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Newsletter of the Austin Scale Modelers Society

January 2009

SPRUE EXAMINER



Snark Attack! **Building The Elderly 1/48th** **Lindberg Kit**

by "Bondo" Phil Brandt
IPMS # 14091

The Northrop "Snark" started life in the developmental tumult that raged in the post-WWII American aircraft industry. Responding to the 1945 USAAF requirements for a long range cruise missile, Northrop was awarded a contract to develop the subsonic "Snark" and the supersonic "Boojum." Design and testing progressed on the initial Snark design, but due to government-reduced emphasis and two crashes, the first flight didn't occur until 1951.

Because the Air Force kept significantly changing its load, speed, and range requirements, the Snark was significantly re-designed, eventually designated under the new USAF missile naming system as the SM-62.

In 1953 President Eisenhower stepped up strategic missile development to the highest national priority, and testing got serious. The Snark went head-to-head with the North

American X-10 Navajo cruise missile, and both companies used the Cape Canaveral test site.

What was to become a ten-year gestation for the Snark had more than its share of inflight failures, so many in fact that competing North American engineers used to refer to the waters off Cape Canaveral as "Snark-infested."

The Snark's guidance system performance was especially egregious over the five thousand mile planned range. The original combination of inertial/star tracking was hoped to produce CEPs (Circular Error Probable, delivery accuracy indicator of a weapon system) in the 2nm range, but more often produced CEPs of 20nm, not acceptable even with the blockbuster thermonuclear warheads then in production! Continued test results were so disappointing that in 1957 even SAC commander General Power felt that the program should be cancelled; he was overridden at Air Force level.

In 1959 the Snark was finally deployed operationally as part of the first strategic missile wing ever formed in the Air Force, the 702nd at Presque Isle AFB, Maine. The first Snark went

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Our Sponsors

These are some of the organizations and individuals which help make Austin Scale Modelers Society possible:



Austin Armor Builders Society
www.austinarmorbuilders.com



AUSTIN MODEL CARS
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AustinModelCars/



IPMS-USA Alamo Squadron
www.alamosquadron.com

South Texas Auto Modelers



2500 West Palmer Lane, Suite 80
Austin, TX 78727
Tel: (512) 246-8904
Email: hobbytownaustin@gmail.com



8810 N. Lamar Blvd
Austin, TX 78753
Tel: (512) 836-7388
Email: kinginfo@kingshobby.com
www.kingshobby.com



Email: wmbros@sbcglobal.net
www.williamsbrothersmodelproducts.com

Phil Brandt **Kachoris Family**
Dennis Price **Ion Tesu**
John Seaman **Rick Willaman**

Upcoming Events

Model Shows

IPMS/SWAMP, CALMEX XXIII, Westlake, LA	January 24
IPMS/Alamo Squadron, ModelFiesta XXVIII, Live Oak, TX	February 21
IPMS/MCMA, Showdown #19, Irving, TX	March 21
IPMS/Tulsa, Tulsa Modelers Forum Open Contest, Tulsa, OK	March 28
IPMS/Flying Tigers, Great South Tigerfest XVI, Kenner, LA	March 28

Local Events

First meeting of the "resurrected" Lone Star Military Miniature Society San Marcos Public Library, San Marcos, TX	January 10
Living History Program, National Museum of the Pacific War (Nimitz Museum) Fredericksburg, TX	March 14-15



Support Our Troops!



In support of the initiative to provide model kits, supplies and reference materials to our servicemen and women serving in combat zones in Iraq, IPMS/USA has elected to have **SFC Steven DeLong** as the point of contact for **The Iraq Model Network**. Any individual, IPMS chapter, or industry supporter who wishes to make a donation, please send it to:

Baghdad Hobby Club
c/o SFC Steven DeLong
HQ, MNC-I (FSC), 18th Airborne Corps
APO, AE 09342

SFC DeLong can also be reached via e-mail at: steven.delong@iraq.centcom.mil




Austin Scale Modelers Society (ASMS) is affiliated with the International Plastic Modeler's Society (IPMS) as the Republic of Texas Chapter. ASMS meets the second Tuesday of each month except December. Dues for full membership are \$20 yearly. Subscription to the newsletter *Sprue Examiner* is \$15 yearly. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors. ASMS does not endorse the contents of any article.

Kenny's Korner

2009! I hope everyone had a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I know I did. With the new year we have new opportunities and challenges. This month we will be electing officers and moving to a new meeting place.

Usually a new year prompts us to make resolutions to better ourselves. And usually, after our normal life starts regaining its foothold, we resolve to try again next year. Whatever you resolve, I urge you to write it down. Place it where you will look at it every day, share it with someone who will encourage you and finally, believe you will accomplish the task. I know it sounds very zen, but believe me, it does work.

