



THE PATRIOT

IPMS Patriot Chapter Newsletter
Pip Moss, Editor

Billerica, MA
www.ipmspatriot.org



December 2009

Meeting Info

The next Patriot Chapter meeting will take place on Friday, December 4, at 7:30 p.m. at the First Parish Unitarian Church in Billerica, MA. The church is located on Concord Road, just as it meets Route 3A (Boston Road) at the Billerica Town Common. This will be our annual **Holiday Party**, with refreshments (pizza and Chinese) provided. The Show and Tell table will feature, but not be limited to, models completed for our **Group Build** theme: **TIGER**. Also, don't forget to bring a wrapped present if you wish to take part in the exciting and unpredictable **Yankee Swap**. It's going to be a great meeting, so come and enjoy the fun! More on Page 2.



John Walker built this Type 97 Shinhoto Chi-Ha (early version) by cross-kitting the early chassis with the late turret. He made muffler screens from photo-etched sheet. The model is painted with Tamiya and Vallejo acrylics and weathered with an oil wash, weathering powders and pastels. The markings, using decals from Fine Molds, are for a vehicle of the 7th Tank Regiment, Corregidor 1942.

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Minutes from the November Meeting

CHAPTER President Kurt Kunze called the meeting to order at about 8:45 p.m. About 15 members were present.

The first order of business was E-Board elections. Nominations were re-opened. Bill Michaels withdrew his nomination for President, but expressed an interest in the 2nd Vice President position. He was nominated immediately.

As the 2nd Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary positions were unopposed, Bill Michaels made a motion that the candidates for these positions be declared the winners in their respective races. The motion was seconded and passed. Paper ballots were then distributed for President and First Vice President.

As the ballots were being counted, there was a discussion concerning future raffles. Bill Michaels discussed a plan to bring higher quality kits in, but noted that even on sale the cost would be higher. Kurt proposed a plan where the raffle might offer only two kits of a higher quality. Bill suggested that he take some of the money from the GraniteCon kit sale and use it to buy some quality kits. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Pip Moss then announced the results of the election: Mike O'Keefe was elected 1st Vice President, and Dave Schmidt was elected President. Pip congratulated Kurt on the completion of a long and successful run as President.

The next order of business was planning for the December meeting and Christmas party. The members agreed to Chinese food and pizza, as was done last year. There will also be a Yankee swap.

The business agenda concluded, and the meeting moved to Show and Tell. After Show and Tell there was a brief break for the sale of raffle tickets, followed by the monthly raffle. After the raffle, the meeting broke up for the night.

—Rick Lippincott, Secretary

Show and Tell

Bob Hale 1/48 DGA-6 (Hawk/Testors)
Pip Moss..... 1/48 La-7 (Gavia/Eduard)
John Walker..... 1/35 Type 97 Shinhoto Chi-Ha (Tamiya)

Club Notices

E-Board 2010

Patriot Chapter's officers for 2010 are as follows:

President: Dave Schmidt
1st Vice President: Mike O'Keefe
2nd Vice President: Bill Michaels
Secretary: Rick Lippincott
Treasurer: John Touloupis

We are grateful for your willingness to serve the club, whether for the first time or in a continuing capacity. We are also grateful to our outgoing President, Kurt Kunze, for the fine job he did during his long tenure.

All officers: please remember to make sure your IPMS/USA membership is up to date so that Patriot Chapter can renew its charter for 2010.

Hold the Presses!

This just in: Bill Michael wants everybody to know that he will be bringing the Wings of War game to the December meeting.

So here's a rundown of all the great things that'll be happening next Friday evening:

- Food—pizza and Chinese
- Group build theme display: TIGER
- Yankee swap
- Special raffle
- Wings of War



Check out Page 8 for more meeting pics.

Show and Tell Gallery

Pip Moss's 1/48 scale La-7, built mostly OOB and painted with Model Master enamels. The Eduard Weekend Edition version of the Gavia kit is pretty good, with two exceptions: the rear fuselage, including the rear canopy, is significantly too narrow; and the canopy pieces, while clear, are quite thick, so the sliding canopy doesn't sit properly in the open position. Nothing was done about the first problem, but the sliding canopy was later replaced with a Squadron vacuform. The kit decals, which worked very well, are for a plane flown by Crimean Tatar pilot and Hero of the Soviet Union, Amet-khan Sultan.



