

Re-discovering Earhart's Electra in 1:72

By Mike Burton

You might say she was a seductress even as a young model, and arguably directly responsible for making the match between a legendary design engineer and a pioneer of early aviation. She was a 10 from the beginning and only got better with age. Her name: *Electra*, after a star in the constellation Pleiades.

Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, newly re-formed in 1932, was seeking an entry into the rapidly growing new market for multi-engined commercial airliners that was being spurred by regulations banning single-engined passenger transport after 1934. The *Electra* was a 10-passenger low-wing monoplane that represented a departure from Lockheed products like the *Orion* and *Altair*. But the original design was found to be seriously wanting in

directional stability in wind-tunnel testing. Enter an ambitious 23-year-old University of Michigan student, who raised her to greatness.

Clarence L. Johnson arrived at Lockheed Burbank with MS degree in hand and did a great job of selling himself as the savior of the wayward *Electra*, which Lockheed was pinning its hopes on. Having been the one to test her in the wind tunnel, Johnson diagnosed the aircraft as dangerously unstable, but he confidently said he could fix her. He did, and launched a great career for both himself and Lockheed. Not bad for a Swede with the Irish nickname of "Kelly" Johnson, as he is better known.



Amelia Earhart poses for a publicity photo prior to her 1937 round-the-world attempt. Modifications made to the plane boosted fuel capacity from 250 to 1150 gallons and stretched its range to 4000 miles.

Competing against Douglas (DC-1) and Boeing (Model 247) twins, the *Electra* first flew in February 1934 and was CAA (Civil Aeronautics Authority) certified for commercial sale by that spring. June 1934 saw deliveries to Northwest and Pan Am, and the year ended with over \$500,000 in sales and over \$1 million in orders on the books. Between June 1934 and July

1941, 149 Model 10s were delivered, making it more successful in sales and satisfied customers than the *Vega*, which arguably was one of the great Lockheeds.

Commercial airlines were not the only users. The U.S. Army Air Corps (in the form of the C-36, impressed from civil operators, and the purpose-built military XC-35 and Y1C-37 transports) and U.S. Navy (the one-offs XJO-3 and R2O-1) and Coast Guard (R3O-1) found the *Electra* useful. The

Army Air Corps expanded her scope to that of heroic pioneer in the form of the XC-35. This was a modified Model 10 with a fully pressurized passenger cabin which won the Collier Trophy in 1937 for having made the most valuable contribution to aircraft development for that year.

While quite famous in her own right for the superb performance of her regular airliner duties, the *Electra* is today best recalled for her role as the mount in some less than stellar final acts. One that is less well known is the role of transport for Britain's Neville Chamberlain and his staff on the London-Berlin-London trip that ended with the now infamous 1938

Continued on page 10

The *Styrene Sheet* is a monthly publication of the Silicon Valley Chapter of the International Plastic Model Society (IPMS). Articles and comments should be submitted to Chris Bucholtz, Editor, P.O. Box 361644, Milpitas, CA 95036, or by E-mail at bucholtzc@aol.com. Excerpts may be published only with the written permission of the editor.

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EDITOR'S BRIEF

Okay, people, this is important! Our meeting place for February is the Los Altos Public Library. Luckily, there's a major modelers' landmark just up the street (San Antonio Hobbies), but just in case the map on the back page isn't enough, here are the written directions:

From San Jose: Take 280 north to the El Monte exit. Go east on El Monte to Foothill Expressway. Turn left onto Foothill and get into the right hand lane. Turn right onto San Antonio Road, which is the next right. Go .a half mile. The Library is on the right, just past the Seville Properties sign.

From Palo Alto: Go south on 280 to El Monte and proceed as above, or take El Camino south to San Antonio. Turn right and proceed through three lights. After the third light (at Edith) get into the left hand lane immediately. Turn left into the library driveway.

From Milpitas: Take 237 to 101 north. Proceed to the San Antonio exit. Drive south on San Antonio to the intersection where Edith, State and Main join San Antonio. Go straight through that intersection and immediately get into the left-hand turn lane. Turn left into the library driveway.

See? Easy! We can handle this! At this meeting, let's be on our best behavior; for this meeting, please do not sell anything in the room. We want to make sure we stay on the library's good graces, at least until we can get squared away with the Milpitas Library the exact situation there.

While this tribulation is going on, we prepare for the Kickoff Classic. The people you've appointed to take care of things have been doing just that, and Feb. 24 should see yet another successful show. On page 15 of this issue, head judge Rodney Williams tells you why you should judge. Rodney is right on in everything he says. Another thing we ask of you: bring a friend to the event, or a son or daughter, or a niece or nephew, or some other person who may have an interest in the subject but hasn't yet entered the hobby. With the friendly crew we have, the Classic is a great entry-point into modeling, since even the most intimidating-looking spectacularly-finished entry is usually accompanied by someone who will take the time to explain how he or she did it. The event is really our biggest club meeting of the year, with our members showing off their year's worth of work and visitors coming from as far away as England (no joke!) to enjoy the crowd, the competition and the conviviality we've come to be known for.

We'll need volunteers to set up, of course; we'll let you know what time we need you on Saturday. It's also a big help when people stick around at the end of the event to clean things up. Any little way you can help will mean a lot to the club.

The editor would like to see us reach the 375 entry mark this year. Although he says that, he's done little to help reach that goal himself, slowpoke that he is. The key to reaching this number is participation; even if you don't win, it's fun to put your model on the table next to your peers. It's like donating an exhibit to a museum for the day (or, in Jim Lund's case, it's like removing an exhibit from a museum and putting it out somewhere else for a day)—you're sharing your model with your fellow builders. That's the real fun of these events. Sure the vendor tables are nice, but it's the people that make the whole event worthwhile.

The other thing that participation is often rewarded with: an award. The editor's *Beaufighter Mk. X* from last year won its category at both the Region VII and Region IX regional contests. Was it because the editor is a superb modeler with an eye for detail and a finishing touch that's second to none? Well, of course not! It was because he had no competition in the multi-engine prop category! This, in a year that saw new kits of the *Mosquito*, Ta 154, Ki-46 "Dinah" and other beautiful twins. At another contest, a modeler had to be talked into entering his *Avenger* and *Skyraider*—only to have them take first and second! You can never predict what may happen, but it won't happen in your favor unless you share a model with your club-mates.

That's it for now—excuse the editor while he gets back to work on his entry. What? 3 a.m. already? Gadzooks!

—The Editor

CONTEST CALENDAR

February 24, 2001: **Silicon Valley Scale Modelers** host the **eighth annual Kickoff Classic** in Milpitas, California. This year's theme is "Camelot, 40 years after: 1961—1963." For more information, call Chris Bucholtz at (408) 723-3995 or e-mail him at bucholtzc@aol.com.

March 17 and 18, 2001: **The Southern California Area Historical Miniature Society (SCAHMS)** hosts the **17th Annual Historical Miniature Exhibition and Competition** at the Hilton Hotel/Orange County Airport. For more information, call Jim Sullivan at (714) 593-9071 or Jim Hill at (714) 774-4076.

April 22, 2001: **IPMS/U.S.S. Hornet & IPMS/Fremont Hornets' First Annual HornetCon**. Theme: "From Midway to the Moon—27 Incredible Years." On board the aircraft carrier U.S.S. *Hornet* (CVS-12), Pier 3, Alameda Point, Alameda CA (formerly NAS Alameda). For more information, call Ken Durling at (510) 843-4419 or e-mail him at kdurling@earthlink.net. (Note: This event will coincide and coordinate with the 2nd annual Ship Modeler's Mailing List (SMML) convention, a three-day event commencing on the Friday of that weekend. For more info, contact Duane Fowler at (831) 338-7050 or by e-mail at dlfowler@uscg.net)

April 28, 2001: **IPMS/Silverwings** hosts its **Annual Contest** at the Kerr Middle School, on Elk Grove Blvd, Elk Grove, California. For more information, call Scott Bell at (916) 428-5520 or e-mail him at SnJmodprod@aol.com.

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Sub-Juniors (12 and under): \$1.50 with unlimited entries