Now, think about how you can serve our club. Make a resolution to be a better member, whether that is to be an officer, recruit a new member, conduct a clinic, help with planning the show or lend a hand on the day of the show.

Whatever you decide, remember, the whole purpose of ASMS is to promote our hobby. The best way to promote it is to have fun at it. Now, get out there and build something! 

Kenny

King's Hobby Staying Open!

Santa apparently must have heard every Central Texas modeler's prayer last Christmas. We received the good news via King's weekly newsletter on the last day of 2008:


We are pleased to report that King's Hobby Shop will be open and operating into the new year and — with your kind support — for many years to come. Bob King will return temporarily to help transition store ownership to new proprietor, Marc Hobbs.

Marc has been an active participant in the Austin hobby scene for many years and brings lots of business and accounting experience to the table. He also states as his priority a commitment to the high level of product quality and customer service everyone has enjoyed at King's for so many years.

Faces behind the counter will be familiar to everyone as well. Brad Perry, Rudy Cline and Antonio Brewer will be the initial staff into the new year and look forward to serving you.

Janis and Rudy want to thank you all once again for your wonderful support over these last six years. Being part of something so special was a great privilege and nothing makes us happier than to see it moving forward under new leadership.

We're most fortunate to have someone like Marc, who is a serious modeler as well as a dear friend in our local modeling

community, to rescue King's in these turbulent economic times. No doubt his training and experience as an accountant will be his greatest asset in managing our favorite local hobby shop. Thanks, Marc! You can count on our support in spirit and wallet in the years to come. 

Editor

Editor's Final Notes...

Happy New Year, everyone! I hope you all enjoyed your holiday. Thanks to Marc Hobbs' hospitality, our Christmas party was a blast (see photos on page 8).

First order of business in 2009 is the election of new officers. It's time to start thinking about the management team for the next two years. I have some thoughts I would like to share with you on that. Even though I doubt you might read on, I'm going to write it anyway (one of the few advantages of being the editor, I suppose. But I shall put that to a stop after this month).

What constitutes a good President or Vice-President? In my opinion, being the top ASMS officers involves more than just holding the titles. Other than representing the club in a dignified manner, they must possess leadership and organizational skills to steer this ship. Often sacrifices of time and personal gain from the club must be made for the better good of the organization. Showing up to conduct our meetings is NOT the only thing that is required of them. They must provide guidance, encouragement and set an example for all of us. From simple things such as paying dues on time and finishing a model to inspire us, to bigger chores such as resolving conflicts and scheduling meetings and programs, they must be decisive in handling and delegating tasks.

The membership of this club has stayed stagnant in the last few years. I believe it's a top priority for our new prez and veep to place more emphasis on recruitment. With the increasing demise of local hobby shops throughout the country, the burden of promoting our hobby is now solely on the shoulders of community level organizations like ASMS. The Annual Show, again in my opinion, can only arouse people's curiosity for a short while. To sustain a constant interest in model building, we need to invest further efforts into outreach and recruiting projects on all levels.

While we spend more time infusing new blood, we must not neglect our existing members. We need to make sure they stay interested. The last thing we want is members getting tired of us saying and doing the same old things and stop coming.

The bottom line is in order for ASMS to survive, we have to keep growing. We can no longer afford another two years of doing nothing! You may think this all sound melodramatic, but the threat of our hobby dying is very real indeed. Just look at the age group of our members. Just look at how many times we

(continued on page 6)

(Snark Attack! continued)

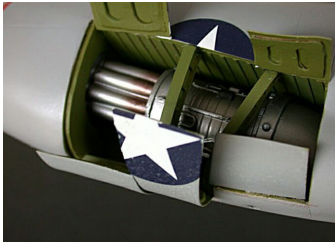
on alert in March 1960, soon to be joined by three others, and by February 1961 the missile wing was at long last designated "operationally ready." Just one month later President Kennedy declared the program to be "...obsolete and of marginal military value." The Snarks immediately stood down and by June of that year were gone forever.

The Kit

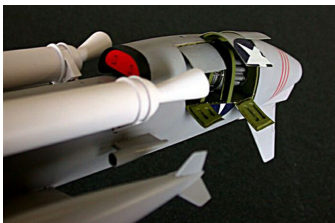
This is the ancient Lindberg, all right! Red plastic, boiler-sized rivets and raised panelling everywhere. Plus the same handy jet engine that accompanied so many of the firm's releases of the 50s and 60s. But, when all's said and done, dimensions seem close enough for government work, and there's the neat launching trailer and mini-CAT towing vehicle that are part of the kit.

Construction

All surfaces were wet sanded to be totally free of raised detail and then the panels and lines were rescribed. Because there's little complexity, such as a cockpit, to catch the eye, I chose to create an open engine compartment. The J48 engine from the Academy F-86 was used because I was unable to find a 1/48th J57. By the time the interior structure was scratchbuilt, it was reasoned that not enough engine would actually be showing anyhow. Engine compartment panels were also scratchbuilt.



