

DECEMBER 2023 EDITION

## NEXT MEETING:

**Monday, December 18, 2023**

**Time: 6:30 PM**

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

*Hall Opens at 6:00 PM*

*Program: Holiday dinner and  
December chapter contest, special  
prize drawing*

## VISIT US AT:

[ipmsrichmond.blogspot.com](http://ipmsrichmond.blogspot.com)

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# SPARE PARTS

## IPMS RICHMOND



Bidders make their final selections and bids during our November meeting's silent auction. This event funded most of IPMS-R's gift to the Virginia War Memorial Foundation. See article inside.



The December chapter contest is almost here. Get your entries finished and ready.

## ***At our next meeting....***

### **Greet, Eat, Compete and Make Our Year Complete**

If you haven't already heard, Monday, December 18, 6:30 PM, at Deep Run Recreation Center will be our annual holiday dinner and chapter model contest. Other than a few very quick announcements, NO business is permitted. Mike Lyons' brother will again cater our dinner. We'll enjoy barbecue with all the trimmings from his Supper restaurant as well as his signature Krispy Kreme pudding. Those still needing a bigger sugar buzz may bring additional desserts if they wish. The chapter will provide soft drinks, cups, ice, paper plates, napkins and utensils.

Spouses, "significant others" or "plus one's" are welcome. However, please note that we are limiting the evening to IPMS Richmond members and one guest.

Along with dinner, we will have our December contest with the theme of "Movies and TV." Whatever has been featured in a TV show or movie will fit the theme. Perhaps Steve McQueen's "Bullitt" Ford Mustang or Adam West's Batmobile will show up ready for a chase while all sorts of spacecraft from "Star Wars," "Battlestar Galactica" and "Star Trek" battle it out. And maybe, Oddball's "Kelly's Heroes" Sherman and an M-47 trying to pass itself off as a "Battle of the Bulge" Tiger will square off as well. This is a great theme with many possibilities. Did someone say President Glen built and plans to enter the "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" car? Just a rumor.

The December contest will also have a special category for the James Alvis group build. If you received and built one of James' models, this is the night to bring in the completed model (built according to the rules) and enter it in the contest. Here's hoping we will have a big collection of models in that category honoring James.

A contest entry form is included in this issue of *Spare Parts* (see next page). Print off and complete one form for each model entered. Mark Groth and Scott Oates will be running contest registration. Please help them—and get us all to the buffet tables faster—by honoring the following two requests. First, PLEASE COMPLETE YOUR ENTRY FORMS PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT THE MEETING. Second, PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY. Also, please note if your model is competing in the "Movies and TV" or Alvis categories. And if you can arrive a bit early to register your entries, all the better.

Christmas will still be a week away, but our December raffle/prize drawing will include some fine model kits that will be going home with their lucky winners. For years, Mike Lyons has kept a good rapport with that big guy at the North Pole, so keep your fingers crossed. Please remember, the raffle tickets are for chapter members only.

December 18 will be our night to celebrate a banner year together, enjoy a good dinner, and compete in our chapter contest. We look forward to seeing you!

# December 2023 Chapter Contest Entry Form

Print ALL information clearly... complete form prior to registration



ENTRY NUMBER (from registrar)

CATEGORY NUMBER (see below)

### CATEGORIES:

- |                              |                                |                       |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Figures                   | 4. Maritime                    | 7. Dioramas/Vignettes |
| 2. Armor/Artillery/Softskins | 5. Aircraft                    | 8. Other Subjects     |
| 3. Civilian Cars/Trucks      | 6. Real Space/Sci-Fi           | 9. Theme: TV/Movie    |
|                              | 10. James Alvis Memorial Build |                       |

**SUBJECT:** \_\_\_\_\_

Model Name/Designation

**KIT(S) USED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SCALE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Enter in the space below any modifications, techniques, or other information you wish to bring to the judges' attention. Place additional documentation with your entry, if desired.

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Fold under and place with Entry

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SUBJECT:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Minutes of the November 20, 2023, Chapter Meeting

The November monthly meeting was called to order by Vice-President Richard Leininger as President Glen Martin was unable to attend the meeting. The first item on the agenda was the chapter election of 2024 officers. Ballots were collected and votes were counted by E. L. Motley and Mike Lyons. All of the current officers ran unopposed, each received votes, and there were no write-in votes cast. The current officers were declared the winners. Their 2024 term runs from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

Vice-President Leininger gave a short update on the 2024 Old Dominion Open. Our contract is in the hands of the Richmond Raceway's legal department waiting for final approval. We received good news that the usual food service company will not be providing food for the 2024 Old Dominion Open. Instead, we will have a food truck situated just outside the building. IPMS Richmond will have to cover any difference between the food truck's actual sales and \$700.00, their minimum required sales amount. We have also agreed to allow a podcast to be streamed from the show with the understanding the podcast's producers will publicize the ODO during February 2024.

The Chapter membership was reminded that our annual holiday and Membership Appreciation Dinner and December chapter contest will be held November 18 at Deep Run Center.

No chapter business matters were offered by Treasurer Ashley Abernathy or Secretary Bob Walls.

Our silent auction started following the completion of the business portion of the meeting. During the auction, we held our usual Show & Tell with 10 modelers bringing and discussing 10 models.