Contest fees include ship admission

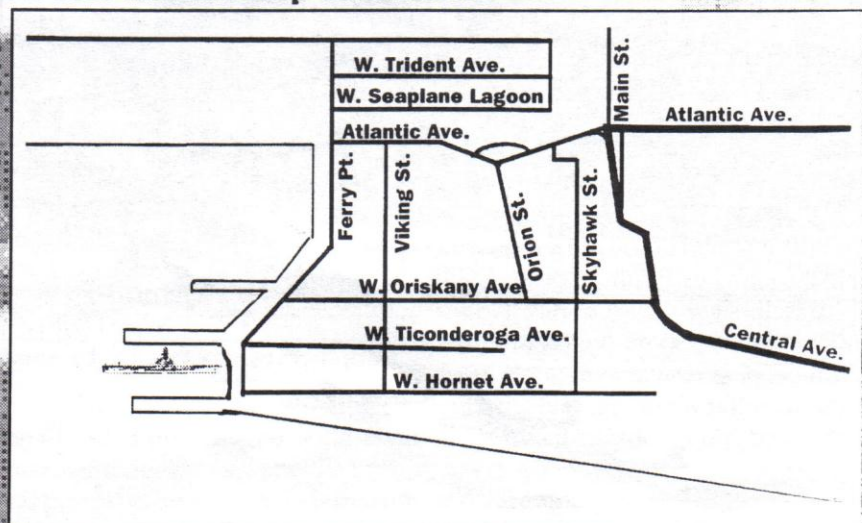
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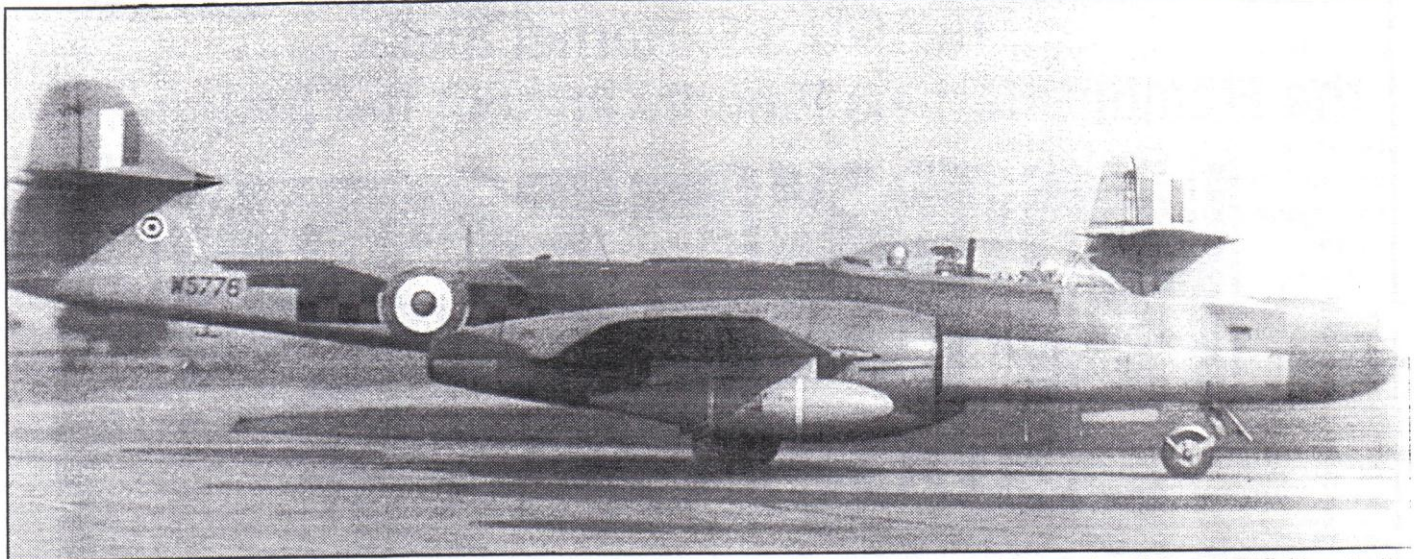
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This somewhat beaten-up looking Meteor NF.14 belongs to 85 Squadron. The NF.14 is distinguished from other Meteor nightfighters by the all-glass canopy.

The last of the first: Meteor NF.14 in 1:48

By Robin Powell

For the world's first operational jet fighter, the *Meteor* has been sadly neglected by modelers and historians alike. 616 Squadron became operational with the *Meteor* F.1 in July 1944, but the Me 262 took until October 3, 1944 to become operational with Kommando Nowotny.

Most successful designs get developed and modified but few grow as the *Meteor* did. The last version of this stout warplane was the NF.14. Often also touted as the longest in the *Meteor* family, research by *Aeroclub* in the preparation of their kit has shown that it was in fact the same length as the NF.12 and 13. The notes in their instructions about the lengths of the *Meteor* night fighters makes fascinating reading! It is very satisfying to see this very appealing shape at last offered in modern short-run form to the modelling world.

The *Aeroclub Meteor* NF.14 is the first kit from this manufacturer to incorporate resin parts as well as its usual mix of vacuform, white metal and injection moulded parts. The use of each material is well thought out. The main airframe components and external fuel tanks are supplied as vacuform parts, the tailplanes and undercarriage doors as injection mouldings, the cockpit tub and the front portions of the engine nacelles as resin castings and the small detail parts and the undercarriage as white metal castings. This results in a smartly engineered product which will prove straightforward for the average modeller to build.

A very crisply printed decal sheet with stencils, walkways and two marking options is included. I have had cause in the past to criticise *Aeroclub* for vague instructions. This kit redresses this issue with a clear exploded view and a comprehensive account detailing the use of all the appropriate parts.

Thus enlightened I set to. The one-piece cockpit tub contains substantial detail on the floor and walls. I airbrushed this and the other cockpit parts with dark grey and followed this with a black wash. This still gives the impression of a black cockpit but allows the detail to be seen with the wash adding depth in the relief detail. The instrument panels are supplied in metal, allowing me to pant the dials black and then scribe through to the shiny metal with the tip of a needle to simulate the instrument faces. A drop of clear varnish on each instrument then simulated the glass faces.

The resin seats come with very good strap detail and the control column and various back set controls are fine metal castings. With very little effort I had a very presentable cockpit, one which warranted an opened canopy. More on that later.

The many struts which make up the foun-



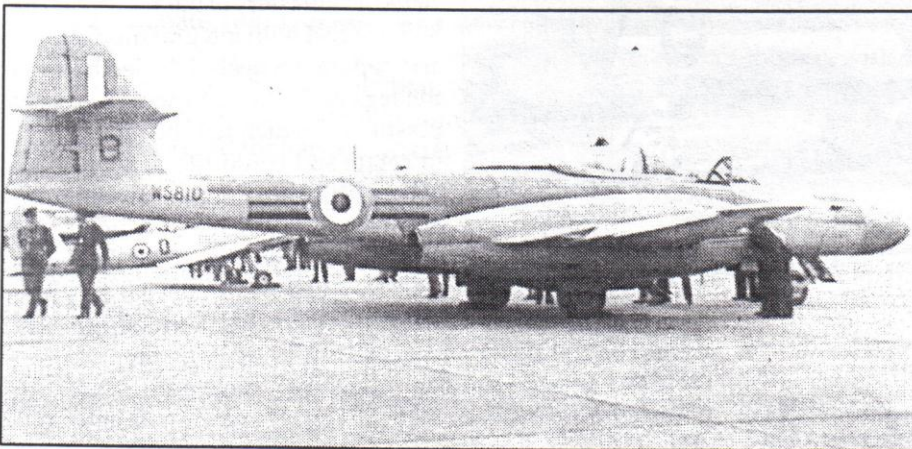
Nine Meteor NF.14s from 152 Squadron in formation on a rare daylight group exercise.

dition for the nose gear are included in the kit and this all assembles to the front of the cockpit tub casting. This gives a solid and sure location and mount as well as being accurate. I taped the prepared fuselage halves together and checked for a good fit around the tub. This check showed no problems, so I fitted the vacuform fuselage bulkhead supplied as a nose-wheel bay forward wall and then joined the fuselage halves with Tenax liquid cement.

The vacuform parts of this kit feature superb recessed panel lines. On the fuselage in particular these line up across the joint line with precision. The access panels with their locking latches are very convincingly depicted. The wings are supplied as upper and lower full span pieces with the upper being moulded with a lip for positive engagement with the cutout in the fuselage.

I assembled the wing first and used it to gauge the trimming of the fuselage. Metal rings are supplied for the jet pipe ends and plastic tubing for the pipes themselves with metal castings for the turbine cones to fit on their inner ends. A vacuform ring bulkhead is also supplied to mount the forward end of each pipe in the nacelle interior. This all adds up to a solid assembly. I joined the upper and lower wings next, taking care not to distort the dihedral or the geometry of the parts. I did find though that the scribed aileron lines failed to line up on the upper and lower port wing parts. I filled and re-scribed the lower ailerons.

The engine intake areas need cutting away to fit the resin sections. These castings are impressive in their interior detailing, but blending them into the wing warrants some care. I used a little Squadron white filler at either side of each, followed *Gunze Sangyo* Mr. Surfacer.

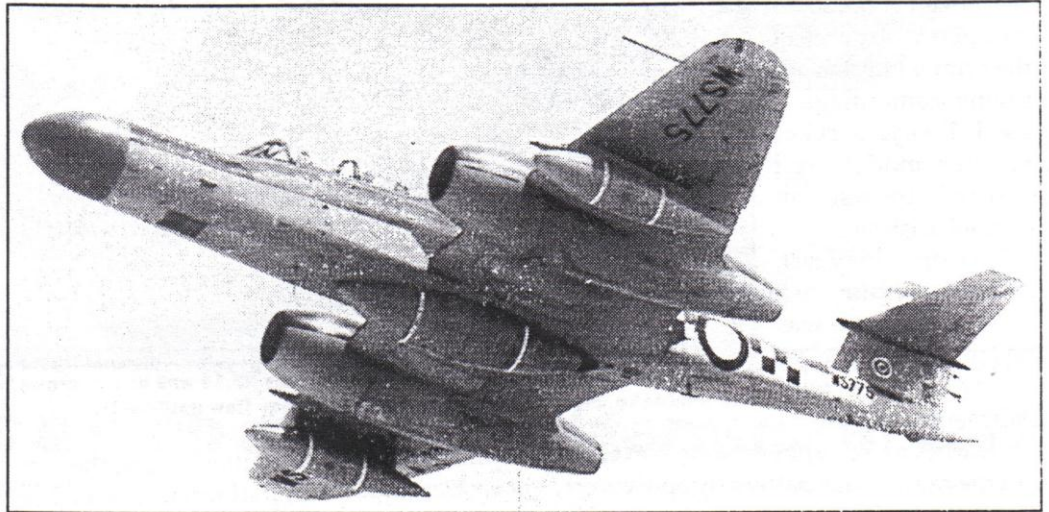


264 Squadron shows one of its NF.14s at the 1956 Battle of Britain air show. The distinctive tail was another of the NF.14's unique features.

The wing was ready to join the fuselage. The fit ended up as very good, but I did slit open and push the fuselage halves apart .020" at the front of the wing joint to match the width of these sections. This may have been due to a little too much

sanding on my part, but in case it wasn't, check while building yours! The last job before gluing on the wing is the fitting of the cockpit tub by sliding the assembly up through the wing cutout into position. With this in place and bonded with superglue, I fitted the wing in place. Remarkably little filling and blending was required at this joint. I got a seamless look with only one coat of Mr. Surfacer and some sanding.

