

SEPTEMBER 2023 EDITION

NEXT MEETING:

Monday, September 18, 2023

Time: 6:30 PM

*Deep Run Center, Deep Run Park,
9900 Ridgefield Parkway,
Henrico, VA*

Hall Opens at 6:00 PM

Program: Doug Hayes 3-D Printing

VISIT US AT:

ipmsrichmond.blogspot.com

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SPARE PARTS

IPMS RICHMOND



Bob Walls' Winged Hussar figure and Jamie Brannan's 1973 Plymouth Road Runner were among 16 models presented during the August meeting's Show & Tell.



At our next meeting....

It's All About the Future

Our September 18 chapter meeting will be all about the future. No, not the recently and unfortunately dearly departed clear acrylic floor polish many of us use as a glossing agent (more on that later). The “future” to be discussed at our September meeting will be the usual definition of “future”...the days, weeks and months ahead and events yet to happen.

Doug Hayes will give a presentation on what is quite likely the future of our hobby, 3-D printing of parts and models. We have all been impressed by Doug’s amazing 3-D printed figures and the 3-D generated bow Doug created for Ed Franz’s enormous U.S.S. *Ronquil* submarine. Doug will discuss 3-D printing and its rapidly growing impact on scale modelling. We also look forward to having a variety of models displayed and discussed during “Show & Tell.”

Our chapter’s future will also be on the agenda as our election process will start with E-Board candidates being nominated at the September meeting. During our October meeting (Monday, October 16), candidates for President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary will each be given time to discuss why they are running and their goals for IPMS Richmond. The membership will vote by the usual secret ballot at the November meeting (Monday, November 20). Votes will be tabulated and the winners announced at the meeting. Those elected will begin their terms in office on January 1, 2024, and their terms will run until December 31, 2024, with the election process commencing again in September, 2024. Our September meeting begins the procedure for the membership to choose who will manage IPMS Richmond for the next year. The officers our members elect will be the stewards of a non-profit corporation and not just some guys sitting at the head table each month. They will oversee our chapter’s activities, business matters, communications and our relationship with IPMS/USA.

Also in the future are several IPMS-R events to be further discussed. We may have a special fund-raising event at the November chapter meeting to provide a donation by IPMS-R to a charitable / non-profit organization with interests compatible to our hobby (just for example, the Virginia War Memorial Foundation). Our annual chapter dinner and contest will be on December 18. Planning and preparation are also picking up steam with our Old Dominion Open scheduled for February 24, 2024. And there are a couple of upcoming model shows in northern Virginia and Maryland that may be worth the journey (see the announcements page).

Moving now to the past.... At our August 21 meeting, John Robinson provided an interesting overview of airbrushes and using them to paint and detail scale models. John’s presentation covered the basics and provided information and suggestions for those purchasing their first airbrush or stepping up to a more advanced one. John provides us with excellent photography for *Spare Parts* and he is always glad to share his model building expertise with us as well.

Getting back to the present.... In this issue of *Spare Parts*, Spitfire aficionado Alex Valz covers the earliest marks of “The Plane that Saved England.” Alex has been building 1/48 models of various versions of the Spitfire (favoring a growing selection of Airfix kits).

He is accompanying those builds with the first of several articles detailing what the Spits and their pilots achieved. In another feature article, Glen Martin looks back on his boyhood interest in the story of John F. Kennedy and his torpedo boat, PT-109. Glen researched the PT-109 and relates not just the 109's being rammed and sunk by a Japanese destroyer 80 years ago, but the harrowing aftermath of that fatal collision as Kennedy struggled to keep his surviving shipmates alive until rescue came. Bob Walls compares and critiques two popular 1/48 P-51D Mustang kits from Tamiya and ICM. And there is also the color gallery of last month's "Show & Tell" models.

Finally, about that other "Future"... You know, the clear liquid floor polish variety. Sadly, the reports are true. S.C. Johnson Company has stopped making our beloved favorite clear gloss. Bummer. But there are some replacement and alternative products that will work when we need to put down a gloss coat for decals or shine clear parts. Hopefully, one of our talented and esteemed members will soon step up and present a demo on what works best for clear gloss and how to apply it.

Here's hoping that the future will see you at our September 18 meeting at Deep Run Center.

E. L. Motley



Ed Franz brought his 1/72 scale U.S.S. Ronquil WWII sub to the August meeting and discussed his ongoing work on this combination Revell mold-scratchbuilt-3D printed model.

Minutes of the August 21, 2023, Chapter Meeting

Our regular monthly meeting was held Monday, August 21, 2023, at the Deep Run Park Recreation Center. Chapter President Glen Martin called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM with 33 in attendance.

The first matter of business was an announcement by Mike Lyons. Mike visited James Alvis' house, and James' sister gave him James' unbuilt model kits. As a tribute to James, Mike proposed that all IPMS Richmond members receive a random model kit of James' to build and finish "just like James would." The completed models will be displayed and placed in competition in the chapter's December contest. Any members who missed the August 21 meeting will be able to pick up a kit at one of the next monthly meetings. A number of James' kits were accordingly distributed during a break in the meeting.

Glen Martin announced that our by-laws have been posted on the IPMS Richmond blogspot.

Treasurer Ashley Abernathy reminded the membership that our Annual Board Meeting will be held at the Deep Run Park Recreation Center next Wednesday, August 30, at 6:30 PM. This meeting was previously announced in the August newsletter and on IPMS-R's Facebook pages. Ashley advised anyone who might not be able to attend the meeting to contact our Secretary, Bob Walls, so that any questions can be addressed within a reasonable time after the meeting.

Vice-President Richard Leininger gave a brief update on the Old Dominion Open. Richard has been assured by the Richmond Raceway that we have the Old Dominion Building for February 24, 2024. This is the large brick building approximately 100 yards from our previous venue, Henrico Hall. Richard's contact at the Raceway will send him our contract which will take into consideration our chapter's non-profit status.

Secretary Bob Walls announced the chapter's election schedule. Nominations for President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer will be made at the October meeting. The candidates will speak at the October meeting, and elections will be held at the November meeting. The officers' term of service will begin on January 1 each year and end on December 31.

Bob also explained that the chapter is looking into having a fund raiser at our November meeting. The goal would be to raise money that the chapter would donate to a worthy non-profit organization in our community. Possible recipients could be the Virginia Historical and Cultural Museum, the Science Museum, or the Virginia War Memorial Foundation.

Mike Jenkins let the chapter know that he had obtained a frame and was in the process of procuring a plaque as a memorial to James Alvis for placement in our display case at Hobby Town.

With no further business, John Robinson presented a program on airbrushes entitled, "The Curse of the Airbrush." John discussed the various types of airbrushes available, how they operate, the advantages and disadvantages of each type, and "do's" and "don'ts" for successfully painting models with airbrushes. John also covered the importance of properly cleaning and maintaining airbrushes and gave his recommendations for those modelers looking to buy and use their first airbrush.

Our "Show & Tell" segment followed John's presentation with 11 modelers presenting and discussing 16 models. Following "Show & Tell" the meeting adjourned.

Our next chapter meeting will be Monday, September 18, 6:30 PM, at Deep Run Park Recreation Center. Doug Hayes will give a presentation on 3-D modelling.

Bob Walls, Secretary

Upcoming Events and Announcements

Saturday, September 30: The National Capital Model Soldier Society presents their 62nd annual show at the Springfield Hilton, 6550 Loisdale Road, Springfield, Virginia. Show hours are 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. General admission is \$10.00, \$15.00 for exhibitors. The theme is “Honoring the Revolutionary War’s End 1783.” For additional information and details visit their website: NCMSSClub.org.

Saturday, October 7: The Southern Maryland Scale Modelers will host the PaxCon 2023 model show and contest at the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department, 24801 Three Notch Road, Hollywood, Maryland. For more information, visit the club’s website at smd-scalemodelers.club/paxcon2023 or call (240) 577-8525.

