



THE STYRENE SHEET

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Modeling Berlin's Belated Beauty



The Curtiss XP-46A in Vacuform

By Mark Schynert

Hot off his successful conversion of the P-36 to take the Allison engine, resulting in the P-40 in 1939, Donovan Berlin, chief designer for Curtiss, looked to the future, wanting a design that could succeed the P-40. Looking at contemporary fighter development in Europe, he designed a compact fighter around the Allison, with eight .30 caliber machine guns in the wings and two .50 caliber machine guns under the engine. This compared favorably with the contemporary Bf 109E (2 20mm cannon and 2 7.92mm machine guns) and Spitfire I (8 .303 machine guns). And it looked right—perhaps one of the sleekest early war designs to fly. However, it was literally a day late and a dollar short. Or, more specifically, the first prototype (the unarmed XP-46A) did not fly until late 1940. Its fully-equipped sister XP-46, which flew in February of 1941, was so burdened by the additional equipment that it was no faster than the P-40D already entering service at that time. *(continued on page 3)*

Editor's Ravings — this month's editor, Mick Burton

We just had another great back to back set of model contest events pass, that thankfully some of us were able to make it to. Yuba City/IPMS Dragon Lady "Wet 'N Wild" show on July 24th was another success and a great warmup for the IPMS US Nationals which came about 10 days later. We'll likely discuss much of the Nats at meeting, but please know how well run and well done that show was! Having been part of the Judging and Journal photo teams this year and last, it was exciting to experience the smooth operations first hand, knowing how much that took to accomplish. Amazing, inspiring, awesome. So our Arizona hosts and all they teamed into their operations deserve a huge thanks and applause. A very pleasing number of Region 9 and Region 8 members took home awards of all sorts, the Best of Show went to a Real Space Subject, NO ONE took the "Best Use of IPMS Convention Decal" trophy home, all sorts of fun and odd surprises occurred by end of show.

Thanks to Mark Schynert's much appreciated work sent to me right after I saw him in Phoenix (the cover shot is his model on the table there!) I have only enough editorial room left in this issue to revisit some recent old business with fresh update:

Silicon Valley Scale Modelers E-Board and membership would *again* like to recognize, gratefully thank for his generous contributions to our upcoming auction, long time member and vigorous supporter, **Mr Stan Muniz**.

Since last issue, Stan has again quietly donated another large number of kits and books for our fund raiser. For those who perhaps have not seen Stan for awhile or haven't had pleasure of meeting him, at right I've included a shot from Wings Of History Museum. Where Stan's been known for a long while as an all around good and talented guy.

Also a big help decorating the place, with many built models and fine oil paintings by Stan. Doesn't hurt that he is a WW2 veteran gunner who saw 35 missions in the Pacific aboard B-25s of the 345th "Air Apaches" BG. Not to mention his time in F-82 Twin Mustangs, F-94 Starfires or NA Texans among other aircraft. My hat's off to you, Stan! Hope you'll have time this year to enjoy a meeting or drop by for some Xmas pizza with us - *mick fini*



SVSM CLUB CONTEST THEME SEPTEMBER 2010 "Let's Raise Some Doh!"

Suggested by our depleted treasury, thank you very much. We'll make it as sporting as possible, with your help. While showing up and bidding on that which you certainly can't do without is a valued participation, why not be extra competitive? Yes, donate something that you just know some one else will become frenzied over in their bidding to take home? We already have a small stock of interesting items set aside, however more are needed.

Trust we know, we have more fun if everyone donates, at least one item sure to "incite madness in the calmest of souls". Please don't consider this chance to unload modeler's version of white elephants or equivalent plastic boat anchors. It's hard enough losing a valuable monthly meeting night to hold an auction as it is.

SVSM CLUB CONTEST THEME OCTOBER 2010 "Hunt for Red October"

Suggested by an enthused and clever club member. Eligible: FINISHED entries in these ranges; Any Soviet, Warsaw Pact, People's Republic of China, North Korean subject. OR any primarily RED subject, which makes for a wide range of possible models. OR any submarine, from U-boats to Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle, regardless of period or operator, INCLUDING fictional ones. We are seeking those hidden treasures you know you want to build anyways, be they Crimson, Communist or avoiding Crush depth. Just finish them by October.