The injection-moulded tailplanes have mounting tongues for location, so I cut out the slots moulded into the tail bulkhead at this stage, finishing with a flat swiss file passed right



Only 100 NF.14s were built, as the Meteor nightfighter family would soon be replaced by the Javelin.

through both slots. This let me keep them even and square to the fin. I used liquid cement to join the surfaces in position and, once satisfied with the alignment, I ran a bead of Zap-A-Gap around the joint and sanded it flush.

There are several metal castings provided for exterior details such as the canopy rail, cooling intakes and antennae. These all have clearly-defined positions in the instructions, but if you are modelling an aircraft other than the two options offered within the box, check your references, as the position of the avionics cooling intakes varied from aircraft to aircraft.

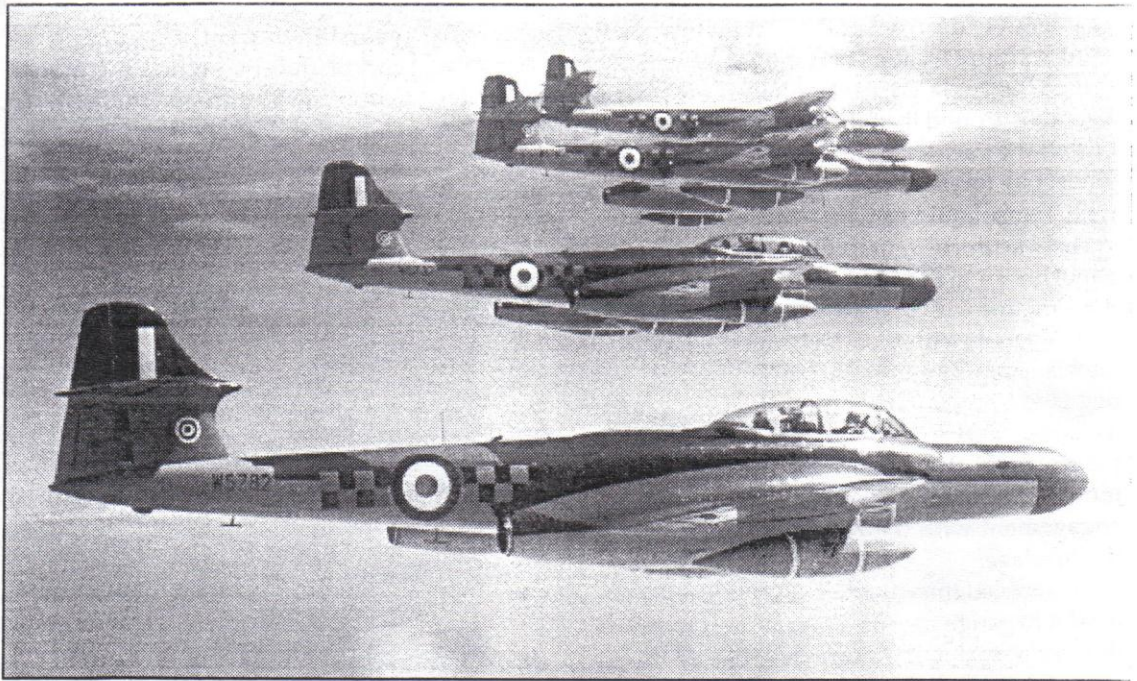
The model now looked very *Meteoric*... I turned to the transparencies. Here I ran into a little trouble. While trying to trim the first canopy (of which there are thankfully two) I failed to get both the windscreen and the canopy to fit the fuselage at the same time. By the time I gave up I had wrecked the windscreen. The problem seemed to be that the canopy had insufficient depth relative to the windscreen. Therefore I cut out the second windscreen, trimmed it to the moulded lines and fixed it to the fuselage with epoxy, taking care to get the correct angle on the front face. I separated the original canopy from the remains of the first windscreen and added 0.040" plastic strips along the lower sills. Now it would touch the fuselage and was the same height as the windscreen. The added plastic would be painted to become the canopy lower frame.

The external fuel tanks are all supplied as vacuformed parts. The conformal belly tank fit without any filling or adjustment,

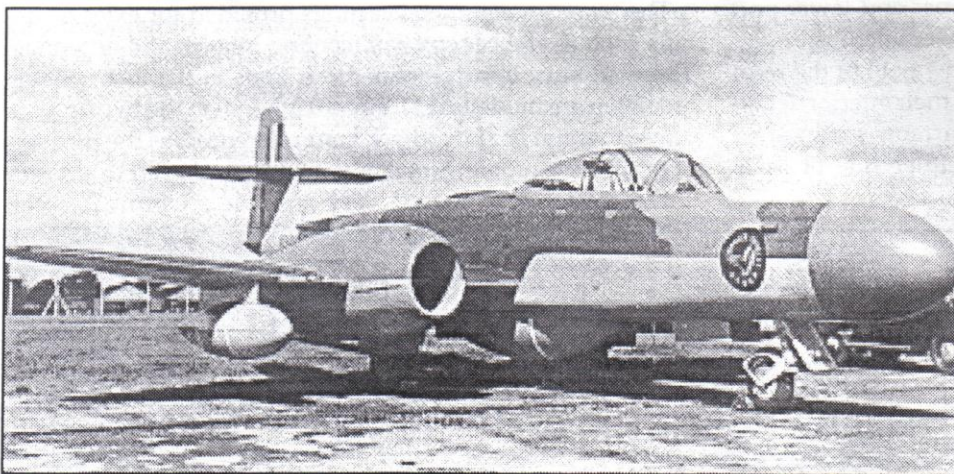
but the wing tanks require that their integral pylons be carefully shaped to the profile of the underwing surface.

With the cockpit masked with tissue soaked in *Maskol*, I gave the model a coat of Halfords grey primer. All looked good, so after a good rub down of the primer I started applying camouflage. I used *Tamiya* acrylics for this model, as I wanted to use an enamel wash later, and *Tamiya* dries very fast. After a Medium Sea Grey lower finish was set I masked off the demarcation lines with paper tape and sprayed

the Dark Sea Grey upper colour. Next I used Parafilm to mark out the camouflage pattern by applying it over each area and then tracing the outline of each with the tip of a number 11 scalpel blade. I sprayed the dark green last. Off with the masking and I had but a little cleaning up to do. As I had chosen the 46 Squadron aircraft from the kit decal options, I needed a black fin with a red rudder and wing tips. A little



A quartet of Meteors in flight. As beloved as the NF.14 was by her crews, when she entered service in 1953 she was unable to catch most jet bombers. Still they flew until 1961.



The last of the line: WS848, the last production Meteor, at the 1954 SBAC Airshow. The crest on the nose is the Hawker Siddeley logo.

more masking and these areas now wore *Humbrol* black and red.

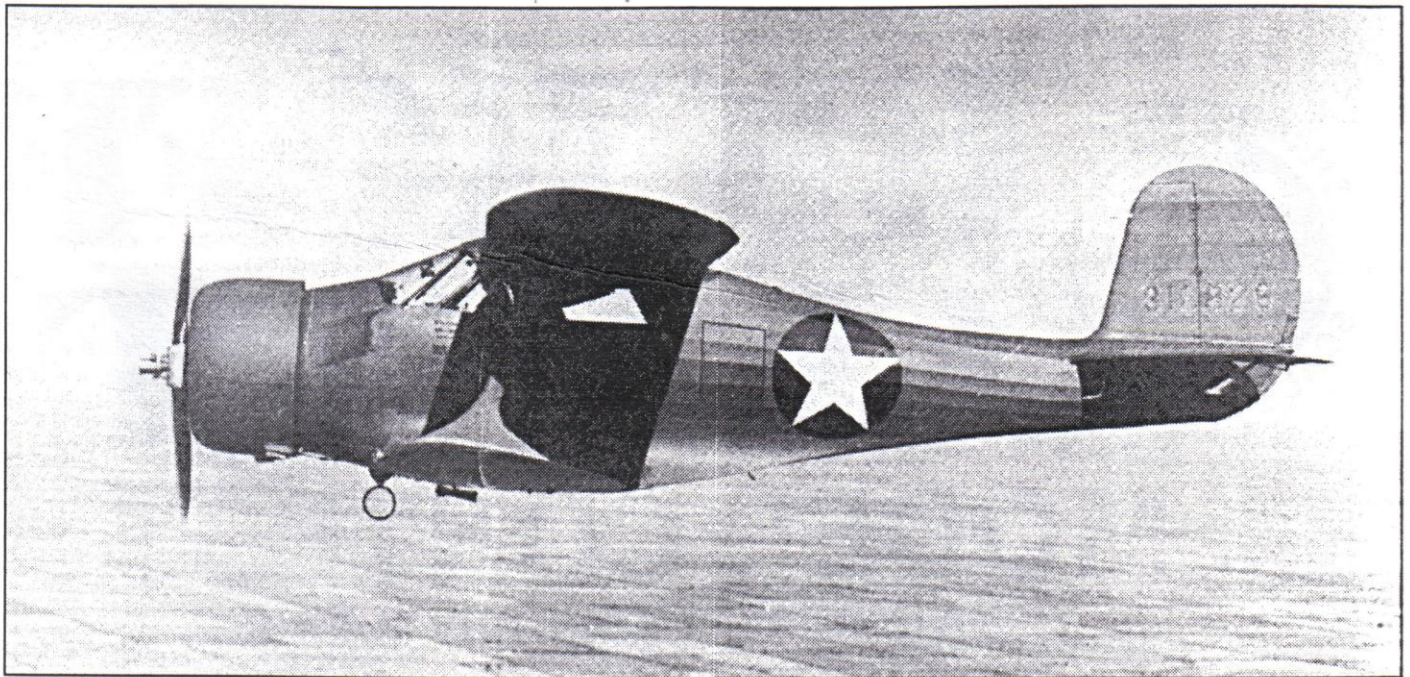
On such a dark finish I like to use a lighter grey wash. I thinned down some *Humbrol* Ghost Grey, flooded the panel lines, waited half an hour and wiped off the excess with paper towel dampened with paint thinner. The panels sprang to life.

