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Applications should be printed and mailed to: IPMS/USA, P.O. Box 1411 Riverview, FL 33568-1411

Hello Swamp Foxes, Welcome to the July 2020 Newsletter.

I hope everyone is keeping well and in good health, Hopefully still building, my bench is full, English Premier League soccer has restarted (Empty stadiums) and seems like games every day with exception of Thursdays,

Lots of new kit releases out there and many due out that should keep most of you happy. I did find a must have on ebay, 11<sup>th</sup> May, seller in Hong Kong, I wish he had said it would be coming by Surface mail, I am still waiting. Yes.... Slow boat from China.

Now go build a model

### **From the Front Office...**

Howdy, all!

Word from the library is that they are closed until further notice. No word on when they will re-open, and if they do, I imagine they will have restrictions on the size and scope of meetings, so Zoom will have to do for now.

Since I only heard from one or two of you about virtual meetings, I made a Command Decision--we'll give one a try and see how it works. The meeting information follows:

· Topic: IPMS/Mid-Carolina July 2020 Meeting Time: Jul 15, 2020 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Join Zoom Meeting [https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75638512590?](https://us04web.zoom.us/j/75638512590?pwd=akJUNkQwTWNCdkNNY3Y0K252TVRwdz09)

pwd=akJUNkQwTWNCdkNNY3Y0K252TVRwdz09 Meeting ID: 756 3851 2590 Password: 6WXkPV

· Just a reminder—the meeting is set so all microphones are muted upon joining the meeting. Please leave them muted unless you are speaking.

· Also, in order to give everyone a chance to speak without being “stepped on”, please raise your hand and be recognized before you un-mute and speak.

· Remember, if you have something you want to show, take pictures and have them open on your desktop so you can share the screen with us. You can hold your item up to your webcam, but experience says the images will not be as good as a photo.

· I am trying to figure out how folks with no webcam or microphone can call in to the meeting on their phones. You won't be able to see, but you'll be able to hear and speak. If I discover how Zoom does this, I'll send out an e-mail.

I'm sure you have all received word, but for those who haven't, we cancelled the show scheduled for 22 August. In the end, it was the Governor's Executive Order that pushed us to the decision, but the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases would have tipped my vote in favor of cancelling, the Governor's EO notwithstanding. Vendors have been notified and will receive refunds shortly. Sponsors (all three of them we received money from) have told us to keep their sponsorships and apply them to next year's show. In the end, the only monies we spent on the show were for postage. Well, and we restocked our Swamp Fox medals, which would have been necessary

before the next show anyway... So, we'll put everything back in the box and try again next year.

Hopefully, a safe and effective vaccine will be available, and things will get back to whatever “normal” is going to be after the pandemic. In other show news, we start with our own Region 12: The guys in

New Bern cancelled their show scheduled for 11 July. The IPMS/Eagle Squadron guys in Raleigh are still planning to host the R12 Regional in November—whether it goes forward remains to be seen. In nearby Regions, Huntsville’s show, scheduled for 22 August, has been cancelled. IPMS/Atlanta rescheduled their March show to 24 October, but no word yet on if it is still “Go”. Along with all the local and Regional cancellations, the IPMS/USA Convention has also been cancelled for 2020. Instead, the IPMS/USA E-Board awarded the 2023 Convention to the San Marcos crew as part of the negotiations with Embassy Suites. So, you’ll just have to wait a bit longer to go to the Texas Convention. Las Vegas is next up in 2021, and Omaha gets another visit in 2022. AMPS has not made any announcements yet on whether the 2020 International Convention in Danbury will proceed as scheduled in September. The convention had been scheduled for Harrisburg, PA in May, but was rescheduled and moved in late April. I suspect that AMPS is in the same boat as IPMS/USA was—they need to weigh the option of having a lightly attended show or forfeiting any monies used to reserve the venue. So, anyone interested in AMPS needs to stay tuned to the AMPS news and information channels... That’s all I have for this month. I hope to see you all on Zoom... Cheers!

Ralph

Photo # NH 97442 Recovery of Gemini Titan 2 spacecraft by USS Lake Champlain, January 1965



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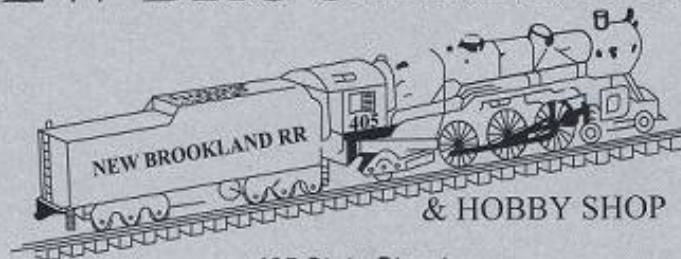


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# The History of the Blue Angels - A reasonable Modeler's Guide

By Max Lacobara



This is not a regular modeler's guide, it's a reasonable modeler's guide, which means that if you are planning to build the History of the Blue Angels, this will help you to accomplish the task in a reasonable way, with an acceptable level of historic accuracy, and hopefully, without going insane in the process.

## First, a little bit about the project

I built this history of the Blue Angels collection for the United States National Naval Aviation Museum, which received the models in donation and owns them today. My original idea included not only the exhibition aircraft, but also the side shows, auxiliary, and logistic support (beetle bombs, Cutlass, two seaters, and transports). The museum only wanted the exhibition ones, so I limited the project to just those, although I still want to build all the others. Maybe one day.

It took me almost two years and about 1,000 hours of work to make these, and that was mainly because when I was practically halfway through the project, I decided to re-start it. Yes, you read that right. I experienced issues with the paint and clear coat,

which led me to ruin several kits from the Hellcat to the Panther. I honestly dealt with repeated frustration before achieving results I considered acceptable for a Museum. See the importance of being reasonable?

I also added an additional aircraft that is always forgotten in the timeline representations, the Short Nose Tiger. This one is actually expendable to the purpose of depicting the evolution of the Blues since you can just include only the long nose one, but I wanted to add it for three reasons: 1 – It was actually the first Tiger variant they flew, 2 – Although it looks almost exactly like the regular Tiger, it has some noticeable differences that, to me at least, makes it display worthy, and 3 - It's a rare and interesting subject.

Besides the models, the collection has another unique characteristic, the Blue Angels insignia on the display bases. As you probably know, the Blue Angels insignia changed as the aircraft were changing. In the first years they had Hellcat/Bearcat-ish silhouettes coming from behind the cloud, while from the Panther moving forward, they adopted the style we know today. Since there was no way I could get patches for each era, I decided to order custom stickers, so I basically designed the sticker for each type of aircraft and had them printed.