Bob Hale's 1/48 scale Howard DGA-6. Bob enhanced the instrument panel and added seat belts, navigation lights, exhaust stacks, and bracing wires on the tail assembly and landing gear. The kit engine was replaced with a resin Pratt & Whitney Wasp from Engines & Things. The plane was painted with Polly Scale acrylics. The kit decals were used to portray "Mr. Mulligan," winner of the Thompson Trophy in 1935.

A Presentation F4U-4 Corsair

by Pip Moss, Patriot Chapter



During our recent model exhibition at the National Heritage Museum in Lexington, MA, I was approached by an elderly gentleman, John Zvara, who asked if there was an F4U-4 Corsair on display. I told him no, sorry, the only Corsair there was my birdcage F4U-1. He then told me that he had flown F4U-4s during his advanced training in the late 1940s and that he had made several carrier landings in them. He wondered if there was anybody in our club who would make him a model. I told him I was definitely interested in the project, and we agreed to communicate further.

During subsequent email correspondence, I learned that Mr. Zvara, who currently resides in Lexington, flew Corsairs during 1949 as a member of VF-ATU-1 based at Cabaniss Air Field, NAS Corpus Christi, Texas. Once out of training, the bulk of his naval flying career was in AD-4 Skyraiders, flying off a number of carriers in 1950 and 51.

Since I had little specific knowledge of the F4U-4, I asked Mr. Zvara if remembered anything about the color of the cockpits in the aircraft he had flown. He replied that he thought they were all black, including the seats. By this time I had started to do some searching on the internet, but all the pictures I could find showed Interior Green cockpits. I posted to HyperScale's Plane Talking seeking confirmation one way or the other, and soliciting any information on markings. By great good fortune my posting caught the eye of Jim Sullivan, modeler, Corsair expert, and author of Squadron's *F4U Corsair in Action*, *F4U Corsair in Color*, and a number of other books on USN aviation. Jim has been an indispensable source

of information and encouragement as the project has progressed. He told me that he had never seen nor heard of an F4U-4 with a black cockpit/seat, and he sent me several color photographs of Cabaniss Field Corsairs in 1949.

At this point it was time to gather materials for the build. There are few choices for F4U-4 kits in 1/48 scale, and none is ideal. The Academy kit does the cannon-armed -4B, but I needed to build a -4, plus the Academy kit suffers from a too-wide cockpit area that results in an obviously misshapen canopy. Then there is a CMK conversion set designed to be used with the Tamiya -1D kit, but it's expensive, and from what I've read it's a difficult project with a lot of fit problems. The old Monogram kit isn't worth considering.

That leaves the venerable Hasegawa -4, originally tooled by Mania. While reported to be a pretty good-fitting kit and generally okay shape-wise, it shows its age with raised panel lines, its cockpit is poorly detailed, and it has the wrong version of the Pratt & Whitney Double Wasp engine, one more suited to F4U-1s. The -4 was powered by the R2800-18W, which had the multiple-bolted front cover, similar to the version used in P-47Ms and Ns. I decided that I could live with the raised panel lines since they were not going to be particularly visible anyway under a coat of Gloss Sea Blue. Having chosen to go with the Hasegawa kit, I invested in a number of extra-market sets to enhance the project: True Details F4U-4 cockpit set (TD 46452), a resin R2800-18 from Engines & Things (48160), and several decal sheets for letters and numbers of various sizes.

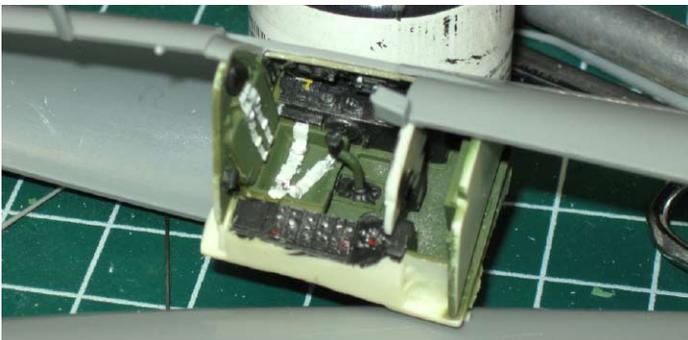


Aircraft Build Report (continued)

As I set to work, my biggest single disappointment with the Hasegawa kit was the lack of dropped flaps. F4U-4s were generally parked with the flaps extended to allow access to the rectangular step cut out of the inboard starboard flap. Ironically, the wonderful Tamiya Corsairs have the step, which shouldn't be there, and are designed to have the flaps extended, which was not normally seen on parked F4U-1s. More about the flaps later.