After a coat of Future, I applied the decals. These are printed by *Fantasy Printshop* and are superb. Incredibly thin and absolutely opaque, the large white areas of the 46 Squadron markings darkened not a jot on the camouflage and allowed the surface detail to spring right through them. My only word

of caution is that they are a tad delicate. I broke one of the aircraft serials and had no replacement so, as the eagle eyed among you may notice from the pictures, I had to leave this for repair later. With the masking removed from the windscreen I added the canopy frames from black decal film sprayed with Dark Sea Grey. Thus the inside showed black. The centre canopy frame I added from a strip of black decal applied to the inside of the transparency. I now gave the whole aircraft a coat of *Humbrol* Satin Cote. Last of all I masked and sprayed the radome *Humbrol* Coal Black with a dash of copper added.

Just the dangly bits were left. The white metal undercarriage shows off *Aeroclub's* mastery of this material. The legs are cast with integral mudguards and separate wheels. I drilled holes in the legs and wheels to accept axles of plastic rod which left the wheels free to rotate so I could file flats on them before fitting and get the model to sit on them later. Heaven forbid that it should stand on tippytoes! With the gear installed the model sat securely on all three wheels (I added no extra weight in the nose) and all that was left was the injection moulded gear doors. The model may have a little too pronounced a nose-down stance which I may adjust later but otherwise it is complete.

This model looks every inch a *Meteor*. The shape has been captured to perfection. The assembly does need a little care to get everything snug but no more than that. It is a "fun build" and I found it very rewarding. A competition class result from this kit is well within the reach of the average modeller and I can recommend it without reservation. My thanks go to *Aeroclub* for the chance to review this splendid product.



A USAAF in flight over the U.S. The Model 17 production line re-opened after the war, with 90 more being built before the line closed in 1948.

Sword takes a stab at the Staggerwing in 1:72

By Chris Bucholtz

Universally considered a classic, the Beech Model 17, or "Staggerwing" as it is popularly known, was the first airplane built by Walter Beech after he and his partners Clyde Cessna and Lloyd Stearman had sold Travel Air to the Curtiss-Wright Corporation. Designed by Ted Wells, the Beech Model 17 (the last aircraft from Travel Air was the Model 16, and Beech thought it logical to continue the series into his new company) featured a number of unique characteristics, including a controllable variable-pitch propeller, a steel-tubing structure, a split rudder that could act as a brake on landing, and the wing layout that gave the plane its name.

When the plane debuted in 1933, it won the Texaco Trophy race but found no buyers. Beech found one customer in oil-drilling magnate Tom Loffland, who bankrolled the second model 17. Still, it wasn't until the model B17L was developed that sales picked up. Slowly, the "Staggerwing" gained popularity, so much so that when war came in 1941 the military ordered the aircraft for liaison and training duties. The Army Air Force's three YC-43s and 270 UC-43s were joined by 117 impressed civilian examples. The Navy received 63 UC-43s, which became GB-2s. The Nationalist Chinese received three GB-2s, and the RAF was provided with 33 more UC-43s, which became known as *Traveller* Is.

Despite the glamour associated with the Model 17, it has been given short shrift in injection-molded 1:72 kit form until now. *Sword's* kit is a good first step in the right direction, containing just 52 parts but getting the idea of the "Staggerwing" across.

As a short-run kit, however, there's a lot of flash. Some patience will be required to clean the parts up, especially on the detailed landing gear legs.

The cockpit is surprisingly detailed for a short run kit. A decent control panel goes up front, while a two piece control column with a single yolk is attached to the spacious floor-

board. The seats are provided as two pieces, and have a very civilian feel to them. No lapbelts are provided, although they are hinted at in the detail drawings in the kit instructions. Cockpit sidewalls with "upholstery" detail finish off the interior nicely.

The engine has a molding flaw that mars an otherwise beautiful piece. The two-piece cowling surrounds the engine and a nice propeller (which needs extra careful flash clean-up) goes up front.

The lower fuselage may be tricky. The fuselage halves go together in a straightforward way, but separate pieces for the areas surrounding the wheel wells may prove challenging to install. The fuselage detail is beautiful, including a subdued fabric-over-tube structure effect that *Hasegawa's Hurricane* patternmakers should study. The wings and tail join easily enough, with mounting tongues for the lower wings, pins for the upper wings and plain butt joints for the horizontal tail. The vertical tail is also a separate piece. Locations for the wing struts are discretely marked.

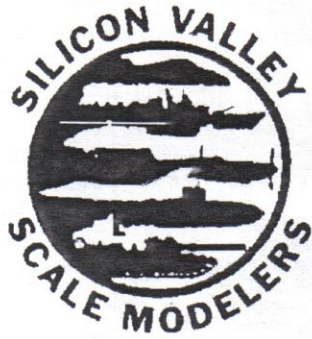
The small parts of this model really seal the deal. Although the wheels are a little clunky, the gear struts are terrific. Also included are mass balances, exhausts and antennas.

The windshield comes in halves, split along the very narrow center brace. This will prove a test of your sanding and polishing skills! I'd superglue these parts in place and then sand the seam away, following up with a polish with Blue Magic.

Decal options provide an American UC-43 from the 67th Reconnaissance Group in 1943 and a *Traveller* I of the RAF Communications Flight, Malaya in 1944, wearing a dark earth/middlestone/azure blue scheme and SEA roundels. The decals are sharp and in register.

With a bit of rigging and some careful building, this kit could provide modelers, both military and civilian, with a classic for their collection. Good job, *Sword*!

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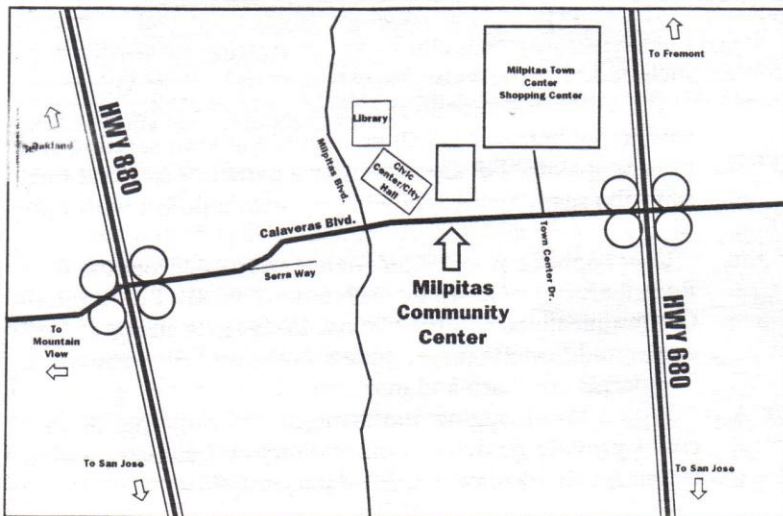
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- S2. Multi-Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:72
- S3. Single-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, 1:72
- S4. Multi-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, 1:72
- S5. Single-Engine Jet or Rocket Aircraft, 1:48
- S6. Multi-Engine Jet Aircraft, 1:48
- S7. Single-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, Allied, 1:48
- S8. Single-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, Axis and Neutrals, 1:48
- S9. Multi-Engine Prop or Turbo-Prop Aircraft, 1:48
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- S11. Prop Aircraft, 1:32 and larger
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- S13. Rotary Wing Aircraft, all scales
- S14. Civil, Sport and Racing Aircraft, all scales
- S15. Jet, Prop and Rocket Aircraft, 1:144 and smaller
- S16. Military Vehicles, Softskin, 1:35 and larger
- S17. Armored Fighting Vehicles, Closed-Top, to 1945, 1:35 and larger
- S18. Armored Fighting Vehicles, Closed-Top, post 1945, 1:35 and larger
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- S20. Towed Artillery and Ancillary Vehicles, 1:35 and larger
- S21. Military Vehicles, all types, 1:48 and smaller
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- S23. Ships, 1:351 and smaller
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- S25. Automobiles, Custom, all scales
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- S33. Dioramas, all types and scales
- S34. Hypothetical Vehicles, all types and scales
- S35. Miscellaneous
- S36. Collections, all types and scales

JUNIOR (13-17 YEARS)

- J1. Aircraft
- J2. Military Vehicles
- J3. Automobiles
- J4. Dinosaurs and Figures
- J5. Miscellaneous

YOUTH (12 YEARS AND UNDER)

- SJ1. Aircraft
- SJ2. Military Vehicles and Ships
- SJ3. Automobiles
- SJ4. Miscellaneous

SPECIAL AWARDS

- SA1. Ted Kauffman Memorial Award
Judges' Best of Show (Senior)
- SA2. Bill Magnie Memorial Award
Judges' Best of Show (Junior:Youth)
- SA3. Arlie Charter Memorial Award
Best U.S. Army Air Corps Subject, Pacific Theater
- SA4. Ayrton Senna Memorial Award
Best Competition Automobile
- SA5. Mike Williams Memorial Award
Best Science Fiction, Fantasy or Real Space Subject
- SA6. Best Westland Aircraft
- SA7. Best British Subject
- SA8. Best Aircraft in Foreign Service
- SA9. Best California Subject
- SA10. Best AFV (including softskins)
- SA11. Best Arab-Israeli Wars Subject
- SA12. Best U.S. Armor Subject, ETO, 1942-45
- SA13. Best Air Racer
- SA14. Best Vacu-Form
- SA15. The Kennedy Years
Theme Award: Best Kennedy Era (1961-63) Subject
- SA16. Desert Storm: 10th Anniversary
Best Desert Storm Subject
- SA17. Korea: Fifty Years Later Best Korean War Subject
- SA18. Tim Curtis Award
Given to honor service to the Silicon Valley Scale Modelers.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 9 a.m.-noon—Registration; Contest Opens
- 11:45—Judges' Meeting
- 12:30-2 p.m.—Judging
- 3:15 p.m.—Awards Presentation

FEES

- Seniors: \$4 Registration, \$1 per model entered
- Juniors: \$1 Registration, .50 per model entered
- Spectators: Free
- Vendors: See information on front of flyer

GENERAL RULES:

1. IPMS/USA rules and criteria will be used for this contest. However, no model may be handled by the judges. Model placement will be handled by the builder. SVSM invites members of other chapters to participate by joining our judging teams.
2. The contest director will make the final ruling on all disputes during the contest and may split or combine categories based on the number and nature of the entries.
3. No model that has won an award at an IPMS National contest is eligible, nor are any models that were first entered in any Re-

- gion IX competition prior to Feb. 27, 2000. SVSM appreciates the honor system, and hopes participants will as well.
4. SVSM asks that all contestants keep away from judging teams during the course of judging to ensure impartiality. Interference with judging teams by the contestants will be handled per IPMS/USA rules, and could render the offenders' models ineligible for award consideration.
5. All work done on model entries must be done by the entrant.
6. All contestants must have fun—otherwise, they aren't doing this right!