Because Lindberg never offered any intake trunking, I chose to do the ol'FOD cover trick. The exhaust tunnel was created from 0.5" plastic tube.



The launch trailer was built OOB. Eventually I elected not to configure the scene with the tow-tractor and front wheel dolly attached to the launcher because the launch sites at Presque Isle were much more permanent.

Painting

We at Bondo Industries usually favor definitive operational colors, as opposed to garish (in this case, especially) test markings as Lindberg provided in the kit. The Snark at the USAF Museum is done in gray, and your correspondent prefers the subdued gray against the stark chrome yellow trailer.



The trailer launcher was first sprayed out of the can with Tamiya white lacquer primer, and then received multiple coats of Tamiya chrome yellow lacquer, again from the spraycan. The missile proper was done in Tamiya gray



lacquer primer, again in the spraycan. The solid rocket boosters are in Tamiya white lacquer primer. The engine compartment is Testors acrylic interior green, and the engine, as always, is in Alclad II.

As these were SAC's brand new, just-deployed missiles, no attempt was made to weather the assemblies; there's no way they'd have been allowed to get dirty!

Decals

The operational bird has few decals, as opposed to the nightmare that would've been visited trying to do all those white test markings over a red base!

I used the SAC star-studded ribbon from an old Hasegawa B-47 sheet; the 1/72nd scale ribbon seems to work fine on a 1/48th airframe. National insignia and stripes are from Aeromaster.

Conclusion

The extremely short operational career of the Snark should not be summarily dismissed, because its ten-year development in so many areas paved the way for SAC's successful strategic missiles of the following twenty years. ✈️

Bondo Phil





**GREX Genesis.XT
Trigger Style Double Action
Side Gravity Feed Airbrush
MSRP \$199.98**

Reviewed by
Floyd S. Werner, Jr., IPMS# 26266

Have you ever experienced your trigger finger cramping up while painting your model? I have, especially when doing Luftwaffe modeling. Maybe what you need is a better way to airbrush.

Enter the GREX Genesis.XT. I first saw the GREX product line at the IPMS/USA Nationals. Emblazoned in the lime green booth were some excellent products for you to test drive. I was immediately impressed with the feel and action of all the airbrushes. The Genesis.XT was the first time I've had the pleasure of using a trigger style airbrush.

The Genesis.XT comes in a lime green box. Inside, protected by foam packaging and a plastic case, is the airbrush, two reservoirs, paint cup cover, a wrench (for disassembly), and the instruction sheet. Everything about this airbrush exudes quality. The action of the trigger demonstrates the precision that is a hallmark of the entire GREX line.

Amazingly, the Genesis.XT can do everything from a fine line to larger area coverage. Fitted with a .35mm nozzle and a 360° swiveling paint cup, the airbrush is ideal for model painting. The action is easy enough; just pull back like a gun trigger and you are painting. Similar to any typical double action airbrush, the more you pull, the more paint comes out. And the further away you get from the model, the larger the area of coverage.

Looking nice is one thing. Performance is another, and the truth is in the usage. For a proper testing, I chose the most difficult task I can think of for an airbrush: Luftwaffe mottling. I ran mine at 5-10 psi and had no problem with either enamels or

acrylics. I was able to do Luftwaffe mottling as well as the gloss and flat coats. I really enjoyed the ease with which I was able to do the clear coats. It is unrivalled with how well it worked for this application. Also, and this is the best part, my fingers didn't cramp up even after all the testing and painting.

I also picked up the Genesis.XN (.20mm nozzle, \$139.98) and had great success with it as well. The GREX line works with the same style of hose as an Iwata. Both airbrushes now have a prominent place on my paint bench. That is the best recommendation I can give. Just like every tool, the more you work with it, the better you'll get. Practice, practice, and more practice.



The Genesis.XT is an exceptionally good airbrush that is a great value. If you are looking for a new airbrush, consider the GREX Genesis series. You will not be disappointed. Highly recommended.

You can obtain your copy directly from GREX at <http://www.grextools.com/grexAirbrush/index.php5>. Please let them know you heard about it from here and from me. ✍️

Floyd

**Robert David Beebe
1971-2008**

Central Texas lost a dear friend and a fellow modeler before Christmas last year. Robert Beebe passed away in his home in Tyler, Texas on December 19th. He was 37 years old.



Born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Robert grew up in a military family, and he followed his father's footsteps and joined the Army upon graduation from high school. He was stationed in Germany in the late 1980s and participated in Operation Desert Storm as a tank driver. After leaving the Army, he obtained his training as a LVN, and he was working at a nursing home in Henderson, Texas at the time of his passing.

