



THE SCRATCHING POST

Newsletter of the Central Arkansas Scale Modelers



2020 1st QUARTER ISSUE

The Strange Times In Which We Live

When I wrote the editorial for the 4th quarter, 2019, edition of The Scratching Post, we were all looking for another great year for CASM, and we had no idea what was in store for all of us. As I write this now, we are in the middle of the quarantine, and hoping this will all come to end soon.

As many of you already know, our usual meeting place, The Regional Innovation Hub, had closed before our March meeting. A few of us met at HobbyTown for a work day, hoping that we would be back to normal soon, which was not the case.

We also found out that the Arkansas Veterans Home, where the No Name Modelers regularly meet, was also closing its doors. Again, HobbyTown allowed us to meet at their store for the last class.

Rail and Sprue has gone to being open by appointment only, so just call or email Daryl. HobbyTown is

only allowing a few people in the store at a time. So, for the moment at least, we can still get the supplies we need for our projects. Let's keep our fingers crossed that this will continue to be the case.

Over the last several weeks, we have seen several model shows being cancelled or rescheduled for later in the year. As we see this trend start to affect shows scheduled in June, we will have to wait to see how this will impact IPMS Nationals.

If there is a silver lining to all of this, it is that most of us should have time to get to our work benches, and get a little modeling done. I am looking forward to seeing all of the work that comes out of this very strange period of time in which we are living.

So, everyone please remember to stay safe, take the appropriate precautions, and don't forget to enjoy our hobby!

-Brent Bristow, editor

A Tale of Two Grille (and a Stalled Panther)

By Rick Knapp

My Rye Field Panther project is on hiatus, with an engine having been installed, a rather traumatic process that has made it evident that serious adjustments will be needed to get the vehicle's rear hull plate installed. In the meantime, I'm well into a modeling adventure that I've had in mind for some time.

I call this latest effort an adventure because it involves 1990s plastic model technology, some aspects of which could be kindly termed "challenging." For years, I've had a couple of kits of "Grille" (German for cricket)—open-topped self-propelled vehicles mounting a 150mm gun on Czech-designed 38t chassis. Grille were manufactured in 1943 and '44 and issued to heavy infantry assault companies of panzer grenadier regiments. Nearly 400 of these vehicles were built.

My two kits represent different models of Grille—the model H, with rear-mounted engine, and the later model M, with its engine moved to the center of the vehicle. I had long contemplated placing these two models side-by-side in a

diorama. With the Panther on hold, I decided to give this idea a go.

The challenge in this project comes from the nature of the kits, especially that of the Grille M. The Grille M kit was made by Alan, a Russian company. I had built an Alan kit previously, and was gratified by the comment of a show judge that I had done "a good job with a dog of a kit." The same judgment might be visited on the Alan Grille M. It's fortunate that I enjoy taking older kits of somewhat dubious quality and turning them into something acceptable, if not great, because the Alan kit needs a lot of work to turn it into a silk purse.

The Alan kit's instructions are pretty primitive by today's standards, and contain some errors to boot. Parts placement in the drawings is often vague. The kit pieces feature quantities of flash and sink marks not seen on today's kits. Adding to the fun, the parts are laid out on their sprues in no discernable order. The fit of parts is definitely not Tamiya quality, and some don't fit at all without sanding and/or surgery. The

vehicle's drive sprockets are a prime example. Oddly, the sprocket halves have no positive locating devices; a kit builder must glue the halves together and then make sure the sprocket teeth line up. But wait, that's not all! Until the inner faces of the sprocket halves were sanded down, the assembled drive sprockets were too wide for the kit's track links. Even more oddly, in a case where this was not really critical, the Grille's rear idler halves *did* feature positive locators.