## **Planning ahead**

The Blue Angels are a very controversial modeling subject, mostly because there is a lot of discussion around the colors. There are also details to observe when building their aircraft that cannot only influence which kit to use, but also what modifications make sense to make (or avoid).

Completing this project with an acceptable level of accuracy requires extensive research and advance planning. There is a lot of information on the internet, and of course, an incredible amount of opinions and discussions. You can find an excellent article about the Blues colors here: [Blue Angel Blue and Gold](#)

In my quest to be as precise as I could, I complemented my research with a considerable number of books, both depicting the history of the Blue Angels and the development and details of each specific aircraft, and even then, I wasn't sure about what was the truth "Blue Angels wise", since no one seems to have it. So, at the end of the day and with the purpose of avoiding going insane, I had to draw a line in the sand and conventionalize some aspects.

The first thing was what aircraft versions I was going to make, since some of them varied in between seasons. As usual, the scale wasn't an issue since all these were going to be 1/72, not only because it's my scale of choice, but because it's the scale that has the best kit availability.

The second thing was the colors and markings, with one main consideration in mind: Blue tone variations were pretty evident between some aircraft, yellow variations were not. This allowed me to plan for the blue paint and rule the yellow issue out by using the same tone for every aircraft. Markings wise it was an easy call; all aircraft were going to be the CO bird: #1

The third and final thing was which mods and details I was going to care about for each plane. This required looking at a TON of photos and determining specific aspects that made them unique. Most of the time this included external mods, wheels, and some cockpit details like installing the proper ejection seat, etc.

With all this in mind, I kind of made a grid of requirements for each machine and tried to stick to it as best as I could. The final results though looked like this:

AIRCRAFT	BA VERSION	BLUE	YELLOW	MODS	SPECIFIC DETAILS
Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat	N/A	Insignia Blue	N/A	N/A	Engine/Wheels
Grumman F8F-1 Bearcat	Early Paint Scheme/Markings	Color Mix (Insignia Blue + Insignia White)	N/A	N/A	Wheels
Grumman F9F Panther	Late Paint Scheme/Markings (F9F-5)	Color Mix (Insignia Blue + Insignia White)	N/A	N/A	Wheels/Seat
Grumman F9F-8 Cougar	N/A	Color Mix (Insignia Blue + Insignia White)	Chrome Yellow	Intakes	Wheels/Seat
Grumman F11F Tiger (Short Nose)	Early Paint Scheme/Markings	Color Mix (Insignia Blue + Insignia White)	Chrome Yellow	Nose/Wing Leading Edges	Wheels/Seat/Smoke System
Grumman F11F Tiger (Long Nose)	N/A	Color Mix (Insignia Blue + Insignia White)	Chrome Yellow	N/A	Wheels/Seat/Smoke System
McDonnell Douglas F-4J Phantom II	N/A	Color Mix (Insignia Blue + Insignia White) + Filter (Blue Angels Blue FS15050)	Chrome Yellow	N/A	Wheels/Seats/Dummy rear cockpit (no controls)
McDonnell Douglas A-4F Skyhawk	N/A	Blue Angels Blue FS15050	Chrome Yellow	Intakes/Ladder Pod	Wheels/Seat
MDD/Boeing F/A-18 Hornet	F/A-18A	Blue Angels Blue FS15050	Chrome Yellow	N/A	Wheels/Access Ladder/Seat/Smoke System

Now that we have this figured out, let's move to the actual models. Since this intends to be just a guide, I won't go into a lot of detail about them. I may make individual posts in the future, but in any case you can see more photos of them in my Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/WingsofGoldScaleModels>



## The Models

### Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat



The Blues operated the Hellcat during 1946 and it was only the F6F-5 variant.



I used the Eduard F-6F5 Profipack kit, which is an awesome kit and comes with some nice add ons and options.

I built the kit pretty much out of the box, although I used a Quickboost engine because I liked its level of detail more than the one that comes with the kit. In some photos I observed that the Blues' Hellcats had diamond thread tires, so I used those from the kit, which comes with two tire thread options.

I painted the model Insignia Blue using Mr. Paint MRP 300, and since the records show the markings were golden and not yellow, I used the set from Draw Decal.



## Grumman F8F-1 Bearcat



The Blues flew the Bearcat between 1946 and 1949, and through that period they painted them in two schemes: The early one was plain blue with yellow markings, the late one was painted in an apparently darker blue (more like the Panthers perhaps? Who knows...) with bare metal details in the leading edges.

One important aspect to consider for the Bearcat is that the Blues used the 1 variant, and that there is only one kit in 1/72 that depicts it, which is the Sword kit. The other kits in the market (Monogram, Revell, and Art Model) are actually F8F-2.

The most noticeable difference between the 1 and the 2 is that the 1 has a 12-inch shorter tail fin. Other differences include the 1 having 5 exhaust stacks and the 2 only 3 but larger, and the 2 having bulged machine gun access panels on the wings. You can also see in several photos that the Blues used the early 1 variant without the rollover pylon behind the pilot's head rest for the main act aircraft. The Beetlebomb, on the other hand, seemed to be a late variant.



Anyway, the thing is that if you want to do a 1 you'll need the Sword kit, or you'll need to modify the Monogram/Revell kit, or the Art Model one, to look like it.

For my model I used the Sword Kit. The kit is not widely available, but some usually appear from time to time on EBay and other places. The kit is classic old Sword, so not great at all. It has no cockpit detail whatsoever, no good fitting, and thick soft plastic, but it comes with a nice resin engine and overall once you put it together makes a decent F8F-1 representation.

I had to scratch the cockpit, and also used the landing gear from a monogram kit, which believe it or not looks better than the one from Sword. For the wheels I used a P-40 resin set from Aires (straight thread) which look basically the same as the Bearcat ones, although I had to add the brakes detail.

I painted the model with an Insignia Blue/Insignia White mix. It' was my first mix so it was somehow challenging until I reached a tone that I liked. In the end, I used 1-part Mr. Paint Insignia Blue (MRP 300) and 9 parts Insignia White (MRP 135). Yes, it took me a lot to downgrade the blue. Decals were again Draw Decals, which were awesome as always.



## Grumman F9F-5 Panther



The Blues operated two variants of the Panther between 1949 and 1955. Initially they flew the F9F-2, but they stopped the shows while serving in Korea, and when they returned, they moved to the newer F9F-5 version.