SVSM CLUB CONTEST THEME NOVEMBER 2010 "Just NAG, NAG, NAG"

Since this will be the last meeting of the year with chance for model abundance on display tables, Editor was harassing innocent bystanders for theme ideas. Somehow, this unholy alliance was the result. Eligible subjects include: ANY Finished North American Aircraft or NA-Rockwell Corp subject, such as P-51 Mustang, F-86 Sabre, T-6/SNJ, A-5 Vigilante for the more obscure, rarely built suggestions. Of course FJ Fury, AJ Savage, F-82 Twin Mustang, OV-10 Bronco, AGM-77A Hound Dog among other commonly seen NA items also can be entered. Grumman products such as the S-2, F4F, F-111B, Gulfhawk are eligible for the "G" portion of first NAG. Second NAG contest is any finished "real" Air Racer, honoring National AirRacing Group competitions. Third NAG is simply that, an annoying but well meaning reminder to at least consider making an entry.

Curtiss's Berlin Beauty in 1/72! (continued from page 1)

No production ensued, and neither example flew after 1942.

THE MODEL

To this day, there is only one kit available of this obscure but attractive airplane, a decades-old vacuform by Execuform in 1/72. The upside to Execuform is the nice set of plans that comes with every kit, but they can be challenging even for vacuforms, because all that is offered is basic shapes with little or no engraved detail, and no multimedia support such as white metal or resin.



I decided to build this model as part of the Fremont Hornets P-40 group build that completed for October, 2009. I did manage to finish a P-40N, a P-40K, a Kittyhawk II and the XP-60E by that date, but the XP-46A took a little longer, as I didn't manage the finishing touches until mid-July, 2010. Herewith is that adventure.

The first step with any vacuform is to remove the components from the sheet of plastic in which they are entombed. This involves rough-cutting the parts out, then sanding on a big sanding block with 320 grit paper or thereabouts, until the margins of the part separate from the remnants of the flat part of the sheet. This is easier with big pieces like wing halves of fuselages, and much harder with stabilizers and other small bits, so I looked for alternatives with regard to the smaller parts. An Academy P-40B was the perfect choice, as Berlin used the same horizontal stabilizers, tires, wheels, tail wheel and gear doors and propeller, and the gear legs, stick and seat could also be adapted. The only vacuformed parts I used were the wings, fuselage, spinner, canopy, and two segments provided for the ventral radiator housing.

Once the vac parts were free of their fetters, I compared them to the drawings. I was surprised to find that the fuselage was half a scale inch short measured against the drawings provided. Fortunately, all the discrepancy was in the aft fuselage. If I had been thinking, I would have transplanted the entire aft end of the Academy P-40B, as it turns out to be virtually identical to the XP-46. But no, I didn't think that far ahead. Instead, I scabbed in a half inch slice of the P-40B fuselage. Lots of shims and stringers, lots of superglue, lots of microballoons later, I had sculpted this all into the correct fuselage contours. Did I forget to mention that this is a natural metal subject? Yee haw.

The cockpit work was straightforward enough. I scratch-built an aft bulkhead, added seatbelts to the seat, found an instrument panel from the spares box, scratch-built a floor and attached all the bits. I also found appropriate exhaust pipes to stick through the cut-outs for same at the front end. I then sealed the fuselage. The oil cooler intake directly under the nose was drilled out, a bit of styrene tube inserted, and faired in, while the carb intake on top of the nose was fashioned from a FW 190 intake.

The wings required a fair amount of trailing edge thinning, and the landing gear openings had to be excavated. Before I did anymore, I carefully marked in pencil from the drawings where all the panel lines would be on both sides of the wings. Then I inserted some styrene sheet inside to both anchor the wing parts to each other and to box off the landing gear area. As the prototype was unarmed, there was no need to add details for wing guns.

The wing root seams were gaping after I attached the wings to the fuselage, so many enjoyable hours were spent filling and sanding, filling and sanding, filing, rasping, Dremeling, sanding, sanding, sanding---right down to 12000 grit in preparation for that NMF. The tail feathers went on a lot easier, given that they were injected pieces. Then lots and lots of scribing, which was a revelation—adding those lines turned what looked like a soap carving into the glimmerings of a real model airplane.

The ventral radiator housing varied over the life of the prototype, so I chose one configuration, which required two segments from the kit parts. I fashioned the radiator itself from another spares-bin refugee, and then I was in for another round of filling and sanding as I blended these components into the underside.