The meeting concluded after the bidders collected their auction items and settled their winning bids. Our chapter will present the Virginia War Memorial Foundation \$2,000.00 consisting of our auction receipts and a donation from IPMS Richmond. A detailed breakdown of the numbers and receipts from the silent auction will be included in the December *Spare Parts*.

Bob Walls, Secretary

## *In Memoriam*

# George J. Honeycutt

George Honeycutt passed away November 29 at Bon Secours St. Mary's Hospital in Richmond; he was age 72.

George was born in Johnson City, Tennessee, on December 9, 1950, to Earl and Betty Lou Honeycutt. He was the second youngest of four brothers. George was married to Susan Gary Honeycutt, who predeceased him. He is survived by four children: George Honeycutt, Dayton Honeycutt, Kristi Perez, and Johnna Hays; two brothers, Edward "Eddie" Honeycutt and Bo Honeycutt; son-in-law Jimmy Hays, 11 grandchildren, one great-grandchild, and many nieces and nephews.

Before his retirement, George was employed for many years by the Richmond Raceway. He was a grounds manager for the raceway complex and worked in the operation of the property's exhibition halls.

George absolutely loved automobiles, and he was a master model car builder. His incredible talent and craftsmanship won many trophies and awards over the years. George was a longtime member of IPMS Richmond and was also one of several car modelers who established the Richmond Automotive Modelers Society (RAMS). George was always active in IPMS-Richmond's preparations for the annual Old Dominion Open hobby show; he was also a major reason that the Richmond Raceway Complex has been home to IPMS-R's Old Dominion Open for over 20 years. George also enjoyed photography and spending time with his family, particularly on trips to the North Carolina shore.

A Celebration of Life Service was held for George on December 9 at the Ashland Church of God. All of us in IPMS Richmond, RAMS, and the scale modeling community have lost a great friend. We will miss George, his outstanding car models, his easy going personality and good humor. Our prayers and sincere sympathy are with George's family.



## Chapter News and Announcements....

### IPMS Richmond Meeting Dates for January through September 2024

The following monthly meeting dates have been confirmed at Deep Run Park Recreation Center for most of 2024. All meetings will begin at 6:30 PM and end around 9:00 PM. The hall will be open at 6:00 PM. Please note that because of scheduling conflicts with Henrico County events at Deep Run, the January and February meetings will be on the **SECOND** Monday. All meetings starting with March, 2024, will be held on the **THIRD** Monday.

#### **SECOND MONDAY**

January 8

February 12

#### **THIRD MONDAY**

March 18

April 15

May 20

June 17

July 15

August 19

September 16

**PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS.**

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Tyler Turpin is looking to buy one (or more) Revell 1/72 B-25D kits. He is also looking for an Airfix 1/72 B-25D kit, 2016 or later new tooling. Also one or more O-1/L-19 Bird Dog kits in either 1/72 or 1/48 scale. If anyone has a 1/48 B-24J, he is looking for a horizontal and vertical stabilizer. E-mail: [tylerturpin@verizon.net](mailto:tylerturpin@verizon.net).

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**START GETTING READY....** The Old Dominion Open is Saturday, February 24, 2024, at the Richmond Raceway. Your help with this project will be vital. Manpower needs include setting up the show hall on Friday afternoon, February 23, and help throughout the day on Saturday, February 24. The above picture is from the 2014 Old Dominion Open. The show is almost over and IPMS Richmond is in the "victory formation." Let's make this year's ODO another great success for our team.

**SUPPORT IPMS-R'S COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS.** *Spare Parts* is always looking for your model build articles, kit and hobby product reviews and historical features on what we build models of. And the editor is always glad to help you. Mark Groth will also appreciate your contributions to IPMS Richmond's blogspot. See Mark or E.L. at the next meeting if you have something you would like to discuss for *Spare Parts* or the blogspot.

## *Editor's Column*

# A Hobby for All Seasons and a Good Year for IPMS-R

Back in 1958, when both rock and roll and plastic scale modeling were in their formative years, Chuck Berry's holiday hit, "Run, Rudolph, Run," depicted our favorite reindeer's "whizzing like a Sabre jet." This year has not just flown past like an F-86 Sabre but more like an F-22 Raptor. 2023 has been a landmark year for IPMS Richmond.

After years of discussing, considering and deferring (including the time that I was IPMS-R's president), our chapter finally took the leap, sought professional advice, reorganized, and upgraded our corporate status to a fully state chartered and federally confirmed non-profit organization. Thanks, Ashley Abernathy, for all your diligent work and time spent on this project. Also, thanks to C.P.A. Sarah South (Adam's wife) for generously providing her expertise in non-profit organizations. This year's corporate and financial overhaul will keep IPMS Richmond on solid legal ground and will also improve our standing in the community above and beyond scale modelers. We recently completed our chapter's first public service effort in several years with last month's silent auction to benefit the Virginia War Memorial Foundation.

2023 also saw our membership increase and our move to a new and more comfortable venue. In February, the membership voted almost unanimously to move our meeting place from Smoketree Community Center to Deep Run Recreation Center. As a non-profit, we are now able to use this Henrico County public facility rent-free and without the pre and post meeting "labor" required at Smoketree. Deep Run also provides amenities, space and audio-visual capabilities our former venue lacked.

Thanks to the efforts of Chairman Richard Leininger, our ODO Committee, and IPMS-R's membership, we hosted a spectacularly successful 2023 Old Dominion Open. In terms of attendance, numbers of contest entrants and models entered, this year's show was a bigtime winner. And in June, we added an additional chapter contest, just for fun and with no awards on the line.