Modeling the Model 10 Electra from Special Hobby

Continued from page 1

Munich Pact. While the year that followed showed that anything but "peace in our time" was ahead, you can't say that British Airways *Electra* G-ABPR was responsible. The only peace of mind anyone felt the whole time probably came from the trusty transport.

The other *Electra* that will live on in infamy was privately owned and registered in the U.S. as NR16020. This *Electra* 10-E was owned and flown into legend and mystery by aviatrix Amelia Earhart. The rumors regarding her round-the-world flight attempt being in part an aerial reconnaissance mission for U.S. intelligence agencies is somehow appropriate, since not so many years later Kelly Johnson would have a hand in not one but two cloak-and-dagger aerial espionage aircraft, the U-2 and the SR-71. So in some ways, Earhart's *Electra* may have been the Patron Saint of Lockheed's black birds.

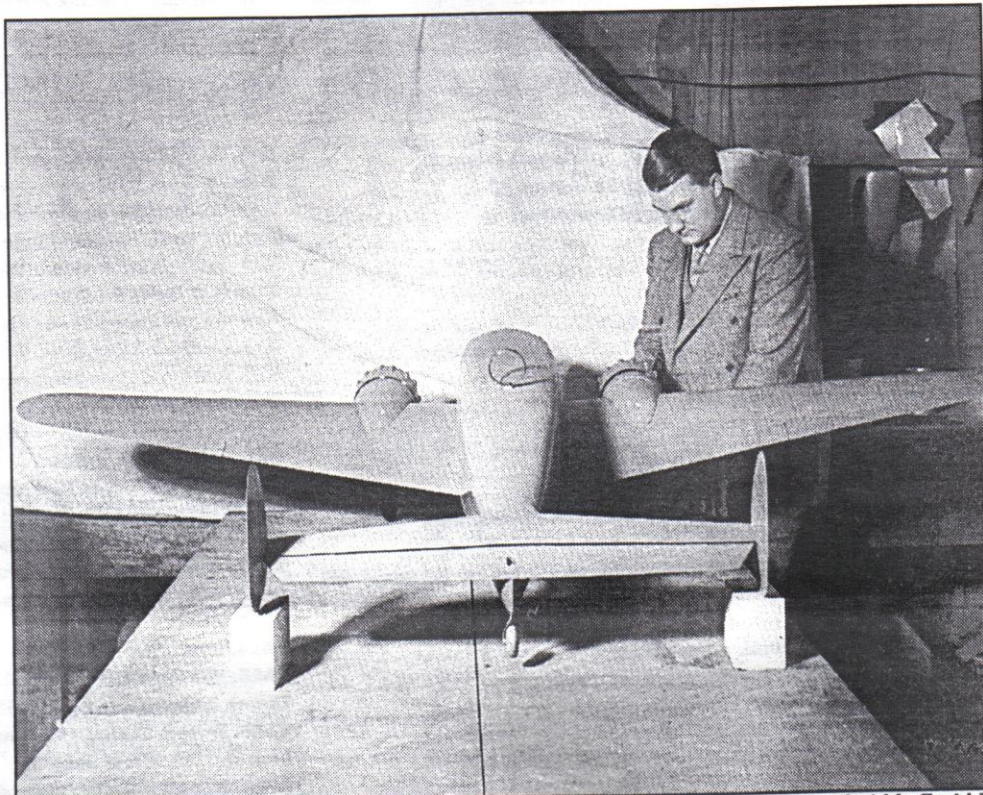
Given that a long-planned project of mine is to build one each of Kelly's Blackbirds, I just had to make this first of my *Electras* as Kelly's first spyplane.

Having lost track of where my *Execuform* vacuform kit of this airplane wandered off to, and not being a big fan of 1:53 as offered by *Williams Brothers*, the arrival of a limited-run injection molded *Electra* in 1:72 from *Special Hobby* thrilled me twice. First, the *Special Hobby* kit has a marvelous Spanish Civil War camouflage scheme as the box art cover. Inside, among other options, you get the choice of building Earhart's plane. Since the kit wasn't likely to be found easily or cheaper later, I bought two of them off the hobby shop shelf as soon as I saw them.

Well-molded with a look and feel familiar to anyone who has ever done a later-generation *MPM* kit, the kit differs from *MPM* by keeping to a minimum the oversized sprue attachment points that can make it a challenge to find where the parts begin and the sprue ends. The model is made up of light gray plastic components, well-done tan resin parts, vacuformed clear parts and decals printed by *Propagteam*, with the mostly clear and concise instruction sheet covering assembly in five steps. The decals provide four paint schemes: the Amelia Earhart aircraft, Romanian Air Force (undated), Spanish Air Force, 1938 (a gray and light blue bird) and Spanish Air Force, 1939 (the colorful camo bird on cover art).

Having determined that Earhart's *Electra* would be my goal, I dived in without references other than the kit instructions. For those interested, one reference I have located for this one bird is a two-page cutaway color illustration on pages 130-131 of *Women Aloft* in the Time Life "Epic of Flight" series.

A good rendering of the specifics of NR16020 (extra fuel tanks, life raft, the tables for navigation, gauges and "pelorus" navigation mount) is shown. I did not aspire to include all this detail, since much of it would be lost to view even with the side door cut and mounted open, but others may wish to add this for their own models. The kit does not provide any seating for the passenger cabin. There is a floor running the full length of both cabins, bulkheads for pilot and rear of



Kelly Johnson went from aeronautical school graduate to aviation legend in steps, but his first big one came when he helped cure some handling problems in the *Electra*. Here, he is seen with a wind tunnel model.

passenger cabin in plastic parts, and resin crew seats, two part (yoke & stick) control columns, and full instrument panel with front coaming. Dry fitting these parts found little need for sanding or trimming them. The rear cabin bulkhead required some slight scoring before it could be bent to the right shape to fit onto the floor.

The instrument panel includes the prominent coaming and the rudder pedals. Once carefully painted, this one item can easily bring to life your cockpit without the need for anything else. Gluing this onto the right half of the fuselage with superglue provided a handy tool for building the remainder of the interior and helped in keeping the fuselage halves aligned properly. Remember, short-run kits like this have no alignment pins at all! Vacuform modelers would not find this a problem, but if you've never done limited-run kits, this is something you'll have to adjust to.

The hardest part of this first stage of assembly comes in fitting the injection molded "glass" rectangular side windows within the fuselage halves. Even in the case of Amelia's *Electra*, you are going to have to work this out. There are three

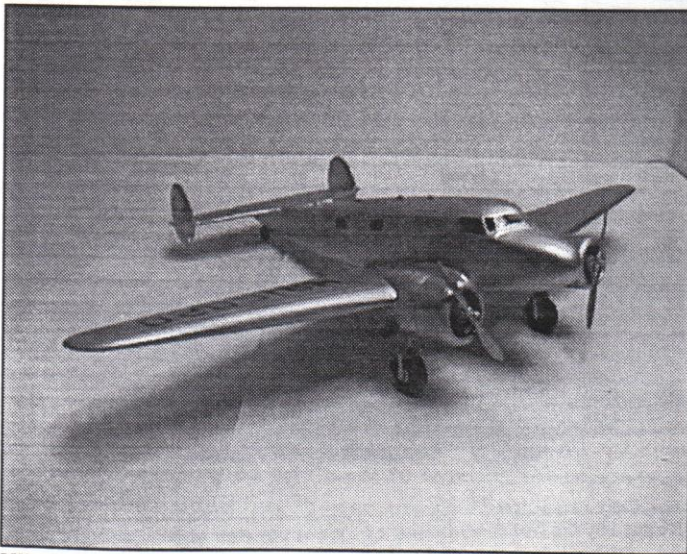
rectangular windows that are to remain clear on NR16020, but every one has to end up flush with the outer surface of the fuselage. After struggling with less aggressive adhesives and managing to knock a number of them loose, I ended up using superglue on each one. Sanding and polishing them out proved less frustrating, even for the ones that ended up clear!

I painted the inside of both cabins and then closed the fuselage before I installed the seats and control columns. This worked well for me, because the sanding of the windows did not fill the cabin with that inevitable detritus that only shakes loose when you've gotten everything sealed shut. There is plenty of room to mount these items late in the process, before mounting the canopy.