While there are differences between the 2 and the 5 versions, externally they look the same. From a Blue Angels standpoint, the main differences between these variants were the metallic details in the leading edges and wing roots. I decided to go with the 5 because I simply liked it more.

I used the Hobby Boss F9F-3 kit. This is a lovely kit with crisp detail and easy to build. It's also a lot better than the one Hasegawa offers.

I built it mostly straight from the box with some Eduard PE interior and resin wheels from Aires. While the seat that comes with the kit has more or less the correct shape, I had to add some improvements to it. One detail I observed in photos from the Blues, is that they had the rope ejection handles in the headrest, so I decided to add them using EZ-line. If you are interested, you can see some good comparison about Grumman seats here: [Grumman F9F/F-9 Panther and Cougar Ejection Seats](#)

I was still experimenting with the color mix here. I used again the mix of MRP Insignia White and Insignia Blue, but this time was around 1/4 of a Tamiya 6 ml jar in white, and the remaining in blue. The metallic color was achieved with AK Extreme Metal Polished Aluminum. Decals are a combination from Draw Decals' Bearcat and Cutlass sets.





**Grumman F9F-8 Cougar**





The Cougar operated with the Blues between 1955 and 1957, and they used an early version of it. The main aspects you can observe in their aircraft is the absence of cannons in the nose, and the lack of intake deflectors which were typical in later versions.



I used the only Cougar kit available in 1/72 that can serve this purpose, the Hasegawa one. It's an old kit but overall fits nicely and looks fine once assembled. It lacks cockpit detail, so it required some work to look decent there. For that I used some Photo Etched from Resin Art, although the Eduard Panther set may do the trick too. I also used a Hobby Boss Panther seat, but this time I installed rigid ejection handles.

Exterior wise, the kit comes with intake deflectors, but the Blues' birds didn't have them, so I removed them and when installed the intake edges I just filled the gaps. Finally, I used some nice Aires Panther resin wheels.

The model is painted with the usual mix of MRP Insignia White and Insignia Blue, this time 1-part White and 5 parts Blue. The yellow is Mr. Paint Dark Chrome Yellow (MRP 028). The metallic details are again AK Extreme Metal Polished Aluminum, while decals are another combination of Draw Decals' Bearcat and Cutlass sets.



## Grumman F11F-1 Tiger (Short Nose)



The Blues used the Short Nose Tiger for only 2 seasons in 1957/58, to then transition to the most popular Long Nose one. The main difference, besides the nose, between these variants was that the short nose had straight wing leading edges.

Another interesting aspect of the Blues' short nose Tiger was that for the second season they painted it with block letter markings. This was the version that I initially intended to make, but the decals got destroyed and upon the impossibility of getting another set, I went with the early paint scheme, which is the one that the aircraft had when they were initially delivered to the Team. You can see the difference in the images below; early markings on the left, late markings with block letters on the right.



I used a special edition Hasegawa kit that comes with a resin short nose. It's a very hard to get kit, and to be completely honest, any avid modeler would be able to make the nose from scratch probably with epoxy putty or wood. Overall, it's the long nose kit to which you just have to cut the leading edges close to the wing roots to make them straight and cut the nose to put the short one.

This kit is an old kit, and to be fair it's not bad at all, fits nicely and looks good, although it has raised detail. It also lacks cockpit detail and will require some detail work in the main gear wheel wells, since they are pretty visible.

For the cockpit interior I used an Airwaves PE set, while the seat is an updated Hobby Boss Panther seat. There is some scratch work inside the main gear wheel wells, while the wheels themselves are early A-4 resin wheels from Aires, which look exactly as the ones these Cats had in real life. The smoke system pipe that runs externally on the left side it's just a Plastruct 0.10"/0.3 mm rod.

The model is painted with the usual MRP Insignia White and Blue mix, this time 1-part White and 4 parts Blue. The yellow is Mr. Paint Dark Chrome Yellow (MRP 028). The metallic details have two tones. Leading edges and exhaust are AK Extreme Metal Polished Aluminum, while the intake edges are AK Extreme Metal Chrome. Decals are a combination of kit decals and some bits from the CAM Decals Hornet set (the Blue Angels legend).





**Grumman F11F-1 Tiger (Long Nose)**



The Long Nose Tiger entered in service with the Blues in 1958 and remained until 1969. It's basically the same airplane than the short nose, but with some improvements.



I used the regular Long Nose Hasegawa kit, with the same detailing I applied to the short nose one (cockpit and wheel wells detailing, addition of smoke system) although this time the wheels are Aires late A-4 wheels, which matched the real aircraft.

I also used the same colors I used in the short nose, while the decals were the kit decals, so no innovation for this one really.





## McDonnell Douglas F-4J Phantom II



The mighty Phantom was the Blues' bird between 1969 and 1974. They operated the J version so no sub variants for this one.



I used the latest Academy kit, which is lovely. Highly detailed and easy to build. The only downside is that it doesn't come with an open cockpit option, so I had to use a Hasegawa canopy, which fits fine. I complemented the kit with Eduard PE interior, Aires MK H7 seats that I detailed with some scratching, and Eduard resin wheels.

I initially painted the model with a mix of 1-part Mr. Paint Dark Blue SU 27 (MRP 045) and 4 parts MRP 300 (insignia Blue), but I didn't like it, so following the advice of my friend Javier from Aviones a Escala, I filtered it with Mr. Color 328 (Blue Angels Blue – FS15050) until I achieved a decent tone. I think that if you paint it just with the 328 it will look fine to be honest. The yellow is Mr. Paint Dark Chrome Yellow (MRP 028). Metallic parts are AK Extreme Metal Polished Aluminum for the wings leading edges, and Extreme Metal Chrome for the intake edges. The hot area metallic tones are a mix of AK Extreme Metal Titanium, Steel, and Stainless Steel. Decals are from the CAM Decals Blue Angels Phantom set.





## McDonnell Douglas A-4F Skyhawk



The Blues operated the Scooter between 1974 and 1986, it was the longest serving aircraft before the Hornet. Their version had bigger, seamless intakes, like the Super F, and some other features to consider: In the place of the left side cannon they installed a pod that was used to transport the portable access ladder. Also, the slats were non-operational and therefore soldered to the wing, so if you are planning to build the model with the slats down you may want to revise that.



I used an A-4E/F kit from Fujimi, which we all know is a great kit. After decades, Fujimi's 1/72 Skyhawks continue to be the best. Unfortunately, the E/F's are not easy to find, but sometimes they pop up, especially the Blue Angels version, although its only differences are the decals and that is molded in blue (no ladder pod or bigger intakes).