Construction

The first build step was the cockpit. The True Details set required some reshaping to fit in the Hasegawa fuselage. Squadron lists the set as being for the Hasegawa and Academy kits, but I suspect it was originally intended for the Academy -4B with its bloated cockpit because the armored seat backplate was much too wide to fit the more accurate Hasegawa contour. The instrument panel was also too wide. Once it had been made to fit, the True Details set painted up very nicely. The seat is especially well done. The F4U-4 didn't have a normal bucket seat: it had only a seat bottom with a pilot's armor plate attached to the backing plate that also served as the seat back. There's a good color drawing of the arrangement in *F4U Corsair in Color*. I used Model Master Interior Green for the basic color, but added some FS 34092 for a slightly greener tint.

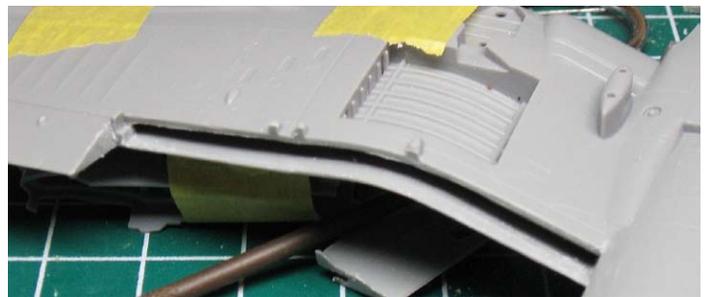


The next step was the engine. The Engines & Things item is a big improvement over the kit's engine simulation, although it may not be as beautifully detailed as the one from Quickboost, which I didn't find out about in time to buy. It has three main pieces of resin: the two cylinder banks and an extensive housing (supercharger and other equipment) to go behind them. I didn't use the rear housing because it wouldn't be visible, and it would have complicated mounting the engine. After painting the cylinders, tie rods and transmission cover, I drilled holes for ignition wires made of strands of light gauge electrical wire which were then painted a mustard yellow using British Mid Stone.



To mount the engine, I simply reversed the kit's engine backing plate and added a circular piece of sheet styrene in the middle to give a flat area for gluing. I secured the backing plate to four small pieces of strip styrene which were glued to the insides of both fuselage halves. Then I inserted the engine and closed the fuselage. It was a very snug fit, and I had to trim the outer edges of the tie rod housings to allow the fuselage pieces to mate.

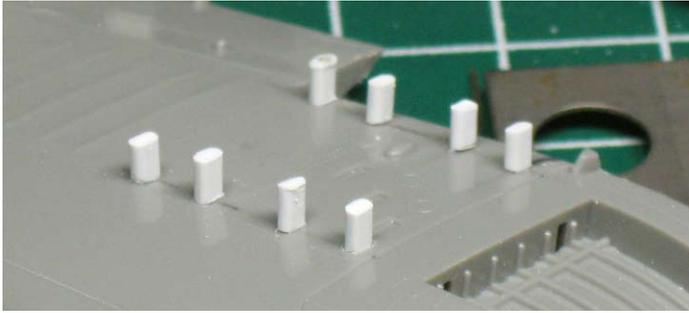
With the fuselage closed, attention turned to the wings. I had resigned myself to a model with flaps retracted, and Mr. Zvara said he didn't care, but the desire for dropped flaps kept nagging at me. Reading one internet build article of an F4U-4 with flaps down convinced me it could be done, so I decided to give it a try. Cutting off the kit flaps was relatively easy, but I saw no way the detached pieces could actually be used. I had a copy of the Tamiya F4U-1A on hand, so I taped two wing halves together and tried lining up the Tamiya flaps. It looked as if they would fit pretty well, so I glued all the wing and flap halves together and attached the flap-less wings to the fuselage. At this point I discovered wedge-shaped gaps in the fuselage where the inner ends of the retracted flaps would have been. I filled these with small pieces of sheet styrene. The Tamiya flaps required a certain amount of tweaking and trimming, especially the outer ends of the outer flaps, and the upper wing had to be significantly thinned, but all in all it wasn't a terribly difficult installation, and the results looked terrific. In case you're aghast at my sacrifice of a whole, beautiful Tamiya Corsair, Ultracast makes resin retracted flaps, a more accurate configuration for F4U-1s anyway.