Sadly, we lost several longtime friends this year. James Alvis, Frank Gomillion, Ron Craig and George Honeycutt passed away. We will remember and miss these fine gentlemen who in their own individual ways made our chapter a special club and an excellent hobby better.

As the seasons change and in this special and most celebrated time of the year, we can look back on a memorable 2023 that saw our IPMS chapter plan, grow, make positive changes and achieve the accomplishments that teamwork and comradery bring. Scale model building truly remains a wonderful pastime for all seasons. As Christmas and New Year's approach, I appreciate the opportunity to be part of IPMS Richmond, thankful for the friendships and hobbying skills it has given me over many years, and all of the great people I have spent this time with. And thanks, too, to everyone who helped me with *Spare Parts*.

Merry Christmas!

E. L. Motley, Editor

In this issue of *Spare Parts*, we cover IPMS Richmond's first charitable project in over four years with the November meeting's silent auction. Scott Oates suggests several novel ways to make our Hobby Town display case literally a showcase for our chapter's activities and the various genres of scale models. Jamie Brannan takes us for a drive though his detailed MPC 1974 Plymouth Road Runner build and a kitbash project with AMT's 1971 Dodge Charger. Alex Valz continues his well-researched Spitfire series with the RAF's ill-advised 1941 air campaign over northern France and the introduction of the Mark V. Your editor reviews Aaron Skinner's very informative guide to airbrushing, and as always, John Robinson provides his excellent photos of the last meeting's Show & Tell models.

# Successful Silent Auction Funds IPMS-R'S Gift to Virginia War Memorial Foundation

It wasn't your usual auction. The air didn't ring with an auctioneer's rapid-fire cadence. There were no rows of formally dressed and ridiculously rich attendees bidding on Picasso's paintings, Princess Diana's jewelry or Theodore Roosevelt's favorite chair. This auction was casual and silent. Up for bids were a variety of model kits as well as books, tools, decals and other hobby items. This was IPMS Richmond's November 20 silent auction to benefit the Virginia War Memorial Foundation, and it was a well-attended and successful event.

Twenty-one (21) donors contributed 168 items for the silent auction, including model kits of nearly every genre. Thirty-three (33) bidders participated in the auction held during the November chapter meeting. At the auction's end, the highest bidders collected and paid for their winnings. The auction garnered \$1,777.00 to which IPMS Richmond added \$223.00 to boost the final total to \$2,000.00. The chapter will present this gift to the Virginia War Memorial Foundation this month. Per auction rules, the items which were not bid upon were turned over to Mike Lyons for future Old Dominion Open and chapter meeting prize drawings. Given the highly favorable response and amount raised, IPMS-R is considering making the kit auction an annual charitable event.





# A Modest Proposal: A Curated Display Case at Hobby Town

By Scott Oates

“Curate,” Mr. Webster’s dictionary tells us, means to select and organize objects for display that will edify and delight viewers. Art museums, for example, are typically organized by historical periods, which are then further divided by genre, style, topic, or even a single artist. Military museums might be dedicated to a certain event, such as the National World War II Museum in New Orleans which is organized by theaters and campaigns of World War II. Virginia’s Military Aviation Museum sorts planes from WWI apart from planes from WWII, each of which is further sorted into groups of German, Russian, and American aircraft. And at the American Civil War Museum at Historic Tredegar, the current topic is a curation of objects that provide a perspective on the fighting contributions of the United States Colored Troops (USCT).

A perusal of our club display case suggests that the principle of organization is . . . ahem . . . *where does it fit?* While each model in the display case is “worthy,” but without some context information, a viewer does not know what they are looking at beyond the obvious (a race car), much less why it is worth looking at (Why this race car? Is it important?) Indeed, to be honest, my collecting and displaying practices can use some curatorial rigor; I may know the backstory on the “what and why” for the aircraft in my model collection, but my occasional interested visitor sees only rows of airplanes.

To be sure, I’m not advocating for curating our private spaces (I’ll leave that to Marie Kondo) but I do have a modest proposal to submit to the club: Let’s take the next 10 months (give or take) to refresh our display cabinet in Hobby Town, curating one or two shelves at a time, applying some themes for selecting and organizing models we want to present to the public.

A variety of themes and categories can be used to select and organize club models in the display case. For example, we can start in early January by establishing a “James Alvis Shelf” to display club members’ award-winning models from our December contest, the Old Dominion Open, as well as other competitions. Signage for this dedicated shelf is already in place with a small *in memoriam* plaque to James. A small information card (prepared by me) can be placed with each model, providing viewers with context on the model, the subject modeled, and the modeler. A second curated shelf to be installed in January can display selected models of a club member. (After all, each of us does distinctive work – in terms of genre, style and technique, scale, historic period.) A brief “hobbyist biography” and the information card for each model would provide context. (Already I have approached club member John Mullins about displaying some of his spectacular monsters, figures, and sci-fi. I have a hunch that John’s work may generate some interest among the younger modelers that frequently occupy the model building tables near the display case.) A third curated shelf for January can be drawn from our 2022 club build: the JEEP. The information cards for this shelf can be pointedly educational, emphasizing development of the JEEP as well as design features for theaters of operation and such.