Model Parts and Kits Wanted: Tyler Turpin is looking for spare parts as follows:

1. 1/48 tail rotor for early AH-64 Apache
2. 1/48 horizontal stabilizer for early AH-64 Apache
3. 1/48 Monogram or Revell B-17F or G right horizontal stabilizer
4. 1/48 F-105F or G (two-seat Thunderchief) left horizontal stabilizer
5. 1/48 B-24J or M Liberator horizontal and vertical stabilizers

Also looking for kits or built models of a 1/72 Hasegawa B-17 (1970’s-1990’s range) or a 1/48 Monogram or Revell B-17F (planning to model as firefighting aircraft, so strictly military parts not needed), and a 1/72 Hasegawa MiG-23. If you have any of these spares or kits, e-mail Tyler at tylerturpin@verizon.net.

All about IPMS-R all the time: If you haven’t already, join our Facebook group page, “Friends of IPMS Richmond.” It’s the latest chapter news and information, plus pictures and discussion of model builds, new kits, and upcoming hobby events in our area.

SCHEDULE FOR IPMS RICHMOND CHAPTER MEETINGS:

Monday, October 16, Program: Bob Walls on making and printing your own decals. Brief remarks by chapter officer candidates.

Monday, November 20, Program: To be determined (possible chapter fund raiser). Election of chapter officers.

Monday, December 18: IPMS Richmond’s annual holiday dinner and chapter contest. The theme is “Movies and TV” (models of anything that appeared in a movie or TV show). There will be a special contest category for James Alvis Tribute Build models. Also, we will have our special kit/prize drawing.

Special Group Build to Honor James Alvis

As you know, James Alvis passed away in July. James was a loyal and enthusiastic member of IPMS Richmond for well over 30 years. Honoring James' service to the chapter has drawn widespread support from our membership. Thanks to Mike Jenkins and Bob Walls, the chapter held a brief and simple ceremony to place a plaque memorializing James inside IPMS-R's display case at Hobby Town.

Mike Lyons' recently visited James' house in Mechanicsville and met with James' sister, Caroll. She generously gave James' unbuilt model kits to Mike, and he came up with an excellent idea to honor James. At last month's chapter meeting, Mike announced a special group build of James' models which would be incorporated into our December chapter contest as a special category.

Here's how the James Alvis Tribute Group Build works: If you haven't already, see Mike Lyons at our meeting and pick up a random kit of James'. Sorry, no "cherry picking" allowed. As that old saying goes, "What you see [or what Mike hands you] is what you get." Your task will then be to take James' model kit and build it the best you can. But you must build and paint it just like James would. See—and heed—the rules listed below. Have the model finished and ready for the December 18 chapter contest. Bring your model to the contest that night and enter it as part of the James Alvis group build. Separate and apart from the December contest's theme of "Movies and TV," all of the models built from James' kits will compete in a special category. There will be First, Second and Third awards just as in any other contest category but with a special bonus...James' brother has graciously offered to provide a \$50.00 Hobby Town gift certificate for the First Place winner.

So pick up or get started on your kit from Mike, carefully read and follow the group build rules, and let's honor James with a table filled with models built in his own style at our December contest.

RULES FOR THE JAMES ALVIS TRIBUTE GROUP BUILD AND CONTEST CATEGORY

1. The model must be built "as is" out of the box.
2. No scratchbuilt, replacement, kit-bashed or aftermarket parts may be used. No filling, use of putty or sanding of seams, gaps or molding flaws.
3. Assembly of the model must be with either "tube" styrene plastic cement or the Testors cement (or similar product) which comes in the plastic bottle with a needle applicator. No brush-on glues such as Tamiya Thin, glass bottle Testors, etc.
4. All painting of the model must be by hand brushing. No airbrushing permitted.
5. All decals used must be those which came with the kit regardless of their age or condition. No replacement or aftermarket decals may be used.
6. James did not weather his models, so any weathering you would normally do should be skipped.
7. While not mandatory and table space permitting, it would be preferred to display the completed model with its box. This will give a good indication of the age and challenges involved in building the model.



On Saturday, September 9, eight IPMS Richmonders and a Hobby Town employee gathered to place a plaque memorializing James next to one of his models in our display case. Thanks to all who participated, especially to Mike Jenkins for having James' plaque prepared and Doug Hayes for these pictures.



In Box Review:
Is the 1/48 ICM P-51D a Copy of the
1/48 Tamiya P-51D?

By Bob Walls

At a recent IPMS Richmond meeting I was talking to Scott Ratliff about ICM airplane kits. He mentioned that his research on the ICM 1/48 P-51CD kit made him believe that ICM had copied the Tamiya P-51D 1/48 kit. The ICM kit was released in 2007 and the Tamiya kit in 1999. So, the timing makes this a possibility. In reading several reviews of the ICM P-51D, I also found mention that it might be a copy of the Tamiya kit. I had the Tamiya kit in my stash, so I bought an ICM kit through eBay to compare. Here are my findings from looking at the two kits side by side.