One more piece of work remained on the wings. The Hasegawa kit does not provide rocket launcher stubs, but Jim Sullivan informed me that they were factory installed and almost always present. He also sent me several helpful pictures showing typical configurations. To make the stubs, I scraped and filed some strip styrene to a rounded rectangular cross section. Then I cut sixteen pieces about 1/8 inch long. Because there were no mounting pins or holes, I drilled out one end of each stub and attached a piece of

Aircraft Build Report (continued)

common pin with CA glue. Then I measured and drilled holes in the bottom of the wings to receive the pins. I attached the stubs with regular liquid cement.



With the wings now completed, all that remained for basic construction was the horizontal tail. The Hasegawa kit may be elderly, but it went together very nicely. Wing alignment in particular was spot on, which is not always the case with Corsair kits. Once seams had been filled, I primed it with Mr. Surfacer 1000.

Paint & Markings

I'm always a little leery of working with gloss paint because it's so easy to apply too thickly. I therefore started with a base coat of Model Master Non-Specular Sea Blue and then applied a thin final coat of Gloss Sea Blue. After the paint had been allowed to dry thoroughly for several days, it was time for markings.

The Hasegawa kit decals are surprisingly good, although they don't provide any stencils. The whites are really white, and the decals react very well to setting and solvent solutions. I used the kit stars and bars because they looked better than anything else I had on hand.

As for the codes and other markings, the kit decals were of no help. Corpus Christi Corsairs carried 24 inch plane numbers below the cockpit and the letters MA on the tail. The plane numbers and MA also appeared on the starboard wing top and port wing bottom in the same size as the fuselage, and the plane numbers appeared on the engine cowlings in a much smaller size. The three-line designator (F4U-4, NAVY and the BuNo) appeared in the standard location on the fuselage below and overlapping the leading edge of the horizontal tail. The plane I was modeling, BuNo 97331, carried the plane number 121. From the color photos Jim had sent me of this aircraft and BuNo 96942, it was apparent that the codes were tinted with a thin overspray of Gloss Sea Blue, a procedure more standard with F4U-5N night fighters.



The 24 inch plane numbers came from a Carpena sheet (48043) of 45° letters and numbers, the first two lines of the designators came from a SuperScale Corsair sheet, the BuNos came (digit by digit) from a Victory double-sheet set of F9F-2 Panthers, and the small plane numbers came from an ancient MicroScale TBD Devastator sheet. The MA codes were non-standard, both in size (somewhere around 20 inches) and in the shape of the M, which was wider than normal and whose central V did not come all the way down to the baseline. After trying unsuccessfully to make an M from various bits of white decal, I made drawings of Ms and As on my computer and printed them on white decal paper. The ink outlines disappeared when the decals were wetted, and voila. Actually, it took over a dozen attempts to get satisfactory letter shapes and stroke widths.

I finished the decaling process by applying a few stencils that came from the SuperScale sheet and an Eagle Strike sheet of Korean War Corsairs. After experimenting on some spare decals, I oversprayed the appropriate markings with a thin dilution of Gloss Sea Blue to give them the blue tint.



At this point I had to decide about weathering. This would include gray stains from the exhausts and the machine guns, and a fair amount of paint chipping. I was worried about applying a consistent amount of weathering without ending up with a seriously dirty, faded model, which I didn't think was what Mr. Zvara wanted. In the end I offered him some options including a clean bird fresh from the paint depot, and that's what he chose. With that dilemma solved, I applied a clear gloss overcoat to the entire model using a new product for me, Mr. Color Gloss, thinned 1-to-4 with Mr. Color Thinner and applied with low airbrush pressure. It worked very well and yielded a strong, clear finish just a bit less glossy than Future.