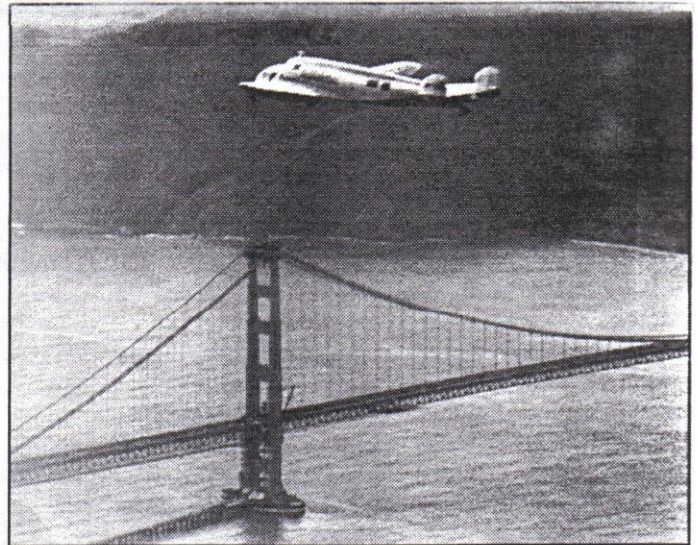
The wings and engines were next. They are deceptively easy-looking, but provide a learning experience for short-run kit builders. The airfoil shape of the wings is well enough captured, but mating the single-piece full-span lower wing to the upper left and right halves calls for a molding sprue to be cut or sanded away first. A slight evening up of the trailing edges inside was required. What the instructions don't clarify is how to align and mount the interiors of the main gear wells. You are presented with what looks like aluminum siding or roofing plates (especially when painted aluminum, as the instructions tell you to do, before gluing them in) and there is a clearly marked point to install them on paper, but not on the plastic! I ended up eyeballing them, and the model appears right to me.

As there are no alignment pins on the wings, first I dry-fitted them using the edges as guides and taped the upper/lower parts together to check the fit against the fuselage. The fit is very nearly true, so I removed the tape from the wings and glued them together one at a time so I could check the fit at each stage of the process. The dihedral remained correct, and the wings are set up in the correct geometry in relation to fuselage this way.

While the instructions clearly show the wing and tail assemblies done before the engines/cowls/main gear (steps 3 and 4), this is not at all how I approached mine, having had bad experiences with fitting, filling and sanding engine nacelles of more than a few vacuforms and injected kits this way. With the wings glued up but free of the fuselage, I assembled,



Mike's finished model, in the guise of the Earnhart-Noonan plane.



Earhart's *Electra* flies over the Golden Gate Bridge on her first round-the-world attempt. This west-to-east flight ended after a ground loop in Hawaii.

sanded and filled the basic parts. You get the top portion of the nacelle molded into the top wing halves. You have to carefully align the halves of the lower nacelle with each other, and to the section molded to the wing, before you glue them to the lower wing. You get to do much the same sort of thing while assembling the two halves of each cowl, the resin engines and the disk that mounts them all together. One nacelle I assembled pretty much spot on, with only a slight "out of round" condition when mated to the upper wing, which left me only a small gap to fill. For the right wing, I had to devise a means to keep the circle and get the edges set right to the lower wing surface. I found a piece of sandpaper slipped in between the still-setting nacelle halves at the mating edge at the front of wheel well kept things aligned perfectly and could be easily removed.

Fitting the plain flat disk that is the mating surface for the cowlings effectively closes up the gear wells and gives strength to the rear nacelle halves. With a little sanding and filling, the two engine nacelles looked pretty closely matched up!

The resin Wasp engines are delicate moldings. The trick with these is to cut off the oversized rod-shaped molding plug on the rear of each without damaging the details! I brutally amputated mine close to the back of the engine with heavy cutters and then sanded the rest of the plug away with sanding sticks.

The cowling halves are delicate injection moldings, and they have no mating pins, but none are required. The engines dry-fitted inside without a hint of sanding required. I removed the engines, glued and sanded the cowls, and used them to determine how much sanding I needed to do on those "blank disks" on the nacelles to bring them into shape.

Another point where the kit instructions and I parted courses was the method of mounting the propeller. The instructions clearly show the engine moldings as having a stepped, protruding boss. While this may prove true on your *Electra* kit, there were never such moldings on mine. I drilled pilot holes in the front of each engine before painting, and added a shaft at the end of the assembly/painting process. I painted the inside of the cowlings and the engines, then mounted the cowlings to the finished wing.

The horizontal tailplane is single-piece molding, and some sanding and dry fitting is required if you want to be sure the whole part aligns properly with the fuselage. Mine sat distinctly high on one side before any work done to attach it to the fuselage. A slight gap occurred at the front edge of the horizontal stabilizer when it was added, but careful use of superglue filled almost all of this gap and left a cleanly filled edge underneath the tail.

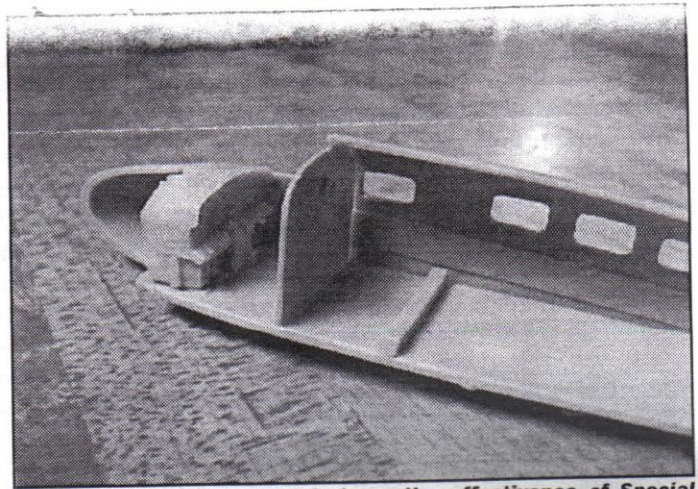
One problem area where references like the wonderful 1:72 line drawing plans included in *Execuform's* kit would come in handy was the vertical tail pieces! There are faint lines scribed on the horizontal tail to suggest the correct points where the upper and lower halves of the vertical stabilizers should be attached. They are vaguely shaped to fit the airfoil shape of the horizontal stabilizer at their mating edges. If you use the lines on the tail to guide you, the verticals will end up too far forward and leave some odd gaps. Trying to make the vertical halves mate to one so that they have the proper oval shape and mate snugly against the horizontal stabilizer puts them on top of the elevators! Despite how the instructions for painting are drawn (with the front and rear vertical edges matched to the horizontals) and the unclear exploded drawing in Step 2, what you want is to end up with nearly matched front edges. On mine the result is not as close to what photos later photos, but I can live with them.

Filling the gaps where the vertical stabilizers joined the horizontal tail was a time-consuming task because of the misshapen curves at the bottom of the vertical stabilizer pieces, plus the difficulty of sanding the 90-degree joints they form when in place.

With the tail assembled, mating the wing sub-assembly seemed like it would be a cinch. Having done all the preparatory work and assembling the wing using the fuselage as a jig helped, but it did not preclude fit problems. I ended up with an annoying ridge at the rear joint of the underside of the wing to the fuselage. Patience, superglue and careful sanding put things back in line.

After I added the finished seats and control columns to the cockpit, it was time to tackle the daunting prospect of mating the vacuform canopy to the injection-molded fuselage. You only are supplied one copy, so be very careful when you cut it out.

The canopy is tough, clear, and thin, which in the end is a great thing, but it makes cutting it out and fitting it a royal pain. The part includes the cockpit roof area, with faintly outlined areas for each cockpit window. The trick is to match



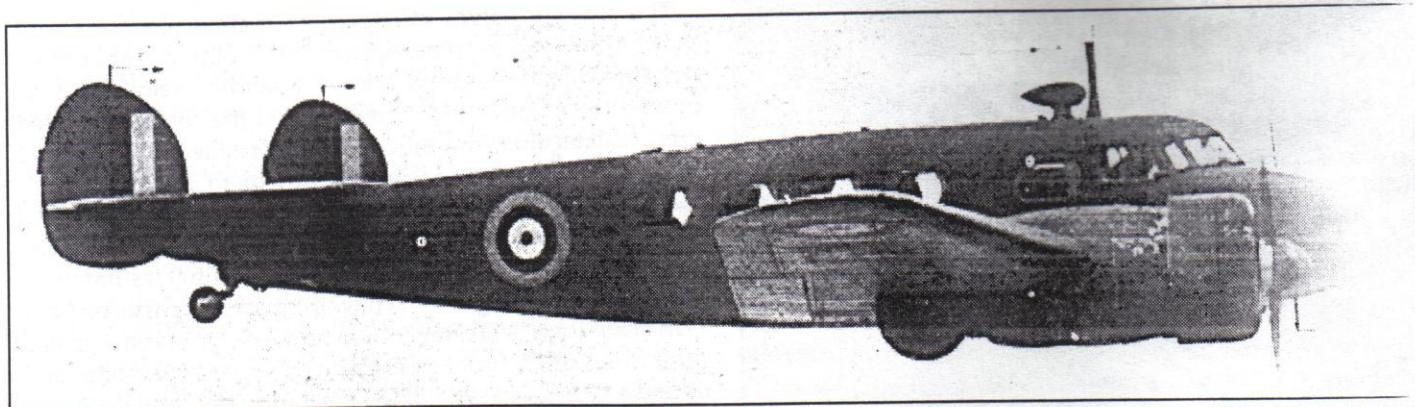
The cockpit of Mike's model shows the effectiveness of *Special Hobby's* resin control panel/instrument coaming.

up the part against the fuselage as you trim it down.

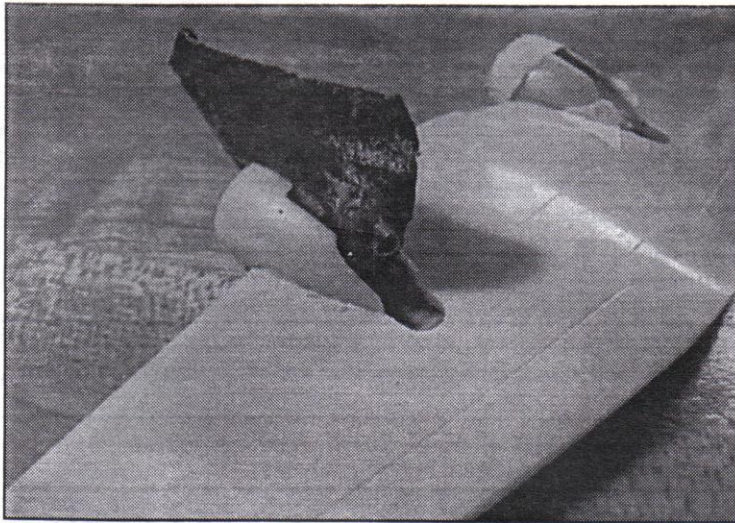
When I arrived at approximately the correct height and width, I used a brand new knife to trim the canopy to conform with the front portion of the cockpit, which "steps" at the instrument panel coaming with no room to spare. If you cut too much you will be forever cursed; cut too little and you will have a distortion disaster when you're done gluing it on!