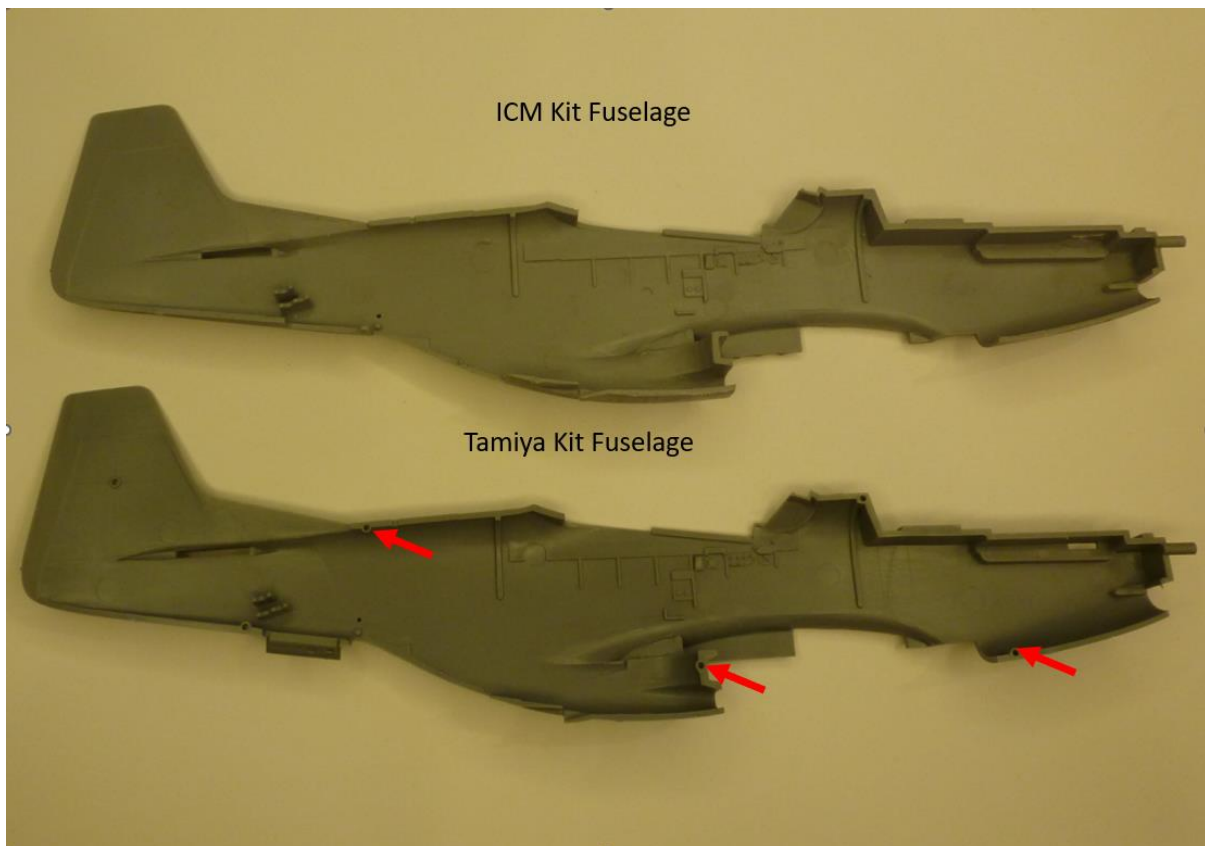
Tamiya P-51D Kit



ICM P-51D with Ground Crew

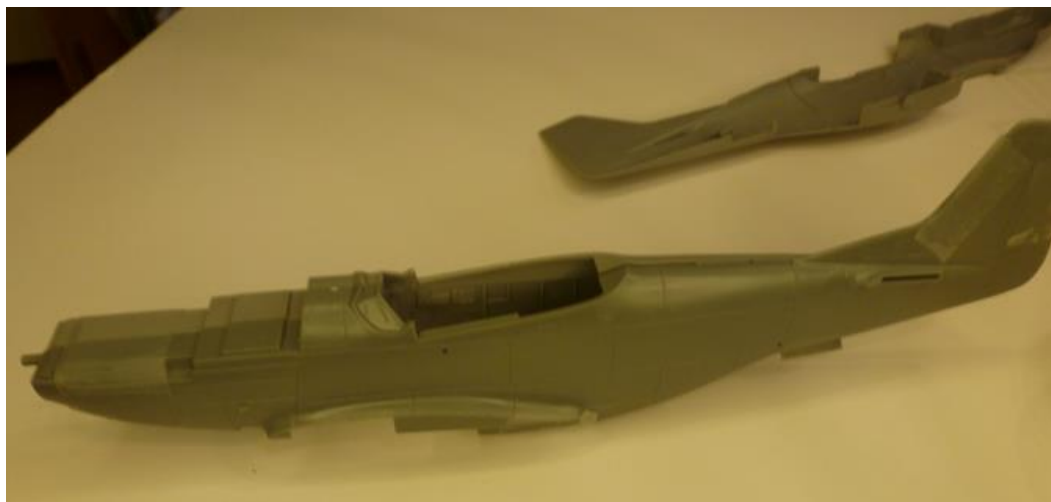
Fuselage Comparison and Do the Halves Fit Well?

Here are the two kit's fuselage halves. Note the color plastic is almost an identical gray. The giveaway between the two kits is that most parts in the ICM kit lack all locating pins to mate parts up. There are some holes where parts are attached, but Fuselage and Wing parts have no locating pins. Other than the lack of these locating pins/holes, the fuselages look exactly the same. The only difference is that the ICM kit has separate rear landing gear doors. Those are molded on the Tamiya fuselage.



Locating pins on the Tamiya fuselage half indicated by red arrows.

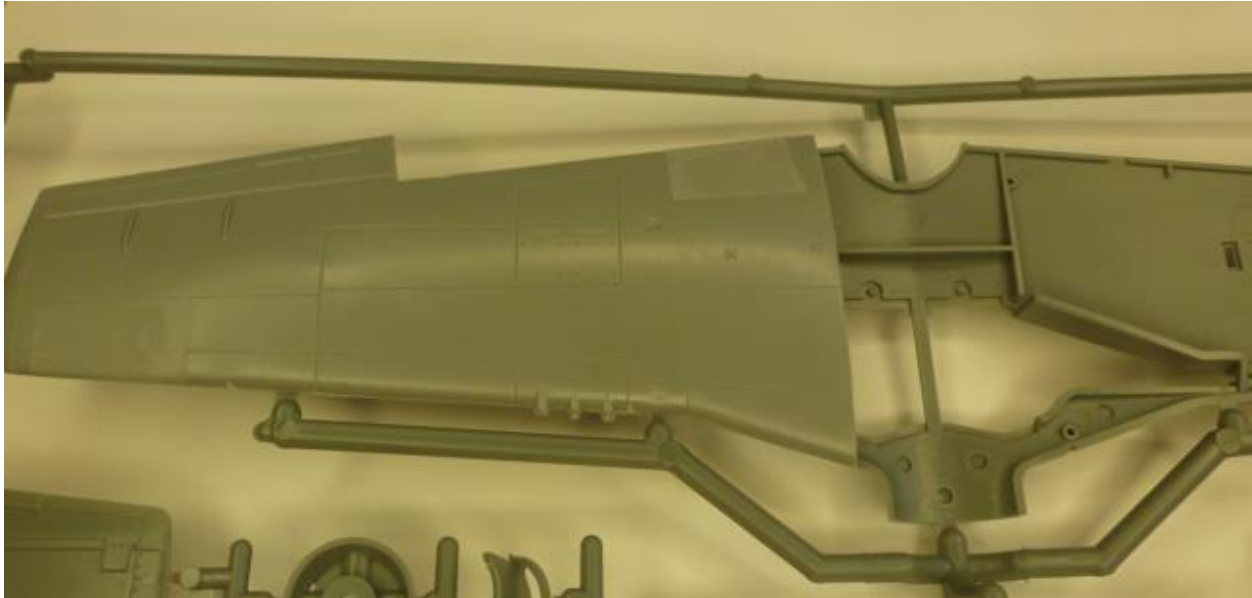
Now for the fitting of the fuselage halves....



When you dry fit one Tamiya fuselage part with one ICM part, they amazingly fit like a glove. If you are careful, you should be able to align the ICM kit halves even though they have no locating pins. You will just have to take your time and be careful.

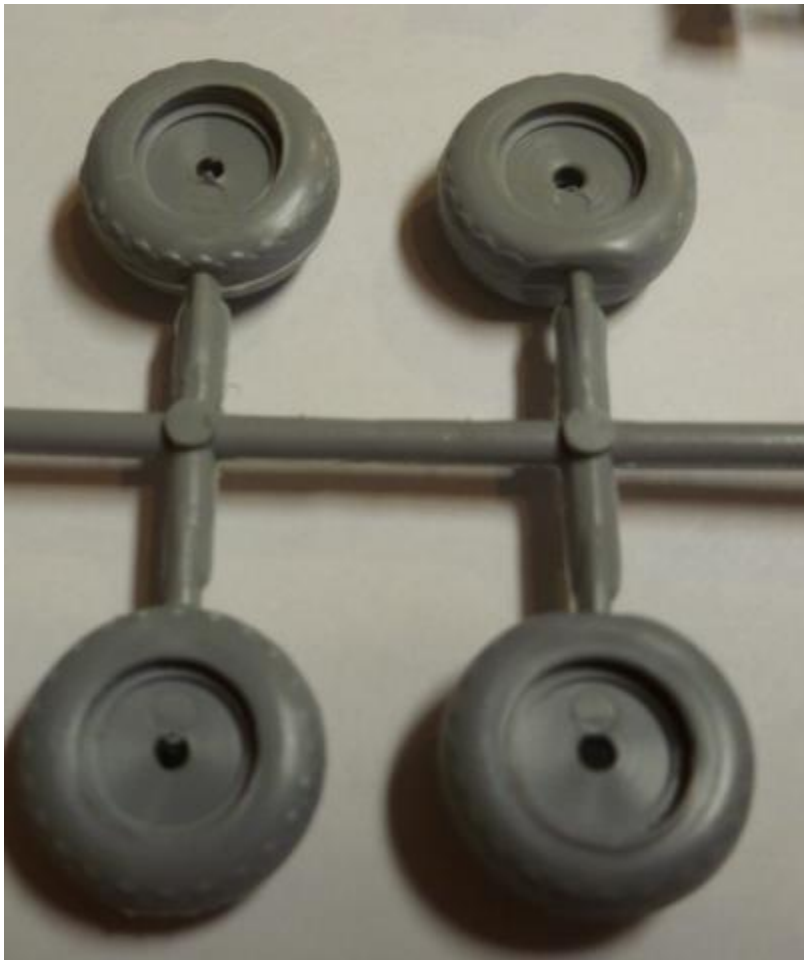
Wings

There are no locating pins on the ICM kit's wings, but the exact same thing happens when you place the top wing part to the lower wing part from each kit. The guns line up into the holes on the lower wing and the wing parts fit perfectly. You will have to be careful with the ICM kit. Here is the top ICM wing mated to the bottom Tamiya wing.