Armor modeling was Robert's passion. Many of us remembered his fine work on WWII AFVs, and he had received numerous awards from various shows and contests in our region.

Robert is survived by his wife, two daughters, sister, and his father. His death was preceded by his mother's three months earlier in September 2008. We send our heartfelt sympathy to the Beebe family for their losses. Memorial messages may be left at www.burkswalkertippit.com. ✍️


Editor

(Editor's Final Notes continued)

have complained that fewer younglings are attending our Annual Show. Just look at what happened to all the defunct model clubs in our region.

So for the sake of this club and our local modeling community, PLEASE volunteer, PLEASE question each candidate's intentions and plans of action, and most importantly, PLEASE vote wisely!

There. I've said enough. These are NOT my campaigning speech for the prez or veep position. Nor are they endorsements for any candidate. They are just my opinions. They are also the final words of *Editor's Notes*. By saying what I've said here, I've stepped over the boundaries of my duties and proper manner for the last time. I must now declare this column "redundant" and close it down for good. No more reckless and meaningless banter from yours truly from now on.

Starting this month we have a new meeting venue: the **Austin Terrazas Library on E. Cesar Chavez Street** (see map on last page). Our reservation at this location has been confirmed for the rest of the year. We meet on **January 13th at 7pm**. It's **membership dues** time again, so please have your money or check book ready. Don't forget to bring what you're working on to impress and inspire everyone! 

Eric



**Do Your Duty,
Pay Your ASMS
Dues!**



Calling All Figure Modelers and Painters...

from Bob Bethea

This goes out to all those who have shown an interest in getting together to paint, sculpt and talk about miniature figures of all subjects, scales and eras. We are, in effect, resurrecting the dormant **Lone Star Military Miniature Society**. We plan to have meetings on Saturday afternoons with time and space to actually do some painting.

We have found a "neutral location" in the city of San Marcos to allow interested persons from both Austin and San Antonio to participate with equal difficulty of access. The librarians at **San Marcos Public Library** are very gracious and will let us paint inside their building as long as we bring plastic sheets to cover their tables. I've reserved their small meeting room for our first meeting in January. Their large room is not available until after April 15th as it is reserved for free tax preparation until then. After that, if we expand, we can reserve the large meeting room.

We picked the second Saturday to allow San Antonio AMPS members to attend, as they meet on the third Saturday. We can also meet beforehand and eat at one of the great San Marcos Mexican restaurants.

Date & Time:

January 10th, 2009 from 12:30 pm till 4:45 pm (or as long as you find it fun)

Directions:


1. From either North or South, take IH 35 to San Marcos.
2. Get off at Exit 205 (Wimberley, RR12, Hwy 80) and go west on East Hopkins Street (Left under freeway for those from the South. Right for those from the North).
3. Go past the HEB Grocery and the railroad tracks and you will find the library on your right. The library street address is:

**625 East Hopkins Street,
San Marcos, TX 78666**

If you get lost, you can call me, Bob Bethea, on my cell phone **(512) 784-7002**.

Program: None specifically, but we can set one for February. Bring something to work on, and we can help each other at the meeting.

A special thanks to Tim Robb, without whom we would still be looking for a place to meet!!

Lets all have a good time. 

Bob



AFV Club 1/35th IDF Centurion Sho't

by
Rick Herrington

I was glad to see AFV Club come out with a new Centurion model, especially depicting an early Israeli Centurion *Sho't*. The Tamiya kit put out in the late 70's is a bit long in the tooth, and it's really showing its age comparing with most of today's releases.



AFV Club is known for its details, and it's usually well worth the price you pay for one of their kits. For the \$56 price tag charged for this kit I expected it to be up to today's standards of detail and engineering. I was not disappointed with the level of detail in this kit, but the over-engineering got in the way of what should have been a fun modeling experience.

Instructions

The kit includes parts to make a Mark 3 or Mark 5 version. Pay close attention to the instructions and decide which version you want to make. The instructions call out which part to be used, but often times they are not clear about how or where to place those parts.

Most kit manufacturers put related assemblies on one part tree. This makes it easier for the builder to find parts for related sub-assemblies, such as the suspension or the turret. AFV Club has decided to take a different path by spreading parts all over the ten part trees included in the kit. You'll spend a great deal of time looking for parts on the trees.

Flash

Most of the releases we see today from major kit manufacturers have no flash. Sadly AFV Club's Centurion has plenty of it, and there are sink holes in prominent places. Each driver's hatch only has not one but three to be filled.

Over Engineering

A typical example of the over-engineering of this kit is the road wheels. There are five pieces to complete each road wheel: two plastic inner dishes, two vinyl outer tires (they'll only adhere to the plastic by using super glue), and an inner ring that is trapped between the two plastic dishes. The vinyl tires do not have any inner stops to indicate their position, so check your reference photos to get an idea before you start supergluing them.