I drew the landing gear doors on styrene sheet with a ruler and a circle template as four pieces, glued the circles to the long rectangles at the correct angle, then severed the aux doors from the main doors to have the full set of four doors. I attached the tail wheel door assembly to the model at the same time. *(concluded on page 8)*

"Presidential Ramblings" by Eric McClure

Why do you go to the IPMS Nationals?

As I sit before the computer terminal the Nationals are two weeks away. Yes this rambling is early but I'm trying to help the editor with his deadline. Anyway, as I pondered what to write my thoughts turned to the upcoming Nationals. This will be the first time I traveled a fair distance just to go. My first National was back in the seventies when San Francisco (1977) hosted theirs. I had not been an IPMS member very long, so to have a big contest in my very backyard was exciting. The next one I attended was the one in Sacramento (1986), again basically in my backyard. I then attended the show up in Seattle, followed by our own Semi-Con (1998) and then the Orange County show a couple of years ago.

Seattle, Semi-Con and Orange County were the only shows I decided to enter any kits. This year I am flying to Phoenix and don't want to hassle taking anything on the airlines (that's even if I had something done for the contest). So I am thinking "Why am I going to Phoenix in August? Am I nuts!" Yes, we have friends who live there and my wife and I plan to visit them, but we could have done that earlier this year when it was cooler. So why am I attending if not to enter.

Some people go to the show obviously in hopes of bringing home bragging rights; ie: trophies. Some go to meet friends they met at previous conventions. And some for the tours or the vendor room. Me, I don't expect to win if I do enter a kit, so trophies are not the reason. All the friends I know who model are in my local IPMS clubs, so that's not it. Never have gone on any tours that I can remember, and if I wanted to I would probably just go on my own so I could leave when I wanted. The vendor room? It's nice but almost all that's there, I could get online easier and not worry about it melting in the car while driving in Phoenix.

So why do I go?

I guess for me, it is just to wander the display room and get motivated. While photos online and in the Journal are nice, there is something about just standing there and looking at a well made and painted kit. Our local contests do motivate me as well, but usually I am so busy judging or working I don't get to enjoy the shows. The IPMS Nationals just allow me the opportunity to just look at models.

Yes, I will volunteer to judge but that's in the evening with no one else except judges in the room. I don't have to worry about some modeler hanging over my shoulder while I try to discuss a kit we are judging. I can just take the show in at my own pace and enjoy models for the sake of viewing pleasure.

So, if you are planning on attending an IPMS National and entering a kit, good for you. Planning on meeting some old friends, enjoy the time. Going on tours and spend way too much money in the vendor room, have fun.

But don't forget to just step back and enjoy the models.

Who knows, you might see a kit that motivates you to build something outside of what you normally build.

Now, where did I put that part I was working on????

- Eric fini

THANKS ERIC FOR THAT EXTREMELY APPRECIATED WRITING, HERE'S ADDITIONAL MOTIVATION BY GREG — editor.

SVSM CLUB CONTEST THEME AUGUST 2010 "Second Chance Soiree"

REAL TIME AND SINGULAR COMPETITION !

Eligible : Any Subject, Any scale, finished: That is a 2010 IPMS Nationals Entry that DID NOT PLACE . You will be asked as part of your entry in this club event to provide evidence that in fact you did enter the item(s). It is a chance to win ten bucks, which is not a losing proposition in most rational thinking circles. Premiere Award recipients are among EXCLUDED from competition here, which is sad, really. You lose twice, no fault of yours.

IMPROMPTU AUGUST SVSM MEETING as recorded by Mick Burton, who ran into some folks while in Phoenix, AZ.



For reasons which currently escape me, Mike Meek, Jim Priete and I determined the first week of August would be a GRAND time to take a road trip to Phoenix, AZ. Likely the lack of SUMMER weather here in Santa Clara region was an influence. Anyways, oddly enough, we saw this sign whilst looking for parking and something to drink, and determined we should stay a while. Just after coming down from our parking space 4 floors up, we ran into John Heck, Chris Bucholtz, Postoria Aguirre, several other familiar SVSMers on the corner. So we just knew we had to stay now, if nothing else, to prevent these folk from getting all of the great deals at the literal basement hobby shop hidden in building behind this sign, without us. Oh yeah, and there was a National Convention of some sort or another, seems a goodly number of Region Nine folks won awards there too. Let's see some of what was up, shall we?