Other kit comparisons

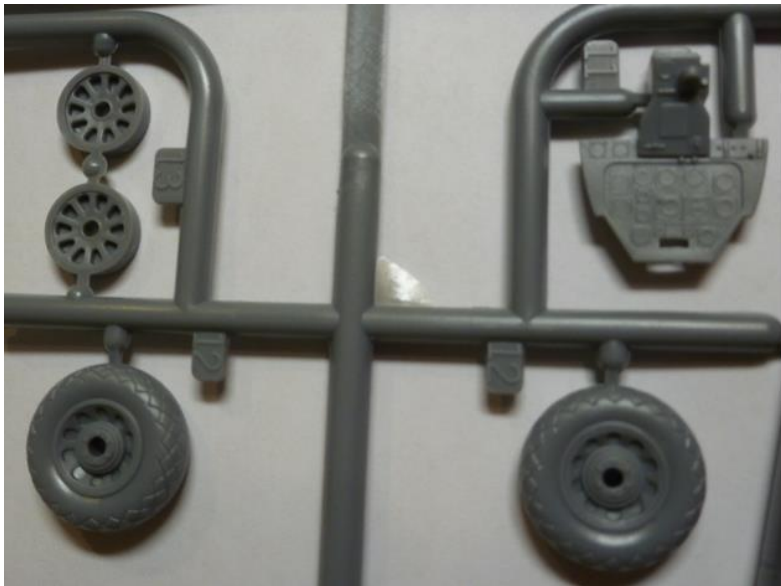
The sprue layout on each kit is slightly different but the parts mostly all look similar. The ICM kit has a clear plastic instrument panel while the Tamiya kit has the same gray plastic as the rest of the kit. For an older release, the Tamiya kit has a little better/crisper detail, but you have to take a close look at the kits to notice that. The ICM kit has several nice additions. It comes with two sets of main wheels with one set “weighted.” The ICM pilot figure is slightly better than the Tamiya one. If you get the kit with crew, the figures in the ICM kit are nice. If you want to build a “wheels up” model, the ICM rear tail landing gear doors are NOT molded to the fuselage like the Tamiya kit, so you won’t have to do surgery. Tamiya gives you two color schemes and ICM only gives one. While I have not used these ICM decals, the ones on other ICM kits I have built were just “okay.” I expect the Tamiya decals to be better.



ICM wheels, note flash on tires.

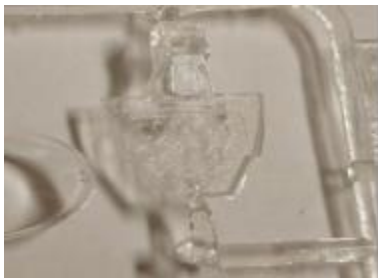


ICM wheels, note shallow detail.



instrument panel.

Tamiya wheels, tires and



ICM clear instrument panel.

Verdict: Guilty or Not Guilty of Copying?

In my opinion, it seems way too coincidental that a model kit done by two separate teams would end up pretty much matching each other in about 70% of the kit plastic.

Since Tamiya's kit was issued first that would indicate ICM copied the Tamiya kit. I vote guilty. Of course, there are enough differences that possibly in an actual court of law a jury might not agree the ICM kit is a copy.

Now, the Frugal Modeler (AKA Bob Walls) kicks in his two cents on these models.

It seems that these two kits can be easily purchased online from various sellers, so they are NOT rare or hard to find kits. The ICM P-51D kit with figures has a list MSRP of \$39.99 but can be bought online for \$27.00 from Scalehobbyist. Without the ground crew, that kit goes for \$32.99 MSRP and can be purchased for \$22.99 online. The Tamiya kit from Scalehobbyist has a MSRP of \$34.00 but has an actual price of \$23.49. Going to eBay, the ICM kit can be purchased for \$21.00 plus postage from some Eastern European sellers. Tamiya kits on eBay run \$28.00 plus postage.

In my humble opinion, without building the two kits, I lean toward the Tamiya kit. Unless you buy them on eBay, the two kits are about the same price. The Tamiya kit's locating pins, color schemes/decals and slightly crisper detail would make it my preferred model to buy at normal prices. If you get the ICM kit at a really bargain price, I recommend you pick it up as it should build into a good model on its own, if you take your time. Heck, buy and build both of them and then you won't have to worry about which one is better and you can let us know your opinion: Copy or not a copy?

PT-109

Eighty Years Later (1943-2023)

By Glen Martin



Like most young boys in the 1960's, I was captivated by the story of PT-109. Roughly about 30 years after PT-109's ill-fated collision with the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri*, the story of PT-109 and the heroism displayed was legendary. Remembering television's "McHale's Navy," which I watched on a black and white floor model Magnavox TV set, I often thought about PT-109, the story, and the boat's connection to an assassinated U.S. President. To me, as a ten year-old boy discovering model ships and floating them in a makeshift dam created behind my house out of the local creek, I would dwell on PT-109.

Remembering this week, this is the 80th anniversary of the sinking of PT-109 and the brutal struggle for survival of the crew of that small 80-foot ELCO motor torpedo boat. As it turns out, PT-109 would have her start right here in Virginia in August, 1942. Loaded onboard the Liberty ship SS *Joseph Stanton* at the Norfolk Navy Yard, PT-109 was transported to the Solomon Islands operations during the height of the struggle for Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands. The boat would come to be based at the Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 2 headquarters at Tulagi Island. PT-109 would see action from late December, 1942, during Japan's abortive Operation "K," the withdrawal of all Imperial Japanese naval forces in and around Guadalcanal and the lower Solomon Island chain, culminating with their cessation of operations in early February, 1943.

Lieutenant (Junior Grade) John F. Kennedy took command of the boat on April 23, 1943. Kennedy found the PT-109 to be in a miserable state, in much need of repair and overhaul. Kennedy and his crew whipped the boat into shape and shortly thereafter, started offensive operations against the Japanese "Tokyo Express" frequently operating in the Solomon Island chain resupplying their garrisons. This would lead to PT-109's run-in with the Japanese destroyer *Amagiri*, a *Fubuki* class destroyer.

On the evening of August 1, 1943, the PT-109 was on patrol in Blakett Strait, a very narrow sea lane in the vicinity of Kolombangara Island. The 109 was at low-speed or "idle" sometime around 2:00 AM on August 2. The *Amagiri* came upon PT-109 after

Kennedy's boat left Kolombangara and headed north at a very prudent speed of about 30-32 knots. Stated reports of survivors of PT-109 indicated that there were less than 10 seconds for Kennedy to issue orders to increase speed on his boat. The resulting collision with the Japanese destroyer sliced the torpedo boat in half at about amidships at a 20-degree angle. PT-109's rear section quickly sank; the forward portion of the boat remained afloat due to trapped air and watertight compartments. Two crew members of PT-109 were killed instantly as they were closest to the collision side of the boat. The rest of the unlucky crew of 13 were injured in some way or another, with several members having been severely burned by aviation fuel that caught fire when the boat's fuel tanks ruptured.

The boat stayed afloat long enough for Kennedy to formulate a plan to try and swim for a neighboring island known as Plum Pudding Island which was about four miles away. They set off, leaving the floating forward section of the hull and made the trip to the island, towing the injured in the process. There, Plum Pudding's roughly 100-yard-wide spit of dry land afforded trees that the 109 crew could hide in from passing Japanese patrols. With no fresh water or food on the small island, the decision was made to swim to additional islands on August 4 and 5.

On the night of August 4, they swam almost four more miles to Olasana Island which was within eyesight of Plum Pudding Island. While on Olasana, the crew was able to have access to fresh coconuts, although there was still no fresh water. Kennedy knew that in the tropical heat, finding fresh water was vital to their survival. Over several nights, Kennedy swam out to the middle of the channel with a battle lantern in the hopes of flagging down PT boats that were operating in the Ferguson Passage. With Lenny Thom, his executive officer, Kennedy then swam to Naru Island which was a further half-mile away. The two men found a small canoe that contained packages of crackers and candy and a fifty-gallon drum of drinkable water that was left behind by the Japanese. To Kennedy and Thom, it was like hitting a lottery jackpot. They took the canoe and paddled back to their crew on Olasana Island. Once there, they distributed the supplies to the crew. Eventually, two native Coastwatchers named Biuku Gasa and Eroni Kumana would stumble upon the 109's crew. From that point, a message written on both paper with pen and a coconut laid out the situation that would be taken to rescuers.... stating that 11 of the 13 were still alive and needed immediate help.

PT-109's crew would survive a total of six days stranded on a floating hulk and three small islands in Blakett Strait. Had it not been for the canoe found with water and limited food, the crew might have perished. What little bit of water they could find came from rainwater caught by leaves. Once rescued, the crew would recover but Kennedy's injuries would plague him through the rest of his life, mainly with chronic lower back pain. He would never get over that injury.