To solve the intake issue, I used the intakes of an Italeri OA-4M. They fit pretty well on the Fujimi kit, they are seamless and look more like the Super F ones. I also complemented the model with an Aires resin interior, Aires resin wheels, and a Quickboost resin exhaust nozzle. The ladder pod it's just a piece of Plastruct rod.

I painted the model with Mr. Color Blue Angels Blue – FS15050 (328) and Mr. Paint Dark Chrome Yellow (MRP 028). I'm aware that the actual Blue Angels Blue is a commercial paint and not an FS Standard one, but the 328, although not perfect, looks pretty OK to me. Metallic surfaces are all AK Extreme Metal Chrome, and decals are from the CAM Decals Blue Angels A-4 set.

The final glossy finish was achieved with a process that involved an initial 12,000 grit Micro Mesh pass, and a final Tamiya Polishing Compound buff (just the finishing grit which is kinda waxy).





**McDonnell Douglas – Boeing F/A-18 Hornet**



The Blues have been flying the Legacy Hornet since 1986, both the A and C versions of the single seaters through time. As we all know, they plan to transition to the Super Hornet in 2021.



I chose the Academy F/A-18A kit Blue Angels edition. The kit is great with very nice details, although the entire nose assembly is not the best. It comes with Cartograph decals which look really awesome although they are a bit thick. The kit also includes different tails that give you the option to build an A or a C version, but keep in mind the wheels are incorrect.

I complemented this model with some Eduard PE for the interior and access ladder, an Aires resin seat, Res-Kit resin wheels, and WolfPack Design flap down wings and exhaust nozzles.

For the colors, I followed the same criteria than with the A-4 (Mr. Color Blue Angels Blue – FS15050 – 328 and Mr. Paint Dark Chrome Yellow – MRP 028). I also applied the same method for the glossy finish. Decals are actually a mix of the kit decals and the CAM Blue Angels Hornet set.





## A final comment, for now...

Well, if you're planning to get into the challenge of building the history of the Blue Angels, I truly hope you find this useful.

For me, this is still an ongoing project, since the collection will not be complete until I deliver the Super Hornet to the Museum somewhere in the future. I'm also unsure if one day I'll effectively build the other aircraft that are part of the Blue Angels family, so my only certainty at this time, is that this is to be continued...



Whilst searching the internet for information on a future build, I came across this and I just had to share it. I contacted Max and he graciously gave me permission to use his article, So please enjoy and use the link to see more pics of this great collection  
[https://www.wingsofgoldscalemodels.com/post/the-history-of-the-blue-angels?fbclid=IwAR2oNF4mmQQd4OA\\_ainjek2uw6H5PUphd7UaZynyNoLCm\\_vpyHqG3rDkiN0](https://www.wingsofgoldscalemodels.com/post/the-history-of-the-blue-angels?fbclid=IwAR2oNF4mmQQd4OA_ainjek2uw6H5PUphd7UaZynyNoLCm_vpyHqG3rDkiN0)

## **Old School Sea King:** Building Fujimi's 1/72 scale SH-3

In the 1950's, the Soviet Union began fielding a larger and more potent force of submarines, both to conduct offensive strikes and to deal with enemy shipping. In response, the Department of Defense—specifically, the U.S. Navy—began developing weapons to counter the threat.

Among the equipment in development, Sikorsky began investigating the use of turboshaft engines on helicopters to replace the obsolescent piston engines then in use with the fleet. The helicopter they designed, the Sea King, would serve the Navy until 2006.

Designed around a sealed amphibious hull and twin General Electric T58 turboshaft engines, the Sea King combined the missions of submarine *hunting* and submarine *killing*—previously, antisubmarine helicopters were either hunters or killers. Initially designated HSS-2 (H=Helicopter, S=Antisubmarine, S= Sikorsky, 2=second subtype), it would be re-designated SH-3 in 1961. Although the SH-3 had nothing in common with the HSS-1 Seabat—itself a variant of the S-58/H-34 family—other than the manufacturer, in the day, funding for an existing design was easier to obtain than for a clean-sheet design. If they wanted to stick to the HSS nomenclature, it would have more accurately been HS2S-1...

The design would be stretched into the U.S. Air Force's HH-3E with a rear loading ramp, and eventually Sikorsky would take the basic SH-3 design, stretch it, widen it, and introduce the CH/HH-53 series. While not physically related, the family lineage is apparent.

Over the years, it was upgraded to the SH-3D, SH-3H, and SH-3G variants. A civilian variant, the S-61, was produced and initially used to ferry passengers from downtown New York City and Los Angeles to their respective international airports, where the passengers could catch their flights—it saved time and trouble dealing with traffic. S-61's have also been used in aerial firefighting.

Fujimi's 1/72 scale Sea King kits date back to 1981, and are quite nice, even now. The kit was available in several boxings, depicting U.S. Navy SH-3's, Japanese HSS-2B's, and British Sea Kings (HAR.3 and Sea King Mk. 41). Revell Germany also issued the kit as a Sea King Mk.41 (not to be mistaken for Revell's own new-tool Sea King Mk.41 that appeared in 1998), and the kit also appeared in a Testors box. Currently, Italeri has it in a box commemorating the Apollo 11 recovery featuring "Old 66". Options included in the box allow you to build it as an early or late Sea King—the short and long sponsons and stabilizers are included, along with a few different interior options. This model was built from one of the JMSDF issues of the kit, a kit I picked up second-hand. By the condition of the decals (and, as I would discover, the brittleness of the plastic), it probably lived most of its life in an unconditioned space. The decals didn't matter, but I would face several issues relating to the condition of the plastic all throughout the project.

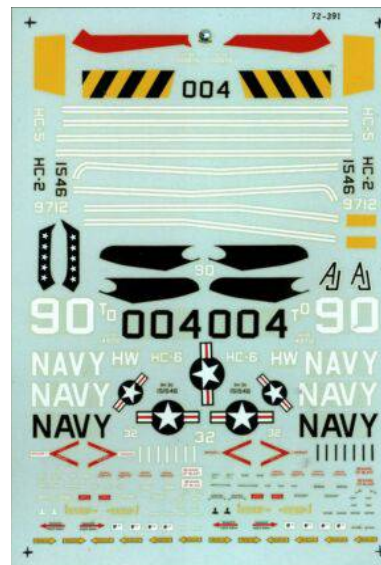




Fujimi's venerable Sea King kit dates to 1981, but is still pretty good for its age.

