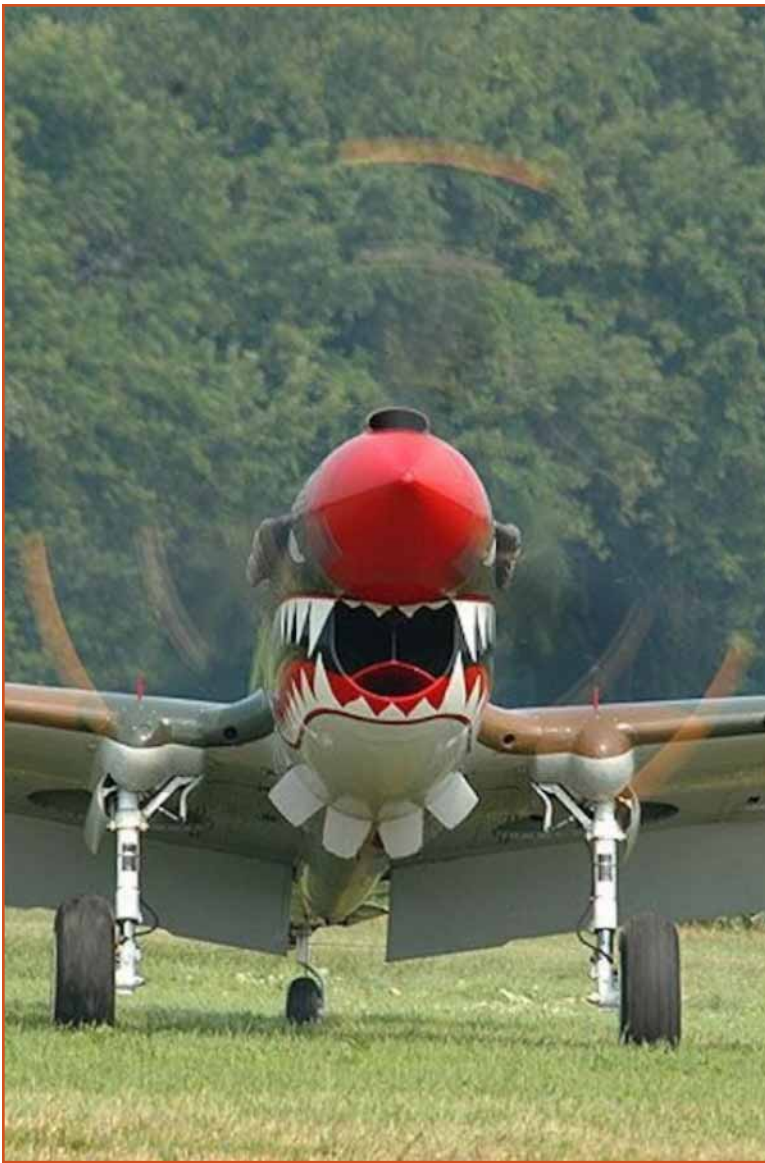
No. Just, no.

# BONUS PAGES! MISCELLANEOUS



...Cow?





**That Face You Make...**

**When You Drop That  
Tiny Piece On The Floor**

***AND YOU CAN'T FIND THE DAMN THING!!!***

## Join IPMS/USA!

The International Plastic Modelers' Society is an organization dedicated to the fun of Scale Modeling. There are IPMS branches all over the world.

As part of your IPMS/USA membership, you will receive the IPMS Journal six times a year. In it you will find stories of interest on subjects such as aircraft, armor, automotive, ships, and figures. You will also find listings of IPMS contests and swap meets, hints and tips, and reviews. Membership also qualifies you to participate in IPMS/USA-sanctioned Regional Contests, as well as our world-famous National Convention, held each summer.

As a member, you'll also be able to access our online Members' Forum, where a wide variety of society and modeling topics are discussed. In addition, many hobby shops around the country offer discounts to IPMS/USA members. To join, simply use the form below or join online (<http://www.ipmsusa.org>).

For any questions or problems regarding your membership application or renewal, please contact the IPMS/USA Office Manager ([manager@ipmsusa.org](mailto:manager@ipmsusa.org)).



## IPMS/USA MEMBERSHIP FORM

IPMS No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ If Renewing \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (required by P.O.) \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership  Adult, 1 Year: \$30  Adult, 2 Years: \$58  Adult, 3 Years: \$86

Junior (Under 18 Years) \$17  Family, 1 Year: \$35 (Adult + \$5, One Set Journals) How Many Cards? \_\_\_\_\_

Canada & Mexico: \$35  Other / Foreign: \$38 (Surface) Checks must be drawn on a US bank or international money order

Payment Method:  Check  Money Order

Chapter Affiliation, (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

If Recommended by an IPMS Member, Please List His / Her Name and Member Number:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ IPMS No.: \_\_\_\_\_

### IPMS/USA

Join or Renew Online at: [www.ipmsusa.org](http://www.ipmsusa.org)

PO Box 56023

St. Petersburg, FL 33732-6023