In the coming months, the remaining shelves can be “curated,” one or two at a time: a shelf dedicated to cars, to armor, to ships, and to aircraft. This would use six of the eight shelves, leaving two shelves for miscellany and whimsy. The floor of the case

is suitable for the “big and tall” models (like a Saturn V rocket!) Moreover, each “genre” shelf could be further curated, periodically presenting a special theme. An auto shelf, for example, could include a special feature on NASCAR racers, customized rods, or sports cars. The aircraft shelf could have a subtheme on “flying boats”, edifying our viewers on how their design is specific to function. I will propose additional themes and subthemes over the coming meetings as I take ideas from club members and as I initiate suggestions to club members from the “show and tell” sessions of our meetings.

Currently, the display case holds 54 models – automobiles, aircraft, armor, naval vessels, and a few figures. The cabinet has 8 shelves, including the floor. Transitioning to a curated display case cannot occur all at once. Following my suggestion that we begin with curating just three shelves, owners of models need to be identified and arrangements made to return models. “New” models for display need to be collected and information needs to be gathered from model makers. This will involve some effort, mainly on my part (gladly, I might add) but I live close to Hobby Town and I am invested in seeing to it that our display case is a site for the delight and edification of our viewers.

I welcome comments and suggestions. Please contact me at [forbes.oates35@gmail.com](mailto:forbes.oates35@gmail.com)

Looking Forward!



# Two for the Road: Building MPC's 1974 Road Runner and a Kitbash with AMT's 1971 Charger

By Jamie Brannan



In the late 1960's and early 1970's, Chrysler was part of the "Muscle Car" era with fast and stylish models from their Plymouth and Dodge lines. Plymouth's Road Runner and Barracuda and Dodge's Charger and Challenger were among Chrysler's all time most appealing and powerful designs. Even the company's compact Dodge Dart and Plymouth Valiant were turned into "Mopar Muscle" with Swinger and Duster versions. MPC and AMT have brought back those times with 1/25 scale Road Runner and Charger models.

## MPC's 1974 Plymouth Road Runner Review

This is a very good yet very basic kit consisting of approximately 64 pieces. There are a few extra parts to make either a stock or modified version. This kit has been re-released many times including in 2009 with "Dukes of Hazzard" box art as Daisy's car for the show's first season. The latest release comes with extremely nice pre-written Goodyear white letter tires. The decal sheet is one of the best available in any current car model kit. The color stripes include black, white and red. With these colors on the decal sheet, you can make every color combination that was available from the factory. Also included are the engine cubic inch call outs for incredible details. Plenty of Road Runner characters are on the decal sheet, too.

The body of the car is in excellent shape with minor sanding needed to remove the seams. This makes for a very good slot car subject. The detailing is very accurate to the real car if you're building one from 1973. If you want an accurate 1974 Road Runner, you will need to fill in the vents on the hood. The hood is supported in four corners, making sure that it sits nicely in place. You will also want to fit the front and rear chrome pieces before painting the body to ensure everything looks great when finished. The kit is molded in white, which makes painting any color a breeze. There is minimal flash in the box, although

some of the sprues could have been positioned a little better to reduce filing and sanding of some pieces.

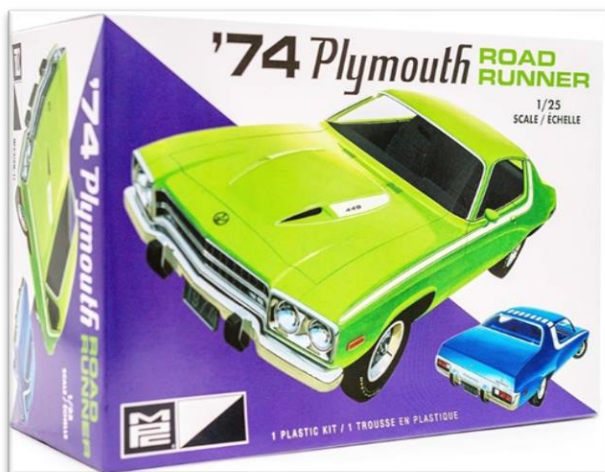
The engine can be built either of two ways. One version is completely stock, and the other is a 6 Barrel Carb system. Unfortunately, the 6 Barrel Carb option was never a factory option, but it never stopped a lot of people from adapting this system to these cars. After all, it is a very iconic Mopar Muscle Car set-up. This kit lacks any real detail when it comes to the engine and the engine compartment. The engine is a very basic blob that has the basic shape of an engine. There is only one engine block in the kit even though engine decal call outs are for either big block or small blocks. One good thing about lacking detail in this case is that there is no distributor. So, it's very hard to tell if the supplied engine is in fact a small block or big block. Mopar small blocks have the distributor in the back while the big blocks have them in the front. The pulley system has both an alternator and power steering pump hanging off the belt assembly in mid-air. The firewall is very plain along with the inner fender wells. A radiator and battery are about the only other things under the hood.

The interior bucket again lacks a lot of detail. There are some annoying injection marks in the bottom of the tub that need to be taken care of. The inner door panels are very basic, but great detail can be added to the dashboard and it has wood grain molded into it. The center console has wood grain molded in place, too. The one-piece front bucket seats need very little work to get rid of seams, and they have very good button details on them. One great thing about the assembly is there are two 1/4" dowels in the deck lid area to locate both the glass and the interior bucket. There is no way to glue these in the wrong place.