The Alan track consists of separate plastic links. I'm not a fan. Many links had considerable flash, and a few were malformed. The tedious job of cleanup occupied several evenings. I used the Karl Logan method for individual links, assembling the runs on a strip of Tamiya tape, butted against a length of basswood to keep things straight. After allowing time for liquid cement to do its work, I installed the track runs, with less than perfect results. The fact that Alan did not specify the required number of links per side was a problem. I found it preferable to glue the drive sprockets in place; this gives a firm anchor point for wrapping the track runs around the rest of the suspension. The single return roller was held in

place with a tiny drop of tube glue; the road wheels and idler were set in place with the lower hull resting on its side. After all the sweating and cursing were done, things didn't look too bad—no defects that mud and strategically placed shrubbery won't fix, anyway. Sanding the inner surfaces of the idler halves would have been beneficial. They too turned out to be slightly too wide for the tracks.

Assembling the 150mm gun's elevating and traverse mechanisms was made difficult by the instructions' "figure this out the best way you can," approach—more sweat and curses there, and the results *may* be close to correct. Some fighting compartment components had to be omitted because they will obviously interfere with the main armament. One spot for ammo storage for instance, had to be removed since it got in the way of the right-hand side of the gun mount.

I'm not as far along with the Grille H kit, a 1994 Dragon issue. I've got the separate-link track runs assembled, formed, and removed for painting, with better results than with my Alan attempts. Dragon specifies 97 links per side, but I found that only 94 links were required. The Dragon links proved to be more

fragile than their Alan counterparts; even using brand new X-Acto blades to remove the remainders of sprue attachments, links were often damaged.

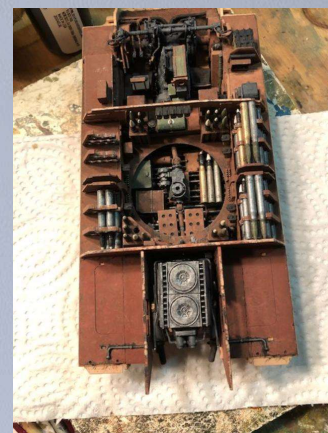
The Dragon kit is apparently an adaptation of a kit featuring a standard 38t chassis—its sprues are molded in slightly different shades of gray, and two sets of road wheels with differing bolt detail are included. Another indication is a requirement to remove the upper 4.5 mm of the lower chassis—not the easiest of tasks to perform accurately.

Surprisingly, I've encountered a couple of areas in which Alan detail is superior to that of the Dragon kit. Unlike the Alan items, the Dragon road wheels have no bolt detail on their inside surfaces; mud will conceal this hard-to-see deficiency. Likewise, bolt detail on the inboard portions of the final drive housings, prominent on the Alan model, is missing on the Dragon kit. This I have corrected.

My future Grille diorama will be populated by eight figures constructed in mix-and-match fashion from three sets of Dragon self-propelled gun crew figures (kit no. 6016). This is one of Dragon's earlier figure offerings, and these guys are closer to 1/32 scale than 1/35. A

helmet from an ancient set of 1/32 scale Airfix multi-pose figures was needed to fit one crewman's big head.

Painting the Grille will involve all the issues inherent in finishing any open-topped vehicle—working in subassemblies, and finishing the interior before everything, hopefully, goes together. In the end, I hope to have a pair of crickets chirping happily together.