Once the canopy was resting properly in its spot, I next had to resolve how on earth to glue the thin-edged clear part to the thick mating edges of the fuselage in a way that would stand up to the rigors of sanding and filling. There was no way the now fairly flimsy and flexible canopy would hold up if I just glued it in place, no matter what adhesive I used. I agonized over this, but finally realized I would have to employ "blocks" at the intersection of the canopy and fuselage which, when the plane was painted, would be extremely hard to see from the outside. Tiny scraps of styrene that were flexible enough to conform to the fuselage contours were used. Two were stacked in the middle of the top rear edge to support the canopy; another one was glued atop them that merely served to make sure the canopy rode at the mating edge. A single sliver was needed at each lower rear canopy corner.

I glued the canopy into place with no-fogging slow-curing gel cement intended for watch crystals. Regrettably, when it had finished curing, I found that all my "perfect fitting" still hadn't really made it, but I was determined the best course of action was to try sanding and filling once the cockpit was sealed so the canopy could keep superglue fumes from fogging the inside of the windows.



An *Electra* pressed into service by the RAF. Other forces also operated the Model 10; the Dutch even had a bomber version with a dorsal turret.



The nacelles present a tricky area. Mike used a piece of sandpaper to hold the nacelle parts in half while gluing them to the wings to help make sure they'd end up in proper alignment later.

I filled around the canopy joint, which I had sealed with acrylic floor wax, by adding a thin bead of superglue. This was rough sanded as soon as it had cured. This was repeated until the mismatch had been fixed.

The landing gear was the next step. *Special Hobby* provides a very welcome attempt at giving you sturdy gear without losing relevant detail. It required a little sanding, trimming, and fitting with knife, but getting the mud flap properly into the gear fork for the main gear is worth the effort, because it really looks cool when it's done. The difficult part is getting the two-part wheel/tire halves glued together and then into the fork without breaking it.

The instructions vaguely show how to put the main gear legs into the gear wells. After studying a few photos of *Electras*, I ended up drilling holes through the lower wing inside the well, and finding out that, without cutting the gear leg length as supplied, I ended up with the height and look that was right.

The kit instructions for the tail wheel are equally useless, but the one-piece molding had only a limited area to fit into. Dry fitting, followed by drilling a hole in the appropriate location, allowed me to get it in approximately the right position.

While my unpainted *Electra* looked a lot cooler in the in-progress pictures than I thought possible, the lack of propellers on those engine cans was a giveaway that there was still something wrong. I trimmed and reshaped the propellers to repair the damage they suffered when they were removed from the sprues (one was just blended into the sprue, so I had to cut off the blob and shave down the blade to match the others) and then drilled out a hole behind each hub to install my own sprue rod.

As I said earlier, the plans show the props mounting on a protruding part of the engines, but my kit had no such animals and provided no clue as to whether the props were ever to have a mounting hole or simply "butt join" on these missing bosses.

After confirming my propellers would be ready to mount

after painting and decalling the plane, the final painting process began. An overall aluminum/silver metallic finish was called for for Amelia Earhart's bird, so I gave the model a rubdown with Novus Plastic Polish and Scratch Remover (bottle grade Numbers 1 and 2), then masked off the windows, engine bays and wheel bays.

The model was sprayed with a generous coating of *Testors* Non-Buffering Metallizer Aluminum, which revealed a horrible scratch-covered monster hiding in the guise of an *Electra* in 1:72, with a canopy threatening to do its imitation of the Aloha Air "convertible" 737. This was frustrating, but that is the nature of natural metal finishes—nothing reveals flaws any better!

Another shot at blending the vacuformed canopy, followed by another series of applications of fine sandpapers, plastic scratch removers and polishing compounds, readied the model for a second shot with the same Non-Buffering Aluminum. I won't call it perfect this time, but it was good enough for a shelf and general display model, if not contest quality.

I lightly polished the paint in a few areas to break up the monotony of the finish, then I picked out the exhausts, gear legs, tires, etc with a brush. Decals for the Earhart aircraft are limited to the registration number on the wings (upper right, lower left) and tiny rudder registration codes. The vertical stabilizers each have the Lockheed winged star logo next to the NR codex.

Now, is it done? I hope so! *Electra* Model 10-E, NR16020 as flown by Amelia Earhart in 1937 as finished per *Special Hobby's* painting instructions and the best photographic references I had, looked just as advertised and thus was complete. Since then, I've picked up more references, and I am not so sure that *Special Hobby* has provided the complete scheme, at least for Amelia's last flight in the *Electra* she and Fred Noonan supposedly were using as a covert recon camera platform when they were lost. There apparently was a later



Lockheed *Electra* NR16020 at one of its stops on the ill-fated 1937 flight.

scheme involving large areas of what looks to be International Orange (FS 12197) trim on the wing leading edges and a big rectangle on the horizontal tailplane, as well as red instead of the kit's black coloration for the Lockheed badge. But until and unless someone can clarify this for me decisively, I consider this model complete.

I recommend the *Special Hobby* kit to those seeking an *Electra* in 1:72. *Execuform* offers it in vacuform, but this kit offers you the decals and a few more goodies to balance out the frustrations common to building limited-run injection-molded and vacuform kits. Just don't think this project will fall together as nicely as it looks coming out of the box.

JANUARY MINUTES

At the January meeting, we discussed the issues that we're having with the Milpitas Library regarding our meeting space. While a long-term solution had not yet been found, other alternatives were suggested by the membership, leading to the use of the Los Altos Public Library's meeting space for our next meeting, as you can read elsewhere in this issue.

In model talk... Dave Balderrama is getting small with his 1:144 Revell YF-23, but he's doing it in a big way. Dave has reshaped the engine bays and done a lot of work to clean up the seams. Dave also found it impossible to resist the Italeri 1:72 X-32 Joint Strike Fighter kit, which he is in the early stages of building. Pete Wong can't build plastic models in the house, so in winter he's turning to wooden ship models, namely a Mamoli kit of the royal yacht *Brittania*. Pete says wooden ship modeling is fun because your goal isn't making the model look authentic—it's to make a pretty model! Bert McDowell is looking for volunteers to work on the masters of a 1:350 Liberty Ship kit that Tom's Modelworks will produce to benefit the S.S. *Jeremiah O'Brien*. Talk to Bert at the next meeting if you're interested. Sami Arim took a 1:700 model of the ocean liner *Batory* and improved it with scratch-built booms and masts and black electrical tape for the windows. Sami also has an HO-scale LeMans car under construction; this wee racer kit includes resin, photoetched and white metal parts. Vladimir Yakubov also got in on the shipbuilding action; his small fleet included a Cambri kit of the Russian armored cruiser *Admiral Lazarov*, which had a number of small resin bubbles he needed to clean up. Vladimir also had his lovely gunboat *Manjur* on display, and he's taking a crack at scratchbuilding a coastal defense ship as well. Mike Burton has a Hasegawa AD-6 *Skyraider* painted; Mike added the Kendall Model Company resin interior and cowl ring to his Able Dog. Mike's other models showed that his tastes lean toward the odd—the Special Hobby Me 262 3-seater, Hasegawa XF5U-1 *Flapjack* and 12-Squared Me 262 "Lorin" conversion are all unique models and are all in progress. Mike also had two U-2s, one from Airfix and one from Minicraft, as a styrene tribute to the movie "13 Days." Tom Trankle has added Eduard parts, a vacuform canopy and a lot of effort to improve Tamiya's 1:48 *Beaufighter* Mk. VI. Brad Chun wants to have his Aeroclub *Meteor* NF. 14 finished for the Kickoff Classic; seeing a real one at Edwards Air Force Base and seeing Robin Powell's finished model gave him the spark to finish this nice vacuform kit. Cooper Sutherland was quick to note that there are 172 parts in the 1:100 Shinlong Gundam model that he built with his father. Roy himself has been busy working on his conversion of a 1:72 *Mosquito* Mk. IV into a NF. 13, adding wings and tail to his fuselage and drilling out the exhaust stacks. Chris Bucholtz's Tamiya *Spitfire* Mk. I has its wings on and is in need of a touch of sandpaper, but his masters for the *Obscureco* 1:72 *Tempest* Mk. V interior set only need for a control panel to be scratchbuilt. Hubert Chan has given the *Karo/AST-38* Russian amphibious tank kit more tender loving care than it deserves, adding rivets, *Modelkasten* tracks and a lot of work to an otherwise rough resin model. Hubert also built a DML Type 82 Kubelwagen straight from the box, except for the addition of a pair of figures. First-time visitor Paul Burnett got right into the swim with his *Geometrix* Creature From the Black