This grouping illustrates the fun madness that is IPMS Nationals. Left, a magical 1/32 scale "Junk MiG-15" diorama, middle, Miscellaneous Poodle, right, "AZ Brand" special award..



Next! On the upper left, I just had to shoot this lovely 1/72 Anigrand resin XA2J-1 "Super Savage". Parked for no known reason next to the "World of Airfix" display. Middle photo is one that makes me cry. Talk about "coulda, shoulda, woulda" regrets. NO ONE took this award home, and I coulda! I shoulda looked the convention flyer over more carefully. I woulda been able to enter my Semicon 1998 P-47 and P-51! On the right above, that's the Best of Show award. Which was used as real branding iron for the "Phoenix" logos on the "Best" awards, before being immortalized as this. Lastly on left, a PRU pink CSR-71. Quite right, of course...bee seeing you -mick fini

UPCOMING EVENTS CALENDAR AS OF SVSM MEETING 08-20-10

Friday, August 20 2010

IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers monthly meeting, club contest theme “ Second Chance Soiree ”

Friday, September 10 2010

IPMS/Fremont Hornets monthly meeting, night’s club theme “Ploesti Raids” and “Things That Go Fast In The Desert”. First is self explanatory, second theme includes X-Planes (Muroc/Edwards), Air Racers, Scout Cars, etc

Saturday, September 11 2010

IPMS/Reno High Rollers host their show at Desert Heights Elementary School, 13498 Mt Bismark, Reno NV Their 11th year’s contest theme is “The New Millennium”, stated to cover subjects designed & built since 2001. More information can be found at their website www.renohighrollers.com

Friday, September 17 2010

IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers monthly meeting, club contest theme “ Let’s Raise Some Doh! ”

Friday, October 8 2010

IPMS/Fremont Hornets monthly meeting, night’s club theme “Night of the Living Dead Project”. Bring in something(s) that defy your every attempt to finish, but you consider still “work in process” in spite of dust!

Saturday, October 9 2010

IPMS Orange County will host the annual OrangeCon 2010 at Titan Conference Center - California State Fullerton located at 800 North State College Blvd in Fullerton. For more information go to their website at www.ipmsoc.org or contact [Nat Richards](#).

Friday, October 15 2010

IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers monthly meeting, club contest theme “Hunt for Red October”

Saturday, November 6 2010

IPMS/Antelope Valley Group host their Desert Classic XV, contest theme “In The Still of the Night”, also special awards including “Best Tomcat” for 40th Anniversary of F-14. Antelope Valley College, Lancaster CA.

Friday, November 11 2010

IPMS/Fremont Hornets monthly meeting, night’s club theme “Ships, Out of the Box”

Friday, November 19 2010

IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers monthly meeting, club contest theme “ Just NAG, NAG, NAG ”

Saturday, December 4 2010

IPMS/Silver Wings host their SilverCon 2010 at the Kerr Middle School, 8865 Elk Grove Blvd, Elk Grove CA. Check www.ipmssw.com for additional information and updates

Friday, December 17 2010

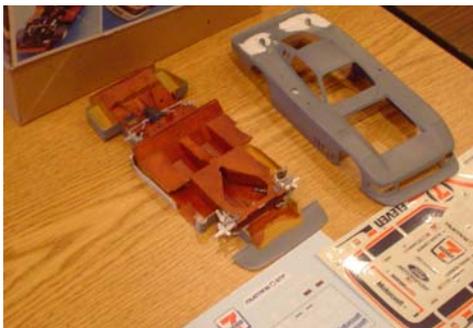
IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers monthly meeting, club contest theme “Eat Pizza, Dude”

Friday, January 15 2011

IPMS/Silicon Valley Scale Modelers monthly meeting, club contest theme “Whiskey Juliet Sierra, Delta”

July 2010 SVSM MEETING (minutes were not received in time for publication, sorry)

Instead, we'll have to get by with a scattering recollection from my review of my photos I shot at our July meeting. Forgive me if I didn't get all the names for the builders, it was a bumpy night. *—mick fini*



Hey? Randy Rothaar? Naaaah...
GTP Mustang WIP, Nice. By Bill B?
At left, Mark S's XP-46A WIP.