The bumpers look great. A couple of changes would be that the four headlights are molded in the headlight bezels and are chrome rather than molded in clear plastic. A little thinned white paint dulls the chrome down enough to look OK. I would like to have had the rubber bumper-ets molded separately and glued into place. Here is the other area where 1973 and 1974 Road Runners differ. In '73, just the outermost piece of the bumper-et is rubber, but in '74, the entire bumper-et is rubber. Again, both bumpers in the kit are molded as a 1973 Road Runner's.

The rear lights are molded in red, which is OK, but the two innermost lights should be clear for the back-up lights. However, a little silver paint will solve that issue. Some odd extra parts in the kit include a hot shoe gas pedal and a short shotgun. Basic roll bars with padding, two sets of rims, Stock Ralleys and some Centerlines are also included.

The chassis is as basic as it gets. The gas tank and exhaust piping are all modeled in one solid piece. Steel rods connect the wheels to make it a rolling model.



## Kitbashing MPC's 1974 Plymouth Road Runner and AMT's 1971 Dodge Charger

AMT's 1971 Dodge Charger is a very detailed kit. I haven't built a complete model of this subject yet, but it makes an excellent donor for other "B" body Mopar's with less detailed engine and chassis.

The engine is a highly detailed 440 cid "Magnum" V-8 4-bbl with a TourqueFlite three speed automatic transmission. The alternator, air conditioner, and power steering pump are all accounted for on the belt assembly. The distributor, coil, and carburetor all look great sitting on the intake manifold. The dual snorkel air cleaner finished off the top of the engine just like it came from the factory. The cylinder heads have incredible moldings of rocker arms that unfortunately are hidden once the valve covers are installed. This would make a great in-process engine build. Once assembled and installed, the heater core hoses, radiator hoses and A/C piping fill out the engine bay nicely.

The engine bay is just as impressive with an amazing firewall full of details. There is a lot of molded-in wiring; the wiper motor, A/C inlets, heater core inlet / outlets, brake booster and master cylinder are all included. The detailing extends to the radiator; the frame that holds the A/C compressor line, which is hoses, and the hood latch. The battery has great detail as well.

The "Rallye" extra heavy-duty front suspension looks like it came from the factory. The front wheel spindles can be left unglued to position the front wheels. Rear leaf springs, exhaust pipes, mufflers, drive shaft, rear differential and axel makes changing the chassis worthwhile.

To combine these two model kits is surprisingly easy, considering the wheelbase and the length are the same for both "B" bodies. The inner fender wells need to be cut off the body before assembling. The transmission shroud needs to be removed about an inch back on the AMT kit's chassis. This will give enough room for the MPC kit's interior tub. Since the engine has air conditioning, I used the dash from the AMT kit because it has the correct A/C vents molded in. I added spark plug wires, valve covers, positive and negative battery cables, vacuum lines, air breather vacuum lines, power steering piping, and brake lines. I had to reroute the A/C lines to accommodate the addition of the extra wiring. I also added two "L" strips under the front fender wells to help line the engine bay. I filled in the area between the firewall and valance with putty, leaving two spots to install the hood hinges. I then used two magnets on each hinge to hold the hood in place once installed. I also grabbed a set of Magnum 500 wheels to complete my build.



# November Show & Tell

Photographs by John Robinson



Kimiyoshi Okabe's 1/76 Airfix World War I Female tank was a medal winner at the Washington Figure Model Club show in September.

Jamie Brannan continues his series of Indianapolis 500 pace cars with this 1/25 AMT 1961 Ford Thunderbird convertible.



Ready to rumble... Raleigh Norris' 1/144 Bandai Volpanova.



Bob Wall's 1/35 Tamiya Centaur British tank.



John Mullins' Geometric 1/8 scale Ripley from "Alien."



Steve Bruce's entry in the James Alvis group build—the very old 1/64 scale Lindberg Junkers Ju-88 bomber.



Richard Leininger's splendid 1/700 Very Fire model of the battleship USS Missouri.

Doug Hayes' 1/6 scale NSFV Hulk stands on a 3-D printed base.



Built to ride piggyback on the SR-71 Blackbird as an unmanned spy drone, Tom Pulliam's 1/72 Monogram/Revell D-21.



This long lost and anonymous 1/48 scale Seversky P-35 resided in IPMS-R's display case at Chesterfield Airport. Mark Elder brought this P-35 model to the November meeting. Its builder remains unknown.



# Spitfire: The Legend, Part 2

## THE RAF TAKES THE INITIATIVE

By Alex Valz

### The Channel Front in 1941

After the Battle of Britain concluded around October 31, 1940, Fighter Command and the Jagdwaffe continued to lock horns through the end of 1940. By that time both the RAF's Air Chief Marshal Dowding and Air Vice Marshal Keith Parks, who had been the commander of No. 11 Group during the Battle of Britain, had been controversially replaced. Dowding's successor, Air Chief Marshal Sir W. Sholto Douglas, was persuaded by Viscount Trenchard, who had led the British air force in World War I, to take the offensive now that major German daylight raids were over. After some skepticism, Douglas (pictured below on the far left) came around to the idea that incursions across the Channel might meet with some success and would show the Germans that the RAF was capable of taking the fight to them.