Initially, I was going to build one of the CH-3B's that the United States Air Force used to service the Texas Tower radar platforms, and I began the project with that in mind. I was going to delete the ASW gear in the cabin, so I installed the plugs for the SONAR well. The more I started digging, the more I realized that I had a lot more information to gather for a CH-3B, and rather than let this kit languish, I decided to reverse course.

I still wanted an early Engine Gray (aka Seaplane Gray, FS36081) aircraft. I started digging in my decal stash, and located two sheets that had that as an option: Microscale 72-391 and Cutting Edge Decals CED72008. I opted for the latter, since it had a colorful ship for HS-5 "Night Dippers" off the USS Lake Champlain (CVS-39). As it turns out, I would also use the Microscale sheet for the data—the Fujimi decals were worthless in that regard (remember, it was the JMSDF issue with appropriate Japanese data), and Cutting Edge does not provide it.



Left: CED72008, supplies main scheme

Right: Microscale 72-391, supplies data

I took a look at what I had done to that point. Removing the plug from the cabin floor was easy—the SONAR enclosure would hide any ugliness. But the fuselage plug was another issue—when I attempted to remove it (I applied some Tamiya Extra Thin to weaken the earlier bond), part of the fuselage came out with it. I was fully prepared to make the required repairs, but my wife (who also

happens to be the Sea King Subject Matter Expert over on the [Tailhook Topics](#) website) offered me her Sea King spares box for anything I may need. So, I selected a pair of fuselage halves that would work for me. The port side came from a Sea King Mk. 41 issue, and is molded in green. The starboard side was from one of the USN SH-3 issues, and was molded in white. Parts from the original kit are almost an ivory color. So, in the pictures you will notice that the model looks like Lou Antonio's "Lokai" character from the "[Let That Be Your Last Battlefield](#)" episode of "Star Trek"—there's the reason why. I also would use sponson stub pylon parts and landing gear from her spares, since the originals were brittle and I managed to break them during construction.

I stuck pretty much to an out of the box build, but several items couldn't be left alone: the cabin interior was flat and featureless (a quick look inside of a Sea King reveals structural members that are quite visible) other than the optional window cut lines and some ejector pin marks, the main landing gear wells opened up into the interiors of the sponsons, and I wanted to fold the main rotor to save on display space.

I revisited my earlier cabin work and added the ASW consoles and seats, as well as the "broom closet" and SONAR housing. I left the aft web seat out for now. In the cockpit, I added a second collective (the kit only has one), and assembled the rest per the instructions.

Now comes the fun. I filled the window cut lines with a mixture of CA (super glue) and microballoons and sanded them flush once cured. There are quite a few ejection pin marks and sink marks inside the cabin, too, and these also got addressed. The good thing about the CA/microballoons mixture is that it cures fast but does not get as hard as straight CA—it sands and fathers easily.

Next, I took a pencil, and using the rivet lines on the exterior of the fuselage, I drew corresponding lines inside. Using various sizes of Evergreen strip stock, I added the indications of frames and stringers inside the left half—the right side cannot be seen, so I didn't waste the effort, time, or materials. Simply cut the strip stock to length, and cement it in place with Tamiya Extra Thin. You'll need to hold the stock in place for a few minutes while the cement grabs.

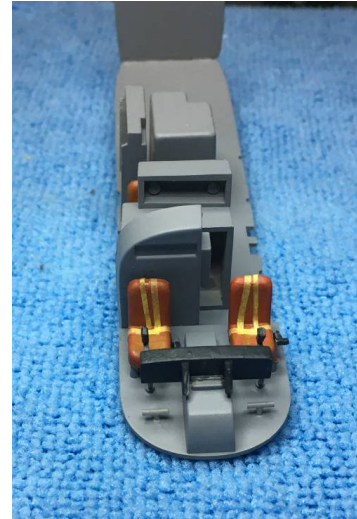
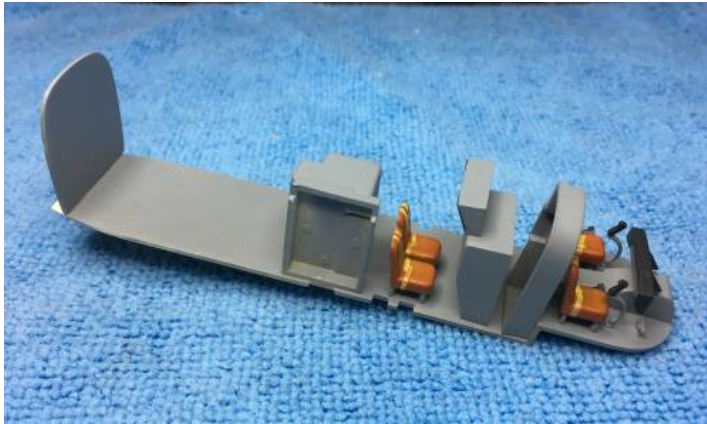
I also fashioned a cabin overhead from Evergreen sheet. I used the overhead from one of the new Airfix kits to cut a pattern from an index card. I test fit the pattern and adjusted it until the fit was to my liking. I transferred the pattern shape to some .015" sheet, cut the pattern out, and did some final fettling to get it "just right". I installed some .040" square stock as gluing tabs for the overhead.



Window cut lines filled and structure added—that's the Airfix overhead I used as a template in the foreground

The windows were cleaned and installed at this time. I used CA—sparingly—and allowed it to wick into the seam. Done carefully, the windows will be installed securely and the seam between the window and fuselage should be sealed. If you want the flush look, add more CA to the outside seam

and then sand and polish the windows back to clarity. Once that was done, I masked the windows and painted the interior areas FS36321 Dark Gull Gray. The seat cushions were painted orange, and I added paper seat belts to all of the seats, and used a greenish tan shade for the web seat. The interior was then added to the fuselage halves, and the fuselage was assembled. The fit was quite good, I only needed to add some CA into the seam on the bottom. A quick sanding, making sure to keep the keel sharp, and that was that.



The interior “pan” painted. I didn’t go into a great deal of detail, since 99% of this won’t be seen.