The upper hull construction is broken down into six pieces where one would have done nicely. The instructions weren't clear on the placement of the parts, and I resorted to pulling out my old Tamiya Centurion as a guide.

The tracks are the vinyl type, and the fit is very tight. They also have some flash to be removed. AFV Club has come out with some aftermarket plastic link-to-link tracks which probably would have been worth the investment.

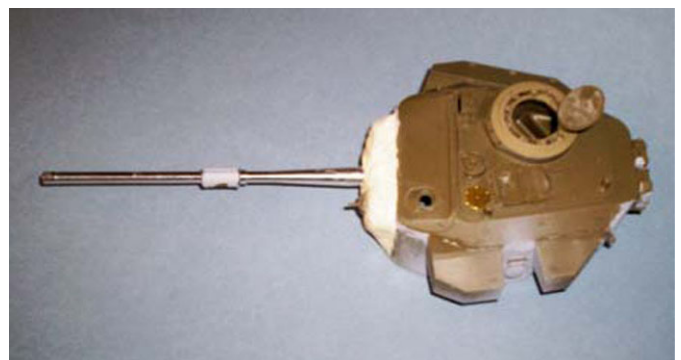
The front idler wheel can be set in either lower or upper position. Make sure the idler is in the top position. Glue it into place before attempting to put the tracks on.

Photoetched Parts

One set of small PE was provided with my *Sho't*. It was not until I was well into the construction of the lower hull that I realized there should have been two provided in the kit. The prominent front fender braces, called out as part G-8 in the instructions, were not there. The '73 version of this kit, which I also purchased, came to the rescue by providing a pattern for the braces. I made them out of sheet styrene, and it actually worked out better since I didn't have to use superglue to attach them.

Gun Mantlet Cover

I have a personal thing about buying extra parts to finish a kit that should have been included with the kit. Tamiya started the practice with the *LeClerc* where you have to buy an aftermarket piece to complete the kit. AFV Club continues trying to be like the big boys by selling the mantlet cover as an aftermarket accessory. For the price of this kit, this should have been included in the kit. I don't agree with trying to squeeze another \$12 out of the modeler after the initial purchase. So I made my cover out of A&B putty and Kleenex tissue.



Completed turret with scratchbuilt gun mantlet cover.

Tow Cables

There are two kinds of tow cable ends included in the kit. The instructions have a picture of the correct type illustrated. Be sure you select the correct one for your version before cutting and gluing the nylon strings to make up the cable.



Finishing up

Once I completed the construction, the painting went well. I used Testors Israeli Sand for the base coat, which is more of a light olive, and Afrika Korp Brown for the Israeli sand color. According to my reference photos, the color should be more on the yellow side, but I'm happy with the finish.

Decals are typical AFV Club: they are too thin and fall apart easily if moved too much. After my first attempt to put one on and destroying it, I went to the left over decal box and selected some Academy decals. That worked out just fine.

Conclusion

Both Dave Edgerly and I have purchased the AFV Club Centurion '73 version. After the experience of this build and the complaints I've been hearing from Dave, I'm not eager to start mine any time soon. I may just let it sit in my closet a while longer. 🐉

Rick



ASMS 2008 Christmas Party



Bondo entertaining Adam Coleman, our special guest of the evening. Adam is the prez of IPMS/RGV in McAllen, TX.



Meanwhile, Adam's wife Gabriella listened to our prez Kenny as Drew Hobbs doing some fancy trick with his foam plate.



Martha Bell and Pat Delk commenting on Tim's choice of dessert?



Russ, Rick, and Frank eagerly waiting for the white elephant gift exchange to start.



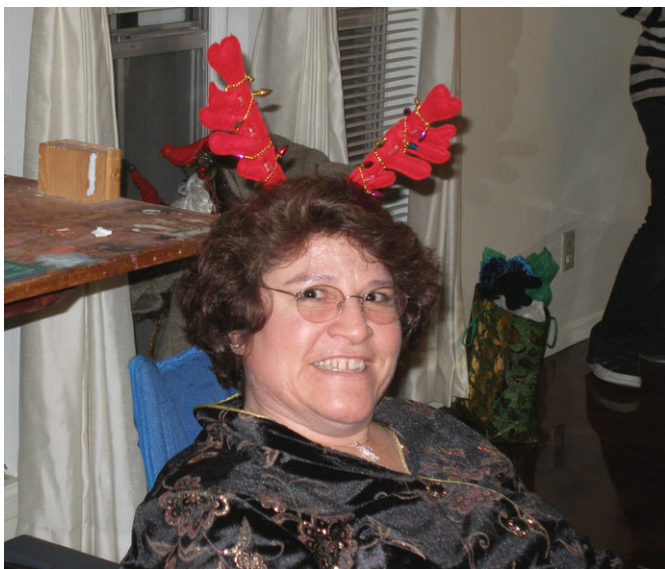
We can expect to see Adam (sorry, the camera missed your face), Jack, Rick, Mike, and Milton finishing these models later on this year, can't we?