Keith Parks' successor as No. 11 Fighter Group leader was Trafford Leigh-Mallory, who was anxious to implement his "Wing Concept" in support of the new offensive. The "wings" would be comprised of four squadrons from sector stations in 11 Group. Each wing would be led by an experienced pilot with known fighting ability and the presence of mind to control up to four squadrons in combat.

The code names of "Circus," "Ramrod," "Rhubarb," and "Ranger" were used to refer to the operations of the RAF's offensive. A "Rhubarb" was a sortie by a small section of fighters, usually pairs, to attack targets of opportunity such as trains or fixed targets. "Circus" referred to an attack by bombers escorted by fighters. The purpose of the bombers was to entice enemy fighters into combat. "Ramrod" was similar to a Circus except that the bombers had the primary task of destroying a target. A "Ranger" was a sweep by a large formation of fighters with the intention of destroying German fighters.

Now that the RAF had undertaken the initiative, it was their turn to endure all of the disadvantages the Luftwaffe experienced during the Battle of Britain. The RAF squadrons were required to operate at maximum range over hostile territory with part of the journey flown over water. With the roles reversed, it was now the Luftwaffe's turn to deal out the punishment.

## **The Opposing Aircraft**

The RAF planes used during the offensive were the Spitfire IIA and the Spitfire VB. Because of production delays, the last of the Spitfire II's would not be replaced until the end of 1941. Similarly, the Germans would be equipped with the Messerschmitt Bf-109 E-7/8 during that period. They would not transition to the newer Bf-109F until 1942,

The Spitfire IIA was powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin XII engine producing 1,135 hp, only slightly more powerful than the Spitfire I's engine. The Spitfire IIA could reach a speed of 354 mph at 17,550 feet. It was armed with eight .303 Browning machine guns. The Spitfire VB was powered by a 1,470 hp Merlin 45 and could reach a speed of 371 mph at 20,000 feet. The VB version packed a powerful battery of two 20 mm Hispano cannon and four .303 Brownings.

The German Bf-109F-2 was powered by a 1,270 hp Daimler-Benz 601N engine and could reach a speed of 371 mph at 20,000 feet, the same as the Spitfire VB. The German plane was armed with one 15 mm machine gun and two 7.92 mm machine guns. The more advanced Bf109F-4 was powered by a 1,350 hp DB 601E and could reach a speed of 379 mph at 20,000 feet. It carried a 20 mm cannon and two 7.92 mm machine guns.

As before, the Bf-109F could climb faster than its British counterpart because of the Messerschmitt's fuel injected engine. At high altitudes above 30,000 feet, the Bf-109F's performance was outstanding. It was also a superior aircraft below 10,000 feet. Therefore, the wisest course for the Spitfire VB was to stay within 10,000 to 30,000 feet when engaging the Bf-109F.

It was assumed that the Spitfire could outturn the German fighters as had been the case with the Spitfire I/II marks. However, some experienced Luftwaffe pilots felt confident enough to challenge the Spitfire in the horizontal plane.

Although near the Spitfire V in maneuverability, the Bf-109F was at a significant disadvantage in firepower, particularly the F-2 version. Unlike the Spitfire I versus the Bf-109E, the Spitfire V had a more destructive punch than the Bf-109F. The Spitfire V's two 20 mm cannon and four .303 Browning machine guns had roughly twice as much power than one cannon and two machine guns. The weak firepower of the Bf-109's F model came under such criticism from front-line pilots that Messerschmitt made it a priority to upgrade the armament in future variants.

## **German Tactics Frustrate RAF Raids**

During the first six months of 1941, as many as eight Jagdgeschwader (fighter groups) opposed the RAF's Channel Offensive. But following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June of that year, only JG 2 and JG 26 remained on the Channel Front. These two groups had at most 250 fighters on hand. At times only 150 serviceable fighters were available, but these aircraft were manned by highly skilled and motivated aviators who had seen more than a year of combat and were equipped with the definitive Bf-109F-4.

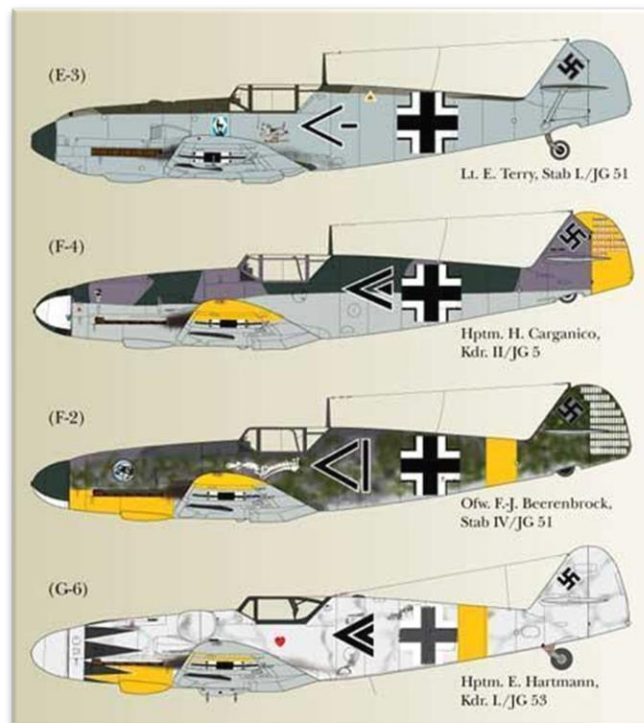
The RAF did not have a shortage of fighters. The Spitfire V was the most produced of all of the Spitfire marks, of which the Spitfire Mk VB variant was the most numerous with 3,911 fighters. Spitfire production increased during 1941 and steadily outpaced the Bf-109's output. So, by the summer of 1941, the Luftwaffe was greatly outnumbered over Western France.