The insides of the fuselage—note that I only added structure where you could see it

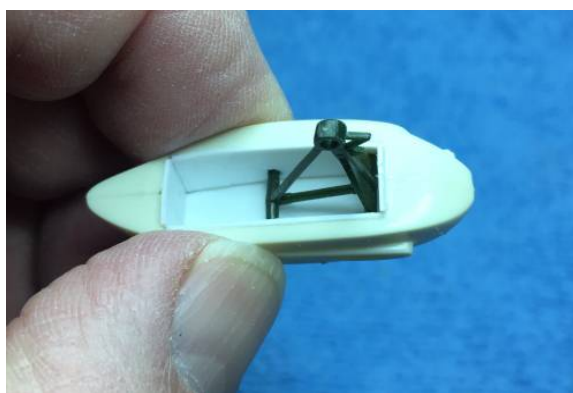
The engine inlet face needed to be fitted carefully—there isn’t a lot to positively locate it, so work carefully. I still wound up with some gaps, and rather than use CA as filler, I used Vallejo putty. It is workable with a wet brush, so I applied the putty and smoothed it out. After it dried, a quick touch with sandpaper feathered in any errant edges.



The engine inlet face installed.

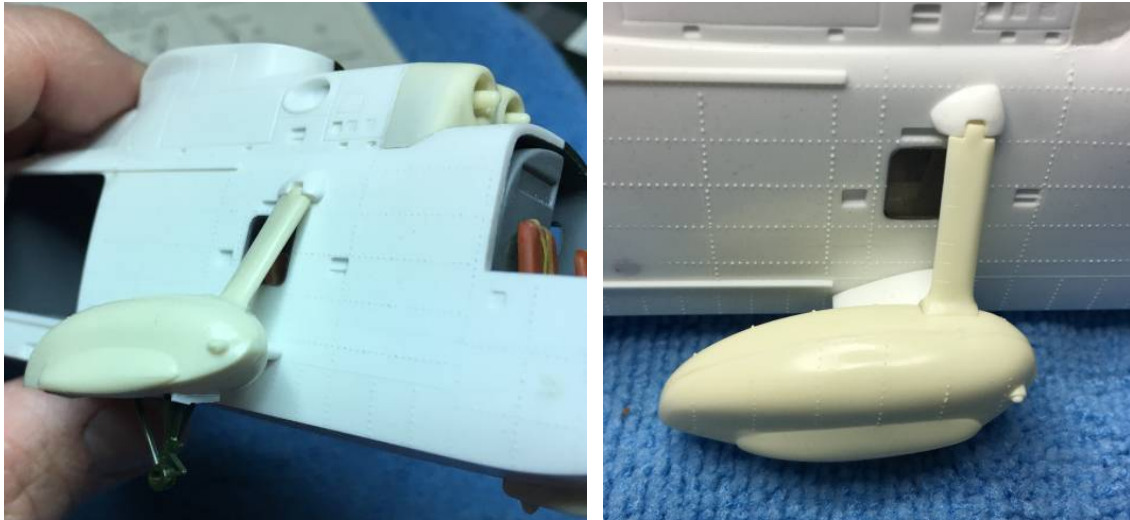
The early issues of this kit have an issue with the cockpit windows—the lower horizontal frames are far too wide. My kit had the later corrected version, but forewarned is forearmed and all that. I first cleaned up a rather large scratch with Micro Mesh pads and Novus Polish, and then gave the canopy a dip in Future. Once the Future cured (overnight), I masked and sprayed the inside of the “greenhouse” windows—in the case of early Sea Kings, they were actually blue. I used Tamiya’s Clear Blue for this. Another curing period and the canopy panes were masked with Tamiya Tape, trimmed with a brand new #11 blade. I masked my canopy before I installed it, but you can do it whenever suits your mood. I used Pacer’s Formula 560 Canopy Glue to secure the canopy. I had to use small tacks of CA in a few spots, since the top of the fuselage tended to bow more than the top of the canopy—gentle pressure on the fuselage, a tack of CA to lock it into position, and then some Canopy Glue to fill the small gaps, and you’re done.

With most of the fuselage together, I dealt with the sponsons. The halves were cleaned up, and then I sized a bit of Evergreen sheet to form the sides of the gear wells. I installed it right over the sockets for the struts, and once the sides of the well were secure, I drilled matching holes. I cut a bit of sheet to act as the well’s roof, and secured it to one side. The sponsons were assembled—don’t forget to install the struts!--and the roof was attached to the other side wall to close it up. I then sized bits of sheet to close off the fore and aft ends of the wells. A bit of sanding to make the sides of the well flush with the bottom of the sponson, and we could check that off the list.



All you need is Evergreen and time. Tell me, which looks better?

When you install the sponsons, do a test first to make sure the support strut will fit okay. Note that there is a normal gap between the sponson’s stub wing and the fuselage on the actual aircraft, so don’t fill it. You should, however clean up the fit of the struts where they meet the fairings.



You can see the gap that needs to be filled where the strut meets the fairing.

The horizontal stabilizer was added, and the gap was filled. The basic carcass is now complete. The tail rotor was cleaned up of flash, and the hub detail added. I also cleaned up the main rotor parts, assembled and cleaned up the dipping SONAR unit, rescue hoist, pitot masts, main wheels, and the fuel dump. Early Sea Kings didn't have the ice shield or rotor cap, so those went to the spares box. I ascertained that this helicopter had the split pitot probes—earlier aircraft had them both located on the right side in a vertically staggered arrangement. I left them off for painting; however, since there would be some tight work needed around the engine doghouse, they would have been in the way had I installed them now. I should have left the fuel dump off, too—I wound up breaking it several times. Everything got a coat of Vallejo's Panzer Gray Surface Primer. It gives a uniform base of subsequent colors, and acts as a very nice scale black. I masked the lower canopy frames that would remain black (the chin windows and lower windscreen frames) and the flame pads near the engine exhausts. Next, I used Vallejo White Surface Primer on the nose and tail band area—fluorescent and Day-Glo paints don't do well unless there is a white backing for them. The areas were masked off in preparation for the main color. I looked and looked, and swore I had a bottle of 36081—but all I had was the Testor Acryl modern Engine Gray. I also needed the red-orange paint, so I placed a supplies order. As usual, Sprue Brothers Models was quick to ship...



Primed and ready.

The Seaplane Gray went on without a hitch. I unmasked the white areas and back-masked them for the red-orange. Yes, I could have shot the red-orange on before the gray, but as it was I had two layers of

paint—I wasn't going to chance that the tape would lift any of the paint. The red-orange is from Lifecolour, and I gotta say this—that was some really nice paint! It only needed minimal thinning and it laid down very nicely.



(Left) We now have a gray and white model.



(Right) Red on the fuselage, Gull Gray on the blades.

The tail rotor tips were masked, and the white was sprayed on the tips. When dry, the white areas were masked and the red added. It was unmasked and set aside for later.



Tail rotor, ready to go.