Central Arkansas Scale Modelers Present

20th Annual

Sproo-Doo Model Show

Saturday, Sept 26th

*Across the Sea
and Stars!*

Show Venue: Jacksonville Community Center
5 Municipal Dr. Jacksonville, AR 72076

IPMS Region VI / AMPS
casmodels.org | casmodelers@gmail.com

Extended Categories for
Gundam & Model Cars



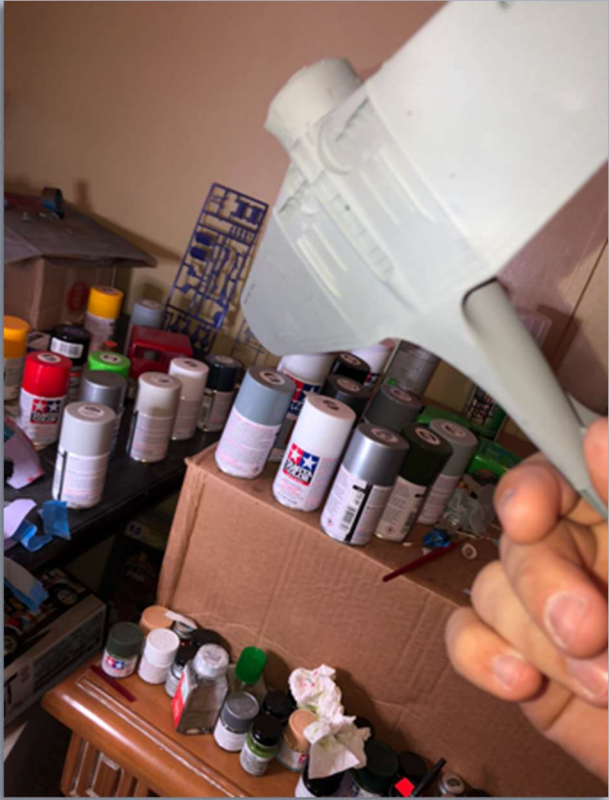
The 20th Annual Sproo-Doo is set for September 26, 2020. We have a new venue, which is the Jacksonville Community Center, located at 5 Municipal Dr. in Jacksonville. In addition to the separate automotive categories, as we introduced in 2019, we will also be adding separate categories for Gundam models. We hope to see you all there!!

1/48 Hasegawa SDB-3 Dauntless Review

by Matt Duke

Overall this kit wasn't too bad, but there are a couple of things that bugged me. One is the exhaust manifolds. They tell you to put them on the engine but they are never seen so there's really no point in painting them. Indexing of them is really weird, it took me several tries to get it correct. The next thing is the way they want you to put the canopies on. It's not real clear in the instructions how to put them on, but you only really get one shot, so make sure you test fit them. The fit on this kit wasn't too bad except when you put the wings on the fuselage. They have a pretty big gap which requires filler of some sort, which I did, and you have to be careful with the landing gear, which are fragile. Another thing that is a problem with this kit is the exhaust pipes that come through the engine cowling are two pieces and the best way to put them together is on the tree. One of the other issues is that the rear gun really needs to be out of the fuselage, which is not mentioned in the instructions. It does come with decals to do the instruments on the instrument panel, which is a nice touch. The decals are also nice on this kit because they are a little bit thicker and don't tend to rip as some other kits that I have built. I'll give this kit about a 7 1/2 out of 10.





Airfix 1/72 Vickers Wellington

By David Carter



Circa 1963. I grew up at a time when there were models everywhere, the toy store, grocery store, drug stores, convenience stores and even Sears had models. In addition to Revell and Monogram, there were Aurora, Hawk, Lindberg, AMT, and others. Made in the USA, mostly, and except for a few fighters like a Messerschmitt or Zero they heavily favored American subjects. By age ten I was familiar with most of the kits in the local stores, when a greater world opened up to me in the form of the hobby shop. Not the kind of place my mother liked, why encourage him? I was thrilled with all the kits of strange planes by unknown companies, and I wound up coming home with a kit exotic to me: the Airfix Wellington.

I started the Wellington on a Friday night and the next morning the family left for two weeks in Colorado. All during that trip I dreamed of building the bomber. I learned that the Wellington, although not so well known in the US, was one of the important planes of World War II and had carried much of the load for the British bombing of Germany until the more celebrated Lancaster came along. The kit was fun to build, just a little complex, with a full crew, including little curled up figures to fit in the gun turrets!

Eventually the fad years of modeling passed and Airfix, like many model companies had little money to invest in new molds. They

survived by reissuing and re boxing. But in 2006, Airfix's parent company, Humbrol collapsed, and Hornby acquired Airfix. Hornby had already done much to revitalize model railroading. Hornby soon announced they had similar plans for Airfix, with new kits being developed and packaged in the UK and manufactured in India.