No hurry for us, according to Milton, Jeff, and Karl. It looks like they could talk all night.



No more excuse for Kathy and Angie not remembering what their white elephants were.



Complementing Tim's Santa inspired outfit was his wife Miriam's reindeer head gear.



Unfortunately, we'll never know what Bruce got. Darn!





16 Years Ago (December 1992) ...

Wildest ASMS Christmas party ever? Then editor Bob North filed this report of the Christmas party in the January 1993 newsletter:

For those of you who might have missed it – the Christmas party was loads of fun—property damage was kept to a minimum and insurance will cover it anyway. Steve Collins (Editor: then ASMS president) regaled us with tales of his adventures in S.E. Asia during the early part of his Air Force career. This included a live demonstration of how monkeys would leap from one piece of furniture to another, but there's a big difference between a 5 lb. monkey and, well, you get the picture...

This inspired Bill Malone to try swinging from the chandelier, which, fortunately was well secured to the ceiling. We were able to scrape most of the bean dip and guacamole from his knees and thus recover usable amounts of same for continued munching.



Personally, I missed that incident, having been forcibly stuffed into the refrigerator, being told to "chill out!" I guess my raucous renditions of bawdy Christmas carols went over like a lead zeppelin, as it were.

I was finally released from my icy prison when someone realized I was in there with all the beer. When A.P.D. showed up, Darryl Monroe had some presence of mind and managed to convince the good officers that a padded van would soon be along to pick us up and take us back to the hospital from which we were all on furlough.



(Editor: Looks like Bob's little prank still fools us after 16 years! Most of the "senior" ASMS members I talked to either did not recall any of the described events or pleaded the fifth...)

Panzer Gunner

By Bruno Friesen

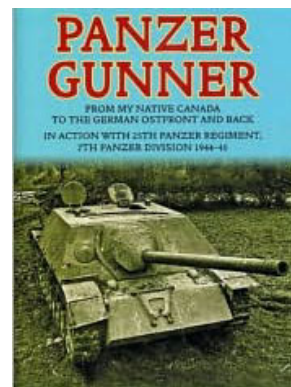
Helion & Company

\$49.95, ISBN: 9781906033118

Reviewed by

Eric Choy, IPMS #44323

Born in Manitoba to Mennonite parents immigrated from Ukraine, Bruno Friesen grew up in Kitchener, a quiet suburb of Toronto, leading the life of an average Canadian boy. Two months before his fourteenth birthday in March 1939, his teenage life in North America came to an abrupt end; his pro-German parents decided a better future awaited them in the Third Reich, and Friesen was sent away to Germany along with his brother. Thus begins this unique story of a Canadian fighting for Nazi Germany in WWII.



Upon his arrival in Germany, Friesen found himself a stranger in the new "old world." He had never been outside of Canada, and the few German words he knew were learned from Sunday School back in Kitchener. After a brief stay with his foster parents in a farmhouse, Friesen reunited with his family in Wilhelmshaven and started an apprenticeship as an electrician.

In November 1942, Friesen was drafted into the German Army. After receiving training as a tank driver, he was sent to the seaport of Trieste as part of the occupation forces when Italy sided with the Allies. Aside from guard duties, the only action Friesen saw there was in the brothel. The good life, however, did not last long. In late 1943, his unit, 25th Panzer Regiment, part of the 7th Panzer Division (Heer), was deployed to the Eastern Front. During the next twelve months, Friesen, now a Panzer IV gunner, was fighting delay actions against Soviet tank units in Eastern Europe. His performance in Lithuania earned him the Tank Battle Badge (Silver) and the first of his two Iron Crosses.

By early 1945, Friesen was already a hardened veteran with a number of T-35/85 and IS-2 kills. Much of the fighting of his regiment was relegated to ambushes and counterattacks in Romania and Prussia. During one of these actions in March, his tank, a late war Jagdpanzer IV, was disabled by an anti-tank mine, and while escaping on foot, he was wounded by a mortar round. He spent a month in a military hospital in Altenburg, and by the time he recovered, the war was over.

After the war, Friesen found work as a mail courier/interpreter/translator in the British Sector. Meanwhile, he repeatedly applied to the Canadian Consulate for his return to Canada. His

effort took him five years, and he was finally able to return home to Kitchener in 1950.