Lagoon. Paul used a three-stage approach to painting the model, starting with an airbrush, then drybrushing, then going back to the airbrush for certain body segments. Lou Orselli has been a productive paisano, judging from the small fleet of 1:72 models he had at the meeting. These started with a Revell P-26, which Lou de-riveted and detailed to make a delightful *Peashooter*. Next came an out-of-the-box DML He 162, then an Airfix F2A finished as a Finnish Model 229 in an unusual silver dope scheme. Lou used a vacuform canopy on the *Buffalo* only because he stepped on the kit canopy, and as a result, the canopy cost more than the rest of the model! Lou gave the old *Hawk* T-6 a bit of clean-up, and he also reshaped the front of a *Minicraft* P-40B, which featured a very nice scratchbuilt cockpit. Lou also battled his way through a *Heller* Caudron 714. Before you think Lou's getting away from the theme of his collection, note that the last models he had on the table was a *Heller* P-39 *Airacobra* modified by the Italian Air Force as a ground taxi trainer, and a *Supermodel* Cant. 1007 featuring a meticulously airbrushed desert paint scheme. Ben Pada's Tamiya 1:48 F-84G wears a natural metal finish made with both *Snj* and *Gunze Sangyo* paints. Ben also re-scribed *FineMolds'* *Shusui* kit, which he says is a tough build, and did a lot of work to improve the engine on Tamiya's F4U *Corsair*. Ron Wergin applied colorful French markings to *Hobbycraft's* *Hawk* 75 kit, topping it off with *AeroMaster* decals. Ron also built the old Tamiya Panther tank from the box, and countered it with a new Tamiya Churchill. Ron also has an ICM *Spitfire* Mk. VIII in the works; he says it's a nice kit, but much of the detail is lost during construction. Larry Roberts described Hasegawa's 1:48 *Shinden* as a "sweet build," but he says his Sukhoi Su-1 is kind of crude. It's a limited run kit which Larry says has been a good learning experience. Ken Durling is taking an ambitious path toward completing the *Academy* Boeing 377; he's cut out the windows and replaced them with a strip of clear acrylic, which he'll sand to shape. Ken went to less effort on his Tamiya 1:48 *Skyray*, which he completed as a Naval Test Pilots' School machine with the aid of some *Cutting Edge* decals. Frank Babbit has pulled out the stops to get *Hi-Tech's* somewhat rough 1:48 *Mystere* kit into fighting trim, complete with an Israeli paint scheme. In 1:72, Frank also has a Revell Ar 240 in the works, and he used a clever technique to straighten the wings of his *Academy* B-24D, which have a tendency to droop outboard of the engines. Frank made an incision and then pushed a piece of wedge-shaped styrene strip into it, forcing the wing back into a straight profile. Frank did all of this only after his model was painted, decalced and weathered! Ken Miller's award-winning Convair 880 diorama—the subject of a Styrene Sheet cover story in 2000—was on display, along with Ken's latest small-scale project, a 1:144 C-130 from Revell that will be finished as a part-time air tanker. Kent McClure added a flame thrower, recoilless rifle and minigun to a railroad scenery cow to come up with an example of what he calls "battle cattle." Kent also used an old drop tank as the basis for a space battleship he'll be using in a Victorian Sci-Fi wargame. Cliff Kranz turned the 1:48 *Testors* SR-71 kit into "Article 12," the prototype of the *Blackbird* family, by shortening the tail and giving the plane a narrow-chine nose. Cliff finished the

model off in an overall silver scheme. Robin Powell's TSK-2, built from the *Dynavector* kit, had an oddly animated vertical tail but it still looked lovely. Robin made custom decals to add panel line and rivet detail to this big bird. Eric McClure took a *Tamiya* M4-series halftrack and upgunned it a little; the *Kendall Model Company* conversion he used gives it a 75mm cannon! Laramie Wright found the *DML* Panzer IVJ a tough build, with warped parts and crude details delaying him at every step of the way. He's had better progress on his *Tamiya* M4A3 late Sherman and *Tamiya* Jumbo Sherman, which are ready for final assembly despite a traumatic fall in the parking lot after the November meeting! The Jumbo is a *Tank Workshop* turret on the *Tamiya* Jumbo hull; Laramie added a shell ejector port to enhance the otherwise fine turret. In the done category, Laramie has his 1st Polish Tank Division Cromwell,

complete with crew. Greg Hammer is making a Euro-low rider out of *Tamiya's* Peugeot World Rally Car kit, something very natural since we all know how frogs like to hop. Greg's also entertaining himself with the *Revell* Bv 194 hypothetical asymmetrical aircraft. Joel Rojas brought in a *Revell* Snap-tite AC Delco stock car, which he said is ideal for the veterans drive. Thang Le completed *Revell's* *Tornado* IDS in the colors provided in the kit, those of the 1998 Tigermeet scheme with the appropriate stripes on the tail. Thang also took a crack at *Revell-Monogram's* *Mirage* 2000, which came out rather successfully. The model of the month goes to... The Ronin Signifier bust by Chris Hughes. This was Chris' first attempt at using oil paints, and he said it was a good first experience once he'd cleaned up the air bubbles in the resin. Congratulations to our productive and prolific membership!

Tips from the Kickoff Classic head judge

By Rodney Williams

Last year was to be my last contest, as I was to move to Samoa. Something went amuck and I am still here. Some will boo, and some will say great, as I am head judge again!

For the newcomers to the show, I will explain some of the more important topics of judging. This is not the total package, but should give you an idea of what judging is about.

You might ask, "Why should I be a judge?" If you become a judge, you will get an eye-opening experience that will make you a better modeler. I became a judge in 1984, when Richard Carlson made me do it. Thanks to Richard, I came home with a ton of knowledge. I knew for the first time in over ten contests why I had not won a single award.

I found out how they did the judging, what they looked for, and why none of my models won. On a scale of 1 to 10 my models were at least a big one, and some made it to number two. I wanted to build models closer to 10's, and reached that goal by talking to other modelers such as Mark Ford, Jim Lewis, Matt Matsushita, George Lee, and many others.

We are always short of judges at our contest. I would like to see all members of SVSM come to our show and help our judging team. We always get judges from other clubs, but we need you, and here's why!

Time is the element, and the fewer judges we have the less time we have! Last year, I judged a couple of categories all by myself, because we did not have enough judges.

So be a judge. Some of the things you will learn:

We look for un-filled seams and panel lines not re-scribed, sink marks, and ejector pin marks. These must be removed from the model. Often, the manufacture will put his copyright and name on the model in raised letters, and they must come off as well. We look at alignment of wheels on aircraft, armor and cars, including any tracks on military vehicles. For ships, we look for misalignment on guns, antennas, railings, etc. If you choose to open up a tank hatch, you'd best finish the inside. Other items on aircraft are the tailplane, pitot tube, and canopy. We look for glue on the model, especially on the clear parts. The last thing we look at are the decals: Placement is critical. Silvering is classified as having air bubbles trapped under the decal. This will take away points from the model.

When it comes to detail parts, including cast-resin, and total scratchbuilt parts we look for not how much was put into the

model, but how well you did the job.

Random tips on how judging works

• We call a judges meeting. The contest director and head judge go over some necessary information, prior to judging.

• When a team finishes a category, they sign the judging sheet and give it to me. I then go to the category and see if I agree with the winners. If I don't, they have to come back and I relate why I do not agree. They must rejudge the category. This has happened only twice in the past ten years!

• If you build only cars, we request that you only judge cars. If you build cars, tanks and aircraft, then you qualify to judge in all three categories. The exception is: you built one tank, two cars, and 40 aircraft, it's best that you judge only aircraft!

• Remember that for every model on the table, someone paid an entry fee, so the model has to be judged. Some judges came to me once, and said: "There are 40 cars in the category, can't we just quickly pick out ten and judge them? My answer was "NO." You must look at all of them!

• We do not pick up models while judging. If you place your model in the wrong category, we will announce your name on the P.A.. system to please move your model!

• The tools for judging are good eyesight, a flashlight with new batteries, and a dental mirror, as it may be necessary for us to look under a model for a tie-breaker.

• All models should be finished as well on the bottom as on the top.

• If this is your first time as a judge, listen to what your judging team say about the models. Don't be afraid to make comments if see something the judges may have missed.

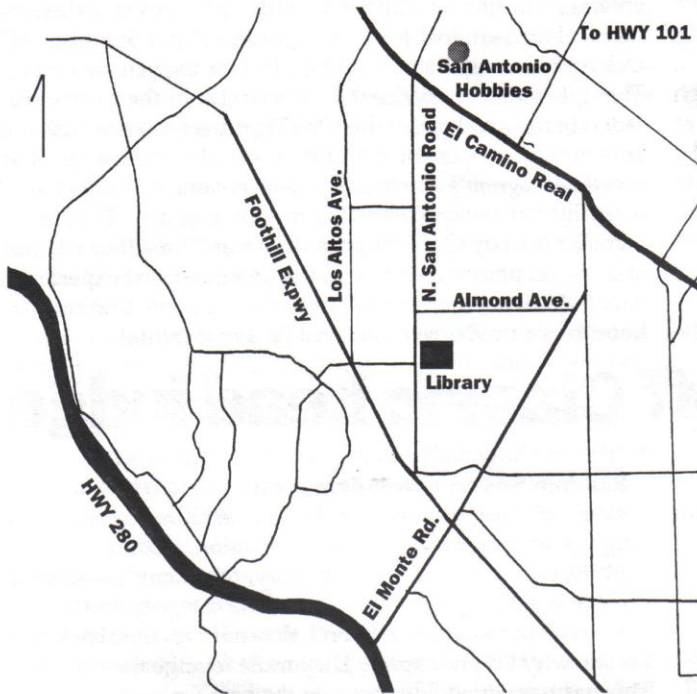
• When two or more models are almost equal, write down the flaws. It makes it easier to compare.

• Please read the building information that's placed next to the model. It's not necessary to read the history of said subject, as it has nothing to do with building the model.

• If you brought your model to last year's event, leave it home this year and bring a new model. However, if you have upgraded it, then bring it.

• If you break a model in transit to the contest and repair it on-site, leave a note next to the model saying this. This way, the judges will know the model was broken and glued back together. They will not take off any points because of problems related to that break.

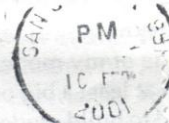
This Month, a Different Location!



Next meeting:
7:30 p.m.,
Friday,
February 16
at the Los Altos
Public Library
13 S. San Antonio Rd.
For more information, call the
editor at (408) 723-3995
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Don't forget: If your renewal date is red, it's time to pay your dues!