Finishing Up

Final assembly was relatively straightforward. I painted the main landing gear struts aluminum, while the tail wheel assembly received a coat of Gloss Sea Blue with an aluminum wheel hub. Wheel wells and gear doors were painted GSB inside and out. The attachment points for struts and doors are quite well engineered, and all the parts went on with little difficulty.

The kit's main wheels look for all the world as if they came off a Jeep, with flattened edges and deep treads. I replaced them with two resin cast wheels from Medallion (remember them/him?) that I've had sitting in a box for a couple of decades.

Aircraft Build Report (concluded)

The kit provides a two-piece canopy with the flat windscreen and wide, flattened cross section. It is reasonably thin and pretty much accurate in basic shape except the bottom rear corner of the sliding section, which is too pointed. The framing for the windscreen is too parallel, however, so the windscreen is much too wide at the top. Photos of F4U-4s with this version show clearly that the windscreen is trapezoidal and the frames pass inside the curved corners of the forward canopy. To fix the kit part, I sanded off the frames, rubbed the part clear again with MicroMesh polishing cloths and Novus rubbing compound, then masked the part with the frames at the proper angle. The result looks much closer to the real thing.



I painted the propeller blades off-black with yellow tips and used Alclad II Aluminum for the hub. The hole in the Engines & Things Double Wasp is larger in diameter than the kit's propeller shaft, so I found a length of plastic rod that fit the prop and glued a strip of thin sheet plastic around one end to thicken it. I CA glued it to the engine and styrene cemented the prop to it.

Next came the radio antenna. The kit has the dorsal mast aft of the cockpit molded integrally with one of the fuselage halves, as well as a small stub mast on the tail (which is incorrect for the type and should be cut off). It also provides the early mast for the forward fuselage (seen on a few -4s) as an add-on piece. The aircraft I was modeling had only the rear mast, so the shallow mounting hole for the forward mast had to be filled. F4U-4s had the fuselage antenna lead connection on the port side, unlike the -1s. Hasegawa has a small circle of raised scribing to represent it, so early in the construction I had cut a small piece of plastic rod and cemented it in the circle. I had also drilled a small hole in the top of the mast for the end of the antenna wire, which I now fashioned using invisible mending thread.

The final step of the build was to attach the canopy pieces, both of which fit quite well. Unlike the Tamiya Corsair kits, the sliding canopy sits just fine in the open position, so there's no need for a vacuform replacement.

The Base

Fellow Patriot Chapter member John Walker offered to cut and stain a wooden base for the model. Since I was modeling a primarily land-based aircraft, I decided to simulate a concrete tarmac using tiles of cardboard which I painted with Polly Scale Cement mixed with some FS 36321 Dark Gull Gray.

In Conclusion

This has been one of the most enjoyable and rewarding modeling projects I have ever undertaken. It has been exciting to build a kit for another person, especially a veteran for whom the model has a special significance. It has also been a wonderful and unique collaboration with Jim Sullivan, without whom this model could never have been built. Jim and I were in constant email communication. I had lots of questions, which he always graciously answered, often accompanying his responses with helpful photos from his vast collection. I sent him digital in-progress pictures almost every step of the way, he sent me pictures of some of his ongoing projects, and we shared tips, techniques and moral support. I hope we can continue our virtual relationship, and I look forward to meeting him someday in the flesh. As for the model, I'm generally pleased with the way it turned out, and I hope it gives Mr. Zvara as much pleasure to have as it gave me to build.



Upcoming Events

March 20, 2010**DownEastCon**, IPMS Southern Maine Scale Modelers. Email Tom Ruel: truel3@maine.rr.com

March 28**ValleyCon 20**, IPMS Wings & Wheels, Knights of Columbus, 460 Granby Road, Chicopee, MA.
<http://www.wmodelclub.org/> or email Al LaFleche: ajlafleche@comcast.net

April 30–May 1**NoreastCon, Region I Convention/Contest**, sponsored by IPMS Long Island, American Airpower Museum,
1230 New Highway, Farmingdale, NY. <http://www.lisms.org/noreastcon2010.html>

Meeting Pictures