Of interest, on April 23, 1944, one year to the day that John Kennedy took command of PT-109, the destroyer that rammed the torpedo boat, the *Amagiri*, would sink after striking a naval mine in the Makassar Strait near Borneo. And an even stranger twist, the *Amagiri* took two hours to sink in water that was roughly 100 feet deep. PT-109 sank in water that was more than 1,200 feet deep. Illegal salvaging of the *Amagiri* would see the wreck broken up and carted away for salvage. This left very little of the ship, whereas the PT-109 would be discovered almost 60 years later in 2002 by a National Geographic team headed by Robert Ballard. Literally finding a needle in a wide ocean, one of the torpedo tubes attached to the PT-109's deck was found half buried in the sand on the bottom of Blakett Strait. Upon investigating the wreck further, it was determined that the forward portion of the hull had drifted south until it sank. Over 80 years, the

sediment from the ocean currents slowly covered the remaining hulk until only that torpedo tube was visible. For size comparison, the Mk 8 torpedo tube on PT-109 was only around 20 feet in length. Partially covered and obscured from searches, one can sense the tremendous stroke of luck it would take to find it 1,200 feet down on the bottom.

As for Kennedy and his men, they were rescued on August 8, 1943. Kennedy endured many months of rehabilitation for his injuries suffered in the collision. August 8, 2023, is just a few days from the date I wrote this article on August 3. It marks roughly 80 years. Kennedy would be awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his bravery though he was recommended for the Silver Star. Established on August 7, 1942, this medal is awarded to those that “Distinguished oneself by heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy of the United States.” Although the Silver Star was mentioned, controversy arose from the awarding of the Navy and Marine Corps Medal. As pointed out, PT-109 had been involved in action earlier that night and was still on patrol in enemy water when the *Amagiri* collided with her. It was pointed out that the 109 had not been destroyed by gunfire but by simple collision. Joe Kennedy, John’s father, would play up his son’s action for political gain and was most offended by the lower grade medal. As noted, the Navy and Marine Corps Medal was awarded to Kennedy for his actions in risking his life to save his men. When you think of it in those terms, that makes what Kennedy endured that much more special.

Kennedy would also receive the Purple Heart for his injuries. Those injuries were caused by the actual collision and required months of rehabilitation. Kennedy’s injuries would result in a host of connected illnesses that would plague him the rest of his life. It is thought that the injuries caused gastrointestinal problems along with the chronic pain in his lower back. Later while in public office, Kennedy would endure years of constant battling with pain.

Later, Kennedy was assigned to skipper PT-59. Kennedy’s executive officer Thom died in an automobile crash in 1946. Kennedy served as one of the pallbearers. Gerard Zinser, Motor Machinists Mate First Class, was the last survivor of PT-109’s crew; he died in 2001. Zinser achieved the rank of Chief Petty Officer. As for Kennedy, he reached the rank of full Lieutenant and retired from the service in 1945. He would go on to be awarded the American Defense Service Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three service stars, and the World War II Victory Medal.

Growing up within 25 years of this event, it was still somewhat captivating to me and to all Americans. What caught my attention to this event in history was watching a movie about PT-109 that came out in 1963 starring Cliff Robertson. Being a young man, I was often enthralled by watching movies of the 1960’s that glorified World War II. This movie was no different; it painted a heroic romanticism of the event which would never really address the six days of horror that the surviving crew of PT-109 endured.

I always wanted a model of the PT-109. Revell introduced a 1/72 scale kit of the PT-109 that was somewhat inaccurate and out of scale. To this day, a suitable, accurate larger scale model of this subject has yet to be released to the modeling world. Available today, Revell kit No. 850310 can be found for about \$25.00. There is also a 1/35 scale Italeri kit (No. 5613) and a 1/64 AMT kit from Round 2 Models. There are several radio control models that are nice and in larger scale, but the only 1/72 true plastic model is available from Revell. It is hoped that newer and better kits will become available. Additionally, I would recommend reading about PT-109 in a book by William Doyle entitled, *PT-109: An American Epic of War, Survival, and the Destiny of John F. Kennedy*.

All these sources can introduce you to the story of the PT-109. And you can always visit the Kennedy Library in person and online for additional information.

In closing, as you consider the 80th anniversary of this event, think about what John Kennedy went through and endured to bring his 10 surviving crew members home. He displayed unbelievable courage swimming at night in shark infested waters to try and flag down passing PT boats, swimming in waters patrolled by Imperial Japanese Navy vessels. Kennedy was nothing short of devotion to his crew. This would propel Kennedy into the office of the Presidency in the 1960 election.

PT boats would continue to struggle to prove their worth with Admiral Halsey maintaining that they were unsuitable for offensive operations against the Japanese Imperial Navy. But in the confined waters of the Solomon Islands, they were perfect for their role when the American Navy was rebuilding after so many losses. The PT boats harassed, interdicted and took the fight to the enemy.



Lt. John F. Kennedy, PT-109's commander.



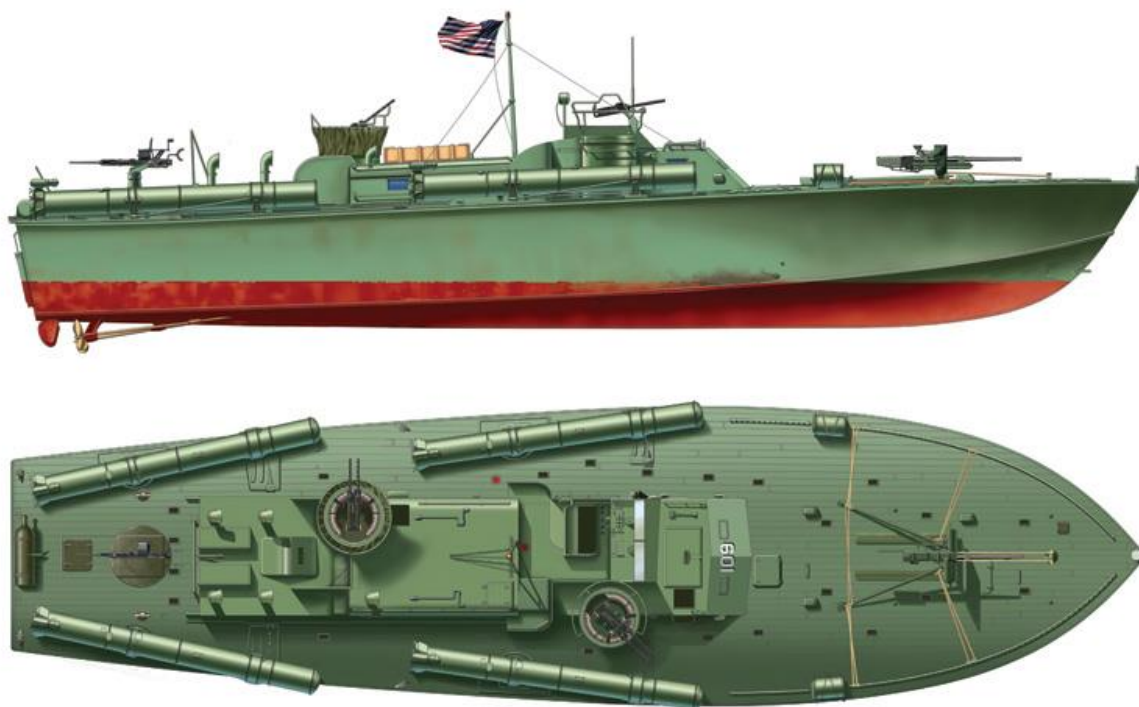
Disaster in the night: the Amagiri crushes and sinks PT-109.



Kennedy and his crew aboard PT-109 in 1943.



Sunk by a mine in April, 1944: the Japanese destroyer Amagiri.



MTB PT-109, Tulagi, 2 August 1943

Color two-view of the PT-109 while based at Tulagi in the summer of 1943.