The main rotors' undersides were masked, and the tops given a coat of FS36440 Light Gull Gray (I used some of the last of my Acryl paint on this). The yellow bands and tips were masked and painted. Once they were dry, I assembled the blades to the rotor head.



The main rotor assembled in the unstowed position.

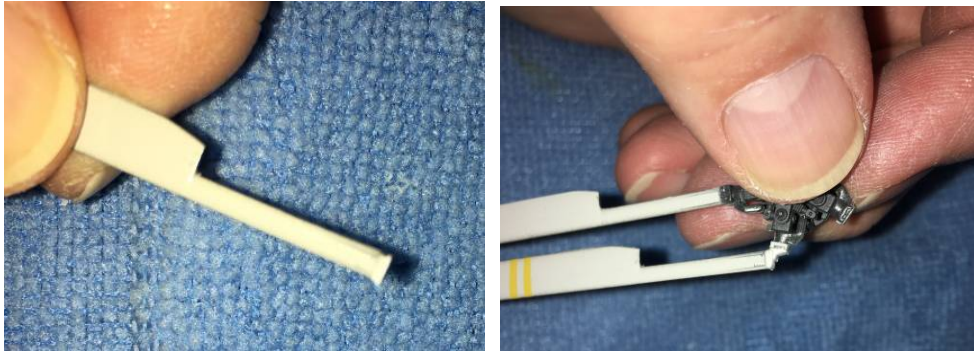
“But wait a minute—you were going to fold the rotor, right?” Patience pays here. It is easier to assemble the main rotor, and then cut four of the five blades off. Using my JLC razor saw, I cut the blades from the hub just outside the main rotor head collars—this is a wee bit longer than the lap joint on the blades reaches, so I trued everything up with a sanding block. Keep track of which blade goes where, too—I merely set them on my bench in the order they were removed around the head.



Four of the five blades cut from the head.

To replace the material lost in the cutting, I added pads of .010” Evergreen sheet stock to both the blades and the rotor head. Now, comes the fun. The rigid blade is #1, therefore I needed to fold the #2 and #5 blades aft. I added a small section of Evergreen angle stock, sanded it until it was thinner and matched the angles I needed—I didn’t measure the angles, I merely eyeballed things until they looked like the reference photos I was using. I used CA here, since it grabs fast and I can lock it if I need to

with some accelerator. Once they were secure, I filled the angle a bit with more CA, and sanded everything smooth.



Added the styrene pad, angle stock, and...done. Now, one more of these...

For the #3 and #4 blades, they not only fold back, but also down and lie almost flat to the fuselage. Again, I added angle stock and placed it to orient the blades where they needed to be. Again, I assembled everything with CA to get a solid bond. If you look closely, it won't make sense, but it is the appearance that counts here. I was satisfied with the look of the rotor, and that's what matters.



Now, were folded.

I took care of the rotor while the decals went on the rest of the model. As I said earlier, I used the Cutting Edge markings and the Microscale data. Everything went on easily, although I did make a goof—I'll let you guys and gals have a look and see if you can tell. I'm not sayin' a word...I can live with it. Good thing, too—fixing it would require a ton of work that I'd rather not do...

I apply decals over a model that's had a clear gloss applied. I use Future, thinned 50-50 with Isopropyl Alcohol, for this task. You can apply it straight if you wish, I find that the alcohol yields a thinner coat and a smooth but not too shiny finish.





Decal time. I do one side at a time, and let gravity help pull them tight.

By the bye, there is a small (but very vocal) faction of modelers online who claim you don't need it, that as long as the paint is smooth, you're good to go. And largely, this is true—decals only need a smooth surface to adhere to without silvering. But if you weather with washes, you will find that the untreated paint will stain differently than the paint protected by the decal film—the work-around(s): Remove all the clear film from your decals OR paint on all your markings OR apply a clear gloss. I've been doing the Microscale System for so long that it is ingrained in the way I build models, and it works, so I'll stick to it. If your mileage varies, that's cool—far be it to me to tell you how to build your models. The decals settled down nicely, for the most part, but around some of the rivets they needed some help—a bit of Solvaset did the trick. Once dry, the model was wiped down with a moist microfiber towel—this removes the excess decal glue and solvent residue and prevents these areas from turning brown months or years later.

Another coat of Future, again cut 50-50 with Isopropyl Alcohol, was applied. I allowed it to dry, and then stripped off the masking from the clear parts. A few licks of paint to color details—the antennas (Panzer Gray primer), the tips of the pitot tubes and landing lights (Molotov chrome marker—next time, I'll use MV lenses for the landing lights), the engine inlet bullets (Vallejo Mediterranean Blue and White mixed to match the blue of the checkerboard decals), and the inlet rings (Panzer Gray primer) were brush painted in the relevant colors. As the last paint operations, I masked off the wheel wells and painted them white, made a mask for the two oval antennas on the forward belly and painted them with Desert Tan Surface Primer, and masked the stainless panels around the exhausts and painted them

Vallejo Metal Color Dark Aluminum.



Ready for final assembly.



A close shot of the front end. You can see a lot in the photo—the exhausts and inlets are painted, the pitot masts are installed, the engine spinners are painted, and the position light on the sponson is complete.

I had sanded the tail beacon off during construction. I made a new one from a drop of Canopy Glue. I also removed the lower beacon (I sanded off of the chin fairing), and replaced it in the same manner. I cut the molded position lights on the sponsons off, and small dabs of Canopy Glue replaced them. When the glue drops were dry, the lights were painted in the relevant colors using Tamiya Clear Red

and Clear Green. A clear position light was added to the aft end of the tail.

The remaining parts were installed with Canopy Glue. The benefit of using Canopy Glue is that the bond breaks before the part does, so if the model gets bumped, you can easily repair anything that pops loose. Any shiny glue spots were addressed with either Future or Matt Varnish, as the situation warranted.

The main rotor still needed work. As it was, the tips of the blades stuck straight out. I used a small section of .040" square stock to raise the forward edge of the rotor head—this dropped the blades to where they looked like the reference photos I used. As a final detail, I made the rotor tie-downs from paper and thread. I slid the bags over the ends of the rotors and secured the “ropes” to the tail wheel as shown in photos. This will put some tension on the blades and get them to curve down a bit. There was no “one” way these were secured—look at your photos and build what you see.



A little stock to get the right “sit” on the rotor head, then some paper and thread will tie down the main rotor.