Reading Friesen's autobiography Panzer Gunner is both enjoyable and a bit puzzling. I like the way he augments his wartime travels and battles with the official history of the 7th Panzer Division for authentication. While I have no doubt about his whereabouts during the war, I have reservations on his assessment of the Panzer IV and his seemingly invincible panzer regiment. If the Panzer IV was so mighty and superior to the Soviet T-34/85, how come the Germans still bothered to develop the Panther and Tiger tanks? Isn't it a bit strange that fuel and ammunition shortages in the late war years are never mentioned in the book? Finally, is it a fact or just the author's "cherry-picking" that every tank engagement he elects to mention in his book always ends with the Germans as the victors?

Throughout the book Friesen never complains about his parents' decision of relocating to Germany. Nor does he resent his days of fighting with his German comrades. However, he occasionally does show his distaste towards Nazi ideologies and propagandas. With the exception of an episode of a fellow panzer crewman threatening a Russian farmer with a pistol, the book is devoid of any mention of mistreatment of the civilians by the German invaders. Maybe his 25th Panzer Regiment was exceptionally gentlemanly, or maybe it is a sensitive subject the author tries to avoid getting into, I feel his stories are somewhat "white-washed" for the fainthearted readers.

Aside from his war stories, Friesen includes much technical information on the tanks he fought in and with. Some of them are quite interesting, such as the chapters on panzer gunnery and driving, while the rest, such as the specification and development of the Jagdpanzer IV, should post no surprise to most armor modelers. Obviously influenced by "zee" Germans' bureaucratic tendency, the author kept every single piece of Wehrmacht document that has his name on it, and he put them all to good use in the book. The same thing, however, cannot be said about the photos in this book. Other than his teenage and family pictures, only a handful of photos of him in uniform are present, and none of them shows any of the tanks he was assigned to. Instead, the interior and exterior shots of Panzer IV and Jagdpanzer IV are all taken from the archive of The Tank Museum (Bovington, UK).

Panzer Gunner is really not a bad book per se, and Friesen's life story is truly unique and fascinating. But I can't help the feeling of watching a wartime newsreel while reading his book; everything in it is filtered and sanitized. Not bad for a light read I suppose, but if you want the "reality show" version of the war on the Eastern Front with all the blood and gore, I suggest you look elsewhere.

Many thanks to my friend Phil Marson in Humberside England for sending me this book. ✍️

Eric

Did You Know?

The batteries that operate a WWII tank are just as deadly as the ammo it carries? The battery storage of most 1940s tanks were located inside the fighting compartment. A rupture in these acid-filled bottles can cause severe burns to the crew and fill the inside of the tank with toxic fumes. Veteran gunners can disable enemy tanks by simply firing a well placed shot to the lower hull where the batteries were stored. ✍️



PRESENTS

MODELFIESTA 28

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEST OF TEXAS

THEME:

"Oldie Moldies"

Any kit that was originally produced 25+ years ago, or has since been re-released without changes.

(See Rule #10 for more information)

Saturday, February 21, 2009

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Old Rumors & New Kits

Greetings and welcome to the 2009 edition of rumors and modeling news. I hope you all had a fine Christmas holiday and survived the New Year celebrations.

The biggest news for us modelers is that King's Hobby will continue and won't be closing anytime soon so that starts the New Year on a positive note. I know that modelers around the state were really sweating this one and many thanks to Marc and all the others who put the deal together.

Now, on to what's new.

There are some exciting new kits scheduled for release this quarter. For starters, the big—really BIG!—Revell (Germany) 1/32nd kit of the Ju.88A-1 is already out in Europe and so should be in the shops here very soon. I've seen a build-up of the model on HyperScale and it looks good. The detail is above average with the cockpit being made up of many well molded pieces. Best of all, the price of this extraordinary kit is \$65 MSRP.

If you think that's a bit much to pay, consider that the 1/32nd Eduard Bf.109E, another kit not yet on the shelves, will set you back about ten bucks more, or \$75 for a nicely detailed big kit of this important subject. I'm always surprised that while there are many 1/32nd kits of various marks of the Messerschmidt 109, the "Emil" has been ignored except for the Hasegawa kit that's been around for years and shows its age. It will be nice to have a "state of the art" kit of the Battle of Britain veteran.

Also coming soon is the 1/48th Academy F-22 Raptor. This is supposed to be the latest version of the new stealth fighter/bomber and size wise is right up there with the smaller 1/32nd kits. The F-22 is a big airplane as I found out when I bought the Revell 1/72nd scale kit.

Now if you really want to spend some money on a model kit, look no further than the soon to be shipped 1/16th Trumpeter King Tiger with Henschel Turret. This one better have all the "extras" built in because you may not be able to afford a bunch of resin, individual track links, PE, and all the rest. The price tag on this kit is \$600 MSRP. I'm sure it's good, but I'm not that serious about my model building.