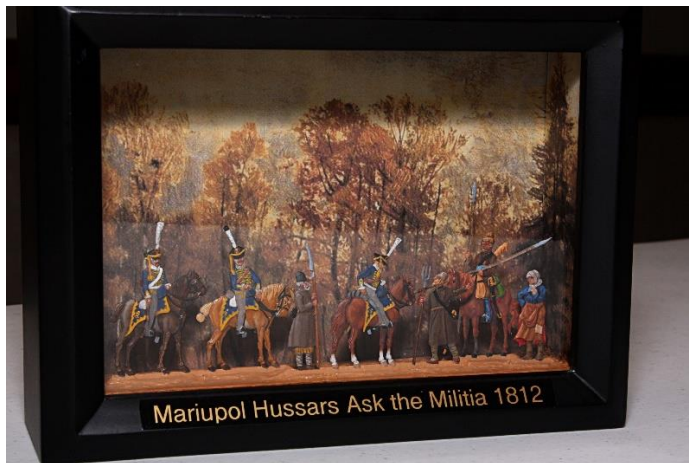
**PT-109 at speed. This is the box art for the 1/35 scale Italeri kit.
The 37 mm bow gun was a “homemade” modification by the crew.**

August Meeting Show & Tell Models

Photos by John Robinson



Adam South's in progress 1/350 Tamiya Tirpitz



Rick Sanders' shadow box depicts a moment during Napoleon's invasion of Russia. "Ask the Militia 1812" shows the Mariupol Hussars.



Bob Walls' airbrushes display complimented John Robinson's program.



Mike Lyons' Genie figure. Be careful what wishes this Genie grants you!



Va-va-voom Velma! A 3-D custom printed figure from Doug Hayes.



Ed Franz continues to make steady progress on his massive 1/72 USS Ronquil World War II submarine. Also displayed are Ed's reference photos of the real vessel's features.



Butcher Bird: Alex Valz's 1/48 Tamiya Fw 190 A8/R2.



Two busts from Mark Groth: Lt. James Halkett and author/illustrator Howard Pyle's Pirate.



Bob Walls' Norse Prince and Civil War artillery officer. See also Bob's Winged Hussar figure on this issue's cover page.



John Mullins' built from scratch and 3-D printed figure of "The Beast."

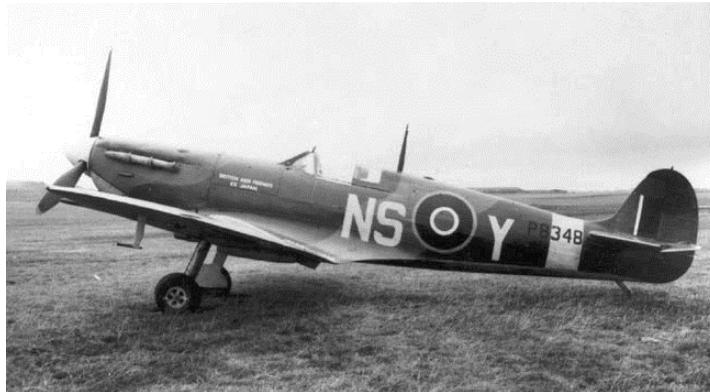
Awaiting the next scramble in the summer of 1940:
Alex Valz's Tamiya 1/48 Spitfire Mk. I.



Dieter "Dutch" Thomassen's P-51 Hasegawa Egg Plane and Alex Valz's 1/48 Academy Spitfire Mk. XIV in late WWII Pacific markings.

The Spitfire: A Legend

By Alex Valz



The legendary British Spitfire was designed by R.J. Mitchell, Chief Engineer of Supermarine Aviation Works. Powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin C engine driving a two-bladed fixed pitch de Havilland propeller, the prototype Spitfire made its maiden flight on March 5, 1936. In June of that year, the Air Ministry extended a contract to Vickers-Supermarine to produce 310 Spitfire I aircraft.

Unfortunately, Mitchell died in 1937 and was unable to witness the success of his work. His assistant, Joseph Smith, took over as chief designer and oversaw its development through many variants. The first Spitfire entered service in 1938 equipping Number 19 Squadron.

Adaptability of the Spitfire Airframe

The Spitfire airframe was developed with adaptability in mind. There were 24 variants of the plane. The original Spitfire I was powered by the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine producing 1,030 horsepower. Later versions of the Spitfire were powered by the much larger and more powerful Rolls-Royce Griffon engine. In the case of the final version, the Spitfire 24, the engine used produced 2,340 horsepower. Naturally, the later versions were faster, had a greater rate of climb, and a higher service ceiling. The Spitfire 24 was twice as heavy and powerful as the Spitfire I, and showed a 30% increase in climb rate over the original. (Note: All Spitfires after the Spitfire XIX were designated with Arabic numerals).

The 24 marks of Spitfires evolved from the previous marks through the power of their engines, armament, superchargers, and numerous smaller yet important changes. The appearance of the Spitfire changed markedly with the advent of the Griffon engine. The nose became more elongated and wider to accommodate the larger engine. The bottom surface of the nose was less curved and lost its "pigeon chested" appearance to a great degree. Additionally, rudder sizes and horizontal control surfaces became larger to handle the increased power. The airframes which gave rise to later marks were those of the Spitfire I, Spitfire V, and Spitfire VIII. The Spitfire I airframe gave rise to the Spitfire II. The Spitfire V was used to produce Spitfires VII, VIII, and IX. Finally, the Spitfire VIII airframe was used in all of the Griffon-powered later marks.

Wing Design

One of the most notable features of the Spitfire was the beautiful elliptical wing. Besides its aesthetic value, the design of the wing was the solution to two conflicting requirements. First, the wing needed to be thin enough to avoid creating too much drag. Second it had to be thick enough to house the retractable landing gear, armament and ammunition. With the ellipse, the wing was thinnest the farthest from the fuselage but was thick at the root, thereby accomplishing these goals.

Another feature of the wing was the innovative spar boom design made up of five square booms that fitted into each other. Both the shape of the wing and the spar boom gave the wing the needed strength and stability for tight maneuvering, a definite advantage in combat over the Spitfire's main adversary, the German Messerschmitt Bf-109E. Finally, the Spitfire had detachable wing tips secured by two mounting points at the end of each wing assembly.

Carburetor versus Fuel Injection

The Rolls Royce designers deliberately chose the carburetor over fuel injection for the Merlin engine because it enhanced the performance of the supercharger and increased the power of the engine with a corresponding increase in speed. It was an odd choice because fuel injection is widely accepted to be more reliable. The disadvantage of the carburetor was that both the Spitfire and Hurricane, unlike the fuel injection equipped Bf-109E, were unable to simply nose down into a steep dive as fuel was forced out of the carburetor by negative "g," thus making the engine stall. RAF pilots soon realized that the solution was for them to half roll before diving to pursue opponents. Carburetors flooding under negative "g" conditions were a more serious problem. The solution came in 1942 when Bendix-manufactured pressure carburetors designed to allow fuel to flow during all flight conditions were introduced.

Armament

Early Spitfires were armed with only four Browning .303 caliber machine guns. These guns functioned fine at low altitudes but tended to freeze at higher altitudes. Supermarine did not fix the problem until late 1938 when they remedied it by adding hot air ducts from the rear of the wing-mounted radiators to the guns. Red fabric patches were doped over the gun ports to protect the guns until they were fired.

Later it was decided to add an additional four guns for a total of eight guns, each of which could fire 1,000 rounds per minute. Pilots soon found that they had a hard time destroying larger aircraft of two engines or more. A gun of at least 20 mm caliber was urgently needed.

In 1939, Hispano 20 mm cannons were fitted into each wing of a Spitfire I but often seized up after firing. Nevertheless, 30 Spitfires equipped with cannon were ordered for operational trials and were designated Spitfire IB to distinguish from the Browning-armed IA.

This was determined to be unsatisfactory, so Supermarine later remedied the problem with an improved feed mechanism and paired the two cannon with four machine guns in the outer wing panels. This mixed armament arrangement was used in the Spitfire IIB, and guns seized far less frequently as bugs were mostly eliminated.

Beginning with the Spitfire V, all succeeding marks of the Spitfire were equipped with both cannon and machine guns.