The Luftwaffe had been quick to build up an air defense system to oppose the British raids. Early warning radar sets combined with the German Radio Listening Service gave fighters notice of impending attacks. An alarm start system similar to that used by the RAF the previous summer to scramble aircraft against approaching formations was also implemented.

The ability of JG 2 and JG 26 to penetrate escorts and attack the bombers in the Circus led to even larger escorting groups. Ultimately 20 squadrons of Spitfires, totaling some 240 fighters, were required to escort only a dozen Blenheim bombers. Because the deployment of these armadas required great skill, cloudless conditions were required over assembly points, Circus were only attempted in the spring and summer months when the weather was most favorable.

The German defenders did not attempt to confront such large formations. The plan was to get off the ground quickly, gain height, and make use of sun and clouds to attack any part of the Circus formation that appeared vulnerable.

General Theo Osterkamp, commander of Luftflotte 2, and his two fighter group commanders, Wilhelm Balthasar of JG 2 and Adolph Galland of JG 26, understood that their role was to inflict maximum damage to the RAF while preserving their own limited forces.



Galland (shown above) in particular, was considered a master tactician on the Channel Front in 1941. On an intercept mission, Galland would position his fighters carefully and wait patiently for moments of confusion in the large and unwieldy RAF formations. Since he was to the rear and had the sun at his back, he was virtually undetectable. When the time was perfect, he would lead a slashing attack through the

fighter screen as they closed on the bombers with guns blazing. The fighters would then continue down, taking advantage of the Bf-109's superior performance in a dive. Galland would, at times, split his force in two, leaving some fighters to linger above the escorts while he took a group of planes to attack from below.

There is no doubt that the Luftwaffe won the battle over occupied France in 1941. It has been shown time and again in history that a small cohesive force can defeat a much larger but unwieldy and less disciplined force by fighting smart and taking advantage of its strengths. That certainly had been the case the previous summer in the Battle of Britain.

The losses experienced by both sides back up this assertion. Though there was a tendency on both sides to inflate claims of victories, actual numbers back up the fact that the Germans had won. Between June and December 1941, 168 Luftwaffe fighters had been destroyed compared with 838 RAF fighters for a kill ratio of 5:1.

The Luftwaffe would continue to win in 1941 as more capable fighters such as the Focke-Wulf FW-190 and the high-altitude Messerschmitt Bf-109G-1 began to replace the Bf-109F. It wasn't until the latter part of 1942 that the most successful Spitfire of all, the Spitfire Mk IX would be deployed and would match or even exceed the FW-190 in performance.

## **British and German Aces in the Channel Front**

There were a number of aces on both sides who stood out over Western France during 1941 and 1942. On the German side, the top scorer was Siegfried Schnell (JG 2) who claimed 40 victories. The top JG 26 scorer was Josef "Pips" Priller of "Longest Day" fame, who claimed 36 victories. Adolph Galland claimed 28 victories along with five other pilots who claimed 20 victories or more. As impressive as those totals are, these numbers are probably somewhat inflated, as German claims usually were. The British claims are much more modest with Wing Commander "Paddy" Finucane claiming 13 victories and Wing Commander Jamie Rankin claiming 12. No other RAF pilot claimed more than nine victories.

**NEXT ARTICLE:** In the January *Spare Parts*, Alex discusses the siege of Malta and the crucial role Spitfires and their pilots play in defending Britain's vital Mediterranean base. Among the RAF heroes is a very troublesome Spitfire pilot who becomes the "Falcon of Malta" and Canada's greatest flying ace.



## **AIRBRUSHING FOR SCALE MODELERS, by Aaron Skinner**

Published by Kalmbach Books, softcover, 128 pages, 336 color photographs, 2015. Available through Kalmbach Publishing (\$22.99 plus shipping) and Amazon Prime (\$16.05 new with free shipping).

At our August chapter meeting, John Robinson gave an excellent presentation on the basics of airbrushing. To follow up John's great program and for those who couldn't attend the meeting that night, here's a quick review and recommendation of *Airbrushing for Scale Modelers*, a recent and readily available book that is probably the best printed guide for learning how to airbrush scale models successfully.

Although excellent models can be completed with carefully hand-brushed paint or the deft use of "rattle can" spray enamels, most well-finished (and trophy winning) models are airbrushed. For many scale modelers, mastering the airbrush is as essential a skill as a crossover dribble in basketball or putting in golf. And like sports, some of us are more adept and faster learners than others. Those fortunate modelers who have taken to an airbrush like Mozart to a piano or Hendrix to a Stratocaster can probably skip this book. But for the rest of us who are still seeking to hone our paint thinning, air pressure setting and paint spraying skills, Aaron Skinner's very practical guide is a valuable airbrush user's manual.

Currently the editor-in-chief of *FineScale Modeler* magazine, Aaron Skinner is a highly accomplished scale modeler who has built models of everything from World War II aircraft and armor to automotive and science fiction subjects. Starting with how airbrushes work, the difference between internal and external feeds and single and double action, he leads the reader through the basic first steps, including selecting a suitable airbrush. He then continues through the critical tasks of how to thin paint, fine tune air pressure and avoid the spraying mishaps (clogs, runs, spatters, "spiders," etc.) all of us have experienced using an airbrush. Skinner's tutorials are easy to understand and follow, and they all are fully illustrated with color photographs and drawings. Although designed for the novice, his initial chapters are a good refresher for those hobbyists already using or having experience with airbrushes.