Now on cover!



At left, Cliff K's
Pair of the Same
Romanian AF
Yak-23. KP kit

Last, on right, I believe is Ron Wergin's fine Jagdpanther
Down below, answer to who won Model of the Month...

CONGRATULATIONS TO



Larry G Lechowicz

FOR WINNING JULY MODEL OF THE MONTH

Berlin's Beauty the XP-46A Concluded (from page 3)

I was now ready to prime the model.

My NMF of choice these days is Alclad II, and I think it works best with primer, especially given that I had a mixture of white and gray plastic. In order to get some variety of metal tones, I primed airframe differentially—I primed selected areas with rattlecan Tamiya Fine White Primer, then masked those and primed the rest with Tamiya Fine Gray. The priming revealed some seams that required further attention, after which I re-primed.

I sanded the primer lightly with 2400 and 3200 grit pads, then applied Alclad Aluminum. The detached landing gear doors were primed and metallized at the same time.

At this point I dry fit the clear canopy part, and it was pretty good everywhere except at the back. I thought it was going to look okay. I was wrong, but more on that later. Anyway, I coated the canopy with Future floor polish and glued it down.

Decals were simple—just four pre-war USAAF insignia, the classic tail striping, ‘U.S. Army’ under wing, a data block under the cockpit. No serial was painted on this plane. I found everything I needed from various P-40 and P-36 sheets, though I had to apply the tail stripes twice.

I fabricated the metal framing on the canopy by dint of applying many small pieces of silver line decal, which is much easier than it sounds. Unfortunately, this brought home in stunning fashion how bad the aft part of the transparency fit—it stood proud of the fuselage and there was no simple way (now) to make it look better. So there I was, with decals in place, having to revert to re-contouring the aft decking to match the canopy.

Unhappy, touchy work that was, and not entirely successful, as I was working over primer instead of plastic, and there was some separation I could neither control nor sand out. But at least I did get a good coat of Alclad down at the end, and I didn't damage any of the decals in the process.

All that remained were the tail wheel, pitot, prop and main landing gear assemblies. The first two were easy. The spinner



had to have three indentations dug into it for the three-bladed propeller. I started each with a rat-tail file, then dug them out with an X-acto knife. I hand painted the spinner with Humbrol Aluminum, which complemented the other metallic tones. To get the main gear legs the way I wanted them, I had to use a photo-etch saw to separate the gear actuator arms from the main legs, attach the legs to the model, then mount the actuators to the side. After that, the main doors went on perfectly, and the aux doors followed suit with a little coaxing. The wells had previously been painted with Testors Zinc Chromate, as were the insides of the undercarriage doors, while the gear legs received a coat of Gunze Neutral Gray. The wheel hubs received Testors Chrome, since it looked like they were polished, in the two color photos I'd seen.

With the attachment of those last fiddly bits, I was done. No doubt some resin outfit will now reveal a finely crafted kit of this subject, but that's okay, because I got it done and had fun doing it. --Mark fini



"Earthbound Lunacy": Look back at July 2010 Club Contest



Mighty FOB (Field Of Battle) had several entries, and they finished out such as this:

First Place, X-15A-2 in 1/72 by Mick Burton

Second Place, Ed White, Gemini Astronaut in 1/? by Cliff Kranz

Third Place, First White Sands V-2 in 1/72 by Cliff Kranz

Appreciated contnders included old 1/48 Mercury Capsule on skis and another 1/72 V-2 by Cliff plus his Mercury Redstone. An Aerobee Hi by Burton, 1/48 Mercury, Gemini capsules, 1/96 Apollo/Saturn 5 by Larry Lechowicz filled out field.



At right:
Seems 'ole Ed White is trying to step on Cliff's innocent pair of Yak-23s. Maybe he though he'd get a higher placement in an act of Cold War? Audience at left is watching raptly...

Directly below, Burton's X-15A-2



Cliff's White Sands V-2 is being counted down for launch. In distance, center, an unfinished cousin. A bare metal painted kit of same (Condor) awaits Burton's attention. Nice work on this kit, Cliff!



NEXT MEETING:

7:00 PM

FRIDAY

AUGUST 20

COMMUNITY ROOM

Milpitas Police Administration Building

1275 N. Milpitas Blvd

Milpitas, CA