The Battle of Britain

With the invasion of Poland by German forces on September 1, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany and began to move forces into Belgium and northern France to defend against a probable German invasion. Britain supplied about 300,000 troops in what was designated the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). Attached to the ground component of this force were a number of Hurricane fighter units and bomber units. No Spitfire units were provided as these were considered too valuable and vital for the defense of the British home islands. The next few months were called the "Sitskreig" or the "Phony War" as there were a few air skirmishes. All that all changed when the Germans invaded France and the Low Countries on May 10, 1940.

Britain's meager air contingent was caught unprepared. Even though some aircraft made it off the ground and engaged the enemy, many were not so lucky and were destroyed on the ground. British army units soon realized that they were being outflanked and retreated to the French coast in hopes of being evacuated from the coastal city of Dunkirk.

When evacuation commenced, Spitfire squadrons from southern England were in the air to cover it, and they took a heavy toll on German fighters and bombers. The evacuation eventually succeeded in bringing 330,000 British and French troops safely back to England. The Dunkirk operation was termed a miracle, and the remaining British troops hunkered down to face an invasion from across the English Channel.

With France out of the fight, Hitler turned his attention on taking Britain out of the war. Reichsmarschall Hermann Goring, who was also the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) commandant, convinced Hitler that the Luftwaffe could destroy the RAF in one month so that the seaborne invasion of southern England, code named Operation Sea Lion, could take place.

The Battle of Britain was the first battle in history that was entirely fought in the air. The British recognize the battle's duration as being from July 10 to October 31, 1940, with the nighttime attacks known as the "Blitz" lasting from September 7 to May 11, 1941. German historians consider the battle as one single campaign lasting from July 1940 to May 1941.

The battle is generally divided into four phases. In 1940, the battle commenced with the Luftwaffe targeting coastal shipping and convoys carrying primarily coal used for British industry. After two convoys were bombed heavily and lost a number of ships, it was decided that shipping coal overland by rail was a far less risky approach. In the German attack on a convoy on July 10, the RAF acquitted itself well by downing 13 enemy planes against the loss of seven British fighters.

The second phase commenced on August when the Luftwaffe was ordered to achieve air superiority over the RAF. August 13, known as Eagle Day by the Germans, included large-scale attacks on airfields, radar stations, and aircraft factories. Although some damage and disruption was caused, most raids were picked up by radar and intercepted with heavy losses on both sides. Damage was usually repaired quickly and RAF operations continued with little disruption.

Since the second phase was largely unsuccessful, the Germans decided to step up the attacks. More and more aircraft were thrown into the fight. The third phase included large-scale attacks on aircraft factories and strategic infrastructure with

growing success. Although the RAF was now taking greater losses, aircraft production continued around the clock, and the number of front line fighters stayed much the same as before. The Germans were greatly perturbed by the staying power of the RAF.

On the night of August 24/25, the fourth phase began when the Luftwaffe, through error, bombed London. The following night the RAF retaliated with a raid on Berlin. Though little damage was done, Hitler gave Luftwaffe chief Goring free rein to bomb London on September 7. This took much pressure off RAF Fighter Command and allowed it to rebuild and repair damage to facilities and aircraft. The Luftwaffe continued raids on London and other British cities largely at night until May 11, 1941.

The Opposing Forces

The RAF Fighter Command consisted of primarily two types of aircraft: Spitfires I and II, and the Hawker Hurricane I. In the beginning of the battle, there were 19 squadrons of Spitfires and 30 squadrons of Hurricanes. The Spitfire was the more nimble and faster of the two fighters, so it was decided that the Spitfires would first engage the Bf-109s before attacking the bombers. The Hurricane, which was at a disadvantage against the Bf-109, would head straight for the bombers.

The Spitfire I and the Bf-109E were well matched against each other. The Spitfire had a tighter turning radius and thus had the ability to shake off the Bf-109. It could also get the German fighter off its tail with its outstanding rate of roll combined with a subsequent dive. The Bf-109E could out climb the Spitfire as it was equipped with fuel injection which prevented stalling. This gave the Bf-109E an advantage as it could level off at a higher altitude and then swoop down upon its opponent.

Another advantage the Bf-109 had was its armament. Two 7.92 mm machine guns and two 20 mm cannon had more hitting power than the Spitfire's eight .303 Brownings. Additionally, the Spitfire only carried enough ammunition for 15 seconds of firing. Ammunition had to be used sparingly with one and two second bursts if more than one enemy was to be engaged. Good marksmanship was necessary to inflict damage on opposing aircraft under these conditions.



Tamiya's excellent new Spitfire I



Hasegawa's classic Bf-109E

Besides the three most important fighters (Spitfire, Hurricane, Bf-109E), there were other aircraft on both sides involved in the Battle of Britain. On the RAF side there was the Boulton Paul Defiant, which featured an odd configuration of a four machine gun turret facing to the rear but no forward facing machine guns. This aircraft was used early in the conflict and initially surprised the Germans, scoring some success against bombers. But the Defiant was soon easily overcome by fighters. The Defiant was later used as a night fighter, which extended its service life.

On the German side, the Bf-110 and the Ju-87B Stuka proved ineffective and were eventually phased out of major roles. The Bf-110 was a twin engine "heavy fighter" that packed heavy armament and was intended to equip elite units. Crews were some of the best in the Luftwaffe, but the plane was so slow and sluggish that it was easy prey for both Hurricanes and Spitfires. With the Bf-109 limited by its short range, the Luftwaffe had to resort to the Bf-110 as escort for the bombers on long missions. Such formations usually suffered heavy casualties and were eventually discontinued. Later in the war, the Bf-110 found a role as a bomber interceptor, a light bomber, and a night fighter. The Ju-87B Stuka was used as a terror weapon in Poland, the Low Countries, and France. In this role, the Stuka was an essential part of the Blitzkrieg tactics and caused panic among opposing armies with its wailing sirens. These planes were used in the early stages of the Battle of Britain to attack radar installations but became very vulnerable to RAF fighters, who would wait until Stukas came out of their dive and then easily slaughtered them. RAF pilots who participated termed these fun engagements "Stuka parties."

With the Stuka all but eliminated from the Battle of Britain, bombing was carried out by three types of twin engine bombers: the Dornier Do-17Z, the Heinkel He-111, and the Junkers Ju-88A. The last of these, the Junkers Ju-88A, called the Schnell bomber or fast bomber, was the most capable of these three planes and could reach speeds approaching 300 mph. All had four or five crew members and were lightly armed with only two or three machine guns. Later in the war, more guns were added but these aircraft remained very vulnerable to fighters, resulting in high losses during the Battle of Britain. All of these planes could carry only small bomb loads compared to the Allied bombers that flew later in the war, so while the damage inflicted was significant, it was only a fraction of what Germany would suffer later.

The RAF's and Luftwaffe's Leaders During the Battle of Britain

As for leaders, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill was an active participant in the Battle of Britain, encouraging his people with inspiring speeches and taking keen interest in the day-to-day operations of the RAF and Britain's other defenses. The British also had capable and active fighter force commanders in Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding, who was responsible for introducing the "Dowding System" whereby radar, raid plotting, and radio control of aircraft were integrated. Vice Marshal Keith Parks was in command of No.11 Fighter Group, which covered London and surrounding countryside. Further north was No. 12 Fighter Group, commanded by Trafford Leigh-Mallory, which could give assistance to No.11 Fighter Group. Two other fighter groups, No.10 and No.13, were responsible for the southern coast and northern England and Scotland respectively.



Air Marshal Hugh Dowding



Keith Parks, 11 Group



Trafford Leigh-Mallory, 12 Group

On the German side, the Luftwaffe was commanded by the amateurish Reichsmarschall Hermann Goring who made many bad decisions, some of which no doubt allowed the RAF to continue to fight. Also called "Fatso Goring" by Luftwaffe personnel, he was a Hitler sycophant who was mainly interested in promoting himself. In command of Luftflotte (Air Force) 2 was Albert "Smiling Albert" Kesselring, who was responsible for the bombing of southeast England and the London area, where most of the action would take place. Kesselring would later be placed in command of the Mediterranean Theater, where he would gain prominence. Monocle-wearing Hugo Sperrle commanded Luftflotte 3 covering the western, midland, and northwest areas of England. He later took over night bombing during the so-called "Blitz." A rising star in the Luftwaffe was Adolph Galland who took over command of JG26 (Fighter Group 26) and became an ace while flying as a General. These men were competent but Goring still called the shots and offended them in doing so. Galland, in particular, later feuded with Goring, but Goring realized Galland's talent and even promoted him to command all fighters.