DML has what appears to be a very nice 1/35th Jagdtiger, Porsche version, which is priced at only about \$50. Still to come is the rather ungainly looking 1/35th 15 cm. s.IG.33(Sf), etc. This is a very top-heavy looking self-propelled gun. It's not pretty, but I suspect the super detailers are gearing up for this one. It's tagged at about \$65.

Eduard's latest WWI 1/48th aircraft is the Fokker Eindecker, a very appealing monoplane with a minimum amount of rigging. Unfortunately, it's all very visible and needs to be done right to make the model "work," that is, look convincing.

Hasegawa has announced a 1/48th Pete. This WW2 IJN Biplane Fighter has been available from Tamiya but the scale was closer to 1/50th and the kit is lacking in detail. No word on when exactly the Pete will be released.

Hasegawa is also showing a 1/32nd P-40K. This should be a good kit since it comes from the same basic tool as the previously released P-40E. They have also released a swarm of "new" kits which in fact are probably kits updated with new markings or represent changes in packaging. These 1/48th kits include the SBD Dauntless, Ki 445 Nick, Draken, A7-D, F-15DJ, and the Zero Ty 21. In 1/72nd look for the RF-4B, AV-8B Harrier Plus, the F-15A, and the He.111H-8 Balloon Cutter.

And showing up for the first time on the Hasegawa list is a Kurogane 4WD car—Japanese Jeep—packaged with a Ty 97 sidecar/motorcycle. Now, that should be interesting in a diorama!


As some of you know, Google has obtained access to the photo archives of LIFE magazine. This immense collection of photographs is now literally just a click away for modelers who have access to the Internet. The collection includes photographs from the Civil War through Vietnam. It's easy to access, Here's the link.

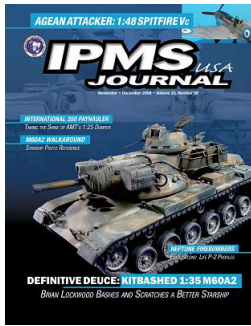
Go to <http://images.google.com/hosted/life>. This will take you to a page that breaks down the collection by decade and basic subject. Click on the one that interests you, and then refine your search by the choices that appear or just use the search line and type in whatever you want to see such as "Battle of Midway" or "Battle of the Bulge." You can also vary the search by using the Labels for additional but unrelated choices.

There are some great color photos of armor and aircraft from the early days of WW2 and Korea as well as ships. I have found a separate label for uniforms which should interest figure painters. Be aware that this site is habit forming and you can spend those hours you should be modeling just sitting at the computer doing "research."

And speaking of research, some of the captions and photo filing are just wrong so be careful. A little looking will show what I mean but knowing the mistakes won't detract from the photos themselves. Many are outstanding and I guarantee you haven't seen them all published.

A friend of mine has decided to begin model building. He likes aircraft and on his own picked a subject to "learn on." He chose the old Monogram SBD Dauntless. That's not a subject I would have recommended, but it offers a chance to do every step a modeler has to master.

Which brings up the question: What would you recommend as a good starter kit? Send me your recommendations. My email is mbell6@austin.rr.com. Thanks. Now have some fun! 



In the latest issue of...

IPMS Journal

Nov/Dec 2008
Volume 20, Issue 6

- **Hard Working Heavy Hauler** — Taking the showroom shine off AMT/ERTL's Payhauler, by Tom Walker;
- **Deadalean Dogfighter** — Kitbashing a Hellenic Spitfire Vc with the Tamiya and ICM kits, by John Korellis;
- **M60A2** — A Futuristic failure, by Chris Bucholtz;
- **MERDC Camouflage** — The four-color pattern-scheme for the M60A2;
- **Startling Starship** — Kitbashing and scratchbuilding your way to an accurate M60A2, by Brian Lockwood;
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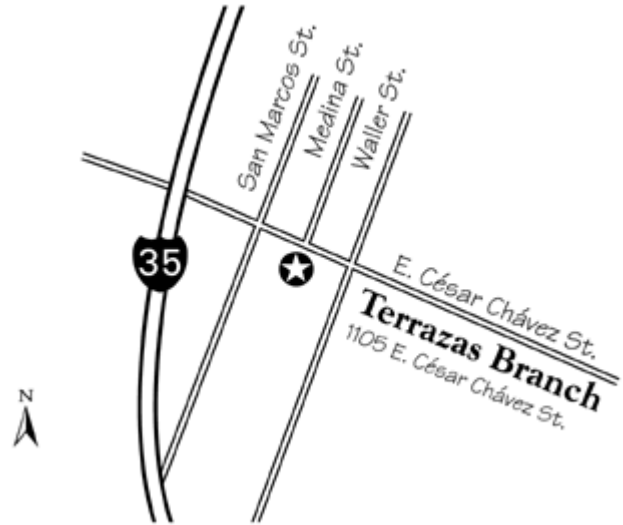
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