All models need a base—it is literally a frame for your model. Simple bases for aircraft models are easy—they are usually a flat base covered with either turf, pavement, or, in the case of ships, a deck (either wood or steel). I had a craft-store plaque lying around that I inherited from someone who simply left them at the hobby shop as freebies. It wasn't in the greatest shape—it had scratches and dings on it. I sanded it as smooth as I could, filled the dings and divots, and gave it a few coats of Matt Black using a craft acrylic. Once the paint was dry, I shot on a few coats of Future—I have an older bottle that was turning yellow, and I had added some food coloring to create a tint.

I created the deck using a piece of mat board I bought as part of a package of off-cuts from the crafts store. I measured the base, cut the mat board to size, and then used a pencil and a straightedge to simulate the deck planks. I had a good photo of the Champ's deck, and I followed it as closely as I could—Essex-class carrier decks were planks set side to side. About every eight planks, there was a steel frame with tie-down cleats. In the case of my base, I didn't bother with the cleats, since the deck was so dark. Once the planks were embossed, I painted the mat board with Vallejo Tire Black. Once dry, I masked and painted the stripes and helipad location. A coat of matt clear finished the job.



A simple base sets your model off. This took about an hour and used common materials found in craft shops.

I glued small squares of felt to the corners of the bottom of the plaque, and attached the deck to the top side, all with Tacky Glue. I whipped up a quick placard in PowerPoint and printed it on card stock, trimmed it to size, and attached it to the deck with Spray Mount. The final step was to attach the helicopter to the deck with a few dabs of Canopy Glue. With that, another model is ready for the display cabinet.



A dab or two of glue, a placard, and we're done.



From the top. The folded rotor adds some visual interest and saves on display space.

### Members Builds and Works in Progress during Self Isolation



Darby Erd – Britain – 1/32 scale HM Queen Elizabeth on Horse back.



Darby Erd – Hasegawa – 1/72 scale P-47 (WIP).



Rick Broome – Jimmy Flintstone – Wally Gator boat.



Norm Foote – Revell – 1/25 scale 49 Mercury Chopped-top custom.





Norm Foote – Revell – 1/720 scale HMS Ark Royal.



Michael Martucci – Monogram – 1/24 scale Kurtis Kraft 1950's Indy car.



Michael Martucci – Revell – 1/25 34 Hot Rod.



Michael Martucci – I Scale – 1/18 scale Mercedes-Benz RW.196 Formula 1 racer from 1955. Driven by Juan Manuel Fangio. F1 World Championship in 1955.



Tom Wingate – Dragon – 1/35 scale Firefly.



Zach Chapman – Hasegawa – 1/48 scale Hawker Typhoon Mk.1b.





Donnie Greenway – AMT – 1/25 White Freightliner Single Drive Cabover Tractor.



Hub Plott – 1/48 scale P-36 conversion to XP-42 (WIP)





Hub Plott – Mikromir – 1/48 scale Fokker G-1

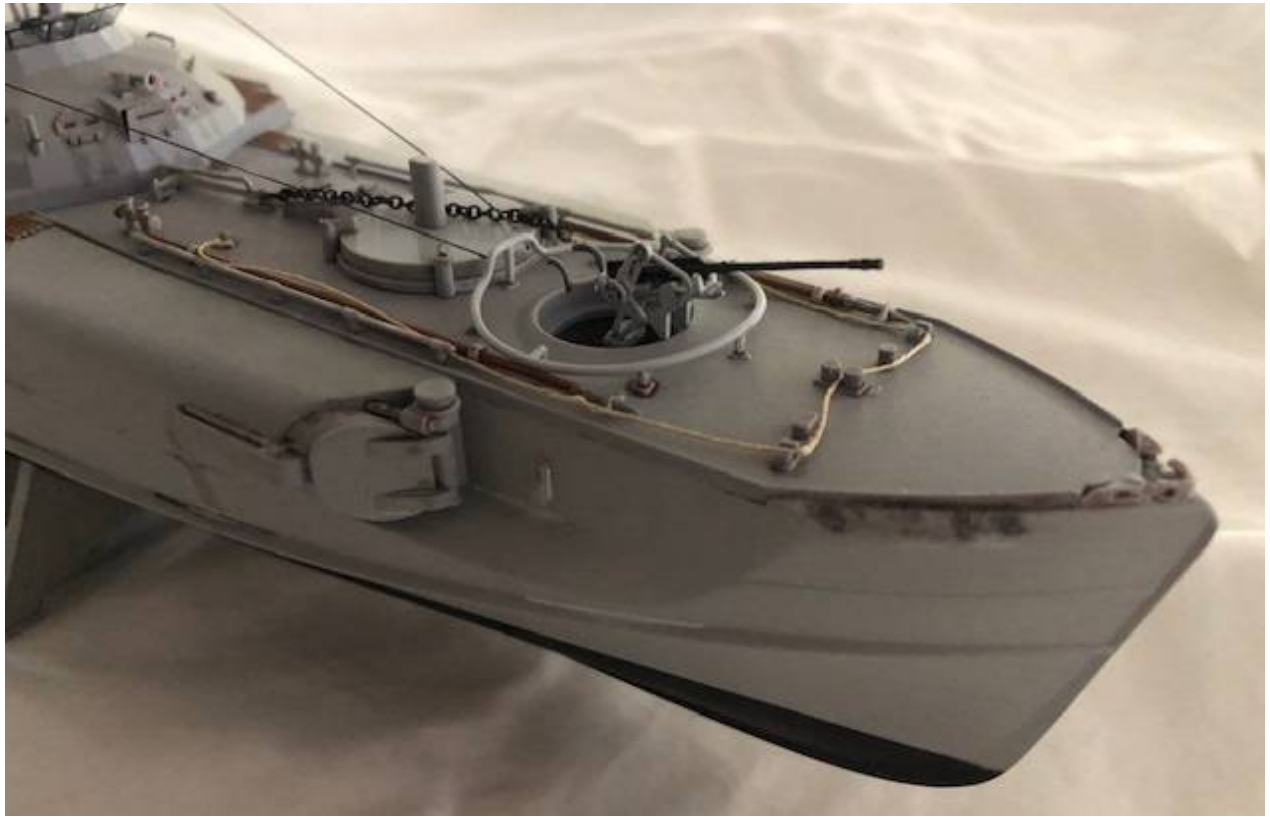




Hub Plott's Up and Running Hobby room.











Michael Carra – Revell – 1/72 scale S-100 Schnellboote.



John Currie – AFV Club – 1/35 scale M35A2 with Legend Gun Truck conversion set (WIP).

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*Well thats all folks*

*John*