Hermann Goring



Albert Kesselring



Hugo Sperrle

Final Results of the Battle

The most dangerous days of the Battle of Britain were considered to be August 24 to September 6. During that time the Germans targeted airfields and aircraft factories with growing success. In August alone, the RAF lost 136 Spitfires but they inflicted even heavier losses on the Germans. Goring questioned the tactics of attacking radar stations and was explicit in his orders not to attack airfields again after they had already been

successfully attacked. This was a major break for the RAF and enabled it to replace losses and continue to fight.

On September 7, Goring began bombing London instead of RAF bases, allowing Fighter Command to regroup unmolested. On that day, a vast formation of 350 bombers, escorted by 617 fighters descended on London. Unprepared for an attack of this magnitude, Fighter Command was slow to respond but managed to down 38 enemy planes while losing 28 of its own.

On September 15, known as Battle of Britain Day, two massive daylight raids involving more than 250 German bombers and 350 Bf-109Es hit London. This time, 300 or more RAF fighters took to the skies to intercept them. Against 56 losses by the Luftwaffe, the RAF lost seven Spitfires and 20 Hurricanes. Lopsided scores like this continued until the Germans called off daylight bombing on October 31. They continued with nighttime bombing until May 1941 in order to reduce losses. With the invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941, most of Germany's air assets were moved east in order to subdue this massive new enemy.

In terms of overall losses, both sides made exaggerated claims of the number of enemy planes destroyed. The RAF claimed 2,698 kills while the Luftwaffe claimed 3,198 RAF aircraft downed. In actuality, Luftwaffe losses totaled 1,977 aircraft, including 243 twin and 569 single engine fighters, 822 bombers, and 343 non-combat types such as reconnaissance and transport aircraft.

RAF Fighter Command aircraft losses totaled 1,087 including 53 twin-engine fighters. The RAF also lost 376 bombers and 148 Coastal Command aircraft. Of the 1,034 single engine fighters lost, 361 were Spitfires and 673 were Hurricanes.

The Battle of Britain officially ended on October 31, 1940, according to the British. There were other statistics besides lost aircraft, specifically those of human casualties. On the British side, RAF casualties totaled 1,542 killed and 422 wounded. For the Luftwaffe, personnel killed totaled 2,585 while 1,735 were wounded. Significantly, 925 Luftwaffe pilots and air crewmen became prisoners and would remain in England for the duration of the war. The loss of these skilled and highly trained air crews would be a major blow for the Luftwaffe and Germany. Finally, on the British side 23,000 civilians were killed and 32,000 wounded in the bombing of London and other cities. Germany's failure to destroy Britain's air defenses led to the cancelation of Operation Sea Lion, the amphibious invasion of Britain, and gave Germany its first defeat of World War II.

As 1940 ended, more Hurricane fighters were turned in for Spitfires. Many of the battle weary Spitfire I's were pulled off the line and replaced by newer Spitfire II's and the much improved Spitfire V's. Soon all of the Spitfire I's, which had fought so gallantly during the Battle of Britain, would be replaced.



Spitfire Aces of the Battle of Britain

There were too many Spitfire aces during the Battle of Britain to recognize in this article, so I have written a short profile of four of the most successful who brought something extra to the defense of the skies over Britain.

Group Captain Colin Gray

Gray was born in Christchurch, New Zealand and joined the RAF in 1938. He first saw action flying a Spitfire I as a member of Number 54 Squadron where he got his first kill of a Bf-109. He was a critic of the "vic" formation like his fellow ace Adolph 'Sailor' Malan. In September 1940 his unit was withdrawn from action with his score standing at 16 enemy aircraft destroyed. He later returned to action after the Battle of Britain and, at the end of the war, his score stood at 27 victories.

Group Captain Adolph 'Sailor' Malan



From South Africa, Malan joined the RAF in 1936. He is considered by many to be the greatest tactician of Fighter Command. He was a fierce critic of the "vic" formation which had squadrons of 12 planes organized into four groups of three. Malan saw this as putting RAF fighters at a significant disadvantage against the Germans, so he organized his squadrons into three groups of four planes, similar to the German "Schwarm." This allowed a group of four to divide into two pairs, which would enable each pilot to have a wingman who could cover his tail. Soon all RAF squadrons would use this system and kill ratios improved as a result.

Flying with Number 74 Squadron over Dunkirk in May 1940, Malan destroyed three enemy aircraft and shared in destroying two more. Prior to the Battle of Britain, he shot down two He-111s while flying night sorties. Malan was subsequently promoted to squadron leader of Number 74 Squadron and, by March 1941, he had destroyed 15 enemy aircraft. This gained him an appointment as commander of the Biggin Hill Fighter Wing. His final score at the end of the war was 27 enemy aircraft destroyed, seven shared, three probables and 16 damaged.

Brian Carbury

Another New Zealander, Carbury was the RAF's leading ace during the Battle of Britain and one of only two Fighter Command pilots to become an ace in a day when on August 31, 1940, he shot down five Bf-109s. On August 28, Carbury's 603 Squadron was sent to Hornchurch Airfield to relieve Number 65 Squadron. Carbury became the unit's ace of aces while downing eight Bf-109s during the first week of his unit's operations. By the end of the year, Carbury had destroyed 16 aircraft and shared in two more victories.

Wing Commander Robert Tuck

In May 1940, Robert Tuck was posted to Number 92 Squadron as a Flight Commander and shot down seven enemy aircraft by the end of the Dunkirk evacuation. He was one of the first pilots to score five victories while flying the Spitfire. By the end of the year, Tuck's score stood at fourteen enemy planes destroyed, all in a Spitfire I. In January 1941, he was shot down over France and taken prisoner while flying a Spitfire VB. By that time his score stood at 27 enemy aircraft destroyed and six probables.

Next article: Spitfires fly fighter sweeps over France and face a formidable new foe, the Focke-Wulf 190. Axis bombers lay siege to the island of Malta, the British bastion in the Mediterranean. Spitfire pilots fight for their lives to save this vital island. New Spitfire variants are introduced, including the answer to the FW-190, the Spitfire IX.



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IPMS Richmond Chapter Information

The Richmond Chapter of the International Plastic Modelers Society (IPMS) was established in 1972 by five area model builders. Combining great talent and a passion for scale modeling, they formed IPMS Richmond with the expressed hope of spreading their enthusiasm for scale models with others in Central Virginia and beyond. IPMS Richmond is part of a national organization, IPMS-USA, with chapters serving modelers across the United States. The International Plastic Modelers Society is also worldwide with members in many countries, all united by their enthusiasm for scale modeling.

IPMS Richmond meets at Deep Run Recreation Center in Deep Run Park, 9900 Ridgefield Parkway, Henrico, VA 23233. Our meeting dates for the rest of 2023 are September 18, October 16, November 20 and December 18 (all Monday nights) at 6:30 PM. From time to time at our meetings, we have guest speakers and other special programs. In December, we host a chapter contest and enjoy a catered holiday dinner. Our members also organize trips to public events, museums or places focusing on history, aviation, military vehicles or other facets of our hobby. Each year, we travel to model shows and contests sponsored by other IPMS chapters in the area. IPMS Richmond publishes *Spare Parts* quarterly, an online newsletter featuring chapter news and a variety of hobby articles written by our members. In other months, a meeting announcement bulletin is prepared and sent.

Our annual model show and contest, the Old Dominion Open, is held the last Saturday in February at the Richmond Raceway. The Old Dominion Open (ODO) has grown over the years into the largest one-day scale modeling event in the Mid-Atlantic region. Our show usually draws as many as 1,000 people and has approximately 1,000 scale models of everything from World War II fighter planes to Ferrari Formula One racers and movie monster figures in competition. All genres of our hobby, from model ships to science fiction spacecraft, are represented on the contest tables. Over 200 trophies are awarded, covering scores of categories. The Old Dominion Open also features an excellent variety of vendors with the latest and vintage model kits, books, tools and hobby supplies.

Our annual dues are \$10.00 per year. Regardless of your model building experience or your preferred subject, we welcome you and invite you to join us.

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