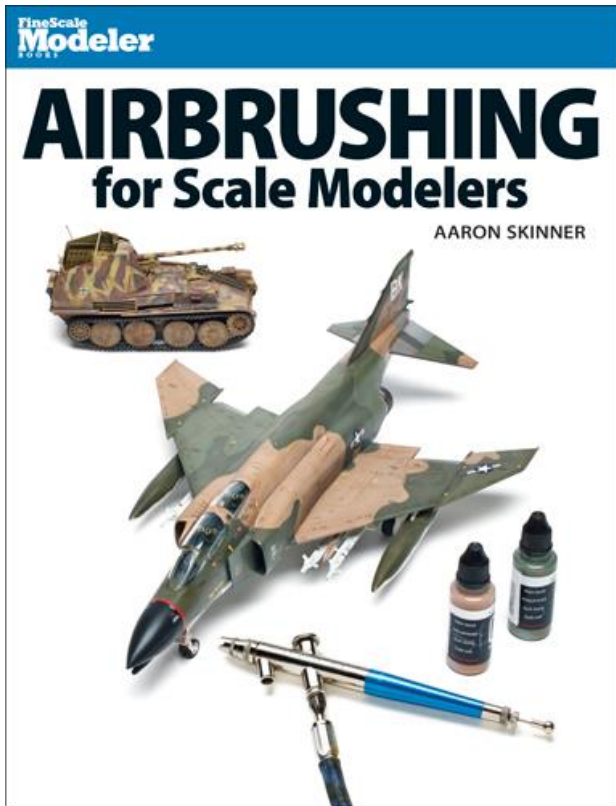
Particularly helpful is a comprehensive table of paint-to-thinner ratios for a number of popular model paint brands, both acrylics and enamels. However, since this book was published, new paint lines such as Mission Models, AK, Hataki and others have hit the market. Acrylic lacquers have lately become a widely used part of the hobby as well. Although available at the time of publication, this book only briefly mentions metallic finishes such as Alclad. Perhaps a revised edition down the road will discuss airbrushing these more advanced—and temperamental—products.

Skinner also covers in detail the important steps of preparing models for painting, including an entire chapter on masking. He also discusses the importance of thoroughly cleaning and properly maintaining an airbrush. Having covered the basics, Skinner progresses into using the airbrush in a series of model builds including 1/35 scale armor (an M4A1 Sherman, a Grizzly AVGP and a T-90A), aircraft (a Brewster Buffalo, a MiG-23M and an F-4C Phantom among others), glossy cars (a blood red 1/24 Ferrari 308), small scale ships (I.M.S. *Kitakami*), and figures (a large-scale Bride of Frankenstein). The intricacies of painting World War II German camouflage are also detailed during the

painting of a 1940 Ju 87B-1 Stuka, a Marder III and a North Africa desert mottled Bf 109E-7 Trop. He even discusses some advanced techniques such as pre-shading.

Although helpful articles on airbrushing have appeared from time to time in *FineScale Modeler* and in other hobby publications, this book is the most thorough, comprehensive and easy to use reference on the subject. With the variety of model projects included, *Airbrushing for Scale Modelers* is a handy guide hobbyists can reach for and find tips to help with whatever airbrushing challenges their latest build presents. Being a book, you can consult this guide while at your workbench without having to track down and watch some YouTube tutorial videos online. Reasonably priced and easily available (especially with Amazon), Aaron Skinner's book is a sensible and practical addition to any scale modeler's collection of resource materials.

Highly recommended.



## 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 December, 2023, through September, 2024, are January 8, February 12, March 18, April 15, May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, and September 16. All of our meetings begin at 6:30 PM and end about 9:00 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. We are a non-profit organization and host special events to benefit charitable organizations which relate to our hobby.

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.

**VISIT US AT: [ipmsrichmond.blogspot.com](http://ipmsrichmond.blogspot.com)**

**WE ARE ALSO ON FACEBOOK AND AT "FRIENDS OF IPMS RICHMOND."**

### IPMS RICHMOND 2022/2023 CHAPTER OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	Glen Martin	<a href="mailto:virginiatankboy@gmail.com">virginiatankboy@gmail.com</a>
<b>Vice President</b>	Richard Leininger	<a href="mailto:rleininger@verizon.net">rleininger@verizon.net</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Ashley Abernathy	<a href="mailto:Caabernathy123@gmail.com">Caabernathy123@gmail.com</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Bob Walls	<a href="mailto:robertwalls@comcast.net">robertwalls@comcast.net</a>
<b>Old Dominion Open</b>	Richard Leininger	<a href="mailto:rleininger@verizon.net">rleininger@verizon.net</a>
<b>Facebook</b>	Bob Walls	<a href="mailto:robertwalls@comcast.net">robertwalls@comcast.net</a>
<b>Blogspot</b>	Mark Groth	<a href="mailto:greyhound@verizon.net">greyhound@verizon.net</a>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	E. L. Motley	<a href="mailto:motleysel@comcast.net">motleysel@comcast.net</a>