Since then Airfix has replaced some older kits with new ones that far surpass them in fit and detailing. So, when I heard that Airfix had an all new kit of the Wellington I had to build one. Airfix has always priced their kits to be affordable. The Wellington retails for \$43, less than what many companies charge for similar kits and a very good kit for the money. The kit is well detailed. The interior has everything, to the extent that the instructions indicate interior parts that can't be seen on the finished model and may be omitted to simplify assembly. The bomb bay doors and undercarriage doors are molded integral with the fuselage halves and interior parts, which makes assembly and alignment easy. Some care must be taken with the interior so that the fuselage halves will fit without gaps. The fit is mostly good, I used little filler, mostly on the lower fuselage aft of the bomb bay.



Extra parts make it possible to build either the A or C versions, and include three different canopies, one with open windows, and an

extra set of bomb bay doors for use in the closed position. Unlike their Lancaster, which comes with no ordinance for the bomb bay, the Wellington includes six bombs. The wings are securely attached by two spars which pass through the fuselage and set the dihedral. Airfix even includes a boarding ladder, though this time round there's no crew included.

One of the most unusual features of the Wellington was its geodetic fabric covered construction. Previous kits have been criticized for over stating the effect. Too much scalloping and it looks like a caricature. The effect of the fabric over the framework should be just enough to notice without dominating, and though it doesn't show in photos well it looks right on the finished model.

I used Gunze aqueous for the Dark Earth and Green. Tamiya NATO black was perfect for dark but not too dark. The real puzzle was what color to paint the forward part of the cowls? The few color photos I've seen range from shiny steel to deep cooper. Many modelers use cooper, and that might be correct for some versions. However, instructions call for steel, and I found modern photos of museum Wellingtons online and they look like steel that has been somewhat cleaned up, not like cooper. Since this part of the cowl is part of the

exhaust collector, if its steel it will discolor, even rust with use. I decided that Alclad pale burnt metal would be a good match looking like steel with some slight reddish discoloration.



Decals are provided for two famous Wellingtons. The first is for a plane that developed an engine fire during a mission over Germany. Knowing that a fire would eventually cause the wing to fail, Sergeant Pilot James Ward crawled out onto the wing, punching holes in the fabric for handholds, and smothered the fire with some fabric. They made it back to England and Sergeant Ward was awarded the Victoria Cross.

I decided to use the second set of markings which are for a plane known as the Loch Ness Wellington. This Aircraft had been used for many bombing missions over Europe and then was assigned to an operational training unit. One night while over Loch Ness the plane developed mechanical trouble and the crew bailed out, the plane coming to rest in the waters of Loch Ness. In the 1970s a group of Americans looking for the Loch Ness Monster found the Wellington bomber instead. It was raised and is now undergoing restoration in a British museum and is one of only two Wellingtons that still exist today.

The decals worked well over a coat of Testor's metallizer sealer, without needing setting solutions. To simplify masking, I added the landing gear during final assembly, rather than earlier as per the instructions. The only additions were masking tape seat belts and the aerial using E-Z Line. I'm very pleased with my Airfix Wellington, it was fun to build, really looks the part and is a great value as well!



CASM Meeting and Contact Information

The Central Arkansas Scale Modelers meet at 10:00 a.m. on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Arkansas Regional Innovation Hub, located at 204 E. 4th St., North Little Rock, AR 72114.

Modelers of all genres are welcome to attend!

For more information, find us on Facebook at

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CASModels/> or

<https://www.facebook.com/CASModels/>. You can also go to our website at

www.casmodels.org, or email us at cc_casm@hotmail.com



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The International Plastic Modelers' Society is an organization dedicated to the fun of Scale Modeling. There are IPMS branches all over the world.

As part of your IPMS/USA membership, you will receive the IPMS Journal six times a year. In it you will find stories of interest on subjects such as aircraft, armor, automotive, ships, and figures. You will also find listings of IPMS contests and swap meets, hints and tips, and reviews. Membership also qualifies you to participate in IPMS/USA-sanctioned Regional Contests, as well as our world-famous National Convention, held each summer.

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